Timeline

Macedonian History at a Glance

-

Chronology of key events

Compiled by Risto Stefov

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Chronology of key events

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-- PREHISTORY --

240,000 B.C. - A fossil of Homo erectus was uncovered in Patraloni, Chalcidice near Solun, dating back to this period.

10,000 B.C. - Latest ice age retreats from the Balkans.

7,000 B.C. - First "tell" type settlements built with clay bricks appear near Solun. First signs of agriculture appear in the Aegean part of the Balkans over the Vardar River along the Danube and widening towards Europe. The Lepenski Vir cult and paleographyisms begin to appear.

6,000 B.C. - Footsteps of human culture appear in the terrain along the flow of the Vardar, Bistritsa, Tsrna and Bregalitsa Rivers.

5,500-3,500 B.C. - Neolithic settlement found in the village Dupiak on the shore of Lake Kostur in Western Macedonia. First paleographyisms appear. Macedonians are settling on the shores of the Bistritsa River.

3,500 B.C. - Pelazgians traveling over Asia Minor arrive and settle in Balkan Pelazgia.

3,500-2,500 B.C. - Diminit culture in Magnesia (Macedonian tribes) and Minoan tablets appear. Podunavtsi (Minoans, Lapits, Tirons, Flegeans in Eolia) (Thessaly).

2,300 B.C. - Makedon son of Osiris, the Macedonian Mythological Dynasty, and Makedon son of Zeus, the Macedonian Mythological Dynasty appear.

2,100-1,900 B.C. - The Armenooro (Rupishta) culture appears in Pelagonia and Thessaly.

1,700 B.C. - Linear A writing finds its way into the Aegean culture.

1,600 B.C. - Migration of the Achaeans to Thessalean Phtiotida, and later to Achaea in the Peloponnesus and in Asia Minor took place under the leadership of Pelop.

1,500-1,200 B.C. - Linear B writing found its way in Crete, Mikena and Pil.

1,400 B.C. - Mikena is founded.

1,300 B.C. - Makedon's Mythical Dynasty begins according to Hesiod.

1,313 B.C. - Cadmus of Phoenicia finds Thebes. Phoenician script comes to the City States.

1,294 B.C. - Macedonian kings Pirrhus, Aematea and Pind appear.

1,248 B.C. - Orpheus, king of Macedonia invents alphabet

1,225 B.C. - Midas becomes king of Macedonia

1,225 B.C. - Argonaut expedition begins

The Argonaut, Minoan and other Aeolian expeditions begin.

1,213 B.C. - "War of the seven against Thebes" begins

1,200 B.C. - Illyrian, Dorian and Epirean migration of the people of the sea begins and so does the migration of the Phrygians, Strimoneans and Bithynians from the Balkans to Asia Minor. Macedonian free migration of Baeotians from Pind to Baeotia and Tespotians to Thessaly. Agamemnon is crowned.

1,200 (1193) B.C. - Trojan Wars begin

1,119 (1,183) B.C. - Troy falls

1,124 B.C. - Exodus of Achaeans from Thessaly to Aeolia in Asia Minor.

1,120 B.C. - Dorian settlement of Thessaly begins. Exodus of the Aeolians.

1,104 B.C. - Dorians conquer Peloponnesus

Dorians with help from the Macedonians conquer and settle the Peloponnesus. Exodus of the Aeolians from the Peloponnesus to Aeolia in Asia Minor.

1,068 or 1,050 B.C. - Dorians conquer Athens

1,044 B.C. - Exodus of Ionians from Balkans to Ionia in Asia Minor.

1000 B.C. - Macedonians, formed during the Iron Age, from Brygian substratum and from Indo-European super stratum settled here at the end of the II millennium; the Macedonians, according to legends got their name from the mythological ancestor Macedon (Hes. Ap. Const. Prph., de them). Maketa, the oldest name of Macedonia (Makedonis), after the mythological original ancestor Maketa (Hes; Eoeae. Fr. 7).

850 B.C. - Process of establishing a mutual state is run by the first Macedonian dynasty, the Argeadai which originated from Argos Orestikon (App., Syr., 63; Diod., VII, 15; G. Sync., I, 373); Of the legendary rulers, the last three, Caranus, cca 796, Koinos and Tirimus (Diod., VII, 15; Eusebios, Hronika, I), were most probably historical kings.

-- ANCIENT HISTORY --

808 B.C. - Caranus (808-778) is believed to have been the first king to rule the Macedonian kingdom. According to Aleksandar Donski the name Caran(us) might be connected to the present day Macedonian noun ‘kruna’ (a crown). The name ‘Karanche’ is present in today’s Macedonian onomasticon.

778 B.C. - Coinus (778–750) becomes king of Macedonia.

776 B.C. - First Olympic Games and restoration

750 B.C. - Homer. Homer created true literary masterpieces that are enjoyed as much today, as they were in the days of Alexander the Great. Originally, Homer's stories were folktales told and retold for centuries until they were immortalized in print in the 6th century BC. What is most interesting about Homer's stories, especially the Iliad, is that they were originally written in the prehistoric Macedonian language. The first paleolinguist to openly proclaim the similarities between the words of the Iliad and those of the modern Slavic languages was the German Homerologist, Pasov. Inspired by Pasov and others, researcher Odisej Belchevsky has furthered the study by illustrating the fundamental relationship between the modern Macedonian language and the language of Homer. Homer in his works the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey", considered to be reliable sources for the so called "Greek Mythology" and the "Greek gods", NEVER ONCE mentions the word "Greek" or any other name derived from this word!

750 B.C. - Chyrimasus (750–707) (Tyrimmas?) becomes king of Macedonia.

700 B.C. - Hesiod. According to Encarta, mythology in written form appeared for the first time in the literary works of Hesiod and Homer around the eighth century BC. Homer, as we know, produced the famous works the "Iliad" and "Odyssey" and Hesiod produced the poems "Theogony". Both authors in their respective works talk about the various tales and legends associated with ancient deities. Hesiod, however, according to Encarta, takes a step further and introduces a larger number of myths that include deities that are not mentioned by Homer. Hesiod, in "Theogony", who talks about the creation of the world, the birth of the gods as well as their adventures, NEVER ONCE mentions "Greek" or any other name derived from this word!

700 B.C. - Perdiccas I (700-678) appears in Orestis (Argos Orestikon-Rupishta, Kostur Region) in Western Macedonia. Perdiccas is the founder of the Macedonian historical Argaed Dynasty. The first Macedonian throne is established in Aegae.

We know from Herodotus that Perdiccas and his brothers moved the Macedonian center but no date for the move was given. “Herodotus (8.183) wrote that ‘[Perdiccas] came to another part of Macedonia and settled near the gardens named after Midas, son of Gordias…above the garden rises the mountain called Bermion, unassailable in winter’.” (Page 65, Eugene Borza, In the Shadow of Olympus The Emergence of Macedon, New Jersey, 1990) I believe this other part of Macedonia, to which Herodotus is referring, is located near the city of present day Voden. Being capable of living in mountainous terrain, I believe the Macedonians descended to Voden via a more direct route over the mountains rather than following the Bistritsa River, as some historians have argued. Unconfirmed, is my belief that Aegae was established near Voden during the 7th century BC and became the second Macedonian capital. Hammond estimates that Perdiccas came to the throne in 650BC. (Page 11, Hammond, The Miracle that was Macedonia)

Beyond some stories about his younger days, there is little information written about Perdiccas and his accomplishments as the first king of Aegae. Translated by George Rawlinson, here is what Herodotus has to say about Perdiccas. “Three brothers, descendants of Temenus, fled from Argos to the Illyrians; their names were Gauanes, Aeropus, and Perdiccas. From Illyria they went across to Upper Macedonia, where they came to a certain town called Lebaea. There they hired themselves out to serve the king in different employs; one tended the horses; another looked after the cows; while Perdiccas, who was the youngest, took charge of the smaller cattle. In those early times poverty was not confined to the people: kings themselves were poor, and so here it was the king's wife who cooked the victuals. Now, whenever she baked the bread, she always observed that the loaf of the labouring boy Perdiccas swelled to double its natural size. So the queen, finding this never failed, spoke of it to her husband. Directly that it came to his ears, the thought struck him that it was a miracle, and boded something of no small moment. He therefore sent for the three labourers, and told them to begone out of his dominions. They answered, ‘they had a right to their wages; if he would pay them what was due, they were quite willing to go.’ Now it happened that the sun was shining down the chimney into the room where they were; and the king, hearing them talk of wages, lost his wits, and said, ‘There are the wages which

you deserve; take that- I give it you!' and pointed, as he spoke, to the sunshine. The two elder brothers, Gauanes and Aeropus, stood aghast at the reply, and did nothing; but the boy, who had a knife in his hand, made a mark with it round the sunshine on the floor of the room, and said, 'O king! we accept your payment.' Then he received the light of the sun three times into his bosom, and so went away; and his brothers went with him. When they were gone, one of those who sat by told the king what the youngest of the three had done, and hinted that he must have had some meaning in accepting the wages given. Then the king, when he heard what had happened, was angry, and sent horsemen after the youths to slay them. Now there is a river in Macedonia to which the descendants of these Argives offer sacrifice as their saviour. This stream swelled so much, as soon as the sons of Temenus were safe across, that the horsemen found it impossible to follow. So the brothers escaped into another part of Macedonia, and took up their abode near the place called 'the Gardens of Midas, son of Gordias.' In these gardens there are roses which grow of themselves, so sweet that no others can come near them, and with blossoms that have as many as sixty petals apiece. It was here, according to the Macedonians, that Silenus was made a prisoner. Above the gardens stands a mountain called Bermius, which is so cold that none can reach the top. Here the brothers made their abode; and from this place by, degrees they conquered all Macedonia." (From the first Book of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, ~440 BC THE HISTORY OF HERODOTUS, translated by George Rawlinson).

678 B.C. - Argaeus I (678- 640) becomes king of Macedonia.

645 B.C. - Phillip I (645-640) becomes king of Macedonia.

602 B.C. - Aeropus I (602-576) becomes king of Macedonia.

576 B.C. - Alcetas (576-547) becomes king of Macedonia.

541 B.C. - Amyntas I (541-498) becomes king of Macedonia.

540 B.C. - King Amyntas becomes a Persian Vassal

512 B.C. - Persian Invasion (512-497)

In an attempt to encircle the Black Sea, Persian forces crossed over the Bosporus Strait around 513 BC, defeated eastern Thrace, and marched westward up to the Struma basin. Victorious over the Thracians, King Darius left Megabazus, one of his commanders, in charge of his forces and returned to Persia. After making peace with the rest of the Thracian tribes, Megabazus deported some of the captured population to Asia, presumably for slave labour, and sent envoys to Macedonia to offer the Macedonians an opportunity for a peaceful settlement. Fearing the Persian wrath, king Amyntas offered no resistance and graciously accepted the envoys. As the story goes, everything went well until the Persians demanded that Macedonian women entertain them for the night. That demand did not sit well with the Macedonians and the Persian envoys disappeared, never to be found.

Here is what Herodotus had to say. As for Megabazus, he no sooner brought the Paeonians under, than he sent into Macedonia an embassy of Persians, choosing for the purpose the seven men of most note in all the army after himself. These persons were to go to Amyntas, and require him to give earth and water to King Darius. Now there is a very short cut from the Lake Prasias across to Macedonia. Quite close to the lake is the mine which yielded afterwards a talent of silver a day to Alexander; and from this mine you have only to cross the mountain called Dysorum to find yourself in the Macedonian territory. So the Persians sent upon this errand, when they reached the court, and were brought into the presence of Amyntas, required him to give earth and water to King Darius. And Amyntas not only gave them what they asked, but also invited them to come and feast with him; after which he made ready the board with great magnificence, and entertained the Persians in right friendly fashion. Now when the meal was over, and they were all set to the drinking, the Persians said- "Dear Macedonian, we Persians have a custom when we make a great feast to bring with us to the board our wives and concubines, and make them sit beside us. Now then, as thou hast received us so kindly, and feasted us so handsomely, and givest moreover earth and water to King Darius, do also after our custom in this matter." Then Amyntas answered- "O, Persians! We have no such custom as this; but with us men and

women are kept apart. Nevertheless, since you, who are our lords, wish it, this also shall be granted to you." When Amyntas had thus spoken, he bade some go and fetch the women. And the women came at his call and took their seats in a row over against the Persians. Then, when the Persians saw that the women were fair and comely, they spoke again to Amyntas and said, that "what had been done was not wise; for it had been better for the women not to have come at all, than to come in this way, and not sit by their sides, but remain over against them, the torment of their eyes." So Amyntas was forced to bid the women sit side by side with the Persians. The women did as he ordered; and then the Persians, who had drunk more than they ought, began to put their hands on them, and one even tried to give the woman next him a kiss. King Amyntas saw, but he kept silence, although sorely grieved, for he greatly feared the power of the Persians. Alexander, however, Amyntas' son, who was likewise there and witnessed the whole, being a young man and unacquainted with suffering, could not any longer restrain himself. He therefore, full of wrath, spoke thus to Amyntas:- "Dear father, thou art old and shouldst spare thyself. Rise up from table and go take thy rest; do not stay out the drinking. I will remain with the guests and give them all that is fitting." Amyntas, who guessed that Alexander would play some wild prank, made answer:- "Dear son, thy words sound to me as those of one who is well nigh on fire, and I perceive thou sendest me away that thou mayest do some wild deed. I beseech thee make no commotion about these men, lest thou bring us all to ruin, but bear to look calmly on what they do. For myself, I will even withdraw as thou biddest me." Amyntas, when he had thus besought his son, went out; and Alexander said to the Persians, "Look on these ladies as your own, dear strangers, all or any of them- only tell us your wishes. But now, as the evening wears, and I see you have all had wine enough, let them, if you please, retire, and when they have bathed they shall come back again." To this the Persians agreed, and Alexander, having got the women away, sent them off to the harem, and made ready in their room an equal number of beardless youths, whom he dressed in the garments of the women, and then, arming them with daggers, brought them in to the Persians, saying as he introduced them, "Methinks, dear Persians, that your entertainment has fallen short in nothing. We have set before you all that we had ourselves in store, and all that we could anywhere find to give you- and now, to crown

the whole, we make over to you our sisters and our mothers, that you may perceive yourselves to be entirely honoured by us, even as you deserve to be- and also that you may take back word to the king who sent you here, that there was one man, the satrap of Macedonia, by whom you were both feasted and lodged handsomely." So speaking, Alexander set by the side of each Persian one of those whom he had called Macedonian women, but who were in truth men. And these men, when the Persians began to be rude, dispatched them with their daggers. So the ambassadors perished by this death, both they and also their followers. For the Persians had brought a great train with them, carriages, and attendants, and baggage of every kind- all of which disappeared at the same time as the men themselves. Not very long afterwards the Persians made strict search for their lost embassy; but Alexander, with much wisdom, hushed up the business, bribing those sent on the errand, partly with money, and partly with the gift of his own sister Gygaea, whom he gave in marriage to Bubares, a Persian, the chief leader of the expedition which came in search of the lost men. Thus the death of these Persians was hushed up, and no more was said of it.} (From the first Book of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, ~440 BC THE HISTORY OF HERODOTUS, translated by George Rawlinson).

500 B.C. - King Alcetas widens Macedonia's frontiers

498 B.C. - Alexander I (498-454) becomes king of Macedonia. Alexander I, called the Philhellene. In 478 B.C. Lower Macedonia is united up to Ennea Hodoi (later Amphipolis) on the river Strymon to the East, and to Pydna to the South. Alexander is a Persian ally in the Greco-Persian wars. The first coins bearing the king's name are struck. Around 460 B.C. Herodotus visits Macedonia and describes the Greco-Persian wars from a Macedonian point of view (Interpretatio macedonica). So Macedonia emerges on the international political scene.

It is believed that Alexander I died of old age in 454 BC, at age 80. Alexander's reign lasted 43 years from 497 to 454 BC. Alexander fathered at least six children. Three were male and legitimate heirs to the Macedonian throne but it was his son Perdiccas II who rose above all and became ruler and king.

495 B.C. - Alexander I to organize infantry and cavalry in Macedonia and to participate in Olympic Games.

484 B.C. - Herodotus (484-424) - I want to mention here that in spite of Greek claims otherwise, Irodot (Herodotus) was not from the City States and definitely not from Athens. Herodotus was Karian, born in the city Halicarnassus in Asia Minor.

480 B.C. - Macedonians participate in Salamian battle on the side of the City States.

479 B.C. - Macedonians assist the City States in the battle at Platea.

454 B.C. - Perdiccas II (454-413) becomes king of Macedonia.

453 B.C. - Perdiccas II starts war between the Athens maritime power and Sparta which lead the Peloponnesian league (Thuk., Pel., I, 57) and initiated the creation of an Olynthian league from the Greek colonies on Chalcidice, for a war against Athens (Thuk., I, 58); during the Peloponnesian war Macedonian kings were one moment on the side of Athens and the next moment on the side of Sparta, depending of their interests, not wanting either of them to become too powerful.

429 B.C. - Perdiccas II defeats Thracian king Saltik. Hippocrates, father of medicine, cures the Macedonian king.

413 B.C. - Archelaus (413-399) improved the roads, built fortresses, reorganized the army (Thuk., II, 100); around the year 400 the Thessalian Pherrhaibia became a Macedonian strategy. Archelaus moved the Macedonian capital from Aigai to Pella. He founded the Macedonian Olympic Games in Dion, (the holy city of the Macedonians). The reason for that was because “barbarians” were forbidden from participating in Greek Olympic Games, meaning the Macedonians too were forbidden (Her., V, 22).

406 B.C. - Macedonian poet Adaeus writes epitaph for the tomb stone of Athenian Euripides. Besides the apologetic work Archelaus, Euripides, during his stay in the palace of Archelaus, also wrote the

famous play Bacchae, inspired by the Macedonian cult of Dionysos. The Macedonian assembly refuses to give Euripides' body to Athens – his birthplace.

399 B.C. - Craterus (399),
399 B.C. - Orestes (399–396)
399 B.C. - Aeropus II (399–396)
396 B.C. - Archelaus II (396–393)
393 B.C. - Amyntas II (393)
393 B.C. - Pausanias (393)
393 B.C. - Argaeus II (393–392)

393 B.C. - Amyntas (393-371) III after the dynastic wars for the Macedonian throne, is pronounced a king. He led a policy of exhausting and weakening the Greek City States. In 371 B.C., he attended the congress in Sparta for the signing of the common peace agreement, not as a representative of a Greek state, but as a concerned partner. 392 B.C. Amyntas III (392–370) becomes king of Macedonia. 391 B.C. Amyntas enthroned; he led a policy of exhausting and weakening the City States. In 371, as the interested party (Aish. II, 23) he took part in the congress at Sparta for signing a mutual peace agreement.

384 B.C. - Aristotle, a great Macedonian thinker and tutor of Alexander III, and his generation are born.

370 B.C. - Amyntas III becomes king
370 B.C. - Alexander II (370–367) becomes king
369 B.C. - Alexander II wages war on Thessaly. Leaves Macedonian garrisons in the Thessalian cities.

368 B.C. - Boiotian league interferes in the dynastic wars in Macedonia. Philip II is taken hostage to Thebes.

368 B.C. - Perdiccas III (368–359) become Regents of Macedonia
368 B.C. - Ptolemy of Aloros (368–365) become Regents of Macedonia

367 B.C. - Ptolomeus (367-365) becomes king

365 B.C. - Perdiccas III (365-359) becomes king of Macedonia.

360 B.C. - 359 B.C. Philip II (359-336) becomes king. He has been referred to as a Macedonian king of kings and initiator of the period when Macedonian ruled the world.

Philip II, the greatest man that Europe had ever given (Theop., F.GR. H., f, 27) united Macedonia and enforced Macedonian dominance upon the neighboring nations.

Philip II was born in 382 BC in Pella, the capital of ancient Macedonia, and ruled Macedonia from 359 to 336 BC. Philip was the youngest son of king Amyntas III and Eurydice.

After the death of Amyntas III, Macedonia's stability began to decline as Alexander II and later Perdiccas III unsuccessfully fought to keep it intact. The instability was triggered mainly by external attacks from the neighbouring Thracians, Illyrians and southern City States. The Thracians occupied parts of eastern Macedonia while the Illyrians were making their threats from beyond northwestern Macedonia. Thebes, the mightiest military power at that time, often interfered in Macedonia's affairs while the colonies in Chalcidice posed obstacles to Macedonia's economic prosperity and were often a threat to Macedonia's security.

From what Diodorus Siculus tells us, while the Thebans held him hostage between 368 and 365 BC, Philip showed extraordinary interest in studying their military techniques and weapons. Philip was especially interested in understanding the fighting style of the elite Theban Sacred Band, which would become important to him later in his career while reforming his own military. After Philip was released from Thebes, at his brother's (Perdiccas III) request, he immediately began to implement his reforms and reorganize the Macedonian military.

Unfortunately before Philip was finished, he lost his brother. While fighting the Illyrians in northwestern Macedonia, Perdiccas III was mortally wounded and died in battle. Worse yet, during the same battle, the Macedonians suffered a demoralizing defeat losing about 4,000 soldiers, which constituted most of the Macedonian army.

Victorious, the Illyrians moved in and occupied northwestern Macedonia. Perched on the mountains of Lyncus they became a threat to the very existence of the Macedonian kingdom.

359 B.C. - Amyntas IV (359–356), the infant son of Perdiccas III becomes king. Philip II was appointed his guardian after Philip was elected commander and chief by the army.

Appointed by the Macedonian army, after his brother's death, Philip ascended to the Macedonian throne in the most difficult times. His kingdom was virtually on the brink of collapse and his neighbours, hovering like vultures, were poised to put an end to his existence. Besides the usual threats from outside, Macedonia was further weakened by internal strife. There were pretenders from inside who wanted to usurp the Macedonian throne for themselves. Some of them were encouraged and supported by foreign powers. Despite tremendous pressure, the 21-year-old king was not discouraged and soon demonstrated his abilities, not only as a competent ruler but also as a skilful diplomat.

Soon after taking control of his kingdom he bribed the Thracian king with gifts and convinced him to execute the first Macedonian pretender who, at the time, was hiding in the Thracian court. The second pretender, supported by Athens, he defeated in battle. Careful not to upset the Athenians, he appeased them by signing a treaty ceding Amphipolis to them. In a little more than a year he had removed all internal threats and secured his kingdom by firmly establishing himself on the throne.

358 B.C. - Philip II defeats the Illyrians

Determined to free northwestern Macedonia, in 358 BC Philip put his reformed army to the test and fought the Illyrians face to face in a fierce battle. Setting aside all fears from the previous battle, the mighty Macedonian army faced the legendary Illyrians and won an overwhelming victory. The Illyrians fled in panic leaving behind 7,000 dead, almost three-quarters of their entire army.

“Without delay he (Philip) convened an assembly, raised the war-spirit of his men by suitable words, and led them into the territory held by the Illyrians, his army numbering not less than 10,000 infantry and 600 cavalry. Bardylis (the Illyrian chief) had not yet mustered the huge forces he had intended to lead into lower Macedonia. He therefore offered peace on the basis of the status quo. Philip replied that peace was acceptable only if Bardylis would evacuate his troops from all the Macedonian cities. This Bardylis was not prepared to do. Confident in the marvelous record and the numerous victories of his elite Illyrian troops, numbering 10,000 infantry and 500 cavalry, he advanced to engage in the open plain of Lyncus. The battle-cries of 20,000 voiced resounded from the hills.

Whether there was a preliminary cavalry engagement or not, Bardylis realized that he was outclassed in cavalry. In order to protect the flank and rear of his spearmen-phalanx from attacks by the enemy cavalry, he made his infantry form a hollow rectangle, of which the front facing the enemy was held by his best men and the other sides by less skilled troops, all facing outwards. The disadvantage of this formation was its immobility. The initiative lay now with Philip, who saw at once the merit of an attack on the enemy’s leftmost front and left-hand side. He marched his phalanx forward at an oblique angle to the enemy’s front, his right being advanced and his left retarded, and he massed his cavalry on his right. The king and the Royal Guardsmen were the leading infantrymen of the Macedonian right. As they approached the stationary Illyrians, they charged the enemy’s left front with their massed pikes lowered (pikes never before seen by the Illyrians), smashed the corner of the square completely and let the cavalry in to attack the disrupted formation in flank and rear. The Illyrians broke and fled. The pursuit by the cavalry over the plain caused huge casualties: 7,000 out of 10,500. Bardylis sent envoys to sue for peace. Philip buried his dead on the battlefield in accordance with Macedonian custom, and made terms for peace, which included not only the recovery of all Macedonian cities but also the cession of territory up to the north-east shore of Lake Lychnitis. The peace with Bardylis was cemented by the marriage of Philip to an Illyrian princess, Audata.” (Page 62, Nicholas G. L. Hammond, The Miracle That Was Macedonia)

Northwestern Macedonia was now free, all the Upper Macedonia cantons, including Lyncestia, the birthplace of Philip's mother, were now firmly under Macedonian control and loyal to their liberator Philip II.

Philip was aware that with a small army of 10,000 he could not defend his kingdom, not even against the defeated Illyrian chief who had even more reserve troops at his disposal. To secure his kingdom and create a pool of new recruits, Philip convinced the chiefs of the smaller kingdoms to join him. To those who did, he offered honourable positions in his court.

With his western frontier secure, Philip moved on to the east to secure the Struma basin north of Chalcidice. His presence there alarmed the colonies, especially Amphipolis, and sent them in panic complaining to Athens. But Athens, having problems of her own, was powerless to act and allowed Philip to conduct his operations unabated.

357 B.C. - Philip II takes Amphipolis

After unsuccessfully trying to secure an alliance by peaceful means, Philip amassed a larger army and attacked Amphipolis. By using his improved siege-train he was able to quickly break through the city's heavily fortified barriers. "In 357, after breaking through the walls with his siege engines (Diod. 16.8.2), he took Amphipolis, thereby accomplishing in a few weeks what the Athenians failed to achieve in more than sixty years." (Page 213, Eugene Borza, In the Shadow of Olympus The Emergence of Macedon)

As promised before the siege and true to his word, Philip, after occupying her, gave Amphipolis her independence under the supervision of Macedonian overseers.

357 B.C. - Athens declares war on Philip II

Athens was divided internally into anti-Macedonians led by Demosthenes, Hyperetes and Lykurgos and pro-Macedonians or so called Philipists led by Isokrates, Eubylos, Philokrates and others.

During the same year (357 BC), Philip, in spite of Athenian opposition, acquired the city of Potidaea in Chalcidice. Turning northward Philip also conquered Pydna, another City State colony on the Macedonian coast.

A couple of years later, Philip acquired the city of Methone, a long time Athenian base located near Pydna. Unfortunately, this particular victory was bittersweet as Philip, during the siege, lost his sight in one eye to an arrow. In the same year, the Macedonian army advanced eastward into Thracian territory and took the town of Crenides (located near modern day Drama) which its residents later renamed Philippi. Crenides was not just an ordinary outpost; it was also the processing headquarters for the hinterland and mountain gold mines, which Philip added to his Macedonian possessions. Some of the revenues derived from gold mining were reinvested to drain the nearby marshlands making the region around Philippi a showcase for new development. The Macedonian eastern frontier extending to the River Mesta was now secure.

Before I continue with Philip's exploits to the south, I want to digress for a moment and talk about Philip's many marriages. The Macedonian tradition of securing alliances by marriage was practiced long before Philip's time. It was probably invented during the Stone Age to strengthen family ties. According to Borza, the best source to explain Philip's complicated marriages is the biographer Satyrus. I doubt however, if Satyrus ever understood the true meaning of this tradition. I also want to make it clear that ancient behaviour towards marriages has nothing to do with our modern perception and values of marriage. Here is what Borza has to say:

"He married Audata the Illyrian and had from her a daughter, Cynna. And then he married Phila, the sister of Derdas and Machatas. Then, as he wanted to appropriate the Thessalian people as well, on grounds of kinship, he fathered children by two Thessalian women, one of whom was Nikesipolis of Pherae, who bore him Thessalonike, and the other, Philinna of Larisa, by whom he fathered Arrhidaeus. Then he acquired the kingdom of the Molossians as well, by marrying Olympias. From her he had Alexander and Cleopatra. And then, when he conquered Thrace, Cothelas, the King of the Thracians, came over to him bringing his

daughter Meda and many gifts. Having married her too, he brought her into his household besides Olympias. Then, in addition to all these, he married Cleopatra, the sister of Hippostratus and niece of Attalus, having fallen in love with her. And when he brought her into his household beside Olympias, he threw his whole life into confusion. For immediately, during the actual wedding celebration, Attalus said, 'Now surely there will be born for us legitimate kings and not bastards.' Now Alexander, when he heard this, threw the cup, which he was holding in his hands, at Attalus; thereupon he too threw his goblet at Alexander. After this Olympias fled to the Molossians and Alexander to the Illyrians. And Cleopatra bore Philip the daughter named Europa." (Page 206-207, Eugene Borza, In the Shadow of Olympus The Emergence of Macedon)

356 B.C. - Alexander III is born in Pella. Athens established an anti-Macedonian coalition with the Illyrians, Thracians and the Paionians; Philip unifies with the Chalcidian League.

From the union of Philip and Polyxena (nicknamed Olympias by Philip), in 356 BC, was born Alexander who in a few short years would become king Alexander III.

Early in his career Philip realized that in order to defend against ongoing aggression he needed a full time army. He built his army by making the military a way of life for the ordinary Macedonian. Soldiering became a professional occupation that paid well enough to make a living, year-round. Unlike before when soldiering was a part time job, something that men would do during their free time, Philip's soldiers could be counted on at all times. The new Macedonian soldier was given the opportunity to develop team skills, unity, cohesion and trust in his peers, the kind of qualities a part time soldier would lack.

The Macedonian soldiers were not the only ones to benefit from Philip's reforms. A full time army required arms, shelter, food and clothing. To support it, a whole new industry had to be developed employing a variety of people and skills.

I also want to point out that we must not forget the general contribution of the Macedonian population who not only supplied

their king with soldiers but also provided the labour to cultivate his lands and feed his army, build his roads, weapons, siege engines and ships. Philip would have been powerless without the support and loyalty of the Macedonian people.

352 B.C. - Philip II tagos of Thessalian League; Demosthenes orated the four Philippics: I (351), II (344) and III and IV (341), and the three Olynthians in 349.

With his army reorganized, full of confidence and equipped with modern weapons, Philip turned his attention south. He first went to Thessaly where he won an easy victory. By 352 BC he was in firm control of a region extending as far south as the pass of Thermopylae. As part of the peace treaty with the Thessalians, Philip married Nicesipolis, a local woman of prominence. Nicesipolis bore Philip a daughter whom he named Thessalonika to commemorate his victory over Thessaly.

351 B.C. - Demosthenes delivers first Philippic

Philip's antagonists unfortunately viewed what was good for Macedonia with suspicion. This included the great Athenian orator, Demosthenes. In 351 BC Demosthenes delivered his first Philippic, a series of speeches warning the City States about the Macedonian threat to their liberty. His second Philippic was delivered in 344 BC, his third in 341 BC and his three Olynthiacs in 349 BC, all directed to arouse Athens and the others against Philip.

Demosthenes's most famous oration was the third Philippic which speaks of Philip as being "not only not Greek, nor related to the Greeks, but not even a barbarian from any place that can be named with honors, but a pestilent knave from Macedonia, whence it was never yet possible to buy a decent slave" (Third Philippic, 31). Words which echo the fact that the ancient City States regarded the ancient Macedonians as "dangerous neighbors" but never as kinsmen.

350 B.C. - River Nestos Macedonia's Eastern frontier

With Thessaly on his side Philip was now staring down at the northern gate of the City States, which at the time, was well guarded by powerful Athenian, Spartan and Achaean forces.

With his southern frontier secured, Philip returned to Macedonia to take care of business closer to home. In 348 BC he sent his Macedonian army to the Chalcidice peninsula and cleared out some of the colonial encroachments, starting with the City State of Olynthus. Olynthus was the grand city of the northern City States, a symbol of power that stood in Macedonia's way. Philip sacked Olynthus and sold its population into slavery, a practice which at that time was expected of City States but not of Macedonians. Like Methone before, Olynthus and some 31 other Chalcidician cities were cleared of intrusions and their lands were redistributed to the Macedonians. One of the cities sacked was Stageira, the birthplace of Aristotle. When Philip was finished, he ended foreign encroachment and reclaimed the entire Chalcidice peninsula for his Macedonians.

Up until 348 BC, even though Philip controlled virtually everything north of the Lamian Gulf, he was never a real threat to the powerful City States in the south. He may have annexed their colonies and cut off access to some of their markets but he was never a threat to their way of life or existence.

348 B.C. - Philip II acts on Thessaly's behalf

In 348 BC, however, things started to change. It began with Philip's intervention, on Thessaly's behalf, to free Delphi from rebel elements. Delphi was a religious center whose neutrality was guarded by the Amphictyonic League, an ancient and mainly religious association of the central City States. When a rebellious splinter faction of the Amphictyonic League broke away and threatened the center's neutrality, Philip was called in to sort things out.

Philip was more than willing to oblige his Thessalian allies but at the same time he had to be cautious not to upset the Athenians and Thebans who opposed each other but also had vested interests in

Delphi. At this stage, an Athenian-Theban alliance would have been catastrophic for Macedonia and had to be avoided at all costs.

Being already allied with Thebes, Philip considered a diplomatic move with Athens by offering the Athenians joint participation in removing the rebels. Unfortunately, the Athenians in Athens, being suspicious of Philip's motives, declined and among themselves proposed to take countermeasures to stop Philip from intervening altogether, even by force if necessary. Fortunately, before any damage was done, wisdom prevailed and the Athenians decided to talk to Philip before attacking him. Being a master of diplomacy, the wily Philip convinced his elder Athenians that he meant no harm and only wished to see this matter solved peacefully. To appease the Athenians he went a step further and personally offered guarantees of Athenian hegemony over several regions near Attica, something the Athenians had desired for a long time. Philip's latest proposal was a success and gained full Athenian acceptance. It even gained support from Demosthenes, Philip's staunchest critic.

Unfortunately, what was viewed as fair by Athens was obviously viewed as unfair by Thebes and problems began to arise. To get himself out of this, Philip turned to the Amphictyonic Council and asked the council members to disbar the rebel group by vote and replace it with the Macedonian king. In a stroke of genius Philip evaded an impending war with Athens, ended the rebellion at Delphi, saved the Amphictyony, averted a war with Thebes, made an alliance with Athens and made himself a voting member of the Amphictyonic League. This indeed was a diplomatic victory, worthy of the Macedonian king himself.

345 B.C. - Philip II leads his army against the Illyrians, Dardanians and the Thracians

344 B.C. - Thessalians rebel against Macedonia

Despite Demosthenes's castigation, peace held, at least for now, and having an equal seat in the council of power, Philip was free to return to Macedonia. Most of 345 BC, Philip spent leading his army against the Illyrians, Dardanians and the Thracians and generally quelling rebellions. In 344 BC the Thessalians rebelled but were put

down swiftly. In 342 BC, Philip marched into Epirus and replaced King Arybbas with his young protégé and brother-in-law Alexander (Amaxis).

Sensing growing discontentment in the Athenians, Philip estimated that it would be a matter of time before war would break out between Macedonia and Athens, especially since Athens amended the Macedonian-Athenian peace agreement hoping it would be unacceptable to Philip.

Determined to attract as many City States as possible to his side, Philip continued to make alliances with the smaller cities. He was determined to attract the cities that were hostile to the more powerful states in hopes of dividing and weakening them.

By 340 BC, a point of no return was reached with Athens when Philip could no longer accommodate Athenian demands to sustain the peace treaty, especially after Athens sponsored anti-Macedonian uprisings in the northern Aegean. In retaliation for this latest Athenian treachery, in 340 BC while campaigning against internal rebellions in the east, Philip captured the Athenian grain fleet. This was the last straw for Athens and under the personal leadership of Demosthenes, the Athenians persuaded the Thebans to jointly declare war on Macedonia. The weaker states, having little choice in the matter, also joined the declaration. What Philip tried to avoid at all costs was now unavoidable.

340 B.C. - Philip II besieges Byzantium and Perinthos

Fights war with the Scythians (Iust., IX, 2). Sixteen year old Alexander replaces him on the throne, undertakes a campaign against the Maidoi and establishes the city Alexandropolis.

Before Philip could accommodate his neighbours to the south, he had some unfinished business to take care of in the north. He quickly assembled a large army and marched deep into Thracian territory and by 339 BC conquered most of Thrace. Unfortunately, he was unable to subdue the eastern coastal cities of Byzantium and Perinthus, which withstood even his most severe sieges. It was certain that neither city would have survived had it not been for the

assistance received from the southern City States and the Persians. Ironically, even though Persia, for more than a century, had been the most hated nation, still the City States sided with the Persians against the Macedonians.

339 B.C. - Philip clashes with Scythians

Responding to a Scythian challenge Philip abandoned the eastern city sieges and, in the spring of 339 BC, led his Macedonians beyond Thrace. There, near the Danube River, he clashed with the Scythians and won a stunning victory crowned only by the death of Areas, the Scythian king.

339 B.C. - Philip defeats Triballians on Macedonia's northern border.

Unfortunately, on his return trip home Philip's convoy was attacked and his booty was lost to Thracian Triballians. During the skirmish, Philip suffered a severe leg injury, which left him lame for life. After returning home he spent several months recovering.

338 B.C. - Battle at Chaeronea takes place

While Philip was recovering, the City States to the south were making alliances and amassing a great army to invade Macedonia. On hearing this, Philip decided it was time to meet this aggression head on and end the treachery once and for all. On August 2nd, 338 BC, in the shallow Cephisus River valley near the village of Chaeronea on the road to Thebes, the two opposing armies met face to face. On the north side stood Philip's Macedonians with 30,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry, the largest Macedonian army ever assembled. Among Philip's commanding generals was his 18 year-old son, Alexander, in charge of the cavalry. On the south side, stood the allied Athenians, Thebans and Achaeans who assembled 35,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry, the largest army ever assembled since the Persian invasion.

Closely matched, the armies clashed and while the battle ensued the Macedonian right flank fell back and began to retreat. Seeing the Macedonians weakening, the allied general gave orders to push on

and drive the Macedonians back to Macedonia. As the Macedonians retreated, the allied flanks broke rank and began the pursuit. Not realizing it was a trick, the allies found themselves surrounded and slaughtered by Alexander's cavalry. When it was over, the majority of the allied army, including the elite Theban Sacred Band lay dead in the fields of Chaeronea. Philip erected a statue of a lion to commemorate the sacrifice of the Theban Sacred Band who upheld their tradition and fought to the last man.

Ancient City State and Roman historians consider the battle of Chaeronea as the end of City State liberty, history and civilization.

Victorious, soon after the battle, Philip proceeded to secure his newest conquests by strategically placing Macedonian garrisons in Thebes, Chalcis, Ambracia, Corinth and the Peloponnesus. He then summoned the representatives of all City States to a grand peace conference at Corinth where he made peace with each one. Sparta was the only one that abstained. Being no threat to him, Philip decided to leave Sparta alone.

Philip organized the City States into an alliance known as the "League of Corinth". It was an alliance among the City States and an alliance between the City States and the king of Macedonia. The league formed a separate alliance with Macedonia, but Macedonia itself was not a member of the City State league. This was an alliance that treated all nations, great and small, as equals. Conversely, the lesser states looked up to Macedonia, as a great power, to guarantee their rights and existence among the greater states.

Living in peace with his neighbours is what Philip had envisioned ten years earlier. It could have been achieved through diplomacy. Even at this stage I believe Philip wanted to secure his kingdom by peaceful means and only resorted to war when all other means were exhausted. If there is any blame to be placed, it should be placed on the Athenians for their suspicions and mistrust.

Having secured peace with the City States, Philip was now looking at neutralizing the next major threat, Persia. The idea of subduing Persia appealed to some but not all City States. Those who favoured

the idea, especially those who belonged to the League of Corinth, elected Philip as the commander-in-chief of the Asian expeditionary force. Those who opposed the idea, especially the City State military and their commanders who were now out of work, made their way to Persia to swell the ranks of the Persian mercenary and fight for pay against the Macedonians. According to the Roman historian Curtius, by the time the Macedonian army set foot in Asia, a force of 50,000 City State soldiers had joined the Persian king's army and lay in wait to face the Macedonians.

Philip, being more or less satisfied with the conclusion of City State affairs, returned home to prepare for the Asian campaign.

It has been said that if Philip ever made a mistake, it was in "marrying for love", a rare luxury for any monarch let alone one that had been married not once but six times before. The woman of his desire was Cleopatra, a Macedonian girl of nobility. Blinded by his love for young Cleopatra, Philip neglected to see that his marriage to her would lead to his break-up with Olympias and the estrangement of his son Alexander. Olympias was a proud woman and very protective of her son. Philip's marriage to a younger woman and a Macedonian at that, made her feel both unwanted and an outsider in her own home. To her, Philip's latest marriage was a dishonour to her reputation as a wife and a threat to her son's legitimacy as heir to the Macedonian throne.

Not knowing what else to do, Olympias and Alexander left for Epirus. Immediately after taking his mother home, Alexander left Epirus and went to the Illyrians. From there he negotiated his way back to Pella where his father forgave him for his misdeeds. Unfortunately for Olympias, Philip's marriage to Cleopatra lasted longer than expected and she bore him a child.

336 B.C. - Philip II prepares for Asian campaign

During the following spring (336 BC), in preparation for the Persian offensive, Philip decided to send ahead an advance force. Commanded by generals Attalus and Parmenio, 10,000 Macedonian soldiers were prepared and sent across to Asia Minor to pave the way for the next spring's offensive. While the soldiers were making

their way across the Hellespont, the Macedonians in Aegae were preparing for a grand celebration. Philip's daughter Cleopatra was about to be wed to Prince Alexander (Amaxis) of Epirus. It was indeed going to be a lavish festival with much entertainment and games. Philip had invited various guests from all over his kingdom to partake in the festivities and witness the marriage of his daughter. Among the invited was Olympias. Being the sister of the groom, Olympias was obliged to attend. At first, she was apprehensive, but after being assured that Philip would welcome her, she accepted the invitation. True to his word, Philip was courteous and made up with her the same day she arrived.

It has been said that after the first day's festivities, Philip visited with Olympias and among other things discussed Olympias's concern about Alexander's chances for the throne. Philip promised her that she had nothing to fear and reassured her that Alexander was his first choice to replace him, when the time came. The first day's festivities concluded without incident but disaster struck on the second day. During a procession in the theater at Aegae, while standing between his son Alexander and his new son-in-law Alexander, a member of the royal guard named Pausanias, stabbed Philip with a dagger and killed him. Pausanias then ran to escape, towards some waiting horses, but tripped and fell down. His pursuers caught up to him and speared him to death.

336 B.C. - Philip II dies

The "Greatest of the Kings of Europe" who liberated Macedonia from foreign occupation, brought her back from the edge of extinction and made her into a world power, now lay dead in his own palace, killed by his own body guard. Philip II king of Macedonia from 360 BC to 336 BC died a senseless death and was succeeded by his son Alexander.

Many historians have laboured looking for reasons to explain why Philip was murdered. Was it a foreign plot, a conspiracy premeditated by his son Alexander? Was it an act of rage by a demented soldier? Or was it Olympias's revenge for embarrassing her by marrying Cleopatra? I guess we will never know for sure.

Philip's plans for Persia now lay in the hands of his successor. He did whatever he could to make Macedonia great but even he couldn't have imagined how great she would become.

336 B.C. - Alexander III (336-323) becomes king

Alexander, son of Philip II and Polyxena (Olympias) was born in Pella on July 22nd, 356 BC. Alexander's father Philip was the son of the Macedonian king Amyntas III and of Eurydice, an Illyrian princess. His mother Polyxena, or Olympias as she became known in Macedonia, was the daughter of the Molossian king Neoptolemus.

Alexander was born into a dynamic world where violence was a way of life. He enjoyed war stories told around the palace and no doubt relished in his father's victories. Philip was very fond of his son and spent a great deal of time giving him affection and telling him stories. Alexander's earliest education was entrusted to Leonidas, a relative of Olympias. But as Leonidas found out, Alexander was no ordinary student and his defiance could not be influenced by the usual methods. So in 343 BC when Alexander was thirteen, Philip summoned Aristotle to tutor him. Aristotle, at the time, was not the famous man we know today but simply a teacher with a good reputation. Philip chose him on the recommendation of others.

Aristotle was born in Stagira (a city in Chalcidice, conquered by Philip), the son of Nicomachus (once physician to Amyntas III). At age 40 (or more) Aristotle left his newly opened school in Mylitine, Lesbos and went to Pella where he was given residence in the quiet little village of Mieza. There, near the sanctuary of the Nymphs, away from the hustle and bustle and constant disruptions of Pella, Aristotle spent the next three years educating Alexander, along with a few other children. One of those children was Hephaestion, whom Alexander befriended for life.

Aristotle, in addition to teaching Alexander of life's wonders, inspired in him a passionate love for culture and intellect that profoundly affected his life and the way he viewed the world. But it was Homer's books that inspired Alexander the most. The Iliad, the best book ever written, and his two heroes Heracles and Achilles where the driving forces that championed Alexander's desires for

conquest and seeking the unknown. In addition to teaching him how to be king, Aristotle also inspired in Alexander a keen interest in the natural sciences.

In 340 BC at age sixteen, while his father Philip campaigned against Byzantium, Alexander was made regent of Pella. It was then that Alexander got a taste of what it was like to be in command, especially to command a battle and put down a rebellion. It was an insignificant rebellion instigated by the Thracian Maidoi but none-the-less it was a joy for the young prince to command. After defeating the enemy, Alexander took the town, resettled it with Macedonians and renamed it Alexandropolis, after himself. This would be the first in a line of many cities to be named after the young conqueror.

Two years later in 338 BC, at age eighteen, Alexander had gained his father's confidence to be given command of the Macedonian cavalry during the most important battle of Philip's career. This was a pivotal battle that not only thrashed the allied City States but also ushered in a new age of warfare. At eighteen years old Alexander was part of it in every respect.

Unfortunately, on that dreaded day in 337 BC when Philip decided to marry Cleopatra, the niece of general Attalus, Alexander's pleasant relation with his father came to an abrupt end. Some say that at the marriage feast Alexander exchanged bitter words with Attalus and then caused a scene with his own father. Be it as it may, Alexander's feelings were badly hurt. Feeling let down by his own father, Alexander, along with his mother, left Macedonia for Epirus. After taking his mother home Alexander left and went to live with the Illyrians, with a Macedonian client king. There, through the work of a mediator, he reconciled his differences with his father and soon after returned home to Pella.

In mid-summer 336 BC, Alexander's life was changed forever as tragedy struck and his father was assassinated. The incident took place in the theater of Aegae at the worst possible time for Alexander's sister Cleopatra. Expecting to be soon going away on the Asian campaign, Philip took the opportunity to marry off his daughter Cleopatra to his protégé Alexander, king of Molossia. No

one expected that during the procession, the crazed bodyguard Pausanias would lunge at Philip and stab him to death right in the middle of Cleopatra's wedding. Fortunately for Alexander, Philip and Olympias had resolved their differences and Olympias was back in the Macedonian court at Philip's side when it happened so Alexander had his mother's support when he needed it the most.

Philip was forty-six years old, at the height of his power and fortune, when his life was taken. There were many rumours as to why he was assassinated but none were proven since his killer was also slain before he was interrogated. It was now up to Alexander to set things right.

When a king or head of state is assassinated, the state and its foreign relations are shaken to the very foundation. Macedonia, after Philip's death, was no exception. The question on everyone's mind, especially his enemies, was who would succeed him?

In Philip's case a group of Macedonian soldiers and ex-soldiers loyal to the king, mostly from the near vicinity, were quickly assembled in Aegae. Without hesitation they chose Alexander as Philip's successor, the new king to lead them. The following day, one by one, his soldiers took an oath of loyalty as was required by Macedonian custom. Alexander chose his own bodyguards and was given his personal Royal Infantry Guard. His first task as king was to investigate his father's murder.

The fact that there were horses involved for Pausanias's getaway suggests that Philip's murder was premeditated and accomplices were involved. But who would have had the audacity to murder a powerful king and at his daughter's wedding at that? That, we will never know for sure! What is important, however, is to examine how Alexander used this tragedy to secure his own position in the Macedonian kingdom and rid himself of some undesirable elements.

The news of Philip's murder attracted the attention of the whole world; especially the City States who rejoiced in knowing that he was gone. Alexander was quick to let them know that he expected from them the same loyalty as they had for his father. He reminded the City States that the treaty of the League of Corinth was perpetual

and gave him a legal claim to be Hegemon, the same as his father. But Alexander's words did not phase the City States in the least, for in Athens they were dancing in the streets with joy. Demosthenes, intoxicated with the prospect of liberty, appeared in council dressed in white with a wreath on his head making offerings to the gods for the joyful news. The call to freedom from Athens spread like wildfire to the rest of the City States. The Aetolians recalled all those exiled by Philip, the Ambraciots expelled the Macedonian garrison, the Thebans took up arms to liberate Cadmeia and there were signs of rebellions in Peloponnesus, Argos, Elis and Arcadia.

When news was received that Alexander was to take Philip's place, Demosthenes became enraged, immediately sending a secret communication begging Parmenio and Attalus to intervene. Fortunately, Attalus and Parmenio were loyal to their new king and allowed Alexander to be seated on the throne without interruption. So in the end, like his father before him, Alexander became Demosthenes's mortal foe and worst nightmare. Failing to enlist help from Macedonians inside Alexander's circle, Demosthenes entered into strange relations with the Persian King and continued to work against Macedonia.

The revolts after Philip's death were not exclusive to the City States. Reports were also coming in from the north with claims that there were disturbances and rebellions there also. On hearing this Alexander moved quickly, put a strong force together and with lightning speed descended upon his enemies. The City States were first on his agenda to subdue as he force- marched his army in a surprise visit to Thessaly. Upon seeing Alexander, the Thessalians not only submitted but they showed an eager willingness to recognize him as their Hegemon. They even offered to help him punish Athens and the other City States for their misdeeds.

After subduing Thessaly, Alexander pushed southward, overrunning all who stood in his way, including Thermopylae. After quelling Thermopylae, he summoned a meeting with the Amphictyonic Council who, without hesitation, also gave him recognition as Hegemon. He then quietly slipped out, marched to Boeotia and set up camp near Cadmeia. His sudden appearance in Thebes frightened the wits out of the Thebans and sent shock waves of chilling terror

to Athens, especially after delivering an ultimatum demanding to be recognized as Hegemon or prepare for war. The Athenians, expecting the worst, were prepared for war but were relieved by the alternative. Through their ambassadors they asked for pardon for not having his hegemony recognized sooner.

At the conclusion of his campaign, Alexander summoned all members of the League of Corinth for a meeting. Here he asked the City States to give him recognition as Hegemon of the League in accordance with the agreement made with Philip. The Spartans, whose response was, "It was their custom to follow themselves and not others who wish to lead them." did not attend.

336 B.C. - Macedonians become masters of the Balkans after defeating the Triballians, Getites, Illyrians and Thebans.

When his business with the City States was finished, Alexander turned his attention to the troublemakers in the north. First on his list were the Thracian Triballian tribe, living between the Balkans and the Danube, who Philip fought but did not subjugate. This was Alexander's first campaign carried out without the tactical brilliance of general Parmenio or the trusted help of friend and advisor general Antipater. The success of this particular campaign has to be attributed singularly to Alexander's own genius. Before setting off to meet the Triballians, Alexander sent his war ships from Byzantium via the Black Sea into the Danube and ordered them to sail upriver and hold their position at a pre-designated location.

335 B.C. - Alexander marches his army against the Thracians

In the spring of 335 BC, Alexander marched his army northward until he found the Thracians. The Thracians had occupied the Shipka Pass and had secured their position atop a hill behind a fort made of wagons. Perched on top of this hill they waited until Alexander's army attempted the climb. Before the Macedonians reached the top the Thracians released a barrage of wagons hoping to run them down. Alexander, however, anticipated their plan and ordered his men at the top to form columns with alleys for the wagons to hurtle down and the men further down the hill to lie down flat in close formation with their shields over their heads.

As the wagons hurtled downhill, they were guided into the alleys by the formation and as they gained momentum, the wagons rode over a roof of shields without doing any damage to the men. With superb discipline exercised, not a single man was lost.

Alexander stormed the Shipka Pass and descended upon the northern plains in pursuit of the Triballian king who sought refuge on an island in the Danube. The Triballian army, which withdrew southwards, suffered an annihilating defeat. Three days later, when Alexander reached the Danube, he found his fleet waiting. He ordered his ships to pursue the Triballian king but the banks of the island were so steep that they couldn't land. Although frustrated, Alexander was not about to give up and came up with a new plan, which at the time may have seemed irrational to his officers but they gave him their support anyway. Alexander's plan was to "frighten the king into submission". He figured that by a surprising demonstration of force he would break the enemy's inclination to resist him. The idea was to cross the Danube undetected and force the Getae, who lived on the opposite bank, into flight and, by this demonstration, startle the king to surrender. An irrational plan indeed! Having earned the loyalty and trust of his Macedonians, they did as he ordered and made silent preparations to cross the river. They collected as many local fishing boats as they could find, filled their canvas tents with hay and under the cloak of darkness put as many troops as possible across the river. Before dawn 1,500 cavalry and 4,000 infantry were on the opposite side of the bank. Before they could be seen the troops hid in the tall reeds, which masked their approach. Then, like wild animals, the cavalry burst out and charged the Getae who were encamped in front of their town. Completely surprised, the Getae, far superior in numbers, rushed back into town, grabbed their wives and children and ran north to safety in the steppes. The town was taken and not a single man was lost.

Alexander's bluff not only worked with the Triballian king who made his submission to Alexander but, when word spread, neighbouring tribes send their envoys to pay Alexander homage. Even the Celts, who had ventured eastward from the Adriatic, asked Alexander for his friendship.

When his northern campaign was over, Alexander was preparing to return home when he received news of an Illyrian revolt. Alexander marched his army at great speed to western Macedonia and, just beyond his frontier, found a very large Dardanian army assembled and waiting. A battle ensued and the Illyrians were driven back into a fortified town. Alexander set camp for the night intending to besiege the town the next day. Unfortunately, by morning another enemy army had arrived. A large Taulantian army had joined the Dardanians and cut off Alexander's retreat and supply line. The Macedonian army of some 25,000 men and 5,000 horses were quickly running out of supplies. Alexander had to do something and soon, but what? He was completely surrounded. Leave it to Alexander to come up with another uncanny plan. He ordered his men to put on a show. Ignoring the enemy, he ordered his phalanx into formation to quietly march back and forth as he motioned their maneuvers with his arm. The show attracted onlookers around his camp who were not only surprised but also mesmerized by this action.

When the time was right, Alexander motioned and the soldiers, in unison, slapped their shields hard with their javelins. The sudden thundering roar, after the mesmerizing silence, startled the enemy causing some of the horses to bolt in fright. At lightening speed Alexander's best cavalry, supported by his archers, bolted through the pass, making an opening for the army to escape through. The army, with catapult, archers and cavalry support, then punched a hole right through the middle of the enemy forces and landed on home territory in the meadows around little Lake Prespa. Not a single man was lost.

Three days later, in a surprise attack at night, Alexander led an assault force through the pass and inflicted a decisive defeat on his enemy. As the enemy bolted the Macedonian cavalry pursued, chasing them for over one hundred kilometers, instilling fear and causing them severe damage. Both kings submitted to Alexander's will and instead of being punished for their misdeeds they were made client-kings with thrones of their own.

No sooner were the Illyrian revolts put down than Alexander received news of a dangerous uprising in the south requiring his immediate intervention. It appears that the Thebans were in revolt and had killed Macedonian officers stationed in a local garrison. Alexander quickly assembled his army and set out on a fast paced march, living off the land as he traversed south through the mountainous terrain. After crossing the Pass of Thermopylae he headed for Thebes. Alexander arrived just in time to prevent his garrison from being attacked so no serious damage was done. But to his surprise, it was not just Thebes that was causing trouble. Athens too had become involved when it entered into an alliance with Thebes and sent arms and its citizen army to support the Theban rebellion. Encouraged by Demosthenes and supported by Persian gold, other City States also joined the rebellion. The whole thing was started by rumours, no doubt spread by Demosthenes himself, claiming that Alexander had been killed and his army defeated in Illyria. But when Alexander arrived alive and well with an intact Macedonian army a chill must have run down their spines. Being the rightful Hegemon of the City State League, Alexander asserted his rights and demanded that the rebels disband. In the presence of Alexander, some of the City State armies obeyed and turned away. Some, like Athens, remained stationary and made no attempt to engage him. The Thebans decided to break away and fight, hoping that an engagement would draw others into the war. They relied mostly on their own forces and the strong fortifications of their city to defend them.

After hearing rumours of his supposed death, Alexander endeavoured to give the rebels a chance to end the impasse peacefully and gave them three days to surrender. Unfortunately, instead of submitting peacefully their cavalry charged his outposts.

The next day Alexander marched his army all around the city and stopped in front of the south gate. Angered by the reply of the previous day, Alexander ordered an attack. In no time the Theban defenses were breached and the Macedonian and League armies penetrated the city. The Thebans fought fiercely but were no match for the well trained, battle experienced Macedonian army. The battle turned tragically when League soldiers turned on the general population massacring everyone in sight.

After sacking it, Alexander left the final fate of Thebes to the League to decide. Those in the League who for many generations suffered under the supremacy of Thebes finally found an outlet to vent their anger. Without hesitation they found Thebes guilty of treason for its current misdeeds as well as those in the past. In a resolution backed by the entire League, Alexander ordered the city to be leveled to the ground. Women and children were sold into slavery. Alexander allowed the resolution to pass so that an example could be made to remind the rest that this kind of behavior would no longer be tolerated. As for the Athenians, the real instigators of the rebellions, Alexander left them unpunished. Alexander was careful not to drive them further into the Persian King's arms. But, as fate would have it, those who were unhappy with the League's resolution left for Persia anyway.

335 B.C. - Alexander III goes East

After restoring peace in the City States, Alexander and his army returned to Macedonia. By the time he arrived it was already October (335 BC) and still much preparation was needed before he could depart for the Asian spring offensive. Alexander also needed time to secure the route to Asia and strengthen Macedonia's defenses. Being mistrustful of the City States, Alexander, in his absence, left Antipater, a competent soldier, a man of strong character and a trustworthy friend, in charge as regent of Macedonia. He gave Antipater special powers to represent him as deputy-Hegemon of the League of Corinth. To keep the peace, Antipater was given 12,000 infantry and 1,500 cavalry from Alexander's best Macedonian troops.

Alexander selected and took with him the best and most battle hardened troops in his army consisting of 12,000 infantrymen and 2,700 cavalrymen. Philip himself had trained and campaigned with most of these men in all hazards of war.

While Alexander was preparing his Asian force, Parmenio's vanguard in Asia was struggling to regain control of the Hellespont. In 336 BC Parmenio had won control of the Dardanelles bridgehead but lost it again in 335 BC when he was driven back by City State

mercenaries, commanded by general Memnon. The City State mercenaries had taken control of an area near the crossing, killed off and expelled the Persian juntas and had taken over the local cities. It didn't take long, however, before the pro-Persian factions rebelled. Parmenio sought his chance and again took control of the crossing. The Macedonians now controlled the waters of the Hellespont and held them until Alexander arrived.

334 B.C. - Macedonian army in Asia Minor

In early spring of 334 BC, with the help of some 160 ships, the main body of the Macedonian expedition force was ferried across the strait. While the army was helped across, Alexander took a diversion to explore the various sacred sites of the Iliad. While visiting the Ilium he dedicated his armour to Athena and in exchange took back an old, sacred shield supposedly dating back to the Trojan War.

Soon after rejoining his army, Alexander set out to find the enemy. As mentioned earlier, Alexander separated his forces and took with him only Macedonians and some Thessalians, leaving the league soldiers behind with Parmenio. In all 13,000 infantry and 5,100 cavalry set off in search of the Persian army. Another reason for not taking the League army was that Alexander had no money for provisions. When he crossed the Hellespont he was almost broke. Some say he only had 70 talents in cash and that was hardly enough to feed his army for more than a couple of weeks. But that did not stop Alexander because he had confidence in his Macedonians to give him victories and then his enemies would be obliged to feed his army.

Besides his military, Alexander also enlisted the services of historians, philosophers, poets, engineers, surveyors, doctors, botanists and natural scientists to accompany him on his Asian expedition. His official historian was Callisthenes of Olynthus, nephew and pupil of Aristotle. The surveyors were there to measure distances traveled by the army as well as make notes of peculiarities in the terrain traversed. The engineers were engaged in building bridges, rafts, ladders, siege engines and equipment to scale steep slopes and cliffs. The botanists and natural scientists were there to investigate the flora, fauna and mineral wealth of the newly

discovered lands. Right from the start the Asian expedition was not just a military campaign but a great scientific research and discovery mission.

334 B.C. - Macedonians defeat Persians at Granicus

As luck would have it, on the third day of his search, Alexander's scouts spotted the Persian army holding its position on the far bank of the river Granicus. As Alexander made his advance, he noticed a much superior cavalry force holding its position on the level ground. Beyond the steep riverbank he could see a large City State mercenary infantry force holding the ridge behind the level ground. He estimated the enemy to be about 20,000 cavalry and 20,000 infantry. Alexander immediately formulated his battle plans and took the offensive. The Macedonian infantry phalanx took the center while the cavalry formed the wings with the archers posted on the extreme right. Alexander's battle line now matched the three-kilometer wide enemy line. According to Peter Green, Alexander badly needed a victory in order to secure booty to pay off his loans and to finance future campaigns. At the moment, Alexander was badly in debt.

