

***THE MACEDONIAN  
PEOPLE'S  
REVOLUTIONARY  
STRUGGLE 1876-1912***



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**(Translated from Macedonian to English and edited by  
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REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE 1876-1912

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## FOREWARD

This book was written by several authors from the Macedonian Institute of National History in Skopje. It is a synthesis of a critical and turbulent period during which the Macedonian people fought in massive struggles to liberate themselves.

The book begins with the famous 1876 Razlovtsi Uprising which took place in the village Razlovtsi, near Delchevo, and ends with events covering up to 1912. It provides a clear overview of the most important historical events, struggles and efforts made by the Macedonian people to free themselves from Ottoman slavery.

On top of covering the usual armed insurrections and uprisings which the Macedonian people organized to gain independence, this book also covers other forms of struggles such as attempts to gain cultural, educational and religious rights.

One of the main reasons why the Razlovtsi and other uprisings and insurrections failed was because the Macedonian people were not ready politically. This book will provide the reader with a clear idea of the problems faced by the political organization known as the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization, or IMRO, responsible for organizing and leading the rebellions before the end of the XIX and the beginning of the XX century. IMRO not only managed to encompass and organize the entire Macedonian population, preparing it for years for an armed uprising as the only way to free itself from Ottoman slavery, but at the same time it also fought fiercely against foreign propaganda waged by the Greater Bulgarian, Greater Greek and Greater Serbian bourgeoisie. The goal of the foreign propaganda was to break the Macedonian people's unity and make it easier for the foreigners to enslave them. The struggle against the Bulgarian supremacist organization and its insidious methods was particularly difficult during this period because it was an exponent of the Great Bulgarian court of the Coburg dynasty. With their insidious work, the supremacists managed to seduce many honest Macedonians to join their cause. Using the same methods, they also managed to infiltrate the highest levels of the IMRO leadership and do damage from within and, at

the same time, influence the adoption of important solutions and the building of strategic concepts and tactics for IMRO.

Organized by IMRO, although insufficiently prepared, the Ilinden Uprising is a special epic moment in the history of the Macedonian people. During the Uprising, in addition to demonstrating heroism and determination, the Macedonian people also confirmed their full readiness, at the cost of great sacrifices, to struggle for national liberation.

Macedonian people, during the Ilinden Uprising, established the Krushevo Republic and clearly articulated the Macedonian people's aspirations for independence and for the creation of a democratic Macedonian state. At the same time, the Krushevo Republic put emphasis on the new state's character, which guaranteed freedom and equality for all peoples and nationalities living in Macedonia. The famous Krushevo manifesto very clearly emphasized this.

This book will also provide the reader with an overview of the difficult and devastating consequences resulting from the bloody suppression of the Uprising. At the same time, it will provide an overview of other, very important, post Ilinden Uprising events such as the Young Turk Revolution, the Federation Party and other dealings up to the 1912 Balkan War, which was the most fateful and catastrophic event in the history of the Macedonian people.

Due to the nature of this book and the way it was written, I hope it will achieve its goal and help all interested to get acquainted with the most important events of the most critical period in the Macedonian people's struggles for their freedom.

Academician Mihailo APOSTOLSKI

## **MACEDONIA FROM 1876 TO 1892 (By Risto Poplazarov)**

Macedonia, as a separate geographical and economic unit, located in the centre of the Balkan Peninsula, is an important place on the crossroads of several international land and sea routes, connecting many countries and seas together. According to Gjorche Petrov, by the beginning of the twentieth century, despite being an integral part of the Ottoman Empire, Macedonia was a separate political unit with its own specific ideology and aspirations. And through the Macedonian people's revolutionary struggles, it expressed desires to liberate itself and become an independent state.

Towards the end of Ottoman rule, Macedonia was divided into three administrative districts, or vilayets, which were sub-divided into sanjaks and the sanjaks were further divided into kaazis. The three vilayets that constituted Macedonia (Solun, Bitola, which included part of Albania, and Skopje, which included part of southern Serbia) were in fact one administrative unit governed by Governor General Hilmi Pasha since 1902.

According to demographical statistics, provided by V. K'anchev for last decades of the XIX century, Macedonia had a population of 2,260,000 inhabitants, of whom most were Macedonian with about 20% living in urban areas and about 80% living in rural areas, engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry. The urban population worked in various industries including handicrafts, trade, agriculture, etc. The vast majority of the rural and urban population lived in misery, deprived of all national and political rights. In addition, the Ottoman state, which was in the process of disintegrating, had put the Christian population at the mercy of foreign educational and religious propagandists, who enjoyed privileges and divided the population into foreign nationalities trying to turn the people into "Greeks", "Bulgarians", "Serbians" and "Romanians". With that in mind, the political and even the economic situation in Macedonia kept worsening with time. The Great Powers, on the other hand, through various treaties and agreements, started turning the Ottoman Empire into their own semi-colonies.

Almost every year the Ottoman Empire borrowed more and more money from the European banks and money lenders. As a result the Empire started to depend on foreign capital more and more. When the Ottoman debt became larger than the state budget, its creditors, i.e. the Great Powers, forced the Porte (Ottoman government) to issue the so-called “Decree of Muharram”. This was in 1881. According to this Decree, an international commission was formed and appointed to control the Ottoman Empire’s economy and budget in order to funnel funds to repay the debt. As a result the Ottoman Empire became a semi-colony of the Great Powers, creating and strengthening new opportunities for exploitation. In the last 20 years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the creditors extracted about 125,000,000 Ottoman Liras from the Empire’s economy and used it to repay the Empire’s debt incurred before and after 1881.

Foreign exploitation of the Ottoman Empire’s economy was carried out through various banks and companies. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were about 54 foreign companies controlling two billion gold pounds. Of these, ten companies operated the railways which had been undergoing rapid construction since 1873. There were many companies like that in Macedonia, of which three were banks operating in Solun, Bitola and Skopje. All the Western European industries, operating in the Ottoman Empire, made large amounts of profit and, at the same time, destroyed domestic industries and handicraft production which, due to antiquated production techniques, was expensive and unprofitable. Crafts and other economic activities in Macedonia couldn’t compete with foreign products and as a result began to decline bringing misery to the domestic workers and forcing them to go abroad to find jobs. In time domestic trade was completely ruined. The famous Macedonian trade fairs eventually failed.

In the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when capitalism entered its imperialistic phase, as part of the struggle for a new redistribution of world wealth, Macedonia became an object of conquest for the Great Powers and the Balkan monarchies. The former tried to turn Macedonia into a condominium (a joint sovereignty colony) through reforms and the latter, with its propaganda machine, prepared the grounds for its plunder. All this as well as the Ottoman Empire’s

economic system stunted Macedonia's normal economic development as well as its natural and geographical opportunities.

The Macedonian people found themselves in a difficult situation in the last four decades of the XIX century. The suffering in the Macedonian villages was especially severe. People were left scattered and without any protection. The beys (Ottoman landlords) and criminal gangs committed countless atrocities against them, without any legal action taken against the aggressors. In fact, the Ottoman authorities often cooperated with the aggressors and received bribes and various other rewards for cooperating. Societal oppression was also unbearable. It originated from the backward Ottoman Empire economic system. To alleviate the dire situation, a large part of the Macedonian population began to seek salvation in the mass pursuit of profit in migrant work, mostly outside the Ottoman Empire.

The rural population in Macedonia was divided into several strata. The richest peasants or chorbadzii owned large swaths of land. Some, working as representatives of the local Ottoman government, were also involved in money lending and collecting exorbitant interest. As people associated with the Ottoman government, they repeatedly emerged as opponents and enemies of the Macedonian revolutionary movement. In addition to the chorbadzii, there were also a number of villagers who owned large areas of land up to two hectares. They had their own houses, livestock and agricultural tools. These small farmers lived mainly in the mountainous areas of Western Macedonia, in areas not sufficiently favourable for agriculture.

The majority of Macedonian villagers didn't have their own arable land and made their living by working on the farms belonging to the feudal estates. The villagers were divided into three categories: the jarandzhii, the kesimdzii and the ajlakchii. The jarandzhii were peasants who had little or no land, so they had no choice but to work on the estate farms. From the crops they cultivated they had to give half and in some cases two thirds of their agricultural production to the estate. They were also obliged to provide the estate with various free services or angaria, such as gathering and cutting firewood, repairing roads, etc. The kesimdzii also worked on the estate farms

but under agreements according to which they paid the estates annual rent (kesim). The kesimdzii paid their rent by giving the estate part of the crops they raised and sometimes they paid in cash. Usually this rent was the same as what the jarandzhii paid in crops. The difference between the jarandzhii and kesimdzii was the kesimdzii paid the same amount regardless of yield. It was not based on the amount of crops they raised. The jarandzhii, on the other hand, paid half or two thirds of what was cultivated that year.

The third category of landless peasants was the ajlakchii. They had no choice but to work the most difficult jobs and get paid the least. They were wage earners and had to work hard for their living doing some of the most difficult jobs on the estate farms. They were hired to harvest crops, dig ditches etc. The annual salary of an ajlakchia in cash was about 12 Ottoman liras. In crops they usually received several hundred kilograms of grain, ten kilograms of beans, vegetables, etc. The ajlakchii were also given free apartments, usually located in unhygienic huts, which were dirtier than the worst stables.

The estate owners in Macedonia continued to seize fertile lands all through the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At the same time villagers were allowed to purchase their own land. By the beginning of the XX century there were about 180,000 agricultural properties in Macedonia, of which 15,000 were large and medium and 10,000 small. It was estimated that 70% of the 180,000 agricultural properties didn't belong to the peasants. "The vast majority of the Macedonian peasantry" wrote Prof. D. Zografski "didn't have enough land... The subject of owning land for them was the basic and main issue that encouraged them to fight for ownership of the land they cultivated." This fact is one of the main reasons why the Macedonian peasantry became the main driving force behind the Macedonian national-revolutionary liberation movement.

The tax system in Macedonia was also a particular problem for the oppressed masses. The tithe (a portion of one's income), the most important tax, was collected by the leaseholders who bought it from the Ottoman state. Most often they were Turks and Albanians, and later Macedonians, Vlachs and others. Most often the leaseholders were crooked and wanted to grab more tithe than was allowed by

law. To do that they usually hired armed gangs made up of various criminals. With their strength and with help from the local Ottoman authorities and local thugs, they intimidated and terrorized the population, forcing it to give them twice as much tithe. In other words the crooked leaseholders forced people to pay more per plot than was required by law.

In addition to economic corruption there was physical abuse and political lawlessness. There were gangs roaming the countryside robbing and killing people and looting properties, especially in Western Macedonia. It was estimated that in 1895 there were about 150 such gangs, which committed over 400 murders. The Turkish state neither cared nor seemed to have been able to protect the people.

So, it's understandable why the situation in Macedonia came to a revolutionary boiling point in the second half of the XIX century and especially after the 1878 Berlin Congress.

## LIBERATION STRUGGLES IN THE PERIOD FROM 1875 TO 1878

In the second half, and especially in the last decades of the XIX century, the Macedonian people's struggle against Ottoman rule intensified and took a variety of forms. One of those forms was the rise of haiduks (brigands) who had already existed in Macedonia for a long time. The haiduks were tolerated by the common people because they dealt harshly with their worst tormentors. The common people often cooperated with Haiduk organizations and aided their activities, especially when they became involved in locally organized struggles. One of those haiduks with whom the people cooperated was the famous Voivoda (leader) Ilo Markov from Berovo. He was known not only in all of Macedonia but also abroad. Because of his heroism, the people called him "son of kings Marko", "king of Maleshevia", and so on.

Leading several hundred Macedonian volunteers, in 1862 Ilo Voivoda took part in the battles to oust the Ottoman military from Belgrade. According to statements made by Russian consuls in the Balkans, Ilo Voivoda was capable of raising even a bigger revolt in the Balkans. The various voivodi and their cheti (detachments) at that time operated independently of each other. Included among the active voivodi were Stoimen, Traian, Chakarot, Hristo Makedonski and Rumena. The haiduk movement was especially strong in Eastern Macedonia where many haiduk detachments were able to hide in the inaccessible mountains.

During the seventh and eighth decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, revolutionaries Dimitar Janakiev - Okuili - Biserov, Petko from the village Sugarevo, Melnik Region, Spiro Dzherov - Makedonski from Bitola and some others began to spread revolutionary ideas among the people. Dimitar Janakiev - Okuili - Biserov and Petko from Sugarevo operated in Melnik and Maleshevo. While Spiro Dzherov - Makedonski operated in Bitola, Lerin, Ohrid and Resen where, in 1862, he organized a rebellion. Unfortunately the rebellion failed because it was betrayed by the Greek Metropolitan in Bitola. Eleven years later (1873), something similar was organized in Voden Region where, according to Hadzi Tashko, a merchant, a group of 15 people were involved.

In the spring of 1873, two haiduk detachments appeared in Melnik and Maleshevo Regions which, according to Verkovich, didn't attack the civilian population "but only individuals who persecuted and exploited the peasants, such as blackmailers, extortionists, etc. because they, like the Ottomans, tormented the poor people in a hundred ways." There were haiduk detachments present in Tikvesh, Mariovo, Prilep, Krushevo and Kichevo.

During the 1875-1878 Eastern Crisis, which began with uprisings in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the haiduk movement in Macedonia exploded. It reached such a height that in some places it grew into local riots and eventually into full blown uprisings. In 1876 larger haiduk detachments fought against the Ottoman army, especially in Lerin and Kostur Regions. The population in Debar Region revolted because new taxes were about to be introduced; a further burden to the people. The people all over Macedonia were reaching a boiling point.

Many of the Macedonian people, who found themselves outside their homeland where uprisings were taking place in the Balkans, sympathized with the other people's liberation struggles and participated in them. Some Macedonians even made commitments to start an uprising in Macedonia. One such example was the promise a number of Macedonians made to Mikio Liubibratic, a revolutionary leader in Herzegovina. They promised they would start an uprising in Macedonia as soon as it was announced in Herzegovina. Others, such as Giorgi Izmirliiev of Gorna Dzhumaia, took an active part in the April 1876 Bulgarian Uprising. By doing so the Macedonian people expressed their aspirations for freedom and a better life.

## THE RAZLOVTSI UPRISING

The desire for freedom was once again strongly expressed by the oppressed Macedonian people during the famous Razlovtsi Uprising, which erupted on May 21, 1876 in the village Razlovtsi and spread to Pianets and Pehchevo Regions as well as to surrounding areas. The uprising was organized by Dimitar Pop Georgiev from Berovo and Pop Stoian from the village Razlovtsi, who had previously joined a conspiracy organization known as “The Butchers” and had led many protests against Ottoman atrocities including forceful conversions of Christians to Muslims, tax abuses and more.

Dimitar Pop Georgiev from Berovo, more commonly known as Berovski, was an educated man who received some of his education in Russia. He also studied in Serbia where he received his military schooling in Belgrade, during which he participated in the struggle to oust the Ottoman army from Belgrade. He worked as a teacher after he returned to Berovo and was instrumental in organizing a struggle to combat against Greek propaganda. For that and his revolutionary activities Berovski was persecuted by the Ottoman authorities, but instead of giving up on the struggle he became even more active. He was joined by Pop Stoian along with his brothers and several other like-minded individuals when he began preparations for an uprising in Macedonia.

The uprising in Razlovtsi was instigated by Pop Stoian. To evade Ottoman persecution Berovski fled Berovo and went to Solun where he joined a secret circle called the “Secret Revolutionary Committee”. Led by Dimitar Berovski the circle took part in making preparations for an uprising. The circle had many members that included Nedela, a teacher, her daughter and Stanislava Karaivanova, also a teacher, who sewed the insurgent flag depicting a dark red lion without a crown embroidered on a yellow field, with the inscription “Macedonia, stand up for your freedom”.

During 1875, when the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina started their revolt, the Macedonian conspirators in Solun and Pianets sympathetically followed through with preparing the Razlovtsi uprising in Macedonia. In the words of Konstantin Pop Stoianov,

son of Pop Stoian, the Herzegovina Uprising “strongly influenced the subjugated here” thus prompting them to accelerate preparations for a local uprising. As soon as this happened Berovski and his collaborator Kote Krchov moved to Razlovtsi bringing with them a load of weapons including rifles and ammunition.

In April 1876, Berovski and the other leaders met with the local peasantry and decided that Dimitar Berovski should assemble a small detachment and tour the areas around Pianets, Maleshevo, Radovish, Strumitsa, Petrich and Melnik in order to call on the people to rise up in revolt. But something unexpected happened just as the tour was being organized.

While the conspirators were preparing to hold another meeting, several Ottoman officials arrived in Razlovtsi with armed escorts and arrested several villagers. Then they abducted two Christian girls with the intent of converting them to Islam. Then they threatened to burn the village down if anyone objected. The conspirators in the meantime, suspecting that someone had betrayed them, decided to start the uprising immediately. On May 21, 1876, they attacked the Ottoman officials and, after several hours of fighting, freed Razlovtsi. The same day the people who rebelled broke into the local Ottoman administration office and burned down all deeds, tax collector notebooks, tax records, as well as all other lists with references to taxes and other levies. In other words they violently expressed their hatred towards the Ottoman economic and social system.

Again, on the same day, the rebels split into two groups. One group, led by Tsone Spasov, remained in Razlovtsi to guard the village. The other, led by Berovski, took the new left and headed for Maleshevo and Berovo. On the way Berovski's group clashed with a unit of Ottoman gendarmes in the village Mitrashints and chased the Ottomans out. Sometime later Razlovtsi was attacked and devastated by the Ottoman army and a large number of bashibozuks (armed Muslim civilians, usually Albanians). After many hours of fighting, the insurgents and villagers fled the fight and ran off to the mountains. In the meantime the residents of the village Laki decided to raise a revolt. They assembled a company of insurgents, led by Tsone Donchev, and were preparing to join other insurgents in the

villages where revolts were being organized. Unfortunately the Ottoman authorities took swift action and prevented them from leaving their village. After the attack dozens of armed villagers, including those who assembled on the mountain in Berovo to take part in the uprising had to go home. This was mainly due to the Ottoman authorities taking action against them and partly due to Dimitar Berovski's company not arriving in time. They all returned to their homes and hid their weapons.

Within a week after it started, the uprising was developing quite successfully, that is, until a large Ottoman force of soldiers and bashibozuks assembled from the surrounding towns arrived and suppressed it. Dozens of villagers from the areas where the uprisings took place, as well as from surrounding areas, were captured, tortured and jailed in Seres, Solun, Skopje and other prisons. Many died in those prisons, including Tsone Donchev, who died in the Kurshumli-ann prison in Skopje.

Even though the uprisings were suppressed, Dimitar Berovski's company remained active and managed to survive in the mountains. And as new volunteers kept coming, it grew to a point where it had to be split. Two spy companies were created in 1877. They carried out several attacks on the Ottoman army when it was retreating through Pianets and Osogovo after the Serbian-Ottoman and Russian-Ottoman wars, in which many Macedonians took part.

\* \* \*

In addition to struggling to liberate Macedonia, several hundred Macedonians took part in the 1876 Serbo-Ottoman war fighting on the Serbian side. Some were led by vojvodi Ilo Maleshevski and Hristo Makedonski and others, including the volunteers, were led by Giorgi Pulevski and Giorgi Antov. They fought alongside the Russian armies against the Ottomans during the 1877-1878 Russo-Ottoman war. These vojvodi and some of the volunteers were later awarded Serbian and Russian military orders for their bravery.

The Macedonian volunteer units also took part in the battles inside Macedonia. They mostly served as guides and acted behind the Ottoman army lines. Ilo Maleshevski's company was the most

successful in carrying out its missions. In January 1878 Maleshevski's company entered the northeastern part of Macedonia and liberated almost the entire Pianets area, including the town Tsarevo Selo (today Delchevo). The local haiduk detachments led by Berovski and others also took part in liberating Pianets.

After Pianets was liberated the insurgents established a government in the free area. The government was run by a board of local elders and the village was protected by armed guards from Ilo Maleshevski and Dimitar Berovski's volunteer detachments. Unfortunately freedom in Pianets only lasted until mid-March 1878 when, according to the Russian-Ottoman peace agreement, Pianets had to be given back to the Ottomans. The Macedonian volunteers guarding the area had to disband. Some moved to Bulgaria while others returned to their homes and continued the struggle for freedom.

In the meantime the Macedonian volunteers led by Iakim Chelopetski, Nikola Alginski and others, who took part in the Serbo-Ottoman war fighting on the Serbian side, entered Kumanovo and Kriva Palanka Regions and, using the favourable conditions at the time, raised a large uprising. They ousted the Ottoman authorities and the Bashibozuk gangs and liberated Kriva Palanka. These areas remained free until early June 1878 when the Ottoman army recaptured it. Some Macedonian volunteers fled to Serbia. The Kumanovo and Kriva Palanka Region uprisings were aided by Serbia, in order for the Serbian government to use them for propaganda purposes. The Serbian government wanted to "prove" that the region belonged to "Serbia" and that the insurgents "demanded" Macedonia's accession to Serbia. Later the Bulgarian and Greek ruling circles took similar positions towards Macedonia.

In the meantime some ruling circles in Greece organized Andart (Greek nationalist) actions in the area around Mount Olympus. Their aim was to start what they called an "uprising on Olympus" and conquer as much Macedonian territory as possible and join it to Greece. A number of people from Macedonia who at the time found themselves in Greece (as emigrants and migrant workers), without knowing about the Greek aims, took part in these actions believing that they were fighting to free Macedonia. A group of Macedonian

migrant workers from Prespa, Lerin and Kostur Regions, who at the time worked in Athens, returned to Macedonia to start an uprising. Unfortunately they were betrayed and their actions failed just as they began.

## MACEDONIA THE TREATY OF SAN STEFANO AND THE BERLIN CONGRESS

It can be said that the above-mentioned armed actions perpetrated in Macedonia by the Serbian and Greek ruling circles were to some extent reactions against the San Stefano Agreement concluded between Russia and the Ottoman Empire on March 3, 1878 in San Stefano, near Tsari Grad (Istanbul). The Bulgarian ruling circles reacted in a similar manner during the Berlin Congress. They attempted to use the Kreshna Uprising through their "Unity" Committees in order to achieve Greater Bulgarian aspirations in Macedonia.

Under the San Stefano Agreement, Serbia, Romania and Montenegro were to be given independence and reforms were to be introduced in the other Balkan countries under Ottoman rule. It was also predicted that an autonomous Bulgarian state would be created, which in addition to encompassing today's Bulgaria, would encompass most of Macedonia, part of Serbia, Albania (Korcha), Thrace, etc. It was envisioned that the Russian tsar wanted to turn these countries into his own behind the Danube provinces.

The San Stefano Agreement however was opposed by the Great Powers, most notably by Britain and Austria-Hungary, who felt it was jeopardizing their interests in the Balkans and breaking previous agreements made between Russia and the other Great Powers. Some, for example, felt that Bulgaria was going to fall under Russian influence and Macedonia under Austro-Hungarian influence. In fact in 1878 Austria-Hungary demanded that a separate autonomous Macedonia be created and placed under its influence.

The Balkan states also opposed Macedonia's annexation to the planned autonomous Bulgarian state. The Greek government, through the consulates and metropolises in Macedonia, sent protest letters to the Great Powers and demanded that Macedonia be given to Greece. The Serbian government took similar actions. The Serbian actions were coordinated by the so-called "Main board in Belgrade", chaired by Archimandrite Sava, who accompanied the Serbian diplomats in Berlin during the Berlin Congress. After the Bulgarian Exarchate emerged it organized a series of actions

(sending letters, etc.) demanding recognition for the so-called “San Stefano Bulgaria”. The ruling circles in Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia instigated and supported these various actions. It was at this time that they began to openly clash over the seizing of Macedonian territory. This gave rise to the Macedonian question “what will happen to Macedonia”, which was brought before the entire European diplomacy through the Berlin Congress.