Among the Persian commanders was general Memnon. Memnon was well aware of Alexander's financial predicament and wanted to starve him out. During an earlier meeting with the Persians, Memnon opposed a direct confrontation and proposed to deprive Alexander of all provisions. This would have required burning all the crops in the vicinity and withdrawing the Persian army. Having no provisions to sustain him, Alexander would have had to turn back and return to Macedonia. When he did, Memnon proposed to go after him by means of the huge Persian fleet. The Persians, however, due to their army's numerical superiority felt confident that a battle with Alexander would give them victory.

After surveying the situation, Alexander noticed that the best Persian cavalry stood atop the steep, eight-foot riverbank. From that position a cavalry charge would have been difficult to execute. In spite of Parmenio's advice to retire for the evening and attack the next morning, Alexander exploited the situation and ordered a surprise attack.

The battle of Granicus started with a blare of trumpets and the terrifying battle cry of Alexander and his Macedonians. His men quickly took their positions as Alexander's horsemen rushed across the swollen river and swooped up the steep bank, violently engaging the Persian cavalry. His infantry phalanx, which by now was used to forming a battle line on the fly, maneuvered into an oblique battle-array and positioned itself to follow suit. As the army frontlines clashed, Alexander and his companions rode back and forth behind the lines looking for weaknesses and to confuse the enemy. Moments after the engagement started, most of the Persian cavalry was pinned down by the Macedonian phalanx as both armies desperately tried to push forward. The Persians were expecting Alexander to attack at the extreme left where the terrain was easiest to navigate. Memnon's most experienced mercenaries were placed there in thick columns in close proximity and ordered to lay in wait. But instead of doing what was expected Alexander took a defensive stand and attacked the position with a light force of infantry and some cavalry, with just enough men to hold the mercenaries back.

As the battle raged on Alexander himself became engaged and fought several Persian nobles, among them the son-in-law of Darius the Great King. While Alexander was dealing a deathblow to the King's son-in-law he nearly became a casualty himself. The world would not have been the same had it not been for Cleitus who came to his rescue.

As the phalanx succeeded in pushing back the Persian cavalry, Alexander's horsemen charged the center and punched a whole right through the enemy formation. The enemy took flight and the Macedonian cavalry went in pursuit leaving many dead in their wake. No sooner had the Macedonians moved in for the kill than they were confronted from the rear by the City State mercenaries who had laid in wait throughout the entire battle. Alexander turned his phalanx around and ordered a frontal attack while his cavalry took on the flanks. In a matter of minutes the elite City State mercenary force was annihilated leaving only 2,000 survivors out of a force of 20,000. By sacrificing themselves, the City State mercenaries saved the Persian cavalry. Before the evening was over,

in a few short hours on a bright day in May 334 BC, the Macedonians won a great victory.

The day after the battle all the dead, including the Persians, were buried with honour. Special attention and care was given to the wounded, each receiving a visit from Alexander himself. Compared to the enemy, Macedonian losses were insignificant, totaling about a couple hundred.

Soon after the battle of Granicus, Alexander organized an administration to manage his lands "won by his spear". Instead of incorporating these lands as part of a Greater Macedonian kingdom, Alexander did the unexpected and appointed a Macedonian "satrap". By that I mean Alexander left the old Persian government and way of governing intact. He only replaced the top Persian official (satrap) with a Macedonian. His only demands were that the Persians now pay him what was owed to the Great King. In addition to taking taxes, Alexander also took possession of the Great King's crown lands.

Alexander's idea of replacing the Great King with himself instead of incorporating the conquered lands into a "Greater Macedonia" had its merits. After seeing that no harm had come to their neighbours, other parts of Asia Minor began to surrender peacefully. When Alexander reached Sardis, the Lydian city, the people surrendered without a fight entrusting Alexander with the city's treasures, satrapy and citadel. In return, Alexander freed the Lydians from Persian rule and gave them back their old culture, laws and way of life. He also replaced the Persian satrap with a Macedonian. Here again Alexander demonstrated his respect for other cultures, choosing to liberate instead of enslave.

After looking at the vastness of Asia, Alexander quickly realized that he could never hold a world that size with a spear. This foresight, along with the Macedonian values instilled in him (to respect people of all classes and cultures), Alexander became a liberator and a champion of the oppressed nations. His conquests became a mission of liberation not enslavement.

If Alexander is to be judged for his deeds let it be for all his deeds and not just for his conquests and military genius. Alexander was a seasoned politician with a vision of uniting all the world's nations together as equals in a democratic system (in the modern sense). Besides his political qualities, Alexander also had a great interest in culture and the natural sciences. Wherever he went he built cities, libraries, cultural centers, museums and many other wonders. He listened to poetry and comedy and took part in debates. He met many people with varying interests and the people whose accomplishments he admired most, he sent to Macedonia for the Macedonians to enjoy. He had his natural scientists study and document the flora, fauna and mineral wealth of this new world. Techniques and knowledge learned then still apply today. He adorned all the gardens of Macedonia, including those in Pella, with plants bearing the best fruits and flowers that Asia had to offer. Wherever he went, he taught the local people culture, artistic skills and natural medicine. As Michael Wood found out, "In the footsteps of Alexander the Great", these gifts that Alexander gave the Asian people are still remembered to this day. As he proceeded to free the Asian people from Persian dominion, Alexander was greeted with enthusiasm and celebrated as a liberator.

With the victory of Granicus under his belt, Alexander turned southward encountering little or no resistance until he reached Miletus and Halicarnassus where City State mercenaries were found in large numbers. The Persian commander in Miletus was ready to surrender his city but convinced that the Persian fleet was on its way he resisted. Before the Persian fleet has a chance to enter the bay, Alexander's navy intervened and closed off the mouth of the harbour. Without the help of the Persian fleet, the city defenses were no match for Alexander's siege engines. Alexander stormed the city but did not harm its population.

In an unexpected turn of events, after the battle of Miletus, Alexander disbanded his fleet. Even though his ships were of help to him during the battle, Alexander decided to disband them anyway, retaining only twenty Athenian ships as hostages. At that time there was no obvious reason given but, as we later learned, he did it to save them. He did not have the naval strength to take on the powerful Persian fleet and win, so why waste his ships? Also, he did

not trust the City State navies behind him, for they too in a moment of weakness could have turned on him and cut off his retreat and supply lines. As for destroying the powerful Persian fleet, Alexander had a different plan.

At the city of Halicarnassus, the capital of Caria, Alexander met with his old adversary Memnon, who at the time was supreme commander of the Asian coast and the Persian fleet. With a division of Persian ships guarding the waters, the fortified city gave Alexander much resistance. But it could not hold out indefinitely and fell to his superior siege-craft. When it was over Alexander appointed an old woman, a princess named Ada of the Carian dynastic house, to the satrapy. Ada met Alexander earlier when he entered Caria. She offered him her city of Alinda and a proposal to adopt him as her son. Alexander was so impressed that he accepted her adoption proposal and gave her back her city. After that Alexander was known in Caria as the son of the ruler. Caria was liberated and free of foreign dominion and its satrapy granted to a native woman. Here for the first time Alexander separated civil from military responsibilities. Ada was given charge of civic functions while a Macedonian officer was responsible for the military.

During the winter of 334 BC, before heading south, Alexander sent his newly wed soldiers home on leave to visit their families and wives. Parmenio, who earlier was given command of the League troops, was dispatched to occupy Phrygia. Alexander, with the Macedonian army, spent late fall securing the western coast of Asia Minor before heading for Gordius. Alexander's plan was to paralyze the enemy fleet by occupying all the ports of the western Asia Minor seaboard. Alexander's coastal trek was mostly trouble free except when he passed through Pisidia. There he encountered stiff resistance and severe fighting from the mountain men whom he subdued. After his victory, Alexander went to Gordium, the Phrygian capital, to spend the winter.

While Alexander was making his way to Gordium, Memnon, his old adversary, was convincing his Persian lords to allow him to resurrect the old idea of bringing the war to Europe. Using the Persian fleet he began to invade the Aegean islands one by one, starting with Chios then Lesbos, hoping to get Alexander turned around. News of this

brought excitement to the City States who had hoped that Memnon's intervention would turn the tide of the war in their favour. Unfortunately, their enthusiasm was cut short when Memnon suddenly fell ill and died. I can't say that Alexander was not relieved. The next spring, the soldiers on leave and reinforcements arrived from Macedonia, joining Alexander at Gordium as he prepared for departure.

333 B.C. - Alexander III cuts Gordian Knot

In April 333 BC Alexander came across the famous Gordian Knot, which many tried but failed to untie. Legend has it that he who would untie the knot would become King of Asia. Alexander tried his luck but found the tangle too complicated and impossible to untie. But Alexander was not about to give up so he did the next best thing; he drew his sword and hacked it to pieces. The end result was the same, the knot was removed and the yoke-pole of King Gordius's chariot was now bare. That night thunder and lightning followed which was interpreted as a good sign that the gods were pleased.

With his army ready to march, Alexander passed by Ancyra before turning south to continue to occupy more Persian ports. His intention was to quickly march south through Cappadocia and occupy the passes of the Taurus mountain range on the southern coast of Cilicia. Having no time to conquer all of Cappadocia, he appointed a native satrap instead of a Macedonian.

When Alexander arrived in Cilicia he took the Persian garrison by surprise when his men climbed up the strongholds in the night. Surprised by the sudden appearance of Macedonians in their midst, the guards ran off and left the pass unguarded. The pass was taken without a fight. Alexander then marched down the mountain to seize the city of Tarsus but at the mere sight of the approaching Macedonian cavalry, its defenders also ran off. His victory at Tarsus was bittersweet as Alexander contracted an illness from swimming in icy cold waters. He would have died had he not been so physically fit. His recovery unfortunately was long and arduous.

As soon as he was well enough, Alexander and his troops were on the move. To recover lost time, he divided his army and sent Parmenio east to secure the Cilicia to Syria pass. Alexander, meanwhile, went west to secure the western coastline as well as reinforce his supply line. On his way back he took time off near Tarsus to rest and celebrate his eventual victory at Halicarnassus. As mentioned earlier Alexander conquered the city of Halicarnassus but not all the citadels. After he left, a couple of citadels were still intact so he left that job to his officers to finish.

Soon after departing Tarsus, Alexander got word from Parmenio that the Great King Darius, with a large army, was encamped on the plains of Northern Syria, about two days journey from the pass that Parmenio was now holding. After finding out what Alexander did to his army at Granicus, the Great King was furious with him and wanted to squash him like a bug. Who was this insolent man who dared challenge the Great King and prance in his backyard?

334 B.C. - Macedonians defeat Persians at Issus

After finding out that Alexander was in Cilicia in the fall of 333 BC with plans to head south, the Great King amassed a great army and prepared a trap. Expecting Alexander to come after him, Darius picked a suitable place with battle advantage and lay in wait. Because of his numerical superiority, Darius was convinced he could crush Alexander's little army in battle. When Alexander didn't show up as expected, the Great King became anxious. Thinking Alexander was afraid to face him, Darius decided it was time to pursue him instead. Alexander did not show up because he had fallen ill. But now that he learned Darius was out there, he mustered his forces and went after him. Unfortunately, as Alexander moved south quickly through the Cilician Gates along the Syrian coast, Darius moved north towards Cilicia on the opposite side of the same mountain range.

Unbeknownst to Alexander, Darius had broken camp. Alexander left his sick and wounded at Issus and continued to travel south, hugging the coastline. Camped overnight and weathering a storm, Alexander expected to do battle the next day, but to his surprise he learned that Darius had already broken camp and was now after him. Without

any knowledge of each other's positions the two armies passed one another over the mountain range of Amanus. Darius was first to learn of this from Alexander's wounded at Issus. It has been said that Darius was so frustrated that he took his anger out on Alexander's sick and wounded by ordering his soldiers to cut off their hands so that they could never fight again.

By cutting off his retreat and supply lines, Darius was now resolved to follow Alexander into the plains of Syria and trample him and his little army to death with his cavalry. Unfortunately for Darius, Alexander had different ideas. On finding out that Darius was behind him and pursuing him, Alexander expediently turned his army around. Determined to meet Darius on his (Alexander's) terms, Alexander ordered a battle plan for the next day. After allowing his troops to have a quick meal, he mobilized the entire army and marched through the night until he arrived at the battlefield of his choice. The battle was going to take place not in the broad open plain of Syria, but in the narrow plain of Pinarus, encircled by the mountains and sea. Hidden from view, Alexander's army spent the rest of the night laying in wait. At the crack of dawn, Alexander ordered their descent to the plain, infantry first in long narrow columns followed by the cavalry. In the face of a large enemy, Alexander formed the battle lines with ease as if performing a routine exercise. The Macedonian troops displayed great discipline and courage as they took their positions, knowing that they were about to face the largest army they have ever seen. With only about 16,000 Macedonian infantry and 5,600 cavalry troops, Alexander was facing a huge Persian cavalry force of 450,000, a City State mercenary infantry force of 30,000, a light infantry force of 20,000 and 60,000 Persians armed as hoplites.

The Persian battle line (this time) had the City State mercenaries placed front and center, while right and left of them stood the hoplites with the bulk of the cavalry stationed to the right of the City State mercenaries. The remaining troops stood behind the lines in column formations. Darius, sitting on his magnificent chariot, stood in the center behind the City State mercenaries.

Before the battle started, Alexander secretly rearranged his cavalry formation moving some of it behind and to the left of the frontline.

Alexander was in command of the right wing while Parmenio was in command of the left wing with strict orders not to break contact with the sea. Alexander charged first in an oblique formation, the right wing cavalry followed closely by the phalanx. As (bad) luck would have it, soon after the charge, Alexander received a leg wound. At the same time the phalanx had become dislocated and had broken line while attempting to climb the steep bank of the river. While Alexander seemed to have regained his composure, the City State mercenaries sought the opportunity and entered the gap in the open phalanx formation. The City State mercenaries fought like demons displaying their hatred for the Macedonians. But soon after overwhelming the enemy's left wing Alexander turned inward and attacked the center. The moment Darius saw Alexander coming for him, he turned his chariot around and fled. Choosing not to pursue him, Alexander first turned on the City State mercenaries and then on the numerically superior cavalry which had engaged Parmenio in a fierce battle across the Pinarus River.

Darius's flight left his army in disarray and confusion, running in all directions. As soon as the Persians began fleeing the Macedonians gave chase. Alexander, hoping to catch up to Darius, went after him. Anticipating a chase, Darius gave up his chariot for a horse and was nowhere to be found. The pursuit inflicted catastrophic losses on the Persian army especially since it had to exit through a narrow pass. The pursuit finally ended when darkness fell.

When it was over, only 8,000 of the City State mercenary force was left intact. It is unclear how many Persians died but, according to Ptolemy who was there at the time, the pursuit at the narrow pass alone yielded a ravine full of enemy corpses.

So before the year 333 BC was over the Great King's army was beaten and the Great King himself became a fugitive, leaving his royal family and great wealth to Alexander.

After the long pursuit, Alexander returned to the Pinarus and took a stroll through Darius's camp to find Darius's mother, wife and three children weeping for him. They presumed he was dead and were worried about their own fate. Here too Alexander showed

compassion by not harming the royal family and treating them with utmost respect. He informed them that Darius was still alive.

Alexander's victory at Issus was welcome news in Macedonia and a crushing disappointment for Persia and its City State allies. I can just imagine the thoughts that went through the minds of the various City State members of the Corinthian League at the 332 BC Isthmian Games, when it was suggested that a golden wreath be sent to Alexander to congratulate him on his victory.

The worst disappointment, however, goes to the Persian admirals in the Aegean who by now were fed up with the poor performance of the so called "superior City State fighting skills" and opted out of their strange partnerships.

Alexander was tempted to go after Darius immediately but it was too risky, especially with the Persian fleet still intact at his rear and in control of the Aegean waters.

Alexander possessed almost no ships or navy to speak of, let alone a powerful one to subdue the Persian fleet. He wanted to win his battles so he always chose the terms of engagement. His thinking was that if he couldn't engage his enemy and win in the water then he would have to bring the fight to shore where he had the advantage. The only way to do that was by cutting off the Persian navy from its ports. His plan, therefore, was to eventually occupy all cities around the eastern Mediterranean coastline and starve the Persian fleet of its supplies.

Soon after the battle of Issus, Alexander marched his Macedonians south in an effort to secure the coastline by occupying the various port cities. In the meantime Parmenio was dispatched to Damascus to seize the city and recover Darius's treasure, which had been sent there along with the Persian baggage train before the battle of Issus. Parmenio seized the city with ease (some say by treachery) and took possession of the treasury. He also captured many City State traitors including City State ambassadors to Persia who had previously conspired against Macedonia.

With Darius's treasury in his possession, Alexander secured the finances he needed to pay his debts and continue with his campaign. In comparison to Alexander, Darius was a very rich man, rich enough to carry 2,600 talents of coins, 500 pounds of silver, 4,500 pounds of gold and 3,400 pounds of precious stones. This however was not all of Darius's money. Compared to his total wealth this was only pocket change, which he carried with him during his travels.

332 B.C. - Alexander begins siege on Tyre

Alexander journeyed through Syria taking port after port, until he reached the Phoenician port city of Tyre. Tyre was an independent city, the most powerful naval and commercial port in the region. Most of the sailors in the Persian fleet were either from Cyprus or Tyre. Being independent (not under Persian rule) the citizens of Tyre wished to remain neutral (neither under Persian nor Macedonian rule). This however was not an option for Alexander. He needed to control all ports, especially Tyre, if he were to close off the Persian fleet. Being unable to negotiate a peaceful surrender Alexander declared war on Tyre and began a siege around January 332 BC.

Tyre stood on an island about a kilometer offshore. The city was fortified on all sides by high stone walls and defended by the powerful Tyrian fleet. At the time, both Alexander and the Tyrians felt confident that they could outlast one other and neither was willing to relent. The Tyrians, trusting their city to be impregnable, found the very idea of Alexander thinking of attempting a siege absurd. How could he seize an island when he didn't even have a fleet? Alexander, on the other hand, could not afford to allow the powerful Phoenician city to exist free behind his lines, especially since he was planning to venture deeper into Asia. He had no choice but to seize it by force. When the siege began, no one had any idea of the enormity of the task.

While Alexander's military strength lay on land, the city he wanted to besiege lay in water. The only way he could turn the situation to his advantage was by building a bridge and linking the island to the shore. His army could then rush in with its siege engines, knock down the walls and seize the city. While the army drafted labour

from the local vicinity and neighbouring towns to build the bridge, Alexander's craftsmen and engineers began the construction of the colossal siege towers. Building the bridge proved a lot more difficult than expected. Even though the water was shallow, the bottom was all mud and stakes had to be driven deep down, supported by stone before the sixty-meter wide road could be constructed. As the building of the causeway progressed, every stone found in the vicinity was carried and deposited into the water.

The Tyrians taunted and mocked the workers telling them that Alexander was crazy and wasting his time. But as the road began to materialize and approach the island the Tyrians began to panic. Physical attacks and countermeasures began to replace mocking and taunting. At the outset, Tyrian commandos attacked Alexander's supply lines on land hoping to slow down the building effort. Later, the Tyrian fleet began raiding by sea, sending ships with archers, slingers and catapults to attack the workers. Alexander, in the meantime, took every precaution possible to protect his men as well as maintain his schedule. When it become obvious that Alexander was not going to give up and his chances of actually besieging Tyre improved, many of the local cities, including Sidon a former enemy of Tyre, offered him assistance, including ships. Alexander quickly assembled a strong sea force to bottle the Tyrian fleet in its own harbour and to repel Tyrian raids at the causeway.

There was one major incident that could have turned the tide on Alexander but his confidence in his army's abilities and his unwavering persistence paid off. The Tyrians put together a large floating craft, set it on fire and by using the wind managed to burn most of the causeway. Alexander was away at the time on an expedition to find more lumber. When he returned he was shocked to find that his road had been destroyed. Instead of giving up, Alexander built a new causeway north of the old one. As the artificial harbour approached the island shore the Tyrians became desperate. They tried everything to stop the progress including pouring boiling sand on the soldiers. But, in spite of their gallant effort, nothing worked and the Macedonians eventually besieged the city.

Tyre fell in August 332 BC. It was a grueling seven-month effort on both sides but in the end the most determined won. The Tyrians, on several occasions, were given a chance to surrender. Unfortunately wisdom gave way to stubbornness and they fought bravely to the end. When it was over, about six to eight thousand were killed and about thirty thousand were taken prisoner and sold into slavery. The Tyrian leaders along with about two thousand of their fighting men were executed. The city itself was spared and resettled, continuing to function as an important naval and commercial port but under Macedonian rule.

I want to mention at this point that Tyre was the Sister City to Carthage. Carthage is located on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea south of Rome and played a key role in Rome's development as a super power. Had Alexander sacked Carthage as he intended to, our world would have been a different world today.

After his gallant struggle and long delay in Tyre, Alexander resumed his trek southward through Palestine, heading for Egypt. His voyage, expectedly, was interrupted as he ran into resistance at the city of Gaza. Gaza was well fortified and defended by Persian soldiers, supplemented by a strong force of Arab mercenaries. Unable to break through the city's fortification by conventional means, Alexander employed his siege engines and within two months reduced Gaza's fortification to rubble. During the course of the siege Alexander received a wound to his shoulder which put him out of action for a couple of weeks. Being physically fit, however, he recovered quickly and joined the final assault on the city. After breaking through the fortification, a vicious struggle ensued spilling into the streets where Alexander was again wounded, this time in the leg. When the battle was over, ten thousand were killed and the civilian population was rounded up and sold into slavery. Gaza too was resettled with people from the local region, converted into a fortress and placed under Macedonian control.

332 B.C. - Macedonians conquer Egypt

From Gaza, Alexander's army marched along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and then turned south into Egypt where huge crowds greeted him as a liberator. Having conquered all the port

cities around the eastern Mediterranean coast, the threat from the Persian fleet was finally removed. Before penetrating the interior of Asia, Alexander planned to occupy Egypt by force but it fell without a fight. The Egyptian people hailed Alexander as a liberator, giving him the citadel of Memphis along with its treasury amounting to 800 talents. Egypt was a strategic location for Alexander's Asian campaign and it was now secure.

331 B.C. - Alexander III elevated to Pharaoh

Something else happened to Alexander in Egypt, something unexpected. Having defeated the Persian King who ruled in place of the Pharaoh of Egypt, in the eyes of the Egyptian priests, Alexander now became Egypt's new ruler but not a Pharaoh. For the priests, unfortunately, it was impossible to accept a foreigner as a true Pharaoh. If Alexander were to continue on his campaign deep into Asia he had to pacify Egypt and gain its loyalty. Egypt was a large, rich country with a huge population capable of supplying his army with all the necessities for the entire campaign. He had to do whatever was necessary to secure it, which meant that Alexander had to become Egypt's undisputed ruler. The only way to do that was by becoming an Egyptian Pharaoh. Unfortunately, a foreigner could only become a Pharaoh by divine intervention.

Accepting this challenge Alexander took a trip to Siwa to visit the religious order. When he arrived at the temple of the oracle, the high priest greeted him as the "son of Zeus-Ammon and master of all lands". Why the priest greeted him this way is unknown, perhaps an error in translation? Alexander was delighted with the pronouncement and humbly accepted his proclamation as the "Son of God".

After returning to Memphis during the winter of 332-331BC, Alexander took a small division from his army and went down the Nile River. Just before reaching the Mediterranean coast he saw a perfect strip of land upon which to lay the foundation of a great city which would bear his name, Alexandria of Egypt. Alexandria, in time, would bring about change in intellectual and economic life as never before experienced and for the next one thousand years would become the center of civilization. With the founding of Alexandria,

a port city facing the Mediterranean, Alexander transformed his military efforts into business opportunities not just for the Macedonians but for the entire known world. Alexandria was to become the leading multinational, multicultural, commercial trade centre of the world.

The closing of the entire Eastern Mediterranean coast forced the Persian navy to move on and opened the way for the Macedonian fleet to dominate the waters.

After returning to Memphis, Alexander met the reinforcements sent to him by Antipater and ordered the army to prepare to march. Before leaving, however, he sent a scientific expedition up the Nile River on a discovery mission and also appointed a couple of native satraps and Macedonian overseers to govern Egypt. Alexander did not want to entrust the governing of such a large country to a single person.

In early spring of 331BC Alexander left Memphis and headed for Phoenicia. He stopped at Tyre for a while and made some changes to the government there before proceeding north towards Damascus.

The Great King Darius, in the meantime, having received Alexander's answer to his peace offer began to amass a great army. Darius offered Alexander the marriage of his daughter, 10,000 talents and the lands east of the Euphrates in exchange for peace. Parmenio and his older officers encouraged Alexander to accept the offer but Alexander declined wanting it all: Darius's lands, money and his crown. Having no alternative the Great King began preparations for another battle.

The Persian Empire was vast and Darius had no problem raising an army. Besides the Persians there were many other races that offered assistance. The Indians even sent him fifteen elephants. Besides raising a great army Darius was also careful to find open space for his choice of battleground, the kind that would give him advantage over Alexander. This time Darius was determined to get things his way and made sure everything was done correctly.

331 B.C. - Macedonians defeat Persians at Gaugamela

While Darius was raising an army, Alexander was marching northward preparing to cross the Euphrates River. As expected during war, his advance force, which was sent to build a bridge over the mighty river, faced opposition from the satrap of Syria and Mesopotamia. But the moment Alexander arrived with his army the Satrap fled and the bridge was built with relative ease. Then as Alexander advanced towards the Tigris River the local spies led him to believe that Darius was on the other side waiting to prevent his passage. Assuming the reports were accurate, Alexander force-marched his army to catch up but Darius was nowhere to be found. Alexander's army crossed the Tigris on September 20th, 331 BC and marched on in a southeasterly direction until it reached the village of Guagamela. There he found Darius's army clearing and leveling the land to give his chariots advantage over the Macedonian phalanx.

In battle formation, Darius stood on his chariot at the center. By his sides stood the mounted guard and Persian infantry. To the right and to the left stood the City State mercenaries. At both wings stood a combined force of cavalry and infantry. In front of the wings stood the allied cavalries and front and center stood fifteen elephants. In front of the battle line stood 200 Scythian chariots ready to roll along the cleared, smoothed out ground.

Alexander was initially planning to deploy the usual oblique formation with the offensive right wing commanded by himself and the defensive left wing commanded by Parmenio. Due to the overwhelming numerical superiority of his opponent, however, Alexander decided to add a second battle line capable of fighting a second front behind him, in case he was surrounded. In other words, if Alexander's forces were to be surrounded their formation would take the shape of a flexible square and push the enemy outwards on all four fronts.

Expecting to be immediately attacked, Darius ordered his battle line to form and waited. After sizing up the situation, Alexander decided not to attack and camped his troops about four kilometers away from Darius's camp. That evening Alexander ordered his men to rest for

the night. Darius's men, expecting an attack at any time, stood ready all night.

The morning after, October 1st, 331 BC, Alexander, with a well-rested army, approached from the north but found his right wing too short to match the opponent's. To compensate he continued to stretch his line but his opponent continued to match his moves. Darius, however, feared that if he moved too far off the cleared ground he would compromise the mobility of his chariots and ordered the attack. The chariots rushed to outflank Alexander but Alexander's men were prepared. The archers struck first and took out most of the charioteers while Alexander's front line quickly formed into columns, allowing the rushing chariots to pass. Trapped by columns of men and unable to maneuver, the horses were overpowered by Alexander's grooms, effectively disabling the chariots. Now, as the two lines of battle were drawing close, Alexander noticed a gap in the Persian left and sought the opportunity to take the offensive. Leading his companions he swerved and rushed into the gap and began to roll towards the center. The phalanx also pushed hard towards the center squeezing the battle towards Darius. Frightened by this sudden fierce attack, Darius turned his chariot around and fled. His guards formed a protective circle around him and they too fled. In his absence, his troops in the center and left wings followed suit. It was Issus all over again. Darius left the battlefield before the battle was decided.

The rapid movement of the phalanx in the center of Alexander's formation caused a gap in the Macedonian line, which could have been exploited by the enemy. But instead of closing in on the line, the undisciplined Persians and their allies rushed in to plunder Alexander's camp. The moment the enemy disengaged, Alexander's second front line went into effect and chased the looters back.

In the meantime, Parmenio was having trouble and had sent for Alexander to help him. By now Alexander's companions had broken through the enemy lines and were just about to pursue Darius. As much as he wanted to catch him, Alexander could not leave the battle unattended. Disappointed as he was, he turned his companions around and made his way towards Parmenio, only to run into the fleeing looters. A bloody cavalry engagement ensued as the trapped

enemy soldiers now desperately fought for their lives. By the time Alexander reached Parmenio, the battle was over. Parmenio had overwhelmed his attackers and was now free. Unfortunately, so was Darius. This was the second time Alexander was robbed of his chance at gaining a total victory, complete with the capture of Darius.

Even before the battle of Guagamela was over Alexander acted quickly and sent an advanced force to Susa to take possession of the treasury before it was looted.

With the battle won, Alexander went in search of Darius and rode through the night. Unable to find him, the next day he returned to Guagamela (Arbela) to harvest the fruits of his victory and bury his dead. It is estimated that enemy losses were between fifty and sixty thousand while Macedonian losses were estimated at less than one thousand. When the dust settled, Alexander's victory was celebrated with the burial of the fallen soldiers, with gift giving ceremonies and with Alexander's acclamation as King of Asia.

Confident that the Persian threat was over, to ease the tension back home, Alexander loosened his tight grip on the City States by giving them autonomy. With the Persians defeated, Alexander no longer feared a City State-Persian alliance but he could not completely discount the Spartan threats in the potentially explosive Peloponnesus.

Soon after his victory Alexander left Arbela and continued to journey southwards to Babylon, expecting to run into resistance from the surviving Persian army. To his surprise, however, the same Persian satrap who fiercely fought Parmenio in Guagamela now came out with his sons to peacefully greet Alexander and surrender the city. What was more surprising was that not only the city leaders but also the entire general population came out en masse to greet their new King. They decorated the streets with wreaths and flowers to welcome the Macedonians.

After spending about a month in Babylon, on November 25th, 331 BC, Alexander set off for Susa. On his way there he received word that his advance force, previously sent to secure the city and take

possession of the treasures, had successfully completed its mission. Like Babylon, Susa surrendered without a fight with the great treasure depot of the Persian King intact. In spite of spending great sums of money to finance his campaigns, Darius still had enough treasure left to purchase a small country or as Michael Wood puts it, equivalent to the national income of the fifth century Athenian empire for 150 years. It is estimated that apart from the precious stones, 40,000 silver talents and 9,000 gold daries (coins) were also discovered and fell into Alexander's hands. Alexander was a happy man indeed.

330 B.C. - Macedonia defeats Agis III

Alexander arrived in Susa on December 15th, 331 BC, and was greeted by the governor and a delegation of important people bearing rich gifts including a dozen Indian elephants. Some of the money received was sent to Macedonia to finance Antipater's campaign against the Spartans. In the spring of 331 BC, the Spartans formed a Peloponnesian coalition and were preparing to fight Macedonia. Antipater unfortunately had his hands full putting down Thracian uprisings and was unable to immediately respond to this Spartan provocation. The Spartans took this as a sign of weakness and began to attack cities loyal to Macedonia. Antipater quickly finished off the northern campaign and expediently marched south. When he arrived he found the Spartans and their allies besieging the city of Megalopolis in Arcadia which had remained loyal to Macedonia and would not surrender. There was a great battle and Antipater won a decisive victory. The mighty Spartans were vanquished and begged for peace. Antipater took most of the nobles as hostages and referred their fate to the League as Alexander had previously done with the Thebans. Unfortunately, the League of Corinth, seeing this as another blow to their freedom, did not have the stomach to pass judgment and left the fate of the captured undecided. It was now up to Alexander to determine their punishment. When they arrived in Asia, Alexander held a trial where it was decided that the troublemakers would be executed and the rest freed. Sparta, however, was forced to join the League of Corinth.

With the defeat of Sparta, the legacy, culture and way of life of the ancient City States ended forever. From then forward, Macedonia ruled over them for centuries until the Roman wars.

After collecting his treasure, Alexander appointed a Persian satrap in charge of civil duties and two Macedonian commanders in charge of the troops and citadels. While still in Susa, he also received several thousand fresh Macedonian troops for his next campaign.

330 B.C. - Macedonians conquer Persepolis

After a bit of rest and relaxation, Alexander was on the move again, this time headed for Parsa (Persepolis) but first he had to cross the land of the Uxii. While the people of the plains submitted without a fight, the highlanders, bound by old traditions, demanded tribute as payment for passage through their lands. Everyone had to pay, including the Persian King as many had done before him. Alexander unfortunately was not the sort who would easily yield to bandits and marauders. Instead of paying tribute he unleashed his army upon them. He sent a strong detachment behind their lines to cut off their retreat while his main army attacked from below. After a short battle the Uxians were overpowered and fled, only to be annihilated by the Macedonians waiting at their rear. It was now Alexander's turn to impose a penalty demanding from them annual tributes of 100 horses, 500 draught animals and 30,000 sheep.

At this point Alexander decided to split his army in two. Parmenio went with the allied forces to Parsa via the main southern road while Alexander with the second force took a shortcut to the Persian Gates through the treacherous mountains. After five days of forced march, Alexander arrived at the pass only to run into serious resistance. In anticipation, the Persians had built a wall across the pass. A sizable force was waiting for the Macedonians to arrive. Upon contact, Alexander initiated a direct siege but was unable to penetrate the barriers. The Persians had artillery and archers mounted above the wall. From there they rolled great boulders and rained arrows and javelins down upon the Macedonians below. Alexander suffered heavy casualties and had to retreat. Discouraged by the heavy losses, Alexander's officers were about to give up the siege claiming that it would be easier to go around than lose more men attempting the

impossible. “Impossible? It is not impossible.” Alexander exclaimed. “It is so simple that even that old shepherd over there can show you how it is done. Bring me the old man here and I will prove it to you.” When the old man arrived, Alexander had him questioned about the local terrain. Being a shepherd all his life the old man was familiar with the local landscape, especially the passes that led through the treacherous terrain. With relative ease the old shepherd was able to lead Alexander’s army behind the Persian position.

Alexander left a strong cavalry force and two battalions of the phalanx at the entrance to the gorge. To deceive the enemy about his numbers, Alexander ordered his men to burn the normal number of campfires at night. Then when the signal was given, they were to assault the wall. Alexander in the meantime took a commando force and assault troops through the long and winding twenty-kilometer path and after a day and two nights travel, reached his destination. He gave the signal to attack at dawn and after a bloody clash the Persian force was totally annihilated.

Victorious, Alexander resumed his journey towards Parsa only to be bogged down by heavy snowdrifts, ravines and watercourses. Part way he received incentive to get moving again when a messenger arrived with news that Parsa was ready to surrender. If, however, Alexander didn’t hurry to get there in good time the inhabitants would plunder its treasures.

Alexander acted at once ordering the infantry to follow as best as it could while the cavalry dashed all night at breakneck speeds until it reached the Araxes River at dawn. There was no bridge so his engineers hurriedly built one from timbers and stones in record time, allowing the cavalry to cross and ride on. Alexander arrived in time to marvel at the splendor of Persian culture and to secure his treasure. His gaze at the city’s magnificence reinforced the reality that Persian rule was over. Alexander was now the new lord and master of Asia as he planted his feet in Parsa and sat himself at the throne of Xerxes. Soon after taking control of the city, Alexander ordered his troops to burn down Xerxes’s building as a symbolic act to show that he had now accomplished what he had set out to do. It was an act that he would later regret.

While in Parsa, Alexander received news of the final Macedonian victory over the Spartan coalition. Alexander must have been ecstatic at the knowledge that the once feared and mighty Spartans had folded not before him but before Antipater, a mere general. There was nothing that could stand in Alexander's way now. His army proved itself invincible against any foe and amply demonstrated its cunning and might in all kinds of battles and under all conceivable circumstances.

With the Spartan threat out of the way, the last bastion of City State resistance was over and Alexander no longer needed to hold the City State armies hostage. With much fanfare, gift giving and bonus pay he dismissed the entire League troops from their duty. The Thessalian cavalry, which proved itself worthy in battle, he rewarded handsomely and sent home. Those who preferred to stay in Alexander's commission were accepted as paid mercenaries, not as allied soldiers. With the fall of Sparta the so-called "alliance" also ended and Alexander's campaigns from here on forward were waged by Macedonians only. Alexander and his army took a long deserved rest during the winter months before setting out to occupy Ecbatana, the last of the Persian capitals.

The treasures Alexander found in Parsa were even greater than those found in Susa. It is estimated that he collected 120,000 Persian talents from Parsa alone and another 6,000 talents from Pasargadae, a nearby town that also surrendered without a fight.

In May 330 BC, after about four months rest, Alexander left Parsa and headed northwards. It seemed unusual that Alexander would remain still for this long but Peter Green believes that he was waiting for the Persian New Year festival to commence so that he could participate in it. That unfortunately did not happen and Alexander left for Ecbatana to again look for Darius. Darius, in the meantime, hoped that Alexander would be so intoxicated by the overwhelming treasures and the decadent life in Parsa that he would retire in the luxurious quarters of the western palaces and forget about pursuing him. Just to be on the safe side however, Darius began to amass a new army in case Alexander dared to attack. Darius would then quickly escape into Bactria, destroying the countryside and leaving nothing behind.

When Alexander found out that Darius was in Ecbatana he went after him. Anticipating Alexander's move Darius quickly sent his baggage train and harem to the Caspian Gates while he prepared a trap for Alexander in Ecbatana. Counting on the assistance of his allies, the Scythians and Cadusians to provide him with massive reinforcements, Darius challenged Alexander to a battle. When Alexander heard of Darius's challenge, he instructed his baggage train to follow behind while he force-marched his Macedonians in pursuit. But before reaching Ecbatana, Alexander learned that Darius had not received the reinforcements he expected and had resolved to flee. When Alexander arrived at Ecbatana he was a week too late. His 500-kilometer break neck march was for nothing. Darius had cleared the city treasury of its 7,000 talents and had slipped away eastwards with 6,000 infantry and 3,000 cavalry troops. This was a great disappointment for Alexander making him even more determined to hunt Darius down.

Before leaving on his journey deep into Asia, Alexander built a treasury house at the citadel of Ecbatana to safeguard the 180,000 or so talents that he had amassed from Susa and Parsa. Parmenio was put in charge of guarding it. After dismissing the allied forces, his loyal Macedonian general Parmenio, having no army to command, was reduced in rank to military area commander. He was then placed in charge of guarding Alexander's treasury house at Ecbatana and securing his communication lines to the rear. Parmenio was seventy years old when Alexander diplomatically coaxed him into retiring from the front lines.

With his treasury secured and Parmenio in charge of local affairs in Persia proper, Alexander was free to pursue Darius in present day Iran, by way of the Caspian Gates. It is a shame that such great effort was expended in the pursuit of a single man in such a reckless manner during July in the heat of the desert.

Alexander force-marched his army northward and covered 320 kilometers in eleven days, moving relentlessly in an attempt to overtake the Persians before they crossed the Caspian Gates. When they reached Rhagae, about eighty kilometers from the Caspian Gates, Alexander discovered that Darius had already passed

through. Alexander at that point decided to stop the pursuit and allowed his army rest for five days before continuing on through the Gates. When they crossed the Gates, Alexander was informed that Darius had been deposed by his own satraps and was now their prisoner. Alexander quickly deployed his fastest cavalry on an all night pursuit and in the morning when they reached Darius's camp they discovered that Darius had been arrested and taken away.

Alexander continued his search and when his Macedonians finally caught up to him they found Darius in chains and weakened from stab wounds. After a wild all night chase, the next day Alexander's men discovered Darius mortally stabbed by javelins. Darius's own satraps murdered him to prevent him from falling into Alexander's hands, alive. Darius was around fifty years old when he met his tragic end in July of 330 BC.

After learning of the agonizing circumstances under which Darius had died, Alexander took his body back to Parsa and gave him a kingly burial in one of the Archaemenid royal cemeteries. Alexander, to the surprise of his Macedonians and especially the citizens of the City States, did something unusual by declaring his desire to avenge the murdered Darius. He declared that the rebels who had murdered their royal master would be punished severely while those faithful to him would be held in high honour.

With the death of Darius, the impression was that the war was over. A rumour was started around the camp that the crusade might be over and everyone would soon be allowed to go home. After all, the allied forces had been dismissed and Darius was dead, what other purpose would there be to go on? This was obvious to everyone of course except Alexander who now wanted to avenge Darius's death by going after his murderers. It was obvious that Alexander had motives different from his Macedonians. Alexander was not out to avenge anyone but rather to continue the conquests that would satisfy his own desires. His loyal soldiers, unfortunately, were becoming weary and wondered when, if ever, they would be able to go home to enjoy their hard-earned earnings in peace?

Alexander convened a meeting of his officers and soldiers and put an end to the rumours about going home and then ordered the army

to prepare to move again. Even though Alexander got his way (again), this time unfortunately a rift began to develop between his own desires and those of his men. Alexander was well aware of the problems he was about to face and began to look at non-Macedonians as possible candidates for his civil as well as military administration. To lessen their loneliness, he even encouraged his men to take wives from the captive women and bring them along on the campaign. As he was moving away from Macedonia, Alexander knew all too well that receiving new recruits and maintaining a long distance communication link with home would become more and more difficult, especially since he was planning to make "conquering" a way of life.

After a few days rest the army was on the move again and headed east towards Hyrcania. On his way through Iraq, Alexander encountered wild tribes that had never before been conquered and fierce battles broke out. After subduing some he made them pay tributes of horses and livestock. Some, especially the very skilled horsemen and archers he drafted into his service.

While crossing Iran, Alexander found a new enemy with different fighting skills that offered him no great battles. It was an enemy in small numbers that hid during the day and attacked at night. It appeared in the rear and hit at several places simultaneously and quickly disappeared. When Alexander went in pursuit, it entrenched itself in inaccessible terrain or dispersed itself and vanished into the woodlands. Alexander, in response to these terror attacks, reorganized his army into small mixed units that could fight many independent battles simultaneously or come together as one large unit if necessary. Alexander also, for the first time, employed riding archers and javelin throwers who could attack on the move. With the new fighting methods and the conscription of foreigners into his military, Alexander's army was no longer the same army as when he had started out.

After spending two weeks of summer in Hyrcania, Alexander moved eastward to the northern side of Areia. There he received news that Bessus, one of Darius's satraps who was also a suspect in Darius's murder, had been recognized in the province of Bactria as King of Asia. Alexander was about to set out for Bactra, the capital

city of Bactria, in pursuit of Bessus when he received news that the satrap of Areia was in support of Bessus's recognition and himself was planning an insurrection in Areia. Without losing any time, Alexander, with part of his army in a fast paced two-day march, showed up unexpectedly in Artacoana, the capital of Areia. His presence brought great fear among the rebels and the insurrection collapsed.

Unfortunately, during the forced march Alexander lost Nicator, Parmenio's son and commander of his Guards Brigade. Nicator fell ill and died on his way to Artacoana. Alexander was too much in a hurry pursuing Bessus to stay and honour his fallen soldier himself as he did with so many others, so he gave that task to Philotus, Nicator's brother which in the long term proved to be a mistake. Alexander was determined to put down Bessus as soon as possible and after arriving in Artacoana, went on the move again. He had learned that Bessus was raising a large army recruiting from Bactria and from the wild nomadic tribes beyond the Oxus.

Alexander was now entering uncharted territory and did not know what to expect. To avoid further trouble he founded a Macedonian settlement, which he named Alexandria-of-the- Areians, the first of many military garrisons positioned at strategic points throughout the eastern provinces.

For some reason Alexander abandoned his haste to reach Bactra by direct route and decided to travel south, perhaps to tame the rest of the provinces before heading north for the Hindu Kush. He secured these regions too by founding several new Macedonian settlements such as Alexandria-in-Arachosia, present-day Kandahar and Alexandria-at-the-Caucasus. To build his cities, Alexander's army laboured all through the winter without rest.

329 B.C. - Macedonians reach western China after conquering the North-eastern part of the Persian provinces Eschate, Bactria, etc., today's Samarkand, Bihar, Tashkent and others.

In the spring of 329 BC, after a short rest, Alexander led his army over the snowy Hindu Kush. Despite the opposition Bessus offered him, Alexander emerged victorious and entered Bactria. Bessus fled

and disappeared in Sogdiana. Alexander occupied Bactria including the capital Bactra and then advanced northward across the Oxus River. It has been said that there was no wood to build a bridge so it took the army five days to cross the Oxus River. They swam across the river using inflated leather skins, which had been sewn together from their tent coverings.

As soon as Alexander entered Sogdiana, Bessus fell out of favour with his supporters for not putting up a fight. Then gradually his own troops deserted him. Bessus's fall from grace did not mean that the rebellion was over. In time a new and much more dangerous antagonist would take his place and carry on the national resistance.

After capturing Bessus, Alexander continued his trek northward past Maracanda until he came upon the Jaxartes River where he reached the extreme northeast limit of the Persian Empire. Beyond there, in the broad steppes, lived nomads who were always a danger to the empire. To defend against attack and keep watch on the river, Alexander founded a frontier Macedonian settlement and named it Alexandria-Eschate or Khojend.

While Alexander was occupied with the preparations for the founding of his new city, a Persian rebellion was festering and erupted into violent revolts in a number of localities. Alexander did not waste time before unleashing his army and crushing the insurrection with much bloodshed. All the towns that participated were destroyed and their inhabitants executed. But instead of crushing their spirits, Alexander's actions inflamed the rebels and soon afterwards even more uprisings took place, on a greater scale. At one point the rebels managed to defeat the Macedonian expeditionary force and besiege Maracanda. Their action, however, angered Alexander to a point where he himself took a contingent of light troops and force-marched 300 kilometers in three days in pursuit of the rebels until they were subdued and severely punished. When he was finished, he headed south into Bactra where he spent the winter of 329-328 BC resting.

During the following spring, Alexander split his army in two and left Craterus behind in Bactria to protect the city while he moved north into Sogdiana to put down more rebellions. While Alexander

was rounding up rebels, he instructed Hephaestion to plan out several cities in Sogdiana. A new city named Alexandria-the-furthermost emerged which was later populated by Macedonian immigrants.

Victorious over the rebels, Alexander gave command of Sogdiana to Coenus while he and his army moved on to Nautaca to spend the winter.

Of all the rebellions that erupted between 329 and 327 BC, only one remained undefeated. The rebels here were perched high upon an inaccessible rocky citadel in the mountains of Sogdiana. In the spring of 327 BC, Alexander marched his army from the wintering grounds of Nautaca to the high fortress of Sogdiana and summoned the rebels to surrender. Unfortunately, the only answer he received was laughter and ridicule. They said that the only way they would surrender was if Alexander's soldiers suddenly developed wings.

Alexander turned to his men and asked for volunteers, offering high rewards to those who would scale the highest peak. As it turned out, among the Macedonian soldiers were mountain climbers and some 300 of the bravest and boldest volunteered. They undertook the climb in the dark of night using ropes and iron tent pegs for spikes, which they drove into the icy cold rock. Thirty of them fell to their death during the climb but the rest made it to the top. Then early the next morning, in the dawn of first light, the rebels saw, to their astonishment, these Macedonian supermen high above them and immediately capitulated, surrendering their fortress. Among the rebels captured was the Bactrian prince, Oxyartes, who had with him his beautiful daughter Roxane. In the judgment of Alexander's companions, Roxane was the most beautiful woman they had ever seen, second only to Stateira, the wife of Darius. Alexander fell passionately in love with her and soon afterwards made her his wife.

Soon after this campaign was over, Alexander marched eastwards towards Paraetacene to put down another citadel of resistance. Here too Alexander found the fortress perched high on a steep rock surrounded by deep ravines and very rough terrain. It seemed that the more impregnable the fortress looked the more Alexander was

determined to penetrate it. He loved challenges and so did his Macedonians because they too seemed eager to do the impossible.

With a bit of Macedonian ingenuity, a lot of determination and with whatever nature had to offer, the Macedonian engineers constructed long ladders from the surrounding tall pine trees descending into the ravines. From the bottom they raised a causeway over the ravine to the citadel walls. They then built a penthouse above the causeway to protect the soldiers from falling artillery and began to bombard the citadel walls. It did not take too long before the shaken rebels offered to surrender.

This being the last bastion of resistance, Alexander had put down all resistance in the Far East and was free to return to Bactra. Alexander was hesitant to leave Sogdiana unresolved before continuing on his trek to India. Here he met a fighting people with great determination much like his own. He needed to pacify them but not by just defeating them in battle. He needed to show them that he had earned their respect but not just by employing them into his services. He needed to make them partners the old fashioned way, by marrying one of their kind, the way Philip would have done.

Before returning to Bactra Alexander married Roxane at the top of the citadel in the castle he had just conquered. His marriage to Roxane was a symbol of reconciliation with his former enemies and was meant to have great political importance. The marriage ceremony was conducted according to Iranian customs, which was meant to flatter the Iranian national pride.

By 328 BC, Alexander had conquered the entire Persian Empire, at least the empire that belonged to Darius III. The ancient authors gave no account as to why Alexander wanted to go beyond the Persian realm but as soon as he completed his conquests of eastern Iran, Alexander began preparations to invade India. I believe Alexander acted not so much on his desire for conquest but on his overwhelming curiosity to see what was beyond the eastern realm of the known world then. No doubt, while dealing with the mountain Indians of eastern Iran, he had heard stories about India that did not fit with his previous knowledge of that part of the world.

Before leaving Bactra, Alexander parted with tradition and appointed Amyntas, a Macedonian, instead of a foreign satrap to secure the important satrapy of Bactria. Amyntas was left well armed with 10,000 infantry and 3,500 cavalry, more soldiers than Alexander had started with seven years before.

327 B.C. - Macedonians conquer Cashmere and Punjab

In the spring of 327 BC, while his army stood at the Hindu Kush contemplating the sight of the eastern edge of the world, Alexander meticulously planned the next step of his campaign. For the Indians, Alexander's approach through the Hindu Kush was a reminder of the Aryan invasion long ago. Nomadic Aryans invaded India around 1500 BC, destroyed the Indus valley civilization and exterminated the Indus inhabitants, thus ending the most brilliant civilization of the ancient world.

On his journey to India, Alexander brought with him his young queen Roxane, who a year later bore him a son. Unfortunately the child died soon after birth.

In early summer of 327 BC, Alexander divided his army into two. The main column, commanded by Hephaestion and Perdiccas, went down the Kabul River and over the Khyber Pass to build bridges and prepare for the invasion. Alexander meanwhile, with his lightly armed units, took a different path along the Kunar Valley in east Afghanistan and from there he crossed into northwestern Pakistan.

Along his journey Alexander encountered stiff opposition, which required severe fighting. The fearless Indian tribes along the mountainous terrain had numerous warriors and presented difficulties for Alexander's advance. The fighting was so severe that during the first contact both Alexander and Ptolemy were wounded.

After crossing the Swat River, Alexander encountered more formidable tribes and the fighting became even more intense. The Indians fought bravely but eventually relented. After losing Massaga, their chief fortress, the Indians left for Aornos (Pir-Sar), another fortress. Situated at the bend of the Indus River, this 1,500-meter high fortress was impossible to scale. Sensing the limits of his

army's capability, Alexander, for the time being, decided not to pursue the enemy any further. He turned his army around and marched southward down the Indus River.

Later, using different strategies, Alexander attempted to besiege the Aornos fortress several times without success. Alexander could not enter Punjab with Aornos intact. He had to break its resistance. If conventional means did not work then he had to invent new methods of attack. Of all the new methods attempted, the most successful proved to be the flooding of the ravines surrounding the fortress. As soon as the water rose high enough in the ravine to bridge the army's position with the rock, Alexander's siege-engines moved in for the kill. The resistance soon broke and the army was able to rush in and subdue their opponents. Alexander was the first to reach the top, completing the conquest of Aornos. This was one of the most brilliant feats of strategy and tactics in his career. With Aornos out of the way Alexander was now free to pursue his journey to Punjab. The downing of Aornos gave birth to the legend of the Macedonian supermen. The Indians regarded the fortress impregnable and believed that the god Heracles once tried to conquer it without success.

326 B.C. - Macedonians conquer Eastern India and establish Macedonian rule. Many scientific projects are initiated.

In March 326 BC, Alexander turned southward on a journey to catch up with Hephaestion and Perdiccas. When he reached them he gave his army a month of well-deserved rest. After crossing the Indus River, over the pontoon bridge previously built by Hephaestion's engineers, Alexander entered into the land of his ally Ambhi. Alexander, trusting no one, marched into Taxila battle ready but none materialized. Ambhi welcomed Alexander with many gifts and received him as his guest in the capital Taxila.

In Taxila the Macedonians, for the first time, encountered many wonders, strange manners and customs. To the scientists' delight they also discovered flora they had never seen before. It was here too that Alexander met those "naked philosophers" (Buddhist monks) and came in contact with the doctrine of Buddha. For the next three days the Macedonians were treated royally with lavish

gifts. Not to be outdone, Alexander reinstated Ambhi as rajah of Taxila and showered him with gifts of his own, which included thirty horses and no less than 1,000 talents. This generosity was motivated by Alexander's wish to have Ambhi on his side, as he was receiving intelligence reports of large concentrations of enemy troops ahead. In spite of making him rajah, Ambhi was still a vassal king. A Macedonian military governor, with a strong garrison at his disposal actually governed Taxila.

Alexander invested a great deal of time and considerable effort negotiating peaceful terms with the other two Indian rajahs in that region but it seemed that peace was not possible before war. Porus, one of the rajahs negotiating with Alexander, made his terms very clear. If Alexander wanted his kingdom, he had to earn it in battle.

Porus's army was already amassing at the banks on the other side of the Jhelum River as more reinforcements began to arrive. Alexander could not afford to waste much time so he ordered his engineers to build a bridge. Since there were no building materials available in the vicinity, Alexander sent Coenus to dismantle the pontoon bridge from the Indus River, cut it into small sections and transport it over land on oxcarts. While Coenus was looking after the bridge, Alexander reinforced his army by adding elephants and Indian recruits to his infantry.

As he was getting ready to meet Porus, Alexander did not count on a monsoon. Perhaps unaware of the Indian climate in June, Alexander led his army during continuous, steaming, torrential rain. The skies had opened up and pounded the unknowing Macedonians for over two months without a break. Alexander traveled over the Salt Range covering about 180 kilometers in a little over two days before reaching the Jhelum River. A great achievement under monsoon conditions.

Unfortunately, the Jhelum was so swollen from the monsoon rains that it was impossible to cross. Besides, even if crossing was possible, Porus was waiting on the other side with archers, chariots and elephants. To a casual observer it would have appeared that the opposing armies had reached a stalemate. Neither could act without severe consequences.

To reinforce the idea that he was going to wait for more favourable conditions before attacking, Alexander ordered continuous supplies to be delivered to his camp in full view of his enemy. While doing that he sent surveyors up and down the river in search of a good place to cross. In the meantime, the troops were kept on full alert with activities suggesting the possibility of an imminent attack. When nothing happened for a long time, the enemy tired of Alexander's antics began to ignore the distracting maneuvers. As luck would have it, the surveyors did find a good place to cross. It was on a large wooded island where the channels at both sides were narrow. The spot was located about 25 kilometers upstream from camp and was ideal since there was a ravine on the near side of the bank, a good place to hide troops.

To ensure a successful crossing, Alexander had to thoroughly confuse the enemy about his real intentions so he ordered his troops to light fires over a wide area every night. At the same time Ptolemy would take a large cavalry force and run up and down the riverbank making as much noise as possible while making false attempts to cross. Initially, all these demonstrations were taken seriously and every move and maneuver was counteracted with opposing forces on the other side. After some time, however, when it became obvious that these were only tricks to agitate the opposing troops and lower their morale, Porus began to relax his vigilance. Porus must have thought that Alexander's real aim was to break his army's morale and attack him when he was at his weakest. Unfortunately for Porus, Alexander was much cleverer than that.

Alexander had to make his move in less than two days because the other rajah, Abisares of Kashmir, was about 80 kilometers to the north and coming his way. Even though Porus was at ease with Alexander's exercises, his patrols kept constant watch. Any attempt at crossing, even undetected, would be overwhelmed by Porus's forces as soon as it was spotted. To maximize his chances, Alexander divided his army and directed simultaneous but separate attacks at different points on the river. Not knowing where the attack was going to come from, Porus had to divide his forces in order to counter the Macedonians. In the meantime, the pontoon bridge was assembled in secrecy and ready to be deployed.

In the dark of night, Alexander, with a force of 10,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry, slipped away up the banks to make the 25-kilometer trek to attempt the crossing at dawn. The baggage train and a large part of the army remained at the base camp. Alexander had given orders to openly start making preparations for an attack at the crack of dawn. He even had someone who looked like him come out of his royal tent, wearing the royal cloak, barking out orders.

A second group, consisting of three battalions of the phalanx, the mercenary cavalry and infantry, was dispatched from the main camp to the halfway point between the main camp and Alexander's crossing, with orders to wait and cross only after Alexander was engaged in battle. Craterus, in command of the forces at the main camp, was also given orders to wait and not cross until Porus had moved from his current position in pursuit of Alexander.

This was indeed a brilliant plan and certainly posed a dilemma for Porus. What was Porus to do? He did what any skilled commander would have done. He dispatched a strong force to stop Alexander from crossing. Alexander, however, anticipating his move, countered it by depending on his best Macedonian troops to make the crossing at lightning speed and put up a great fight on the other side; a move that to this day remains unparalleled.

Alexander did receive some help from his gods who provided him with deafening thunderclaps and torrential rain, which masked the noise of the embarkation. Even though the crossing was made successfully, all was not well. It seemed that Alexander's surveyors had made an error. The bank Alexander landed on was not the expected shore, but another elongated island. It was a long and arduous struggle to get across the fast flowing torrents of the mighty Jhelum River. Exhausted and drenched in mud the Macedonians finally made it across. Porus still did not know where the main attack was going to take place. This exhausting and pointless exercise of Alexander's he suspected was another deception to lure his forces away from the main attack. After some hesitation, however, and to be on the safe side, Porus eventually did dispatch his son with 2,000 cavalry and 120 chariots, but by then it was too

late. Most of Alexander's assault force had made it across and easily subdued the Indians.

After a brief clash the Indians fled leaving behind about four hundred dead, including Porus's son. While pursuing the fleeing Indians Alexander was joined by the second group of his army, which by now had also made it across. Alexander again divided up his forces and took command of the cavalry, which ran ahead at galloping speed while the foot soldiers followed behind at a fast marching pace.

When Porus received news that his son was dead and that Alexander had crossed the river, he decided it was time to face him and marched his forces upstream to do battle. Only a small force, consisting mostly of elephants, was left behind to hold back Craterus. It is estimated that Porus had at his disposal approximately 2,000 cavalry, 20,000 infantry, 130 elephants and 180 chariots. Porus chose a level, sandy plain for the battleground and positioned his infantry in a wide central front reinforced with elephants about 30 meters apart. At the wings he positioned his chariots and cavalry along with a flanking body of infantry.

Alexander's cavalry arrived first but stayed back and would not engage the enemy until the infantry arrived. Alexander had about 11,000 Macedonian infantrymen and 6,000 cavalrymen. While waiting, Alexander kept his forces out of sight and carried out detailed reconnaissance of Porus's dispositions. A frontal attack using his cavalry would be difficult, pitting horse against elephant. The phalanx might do the trick but not while Porus's cavalry was still active. The cavalry would have to be disabled first so that there was no chance that it would outflank the phalanx.

To knock out the Indian cavalry Alexander decided to attack Porus's left wing. The idea was to keep two cavalry divisions hidden from the enemy while carrying out the attack with his entire visible cavalry, which numbered a little less that the enemy's total mounted force. A force that size was sure to overwhelm Porus's left wing and he would have to draw reinforcements from his right wing. The commander of the hidden divisions was given specific orders to circle around Porus's right wing and stay out of sight until the left

wing was engaged. If Porus transferred troops from the right wing to feed the engagement, he was to charge across behind the enemy lines and attack from the rear. Otherwise he would engage the enemy normally. The phalanx was ordered to delay engagement until there was evidence that the enemy was thrown into confusion.

The mounted archers attacked first and almost immediately disabled the chariots. Alexander's cavalry charged next and, as expected, Porus committed his right wing to deliver a striking blow. The two hidden divisions, under the command of Coenus and Demetrius, broke cover and engaged the Indians from the rear. Instead of striking a blow at Alexander, Porus's cavalry received a blow and the Indians fell back to the protection of the elephants.

With the enemy cavalry put out of action, the Macedonian phalanx and heavy infantry advanced on Porus's center. But attacking angry elephants was not an easy task. Each elephant had to be encircled, its driver picked off by the archers and while the elephant fought back it had to be speared and slashed until it was brought down. The infantrymen had to resort to slashing the elephant's trunk with swords and chop at its feet with axes before the animal could be brought down. Many of those doing the hacking and chopping did not fare well either since the elephants fought back smashing, impaling, stamping and crushing their tormentors to a bloody pulp.

As Porus's battle line was pressed back the elephants squeezed together and began to trample their own troops, causing further casualties. As Alexander drew his cavalry ring tighter around Porus's army, he ordered his phalanx to lock shields and move in for the kill. By now Craterus had crossed the river and was in pursuit of those who had broken through Alexander's ring. The Macedonians had just had a traumatic experience and were in no mood for forgiveness as the battle soon turned into a massacre.

The elephants became frantic and trampled more Indians than enemies. The Indians, including Porus, fought and resisted to the bitter end. Wounded by a javelin, Porus saw no point in resisting any further and rode off on his elephant. Alexander pursued him and with diplomacy convinced him to surrender. Alexander showed great admiration for Porus and gave him the respect a king deserved.

This was the last great battle the Macedonians would fight. Considering that it took place under monsoon conditions, something the Macedonians had never before experienced, this may have been the most difficult battle of their entire campaign.

When it was all over, Alexander appointed Porus king of his own dominions and later extended his kingdom to the Hyphasis. Porus in turn remained loyal to Alexander until he died. To secure his position in Punjab, Alexander commissioned two new cities, Nicaea and Bucephala, to be built on the Jhelum. Nicaea was built where Alexander crossed the mighty Jhelum River in honour of his success. Bucephala was built where the battle took place and was dedicated to Alexander's horse Bucephalus, which was said to have died of old age.