The ruling circles in Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece wanted to plunder Macedonia, which was news, at that time, to the Macedonian people and the rest of the population living in Macedonia. The Macedonian population condemned these hostile, foreign actions because they didn’t take into account the interests of the people. Instead of liberation, the foreigners offered plunder and replacing Ottoman rule with something else. In May 1878 the Macedonian position was expressed by Dimitar Robev, the first Macedonian member in the Ottoman parliament (since 1876). Robev condemned the foreign propaganda carried out by the Balkan ruling circles and declared that it was in the best interest of the Macedonian people if Macedonia was to become independent. In this regard, he visited Belgrade and talked to the Serbian president and others. Unfortunately they disagreed with him and accused him of wanting Macedonia for himself. Robev brought up the same issue to Ignatiev, the Russian envoy in Constantinople. It is alleged that Ignatiev told Robev that “Macedonia can’t belong to any of the three main peoples in the Balkan Peninsula.” This opinion was not unique.

Before the Berlin Congress was even convened, during the Russian-Austro-Hungarian negotiations held in Vienna, the Russian government proposed the creation of a separate autonomous vassal principality that included Macedonia and the Novopazar Sandzhak, but Austro-Hungary opposed it. After realizing that it wouldn’t be able to support the San Stefano Agreement, the Russian government abandoned its plans to create a “San Stefano Bulgaria” even before the Berlin Congress was started. This was also expressed in the Russian negotiations with the English government.

In regard to the San Stefano Agreement, Dimitar Blagoev, father of socialism in Bulgaria, in an article published in Leninova “Iskra” on August 1, 1903 and in the book “Contribution to the History of

Socialism in Bulgaria” (Moscow 1944, p. 39), provided an analysis of the situation and proved that the creation of a “San Stefano Bulgaria” was unattainable. It was a fabrication. It was pure “fiction”. At the same time he showed appreciation for the positive aspects of the Russian war against the Ottomans (liberating Bulgaria, etc.) and didn’t forget to point out that the Russian tsar had goals to conquer territories during that war. A similar view was also expressed in the “Little Soviet Encyclopedia”, Volume VII, p. 622 (Moscow 1930).

According to the agreements reached during the Berlin Congress (13.VI. - 13.VII.1878), Romania, Montenegro and Serbia became independent states; Bosnia-Herzegovina was given to Austria-Hungary. Northern Bulgaria became a vassal principality of the Ottoman sultan, south of that, an autonomous region of Eastern Rumelia was created, and so on. As for the other Balkan countries in the Ottoman Empire, the Treaty of Berlin provided for various reforms. Article 23 of this agreement provided for the implementation of reforms in Macedonia spelled out in the so-called Critical Statute of 1866, which gave Macedonia certain autonomous rights. But the Porte (Ottoman government) didn’t implement any of these reforms and the situation in Macedonia worsened even more.

## AGITATION FOR AN UPRISING IN MACEDONIA

Unlike the Greek and Serbian ruling circles which opposed the San Stefano Agreement, the Exarchate and Bulgarian bourgeoisie, which gradually took power in the Bulgarian vassal principality, protested against the decisions made during the Berlin Congress because they didn't allow for the creation of a "Greater Bulgaria". After the Berlin Congress was concluded, the Bulgarian bourgeoisie, especially its liberal part headed by Stefan Stambolov, created the "Edinstvo Charity Committees" in order to organize actions to reverse the decisions made during the Berlin Congress. In other words to create conditions so that Macedonia could be given to Bulgaria.

In the period from 1875 to 1878 the situation in Macedonia, especially in its northern and northeastern parts, became extremely intolerable due to the turmoil that was taking place. A number of Ottoman armies passed through these areas on their way to and coming from the war fronts. Angered by their losses they'd suffered they devastated everything in their path. On top of that, they brought with them thousands of Muhadzirs exiled from the newly liberated neighbouring countries and dumped them in Macedonia. And, with help from the Ottoman authorities, they let them loose to loot the houses, fields, livestock and other properties of the Macedonian people.

During the June 1878 insurrection suppression in Kumanovo, Kriva Palanka and surrounding areas, the Macedonian people endured many attacks from the Bashibozuks. So did the people in Melnik Region the following month, especially in the Krsiak vicinity and surrounding mountains where many spy and volunteer detachments had gathered to launch insurgent actions. Aware of their presence, the Ottoman authorities took a series of military actions against them. About 500-600 Ottoman soldiers and bashibozuks, led by the kajmakam (governor) from Melnik, ravaged about 20 villages in Krsiak and killed over 60 people.

During these attacks the people had no one to rely on and were forced to take care of their own safety, lives and property. As a result many joined the haiduk detachments which began to explode

in size. Stojan Voivoda's detachment, one of the largest in the region, was active in Ohrid and Bitola. Another large detachment led by Stefo and Pop Kosta Bufski was active in Kostur, Lerin and Bitola Regions. Three large detachments fought against the Ottoman authorities in the Bitola sandzhak under the leadership of Vlaot Alexi, Kotula and Kostadin. Churko and Dimitar Voivoda's detachments also took part there. There were haiduk detachments operating in Mariovo, Prilep and other regions.

In the summer of 1878, the haiduk movement was gaining strength in Eastern Macedonia, where about 12 haiduk detachments had concentrated and were being constantly reinforced with new volunteers and participants from the Serbian-Ottoman and Russian-Ottoman wars. In the meantime Ilo Maleshevski's detachment operated in Kiustendil. Among the 12 detachments, the most famous was Stoian Stoil Karastoilov's detachment from the village Strachishta, Nevrokop Region. Karastoilov was well respected by the people for being courageous and rational. Because of that the twelve haiduk leaders appointed him their chief.

This was unusual in the haiduk movement because, almost without exception, all haiduk leaders tended to operate alone in their own territory and independent of one another. But as a result of grouping all those detachments under Stoian Karastoilov's leadership, the haiduk movement was able to successfully execute the Kreshna Uprising. In other words, the 1878 Macedonian Uprising in Kreshna was executed by a single force under a single leader around which all the insurgents were grouped.

Included among the leaders of the 12 detachments were Todor Palaskarot, Kosta Kukoto, Kocho Liutata and Stoian Tsaparevetsot. They, along with some of the Macedonian groups which had earlier fled to Bulgaria, including Nathaniel's group, began to agitate for an uprising in Macedonia. Other haiduk leaders were also advised to do the same. Many, such as Kostadin Bufski from the village Buf, Lerin Region, accepted the responsibility. In no time large groups of haiduks, volunteers and others not only became aware of the pending liberation but also began to prepare for it

At the same time rumours began to circulate that if an uprising was raised in Macedonia, Russia would declare a new war on the Ottoman Empire and drive it out of the Balkans. There were also rumours circulating that special Russian cavalry units were standing by behind the Bulgarian-Macedonian border, waiting for orders to enter Macedonia. People were told that Russian officers sympathized with and supported the Macedonian liberation movement. These rumours were so strong that even the European press wrote about them. Then when the uprising broke out, the European newspapers expected it to grow into a general Balkan uprising and provoke a new Russian-Ottoman war. These rumours had an extraordinary impact on the Macedonian agitators who called for the uprising to begin.

The uprising was also influenced by agitation carried out by the “Unity” Committees which, under the label of “benevolence”, covered up the war plans and actions prepared by the Greater Bulgaria propaganda which called for the accession of Macedonia to Bulgaria. The “Unity” Committees started organizing armed detachments sent from Bulgaria through Kiustendil to the northern part of Macedonia, in order to start an uprising there. One of those detachments belonged to the Russian Cossack Adam Kalmikov. Metropolitan Nathaniel of Ohrid also took part in these actions.

Metropolitan Nathaniel formed “Unity” Committees in Kiustendil, Gorna Dzhumaia and Dupnitsa, which operated as clones of Stambolov’s Trnovo Committee. In Kiustendil, Nathaniel connected himself to Ilo Maleshevski and Dimitar Berovski. Together they recruited volunteers to form more detachments, etc. But these actions didn’t produce results. When the Cossack Kalmikov saw that nothing was happening there, he moved to Gornodzumaia Region and joined Stoian Karastoilov’s haiduk detachments located in the areas around Kreshna. Dimitar Berovski did the same.

## THE KRESHNA UPRISING

At the end of September 1878 a meeting was held in Gornodzhumaia Region. The meeting was attended by over ten haiduk leaders and other patriots. Included among those who took part in the meeting were haiduk leaders Stoian Karastoilov - Starchieski, Atanas Cholakov (Daskalov), Dimitar Pop Georgiev, Kocho Mutrukov, Kocho Liutata, Todor Palaskarov, Kosta Kukoto and Stoian Tsaparevetsov. Among the issues discussed was what preparations needed to be made for an uprising to take place. It was also decided to inform the people of the start of the uprising with the attack on the Ottoman military garrison stationed in the village Kreshna. An operational plan was developed for that purpose, Stoian Karastoilov was elected military leader of the insurgency, and haiduk leaders Atanas and Cholakov were appointed to assist him. The military forces were deployed in several units which included many villagers.

The Kreshna Uprising began on October 17, 1878 with about 400 haiduks and villagers taking place. Stoian Karastoilov was in command of the haiduk leaders who led the haiduk attack on the Ottoman army in Kreshna. And thus began the Kreshna Uprising, which later got its name on account of the place where the first and successful insurgent action took place. The fighting lasted for two days. The insurgents demanded that the Ottoman soldiers surrender. The Ottomans initially refused, believing that reinforcements would be arriving from Melnik and other places. The reinforcements however were beaten back and didn't reach the battle. Then, after many hours of fighting, the Ottoman army was forced to surrender with two officers and 119 soldiers. One insurgent was killed and three others were wounded. On the Ottoman side, 9 soldiers were killed and 11 wounded. According to his contemporaries, Stoian Karastoilov and his good leadership was credited for the great victory.

The Kreshna Uprising had a positive echo in the European press, which surprisingly wrote about the heroism of the Macedonian insurgents. The Macedonian villagers enthusiastically received the uprising's successful start and began to join the insurgency en masse. But due to lack of weapons not all could be recruited. There

was a great shortage of weapons from the moment the uprising began.

Despite the fact that the insurgents faced great difficulties from the start, still the uprisings continued to spread until the beginning of November and covered a large area consisting of several kazis (districts) in today's Pirin Macedonia. Immediately after the uprising started in Kreshna, battles broke out in the villages Ostava, Vlahi, Grncha, Novo Selo (Ienikioi) and others. Included among the insurgent leaders who fought these battles were Kosta Kukoto, Krsto Svetivrachki and Dedo Giorgi Gadzhalot.

The success of this uprising and the course it took was a result of the support provided by the Macedonian villagers and the considerable measures the insurgent leadership took. After the first battles the leadership evolved its battle tactics as well as its military forces to meet the situation. The armed insurgents were deployed in four large detachments led by Stoian Karastoilov, Kosta Georgiev, Stoian Torolinko and Krsto Arizanov. Karastoilov was elected top military leader of the insurgent forces through the course of the uprising. The Cossack Adam Kolmikov was elected ataman (a Cossack chief) of the uprising and a "Headquarters of the Macedonian Uprising" was also formed.

From the several official documents left behind by the insurgency leadership, we can see that the participants in the uprising themselves called the uprising a "Macedonian Uprising", about which even the European press wrote. The headquarters of the Macedonian uprising consisted of the haiduk leaders commanded by Karastoilov. Dimitar Pop Gieorgiev-Berovski was elected Chief of Staff and held a seal with the inscription: "Seal of the Chief of the 1878 Macedonian Uprising", which not only carried the name Macedonia but also the year the uprising took place as well as its national character. Berovski dealt mainly with political and administrative issues, which arose during the fighting and in the liberated areas. The Headquarters was located in the village Vlahi. From the nature of its activities it can be said that the headquarters, in addition to carrying out military duties, functioned as an interim insurgent government. The headquarters had organized a functioning administration and appointed people to administer the

liberated areas, maintain relations with the “Unity” Committees, conduct negotiations with representatives from the Ottoman government, etc. It is interesting to note that in the official documents the Chief of Staff, when addressing important issues, spoke on behalf of the haiduk leaders or on behalf of Karastoilov, something that testifies to the fact that the supreme leadership of the uprising consisted of Macedonians only.

By its activities carried out in the liberated territories, the insurgent leadership, the insurgent organization and the insurgent people's government proved to the Macedonian people that a base was created from which the insurgency could draw material goods such as food, as well as new military recruits that could be deployed in uprisings in other areas in Macedonia. Unfortunately, by its accomplishments, the Macedonian insurgency leadership and Macedonian internal forces came into sharp conflict with the Bulgarian committees, which directly or indirectly served the interests of Greater Bulgaria.

The Bulgarian committees and Bulgarian ruling circles were extremely upset by the course the 1878 Macedonian uprising had taken. They saw it as a new Macedonian revolutionary movement taking place which posed danger to the Greater Bulgarian aspirations in Macedonia. That's why they took (as we shall see later) hostile actions to remove the insurgency leadership led by Karastoilov and Berovski.

As was mentioned earlier, many of the administrative functions in the people's insurgency government in the liberated areas were managed by elders. The people's militias in the villages were put in charge of providing security and keeping the peace in the population while the elders resolved disputes and assisted the militia. Conducting themselves in a fair manner towards the villagers, the insurgency leadership won over not only the residents of Razlovtsi but also those of Demir Hisar, Pehchevo and places where the population was in full swing and ready to rise in revolt. The village militias were of special importance for maintaining order and defending the liberated areas from enemy attacks. The village militias were also responsible for guarding various prominent places

and for keeping the insurgents informed about enemy movements. The militia was led by a board that was based in the village Kreshna.

After various measures taken by the insurgency leadership, the uprising began to spread even more successfully. The insurgents liberated the areas up to the villages Gradeshnitsa - Belitsa, on the eastern side of the river Struma, where long and disparate battles were fought against the Ottoman army and bashibozuks. As the uprising spread west of the Struma River, several villages in Petrich Region were also liberated. Almost the entire Karshiak Region had fallen into the hands of the insurgents led by Zlatko, Giorgi Okoto, Indzheto, Mitko Iurukot and others. The insurgent incursion to the south was blocked at the Strmeshnitsa River by a large Ottoman army. The insurgents also pushed towards Strumitsa and liberated the village Sushitsa but their advance was again blocked by Ottoman military forces dispatched from Strumitsa.

The largest and longest battles fought by the insurgents took place on the Gradeshnitsa – Belitsa line where the rebels deployed cavalry led by Nikola Makedonski. The insurgent forces were also assisted by Pop Kostadin – Bufski’s detachment. But even though the battles were led by Stoian Karastoilov himself, the insurgents failed to take this line because a large Ottoman army and bashibozuks, reinforced with cannon fire, held it.

While the battles were being fought on this line above the village Gradeshnitsa, the Ottoman authorities from Melnik proposed holding negotiations with the insurgency representatives. Negotiating on behalf of the Ottoman government, they promised to abolish taxes on the villagers but only for a few years. The insurgency representatives, on the other hand, demanded much more than what the Ottoman government offered. So the negotiations produced no resolutions.

The insurgency failure to break through enemy lines at the Gradeshnitsa - Belitsa front as well as other places halted the spread of the uprising in other areas. It was one of the factors that negatively impacted the future course of the overall uprising. Another factor was the “Unity” Committees which offered help to the uprising, but according to Russian historian Levintov it wasn’t to

help the uprising but to stall it. When the leader of the Macedonian uprising addressed the “Unity” Committees he made sure to let them know that he was fully aware of their anti-insurgent role. He said: “The hopes we had in your offer to help us have evaporated. We now see that you were making fun of us... Imagine how many detachments we armed with the first and last 60 rifles you sent us...” In another letter, speaking on behalf of the insurgency leaders, Chief Berovski protested against the “Unity” Committees’ interference in the uprising and pointed out that their role was to act as observers and supply the insurgency with funds and not to interfere in the uprising. “That’s why we consider it our duty to tell you that. And if you continue like before... we will be forced to act as we see fit...”

During the various arguments the insurgency leaders had with the “Unity” Committees, the name “Macedonian” Uprising surfaced as an issue. The “Unity” Committees were against using the word “Macedonian”, to which the insurgency leadership replied: “This word will not die. We will not accept your correspondence without the word Macedonian written on your letters...” At the same time, the insurgency leadership, when convinced that some of the “Unity” Committee leaders were doing harmful work, expelled them from their ranks. Day by day relations between the “Unity” Committees and the insurgency became more and more tense.

The Sofia based “Unity” Committee, tasked by the Bulgarian “Unity” Committees to contact the insurgency leadership through its branch in Gorna Dzhumaja, decided to secretly arrest the chief of the insurgents and replace him and the entire Macedonian uprising leadership with its own people. A three-member commission, headed by D.S. Stalov, member of the Sofia “Unity” Committee, was created for that purpose. The commission, accompanied by several armed men, was dispatched to rebel territory where, at the end of November 1878, they arrested Chief Berovski and imprisoned him in a jail in Kiustendil. The rebel leadership strongly protested but couldn’t do anything because it was busy fighting against the Ottomans.

At the same time, the Sofia “Unity” Committee created a detachment under the leadership of Bratan Marinov, a Bulgarian

officer, and dispatched it to Razlovtsi to spread propaganda in favour of a Greater Bulgaria. Not knowing that this was the work of the Sofia “Unity” Committee, many Macedonians in Razlovtsi began to join Marinov’s detachment including several local haiduk detachments. Then, on November 20, 1878, it attacked the Ottoman defenses in the town Bansko and after several hours of fighting the Macedonian villagers liberated Bansko and captured 34 Ottoman soldiers. Several other villages were also liberated. At that time Russian detachments led by Russian officers A. Kalmikov and L. Voitkevich acted in Razlovtsi, sent there by the Sofia “Unity” Committee.

After that, the insurgency leadership in Razlovtsi organized a popular insurgency government modeled on previous such governments established in the area. However this government, as well as the liberated part of Razlovsko, was short-lived. About a week later the government was abolished and many people suffered greatly. This is because the Sofia “Unity” Committee not only didn’t organize security for the population, but when Razlovtsi was attacked by the Ottoman army the insurgents sent there by the Sofia “Unity” Committee fled the area and abandoned the people.

During the last days of November 1878, the Ottoman army had quelled almost all the uprisings in Macedonia. Preparations for it had started immediately after the uprisings began. According to the foreign press, “uprisings in Macedonia were a typical issue”. This was, however, a delicate issue for the Ottoman government. Its biggest fear was that Russia might use them to invade Macedonia. In response to Ottoman fears the Russian imperial government said it had nothing to do with the uprisings and, in fact, opposed them. This was encouraging for the Porte (Ottoman government) which then appointed the infamous Selim Pasha to quell them. Selim Pasha, commander-in-chief of the Ottoman army and bashibozuks, was responsible for suppressing the Crete Uprising sometime earlier. Quelling the uprisings in Macedonia was supported by the British government, which assisted the Ottoman Empire by providing them with ships to transfer Ottoman troops from Asia to Macedonia. The British government incited the Porte to quell the uprisings in order to prevent Austro-Hungary from launching a landing operation in Solun, which it had dreamed of for a long time.

After a large Ottoman army and bashibozuks arrived in the region, the insurgents retreated and the Ottomans re-took the liberated areas. Many Macedonian people were killed and hundreds of houses were burned down. On top of that many properties were looted and livestock were stolen. The villagers who failed to escape in time, such as those in Razlovtsi, were badly mistreated and some were outright killed. Most of the insurgents that survived the uprisings fled to Bulgaria to escape their demise.

According to the European press, on top of the uprisings in Macedonia being suppressed, the insurgency suffered another major blow. In addition to Chief Berovski being arrested, Stoian Karastoilov and his comrade G. Cholakov were killed by Greater Bulgarian agents. According to A. Kostenchev's memoirs, a teacher who at the time was serving in the Russian administrative bodies in Gorna Dzhumaia, "A commission, led by Stefan Stambolov, arrived in Kreshna from Sofia... The commission leaders asked Stoian Karastoilov to surrender his company to them to which Stoian replied that he was prepared to act independently and would not give up his comrades. Then, on Stefan Stambolov's order, in the absence of his company, he was killed in the room where he was sleeping. This was in the village Oshtava.

When Stoian's troops and his subordinates found out that he had been murdered, they went after the assassins and agents of the Sofia "Unity" Committee, who in turn had fled to Sofia. After Karastoilov and Cholakov were murdered there was public outrage which resulted in Berovski's release from prison. Once he was out of prison the people of Krshiak, Petrich Region, invited him to help them sort out their situation. After the Ottoman army left, almost the entire region remained free and the people who'd fled to the mountains, began to return to their burned out villages. With help from the insurgent cadres from this region, the people took advantage of the Ottoman government's absence and organized a local government, which was largely modeled after the insurgency people's government.

Restoration of the popular insurgency government in Krshiak began in mid-December 1878. The people gladly accepted the new order

except for the rich whose influence was limited. They disliked the new order and sent a commission, accompanied by Pahomii, a monk, to the Sofia “Unity” Committee to slander Berovski and Zlatkov. As a result, Berovski was re-arrested. It is interesting that the rich in their maneuverings against Berovski and the popular insurgency government relied on the Bulgarian “Unity” Committees, the Greek bishop in Melnik and the Ottomans to help them.

Some of the wishes and aspirations of the Macedonian people for achieving a free and independent Macedonian state came to the fore during the Kreshna Uprising. According to what Ivan Hadzi Nikolov said in his memoirs, later IMRO leaders drew from the experiences gained during the Kreshna Uprising.

## THE BRSLAK UPRISING

The situation for the people in Macedonia became extremely difficult not only in northeastern but also in western Macedonia. They had to endure violent attacks from gangs that constantly assaulted them and looted their homes and properties. In many cases these attacks were perpetrated in cooperation with the local Ottoman authorities, leaving the people unprotected and without justice. Having no other alternative the people began to take care of themselves. Dissatisfied with the way they were treated the people began to resist and organize themselves into a movement called the Ohrid Conspiracy or the Brsiak Uprising. The Brsiak Uprising covered a large area with many villages and several towns. Several conspiratorial circles took part in it, among which the most active was the circle created in Krushevo, which started to operate at the end of 1878.

It was during this time that Dime Chakre, the leader of a number of volunteers who had participated in the Russian-Ottoman war, visited Krushevo. There he met with Pop Hristo, Itso Karev, Nikola Kovachot and others and among them they decided to do something about the unfortunate situation. To this end, they decided it was time to organize and spread their conspiracy in the villages where they could raise money, buy weapons, create armed detachments and punish those who abused the people. They allied themselves with the local haiduks and connected themselves to the notorious Ohrid circle. Gradually the conspiracy began to spread from Prilep and Bitola to Ohrid and Kichevo, covering a large part of western Macedonia.

They used the Demir Hisar Mountains as their centre of operation. One of the first things the conspirators did was contact Niaga, the Russian consul in Bitola, to try to get him to supply them with weapons and ammunition. Niaga had encouraging words so the conspirators began to spread the idea among the people that Russia and Serbia would help them prepare for a struggle.