After a month long, well-deserved rest Alexander summoned his army and headed eastward. He crossed the Chenab River which was three kilometers wide due to excessive rain. By the Chenab he founded another city which of course he named Alexandria (Sohadra). Somewhere east of the Chenab, near a city called Sangala, the Macedonians ran into stiff resistance and a horrific battle ensued where 17,000 Indians were slaughtered and 70,000 more were taken captive.

Alexander continued his eastern journey traveling below the high mountain ranges and making his way through water drenched fields in stifling heat and dripping monsoon skies. Long lines of dirty, tattered Indian refugees followed as the Macedonian army snaked its way across the countryside. After crossing the Ravi and the Beas Rivers into modern Punjab, the army camped for a short rest only to be frustrated by Alexander's future campaign plans. It must have been some time ago that Alexander had realized that his original assumption about the geography of this region was in error. He also must have found out from the Indians that the Indus River did not empty into the Nile, as he had earlier informed his troops. Why he kept this information a secret from his troops is unknown.

Alexander waited for an opportune time to inform his troops that his maps were in error and that they were nowhere near the end of the world. In fact he informed his troops that they had to march twelve

more days in the desert and cross another great river, the Ganges, before they might reach the end of the world. This information was not well received by his troops.

It appears that Alexander wanted to continue his campaign eastward and venture towards the Ganges but his giant plan was met with refusal. His army was getting tired to the point of exhaustion and would no longer follow him. They had traveled 18,000 kilometers in eight and a half years and they were tired. The sweltering weather and continuous torrential rain, which they had endured for seventy days, did not help the situation. Alexander found the predicament he was in hard to accept. Even after making many speeches and doing much sulking, his men would not relent and stood their ground. Alexander was powerless to act. After spending three days in his tent contemplating his predicament, he came to the realization that his men were right, it was time to turn back.

To commemorate his great advances and honour the gods who gave him his victories, Alexander ordered the construction of twelve tower altars on the east side of the Beas River, one for each Macedonian god. He had his army construct the towers from square stones, which stood seventeen meters square and twenty-five meters high.

With a heavy heart Alexander turned his army around and sometime in mid September 326 BC started his march back towards his newly founded city near the Jhelum River. The next major task he would undertake would be to build a fleet of ships that would carry his army down the Indus River and into the ocean to the south. Approximately 800 vessels were constructed to transport horses, grain, men and cargo. About 80 thirty-oar warships were built for defense. Alexander did not intend to command the fleet so he appointed Nearchus, his intimate friend from youth, as admiral.

In November 326 BC Alexander divided his army into two columns, boarded the ships and began his voyage down the Jhelum River. A blast of trumpets gave the signal to start rowing as each column took its position at opposite banks. Craterus commanded the column on the right and Hephaestion commanded the one on the left. There was a great commotion as the pilots called out rowing commands and the

oars splashed in unison, attracting onlookers who came to see the spectacle and serenade the soldiers on their voyage. Unfortunately, all was not well and before the fleet reached the Chenab, Alexander received information that a couple of tribes, the largest and most warlike, were preparing to do battle with him down river. Alexander, at the time, was not certain where the battle was going to take place so he hastened his pace down the Jhelum in hopes of passing the junction of turbulent waters where the Jhelum met the Chenab.

As it turned out, there was no sign of the enemy at the river junction but the turbulence did cause a great deal of damage and many ships were in need of repair. While repairs were made the army set camp near the banks, giving Alexander time to formulate a battle plan. The enemy territory was located between the Chenab and Ravi Rivers and a waterless desert protected their settlements. The most logical and efficient method to reach them was by water up the Chenab River. Alexander expected that the enemy too would think along the same lines so his plan included a bit of a surprise.

After his repairs were completed Alexander divided his army into three columns. He took the first column by land through the desert into the heart of enemy territory. The second column, commanded by Hephaestion, was sent up the Chenab River. The third column, commanded by Craterus, was ordered to hold the territory near the mouth of the Ravi River. Alexander's land column encountered much resistance and a bloody battle ensued when he stormed and took several towns. Many attempted to escape but were intercepted by Hephaestion and Craterus. During the storming of one of the towns Alexander was wounded. While climbing a castle wall he fell victim to an enemy arrow which penetrated his chest. Believing him to be slain, his troops vented their fury on the enemy who fought back with equal ferocity.

Alexander was laid on his sacred shield and carried out on a stretcher to his ship. News of his alleged demise traveled like wildfire bringing grief to his troops. But Alexander was not dead and quickly regained consciousness after the arrow was extracted. In spite of all assurances, however, his men were not convinced until he himself rose to his feet, walked out of his tent and mounted a

horse so that everyone could see him from the distance. Seeing their king alive brought joy to the troops whose shouts echoed throughout the land. His soldiers, from all sides, came to gaze upon him, shake his hand and show their affection. But most surprising of all was his enemy's reaction. Alexander's sudden rise from the dead spread terror and panic among the enemy ranks, causing mass surrenders. Even the enemy tribal kings voluntarily and humbly submitted themselves to Alexander's will.

325 B.C. - Macedonian Imperial throne in Babylon. Macedonian settlement of the Empire and the establishment of more than one hundred new cities.

After Alexander recovered from his wound, the fleet resumed its course down river until it reached the Indus where Alexander founded another city, which he named Alexandria (at the confluence). By now it was February 325 BC and Alexander had reached the halfway point of his river voyage. The second part of the voyage was just as turbulent as the first and even more fighting was needed before the region was conquered. Fortunately, Alexander had developed a reputation as a fierce fighter and many tribes were reluctant to fight him and acquiesced. There were others further south, however, who were influenced by the Brahmins and fought back fiercely. After achieving victory, Alexander severely punished the Brahmins by having some of them hung for inciting riots and influencing the population to take up arms against him.

It was July 325 BC, when Alexander arrived at the Indus delta and camped for a rest at the city of Patala. Here Alexander reflected on the journey that took him from Kashmir through the entire Punjab down to the Indian Ocean. India was a great, rich and fruitful country and now it belonged to Macedonia.

While Alexander was busy conquering new land, his scientists and explorers were busy examining the country's exotic plants and animals, studying the Indian political and religious systems and cataloging the mineral wealth of this vast territory. Besides learning about India, much knowledge was imparted the other way. Being more advanced in metallurgy, the Macedonians taught the Indians how to smelt their silver and gold. The Macedonians also shared

their knowledge of medicine and art, especially sculpting. Having been mislead before by geography, Alexander was determined to correct that problem as well.

During his rest at Patala, Alexander and his advisors busied themselves looking for a sea passage from the Indus into the Tigris and the Euphrates. Alexander sent expeditions to explore the western and eastern branches of the Indus River delta in hopes of finding a safe passage. It was during these expeditions that the Macedonians experienced, for the first time, the sudden and frightening ebb tide of the ocean. After determining that the eastern branch of the Indus delta was easiest to navigate, Alexander dug wells and set up grain depots for his fleet all along the coast before returning to Patala.

By now it was nearing the end of August 325 BC and Alexander was anxious to get going. While admiral Nearchus and the fleet were ordered to wait until the end of the monsoon season, Alexander left Patala to make preparations for provisioning the fleet along the way. On his way, Alexander ran into resistance again and had to subdue more tribes before turning westward. After appointing a Macedonian satrap to keep the region secure, Alexander left Hephaestion behind with orders to build another Alexandria city. At the coast before turning westward, Alexander left Leonnatus behind with orders to wait for the fleet and to build a second Alexandria city.

To further secure a supply line for his fleet, Alexander and his army turned westward into the Gedrosian Desert. This may have been one of the most difficult journeys Alexander and his army had ever encountered. There were no enemies to speak of only the scorching sun. Provisions, especially water, were in short supply and the army suffered immensely. Discipline, however, did not break down because the officers and Alexander himself suffered along with the men. Alexander even refused to drink water if there was not enough for everyone. His soldiers respected that and would not let him down. They traveled by night because it was too hot during the day and many perished from exhaustion, dehydration and starvation. They resorted to slaughtering their animals, including their horses, to survive. The desert was completely barren and dry and the local

population subsisted strictly on seafood, consisting mostly of mussels.

It took Alexander sixty days to cross the desert before reaching Pura, the capital of Gedrosia. He marched on foot with his soldiers and shared with them his provisions as well as his courage and perseverance. He showed great respect for his men and treated them not like common soldiers but as comrades. This is the kind of man Alexander was. He always came through for his men, even in the worst of circumstances, which exemplified his true character as a person and his feelings for his Macedonians. It is unknown how many of Alexander's people the desert took, but according to ancient sources (Arrian) a great many were lost. Even at times such as these, Alexander's scientists paused to observe and note the desert plant life. Pura was like heaven for the survivors who, with plenty of food and drink, quickly recovered from their ordeal.

By the conquest of Gedrosia, Alexander's full subjection of Asia was complete. It was now the beginning of December 325 BC, and Alexander was on the move again headed westward to Carmania where he had made prior arrangements to meet with Craterus. Before its departure the army was split and Craterus was sent via a different route to Carmania where he was expected to rendezvous with the main army. Craterus took the north road via the Bolan Pass and turned westward past Kandahar (Alexandria in Arachosia) where he did some fighting, before turning to Carmania. Here the field armies were again recombined and supplied with animals and provisions by the local satrap. Before leaving, Alexander held a festival of thanksgiving for his successes in India and for his passage through the deserts of Gedrosia. Here too Alexander received news that the fleet had to depart a month earlier than expected due to the change in mood of the Indian population which had started to become hostile after Alexander's departure. According to reports, the sea voyage seemed to have had more success than the land trek with no crew losses, except for some suffering due to bad food and water. With the exception of one minor skirmish the sailors faced no armed resistance.

Like Alexander, Admiral Nearchus never bypassed an opportunity to have the scientists study the local flora and fauna, as well as

record the customs of the native Indian coast dwellers. It was here too that the Macedonians saw whales for the first time. The sea voyage unfortunately was no pleasure cruise and the prolonged exposure to the hazards of the sea and lack of proper diet took its toll on the men. When they finally landed on shore and met their comrades, they were weakened, scruffy and unrecognizable. Nearchus and a few others came ahead of the fleet to report their arrival. When Alexander met them, even before a single word was exchanged, he was gripped by despair and devastated at the sight of their condition. Thinking that they were the only survivors of the fleet he wept uncontrollably. When finally Alexander gained his composure and Nearchus informed him that the fleet was safe, Alexander wept even more with joy and held a festival with offerings of thanks for its safe return. Soon afterwards, Nearchus joined the fleet for its final voyage to Susa. Hephaestion was sent by the south road to Persia to acquire provisions while Alexander, with the light troops, took the north road on a direct course to Pasargadae.

It was January 324 BC and this would be Alexander's second visit to Pasargadae. More than five years had passed since he had last visited the city but to Alexander it seemed like an eternity. The last time he entered Pasargadae he was a mere Macedonian general but this time he was a Great King who had outdone not just mere mortals but legendary gods. Unfortunately his accomplishments alone could not keep the peace in his empire. His prolonged absence gave the impression that he was either dead or not going to return. Thinking along the same line many of his Persian satraps became rebellious, attacking Macedonian garrisons, plundering Macedonian temples and generally mistreating Alexander's subjects.

Alexander was now back and needed to make an example of those who had turned against him. By stern punishment he hoped to warn all others that such behavior would not be tolerated.

In one instance he executed a satrap along with his followers for usurping the title of Great King. In another, he tortured the priests in charge of a tomb that was plundered. At Persepolis Alexander had a man hanged for usurping the satrapy of a previously appointed satrap who had since died. Peucestas, a Macedonian who was

comfortable with Persian customs and had learned to speak the Persian language, replaced the hanged Persian satrap.

According to Arrian, upon his return to Persepolis Alexander was saddened to tears after he gazed at the destruction he had caused the last time he was there. He was stricken with grief as he realized the symbolic value of the age-old buildings and temples that he had torched, now lost forever. He had done this for the sake of the City States to take vengeance for the crimes of Xerxes. Seeing the rubble and charred remains of what was once a great civilization and realizing what he had done made him feel great remorse. The City States were now but a distant thought for which he cared not at all. In the last years he spent in Asia, Alexander had come to the realization that here too many rich civilizations existed far beyond what he had previously imagined. The City State idea that Asia was populated with uncultured and unworthy barbarians was only a narrow concept that reflected more on the City States than on the Asians. The effects of his conquests did not change Alexander's character as many have claimed. What had changed was Alexander's perception of the new worlds, which he came to understand and respect.

In February 324 BC, Alexander left Persepolis and went to Susa where he was reunited with Nearchus and the fleet. Here too he had to deal with unruly satraps. Alexander had appointed Harpalus, his boyhood friend, as treasurer of Ecbatana in 330 BC. Harpalus escaped with much of Alexander's treasure and squandered it away on his own extravagant lifestyle.

During his stay in Susa, which lasted the spring and summer of 324 BC, Alexander encouraged the idea of mixed marriages. To show that he was sincere he married Stateira, Darius's daughter. He convinced some of his officers and soldiers to marry foreigners and rewarded them with gifts and dowries.

During this time Alexander also amnestied all exiles (about 20,000) in his empire, except those who were criminals, and allowed them to return to their homes. This order was begrudgingly obeyed by the City States. Athens especially disliked it since the majority of the 20,000 were political exiles and displaced persons from that region.

During the summer of 324 BC, Alexander left Susa for Ecbatana. He sent the bulk of his army ahead with Hephaestion on a march to the Tigris River, while he and his light armed units sailed down the Eulaeus River to the Persian Gulf. After observing the scenery and satisfying his longing to sail, Alexander went up the Tigris and joined Hephaestion at Opis. Just before reaching Opis near Babylon, Alexander decided to reveal his future plans for his army's reorganization. One of his objectives, which became a bone of contention with the Macedonians, called for the retirement of the old Macedonian veterans who Alexander believed could no longer fight because of old age or debilitating wounds. His army did not take the news well, especially the idea of losing its respected veterans. Alexander had a mutiny on his hands. Alexander's intentions may have been noble but his men did not see it that way. To some it appeared that Alexander was phasing out the conservative Macedonians only to replace them with foreigners. For some time now Alexander had been building his army with foreign recruits, mostly from Persia. The Macedonians had fought them in the past and were not happy having them among their ranks. To the conservative Macedonians it appeared that Alexander wanted to make the Persians partners and equals and that did not sit well with them.

During the mutiny harsh words were exchanged. Alexander was infuriated to the point of rounding up thirteen of the ringleaders and executing them immediately. He then dismissed the entire Macedonian army and stormed away shutting himself in his royal castle for three days, entertaining only Persians and refusing to speak to any Macedonian. On the third day some Macedonians requested an audience with him. After pleading for his time they were granted permission to see him. It was an emotional reconciliation as Alexander greeted his comrades speechless and in tears. When it was over, Alexander threw a great festival in honour of this reconciliation. As it turned out, it was not a reconciliation between himself and his troops but, in the interest of the empire, it was a reconciliation between the Macedonians and Persians.

At the great festival, Alexander had his Macedonians sit next to him and next to them sat the Persians and other nationalities from the

empire. It was said that in all about 9,000 people of various nationalities attended. Religious ceremonies were conducted in both the Macedonian and Persian traditions without incident. This reinforces the idea that even then, as today, many cultures could live together in peace and harmony.

Alexander knew that without peace and harmony between the various people he had little or no hope of holding on to such a vast empire for any reasonable length of time. Peace and harmony, however, could not be achieved without freedom and equality of all races. This feast was a great moment for Alexander, not only because he attempted to bring reconciliation between the races but more importantly because he gave birth to multiculturalism, a concept that was well ahead of its time.

Following the festival, Alexander went ahead with his original plans and dismissed about 10,000 of his veteran soldiers. Each man, in addition to his pay, also received an extra talent. The task of leading the veterans back to Macedonia was given to Craterus. Upon arriving in Macedonia he was also instructed to replace Antipater. Antipater in turn was to be given orders to lead fresh troops back to Alexander. Alexander felt that Antipater and Olympias could use a break away from each other and he himself could also use a break from their incessant complaining and bickering.

When the great festival was over, Alexander left Opis and resumed his trip to Ecbatana. After spending a few months there, he went to Babylon where he began to unfold his grand plans for the future.

323 B.C. - Alexander III the Great dies. Alexander IV (323-310), Alexander III's newborn child and Philip IV (323-317) are appointed kings.

Alexander's campaign plans against the west were based on intelligence information he had obtained beforehand about the strength of the various states and their political ties to one another. Besides military plans, Alexander had made plans for scientific exploration, constructing geographical maps, plotting ocean routes between Alexandria and Susa and developing trade routes between the various regions of his empire. Planning for world conquest was

never too far from his mind but that plan he only shared with his most trusted companions like Hephaestion. Unfortunately he was no longer alive. Not too long ago, while at Ecbatana during a festival, Hephaestion contracted a fatal fever and died. It was a terrible loss for Alexander and for the Macedonians. Alexander took the loss with great difficulty and mourned him for days without food or drink. Hephaestion's corpse was taken to Babylon where a great monument was erected in his honour. Also, to preserve his memory, he was never replaced as second in command next to the king. That position forever remained vacant.

After arriving in Babylon, Alexander's first priority was to prepare an expedition to explore Arabia. For the time being his interests in Arabia were to explore the region and gain information. He had no intention of invading the mainland. He only wanted the coastline and islands, which offered good harbours for his trading ships. Alexander's greatest ambition was to establish a connection by sea between Alexandria and Babylon. He was so certain his dream would become reality that he ordered the excavation of a huge harbour at Babylon. It was large enough to hold over 1,000 ships, which included his entire Asian navy and all the merchant ships in the region.

After initiating that project, Alexander became involved in building canals to regulate the flow of the Euphrates and the Tigris. Alexander wanted the region to prosper so he made arrangements to settle the north coast of the Persian Gulf. To promote trade on the Gulf between the mouths of the Tigris and the Euphrates he founded Alexandria Charax, a town suited by its geographical position to become a great harbour for Babylon.

While stationed at Babylon, Alexander received new recruits from various regions of his Asian Empire as well as cavalry reinforcements from Macedonia. Here for the first time Alexander started to reorganize his army to include mixed nationalities among his ranks, entrusting command positions to Macedonians. Unfortunately, Alexander's attempts to reorganize his army, along with his many other plans would not come to fruition. It has been said that on June 2, 323 BC, after participating in several festivities that lasted through the night, Alexander began to show symptoms of

a fever. Some say that he may have contracted malaria, which is common during the hot summer months in the marshy areas of Babylon. Alexander was physically fit but his personal involvement in so many activities and the stress he subjected himself to during the planning and preparation of the various expeditions had weakened his immune system and his ability to resist the disease. Alexander himself believed that he would recover because on June 3rd he ordered his generals to make plans to set sail on June 7th.

On the evening of June 3rd, Alexander was taken to the royal gardens on the west bank of the Euphrates for some fresh air and a speedy recovery. The next day he was feeling better and sent word for his generals to come and meet with him on June 5th. That night unfortunately his fever came back and did not leave him. On June 7th when the fleet was ready to move he ordered it to stand by, hoping that he would soon be well and able to join it. Instead of getting better he became sicker as the day progressed and by the next day he was so ill he could hardly speak.

On June 9th he called for his generals to assemble overnight in the court. The other officers waited outside in front of the gates. The next day his condition worsened and he was moved back into the palace. When his generals came to him he could recognize them but was so weak he was not able to speak a word to them. During the night and the next day his fever worsened and he was no longer able to see visitors. His troops, fearing the worst, demanded an audience with their king but the officers would not allow it. Disobeying their officers they forced the doors open and filed past Alexander's bed in a long procession only to witness his weakened condition. Alexander with difficulty could only nod slightly and greet his companions in arms with his eyes as they filed past him in silence and deep emotion.

During the evening of June 13th, 323 BC, Alexander passed away. He was not yet thirty-three when his life was snatched away, not in a glorious battle by the enemy's sword, but by malaria, a mere microscopic parasite, a terrible way for the greatest conqueror of conquerors to die.

No one expected Alexander would die, let alone this quickly. With Hephaestion dead, there was no single leader who could step in and take charge of the empire. The leaders of the army at Babylon were suddenly faced with difficult problems. The only one who now had any authority to act was Perdiccas to whom the dying Alexander had handed his signet ring. Once more the assembly of the Macedonian army was summoned to the forefront to do its duty and elect a new king. Unfortunately, new problems arose as old traditions clashed with new ones. The wishes of the infantry, in whom the old Macedonian spirit was entrenched, could not reconcile its differences with the wishes of the more modern cavalry which was loyal to Alexander's modern ideas. Arguments came to blows before an uneasy compromise was reached where Arrhidaeus, the candidate of the infantry, was to conjointly rule with the cavalry's choice, the unborn son of Alexander and Roxane. These were indeed unfortunate choices since Arrhidaeus, Philip II's son was epileptic and dimwitted, and Alexander's child had not yet been born. Additionally, it was decided that each general was to assume responsibility for designated satrapies in accordance with the decisions reached in Babylon. Ptolemy son of Lagus went to Egypt, Lysimachus went to Thrace, Antigonus went to Greater Phrygia and Perdiccas remained in Babylon. There was one more issue placed before the assembly and that was what to do about Alexander's latest plans. Not surprisingly, the assembly unanimously decided to cancel them.

The news of Alexander's death traveled like wildfire throughout the empire but hardly caused a stir in Asia. In the City States, on the other hand, it was welcome news causing an explosion of emotions that resulted in the dissolution of the Corinthian League. Athens was the first to rise and summon the City States to fight against Macedonia. A new League, headed by Athens, was formed and rose up against Macedonia in what was termed the "Lamian War". The City States could not contain their hatred for Macedonia and unleashed their fury with all their might. Unfortunately, the entire City State might was not enough to overwhelm Antipater's Macedonians. Victorious, Antipater stripped Athens of its position as a power at sea and restored Samos to the Samians. He then forced a change of constitution on the Athenians, stripping them of their democratic powers. Additionally, a Macedonian garrison was

installed on Athenian soil to remind the Athenians of who was in control. Antipater made peace with the rest of the insurgent states individually and dissolved their newly formed League.

Unlike the City States, with the exception of a few minor disturbances, caused mostly by disgruntled City State citizens, Asia remained peaceful for a relatively long period. Unfortunately without Alexander's persuasive politics, peace slowly gave way to conflict. Even though our ancient sources fail to reveal the real motive for the conflict, I suspect it was greed for wealth and the desire to rule.

Initially it was the more ambitious satraps in Asia who fought each other for a bigger piece of their empire. Later it involved Alexander's generals who each ruled a piece of his empire but were not content with what they had and wanted more. The most powerful of these successors were Antigonus and his son Demetrius who gradually acquired most of Asia. Against them were a coalition of Ptolemy of Egypt, Seleucus of Babylon, Lysimachus of Thrace and Cassander, son of Antipater, of Macedonia.

About six years after Alexander's death, in 317 BC, a chain of events took place in Macedonia that would forever change its course in history. It began when Olympias murdered King Philip Arrhidaeus, which gave Cassander reason to vanquish her. Without Olympias's protection Cassander murdered the unhappy Roxane and young Alexander. With Alexander's family dead and no king to rule, the fate of the empire remained in the hands of his generals who were now fighting each other.

The stage was set for the Great Macedonian Empire to decline when the army failed to appoint a single strong leader. It was apparent from the start that Arrhidaeus, Philip II's epileptic and dimwitted son and Alexander III's unborn child were not chosen for their leadership skills but rather for their non-interference. Who then was truly going to rule the empire?

After fifty years of struggle and strife Alexander's generals partitioned his empire into three pieces. In the end, the Antigonids took Macedonia and the City States, the Ptolemies took Egypt and

the Seleucids took Asia. Many died senselessly before the conflicts reached equilibrium and the partitioned lands assumed a sense of normalcy (see Arrian). There was one positive result from all this. Even though the empire was partitioned and ruled by different dynasties, it was always ruled by Macedonians. For centuries Macedonians ruled the empire and traveled freely throughout their world, which stretched from the Adriatic to the Punjab and from Tadzhikistan to Libya. They maintained contact with each other and with their homeland as many traveled back and forth to seek employment and visit family and friends.

After Alexander's death and the conclusion of the Lamian Wars, most of what we refer to today as City States lost the privileges granted to them by Philip II and Alexander III. For fifty or so years after Alexander's death, they were ruled by Macedonians and were used as pawns in a power struggle for dominance. During the later years, however, some of the states organized themselves into leagues but unfortunately they were never able to hold alliances for too long. This was partly due to the characteristic politics they played internally and mainly due to outside influence from the rich and powerful Macedonian rulers.

323 B.C. - In August Roxana bore Alexander III's son

323 B.C. - Macedonian Commonwealth (323-221) a the period of inheritors and followers. The Macedonian state occupied three continents Europe, Asia and Africa.

322 B.C. - Aristotle dies in Chalcidice
322 B.C. - Demosthenes dies in Calabria

321 B.C. - Antipater (321–319) appointed Regent of the Macedonian Empire.

319 B.C. - Polyperchon (319–317) appointed Regent of the Macedonian Empire.

317 B.C. - Cassander (317–305) appointed Regent of Macedonia.

316 B.C. - Alexander III's mother Olympias dies

315 B.C. - Cassander builds the city Thessalonica (Solun) in honour of his wife and sister of Alexander III.

310 B.C. - Founding of the Alexandrian library, a world cultural institution, where the Old and New Testaments are translated into the Macedonian language (Alexander's Koine) and the Buddhist Canons to Chinese.

309 B.C. - Roxana and Alexander IV die. In the summer of 309 BC the uncrowned emperor of Macedonia, fourteen year-old Alexander and his mother Roxana, from distant Bactria (today on the territories of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan), the legitimate wife of Alexander III of Macedonia, were murdered.

306 B.C. - Demetrius proclaimed king

Demetrius from the Antigonid Dynasty is proclaimed king in 306 BC with his father, but his reign in Macedonia only became effective after he ousted the Antipatrids in 294, and his power there ended after he was in turn expelled by Pyrrhus and Lysimachus in 286. His death in 283 is often given as marking the end of his reign. Antigonus claimed the kingship upon his father's death in 283, but it was only effective after 276. The murder of Alexander and Roxana was hidden from the Macedonian public until 306 BC. The following year Alexander would have come of age and crowning ceremonies would have taken place. Alexander IV was the last legitimately chosen Macedonian emperor. He was descended from the Argaed dynasty that ruled Macedonia for three and a half centuries.

305 B.C. - Cassander becomes king

Cassander (305–297) from the Antipatrid Dynasty becomes king of Macedonia.

297 B.C. - Philip IV (297) becomes king of Macedonia. Alexander V and Antipater II (297–294) become kings of Macedonia.

286 B.C. - Lysimachus and Pyrrhus become kings

Lysimachus (286–281) and Pyrrhus of Epirus (286–285) non-dynastic kings become kings of Macedonia.

283 B.C. - Antigonus claims the kingship upon his father's death but it was only effective after 276.

281 B.C. - Ptolemy Keraunos and Meleager become kings

Ptolemy Keraunos (281–279) and Meleager (279) non-dynastic kings become kings of Macedonia.

279 B.C. - Antipater Etesias and Sosthenes become kings

Antipater Etesias (279) and Sosthenes (279–276) from the Antipatrid dynasty become kings of Macedonia.

279 B.C. - Celtic wars in Macedonia (279-276)

277 B.C. - Antigonus Gonatas finds dynasty

Antigonus Gonatas, the grandson of Antigonus the One-eyed, founded the second Macedonian dynasty, Antigonids, whose rule was filled with battles in order to maintain Macedonian dominance in the City States and to protect Macedonia from Dardanian attacks.

276 B.C. - Antigonus II Gonatas becomes king

Antigonus II Gonatas (276–274) from the Antigonid dynasty becomes king of Macedonia.

274 B.C. - Pyrrhus of Epirus becomes king

Pyrrhus of Epirus (274–272), a non-dynastic king becomes king of Macedonia.

272 B.C. - Antigonus II Gonatas becomes king

Antigonus II Gonatas (272–239) from the Antigonid Dynasty becomes king of Macedonia.

260 B.C. - Diodotus governor of Bactria, a former Macedonian soldier with no links to any of the Macedonian dynasties, assumed kingship of parts Asia. Diodotus and his son, Diodotus II, ruled over a large kingdom that not only included the ancient provinces of Bactria and Sogdiana but stretched from the Hindu Kush over the Oxus valley to Bokhara, Samarkand, west to Margiana and south of the Kara Kum desert to the frontiers of Parthia. Although sketchy in detail it has been said that this kingdom, with minor interruptions from the Seleucids, existed from about 260 BC to the middle of the first century BC when it was overrun by nomad migrations.
Outside of minted coins and various religious Buddhist texts very little excavation and archeological work has been done.
Bactria's isolation from the rest of the Macedonian realm forced it to look eastward and develop trade with the eastern nations including China. Even though trade with China was done through middlemen, Macedonian made objects created from the natural nickel and copper alloy were found in the Chinese province of Yunnan. Nickel was unknown to Europeans until 1751 AD. The Macedonians of Bactria were using it in 200 BC.

Another famous personality worth mentioning here, who may be worthy of further study in the future, is Menander the great king of India. Menander too was a professional soldier, not of royal stock, who rose to become a fair king. He is famous for his fair treatment of his subjects and for introducing bilingual coins. Menander's kingdom was separate from that of the Bactrian and lasted for many decades, even past his death. Even though Menander's kingdom was partitioned by his successors, it remained in Macedonian hands for a very long time afterwards.

The last king to rule parts of India was Hermaeus whose reign lasted until about 40 BC, about 10 years past the Kushana and Parthian invasions. Hermaeus held out until 30 BC when he and his wife Calliope were both killed. After Hermaeus's death no king of his race ever ruled again south of the Hindu Kush. The Macedonian rulers of India may have ceased to exist but the Macedonian populations continued to live on. There is no evidence of any general or local massacre of the ordinary population after the nomad invasions to suggest otherwise. In fact there is evidence that

suggests that even two hundred years after Hermaeus's death, the Macedonians and other European races in India remained numerous and formed communities that continued to issue coins in their language. It is estimated that Macedonian communities existed up until the year 200 AD, as self identifiable minorities in India. The process of dispersion was long and slow and the impressions made on the Indians were considerable. The reputation of these "all-knowing Yavanas" was undiminished for a long time. Besides their miraculous abilities to heal, the Yavanas were in great demand for their engineering expertise in war machine design and in stone, wood and metal works. Demand for the skilled Macedonian artisan was not restricted to the Indians alone. Even the newcomer Parthians used them to build their commissioned works. Strange as it may sound, both the Kushana and Parthian kings used Macedonian as well as hybrid coins. Was this because they couldn't mint their own? Or was this because the Macedonian coins were more popular with the predominantly Macedonian merchant class? How far in time did the Macedonian cities, with their large merchant populations, continue their traditional activities into the period of Parthian and Kushana dominion? At this point it is hard to estimate. Only through further archeological research can these questions be answered.

239 B.C. - Demetrius II Aetolicus (239–229) from the Antigonid Dynasty becomes king of Macedonia.

229 B.C. - Antigonus III Doson (229–221) from the Antigonid Dynasty becomes king of Macedonia.

221 B.C. - Philip V (221–179) from the Antigonid Dynasty becomes king of Macedonia.

Young Philip V, anxious to prove himself, became entangled in all kinds of Balkan intrigues. He was involved with an Illyrian pirate called Demetrius of Pharos who, at the moment, was seeking refuge in his court. Demetrius was expelled from Sicily by the Romans in 219 BC for raiding and being a nuisance to the Rhodians and Romans in both the Aegean and Adriatic Seas. Demetrius, however, was welcomed in Philip's court because he contributed troops to Antigonus Doson's Sellasian campaign. Philip also valued his so-called "sound advice".

217 B.C. - Hannibal defeats Rome

When Rome was defeated by Hannibal in 217 BC, at Lake Trisamene, Demetrius convinced Philip to reinstall him on the Adriatic coast. Philip took his advice, moved into southern Illyria, drove out Scerdilaidas, his rival pirate, and enabled Demetrius to recover his former place. Unfortunately, Scerdilaidas was not happy about being pushed out and quickly appealed to Rome for help. Rome lost no time in sending a patrol to investigate. Anxious to avoid a showdown Philip retreated at once. He burned 120 of his own ships to avoid capture and fled with his army over the mountains. Although nothing came of this, suspicions were raised in Rome about Philip's real motives. After reaching its destination, the Roman patrol remained in Illyria to safeguard against any future raids.

Another mistake young Philip made, again acting on the advice of Demetrius, was to sign a treaty with Hannibal the Carthaginian. Drafted by the Carthaginians, this treaty required Philip to become an ally of Carthage in the event of a war with Rome. In return, should Carthage win the war, it would ensure that the Romans would be forced to abandon their sphere of influence in Illyria. The only reason I believe Philip agreed to this was to humour his confidant, Demetrius. Philip at the time did not believe that Rome would risk going to war with a powerful Macedonia over a trivial document. Rome also, at the time, had no plans for any serious eastward interventions. What Philip failed to realize, however, is that his trivial actions would have serious consequences for Macedonia in the future. For the moment, however, Rome remained content and Philip continued to look for ways to gain influence in Illyria.

215 B.C. - First Roman-Macedonian war 215–205

Still under Demetrius's influence, Philip began to look southward for adventure, always keeping one eye open for conquest. Unfortunately he continued to make mistakes. By inciting various factions in the Peloponnesus to fight against one another he caused torment and senseless bloodshed. His bad influence came to an

abrupt end when Demetrius of Pharos was killed in 215 BC during an unsuccessful assault on Ithome. Unfortunately, by now Philip's conquered subjects didn't see him as a reasonable ruler but as a somewhat wild, cruel and politically motivated adventurer. His ravaging of Messenia ended with Demetrius's death.

For the next two years, 213 to 212 BC, Philip turned his attention to Illyria. He replaced the ships he lost during his last contact with the Romans and, being careful not to be detected, marched his army north into Scerdilaidas's territory. When the time was right he descended upon Lissos on the Adriatic and established his western base of power.

It is not known why Philip turned his attention westward at this time. His rationale may have been to put a barrier between himself and Rome or perhaps, as some believe, to gain control of the lucrative western maritime markets and trade routes in the Adriatic. In any event, his appearance in the Adriatic caused panic and hysteria in Rome. Fearing an invasion of Italy, Rome was determined to stop him and quickly sought allies among his enemies. As it turned out, the Aetolians were having problems with Philip and were also looking for allies among Philip's enemies. A Roman-Aetolian coalition not only distracted Philip from his western campaigns but also caused him to strengthen his alliance with the Achaean League. The Aetolians and Romans proved to be brutal in their habits and wreaked havoc in Illyria, Thrace, Thessaly and Acarnania. To make matters worse, Attalus of Pergamon joined the Roman-Aetolian coalition and in 209 BC was appointed general of the Aetolians.

Philip, with his disciplined Macedonian army, quickly retaliated and did well against the Aetolians on land but hesitated to challenge the Romans at sea. The Achaeans also had some success and were able to crush the Spartans at Mantinea. Before things could be settled, however, both Philip and Attalus were recalled to their homeland to deal with yet another large Dardanian invasion.

After Philip left for home and was no longer a threat, the Romans lost interest in the Aetolians and abandoned them altogether. Without Rome's support, the Aetolians were no match for Philip and

they quickly capitulated after his return. In 206 BC they broke their treaty with Rome and made peace with Philip, giving him back all that they had previously taken. The Romans unfortunately did not take this breakup well and were anxious for a renewed alliance.

Their chance came when Rhodes and Chios started accusing the locals of disrupting international commerce with their petty wars. In the spring of 205 BC the Romans came back with thirty-five ships and eleven thousand troops. They landed in Epidamnus where Philip met them and offered them battle but the Romans refused to fight. Their real objective was to break up the Macedonian-Aetolian treaty. They figured that with their massive support they could spur the Aetolians back into action, break off relations with Macedonia and wage war on Philip. When the Aetolians refused, the Romans reconsidered and negotiated separate peace agreements with the various parties involved. The result was the treaty of Phoenice which was concluded in the summer of 205 BC, thus ending the First Macedonian War.

On the surface it appeared that Macedonia was the biggest winner. Philip was allowed to keep his gains in inland Illyria. Even though the status of Lissos remained uncertain, Lissos was still under Macedonian control. Rome, on the other hand, appeared to be the loser because all it received were words of assurance that Macedonia would not interfere in Adriatic affairs. Beneath the surface, however, Rome was the real winner because it managed to prevent an active alliance between Macedonia and Carthage.

The conclusion of the First Macedonian War was a crossroad for both Macedonia and Rome. Philip was content with his treaty with Rome, reassured that his problems with the Romans were over. He no longer had reason to fear the west. Similarly, Philip's word of non-interference in Roman affairs was good enough for the hysterical Roman Senators who now felt they could freely devote their full attention to dealing with Carthage. Had Philip paid heed to the growing menace west of him, he would have sided with Carthage just to maintain a balance of power. Unfortunately he allowed Rome to grow powerful. Instead of striking a crippling blow, while he still could, Philip closed his eyes and for the next five years left Rome to ravage Carthage unabated.

After the treaty of Phoenice, Philip decided it was time to strengthen his navy and went to work building a powerful fleet. By 201 BC his fleet was ready and operational. After his secret pact with Antiochus, Philip captured the island of Thasos, a strategic post for keeping an eye on the Bosporus and Black Sea trade routes. In 201 BC he captured Ptolemy's naval base at Samos and added the large number of ships there to his own fleet. He later attacked and defeated the Rhodian fleet and invaded Ionia and Pergamon.

Unfortunately, the Macedonians were never good at fighting at sea but still it took the combination of Rhodes, Chios, Pergamon and Byzantium to stop the Macedonian navy. At a naval engagement near Chios, the Macedonian fleet suffered a crippling defeat, losing almost half the ships in the navy. What was most alarming about this battle was that more Macedonians were lost here than in any previous engagement on land or at sea.

200 B.C. - Second Roman-Macedonian war 200-196

Philip's troubles started with the arrival of the young Roman consul, Flamininus, who was sent by the Roman Senate to meet with him and deliver Rome's conditions for peace. Philip agreed to a meeting, which took place at the Aoos River in Illyria, but disagreed with the Roman terms. According to Roman demands, Macedonia was to evacuate and remove all its garrisons from the cities in Thessaly, Euboea and Corinth and give the cities autonomy. In other words, Macedonia was expected to surrender its most important defensive positions and for what? Philip was insulted by the offer and quickly stormed out of the meeting. Flamininus wasted no time and immediately ordered his forces to invade the City States and start driving the Macedonians out.

By late summer 198 BC, the Roman legions had reached the Gulf of Corinth and a battle with Philip seemed imminent. Roman presence in the region convinced all but a few Achaean League members to abandon Macedonia and ally themselves with Rome. Philip weighed the situation carefully and, in November of 198 BC, returned to the negotiating table with a counter offer. He was willing to evacuate the City States voluntarily provided that he retain control of a few

defensive positions and if the Romans guaranteed him that they would not invade Macedonia. The offer was neither accepted nor rejected as the Romans kept stalling for time. It was an election year and Flamininus had to leave for Rome. Philip was told that if he wanted to continue the negotiations he would have to send an embassy to Rome.

While in Rome, negotiations went from bad to worse. The main points of contention were Philip's insistence on retaining control of Demetrias, Chalcis and Corinth, better known as the shackles of the City States. When Flamininus was re-elected the negotiations came to an abrupt end and the legions were ordered to resume their campaign.

Philip was now desperate and turned to the Spartans for help. He offered them Argos, one of the Achaean allies who remained loyal to Macedonia, and the marriage of Philip's daughter to the Spartan king's son. The treasonous Spartans unfortunately were not trustworthy. They took Philip's offer and then stabbed him in the back by making a separate deal with Flamininus. What was worse, there was now an armistice between Sparta and the Achaean league and the Spartans were obliged to provide Flamininus with troops to fight against Macedonia.

While the Romans and their allies were gaining strength, fighting had reduced Macedonia's army to about twenty-five thousand troops. Philip realized that his strength was slowly eroding and action was needed now. Like many of his predecessors he decided to stake everything on a single battle.

In June 197 BC, at Cynoscephalae in Thessaly, the unbeaten Macedonian army came face to face with the Roman legions. With a massed charge the Macedonian phalanx gave the Romans a terrifying battle which they would never forget. During the first charge the Macedonians were successful and won. It was a horrific spectacle for the battle hardened Romans who for the first time had made serious contact with the Macedonian phalanx. During the second charge, unfortunately, the phalanx overreached the Roman battle line and lost formation. The Romans quickly took advantage by outflanking the phalanx and cutting it to pieces. Each individual

Roman soldier was equipped with tools to fight in formation and in single-handed combat, something the Macedonians had never experienced before. Unable to regroup, the phalanx fell back and was destroyed. Without the phalanx, the Romans made short work of the rest of the Macedonian army. The Romans were not only more disciplined than Philip had anticipated, but they were also fast learners and able to quickly adapt to their opponent's fighting techniques. Even though the armies were equally disciplined, the Romans proved to be more flexible, giving them the advantage they needed to win.

Victorious, Rome took control of the region, restricting Philip to Macedonia. The terms of the agreement were far stiffer than those proposed earlier. Now Philip was required to evacuate all previously held regions in Asia and Europe, with the exception of Macedonia. In addition, Macedonia was required to pay Rome a one thousand talent war indemnity. It was a hard pill to swallow for Philip but what other choice did he have?

In the spring of 183 BC, another Senatorial commission was sent and Philip was evicted from the neutral towns. But Roman treachery did not end there. Soon afterwards, Demetrius was sent home decorated with diplomatic laurels and promises to the Macedonian throne. It was a ploy to create trouble for Philip and it worked like a charm sending Perseus, Demetrius's half brother and heir to the Macedonian throne, into a jealous fit. Rivalry between the two brothers continued for some time until Perseus produced a Roman letter, perhaps a forgery, proving that Demetrius had treasonable aspirations to the throne. Having no other choice, Philip was forced to exercise judgment against his own son and enforce the full extent of the law. Demetrius was executed in 180 BC. No sooner had the deed been done than Philip discovered that Perseus's testimony was a fabrication. Being unable to accept the tragedy, Philip died of remorse. Philip V died in 179 BC and was succeeded by his eldest son Perseus.

179 B.C. - Perseus becomes king of Macedonia

Perseus (179–167) from the Antigonid Dynasty becomes king of Macedonia.

Perseus was not a popular king, especially with the Romans, who had discovered that he was responsible for Demetrius's execution. Perseus, well aware of his weak popularity outside Macedonia, tried to improve his position by making alliances with his neighbours. He first tried to convince the Roman Senate to ratify him as king with all the privileges granted to his father. He then married Seleucus IV's sister Laodice while he married off his own half-sister to Prusias II of Bithynia.

His attempt at forming mass alliances with his neighbours, unfortunately, did not bolster his popularity as expected. In fact it did the opposite, raising the suspicions of his enemy Eumenes who kept a vigilant eye on him, reporting his every move to the Romans, interpreting it as an anti Roman act.

After the catastrophic battle at Cynoscephalae, Philip had rebuilt his military and replenished his losses but Perseus was still unwilling to go to war. From 171 to 168 BC he remained on the defensive and committed only to minor engagements, all the while hoping that a peaceful settlement could be reached.

168 B.C. - Third Roman-Macedonian war (171-168)

Perseus was defeated in the battle at Pydna.

The four year war (Third Macedonian War) came to a climax on June 22nd, 168 BC when the Romans marched en masse northward and met the Macedonian army at Pydna in southern Macedonia.

In the style of his predecessors, Perseus struck first by unleashing the full might of the Macedonian phalanx. This was not the usual phalanx. It was reinforced with spears all round like a hedgehog, especially at the flanks. "Aemilius Paullus, a veteran commander, declared afterwards that this advance was the most terrifying thing he had ever witnessed." (Page 430, Peter Green, Alexander to Actium The Historical Evolution of the Hellenistic Age)

167 B.C. - Perseus is defeated at Pydna

Perseus is defeated at the Battle of Pydna in 167 BC (After that Macedonia was divided into four parts, and under Roman domination, was deprived of external independence but retained internal self governance. The four parts (meres, partes, regiones, T. Liv., XLV, 30, 2) were forbidden from mutual marriages, from trade and from mining the gold and silver mines. All prominent Macedonians older than 15 years old had to leave Macedonia "voluntarily", under the threat of death, in order to prevent renewal of the country and rebellions from taking place against foreign dominance).

The Macedonians did their best and fought bravely to the last soldier but the disciplined Roman military machine and its fighting style, once again, proved to be superior and the battle was lost. It was the end of Macedonia and Macedonian independence. Perseus was taken to Rome as a prisoner of war, or as Peter Green puts it, "to adorn Paullus's treasure rich triumph". The Macedonian monarchy was abolished and Macedonia was demilitarized and partitioned into cantons so that it would never again be able to fight back. As further insurance of its passivity, Macedonian leaders were rounded up and taken to Rome.

The real horror of the Macedonian defeat was not Pydna but what the Roman army did afterwards. Before leaving Macedonia, the Roman army was unleashed on the civilian population and allowed to loot, pillage and rape uncontrollably. It has been said that an unimaginable amount of treasure, including gold, jewels and art, was carried off to Rome. A large segment of the population was taken into slavery. Severe restrictions were placed on trading commodities including lumber, and most of the state taxes were now diverted to Rome. According to Livy, Macedonia was divided into four regions, each with its own Roman council, and was forced to pay half the tribute to Rome. This would have otherwise been paid to the Macedonian king. If that was not enough, Paullus lent the Aetolians five hundred soldiers so that they too could exact their own brand of revenge on the Macedonians. What happened next is a tragedy of great proportion that not even the old authors dare describe. The Romans indeed proved themselves to be ruthless, the "true barbarians" that they were, but this was only the beginning.

Athens participated in the anti-Macedonian campaign by supplying the Romans with grain and by fighting side by side with the Romans at Pydna. To the end the Athenians remained anti-Macedonian

150 B.C. - Andriscus claims to be Perseus's son

Andriscus (150-148) claiming to be the son of Perseus, claimed the throne of Macedonia as Philip VI. This led to the Fourth Macedonian War, in which Andriscus was defeated by the Romans, and Macedonia was annexed as a Roman province in 148 BC.

Roman rule was harsh and much tension developed between the Macedonians and their new masters. The economic situation was particularly distressful and at times unbearable. Relief, however, did arrive in the form of a pretender named Andriscus. Andriscus claimed to be Philip VI, son of Perseus by Laodice, Seleucus IV's daughter who was also Demetrius I's sister. In 153 BC, with Demetrius I's help, Andriscus went to Rome to plead his case for the Macedonians but the Senate was not interested in a hearing. Frustrated, Andriscus returned and sought help from the Macedonian people who gave him what he needed including royal robes, a diadem, recognition and troops. He received recognition from Byzantium and troops from various Thracian chieftains.

149 B.C. - Macedonia rises against Roman rule

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

148 B.C. - Macedonia given status of province (with a Roman army and administration), making it a target for neighboring attacks. Macedonian also served as a base for Roman conquests to the North and Northeast. Macedonia was the first Roman province in the Balkans (until all territories became organized as provinces) extending from the River Danube in the north to the Peloponnesus in

the south and from the Adriatic Sea in the west to the Black Sea (Pontos Euxinos) in the east.

After this unsuccessful revolt, Macedonia lost its independence entirely and became a Roman province. Macedonia's total demise and the witness of Roman brutality brought fear into the hearts of the leaders of the Achaean League. Roman atrocities in Macedonia turned the Achaeans from Roman allies to Roman enemies. In 146 BC, in a desperate last ditch effort, the Achaeans engaged the Romans and lost. Roman reprisal was decisive and brutal, involving looting, burning, raping and taking civilians into slavery. Corinth was reduced to rubble and remained a heap of ruins until 44 BC when it was again rebuilt by Caesar.

142 B.C. - Rome put down Macedonian rebellion

Macedonia, after the last rebellion in 142 BC continued to exist as part of the Roman domain until antiquity. During this five-century long period Macedonia's boundaries were changed several times. The northern frontier was most vulnerable and prone to invasions. At one point, after an attack against a barbarian tribe, the northern boundary was extended to the Danube. In 27 BC Augustus declared Macedonia a Senatorial province and had its territory significantly reduced. With time, in the decades that followed, Macedonia was partitioned into territories. After Diocletian's reforms Macedonia became part of the Diocese of Moisia and at the time of Constantine it became part of the Illyrian Prefecture. At the end of the 4th century AD Macedonia was split into two provinces, Macedonia Prima with Solun (Salonika) as its capital and Macedonia Salutoris. Later during the 5th and 6th centuries another name appeared: Macedonia Secunda with Stobi as its capital.

When Macedonia came under Roman rule the number of Italian colonists increased and a variety of barbarian tribes penetrated the region. As a Roman province, Macedonia was heavily exploited and the population was plundered by heavy taxes. The support of the Roman administration, garrisons and military campaigns fell upon the shoulders of the local population. Macedonia, in addition to being enslaved, was also obliged to provide large numbers of soldiers for the Roman auxiliary brigades.

Urban life in Macedonia, during Roman rule, existed under three distinct settings, the free cities, the colonies and the municipalities. Included among the free cities were Aegeae, Pella, Beroea, Philippi, Heraclea, Salonika, Heraclea Lyncaestis and Stobi. During the Roman period both Heraclea Lyncaestis and Stobi were important large centers situated on well-traveled roads.

Another important fact is that most major stormy events in the history of the Roman period had their echoes in Macedonia. The Roman civil wars, the struggle between Caesar and Pompey and the war between Brutus and Cassius all took place on Macedonian soil. Similarly, the 3rd and 4th century Roman Empire crisis, colonial relations with Christianity and barbarian penetrations, also had their roots in Macedonia.

As mentioned earlier, after Perseus's defeat at Pydna in 168 BC Macedonia was partitioned into four regions and became Roman territory. It was particularly during this period that Macedonia was robbed of its cultural treasures including the many monuments of art located in Solun, Pella and other culturally rich cities. Macedonia's treasures were transferred to Rome and paraded as trophies of Roman victories on Roman streets during triumph festivals. After 148 BC the four regions of Macedonia were united again but made into a Roman province with Solun as its capital. What is also interesting is that all city states and jurisdictions south of Macedonia, including Athens and Sparta, were also annexed and added to this large Roman province called Macedonia. This merger lasted for about one hundred and twenty years until 27 BC. In 27 BC Augustus separated the region to form the province of Macedonia and the province of Achaia. For one hundred and twenty years Solun, not Athens, was the capital or "mother city" of this vast province called Macedonia.

27 B.C. - Macedonia a Senatorial province

Augustus declared Macedonia a Senatorial province and had its territory significantly reduced. With time, in the decades that followed, Macedonia was partitioned into territories. After Diocletian's reforms Macedonia became part of the Diocese of

Moisia and at the time of Constantine it became part of the Illyrian Prefecture. At the end of the 4th century AD Macedonia was split into two provinces, Macedonia Prima with Solun as its capital and Macedonia Salutoris. Later during the 5th and 6th centuries another name appeared: Macedonia Secunda with Stobi as its capital.

-- FIRST MILENEUM --

51 A.D. - Apostle Paul preaches Christianity (Acta apos., XVI, id. XVII) for the first time on European soil, in the Macedonian towns Philippi, Solun and Beroia. In 52 and 53 he sent epistles to the people of Solun (Epist. Thess). In 57 he came to Macedonia again, and in 63 he sent epistles to the people of Philippi (Epist. Philipp).

It cannot be said that Paul created Gentile Christianity but he was responsible for giving it impetus. Paul became an important factor in the spread of Christianity to Macedonia when he had a vision of a man, a Macedonian, urging him to "come to Macedonia and help us". Paul interpreted this vision as God's will to take the "Good News" of Jesus into Macedonia. "And when they had come opposite My'sia, they attempted to go into Bithyn'ia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; so, passing by My'sia, they went down to Tro'as. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedo'nia was standing beseeching him and saying, 'Come over to Macedo'nia and help us.' And when he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedo'nia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them." (Page 1044, The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version, Holman, Philadelphia, 1952)

There are some who believe that the man in Paul's vision was the Apostle Luke. Luke was a Macedonian, a physician by trade, who Paul met for the first time in Troas. Luke may have had some connection to Philippi to have Paul sent there. It is unknown whether Luke was a Christian or not before he met Paul but he was certainly one afterwards. Luke was a great writer and composer of one of the gospels.

It was around 50 AD when Paul set foot on European soil for the first time. That was in the Macedonian towns of Philippi, Solun (Thessalonica) and Berroea where he preached the word of Jesus

(Acta apos., XVI, id. XVII). Around 52 and 53 AD he sent epistles to the people of Solun (Epist. Thess); then in 57 AD he came back to Macedonia to follow up on his progress. In 63 AD he again sent epistles to Macedonia but this time to the people of Philippi (Epist. Philipp).

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

Paul's first mission to Macedonia took him to Philippi where he met a woman named Lydia, a fabric dealer. Lydia was a widow who sold cloth and textiles and was a rare example of a free woman who lived and worked in Macedonia. For some time, Lydia was exposed to Jewish religious practices which she had observed at a colony of Jews who had settled near her home in Thyatira. Lydia, along with her household, is believed to be the first Christian in Macedonia to be baptized by Paul. After Philippi, Paul's missionary journey took him to the beautiful Macedonian city of Solun where, in 50 BC, he established what later came to be known as the "Golden Gate" church, the first Christian church in Europe. According to the Bible, Paul, along with his friend Silas, spent about three weeks in Solun in a synagogue debating the "Good News" of Jesus with the Solun Jews. But much to his disappointment he could not sway them to see things his way. He persuaded some to join but the majority would not join and became hostile towards him. The real surprise, however, was that many non-Jewish Macedonians accepted the "Good News" of Jesus and embraced Christianity as their new faith.

The start of the new millennium witnessed the death of the Roman Republic and the birth of Imperial Rome. The Augustan emperors may have brought peace to the empire but with it they also brought neglect, decline and decay. As mentioned earlier, by 180 AD there

were unmistakable signs of decay. Besides the agricultural and economic decline, the empire opened its doors to anarchy when the adoptive system of choosing emperors was abandoned in favour of personal appointments.

247 A.D. - Goths enter Aegean coastline

The Goths were a maritime people who lived in southern Russia and controlled the waterways from the Baltic, across Russia to the Black and Caspian Seas.

Unable to withstand their advance, the Romans lost the eastern seas and allowed the Goths to enter the Aegean coastline and advance on Macedonia. Another group crossed the Danube in a great land raid in 247 AD, defeating and killing the Emperor Decius.

270 A.D. - Romans push back the Goths

The Romans eventually did muster enough strength and in 270 AD Claudius defeated the Goths, driving them back to where they originated.

Further east, under the powerful Sassanid dynasty, the Persian Empire was revived and it too attacked the Romans, capturing the Roman Emperor Valerian in 260 AD.

276 A.D. - Goths return to raid coasts of Asia Minor. Then in 284 AD Diocletian, an Illyrian born general, seized power in Rome and ruled for the next twenty years.

313 A.D. - Emperor Constantine - During the year 313 AD, from the great imperial city of Milan, Emperor Constantine, together with his co-Emperor Licinius, dispatched a series of letters informing all provincial governors to stop persecuting the Christians, thus revoking all previous anti-Christian decrees. All properties, including Christian places of worship, seized from them in the past were to be restored. This so called “Edict of Milan”, by which the Roman Empire reversed its policy of hostility towards Christians, was one of the most decisive events in human history. What brought on this sudden reversal?

Rational thinkers believed that Constantine had the foresight to realize that Christianity was a growing power and could be harnessed to work for the good of the empire. Christianity was a result of changing times and harnessing its power was of far greater benefit than following the current policy of attempting to destroy it.

Christianity at that time was disorganized and existed in cult form in sporadic pockets spread throughout the empire. Yet Constantine still had the foresight to see potential in it.

Christianity was a peripheral issue in Constantine's mind when he and his co-Emperor Licinius were about to face Maxentius and Maximin Daita in the greatest battle of their careers. It was at this decisive moment that Constantine experienced a vision which, not only changed his life but, was the turning point for Christianity.

Immediately after his victory over Licinius in 324 AD, Constantine began the construction of his new capital, the "City of Constantine". This would be a Christian city fit for Kings that would not only rival, but would surpass the glory of Rome.

Power was where the Emperor was, and the Emperor was now in his own city in the hub of activity just at the edge of Macedonia. Although this was not purely a Macedonian city, it had the elements of Macedonian culture and tradition. It was a very un-Roman city in language and culture and not only imitated the Macedonian cities of Alexandria and Antioch but with time surpassed their cultural and academic achievements. Constantinople or Tsari Grad ("City of Kings"), as it was known to the Macedonians, was going to be the power base of a new empire, a revival of Alexander the Great's old empire with a Christian twist. "This 'Eastern' or Byzantine empire is generally spoken of as if it were a continuation of the Roman tradition. It is really far more like a resumption of Alexander's." (Page 414, H.G. Wells, The Outline of History, Garden City Books, New York, 1961).

While Constantine was building his new city, his mother Helena undertook a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and was instrumental in

the building of the Churches of the Nativity at Bethlehem and Eleona on Jerusalem's Mount of Olives.

324 A.D. - Constantine lays out Tsari Grad boundary

November 8, 324 A.D. - Constantine formally lays out the boundaries of Tsari Grad (Constantinople), his new city, roughly quadrupling the territory of old Byzantium. While his architects were designing his new city, Constantine and his army, numbering about 120,000 troops, were established in Solun. Even before moving to Solun in 324 AD, Constantine had the old Solun harbour renovated and expanded to fit his fleet of 200 triakondores galleons and about 2,000 merchant ships.

328 A.D. - Walls of Tsari Grad are up

Walls of Tsari Grad up and the new city formally ready for dedication in May 330 AD. Soon after the city was opened, Constantine ordered the construction of two major churches, Sveta Sophia (Holy Wisdom) and Sveta Eirena (Holy Peace) and began laying the foundation of a third church, the Church of the Holy Apostles.

Before they were known as the Byzantines or were called the Eastern Orthodox and even before they were barely a separate empire, they were known to the Macedonians as the Pravoslavs; an ancient people unified by a common (Eastern Christian) faith which has survived to this day and carries a strong meaning for the faithful.

434 A.D. - Huns invade Macedonia. The Huns attack at the beginning of the century.

478 A.D. - Ostrogoths invade Macedonia. In 447 Ostrogoths attack and demolish Stobi (P. Gradsko) and Heracleia Lynkestis (Bitola). Macedonia is divided into Macedonia Prima and Macedonia Secunda.

500 A.D. - Christianity in Macedonia

Christianity had become the standard religion in Macedonia and the Macedonian language and culture re-emerged with it. As mentioned earlier, the Latin language began its decline about four hundred years earlier and the Koine language was the language of administration and commerce, far from the reach of the common Macedonian.

Christianity's humble beginnings may have begun with the Koine language but in order for Jesus' message to be understood by the masses it had to be spoken in the language they used. It is well known today that the language of Christianity in Macedonia was the Macedonian language, the language of enlightenment made world famous by Kiril and Metodi.

518 A.D. - An earthquake demolished Scupi (today's Skopje).

559 A.D. - Bulgars invade Macedonia. A horde of Huns, or proto-Bulgars, crossed the frozen Danube and advanced into the Balkans

-- CULTURAL REVIVAL --

800 A.D. - Cultural Revival begins in Macedonia

We know that the brothers Kiril and Metodi instituted a revision of the written Macedonian language during the 8th and 9th centuries AD. This statement may be rather controversial, but we can say that the brothers did not invent but renovated the Macedonian alphabet, based on old Macedonian traditions, to properly capture the natural evolution of the spoken language. The Macedonian oral language always existed and naturally evolved. Unfortunately, due to prolonged Roman influence, the written form was neglected and in need of reformation. What the Macedonian brothers began was later taken up by their students. Kliment being the brightest was credited with the final reformation of the alphabet which became known as the Cyrillic alphabet. Kliment updated the written part of the Macedonian language to take advantage of its natural evolution and made it simpler and phonetic. Kliment was also credited for translating the gospels and other works and making them available in the Macedonian language commonly referred to as "Old Church Slavonic".

The brothers Kiril and Metodi were Macedonians, natives of Solun, who were acclaimed as the apostles of the southern Slavs and the fathers of Slav literary culture. Kiril, the younger of the two, was given the name Constantine when he was baptized. It was much later that he received the name Kiril.

Macedonian scholars not only solved the problem of writing in the common Macedonian language in a relatively short period of time but they also managed to successfully promote and teach it to the entire Slav speaking world. This kind of success was not only paramount but unprecedented in the history of the world.

Since there was no one to speak on behalf of the Macedonian people when Balkan histories were written after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, foreigners such as the Greeks and Bulgarians usurped parts of Macedonia's history and took credit for Macedonian deeds and accomplishments.

What is important here is that these deeds and accomplishments originated in Macedonia, not in Greece and not in Bulgaria and as such must be attributed to the people of Macedonia.

It is a well known fact that the Bulgars never defeated, conquered or invaded Solun so how can modern Bulgarians claim that Kiril and Metodi, the Solun bothers, the very same people who are credited with "inventing" the Cyrillic alphabet be Bulgarians?

Similarly, even though the Slavs never conquered Solun, according to Byzantine Emperor Michael III, the people of Solun spoke pure Slavonic. How is possible that they spoke "pure Slavonic" in Solun when no Slav ever set foot on that city?

"The 'Salonika Brothers', the 'Apostles to the Slavs', as they are variously called, are claimed by different sources such as Greeks, Bulgarians or Macedonians. Such categories are inappropriate for the middle ages, before the formation of modern nations. Cyril (Kiril) and Methodius (Metodi) were Byzantine missionaries. They may have been of East South Slavonic stock or they may have learned the Salonika dialect from peasants in the area. When the

Moravian Emperor Rastislav appealed to the Byzantine Emperor Michael III in Constantinople for missionaries to teach the gospel to the Slavs of Moravia, Michael chose Constantine and Methodius, who were well known as Byzantine scholars and diplomats. Michael justified his choice with the famous sentence: 'You are Thessalonians, and all the people of Salonika speak pure Slavonic'." (Peter Hill. The Macedonians in Australia. Carlisle: Hesperian Press, 1989. Page 2)

Again, if the Slavs never entered Solun, how was it that all the people of Solun spoke "pure Slavonic" and not Greek as the Greeks today want us to believe?

Debates as to who the Macedonians were are absurd and counterproductive since it is well known that the Macedonian people were not only a dominant factor in the affairs of the Byzantine Empire but also major contributors to the world's civilization.

Macedonians took the initiative to create a written language not only for themselves as some cultures had done in the past, but also to educate a vast part of the world. If anyone should be credited for spreading their language and culture it should be the Macedonians. Christianizing and educating the entire East European world and part of Asia all the way to Siberia is an example of what the Macedonians had accomplished in a relatively short period of time. Today we have the following languages using the Cyrillic alphabet: Abaza, Abkhaz, Adyghe, Avar, Azeri, Belorussian, Bulgarian, Dungan, Kazak, Kyrkhyz, Komi, Macedonian, Moldovan, Mongolian, Old Church Slavonic, Russian, Ruthenian, Serbian, Slavio, Tajik, Tatar, Turkman, Ukrainian, Uzbek and Yakut.

There are two questions that arise from the above: 1) why would Macedonians be willing to create a language and spread it so far away from their own domain? And 2) why would foreign tribes and nations as far north as Siberia accept a foreign language from a foreign people thousands of miles away?

This is indeed an enigma to which, to this day, very little thought has been devoted, especially from academics and scholars. This however does not preclude us from theorizing.

Angelina Markus always believed that the modern Macedonians are the natural inheritors of the entire Macedonian heritage from the day Macedonia came into being which according to her extends to Neolithic times. According to Markus "many of the people from the Balkans to Siberia today who are called 'Slavs' owe that title to the Macedonians". When Alexander conquered Eastern Europe he created cities and populated them with Macedonians. These cities remained intact and vibrant even after the Macedonian empires disappeared. History has also recorded that when Rome attacked Macedonia half of the Macedonian population fled north beyond the Roman domain. The people that fled were mostly educated and prominent Macedonians who would have found it difficult to survive under Roman oppression and were invariably civilized and capable of spreading the Macedonian language and culture to the new worlds they settled. It is estimated that half a million people fled Macedonia some 2,100 years ago and since then have been populating and spreading the Macedonian language and culture to Eastern Europe and Asia all the way to Siberia.

When the so called "Slav tribes" from the Danube to Siberia were Christianized during the 8th, 9th and 10th centuries AD, they were Christianized by teachers from Macedonia, a foreign world, a world that should have been alien to the Slavs. Yet this demand for Macedonian teachers did happen and lead to the formation of the Ohrid University, the first University in Europe.

"The reason that these people were asking for teachers from Macedonia" explains Markus "is because they were themselves or believed to be themselves akin to the Macedonians". This also explains why when the so called "Slavs" came to Macedonia they found a familiar culture and language.

Angelina Markus also pointed out that: "To have a complete Macedonian History, Culture, Philosophy, we need to open the archives of the Vatican because old Rome was the last to take everything from Macedonia, and those documents today are hidden away in a secret place. The other places that need to be opened are the archives of the universal Constantinople (Istanbul) patriarchy. In these archives are kept most highly treasured things about the

writing and history of ancient Macedonia." (Zac I)

While Ohrid experienced a boom in the field of education and enlightenment, Solun experienced a golden age of its own not only in the arts and literature but also in commerce and industry. Celebrated scholars, orators, philosophers, mosaicists, wood carving craftsmen, hymnologists, architects, hagiographers, etc., all gathered together in Solun not only to build the most magnificent churches the world had ever seen but to also open schools and teach their crafts to foreign students for export.

Besides the immense Macedonian contribution to the arts, crafts, literature and architecture, Macedonians also served the Byzantine Empire as soldiers, statesmen and even Emperors. Macedonians occupied the Empire's throne during the period from 867 AD to 1081 AD in what came to be known as the Macedonian Epoch. The following Macedonian Emperors and Empresses served on the Byzantine throne: Basil I the Macedonian (867-886), Leo VI the Philosopher or the Wise (886-9I2), Alexander (886-913), Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (913-959), Romanus I Lecapenus (919-944), Romanus II (959-963), Nicephorus II Phocas (963-969), John Tzimisces (969-976), Basil II the Macedonian 976-1025), Constantine VIII (1025-1028), Romanus III Argyrus (1028-1034), Michael IV (1034-1041), Michael V Calaphates (1041-1042), Zoe and Theodora 1042, Constantine IX Monomachus (1042-1055) and Theodora (1055-1056). (A. Vasiliev. "History of the Byzantine Empire (324 - 1453)". The University of Wisconsin Press. 1952. Pages 300-303)

According to Vasiliev, the Macedonian dynasties fall into two periods. The first extends from 867 AD to 1025 AD with the death of Basil II. The second but brief period extends from 1025 AD to 1056 AD with the death of Empress Theodora.

Historians have often referred to these periods, especially the first, as the most productive and politically successful in the Empire's existence. The Empire was particularly productive under the leaderships of Nicephorus Phocas, John Tzimisces and Basil II.

During Basil II's reign the empire achieved its greatest accomplishments and glory. Among its successes were the suppression of the separatist movements in Asia Minor, its increased influence in Syria, its partial annexation of Armenia, its annexation of Bulgaria and its successful Christianization of Russia. Upon adopting Christianity from the Byzantines, Russia entered into closer religious, political, commercial, and cultural ties with the Byzantine Empire.

855 A.D. - Kiril, Metodi and the Macedonian alphabet

It was during the reign of the Pravoslav emperor Michael III (842-867) that Solun had definitely established itself as the religious and philosophical center of the empire. This was the time when Kiril (Cyril) and Metodi (Methodius) set off on a series of missions to spread the doctrines of Christianity to various places in Eastern Europe and Asia.

I just want to mention here that, by the eighth century AD, the Macedonian eparchy was controlled by a Macedonian Archbishopric with its center located in Solun and bishoprics existed in eighteen towns including Lerin, Kostur, Voden and Serres.

The brothers Kiril and Metodi were Macedonians, natives of Solun, who were acclaimed as the apostles of Eastern Europe and the fathers of Macedonian literary culture. Kiril, the younger of the two, was given the name Constantine when he was baptized. It was much later that he received the name Kiril.

Kiril was very fortunate to have studied in Tsari Grad at a young age and received his education from Leo the Grammarian and Photius, a prominent educator at the imperial university. Kiril was an extraordinary student and earned himself the nickname "the Philosopher". After he finished his education he was ordained deacon and later became professor of philosophy at the imperial school in Tsari Grad, where he took over the chair from Photius. Soon afterwards, he retired to the quiet solitude of a monastery. From there, in 861 AD, he was summoned by the emperor, Michael III, and sent on a mission to Christianize the Khazars of southern Russia who lived between the Dnieper and Volga Rivers.

The older brother Metodi was a well-liked, intelligent man who started his career in his father's footsteps. At first he served in the military in Solun. Later, at age twenty, he became governor of one of the colonies in the Opsikion province in Asia. Then he became a monk and, like his brother, took part in a mission to Christianize the Khazars.

Kiril and Metodi were two of seven siblings. Their father Lev was a prominent Macedonian who served as assistant to the Solun military commander of the Pravoslav army.

The careers of the Solun brothers took a turn for the better in 862 AD when, Rostislav, the prince of Moravia sent his ambassador to Tsari Grad seeking missionaries capable of teaching his people to read and write in their own language. Rostislav, fearful of his powerful German neighbours, sought the opportunity to strengthen his alliance with the Pravoslavs to counter-balance the German missionary influence in his kingdom. Rostislav preferred the ecclesiastical politics of Photius, now patriarch of Tsari Grad, over those of his western counterpart.

When word came that Emperor Michael was looking for capable missionaries, Photius decided that Kiril and Metodi were the most suitable candidates for the job. The Solun brothers, being Macedonian speakers themselves, knew the Solunian language dialect well and accepted the task.

The old-Macedonian dialect was quite well understood by all Eastern European countries. Unfortunately, teaching the illiterate to read and write was easier said than done. Even though the old Easter Europeans had a written form of language described as "lines and incisions", it was not an easy language to learn.

Kiril was familiar with the Glagolic script but that was also too complex a language for illiterate people to grasp quickly. According to Tsarnorizets Hrabar, an advocate of Macedonian literacy, Kiril and Metodi first tried to use the Koine and then Latin alphabets, but proper pronunciation could not be achieved. Macedonian speech was far too complex to record with just Koine or Latin letters. Kiril

was an intelligent man and solved the problem by constructing a new alphabet based on old Macedonian traditions. The pattern and some letters he based on the Koine alphabet but he enriched it by adding new letters. He borrowed some from the Glagolic script and some he fashioned from ancient Macedonian symbols that had traditional Macedonian meaning. “Peter Hill argues that Old Church [Macedonian]…was more than merely a written dialect. It is naïve, he says, to imagine that this construction of a written language was possible without established tradition. Therefore it can safely be assumed that there was at least some tradition on which Cyril and Methodius could build. Presumably their familiarity with this tradition derived from the fact that they were [Macedonian…themselves.” (Page 198, John Shea, Macedonia and Greece The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation, Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Co., 1997)

When it was completed Kiril’s alphabet consisted of 38 letters, each accurately and exactly representing a unique sound in Macedonian speech. The phonetic nature of Kiril’s language made spelling words very simple. One only needed to learn the alphabet to have the ability to read and write. The same is true to this day.

I just want to mention that there are some references claiming that Kiril was the inventor of the Glagolic script, but they are incorrect. Kiril was familiar with the Glagolic script and had composed Glagolic texts but we now know from recent discoveries of ancient inscriptions that the Glagolic alphabet existed before Kiril’s time.

862 A.D. - Kiril and Metodi in Moravia

In 862 AD Kiril and Metodi, along with a number of followers, arrived in Moravia in Rostislav’s court. They immediately set out to work and to their surprise Kiril’s vernacular was not only well understood but also became popular with the Moravians. The Pravoslav missionaries continued their work for a while, with much success, but were soon handicapped by the lack of Pravoslav bishops to ordain their priests. Also, their popularity with the Moravians displeased the German missionaries who saw them as competition and harshly objected to their presence.

German hostilities reached their peak when the German Emperor Louis forced Rostislav to take an oath of loyalty to him. The German prelate, the bishop of Passau, who had the power to ordain Pravoslav priests refused to do so out of contempt. Unable to continue their work the missionaries were forced to return to Tsari Grad. On their way back the Macedonian brothers took a detour through Venice where they learned that the Pope had excommunicated Photius, the Pravoslav Patriarch in Tsari Grad. Pravoslav missionaries and their liturgical use of the Macedonian language were vehemently criticized.

In 858 AD Emperor Michael III, on his own authority, deposed Patriarch Ignatius and replaced him with the more progressive Photius. The Pope, however, did not agree with Michael's decision and proclaimed his deeds invalid. At the same time the Pope denounced both Photius and the emperor.

When Pope Nicholas I found out that the Pravoslav missionaries were in Venice he summoned them to Rome. By the time they arrived, however, Nicholas had died and the political situation had changed for the better. In a turn of events Nicholas's successor, Adrian II, warmly welcomed the strangers, especially when he found out that they were bringing him an important gift. Kiril it seems had recovered some relics of Pope St. Clement when he was in the Crimea visiting the Khazars and offered them to Adrian as gifts.

When they arrived, Adrian conducted an investigation and found no misconduct on the part of the Pravoslavs. In his judgment he permitted Kiril and Metodi to receive Episcopal consecration and allowed their newly converted priests to be ordained. He also approved Macedonian to be used in liturgy.

869 A.D. - Kiril dies

Sadly, Kiril died on February 14, 869 AD in Rome and never made it back home. After Kiril's death Metodi pleaded with Pope Adrian to allow him to take his brother's body to Solun for burial but Adrian would not permit it. It was the wish of Kiril and Metodi's mother that if either son should die, the other would bring the body

back for a decent burial in the family monastery. Unfortunately Adrian would not allow it claiming that it would not be fitting for the Pope to permit the body of so distinguished a Christian to be taken away. He declared that a man so famous should be buried in a famous place. Kiril was buried with great pomp in the church of San Clemente on the Coelian, where the relics of St. Clement had been enshrined.

After Kiril died Metodi took over the cause and leadership of the mission from his brother. Having been consecrated, he obtained a letter of recommendation from the Pope and the Holy See and quickly returned to his duties. At the request of Kozzel, prince of Pannonia, who at the time wanted to revive the ancient archdiocese of Sirmium (now Mitrovitsa), Metodi was made metropolitan (Archbishop). He was given a large area of responsibility with boundaries that extended to the borders of Bulgaria. Unfortunately as the political situation in Moravia was shifting Metodi's title and his papal approval did not mean much to the western missionaries, especially the Germans who began a smear campaign against him. To make matters worse Rostislav's nephew, Svatopluk, allied himself with Carloman of Bavaria and had his uncle driven out. After that it did not take long before Metodi was in trouble again.

In 870 AD Metodi was summoned before a synod of German bishops. They found him guilty of misconduct, no doubt on trumped-up charges, and locked him up in a leaking jail cell. It took two years of pleading before Pope John VIII could get him out. Unfortunately, to avoid further controversies Pope John withdrew his permission to use Macedonian, a barbarous language as he called it, for any purpose other than preaching. At the same time he reminded the Germans that Pannonia was never German and since age immemorial it belonged to the Holy See.

After his release, Metodi continued his work in Moravia but there too he got into trouble. Metodi did not approve of Svatopluk's wicked lifestyle and made his displeasure public. In retaliation, Svatopluk reported Metodi to the Holy See. He accused him of conducting divine worship in Macedonian and of heresy, charging that he omitted the words "and the Son" from the creed. At that time these words where not yet introduced everywhere in the west.

In 878 AD, as a result of Svatopluk's accusations, Pope John VIII summoned Metodi to Rome and conducted an inquiry. Metodi, a serious man and a dedicated Christian, was able to convince the Pope both of his devotion to his religion and of the necessity to use Macedonian liturgy. Even though Pope John was in agreement with Metodi on most matters, he had certain reservations about the use of the Macedonian language. It seems that some of the western missionaries perceived the Macedonian language as a threat to their own mission and did everything in their power to condemn it. They alleged that, being created by mere men, the Macedonian language was not from God and that God had created the three principal languages, Hebrew, Koine and Latin. Metodi however fought back with equally persuasive arguments, counter-claiming that God did not create the Hebrew, Koine or Latin languages. God created the Syrian language which Adam and the people after him spoke until the flood. Then during the building of the Tower of Babel, God distributed the various languages among the people and created the written form of the languages. His arguments may have bought Metodi some time but he was still in trouble with the German missionaries.

Seeing that he could not easily get rid of him, Svatopluk used his influence as king and persuaded the Pope to appoint Wiching, a known adversary, to work with Metodi. The German (or French) priest Wiching was brought in to assist Metodi as one of his bishops. Wiching was an implacable opponent of Metodi who worked against him tirelessly. This unscrupulous prelate continued to persecute Metodi, even to the extent of forging pontifical documents.

After Metodi's death, Wiching obtained the archiepiscopal see, banished Metodi's followers, and undid as much as he could of Metodi's work in Moravia.

When Wiching was appointed as his assistant, Metodi must have realized that he was fighting a losing battle. In the last four years of his life he took a break from missionary work and translated most of the Bible from Koine to Macedonian. Metodi died in 885 AD, probably from exhaustion. His funeral service was carried out in

Koine, Macedonian and Latin. Metodi was very popular with the people and many came to his funeral to pay their last respects.

I just want to add here that Saints Kiril and Metodi were always celebrated in the lands of their missions and after 1880 they were also celebrated throughout the entire western world.

886 A.D. - Ohrid Literary School established

Kliment and Naum spread Christianity and establish the Ohrid Literary School

The most famous of the Pravoslav disciples were Kliment (Clement), Naum, Angelarius Sava and Gorazd. Even though Gorazd was groomed to take over from Metodi, the first to rise to the occasion was Kliment, also known as Kliment of Ohrid.

Kliment was one of the brightest of Kiril and Metodi's students and played a pivotal role in their careers. After his banishment from Moravia and Pannonia however, Kliment returned to Ohrid to his place of birth (although some claim he was born in Solun). Kliment spent the next seven years, from 886 to 893 AD, in Ohrid doing God's work and teaching the Macedonian language. During his stay in Ohrid he was instrumental in founding the Ohrid Literary School and developing the first university in the Balkans and perhaps in all of Europe. It has been said that three thousand five hundred clergy and teachers were educated in the University of Ohrid. But that was not all, Kliment was also responsible for writing poetry and translating other works from Koine to Macedonian.

In 839 AD Kliment was joined by one of his life long friends, Naum. Kliment and Naum were responsible for refining Kiril's alphabet as well as re-writing many of Kiril's works from Glagolic to Macedonian (Cyrillic). Kiril, it seems, had written many works in the Glagolic script in anticipation of using them in his teaching but after finding out that Glagolic was too difficult for lay people to grasp, he opted for the simpler Macedonian which he himself created.

During Leo VI's rule the peace treaty between the Pravoslavs and Bulgars was once again breached. When the Bulgar ruler, Simeon came to power in 893 AD he resumed aggression in Macedonia. His armies continued to penetrate further west and south and came to within twenty-two kilometers of Solun. A new peace treaty was signed in 896 AD and Leo VI agreed to pay Simeon an annual subsidy of an undisclosed amount to cease his aggression.

After coming to power in 893 AD, Simeon invited Kliment to Preslav with an offer to make him his son's royal counselor and assistant. The offer did not materialize due to some demands Simeon had made that seemed unreasonable to Kliment. Simeon had some reservations about making the Macedonian language official and requested that Kliment modify it. Kliment of course refused, wanting the work of Kiril and Metodi to stay as it was. Simeon himself was educated in Koine at Tsari Grad and had developed ambitions to take over the Pravoslav Empire and become Emperor of a Pravoslav-Bulgar Empire.

When the original offer did not work out, Kliment was given a new appointment in the Velika bishopric in a backward province. This was somewhat of a demotion for Kliment but at the same time it allowed him more time to work on his own projects. He continued to translate chants, psalms, festal fragments from the Bible, moralities and so on.

Towards the end of their careers, both Kliment and Naum built churches on opposite sides of Lake Ohrid. Closest to the city, Kliment dedicated a shrine to the holy healer Panteleimon. A little later, near the springs of the Crn Drim River, Naum built a monument in honour of Gabriel and Michael, the archangels.

Both Kliment and Naum were buried in the tombs they had built for themselves. Naum was buried in 910 AD and Kliment six years later in 916 AD.

Naum, like Kliment, was also an important contributor to the development of the Macedonian language and culture. It is believed that Naum was born in Macedonia in 835 AD and had been Kliment's inseparable companion since his earliest youth. As

mentioned earlier, Naum was a student of Kiril and Metodi and was active among the people in Moravia and Pannonia. Naum, also known as Naum of Ohrid, was inseparable from his teachers and fellow pupils and suffered the same humiliation and injustice they did. Their most difficult and fateful moments came after Metodi's death when, under the influence of German churchmen, the Franks attacked the Macedonian missionaries and tortured them. In the words of Kliment of Ohrid's biographer: "Soldiers, stern men because they were Germans and by nature fierce, their fierceness being increased by their orders, took the priests, led them out of the town, pulled off their clothes and began to drag them along naked. Thus by one act they did them two wrongs: dishonored them and tortured them in the icy fog, which had descended on the Danube banks. Besides this, they put their swords against their heads, ready to cut them, and their spears against their breasts, ready to make them bleed, so they would not die a sudden death..."

"Subjected to cruel torture, some of the pupils succumbed, while the others, among them particularly Gorazd, Clement, Naum, Sava and Angelarius, were declared excommunicate by Bishop Vihing. Their books were seized and burnt. The younger pupils (about 200) were sold as slaves, while these five were driven out of the country."

On their way home to Macedonia, at the request of Boris the Bulgarian prince, Kliment, Naum and Angelarius (who died shortly afterwards) took a detour through Pliska, Bulgaria. After a short visit they felt it was time to return home and continued their work translating books from Koine to Macedonian. Prince Boris insisted that they remain in Pliska but when he couldn't convince Kliment he insisted that Naum must stay. Having no choice, Naum spent the next seven years, from 885 to 893 AD, in Pliska before returning home to join Kliment.

The establishment of feudal social structures in Macedonia opened the way for mass exploitation not only of the feudal principalities but also of the free peasants who still lived in rural communities. The situation worsened around the middle of the tenth century when the profitable Bulgar wars of conquest came to an end. Having no other substantial sources of income to support the Bulgar military, administrative, court and church systems, the Bulgars turned to

feudal exploitation. After everyone took their cut, the Macedonian peasant was left with nothing. Pushed beyond the brink of starvation, the Macedonian peasants revolted in what later became known as the Bogomil movement. Even though it was religious in nature, the Bogomil movement was predominantly a class struggle between the poor Macedonian peasant and his rich foreign rulers. The Bogomil movement was initiated in Macedonia by a Macedonian priest named Bogomil.

Under feudal ownership the peasants were fully dependent upon their feudal lords. Some historians argue that Kliment of Ohrid's visit to the Bulgar capital and his resignation as bishop a few months before his death was in response to the violence and devastation the Bulgars inflicted on the territory of the Bishopric of Velika.

The swift spread of the Bogomil movement prompted Petar, the Bulgar king, to take measures for its suppression but he did not succeed. Bogomilism was strongest in the territory defined by the triangle of the Vardar River, Ohrid and Mt. Shar. His intervention, however, did cause the Bogomils much suffering. But even the cruelest of methods did not stop the insurrection, which in time spread and became a general people's movement. Petar's death and the Russian campaigns drastically reduced Bulgar control over Macedonia allowing the Bogomil movement to flourish, at least for a while.

976 A.D. - Macedonian Medieval kingdom established

Tsar Samoil (976-1018) established the Macedonian Medieval kingdom

The Macedonian Ohrid archbishopric, with its capital in Ohrid, was founded during Tsar Samoil's rule.

In the meantime a new force of power was emerging in Macedonia. In 976 AD, the year emperor John (Tsimisces) died, the four brothers, David, Moses, Aaron and Samoil raised a rebellion. With the collapse of Bulgar rule and in the absence of Pravoslav forces, the rebellion was successful and the brothers decided to rule their newly established state jointly. Unfortunately, the joint rule did not

last too long. Vlach shepherds killed David, somewhere between Castra and Prespa, and Moses died during a siege in Serres.

In the absence of David and Moses a struggle for the throne ensued between Aaron and Samoil. Samoil, being a much more talented leader and statesman, was victorious. To prevent further problems Samoil had Aaron and his family executed, with the exception of Aaron's son Ivan.

After consolidating his power Samoil started a westerly campaign penetrating Thrace, Macedonia and Thessaly right down to the Peloponnesus. Just recovering from its last sacking, Solun was about to be sacked again but Samoil decided to continue south and in so doing he took a large number of towns, including Larissa. Samoil resettled the inhabitants of Larissa in the interior of his state and incorporated the Larissan soldiers into his own army.

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

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

Although Samoil may not have been a Bogomil himself, he accepted Bogomilism and its right to exist in his new kingdom. In turn, the Bogomils ceased to verbally attack Samoil, his upper classes, royal officials and high ranking clergy. If anyone was not pleased with Samoil's successes it was the Pravoslavs. Samoil, in combination with the Bogomil movement, was perceived as a powerful force and the Pravoslavs wanted it checked.

For the last ten years or so Basil II was attempting to put down insurrections in Asia, ignoring what was happening in his own backyard. But when the threat became too great to ignore, he gathered an army together and crossed over the frontier regions of the Rhodopes and the River Maritsa. There in August 986 AD, at the hands of Samoil, Basil suffered a crushing defeat. Basil lost nearly his entire cavalry, a large section of his infantry and narrowly escaped death himself. A peace treaty was concluded giving Samoil free control of his new territory.

Basil's defeat caused even more internal strife among the Pravoslavs, especially in Asia. The Pravoslav quarrels took attention away from Samoil and opened opportunities to extend his rule to new territories.

In the summer of 989 AD Samoil resumed his campaign and took Berroea (Ber). After that he invaded Dalmatia and declared war on young king Vladimir. When Samoil reached Diocleia, Vladimir fled to the mountains but was persuaded by one of his tribal chieftains to surrender. Samoil took him prisoner and banished him to Prespa. In much need of resources, Samoil plundered the whole of Dalmatia and took whatever he could find. He then burned the cities of Kotor and Dubrovnik and razed many villages as far away as Zadar. Samoil had no navy and was not able to take any of the coastal towns.

Back in Prespa meanwhile, Samoil's daughter Kossara fell in love with the young captive king Vladimir and wanted to marry him. Not to disappoint her, Samoil gave in and gave her his blessings. Now that he was his son-in-law he gave Vladimir his former kingdom back. As a wedding gift he also gave the newlyweds Dyrrachium and all its territories. He even returned Trebinye to Vladimir's uncle, Dragomir. Samoil's good deeds not only earned him the respect of his son-in-law but Vladimir also became his ally and loyal vassal.

When the Pravoslav civil war ended Basil decided it was time to terminate his three year treaty with Samoil, which lasted from 987 to 990 AD. War broke out in 990 AD and lasted until 994 AD during which time Basil captured and destroyed a number of Samoil's strongholds. In retaliation, in late 994 AD, Samoil prepared a siege

against Solun during which Gregory Taronites, the city's Governor, was killed. Gregory died while attempting to rescue his son, Ashot, who had been ambushed during a reconnaissance mission. When Basil found out, he was furious and sent Uranus, his Supreme Commander from the west, to investigate. Uranus discovered that not only had Samoil besieged Solun, but he had been plundering the surrounding countryside. He had also been campaigning in Thessaly, Boeotia, Attica and the Peloponnesus. Upset by the situation, Basil ordered Uranus to attack Samoil and put an end to his free reign.

Uranus immediately went in pursuit of Samoil but found the River Spercheius swollen from a flash flood. Unable to cross he camped on the river's bank. As it happened, Samoil's army had also made camp nearby but on the opposite side of the river. Upon his discovery that Samoil was close by, Uranus went in search of and found a safe place to cross. During the night he made the crossing and attacked his sleeping adversary. Being unprepared, Samoil's army was devastated and both Samoil and his son were badly wounded and barely managed to escape.

Victorious, Basil demanded that Samoil surrender. Instead of surrendering Samoil fled to his capital. To convince Basil not to pursue him, Samoil agreed to sign a peace treaty and offered his surrender in writing. But instead of surrendering Samoil had himself proclaimed King. What Samoil really wanted was the crown of an emperor but the Pope of Rome, Gregory V, had no intention of creating another Emperor. Samoil could have taken the Bulgar crown, but unfortunately that crown was also in Tsari Grad and out of reach. So, all that Samoil could legally hope for was a mere king's crown. Even though Samoil's crown was not recognized by Tsari Grad, his coronation gave him international recognition. For the Pope of Rome, this was another chance to erode and weaken Pravoslav rule.

When Basil found out that Samoil was crowned king he became furious and once again dispatched Uranus to destroy him. Unable to engage Samoil in battle, Uranus went on a looting spree burning everything in his path. After three months of mayhem and

destruction Uranus failed his mission and returned to Tsari Grad empty handed.

Safe, at least for now, Samoil took the opportunity to marry another daughter, Miroslava, to Ashot, Gregory's son from Solun whom he had previously captured. As a wedding gift he gave the newlyweds Governorship of Dyrrachium with king Vladimir's full approval. The ungrateful Ashot, however, fled to Tsari Grad and for his loyalty was awarded the title of Magistrate, by the Pravoslavs. In the meantime his wife, Miroslava, became a lady-in-waiting at the Tsari Grad court. Soon after Ashot fled, the city leaders of Dyrrachium broke off relations with Vladimir and surrendered their city to the Pravoslavs.

In retaliation and hoping to stir trouble for Basil in Tsari Grad, Samoil began a propaganda campaign promoting Vatatz, a family member from the Basil Glavas family as his ally. The Basil Glavas family and a number of other nobles had taken refuge with Samoil to avoid persecution from Basil.

Instead of creating trouble, Samoil's actions further infuriated Basil prompting him to initiate a new military offensive. Taking a route via Philippopolis, Basil destroyed most cities in the region of Serdica. In the year 1000 he dispatched a large army and attacked all fortified cities, capturing Great and Little Preslav and Pliska, near the River Maritsa. In 1001 Basil himself joined the offensive and marched his army by Solun in the direction of Berroea, where he captured Dobromir. Basil then captured Kolidron, near Berroea, and put Servia under siege. In spite of Servia's brave resistance, the city fell into Basil's hands anyway. Nikolitsa, Servia's Governor, was taken captive to Tsari Grad but instead of being thrown in jail, Basil conferred upon him the honour of a patrician. Nikolitsa, however, was not satisfied and fled to Samoil and together they attacked Servia. Basil retaliated and again captured Nikolitsa but this time he conferred upon him the honour of serving in chains in exile in his jail in Tsari Grad.

After subduing Servia, Basil took his campaign to Thessaly. He took back and made repairs to the damaged fortresses which Samoil's troops had held. He then refortified the fortresses with fresh

Pravoslav garrisons. After that he turned his attention to Voden and took the city by force from the aggressive Governor Drazhan. Drazhan was captured and sent to Solun as Basil's prisoner. Upon his arrival in Solun, Basil dispatched Uranus to Antioch to deal with the Arabs. Uranus was replaced with the patrician David Arijant as Solun's new military commander.

In 1002 Basil made his way to Vidin and after an eight-month siege he broke through the defenses and captured the town. On the same day Samoil forced marched his troops through Thrace, looting and trashing Endrene (Adrianople). If Samoil's intent was to get Basil's attention by trashing Endrene, he succeeded. Basil now moved his campaign to Skopje, where he caught up with Samoil. Unexpectedly Samoil fled without a fight and Skopje's governor surrendered the city to Basil. From Skopje, Basil took his campaign to the fortress of Pernik where he encountered heavy resistance from the great warrior Krakras. Basil failed to take the town and incurred great losses in the process and was forced to return to Tsari Grad.

As if Samoil did not have enough problems with the Pravoslavs he now made the Hungarians angry. His son, who was married to a Hungarian princess, decided to leave her thus bringing disgrace to his family and an end to the cordial relations between Samoil and King Stephen I. After the embarrassing incident, King Stephen abandoned his alliance with Samoil and joined Basil who had offered him an alliance of his own.

1014 - Battle of Mount Belisitsa

In the recent past, Pravoslav attacks and plundering of Samoil's territory were more frequent and of greater intensity. Samoil felt it was time do something and soon. His chance came in 1014 when Basil's forces were about to enter a gorge in the Rhodope Mountains. Samoil surrounded the gorge with a strong force in what was going to be a surprise attack. Unfortunately Basil must have anticipated Samoil's move and ordered one of David Arijant's generals to force march his troops around Samoil's forces. When a fierce battle broke out between Basil and Samoil, Samoil's army was attacked from the rear and trapped. Unable to withdraw, many of Samoil's soldiers were slain and even more were captured. Samoil

himself was saved by his son who aided his escape to the fortress of Prilep.

After his victory Basil rounded up all his prisoners and had his soldiers gouge their eyes out. According to accounts there were fifteen thousand Macedonian soldiers captured that day. To lead the blind soldiers back to Samoil, Basil ordered that one out of every hundred men be left with one eye intact. This was indeed a gruesome act, a real tragedy not only for Samoil but for Macedonia as well. Shaken by the sight of this tragedy Samoil died of shock two days later. Samoil's son Gabriel Radomir succeeded him.

When Samoil died in 1014, his kingdom was vast and included the whole of Macedonia (except for Solun), Thessaly, Epirus, the coastal sclavenes of Oiocleia, Travunya and Zachlumia, the Neretva region (excluding the islands) as far as Cetina, Serbia, Bosnia and a considerable part of Bulgaria. For the most part, the majority of the population living in Samoil's empire was Macedonian. To a lesser extent there lived Bulgars, Serbs, Croats, Romani, Albanians and Vlachs. Additionally there lived migrants such as Vardariot Turks and Armenians who were recently settled there by former Pravoslav emperors and some by Samoil. While many Armenians existed in Thrace, Samoil had also settled some in Pelagonia, Prespa and Ohrid. The Romani were known to exist mostly in coastal regions.

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

1018 - Byzantine rule resumes in Macedonia

August 1018, Basil II succeeded in destroying the last remnants of Samoil's forty-two year reign (976-1018) of his Macedonian kingdom. By now Basil II was an old man and after finishing with Samoil, he took his campaign to Armenia. Some historians believe

this was a mistake. By destroying Armenia he destroyed an effective buffer zone between the Pravoslavs (Byzantines) and the Islamic powers. Basil II died in 1025.

1040 - Petar Delian organizes a rebellion

Petar Delian organizes a rebellion (1040-1041) against Eastern Roman rule.

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

By 1040, discontent with Pravoslav (Byzantine) rule, the situation in Macedonia reached a boiling point and the population began to rebel. Leading the rebellion was Peter Delian, Gabriel Radomir's son by his first wife, the daughter of the Hungarian king. The rebellion, supported by the Hungarian king, began in the regions of Belgrade and Morava near the Hungarian border and soon spread south to Skopje. With popular support and assistance from the local Macedonian population, the rebel army invaded and took Skopje. Tsari Grad (Constantinople) quickly reacted by dispatching an army in pursuit. But instead of attacking, the Pravoslav soldiers defected and proclaimed Tihomir, one of their own soldiers, as their emperor. Tihomir unfortunately died in battle leaving his army under Delian's command.

1072 - Giorgi Voiteh organizes rebellion

In 1072, five years after the Thessalian rebellion, a new revolt broke out, this time inside Macedonia. The revolt, led by George Voiteh, took place in Skopje and was sparked by new and more oppressive financial policies introduced by the Pravoslav (Byzantine) authorities. The leaders of the revolt turned for help to Michael, the ruler of Zeta, who was related to Samuel. Michael sent his son Constantine Bodin along with three hundred of his elite troops. Voiteh and his rebels met Bodin at Prizren and immediately

proclaimed him emperor under the name Peter, in honour of the fallen Peter Delian.

1185 - Macedonian feudal lord Dobromir Hrs becomes independent of Eastern Roman rule.

After Andronicus I Comnenus died in 1185, Isaac II Angelus replaced him as emperor. It was during Isaac II's reign that the newly developed feudal powers in Serbia and Bulgaria were established and became a significant political factor in the Balkans. The sacking of Solun by the Normans weakened the Pravoslavs (Byzantines) and that too created favourable conditions for the Slavonic feudal lords to gain some independence. Among the more successful of these was Dobromir Hrs. Hrs had accumulated an army of five hundred men and, for the most part, maintained peaceful relations with the court in Tsari Grad (Constantinople). He was, however, an opportunist and looked for ways to expand his authority. His chance came in 1189 during the third Crusade, led by Frederic I Barbarossa, when a number of Crusaders left the main route and invaded Macedonia. While passing through Gradets they killed people and set fire to several buildings, including the town's church. After descending to Vkahija (near Strumitsa) they clashed with a rebel group and took their possessions. It was here that Hrs made contact with the Crusaders and sent them on their way. Unfortunately no sooner had the Crusaders departed for Asia Minor than Pravoslavs rounded up these opportunistic feudal lords and sent them to jail. Dobromir Hrs was imprisoned for a while but was then released and awarded the governorship of Strumitsa.

1207 - Macedonian feudal lord Strez (1207-1214) becomes ruler of parts of Macedonia from Solun region to Ohrid.

After the 1205 defeat of the Latin Emperor Baldwin and the Adrianople Crusaders, the Bulgarian army attacked and destroyed the town Serres and invaded the district of Solun. Bulgarian pressure on Solun increased in 1207, particularly after the death of Boniface of Montferrat. The Bulgarian emperor Kaloian laid siege to the city but soon died and the siege was abandoned.

In the period after Kaloian's death a power struggle ensued in Bulgaria and Strez, a descendant of the Bulgarian royal line was able to establish an independent kingdom in Macedonia. With the aid of Serbia he set himself up in Prosek and extended his rule from Solun Region to Ohrid. All Bulgarian governors within these territories swore loyalty to him. After a while, agitation from the Bulgarians subsided and Strez was able to establish good relations with the Bulgarian state.

Upon consolidating his rule in Macedonia, Strez began a campaign against the Kingdom of Solun which in 1212 sparked a massive conflict in Pelagonia. Even though the conflict was between Strez and the Latins, it had support from the more powerful Despot of Epirus on one side and the Bulgarian state on the other. After losing to the Latins, Strez broke off relations with the Serbians. In 1214 he initiated a campaign against them but died unexpectedly.

After Strez's death the Despot of Epirus conquered a large portion of Macedonia, including Skopje and Ohrid. In 1244 Solun too fell prey to the army of Epirus.

1255 - The Dragota Uprising

Another less known uprising termed the Dragota uprising named after its leader, took place in 1255 in the Melnik Region during Nicaean rule. In 1246, the Nicaean ruler John III Vatatzes conquered Melnik and the surrounding region and established Nicaean rule. The City Melnik and its vicinity being in mid-course of the Struma River always played a geopolitical role in Macedonia's history. Important roads passed through there and connected the coast of the Aegean Sea with the Danube including Salonica with Sofia. On the road from Melnik to Seres, near Melnik, is the Rupel Gorge, a very important strategic position which allowed rulers of the city to control the main roads from north to south and from east to west. As a result Melnik developed through the centuries as a strong fortress, and has served as capital city many times through history reaching its zenith in the 13th century when it became Alexeus Slav's capital.

Dragota was originally from Melnik but because of his military achievements in the Bulgarian army, he was appointed military

commander of Seres. After Emperor Ka1iman's death in 1246 the Nicaeans invaded Macedonia. Dragota unable to resist their attacks allowed the region to fall in 1246. Afterwards he surrendered Seres to the Emperor John Vatatzes, and some time later helped the Nicaeans conquer the city of Melnik. He was greatly awarded for his help, and as a Nicaean Vassal was formally appointed commander of Melnik and the surrounding region.

1282 - Urosh II invades Macedonia

Then in 1282 the Serbian feudal army of king Stephen Urosh II Milutin invaded northern Macedonia and took Lower and Upper Polog, Skopje, Ovche Pole, Zletovo and Piyanets. Shortly afterwards, the Serbs initiated a new campaign and invaded Poreche and the Kichevo and Debar regions. After that a Serbian detachment was dispatched along the lower course of the Struma River and penetrated as far as Krstopol.

About four decades later the Serbians, under the rule of the Serbian King Stephen Urosh III Dechanski, launched another campaign against the Byzantines. During their first wave of attacks they invaded and captured the towns of Shtip, Chreshche on the River Bragalnitsa, Veles and Prosek on the Vardar. Then in 1328 they took Prosek and the Serbian army invaded the regions of Demir Hisar and Debartsa, coming face to face with the Byzantines in Ohrid.

Ohrid was an important Byzantine stronghold and the threat did not go unnoticed in Constantinople. Emperor Andronicus III Palaeologus immediately prepared a counter-offensive and went in pursuit of the invaders. By 1330 the Emperor had recaptured the towns in the Demir Hisar and Debartsa regions, including Zheleznets.

Four years later, under the leadership of their new ruler Stephen Urosh IV Dushan, the Serbs renewed their offensive in Macedonia. With the capture of Serres in 1345, Serbian rule was extended over virtually all of Macedonia. The same year the Serbian ruler Stephen Urosh IV Dushan proclaimed himself emperor and elevated the Serbian Archbishopric to a Patriarchate. The coronation took place

in Skopje on April 16, 1346 but the Byzantines refused to recognize it along with Serbia's territorial gains and the Serbian Patriarchate.

During the course of the late 1340's Serbian rule was expanded to Thessaly and Epirus. But in 1350 the towns of Serres and Voden rebelled and severed links with the Serbs. After that opposition became common everywhere and the Serbs found it very difficult to hang on to their conquered territories.

After Stephen Urosh IV Dushan's death in 1355 the central government's authority quickly eroded, leaving the feudal lords to rule independently. The most notable of the feudal lords in Macedonia at the time were the brothers Volkashin and Uglesha. Volkashin proclaimed himself king in 1365 with Emperor Urosh as co-ruler.

-- OTTOMAN ERA --

1346 - Ottoman invasions begin

The Byzantine Empire's downslide began in 1302 when a band of Turkish warriors, under the leadership of Osman I, defeated the Pravoslav army near Nicomedia in northwestern Anatolia and, for the first time, penetrated Europe. Osman I was the founder of the Osmanli, or Ottomans as they would later be known by westerners.

Unable to beat the Ottomans back, a year later in 1303, Andronicus hired a professional army of mercenaries known as the Grand Catalan Company. The Catalans made one successful counterattack against the Turks in Anatolia but after that they became unruly and unpopular. After their leader was murdered they turned against their employers. Having failed to conquer Tsari Grad they headed for Macedonia and stopped in Solun, looting and plundering everything in sight. Even Sveta Gora (Mount Athos), Macedonia's Holy Mountain was not spared by the Catalan's ferocious greed. Solun, however, held out and succeeded in repelling the Catalan invaders who were forced to push further southwards.

For some years the Catalans used the Gallipoli Peninsula as a base from which to ravage Thrace, inviting thousands of Turks to come

over and help them. The Catalans finally moved west and in 1311 conquered Athens from the French and established the Catalan Duchy of Athens and Thebes. The Turks who were left behind were not ejected from Gallipoli until 1312.

The Catalans were only a minor problem for the Pravoslavs in comparison to their own internal strife and civil wars. The trouble started around 1320 when Andronicus II disinherited his grandson Andronicus III. The cause of the young emperor was taken up by his friends, who periodically fought against the old emperor. The civil strife lasted from 1321 to 1328 until the older Andronicus yielded the throne to the younger. Unfortunately this internal fighting took attention away from needed economic reforms and gave the enemy new opportunities to gain more ground.

In 1329 the Turks renewed their campaign against the Pravoslavs. A battle was fought and lost at Pelekanon (near Nicomedia) giving the Turks a needed victory. Victorious, Osman's son Orhan and his Turkish warriors went on to capture Nicaea in 1331 and Nicomedia in 1337. Northwestern Anatolia, once the heart of the empire, was now lost to the Turks.

Surprisingly the Pravoslavs accepted their defeat and came to terms with the Turks. By so doing Andronicus III now opened the door to an almost limitless number of Turkish soldiers to join his army and fight for pay against his enemies the Italians in the Aegean islands and the Serbs and Bulgars in Macedonia and Thrace. By allowing the Turks to aid them, the Pravoslavs taught them military skills and gave them combat experience, which helped them to form a base for future campaigns.

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

1366 - King Dimitria Volkasin establishes rule in Macedonia (1366-1371)

Among the first to be threatened by the Turkish forces was Uglesha's rule, the feudal lord in Macedonia mentioned earlier. Confronted with danger he persuaded his brother Volkashin to take joint actions. Hostilities broke out in September 1371 near Chernomen followed by a fierce battle on the River Maritsa. The river turned red as casualties mounted, among them the brothers Volkashin and Uglesha. It was a major victory for the Turks and a catastrophe for the Macedonians, not only for the loss of life but for the terrible change of fate.

1371 - King Marko (1371-1395) continued rule in Macedonia after Volkasin with Prilep as his capital

Even though, this was an insignificant battle, its outcome had disastrous significance for Macedonia. The balance of power was destabilized and as a result the Despot Manuel Palaeologus captured the Serres region and Chalcidice. Volkashin's son Marko retained the title of King but recognized Turkish authority and began paying tribute and rendering military aid to them. The Dragash brothers, rulers of eastern Macedonia with their seat at Velbuzhd, became Turkish vassals while Vuk Brankovich extended his rule to include Skopje and the Grand Zhupan, Andrea Gropa, consolidated his position in Ohrid.

After winning the Battle of Maritsa the Turks continued to campaign throughout Macedonia. In 1383 they took the town of Serres and in 1385 took the towns of Shtip, Veles, Prilep and Bitola.

From 1382 to 1387 Emperor Manuel reigned from Solun and worked hard to make the city a rallying point for resistance. Unfortunately the city fell to Murad's army in April 1387.

When the Turks drove deeper into Macedonia, the Serbs organized a counteroffensive but were overwhelmed at Kossovo in 1389.

The loss of Solun and the Battle of Kossovo unfortunately cut off access to Tsari Grad by land. By 1393 the Turk Bayezid had

completed his conquest of Bulgaria and returned to lay siege to Tsari Grad. His blockade lasted many years and Manuel II, like his father, pinned his hopes of rescue on the west.

The king of Hungary organized a great crusade against the Turks but was defeated at Nicopolis on the Danube in 1396. In 1399 the French marshal Boucicaut, who had fought the Turks at Nicopolis, returned to Tsari Grad with a small army. There he persuaded Manuel to take his appeal for help to the west in person. Leaving his nephew John VII in charge, Manual went to Italy, France, and England. The westerners gave him audience and sympathy but little in the way of practical help. During Manuel's absence, in July 1402, the Ottomans were defeated at Ankara by the Mongols. Bayezid was captured and his empire in Asia was shattered. His four sons, however, individually secured control of European provinces, which had not been affected by the Mongol invasion, and began to compete against one another for total dominion.

1392 - Macedonia falls under Turkish rule and remained as such for five centuries (1392-1912).

In a steady process of state building, the Ottoman Empire expanded in both easterly and westerly directions conquering the Pravoslavs and remnants of the Macedonian, Bulgarian and Serbian kingdoms to the west and the Turkish nomadic principalities in Anatolia as well as the Mamluk sultanate in Egypt to the east. By the 17th century the Ottoman Empire had grown and held vast lands in west Asia, north Africa and southeast Europe.

During the 16th century the Ottomans shared the world stage with Elizabethan England, Habsburg Spain, the Holy Roman Empire, Valois France and the Dutch Republic. Of greater significance to the Ottomans were the city states of Venice and Genoa which exerted enormous political and economic power with their fleets and commercial networks that linked India, the Middle East, the Mediterranean and west European worlds.

Initially the Ottomans may have been ethnically Turkish, perhaps originating from a single race but by the time they had conquered

the Balkans, the Ottoman Empire had become multi-ethnic and multi-religious.

The Ottoman Empire built its power base on a heterogeneous mix of people who were added to its population with every conquest. What may have been Turkish at the start was soon lost and the term "Turk" came to mean "Muslim" as more and more people from the conquered worlds were Islamized. To be a Turk, one had to be a Muslim first. "The devsirme system offered extreme social mobility for males, allowing peasant boys to rise to the highest military and administrative positions in the empire outside of the dynasty itself." (Page 30, Donald Quataert, The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922, Binghamton University, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

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

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

The Sultan was the supreme head of the empire and his power was unrestricted. Initially his capital was in Bursa then it was moved to Endrene (Adrianople) and after Tsari Grad fell, in 1453, it became the permanent Ottoman capital. Even though their empire was spread throughout Asia and Africa, the European provinces were considered to be the Ottoman Empire's heart and soul.

1564 - Uprisings begin in Mariovo and Prilep against Ottoman rule (1564/65).

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

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

1569 - The Saniak Uprising in Ohrid

Encouraged by priests from Venice, a rebellion was started in the sanjak of Ohrid In 1569. In the following years the villagers continued to oppose the Ottomans by attacking caravans and storming fortresses. On one occasion the rebels captured 50 Ottoman soldiers, prompting the Sultan to order the spahis from Bitola and Korcha to retaliate. The rebels resisted so the Sultan was forced to send troops all the way from Herzegovina to suppress them.

1571 - The Ezerani Uprising

In 1571 a group of about 300 well-armed Christian rebels who had refused to pay taxes for the last two years banded together near the village Ezerani and stormed the Ottomans. This rebellion too was instigated by the priests of Venice through the consultation of archbishop Atanasij I from Ohrid. This particular rebellion lasted

longer than expected due to lack of Ottoman resources to quell it. So on July 25th, 1571 the vazir Ahmet Pasha issued orders to divide the Ohrid sanjak, which extended from the Adriatic Sea in the west to Gavato in the east, into two parts with one center in Ohrid and the other in Elbasan. This was done to double the authority in the region so that the situation could be monitored more closely and rebellions would effectively be quelled before they could get out of hand.

Ohrid Region is full of mountains and forests where the rebels hid and planned their raids, so it took considerable time, almost a year, and much effort on the Ottomans part to put down the rebellion. All captured rebels were killed; those who surrendered were put in chains and sent to Istanbul to serve as oarsmen in the Sultan's galleys. That was not the end of the rebellion however. Soon afterwards in 1572 it spread to the Golemo and Malo Rech villages in Ohrid Region and to Sebekren and Mastar in Akchehisar Region. Then in the spring of 1573 several villages in Prespa Region joined. All these rebellions were the result of people refusing to pay exorbitant taxes.

1603 - Old Church Slavonic as simply "Macedonian"

The first Westerner on record to mention Old Church Slavonic as simply "Macedonian" was the German humanist Hieronomus Megisser in his works of 1603. According to Megisser a psalm was translated into 21 languages. One of those languages was marked "Macedonian". Again, according to Western sources, only a few texts approximating the spoken Macedonian language are known before 1790. However, one important historical record is a small dictionary of the Kostur dialect with a folk song in it dating from the sixteenth century. (Stojan Ristevski, Sozdavanjeto na sovremeniot Makedonski Literaturen Jazik (Skopje, Studenki zbor, 1988), p. 96.) But very soon after the first written Slavic language appeared, Macedonia fell under the control of foreign empires which used foreign official languages and more or less squashed the creative spirit of the Macedonian people and the written form of their language. This, of course, continued until Greece occupied 51% of Macedonia in 1912 and outright banned the Macedonian language altogether.

1689 - The Karposh Uprising begins

After successfully establishing itself in the Balkans, the Ottoman Empire, around the second half of the 17th century, began to stir again looking to expand westward. Then following a three year preparation it embarked on its first mission to seize Vienna, the Austrian capital. Following his arrival in Odrin with 200,000 soldiers and another 60,000 support units, Sultan Mehmed IV (1648-1687) personally took command of the mission and began his march towards Vienna. When the army arrived in Belgrade on May 12, 1683 it was joined by 30,000 Tatar and another 30,000 Nizam soldiers. Here the Sultan turned command over to Kara Mustafa, his vizier, and gave him instructions to seize Vienna. Using his Tatar soldiers as an advanced guard, Kara Mustafa with his 300,000 soldiers arrived in Vienna on July 14, 1683 and immediately began the assault. A fierce battle ensued as the Austrians fought back and managed to resist the Ottoman siege for fifty-four days before a Polish army lead by Ian Sobieski arrived and joined the fight.

By now the west had realized the danger it was facing from Islam and had begun to organize a defense strategy through a “Holy War” which was joined by several European Christian powers including the Venetians, Hungarians, Saxons, Ukrainians and Serbians. On March 5, 1684 the Holy League was established and in 1686 was joined by Russia forming a Christian military alliance capable of opposing the Ottoman Islamic onslaught.

Soon after the Polish forces arrived in Vienna the Ottoman advance was pushed back but not completely extinguished as hostilities again resumed in 1684 and lasted until 1687 with the allied forces continuing to have successes. Then in 1688 Austria decided to escalate its campaign and on September 8, 1688 invaded and occupied Belgrade and continued to push southward. Unfortunately due to an attack from the French on Germany, Austria was forced to fight on two fronts thus weakening its capabilities to fight the Ottomans. Regardless however, the Austrians decided to continue fighting on two fronts and on April 6, 1689 appointed Count Ludwig of Baden commander of the Austrian forces on the Balkans and Generals Piccolomini and Veterani as his deputies.

The Austrian army in the Balkans numbered 24,000, too small to be effective but nonetheless effective enough to stir the local Christian population into action.

This war was not a social or economic war, it was religious in nature intended to stir-up the Christians that did not want to be pushed into forcibly accepting Islam. The idea was to get them to join the "Christian" Austrians and fight against the "Muslim" Ottomans. Unfortunately the Orthodox people in the Balkans feared Catholicism just as much as they feared Islam so they did not react as expected but began to stir nonetheless.

This became apparent when a letter from the Patriarch in Constantinople was sent to the Russian Emperor informing him that the Christians in the Balkans had a force of 30,000 Christian soldiers ready to start a rebellion if Russian forces were to come to the Balkans and assist them. The Patriarch also informed the Emperor that if Russia did not come then Austria would and the Orthodox Christians would be subjected to the influence of the Catholic Church. This also proved that the Patriarch was unaware of the formation of the Holy League between Orthodox and Catholic countries in the defense of Christianity.

The Ottoman military failure against the Holy League had devastating effects on the morale of the Ottoman army resulting in the assassination of Sultan Mehmed IV in 1687. But after his brother Suleyman II (1687-1692) was proclaimed the new Sultan the Ottoman army once again began new preparations for war.

After a few months of planning Suleyman II declared a state of emergency and ordered general mobilization. On June 6, 1689 he left Odrin for Sofia and appointed Arap Rejep Pasha commander of the front against the Austrian army. Arap Rejep Pasha was then ordered to reclaim Belgrade while the Sultan observed the campaign from the Sofia Field in Bulgaria. Rejep Pasha was given command of 50,000 soldiers, 20,000 of whom were cavalrymen which was more than a match for the Austrians. Unfortunately Rejep Pasha lacked the confidence to engage the Austrians and instead of fighting them he took a detour through Serbia robbing and pillaging

villages; upsetting the Serbian population. But if the Ottomans were not going to come to the Austrians then the Austrians would come to the Ottomans in Belgrade on August 13, 1689. Here Ludwig of Baden joined Piccolomini's and Veterani's corps and on August 29, 1689 attacked the Ottomans near Grabovets and Batochima delivering a devastating blow. With 3,000 dead, the demoralized Ottoman army robbed its own camp and fled for the Sofia Field. Managing to save his own skin, the incompetent Rejep Pasha together with some of his elite forces fled the battlefield and hid in Nish where he organized a new defense. A month later the Austrians began their attack on Nish delivering another devastating blow. Soon after the Austrian Army began its attack on September 24, 1689 the Ottoman forces in Nish panicked and fled. Five thousand Ottomans drowned in the Nishava River in an attempt to cross it.

After that defeat Rejep Pasha sent some of his forces to Dragoman to defend the access to Sofia and the remainder to Vranje and Kriva Palanka. By now the Sultan had lost all confidence in Rejep Pasha and appointed the Grand Vizier Bekir Mustafa as his replacement. The new commander immediately took control of his forces and after arriving in Dragoman had Rejep Pasha executed and his subordinates punished. Here Bekir Mustafa strengthened his defenses and carried out a general mobilization.

Having experienced several successes the Austrians became bold and divided their army into two columns. Piccolomini commanding the first headed south to the Adriatic Sea while Ludwig of Baden personally led the second column towards the Danube and Vidin. In spite of their divided strength both columns had success liberating cities and towns and stirring the population into action.

On October 20, 1689 Piccolomini informed Emperor Leopold I that he had arrived in Prishtina and had made a request for reinforcements in order to attack Skopje, Solun, Albania and Herzegovina.

The deep Austrian penetration inside Ottoman territory alarmed the Ottomans especially since it was nearing Macedonia, their main economic bread basket. Being cut off from the north part of the empire and having their army reserves depleted, the Ottomans had

no choice but to turn to Macedonia not only for their economic but also for their military needs. To support the war effort taxes were immediately raised and new ones imposed. Young men were mobilized and forced Islamization was accelerated. Christians were not allowed to bear arms so Christian men were converted into Muslims by force in order to be inducted into the Ottoman army. Even haiduks were granted amnesty and turned into martolozes (defenders) and dervenjis then employed by the Ottomans to recruit soldiers for them.

While the Ottoman central government was busy preparing for its defense against the Austrians, local despots, outlaws and corrupt state officials took it upon themselves to make some profit of their own by robbing the population. Among the most famous of these outlaws was Yegen Pasha, a former Rumelian beglerbey, who along with 10,000 outlaws was engaged in robbing the people of the Central Balkans.

As events were unfolding between the Ottomans and Austrians, the Macedonian population was once again exploited by all sides. While both the Ottoman and Austrian central governments were vying for the Macedonian people's favour, local authorities were robbing them blind and turning them into slaves. In addition to raising taxes which were to be paid in kind, new taxes were introduced which were to be paid with money. Local authorities also imposed additional taxes to be served as free labour in aid of the war effort but which in many cases ended up serving the local authorities by working on their estates for free.

After the fall of Belgrade on September 6, 1688 the Ottoman Empire became unstable and many innocent people became victims of anarchy. Vizier Kara Mustafa too was accused of being responsible for the defeat in Vienna and was executed. Dissatisfaction with Ottoman rule was not limited to the Christian population but grew among members of the Ottoman administration and restlessness spread everywhere manifesting itself in desertions and outlawry.

At the beginning of the Austrian-Ottoman War in 1683, the Christian populations in the Balkans, particularly the Macedonians, Serbians and Bulgarians, were deprived of their rights and saw the

Ottoman defeat and the Austrian penetration as an opportunity for liberation particularly after Austria called on all Christians in the Balkans to join the Austrian army's actions. Those who were far from the front were called upon to engage the Ottoman army through organized rebellions and haiduk actions.

If it was not the Austrian call to arms then it must have been the taxation, economic oppression and forced Islamization that spurred the Balkan Christian population, particularly the Macedonians, to rebel against the oppressors in what later came to be known as "The Karposh Uprising" named after its leader Arambasha Karposh.

The Karposh Uprising began sometime in 1689 as social, economic and religious pressures were placed on the Macedonian population causing numerous rebellions to flare-up and haiduk actions to become more frequent. Although unrelated to other rebellions such as the one in Moriovo, the Karposh Uprising signified the first attempt, since the Ottoman penetration, by the Macedonian people to liberate themselves in their struggle to establish a Macedonian state. The Karposh Uprising is extremely important to Macedonia since it was organized by Macedonians and took place inside Macedonia.

Unplanned in the beginning, the Karposh Uprising began with riots and continued with haiduk actions especially after the violent suppression of the Mariovo rebellion in 1688-1689. The population's dissatisfaction with its condition continued to increase and spread over wider regions engulfing Petralitsa and Kriva Palanka. At the same time another rebellion was sparked in Shtip. This one was lead by Ivo of Shtip a mortoloz leader responsible for guarding the dervens in Shtip. Even though Ivo was working for the Ottoman state he had connections, cooperated and from time to time conducted missions with the haiduks. But when his secret was revealed, the Ottoman authorities came after him. But knowing that his services were in demand, due to the war with Austria and the shortage of fighting men, Ivo appealed to his Ottoman overlords promising that he would repent and accept Islam if his deeds were to be forgiven.

Ivo was pardoned and assigned to recruitment duties in Shtip where he was expected to recruit more than 1,000 paid volunteers to fight at the front. After recruiting about 300 a battle took place near Nish where on September 24, 1689 the Ottomans were badly defeated. At this point Ivo resigned his post as a recruiter, renounced Islam and fled to join Karposh.

Karposh too had a similar beginning. Karposhe's career began in the second half of the 17th century right after the brutal suppression of the latest rebellions when the haiduk movement exploded. By this time Karposh was a well known haiduk but his involvement in the rebellion earned him the respect of his peers who raised him to the level of arambasha.

Then when the Ottoman administration needed fighting men to fight against Austria the haiduks were officially pardoned and recruited as martolozes. As a martoloz, Karposh, which by the way is a nickname meaning "rock", had free access to the Macedonian people. Here he played the double role of Ottoman recruiter and rebellion organizer.

In official historical documents the name "Karposh" appeared for the first time in 1689 where he is described as a haiduk leader of a large group of haiduks who fought the Ottomans during the Austrian-Ottoman war. Karposh became famous in the spring of 1689 when the Ottoman central government sent Sarach Ali-Unsta of Odrin to pursue and destroy Karposh and his haiduks at his base in Dospat Mountain in the Western Rodopi mountain range. Uskadari, who at the time was sent along with Ali-Usta, was a witness to those events and on May 26, 1689 wrote about Karposh in his journal.

Upon Ali-Usta's arrival a battle took place. Ten haiduks were killed but Karposh escaped and continued to operate on Dospat Mountain until the rebellion began to spread to wider regions. By August the rebellion had spread to Sofia and as the Austrian army penetrated further south the rebellion spread south between Nish, Leskovac, Vranje, Breznik and Pirot.

On September 15, 1689 the Ottoman central Government issued orders to Mehmed the martolozbasha of Znepole to take charge of all forces from Breznik, Pirot, Vranje, Nish and Leskovac and go after Karposh and his haiduks. It is unknown what happened during this pursuit but the next we hear of Karposh is that late in September he had become a martoloz officer in the Ottoman service.

Between September 26 and October 5, 1689 the central Ottoman government had issued orders to the kadis of Kyustendil, Sirishnik and Radomir to appoint Karposh leader of their martolozbashia. The kadis of Shtip, Radovish, Veles, Dojran, Seres, Demir Hisar, Nevrokop and Razlog were also ordered to appoint Ivo of Shtip as their martolozbasha. Sugare was appointed martoloz of Petrich and Melnik.

It was stated in the Divan (edict) of the Sultan that Karposh was appointed highest commander of all martolozbashas (leader of all martoloz leaders) and Ivo and Sugare were appointed chief leaders. By enlisting the services of the most eminent haiduks in the region the Ottoman authorities assumed that they would a) gain experienced fighters in their fight against the Austrians and b) eliminate chances of the haiduk leaders leading a rebellion. Unfortunately the Ottomans were wrong on both counts. With the Austrian presence in the Balkans the haiduk movements quickly developed into guerilla warfare and in time, as small units combined, companies were formed resembling an army.