The connection between Krushevo Region and Ohrid Region was finalized in 1897. The Ohrid Circle was managed by several merchants and teachers. Included among them were Zafir Belev,

Angel Sprostranov, Kosta Limonchev, K. Blazev, Dr. Konstantin Robev and K. Manolov. Members of these two circles held joint meetings during which they decided to continue their actions of expanding the conspiracy, procuring weapons, seeking help from the Russian consul and carrying out attacks on the Ottomans and on those who tormented and plundered the people. In the period from 1880 to 1881 most of the offending thugs were liquidated and crimes against the people began to fall, at least for a while.

Among other places, actions against those who tormented the Macedonian people were carried out in the upper reaches of the river Treska. The people from the village Lupshte, Kichevo Region, who suffered the most from the looters, asked for protection from the Ottoman authorities but they were ignored. As a result the villagers rebelled and formed their own armed detachments with brothers Stevan and Kuzman Petrevski in charge. In solidarity, many of the surrounding villages did the same. Armed with weapons, the rebellious villagers expelled the thugs and murderers from their hiding places and, to some extent, disassociated themselves from the Ottoman government and decided to govern themselves. They told the authorities not to come and collect the taxes, that they would collect them themselves and deliver them to Kichevo. The authorities initially accepted the new situation but gradually eliminated it by capturing Stevan and then poisoning him. About a year later the same gangs came back and burned the village down. They burned the houses with people in them.

Armed Macedonian detachments also operated in other areas of Macedonia. The conspirators managed to work quite successfully but the Ottoman authorities started to become wise to them and took stricter measures. In the spring of 1880 the Ottomans started a search and destroy campaign. In the centre of all this was the treacherous Greek abbot at the Slepche-Demir Hisar monastery, where the conspirators often met. Several dozen leaders and conspirators were arrested and thrown in jail. Also because of this treachery, in 1881 a detachment, led by the Chekrev brothers, was discovered in a house in Prilep and destroyed. But in spite of how this unsuccessful conspiracy ended, it was a step forward in organizing a general Macedonian revolutionary movement.

With regards to events taking place in western Macedonia, we should mention that the Macedonian people also cooperated with their Albanian neighbours, who at that time were also struggling for their freedom and national rights. Leading the Albanian struggle was the “Albanian League”. Isai Radev Mazovski, a Macedonian from Lazaropole, was the Macedonian representative in the “Albanian League”. Mazovski worked for a long time to establish Macedonian-Albanian relations and cooperation. He was also a supporter of an independent Macedonia and an independent Albania. Albanian-Macedonian cooperation was expressed in 1881 when the Albanians and Macedonians took joint actions to remove the kaimakam (deputy governor) in Debar. There were also other such actions but when the conspiracy in western Macedonia was destroyed the Ottomans also took down the “Albanian League”. Even though they were prematurely suppressed, Macedonian-Albanian relations were again renewed, especially after 1885 when the “Macedonian-Albanian Revolutionary League” was created.

In 1887, the “Macedonian-Albanian Revolutionary League” issued an appeal inviting Albanians to join its ranks for a joint liberation struggle. The “Macedonian-Albanian Revolutionary League” strived to unite Macedonians and Albanians in a common struggle in order to gain autonomy for both Macedonia and Albania. Among other things, the appeal read: “We don’t want Albania and Macedonia to fall under Bulgaria, Serbia, or Greece. We want Macedonia and Albania to be given autonomy...” This appeal, mentioned earlier, was circulated among the Albanians by Mazovski. The league envisioned a joint uprising but for various reasons its plans and efforts didn’t yield much.

## RESISTANCE TO FOREIGN PROPAGANDA IN MACEDONIA

As mentioned earlier, foreign propaganda intensified in Macedonia during and especially after the Eastern crisis. This hostile propaganda was generated primarily by Bulgarian, Greek and Serbian sources. In due course it intensified like never before and did great harm to the Macedonian cause hindering the development of the Macedonian people's struggles for national and social liberation.

The earliest foreign propaganda to surface in Macedonia was Greek propaganda, led by the Greek Patriarchate in Tsari Grad (Istanbul) and carried out by Greek schools and churches. Its aim was to promote the realization of the "Megali Idea" ("big idea") which called for bringing back the Byzantine Empire with Macedonia in it but under Greek rule. This Greek propaganda was financed mainly by the Greek bourgeoisie. Included among the most prominent agitators and financiers were the large trading families Skouloudis, Zafiris, Karapanos and Zografos who lived in Tsari Grad (Istanbul) and other cities. Still enjoying privileges from the Ottoman authorities, these Greeks were squeezed out by foreign capital in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and landed in Athens. Wanting to regain their former positions and wealth, they escalated the Greek propaganda campaign for the "Megali Idea" by providing larger sums of money. By doing so they portrayed themselves as "virtuous" for which they received various privileges from the Greek government. This enabled them to amass great fortunes and gain political favours.

After Greece was created for the first time in 1829, the Greek leadership began to gradually take over the Greater Greek propaganda and the Patriarchate in Tsari Grad became its organ. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, even metropolitans were appointed at the behest of the Greek government in Athens. In fact, several Greek ministries were involved in the implementation and management of Greek propaganda. Most active was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which also operated in Macedonia and, through Greek consuls, was the first to be activated in Solun in 1835. In fact in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the Greek government gained special

permission from the Porte (Ottoman government) to spread propaganda in Macedonia. As a result it increased the number of consulates and staff to the maximum. There were Greek consulates in Solun, Bitola, Skopje, Seres and Kavala. Separate consular officers managed and controlled Greek schools, municipalities, churches and other Greek functions in Macedonia.

The Greek government also operated in Macedonia through various organizations of which the most important were the “Education Organization”, founded in Athens in 1836, and the “Society for Spreading Greek Literacy”, created in 1869 on instructions from the Greek government. These organizations were financed by the Greek state treasury. In 1891, for example, the Greek government gave them 400,000 drachmas. The same year, the Greek government also gave them about 790,000 drachmas to finance Greek propaganda in Macedonia.

As a result, the number of Greek schools in Macedonia increased every year. In 1877 there were 256 schools in the Solun and Bitola vilayets with 10,968 students. In 1896, the number rose to 907 schools with 53,633 students. These numbers grew with each passing year until 1902 when they began to stagnate.

The above data, used incorrectly, served Greek propaganda to prove that Macedonia was “Greek” because the Macedonian people were “Greek speakers” and so on. In other words, the Great Greek propaganda, spread mainly by the “Society for Spreading Greek Literacy”, collected and fabricated false ethnographic statistics about the population in Macedonia. These figures were made available to foreign authors who used them in their books and maps. This information was then used by Greece to defend its aspirations to annex Macedonian territories. According to information provided in Greek books and Greek maps, Greece had aims to annex territories as far as Kachanik, Kiustendil and beyond, all the way to the Black Sea. This was the so-called maximum program of the “Megali Idea” which Greece persistently propagated through its Greek organizations, the Patriarchate, bankers, wholesalers, etc. The Greek government was also in agreement with this program. The Greek government also had an alternative program. This one was

formulated by H. Trikoupis who, in 1866, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, put forward the idea of partitioning Macedonia.

According to this program, Greece was looking to annex the so-called “Historical Macedonia”, whose northern borders were defined by the line starting at the Rhodope Mountains, following the Mesta River, passing north of Nevrokop - Strumitsa and Demir Hisar - Prilep - Krushevo – Ohrid, passing through Albania and ending in the Adriatic Sea. On many occasions the Greek government used this option to negotiate with the Serbian government on how to divide Macedonia into spheres of influence. But no agreement could be reached until 1912, mainly because Serbia also had claims on most of that territory.

The Greater Serbia propaganda in Macedonia appeared more prominently after 1868, but certain parts of its ideological principles were established as early as 1844, in the so-called “Nachertanie” (Drawing) by Ilia Garashanin where it was proposed that “the Principality of Serbia must also be concerned with Macedonia’s accession to Serbia”.

According to directives given by the Serbian government, an “Education Board” was established in Belgrade in 1868. Its job was to start opening Serbian schools in Macedonia. By 1873, it had opened 61 schools. In 1877 the so-called Main Board was created and chaired by Archimandrite Sava. The purpose of this Board was to create the right conditions for Macedonia to join the Principality of Serbia. In order to do that organizers and agitators of Greater Serbian propaganda, such as I. Dragashevich, P. Srechkovich, M. Miloievich and others, laboured to create a “Greater Serbia” and to “prove” that Serbia had rights to Macedonia.

It wasn’t only those in power in the Serbian government who became involved in the idea of a “Greater Serbia”, there were also other politicians from various political parties who began to delve into these matters. According to V. Karich: “most of them went crazy over Dusan’s kingdom...” (Which in the past occupied Macedonian territories). Even scientists and writers, such as S. Novakovich, S. Stonoevich, D. Iovanovich, S. Gopchevich, I. Cviich and others began to write piles of papers to justify Serbian

aspirations and actions for a Greater Serbian bourgeoisie in Macedonia.

In their zeal to annex Macedonia, the Serbian ruling circles which promoted the idea of a Greater Serbia were encouraged by Austria-Hungary to direct Serbian policies towards Macedonia. This was done at the conclusion of the 1881 with a secret Serbian-Austrian agreement. By doing so, Austria-Hungary wanted to divert Serbian attention away from Bosnia and Herzegovina and from the Serbians who lived in Austria-Hungary. On top of that, Vienna believed that Serbian, Greek and Bulgarian propaganda in Macedonia would provoke such confusion that Austria-Hungary might use it to infiltrate Macedonia itself.

In the period after 1881, encouraged by Vienna and the intensification of the Greater Bulgarian and Greater Greek propaganda, the Serbian government took a series of measures to intensify its propaganda in Macedonia. For that purpose, the Serbian government appointed Serbian bishops in Skopje, Prilep, Debar, Veles, Bitola and Ohrid. To fulfill its aims, the Serbian government cooperated with Greek Patriarchate and Ottoman authorities. At the same time, it increased the amount of money it spent on propaganda. The Greater Serbia propaganda was implemented through several organizations. In 1886, for example, the Belgrade association "St. Sava" took part through Macedonian migrant workers in Serbia who assisted it in opening Serbian schools in Macedonia, through which the Serbians spread their propaganda.

Stoian Novakovich, a Serbian MP in Tsari Grad, was also of great importance for the intensification and expansion of the Greater Serbia propaganda in Macedonia. Novakovich was responsible for obtaining permits from the Porte which allowed Serbia to send Serbian consuls in Solun, Skopje (1887) and Bitola (1888). After the railway Skopje - Vranie was constructed in 1888 the Serbian government began to not only send Serbian teachers but also booksellers, doctors, merchants and various other agitators, who worked in its services promoting its Greater Serbian propaganda.

In 1890, the Greater Serbian propaganda central leadership was reorganized. The old governing body leading the "Schools and

Churches Department” of the Ministry of Education was replaced by the “Political-Educational Department” of the Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which had at its disposal an advisory board consisting of three members. Its funding was also increased from 200,000 in 1890 to 300,000 dinars in 1891. And instead of the Serbian MP in Tsari Grad running the propaganda campaign in the field in Macedonia, it was transferred to the Serbian Consul General in Skopje. The Bitola and Solun vilayets were given to the Serbian consuls in Bitola and Solun. Later the Serbian government appointed Firmilian as the Serbian Metropolitan in Skopje. Greater Serbian propaganda in the Veles-Debar diocese was organized under Serbian deputy bishops in several church-school municipalities, Serbian priests, etc. Serbian metropolitans and priests in Macedonia were recognized by the Greek Patriarchate but worked for the Greater Serbian propaganda.

The strongest opponent to the Greater Greece and Greater Serbia propaganda in Macedonia was the Greater Bulgaria propaganda. It had developed long roots, especially during the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was the most widespread. It began operating before the Exarchate was created in 1870. We can see its beginnings more clearly in the actions taken by the Bulgarian bourgeoisie through its representatives in Tsari Grad grouped around P. R. Slaveikov. Even then the Bulgarians acted by various means to stifle the independent Macedonian movement. They even took actions to destroy Macedonian textbooks, the Macedonian language in schools and were against bringing back the Ohrid Archbishopric, among other things.

After 1870, and especially after the Bulgarian principality was created, the Exarchate became the main driving force for implementing the Greater Bulgaria actions towards annexing Macedonia to Bulgaria and assimilating the Macedonian people by turning them into Bulgarians. In other words, the Exarchate was responsible for running the Greater Bulgaria propaganda by subjugating all Macedonian school and church communities and persecuting all manifestations of Macedonian national consciousness and independence. In 1897, the Exarchate infiltrated Bulgarian trade agencies in Solun, Bitola and Skopje and turned them into kinds of consulates. In other words the Exarchate

metropolitans became the governors of the Greater Bulgarian propaganda in Macedonia, who by all means, and especially through the schools and the church, were aiming to instill a Bulgarian national consciousness in order to “prove” that the Macedonian people were supposedly Bulgarians, thus preparing the ground work for Macedonia to join Bulgaria.

In order to intensify and expand Bulgarian propaganda in accordance with the directives issued by the Sofia government, an educational commission was created within the Exarchate, which worked under the presidency of the Exarch and under the control of Bulgarian diplomats. That commission had a special task to take care of the school and educational propaganda, to keep the schools under its control as well as its cultural-educational activities in Macedonia. To achieve these Greater Bulgaria propaganda goals and objectives, the Sofia government increased its spending on propaganda every year. In 1881 it spent 100,000 leva, in 1883 about 575,000 leva and in 1890 it spent 5.5 million French francs. In other words, the Great Bulgarian propaganda in Macedonia was the costliest of all propaganda.

As a result, the number of Exarchate schools grew more and more every year. In 1886 the Exarchate had 306 schools in Macedonia and in 1888/1889 it had 744 primary and 63 middle schools. The exarchate also took special care of the boys’ and girls’ high schools in Solun, the teachers’ schools in Skopje and Seres, the seminary schools in Ohrid, etc. The Greater Bulgaria propaganda, like the other propaganda, made great efforts to recruit and educate its teaching and clerical staff from the ranks of the Macedonian youth, so that it could more easily act on and conceal its anti-Macedonian measures. As a result, a number of students from Bulgarian schools became agents of the Greater Bulgarian propaganda and agitated for a “San Stefano Bulgaria”, i.e. for joining Macedonia to Bulgaria. The Greek and Serbian propaganda machines weren’t too far behind in installing their own agents.

The Greater Bulgaria propaganda also worked through the Macedonian people who had earlier immigrated to Bulgaria. Organizations belonging to these people often participated in various rallies and manifestations organized by the Bulgarian ruling

circles, or sent armed detachments to Macedonia to create noise and call for “uprisings” (1895, 1902). At the same time the Greater Bulgarian propaganda also found resistance among the Macedonian immigrants. Included among those who resisted was the group led by Dimitar Blagoev and Spiro Gulapchev. They were against Macedonia’s accession to Bulgaria and proposed that the Macedonian question be resolved within a Balkan federation, in which the Macedonian people voluntarily declared what they wanted to do and determined their own fate.

The Macedonian people’s resistance to foreign propaganda dates back to the time when this propaganda was first introduced into Macedonia. In the beginning resistance was passive but gradually it became more active and grew into open conflicts and daily struggles. The Macedonian people’s resistance was well known from the start. Macedonians first resisted against the Greek language and the Patriarchate, and later against the introduction of the Bulgarian and Serbian languages into Macedonian schools and against the Exarchate. All these foreign actions served as a means to assimilate and subjugate the Macedonian people. Within that resistance, there were clashes between the Macedonian students who promoted the Greater Bulgaria propaganda and the Macedonian people whom they called Macedonian “separatists”. The Macedonian revivalist brothers Dimitar and Kostadin Miladinov died in such clashes in the struggle against the Patriarchate.

The Exarchate and Patriarchate jointly opposed Catholic and Uniat propaganda in Macedonia, which further divided the people. But unlike the other propagandas, the Catholic and Uniat propaganda at times aided the movement to restore the Ohrid Archbishopric within the Church of Rome. In 1882 for example, with help from Uniat missionaries and the Austro-Hungarian consul in Skopje, Metropolitan Theodosius launched a campaign to restore the Ohrid Archbishopric, which would have granted all of Macedonia autonomous religious rights. But because of disagreements between Austria-Hungary and France and due to interventions from the Exarchate, Theodosius was imprisoned and his attempts to restore the Ohrid Archbishopric failed.

Giorgi Pulevski from Galichnik also played an important role in the struggle against foreign propaganda and in the Macedonian national revival. He fought against the Bulgarizing of Macedonian schools and against the propaganda opposing the Macedonian language. He published several books in the Macedonian language that included two dictionaries, one Macedonian grammar book, one Macedonian history book and several other books. Among other things, he enlightened the Macedonian people and showed them that they were Macedonians and that their homeland was Macedonia. To better disseminate his ideas, in 1888, Giorgi Pulevski founded the “Slavic-Macedonian Literary Society”.

Since their implementation in Macedonia, the Exarchate and Patriarchate, as well as other propaganda organs, had done everything in their power to focus on controlling the situation in Macedonia in order to destroy the Macedonian people’s independence. Fortunately the people resisted. Young people and the guilds in particular put up a strong resistance which the Greater Bulgaria propaganda repeatedly tried to hide. This resistance often turned into clashes between Macedonian and Bulgarian professors, especially in the Solun Gymnasium. The Exarchate unfortunately fought against and persecuted all Macedonian teachers and professors who, in any way or form, opposed their Greater Bulgarian propaganda. Because of this, one time the students in the Solun Gymnasium started a riot resulting in 14 of them being expelled. Among them were Giorche Petrov and Pere Toshev.

In another student riot, which also broke out in the Solun Gymnasium, students demanded that the Macedonian language be introduced into the classrooms. Nineteen students were expelled because of that. There were similar riots taking place in the exarchate Gymnasiums in Bitola and Skopje. In the words of Giorche Petrov, these riots against the Exarchate and the Greater Bulgarian propaganda gradually turned into a revolutionary movement. The same people who had initially rioted gradually led the struggle against the Exarchate.

In the struggle against the Greater Bulgaria propaganda, the Macedonian people labeled “separatists” and above all the “Young Macedonian Literary Society”, led by Petar Pop Arsov, Giorgi

Balashchev, Ivan Hadzi Nikolov and others, in 1892 published the Macedonian magazine “Loza” (vine) in the Macedonian language. Its members were known as “Lozari” (vine growers). Their aim was to come up with a Macedonian literary language and introduce it all over Macedonia. They tried to attract like-minded people into their ranks not only to promote the Macedonian language but to also prepare the ground for a revolutionary movement. Their effort to come up with a Macedonian literary language was continued and perfected by Krste Misirkov, who studied in Russia and in 1903 published his important works entitled “On Macedonian Matters”, which laid the foundations for the Macedonian literary language.

All those people working in the above-mentioned Macedonian national movement and their leaders were perpetually persecuted and their newspapers, magazines and books were banned by the Great Bulgarian propaganda.

## **MACEDONIA FROM 1893 TO 1903 (By Dr. Krste Bitovski)**

### **BIRTH OF THE MACEDONIAN REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION**

The organized force responsible for laying down the foundations to channel, unite and lead the Macedonian people's struggle for freedom was created in Solun in 1893. Its first members and founders, who created the Organization "Secret Macedonian-Odrin Revolutionary Organization", were Damian Gruev from the village Smilevo, Bitola Region, Dr. Hristo Tatarchev from Resen, Petar Poparsov from the village Bogomila, Andon Dimitrov from the village Aivatovo, Solun Region, Ivan H. Nikolov, a Solun based bookseller from Kukush and Hristo Batandzhiev from Gumendzhe. A select number of the same people were appointed to the Organization's Central Committee. Dr. Tatarchev was elected President and Damian Gruev Secretary-Treasurer.

After the most important organizational problems were solved, the Organization began to expand requiring more members and a broader council. This was to include other revolutionaries outside of the Organization's founders. To do that the group took advantage of a gathering which had assembled to consecrate a church in Resen in the summer of 1894. Present in the midst of all the people who had gathered were Damian Gruev, Hristo Tatarchev, Pere Toshev, Anastas Lozanchev, Aleksandar Chakarov and some others. The Resen gathering, which Hristo Tatarchev called the "First Revolutionary Congress", was in fact a continuation of the meetings held in Solun, whose main task was to build and expand the Revolutionary Organization and determine its goals.

The Secret Macedonian-Odrin Revolutionary Organization, herein later referred to as the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) or the Internal Organization, which, according to its political views, belonged to the progressive intelligentsia and expressed the aspirations of the petty-bourgeois strata in Macedonia. At first the Organization's creators had no clear idea of either the character or the goals of the Organization they were creating. This was demonstrated in the Organization's first Constitution, probably adopted in the beginning of 1894, and from the statements made by

Gruev, Tatarchev and others. Nevertheless the Organization gradually expanded.

Damian Gruev wasn't only an initiator of IMRO but also the first to start expanding the Organization's network in Macedonia. Revolutionary committees began to emerge in Solun, Shtip, Kavadarci, Prilep, Bitola and other cities. Included in the committees were narrow circles of people, exclusively from the middle merchant class and teachers. Based on its activities, initially the Organization was characterized as a purely city Organization, led mainly by the sons of trading families and by teachers.

## THE INTERNAL ORGANIZATION'S SECOND CONSTITUTION

The Macedonian people's liberation movement reached another milestone in 1896 when the Organization began to expand outwards towards the rural areas. With Gotse Delchev's arrival in Novo Selo, Shtip Region, in the fall of 1894, where Dame Gruev was serving as a teacher, the character of the organization's activities and its membership's social composition began to change. People from all levels of Macedonian society began to join its ranks. More organizational cells were created in Novo Selo, especially from the poor population, and agitation for the people to join the revolutionary movement was intensified and so on. Gotse Delchev, together with Tushe Delivanov, expanded the organizational network in Doiran, Gevgelia, Kukush and other places. In the meantime, on the other side of Macedonia, in the Bitola vilayet, Giorche Petrov and Pere Toshev began to spread the Organization outside of the city and into villages.

In order to further expand the Internal Organization, its membership felt it needed to clarify its political program and for that it needed to convene a wider congress. That wider congress took place in Solun in the summer of 1896. It was attended by its most prominent leaders, including Gotse Delchev, Giorche Petrov, Damian Gruev, Pere Toshev, Petar Pop Arsov and others. After a long discussion, among other things, the congress decided to relegate the job of drafting the Organization's new constitution to Gotse Delchev and Giorche Petrov. The decision to do that was of great importance. Namely, the Congress recognized that these two revolutionaries knew the situation in Macedonia better than anyone and could most accurately express the desire of the Macedonian people to be free from the grips of the Ottoman Empire and their other enemies.

The new Constitution, drafted by Gotse Delchev and Giorche Petrov, otherwise known as the Internal Organization's Second Constitution, put together the Organization's goals and objectives in a clear form. After the new Constitution was put in place the Organization again began to operate but more precisely. Some began to call this more robust Organization, Gotse Delchev's Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization. Following, in

part, is the content of the new Constitution under whose guidance the Macedonian people's best sons fought and died.

# THE SECRET MACEDONIAN-ODRIN REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION'S CONSTITUTION

## Chapter I - Aims

Article 1. - The Secret Macedonian-Odrin Revolutionary Organization aims to unite all dissatisfied elements in Macedonia and Odrin Region regardless of their nationality. It aims to gain, through a revolution, full political autonomy for Macedonia and Odrin.

Article 2. - To achieve this aim, the Organization will struggle to drive out the chauvinistic propaganda and national quarrels, which divide and defeat the Macedonian and Odrin population in its struggle against its common enemy. The Organization will work to instill a revolutionary spirit and awareness among the population and use all means and efforts to, faster and more timely, arm the population with everything that is necessary for a general people's uprising.