Outside of the haiduk movements, Austrian emissaries who agitated the Christian population also greatly contributed to the Karposh Uprising. Piccolomini's men made contact with Christian leaders and urged them to start uprisings. Petar Bogdani, the Catholic Bishop of Skopje, and Toma Raspasanovich, an interpreter in the Austrian army, also became involved in the agitation in Skopje. Military successes on the part of the Austrian army, agitation of Austrians emissaries and numerous haiduk attacks on the Ottoman defense spurred the Macedonian people into action.

The first armed conflicts on Macedonian territories between the Austrian and Ottoman armies took place on October 20th, 1689 in Kriva Palanka where the Austrians encountered stiff resistance from

the Ottomans and were forced to retreat to Vranje. Although this was a small victory for the Ottomans, they truly believed that Holy League reinforcements would soon be arriving and there would be another and more severe attack, so the Ottomans retreated to Shtip. Just as the Ottomans left, Kriva Palanka was taken over by the haiduks who were preparing to use it as their base for future operations. At this time Karposh and Ivo were in Skopje engaged in the defense of the Ottoman Empire against the Austrian invasion and by the Sultan's orders were obliged to defend the city and surrounding region. But as the Ottomans retreated from Kriva Palanka and as the Austrian army began its approach towards Prishtina and Kachanic, Karposh sought his opportunity and lead a rebellion in Skopje and Kachanik. When Piccolomini's advanced guard reached Kachanik on October 23, 1689 it found the fortress abandoned. When the news of the rebel attack on Kachanic reached the Ottoman authorities, Mahmud Pasha dispatched 300 soldiers from Skopje to provide reinforcements but on their way they ran into Piccolomini's forces near the Gorge of Kachanik and were decimated.

On October 25, 1689 the Austrian army, led by General Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, arrived at the Kachanik Gorge and was joined by Karposh and his Christian rebels, which marked the beginning of the Karposh Uprising.

The sudden appearance of the Austrian army accompanied by the thunder of its numerous cannons caused panic among the Ottomans in the city of Skopje, forcing many to flee leaving Mahmud Pasha with little to defend the city. A battle ensued near the Lepenets River leaving about 100 Ottoman soldiers dead and 200 more captured. Mahmud Pasha along with 200 soldiers managed to escape into the nearby woods.

Unbeknownst to Piccolomini, Mahmud Pasha had regrouped overnight, was supplied with reinforcements and had reentered Skopje with 8,000 soldiers laying a trap for Piccolomini. When Piccolomini found this out from the villagers leaving Skopje, he set a trap of his own and ordered his artillery to open fire on the city. After a barrage of salvos from his ten cannons Piccolomini sent Colonel Chaki to check on the city. On his return Chaki reported

that the city was abandoned and that the stores were full of food and other merchandise. But what Chaki failed to notice is that the city was infested with the plague. Piccolomini nonetheless entered the city and ordered his troops to gather supplies.

After entering the city of Skopje on October 31, 1689 Piccolomini sent a second letter to Emperor Leopold, in which he wrote: "The city of Skopje is almost as big as Prague. It has no walls and no ditches. I found it deserted, without any valuables, but richly supplied with goods. The few people we met in the streets were pale and scared. The fortress was built in an old-fashioned way, it is without defense now and without water and there is no room for the cavalry, which is very needed for the collection of contribution. We remained armed during the night. I recommended Colonel Strasser to take over command. This experienced soldier requested 15 days to prepare the city for defense and to supply it with food. I have realized that his condition is justified and I could not decide to stay here with the entire corps, because enemy forces could appear in Skopje in four or five days. Behind our back we had the Gorge which could become almost impassable because of frequent rainfalls usual for this time of the year. Kosovo Field was not possessed, Nish was too far, and Bosnia stayed behind. This situation made me think sensibly and while I was so indecisive, I received a report about the retreat of Markcount Ludwig of Baden. Reluctantly, I decided to turn the city into dust". (Vanche Stojchev, “Military History of Macedonia”, page 150) Unfortunately Piccolomini’s decision to destroy the city left a population of about 60,000 people in dire straits and 4,000 homeless refugees.

As mentioned earlier, Karposh’s rebels participated in the Kachanik fortress attacks delivering a blow to the Ottoman forces killing 19 and capturing 11 soldiers. News of this traveled fast and wide and when Karposh arrived in Skopje he was greeted as a hero by the people. Here is what Ottoman chronicler Silahdar had to say: "Among the most famous criminals was the damned atheist Karposh, one of the martolozes of Skopje, who had been promoted by the Padishah (Sultan) but then forgot everything. He escaped, and became the head of the company of more than 3,000 non-Muslim bandits of the rebelled raya and the foreign enemy". (Vanche Stojchev, “Military History of Macedonia”, page 150)

During his assault on Skopje, Piccolomini called on the Christian population to abandon the city and leave but of all the people invited only 20 Catholic families and two priests accepted his offer and left.

On his way to Kachanic, Piccolomini destroyed the passage through the Kachanic Gorge and upon his arrival in Kachanic he appointed General Holstein Commander of the fortress and sent Colonel Strasser to liberate Bosnia.

On November 1, 1689 Piccolomini left for Prizren where he was expected to spread the uprising. But unfortunately during his stay in Skopje he was infected with plague and by now had become very ill. Sick and exhausted Piccolomini arrived in Prizren on November 6, 1689 where he was greeted by 5,000 armed Serbian, Albanian and Montenegrin insurgents including Arsenije III Chamojevich who wished to join his forces. After two days of negotiations it was decided that those who wanted to fight the Ottomans should join the Austrian army and the rest should turn in their weapons.

On November 8 Piccolomini turned over command to Herzog Holstein, took communion from Petar Bogdani, the Archbishop of Skopje, and the next day he died and was buried in Prizren.

Joined by Ivo of Shtip, with about 1,000 rebels at their disposal, Karposh continued the uprising liberating most of Macedonia and parts of Serbia and Bulgaria.

After Skopje was burned down, the Ottoman army retreated to Veles and Shtip, the Austrian army left for Kachanik and Karposh went to Kumanovo and Kriva Palanka.

The first territory to be liberated by the rebels was Kriva Palanka where a vicious fire fight took place and in spite of losing six cannons and other weapons, the rebels managed to capture and hold on to the fortress. From there, on October 27, 1689, the rebels launched an attack and captured Kumanovo and a few days later, with the help of the local population especially the miners, the rebels took Kratovo. The Kratovo fight was particularly vicious. It began in the streets as the Ottoman forces were pushed to take refuge in a

bath house but the rebels destroyed the roof and set the place on fire killing everyone inside. After that the insurrection spread to Zletovo, Kochani, Kachanik and finally to Tetovo and Gostivar engulfing a large area spanning from the Gorge in Gradelitsa and Shtip, to the Gorge of Kachanik, Veles and Tikvesh to Kyustendil in the east. This much of Macedonia's territory was never before liberated since the arrival of the Ottomans, which the rebels managed to hold onto for six weeks.

With this much success in such a short time, it was no wonder Emperor Leopold proclaimed Karposh "Prince of Kumanovo" and his own people, especially his rebels, considered him their supreme commander and treated him like a king.

The Austrian command in Nish proclaimed Karposh "King of Kumanovo" and as a sign of recognition they awarded him the "hat of a prince" significant of a crown. In other words given the status of the symbols bestowed on the Macedonian leadership the Austrians indirectly recognized the Macedonian liberated territory as a "princedom".

Immediately after liberating the territory and establishing rebel control Karposh, as "king of Kumanovo", began to organize the various freed cities for defense against the return of the Ottomans. He especially strengthened the gorge at Kriva Reka near Kriva Palanka, which the rebels blockaded by digging ditches and laying logs.

While the Macedonians were preparing to defend their liberated territory, the Austrian army began its intrusion deeper into Macedonia.

By November 1689 the Austrian army was making its presence in Shtip, Veles and Kavadartsi and later through Tetovo to Mavrovo. In Shtip, Colonel Holstein encountered a force of 6,000 Ottoman soldiers lead by Mahmud Pasha who earlier had retreated from Skopje. Holstein, who had earlier retreated to Vranje, made his way to Shtip via the village Orizari arriving just outside of the city in the dawn of November 10, 1689. A vicious battle ensued as the Austrians pushed into the city leaving 2,000 Ottoman soldiers dead.

In revenge the Austrians also burned the city down but not before emptying it of its possessions.

As the Austrians left Shtip for Vranje they ran into another column of 300 Ottoman soldiers and managed to subdue them, killing more than half of them in the process. Holstein's campaign strengthened the defenses of the territory between Vranje and Kachanik, creating a consolidated defense line.

After receiving news that a large Ottoman force was concentrating in Vlainitsa near Leunovo, the Austrians carried out a second campaign in Mavrovo in the middle of November 1689. During this campaign the Austrian command sent a small force of Austrian soldiers reinforced with some Albanian Catholics to attack the Ottoman force. The armies clashed near Tetovo and drove the battle towards Vrainitsa where more than 600 Ottoman soldiers were killed and the rest escaped. Here too the Austrians robbed the region of its wealth stealing more than 1,000 cattle before returning to Prizren.

It is interesting to note at this point that the Macedonians here again were divided fighting on both sides of the war. While the Miaks fought on the Ottoman side the men from Mavrovo fought on the Austrian side. After the battle was over, the men from Mavrovo accompanied the Austrians and joined the ranks of the Austrian army, some even became officers. The Miaks on the other hand were well looked after by the Ottomans who allowed them to preserve their customs and to wear "the cross bayrak" in weddings.

The third Austrian campaign, led by Captain Sanoski, took place on November 20 and 21, 1689. Here 100 Austrian soldiers and 400 Serbian and Albanian volunteers joined ranks and after two days march, arrived in Veles, immediately surrounded the marketplace and slaughtered the entire population. While the Austrians remained outside the city, the Serbians and Albanians robbed and burnt it down. After they were done they left while the Austrians continued their march to Tikvesh and robbed that city. On their way back the Austrians clashed with a unit of janissaries leaving Captain Sanoski badly wounded. His soldiers carried him to Kachanik where he died.

After General Piccolomini died the Austrians held their positions at Gradelitsa, Kachanik, Znepole and Dragoman Gorges. In the meantime the Ottoman Sultan issued a general mobilization order to enlist the entire male population capable of fighting. Janissaries, spahis, yuruks and all semi-military units in Rumelia were mobilized and spurred into action to stop the Austrian penetration and extinguish all rebellions. Extinguishing the rebellions was considered a priority and to be carried out before engaging the Austrians. In other words, the final result of the Austrian-Ottoman war depended on the success of the Ottoman army's ability to suppress the rebellions inside Macedonia.

While mobilization was taking place preparation for a serious counteroffensive was planned. The Grand Vizier Bekri Mustafa Pasha was replaced by Fazli Mustafa Kuprulu, a 52 year old man known as a man of respect with regards to Islamic law and tolerant of Christians. Also Koja Mahmud Pasha from Shtip was appointed commander of the entire Muslim force.

To increase his chances of success the Ottoman Sultan on July 21, 1689 made contact with Khan Selim Giray, one of his Allies from Crimea, requesting his help. To entice him to join the Sultan sent him a gift of 75,000 gold coins. The Khan obviously accepted and on July 26, 1689 left for the Balkans arriving in Sofia four months later, on November 14, 1689. By then reconnaissance had already been conducted and all the necessary information on enemy activities and positions was collected and plans for the counteroffensive were being drafted.

To reverse some of the damage done to the Christians and to patch-up relations, the Grand Vizier Kuprulu carried out reforms to rescind some of the taxes imposed on the Christians in hopes of preventing them from joining the Austrian army.

On November 15, 1689 edicts were sent to the kadis of Skopje and other cities in Macedonia, amnestying all those who owed back taxes.

Before finalizing his counteroffensive plans, the Grand Vizier had consultations with Selim Giray to get his agreement. Giray agreed

that the rebellions should be put down first and the counteroffensive should begin in Sofia, not Nish. With regards to putting down the Karposh Uprising it was decided to deploy a combination of forces consisting of Crimean Tatars, Albanian mercenaries and all available Ottoman soldiers. The forces were to depart from Sofia to Kyustendil and via Kriva Palanka and Kumanovo to Skopje and from there to Kachanic and to Kosovo.

In addition to the local forces the Ottoman Sultan also ordered Koja Halil Pasha, the commander of the Peloponnesus, to gather all available forces from the Trikala and Euboea Regions and head to Skopje to join Selim Giray.

After resting for a few days in Sofia, the main body of the Ottoman army was ready to go. Led by Mahmud Pasha, the counteroffensive began on November 20, 1689 starting with the attack on Kyustendil. On their way the Ottomans encountered a company of about 100 haiduks and destroyed it. Prior to the attack on Kyustandil, Mahmud Pasha consulted with his Muslim leaders and was informed that about 6,000 more soldiers led by the nazir of Skopje had arrived in Kochani and were ready to depart for Kratovo and Kriva Palanka to join the fight.

A large force of Christians, numbering from 10 to 20 thousand with six cannons, gathered at Kriva Palanka prepared to meet the counteroffensive.

Led by Selim Giray the first wave of clashes between Giray's advanced guard and Karposh's rebels began on November 21, 1689 at the Kriva Reka Gorge entrance. Unable to stop the advance Karposh ordered the fortress to be burned down while he and his rebels retreated to Kumanovo.

By November 26th Giray had subdued the rebels and taken over Kriva Palanka and the next day he made his presence in Kumanovo where he was confronted by Karposh and his rebels. Karposh fought back gallantly but was unable to stop the assault and the Kumanovo fortress fell to the enemy. Karposh and most of his fighters who fought in the meadows outside the fortress were all captured. All

those inside the fortress were killed and the fortress was burned down.

Giray afterwards divided some of his forces into three columns of about 10,000 fighters each and sent them in three different directions. One was sent to Tsrna Reka – Raets region to dislodge the rebels there, the second was sent to Tikvesh region and the third was sent to Shtip, Veles and Prilep regions where about 4,000 rebels lay in wait.

Giray and the main Ottoman army of about 10,000 soldiers, together with the captured rebels including Karposh, departed for Skopje on November 29, 1689.

On December 6, 1689 the Austrian command in Prishtina received information that the Tatars had burnt down all the villages they passed through and had taken 6,000 prisoners, mostly women and children. They had also massacred the entire Christian population in the villages Rashtak and Ljuboten, today known as “butcher's meadows”.

The Tatars entered Skopje unabated and settled there.

Upon finding out that a large Ottoman force was approaching, the Austrian army and the Macedonian rebel forces retreated, especially after learning that Karposh had been captured.

Given the new situation with the Ottomans, the Austrians decided to no longer assist the rebels, leaving them vulnerable to Ottoman attacks. The Tatars now stationed in Skopje Field continued their assaults on Tetovo, Veles and Mariovo, suppressing the rebellions and robbing the population. In the meantime Koja Halil Pasha from the Peloponnesus had arrived in Skopje and had met up with Giray. Although Halil Pasha did not participate in the suppression of the Karposh Uprising, because he arrived late, his Albanian mercenaries were allowed to acquire land in Skopje and Tetovo Regions in gratitude for the terror they had spread on their way to Skopje.

Most of the rebel prisoners, including Karposh, who were brought to Skopje were tortured and then executed. There are also two versions

as to how Karposh died. One version says Karposh was impaled by Tatar lances near the Vardar River Bridge in Skopje. The other version says that he was hung on an oak tree near the Vardar River Bridge. He was most probably executed near the end of November or probably in the beginning of December. News of his execution arrived in Odrin on December 13, 1689.

After putting down the Karposh Uprising, the Ottomans prepared to attack Kachanik and engage the Austrian army. 11,500 Ottoman soldiers were dispatched from Skopje to Kachanic on December 30th, 1689. Upon finding this out Holstein ordered Colonel Strasser and his forces in Prishtina to go to help the soldiers located in Kachanik. Strasser arrived in Kachanik fortress with 9,000 cavalrymen, 400 Hungarians and 1,500 Serbian and Albanian volunteers and was joined by the 600 Austrian soldiers already stationed there. A battle broke out on January 1st, 1690 and the Austrians suffered a devastating defeat with 2,000 soldiers killed including Colonel Strasser. When Holstein received news of the defeat and that now an Ottoman force was approaching Prishtina, he quickly gathered his forces and fled to Nish.

After occupying Kosovo, the Ottomans stopped the counteroffensive to let their forces rest for the winter. Giray was no longer needed and was ordered to return to Odrin while his Tatar army was ordered to leave for Crimea.

In the meantime, the Austrians realized that without the help of the oppressed Christian population they could not survive another battle. They also wanted to correct some of the mistakes they had made during their campaign. A decision was made to send an appeal to all Balkan nations on behalf of the Austrian Emperor Leopold I. The appeal was a call to continue the fight against the Ottomans and by doing so to help the Austrians win. The appeal was made on April 6, 1690 and sent to the Balkan nations on April 26, 1690. A special Letter of Protection was also issued but only to the Macedonian people (Gens Macedonica) as a result of a letter sent to the Emperor by Marko Kraida of Kozhani and Dimitri Popovich of Solun, two Macedonians who had left their homes and moved to Austria. The letter written by the Macedonians was a request to the Emperor Leopold I to take the Macedonian people under his protection.

On May 31, 1690 Emperor Leopold I issued another appeal extending his protection to the Bulgarian, Serbian, Macedonian and Albanian populations. He called on all these people to fight against the Ottomans, their mutual enemy, under Austrian colors.

Unfortunately in spite of all that was said and done the Austrian intervention turned out to be a big disappointment for the Macedonians and the promises and appeals were too little, too late. The people decided to side with the Ottomans and put pressure on them to deliver on tax cuts and amnesties which the Ottomans did.

After gaining the people's support the Ottomans carried out new offensives against the Austrians winning back Nish and Smederevo and eventually Belgrade driving the Austrians back across the Sava and Danube Rivers.

1759 - Macedonian regiment created

On May 10th, 1759 Empress Elisaveta Petrovna issued orders to create two new maneuver cavalry regiments; one Macedonian and one Bulgarian. Major General Ivan Horvat was given the task of creating the Macedonian Regiment which consisted mostly of Macedonians with a small number of other people from the Balkans. Major Simeon Pishchevich was appointed in charge of the regiment while Aleksandar Dimitriev was given command of it. The regiment was given an official name "Macedonian Hussar Polevii Polk", that is "Macedonian Cavalry Maneuver Regiment". This regiment was created for the purpose of fighting wars outside of Russian territories. By Senate decision, the Macedonian Regiment was ordered to fight in Prussia, Poland and in the Ottoman Empire against Tatars, Cherkezes, Cossacks and others.

The organization and formation of the Macedonian Regiment was similar to the other cavalry regiments, consisting of 4,000 soldiers divided into 20 companies each with about 200 soldiers. It is interesting to note that on the personnel list under the column "nationality" the words "Macedonian" appeared with each individual's name, rank and date of arrival.

There was however one difference between the Macedonian and other regiments. The Macedonian regiment had its own seal, coat of arms and flag. Also, considering most members of that regiment were once Austrian officers and soldiers, they were allowed to use their original weapons and uniforms which they brought with them after leaving Austria. This however gradually changed and the regiment acquired new weapons, uniforms and coats of arms. In the beginning the Macedonian Regiment's coat of arms was a little lion without a crown, borrowed from the Stematography of Hristifor Zhefarovich. Then in 1776 the Macedonian coat of arms was changed and had a shield in French form. The base was red with various oriental ornaments, and the emblem was a Tatar shield with two crossed spears with golden picks. (Vanche Stojchev, "Military History of Macedonia", page 162)

Soldiers and officers were allowed to wear whatever they wanted but on May 10th, 1763 the Russian Supreme Command issued a General Order to all cavalry regiments to upgrade their weapons and dress. Every soldier and officer was obliged to possess a mantle, a dolman, boots, a belt, a bag, a saddle, a saber, a carbine, a pistol etc. On October 3rd, 1775 another order was issued requiring all cavalry regiments to wear uniforms. The Macedonian Regiment was issued yellow jackets and trousers, ornamented with black braid and a red cap. On December 24th, 1776 a new order was issued with a more precise description of the uniform. According to that order the Macedonian Regiment was issued yellow jackets and trousers with red edges, ornamented with black braids. The Macedonian Regiment wore this uniform until it was disbanded. Each regiment also had its own bugle and a drummer.

Like all good things that come to an end, so did the immigrant colonies in Russia when Russian authorities decided to disband them and integrate them into Russian society. By Decree from the Empress Catherine II, on June 28th, 1783, the immigrant regiments were disbanded and new ones created. The regiment to which the Macedonians belonged was combined with the Dalmatian regiment and named the Alexandrian Regiment. In spite of the name change, the Macedonian people, unofficially of course, continued to call their regiment by its old name until it became fully integrated and began to lose its Macedonian identity.

Prior to being integrated the Macedonian regiment proved itself by demonstrating courage and success in battle for which it received various commendations from Empress Elisaveta Petrovna, Empress Catherine II and from the Russian Supreme Command.

During their participation in the Russian military a large number of Macedonian officers were promoted to the ranks of general. The highest known rank awarded to Macedonians was that of Major General proudly earned by Ivan Horvat and Todor Chorbe. Despite of all his merits however, Ivan Horvat was charged with severe obstinacy and sentenced to 20 years imprisonment in Siberia where he died in 1780.

1767 - Ohrid archbishopric abolished. The powerful Macedonian Ohrid Archbishopric was active right up to the year 1767 when it was abolished by the Ottoman Sultan Mustafa III.

1789 - French Revolution begins

The French Revolution gave birth not only to new ideas and nationalism, but also to Napoleon Bonaparte. As Napoleon waged war in Europe and the Middle East, French shipping in the Mediterranean subsided only to be replaced by the Phanariot and British traders. French trade inside Ottoman territory also declined and never fully recovered. By land, due to the long border, Austria dominated trade with the Ottoman Empire exercising its own brand of influence on the Balkans, especially on the Serbian people.

-- 19 CENTURY --

1821 - Morean (Greek) revolution begins

After almost a decade since it had ignited, the Morean rebellion refused to die down which prompted Great Power diplomats to intervene but without success, that is until the Ottoman fleet was sunk in Navarino on October 8th, 1827. After that on September 14th, 1829 the Ottomans were forced to accept the June 24th, 1827 Treaty of London proposed earlier and to recognize the newly created Greek State.

After forcing the Ottomans to accept the June 24th, 1827 Treaty of London, on September 14th, 1829 the newly created Greek State was recognized by the Ottomans which gave birth to the Kingdom of Greece. When the war in Morea ended there was relative peace in the lower Balkans for several decades but that did not mean that the people were content with their situation. With the creation of the Greek State seeds of discontentment were planted everywhere which would sprout in the future causing more revolts and calls for freedom.

1822 - The Negush Uprising

In early March 1822, under the leadership of Atanas Karatase and Angel Gacho, a revolt broke out in the town Negush. In no time the rebels put down the Turks and declared Negush liberated. The revolt quickly spread towards Voden engulfing a large number of villages. Unfortunately, effort and determination alone were not enough to stop the numerically superior Ottoman army. Isolated and besieged from all sides the rebels were suppressed and dispersed. After a fierce battle the Turks recaptured the town Negush and persecutions and pillaging followed. To avoid further problems, the population of Negush was either enslaved or resettled in other parts of Macedonia.

1851 - Macedonian writing with Greek letters

In addition to the gospels, apostles and other existing materials that were written in the Macedonian language with Greek letters, we also have the Ottoman law printed on July 25, 1851 for the Bitola Chiflik villages. These laws were printed by Kiriak Drzhilovets, a Macedonian reformer and patriot from Solun.

1870 - The notorious Pavlos Melas is born

Pavlos Melas (his real name was Mikis Zezas) was born in Messalina on March 29, 1870. He was originally from Epirus. For his exploits and the role he played in fighting against the Macedonian rebels, he was appointed, in 1904, leader of the Greek struggle in western Macedonia with Kostur as its centre.

Many of the older villagers remembered the dark days of the Andartes; the slaughter, the looting, the frightening things that happened when the Greek Andartes, headed by Pavlos Melas and Germanos Karavangelis, came here in 1904 and began to torment the people. There were some really angry people amongst the Andartes, especially the Cretans. They tormented the people something awful even though they had done nothing to them and were still under Ottoman rule.

Melas's obituary read: 'He heroically died on October 18, 1904 in the village Statitsa, Kostur Region'. His last words were: 'No Bulgarian shall be left alive!' Unlike Karavitas who said: 'We don't need the Macedonians, we need Macedonia!"

1872 - Gotse Delchev (1872-1903) is born

February 4, 1872 Gotse Delchev (1872-1903) is born. Son of Macedonian patriots Nikola and Sultana Delchev, Gotse was born on February 4th, 1872 in Kukush, a town 35 km north of Solun. His parents had been instrumental in raising rebellions directed against the Patriarchate and had been active in the Razlog and Kresna uprisings in 1878.

Gotse completed his elementary education in Kukush, then attended high school in Solun where he studied literature and social studies. He then entered the Sofia Military Academy in July 1891 where he furthered his knowledge in military and scientific discipline. He was expelled from the Academy for his social tendencies and returned to Macedonia in 1894.

He was always keen to learn and kept up with Macedonian national affairs. He played an active role in the political clubs of Solun and Sofia and kept in close contact with others like himself, especially the socialists. They greatly contributed to Gotse's involvement in IMRO and helped shape the course of the Macedonian national liberation movement. The years 1894 to 1903 represented the final revolutionary stage of Gotse's short life. His career as a teacher took him to Novo Selo (near Shtip) and Bansko from 1894 to 1896. Later he became involved with the revolutionary cause, preparing the Macedonian people for the armed uprising. While teaching in Novo

Selo he met Damian Gruev the leader of the IMRO central committee. The two men shared similar ideals and became close friends. In 1895 Gruev convinced Delchev to join IMRO. It wasn't too long afterwards that Delchev became IMRO's undisputed leader.

Gotse was a realist as well as an idealist who loved people, hated tyranny and saw the world as a place of many cultures living together in peace. The international and cosmopolitan views of Delchev were far ahead of his time and could be summarized in his proverbial sentence: "I understand the world solely as a field for cultural competition among nations".

As a realist Gotse knew that in order for a revolution to be successful it had to be a "moral revolution" of the mind, heart and soul of an enslaved people. They needed to feel like people with rights and freedoms, not like slaves. With that in mind Gotse set out to build a revolutionary conscience in the Macedonian population, thus setting the revolutionary wheels in motion.

The inclusion of rural areas into the organizational districts contributed to the expansion of the organization and the increase in its membership, while providing the essential prerequisites for the formation of the military power of the organization, and had Gotse Delchev as its military advisor.

The primary question regarding the timing of the uprising in Macedonia implicated an apparent discordance among the representatives at the Solun Conference in 1903, with Delchev opposing the uprising as premature. Since then he tried to oppose an early uprising. He met with Gruev in Solun and convinced him to delay at least long enough to get organized and prepare for it. He would have had a chance to speak to the entire leadership during the Smilevo Conference, scheduled to start on May 3rd, 1903, but he never made it.

1873 - Macedonian language documented

The villagers from Boboshchitsa and Drenovo were remnants of the southern Albanian population, located about two hours away, on foot, from the city Korcha. Even though these two villages were like

islands in a sea of Albanian villages, until recently they spoke a dialect of the Macedonian language and followed their Macedonian customs. They were also familiar with the Macedonian people's movement and their struggle for spiritual rights. A testimony of this can be found in their letter of appeal, dated October 26, 1873, sent to the Exarch Athim I in Istanbul (Tsari Grad) via one of their villagers.

1876 - The Razlovtsi Uprising begins

The Razlovtsi uprising was planned for May 8th, 1876, right after Gjurgievden, so on May 7th, the day before the uprising, the Secret Revolutionary Circle of Razlovtsi held its third congress, again in Kaladzherdzhevo, to discuss the final plan before putting it into action. Unfortunately the congress was disrupted by the arrival of the Ottoman tax collector. Even though the taxes had already been voluntarily paid early that year, so as to avoid the tax collector's visit, the tax collector showed up anyway un-announced and called on all the villagers to assemble under the threat that if they didn't he would burn their village down. It was obvious to everyone that something was not right. The Ottomans must have found out about their plans but it was too late to do anything. The guns and ammunition were stored and hidden far from village so the Razlovtsi residents decided to assemble as ordered. People who did not belong in Razlovtsi were immediately arrested and taken to prison. Among those arrested were brothers Nako and Stoilo from Istevnik, relatives of priest Sojan Razlovki. But when the Ottomans, not satisfied with just apprehending the visitors, came back to apprehend the most beautiful girls in the village with intent to make them Turkish brides, the villagers became very angry and began the uprising right there and then. Unable to control the angry crowd the Ottomans hid indoors. As news of the disturbance spread to the neighbouring villages more people armed with axes and pitchforks joined the mob. Exploiting the explosive situation, Berovski called for the uprising to begin immediately starting with the eviction of the Ottomans from Razlovtsi. Thirty new insurgents joined Berovski's rebels. A Cheta of 20 insurgents were dispatched to Razlovtsi. Six insurgents surrounded the inn where the Ottomans were hiding. Another small group went to intercept the Ottomans who had just left the village with the prisoners. The rebels caught up to the

Ottomans and managed to free ten people. Unfortunately Nako Pop Atanasov, was accidentally killed by a stray bullet. He was the first casualty of the Razlovtsi Uprising.

Having no time to arm themselves, most villages stormed the inn where the Ottomans were hiding and with sticks, hatchets, pitchforks and knives and demanded that the Ottomans surrender. Unaccustomed to this kind of behaviour from the Macedonians the Ottomans refused to come out thus prompting the villagers to set fire to the inn. As the fire grew, heavy rain began to fall giving the Ottomans cover and a chance to move to other buildings. To be sure there would be no place for them to hide more and more people started burning their own houses. Many Ottomans were burned alive as the buildings were torched, those who attempted to escape, including the tax collector the infamous Sapil Aliman, were run down by the mob and killed. Only two Ottomans escaped.

By ousting the Ottomans from Razlovtsi, the village was liberated and the start of the uprising was deemed a success. The fervour and enthusiasm created by this incident prompted more people to join the insurgency and gave it the impetus it needed to spread outwards. While Berovski took his Cheta and departed for Maleshevo, a group of insurgents remained in Razlovtsi to defend the village from retaliations, especially from the Bashibuzuks (armed Muslim civilian population).

On their way to Maleshevo, Berovski and Smilevski were greeted with cheers by the villagers especially when the new flag was unveiled. The men threw their hats up in the air and the crowds roared in patriotic songs. It was a glorious moment, a moment to remember, a moment of liberty and freedom. News about the uprising spread far and wide and encouragements to fight on came from everywhere.

1878 - Kumanovo-Kriva Palanka Uprisings
1878 - Pianets and Kreshna Uprisings

On January 19th, 1878 units of the Serbian army had penetrated Macedonia as far south as the north borders of Kumanovo and Kriva Palanka. At the sight of the arriving Serbian army the Ottomans

withdrew their forces to Komanovo. They also evacuated the Muslim civilian population and its armed wing the Bashibazuks. During their withdrawal the Bashibazuks wreaked havoc on the Macedonian villages; robbing and killing people. Having being assaulted yet again and in view of the impending arrival of the Serbian army, the villagers began to fight back. They soon were met by the Macedonian volunteer fighters in the Serbian army. Combined the locals and the new arrivals joined forces, elected new leaders and began a new uprising termed "the Kumanovo-kriva Palanka Uprising". The leaders selected to lead this uprising were Jakim Chelopechki, Nikola Algunjski, and Bogdan Ristich who along with 500 well-armed fighters organized themselves for an uprising on German and Kozhjak Mountains. When the insurgents were ready to fight they came down to the valley along the Pchinja River approaching Kumanovo. As the insurgents approached the villages in the region they were greeted with great enthusiasm by the local population. Here too more Macedonians joined the insurgency including Dimitrija Pop Paunov and Veljan Tsvetkov. In no time at all the insurgent force had swollen to more than a thousand. Unfortunately as usual most of the men joining the insurgency were without arms or ammunition and the entire world's training could not help them if they had no weapons to fight with. For that reason a delegation was sent to the Serbian command in Vranje to discuss the issue of arms and from what we know from alternate sources the Serbians did give the Macedonians 3,000 rifles with 2,000 more to be delivered later to Prohor Pchinski Monastery. The well-armed Macedonian force soon swelled to 4,000 insurgents who fought gallantly and liberated a large Macedonian territory south of the Serbian border. Unfortunately with the signing of the San Stefano agreement by Russia and the Ottomans all insurgencies ceased. Then after the Berlin Congress all Macedonian territories were given back to the Ottomans.

Not wanting to use violence, considering that the Western Powers were about to honour the Ottomans by giving them Macedonia back, the insurgents were offered complete amnesty in return for their weapons. An Ottoman delegation arrived in Zabel on April 12, 1878 to negotiate the disarming but the insurgents refused to disarm. Furious, the Ottomans dispatched a large Bashibazuk force to attack them but failed to destroy them. Realizing that the Western Powers

were now on their side, the Ottomans mustered a larger force and in May 1878 attacked the insurgents. Great battles ensued and much of the rebel force was destroyed. Some of the more stubborn villages however refused to surrender and remained active and fought fiercely but by September of the same year that uprising too ended in failure.

As for the Macedonians who joined the Russian army they too became involved in the conflict as Russia declared war on the Ottomans on April 24, 1877. At the start of the mobilization all Balkan armies, including the Macedonian volunteers, were organized and trained as part of the permanent state armies. But later the Macedonian units were given special duties which included intelligence, reconnaissance, combat and surveillance in the front lines. The initial numbers that joined were in the 800's but soon increased to over a 1,000 as the war intensified. When the Russian army penetrated into Macedonia, the Macedonian volunteers became its guide helping the Russians infiltrate remote enemy positions, navigate through unknown territories and act as interpreters. All Macedonian Chetas showed great courage but that of Iljo Maleshevski, Gjorgi Pulevski and Gjorgi Antonov showed exceptional courage. In addition to the Macedonian volunteers fighting in the front lines, Dimitar Berovski and his Cheta fought behind enemy lines carrying out hit and run and terrorist actions. Consisting mainly of veterans from the Razlovtsi Uprising, Berovki's Cheta operated in the Osogovski Mountain region and during the summer of 1877 expanded its control to the Pijanets, Maleshevo, Kjustendil and surrounding regions. By December 1877 the number of insurgents had tripled and the area of operation was expanded to include the entire Tsarevo Selo territory and the Bregalnitsa and Strumitsa valleys encompassing 47 villages.

As the Russian army penetrated further south into the Balkans, Iljo Maleshevski and his Cheta broke off from the Russian army and in December 1877 descended to Kjustendil and Tsarevo Selo with aims of liberating his native Maleshevo and Pijanets.

By January 17, 1878 Kjustendil was liberated with help from the Macedonians and occupied by the Russian army. Unfortunately the Russian-Ottoman War ended abruptly with a signing of a truce on

January 31st, 1878 leaving Maleshevo and Pijanets outside the demarcation line and still in the hands of the Ottomans. Being so close to liberating his native territory Maleshevski, without Russian approval, broke the truce and on January 20th, 1878 launched an attack on Pijanets. Upon receiving news of the attack more Macedonians joined in and began what became known as the Pijanets Uprising.

Unfortunately all that effort went for nothing because after the Ottoman-Serbian-Russian protocol of February 13th, 1878 was signed, the currently liberated territories including Pijanets were given back to the Ottomans.

I just want to mention here that besides participating in the Serbian and Russian war against the Ottomans there were also preparations for liberating Macedonia made by the Macedonian émigrés in Athens, Greece. It is estimated that about 10,000 Macedonian immigrants lived in Athens at the time; many eager to get back to Macedonia and fight for its liberation. For that purpose a revolutionary committee was created in Athens and lead by Leonidas Vulgaris originally from Pijanets.

The Russian-Ottoman War was an absolute disaster for the Macedonian people especially for those who sacrificed their lives and died helping Russia. Instead of being grateful for the help they received and allowing the Macedonians to create a Macedonian state, the Russians sold them out to the Bulgarians. By signing the San Stefano treaty Russia agreed to the creation of a large Bulgarian State which was to include Macedonian lands and people. Then as the Western Power intervened in the Berlin Congress instead of sorting things out and giving Macedonia autonomy as they did to Bulgaria, they gave Macedonia back to the Ottomans.

1880 - Provisional Government of Macedonia

The Provisional Government of Macedonia sent a letter with a copy of the Macedonian Constitution to the six Great Power ministries of the European Commission requesting their approval. Expecting no reply, the General Headquarters then went ahead and created a Manifesto calling on all the Macedonian people to organize a united

national uprising. Among the signatories of the Manifesto were Ilio Maleshevski, Vasil Diamandiev and eight other leaders.

1881 - P. G. of Macedonia approves Manifesto

March 23, 1881 - The Provisional Government of Macedonia approved a Manifesto and submitted it to the various diplomatic missions in the Ottoman territories.

1881 - P.G. of Macedonia takes Manifesto to Kiustandil

April 11, 1881- The Provisional Government of Macedonia Manifesto was taken to Kiustandil where the transcript was translated to Russian and French and distributed to various foreign and domestic diplomatic representatives in Istanbul.

-- ILINDEN UPRISING --

1893 - MRO founded

In Solun on October 23rd, 1893, Dr. Hristo Tatarchev, Damian Gruev, Petar Pop Arsov, Ivan Hadzhinikolov, Anton Dimitrov and Hristo Batandzhiev founded the Macedonian revolutionary organization (MRO). The basic aim of the organization was to create an autonomous Macedonia. The Organization's leaders and ideologists were Gotse Delchev and Giorce Petrov.

1894 - IMRO founded

As word got around an MRO committee was formed, more Macedonians got involved and a second (formal) meeting was held on February 9th, 1894 which resulted in the formation of a revolutionary organization known as the Vnatrezhna (Internal) Makedonska (Macedonian) Revolutsionerna (Revolutionary) Organizatsia (Organization), VMRO (IMRO).

1895 - First terrorist groups created

When the terrorist groups were first created their task was to seek out and punish enemy informants. The first terrorist group created in

1895 consisted of four people and began its operation by monitoring Ottoman activities in Prilep. In 1896 another terrorist group was created in Krushevo whose task was to follow certain suspects and to collect money and other needed items for the Organization. In time every revolutionary district created its own terrorist group who were assigned various tasks to suit its needs. All in all, these terrorist groups were very effective in demonstrating the Organization's strength and authority. By October 1898 twelve terrorist groups were operating in Macedonia including Prilep, Bitola, Solun and Kukush. One of the more significant deeds performed by a terrorist group was the execution of Dimitar Grdanov, a key Ottoman spy. Gedanov was executed by Metodi Pachev on August 5th, 1898 in Ohrid. The terrorist groups were also known to have participated in battles alongside the Macedonian Chetas as well as provide secret security services for MRO revolutionaries.

1896 - First Congress held in Solun

As the number and needs of terrorist groups increased, it was decided to reorganize them into a Secret Police. The decision to form secret police units was made during the 1896 Solun Congress and was enshrined in the MRO Constitution and spelled out in the Rulebook. According to article ten of the MRO Constitution, each committee of the Organization had the right to form its own Secret Police unit for the purpose of taking actions against internal and external enemies. After the formation of the Secret Police units however, most regional Organizations used their services to investigate various matters, perform intelligence functions, follow the movements of official Ottoman authorities, identify and investigate newly arrived personnel and track the movements of the Ottoman secret militia. Each committee was responsible for appointing a chief who in turn appointed three personally selected assistants who did not know each other.

Lacking skill and experience, most of these "secret agents" made mistakes and did not measure up to Gotse Delchev's, the Commander in Chief's, expectations so the Organization made sure to recruit from the more experienced haiduk (outlaw) groups. In fact the Organization took a step further and made contact with the various haiduk leaders throughout Macedonia asking them to join

the MRO and fight for a free and independent Macedonia. In time the majority did and those who did not and continued their illegal activities were eventually destroyed by the MRO.

1903 - Another Congress held in Solun

By a vote taken on December 24th, 1902 it was decided that a Congress would be held in Solun on January 1st, 1903. This not only did not provide enough notice for the elected delegates to make it to the congress on time but also breached the Organization's constitution by allowing non-elected delegates to attend and participate in the vote. In other words, Garvanov took it upon himself to rush the congress to avoid being opposed by the MRO founding leaders and only invited those who he was certain would support his initiative to start a massive Uprising as soon as possible before the MRO was ready. This would have guaranteed its failure and in the process would have exhausted both the Macedonians and the Ottomans, leaving Macedonia open for a Bulgarian invasion.

The Congress began on January 2nd, 1903 and ended on the 4th without a single delegate from the founding MRO leaders attending. In fact none of the MRO delegates who would have opposed the early Uprising were they invited or attended. In other words the holding of this Congress was not only illegal, according to the MRO's constitution, but also was not representative of the entire revolutionary territory because many district delegates were either not invited or did not attend. Even Lazar Dimitrov, who took part in the Congress, voiced his concern in his memoirs calling the Congress "unlawfully constituted".

The Congress was opened by Garvanov, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Organization, who requested from each delegate to individually report on the situation in their districts. Most delegates however, including Anastas Lozanchev, district representative of Bitola, admitted that they were unable to provide reliable information on the status and readiness of the districts they represented. Almost all delegates admitted that their revolutionary districts were materially and morally not prepared for an uprising. The situation however changed when Lozanchev and Garvanov assured the Congress that a large delivery of arms would soon be

arriving from Bulgaria and each detachment would be receiving its fair share of guns, supplies and other materials necessary to carry out the Uprising.

Garvanov made a strong impression on the delegates by his speech in which he assured them that leaflets calling on the Macedonian population to prepare for an uprising in 1903 were being spread throughout Macedonia. He said the fact that the Ottoman authorities had managed to capture some of these leaflets, proves that the job is being done as we speak. He went on to say that the 1903 Uprising would be even more glorious than the 1902 Gornodzhumajski Uprising. Garvanov told the Congress that he did not believe a mass uprising would be successful without external intervention.

In spite of Garvanov's reassurances there was still some opposition to his plan. Most of that opposition came from Lazar Dimitrov who declared to the Congress that far too many districts were unprepared for such an uprising and it would be a mistake. He also added that Lamzdorf, Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, was against such an uprising and the Macedonians could not count on Russian support. He went further to say that he had spoken to other revolutionaries including Iane Sandanski and Gotse Delchev just before the Solun Congress and they were all against a premature uprising.

Unfortunately, despite his opposition, Dimitrov too signed Garvanov's declaration endorsing an early uprising. Even Dimitar Ganchev, the delegate from Skopje who was sent there by the District Committee with explicit instructions to press for a postponement of the Uprising for at least a year, seeing that the other delegates agreed, also added his consent.

On January 3rd, 1902 at 11:20 AM, after all the delegates had had their say it was decided that an Uprising would begin in the spring of 1903. It was decided that this would not be a mass uprising but rather a strategic one to start things moving. All District Committees were ordered to assemble and discuss the Congress's decisions and start preparations to ensure the Uprising was carried out.

1903 - Second Congress held in Solun

A second Solun Congress, dominated by the Vrhovists, was staged in February of 1903. Delchev and most of IMRO's loyal supporters did not attend. A resolution was reached, but not ratified by the regional committees, that an uprising would take place on Ilinden, on the 2nd of August 1903. To weaken the Turks, the Vrhovists staged a number of bombings and terrorist acts. The Solun to Tsari Grad railway was bombed on March 18th, as was the Solun Ottoman bank a month later. This did not weaken the Turks as expected but instead brought more Turkish troops into Macedonia and further escalated the violence against innocent civilians. If that was not enough, the sudden rise in violence against Ottoman institutions was not well received by European investors and businessmen, who saw Ottoman Macedonia as a safe place to invest. The few lonely voices in London, calling for Macedonian support, were quickly drowned out by the many voices of discontent calling for the demise of the terrorists.

Tragically the Turks killed Gotse Delchev in Banitsa on May 4th, 1903, a day after the IMRO Smilevo Congress had started. Termed the Bitola Congress, the purpose of the Smilevo Congress was to review the resolutions from the Vrhovist dominated Solun Congress, held earlier the same year. Damjan Gruev (a native of Smilevo) chaired the Congress and tried hard to present the situation realistically by arguing for and against an early uprising. When the matter was put to a vote, however, the majority declared themselves in favour of an uprising. With these words, "better an end with horrors than horrors without end", Gruev also voted in support of the Ilinden rebellion. From here on there was no turning back. A general staff was elected with Gruev as the head and preparations for the uprising began. In due time plans were made, a military strategy prepared, weapons, medical supplies and food-stuffs were requisitioned and stock piled. Cheti were organized and training drills were performed. On July 26th, 1903, by a dispatch to the Great Powers via the British vice-consul in Bitola, the General Staff formally announced the uprising. Then on July 28th, 1903 IMRO dispatched mounted couriers to all the sub-districts with the message "let the uprising begin". On the same day the General Staff informed the Ottoman Director of Railways to warn travelers to choose a different mode of transportation in order to avoid being hurt. Despite the odds, the brave people of Macedonia heroically rose to the task

with valour. They knew well that the fight they were forced to fight might not bring them what they wanted. They chose to fight anyway because it was a fight for freedom and freedom after centuries of slavery was valued above life itself. That, however, did not convince the Great Powers to lend a helping hand. Macedonia, for a second time within a quarter century, was exposed to treachery that would make the 1878 betrayal look like a picnic.

1903 - "Gemidzii" carry out attacks

On April 1903 the "Gemidzii" carried out attacks. A number of Macedonian revolutionaries from Solun known as the "Gemidzii", carried out a series of attacks on a number of buildings in Solun in order to draw the attention of the European public towards the harsh situation the Macedonian people were facing under Ottoman rule.

1903 - Nikos Zahariadis is born

April 27, 1903 - Nikos Zahariadis is born in Edirne, Eastern Thrace. His father was employed as a clerk at "Razim", a French commercial tobacco company based in Constantinople. From 1911 to 1912 Nikos Zahariadis lived and attended school in the "Ibin Paiko" settlement in Skopje, where his father worked as a representative of the "Razim" Company. In 1913 he moved to Solun. In 1922 and 1923 he worked as a sailor, a job which took him to the Soviet Union where he became a member of the Communist Party. In 1924, with the exchange of populations between Turkey and Greece, Zahariadis's family was moved to Greece. In 1924 he visited the famous Communist University of Eastern European nations, KUTVE in Moscow. Nikos Zahariadis was leader of the Greek communist movement and secretary general of the CPG from 1936 to 1956. Zahariadis treated the CPG like a cult and had absolute confidence in Stalin and his Communist Party, which he believed to be infallible. He himself admitted to this. Zahariadis committed suicide in 1973 while serving a prison sentence in Sorgun, Siberia.

1903 - Start of Smilevo Conference

May 3, 1903 – Start of Smilevo Conference

In order to finalize all activities, the leadership of the Bitola District requested that a Congress take place on May 1st, 1903 in the village Smilevo. Dame Gruev, representing the Central Committee of MRO, was elected chairman of the Congress. Among other things the meeting agenda included discussions on (1) the distribution of military forces, (2) preparations for the Uprising, (3) duties and responsibilities of leaders both before and during the uprising, (4) what to do with unarmed people, disabled people, old people, and women and children during the uprising, (5) distribution of arms, (6) determining the exact time of the uprising, (7) establishment of regional administrative bodies before and during the uprising, and (8) method by which the uprising would be conducted.

From the discussions that took place it was determined that the best-prepared regions to enter the Uprising were Resen, Kostur, Demirhisar and several surrounding villages in the Bitola Region. Among the less prepared regions was Ohrid with only one thousand four hundred guns.

The speakers and debaters at the Smilevo Congress were very critical of Anastas Lozanchev, chairman of the District Committee, for his arbitrary representation of his District at the Solun Congress and for undertaking obligations in the name of his district without first consulting the various regions. Among the delegates who opposed Garvanov's plan for an early Uprising were Gjorgji Sugare, Petre Atsev, Tale Hristov, Nikola Karev and Nikola Petrov. They were all bitter about how the Solun Congress was conducted and their anger was reflected during the debates in the Smilevo Congress. Overall a tense situation was created prompting Dame Gruev's intervention. Gruev used his authority as chairman to break off the discussions, insisting that the uprising would still have to take place regardless of the protests because that question had already been settled.

1903 - Gotse Delchev (1872-1903) gets killed on May 4

Delchev was killed near the village Banitsa, Seres Region in a skirmish with Turkish forces. Delchev's remains were transferred to Bulgaria in 1923. Then, after the Second World War, on October

10th, 1946, they were transferred to the People's Republic of Macedonia. The following day they were enshrined in a marble sarcophagus, which to this day is displayed in the yard of the Sveti Spas (Holy Savior) Church in Skopje.

Delchev will be remembered as the undisputed leader, strategist, ideologue and diplomat of the original IMRO. He was a man who almost single-handedly sowed the seeds of resistance amongst the Macedonian peasantry, through foresight, popularity, tactical skill and enormous enthusiasm.

1903 - Dispatch sent to the Great Powers on July 26, via the British vice-consul in Bitola, the General Staff formally announcing the Ilinden Uprising. Then on July 28, 1903, IMRO dispatched mounted couriers to all the sub-districts with the message "let the uprising begin".

1903 - Ilinden Uprising begins on August 2

----- The Smilevo Uprising

Just prior to the August 2nd, 1903 Ilinden Uprising the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (MRO) moved its headquarters to the village Smilevo near the city Bitola in the Bitola Revolutionary District. The move made Smilevo the Political and Military Center of Macedonia. Being the center of Macedonia however had its drawbacks. The constant movement of people, particularly during the Smilevo Congress, which was held in Smilevo between May 3rd and 7th, 1903 attracted the attention of the Ottoman authorities. Thankfully the Congress was over when an Ottoman battalion dispatched from Bitola arrived just outside of Smilevo on May 11th, 1903 and surrounded the vicinity. Unfortunately, as luck would have it, vojvoda Pareshkev Tsvetkov with 18 of his insurgents just happened to be there near the village Mogila at the time and fell into the Ottoman trap. A battle ensued and after 12 hours of fighting and numerous attempts to break the siege, the battle ended with most of the insurgents dead. Tsetkov was badly wounded and took his own life.

To avoid being discovered, the MRO leadership decided to move its headquarters to the Golem Gar locality. The Ottomans meanwhile, to prevent further developments, decided to garrison Smilevo and turn it into a military and political center leaving part of a battalion there to guard it. After assessing the situation however, the Bitola Revolutionary District leadership concluded that Smilevo, despite the new Ottoman developments, was still the best place from which to continue preparations for the Uprising such as organizing defenses and shelters, storing food and clothing, hiding ammunition and running a secret hospital. Smilevo was also an ideal place from where the insurgents could keep an eye on the surrounding region in case of an enemy encirclement. In view of all these factors, the District leaders decided to destroy the Ottoman garrison in Smilevo and proclaim Smilevo and the surrounding territory "a liberated zone", but this would have to wait until the beginning of the Uprising.

Having no assistance from the outside world the MRO always relied on the local population to provide it with financial aid. In the Bitola District the MRO turned to the local population, particularly to the rich Vlach villages Trnovo, Magarevo and Gopesh for money and goods which it then used to purchase weapons from the Ottomans and Albanians who collaborated with the MRO.

Just prior to the Uprising, in its preparations for combat, Smilevo assembled and trained 158 insurgents and subdivided them into six Chetas. Then four days before the Ilinden Uprising a messenger arrived with instructions and details on how to commence the attacks. All people working outside their villages, particularly those working in Bitola, were instructed to return to their homes immediately. After the District flag had been sanctified on August 1st in the fields above the village everyone was told to go home and act in their normal way in order to avoid suspicion. The next afternoon all the Chetas assembled in an area near Golem Gar and at dusk, together with the District Headquarters, came down to the villages and attacked the Ottoman garrisons. Being caught by surprise there was much panic and confusion on the part of the Ottomans as they ran for cover in nearby houses. Unfortunately the Ottomans recovered quickly and were out fighting in the streets again as the insurgents tried to contain them. In the fury of the battle

the Ottoman soldiers were pushed back in the houses, concentrating in Gjorgija Churanov's house in the center of the village, the same house in which the Smilevo Congress was held.

When Damjan Gruev arrived at the scene he was disappointed not because the Ottomans had occupied the house in which the Smilevo Congress was held but because this particular house was a stronghold that could not easily be broken into. It was decided that the only way to dislodge the Ottomans from it was to burn it down. Fearing more Ottoman soldiers would soon arrive to join the battle the rebels, with permission from Churanov the owner of the house, torched the house in a hailstorm of bullets. And thus began the Uprising in violence and flames.

During the night the insurgents cut telephone lines and destroyed bridges on the Bitola to Resen road. One Cheta attacked the Bashibazuks in the village Dolnentsi while another kept the Ottoman soldiers pinned down leaving the rest to assist with the evacuation of the villagers.

On the afternoon of August 3rd, 1903 more than 2,000 people from the villages were evacuated and moved to a secluded place near Golem Gar where a shelter was previously prepared for them.

During the first day of skirmishes it was estimated that about 25 Ottoman soldiers were killed and two Macedonian rebels were badly wounded.

Just as the people were leaving the villages, a detachment of 400 Ottoman soldiers was spotted approaching the village Obednik, about four kilometers east of Smilevo. One of the Chetas, lead by Stojan Donski, was quickly dispatched and attacked the Ottomans just as they were about to enter the village. Unfortunately, probably to spare the Cheta from being destroyed, Headquarters ordered its withdrawal allowing the Ottomans to enter the village, release the blockaded soldiers and burn down 34 houses. Fearing the insurgents would return with a larger force, the Ottoman detachment left Smilevo and went on to attack and burned down the village Gopesh.

Encouraged by the August 3rd success, the next day the Ottomans dispatched another unit of soldiers and a group of Bashibazuks but this time they were not so lucky. As the Ottomans approached the village Obednik they were met by a more determined Cheta which inflicted a catastrophic blow. It was estimated 45 soldiers died, one rebel was killed and one wounded.

Following this defeat the local Ottomans abstained from attacking Smilevo again until the arrival of new troops, leaving the people in the region to enjoy their short lived freedom which lasted from August 4th to August 27th.

----- The Krushevo Uprising

The Krushovo Revolutionary District covered an area stretching from the Blato River in the east, the Tsrna River and Prilep in the south, the Velika River in the north and Demir Hisar Region in the west. With the town of Krushevo as its center, the Krushevo Region supported about 10,000 inhabitants of whom 5,000 were Macedonians, 4,000 Vlachs, 400 Christian Albanians and others. In comparison to other towns, Krushevo was more developed and its people more educated and highly motivated working in the fields of trade, handicrafts and cattle breeding.

Like other revolutionary Districts, Krushevo, right after the Smilevo Congress, began preparations for the Uprising by electing leaders and enlisting, training and arming insurgents. Among the six elected representatives, Nikola Karev was elected commander of the insurgency force which at the time numbered about 1,200.

Weapons for the forces were supplied by various channels from Greece, Albania, Tetovo, Kichevo and other places. Six cherry-wood cannons were especially built for the defense of Krushevo and their operators received special instructions on how to deploy them. A ten day training course was provided to all insurgents, which included various tactical exercises and instructions on how to use weapons. Special ovens and storage facilities were also constructed in several secluded places to accommodate cooking for a large number of people and for storing food, clothing, ammunition and other materials.

Upon Krushevo Region's decision to participate in the Uprising a survey of enemy forces was undertaken and it was discovered that the town of Krushevo was garrisoned by only 60 soldiers and no more than 100 Ottoman civilians were armed. It was also discovered that it would take the Ottomans from 8 to 10 hours to bring reinforcements.

In view of the above facts it was decided to begin the Uprising with an attack and speedy destruction of the Krushevo garrison before the Ottoman reinforcements had enough time to arrive.

It was also decided that after its liberation the Krushevo Region would be defended by positioning the Cheti at various strategic locations. The insurgent force would be divided into eight units; six main and two support. Andrej Dimov's unit would be assigned to take over the prison, telegraph, post office and the home of the state treasurer and the gendarmerie. Ivan Alabakov's unit would be assigned to take over the barracks where the Ottoman soldiers were stationed. Pitu Guli's unit, which would be accompanied by members of the Macedonian village police, would be assigned to protect Krushevo on the south from the direction of the villages Ostriltsi, Birino and Trsenik and provide support to other units when needed. Being the largest, consisting of 300 insurgents, this unit would also have a flag bearer. Gjorgij Dimov was tasked with that duty. Marko Hristov-Mirche's unit would be assigned to protect Krushevo from the north-east side. Tashko Karev's unit would be assigned to protect the Pavlena Cheshma Pass and Kosta Hristov's unit would be assigned to take position at the Muratova Cheshma Pass. Gjurchin Naumov and Gjorgij Stojanov's units would be assigned to occupy positions at Deni Kamen between Sliva and Bushova Cheshma to the north-west and Pusta Reka.

The Krushevo Uprising Headquarters held a meeting in Birinska Mountain on July 30th, 1903 and finalized its plan for the attack on Krushevo. It also briefed the unit leaders on their assignments. Details of the attacks were withheld until the signal to commence the Uprising was received.

While the military leaders were preparing their strategies, the government in Krushevo, headed by Nikola Karev, was busy preparing the Krushevo Manifesto which was to be distributed to all Ottoman villages just after the Uprising began. The idea of the Manifesto was to provide the people with a real picture of what the Uprising was all about and to assure the Muslims that the Uprising was not against them but against the oppressive Ottoman government. In part the Manifesto said that the Uprising was not aimed against the Muslims but rather against the tyranny and slavery of the oppressive Ottoman government which violated the honour of all people including that of the poor Muslims. The Manifesto also called on all people to rise up against the Ottoman government, join the rebellion and fight for liberty and justice for all. Surprisingly the Manifesto did exactly what it was designed to do and caught the attention of many Ottomans including the attention of Lieutenant Suleyman Ali, the commander of the Krushevo garrison who escaped the rebel attack. In a letter addressed to the Krushevo Republic, Sulayman Ali congratulated the rebels for their accomplishments and on behalf of his people apologized for treating the revolutionaries like bandits. He also wished the rebels success and gave them his blessings. At the end he asked them to destroy the communiqué.

It was believed, because of the Manifesto, less Bashibazuks joined the Ottomans in attacking and ravaging the villages which was of great help to the insurgents.

Attacks against Ottoman defenses took place as planned and the insurgent forces were deployed as expected and in a timely fashion. The attack on Krushevo itself began at midnight with Vangel Topuzov firing the first shot. The gendarmerie was stormed and everyone in it surrendered. The post office also fell without any resistance. The tax inspectors refused to surrender and were killed in a firefight. By the morning of August 3rd, 1903 all of Krushevo business district was in rebel hands.

The Ottoman soldiers however were not as easy to put down as first anticipated and had reached a stalemate with Alabakov's insurgents. It took the additional forces of Pitu Guli's reserve detachment to finish the job. Incendiary bombs were eventually used to dislodge

the Ottomans. Fourteen hours later 9 soldiers were captured and 17 along with their commander Sulayman Ali broke through the rebel breach and escaped. Eight insurgents were killed and 16 were wounded in this battle. The attack was unexpected and a complete surprise to the Ottomans giving them no advanced warning.

Upon discovering the rebel attack on Krushevo, the Ottomans quickly assembled and dispatched 300 soldiers consisting in part of the 3rd regiment from Prilep and some Albanian Bashibazuks. Upon their arrival in the Spili and Kale vicinity the Ottomans were intercepted by Marko Hristov-Mirche's Cheta and a firefight broke out forcing the Ottomans to quickly retreat. The Ottomans tried again the next day and the day after to breach Mirche's defenses but without success. After that the situation in Krushevo remained calm until August 11th, 1903 when a large Ottoman force arrived.

On August 4th, 1903 a Bashibazuk detachment was spotted near Deni Kamen advancing towards Drenovo. Gjurchin Naumov's Cheta was quickly dispatched and managed to push the Bashibazuks back into a hasty retreat. Twenty Bashibazuks were killed in that battle.

Just as the Ottoman forces were being put down on August 4th, 1903 Nikola Karev, along with other MRO political leaders, arrived in Krushevo. Immediately upon his arrival he proposed the establishment of a six member provisional government. After being welcomed as a hero and liberator, Nikola Karev requested the presence of 60 of the most prominent residents of Krushevo. He specifically asked for prominent people from all three ethnicities, Macedonian, Vlach and Albanian which lived there. From these people six were selected to run the provisional government. They were Dinu Vangel appointed as President and head of the court, Gijorgij Chache appointed Secretary and requisitions manager, Teohar Neshok appointed Treasurer, Hristo Kjurchiev appointed Mayor and Chief of Police, Dimitar Sekulov appointed Manager of food supplies and Dr. Nikola Baljo appointed Manager of Health Care. A Governing Council was then elected and Nikola Karev was appointed President. As President, Nikola Karev declared the Krushevo Region a Republic, the first republic in the Balkans run by Macedonians, Vlachs and Albanians.

First order of business for the newly elected government was to make sure all people, including the Muslims, were protected and treated as equals.

Several houses and stores were turned into workshops and storage depots to store, manufacture and repair weapons, shoes and clothing in aid of the Uprising. Extraordinary measures were also taken to requisition food supplies, weapons and ammunition. Most of the population voluntarily donated such items as pots, pans, dishes and other utensils to be melted down to make bullets.

Headquarters in the meantime worked hard to devise defense plans in order to defend the newly established Macedonian Republic from an Ottoman invasion and looked for the most efficient ways it could deploy its limited defenses. One of the actions taken to bolster the defenses was the construction of a well stocked trench system which would protect the insurgents from enemy fire as well as provision them with supplies for prolonged battles.

It did not take long however for the Ottomans to regroup and start an all out offensive. Between August 5th and 12th, 1903 a sizable force of 18,000 Ottoman soldiers and Bashibazuks was quickly assembled. The force consisted of 40 infantry battalions, several cavalry units, 4 artillery batteries and 24 cannons all concentrated in the Bitola, Prilep and Kichevo Regions.

While the insurgents were busy bolstering their defenses three Ottoman columns were dispatched to attack the regions. The main column commanded by Bahtiar Pasha consisting of 10,000 soldiers, fully equipped with artillery, advanced towards Krushevo from the east, from the Prilep and Krivogashtani direction. The second column consisting of 3,000 Ottoman soldiers also supported by artillery advanced from the south. The third column consisting of about 5,000 soldiers equipped with cavalry and mountain artillery advanced from the north-west.

The Ottomans had good reason to act fast and suppress this Uprising as soon as possible because the Ottoman government was seen as somewhat of a villain by the European public. The establishment of

the Krushevo Republic could have had unforeseeable political consequences for the Ottoman Empire if not quickly checked. Besides, Krushevo was a rich region with a healthy economy that would support a high concentration of insurgents and a sustainable and prolonged uprising if allowed to deeply trench itself.

On August 12, 1903 Bahtiar Pasha ordered his troops to encircle Krushevo. Following that he dispatched an ultimatum to the Uprising Headquarters demanding its surrender. The answer from Headquarters however was a flat "no". "We did not rise up so that we can surrender but rather we took up arms to fight for our liberty and for Macedonia" was the Headquarters' response. Upon receiving his reply, Bahtiar Pasha ordered his troops to start firing.

Children and the elderly were quickly evacuated in the nearby forests and the rest took up their positions to defend Krushevo. Gjurchin Naumov's Cheta took up position to defend the heights above the Bitola-Prilep road. Ivan Alabakov's Cheta took up the defense of Bushova Cheshma, Deni Kamen and the road to Kichevo. Gjiorgij Stojanov's Cheta was assigned to protect the Sliva Pass and Tashko Karev's Cheta was sent to defend the road to the village Kochishte at Kojov Trn. Todor Hristov and his group took up defense in the rocky peak at Mechkin Kamen. By orders of Pitu Guli, inspector of the insurgent units, all insurgents without weapons were sent home. The Uprising Headquarters was moved to Gumenje which gave the leadership a good view of the entire Prilep Field.

Upon discovering the size of the Ottoman force surrounding Krushevo, the Council of vojvodas met and recommended to the Provisional Government to surrender the town of Krushevo to spare it from destruction. The plan was to surrender Krushevo and retreat, hoping the Ottomans would pursue. Then while retreating, the insurgents would lead the Ottomans into a trap at the River Zhaba's narrow pass west of Krushevo. Unfortunately that plan was quickly abandoned when it was discovered that the Ottomans had already taken the pass. Failing that, the Council decided to save its forces by leaving the region altogether. Unfortunately too many insurgents, not wanting to leave their families behind unprotected, disobeyed the orders and decided to fight to the death. Among those who

fought suicidal battles was Pitu Guli and his Cheta who declared “if there is no liberty then there is death”.

At 10:00 AM on August 13th, 1903 Bahtiar Pasha ordered his artillery to begin firing. He then ordered his troops to tighten the encirclement around Krushevo. While Krushevo was burning, Headquarters again ordered all insurgents to retreat and Pitu Guli along with 34 of his men again disobeyed and fought until their ammunition ran out saving the last bullets for themselves. Pitu Guli and his men displayed great courage that must never be forgotten.

While most defenses fell apart, Gjiorgij Stojanov’s Cheta managed to safeguard the Sliva Pass allowing many civilians and insurgents to be evacuated. Ivan Alabakov’s Cheta took with it is as many people as possible and also retreated to the hills via the Sliva Pass. Stojanov, with 40 of his fighters however, remained active at the pass and fought to the death. His and his men’s sacrifice saved thousands of people from being trapped by the Ottomans.

By the end of the day on August 13th, 1903 Krushevo was on fire and pillaged by the Bashibazuks who took no pity and slaughtered, murdered, tortured and raped the civilian population. Krushevo and the villages Seltse, Rastoitsa and Zhurche suffered the most with 139 men killed, 165 women raped, 217 houses burned, 210 stores burned to the ground and 1,170 people left homeless. (Vanche Stojchev. “Military History of Macedonia”. Military academy. Skopje, 2004. Page 322)

----- The Kichevo and Karbunitsa Uprisisngs
----- The Dushegubitsa and Gjavato Uprisings

The Kichevo Uprising encompassed the Kichevo and Poreche Regions and was lead by vojvodas Luka Dzherov, Janaki Janev and Arso Mitskov representing Kichevo Region and Gjorgij Peshkov, Vancho Srbakov, Janaki Petrov and Tsvetan from Svetoratse representing Poreche Region. The Kichevo Region was subdivided into sub-regions Gorna Kopachka, Dolna Kopachka and Dolna Reka. The Poreche Region was sub-divided into Rabetin Kol and Poreche.

Unlike most Regions, the Kichevo-Poreche Regions, populated almost entirely by Christians, the vast majority being Macedonian, took part in the Uprising in vast numbers making them proportionally one of the strongest supporters of the Uprisings in Macedonia. Unfortunately the people in these Regions were faced with obstacles; they were poorly armed and were bordering a Region predominantly populated by Albanians and other Muslims.

Being faced with a difficult situation the Kichevo-Poreche Region leadership was hesitant to start the Uprising under these conditions prompting Damian Gruev and the General Headquarters to intervene.

On May 28th, 1903 Gruev dispatched a Cheta of 40 insurgents lead by vojvoda Maksim Nenov to Dolna Reka to raise the peoples' moral and make sure the Uprising began on time. Unfortunately the Cheta was spotted by the Ottomans and attacked by the Bashi Bazuks. Unprepared, the Cheta was defeated and suffered severe losses. With Gruev's plan foiled, General Headquarters decided to take a different approach. Instead of maintaining the Kichevo Revolutionary Center as a military base it decided to move its mountain headquarters to Dolna Reka and turn it into a logistics and strategic base for reserves which could be employed at other sub-regions. The Kichevo leadership was then asked to lobby the prominent Debar citizens to influence the Albanian and other Muslim populations to be more sympathetic to the rebel cause.

Their actions seemed to work and as more money was raised more rifles and ammunition were purchased. Just before the Uprising started 450 rifles were purchased and 23 villages participated each with their own Cheta.

In spite of the problems experienced in Dolna Reka, the four Chetas formed there were dispatched to other regions. Two were dispatched to participate in the Galichnik Uprising, one in the Lazaropole and the fourth in Tresonche. During the Uprising most Chetas were dispatched to assist with the fighting in Gorna Kopachka since there was little activity in the Kichevo and Poreche Regions.

The number of fighters mobilized in these two regions just before the Uprising numbered over 1,000 but they were still outnumbered by the Ottoman army by three to one not to mention the additional numerous Bashi Buzuk units that roamed these regions.

The orders to commence the Uprising, dispatched from the General Headquarters, arrived in the Kichevo Uprising District on July 26th, 1903 prompting the district leadership to convene on July 31st in the Prechista Monastery and prepare its plan of action.

Upon completion of the plan of action, on August 1st, 1903, the village vojvodas were briefed and given orders to mobilize the forces on August 2nd. Six hundred insurgents arrived the night of August 2nd and were divided into three detachments. About an hour after midnight the attacks commenced. One detachment attacked a camp near Jurija while another attacked the Kale barracks. The attacks were designed to shock the enemy and cause it as many casualties as possible in the shortest possible time.

While these attacks were taking place, six smaller village Chetas in the Gorna Kopachka Sub-region combined forces to form a large, 120 insurgent Cheta which in turn encircled and attacked the 150 soldier strong Ottoman garrison at Izvor. This particular garrison, being of some importance, was cause for both sides to escalate the fighting. As a result, the Ottomans dispatched another 150 soldiers to the scene prompting the Macedonians to match it with 200 of their own. A vicious fight ensued resulting in the breach of the Macedonian blockade. As soon as the garrison was freed the Ottomans retreated to Kichevo. Fifty Ottoman soldiers and eight Macedonian insurgents were left dead.

The next day (August 3rd, 1903) the Ottomans came back with 200 soldiers and 150 Bashi Bazuks intending to attack and blockaded the village Vraneshtitsa. The Macedonians sent 200 insurgents lead by Arso Mitskov to the rescue. The Macedonians divided their forces into two groups intending to attack the enemy from two sides. The first group managed to intercept the Ottomans at the village Staroets before they had a chance to do any damage. The second group attacked the Ottomans near Vraneshtitsa resulting in an Ottoman defeat. After a short engagement the Ottomans near Staroets were

also defeated. The Ottomans retreated to Kichevo while the Bashi Bazuks were pursed by the insurgents with several engagements taking place. The Bashi Bazuks disbanded after their leader Alija was killed and the pursuit ended.

On the morning of August 4th, 1903 a regular Ottoman battalion numbering 800 soldiers, along with a number of local Bashi Buzuk units, viciously and repeatedly attacked the village Karbunitsa. Three of the attacks were repelled by the 200 insurgents lead by Arso Mitskov defending the village but the defense line was breached during the fourth attack and by noon the village had fallen into enemy hands.

In their attempt to withdraw from the battle Arso and his insurgents lead the enemy in pursuit to a place near Gjugjevitsa where an ambush was prepared by 350 insurgents from Gorna and Dolna Kopachka. Then just as the Ottomans received more reinforcements from the Kichevo garrison and from the Bashi Bazuks, 150 more insurgents, lead by Jordan Piperkata and Dimitar Dechev, arrived and joined the battle.

Unprepared for a long battle the insurgents soon ran out of ammunition and the firefight turned into a vicious hand to hand massacre as the Macedonian insurgents threw themselves at the enemy, armed with only daggers and knives. But as luck would have it, one of the Macedonian insurgents killed the enemy commander responsible for directing the battle and during the confusion many of the insurgents broke through the enemy lines and managed to escape. About 700 Macedonian insurgents participated in this 12 hour battle leaving behind 30 dead and many wounded. On the Ottoman side more than 1,500 soldiers and Bashi Bazuks participated in the battle with 120 dead and many wounded. When the battle was over the Ottomans declared it a defeat and the army retreated to Kichevo while the Bashi Bazuks fled to the forest in hiding.

After failing to win in Kichevo, the Ottomans turned their attention to Poreche Region. On August 8th, 1903 2,500 Ottoman soldiers and about 1,000 Bashi Bazuks made their way into Rabetin Kol where they were met by 100 Macedonian insurgents lead by Vancho

Serbakov. Just as the insurgents approached the enemy near Poduvach in Cholaitsa Mountain, the Ottomans opened fire with their artillery forcing the insurgents to retreat back into the hills. A vicious battle ensued but without the use of its artillery the enemy was unable to break the barrier and its advance was halted. When the battle was over the Ottomans retreated leaving behind 80 dead. The Insurgents lost 12 fighters.

Frustrated, during its retreat the Ottoman army burned down the villages Orlantsi and Rabetino leaving behind 20 women, children and old men dead. After their retreat, the Ottomans stayed away from this region for at least a month. During this time the Macedonian civilian population prepared special camps in secluded areas where they remained for the duration of the Uprising. While living in the safety of the camps, the civilians served as the main providers of food, clothing, weapons and medical supplies for the local insurgents who were fighting in the Uprising.

The village Dushegubitsa was attacked by Ottoman soldiers on August 29th, 2003 as part of an Ottoman offensive against the Kichevo Uprising. A detachment of 600 Ottoman soldiers was dispatched from Debar to Dolna Reka to clean up the insurgency there when it was met by the Dushegubitsa village Cheta. A battle ensued and lasted about four hours before insurgent reinforcements arrived and pushed the Ottomans back. This was indeed a great battle where a tiny village Cheta consisting of inexperienced men and women pitted against an entire Ottoman detachment of battle hardened soldiers. But thanks to the timely arrival of Luka Dzherov's district Cheta and the Laftentsi village Cheta, a disaster was avoided.

After their defeat the Ottomans quickly retreated leaving behind 30 dead. The insurgents experienced no deaths and only a few wounded. The next day the Ottomans came back and tried to invade the region again but this time the insurgents were prepared with an ambush at Bistra Mountain. Unfortunately due to an accidental rifle shot their plans were revealed and the Ottomans turned back before falling into the trap.

A few days later, on September 2nd, 1903, the Ottoman army returned. This time it brought 2 battalions from Debar numbering 2,000 soldiers. In its third attempt to enter the region the Ottomans divided their forces into two groups. One group was to attack and capture Dushegubitsa while the second was to simultaneously attack and capture Lafchani. Outnumbered and suffering from exhaustion, the Dushegubitsa village Chetas decided to retreat and head for the village Klenoets. The Lafchani village Cheta, consisting of 75 insurgents, decided to stay on and fight. Unable to resist the numerically superior Ottoman army the Lafchani insurgents also decided to abandon their positions and retreated to Podvis. The second Ottoman group then burned down the village Lafchani and retreated to Kichevo and Debar. The first Ottoman group meanwhile, invaded Dushegubitsa and burned the village down and then headed towards Kleonets in pursuit of the insurgents. Several battles ensued before the Ottomans retreated.

A stronger Ottoman counter-offensive in the Kichevo and Poreche Regions did not begin until September 8th, 1903 when 10 Ottoman battalions arrived with 7,000 soldiers and 4 mountain cannons. The army positioned itself to attack the region from four different sides. On the opposing side, leading the defense were vojvodas Mihail Josifov, Pesho Radev and Kocho Kurshumot with 200 insurgents. The fight lasted two days before the Ottomans broke through the Kichevo defenses and burned down the refugee camps along with the villages Pateets, Svetorache, Kozichino and Rabetin. After that the Ottomans took measures to suppress the Uprising in Poreche by sending an attack force of 1,500 soldiers accompanied by a large number of Bashi Bazuks which attacked and robbed the villages Tsreshovo, Belitsa and Vir.

By September 17th, 1903 most Uprisings in the neighbouring districts had been squelched and more Ottoman forces were becoming available to carry out new offensives in the still liberated regions. By then Ottoman forces were arriving from Kichevo, Debar, Ohrid and Demir Hisar and they were all headed for Gorna and Dolna Kopachka.

Sensing the enormity of the force arriving in the region, General Headquarters ordered the insurgents to back off and evacuate

themselves prompting the Ottomans to go on a three day wild goose chase.

Unable to finish the job, the Ottomans left disappointed but came back to Dolna and Gorna Kopachka on October 1st, 1903 and robbed and burned down several villages.

By October 13th the Uprising in these regions had been squelched and with the exception of some garrisons, most of the Ottoman army returned to its bases in Kichevo and Debar.

All in all when it was all over, it was estimated that the Ottomans lost 600 soldiers. On the Macedonian side, 100 insurgents were killed, 12 villages were burned down, 550 houses were destroyed and 204 civilians killed. (Vanche Stojchev. "Military History of Macedonia". Military academy. Skopje, 2004. Page 327)

The Village Gjavato was of no extraordinary importance except that it was situated in the Bitola-Smilevo vicinity near the crossroads leading to Bitola, Prespa, Resen and Ohrid. Being in the way of the Ottoman communication and transportation corridor, Gjavato was attacked many times during the Ilinden Uprising. The first attack took place on August 3rd, 1903. Ottoman forces heading for the Smilevo Region attacked the village in an attempt to dislodge the insurgents so that they would not interfere with their Smilevo campaign. The village was defended by 150 insurgents lead by Gjorgij Sugarev and assisted by vojvodas Stefanov and Tale. Realizing that they were no match for Bahtier Pasha's several thousand finest Ottoman soldiers, the insurgents, after some short resistance, yielded and allowed the enemy to pass.

The second wave of attacks manifested themselves on August 12th, 1903 when the Ottomans began their counter-offensive in the region. This time the village was first attacked by a large group of Bashi Bazuks from the villages Kazhani and Dolentsi. Fortunately the Chetas lead by Boris Sarafov and Gijorgij Monchev happened to be in the vicinity and together with Sugarev's Cheta the insurgents were able to repel the attack. Unable to break the impasse the Ottomans sent in the artillery which forced the insurgents and much of the civilian population to fly to the forest.

Two days later, just as the people had returned to their homes, the attack, as part of the counter-offensive to suppress the Uprising in the Smilevo Region, was renewed in Gjavato resulting in a massive fight. In an attempt to slow down the enemy advance Sugarev ordered his most experienced fighters to take a frontal position near Prevarets as a first line of defense for Gjavato. A battle ensued and the front line insurgents resisted as long as possible before retreating into the village and taking positions in the sturdiest houses. As the Ottomans advanced on the village the insurgents managed to repel the first wave of attacks. Being unable to encircle the entire village, due to lack of sufficient forces, the Ottomans concentrated their second wave of attacks on two fronts, east and west. Still unable to break the impasse, the Ottomans ordered re-enforcements from Bitola. During the lull, Sugarev evacuated the civilians and ordered his insurgents to continue to fight. Unfortunately the re-enforcements arrived equipped with cannons and by dusk the enemy had turned the village into dust. Being familiar with the terrain however, Sugarev and his insurgents had no problem slipping through the Ottoman encirclement in the dark of night and escaping to Bigla Mountain.

----- The Demit Hisar, Prilep and Margara Uprisings

The Demir Hisar Revolutionary District encompassed the region covered by Ilinka Mountain, Velmeshka Mountain, Sprostranska Mountain, Baba Mountain, Ljuben Mountain and part of the Krushevo valley. The population in this district consisted of about 12,800 people, predominantly Macedonian with only a few Albanian villages. It was estimated that about 10% of the population actively participated in the Uprising.

Taking part in the Uprising in top leadership roles as vojvodas in this District included were Jodan Silijanov – Piperkata from the village Koritsa, Dimitar Dechev, Priest Kuzman from Babino and Hristo Pashov.

Preparations for the Uprising in this District began immediately after the Smilevo Congress and by the time the Uprising began the people were ready to fight. While the larger Chetas, including that of Jordan

Piperkata, were tasked with attacking the Ottoman garrisons during the Uprising, the smaller Chetas were dispatched to incapacitate roads, cut telegraph wires and destroy bridges and other facilities between Kichevo and Bitola. Jordan Piperkata and his 150 insurgents took on and destroyed the Ottoman strongholds in Ukjumat, Murdirluk and Pribiltsi. After burning down the Ottoman strongholds and liberating the local villages, Jordan Piperkata and his fighters left for Kichevo Region.

After the liberation of Krushevo and the establishment of the Krushevo Republic, Macedonian authority was extended to Kichevo and parts of Demir Hisar Region. Jordan Piperkata was tasked with providing security for the region but as soon as Bahtiar Pasha advanced towards Kichevo Jordan Piperkata's insurgents were instructed to open fire. However, being vastly outnumbered, Piperkata wisely withdrew to save his forces and retreated to the hills. Being unopposed the Ottomans entered Tser, killed all its inhabitants, including women and children and burned down 200 houses. The next day Piperkata and his insurgents returned to investigate and help those in need but the Ottomans were waiting for them and they fell into an ambush. The Ottomans quickly encircled the area and began to tighten the ring. Fortunately reinforcements from Svinishta arrived just in time and succeeded in breaching the encirclement allowing Piperkata's Cheta to escape to Sprostani. When the Cheta arrived at its destination the villagers poured in to jubilantly greet it but when they found out Jordan Piperkata was not among his insurgents the crowds went silent. Jordan Piperkata was killed in battle during the escape.

Upon finding this out, some of the villagers traveled to the scene of the battle, retrieved the bodies of their fallen heroes and returned them to the village Velmentsi where they gave them a proper burial. Many attended the funerals and the entire district was in mourning for days, mourning their favourite vojvoda who for years had defended them from the Ottomans. But even the dead were not allowed to rest as the funeral was interrupted by the arrival of a large Ottoman force. They disrupted the insurgents from saying their final words to their leader and forced them to take refuge in Sprstranska Mountain where they remained for a while.

On August 15th, 1903, as part of the Ottoman general offensive, a column of 2,000 Ottoman soldiers were spotted approaching Strugovska Mountain on its way to Slepche. The local Cheta did its best to intercept the Ottomans but was quickly put down by the numerically superior Ottoman force which then burned down the village Slepche, including its old monastery.

Following the first column of Ottoman soldiers, another column of 1,000 was spotted coming from Gjatovo. So as not to provoke a firefight, the local Chetas, including that of Boris Sarafov, withdrew their force and allowed the Ottomans to enter the village Babino unobstructed, in hopes that it would not be harmed. Unfortunately the Ottomans did not feel sympathetic that day and robbed the village and burned it down anyway.

While the people tried to recuperate from the shock a third column of 1,000 Ottoman soldiers was spotted marching on the Bitola-Kichevo road. Unprovoked they attacked and burned down several villages including Sopotnitsa and Rakinitsa.

A fourth column of another 1,000 Ottoman soldiers was spotted marching on the Kichevo to Belitsa road and as the days passed they pillaged and burned villages indiscriminately. The columns eventually came together on August 21, 1903 at the village Slp. Convinced that they had destroyed the Uprising the soldiers retreated to Kichevo and Bitola from whence they came.

Unbeknownst to the Ottomans most Chetas were not completely destroyed and as the insurgents fled to the Demir Hisar mountainside to hide they formed a sizable force, numbering over one thousand. Unfortunately as the number of insurgents increased so did the chances of them being discovered and as they waited for further orders from the General Headquarters an Ottoman force numbering over 10,000 infantry soldiers and Bashi Bazuks, lead by Bahtiar Pasha, was dispatched in pursuit. Equipped with 14 mountain cannons and 4 cavalry squadrons the Ottoman force was divided into 4 columns and on September 17th, 1903 began its second offensive against the Macedonian insurgents.

As all columns headed for the Demir Hisar mountainside, the first column started out from Smilevo and moved towards Slepche, the second column left from Strugovska Mountain and headed towards Laskovo, Tserovo, and Virono, the third column started out from Resen and headed towards Tsrn Vrv and the fourth column began its campaign in Ohrid Region and moved towards Gol Vrv and Plake.

As this massive Ottoman force began to tighten its noose on the Bitola Revolutionary District, General Headquarters quickly scrambled to assemble its forces and take the defensive. A force was 300 insurgents was ordered to defend the General Headquarters, which at that time was located on Mount Bigla, right in the middle of the Ottoman encirclement. Sugarev's Cheta, consisting of about 250 insurgents, was dispatched to the southern side of Bigla Mountain to head off the Ottoman advance. A third Cheta consisting of local Demir Hisar insurgents was positioned to defend Vorovsko and Sloeshtitsa. The Chetas stayed in constant contact with each other and with General Headquarters through couriers who reported the enemy's activities and movements. Just as the 19 kilometer Ottoman encirclement, stretching from the village Boishta to the village Sloeshtitsa began to close in, command of all the 970 or so insurgent forces was taken over by the District leadership and orders were given to open fire on the enemy.

Outnumbered 12 to 1, the insurgents initiated the attack and a severe battle broke out all throughout Bigla Mountain, lasting several hours. Unable to stand the pounding of the enemy artillery the insurgents in the lower half of the mountain left their positions and retreated into the forest, regrouping at the rear of the General headquarters.

Resistance free, one of the columns from the Ottoman force continued to advance up the mountain until it was again attacked by insurgents at the Sloeshtitsa Slope. The loud roar and sudden appearance of the insurgents stopped the Ottoman advance forcing the soldiers to take defensive positions. A firefight broke out and a stalemate was quickly reached. To break the stalemate the Ottomans brought their artillery and again began to pound the insurgents. Unable to withstand the pressure the insurgents abandoned their positions and retreated back into the woods splitting their forces into

several columns. One column of about 200 insurgents went directly to Tserovo Mountain and took a defensive position in the rocky terrain. The other columns that had retreated to Virovo and Boishka Mountains later joined the Tserovo force just as the Ottomans began to concentrate their attacks. A stalemate was reached before the day was over, which would have prompted the Ottomans to order artillery attacks the next day. Instead of waiting it out, the insurgents took the offensive and attacked the Ottomans in the dark of night punching a hole in their defenses.

After breaching the Ottoman encirclement the insurgents organized themselves into three groups and escaped. One group consisting of the General Headquarters escaped to Boishta and Smilevo, another group escaped to Tserovo Mountain and the third escaped to Virovo.

During the battle, which lasted all day and through the evening, 78 Ottomans soldiers and 17 Macedonian insurgents were killed and 11 Macedonian insurgents were wounded. When it was over the Ottomans returned to their garrisons and the insurgents returned to Demir Hisar to regroup. Unfortunately with the Uprising in decline the insurgent force in Demic Hisar was disbanded and by the end of 1903 everyone was sent home.

The Prilep Region, at the start of the 1903 Uprising, supported 38,000 residents of whom 35,000 were Macedonians and the rest were Ottomans, Albanians, Vlachs and Roma. Of the 38,000, 17,000 lived in the city of Prilep.

During the preparations for the Uprising the Prilep District was divided into three Regions and further subdivided into thirteen centers each equipped with a small Cheta of 10 to 15 insurgents. Since the region was not prepared for the Uprising, the first priority of the Chetas was to help mobilize the villagers, recruit new insurgents, acquire medical supplies, form intelligence networks, carry out training and procure weapons, food, clothing and other supplies.

As a result of their activities, the Chetas managed to recruit 600 more insurgents but unfortunately there were only 500 rifles in reserve and not sufficient ammunition to properly arm all the men.

The Bitola Revolutionary District did help out but not sufficiently to develop a force strong enough to tackle the Headquarters of the Ottoman 7th Cavalry brigade located in Prilep, consisting of four squadrons, a battalion of reservists and four other battalions numbering 4,500 Ottoman soldiers and officers in total.

Since a direct attack on the Prilep Ottoman strongholds was out of the question, the regional and village Chetas were ordered to initiate the Uprising using diversionary actions which included destroying bridges, cutting telegraph wires, attacking the Bey's estates, etc.

During their operations the Chetas not only avoided direct confrontation with the Ottoman army but between August 2nd and 8th carried out missions in Skochivir, Grbalovo, Brod, Ribartsi, Novatsi and other villages. They managed to damage the roads to Bitola, Krushevo and Veles and to destroy the railway station in Gradsko. After all these successes the leadership decided to take its chances and attack the 300 soldier strong Ottoman garrisons in Vitolishte. For that purpose smaller but well armed and trained Chetas were ordered to gather together in the neighbouring village Zhiovo and combine forces. The combined Chetas lead by Tole Pasha and Dimitar Andonov were split into several columns. The first column was to attack from the east and the second from the south while the others acted as reserves. The date of the attack was chosen to be August 12th, 1903 and was kept a secret until the final minutes when a rebel accidentally fired a shot as the Chetas were approaching the Ottoman barracks.

A firefight broke out and the insurgents continued their pressure, with Andonov's Cheta taking positions on the hill above the village forcing the Ottomans to retreat into the barracks while Tole Pasha's insurgents kept up the pressure on the buildings where the gendarmerie was housed. Unable to take the garrison the insurgents retreated to the Kuchkin Kamen Peak on Nidzhe Mountain leaving 16 Ottoman soldiers dead without any losses to themselves.

Discouraged by their failed attempt the Prilep Leadership decided to disband the new Chetas and sent the insurgents back to their old Chetas and continued their partisan style operations mainly in the mountains.

Prilep Region is the crossroad connecting Western Macedonia with Skopje and Solun. The railway connecting Gradsko and Veles to Krushevo, Brod and Kichevo also passed through Prilep which for the most part carried thousands of Ottoman soldiers from Uroshevats to Vels, Gradsko and Prilep. Unfortunately, perhaps as an oversight by the Macedonian leadership at General Headquarters, this strategically important part of the country was never secured and was allowed to operate uninterrupted.

The small Chetas continued to concentrate their operations in the mountains until August 19th, 1903 when an Ottoman force attacked and encircled the village Paralovo on Mount Selechka trapping Petso Zhelezarov's Cheta inside. The attack however was slowed long enough by the local Cheta for Todor Zlatkov and Kole Mariovets's Cheti to arrive with reinforcements and punch a hole in the encirclement. This too was an unequal battle bidding 250 insurgents against 400 Ottoman soldiers but the insurgents fought hard and saved the day. Two insurgents and twenty-six Ottomans were killed in this battle.

Aching from the sting, a few days later the Ottomans sent a larger force numbering 7,000 soldiers and again clashed with the insurgents, this time in the village Dunje. Vojvodi Peshkov, Zlatkov and Zhelezarov with a combined force of 350 insurgents were surrounded but still managed to punch a hole through the Ottoman encirclement and escaped with only 20 dead. The Ottomans lost 160 during this battle. Unfortunately as the number of Macedonian fighters dwindled the Ottoman forces continued to grow making battles more and more difficult to win.

One of the last major battles to be fought in Prilep Region was on September 16th, 1903 when Nikola Peshkov fought an unequal battle with the Ottomans on the slopes of Dren Mountain near the village Belovoditsa and lost 35 insurgents and his own life.

One of the most brutal and significant battles ever fought by the Prilep Revolutionary District during the Ilinden Uprising was the battle of Margara, fought near the village Chanishte, Moriovo Region. As the Uprising was winding down in the southern parts of

Macedonia the insurgents were being pushed northward and were concentrated in certain regions creating serious opposition to the Ottoman offensive. As it happened, in the beginning of October, there was a concentration of insurgents on the move in the Moriovo Region. Among the Cheta leaders present there were Lazar Pop Trajkov and Ivan Popov with 116 insurgents, Gjorche Petrov with 14 insurgents and 10 insurgents from the remnants of Tole Pasha's Cheta lead by Milan Zvezdov. The insurgents numbered 140 in total and were pitted against a force of 5,500 well armed Ottoman soldiers.

The battle began at seven in the morning just after sunrise on October 2nd, 1903 when an Ottoman force was spotted just above Margara attempting to surprise the rebel camp near the village Chanishte. The moment the Ottomans were spotted a security unit of 20 insurgents, lead by Iovan Ivanovich (a Montenegrin) was dispatched and set up positions to intercept. Vasil Kotev's Cheta meanwhile took up position at a nearby hill. Luka Ivanov took charge of the operation and ordered the insurgents not to fire until the enemy was within 200 paces. Surprised by the sudden burst of fire the Ottoman force quickly retreated and took up a defensive position. A stalemate was reached as the two sides continued to fire at each other. Many Ottomans were killed during the initial attack. About an hour later the Ottomans received reinforcements and again began the offensive, this time in a much denser line. When the insurgents stopped firing it was a sure sign that they had fled. Confident that the insurgents were gone the dense Ottoman line continued its advance only to find out it was a trick. This time the Ottomans received even heavier losses.

About six hours later the Ottoman force was again reinforced and ordered to encircle the entire battle ground. Through the call of trumpets all Ottoman units were ordered to attack simultaneously from all sides but to their surprise the insurgents kept fighting with renewed vigor. In their arsenal the insurgents also employed grenades, dynamite, boulders and even javelins, swords and knives. It was going to be a fight to the end.

By the evening the Ottomans realized that it was not going to be an easy victory so they retreated for the night.

The next day a bigger Ottoman force arrived fully equipped with artillery only to find the insurgents had left.

The battle of Margara, the greatest and last of the Ilinden Uprising great battles, pitted an insurgent force of 140 Macedonians for 12 hours against a superior force of 5,500 Ottoman soldiers and proved that under the right conditions, with good discipline and a willingness to fight, the scales against the Ottomans could have been tipped.

----- The Ohrid and Resen Uprisings

The Ohrid Uprising Revolutionary District, which included the Ohrid and Struga Regions, consisted of 111 villages housing a total population of 64,000 residents. Of those, 46,000 were Macedonians, 7,000 Albanians, 6,000 Ottomans 3,000 Muslim Macedonians and 2,000 Vlachs. (Vanche Stojchev. “Military History of Macedonia”. Military academy. Skopje, 2004. Page 336)

Even though the Ohrid Revolutionary District leadership had concluded that Ohrid was not ready to participate in the Uprising militarily, it did not want to go against the National leadership’s decision to start an early Uprising, so after the Smilevo congress it began intensive preparations. Tome Davidov, a trained military officer, and his Cheta were dispatched to the region in March 1903 and were given responsibility for organizing training camps and acquiring food supplies, weapons and ammunition. Unfortunately, as luck would have it, soon after their arrival, his Cheta were surprised by a strong Ottoman force near the village Rbeni and in a pitch battle, Tome was killed and 150 of his insurgents were captured. The incident severely hampered preparations but soon afterwards Hristo Uzunov, just released from prison, took over the operation and brought it back on track.

Initially, the Ohrid Uprising Revolutionary District was divided into four Regions consisting of Debar with 18 villages, Lake with 37 villages, Malesija with 10 villages and Drimkol with 18 villages. By mid-May 1903 it was re-organized into six Regions consisting of Debar with 12 villages led by Smile Vojdanov, Malesija with 10

villages led by Tase Hristov, Dolna Debartsa with 23 villages led by Dejan Dimitrov, Lake with 19 villages led by Nikola Mitrov, Debar Drimkol with 7 villages led by Marko Pavlev, and Struga Drimkol with 11 villages led by Jakim Alulov. Recruitment and training began immediately after the re-organization and was conducted underground and with utmost secrecy.

On July 23rd, 1903 the General Headquarters announced the actual date of the Uprising, prompting the Ohrid District to set up its regional headquarters in the mountains and to prepare plans for combat. The Uprising was to begin in three regions in Ohrid; Gorna Debartsa, Dolna Debartsa and Lake. Uzunov made it clear to all the District Vojvoda's that the aim of the Uprising was to follow Gotse Delchev's prescribed methods of fighting which included first and foremost saving the population and second prolonging the struggle by carrying out Partisan style campaigns.

Their first task was to evacuate the population from the areas where battles were expected to take place. Then the Chetas were to attack and subdue the various Ottoman garrisons and strongholds in the Ohrid vicinity and finally the insurgents were to pursue and eliminate representatives of the Ottoman authorities and their collaborators; including tax collectors. It was prohibited to attack the Ottoman civilian population. Various posters were put up explaining the Organization's aims and that this was an attack on the Ottoman system; not on the people.

On July 28th, 1903 the district vojvodas held a meeting with the village leaders and local vojvodas in order to inform them of the Uprising date and of their plans for the Uprising. Unfortunately, as it turned out, one of the leaders from the village Velmej was also an Ottoman spy and the plans were revealed to the Ottoman authorities. Being discovered before the Uprising began ruined the surprise attack on the enemy and placed the insurgents at a disadvantage. As a result, events in Debartsa Drimkol and Struga Drimkol did not develop as planned and the village Chetas were not mobilized. Of all the Chetas from Struga Drimkol that were prepared to join the Uprising, only the Regional Cheta became active and participated in various battles outside of its territory. Because its support was needed at various other places, the Regional Cheta was split into two

units, one commanded by Lazar Dimitrov and Marko Pavlev and the other by Milosh Krstev. While the first Cheta was tasked with cutting the telegraph lines connecting Debar to Struga, the second Cheta was sent to recruit insurgents for the village Chetas.

While this was going on, Malesija Region came under attack and Pavlev and his Cheta were dispatched to provide assistance, thus abandoning the mission to cut telegraph lines.

Because of the sudden and unexpected attack, the Malesija Region too deviated from its original plans and instead of providing support to neighbouring regions it ended up fighting for its own survival. Unprepared for a fight, the civilian population suffered the most.

On August 3rd, 1903 a Bashi-Buzuk group of 300 from the village Zhupa appeared in the region near Kale in Seltse and was confronted by Pavlev's Regional Cheta. A vicious battle broke out and unable to withstand the pressure the insurgents retreated. Then another battle broke out between Tase Hristov's Regional Cheta and a regular Ottoman army unit of 200. Hristov's insurgents fought hard but after the Bashi-Buzuks attacked them from the rear, the Cheta retreated to Debar.

In other parts of Malesija Region, the plan was for the village Chetas from Lazheni, Draslaitsa and Tashmaruninishta to go to the foot of Karaorman Mountain and, on August 1st, 1903, meet up with the Chetas from Struga Drimkol and leave together for Gorna and Dolna Debartsa. While the 210 insurgents from the three villages arrived on time, 80 being unarmed, the ones from Struga did not show at all. Then, after a three day wait, the village Chetas attacked the Ottoman garrison of 100 stationed in the village Velishta. Unfortunately the attack was unsuccessful and was quickly repelled by the Ottomans with assistance from the local Bashi-Bazouks. The insurgents then withdrew to Tashmaruninishta where they were followed and attacked by Ottomans and Bashi-Bazouks. A vicious battle ensued and lasted until the evening of August 3rd, 1903. By then the Ottomans had dispatched reinforcements from Ohrid numbering 800 soldiers but before they could engage in battle the insurgents withdrew and retreated to Karaorman. When it was over, 25 insurgents and 80 Ottoman soldiers lay dead and wounded. After

this battle the insurgents went to Gorna Debartsa, signifying the end of the Uprising in Malesija Region.

In the Gorna Debartsa Region, in the meantime, 330 insurgents from Dolna Debartsa and Malesija arrived to join forces with Gorna Dabartsa and the surrounding villages and to attack Izdeglavje. Smile Vojdanov, the Regional leader, was given responsibility for mobilizing the 232 insurgent village Chetas in the six surrounding villages and to ultimately lead them in the attack. The aim was to approach Izdeglavje from two fronts, surround it and destroy its garrison. While the Chetas were attacking from the outside two village Chetas, one from Mramor and the other from Slatina, were tasked with simultaneously attacking the towers in Osashani, Ozdoleni and Slatinski Chiflik. The insurgents were successful in burning down the Osashani and Ozdoleni towers but failed to destroy the Slatinski Chiflik because the attack was expected and as the garrison moved its defenses forward the rear was reinforced with about 2,000 fresh Ottoman troops from Ohrid and Debar including Bashi-Bazouks from Pesochani. Unable to withstand the pressure the insurgents withdrew their forces to Rbeni and Laktinje. The Ottomans did not pursue and instead burned Ozdoleni to the ground.

In other places in Dolna Debartsa, on August 2nd, 1903, Vojvoda Gurko Sadulov mobilized the village Chetas from a number of surrounding villages in Struga Field and conducted demolition operations including the cutting of the Struga to Ohrid telegraph lines and demolishing the Ohrid to Struga road. Unfortunately their operations too were cut short as the enemy set an ambush and attacked and killed most of the insurgents including their leader Gurko Sadulov. During the same day a unit of 200 Ottoman soldiers attacked the three village Chetas from Brezhani, Belchishte and Velmej. The Chetas were forced to retreat but came back the next day and pushed the Ottomans back to Vemej where they remained under siege for the next three days. During the siege two insurgents were killed and six wounded. The Ottomans had five dead and three wounded.

While this was going on the Cheta from Belchishte, consisting of 140 insurgents, attacked the Ottoman garrison in Sirula from three

sides but unfortunately the attack was anticipated and the insurgents were forced to retreat.

In the Lake Region in the meantime, the plan called for defensive and diversionary attacks. On August 2nd, 1903 the regional Cheta led by Argir Marinov was sent on a mission to cut telegraph wires and destroy the Ohrid to Resen road. The rest of the village Chetas led by regional vojvoda Nikola Mitrev were dispatched to carry out diversionary missions on the Ohrid to Pogradets road. Unfortunately unbeknownst to the insurgents, the Ottomans were aware of their plans and anticipated their moves thus ambushing Mitrev's Cheta in a surprise attack between the villages Elshani and Konsko. Five insurgents were lost during the ambush but they managed to successfully cut the Ohrid to Resen telegraph lines. After fleeing the scene the insurgents regrouped and took defensive positions outside the village Trpejtsa.

Marinov's Cheta was successful in blocking the Ohrid to Resen road and as a bonus managed to capture a convoy carrying food supplies.

Between August 2nd and August 6th, 1903 the Macedonian insurgents managed to liberate Gorna and Dolna Debartsa as well as part of Lake Region thus ending the first phase of the Uprising in the Ohrid Revolutionary District.

In the lull that followed the Regional Headquarters began to prepare for the next phase of fighting by tasking its forces with gathering provisions and war material. A number of checkpoints, shelters and warehouses were established in various mountainous regions in preparation for prolonged partisan-like warfare. A hospital with the capacity to handle 30 people was also established along with a kitchen and bakery well stocked with medical supplies and food. Hristo Angelov, a graduate of medicine, was appointed as the doctor who not only treated wounded insurgents but also sick villagers.

Given the proximities of the sub-regions liberated, Regional Headquarters on August 9th, 1903 decided to split itself into two headquarters. One, led by Uzunov, Tsvetinov and Zlatarev was established to lead the forces in Dolna Debartsa and Lake sub-

Regions. The second, led by Ketskarov, Chakrov and Dimitrov was established near Gorna Debartsa.

Unfortunately, as it happened in other regions, the Ottomans, before commencing their offensive, bolstered their forces with significant reinforcements both with trained soldiers and with Bashi-Bazouks and began their attacks. As in other regions they were not simply attacks to recover lost territories, but assaults on the entire population with aims to eradicate it. The Ottomans burned houses, killed civilians and robbed and destroyed their properties. The insurgents fought back with all their might using every technique known to them but it was futile. As the number of insurgents declined the number of Ottomans kept increasing and the battles were moved out of the villages and into the mountains and campsites. Then on August 30th, 1903 a regular Ottoman army numbering about 3,000 soldiers accompanied by Bashi-Bazouks began to besiege the refugee camps. At the time these camps were sheltering over 2,000 refugees from 18 different villages from the Dolna Debartsa and Lake sub-Regions and were protected by 117 insurgents. A fierce battle ensued and lasted the entire day. Unfortunately vastly outnumbered and outgunned, the insurgents could not hold out and the battle turned into a massacre of women and children. About 190 were killed, mostly women and children and every female of young age was raped and dishonoured. Forty one insurgents were killed and 200 Ottoman soldiers were lost to the enemy. All the buildings that stored food and other supplies were looted and destroyed.

After this the civilians in Dolna Debartsa and Lake began to slowly return to their homes only to find them in ruins. After the disastrous battle insurgent activities continued to decline and completely ceased by the beginning of October. Those insurgents who remained active, including Hristo Uzunov, left for Demir Hisar.

The less devastated insurgents in Gorna Debartsa continued the struggle for a little longer but they too eventually were forced to flee for their lives and escaped to Albania and from there to Montenegro. Hristo Uzunov returned to Ohrid and shared his people’s fate.

During the Uprising period from August 2nd to October 1903, 42 villages were burned down, 2,064 houses, 24 churches and 18 schools were completely destroyed in the Ohrid Revolutionary District. According to Hristo Uzunov, 483 people were killed of whom 116 were insurgents and the rest were civilians mostly women and children. (Vanche Stojchev. "Military History of Macedonia". Military academy. Skopje, 2004. Page 342)

After the Smilevo Congress, the Resen Uprising Revolutionary District with a population of 28,000 was sub-divided into two independent regions, Gorna and Dolna Prespa. Gorna Prespa was led by Slavejko Arsov, Dragan Petkov and Aleksandar Panajotov, while Dolna Prespa was led by Nikola Kokarev, Veljan Iliev, Naum Fotev and Angel Andreev.

Gorna Prespa Region consisted of the city Resen as the center and 32 surrounding villages. Dolna Prespa Region was made up of 43 villages with the village German as its center. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the population in the Resen Uprising Revolutionary District was Macedonian and the rest were Vlachs, Albanians, Ottomans and others.

Due to some prior successes in the struggle against the Ottomans, the people of Resen were ready to follow their leaders. In January 1903 Arsov and his Cheta engaged the Ottoman army and the Bashi-Bazouks in the village Izbishte in a great battle and won a victory. Following that more battles were fought and won thus giving the insurgents some reputation as good fighters and gaining the trust of the people. When the call to arms came, many volunteered for all sorts of duties including stocking food, clothing and other assets necessary for a prolonged struggle. Even many of those who had gone to work abroad as pechalbari answered the call and over 1,000 returned to prepare for the ultimate fight.

Purely for the purpose of better organization, the Dolna Prespa Region was further divided into two sub-regions, one covering the villages south of Podmochani to Dolno Dupeni, led by Valjan Iliev, and the second covering the villages near Mala Prespa Lake, led by Angel Andreev. Nikola Kokarev was appointed leader of both.

Just before the Uprising began, the Resen Revolutionary District was visited by Damjan Gruev and Boris Sarafov who offered some advice for the division of the forces and on how to commence the uprising. Having only 900 insurgents at their disposal, the local leaders were encouraged to recruit more and subdivide their forces so that they could simultaneously strike several targets. Village Chetas were also formed and charged with defending their villages.

On July 18, 1903 regional head Slavejko Arsov held a meeting in the village Bolno with the Resen city elders to convince them to prepare for an uprising inside the city but the idea was opposed. Failing that, the regional leader convinced them to at least help the rebellion by donating medicines, food, etc. and establish an intelligence service inside the city.

About a week prior to the Uprising, the District received its final orders and a decision was taken to strike at the mudirluk in Nakolets first where 200 Ottoman soldiers were stationed. The plan was for several Chetas to simultaneously attack on August 2nd, 1903 from various directions. Unfortunately not all the Chetas made it to their destination on time and left a gap for the Ottomans to escape. Having unexpectedly escaped, the additional Ottoman force was able to aid the Ottoman Beys in the village Slivitsa and to contribute to the defeat of the insurgents in other areas. Having freed Slivitsa the Beys then participated in the defense of Nakolets which lasted two days. A band of Bashi-Bazouks from the village Krani joined the Nakolets battle and drove the insurgents to retreat.

The Mala Prespa Lake sub-Region leadership in the meantime held a meeting on August 2nd, 1903 in the village Rudari and developed a plan of attack which called for attacking the village Ppli where 150 Ottoman soldiers were stationed. Village Chetas from Esvika, Oromnik, Bukovik and Drenovo on one side, and Chetas from the villages Rmbi, German, Medovo, Shtrkovo and Rudari on the other, with a total force of 200 insurgents, were to approach secretly and at their leader's signal attack simultaneously from all directions. Because of the close proximity of the Albanian armed population living in those villages extreme caution needed to be exercised. Unfortunately before the plan could be put into action, the Ottomans became aware of it and took precautions. Having lost the advantage

of a surprise attack, the insurgent leaders decided to withdraw their forces and retreated to the village German where they held another meeting to decide what to do.

Despite their position of disadvantage, the leaders decided to carry out some attacks anyway. The first attack was staged against the village Shaovtsi during the night of August 8th, 1903, but without success. The next attack was carried out against the village Bostandzhiovtsi on August 8th, 1903 which was also unsuccessful. Both villages were well armed and well defended not only by the Ottomans but also by the Albanians who lived there.

The plan to commence the Uprising in Gorna Prespa was with an attack on the city Resen. To finalize preparations, the insurgent leaders got together in the village Bolno on August 1st, 1903. It was decided to split up the Chetas into 5 groups of 30 and commence the attack the same day. All Chetas except the one from Drmeni made it to its destination and waited for the signal to commence firing. The Drmeni Cheta was unfortunately intercepted by an Ottoman night patrol and had no choice but to open fire. The premature gunfire alerted the city authorities of the imminent attack and to prevent a counter attack the rest of the Chetas opened fire starting multiple battles. The firefight lasted 45 minutes before the Ottomans regrouped and had the Chetas driven out of the city.

While the main Cheta was battling the Ottomans in the city, several village Chetas from Izbishta, Kriveni, Krushe and Zlatari attacked Ottoman patrols but with little success. The Ottomans, with help from the Bashi-Bazouks, quickly took the upper hand and not only drove the insurgents out but in revenge also burned down the villages Krushe and Leva Reka. The village Chetas from Evla and Gorno Dupeni with about 50 insurgents attacked the Ottoman stronghold in Petrino which was guarding the Ohrid to Resen road. Skirmishes were also sparked in the villages Tsarev Dvor, Drmeni and Podmochani. Battles continued for the next couple of days and most of Prespa Revolutionary District, except for the City Resen, Nakolets and Ppli, were liberated. The failure to liberate these places was mainly due to treachery where the plans of the insurgents were secretly revealed to the enemy.

No sooner had the insurgents liberated the region than the Ottomans sent reinforcements. Late in the day on August 3rd, 1903 a column of 600 enemy soldiers and Bashi-Bazouks arrived in Resen and began surrounding villages and indiscriminately firing at the civilians. As each village fell, it was looted and houses were robbed and then burned. The general population was tortured and many women were raped and dishonoured. Each attack was concluded with the burning of the village. The worst suffering happened at the hands of the Albanians who formed a unit of 700 Bashi-Bazouks and went on a rampage robbing, beating and torturing the Macedonian population. After crossing the Devol River, these Bashi-Bazouks continued their rampage all through Nivitsi, Grazhdino, Orovo, Drenovo and other villages in the Dolna Prespa Region.

These severe attacks on the civilian population prompted many insurgents to leave their posts and join the village Chetas in an effort to save the Christian population. Unfortunately, the more the insurgents resisted the worse was the punishment on the villagers.

By August 11, 1903 almost the entire insurgence in the Resen Uprising Revolutionary District was engaged in the defense of the civilian population but without success. The Ottoman army received further reinforcements from Lerin and the massive revenge continued. Ljuboino and Brajchino were burned to the ground and as the battle moved from Brajchino to Dupeni both insurgent leaders Nikola Kokarev and Veljan Iliev were killed. The leaderless insurgents were then thrown into disarray, literally ending the Uprising in the northern part of Dolna Prespa.

In the southern part, meanwhile, the insurgents decided to stiffen the resistance and called for all available fighters to join the battles. When the Ottoman offensive began between August 23rd and 25th, 1903, near the village German, the first to arrive was the Bitola Cheta, numbering 86 insurgents, led by Aleksandar Eftimov and Ivan Kafedzhija. Joining in from Vmbelska Mountain were the Kostur Chetas, numbering 825 insurgents in total, led by Vasil Chakalarov and Pando Kljashev. Also joining the fight were about 200 local insurgents led by Andrev and Olchev. In total there were

1,100 Macedonian fighters pitted against an army of 6,000 Ottoman soldiers.

After surprising and demolishing the Bitola and German Chetas near the village Shtrkovo, the Ottoman army on August 28th, 1903 engaged the remaining Chetas near the village Rudari where several battles broke out. The results were catastrophic for the insurgency, leaving 85 insurgents dead and virtually ending the Uprising in that Region. Demoralized, both insurgents and civilians began to hastily retreat to the safety of Pelister Mountain.

After the mass exodus, the insurgents shifted their priorities from offensive to defensive tactics and concentrated their efforts on protecting the civilians and providing food and shelter for them.

Some Prespa residents made the Island of Ail into a stronghold and held out for the better part of September. But when word came that the Ottomans were about to acquire long range artillery, the Island defense leadership evacuated the island on September 20th, 1903. As the villagers began to return to their homes the insurgency quickly died down, thus concluding the August 2nd, 1903 Uprising in that district.

----- The Kostur Uprising

The Kostur Uprising Revolutionary District (now occupied by Greece) covered the south-western part of Macedonia which roughly corresponded to the administrative Kostur Caza with borders following the flow of the Bistritsa and Devol Rivers to the edges of the Gramos, Smolikina and Sarakina Mountains. The Kostur Caza was supported by a population of about 75,000 people of whom 51,000 were Macedonians and the rest were Albanians, Vlachs and Ottomans.

Revolutionary activities in the Kostur Uprising Revolutionary district increased significantly with Gotse Delchev's visit in late 1901. His extended visit and tour of the region, which lasted well into 1902, helped the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (MRO) establish revolutionary committees in almost all of the Christian populated villages.

The top leadership positions in the Kostur Uprising Revolutionary District were filled entirely with Kostur Region locals, which included the famous vojvodi Vasil Chakalarov, Pando Kljashev and Lazar Pop Trajkov, all well known to Delchev from his school days in Solun. Because of urgent circumstances, the Kostur Uprising Revolutionary District leadership wanted to begin the Uprising early and made such requests to other Regional Revolutionary Organizations.

The failed Uprising attempt in Zagoricheni by Anastas Jankov alerted the Ottoman authorities that something was happening in that region so the immediate reaction was to clamp down on the population and destroy the MRO. So rather than waiting for the Ottomans to pick them off one by one, the Kostur Revolutionary leaders requested that the Uprising begin as soon as possible. At the time there were only 1,800 Ottoman soldiers stationed in and around Kostur so it would have been a great opportunity to liberate Kostur before more troops were brought in.

In the meantime, because of the Uprising attempt at Zagoricheni, the Ottomans became aware that something was developing so they increased their searches, arrests and murders of people. Violence became an everyday occurrence with grave consequences not only for the ordinary Macedonian people but also for the future of the Uprising. All this weighed heavily in the hearts and minds of the revolutionaries, particularly on Chakalarov and Kljashev, so at the Smilevo Congress, which took place in May 1903, they not only supported an early Uprising, they demanded it.

At the Smilevo Congress it was decided that the leaders to organize and lead the Uprising in the Kostur Revolutionary District, among others, would be Vasil Chakalarov, Pando Kljashev, Lazar Pop Trajkov, Manol Rosov, Ivan Popov and Mihail Nikolov.

Immediately after the Smilevo Congress, Kostur Revolutionary District representatives organized a number of meetings that took place in the villages Dmbeni, Blatse and Ppli where the general situation was discussed and decisions were made on how to proceed with preparations for the Uprising. It was decided to divide the

Kostur Uprising Revolutionary District into 5 sub-regions, each lead by a vojvoda who in turn would report to the Regional Headquarters. As soon as the vojvoda's were appointed, preparations for recruitment, training and arming of insurgents followed. People were also placed in charge of acquiring food, clothing, medical supplies and other provisions in support of the Uprising.

While the insurgents were secretly preparing for the Uprising, the Ottomans continued to reinforce their forces and stepped up their provocation, abuse and torture of the general population. In their search for weapons, the Ottomans burned down the village Smrdesh along with the bomb making factory and grenade manufacturing workshop. A little later the villages Statitsa, Kolomnati and other surrounding villages were raided and over 100 rifles were confiscated.

So instead of waiting for General Headquarters to give a date for the Uprising, while the Ottomans were destroying Kostur Region village by village, the local Kostur Region leadership decided to retaliate. After the burning of Smrdesh, on May 31st, 1903, Chakalarov took the offensive and attacked the Ottomans near Lokma, delivering a devastating blow. Being left alone for a while, the insurgents continued with their preparations and around mid-July 1903, Chakalarov, Kljashev and Popov felt confident to take their Chetas on a tour of the various Kostur Region villages.

When news of the Uprising start date reached the Kostur Regional Headquarters, all 80 Kostur Region villages were informed in a matter of 4 to 5 hours, indicating that the Kostur Uprising Revolutionary District was ready for action. Unfortunately so were the Ottomans who had found out about the impending attacks, particularly about the one on the city of Kostur.

When the insurgents discovered that the Ottomans knew of their plans to attack the city, they quickly changed their tactics and began attacking smaller Ottoman installations. The first attack, carried out by Popov's Cheta, began in Aposkep and Zhupanoshte during the night of August 2nd, 1903 and escalated during the liberation of Klisura.

The town of Klisura, with a population of 3,400 inhabitants, is located on the Klisura Mountain curve 1,170 meters above sea level. Geographically and from a military point of view, Klisura is located in an ideal place bridging Kostur with the surrounding villages. Another good reason for the insurgents wanting to liberate Klisura was to gain control of the road that links Kostur to the central part of Macedonia which also happened to pass through Klisura. The road from Kostur leads to the east via the village Mavrovo, to the north around Nered Mountain and to the south around Snezhnik Mountain. All these branches which interconnect Kostur to Vrbeni, Kajlari, Banitsa, Bitola and Solun must pass through Klisura, which makes this town of great strategic importance not just for the insurgents but also for the Ottomans. That is precisely why both sides were prepared to fight over it at any cost.

Given the strategic importance of Klisura, the Kostur Uprising Revolutionary District leadership decided to concentrate its efforts on liberating this town as soon as possible, before the Ottomans had a chance to bolster their defenses. The first attack took place on August 4th, 1903 under Nikola Andreev's own initiative. At the time there were only 300 Ottoman soldiers stationed there and Andreev, with his Cheta of 150 insurgents, decided to surprise the Ottomans. Unfortunately it was he who was surprised as the attack was expected and quickly ended in disaster with 6 insurgents dead and the rest barely escaping with their lives.

Fearing more attacks to come the Ottomans made preparations to bolster their defenses, particularly near the roads, by bringing reinforcements from other garrisons.

Having learned their lesson, the insurgent leadership began preparations for a second attack on Klisura scheduled to commence before the Ottoman reinforcements arrived. After developing a plan, all available insurgents in the Kostur Uprising Revolutionary District, numbering about 600, were ordered to amass, concentrate and regroup. The insurgent force was then divided into two columns and each column was given its responsibility. The column responsible for the liberation of the northern region of Kostur District, lead by Chakalarov, Kljashev and Rozov, which included

the Zagorichani and Bobishta Chetas, was tasked with attacking the Zagorichani-Bobishta-Klisura line, while part of the same force was separated and assigned to protect the Lehovo-Klisura line. The column responsible for the liberation of the southern region of Kostur, lead by Popov and comprised of eight smaller Chetas, was tasked with carrying out its attacks from Kumanichevo into Klisura. But as the plan was ready to be put into action, information gathered by the intelligence service indicated that a large Ottoman force of undetermined size was about to be dispatched from inside Kostur towards Klisura. Based on this information the insurgents had to change their plans and immediately intervene. To slow down the Ottoman advance, it was decided that the closest Cheta from Visheni lead by Joto Rashejkov and Naum Trpovski's Cheta be dispatched to set an ambush by the road near the village Visheni. But with help from the people of Visheni, the Macedonian Chetas not only stopped the Ottoman advance but in their surprise attack they sent the Ottomans fleeing in panic.

Then at dawn, August 4th, 1903, a massive battle began which pitted 2,000 Ottoman soldiers against 700 Macedonian insurgents. It was an extraordinary battle that lasted over twelve hours, employing the best military tactics and weaponry by both sides. While the Ottomans utilized their artillery and cavalry, the Macedonians more than matched them with their determination, decisiveness, sharp shooting and use of hand grenades. With their determination, accurate aim and superior maneuverability, the Macedonians eventually took the upper hand and drove the massive Ottoman force to retreat to Lerin. On August 5th, 1903 the insurgents came out victorious thus liberating Klisura from the Ottomans. What was also amazing about this battle is that while the Ottomans sustained 26 casualties, the insurgents sustained no casualties. Klisura remained liberated and free until August 28th, 1903 when its liberators retreated without a fight and the Ottomans returned to reclaim it.

In other parts of Kostur Region, meanwhile, the Ottomans began their penetration on August 13th, 1903 with a massive force of 6,000 soldiers. To avoid detection the Ottoman force crossed Kostur Lake with ships, departing from Kostur and landing in Mavrovo at the rear of the insurgents. The first to spot the Ottoman invasion was

Ivan Popov's Cheta which did its best to slow the penetration, but without much success. A battle broke out but being vastly outnumbered the insurgents had little choice but to flee to Vicho Mountain to save themselves. The Ottomans persistently pursued the fleeing Cheta but on their way ran into Chakalarov's Cheta. Another battle broke out and lasted several hours, but unfortunately still outnumbered the combined Macedonian Chetas decided they were no match for the Ottomans and withdrew. In their haste the insurgents left all their provisions behind but not without poisoning them first. Unaware of the poisoning, the Ottomans took advantage of the free food and 250 of them ended up sick.

On August 21st, 1903 the Ottomans launched a massive cleanup operation against the Kostur Uprising Revolutionary District with a force of 15,000 soldiers. The force consisted of three separate columns originating from Kostur, Sorovich and Lerin and initiated simultaneous attacks indiscriminately killing people and burning villages. By the time the Ottomans finished they had burned 23 Macedonian villages and killed 600 people.

To stop the indignant attacks on the villages and the civilian population, the insurgent leadership decided it was time to open new offensives. They regrouped their immediate forces and split them into two groups. Lead by Pop Trajkov, Popov, Nikolov and Razov, the first group of 620 was dispatched towards Lerin Region. The second group consisting of 450 insurgents lead by Chakalarov and Kljashev was dispatched to head south to attack the Ottoman detachment of 2,000 soldiers stationed in Aposkep. In the meantime a much smaller insurgence force, lead by Dimitar Pandzhurov, was left in Kostur Region to regroup the remaining insurgents and, to the best of its ability, protect the population.

When Chakalarov and Kljashev began their attacks on Aposkep it was a total surprise to the Ottoman commander Ethem Pasha in Kostur, who was under the impression that the insurgency in Kostur Region was defeated. Witnessing a large force of insurgents at its doorstep, which was no more than six kilometers from the outskirts of the city of Kostur, panic began to grip the Ottomans turning what could have been a victory into defeat. More Ottomans were dispatched to the battle and they too were defeated. Victorious, the

insurgents again divided their forces into two new groups. One group, consisting of 120 insurgents lead by Chakalarov, set its sights on liberating Smrdesh, Dmbeni, Kosinets and Nestram. The other group, consisting of 330 insurgents lead by Kljashev, returned to Kolomnati where it was split into several smaller Chetas and assigned to protect the various villages in the region.
Chakalarov's Cheta fought several battles with both the Ottoman army and the Bashi-Bazouks in the region but eventually returned to Kolomnati and with Kljashev continued to score victories against the Ottomans.

----- The Lerin Uprising

The Lerin Uprising Revolutionary District (now occupied by Greece) is situated south of the Bitola Uprising Revolutionary District. On its south and west it bordered the Kostur Uprising Revolutionary District. On its north it bordered Dolna Prespa and Pelister Regions and on its east it bordered Voden Region.

The most strategically significant part about Lerin Region was the road passing through its territory that interconnected the transportation and communications lines between Bitola and Solun.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Lerin Region was supported by a population of about 60,000 people of whom 63% were Macedonians, 19% Ottomans, 7% Albanians, Vlachs and others. (Vanche Stojchev. "Military History of Macedonia". Military academy. Skopje, 2004. Page 350)

Revolutionary activities in the Lerin Uprising Revolutionary district were unfortunately stifled due to an incident that took place in 1902. Because of an accidental discovery of weapons, the Ottomans suspected something was going on in that region and initiated massive and intense weapons searches. In the process they also initiated terror campaigns and committed atrocities against the Christian population. This improper conduct weighed heavily on the Lerin Region Revolutionaries and prompted them to take action against the Ottomans. Regrettably this brought them into a collision course with the Ottoman authorities who felt they needed to eliminate the insurgency. Unfortunately in their unprepared-ness the

insurgents could not protect themselves or initiate a prolonged fight against this aggression. But once exposed, the insurgents were pursued, hunted down and killed one by one, including their illustrious leader Marko Lerinski. Unfortunately this incident caused much harm, not just to the insurgents, but also to the Uprising. The incident gave the Ottomans more reasons to further escalate the searches which eventually lead to the discovery and confiscation of over 600 rifles and large quantities of ammunition. Besides overpowering the insurgency and removing the arms from the region, Ottoman authorities also bolstered their defenses, especially around the railway, rail yards and rail stations.