(The above were excerpts from the new Constitution)

As can be seen from Article 1, the main goal of the Organization was to gain full political autonomy for Macedonia through a revolution.

The term "Autonomy", as part of the Macedonian National Liberation Movement's platform, was interpreted differently by different people. Some believed (and still do) that gaining autonomy meant struggling to implement some form of Macedonian self-government within the Ottoman State. But this interpretation doesn't correspond to the socio-economic desires of the liberation movement which, due to the political and economic situation of the time, could neither spread nor take root among the Macedonian people. The Macedonian people wanted to destroy the Sultan's ruling system and all that was rotten in it as well as what hindered their progress and entry into the modern world. In the above-mentioned context, an autonomous Macedonia within the Ottoman Empire didn't mean getting rid of the feudal system. It didn't mean

giving the land to those who cultivated it. In other words it didn't mean complete freedom. Therefore we can safely conclude that the Organization and the people behind it didn't struggle for that kind of autonomy. They wanted full political autonomy, in which the Sultan's totalitarianism couldn't prevent them from destroying the hated and corrupt state apparatus. In which the Sultan couldn't stop them from building a new system where the peasants were free from the Beys.

In addition to struggling for full political autonomy, the Internal Organization also struggled against the aspirations of Macedonia's neighbours who wanted to seize, dismember and annex Macedonian territories for themselves. By that time the Bulgarian bourgeoisie had turned its eyes on the whole of Macedonia. The Serbian bourgeoisie was looking at the Vardar Valley down to Solun. The Greek bourgeoisie wanted most Macedonia.

In order to realize their aspirations, the Bulgarian, Greek and Serbian governments developed intense nationalist and chauvinist propaganda which they spread among the Macedonian Christian population. In this way, they not only hindered the Macedonian people's historical process of forming a Macedonian nation but also destroyed the unity of the Macedonian people, without which a successful revolutionary struggle could hardly be imagined. Therefore, the Organization's struggle against foreign propaganda and foreign influences was a necessary precondition for the Macedonian people's liberation and the creation of a free Macedonian republic. As a result, the need for such a struggle found a place in the Organization's Constitution.

The 1896 Constitution also clearly defined the Organization's structure which was led by a Central Committee, elected according to Article 9 by the District Committees through a Congress. Accordingly, the Congress emerged as the highest body of the Revolutionary Organization. The Central Committee managed the Organization's activities through the District governing bodies (Committees).

A special body, consisting of two or three members, was created to represent the Organization abroad.

The District governing bodies (Committees) managed their work in accordance with directives issued by the Central Committee. The local city and village Committees managed their work in accordance with directives issued by the District Committees. Later some of the larger districts were broken up into smaller districts, by neighborhood especially in the larger cities.

The village governing bodies (Committees), or lowest governing bodies in the Organization, were responsible for managing the village groups.

The entire Internal Organization membership was organized into groups of ten, each group led by a corporal.

## CREATING THE ORGANIZATION'S ARMED FORCES

A very important place in the Macedonian people's national liberation movement's organizational structure was occupied by the armed detachments. The first detachments were formed by members of the Organization who had to go underground because they were being persecuted by the Ottoman authorities. These detachments weren't permanent. They were, however, connected to various different areas which allowed them to move and avoid being discovered or engaging in battles with the Ottoman army or police. Later, however, after the 1897 Vinitza affair, the situation changed. After that both the detachments and the insurgents joining them began to rapidly increase. When the organizational network in this part of Macedonia was severely shaken up by the Vinitza affair, causing almost all revolutionary activities to stop, local detachments began to form in response to Ottoman atrocities committed against the people. They began to not only organize in the local villages to protect them but also elsewhere and became the sole bearers of the Organization. Their appearance in the villages not only encouraged the population to organize but helped to gather the Organization's scattered forces. In other words they helped to revive and reactivate the activities managed by the local committees.

The 1896 Constitution provided for each revolutionary district to organize its own detachments but it wasn't until late 1898, after the detachments had been formed, that the Central Committee in Solun issued a 14-point directive legalizing the creation of detachments and ordering the districts to form detachments everywhere and to appoint a detachment leader and secretary. However, it wasn't until the end of 1900 that Gotse Delchev and Giorche Petrov developed a rulebook for the detachments to follow. At the same time, detachment schools were opened to train detachment leaders to lead the new detachments being created in the surrounding areas. Included among the detachments formed under these conditions were the detachments led by Mihail Popeto, Hristo Chernopeev and Marko Lerinski (Georgi Ivanov).

# RULEBOOK FOR THE CREATION OF SECRET DETACHMENTS IN THE THREE VILAYETS AND IN ODRIN

## Chapter I

For revolutionary purposes a detachment may be formed at any time in any District. Detachments such as these are considered integral parts of the entire Organization. Each detachment, confined within its own boundaries, will undertake secret meetings with the knowledge of the appropriate Local Committee and serve its needs.

## Chapter II

### Article 1

Seeing that they are parts of a bigger whole, through their campaigns the detachments will teach the population who they are, the basic idea for their existence, their purpose, their duties and contents of the entire Organization's statute.

### Article 2

In places where branches of the Organization function fully, detachments will work to train their members to become serious fighters who will fight for the nation. Detachments will try to prepare its fighters to act for the Organization when given the opportunity and teach them that loyalty and obedience are of paramount importance. In places where formal branches of the Organization don't exist, but exist only in basics, the detachments will need to upgrade these branches to their fullest working capacity. This has to be done in ways that correspond to the rulebook and the statute! The detachments must report their undertakings to the appropriate District Committee and request orders from them and guidance if required.

### Article 3

By persuading the population and by morally influencing their spirits, the people will be encouraged to take up arms voluntarily.

## Chapter III

### Article 4

With strong support from their District and Village Committees, the detachments will appoint police and secret postal liaisons. They will also prepare lists of Village Committee members, along with a brief description of their lives. In short, detachments are expected to implement all the provisions in the rulebook correctly. All provisions that haven't been realized so far need to be implemented.

The rulebook contained 45 articles which detailed detachment rights and responsibilities.

The District detachments played a very important role in the work done for the Macedonian people's liberation movement. They engaged in agitation, spreading revolutionary information, recruiting fighters, training members of the Organization to handle weapons, assisting the Organization in acquiring weapons, fighting against bandit gangs, carrying out judgments against traitors and spies, etc.

The top role for creating detachments and training them belonged to Gotse Delchev. Gotse was the number one teacher when it came to teaching detachment leaders how to lead. The detachment leaders in turn loved and respected Gotse as their leader. He was seen as the first and legendary detachment leader (Commander in Chief). The people loved and respected Gotse as well as the detachments he created. The people's love for the detachments is immortalized in the many songs they sang about them. Here is one of those songs:

What I love, dear little one, what is precious,  
To watch them, dear little one, the revolutionaries,  
How they wear, dear little one, their hats,  
Like the Solun girl cabaret dancers...  
How they wear, dear little one, their cloaks,  
Like the Turks, dear little one, wear their capes...  
How they wear, dear little one, their cartridge straps,  
Like the girls in Kochani wear their belts...  
How they carry, dear little one, their rifles,

Like the Skopje girls carry their umbrellas...  
How they wear, dear little one, their revolvers,  
Like the Pirin girls wear their buckles...  
How they wear, dear little one, their socks,  
Like the Bitola girls wear their stockings...

Delchev's training establishment was developing very rapidly such that its activities exceeded the limits provided by the rulebook. The detachments began to take over more and wider functions and increased their involvement and right to act. They started solving all problems on their own as they encountered them in the field. They took on the role of judges, economists, educators, etc. In fact they expanded their roles so much that in many districts they actually pushed back the district governing bodies and became the centres of organizational activities.

During the pre-Ilinden period the detachments were structure as follows:

- 1) Global or enforcement detachment, usually one for the whole of Macedonia.
- 2) District detachment - one for each district.
- 3) Central detachment – usually formed in larger districts from several neighbouring village detachments and subordinated to the District detachment.
- 4) Village detachment - one for each village, composed of villagers who are members of the Organization mobilized when needed, such as to provide assistance to the regular detachments or to others. In some areas village detachments that had wider functions were called village militias.

## THE REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION'S EXPANSION

After its so-called infant period, which lasted until 1896, the Organization began to rapidly grow and expanded its Macedonian revolutionary movement activities. While initially the basic element that filled its ranks was primarily made up of city intelligencia and the guilds, after 1896 poor peasants from the villages began to fill its ranks. Soon the organization changed from being predominantly urban to predominantly rural. The villagers became the Organization's basic army that carried forward the Macedonian liberation movement.

In a relatively short period of time, up until the Ilinden Uprising, a dense network of revolutionary committees and groups was created in all towns and villages. Revolutionary detachments appeared everywhere. Couriers appeared all over the country supplying the Organization with weapons, information and new recruits. In other words, the people were being prepared for a massive uprising.

The Bitola Revolutionary District was the fastest to prepare for the revolt and a significant credit for that belongs to Gotse Delchev. Namely because of the historic tour he took through western Macedonia in 1901 which, to some extent, was a milestone in the development of the liberation movement in that area. Delchev's tour was one of the longest and most fruitful events in his revolutionary life. He arrived in Prilep and then Bitola by way of Kochani, Maleshevo, Radovish and Tikvesh, where he visited Gruev in prison, and then went to Lerin and finished his tour in Kostur Region.

Delchev was capable of rapidly orienting himself towards the more important needs of a district and engaged himself in solving the most important and sometimes most painful problems. In this way he met many local revolutionaries and visited many villages. For example in the village Konomladi (Kolomnati), Delchev gave all the villagers an opportunity to come before him and complain about everything that bothered them, including any troubles they had with their local detachment. According to Slaveiko Arsov, one of Delchev's companions, all the villagers came out to see him and

complained about everything, including divorce, theft, quarrels between women... and so on. As a result all their complaints were looked at and problems resolved impartially. At the end, the villagers were told they were forbidden from going to Ottoman courts to settle their problems. They were also told to refrain from committing acts of theft, immorality, drunkenness, etc. Delchev then assembled all the men who had not yet joined the Organization and asked them to take the oath of loyalty. Delchev did the same in all the villages he visited. And he visited many villages including Smrdesht, D'rbeni, Zagorichani, Visheni and others in Kostur Region, Rakita (Kailari Region), Ekshisu, Patele, Ostrvo and others. According to Giorgi Pophrstov, one of the leaders in this district, after Delchev arrived in the Bitola Revolutionary District, his presence was immediately felt and the district began to grow in strength. The people began to arm themselves much faster and were in the mood for a great fight.

During his tour of these areas Delchev was accompanied by Marko Lerinski's famous detachment.

## TERROR PERPETRATED BY THE OTTOMAN GOVERNMENT

The revolutionary movement's growth and chaotic development, no matter how hard it tried, couldn't remain a complete secret from the Ottoman authorities. The first discovery was made in 1895 (according to some in 1896) in Bitola. The Ottoman authorities accidentally discovered bombs inside bags filled with rice being transported by Done Stojanov (Doncho Shtipiancheto) from Shtip to Bitola. After he was caught, Doncho was locked up in a very small cell in which he could only stand and was exposed to terrible torment. Even so, he didn't betray the Organization. His name, among members of the Organization and among the people, became a symbol of heroism. Admiration for his exemplary behaviour resulted in a beautiful song written about him. It was sung by the people during the Ilinden Uprising.

Doncho's case passed without consequences for the Organization. However, starting from 1897 there were an increased number of searches conducted by the Ottoman authorities. This was cause for concern to the Organization because searches were detrimental to the liberation's development. One of the first acts to inflict a heavy blow on the Organization was the Vinitsa affair, mentioned earlier, which was ignited in late 1897. While searching for a Bulgarian gang responsible for murdering a wealthy Ottoman in Vinitsa, the Ottoman police discovered a cache of weapons belonging to the Organization. Because of this, through terror and violence, the authorities began to unearth the Internal Organization's networks in the Kochani, Shtip, Palanevo, Kumanovo, Maleshevo and Radovish Districts from the Skopje Revolutionary District. More than 500 people were arrested and about 300 fled to Bulgaria. Many of those arrested were severely tortured, of whom 5 were killed, 5 died of torture and 10 were sent to the Podrum Kale Prison in Asia Minor.

The Vinitsa affair was a major event in the history of the revolutionary movement. It revealed to the Ottoman ruling class and the European public that inside Macedonia a well-organized conspiratorial liberation movement existed. As a result the struggle was exposed. Under these conditions the Organization's leadership and membership became well aware that it was going to face

difficult times ahead and dangers in the forthcoming liberation struggle.

After the Vinitsa affair, the Ottoman authorities systematically worked to unearth the Organization's entire network. And almost succeeded...

Every affair, more or less, opened more doors to the Ottoman dungeons to lock up more revolutionaries, slowly swallowing the Organization's combat forces, disrupting its conspiratorial networks and so on.

There were many such affairs that took place but it isn't our aim here to cover them all as well as the severe consequences that resulted from them. Instead we will only look at a small representation in the five years from Vinitsa to Ilinden. But for now, let us say that searches were conducted in every district. In Strumitsa District, for example, from 1897 to the end of 1902 there were five searches conducted with 740 arrested and 240 tortured. In Kostur District, from September 1899 to May 1903, 14 searches were conducted as a result of Ottomans being murdered, betrayals, detachment clashes, etc., during which about 230 people were tortured, about 220 arrested and several villages looted and burned down. The most negative consequences resulted from the so-called Ivanchov affair.

The frequent searches unfortunately dealt a severe blow to the Macedonian liberation movement, but it must also be acknowledged that, at the same time, they affirmed the Macedonian people's struggle against the Ottomans before the world public and strengthened their revolutionary resistance.

## ABDUCTING MISS STONE

More often than not, the Internal Organization was faced, among other things, with lack of finances. At first, the financial needs of the Organization were met by funds donated by its founders and from collecting membership fees. Voluntary contributions from wealthier citizens were also welcomed. In Kukush, for example, the citizens donated 320 Turkish liras to aid the Organization and handed over the money to the Central Committee. Funds were mainly raised from donations but they always seemed to be insufficient. Attempts were later made to extort funds through ransom by kidnapping wealthy Ottomans and prominent foreigners, but most of the time they failed to deliver; except in the case of American missionary Miss Stone.

Leading his detachment on August 21, 1901, dressed in a military uniform, Iane Sandanski seized Miss Stone with her friend Tsilka on the road between Bansko and Dzumaia. As a result the Organization achieved two objectives:

- 1) The world press was challenged to write about the situation in Macedonia and popularize the people's struggle for freedom, and
- 2) A ransom of 14,000 Ottoman liras was paid for Miss Stone's release, with which the Organization could buy a significant number of weapons.

Going through with the kidnapping and collecting the ransom wasn't easy. First, the Ottoman authorities mobilized all possible forces to end the affair as soon as possible because it greatly compromised the Ottoman state in the eyes of the world. Second, supremacist Bulgarian agents sent troops to Macedonia to take Miss Stone from Sandanski. Being pursued by the Ottoman army and supremacist detachments, Sandanski's small detachment was often forced to move from mountain to mountain in the Macedonian terrain to avoid capture. Despite all that, however, Sandanski got his ransom and the affair ended successfully.

## THE ORGANIZATION'S ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

As was mentioned earlier, the Internal Organization's ultimate goal was to gain full political autonomy for the Macedonian people through an uprising. In order to achieve that, however, the population needed to be organized and armed for a long struggle. At the same time, during this long preparatory period, the Organization couldn't ignore the extremely difficult economic situation in which the people had found themselves, especially in the Macedonian villages. Major reforms could be expected after Macedonia's liberation but until then it was necessary to do something to at least partially improve the situation for the exploited people who were expected to endure the long struggle. The Organization proposed the following:

- 1) Protect the villagers and their properties from various thugs, exploiters, tithe collectors, etc., and
- 2) Struggle to liberate the villagers from having to work for free for the estates as well as struggle to increase their wages, etc.

The direct bearers of the Organization's economic policies were the detachments. Almost everything they did, while organizing the Macedonian villagers and recruiting the Macedonian people for a revolutionary struggle was usually closely connected to actions taken to improve the people's lives. On top of that, the agitation and actions the detachments undertook, whenever possible, were done in the interest of those who were oppressed. So almost everything the Organization did, to prepare the masses for an armed uprising, was done as protector of the people and was in their interests. This policy, of course, was the result of the very character of the people's movement, which sought to solve the broader problems in Macedonia.

At the centre of the Organization's economic policy was the struggle against serfdom and against exploitation by the Beys in general. Nikola Petrov-Rusinski, a detachment leader, in one of his speeches to his detachment, in June 1901, among other things, said: "It will be necessary for you to get acquainted with land assets and estates,

about which you will often hear from me in the village organizational assemblies, especially in the villages held by some great estate owners... for whose properties tomorrow the Organization will say: ‘Stop, these properties belong to the people who labour in them. You are nothing but leeches that suck the people’s blood. The people who work on these properties will become their rulers without giving even a penny to yesterday’s estate owners’...”

This is what detachment leader Slaveiko Arsov said about how the Internal Organization dealt with exploitation by the Beys: “The organization took measures to abolish requirements for giving free labour during the holidays. Our people were forbidden to work at all, even if the Ottomans paid them... The Ottomans felt strongly that this was a ‘devilish thing’... the work of the Committees...”

It is well-known that usury (a practice of lending money and charging the borrower’s interest) was one of the greatest evils that put many poor villagers and citizens into economic ruin. The Organization fought against this practice by helping people put an end to this kind of crime. According to Arsov “when people saw that the Organization was trying to help them avoid this crime, they began to turn to their local detachments for help. In cases such as these the detachments instructed them, for example, not to give the lenders more than 20 percent interest, especially to those who were asking for 60% or even 100%, and to tell them that if they persisted, or if they took the borrowers to the Ottoman courts, they would answer to the detachment”.

The Organization also fought hard against the Ottoman tax system, especially against the big tithe tax collectors. It fought and destroyed the looting gangs that plundered villages, looted homes and caused destruction, especially in western Macedonia, etc.

The Organization’s entire economic policy was seen as a positive step in the right direction by the oppressed Macedonian population. As a result more people became active and not only contributed materially to the revolutionary movement but also joined the struggle for national and economic liberation.

The Internal Organization was also put in a situation where it had to struggle against the population's great cultural backwardness. Even though the Greek Patriarchate and Bulgarian Exarchate had opened schools in many Macedonian villages and towns (for propaganda purposes), illiteracy in Macedonia was enormous, especially in the villages. People still believed in superstitions and practiced harmful customs and traditions. The low cultural level and the primitive situation in the Macedonian villages wasn't only harmful to the interests of the people, but also negatively reflected on the course of the liberation movement. The Organization couldn't always tolerate some positions taken and was forced to intervene and, to the best of its ability, fight to elevate the general culture in the masses.

As was mentioned earlier, most of the Macedonian people, who used to recognize the Greek Patriarchate's religious authority before the revolutionary period, were now turning to the Bulgarian Exarchate which, due to its Slavic character, was closer to the population than the Greek Church. And in time, most of the churches and schools in Macedonia fell into the hands of the Exarchate which, through them, carried out its nationalist - Greater Bulgarian activities. This Exarchate policy which called for Macedonia to join Bulgaria not only contradicted the Organization's agenda which called for "full political autonomy for Macedonia", but also affected the Greater Bulgarian, Greater Greek and Greater Serbian bourgeoisie interests in Macedonia.

The Bulgarian Exarchate position towards the Organization was basically hostile. According to one author, "The Exarchate, by its deep essence, was purely supreme. The exarchate authorities, expressing the desires of the corrupt and powerful bourgeois elements, were completely loyal to the Ottoman authorities and publicly expressed their hostility towards the Internal Organization."

In other words, the Exarchate's position towards the Organization was in fact favourable to the Ottoman authorities. Among other things, this position was mentioned in a newspaper in 1899 which, among other things, wrote: "Bishops are indifferent to the suffering endured by their flocks from the Ottoman knife. They appear to support the harsh Ottoman rule... they are deaf to the sounds of torment coming out of people's souls..."

Now that we know what the Exarchate was all about, we can easily understand why it persecuted the progressive teachers, including Gotse Delchev, Damian Gruev, Pere Toshev and many others who led the Organization. Fearing what the real Macedonian teachers and the real Macedonian national educational programs would do to its propaganda, the Exarchate did its best to prevent Macedonian schools from opening in the villages.

Given the harm the Exarchate propaganda was causing, the Organization had no choice but to direct its cultural and educational policies primarily against it. In other words, the Organization did everything it could to liberate the Macedonian schools and churches not only from the grips of the Exarchate, but also from the conservative and harmful influence of the Patriarchate, etc. For that purpose, the Organization aspired to take control of all church and school leaderships, open weekly schools for adults and attract progressive teachers to work in them, open schools where there were none and so on. To achieve this, the Organization was often forced to use intimidation and force. According to Rusinski the Organization had to use force against the Bishop of the Ohrid Exarchate who not only didn't want to accept a request from the Internal Organization's regional leadership to appoint teachers to expand the Organization, but deprived 14 villages of their teachers. In November 1901, Rusinski forcibly entered the Diocese and, with a weapon in his hand, demanded that the bishop appoint teachers to the villages. He said: "It isn't you who supports these teachers. The people support you... But you aren't supporting them..."

The Organization vigorously fought against superstition, harmful traditions, debauchery, etc. According to Slaveiko Arsov the people in Resen Region even wanted to ban unnecessary and expensive luxury items from their dresses such as velvet, silk, silver, money, jewelry, etc.

According to Slaveiko Arsov, the Organization was also forced to intervene in the churches to stop drunkenness and fighting. The Macedonian people had a tradition of providing food and drink at funerals, during church service, on holidays, etc. People were expected to bring a lot of food and drink to these events which

usually included roasted lamb, other foods, wine, rakia (brandy), etc. Partakers often got drunk, especially during memorials, and ended up yelling and fighting. Because everyone was invited to attend, most of these disturbances were caused by strangers. In addition to the embarrassment the family hosting the event faced, caused by the drunkenness and fighting, these customs also cost a lot of money. A family usually paid no less than 10-15 grosha. So in order to minimize the violence and reduce costs to a reasonable level, the Organization often had to intervene.

Statements made by a number of contemporaries and documents left behind, show that the Organization's cultural and educational policies, in the broadest sense, yielded positive results and were of great importance in the struggle against foreign influence and harmful customs. Like its economic policies, the cultural and educational policies also played a significant role in raising the Internal Organization's authority and its ability to attract the masses in its endeavour to re-educate them, especially in the villages.

## MACEDONIAN SOCIALISTS IN THE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT

The appearance of capitalism in the Ottoman Empire and Macedonia's late entry into the modern world, allowed for the development of a working class movement in Macedonia. In the second half of the XIX century, Macedonia was just entering the initial stage of capitalist development. Industry was just beginning to develop. As a result, the working class that was created wasn't yet aware of its class interests and responsibilities. Gradually, however, socialist ideas began to infiltrate and spread around starting an organizational connection.

The first bearers of socialist ideas in Macedonia were the Macedonian economic immigrants primarily those working in Bulgaria. Among them was Vasil Glavinov, a carpenter born in Veles in 1893. He formed the Macedonian Workers' Socialist Group in Bulgaria, which later expanded its socialist educational activities in Macedonia. In 1894, Glavinov established a reading room in Veles, which 65 people joined. This was the first educational workers' association in Macedonia. This society in fact was responsible for organizing and spreading socialist ideas in Macedonia.