Fortunately help came from General Headquarters with the appointment of Georgi Papanchev sent to Lerin Region to replace Marko Lerinski and to lead the Uprising. Then in March 1903 Boris Sarafov was sent to inspect the Revolutionary District's progress and encourage the local population to join the Uprising. With Sarafov's help, several meetings were held in various villages including Setina, Banitsa and Ekshi Su. Issues concerning preparations for the Uprising were discussed including plans to create and train new Chetas, procure and stockpile food, acquire medical supplies, etc.

Because of its weakened state, the Lerin Uprising Revolutionary District was also encouraged to look to the Kostur Uprising Revolutionary District for assistance, particularly in coordinating simultaneous and joint attacks on the enemy.

Primary targets selected for attacks were the railway tunnels near the village Tserevo, the railway station in Banitsa and the bridges near the villages Sakulevo and Ekshi Su.

Despite its inability to contribute much to the Uprising, the Lerin Uprising Revolutionary District did attend the Smilevo Congress in May 1903 and was represented by Georgi Papanchev and Mihail Chekov from Ekshi Su. It was there that it was decided that Lerin Region had the potential to fight and would definitely participate in the National Uprising. As a result, Georgi Papanchev, Lecho Tserovski and Kosta Gruev were appointed leaders of the Lerin

Regional Head Office and were to lead the Uprising and revolutionary activities in that District.

After the top leadership was appointed Lerin Region was then sub-divided into six Uprising centers each with its own leader and each reporting to the Regional Head Office.

Soon after their return from the Smilevo Congress, Papanchev and Chekov decided to schedule a number of meetings with the local leaders to inform them of the situation. The first meeting was scheduled for the night of May 28th, 1903 in the village Banitsa where local leaders and more than 400 insurgents were in attendance. Unfortunately, and despite the precautionary measures the insurgents had taken to avoid incidents, the Ottoman authorities were aware of their activities and very early in the morning of May 29th, 1903 Ottoman troops surrounded the village. In their attempt to breach the siege, 17 insurgents lost their lives, including their leader Papanchev, again devastating the Organization and delivering another blow to the Lerin Uprising Revolutionary District's effort to join the National Uprising.

In spite of the great loss, however, General Headquarters still believed there was potential for the Lerin Uprising Revolutionary District to join the national fight so it dispatched Gjorgji Pop Hristov to pick up the pieces and continue the Uprising effort as head of the Lerin Uprising Revolutionary District. Hristov's first priority as top leader was to punish the traitors and informants who caused the disaster. His actions immensely contributed to the straightening and reputation of the Organization. After that Hristov devoted his energy to the preparations for the Uprising.

To help things along Damjan Gruev and Boris Sarafov, in the beginning of July, 1903, paid Lerin Region a visit and managed to attract over 800 potential insurgent recruits. Unfortunately there were no weapons available to arm these people so they were told to return to their homes. With the disasters that befell the Lerin Uprising Revolutionary District, weapons were rare and not easy to acquire, so most of the Lerin Region insurgents remained unarmed. The number of those who were armed was small and therefore needed to be safeguarded to be effective. For this reason the Lerin

Region insurgents had to resort to partisan style warfare. Small units were assembled and assigned to independent actions that mainly had to do with preventing the enemy from executing speedy transfers of troops and material from region to region and with the task of informing and educating the general public about the impending Uprising.

Then when the Lerin Uprising Revolutionary District received information on the Uprising start date, it exercised its duty to warn the management of the railway in Solun not to transport civilians in the trains. But as soon as the railway was disrupted, due to insurgent diversionary attacks, railway management requested of the Ottoman authorities 25,000 Ottoman soldiers to secure the entire railway line. Unfortunately due to lack of resources only one battalion could be spared, which arrived from Asia Minor, and was tasked with securing the rail line between Banitsa and Lerin.

Despite its ill preparedness, the Lerin Uprising Revolutionary District continued to contribute to the Uprising through hit and run operations and by attacking non-defended parts of the railway, cutting telegraph lines, bombing bridges and generally disrupting the transportation and communications corridor between Bitola and Solun. But after the National Uprising began and Krushevo was liberated, the Lerin Uprising Revolutionary District switched its operational tactics from hit and run to fully offensive. One of its biggest offensive operations was the attack on the village Ekshi Su where more that 200 insurgents, lead by Gjorgji Pop Hristov, assembled and destroyed the local railway station.

As the District's fighting skills improved, more and more successful offensive operations were carried out and more armed insurgents enlisted and joined the fighting. Their continuous successes allowed the leadership to shift from small operations to fighting the enemy in frontal attacks and larger battles.

On August 13th, 1903, when a large force of 3,000 Ottoman soldiers arrived in the region, the smaller Macedonian Chetas combined into a single large Cheta and held off the Ottoman advance until all the local villages including Bitosha, Bouf and Rakovo were safely evacuated and the civilians escorted into the local woodlands.

Following that incident the Lerin and Kostur Uprising Revolutionary Districts began to coordinate attacks and to combine their forces. Combined actions between Kostur and Lerin were best demonstrated during the attack on Neveska which took place at the end of August during the Ottoman counter-offensive.

The battle for control of Neveska was one of the greatest successes demonstrated by the Macedonians during the Ilinden Uprising which took place during the height of the Ottoman counter-offensive when the Ottomans were attempting to demonstrate their strength.

Unfortunately this glorious military success was not meant to be because a large Ottoman force arrived just in time to rob the insurgents of their victory, marking this the last major offensive carried out by the Macedonians in that region.

Neveska at the time was a small Vlach town of about 5,500 people located in the southwestern part of Lerin Region. Before the Uprising, Neveska had its own telegraph office and a permanent Ottoman garrison of 70 soldiers residing inside Neveska. But as the insurgency intensified, Ottoman soldiers that were driven out of liberated villages began to concentrate and set camp outside of Neveska. By mid-August the Ottoman soldiers residing in and near Neveska numbered over 250 making this town a formidable Ottoman stronghold.

Plans to invade Neveska were prepared during the successful attack on Psodery, a nearby Vlach town. The actual plans of attack were prepared by the famous and experienced vojvoda Vasil Chakalarov and were carried out efficiently and effectively by a coordinated attack involving the forces of vojvodas Lazar Pop Trajkov, Ivan Popov, Nikola Andreev and Nikola Mokrenski. The insurgence force of 650 was divided into four groups. Each group was then dispatched to each of the surrounding villages that had a road leading into Neveska. In the north, a group was dispatched to Bel Kamen, in the east to Zelenich, in the west to Elovo and in the south the last group was dispatched to Prekopana. Chakalarov in the meantime took to the hills from where he had a view and could observe all the action as well as keep an eye out for possible outside intervention from the Ottomans. The groups remained in seclusion

during the day and in the dead of night simultaneously advanced on Neveska. By 3 a.m. Ivan Popov's insurgents advanced to within 600 meters of the Ottoman camp without being spotted. The first to open fire on Neveska was the Lerin unit which commenced the attack from the north, from the road leading from Bel Kamen. The next to open fire was Ivan Popov's unit of sharp shooters who pinned down the Ottomans in the camp, preventing them from getting to their weapons. Unable to fight back, the Ottomans fled in panic leaving their weapons and equipment behind. No sooner had the Ottomans left than Popov and his insurgents collected their weapons and proceeded to enter the town. Andreev and his insurgents followed from the south and opened fire on the installation where the permanent garrison was stationed. A battle broke out but the Ottomans were quickly overpowered. Unable to maintain resistance, the Ottomans fled allowing the compound to fall into the hands of the insurgents who quickly claimed its contents and burned it to the ground. The loot left behind included 37 modern Mauzer rifles, 6,000 rifle shells, military overcoats and some military machinery.

After the town of Neveska was officially declared liberated, marked by the hoisting of the Uprising flag, the Kostur Region insurgents left for Kostur. The victorious Lerin insurgents, under Pop Hristov's command, were left in charge of defending the town and assisting its people to establish provisional authority.

Three days later, on August 27th, 1903, a 15,000 strong Ottoman force consisting of two columns was spotted heading for Neveska. One column consisting of about 10,000 Ottoman soldiers was observed marching briskly from the south through the village Zagorichani. The other column of 5,000 soldiers was advancing from the north from Lerin through the village Bel Kamen.

No sooner had the insurgent leadership become aware of the new situation than it was decided it would be futile to resist such a formidable force. At this point a decision was made to withdraw all the insurgent forces and in future resort back to hit and run partisan style operations. The retreat was well planned and skillfully executed with much care not to further anger the Ottomans. No incidents were reported and no civilians were harmed by either side.

In their withdrawal from Neveska most of the insurgents retreated to the south towards Emborska Mountain to Kajlari Region passing through Vrapchishte, Ostrovo Lake and Rudnik. The rest fled towards Koreshta ending up in Kostur Region. The retreat was hasty in order to avoid contact with the Ottomans and not to spark a conflict which would have been detrimental to both the insurgents and the civilian population.

Without any resistance from the insurgents the Ottomans quickly re-established themselves in the various villages and took extraordinary measures to also occupy the mountains and former insurgent strongholds in order to prevent the insurgents from returning. They also systematically cut and burned the forests to prevent the Uprising forces from re-establishing camps and shelters. In essence the Ottomans established permanent control over the entire territory.

Even though the vast majority of the Lerin Region insurgents remained active in other parts of Macedonia, the Uprising in the Lerin Uprising Revolutionary District, by the end of August 1903, was effectively over.

----- The Skopje and Strumitsa Uprisings

Just before the Skopje Uprising Revolutionary District began its preparation for the Ilinden Uprising, its leadership decided to rename the District to “Ovche Pole” in hopes of keeping it clandestine. Unfortunately those involved in continued to call it “the District of Skopje”.

Ovche Pole, or the District of Skopje, was supported by a population of 308,719 people of whom 196,417 or 64% were Macedonians. Of the remaining, 82,084 or 26% were Ottomans, 15,543 or 5% were Albanians and 14,000 or so were Vlachs and others. (Vanche Stojchev. “Military History of Macedonia”. Military academy. Skopje, 2004. Page 353)

The most significant strategic part of the Skopje Uprising Revolutionary District was the central location through which the transportation and communication corridors passed, connecting Skopje to Kjustandil, Kumanovo, Prishtina and Solun. This strategic

location was very important to the Ottomans so it was well guarded. Because of the constant movement of Ottoman troops and supplies this region was always very busy and difficult for the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization to function in unnoticed.

Besides being well guarded and well traveled by the Ottomans, this region was also sandwiched between the largely Albanian populated villages to the north, swarming with Bashi-Bazouks, and the Ottoman civilian populations to the south. The constant pressure from all sides created many obstacles for the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization and made preparations for the National Uprising very difficult.

As if that was not enough, there was also pressure from Serbia. As Serbia was preparing to assert its influence in Macedonia, many of its agents were operating inside Macedonia, feverishly promoting Serbian propaganda. This interfered with the natural development of the Macedonian national consciousness, a vital component in creating awareness and recruiting insurgents. There were also constant clashes between the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization and the Bulgarian sponsored Supremacist forces competing for control of this District, which did not always go un-noticed by the Ottomans. In fact because of these clashes there was an incident in 1897, later termed “the Vinitsa affair”, which caused much damage not only to the Skopje Uprising Revolutionary District but to the entire revolutionary movement as well.

After the Solun assassinations in April 1903, the Ottomans began to suspect that the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization was busy promoting revolutionary ideas and preparing the population for an Uprising. With that in mind, Ottoman authorities began to reinforce their military instillations, particularly those in vital areas such as Skopje and the surrounding region. Outside of reinforcing their regular military instillations, the Ottomans in Skopje District also mobilized the Albanian and Muslim population forming numerous Bashi-Bazouk units.

By the end of June 1903, Ottoman military strength in the Skopje Vilayet was up to 87 infantry battalions, each consisting of 800 regular soldiers, 20 cavalry squadrons, 19 field artillery batteries, 36

mountain weapons, 3 pioneer Chetas and several technical stations. The Ottomans had over 80,000 soldiers stationed in the Skopje Vilayet alone. Of these, 23 infantry battalions, 5 cavalry squadrons, 10 field artillery batteries and 2 pioneer Chetas were stationed in Skopje Sanjak, on the territory of the Skopje Uprising Revolutionary District.

After the Solun assassinations, Ottoman army installations were reorganized and forces were relocated to the east of Skopje mainly to Kumanovo, Kratovo, Kriva Palanka and Kochani and were placed in a state of combat readiness. Many of these units were also charged with guarding various places of strategic importance such as villages, roads, bridges, etc.

Being under constant watch by the Ottomans and having to compete with Bulgarian sponsored Supremacist intrusions, the Skopje Uprising Revolutionary District leadership decided it would be best if its forces existed in small units. This way it could carry out partisan style diversionary missions without engaging the enemy and at the same time keep the civilian population safe from retribution and retaliatory attacks from the enemy.

On July 17, 1903 the Skopje Uprising Revolutionary District held a Congress in Kratovo. The Congress was unfortunately only attended by the Skopje Cheta, lead by vojvoda Nikola Pushkarov, and by the Kratovo Cheta, lead by vojvoda Dime Stojanov Berbercheto. In spite of the small turnout however, it was decided, among other things, to pursue and capture the Rumelia Vilyet main inspector, who at any time was expected to be there. They also planned to attack Kratovo and capture Husein Hilmi Pasha. Husein Hilmi Pasha, they were informed, would be residing in Kratovo while visiting the Eastern Cazas of the Skopje Sanjak.

As was the case with other Revolutionary Districts, on July 30th, 1903 General Headquarters informed the Skopje Uprising Revolutionary District of the date of the National Uprising and requested of its leadership to make plans and prepare for attacks. It also requested it to carry out diversionary attacks on the roads and bridges and keep the Ottoman forces engaged as much as possible. Diversionary attacks were ordered to begin immediately after the

Bitola Uprising Revolutionary District began its Uprising on August 2nd, 1903. Unfortunately the Skopje Uprising Revolutionary District remained passive during this period because the District's plans to capture Husein Hilmi Pasha were discovered and Husein Hilmi Pasha reinforced his military and police units making it impossible for the insurgents to operate. All the Skopje Uprising Revolutionary District could muster that day was to assemble the City of Skopje Cheta, lead by the teacher vojvoda Andrej Kozhuharov, which numbered no more than 170 insurgents. Unfortunately that Cheta too could not operate and had to quickly withdraw so as not to endanger the Macedonian civilian population because in addition to reinforcing his military and police units, Husein Hilmi Pasha also armed the Muslim population with 5,000 modern rifles and had the city surrounded preventing the Macedonian population from gathering during the day or from leaving or entering the city during the night.

Skopje was surrounded, barricaded and locked tight by regular and by irregular Ottoman military forces making all insurgent efforts to start the Uprising futile. But regardless of what was happening in the Skopje Uprising Revolutionary District the Ilinden Uprising in Bitola began as planned. At this point vojvoda Nikola Pushkarov moved his Cheta out of Kratovo to the St. Jovan Monastery near the mouth of the Pchinja River where 100 kilos of dynamite and 200 bombs were stored. After recovering the ammunition Pushkarov dispatched his deputy Milan Angelov with a number of insurgents and 30 kilos of dynamite to deliver it to the Cheta inside Skopje so that diversionary actions could be initiated inside the city. Unfortunately, when Angelov and his insurgents arrived in Skopje, the Skopje Cheta, lead by Kozhuharov, had already left and there was no one there to receive the dynamite. Unable to deliver the material, the planned diversionary actions never materialized.

Sometime after the General Uprising began, Macedonians working outside of Macedonia began to arrive and joined the fighting. One such group, consisting of seven insurgents lead by vojvoda Andelko Aleksich, arrived in Skopje from Serbia and at the beginning of August joined Pushkarov's Cheta. Reinforced by Aleksich and his insurgents, Puskarov decided it was time to carry out those overdue expected diversions. The first target of attack was the railway. At

this time the railway was of crucial importance to the delivery of Ottoman troops to the various battle zones. Any attacks on the railway would hinder Ruzdi Pasha's ability to deliver Ottoman soldiers where they were needed. As it happened, Ottoman forces at the time were being moved from Uroshevats through Skopje and Veles destined for the Gradsko railway station. From there the troops were expected to go on foot via Prilep to Bitola in order to suppress the Bitola Uprising.

During the night of August 13th, 1903 Puskarov and his insurgents arrived at the St. Jovan Monastery near the village Vetersko. There Pushkarov divided his Cheta into three squads each consisting of 12 insurgents. With himself in command, he reinforced the first squad with the village Cheta from Kozhle and tasked it with taking control of a local bridge. The second squad, lead by Dimitar Bojanov was dispatched northward to take control of another bridge. The third squad, lead by Todor Nikolov, was dispatched across the river to take control of a tunnel. Each squad was instructed to wait until 11pm before attacking its target.

At precisely 11 pm Pushkarov and his insurgents opened fire on the 50 soldier security force guarding the bridge. A fierce battle ensued. Surprised by the vicious attack 10 Ottoman soldiers were left dead and the rest fled. Fearing more Ottoman soldiers would soon return, the insurgents mined the bridge with explosives but in their haste managed to use the wrong fuses and their effort to blow it up was unsuccessful.

The second squad lead by Bojanov attacked the northern bridge at the scheduled time but without success. The security force on this bridge was better prepared and the insurgents were unable to dislodge it.

Given the number of soldiers guarding the tunnel, the third squad decided it was not safe to attack and withdrew.

Disappointed that he did not blow up the targeted bridges and tunnel, Pushkarov decided to take more drastic measures and blow up a military train. His insurgents waited near the village Novachani until a train arrived before setting off the charges. This time the

explosives did go off but only caused minimal damage. With only two soldiers wounded, the military train continued along its journey unabated. This action however did have some subsequent effects because for the next two days the Ottomans stopped using this railway to transport soldiers. Also this part of the railway was only used during daylight hours.

The next day, August 14, 1903, after bombing the train Pushkarov's insurgents retreated to the St. Jovan Monastery only to be discovered by the Ottomans. No sooner had they arrived than they were surrounded and attacked. The insurgents fought back fiercely all day but could not break the siege. Finally they broke through the siege during the night and escaped to the village Divlje. There they met up with the Kumanovo Cheta lead by vojvoda Bobi Stojchev and together the Cheti fled for the seclusion of the Sveti Nikole Monastery in Gurishte.

This hideout too unfortunately was discovered by the Ottomans and on August 16, 1903 the Chetas were surrounded by a large Ottoman force aided by Bashi-Bazouks from the local villages. Numbering about 50, the insurgents resisted with all their might and around 9 pm the same night they broke through the siege and escaped to Kumanovo.

On August 30, 1903 another Ottoman force was dispatched to seek and destroy the Chetas but by then the Chetas were well on their way to Vranje in Serbia, out of Ottoman reach.

Other Chetas belonging to the Skopje Uprising Revolutionary District remained active and were joined by new Chetas, such as the one from Kochani, until the Ottoman counter offensive began.

On August 27, 1903 Georgi (Goshe) Tanev's Cheta from Dolno Trogertsi, Shtip Region, consisting of 12 insurgents, was surrounded by 200 soldiers from the regular Ottoman army and destroyed. After a long and vicious battle 10 of the 12 insurgents were killed.

On August 15, 1903 another Cheta attempted to blow up the iron bridge near the village Nerezi but without success. Its plans were discovered before they could be put into action.

Another Cheta attempted to cut the telegraph lines near the village Gorno Lisiche but it too was unsuccessful due to its premature discovery by the Ottomans.
On August 17, 1903 two of Ruzdi Pasha's Ottoman battalions from Uroshevats arrived in Skopje, increasing the Skopje battalions to seven. At this point the Ottomans were amassing a huge force, up to 15 battalions, in order to subdue the Uprising in the various regions in Eastern Macedonia. By mobilizing its forces the Ottoman plan was to create up to 55 battalions and let them loose on the Macedonians.

On August 26, 1903 the Skopje Vilyet alone had amassed 41 battalions and by mid September that number had increased to 63 battalions, five squadrons, two artillery regiments and two pioneer Chetas. Because of fears of a Bulgarian invasion, most of these forces were dispatched to guard the frontiers at the Macedonian-Bulgarian border.

This massive show of force literally ended the first or diversionary phase of the Uprising in the Skopje Uprising Revolutionary District but the National Uprising was not over.

The second phase began with the arrival of two new Chetas from Bulgaria. Both numbering about 100 each, were lead by vojvodas Vladislav Kovachev and Atanas Dimitrov-Babata. Unfortunately on their way to Skopje the Chetas were intercepted by Ottoman forces. Pinned down by 300 Ottoman soldiers at Plavitsa Mountain, just south of Kratovo, the insurgents fought a vicious battle killing 25 Ottoman soldiers and losing 2 of their own. Due to the severity of the battle, the Chetas returned to Bulgaria. The following day several new Chetas arrived in the Skopje Uprising Revolutionary District with over 270 insurgents lead by vojvodas Hristo Tsernopeev, Captain Georgi Trenev, Pesho Samardzhiev and others. Among the several Chetas were Dushko Zheve's technical specialist's Cheta and Milan Stoilov's field medics.

Again due to the large Ottoman presence in the region, Hristo Chernopeev's Cheta was spotted by spies in the village Vitosha in Kochani Region, and on September 16, 1903 came under Ottoman

pursuit. After spotting the Ottomans, Tsernopeev and his insurgents fled for the security of the mountains and took up defensive positions. Unfortunately in their haste to flee the insurgents left a vast part of their arms and ammunition in the village which the Ottomans had unintentionally destroyed.

Unaware of the presence of the ammunition, which included bombs and dynamite, the Ottoman soldiers set fire to the houses in the village and as the bombs began to explode they became startled fearing an attack. The Ottomans withdrew immediately and called for reinforcements. After about 6,000 new soldiers arrived the next day, the Ottomans went in pursuit of Tsernopeev's Cheta in the mountains. A fierce battle ensued and lasted the entire day. Unable to hold back the numerically superior Ottoman force, the insurgents in the dark of night decided to flee towards the Bulgarian border. Unfortunately due to the heavy build up of Ottoman forces at the frontier the Cheta was spotted and intercepted by Ottoman soldiers. To save itself, the Cheta split into several smaller units and each took separate paths to safety. This unfortunately still did not save them all as some of the units were ambushed and destroyed. The ones remaining, with the exception of one, fled to Bulgaria. One fled to Sultantepe and fell into an ambush. A vicious battle broke out lasting two days. The Macedonians fought fiercely and by September 18, 1903 when the battle was over 75 insurgents and 380 Ottoman soldiers lost their lives.

One of the most vicious battled fought in the Skopje Uprising Revolutionary District was that of September 24th, 1903 where Nikola Dechev's Cheta from Veles, Grigor Manasiev's Cheta from Kratovo and Toma Pazarliev's Cheta from Voden, totaling 113 insurgents, were pitted against a force of 7,000 Ottoman Soldiers. The Macedonian Chetas found themselves surrounded near Lukovo and Emiritsa in Kratovo Region when the battle broke out. Unable to puncture the siege, the Macedonians fought gallantly the entire day. Then during the dark of night they slipped through the encirclement and fled to Bulgaria. While most escaped with their lives intact, 31 insurgents, including vojvodas Dechev and Manasiev, lost theirs.

Outside of battling the Ottomans, the Macedonians in the Skopje Uprising Revolutionary District also fought against Bulgarian sponsored Supremacist bands operating in Skopje Region, especially near the Macedonian-Serbian border. This was particularly more pronounced after the fall of the Krushevo Republic.

Unfortunately the failed Uprising in this region, as carefully as it was planned not to provoke Ottoman retaliation against the civilian population, did exactly that and the Macedonian people suffered immensely from Ottoman retaliation and revenge killings.

As large as the Macedonian population in the Skopje Uprising Revolutionary District was the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization was unable to motivate it on mass to take up arms against the Ottomans. But as we have seen it was not because the population was unwilling to fight but rather because it was afraid of Ottoman retaliation; a fate it did not escape.

The Strumitsa Uprising Revolutionary District covered an area stretching from the Struma River in the east to the Vardar River in the west. It bordered the Skopje Uprising Revolutionary District in the north and the Solun Uprising Revolutionary District in the south. In other words, it covered the Strumitsa, Radovish, Maleshevo and parts of Gorna Dzhumaja Regions.

The Strumitsa Uprising Revolutionary District had two important roads and a rail line passing through its territory which made it strategically very important to both the Ottomans and the Macedonians. One road, connecting Strumitsa with Solun and Sofia, followed the flow of the Struma River. The other road and railway, connecting Solun and Skopje, followed the flow of the Vardar River. The Vardar and Struma valleys in turn were interconnected via the Kluch Gorge and via the Strumitsa to Petrich roadway.

At that time the Strumitsa Uprising Revolutionary District was supported by a population of 104,000 people of whom 71% were Macedonians. (Vanche Stojchev. “Military History of Macedonia”. Military academy. Skopje, 2004. Page 357)

At the Solun Congress when it was decided to begin the National Uprising early, the Strumitsa Uprising Revolutionary District, represented by Ivan Ingilizov from Strumitsa and Georgi Vamaliev from Radovish, despite its unprepared state, voted for an early uprising. The District did not have enough weapons to arm all its insurgents but that did not worry its leadership because it expected that Bulgaria would soon furnish it with what it needed.

Towards the end of January 1903 the Strumitsa Uprising Revolutionary District was visited by Boris Sarafov and his Cheta of 40 insurgents. At that time there were two local Chetas operating in the District with a combined strength of 25 insurgents, which joined Sarafov's Cheta in its mission to inspect the readiness of Strumitsa District. Sent by the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization, Sarafov's job here was to consolidate the various bands and their leaders who were at the time operating independently and to begin agitating the population and prepare it for the National Uprising.

Towards the end of March more help arrived when Hristo Tsernopeev and Hristo Maznejkov arrived with their Chetas to assist with the Uprising in Strumica and Radovis Regions. Nikola Detsev's Cheta from Veles and Timo Angelov's Cheta from Tikves also crossed the border into the Strumitsa Uprising Revolutionary District and together with the other Chetas participated in various missions.

On April 6, 1903 the combined Chetas descended from Mount Goten and openly attacked the Ottoman, making this an offensive operation. When the battle was over Tsernopeev and Maznejkov went to Strumitsa and Radovish Regions to continue their missions.

After the Solun assassinations 200 angry and frustrated residents from the village Voislavtsi, in Radovis Region, armed with a variety of firearms, swords, knives and pitchforks took to the streets and demanded that Tsernopeev immediately commence the Uprising. Fortunately Tsernopeev was able to calm the angry villagers but not for long. All through May, 1903 frustration drove people to take to their protests to the streets; resulting in fights.

Unfortunately the usual cure for this type of violence was more violence and Ottoman retaliation. In mid July 1903 while traveling through Radovis, Hilmi Pasha himself ordered extreme measures be taken against these outbreaks. This, as usual, resulted in punishing the innocent civilian population more than it punished the troublemakers.

Without the delivery of the expected arms and ammunition from Bulgaria, the Strumitsa Uprising Revolutionary District leadership found itself inadequately prepared and unable to sustain any operations, not even partisan style diversionary ones.

----- The Solun Uprising

Prior to the preparations for the National Uprising, the Solun Uprising Revolutionary District (now occupied by Greece) consisted of two districts: the second or eastern district known as “Belasitsa” and the third or western district known as “Kozhuf”. These were later consolidated to form the Solun Uprising Revolutionary District.

At the start of the 20th century, the Solun Uprising Revolutionary District supported a population of 418,270 people of whom 195,637 were Macedonians, 103,957 were Ottomans, 30,786 were Jews and the remaining were Vlachs and others. (Vanche Stojchev. “Military History of Macedonia”. Military academy. Skopje, 2004. Page 359)

Solun, the capital of Solun Vilayet, was not only a cultural, administrative and military center; it was also a cosmopolitan city with enormous economic power. Much of the high ranking Ottoman authorities were located and lived there. The staff of the 3rd Army Corps, the 17th Infantry Division, the 3rd Cavalry Division and the 3rd artillery Division as well as the staff from several regiments, for example, were all located in Solun. In addition to supporting high ranking officials, Solun Region also supported a number of regular Ottoman army divisions.

As one of the most important cities in the Ottoman Empire, Solun, at the time, was literally the transportation junction between the Balkans and the outside world. It was the crossroad between Europe and Asia, capable of supporting not only a huge civilian population

but also large armies on the move to and from Asia Minor and the Balkans.

Being a cosmopolitan city and supporting many foreigners on political, religious and business missions, Solun was a calm and relatively peaceful city. But that was not the case after the Solun assassinations in April 1903. To restore order and regain the confidence of these foreign investors and businessmen, Ottoman authorities had to crack down on the troublemakers with massive arrests. These actions unfortunately not only robbed the Uprising of its leadership but also created conditions of fear which significantly decreased the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization's ability to function in this District. Without grass roots participation, all the Solun Uprising Revolutionary District could muster was the formation of small bands.

Understanding that very little could be done with small bands, the Solun Uprising Revolutionary District leadership decided to organize its activities around partisan style hit and run activities. Plans were then put in place to conduct combat missions in and around Mount Kozhuf.

Appointed to lead the Kozhuf branch of the Solun Uprising Revolutionary District Headquarters were vojvodas Sava Mihajlov, Argir Manasiev and Apostol Petkov. Considering the lack of leaders available to lead the insurgency in other branches of the Solun Uprising Revolutionary District, it was decided to combine some of the Chetas.

In Belitsa, the Eastern part of the Solun Uprising Revolutionary District, the most prepared region to do combat during the National Uprising was Kukush. Here it was decided to allow the larger Cheta, lead by Krsto Asenov, formed before the Solun assassinations to function as a whole.

Preparations for the National Uprising continued to be made even after the Solun assassinations regardless of the strict measures imposed by the Ottomans. While secrecy and vigilance restricted their movements, organizers did manage to build a large base of operations in the seclusion of the reeds near Lake Ahmatovo.

Among other things they built a warehouse for storing food, weapons and ammunition, barracks for the insurgents, and other buildings to be used for cooking food and nursing the wounded. The insurgents from Kukush also owned a red flag made of silk which they carried during their missions.

Around mid-May 1903, for its own safety, the Kukus Cheta retreated into Krusha Mountain to wait until the National Uprising date was announced. Unfortunately no sooner had the Cheta arrived and settled than it was discovered and placed under siege by a column of Ottoman soldiers. While patrolling an area near the village Megurek, south-west of Lake Butkovo, the Cheta was attacked and a battle broke out. Throughout that day the battle spread outside the villages Gorni and Dolni Todorak, lasting the entire day. The insurgents fought gallantly but were unable to break the siege as the Ottomans continued to pursue them through the night. As the insurgents pushed the battle into the woodlands of the village Nemantsi, Kukus Region, they finally broke free and fled leaving behind many dead including Milan Delchev, Gotse Delchev's brother.

It took a while for the insurgents to regroup but by the start of June 1903 they all arrived in the secluded region of Lake Ahmatovo where they met up with Trajko Jotov and Gotse Nistorov's Chetas. Combined, the three Chetas numbered over 200 insurgents.

Even in the seclusion of the reeds the insurgents were not safe as the Ottomans continued to look for them and kept the lake surrounded with artillery fire. For almost a month the Ottomans pounded the area with artillery and when they couldn't uproot the insurgents they tried to burn the reeds but without success.

While the Ottomans were pounding the insurgents, the local Kukush Uprising leadership was making plans of its own to attack and gain control of the city of Kukush. The plan was to combine the three Chetas and assign Krsto Asenov as the top leader while separately each Cheta would have its own vojvoda, Trajko Jotov, Gotse Nistorov, or Gone Beginin.

Before the attack on Kukush, scheduled for July 28, 1903, the Chetas met at the village Postolar to discuss strategies. The attack commenced on schedule and, surprised by the sudden assault, the Ottomans were easily defeated giving the insurgents a decisive victory. Unfortunately before he could be stopped, the Kukush Kaimakam requested support from the Ottoman garrisons stationed in Kukush, Gevgelija and Dojran. Running out of time the Macedonians strengthened their defenses as much as time would permit but not soon enough to be able to hold onto the city. By morning the Ottomans had surrounded the city and at dawn began their attack. A vicious battle ensued and lasted until late night when the insurgents, in small groups, broke through the siege and escaped to Ardzansko Blato. Given the circumstances, the insurgents managed to inflict great casualties on the enemy while themselves suffering minimal losses.

When the National Uprising began in the Bitola Uprising Revolutionary District on August 2nd, 1903 the Kukush Cheta lead by Krsto Asenov, the Enidzhe Vardar Cheta lead by Apostol Petkov and the Gevgelija Cheta lead by Ivan Karasulijata attacked and liberated the village Komisor. With the Kukush Cheta's flag flying high, vojvoda Krsto Asenov celebrated the liberation by marrying Ana Malesevska, a teacher and daughter of the famous revolutionary Nikola Malesevski. Unfortunately Krsto Asenov's happiness was cut short as he was killed in action soon after his marriage. After his death the Kukush Cheta remained intact and, together with the Gevgelija and Enidzhe Vardar Chetas, continued to contribute to the National Uprising and to the liberation of Macedonia.

Soon after preparations began for the National Uprising in the western half, or Kozhuf part of the Solun Uprising Revolutionary District, the District leadership, lead by Apostol Petkov, subdivided the District into four regions; Grubevtsi, Kriva, Tumba and the City of Gumendzhe. A base of operations, with a number of warehouses, was established on Mount Pajak near Lake Enidzhe Vardar for carrying out Uprising preparations and revolutionary activities. Unfortunately, even though Vojvoda Apostol Petkov was able to recruit a large number of insurgents he was unable to arm them because of lack of weapons and ammunition. With the exception of delivering 10 rifles of 'Gra-Gra' type and several revolvers even the

Macedonian Revolutionary Organization's Central Committee could not help.

To make things worse the Bulgarian sponsored Supremacists became involved in the region and began to agitate the population in the villages around the Pajak and Kozhuf mountains to rise en masse during the Uprising. Vojvoda Apostol Petkov, however, opposed their plan arguing that under the circumstances it would be best not to involve the general population and instead allow the village and local Chetas to carry out partisan style combat activities. Accordingly, Apostol Petkov issued specific orders to the Tumba and neighbouring villages to coordinate their activities with those of the Gevgelija Cheta lead by Sava Mihajlov and Argir Manasiev. Some of those activities included the demolition of the Vardar Bridge and the destruction of the railway north of Gumendzhe. The village Cheta from Grubevtsi meanwhile was ordered to cut the telegraph lines between Enidzevardarsko and the village Kufalovo. At the same time the Gumendzhe leadership was instructed to make preparations for an attack on the installation in Gumendzhe.

Because of a large Ottoman army presence in the area the Uprising in the Enidzhe Vardar Region did not begin until August 6th, 1903.

The Uprising began with a planned attack on the village Kriva where Apostol Petkov was hoping to destroy the garrison of 30 Ottoman soldiers and liberate the village. Unfortunately his plan was discovered and instead of the insurgents attacking the Ottomans, the Ottomans attacked the insurgents and drove them back. While this was going on Sava Mihajlov, with assistance from the Bojmitsa villagers, dynamited and destroyed the railway. A few days later Petkov's Cheta attacked and besieged the Gumendze garrison. Although the insurgents did not capture the city they did manage to block the Ottoman army and hold it besieged in its installation for some time. When Ottoman reinforcements arrived Petkov's Cheta, along with the other Chetas, retreated to Mount Pajak and by mid October 1903 fought several independent battles in various parts of this region.

One of the most severe battles fought in this part of the district was in Gandats, one of the highest peaks of Mount Pajak. There Apostol

Petkov and Ivan Karasulija's insurgents took their frustration and anger out on the Ottoman army and Bashi-Bazouks for the crimes they had committed against the innocent and unarmed Macedonian civilian population.

On September 12th, 1903 via a letter to the Ottoman garrisons in Gevgelija and Gumendzhe, the insurgents challenged the Ottoman army to "Come up to Gandats and fight the insurgents instead of attacking the unprotected population in the villages..."

Frustrated by their peoples' plight, vojvodas Apostol Petkov and Ivan Karasulija looked for a way to teach the Ottomans a lesson for taking revenge on the innocent Macedonian population. They strongly believed that if they could draw the Ottomans into the mountains, away from the civilian population, they could strike a blow that the Ottomans would never forget.

The challenge was accepted and on September 14th, 1903 the Ottoman army climbed Mount Pajak from two sides and took position around Gandats peak. The Ottoman plan was to surround the Chetas and deliver a devastating blow. Petkov and Karasulija however were well aware of Ottoman army tactics and the Macedonians with great skill out-maneuvered the Ottomans and forced them into an ambush. The insurgents fought until they ran out of ammunition killing 183 Ottomans. Taking advantage of the dark of night the insurgents then slipped away leaving the Ottomans in peace to bury their dead.

In Gevgelija Region in the meantime, Vojvodas Sava Mihajlov and Argir Manasiev were busy recruiting insurgents for their own Chetas and making preparations for the National Uprising. Just before the Uprising began they had managed to recruit about 50 insurgents. They chose the village Konsko as their base of operations and as their Uprising center for this region. When the time came the Gevgelija Region leadership decided to split up its Cheta into smaller groups and initiated the Uprising by taking diversionary actions against the railway north and south of Gevgelija.

On August 15th, 1903 Sava Mihajlov's Cheta, assisted by the villagers from Bojmitsa, attacked and destroyed the local railway

and a local bridge. While explosives were placed on the railway by small groups, the larger Chetas secured their positions. In the meantime, Argir Manasiev's Cheta carried out a couple of diversionary actions, one near the village Balintsi and the second near the village Smokvitsa where a vicious battle broke out and the insurgents fought against an Ottoman army unit.

In Tikvesh Region meanwhile, vojvoda Petar Jurukov took charge of the Uprising preparations which began early in February 1903 immediately after the Solun Congress. Unfortunately due to the close proximity of Tikvesh Region to Solun and the strict measures imposed after the assassinations, acquiring weapons became very difficult. Even under these circumstances Petar Jurukov still managed to acquire about 300 rifles of the 'Gra-Gra' type and some Martini rifles.

By end of July, 1903 Jurukov's Cheta had grown to 80 insurgents, which was then subdivided into three groups each capable of carrying out individual diversionary actions. Jurukov's presence in the region unfortunately attracted the attention of Ottoman authorities who retaliated by imposing further repression on the Macedonian population. These strict measures forced Jurukov to re-think his strategy and as a result he demobilized the groups of insurgents, dismissing half of them. With the other half he formed two Chetas, one lead by himself and the other by vojvoda Lazar Misev.

As Ottoman weapon search activities increased in Tikvesh Region, to avoid conflict and further endangering the civilian population, the two Chetas left Tikvesh Region and transferred to Prilep Region, but only for a short time before returning to Tikvesh.

While patrolling the vicinity near the village Sheshkevo, on August 16, the Tikvesh insurgents came under Ottoman fire and a vicious battle broke out. When it was over 15 insurgents and 17 Ottoman soldiers lay dead. A few days later another battle broke out, this one near the village Kopristits, leaving 2 insurgents and 7 Ottoman soldiers dead.

Even though the Solun Uprising Revolutionary District had been restricted by the Ottomans in so many ways, its leadership still managed to accomplish a great deal. For starters it mobilized its forces and kept them active. It got the attention of the Ottomans by forcing Suleyman Pasha to send his powerful army after them and to commit large forces to guard the railways. By doing this the Solun Uprising Revolutionary District leadership proved that even a small number of insurgents involved in partisan style activities could literally pin down a large army, as Gotse Delchev had earlier predicted.

----- The Seres Uprising

The Seres Uprising Revolutionary District (now occupied by Greece), with the City of Seres as its center, covered the territory extending from Mesta River to the east, the Bulgarian border to the north, the Struma River to the west and the Aegean Sea to the south.

Immediately before the 1903 Ilinden National Uprising, the Seres Uprising Revolutionary District supported a population of 429,382 people of whom 245, 582 were Macedonians and the rest were Muslims, Ottomans, Vlachs and others. (Vanche Stojchev. “Military History of Macedonia”. Military academy. Skopje, 2004. Page 362)

The Seres Uprising Revolutionary District, being geographically positioned between a number of mountains, rivers and gorges, was not only of strategic importance to both the Ottomans and the Macedonians but because of its poorly developed road networks it made it ideal for organizing a revolutionary movement. Unfortunately because of the 1878 Kreshna Uprising this District gained special significance in the Ottoman defense strategy and was well guarded. Besides being militarily well guarded, this District was also placed under constant Ottoman watch for revolutionary activities.

In terms of defense in the first half of 1903, just before the August 2nd, 1903 Macedonian National Ilinden Uprising, stationed in the Seres vicinity alone were parts of the 9th Infantry Division and the entire 18th Brigade. The 33rd Infantry Brigade was stationed in Goma Dzumaja and forward battalions were stationed in Melnik,

Drama, Demir Hisar, Nevrokop and other cities. There were also smaller units ranging from 30 to 40 and from 100 to 150 Ottomans soldiers deployed in the various villages in Seres District. All in all there were over 5,000 Ottoman soldiers stationed in this District alone. How this massive Ottoman military presence was deployed largely depended on the geographic position of the cities and villages and on the perceived threat from the revolutionaries.

To keep itself clandestine as much as possible, Seres Uprising Revolutionary District took the name "the fourth Uprising District - Pirin". But in spite of its large Macedonian population and all efforts by the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization to bring this Revolutionary District in line with the others, there was not much success. This was also reflected by the fact that only one delegate attended the Solun Congress.

Lazar Dimitrov, representing the Seres Uprising Revolutionary District, was well aware of the situation in his District when he voted against an early uprising. But given that many of the delegates voted for an early Uprising, Dimitrov accepted the decision and complied with the wishes of the majority.

Towards the end of January 1903, Gotse Delchev paid the District a visit and met with Jane Sandanski, Pejo Javorov, Taskata Serski and others in the village Kara Koj, Nevrokop Region, to assess the situation. Unfortunately before his work was done Delchev was killed and his death brought further deterioration to the District's ability to organize the people and to participate in the National Uprising.

Gotse Delchev's death was viewed as suspicious and there was contention between the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (MRO) and the Bulgarian sponsored Vrhovist leadership. The two factions were accusing one another of betrayal and of having Delchev murdered.

The presence of a large number of Bulgarian sponsored Vrhovists did not help the situation. Discord between the MRO and the Bulgarian sponsored Vrhovists always existed but nowhere more than in the Seres District where there was a gaping divide between

the ideologies of the two groups. In fact at one point just before the Uprising, there was so much tension that there was serious danger of an armed conflict breaking out between the two groups.

Because this district was already suspected of being involved in revolutionary activities and due to earlier revolutionary incidents in Gorna Dzumaja and Solun (assassinations), the people in Seres were placed under extreme scrutiny. So to avoid placing the civilian population in peril, Yane Sandanski, the only revolutionary leader in the District with authority to make decisions and influence the population, decided to follow Gotse Delchev's idea and not participate in the National Uprising, at least not en masse. Unfortunately since that decision had already been made during the Solun Congress, to avoid making the situation even more difficult for the civilian population, Sandanski gave in to Vrhovist pressures and joined forces with the Bulgarian sponsored bands.

All in all there were 850 Vrhovists; 134 were under the command of Colonel Anastas Jankov, 300 were under the command of Jordan Stojanov and Petar Drvingov. All were under the command of General Ivan Tsonchev.

Because of the problems experienced, the District remained inactive, that is, until August 15th, 1903 when Vrhovist Lieutenant Jordan Stojanov's Cheta clashed with an Ottoman unit on the slopes of Belasitsa Mountain.

On August 19, 1903 another battle broke out on Etipitsa Hill in Bansko Region near Lake Eltepen. Here Lieutenant Jordan Stojanov's Cheta combined with Boris Strezov's Cheta to form the Belitsa detachment and fought the Ottomans under Lieutenant Petar Drvingov's command.

On August 22, 1903 Yane Sandanski held the long overdue Seres District Congress in Belemeto, Pirin Mountain. Here it was decided that the Seres Revolutionary District would continue to participate in the Uprising but in a limited way and through the use of diversionary partisan style actions. The first target chosen to be attacked was the Dedeagatch to Solun rail line.

During this Congress, which lasted three days, it was decided to start the Uprising in Seres District much later than in the other districts. The date chosen was the Krstovden Holy Day, September 14, 1903, 43 days after the Ilinden Uprising in Bitola District. The reason for the delay was because the Seres District was not ready to enter the Uprising with all that Ottoman military build up in its District. The thinking was that if Seres remained peaceful, the Ottomans would surely redeploy the Seres District massive force elsewhere where it was needed. Counting on the Ottomans to disperse their troops to other Districts that had already commenced the Uprising, the people of Seres would rise up and have a better chance of liberating themselves. At least that was the plan.

On August 28, 1903, in order to make use of all available forces, Yane Sandanski summoned Lieutenant Jordan Stojanov to bring the Vrhovist Chetas to the village Pirin, Melnik Region, where he intended to incorporate the Vrhovists with Mihail Tsakov's and his own Cheta. Many were not happy with Sandanski's decision but accepted the idea and cooperated as long as the aim was to liberate Seres and Macedonia.

On August 31, 1903 more Chetas arrived, both Vrhovist and MRO, and met in the region between Nevrokop and Melnik. Included among the Vrhovist leadership were General Ivan Tsonchev and Colonel Anastas Jankov as well as a couple of Russian journalists named Petar Orlovetz and Romoald Przhevalski.

The concentration of armed insurgents unfortunately attracted the attention of the Ottomans who dispatched two military battalions to engage them. A vicious battle broke out near the village Pirin as the combined Chetas took joint action for the first time and defeated the Ottoman attack.

Afterwards Sandanski met with Tsonchev and explained to the Vrhovist that he could not have frontal confrontations with the Ottomans at this time and ordered him to take his Chetas to a region near Lake Braznitsa and wait until the official announcement of the Uprising in Seres Region was made. General Tsonchev accepted Sandanski's recommendation and withdrew his Chetas.

After the Vrhovist withdrawal, Sandanski went to Breznitsa and met with Tsonchev and the other Vrhovist representatives in hopes of reaching a consensus on how to deploy the troops during the Uprising. While Tsonchev wanted an all out war simultaneously deploying every available resource, Sandanski wanted to divide up the Chetas by region and conduct long term partisan style diversionary actions. Unfortunately no consensus could be reached other than to begin the Uprising on Krstovden, September 14, 1903. A vote was taken and, by majority, Tsonchev's plan was accepted and a General Headquarters was established. Tsonchev and Dimitar Stefanov, as well as others from both sides, were appointed to lead the Uprising. Unhappy with the outcome, Sandanski and his insurgents returned to Seres and Drama to begin preparations for the Uprising and to conduct partisan style diversionary actions.

Vrhovists General Tsonchev, Colonel Jankov, Lieutenant Colonel Stefan Nikolov, Lieutenants Drvingov and Sarakinov, along with their Vrhovist Chetas, waited until September 15th, 1903 before initiating frontal attacks against the Ottomans. They restricted their campaigns close to the Bulgarian border, mainly in the Gorna Dzumaja and Razlog Regions, and when confronted by sizable Ottoman forces the Vrhovists retreated inside the Bulgarian border leaving the villagers open to Ottoman reprisal.

As planned, Sandanski divided up his insurgents into smaller Chetas and placing one under Vojvoda Mircho Kiprev's command. Unfortunately on September 15, 1903, while patrolling the Drama region, this Cheta fell into an Ottoman ambush. While most insurgents escaped with their lives, Vojvoda Kiprev was killed. Command of the Cheta fell to Vojvoda Ivan Anastasov-Grcheto.

On September 16, 1903 the same Cheta ran into another column of Ottoman soldiers, this time near the village Kalapot. Another battle broke out but, unprepared to fight a frontal attack against a numerically superior enemy, the insurgents retreated into the woods leaving behind four of their own dead.

By mid September 1903 most Revolutionary Districts had fallen to the enemy and the Ottomans had no problem responding to the late

Uprising in Seres with a formidable counter attack, thus putting an end to the short lived Uprising in that District.

Having failed to drive the Ottomans out of Seres, the Vrhovists continued their campaign in the District but focused their actions more on spreading Bulgarian propaganda and less on attacking the Ottoman army.

From a military perspective, the short lived Uprising in the Seres Revolutionary District was unsuccessful mainly due to the District's inability to become organized under the constant watchful eye of the Ottomans but also due to the conditions of the Uprising's late start. By mid September 1903, free from campaigning in other districts, the Ottomans had more than enough resources to respond to the Seres Uprising, something the insurgents did not count on.

From a moral and political perspective, the Uprising was a success because, in spite of all odds, the Seres Revolutionary District, mainly due to Sandanki's good leadership, was able to muster enough will to begin the Uprising thus entering the annals of history as a District that struggled to not only free itself but to free all of Macedonia.

1903 - Misirkov - book "On Macedonian Matters"

1903 - Krste Petkov - Misirkov publishes the book "On Macedonian Matters" ("Za makedonskite raboti") in which he projected the principles for standardization of the Macedonian literary language.

1907 - The Nozh Uprising

By the middle of 1907 the Macedonian people found themselves in a state of anarchy with war looming on the horizon. No one knew or could confirm with any certainty how many illegal armed bands were operating in Macedonia. Neither the Ottoman army nor the International Peacekeepers wanted anything to do with them. These Greek, Serbian, Bulgarian, Albanian and Romanian bands were paid to terrorize and victimize the Macedonian civilian population with a single aim, to eliminate the Macedonian peoples' desire to create a free and independent Macedonia and to make it easier for whoever

possessed Macedonian lands to assimilate the Macedonian people once Macedonia was partitioned. These bands were dispatched and paid for by the Greek, Serbian, Bulgarian and Romanian governments to serve their interests.

By this time the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (MRO) had recovered somewhat from the failed Ilinden Uprising but did not possess the strength or resources to respond to all the troubles that the Macedonian people were facing. However the few Macedonian Chetas that remained active fought day and night to protect the people, sometimes two or three battles per day. If they fought the Greeks, Serbians and Bulgarians in the morning then they fought the Ottoman army in the evening.

The civilian population did not know what to make of all the chaos and violence and lived under constant fear and threat of war. The situation worsened when the Ottomans began to reinforce their military installations in the Bitola Vilayet with ten additional battalions. Not knowing what this military buildup was for the MRO decided to react, particularly after the Ottomans joined the Greeks, Serbians, Bulgarians and Bashibazuks in committing violent crimes against the Macedonian population.

Given the dire situation, particularly in the Bitola Vilayet in April 1907, many of the Macedonian insurgents and Vojvodas who survived the Ilinden onslaught were recalled and asked to reassemble at Babuna Mountain in Bitola.

The first to return were Vojvodas Petar Atsev and Tane Nikolov along with 50 experienced and well-armed insurgents. Vojvodas Mihail Chakov, Hristo Tsvetkov and Mircho Najdenov, along with their Chetas, arrived followed later by Ivan Naumov- Alabakov from Veles with his Cheta. In total there were 230 insurgents who had returned and 300 more from the local village militia. After arriving, the force of 530 insurgents relocated to the Nikodin vicinity where they were joined by more local Chetas and some from Kostur Region and southern Bulgaria.

On June 6, 1907 the Council of Vojvodas held a meeting in Popadiski Chukari where they discussed strategies on how to take

adequate measures to protect the population. Anticipating dramatic events, the Council ordered the local organizations to immediately prepare food for 500 persons for three days. Fortunately the dramatic events anticipated did not materialize.

In the middle of June, 1907 two Serbian armed bands appeared in the village Nikodin and began to hassle the civilian population. On June 22, 1907 the Macedonian Chetas led by Mihail Chakov, Tane Nikolov, Petar Atsev, Mircho Najdenov and Hristo Tsvetkov surrounded Nikodin and began their assault on the Serbian bands. Unfortunately before the bandits could be captured most escaped the encirclement by disguising themselves as women wearing traditional clothes, or shepherds and herdsmen.

When the Ottoman authorities found out that Macedonian insurgents had returned and were in the vicinity of Nikodin, they quickly dispatched their army and garrisoned all the villages including the small ones.

On July 10, 1907 the Chetas, led by Nikolov, Atsev, Najdenov, Tsvetkov and Gorgi Mariovski from Mariovo numbering more than 150 insurgents reinforced with 300 insurgents from the village militia, regrouped in the vicinity between Popadija -Nikodin and Rakle and went on their way to intercept another Serbian armed band which had entered Nikodin.

On July 11, 1907 the Council of Vojvodas decided to encircle the Serbian band and this time destroy it for good. But yet again the Serbians breached the encirclement and escaped. Eager to save their own skins and get revenge on the Macedonian Chetas, Serbian agents reported the Macedonian buildup to the Ottoman authorities who in turn sent a large local army unit as well as other units from Bitola, Prilep, Voden, Lerin, Tikves and Veles to immediately depart for Babuna Mountain. Upon learning of this, the Prilep Revolutionary Committee advised the Vojvodas to quickly leave Nikodin and retreat to Mariovo.

Unfortunately all the Chetas could not retreat as they were expecting other Chetas to arrive and needed to warn them of the Ottoman advance. Ivan Alabakov’s Cheta decided to stay behind while Tane

Nikolov and Petar Atsev, who had major roles in the Council of Vojvodas, watched the Serbian movement and while waiting for the arrival of the Ottoman army divided their forces into two groups. The first group led by Nikolov, Atsev and Mariovski, together with the local militia, occupied the Popadiski Chukari hills. The second group led by Chakov, Tsvetkov and Najdenov occupied the Nozh hill near the village Rakle. The second group was then subdivided into two smaller groups of eight insurgents each, commanded by Sekula Oraovdolski and Velko Popadiski. One group was sent to secure Jasenova Glava peak between the villages Nikodin and Vladilovtsi.

On July 13, 1907 messengers from Prilep, Topolitsa, Trojatsi and Veles reported that a column of 3,000 Ottoman soldiers led by Enver Bey, future leader of the Young Turk revolution, was headed towards Nikodin. The same day, the Vojvodas Chakov, Tsetkov and Najdenov were urged to consult with Nikolov, Atsev and Mariovski, now located near Popadiski Chukar, to decide what to do. Petko Kojchev, secretary of the Veles Cheta, in the meantime, was given the role of acting Vojvoda at Nozh to replace Ivan Alabakov who had left with his 50 insurgents the night before.

Soon after the Vojvodas met they were informed that the Ottoman column was now moving towards Nozh. Messengers were immediately dispatched with orders to inform the Chetas to retreat from Nozh and head towards Popadiska Vodenitsa.

After receiving the order all but 54 insurgents left Nozh. Among the remaining 54 was the entire Kostur Region Cheta numbering 30 insurgents and some volunteers who had recently joined. Command of the Kostur Region Cheta was entrusted to 19 year old assistant Vojvoda Atanas Popov from Sesteovo, Kostur Region and 19 year old Tredafil Dumbalokov from Suho, Solun Region. Dumbakov was a volunteer who had just left the Military Academy in Sofia to join the fight and be close to the Macedonian people.

When Popov and Dumbalokov received orders from the Council of Vojvodas to retreat they immediately rejected the orders and refused to leave claiming that they were sent there by the people of Kostur Region to fight. They were again informed that a column of 3,000

Ottoman soldiers was about to embark on their position, but the two young men and their insurgents again refused to leave insisting that this was their destiny. They came here to fight and not retreat. This was their final decision and they were here to fulfill their obligation to the people of Kostur even if they had to fight to the death.

Popov's and Dumbalokov's decision to fight, although astonishing, was welcome news to the village militia and to the Papradiste insurgents led by Najdo Arsov and Petko Kojchev but a disappointment to the Council because it would prove to be a senseless loss of such good fighters and patriots.

But as the first Ottoman soldiers began to arrive and encircle Nozh there was a change of heart in the Vojvodas, insurgents and village militia as they tried to unsuccessfully breach the Ottoman encirclement. It was impossible to help the brave souls since by then all roads to Nozh were occupied by the Ottoman army and another large army group was approaching.

Tane Nikolov and Mirche Najdenov with their Chetas took position on the highest hill, while Mihail Chakov and Tsvetko Popadiski with their Chetas climbed to another hill surprising and pushing back the Ottoman advance.

Tane Nikolov's insurgents fought the Ottomans approaching from Veles while Ivan Alabakov attacked the Ottomans headed to Nozh in order to open a gap for the Kostur Region Cheta to escape. Understanding the seriousness of the situation, the village militia too tried to punch a gap in the Ottoman encirclement but again without success. The Ottoman army was much too numerous to overwhelm and well informed of the situation at their disposal.

Still refusing to budge, knowing that they would all die, the Kostur Region Cheta and its new volunteer recruits remained steadfast and determined to give their lives for the liberty of Macedonia. During the night of July 13 and 14, 1907 the brave insurgents took an oath that they would not surrender and took their position with only one thought in mind, "victory or death".

By dawn on July 14, 1907 the 3,000 strong Ottoman column had completely encircled Nozh and a vicious battle ensued. After firing the first volley the Ottomans sent a message asking the Macedonians to surrender. The Macedonians in turn rejected their offer with a counter offer saying that they preferred to fight.

The Ottoman commander was not amused so he began to tighten the noose escalating the battle from all directions.

The unequal battle continued, leaving many dead and wounded but without any surrenders and no attempts to escape, until noon when the last bullet was fired. Then as was previously agreed to, the 45 insurgents who were still alive huddled together, destroyed their guns, watches and other valuables so the enemy could not possess them, gathered all their ammunition and explosives, pointed their revolvers at each other and began to sing a Macedonian patriotic song. They then blew themselves up with their own ammunition.

As the ammunition exploded violently their bodies were scattered with arms, legs, bones and other body parts falling everywhere. The enemy was shocked as it had never seen such self-sacrifice for idealism and with such a tragic ending. When the Ottoman commander Enver Bey arrived at the scene he too was astonished by what he saw. He had nothing but admiration for those who sacrificed their lives and he used the moment to exemplify this tragedy as an act of heroism. He called upon his soldiers and showed them how real heroes fight and die.

To honour the fallen, by Enver Bey's order, the 3,000 Ottoman soldiers shot three volleys in the air while shouting 'Allah, Allah, Allah'.

Italian gendarmerie Captain Lucius in the meantime took photos of the fallen and afterwards Enver Bey allowed the villagers to bury the corpses.

1908 - The Young Turk Uprising

It appears that the Christians were not the only ones being targeted for exploitation and abuse by the high Ottoman authorities and the Ottoman system in the Balkans during the early 1900's.

After the Ilinden Macedonian National Uprising was suppressed, conditions in the Ottoman Empire continued to deteriorate distressing even elements of the Ottoman ruling class.

Pushed to the limit, the first to react were the foreign educated Ottoman military officers who later came to be known as the Young Turk Committee of the "Unity and Progress" party. Having run out of options as to what to do about the distressful situation in which they found themselves, the Young Turk Committee decided it was time to take matters into its own hands by organizing a rebellion, later termed the Young Turk Uprising.

The decision to start an uprising was made in Bitola at the "Unity and Progress" party headquarters on July 3rd, 1908. Here the Young Turk Committee ordered the commander of the Resen garrison, Ahmed Niazi Bey, an Albanian by origin, to leave the barracks and take his soldiers to the mountains. Soon afterwards the commander with 160 of his soldiers took whatever they could, including 74 rifles, 30,000 cartridges and all the money possessed by the garrison, and left for the mountains.

When word of the rebellion spread throughout the civilian population Niazi Bey was joined by many of the policemen in the region.

Soon after Niazi Bey declared his intentions to the Ottoman authorities in Istanbul, Solun and Bitola that he had raised a rebellion against the Sultan's regime, on July 5, 1908, he sent a proclamation to the Macedonian people also informing them of his intentions. In his proclamation, among other things he said: "Christian and Muslim brothers, this is to inform you that the time has come to put an end to the terror and abuse which we all have suffered for centuries. We are in this situation because up to now we have been listening to the Great European Powers and their proxies, Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece. Our authorities have contributed a great deal to this situation by exerting pressures on us, the Ottomans,

Macedonians, Vlachs, Albanians and others... Today we have stood up to fight against this tyranny, to eliminate the pressure imposed on us, and to create a future where all of us will have independence and liberty, equality and justice… That is why I call on you to disband your Chetas and to join us in a common struggle against tyranny and injustice. Liberty, to borrow a word from the Macedonian language, for all will be guaranteed… Those who oppose us, be it Muslim or Christian, will be severely dealt with…" (Vanche Stojchev. "Military History of Macedonia". Military academy. Skopje, 2004. Page 387)

On July 7, 1908 Sultan Abdul Hamid II ordered Shemsi Pasha, commander of the 18th Division stationed in Mitrovitsa, to take two Ottoman battalions and crush the Young Turk rebellion. But as the situation developed, as soon as he arrived in Bitola, Shemsi Pasha was killed. Then on July 20, 1908 the entire 3rd Ottoman Army stationed in Solun deserted and joined the new insurgency. The 2nd Ottoman Army stationed in Odrin also joined the insurgency.

After the Young Turks appealed to the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization's (MRO) Chetas to join their fight, the Young Turks formed new armed forces consisting of the Ottoman soldiers who deserted and the Macedonian insurgents from the MRO village Chetas, forces which continued to grow with each passing day.

On July 20th, 1908, led by Niazi Beyand Sabri Bey, about 3,000 Young Turk insurgents entered Bitola and emptied its jails releasing about 1,200 political prisoners, mostly Macedonian revolutionaries.

On July 24th, 1908 Niazi Bey took control of Prespa, Struga, Resen and Debar Regions, punished those who had aided the Sultan and established revolutionary authority over those regions. Shortly afterwards Solun became the new centre of the Young Turk Uprising.