Glavinov's Macedonian Socialist Group significantly contributed to the development of the Macedonian national liberation movement. The Group tended to place greater emphasis on the principle of independence and on running an independent liberation movement, with the slogan "For an independent Macedonian Republic". The organ of the socialist group "Revolution" repeatedly asserted that "the Macedonian people shouldn't and couldn't expect to be liberated by someone else; they needed to liberate themselves..." Of course, the Macedonian socialists weren't against receiving help from the progressives in the Balkans... they considered it necessary. "In addition to helping the Macedonian movement, the Balkan revolutionaries should launch a bold struggle against all the chauvinists who want to annex Macedonia. Macedonia doesn't belong to the Bulgarians, Serbians or Greeks, it belongs to the Macedonians," the socialist group "Revolution" believed.

The idea, by which the Macedonian Socialists regarded the Macedonian liberation's means and manner, had strong influence on the Organization's ideological foundation construction. This influence could be primarily seen in the 1896 Constitution and in other acts and actions that the Organization undertook. Since 1900, the day the Macedonian Socialists became directly involved in the Organization, their influence was direct, concrete and beneficial. Nikola Karev, Rusinski, Vele Markov, Dimo Hadzi Dimov and a number of other Macedonian socialists, leaders or fighters in the ranks of the Revolutionary Organization stood out as the most consistent exponents of the Macedonian people's aspirations for national and social freedom.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the Internal Organization's progressive ideological foundation was largely the result of the Macedonian socialist group's positive influence, which Gotse Delchev himself supported.

## SUPREMACISTS AND THE GREAT BULGARIA PROPAGANDA

The Bulgarian church and school propaganda machine, sponsored by the Bulgarian ruling circles, was only one tool in the Bulgarian toolbox used to prepare the groundwork for annexing Macedonia at any given moment. The Bulgarian bourgeois governments also used other means to achieve their ultimate goal. One of those means was the so-called Macedonian Supreme Committee in Sofia.

The Internal Organization's coming into existence, its relatively rapid growth and spread, its anti-Exarchate temper, didn't please the ruling circles in Sofia. They were especially dissatisfied and indignant with the purely internal Macedonian national and social direction the Organization was taking while being led by Gotse Delchev and his comrades.

On the other hand, the Bulgarian government felt it needed an instrument, with the help of which it could put pressure on the Ottoman government to act in the interests of the Great Bulgarian propaganda in Macedonia. Such an instrument was created in 1894 and was later named the "Macedonian Committee" led by Traiko Kitanchev based in Sofia. In actual fact this was the "Macedonian Supreme Committee" which initially falsely declared that its main goal was to help the Internal Organization raise money and acquire weapons.

Given its commitment to help the Macedonian cause, initially the Macedonian Committee not only received support from the Macedonian immigrants in Bulgaria, but also raised Gotse Delchev's and Giorche Petrov's hopes that, with its help, they would be able to supply the Organization with more funds, especially weapons, which it desperately needed. Unfortunately the Supreme Committee soon changed its leadership and appointed people the likes of General Nikolaev, Boris Sarafov, General Tsonchev and others, who were faithful servants to the Bulgarian court and the bourgeoisie, with whose help the Bulgarians sought to realize their hostile policy towards Macedonia. Right from the start, the Kitanchev Committee was used to put pressure on the Ottoman government to

extort concessions in the interest of the Exarchate, i.e. in the interest of the entire Bulgarian propaganda machine in Macedonia.

To this end, the so-called “Melnik Uprising” was initiated in 1895. This was done by detachments organized and armed in Bulgaria and led by Bulgarian officers. Among them was Boris Sarafov. The detachments penetrated eastern Macedonia and immediately clashed with the Ottoman army. The provocation helped the Bulgarian government obtain a promise from the Ottoman government to implement measures, which ultimately would lead to the intensification of the Greater Bulgarian propaganda in Macedonia.

The results achieved from the “Melnik Uprising” were satisfactory for the Bulgarian court and government. Among other things, the Bulgarians managed to show the Europeans that Bulgaria had the right to aid Macedonia and that it should be included in issues relating to the Macedonian Question. By doing so, the Bulgarian government usurped the right to interfere in Macedonian affairs and the Macedonian people’s situation. The Greek and Serbian bourgeois governments also usurped the same right.

Furthermore, especially after 1900, the Bulgarian government often demanded that reforms be implemented in Macedonia, i.e. application of the Berlin Congress’s Article 23, but the Porte (Ottoman government) was reluctant to accept the demands. Because of that, supremacist provocations in Macedonia began to intensify, and in September 1902 the so-called “Gorno Dzhumaia Uprising” was sparked. But this supremacist provocation didn’t yield the kind of results the Bulgarian side expected.

The consequences of supremacist actions that resulted from the 1895 and 1902 “uprisings” were severe for the Macedonian population in the Melnik and Gorno Dzhumaia Regions. Ottoman authorities began to intensify the terror, killing people, burning houses, looting properties and driving people out of their homes and villages. But even though these Bulgarian “missions” caused a lot of damage, the Bulgarian detachments took no responsibility for what they had done. In fact they went back to Bulgaria without the slightest of worries.

As was previously mentioned, the Internal Organization's goal to achieve "full political autonomy" for Macedonia and the Macedonian people was clear and it seriously endangered Balkan monarchy interests in Macedonia. As a result the Greek bourgeoisie chose a different means to compromise the Organization. Instead of recognizing it for what it was and what it was struggling to do, the Greek propaganda machine declared it a tool of the Bulgarian government, a bandit organization which was supposedly fighting to destroy the Greek-ness in Macedonia and so on. The Serbian ruling circles also had a hostile attitude towards it.

The Bulgarian court and Bulgarian bourgeoisie, on the other hand, made every effort to treat the Organization, both in diplomacy and the world public, as Bulgarian. At the same time the Bulgarians were well aware that the Internal Organization was their most dangerous opponent in their aspirations towards Macedonia. And so they decided to declare war on it as soon as possible in order to subjugate or liquidate it. The Bulgarian responsibility for compromising the Organization, of course, fell into the hands of the supremacists. The Supreme Committee was given the task to compromise the Internal Organization by any combative means possible including slander, intrigue, lies, etc. The Bulgarian aim here was to compromise the Organization's leaders without injuring or killing them, in order to separate them from the people. But when they were convinced that their tactics didn't yield the desired results, they chose weapons and betrayals.

The supremacists began to organize armed detachments primarily composed of the worst criminal elements such as murderers, robbers, thieves, traitors, etc., and send them to Macedonia to fight against the liberation movement. One of the most famous robbers recruited by the Supremacist Committee for this task was Doncho Zlatkov. When the Internal Organization became aware of this, it decided to start publishing the newspaper "Delo". Its aim was to inform Macedonian immigrants in Bulgaria that the supremacists were anti-Macedonian. The following was said in "Delo" number 6, published in February 1902:

"A detachment has entered Macedonia, which, apart from having intentions to rob and pillage, aims to take over and dismantle the

Internal Organization. To achieve this, its first goal is to confirm Doncho Zlatkov's predatory instincts. Its second goal is to start funding and assisting the supremacist quasi-Macedonian institutions which, at all costs are working to demoralize and denigrate the Macedonian revolutionary struggle to the degree of enslavement. Once the Macedonian revolutionary struggle is demoralized, the supremacists aim to take control of the Macedonian movement. And by doing so they will implement their Bulgarian transgressive triumvirate plans at whose centre stands the Bulgarian court and its two wings the Bulgarian government and the Supreme Committee.

Doncho Zlatkov, the robber, is only a tool through which Bulgarian plans will be implemented. Zlatkov, the leader of the detachment, isn't only a robber but also an envoy of the generals in Sofia. But the generals aren't alone, behind them stands the future king of Macedonia and behind him stands Russia... Doncho Zlatkov, the robber, is recruited to tell the Macedonian people that they have his support and that he will provide them with weapons. Zlatkov promises not only to deliver rifles but also regiments, princely armies and even Russian divisions... But then, when the people shy away from him, Zlatkov's band of robbers resort to committing violence, terror, robbery and even murder against them. And all this is done for the sole purpose of forcing the population to give up their revolutionary leaders. In other words, abandon the Macedonian revolutionary leaders and join the supremacist committees behind whom stand the Bulgarian generals, behind whom stands the prince and behind him Russia...

What true patriot will not shudder at this vile demoralization; what heart will not ache watching this desecration performed on the tortured shoulders of a five-century-old slave?! And that from whom? From a sad tool, who can hardly understand the role he is playing at the hands of his inspirers.

Imagine for a moment, dear readers, the atmosphere of that tormented and very suffering Macedonia... Look at that crushed and drunk from suffering population, which has given dearly and is glad to be ready for the moment when the last hour of its temptation arrives. Remember those brave, heroic and determined sons of Macedonia, burdened with the noble task of organizing the

overwhelmed and resenting slave, to prepare for the Macedonian revolution... Could these conditions be a matter of mercy or hesitation? Revolutionary work is sacred and revolutionary ethics are very clear. The people who are ready to sacrifice their lives to serve the revolution, cannot and should not allow their work to be taken by the robber who wants to trample them... Every hesitation is a crime...

The Macedonian revolutionaries understand this very well and understand even better the danger of procrastination. That is why on January 22, 1902, two Macedonian Internal Organization detachments with a combined force of 24 fighters set out in pursuit of Doncho Zlatkov's gang with firm intentions of putting an end to his criminal activities once and for all. After stopping at a village in Petrich to greet some friends, the detachments discovered that Zlatkov and his gang of 40 followers were nearby. Unfortunately Zlatkov, through his spies, also discovered their whereabouts and why they were pursuing him. But instead of facing the internal detachments face to face, Zlatkov, through espionage, decided to involve the Ottoman authorities while he himself fled to Maleshevo Region.

We won't describe the heroic struggle that the handful of young men fought against the Ottoman army at this time, or their rare courage which forced the enemy to retreat. Here we want to only note one side of the story which shows us that we are looking at the first act of an artificially instigated struggle, inspired by the mysterious but very transparent intentions of the Macedonian Supreme Committee. It also shows that Macedonia had worthy sons, who were ready to protect the revolution equally from the furious attacks of the Ottoman army and police, as well as from our false saviours.

And so the struggle has begun!

We salute our Macedonian revolutionaries for their courage and strength in the unequal, two-winged struggle. Macedonia wouldn't be worthy of its freedom if its revolutionaries couldn't crush the head of that hydra which had surrounded them with police and military border guards. Those who betrayed the Macedonian fighters knew very well that their ruthless hands were sprinkled with the

blood and ashes of those whom they betrayed! And for who?! For the princely crown of 1895! They know very well that those same hands, sprinkled with the blood and ashes of the Macedonian revolution, don't fight for the Macedonian people's freedom but for the royal crown of the Bulgarian throne...

The struggle has already begun but has to be brought to its end. There is no middle ground. To end the struggle, the infernal plans of all the military geniuses and warlords must be broken through the corpses of their mournful tools. The Macedonian revolutionaries have already started that fight and, to put it bluntly, they have all our sympathies. We aren't the ones who will regret the consequences, those who raised the current committee through daggers and terror will regret it, as well as those who continue to help it through their transient silence..."

The Organization's leadership first tried to use "words" to convince the Supreme Committee detachments that their work was anti-Macedonian and criminal, but without success. It was difficult for them to meet the supremacist detachments because they systematically avoided meetings, especially with the Organization's detachments.

The basic message the supremacists tried to spread in Macedonia was as follows:

1. The Macedonian people can't liberate themselves through the Internal Organization but will be liberated by the Bulgarian army.
2. They should not listen to the Organization's leaders because they are "vagabonds", "gamblers", etc.
3. An uprising should be launched as soon as possible so that the Bulgarian army, aided by the Russians, can intervene and liberate Macedonia, etc. etc.

The Organization had to make special efforts to suppress this anti-revolutionary Greater Bulgarian propaganda, spread by the supremacists. According to Iane Sandanski: "The plan was to explain to the people... show them how the supremacists differed

from us. We told them they were people who belonged to the palace (Bulgarian), that they wanted to capture the Organization's leaders so that they could take over our work... We told them that in our opinion, an uprising could only be started if everyone was ready, and without relying on promises from outsiders..."

Supremacist anti-Macedonian activities caused a series of clashes between their detachments and the Organization's detachments. Sandanski, for example, clashed several times with Zlatkov's, Sarakinov's and Captain Stoianov's supremacist detachments. Zlatkov attacked Sandanski's detachment to claim Miss Stone. The supremacists not only betrayed the Macedonian detachments to the Ottoman authorities, but also made attempts to poison the Organization's troops.

What the enemy couldn't achieve with the help of weapons, it achieved through another means. Namely, in order to more effectively hinder the Macedonian revolutionary movement, in 1897, the Exarchate formed its own organization in Solun named "Beneficial Brotherhood" (later renamed "Revolutionary Brotherhood"), which was composed of Exarchate circles led by Ivan Garvanov, a Bulgarian, who served as a professor at the Exarchate Gymnasium in Solun. The "Brotherhood" made a decision to assassinate Damian Gruev, Pere Toshev and some others. The "Brotherhood" became attached to the Supremacist Committee in Sofia, from where it received orders to join the Internal Organization. That took place in 1900 with help from Matov, Tatarchev and H. Nikolov, but without getting permission from Delchev, Petrov or Gruev. The "Brotherhood's" entry into the Organization proved fatal to its future.

After most members of the Internal Organization's Central Committee in Solun were arrested in January 1901, Garvanov was invited to join it. Hadzhi Nikolov, another Central Committee member, under the pretext that he too would soon be arrested, handed over the Organization's seal, codes and the connections to Garvanov. It isn't known if Hadzhi Nikolov knew that this would be a betrayal of the Organization. Two of the three Central Committee members were supremacists. Taking advantage of the situation at the time, when almost all of the prominent and legitimate leaders of

the Organization were in prison or exile, the supremacist agents from Sofia took over the Organization's Central Committee. Shortly afterwards, the new and supremacist populated Committee decided to relieve Gotse Delchev and Giorche Petrov of their duties as the Organization's representation outside of Macedonia. On top of that, Sarafov was dispatched to assassinate them because they were deemed the most dangerous opponents of the supremacists. Garvanov sent five white letters to the Supremacist Committee in Sofia, stamped by the Organization's stamp to serve as powers of attorney for the Bulgarian officers, who were to be sent by the Supremacist Committee to Macedonia to serve as instructors, with the right, if necessary, to stage an uprising. With Garvanov and his like-minded people serving in the Organization's Central leadership, the supremacists were able to impose their will without any major obstacles and to work to start an uprising in Macedonia as soon as possible.

## THE ILINDEN UPRISING

The Solun Congress held in January 1903

At Garvanov's initiative, the Organization convened a Congress in Solun on January 15, 16 and 17, 1903. The Congress was attended by 17 delegates who didn't equally represent all the Internal Organization Districts. Many prominent revolutionaries didn't attend, including Gotse Delchev, Giorche Petrov, Iane Sandanski and Pere Toshev. In this regard Pando Kliashev, a detachment leader in Kostur Region, wrote: "The Congress... wasn't a district nor a general Macedonian Congress as it should have been, it was a Congress composed of several city leaders and teachers, poorly acquainted with the state of affairs. There was one representative from the city Kukush, one from the entire Bitola Region and that was A. Lozanchev, a city leader." Lazar Dimitrov, the Seres delegate, was absolutely correct when he said: "According to its composition, the Congress was illegal..." Even Garvanov's Central Committee itself was illegal because it wasn't elected by anyone.

Nevertheless, at Garvanov's initiative the Congress persuaded the delegates that if an uprising broke out it would involve Europe and would give broad rights to the population, so it was decided to stage an early uprising in the spring of 1903.

The biggest opponents of an early uprising were the most prominent Macedonian revolutionaries such as Gotse Delchev, Giorche Petrov, Iane Sandanski and others. They believed that Macedonia wasn't ready for an early uprising: the masses weren't ready, the people weren't sufficiently armed and the international situation was also unfavourable for an uprising. Normally, these revolutionaries were all for an uprising but not for one that was unprepared and early.

All attempts made by Gotse Delchev and others to reverse the decisions made during the Solun Congress, in order to stop the early uprising, failed. For this reason Gotse Delchev was killed by an Ottoman attack on May 4, 1903. On his way to attend a meeting, to discuss how to proceed with the uprising, Ottoman soldiers surrounded the village Banitsa in Seres Region, where he spent the night, and killed him. Some believe he was betrayed by the

supremacists. Sadly the Macedonian liberation movement was deprived of one of its most consistent and authoritative fighters for Macedonia's freedom.

“For fifteen hours,” wrote Delchev's associate Dimo Hadzhi Dimov, a participant in the Banitsa battle, “the Ottoman soldiers were held back by our bullets. We refused to allow them to approach our dead. For fifteen hours we watched our dead Gotse like he was leaning on Macedonia's grave. For fifteen hours our hearts were torn because he left an entire nation orphaned.”

Today Gotse Delchev's remains are preserved in the Republic of Macedonia mainly thanks to M. Chakov, who himself was in Gushtanov's company during the battle in Banitsa when Delchev was killed. After the Banitsa tragedy, Tefikov, Commander of the Ottoman detachment, who was a friend of Gotse Delchev from the military school in Sofia, ordered Delchev's and Gushtanov's bodies to be taken to Ser. However, an order was sent from Solun to have them returned and buried in Banitsa but in separate graves from the other corpses. This, in fact, made it possible to know exactly where Delchev's remains were buried. Then, in 1906, when Chakov was sent on a revolutionary mission to this part of Macedonia, he and Taska Serski decided to dig up the grave and collect Delchev's remains. But, to their great surprise, Delchev's body hadn't yet completely “decomposed”. Gushtanov's remains were handed over to his uncle and most of Delchev's remains were collected and handed over to Dedo Nikola Mutavchiev from Banitsa for safekeeping. Chakov told Dedo Nikola Mutavchiev to make a box and put the bones in it. Then, in the dark of night, bury them under the holy throne of the church. He also told him to tell no one. “A snake will bite your tongue if anyone finds out they are Gotse Delchev's bones...” he said.

In 1908, Dedo Nikola Mutavchiev dug up Delchev's remaining bones from the grave and, like he had with the other bones he kept in the box, washed them, soaked them in alcohol and put them in the box with the other bones. Even though Macedonia was divided in 1912 and 1913 and even though the village came under Greek rule and was burned down several times, Delchev's remains were still preserved. When the Greeks were expelled during the First World

War, Chakov, again with the help of Dedo Nikola Mutavchiev, in 1917 collected the box with Delchev's remains and kept it with him until 1923 when Delchev's remains were moved and placed in safekeeping in the office of the "Ilinden" Organization in Sofia with the following inscription:

"We pledge to the generations that these holy relics will be buried in the throne of independent Macedonia"

The Macedonian people's struggle for freedom continued. After a part of Macedonia was liberated, the generations didn't forget to transfer the "holy relics" and bury them in Skopje in the throne of the free part of Macedonia, the Republic of Macedonia.

## THE SOLUN ASSASSINATIONS

A few months after the Solun Congress decided to start an early uprising, something happened that not only shook Macedonia, but also Europe. That something was the Solun assassinations. The assassinations were carried out by a group of young Macedonian intellectuals, who had fallen under the influence of anarchist ideas and had formed a terrorist group called the “Gemidzhii” (Boatmen). They were responsible for using explosives (dynamite) to blow up institutions belonging to capitalist countries, hoping that in doing so they would attract the attention of the European public to look at the difficult situation Macedonia was in and provoke Great Power intervention to change things.

On April 29, 1903, after long preparations in Solun, the Gemidzhii blew up the French ship Guadalquivir, the Ottoman Bank, the Post Office, the Gas Plant and other buildings. During the attacks some of the assassins were killed and others were captured and sentenced to death, but their sentences were commuted to imprisonment.

The consequences resulting from these actions were quite severe. Many innocent people were killed on the streets of Solun and Bitola and many were imprisoned. The authorities unleashed such terror that the situation became unbearable and even more tense. This was the time and the conditions under which the famous Smilevo Congress was held, which lasted from May 2 to 7, 1903.

## THE SMILEVO CONGRESS

According to the decisions made by the Solun Congress, held in January 1903, the final decision for the uprising was to be made by the district congresses. For that reason the Bitola Revolutionary District convened its Congress in the village Smilevo, Bitola region. The Congress was attended by delegates from all parts of the country. Here too the delegates were divided on the issue of starting the uprising. Some were “for” and others were “against”. Even though this district, compared to others, was the most prepared for the uprising, it turned out that it was still not sufficiently prepared, especially in some areas such as Prilep. Despite all that, it was decided to start the uprising. A General Staff was elected to lead it, consisting of Damian Gruev, Boris Sarafov and Anastas Lozanchev. The General Staff was given the right to set the date for the uprising, by which the entire district had to make its final preparations.

The Congress adopted its Insurgency Disciplinary Constitution, which defined the rights and duties of the insurgents, the detachment leaders and the General Staff. Here are some of the points from that Constitution.

### Article 6

The insurgent is obliged:

- a) To guard the interest of his homeland to the last drop of his blood, fulfilling the oath he took.
  
- h) To guard the flag for as long as he is alive and to make an expensive bed for it with his own body, and only then can it fall.

During the Uprising:

The General Staff on July 26, 1903, during a meeting held above the village Buf, Lerin Region, decided to announce the start of the Ilinden Uprising. In this regard, on July 28, 1903 the District sent written information to the Central Committee and the village chiefs to inform the people about its decision. This is what the District General Staff wrote:

“Brothers,

The day we have been waiting for so long to settle our score with our enemy has finally arrived.

The blood spilled by our innocent dead brothers owing to Ottoman tyranny shouts loudly and calls for repayment. The trampled honour of our mothers and sisters desires to fall into place!

Enough with the torment, enough with the shame!

It’s a thousand times better to be dead than to live a shameful and Scottish life!

The definite day, in which the people from all over Macedonia and Odrin will rise up with weapons in hand and publicly attack our enemies, is August 2, 1903.

Brothers, go attack your rulers on that day and fight together under the banner of liberty. Be persistent, brothers, in the fight! Our salvation rests in our persistent and long-lasting struggle.

May God bless our righteous deeds and the day of our Uprising.

Down with the Ottomans! Down with the tyrants! Death to our enemies!

Long live the people! Long live freedom! Hooray!

With brotherly kisses,

Headquarters”

General Staff also sent a letter to the Directorate of Eastern Railways in Solun (the Ottoman railways were in the hands of European capitalists) warning that the uprising would be accompanied by assassinations on the railways and in order to protect the innocent, people shouldn’t be allowed to travel during those days.

The Central Committee in Solun issued a special declaration to the Great Powers and officially informed Europe of the reasons that had led the Organization to start this uprising.

As planned, the Ilinden Uprising started on August 2, 1903, on the day of Ilinden, in most of Macedonia. The uprising was strongest in the Bitola Revolutionary District where it was most prepared. On August 2, 1903 the insurgents started disrupting the telephone lines and carrying out attacks on the homes and properties of the ruling beys. Some attacked the local Ottoman garrisons, demolishing their strongholds and so on.

The most famous event from the Ilinden epic, of course, was the creation of the Krushevo Republic. The Krushevo insurgent headquarters (Mountain Command) led by Nikola Karev, announced the Uprising with the following proclamation:

“Brothers,

We hasten to greet you with the uprising! Today, the entire Krushevo district together with the whole of Macedonia started an uprising and shouted: Down with tyranny! Long live freedom and brotherhood among the Macedonian nation! The bells are ringing everywhere, the people gathered with strange joy under the flag of freedom. The young ladies and brides have decorated the heads and rifles of the insurgents with flowers! Any and all Ottomans, who found themselves on the roads and in the villages, were caught and taken hostage. There is singing, joy and merriment everywhere. We are burning with impatience as we wait for the night to come and we take over Krushevo, so that together with the entire nation we can shout the victorious Macedonian hurray! We are in the right and God is with us!

Long live Macedonia!

Headquarters

Nikola Karev  
Tome Niklev

Todor Hristov

Signed: Antinogen Hadzhov, insurgent leader Pitu Guli, Ivan Alabak, Andreia Giurchin, and Tashku Karev.”

The battle to liberate Kreshevo began August 2<sup>nd</sup>, on Ilinden, and ended on August 3<sup>rd</sup> with Kreshevo’s liberation. It was a glorious day marking a supreme victory, expressing the Macedonian people’s aspirations for a free and independent life. Immediately after Kreshevo’s liberation a revolutionary government was formed. The highest government body was a Council of 60 people from all nationalities who lived in the city. The government’s executive body was composed of 6 members from all nationalities. Commissions were also set up to look after food supplies, clothing, health and finances, and to maintain order. Special care was taken to fortify the city with armaments and so on.

In order for the revolutionaries to win over the Muslim population they wrote the famous “Kreshevo Manifesto”, which declared their goals and what the democratic Macedonian Republic was all about. The “Kreshevo Manifesto” literally spelled out President Nikola Karev’s vision.

“Fellow countrymen and dear neighbours!

We, your perennial neighbours, friends and acquaintances from beautiful Kreshevo and its pretty villages, regardless of faith, nationality, sex or conviction, not being able to endure any more tyranny from bloodthirsty murtats who hunger for human flesh, who would like to lead both you and us to slaughter, to reduce both you and us to poverty, and to turn our dear and wealthy land of Macedonia into a wasteland, we have today raised our heads and decided to defend ourselves, with rifles in our hands, from our and your enemies and obtain freedom. You know very well that we are not evil and you understand that it is trouble that made us risk our lives, so that we might begin living like human beings or die like heroes!

And because since the times of our grandfathers and great-grandfathers we have lived together like brothers on this land, we

consider you as our own and would like it to remain the same forever. We have not raised our rifles against you - it would be shameful for us to do so; we have not raised against the peaceful diligent and honest Turkish people who, like ourselves, earn their living through sweat full of blood - they are our brothers with whom we have always lived and would like to live again; we have not risen to slaughter and plunder, to set fire and steal - we have had enough of countless derebeyis pillaging and plundering our poor and blood-stained Macedonia; we have not risen to convert to Christianity and disgrace your mothers and sisters, wives and daughters; you should know that your property, your lives, your faith and your honour are as dear to us as our own. Alas, we have taken up arms only to protect our property, our lives, our faith and our honour. We are not murtats of our own land that has given birth to us, we are not robbers and plunderers, but revolutionaries sworn to die for justice and freedom; we rebel against tyranny and against slavery; we are fighting and will fight against murtats, against robbers, against oppressors and plunderers, against besmirchers of our honour and our faith and against those who benefit from our sweat and exploit our labour. Do not be afraid of us and our villages - we shall not harm anyone. Not only do we consider you as our brothers but we also feel sorry for you as our brothers, since we understand that you are slaves like ourselves, slaves of the Sultan and his beys, effendis and pashas, slaves of the rich and powerful, slaves of tyrants and oppressors who have set fire to the empire from all four sides and have made us rise up for justice, for freedom and for human life. We invite you, too, to join us in our struggle for justice, freedom and human life! Come, Moslem brothers, let us go together against your and our enemies! Come under the banner of "Autonomous Macedonia"! Macedonia is the mother of us all and she calls on us for help. Let us break the chains of slavery, free ourselves from suffering and pain and dry the rivers of blood and tears! Join us, brothers, let us fuse our souls and hearts and save ourselves, so that we and our children and our children's children might live in peace, work calmly and make progress!...

Dear neighbours!

We understand that you as Turks, Arnauts and Moslems might think that the empire is yours and that you are not slaves since there is no

cross on the imperial flag but a star and a crescent. You will soon see and understand that this is not so and that you are wrong. Nevertheless, if your honour does not allow you to join us and declare yourselves against the Sultan's tyranny, we, your brothers in suffering and of the same homeland, shall do you no harm and shall not hate you. We will fight alone both for you and us and, if necessary, we will fight to the last man under the banner for our and your freedom, for our and your justice. "Freedom or Death" is written on our foreheads and on our blood-stained banner. We have already raised that banner and there is no way back. If you consider us as your brothers too, if you wish us well, if you intend to live with us again as you have lived up to now, and if you are faithful and worthy sons of our mother Macedonia, you could help us in one way at least - and it would be a great help indeed - do not make partners of the enemy, do not raise guns against us and do not oppress the Christian villages!

May God bless our holy struggle for justice and freedom!

Long live the fighters for freedom and all honest and good Macedonian sons!

Hurrah! For an autonomous Macedonia!"

In response to the Manifesto, the villagers from Aldantsi and the mayor promised to be peaceful and blessed the struggle. The chief of the Kreshevo garrison, who managed to escape, sent the following interesting letter to the insurgents:

"Heroes,

Your proclamation to my compatriots really interested me. From it, and these two days from your actions, I thought you were bandits.

However your goals are great and your struggle is important. Forward on that terrible and glorious path by which all nations have gained their freedom.

When I beg my great Allah to protect the right side, let me send you two requests:

1. Do not leave me naked but send me my clothes that I have left in the bravely attacked barracks taken by you and
2. For any eventuality, destroy the correspondence exchanged between us.

Chief of the Kreshevo garrison,

Ali”

After Kreshevo, the Kostur revolutionary District stood out for its vitality and revolutionary endeavour. The Supremacists, led by Colonel Jankov, arrived at the Kostur District in 1902 in order to start an early uprising but were expelled by the district leaders. But despite being told to leave, they continued to agitate for an early uprising and causing disturbances. Shortly before the uprising started, Smrdesh, a large village was burned down in May by the Ottoman army which sparked the famous Lokvata and Viniari battle fought between the Kostur detachments and the Ottoman army. These, as well as other events, contributed to the Kostur district's readiness and mobile position before Ilinden 1903. In this way the Kostur District welcomed the day of the Uprising relatively more prepared than the other districts. The uprising in Kostur District was massive. Leading the mountain detachment were Lazar Poptraikov, Chakalarov, Kliashev, Rozov... The district was divided into several points. About 500 insurgents liberated the town Klisura and about 700 insurgents liberated the town Neveska. In fact, it was the biggest and most successful Uprising in this area. A revolutionary government was formed here similar to that at Kreshevo.

The Lerin detachments attacked and demolished the railway station near Ekshisu, cut the telegraph lines and destroyed bridges and roads. One of the biggest battles fought by the people of Lerin was at the Lakes where 300 insurgents fought against 2,000 Ottoman soldiers. The Kostur detachments were called in to aid the Lerin insurgents.

The most significant insurgent actions that took place in Ohrid District were in Gorna and Dolna Debartsa, Ortakol and Malesia.

Here, as in Prespa and Rashanets, people running away from the battles were told to flee to a designated place where a hospital was opened. The battle at Rashanets was one of the most famous battles of the Ilinden Uprising.

In Kichevo District the insurgents tried to take the city Kichevo but failed. There were also big clashes with the Ottoman army and bashibozuks in the village Karbunitsa, in Kopachka where people lived collectively, etc. Many had to be evacuated.

Several smaller insurgent actions were observed in Prilep District, the most significant were those of Giorche Petrov and his detachment and the battle near Chanishta - Moriovo in which a large detachment from Kostur participated, led by Lazar Poptraikov. Poptraikov was severely wounded during that battle.

Unlike the Bitola District, the other revolutionary districts didn't participate massively in the Ilinden Uprising. The Solun District was so poorly armed that it could only muster several attacks on the railways, Turkish barracks and others small targets. There were 38 battles in which over 100 insurgents and nearly 1,200 Ottoman soldiers were killed (the numbers refer to the Solun province, i.e. to the Solun and Seres revolutionary Districts).

The uprising in Skopje District wasn't massive either. Here too there were attacks on the railway and 15 clashes between the detachments and the Ottoman army took place, in which about 90 insurgents and nearly 400 Ottoman soldiers were killed.

The Uprising in Seres District began on September 27, 1903, on Krstovden (Day of the Cross) without participation from the masses. The detachments clashed with the Ottoman army in several places including Nevrokop, Gornodzumaia, Melnik and Seres Regions. After lengthy negotiations, the District Organization allowed supremacist detachments to take part in the battles, unfortunately the supremacists behaved very badly, even treacherously.

## SUFFOCATING THE UPRISING

Despite the unprecedented heroism and self-sacrifice demonstrated by the insurgents and the people, the Uprising was violently and ferociously suppressed, especially in Bitola District where it was massive. The Ottoman army and bashibozuks killed people and destroyed properties uncontrollably. About 150 villages, or about 9,850 houses, were partially or completely burned down and over 58,000 people were left homeless. More than 2,000 innocent people were killed, many women were disgraced, about 10,000 people left Macedonia and the prisons were overcrowded. All this speaks of the extremely difficult situation in which the Macedonian people found themselves after the suppression of the Ilinden Uprising. The aid sent from neighbouring countries, or from Europe was just too little to meet the great need.

The uprising, wherever it took place, was massive and popular. The Internal Organization spent ten years preparing for and executing it. The Macedonian intelligentsia, which arose mainly from the ranks of Macedonian merchants and craftsmen, was primarily responsible for its preparation and execution. The driving forces behind it were the Macedonian peasant masses that fought in this bloody struggle with enthusiasm, hoping to gain their national and social freedom.

The Ilinden Uprising was the largest revolutionary event in the history of the Macedonian people until the Second World War. In the words of Dimo Hadzi Dimov, “the struggle was a magnificent expression of the nationwide Macedonian desire for freedom.” The Ilinden Uprising was a turning point in the historical process of the Macedonian nation’s development. Its influence and tradition will be especially strong on future generations and future Macedonian revolutionaries.

There are several reasons why the Ilinden Uprising failed. For starters the people were not sufficiently prepared and because of that not all of Macedonia rose up en masse. However, the main reason for the failure was that the Macedonian people were put in a situation where they had to fight alone against the entire Ottoman Empire without any outside help. Unlike the Serbian, Greek and Bulgarian peoples, who received military and diplomatic assistance

from some of the great powers, primarily from Tsarist Russia, the Macedonian people received none. When the Macedonians rose in revolt, Tsarist Russia and Austria-Hungary, who were most interested in this part of the Ottoman state, sided entirely with the Ottomans.

During the same tragic moments when the Macedonian people were experiencing defeat at the end of the Uprising, a major event took place which would have great significance for the development of the Macedonian nation and culture. Krste Misirkov published his book entitled "ABOUT MACEDONIAN MATTERS". Fortunately, the supremacists failed to destroy the entire batch of books. A number of specimens were preserved and this work of immeasurable value was preserved for future generations.

## **MACEDONIA AFTER THE ILINDEN UPRISING 1903-1912**

**(By Dr. Gligor Todorovski)**

### **THE ILINDEN UPRISING AND THE OUTSIDE WORLD**

There were major consequences for the Macedonian people resulting from the failed Ilinden Uprising which were soon felt in all areas of Macedonia, in both socio-political and economic life. Reprisals and other crimes against the Macedonian people were brutal, seeming like the Ottomans wanted to blame all their ills on the Macedonian people and their Ilinden Uprising. On top of everything else weather conditions further aggravated the extremely difficult situation. The winter was especially severe and living conditions in the Bitola vilayet became difficult. People had no homes to go to. Most of the houses and villages were burned down and because the Uprising started at the beginning of the harvest season the fields weren't harvested, resulting in massive shortages of food.

Fortunately the Macedonian people received some attention from the European public, especially from the south Slavic countries who raised their voices to help the Macedonian people. Even before the Ilinden Uprising was put down, an international rally was convened in Paris in October 1903, at which prominent French social figures such as Francis de Presance, Victor Berard, Jean Jaurès, English social figure Evans Noel Bagston, Italians Marcini and Bitargo and the Belgian Laurent spoke. A resolution was adopted condemning the atrocities and violence committed in Macedonia against the Macedonian people and expressed the difficult situation in Macedonia. Those present at the rally called on the Great Powers to put an end to the massacres and violence in Macedonia and Armenia.

In addition to holding rallies in various cities across Europe, practical steps were also taken in England to remedy the difficult situation in Macedonia. A Balkan Committee was formed, which held over 200 rallies in England to speak in favour of the Macedonian movement for liberation from Ottoman rule and to explain the true position of the Macedonian people. Canterbury, the English Archbishop, joined this action and also addressed the

English government with a request to help the Macedonians. Apart from the actions taken in these more distant Western European countries, other European countries weren't left behind in organizing actions to help the Macedonians. Rallies in support of the insurgent population in Macedonia were also held in Milan, Italy.

After the first rallies and actions to inform and encourage European public opinion and governments, to more effectively speak out against Ottoman absolutism in Macedonia, larger actions began to take shape to raise funds and other contributions to address the severe needs of the Macedonian population. In this sense, the English humanitarian organizations stood out the most. A special fund was set up in England, intended for the burned Macedonian villages. Henry Brailsford, secretary of the fund, was instrumental in running this support. In November 1903 Brailsford went to Macedonia, to Bitola and distributed the collected aid from England that included food, clothes, blankets, medicines and other needs for the villagers of Bitola vilayet. Brailsford was also instrumental in setting up three hospitals, one in Ohrid, one in Bitola and one in Kostur and equipped them with the essential needs. The English humanitarian organizations in Macedonia were of great help to the Macedonian people during these desperate times.

Voices calling to help the Macedonian people in these most difficult times were met with a wide response and reception in Russia. A Red Cross Society was created which appealed to the Russian people to donate in aid of the Macedonian people. Relief societies were also set up in Czechoslovakia and Switzerland.

Included among the various charities and humanitarian organizations, wanting to help the Macedonians, were relief committees in the USA and Canada. The biggest of these were organized and run by Macedonian immigrants and migrant workers.

Efforts to help had also surfaced in the south Slav countries. A Macedonian committee was set up in Ljubljana, calling on Slovenes to help the suffering Macedonians. In Serbia, the organization "Circle of Serbian Sisters" was formed and a Relief Committee and other associations were set up to help the Macedonian victims. Similar associations were formed in Croatia and Bulgaria. The

Serbian and Bulgarian governments set aside special budgets with funds for the victims in Macedonia. The Serbian government set aside 1,500,000 dinars and the Bulgarian government 1,500,000 leva. Even the Ottoman government, after allowing a number of villages in the Bitola vilayet to be burned down during the Ilinden Uprising, issued an order to help repair the burned houses. However, a large number of villagers, even though they were in dire need of any material assistance, refused to accept support from the Ottoman government.

The greatest help during this time came from interpersonal solidarity, especially in the rural population in the Bitola vilayet. People helped each other create temporary shelters which soon sprouted up in the burned villages. Once the people settled down the situation calmed. Some even resumed their revolutionary activities. As mentioned earlier it was under these circumstances that Henry Brailsford found himself in one of these burned Macedonian villages in the Bitola vilayet. Again, as mentioned earlier, he was the prominent English social worker and secretary of the committee for aid to the Macedonians. On this occasion, Brailsford wrote a book in English in which he described the events of the Ilinden Uprising, giving a realistic picture of the burned down villages, of the tortured, the wounded and the disgraced women and girls. But nowhere did he note any decline in the revolutionary spirit of the peasants, nor a critique of the revolutionary committees. On the contrary, he noted that villagers everywhere expressed a desire to again fight against Ottoman rule, anytime, the moment they were called upon.

## THE INTERNAL REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION'S NEW SITUATION

The failed Ilinden Uprising put the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization in a particularly difficult position. The loss of a large number of its personnel during the Uprising, as well as the atrocities committed against the rebel villages by the Ottoman army and bashibozuks, left the Revolutionary Organization limp. One of the first concerns the Organization's leaders, who still remained on the ground after the Uprising ended, was to reconnect with the organizational ranks. This was absolutely necessary, especially in the areas of the Bitola Revolutionary District where the uprising was strongly expressed. In all other revolutionary districts, the state of the Organization was quite different, it remained almost unaffected.

There is no doubt that the failed Ilinden Uprising raised many ideological and tactical questions which the Revolutionary Organization had to address and find appropriate answers. Fundamental issues, such as lessons learned from the Ilinden Uprising and in general from the long-standing revolutionary activities, democratization and decentralization in the ranks of the Revolutionary Organization, etc., became the subject of debate at all congresses held by the Organization during 1904 - 1905. In general, until the Rila Congress, held in October 1905, the Revolutionary Organization experienced a steady rise in its ranks. Important organizational issues were dealt with at the district congresses, which were held during 1904 -1905, as well as at the Rila Congress, which served as the general congress for the Organization. However, after the Rila General Congress, which covered various ideological and tactical views, a fracture began to appear in the Organization. As a consequence the Internal Organization began to experience constant intrusion and open division, from which, in time, two opposing views began to crystallize. As a consequence, resistance began to develop within the leadership that impacted not only the Organization's leadership but also the Macedonian National Liberation Movement in general. The physical fighting was very harmful and reflected in the further growth of the Revolutionary Organization. Two currents called "left" and "right" began to emerge in the Organization. These currents, later formed into separate groups and organizations with established ideological

bases. In fact, they were not based on economic and social assumptions but primarily on a national and tactical nature. From this we can conclude that a more appropriate term to describe “the right” would be the term pro-Bulgarian. As a consequence of this division in the Revolutionary Organization, especially after the Rila Congress, there was mutual confrontation. Armed detachments were formed which supported one or the other side. All this dealt a great blow to the Revolutionary Organization and left extremely severe consequences for the Revolutionary Movement in Macedonia. In such a mutual struggle and division, both of the revolutionary cadres and the combat elements, many faithful workers and experienced fighters lost their lives in the long struggles, especially in the fighting ranks of the Organization. All this was reflected in the plan of the general struggle against the Ottoman oppressors and against the intensified intervention of the armed propaganda waged by the neighbouring countries.

One of the basic issues, over which there was a split in the Organization was the attitude of the Revolutionary Organization towards Bulgarian nationalism and towards the other Balkan countries. The two basic groups in its ranks sought to gain supporters for their views. One group, represented in Macedonia by Iane Sandanski and in Sofia by Petre Pop Arsov, wanted to remain consistent with the principles of the Internal Organization. This meant that this group wanted the Organization to remain independent of Bulgaria and the other Balkan countries. Therefore, this group didn't oppose any assistance from official Bulgaria, nor did it want to subordinate the activities of the Internal Organization to the needs of Bulgarian foreign policy.

The other group, the pro-Bulgarian group, which had no prominent supporters in Macedonia and was led by Boris Sarafov, Hristo Matov, Ivan Garvanov and others, insisted that the Internal Organization should rely on official Bulgaria and receive assistance from Bulgaria. This group considered the Macedonian Question as an exclusively Bulgarian issue and therefore agreed to receive directives from Sofia for all its future activities. It was willing to receive financial and other assistance from Sofia without seeking cooperation with other national elements in Macedonia. These were the basic opposites on which the division within the Internal

Organization arose. This division, which mainly existed at the peak of the Organization, soon began to filter down to the lower bodies.

## THE INTERNAL ORGANIZATION'S POSITION AND ITS ACTIVATION

The Bitola Revolutionary District felt there was a need to sort out the workings of the Internal Organization through a Congress which was initiated in the middle of May 1904. The Congress which lasted until the end of May was held in the villages around Prilep and because of that it became known as the Prilep Congress. The Congress was attended by 13 delegates from the District, including by Damian Gruev, Giorche Petrov, Pere Toshev, Georgi Pop Hristov, Hristo Uzunov, Giorgi Sugare and others, who remained in the field after the Ilinden Uprising. Two delegates from the Solun Revolutionary District also attended. The main topic of discussion was reasons why the Ilinden Uprising failed. Other topics discussed were what to do next. In discussing this issue, two views were expressed: one was to decentralize the Organization, while the other sought to maintain the old centralist form of managing the Organization. A Draft Constitution emerged out of all these discussions which was accepted, indicating that there was some positive tendency and willingness to change the outdated forms of how the Organization was managed.

In January 1905, the Skopje Revolutionary District held a Congress. This Congress, which lasted a week, was held in the village Knezevo, Kratovo region. The new draft constitution, the Organization's past and future activities, the Organization's attitude towards propaganda and other economic issues were the subjects of discussion. A rulebook was drafted and accepted during this Congress, as well as ideas on how to improve the workings of the Organization.

The Solun Revolutionary District also showed considerable activities after the Ilinden Uprising. Two congresses were held in this District. The first was held in July 1905 and the second in August 1905. Here too similar issues were discussed with emphasis on the principle of autonomy, as well as the international aspects of the Macedonian Question; the Organization's attitude towards the Exarchate and the need to punish Boris Sarafov. The Solun Revolutionary District took a very positive stance on a number of

issues concerning the proper conduct of the Revolutionary Organization.

In the summer of 1905, two congresses were held in the Strumitsa Revolutionary District. One was the Strumitsa Region Congress and the second was the Strumitsa District Congress. Both congresses addressed issues related to the further development of the Organization, the attitude of the Organization towards propaganda, the establishment of a special judicial institute in the Organization, the introduction of a tax system and more. The influence of the left came to the fore at these Strumitsa Revolutionary District congresses.

On July 29, 1905, the Seres Revolutionary District held its Congress in the locality “Belemeto”, on Pirin Mountain. Among the delegates who attended was Iane Sandanski, who, after the Ilinden Uprising and following in the footsteps of Gotse Delchev, became an increasingly prominent revolutionary figure. Among other things discussed during the Congress was the current situation in the Country and the status of the Organization with special attention paid to the economic problems in the Country. It was particularly emphasized that the Organization and the development of the Macedonian liberation movement had to remain independent.

During all the general Congresses held by the Organization, in 1904-1905 at the various revolutionary districts, except in Skopje, the views of the left seemed to dominate. It didn't take too long after the Ilinden Uprising for the organization to recover and once again stand on its own two feet.

The biggest event in the life of the organization in the post-Ilinden period was the General Congress held at the Rila Monastery, called the Rila Congress. There was a great deal of controversy among the delegates over the place where this Congress was held. Many of the delegates, especially those from the interior of Macedonia, demanded that the Congress be held on Macedonian territory. In the end, it was agreed to hold the Congress in the Rila Monastery because a lot of work had to be done so it was necessary for things to go smoothly.

The congress began in early October 1905 and lasted until the end of the month. Included among the delegates who attended were prominent leaders such as Damian Gruev, Giorche Petrov, Iane Sandanski, Pere Toshev and others. The Congress reviewed most outstanding Organizational activities, cultural and educational activities, judiciary, finance, press and more and how the Organization was being managed. Issues regarding the Organization's attitude towards state propaganda, particularly Bulgarian state nationalism and the Exarchate, the supremacist groups inside and outside the Organization, etc. were discussed with special emphasis.

After lengthy discussions, the Congress elected new governing bodies. A new Central Committee was elected, which included Damian Gruev, Pere Toshev and Todor Pop Antov, while outside of Macedonia Organizational Representation included Giorche Petrov, Dimitar Stefanov and Petre Pop Arsov. Dimo Hadzi Dimov was appointed editor of the Organization's official newspaper the "Revolutionary List".

The longest discussion that took place was the issue of managing the Organization, during which the left and right came to the fore. At the end of the discussion, a new Constitution, Organizational Rules and Procedures were adopted, in which the concepts and views of the left were fully accepted. The independence of the Organization and its revolutionary character as well as the principle of democratic centralism served as the basis in forming the Organization's future activities. The Congress paid special attention to the Organization's cultural, educational, social and economic activities. At the same time the Congress characterized the Murzsteg reforms as useless and harmful to the Macedonian national liberation movement. Also very harsh words were spoken when it came to the supremacist activities of Tsonchev's group, as well as the activities of Boris Sarafov. Both Tsonchev and Sarafov were instructed to stop their activities. Unfortunately the expected unity the Congress was supposed to achieve at the Rila Congress never materialized. There was a tragic split in the Organization, which had severe consequences for the course of the Macedonian national liberation movement. The Organization's right-wing elements or the neo-supremacists didn't accept the decisions made during the Rila Congress and began to act

independently and destructively under the influence of external factors, alien to the Macedonian national liberation movement. As a result the organization began to fall apart with regards to its revolutionary activities.

## IMMIGRATION AND MIGRANT WORK

The process of people leaving Macedonia didn't subside even after the Ilinden Uprising was over. On the contrary, migration became even more intense, as a consequence of the invested socio-economic and political conditions in Macedonia, and specifically the difficult economic conditions in the Bitola vilayet and the intensified action of the armed propaganda, and many villagers sought refuge in larger towns and cities in Macedonia and even abroad. One of the biggest movements was the refugee movement in the Bitola vilayet, i.e. in certain areas of the vilayet, such as Krushevo. Many residents of this once adorned and prosperous town had to seek refuge elsewhere, mainly in Bitola, which as a relatively large city and vilayet centre provided some shelter. Most people went to live with relatives but there were also various charities that operated and were involved in accepting refugees. Bitola vilayet wasn't the only place where people abandoned their birthplace. People were leaving Kostur, Lerin, Prespa, Prilep, Ohrid and other places all throughout Macedonia. The refugee trains were uninterrupted and unstoppable. A considerable number of Macedonians left their homeland permanently and settled in neighbouring Balkan countries, as well as to the interior of the Ottoman Empire, where in addition to finding shelter they sought work for a living. This included Tsari Grad (Istanbul) Smyrna, Egypt, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia and Romania. The Macedonians sought and found shelter wherever they could. On a much smaller scale, emigration was also directed towards European countries. Going to European countries, especially Austria-Hungary, Germany, or France, was predominantly dictated by the need to work. Some even took the long trek to North America and some to South America. There were also recruiters who recruited people and sent them to work for American and other companies. The conditions in Macedonia were so bad that finding and securing cheap labour for your company wasn't difficult at all. According to some statistics kept by Giorche Petrov, in 1903, 9-10,000 Macedonians left for America; in 1904 10-12,000, while in 1906 that number increased even more. This doesn't conclude Macedonians leaving for many European and non-European countries. It should be emphasized that even though Macedonians left their homes they never severed ties with their homeland. They

constantly maintained close contact with families and on various occasions they returned to their homes.

## THE MURZSTEG AND OTHER REFORMS IN MACEDONIA

Despite the fact that the Great Powers of Europe showed no interest in helping the Macedonian situation, Austria-Hungary and Russia couldn't completely ignore things. There were things going on in Macedonia that directly endangered their general interests in this part of the world. Hence, in order to alleviate and calm the situation, Austria-Hungary and Russia, after having lengthy negotiations and consultations with the other major European powers, took it upon themselves to resolve the Macedonian Question. Tsar Nicholas II of Russia and Emperor François Joseph of Austria met in Vienna in late September 1903. The two monarchs continued their talks in Murzsteg. As a result a reform program emerged, which according to the place where it was adopted, was called the Murzsteg Reform Program. On October 3, 1903, the Austria-Hungary and Russian ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire were instructed to inform and acquaint the Ottoman authorities with the contents of the reform program and what they were required to do with it in Macedonia. The Ottoman government wasn't happy about it, complaining that the reforms violated its sovereignty. But soon, after being pressured, the Ottomans formally accepted the reforms and constantly strived to hide their content and essence during their implementation.

The Murzsteg reforms called for appointing two civilian agents to represent Austria-Hungary and Russia at Hilmi Pasha's Solun-based chief inspector's office for European provinces. The civilian agents would be tasked with overseeing the Ottoman administration's implementation of the reforms. In addition to civilian agents, a foreign general with European officers and a required number of advisers was to be appointed. These military personnel were to carry out the reorganization of the Ottoman gendarmerie in Macedonia. Macedonia's division into sectors was to enable a more efficient execution of the planned gendarmerie reorganization which aimed to achieve greater efficiency in the clamping down of the revolutionary movement in Macedonia. This was one of the important elements of the reform program in Macedonia. It should be noted that the initiators of the reform program insisted on this important element, which could be concluded for the benefit of Austria-Hungary and

Russia, as well as for the other European Great Powers to maintain the famous status quo in Macedonia.

In addition to the demands made for the appointment of civilian agents and reform the gendarmerie, there were demands made for the Ottoman authorities to also reform the administration and the judiciary, to include locals in the administration, form commissions composed of Christians and Muslims, in order to investigate crimes committed during the Ilinden Uprising, etc. The Ottomans also had to commit to reimbursing all costs of the burned villages and for disbanding the irregular army.

Unfortunately the Ottoman authorities had the uncanny ability to drag their feet and delay any action taken. After being pressured to act, civilian agents began to appear and do their work in the second half of January 1904. There was also disagreement between the European powers over who would be selected to lead the gendarmerie reforms as well as the distribution of the sectors, greatly contributing to the untimely start of the reforms. During these debates it became clear that the European Powers were only interested in their respective countries getting their hands on certain parts of Macedonia. But, in the end, they agreed to allow the Italian gendarmerie general Di Georges to lead the reforms of the Ottoman gendarmerie in the Macedonian provinces. To do this Macedonia had to be divided into sectors, with the Great Powers engaged in the Ottoman gendarmerie reforms. This way Austria-Hungary took charge of the Skopje Sandzhak, Italy took charge of the Bitola vilayet; Russia took charge of the Solun vilayet; France took charge of the Seri Sandzhak, while the United Kingdom took charge of the Drama Sandzhak. Germany, which was the Ottoman Empire's best ally at the time, took over the management of the gendarmerie schools in Solun. Once all this was settled and tensions had slightly relaxed, in April 1904 the foreign officers started the reorganizing of the Ottoman gendarmerie in Macedonia.

The Russian and Austrian civilian agents who came to Macedonia were in fact put in a very awkward situation. Their ability to do their work was completely limited. They traveled through Macedonia's interior to allegedly supervise the reforms being implemented, receiving various individual and group complaints from the field

without being able to take concrete measures because, according to their obligations, they were only obliged to report to their superiors what they saw or what was reported to them. So, in order to be more effective at their job they began to pay attention to the Chief Inspector Hilmi Pasha and used his services to take necessary measures.

The foreign officers were a bit more successful in their work reforming the Ottoman gendarmerie. First they sought to remove all incompetent and illiterate people from the ranks of the gendarmerie. Then they sought to provide the gendarmes with a regular income. Being used as irregulars and not being paid properly was one of the causes of corruption and other crimes in the gendarmerie. Gendarmerie schools were opened in Solun, Skopje and Bitola and the number of gendarmerie stations was significantly increased, thus establishing general control throughout the networks. As a result, and with the help of the European Powers, the Ottoman gendarmerie in Macedonia became a better and more effective Ottoman Empire guardian. Some of the reformers made claims that Christians too should be admitted to join the Ottoman gendarmerie, but due to the Revolutionary Organization's attitude towards the reforms, the number of Macedonians registered for service was quite insignificant.

In December 1905, the Great Powers sent their fleets to the port of Solun where they demonstrated their naval power. The naval demonstration was aimed at forcing the Ottomans to expand and accelerate administrative, financial and judicial reforms. Of particular interest were the planned reform projects in Macedonia, adopted between the English and Russian monarchs in Reval in June 1908. They envisaged an autonomous Macedonia. Unfortunately the 1908 Young Turk Revolution hampered that realization. In 1909 the Great Powers stopped carrying out reforms in Macedonia.

Even though the Murzsteg reform program didn't contribute much to the improvement of the socio-economic and political conditions in Macedonia, it still allowed Europe to become familiar with the real situation in Macedonia. It actually contributed to the Macedonian people's affirmation of their national liberation struggle. It should be noted that the Murzsteg reforms had an

international character, which is of importance to the Macedonian people

## GREATER GREECE ARMED PROPAGANDA

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Greek ruling circles organized armed actions in Macedonia in order to carry out their “megali idea” plans. In the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and especially after the Ilinden Uprising, Great Greek armed actions weren’t only accelerated but also took on a kind of military intervention, organized and carried out by the Greek state against the Macedonian people, who persistently fought against the Great Greek and other foreign propaganda which were preparing the ground for invading, occupying and partitioning Macedonia.

As early as the first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, led by the Greek metropolitans and consuls in Macedonia and with the blessing of the Ottoman authorities, Greek propaganda was organized and, through several armed detachments, used against the Macedonian liberation movement. In 1903, the Kingdom of Greece and the Patriarchate stood against the Ilinden Uprising. They showed solidarity with the mob and organized a series of hostile actions against the Ilinden Uprising. Then, in June 1903, the first Greek armed detachments were sent from Athens to Macedonia, which together with the Ottoman army fought against the Macedonian insurgents.

After the Ilinden Uprising ended, the military wing of Greater Greece decided to bolster its propaganda machine in Macedonia by introducing its Greater Greece armed propaganda. For that purpose, in the summer of 1904 and in the following years, the Greek government sent 10 diplomats (consuls), over 100 officers, about 110 armed detachments called Andarts, several hundred rifles, a large quantity of weapons, etc., to Macedonia. Greek officers were dispatched over to the Greek consulates in Solun, Bitola, Seres and Kavala in order to serve the consuls in implementing the Greater Greek armed propaganda in the various areas. Some of the officers were placed in charge of Andart detachments, others in charge of espionage and so on. More than 200 spies were engaged in the Greek espionage service in Macedonia, who also served the Ottoman authorities.

The Greek government and the Greek court saw the Macedonian revolutionary movement as its enemy and decided to refer to it as

“Bulgarian”, and every measure should be taken to liquidate it because it opposed Macedonia’s division. To that end, the Greek government signed a co-operation agreement with the Ottoman government. As part of that cooperation, the Greek Andart Detachments avoided clashes with the Ottoman authorities, even though clashes in the past were common. The Greater Greek armed propaganda was deemed legal and was allowed to act against the Macedonian national liberation movement. Because it was legal it was allowed to freely act and enjoy various privileges from the Ottoman authorities, especially from Hilmi Pasha who was in charge of the Ottoman military in Macedonia and who refused to allow any villager to leave the Patriarchate Church. With consent from the Sultan, Hilmi Pasha vowed to protect the Greek Andarts from any prosecution by the extraordinary military courts, created to try members of the Macedonian revolutionary movement.

And so instead of protecting its citizens, the Macedonian people, the Ottoman state decided to tolerate foreign intervention from the Greek Andarts who, in the words of their own Greek officers, slaughtered people like they cut grass. The crimes the Andarts committed were sanctioned by Greek government officials from Athens and by the Greek metropolitans in Macedonia. Included among the Greek Metropolitans who had sanctioned such crimes were Metropolitan Karavangelis from Kostur, Metropolitan Foropoulos from Bitola, as well as the Metropolitans from Greben, and Drama. These Metropolitans demanded that the Andarts subdue the Macedonian population and use terror to keep it from leaving the Patriarchate church.

At the beginning of 1905 the so-called “Macedonian Committee” in Athens, leading the Greek armed propaganda in the Bitola vilayet, issued an order to the Greek Andarts to intensify their terror activities against the Macedonian people. Among other things, the order said: “Pursue and exterminate the barbarians...” Immediately afterwards, Tsontos-Vardas, leader of the Andart Bitola vilayet detachments, in cooperation with Kostur Metropolitan Karavangelis and the Greek consulate in Bitola, decided to destroy the village Zagorichani in Kostur Region. Before the attack Vardas read the Andarts their orders which in part said: “Heroes of vengeance, you are called to carry out the destruction of the people of Zagorichani...”

You are descendants of gods and demigods... To fulfill your mission you will need to become full fledged assassins. Carry out this mission and you will not only become murderers but also beasts. Kill everyone regardless of who they are...!" And so they did. On May 25, 1905, the Greek Andarts carried out the beastly act of massacring the entire village. They killed 78 women, men, children and the elderly. They burned houses, looted properties, etc. The Ottoman army could have intervened but did not.

In the period from 1904 to 1908, similar massacres and many individual murders were committed in various parts of Macedonia but mostly in Kostur, Lerin, Bitola, Moriovo, Enidzhevardar and Seres Regions. The Greek Andarts demanded that the Macedonian people renounce their revolutionary movement and submit to the Patriarchate. In the letters sent by the Greek Andart leaders to the villagers, they asked the following: "Go as soon as possible to the Metropolitans and declare yourself Greek because soon it will be too late to repent in hell. Keep in mind that in a short time you will have no children, no houses, nothing, because everything will be destroyed by the knife and by the unstoppable Greek fire... We will liquidate you and your property and we will bring pure Greek blood to these places." These genocidal threats, organized by the Greek state, were often carried out to maintain the high level of Greek propaganda terror. Compared to other propaganda, the Greek armed propaganda carried out the most massacres and murders. It was estimated that, at that time the Ottoman military along with the Andart gangs were responsible for killing an average of about 100-150 people a month. These killings were committed mostly by the Andart detachments and Greek propaganda agents.

The Macedonian people, led by the IMRO left wing, put up strong resistance against the Greater Greece and other armed propaganda machines. In 1905, during the Rila Congress, IMRO condemned all armed propaganda campaigns that were hostile to the Macedonian people and tried to organize resistance against them. Even the Macedonian revolutionary detachments were tasked with fighting against the Greater Greek armed propaganda. For example, during its four years of acting in Kostur Region, Mitre Vlaot's detachment fought several successful battles against the Greek Andart detachments of which the Greek Andarts soon became fearful. In

Enidzhevardar Region, primarily in Enidzhevardar Lake, Apostol's Detachment fought and won several battles against the Andarts as well as repulsed several joint attacks carried out by Greek Andarts and Ottoman military forces. Apostol's Detachment, with help from the Macedonian people, turned the Enidzhevardar Lake (Swamp) into something like a state within a state. Many times the village militia repulsed Greek Andart attacks and successfully carried out several battles against the Greek Andarts, forcing their leaders to admit that the Macedonian villagers fought skillfully and bravely. Speaking about the resistance of the villagers, Dikonimos-Makris, a longtime Andart leader, pointed out that "Women also took part in the battles and attacked us with stones. Some, the more determined ones, attacked us with axes in their hands..." Makris wrote about a battle in which the Ottoman army retreated and the Macedonian village militia won and forced the Greek Andarts to retreat. The village militia liquidated several Andart detachments and their leaders. Despite being attacked from many sides, the Macedonian people showed extraordinary military ability and courage, which had to be recognized by its enemies.

## GREATER SERBIA ARMED PROPAGANDA

After the Ilinden Uprising ended, the government of the Kingdom of Serbia actively engaged in the formation, financing and management of a Chetnik (Insurgent) organization, whose activities were entirely aimed at Macedonia. After the Serbian Chetnik Organization was formed it activated a new phase of propaganda through the Serbian government, not like the previous propaganda activities that were conducted through churches and schools. In a short period of time the Kingdom of Serbia created a well-organized Serbian Chetnik paramilitary organization whose activities were especially noticeable in places in Macedonia such as Kumanovo, Skopje, Palanka, Kratovo, Prilep, Brod and Kichevo Regions. The Serbian organization was less influential in other parts of Macedonia. This is how it was implemented to serve the special interests of the Kingdom of Serbia in Macedonia, which was in line with the conditions created before through the church and school propaganda machine. The Serbian Chetnik organization showed its greatest ferocity when it fought against the so-called “Bulgarian troops and Bulgarian-ism in Macedonia” because, according to Serbian political factors, the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization was a “Bulgarian organization”. In other words the Serbian Chetnik Organization’s main goal was to fight against the Macedonian Internal Organization, while its war against the Ottoman authorities in Macedonia was a secondary goal. The Serbian Chetniks were particularly brutal against the Macedonian insurgents and villagers made sure to take extraordinary care to avoid them. There were many bloody clashes between the Serbian Chetniks and the Bulgarian supremacists, Sarafov’s forces, Greeks Andarts, as well as Macedonian liberation movement detachments belonging to the left. The Serbian Chetniks, along with all the others, inflicted a lot of damage on the Macedonian people. Macedonia was turned into a real bloody arena.

The Serbian government began to form the first Serbian Chetnik Detachments in 1904. At first, the Serbian government pretended that this was the action of “a private initiative put together by a few ardent Serbian nationalists”. On the contrary, behind this action stood the most responsible political circles of the Serbian royal government. The Serbian Chetnik organization in Macedonia was

centrally managed by the Serbian government. In this sense, the Serbian government also used Boris Sarafov for its purposes by giving him money. In return for receiving money, Sarafov gave the Serbian government information on how to infiltrate Macedonian territories. This is how the first Serbian Chetnik Detachment, led by Gligor Sokolovich, entered Macedonia. By doing so, Boris Sarafov grossly violated the principles of the Macedonian Internal Organization.

The Serbian Chetnik Detachments began to act more intensively after 1905, when they were given their final organizational form. In addition to establishing a Supreme Board, as the highest political governing body of the Serbian Chetnik Organization, a Main Board was also established in 1905. Both Boards were based in Belgrade and both operationally managed the Serbian Chetnik Organizations. The most directly connected and in charge of the Chetnik activities in Macedonia were the Main Board in Vranje and the Executive Board located near the Serbian-Ottoman border in Vranje vicinity. However, conflict and duplication soon emerged in the work of these boards. Because of that in December 1905 both boards were abolished. Only one was recreated in Vranje and renamed the Executive Board. The Executive Board took over all the functions previously held by the other Boards. In 1905, during the formation of the Executive Board, the Serbian Chetnik organization had 11 Detachments with a total of 62 Chetniks operating in Macedonia and 55 Chetniks who were temporarily on vacation in Vranje.

The Serbian Chetnik Organization was a secret paramilitary organization that followed a number of principles and a constitution which determined the scope of the work done by all people in the organization. The organization consisted of local boards, sub-boards and boards, formed in larger and smaller places in Serbia and Macedonia. Main boards in Macedonia existed in Skopje and Bitola; sub-boards in Kumanovo, Veles, Debar, Ohrid, Prilep, Kichevo, and Krushevo. Local boards existed in Porechie, Drimkol, as well as in the villages where boards and sub-boards existed. All these positions were occupied mainly by teachers, priests and other people who worked for the Greater Serbia school and church propaganda machine.

In January 1908, the Serbian Chetnik Organization was subordinated to the Serbian Consul General in Skopje. This was done “for the sake of unity in the service...” This also elevated the Serbian consuls in Skopje to far more significant and prominent levels compared to the Serbian consuls in Bitola and Solun. Direct operational management of the Chetnik Detachments was placed under the leadership of two headquarters: Headquarters for East Povardarje and Headquarters for West Povardarje. One leader led the Chetnik forces on the left and another on the right of the Vardar River.

The detachments were composed of Chetniks from various professions. They included students who were exiled, upper class high school students who were seduced to defend the “Serbian-ness of the South” and poor and miserable villagers who were looking to make extra money for themselves and their loved ones.

By national composition, the Serbian Chetnik Detachments were composed mostly of Serbians with some Macedonian migrant workers who worked in Serbia and who fell into the network of the Serbian Chetnik Organization. To a lesser extent, there were also renegades or members of the Macedonian Internal Organization who were expelled from the Organization for various reasons.

Funds raised from voluntary donors weren’t sufficient enough to keep the Serbian Chetnik Organization afloat. Most of the funding the Chetnik Organization received came from the Serbian government through secret means. Not once did the Serbian Chetnik Organization fall short of funds. These funds enabled the Chetnik organization to recruit 300 Chetniks who operated in Macedonia during the summer months. Included among their Chetnik leaders were Gligor Sokolovich, Iovan Babunski, Iovach Dovezenski, Vasile Trbich, Giorgi Skoplianche, Spasa Garda, Krsta Kovachevich, Tsane Markovich, Petko Ilich and Iovan Peshich.

The Serbian Chetnik Organization was an armed Detachment of the Serbian bourgeoisie which was justified as a supposed offspring of “the Serbians in Macedonia”, which didn’t correspond to any historical truth. After the 1908 Young Turk Revolution ended, Serbian Chetnik activity in Macedonia stopped.

## SAFEGUARDING THE MACEDONIAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT IN SERES

Gotse Delchev wasn't the only one who felt that Macedonia should become self-sufficient and have its own principles for its independence. Gotse Delchev and the Macedonian national liberation movement had reliable followers who believed in his principles and on an independent Macedonia. Most of those followers were from the Seres Revolutionary District and had gathered there after the Ilinden Uprising ended. Most prominent among Delchev's followers was Iane Sandanski. The most revolutionary and principled core of the Macedonian Internal Organization was built in the Seres Revolutionary District where Delchev's principles were most energetically defended. After the Ilinden Uprising ended, this District took on many issues including writing letters in the defense of the Macedonian Internal Organization and its role in the Ilinden Uprising. On June 26, 1904, the Seres Revolutionary District leaders sent a letter to the group of Greeks in Melnik to clearly and unequivocally inform them of the Macedonian struggle's goals and let them know that the Macedonian question wasn't a Bulgarian issue and that the actions taken by supremacists inside and outside of the Internal Organization were Bulgarian interventions and interference in the Macedonian liberation movement. The letter also emphasized the internationalist character of the Macedonian struggle.

The Seres Revolutionary District leadership took concrete actions after the Ilinden Uprising ended to preserve the above-mentioned principles and to maintain the struggle in the proper course. On January 20, 1905, in a speech addressing all the District and sub-District committees, the Seres District leadership explained the aims of the struggle in the newly created conditions in Macedonia. The speech highlighted the already implemented Balkan country policies showing that they had aims on invading, occupying and dismantling Macedonia. While revealing these warlike policies, the Seres District leadership, with special emphasis, condemned the policies of the Bulgarian government towards Macedonia.

The Seres District leadership also conducted an analytical assessment of the situation in Macedonia and had sharp criticism for

the supremacists and Sarafov and his followers, as well as all others who, with their actions and deeds, inflicted damages on the Macedonian liberation movement especially during the Ilinden Uprising. By doing so, the leaders emphasized the need to take concrete measures to preserve the purity of the Macedonian national liberation movement.

## PASSING JUDGMENT ON BORIS SARAFOV AND IVAN GARVANOV

On December 23, 1906, Dame Gruev, one of the oldest leaders in the Macedonian Internal Organization, was killed in battle fighting against the Ottoman army on Petlets Peak, above the village Rusinovo in Maleshevo Region. After he was killed, which happened to be one year after he served in the Central Committee as an outside of Macedonia representative of the Macedonian Internal Organization, the Internal Organization began to again fall apart. In fact without a central leadership the Revolutionary Districts began to operate as if they were independent. This prompted the supremacists to reactivate and start taking control of the Internal Organization, especially in the interior of Macedonia. First Boris Sarafov, assisted by some leading figures from the Revolutionary Districts, then Ivan Garvanov and Hristo Matov became members of the Committee representing the Internal Organization outside of Macedonia. After they became members they began to intensify supremacist activities inside the Macedonian Internal Organization. They started sending armed detachments trained in Bulgaria to Macedonia in an attempt to disable and undermine the Macedonian Internal Organization's activities. As a result the struggle between the left and the right in the Macedonian liberation movement again began to fiercely flare up. In their zeal to destroy the struggle, the supremacists had a special tendency to invade the fortresses of the Macedonian Internal Organization in the Seres and Strumitsa Revolutionary Districts. In doing so they also attempted to assassinate Iane Sandanski, who was one of their greatest opponents. Once the Seres Revolutionary District Committee figured this out, it sentenced Boris Sarafov and Ivan Garvanov to death. The assassinations were carried out by Todor Panitsa in Sofia, in November 1907.

The elimination of Boris Sarafov and Ivan Garvanov was a surprise to some members of the Internal Organization and to the Macedonian public in general, which wasn't sufficiently acquainted with Sarafov's and Garvanov's destructive anti-Macedonian activities in Macedonia. To clear the air the Seres Revolutionary District Committee wrote "open letters" which were then published by the Internal Organization's press that explained the Internal Organization's motives for the assassinations.

One letter, written in December 1907, said that the leaders of the Seres Revolutionary District were compelled to eliminate Sarafov and Garvanov because they were prone to interfere in the Internal Organization and cause discontent. The letter emphasized that instead of the Internal Organization harnessing all its forces in solving problems arising from the internal situation in Macedonia and in the Organization itself, it was wasting its physical and intellectual efforts in constant quarrels and bloody and mutual clashes. It also emphasized that much of the Internal Organization's efforts were used to support Bulgarian state interests instead of supporting the Macedonian liberation movement.

Among the other things that were said in the letter presented about Boris Sarafov's character was the fact that he didn't care much about Macedonian interests and the destiny of the Macedonian people. He was a man who constantly used his revolutionary movement for speculation.

Sarafov's and Garvanov's elimination didn't end without consequences. During the Internal Organization's Kiustendil Congress, held 1908, a full and final split resulted in the relations that were previously established in the ranks of the Internal Organization. Only representatives from the right attended this congress. Representatives from the Seres and Strumitsa Revolutionary Districts, as well as some members of the Internal Organization's Central Committee, didn't take part in the Kiustendil Congress. The most essential issues discussed and decisions made by the right during this Congress were contrary to the decisions adopted at the Rila Congress. As a result the right became an open supporter of a policy that was contrary to the interests of the Macedonian national liberation movement. The left, although formally in the minority, firmly stood for an independent Macedonian revolutionary movement and, as events in Macedonia in 1908 showed, it was the best position to take.

## THE YOUNG TURK REVOLT

Economically and politically speaking the Ottoman Empire was one of the most backward countries in Europe. It was unable to develop economically and politically because it was socially very backwards.

The unequal economic relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Western capitalist states greatly hampered Ottoman economic development, which in turn had negative effects on social relations. The Ottoman Empire with its existing Ottoman customs, system and privileges prevented the creation and development of domestic industry. As a result of this absolutist economic policy, the Ottomans allowed foreign capital to become the owner of the Ottoman Empire and seize all its economic potential.

Foreign capitalists owned the railways, the large industrial enterprises, the mines, the power plants, the banks, etc. If we add to this the fact that almost all the reforms in the Ottoman state were carried out under foreign control we have to accept that everything in the Ottoman state was open and completely dependent on foreign capital. This dependency on foreigners to control everything inside the Ottoman state prompted a new movement called the Young Turk Movement, whose aim was to free the Ottoman state from foreign political and economic dependence. Also, basic social relations inside the Ottoman state were an impediment to the development of a domestic bourgeoisie. The Young Turk bourgeoisie, which consisted of a heterogeneous intelligentsia that included army officers, landlords and other liberal elements, began to organize an uprising against Sultan Abdul Hamid's medieval absolutist system. Their aim was to create a modern and contemporary Ottoman state.

The Young Turks, whose origins can be traced back to 1876, were a progressively social group in the Ottoman Empire, unlike the Old Turks (Ottomans), who were adherent to the existing absolutist system. The Young Turks began to form secret organizations inside the Ottoman state and outside. They formed the "Ottoman Committee for Unity and Progress" in Geneva, in 1891, which soon became the external centre for all Young Turk migrants. This Committee, with its printing press, also directed the Young Turk movement inside the Ottoman state. The most essential element of

the Young Turk agenda was to preserve the entire Ottoman Empire as a whole.

The Young Turk Organization in its struggle against the absolutist Ottoman system, sought to gain support for a national liberation movement from inside the Ottoman state. To accomplish this it held a Congress in Paris in 1907 which, in addition to the Young Turks, was attended by delegates from Armenia and Arab and Jewish organizations. Even representatives from the two winged Macedonian Internal Organization were invited. Hristo Matov, the leader of the right IMRO elite wing, declined the invitation. The left from the Macedonian national liberation movement, however, accepted the invitation. Despite the differences and the different and special interests that were expressed, the Paris Congress adopted a program that envisioned the overthrow of the absolutist system by any means possible and the introduction of a parliamentary regime in the Ottoman state.

In seeking to establish where to start the Uprising, the young Turks discovered that the best condition for this kind of action was Macedonia. This wasn't just a coincidence. There was already an existing revolutionary tradition and the right revolutionary conditions in Macedonia. The Macedonian revolutionary movement had a long-term plan for carrying out its mission. The Young Turk movement in the Ottoman state became visible especially after 1905, when it adopted Solun as its centre for the Young Turk movement, which had a considerable number of supporters in the officer ranks of the Third Army Corps, whose headquarters was in Solun.

The Young Turks were planning to carry out an armed attack on the Ottoman Empire in August 1908; however, an event took place outside of the Empire that threatened the Ottoman state's sovereignty which prompted the Young Turks to speed up preparations. That event was a meeting between the sovereigns of Russia and England during which they discussed what to do with Macedonia. The meeting took place in Reval, today's Tallinn the capital of Estonia. As a result, on July 3, 1908, Niazi Bey, commander of the Ottoman garrison in Resen, launched an operation against the local sultanate. Niazi Bey was soon joined by

the local Young Turk committees, which existed in the southwestern and western part of Macedonia.

Soon afterwards many more Ottomans and others joined the Young Turk insurgency and took control of the sultanate in Prespa, Ohrid, Ohrid Region, Struga, Debar and some Albanian cities. The same insurgents were soon joined by an Ottoman insurgency detachment from the Solun garrison commanded by Enver Bey. At that point the Ottomans sent an army to stop the insurgents but its soldiers obediently surrendered. Their commander Shemzi Pasha was captured and taken to Bitola where he was executed by the Young Turks.

While eliminating the local sultanate authorities, the Young Turk insurgents sent calls, appeals, proclamations and pleas to the Muslim and Christian populations in Macedonia, advertising their aims. They called on the population to remain calm until the Young Turks gained its cooperation and support.

The Young Turk insurgency grew fast in Macedonia. As a result, during the night of July 22, 1908, Young Turk insurgents stormed Bitola, took over the sultanate and released all political prisoners. Most of these prisoners were Macedonians and Albanians. As a result the local population became ecstatic and gave them its full admiration. A similar event took place in Solun on July 23, 1908, where once again all political prisoners were released from the Solun jails. In general there was joy and union shared between Muslims and Christians in many Macedonian cities. The Young Turks looked like promising rulers who had faith in a better future, in freedom, brotherhood and unity.

There was such an acceptance of the Young Turk movement by the general population that the Young Turks felt it was time to stand up to the Ottoman Sultan himself. As a result, on July 22, 1908, the Young Turks made serious demands on the Sultan to scrub the current rules and reinstate the 1876 Constitution which he himself had repealed in 1878. The Sultan accepted the demands and during the night of July 23-24, 1908, officially announced that the old Constitution was reinstated, thus introducing a constitutional regime in the Ottoman state. This meant that one of the most basic demands

the Young Turks had made was accepted. This event was welcome news for the masses because it practically heralded the end of Sultan Abdul Hamid's absolutism.

Re-introducing the Ottoman Constitution in the Ottoman state was a major event which opened up more opportunities for the people in the Ottoman Empire. This also enabled the social and political forces in Macedonia to take legal actions. As a result all political organizations in Macedonia had to adapt to the new Ottoman political situation. Even before the Ottoman Constitution was reinstated, Iane Sandanski, leader of the left in the Macedonian national liberation movement, made contact with the Young Turks and placed several of his own demands, which the Young Turks accepted. In order to gain their cooperation Sandanski demanded that the Macedonian revolutionary activities of the left be made legal. He also demanded that all foreign propaganda activities in Macedonia be resolved.

Among other demands the left insisted on was for the Young Turks to create a parliamentary government in the country and to allow district and municipal self-government where the various nationalities could develop and flourish. The left also demanded that the feudal system, which depended on taxes in kind, be removed. Most of these demands were accepted because the Young Turks were extremely interested in strengthening their new order.

After he gained agreement of his demands, Sandanski made sure that the Macedonian insurgents in the Seres Revolutionary District could operate legally. He took one of his Detachments to Melnik and proved that he was welcome without any resistance. At the same time Hristo Chernopeev and his Detachment entered Strumitsa without any resistance. Being allowed to operate without being pursued by the Ottoman army wasn't only a relief for the Macedonian Detachments but generally brought joy and enthusiasm to the Macedonian population. After entering and being welcomed in Melnik without resistance, on July 30, 1908, Iane Sandanski decided to go to Solun. There too he was welcomed by the Young Turks. On July 31, 1908, Sandanski issued a manifesto calling on the Macedonian population to accept the Young Turk regime and to defend it from its enemies.

Macedonian Detachments everywhere in Macedonia were able to operate without resistance from the Ottomans. Insurgent leaders Sande and Milan Giurlukov with their Detachment of 11 insurgents visited Veles without any resistance. Insurgent leader Stefan visited Radovish, Gerasim and Dimitria Boiadzhiev visited Maleshevo, Dimitar the insurgent leader of Kratovo visited Kriva Palanka and so on. Even Ottoman and Albanian Detachments were making their rounds without being attacked as was the case of Riza Nuredin, Mustafa and others.

But sometime later, in order to accommodate Serbian demands, the Serbian armed propaganda detachments were also allowed to freely operate in Macedonia. This was accepted by the left of the Macedonian liberation movement and with distrust by the right, which at that time was led by Hristo Matov and Todor Alexandrov. This was after the right tried to stop the Serbians from operating freely and failed. After the failure all Detachments were freed and ordered to prepare to defend the Ottoman Empire. All Greek armed propaganda detachments were also ordered to do the same. And so, during the Young Turk Revolt the foreign propaganda war waged by the various insurgencies in Macedonia was temporarily halted.

Allowing all the insurgencies in Macedonia to freely operate in aid of the Young Turk regime created new conditions for the Macedonian Internal Liberation Movement. As we said earlier, the left in the Macedonian liberation movement sincerely embraced the Young Turks. As leaders of the left, the Seres revolutionaries were joined by other prominent Macedonian revolutionary figures such as Giorce Petrov, Dimo Hadzi Dimov, Pere Toshev and so on, who in the new social circumstances sought to gain as many benefits for the Macedonian people as possible, especially in the agrarian sector. Striving for a solution to the agrarian sector, in fact meant attaching the peasants to the new regime and categorically rejecting all illusions with which they were being deceived by the foreign propaganda.

## THE PEOPLE'S FEDERAL PARTY AND OTHER POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS

The Macedonian Seres, Strumitsa and Solun Revolutionary Districts belonged to the Internal Macedonian - Odrin Revolutionary Organization. All these Organizations were attached to the left and led by Iane Sandanski. In addition to leading the above-mentioned District Organizations, the left also led separate groups in the Bitola and Skopje Districts. With the emergence of the Young Turk Revolution in July 1908, the left focused its efforts on building a broader Macedonian Liberation Movement, seeking to unite all individual organizations, groups and individuals around a common and wider platform. As a result the Macedonian leaders reached an agreement to create a new Macedonian political party, which they named the People's Federal Party, with aims to replace the work carried out by the Internal Macedonian - Odrin Revolutionary Organization with a somewhat different content in its political program.

By August 1909 the Macedonian leaders worked out a new political program for their Party and were ready to hold their first Congress. The Congress was held in Solun during which a program, a statute and several resolutions were adopted and a Central Leadership was appointed with Dimitar Vlahov as its leader. Dimitar Vlahov was an already elected member of the Ottoman Parliament, elected in 1908. Unfortunately the Macedonians were unable to resolve everything about their Party and unity wasn't achieved. Soon after that Iane Sandanski was expelled from the party because certain factors in the Party sought to get rid of the revolutionary elements from it. Sandanski's supporters insisted that Sandanski's expulsion was unfair and sought to convene an Extraordinary Party Congress to resolve this issue. The Extraordinary Congress was held in April 1910, during which the Bulgarian Exarchate, the Greek Patriarchate and the Young Turk regime were condemned because of the negative attitude they had taken towards the Macedonian church and school communities in Macedonia.

The Extraordinary Congress also looked at the general political situation in Macedonia and decided to adopt several resolutions, with special emphasis on the agrarian sector. The Party leadership

also rejected the First Founding Congress and elected a new one. Included in the membership of the New Congress were Dr. Hristo Tenchev, President and representative of Macedonian progressive citizenship, and members Dimitar Miraschiev, Chudomir Kantardzhiev, Aleksandar Buinov and Taska Spaso. From the composition of the New Congress it can be seen that Sandanski's supporters won this round.

Unfortunately the Young Turk regime didn't last long. Not everyone in the Ottoman state was happy with what the Young Turks were doing, especially with regards to how they handled domestic political and economic issues. In retaliation, in August 1910, the Ottoman Young Turk Parliament passed a law to ban the People's Federal Party, the Macedonian people's first legal political party established during the Young Turk revolution.

The People's Federal Party program was created to serve the Macedonian people's needs in the Ottoman state's newly created political conditions, as afforded by the introduction of the Constitution and the parliamentary regime. The Party's main program was to focus on the Ottoman state's reorganization, government decentralization, autonomy for the various nationalities in certain areas of the country and limited self-government in the districts and municipalities. With its Party program, the People's Federal Party was prepared to create a federation of nationalities in the Ottoman state in which Macedonia was to become a legal separate self-governing state and then struggle for equality for all peoples and nationalities in the Ottoman state.

In terms of social and economic requirements, the People's Federal Party program called for satisfying the basic economic needs of the Macedonian peasantry by eliminating all feudal remnants, transferring fiefdom lands to the peasants, protecting workers from over-exploitation, as well as eliminating all types of taxes and replacing them with income tax.

In its struggle to implement its Party program, the People's Federal Party, through its press, rallies and other form of communication, sought to advertise its demands to the broader masses in order to encourage the Ottoman Parliament to review and modernize the

agrarian sector. One aspect of the program in which the People's Federal Party achieved some results was the implementation of its education policy.

In the school year 1909/1910, the People's Federal Party managed to take away about 70 schools from the Bulgarian Exarchate and give them to the local Macedonian municipalities to manage. Taking the schools away from the Bulgarian Exarchate caused great concern among all the foreign propaganda organizers in Macedonia. Taking away their educational institutions was disastrous for propagating their propaganda, financed to denationalize the Macedonian youth in Macedonia.

When the Young Turks took control of Macedonia, the Bulgarian government was forced to change its propaganda practices in Macedonia. While the Young Turk Revolution was taking place the Bulgarian government and the Bulgarian bourgeoisie exercised their influence and actions through the right wing of the Macedonian Internal Organization and through the Exarchate church and school institutions. In order to strengthen Bulgarian influence in Macedonia and fill the space Matov and his supporters had left open, a new political organization was created called the Union of Bulgarian Constitutional Clubs.

Immediately after its formation, the Macedonians who served in the Exarchate up to now including some of the Macedonian intelligentsia joined the Union of Bulgarian Constitutional Clubs. In its program documents the Union of Bulgarian Clubs revealed its pro-Bulgarian goals exercised by part of the Macedonian intelligentsia and part of the Macedonians who served the Exarchate through the Bulgarian schools and institutions in Macedonia, which were supported by the Bulgarian state. However, the Union of Bulgarian Constitutional Clubs didn't last long. In November 1909, the Union of Constitutional Clubs was banned in accordance with the Law on Political Associations.

In April 1909, Panche Dorev, member of the Ottoman Parliament from the Bitola province, tried to form a new political party called the Ottoman Progressive Party. Contrary to what the Union of Constitutional Clubs was doing, the Ottoman Progressive Party

wanted to settle Macedonian and Ottoman issues in the Ottoman Constitutional state by smooth and peaceful means. Unfortunately Panche Dorev's initiative failed.

Another organization that was banned in accordance with the Law on Political Associations was a Serbian organization. This organization worked for Greater Serbian interests in Macedonia. After the Serbian armed detachments, organized by the Serbian government, were shut down the Serbians sought to establish a legal political organization in Macedonia, which would continue to serve Serbian interests and the Serbian propaganda in Macedonia but through new forms and methods. To accomplish this, the Serbian government, in February 1909, created the political Organization of the Ottoman Serbs in Macedonia. According to its program principles this was a nationalist political organization working for Greater Serbian interests. This organization was banned in January 1910.

After the Greek Andart detachments were legalized by the Young Turks in July 1908, the Greeks tried to modify the way of propagating their propaganda activities in Macedonia. The Greek initiatives to create clubs in Macedonia during the Young Turk Revolution originated in the Greek colony in Tsari Grad (Istanbul) where a Greek political centre was established. Clubs and other types of associations were created and served as disseminators of Greek propaganda.

The Greek Club political program especially emphasized the need for observing Greek Patriarchal privileges in relation to churches and schools in Macedonia. However, that wasn't how the Macedonian people saw the Greek propaganda machine in Macedonia. A large number of Macedonians left the Patriarchate and moved to the Exarchate. The Exarchate churches and schools, being Slavic institutions, were more attractive to Macedonians than the Greek institutions, especially since the Macedonians weren't allowed to have their own independent Macedonian Church. The Greek Clubs were banned in November 1909.

But just because the legal foreign propaganda political organizations were banned in Macedonia didn't mean that the propaganda

machines were removed. They were just reformed to operate by different means.

Albanian clubs were initially opened in Albania and then, during the Young Turk Revolution, replicated in Skopje, Bitola, Solun and Debar. Albanian national and political aspirations were then promoted through the various activities conducted in these clubs. The Albanian clubs, it seemed, had no general political programs attached to them. Their single drive was to gain Albanian national autonomy in the Ottoman state which would allow for the opening of Albanian language schools using the Latin alphabet as the Albanian national alphabet.

The Young Turks opposed the ongoing Albanian clubs, which confirmed that they didn't want to enable the national emancipation of Albanians from the Ottomans. With regards to Macedonian Albanian relations, the Macedonian People's Federal Party cooperated with the Albanian Clubs during this period, especially in 1909 when volunteers and detachments from both sides took part in the suppression of the counter-revolution to dethrone Sultan Abdul Hamid and appoint Sultan Mehmed Reshat V.

The political conditions in Macedonia during this period also allowed growth to take place in the labour and socialist movement in Macedonia.

Unfortunately, as was shown in the last years of Young Turk rule in Macedonia, the Young Turks were inconsistent in how they implemented their proclaimed principles. There were both internal and external factors which created obstacles for them. The Young Turk regime, by nature, was a bourgeoisie democratic organization which struggled for the interests of the Ottoman and non-Ottoman people in the Ottoman state.

In their quest to solve the problem of where and how to settle the Muslim colonists in Macedonia, the Young Turks used force and terror tactics which overshadowed their positive contribution in the development of social, political and economic relations in the Empire. Not to mention the terror actions the Young Turks took in collecting weapons from the Macedonian population and

implementing laws against political associations. Unfortunately some of these actions the Young Turks took were a precondition to satisfy insurgent demands. The right IMRO wing, led by Todor Alexandrov, for example resumed its armed activities serving Bulgarian bourgeoisie aspirations. The Bulgarians were soon joined by the Greeks and Serbians. In 1911 both Serbian and Greek armed gangs resumed their terrorist activities in Macedonia, worsening the situation for the Macedonian people. All these activities were a prelude to the preparation for a Balkan war to drive the Ottomans out of the Balkan Peninsula and to seize foreign territories.

Despite all efforts that the Macedonian people made to liberate themselves, they still remained enslaved until 1944 when only one part of divided Macedonia was liberated.

## **SOME OF GOTSE DELCHEV'S THOUGHTS**

We do not hate the Ottomans as a people but fight against their ruling system of government.

I understand the world solely as a field for cultural competition among nations.

Chauvinism obscures even the brightest idea.

The Macedonian people's organization is necessary in order to destroy slavery, not to conduct trade.

An idea cannot be accepted through weapons, but through examples.

A worker is one who serves the people and not himself over the people.

There should not and cannot be a measure of sacrifice; it ends, when necessary, with both name and honour.

I do not want to start an uprising with people who will leave me at first failure; I want to be in a revolution with citizens able to withstand all difficulties and a long struggle, which due to the fierce political conditions will be our struggle.

Macedonia's liberation lies in an internal uprising. Whoever thinks otherwise is lying to themselves and to others.

If tyranny is violence, revolution is violence against violence.

Taking tyranny from tyrants, for the purposes of the revolution has a historical justification.

We need to seek faith in the success of the struggle within ourselves and others. If that faith is absent we need to create it, if it is there we need to awaken it and kindle the fire of struggle.

The revolutionary rises in the consciousness of the people through his deeds. The rebel is not yet a revolutionary.

We are fighting for a free and independent Macedonia with broader rights for the poor population.

Macedonian culture is a necessity in order to properly develop the Macedonian revolution.

## SOME BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Gotse Delchev was born on January 23, 1872, in the city Kukush. In his early years he attended Catholic school and later he enrolled in an Exarchate school. After that he enrolled in the Solun high school where he was one of the best students. There he became involved in various secret student circles and even led one. Later more Macedonian students took part in those circles and some became prominent Macedonian revolutionaries.

After finishing high school, in the second half of 1891, Gotse Delchev enrolled in the military school in Sofia. He knew that military knowledge would be needed in order to liberate Macedonia. Because Delchev registered himself a socialist at the academy he was found unsuitable to join the Bulgarian army. Unfortunately, for other reasons, 2-3 months before he finished his military studies Delchev was expelled from the academy.

He gladly accepted the expulsion because that way he could immediately leave for Macedonia and put himself in the service of the people who were preparing to fight for their liberation.

## SONGS

# BLACK PLAGUE STRUCK

Black plague struck,  
Down there in Macedonia,  
Down there in Demirkapia.

Who will be chosen to be a hero?  
To put down the plague?  
A hero has been found,  
Young Delche, a young leader,  
Rose in Macedonia,  
To put down the plague.

Black clouds formed,  
Down in Macedonia,  
Down in Demirkapia.

Are they black clouds?  
Or are they black rogue Ottomans?  
They are not black clouds,  
They are not rogue Ottoman,  
They are Detachments of insurgents,  
They are rebels and their leaders.

They are carrying our wounded hero,  
Our wounded hero - young Delche,  
Young Delche, our young leader.

Delche spoke to the Detachment:  
My faithful friends, companions,  
Tomorrow you will go,  
To our troubled country.

When you pass,  
Through my city Kukush,  
My mother will welcome you,  
About me she will ask:

“Where is my son, young Delche?”  
You will tell her:  
“Young Delche is engaged,  
To the girl Macedonia,  
An enslaved dark country!”

# WHAT I LOVE AND VALUE

What do I love and value?  
A young rebel to become,  
To go with Iane Sandanski,  
Across the wide Drama Region fields,  
To carry a rifle,  
And a sharp French sword,  
To fight Greek spies,  
And our Ottoman enemies!