On July 24th, 1908 Sultan Abdul Hamid II issued a decree ordering the Ottoman Empire's State Constitution to be rolled back to the Constitution established in 1876.

The day after the Constitutional roll back order was given, Yane Sandanski from Nevrokop and Hristo Chernopeev from Strumitsa called a meeting to discuss the situation during which the Macedonians decided to give the Young Turks their support.

On July 27th, 1908 the Young Turk committee of the "Unity and Progress" party in Bitola, led by Niazi Bey, organized a welcoming reception for the MRO Chetas. The Macedonian leaders including Apostol Petkov, nicknamed "the Sun of Enidzhe Vardar", and Vasil Chakalarov from Kostur were welcomed with special honours. In Pehchevo, Vojvoda Gerasim Naumov gave a speech in which he also said: "Brothers and sisters, Turks, Macedonians, Gypsies, Vlachs, Jews, we are all in this together and together we will fight to destroy the Empire but preserve the Republic of Turkey as it is now, with no sultan". MRO insurgents were also welcomed as they arrived from the mountains.

On July 30, 1908 Yane Sandanski arrived in Solun where he was welcomed by thousands of Ottoman citizens, including Enver Bey and Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.

On July 31st, 1908 Sandanski issued his famous Manifesto, calling on all nations in the Ottoman Empire to unite as brothers and together fight against the Sultan's tyranny. After that all political prisoners in the regions under Young Turk control were amnestied. More Vojvodas and their Chetas came down from the mountains and were welcomed and allowed to operate legally.

On August 8th, 1908, while in Solun, Sandanski participated in the reformation of the MRO to include Odrin, a region east of Macedonia. After that MRO became known as the MORO (Macedonian Odrin Revolutionary Organization). MORO was also reformed to include some of the Young Turk goals which were supported by the Macedonian leadership, including Sandanski but with some reservations. Before committing himself fully to the Young Turk cause, Sandanski warned the Young Turks that if they did not keep their promises he would not hesitate to take his insurgents back to the mountains. It was clear that Sandanski did not fully trust the Young Turks because, besides making threats, he also

ordered some of his Chetas in Seres, Melnik and Shtip to hide weapons, just in case the Young Turks were not on the level.

During August 1908 the Young Turks elected a new National Parliament in which many of the Empire's nations participated, including the Macedonians. Elected in the first National Parliament were 275 delegates of whom 142 were Turks, 60 Arabs, 25 Albanians, 23 Greeks, 12 Armenians, 5 Jews, 4 Macedonians, 3 Serbs and 1 Vlach. The Macedonians elected were Todor Pavlov from Skopje District, Pancho Dorev from Bitola District, Dimitar Vlahov from Solun District and Hristo Dalchev from Seres District. The fact that Macedonians were invited to participate in the elections and the fact that Macedonians were actually elected in Parliament raised the Macedonian peoples' hopes and their trust in the Young Turks.

On December 17th, 1908 the new National Parliament held its first session with the passing of an anti-strike law directed at ending all strikes, most of which took place in Macedonia; the revolutionary core of the Ottoman Empire. Unfortunately, being prejudiced against the Macedonians and unable to let go of bad habits, the Young Turks exercised the usual violence and anarchy which their predecessors had employed when putting down strikes, thus creating confusion and distrust for the new regime.

At the start of January 1909 the MORO created the National Federal party (NFP) which supported democracy in Macedonia and was against Macedonia separating from the Ottoman Empire. The NFP was in support of an Ottoman Empire as a Federation of States with all of Macedonia existing as a Republic inside that federation. Unfortunately, the Young Turk Uprising in general and the NFP's goals and objectives in particular were not popular with the Great Powers who at the time had different ideas.

The Young Turk revolt, no matter how popular inside, was a threat to Great Power plans particularly to those to whom Macedonia had been promised. The neighbouring countries, with help from the Great Powers, carried out numerous activities designed to disunite the Macedonian revolutionary movement. Some of these activities manifested themselves in a class struggle between left and right. The

right it seems was promised an independent Macedonia while the left fought for a Macedonian republic under an Ottoman Federation.

After the MRO was disbanded in early 1908, left wing forces, including the insurgents from Seres, Strumitsa and Solun Districts, followed Sandanski's lead. Odrin District also joined Sandanski after it was incorporated into MORO by the Young Turks.

In September 1908, under the influence of the Bulgarian government, members of the right wing MRO created the Association of Bulgarian Constitutive Clubs (ABCC) whose main goal was to "group Bulgarian nationalities in new administrative units, homogenize the regions and give them power to self-manage". Clubs such as these were created all over Macedonia and worked hard to separate Sandanski and the NFP from the Young Turks.

In the fall of 1909 after the Law on Associations was passed, which prohibited the creation of organizations on a national basis, the ABCC was disbanded. So to avoid condemnation the Bulgarian government participated in the creation of various Macedonian and Odrin organizations, which again were used for the realization of Bulgarian national objectives. These organizations were created on Bulgarian territory then dispatched to operate in Macedonia and Odrin.

While world politics was polarizing the MORO leadership pulling it to the left or to the right, many Macedonian insurgents remained neutral and fought for the original MRO ideals. One such group was the Bitola District Cheta, which at the time operated legally in Bitola District. On October 13th, 1908 the Bitola District Committee submitted an official protest to the city's Vali, the Young Turk committees and to the Great Power diplomatic representatives in Bitola declaring that the Committee had noticed change for the worse in the Young Turk attitude towards the Macedonian people and unless the proper authorities took measures to alter this change, the MRO would be forced to act. But in spite of the strong words, the MRO continued to operate legally under the rules created by the Young Turks.

The Serbian government in the meantime, in view of the changes brought on by the Young Turks, instructed its diplomatic representatives to support Young Turk initiatives but to also emphasize and promote Serbian interests in Macedonia. During the elections Serbian diplomats demanded that the Young Turks recognize the so-called "Serbian nationality" in Macedonia and to allow the appointment of a Serbian metropolitan to the Veles-Debar eparchy. All this Serbian political maneuvering was carried out through the Serbian Democratic League established in August 1908. It was renamed "Educational-charity organization of the Ottoman Serbs" in 1910. Besides using this organization, Serbian propaganda was spread by the Serbian church, schools and other Serbian cultural and educational institutions and clubs established in Macedonia.

Greek interests in Macedonia were also affected by the Young Turk Uprising but that did not stop the Patriarchate church, Greek consular representatives and the Greek sponsored armed bands from spreading Greek propaganda in Macedonia. Before the Young Turk Uprising, the Patriarchate, being a legal institution in Macedonia, was authorized by the Sublime Porte to oppose Bulgarian Exarchate influence in Macedonia. But with the Young Turk victory that privilege was threatened so on August 6th, 1908 the Greek silogos convened a meeting in Istanbul. A decision was made to create Greek political clubs in Macedonia and use them to spread Greek propaganda and promote the Greek national ideology.

The Young Turk regime did not meet Albanian expectations so in 1908 the Albanians fought against the Young Turks, struggling for their own independent national, political and economic freedom.

Albanian clubs were also created in several Macedonian cities including Skopje, Bitola, Solun and Debar. The club in Skopje at the beginning of September 1908 had 120 members many of whom were of the Christian Catholic religion, which attracted the attention of the Austrian-Hungarian consul. In June 1909 the Albanian Constitutive Club in Solun submitted a letter of protest to the Young Turk committee condemning the violence and terror perpetrated in Albania by General Javid Pasha.

In the spring of 1910, Midhat Frasheri, president of the Albanian Solun committee, was removed by the Young Turk government from his position as Political Department Director of the Solun Vilayet and was sent to work in Baghdad. This was yet another blow to Young Turk-Albanian relations.

Dissatisfied with the treatment they received from the Young Turk regime, the Albanian people in Albania, in the spring of 1911, began to riot spreading their havoc from northern to southern Albania. As the protests widened a large number of Ottoman officers deserted, joined the Albanian side and began to organize riots against the Young Turk regime in Macedonia.

In early 1912 several Ottoman officers and about sixty soldiers from the Bitola, Ohrid, Prilep and Debar garrisons deserted and some officers in command of the Ottoman battalions began to disobey orders demanding that the Young Turk committee schedule new elections.

In June 1912 a number of Ottoman officers created the "Peoples' League of Saviours" ("Ishadia"). Then on July 5th Major Halil and Lieutenant Arif, representing the "Ishadia", met with Chernopeev and Chavdarov in Dupnitsa to discuss what to do about the Young Turk situation. After much discussion the various representatives agreed that they would unite and counter-revolt against the Young Turk regime. The Ottoman officers also agreed to supply the Macedonian insurgents with weapons, ammunition and the targets to attack. The Macedonians in turn agreed that they would not attack the "counter-revolutionaries" and would try to establish relations with the Albanian and Greek bands and gain their assistance in the fight against the Young Turks.

According to this agreement the Macedonian revolutionaries were to receive armaments, free movement and the cooperation of the counter-revolutionary Ottomans, Albanians and Greeks.

The extreme pressure placed on the Young Turks by the counter-revolutionary movement was too much to bear and in July 1912, the Young Turks finally cracked with the dismissal of parliament.

Immediately afterwards more than 10,000 insurgents stormed Skopje and released about 440 political prisoners.

Because of all these countermeasures, the Ottoman government passed even more restrictive laws, took stricter measures and brought new police and military forces into the region. Life in Macedonia became harsher and the only way out of it was seen to be through a war against the Ottomans; a war which could be carried out by reestablishing MRO and its original military activities.

The Young Turks did not succeed in achieving their goals mainly because their "revolutionary ideals" were not supported by the rich Ottoman feudal lords. In fact on April 13th, 1909 in Istanbul, the feudal lords called for a coup against the Young Turks, instigating the April 15th, 1909 protests in Solun where Yane Sandanski and the NFP were called on to participate in putting it down.

Sandanski was again called on April 20th, 1909 to participate in another attack against the old Ottoman regime; this time to a place called Chataldzha near Istanbul where the 3rd Ottoman Army consisting of 40,000 soldiers and 15,000 volunteers was concentrated. Sandanski with 2,000 insurgents, Hristo Chernopeev with 150, Todor Panitsa with 120 and other Macedonian volunteers joined this huge force in a joint action to overthrow the Sultan. The battle lasted three days, resulting in a victory for the Young Turks whose forces occupied Istanbul on April 24th, 1909, overthrowing Sultan Abdul Hamid II and replacing him with Mehmed Pasha V, former inspector for the Murzsteg reforms. Unfortunately, due to Great Power intervention the Young Turk armed forces along with the Macedonian insurgents were forced to retreat and the new administrative organs that were put in charge followed the old Ottoman rules.

It would appear that the Young Turks tolerated the insurgency in Macedonia as long it was needed to fulfill their own objectives but as soon as they took control of the territory and overthrew the Sultan they no longer needed the insurgents and began passing restrictive laws to suppress them. One of the more significant laws was the law on military squad creation for the purpose of hunting down and eliminating insurgents.

In November 1909 Hilmi Pasha, the Minister of the Interior, signed a disarmament law aimed at disarming Rumelia Vilayet and punishing those who were suspected of harbouring weapons. The law consisted of 38 articles grouped in 4 chapters enforced by the Ministry of the Interior and by the War Ministry.

Ordered by Talat Bey, the new Minister of the Interior, another law was passed on December 24, 1909 to revoke all amnesties granted to former MRO activists on July 11, 1908. This law additionally would charge MRO members for old acts committed for which they were already pardoned.

After all these laws were passed, the Ottomans began to arrest, persecute and murder Macedonian revolutionaries, activists, military leaders and insurgents, generally disarming the population by force and by repressive measures.

During late 1909 more than 150 people were killed in Skopje, Bitola, Solun and Odrin Vilayets including Vojvodas Todor Dochev from Bitola and Gjurchin Naumov from Ohrid. Many were wounded, robbed and mistreated and even many more, particularly Christians, were expelled from Macedonia and their properties confiscated and given to Muslim refugees from Bosnia and other places. From March 1st, 1909 to the end of 1910 1,084 Muslims were settled in Odrin vilayet, 10,000 in Solun vilayet and 10,300 in Skopje vilayet, increasing not only the terror against the Macedonian Christian population but also changing the region's demography.

Failing to bring permanent change in the region, the Young Turk regime not only failed the hopes of the Macedonian people but brought unprecedented terror to the population forcing the Macedonian revolutionaries to go back to the mountains.

Among the first to take to the mountains were Vojvodas Blazhe Krstev-Birincheto, Trajko Mitrev from Prilep, Alekso Stefanov from the village Radevo, Bogoj Simeonov from the village Malo Tsrsko followed by Apostol Petkov, Todor Aleksandrov, Hristo Chernopeev, Konstantin Samardzhiev and Mihail Dumbalakov.

In mid-December 1909 Chernopeev, dissatisfied with the current situation in Macedonia, went to Solun and announced to his friends that he was fleeing to the mountains because he believed the situation in Macedonia would only change through violence and war; a notion that was fully supported by Dimitar Vlahov.

In the spring of 1910 new Chetas began to pop-up in Strumitsa, Pehchevo and Shtip Regions and as their numbers increased the Cheta Chiefs decided it was time to create a new General Headquarters and elect new leaders. This task was delegated to a group of former MRO activists from Strumitsa, Seres and Solun Revolutionary Districts who in April 1910 met in Varna and then in Sofia and decided to resume the insurgency in Macedonia and to include Odrin District. An organizational committee was elected led by Hristo Chrnopeev and Andon Bozukov. But in spite of this group being Macedonian and in spite of the insurgents fighting for the liberation of Macedonia and Odrin, the organization which was going to lead it was called "Bulgarian National Macedonian Odrin Revolutionary Organization" (BN MORO). This was done in order to placate Bulgaria, which had pledged support for the Organization and would allow its Chetas to be formed on Bulgarian soil.

Led by Chernopeev and Petkov, the first Cheta organized by BN MORO was dispatched to Macedonia on June 29th, 1910. Not happy with the situation another group of former activists, consisting of Hristo Matov, Todor Aleksandov, Aleksandar Protogerov, Petar Chaulev, Stefan Nikolov, Milan Gjurlukov, Stojan Mishev and others, got together in Sofia in May 1910 and decided to reestablish MRO and its revolutionary activities in accordance with its old principles. A new MRO Central Committee was elected that included Todor Aleksandrov, Aleksandar Protogerov and Petar Chaulev with Hristo Matov and Todor Lazarov as representatives from abroad.

On May 10, 1910 a group of 13 people, led by Todor Aleksandrov, arrived in Macedonia and after crossing the border broke into five groups and went to various cities to re-establish MRO and carry out new military activities.

As a result of their work numerous new Chetas were created in a short time and established in almost every region of Macedonia. People were told that the new MRO was based on the old Ilinden ideals and would seek the same goals as its predecessor. MRO's comeback had great influence on the Macedonian people as many flocked to join its new Chetas. Skopje Revolutionary District, led by Todor Aleksandrov, was the most successful District to engage the people not only to join the Organization but also to carry out military campaigns against the Ottomans.

Unfortunately in spite of all efforts on the part of the MRO and its leadership, neither the new Chetas created internally nor the ones infiltrated from abroad would follow the MRO military procedures and principles. Each Cheta followed its own rules and acted more or less on its own initiative.

To resolve this and other outstanding issues, a meeting was held in Sofia on March 11, 1911 between the various representatives of MRO and BN MORO. After a long discussion it was decided that the name MORO would be used to represent all Organizations and as for the conduct of its members, they were to follow the old pre Ilinden Constitution and Rulebook. The new struggle would be mostly diversionary with attacks aimed at the railroads. A new Central Committee was elected consisting of Todor Aleksandov, Hristo Chernopeev, Petar Chaulev and Aleksandar Protogerov. Todor Lazarov and Pavel Hristov were appointed representatives from abroad. Immediately after the meeting new Chetas were created, each consisting of 5 to 6 insurgents led by Vojvodas Aleksandrov, Chernopeev, Jurukov, Apostol Petkov, Ichko Dimitrov, Konstantin Samardzhiev and others.

Before returning to Macedonia, Todor Aleksandrov, in a speech, reassured the Macedonians in Sofia that the morale of the Macedonian people in Macedonia was high, that the new insurgency was welcomed everywhere and that the Macedonian people were again ready to make sacrifices.

The first MORO (United VMRO and BN MORO) Chetas, organized by activists from the former Supreme Committee (Vrhovists) and led by Lieutenant Colonel Stefan Nikolov, were dispatched to

Macedonia in May 1911. Upon crossing into Macedonia the Chetas were broken up into smaller groups and each group was sent to a pre-selected region; namely Strumica, Petrich, Maleshevo, Melnik and others. Each smaller Cheta, led by Tane Nikolov, Doncho Zlatkov, Stefan Chavdarov, Georgi Zankov and others, in turn operated independently of the others.

On October 18th, 1911 MORO's Central Committee sent a memo to all Great Power Consuls in Macedonia informing them that the political and economic situation in Macedonia had not changed since July 11th, 1908, emphasizing that in such a situation it was only normal that revolutionary activities, such as those agreed upon on July 10th, 1908, be continued. All conflicts from here on forward between insurgents and the Ottoman army would be due to revolutionary activities of the MORO.

After the memo was sent, Ottoman authorities imposed even stricter measures against the Macedonian people. During 1911 and especially 1912 diversionary campaigns became a regular theme in Macedonia being carried out by MORO insurgents.

Explosive experts from the Bulgarian army were dispatched to train MORO insurgents on how to carry out effective attacks on rail lines, focusing mainly on the Solun-Skopje and Solun-Bitola rail lines.

Besides carrying out diversionary attacks on railway facilities, explosive devices were also placed in cities, often on market days and in crowded places. These kinds of diversions were carried out all throughout Macedonia. One of the most severe attacks was carried out in Dojran where 13 people were killed and 42 Ottomans and four Macedonians were wounded. Another attack was carried out in Shtip on November 21st, 1911 killing one and wounding three Ottomans. Although this attack did not cause much damage, this particular incident stirred up fanaticism in the Islamic population causing it to massacre many Christians and rob and burn their shops and houses. After the Muslims were done 20 Macedonians were killed and 262 were wounded.

On July 19th, 1912, just before the Balkan Wars erupted, a bomb exploded in the green market in Kochani. Five minutes later another

bomb exploded in the granular food market killing 10 people in total. Twenty minutes later the Ottoman army blocked all exits and, aided by the police, entered shops and houses killing everyone in sight. In the seven hours that Kochani was seized 40 people were killed and 200 were severely wounded. Houses were robbed and burnt and many women were raped. All consuls were informed about the incident, which was later used as pretext for the First Balkan War.

After Italy declared war on the Ottoman Empire, Ottoman authorities, in October 1911, declared a state of emergency and initiated mobilization of the Macedonian people. To avoid being mobilized many young Macedonian men left their homes and fled abroad. By the end of 1911 more that 900 young Macedonians had avoided the Ottoman recruitment only to return as MORO insurgents.

At the start of March 1912, Shukri Bey, secretary of the Ottoman Ministry of the Interior, and Abdul Kerim Bey, secretary of the Ministry of Education, arrived in Sofia and requested that Bulgarian government stop armed MORO insurgents from entering Ottoman territories from Bulgaria.

A meeting was convened between the Ottomans, the Bulgarian government and the MORO to negotiate a deal. But as a representative of the MORO from abroad, Hristo Matov categorically refused to allow the disarming of insurgents. Being unsuccessful in negotiating a deal, the Ottomans decided to increase their gendarmerie forces in Macedonia to five regiments, each consisting of 3,000 soldiers, and five mobile battalions, each consisting of 1,000 soldiers. The total number of policemen was also increased to 20,000.

In the summer of 1912 new organizations were created in Bulgaria in an attempt to quickly solve the Macedonian Question. On June 17th, 1912 a group of people, among who were Bulgarian officers of Macedonian descent, met at Dr. Dimitar Vjadov's house to plan what to do next. Among them were Lieutenant Colonel Aleksandar Protogerov, Lieutenant Colonel Stefan Nikolov, Major Petar Drvingov and Major Boris Drangov. After some discussion it was

decided to convene a congress in Sofia and present the Bulgarian government with a scenario that favoured an uprising followed by war. A new administrative body, headed by Stefan Nikolov, was appointed to organize the Congress.

The Congress took place in Sofia on August 12th, 1912, which according to media reports was dubbed the “People's assembly for Macedonia and Odrin”. During the Congress a resolution was adopted demanding that the Ottomans provide complete autonomy to Macedonia and Odrin with its own district national parliament, people's police and a Christian governor to be elected by the people and to be supported by the Great Powers. If this demand was not immediately met the resolution called for the Bulgarian government to declare war on the Ottoman Empire.

At the beginning of September 1912 the Macedonian-Odrin brotherhood executive committee began to organize volunteer Chetas for the liberation of Macedonia and Odrin. On the eve of the Balkan Wars, in addition to existing MORO Chetas, new Chetas were created and recruited in Bulgaria to be dispatched to Macedonia. Unfortunately the various leading bodies could not agree on who was going to lead the Chetas, which brought into question Bulgarian mistrust of the Macedonians regardless of their political affiliations.

1910 - The Treaty of Sèvre (August 10)

The Treaty of Sèvres (10 August 1920) was the peace treaty between the Ottoman Empire and Allies at the end of World War I. The Treaty of Versailles was signed with the German Empire before this treaty to annul the German concessions including the economic rights and enterprises. Also, France, Great Britain and Italy signed a secret "Tripartite Agreement" at the same date. The Tripartite Agreement confirmed Britain's oil and commercial concessions and turned the former German enterprises in the Ottoman Empire over to a Tripartite corporation. The terms of the 'Treaty of Sèvres' were far more severe than those imposed on the German Empire in the Treaty of Versailles. The open negotiations covered a period of more than fifteen months, beginning at the Paris Peace Conference. The negotiations continued at the Conference of London, and took

definite shape only after the premiers′ meeting at the San Remo conference in April 1920. France, Italy, and Great Britain, however, had secretly begun the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire as early as 1915. The delay occurred because the powers could not come to an agreement which, in turn, hinged on the outcome of the Turkish national movement. The Treaty of Sèvres was annulled in the course of the Turkish War of Independence and the parties signed and ratified the superseding Treaty of Lausanne in 1923.

1912 - Alliance between Bulgaria and Serbia

February 29, 1912 – The Treaty of Friendship and Alliance between Bulgaria and Serbia is signed in Sofia.

1912 - The First Balkan War begins during which Balkan allies Serbia, Bulgaria, Monte Negro and Greece, achieved victory over the Ottoman Empire.

1912 - Greece takes over Macedonia

Even before Greece had secured its grip on Macedonia, officials were sent to administer "the new lands". The first official Greek administrator arrived in Solun near the end of October 1912, accompanied by two judges, five customs officials, ten consulate clerks, a contingent of reporters and journalists and 168 Cretan soldiers.

1913 - Ottoman rule in Europe ends after five centuries. Macedonia is partitioned between Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece. What is now the Republic of Macedonia is incorporated into Serbia.

1913 - Secret protocol signed between Greece and Serbia

April 22, 1913 - Secret Protocol between Greece and Serbia is signed in Athens.

1913 - Treaty of London signed. May 17/ May 30, 1913
Peace Treaty between Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro and the Ottoman Empire is signed. The Treaty of London was signed on May 30, 1913 during the London Conference of 1912-1913. It dealt

with the territorial adjustments arising out of the conclusion of the First Balkan War. The combatants were the victorious Balkan League (Serbia, Greece, Kingdom of Bulgaria, and Montenegro) and the defeated Ottoman Empire. Representing the Great Powers were Britain, Germany, Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Italy.

1913 - Macedonians rebel against Serbian occupation in June in the Tikves Uprising right after the First Balkan War. The rebels freed almost all of Tikves Region, including the towns Kavadartsi and Negotino. To bring the uprising to an end the Serbian military killed about 1,200 people and burnt more than 1,000 houses.

The Second Balkan War, led by the allies from the First Balkan War (Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria), begins with the aim of portioning Macedonia.

1913 - Inquiry Commission dispatched

August 2, 1913 - Carnegie Endowment Inquiry Commission dispatched from Paris to Macedonia, shortly before the end of the second Balkan War and returned to Paris nearly eight weeks later, on September 28, 1913.

1913 - Peace treaty in Bucharest signed on August 10 - the territory of Macedonia was partitioned into three parts among Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece. Greece was given 51%, Serbia 39% and Bulgaria received 10%. This Peace Treaty is signed between Rumania, Greece, Montenegro, Serbia and Bulgaria.

1913 - The Ohrid – Debar Uprising

Macedonia's division by the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest, approved on August 10th, 1913 by the Great Powers, left the Macedonian people in shock and disbelief. Macedonia had not only been snatched from their hands but now, after two millenniums since Roman times, it had been again partitioned.

It would have been better if Macedonia was left intact and given to any one of these countries, including the Ottomans, perhaps as an autonomous province, but to have it divided was not acceptable.

Many Macedonians were dissatisfied with the turn of events and sought ways to reverse them.

The Macedonian colony in St. Petersburg was the first to react with dissatisfaction and launched an appeal to have the division reversed. But, as before, the appeal was ignored.

As events continued to unfold it became apparent that the Treaty of Bucharest had left more than just the Macedonians dissatisfied. But in the interest of avoiding a war that might spread throughout all of Europe, the Treaty was left as it was. This dissatisfaction unfortunately split the parties into two camps, those who agreed with the Treaty and those who disagreed.

Having lost the most from this experience, Bulgaria was one of the first parties to call for Macedonian autonomy after the Treaty of Bucharest was signed. This gave some Macedonians, including some Macedonian Revolutionary Organization's (MRO's) leaders, hope that there was a chance the division could be reversed by diplomatic or even by military means if necessary.

To prepare for such a contingency, in August 1913, MRO leaders met with Mehmed Sefadin Pustina, leader of the Albanian Revolutionary Committee in Elbasan and signed an agreement to jointly take actions against the Serbian regime.

The Bulgarian government also became involved and together with MRO appointed a three member commission consisting of Dr. Balabanov from Shtip, Dr. I. A. Georgov from Veles and Dr. P. Pavlov from Skopje and charged them with the task of going to Vienna to lobby Austrian-Hungarian politicians to help reverse the Treaty of Bucharest and its division of Macedonia. Their job was to inform Austrian-Hungarian politicians about the situation in Macedonia and to let them know that a mistake had been made in allowing the Serbian and Greek regimes, considered to be much stricter than the Ottomans, to occupy and divide Macedonia. They encouraged Austria-Hungary not to give up on the Macedonian people and if necessary to engage all its forces to reverse the division.

On August 23rd, 1913, Macedonian and Bulgarian delegates led by Leopold Mandl, a representative of the Austrian-Hungarian government, held an assembly in Vienna during which Georgov requested that Macedonia be allowed to organize a referendum to determine the Macedonian peoples' national declaration. He also emphasized that there was great danger that the Macedonian population would be forcibly turned into Serbians and Greeks. Macedonians did not want to be turned into Serbians and Greeks and with help from Austria-Hungary, were prepared to fight against Serbia and Greece. If the Great Powers wanted peace in the Balkans then Macedonia and Albania must be given autonomy.

Mandl was in favour of Macedonian autonomy and said that Macedonia deserved to be helped because the Macedonian people had suffered the most in these wars.

A Resolution was passed calling Macedonia's division between Serbia and Greece a violation of the Macedonian peoples' rights, an illegal and uncivilized act. The resolution called on the Great Powers to reconsider the Bucharest Treaty and correct the injustice done to the Macedonian people.

The resolution was sent via telegram to 150,000 Macedonian refugees in Sofia and to the Albanian government in Vlore.

Yane Sandanski too came out in opposition of the Treaty and began his own campaign against it, particularly against Macedonia's division. Sandanski supported the idea of autonomy for Macedonia and saw hope in it if Austria-Hungary was to give it its support.

In August 1913 Sandanski took a trip to Tirana and Vlore and, with representatives of the Albanian Revolutionary Government, organized preparations for a joint Macedonian -Albanian Uprising. The goals of the Uprising were to cancel the Bucharest Treaty and establish autonomy for Macedonia and Albania. Unfortunately, because of subtle differences between Sandanski's plan and that of the Austro-Hungarians, Austria-Hungary intervened and cancelled Sandanski's plans. Discouraged, Sandanski gave up and left Albania.

Seeing that there was no mention in any of the agreements of Bulgaria giving up its share of Macedonian lands, a number of prominent Macedonians in Sofia requested of Bulgaria to be the first to relinquish its part of Macedonia and let Macedonians establish a princedom in that part of Macedonia. Then, supported by Austria-Hungary, the princedom would request of the others to relinquish their parts of Macedonia. Unfortunately the Bulgarian government rejected the proposal, once again showing its true intensions towards Macedonia.

Despite Austro-Hungarian disapproval, MRO and the Albanian provisional government continued with preparations for an uprising and at the same time gaining Bulgarian and Ottoman support. While the Bulgarians were in support of the MRO the Ottomans threw their support behind the Albanians.

The plan was for the Uprising to commence with Macedonian and Albanian Chetas attacking the Serbian and Greek rear while the Bulgarian and Ottoman armies would mount a frontal attack.

Unfortunately opposition parties in Bulgaria were against such an uprising in Macedonia because many believed that cooperation between the Albanians and Macedonians would not last and there would be no benefits for Bulgaria to become involved. However the Bulgarian government continued to prepare for war with Serbia and Greece.

On August 29th, 1913 Bulgaria signed a Treaty with the Ottomans to carry out joint actions against Serbia and Greece, according to which Bulgaria was to give up Odrin, Dedeagatch and Gyumyurdzhina in exchange for Ottoman help to take as much Macedonian territory as possible away from Serbia and Greece. After the treaty was signed, the Bulgarian government ordered one of its divisions to mobilize new troops and commence operations in order to occupy Gevgelija, Strumitsa, Kavala, Drama and Seres. At the same time MRO began to recruit Macedonian volunteers in Sofia and to create new Chetas.

But before any of these plans could be put into action, the French, British and Russian representatives in Sofia found out and

vigorously opposed them. So without Bulgarian and Ottoman support it was now up to the Macedonians and Albanians to commence the Uprising. It was agreed by the Albanian Revolutionary Committee, through written authorization, that the Albanian Chetas would come under MRO command and would be led by Vojvodas P. Chaulev, P. Hristov and M. Matov.

On August 25th, 1913 Vojvoda Tane Nikolov met with the MRO Vojvodas in Sofia and informed them of the plan for joint actions against Serbia and Greece in Macedonia and asked them to cooperate with the Albanians. A follow-up meeting was called in Sofia during which the Albanian League in Bulgaria also pledged its support to join the MRO in the uprising.

Before the Uprising was to begin, the plan called for the MRO to send some of its Chetas across the Bulgarian -Serbian border and the rest by Austrian ships from the Black Sea via the Danube River to Trieste and further into Albania. The new Chetas would then join Chaulev and Matov in Macedonia.

In time Vojvodas Matov and Chaulev mobilized about 12,000 insurgents, consisting mostly of Macedonians and some Albanians and Ottomans. Some of the Vojvodas and insurgents expected to arrive from Bulgaria unfortunately never made it to their destinations.

What later became known as the Ohrid -Debar uprising began unexpectedly on September 7th, 1913, not as the planned Uprising but as a spontaneous result of a Serbian provocation in the village Episkupija. The day after Serbian authorities terrorized the population in Episkupija, 300 insurgents from the Debar Detachment launched an attack on the 19th Serbian Regiment stationed in the village Luzuna capturing 18 mountain guns, 7 machine guns and a large cache of ammunition.

The momentum of the sudden attack on the Serbians scattered the Uprising in three different directions. One group of insurgents continued to push the Serbian army towards Gostivar and Mavrovo. A second group coming from Debar advanced on the Serbian strongholds in Lopusnik and Kichevo. A third group appeared in

Struga and attacked the Serbians stationed near the village Velesta. As more insurgents joined the fight, a number of towns and cities in western Macedonia were quickly liberated and local authority established.

Among those who established authority in Ohrid were Lev Ognjanov, Dimitar Ivanov, Ivan Grupchev, Lev Kachkov, P. Hristov, Petar Filev, Dam Tsana and Irfan Bey. Among those who established authority in Galichnik were Evrem Avramov, Ilija Efremov, Eftim Giovski and Riste Efremov. (Vanche Stojchev. "Military History of Macedonia". Military academy. Skopje, 2004. Page 481)

Albanian armed units, trained and instructed by the Austrian-Hungarians and led by Gagliardi were given the task of securing the Serbian -Albanian demarcation line established back in December 1912 at the London Conference. Austria-Hungary's goal was to move the line eastward so that the Ohrid, Struga and Debar Regions became part of Albania.

The Serbians meanwhile, still hoping to access the Adriatic Sea, established a propaganda group in Albania to disarm the Albanians and convince the Albanian population to join Serbia. This however provoked some Islamic and militant Albanians who formed a fighting group called the "Katchaks" and who fought for the liberation of Albania as an Islamic country. This drew support from many Ottoman officers and soldiers who also joined the group.

The Katchaks fought fiercely, not only against the Serbian army and police, but also against the Macedonian population in an attempt to cleanse the region of Macedonians.

The Serbians reacted quickly and fiercely against the Uprising by engaging all their available forces which were more than a match for the Macedonian insurgents who by now were running out of ammunition. But more disappointing than that was the let down from Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary, both of whom promised help but beyond moral support, delivered nothing.

Chaulev and Matov decided to withdraw from the battles and regroup and organize a defense line about 20 km east of Ohrid, taking a defensive position on the hills at Petrino and Bukovo.

On September 17th, 18th and 19th, 1913 the insurgents fought bravely against the Serbian forces but were overwhelmed by the sudden attack at Golak Mountain by 600 Greek soldiers. At that point Petar Chaulev dismantled his Cheta into small groups and allowed the fighters to retreat to the mountains where they were to spend the winter. Chaulev, Matov, Georgiev, Sibakov, Atanasov and the other Vojvodas and insurgents fled to Albania.

On October 6th, 1913 the Serbian District Chief in Bitola informed Serbian Command that the insurgents were defeated and had retreated to Albania and that the situation in the border region had been pacified.

After the Ohrid -Debar Uprising was suppressed, the Serbian army, police and former illegal bands again began to terrorize the Macedonian population. Schools were closed and all non-Serbian educators were expelled or killed. Special martial courts were opened to prosecute the Macedonians and Albanians who had participated in the uprising. Many people were killed and their houses were burned down.

Material damage and revenge killings for Macedonian participation in the Ohrid -Debar Uprising continued for a while, which prompted the Bulgarian government to suggest that a part of it's national budget be set aside for organizing another general uprising in Macedonia in the spring of 1914. Austria-Hungary too was encouraged to set aside government money for this purpose.

In the meantime MRO established its own cooperation with Ottoman representatives and agreed to conduct joint operations in Macedonia to protect the Ottoman and Macedonian civilian populations from Serbian retribution.

MRO also met with Albanian representatives in Sofia and agreed to carry out joint activities in the spring of 1914. According to the

Albanians who attended this meeting, Austria- Hungary was ready to support the insurgency both financially and militarily.

A new MRO committee was established specifically for the purpose of preparing and coordinating military activities in the future. General Geshov was appointed president of the new committee, Lieutenant Colonel Aleksandar Protogerov was appointed his assistant, and Nikolov, Matov, Drvingov, Todor Aleksandrov, Chaulev, Stojanchev, Dr. Vladov, Zankov and Takvor were appointed members of the committee. It was decided that the Committee would remain inactive until the next spring, but was charged with organizing a struggle that would involve all of Macedonia.

-- WORLD WARS --

1914 - First World War begins. Bulgaria occupies Macedonia in 1915.

1917 - LAW 1051

Greece inaugurates new administrative jurisdictions for governing newly acquired lands in Greek occupied Macedonia.

1918 - End of WW I, Macedonia becomes part of Serbia again. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes is founded, and is renamed to Yugoslavia in 1929.

1919 - Treaty of Versailles (Paris) (November 27) between the Allied and Associated Powers and Bulgaria, and Protocol and Declaration signed at Neuilly-sur-Seine, on November 27, 1919. England and France ratify the principles of the Bucharest Treaty and endorse the partition of Macedonia.

Greece pursues the forced expulsion and denationalization of Macedonians and begins colonization by transferring “Greeks” into Aegean Macedonia.

Article 51 of Treaty of Versailles espouses equality of civil rights, education, language, and religion for all national minorities which Greece violates and ignores.

Neuilly Convention and forced exchange of populations. About 70,000 Macedonians expelled from Aegean Macedonia to Bulgaria and 25,000 Greeks transferred from Bulgaria to Aegean Macedonia.

Greek Commission on Toponyms issues instructions for choosing Hellenized names for Macedonian places in Aegean Macedonia.

1919 - "IMRO" is restored under the leadership of the new Central Committee: Todor Aleksandrov, Aleksandar Protogerov and Petar Chaulev. The primary aim of the organization is to free Macedonia and create an autonomous and independent country within its geographical and ethnic borders.

1920 - Greek Ministry of Internal Affairs publishes booklet: "Advice on the change of the names of municipalities and villages" in Greek occupied Macedonia.

1923 - Treaty of Lausanne is signed on July 24. By the Treaty of Lausanne the Greco-Turkish war came to an end. Greece and Turkey signed a population exchange agreement using "religion as the basic criterion for nationality".

1924 - CPG all for United and Independent Macedonia

February 1924 – CPG adopts resolution in support of a united and independent Macedonia

In February 1924, during its extraordinary Congress, the CPG adopted a truly revolutionary Resolution with regards to the "Macedonian Question". Among other things the CPG said:

"The most recent imperialistic wars and post war conditions in the Balkans not only did not solve, but further complicated the Macedonian and Thracian National Questions. For many years the people in both Macedonia and Thrace have endured aggressive and violent attacks in the neighbouring countries, were they have been

exterminated in the many years of wars, and when they economically collapsed they were divided between Serbia, Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece."

"However, Macedonia's division between Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria further strengthened the Macedonian people's desire to unite their country, and to create a united and independent Macedonia. The Congress recognized the slogans raised during the 6th and 7th Balkan Communist Federation Conference calling for 'a united and independent Macedonia' and for 'a united and independent Thrace' which are fully functional and revolutionary."

1924 - May 6, the "May Manifest" is signed in Vienna by the members of the Central Committee by all the fractions of VMRO (IMRO). Its aim is to unite the Macedonian revolutionary forces into a single Macedonian revolutionary front for freedom and unification of the partitioned territories of Macedonia making it an independent and single political unit within its natural geographical and ethnic borders. A few months later the Bulgaro-Vrhovists gave up from the "May Manifest".

1925 - 76 names of Macedonian villages changed in Greek occupied Macedonia into Greek names, a process that was initiated in 1918 by Greek authorities.

League of Nations put pressures on Greece to extend rights to Macedonian minority.

1925 - ABECEDAR Primer printed in Athens for use by Macedonian school children in Aegean Macedonia. Written in Latin alphabet and reflects the Macedonian language spoken in Bitola-Lerin district in Western Greek occupied Macedonia.

Serbians and Bulgarians protest to League of Nations. Primer undermines their claim that Macedonians are Serbs and Bulgarians respectively.

Greece counters with last minute cable to League: "the population…..knows neither the Serbian nor the Bulgarian language and speaks nothing but a Macedonian idiom."

Greece "retreats" so as to preserve Balkan alliances. Primer is destroyed after League of Nations delegates leave Salonika (Solun).

Thereafter, Greece denies existence of Macedonians. Refers to Macedonians as "Slavophone Greeks", "Old Bulgarians" and many other appellations but not as Macedonians.

The very fact that official Greece did not, either de jure or do facto, see the Macedonians as a Bulgarian minority, but rather as a separate Slav group ('Slav speaking minority'), is of particular significance. The primer, published in the Latin alphabet, was based on the Lerin - Bilola dialect. After Gianelli's Dictionary dating from the 16th Century, and the Daniloviot Cetirijazicnik written in the 19th century, this was yet another book written in the Macedonian vernacular. The primer was mailed to some regions in Western Aegean-Macedonia (Kostur, Lerin and Voden), and the school authorities prepared to give Macedonian children, from the first to the fourth grade of the elementary school, instruction in their own mother tongue. (Grigorios Dafnis, 'Greece between the two world wars', 'Elefteria' newspaper, March 15, 1953, Dionisios Romas in 'Elefteria' newspaper of October 9 and 12, 1954 and Dimitrios Vazuglis in Racial and religious minorities in Greece and Bulgaria, 1954)

1925 - 6th IMRO Congress takes place in February and a new IMRO Central Committee is formed with members Ivan Mihailov, Aleksandar Protogerov and Georgi Pop Hristov. The IMRO aims remained the same: struggle to unite partitioned Macedonia within its geographical and ethnic borders and to achieve political autonomy.

1925 - IMRO (United) is founded in Vienna in October under the leadership of Dimitar Vlahov, Pavel Satev, Georgi Zankov, Rizo Rizov, Vladimir Pop Timov and Hristo Iankov. Their main objective is to free Macedonia within its geographical and ethic borders and to create an independent political unit that will become an equal member of a future Balkan Federation. Under the pressure of The League of Nations, a Macedonian language primer, the Abecedar is

published in Greece to educate Macedonian children in their native language.

1926 - Racist flyer distributed in Lerin

January 27, 1926 – On this day the organization "Elino-Makedoniki pigmi" (Greeko-Macedonian fist) distributed a flyer in Lerin with the following content: "From today forward we prohibit the use of the Bulgarian dialect spoken in social centers, trade relations, meetings, assemblies, festive gatherings, banquets, weddings, etc. We demand that only Greek be spoken in all the above mentioned instances. We recommend to all political and military authorities, to all public and private employees to not accommodate requests or give out information in a language other than Greek. Parents, teachers, priests, elders and minors, we invite you all to fulfill your patriotic debt; otherwise we will hold you and your subordinates responsible for the offenses you commit. Violators of the ordinance are considered traitors to the motherland and will fall under the terrible blows of our organization which was created to study the situation. The slogan "fatherland above all" means punishing anyone who will not fulfill our orders.

1926 - Secret Youth organization founded

March 1926 - The Macedonian Young People's Secret Revolutionary Organization ("Makedonska mladinska tajna revolucionerna organizacija" - MMTRO) is founded which has aims to help IMRO in its fight for freedom for the Macedonian people and for the unification of the three parts of Macedonia into one autonomous political unit.

1926 - Legal act on change of names issued

November 1926 - a legal Act was issued on the change of Macedonian geographic names into the Greek version. The news was published in the government daily Efimeris tis Kivemiseos No. 322 of November 21, 1926. The same newspaper in its No. 346 published the new, official, Greek names. The names of the people were changed too. First names as well as family names were

changed to Greek versions. These are still officially binding to this day.

All place names (toponymia) were Hellenized; that is the names of cities, villages, rivers and mountains were discarded and Greek names put in their place. At the same time the Macedonians were forced to change their first and surnames; every Macedonian surname had to end in ‘os’, ‘es’, or ‘poulos’.

The news of these acts and the new, official Greek names were published in the Greek government daily Efimeris tis Kiverniseos no. 322 and 324 of November 21 and 23, 1926.

1927 - Cyrillic letters erased in churches and tombstones

1927 - Cyrillic inscriptions (Macedonian alphabet) in churches, tombstones and icons rewritten or destroyed. Church services in the Macedonian language are outlawed.

Macedonians ordered to abandon personal names and under Duress adopt Greek names assigned to them by the Greek state.

1928 - Events in Greek occupied Macedonia - In the period from 1928 to 1934, when there seemed to be a movement for better relations between the Balkans countries successive Greek governments of the time appeared a little more elastic in their attitudes towards the Macedonian language. Some even made serious statements in favour of the Macedonians. But in order to see the differences between what Greek politicians said and did regarding the Macedonian Question, we need to emphasize the fact that back in 1926 a law was passed by the Greek Government, as published in the Greek Official Gazette no. 332 of 21. XI. 1926, which entailed the erasure of the Macedonian toponymy and replacing it with a Greek one. In other words, the Greek government passed a law to change the names of all villages, towns, rivers and mountains in Greek occupied Macedonian from Macedonian to Greek. At about the same in 1926 the Greek government allowed various different Greek nationalist organizations, such as the “Elino - Makedoniki pigmi” (Greco - Macedonian fist) and “EEE”

(National Organization of youth), to appear which were openly raising the issue of banning the Macedonian language.

1928 - 1, 497 Macedonian place names changed in Greek occupied Macedonia turned into Greek (since 1926).

English Journalist V. Hild reveals, "The Greeks do not only persecute living Macedonians but they even persecute dead ones. They do not leave them in peace even in the graves. They erase the Macedonian inscriptions on the headstones, remove the bones and burn them."

1929 - Legal act issued on protection of public order

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

LAW 4096 directive on renaming Macedonian place names.

1932 - CPG adopts conditional support for the Macedonians

During the CPG Central Committee 4th Plenum the CPG modified the paragraph that said "united and independent Macedonia and Thrace" without considering that the Macedonians represented a separate nation that was striving for its national liberation. Specifically, during the March 1932 4th Plenum it was concluded that Greece was an imperialistic country which violently occupied large areas inhabited by other nationalities (Macedonia's and Thracians) and subjected them to colonial exploitation, persecution and extermination.

"In the name of Bolshevik principles, the Communist Party of Greece took away the Macedonian and Thracian people's right to self-determination and to completely breakaway from the Greek state, the right to and independent Macedonia and Thrace and boldly supported the revolutionary struggle of the population in these areas for their national liberation..."

According to former Greek Party leader Stavridis, the CPG was prepared to support the right to self-determination up to secession and the right to form a united and independent Macedonia and Thrace, if there was an IMRO (United) coordinated armed struggle to take place in the three parts of Macedonia which would include the objectives of the Vlach minority (because the Vlachs like the Macedonians were disadvantaged), the Albanian Revolutionary Committee, and the Jews in Macedonia, who were now more than before willing to see an autonomous Macedonia. If these conditions were to be met then the CPG would be prepared to materially support such a movement.

1935 - Macedonian students association found

The Macedonian student's association "Vardar" was founded in Zagreb, but soon the authorities banished their monthly journal "Naš vesnik" ("Our Journal").

1936 - Macedonian national movement founded in Ohrid

August 28, 1936. The organization MANAPO (Macedonian national movement) was founded in Ohrid.

1936 - Legal act issued "On the activity against state security"

December 18, 1936 – Metaxas' dictatorial government issued a legal Act "On the activity against state security" on the strength of which thousands of Macedonians were arrested, imprisoned or expelled from their homeland.

1936 - Reign of terror by fascist dictator

Reign of terror by fascist dictator General Metaxas, (1936-40). Macedonians suffer state terrorism and pogroms.

Thousands of Macedonians jailed, sent to internal exile (EXORIA) on arid, inhospitable Greek islands, where many perish. Their crime? Being ethnic Macedonian by birth.

LAW 6429 reinforces Law 4096 on turning Macedonian place names to Greek place names.

DECREE 87 accelerates denationalization of Macedonians.

Greek Ministry of Education sends "Specially trained" instructors to accelerate conversion to Greek language.

Another association of Macedonian students – "Vardar" was founded in Belgrade.

1938 - First collection of poems "Fire" ("Ogin") by Venko Markovski was published in Macedonian. He was a member (1945) of the Commission that worked on the codification of the Macedonian literary language, but in 1965 he moved into Bulgaria where, after declaring himself to be a Bulgarian, was awarded with the most prestigious honours by the Bulgarian state.

1938 - Legal Act No. 2366 was issued on September 7 which banned the use of the Macedonian language. All Macedonian localities were flooded with posters: "Speak Greek". Evening schools were opened in which adult Macedonians were taught Greek. Not a single Macedonian school functioned at that time. Macedonians fined, beaten or jailed for speaking Macedonian. Adults and school children further humiliated by being forced to drink castor oil when caught speaking Macedonian.

LAW 1418 reinforces previous laws on renaming.

1939 - The book "White Dawns" is published. ("Beli Mugri") is published. This book is a collection of Macedonian poems from the first modern Macedonian poet Kocho Ratsin.

1939 - Italian troops landed in Albania on March 23 and occupied its territory

1939 - WW II begins, Germany invades Yugoslavia

-- 1940 ---

1940 - 39 Macedonian place-names changed turned to Greek since 1929.

1940 - Germany, Italy and Japan cooperate

Germany, Italy and Japan signed a cooperation agreement. This basically identified their intentions with respect to each others' spheres of influence, defining their political, economic and defense strategies as well as their obligations to each other. The agreement came to be known as the “tripartite pact”.

Soon after consolidating control in Albania, on October 28th, 1940, Italy declared war on Greece. Greece.

Metodia Shatorov - Sarlo becomes Political Secretary of the Provincial Committee of the Communist Party in Macedonia. This begins the realization of the Macedonian national platform: creating a Macedonian republic as part of Yugoslavia with rights to succession.

-- 1941 --

1941 - Bulgarian attempt to take Macedonian Party

A bid was made by the Bulgarian People’s Communist Party to take over the Macedonian party organization in the Vardar part of Macedonia. The same bid was also made in Greek occupied Macedonia in 1941 when Hristo Kalajdzhiev arrived in Lerin and made contact with Ilija Dimovski – Gotse. Aware of the latest Bulgarian communist tactics Ilija Dimovski – Gotse intervened and strongly objected to the takeover rendering Kalajdzhiev’s mission unsuccessful. Ilija Dimovski – Gotse had already made contact with the Peoples’ Liberation Organization in the Vardar side of Macedonia and was already working with them.
Early in 1941 Ilija Dimovski – Gotse illegally crossed the border to Bitola and established links with the Bitola Region Party Organization. Then in late 1941 early 1942 an illegal courier service was established between Bitola and Lerin.

1941 - Bulgaria allied with axis powers

March 1, 1941 - After war broke out in Europe, Bulgaria allied itself with the axis powers and joined the German led pact.

1841 - Yugoslav Regent joins Germany

March 25, 1941 - To avoid German wrath the Yugoslav Regent, Prince Paul, also joined the German led pact.

Bulgarian and Italian military forces occupy Serbian "Vardar" occupied Macedonia.

1941 - April 6, German army marches into Greece

By the end of April, 1941 Greek occupied Macedonia was divided into three occupied zones: Eastern Macedonia east from the river Struma along with Thrace was held by Fascist Bulgaria, the southern part of Kostur Region, Kozheni Region and part of Lerin Region was held by the Italians and central Macedonia to Solun was occupied by the Germans.

1941 - May 20, Greece divided into occupational zones

In accordance with Hitler's May 17, 1941 order, Greece was officially divided into occupation zones: German, Italian and Bulgarian.

1941 - June 22, Hitler attacks Soviet Union

The CPG in Greece and in Greek occupied Macedonia was placed on alert. All progressive organizations in major cities such as Solun, Voden, Negush, Kostur, Lerin, etc., were quickly re-established and rearmed with new arms. One of the strongest organizations, founded by the Macedonian Trifun Hadzhijanov in 1924, was reactivated in Voden on July 1st, 1941.

1941 - June 28, Bulgarian propaganda in Macedonia

The second and more dramatic time Bulgarian propaganda reached the Macedonian people was during the Second World War when a

group of 27 Macedonian and Greek communists were released from "Akronavplion" prison on June 28, 1941, with the help of Julia Schneider. Julia, who spoke German, informed the German authorities that the Macedonians in the prison were not jailed because they were communists but the Greeks had jailed them because they were "Bulgarians". The Bulgarian authorities demanded that they be released under the condition that they agree to receive Bulgarian citizenship. Naturally this was used by the Greek nationalist press and by some Greek politicians to vilify the CPG, charging it with allegedly working for the services of the occupier and for surrendering Macedonia to the Bulgarians.

At the end of June 1941, the sixth plenum of the central committee of the CPG met to formulate a plan to defend against the occupiers and to overthrow the foreign fascist yoke. To this end the people were invited to join in the formation of the Greek National Liberation Front, which was founded in September 1941.

1941 - CPG abandons the Macedonians

July 1, 1941 - During its 6th Plenum the CPG Central Committee abandons the Macedonians

Unfortunately, during its 6th Plenum on July 1, 1941 the CPG Central Committee abandoned the Macedonians when it admitted that, for the sake of "national unity", the "Macedonian Question" did not exist for Greece. This was one of the requirements for the CPG joining the Papandreou "national unity" program. (See: Dragan Kliakich, "General Markos". Edition, Globus, Zagreb, 1979, p. 75.)

1941 - August, Atlantic Charter is drafted which expressed the post-World War II aims of the United States and Great Britain. President Franklin D. Roosevelt of the United States and Prime Minister Winston Churchill of Great Britain adopted the declaration in August 1941 during a conference aboard a ship off the coast of the Canadian province of Newfoundland and decided among other things that all people who participated in the liberation of the world from Fascism and Nazism would have the right to choose the form of government under which they would live; and to see sovereign

rights and self-government restored to those who had been forcibly deprived of them.

1941 - August 29, Macedonians executed. Among the people executed on August 29, 1941 in Lerin Region were Kon. Lijakov, Stavros Stangulis and Mih. Tesijanos for allegedly possessing and concealing arms. On September 24th, 1941 Stefanos Hristoforidis and Kostas Klasidis were executed in Solun, no reason was given. On October 5th, 1941 Jeremijas Stefanidis, Kirjakos Chotilis and Kostas were killed in the village Gostoljubi, Meglen Region for allegedly moving arms. On October 30th, 1941 Panajotis Jalamas was executed in Enidzhe-Vardar for allegedly taking part in the resistance. On November 4th, 1941 Mihail Vojadzhopulos was hung in Nigrita for allegedly taking part in the resistance. On November 13th, 1941 Macedonian students Ilija Kapeshev and Sokrat Djariros in Solun were executed, no reason given. On December 27th, 1941 496 people were executed in the German zone (Solun Region, Kukush Region, Gumendzha Region, Voden Region and part of Lerin Region) for allegedly raising arms, alleged sabotage and alleged participation in acts against the occupier. More were killed in actions with the Nigrita Region detachment “Andrutsos” in the village Krmsko, Kaljar Region. (The stats above were reported in the newspaper “Makhethonia” in Solun on February 19, 1959).

1941 - September 27, EAM in Greece is formed without any Macedonian markings. Its aims were to expel the German, Italian and Bulgarian occupiers, establishing the integrity of Greece, establishing the self-determination of Cyprus, the Dodecanese and Northern Epirus but nothing was said anywhere about the Macedonians.

The EAM included the Communist Party of Greece, the Agricultural Party, the National Socialist - Democratic Party, the General Workers Federation, the General Federation of State Officials, the National Solidarity Organization and representatives of the political, scientific and cultural life in Greece.

1941 - October 11, Macedonians rebel against occupier with aims at creating an independent Macedonian state.

The first anti-fascist war of national liberation began in the Republic of Macedonia on October 11, 1941. October 11th is the "Second Ilinden" for the Macedonian people. Since 1941 they have celebrated it as "Macedonian Revolution Day".

-- 1942 --

1942 - February 15, ELAS is created. A new Greek Army, appropriately named ELAS, was created on February 15, 1942 with the appearance of its first ELAS military units. The first detachment of ELAS formed in Greek occupied Macedonia was in Kostur on December 7, 1942 and it consisted of 10 Macedonians, 7 Greeks and 2 Vlachs.

1942 - December 3, ELAS conduct first campaign against the occupier in the Gumendzha Region by successfully destroying the Greek gendarme post at Boemidzhki Bridge, killing all the German guards and capturing the gendarmes. The bridge was bombed and destroyed along with a German train. The train engineer and a German officer (a major) on board were both killed. One hundred and twenty regular partisans and 250 volunteers from the neighbouring Gumendzhe villages took part in this mission.

The importance of this mission was captured by historiographer Chrysochoou who wrote: "During the night of December 3rd, 1942 an armed group of EAM resistance fighters attacked and destroyed the railway station in Gumendzhe capturing one officer and five gendarmes and killing the German train engineer. Similarly the group destroyed the German bridge watchtower, wounding a German soldier and five Czech workers. The same Partisan group on the night of December 7th attacked the Mavrodendro mine near the village Fanos, and stole large amounts of dynamite and other items." (Chrysochoou , "The Occupation in Macedonia", Thessaloniki 1950, Vol. 1, Page 40)

1942 - December 12, 25 innocent people killed in Solun by Germans

As punishment for destroying a German train, bombing a bridge and attacking the watch tower, the Germans, on December 12, 1942,

killed 25 innocent people in Solun. (“Makhethonia”, February 20, 1959)

-- 1943 --

1943 - February 28, Vicho Detachment formed

The first Lerin Region resistance detachment called “Vicho” is formed in the village Lagen. Among the first fighters to join this detachment were Ilija Dimovski – Gotse, Kocho Kalinov, Lambe Popovski, Miltiadi Popnikolov, Gijorgij Kalinov, Gijorgij Rusov, Jani Chochev, Hristo Sahidis-Pandelis Masiotis, Giogos Gavriilidis, Pashalis Papadopoulos – Spartakos, Atanas Furtunas and Stojan from Lerin. A few days later more men enlisted including Risto Kolentsev from Lerin bringing the number to 35.

1943 - Kostur Macedonian Committee formed

March 5, 1943 - The “Macedonian Committee” for Kostur Region is formed. Macedonian patriotism was put into action on March 5th, 1943 in Kostur Region when an Assembly of 48 members, representatives of the various villages, was convened and decided to form the “Macedonian Committee” for Kostur Region whose aim was to defend the 54 to 60 villages in that region. They were allowed to arm themselves (by the Italian occupiers) because they needed protection from the Greeks. Everything else that has been said about them is a lie.

The first armed military unit was formed in Kostur, consisting 9,850 armed men. They called themselves fighters, defenders against the armed Greek nationalist gangs. In western Macedonia, in 1943, these armed nationalist Greek gangs were responsible for intimidating the Macedonian people by spreading anti-Macedonian propaganda in the form of leaflets and by other means.

1943 - CPM founded in Tetovo

The Communist Party of Macedonia is founded in Tetovo. The process of creating government authorities – National Councils for Liberation – begins. The Main headquarters of NOV (People's

Liberation Struggle) issues a Manifesto expressing the aims of the liberation war.

1943 - Partisans destroy train on the Lerin-Voden rail line

May 20, 1943 - Partisans attack and destroyed a train on the Lerin-Voden rail line in order to free the political prisoners being transported. Among those freed was Haralambos Haralambidis – Atanatos. Four Germans were killed and Papatanasiou, a well known collaborator, was wounded. All the prisoners were freed and in the process a large number of arms were acquired.

On several occasions the Vicho detachment combined forces with the Dame Gruev detachment from Bitola to perform joint missions.

1943 - May 22, Macedonian detachments combine

Gotse Delchev Detachment combines with Dame Gruev Datachment

On May 22nd, 1943 in the village Prekopana, Lerin Region, the "Gotse Delchev" detachment was formed by combining fighters from the "Dame Gruev" detachment and from the newly recruited fighters.

The formation of the "Gotse Delchev" detachment was welcomed by Naum Shupurkovski - Leon, the political commissar of the Lerin Region Partisan detachment "Vicho". In his speech he emphasized the importance of the help offered by the Partisans from Vardar Macedonia against the disarming of the counter-bands in Lerin and Kostur Regions.

1943 - Dame Gruev Detachment breaks way

July 1, 1943 – Detachment "Dame Gruev" brakes away from detachments "Vicho" and "Gotse Delchev

On July 1st, 1943 the detachment "Dame Gruev" broke away from the detachments "Vicho" and "Gotse Delchev" and crossed over the border into Vardar Prespa. The "Vicho" and "Gotse Delchev" detachments, commanded by Ilija Dimovski – Gotse, continued with

their mission in disarming the counter-bands with much success. Without resistance the counter-bands surrendered their arms and joined on mass the Partisans and the peoples' freedom movement.

1943 - July 5, ELAS placed under British command

Guided by this strategy and tactics, the CPG and ELAS leaderships signed an agreement on July 5, 1943 to place ELAS under British command to be led by British Headquarters for the Middle East. They agreed to form joint headquarters for the guerrilla forces in Greece. They agreed to reject previous commitments made in June 20 to 25, 1943 to representatives of the Communist Parties of Yugoslavia and Albania, for establishing a joint Balkan liberation headquarters.

1943 - July 16, ELAS under Middle East Command

ELAS and the English agree for ELAS to be under Middle East Command

ELAS Commander Sarafis and English Mission Military Chief Colonel Edie Mayers signed a joint declaration by which ELAS was recognized as an army and was subordinated to Middle East Command.

Given that out of the 70,000 ELAS fighters, 40,000 were Macedonians, did anyone consult with them that "this" was what they wanted to do? It was a huge army and, by rights, it should have had its own military leadership and military General Headquarters. But did it? Will our history be able to point out the names of any of the senior Macedonian officers serving in that army? I don't think so, because those in control of the army did not want Macedonians in leading positions!

1943 - July 18, "Gotse Delchev" detachment crosses over into Vardar Macedonia

Around July 18th and 19th, 1943, after a twenty day mission in the Lerin and Kostur Regions, the "Gotse Delchev" detachment also crossed over into Vardar Macedonia.

The military and material aid provided by the Macedonian Partisans and the common military actions between Aegean and Vardar detachments, in spite of all Greek Communist Party obstacles, were of great importance in the awakening of the freedom movement in Greek occupied Macedonia.

Here is what Andreas Dzimas, member of the Central Committee of the Greek Communist Party and commissar of the main headquarters of the Greek National Liberation Army of Greece, had to say: "Under great pressure from the mass movement in Aegean Macedonia the politburo and the Central Committee of the Greek Communist Party agreed to suspend the Lebanon Agreement and immediately began to orientate themselves towards Yugoslavia's People's Liberation Army.

…one of the contributing factors that drew the Macedonians in the war against the occupiers, besides the connections they had with the Greek democratic movement, was the strong influence of the Macedonian Partisans of Yugoslav Macedonia. Their presence in Lerin, Kostur and Voden regions broke the last vestiges of the counter-bands and stirred the Macedonian peoples' spirits into action against the occupiers…"

1943 - Vicho Detachment split

July 20, 1943 - Leadership decides to Split the Vicho detachment into smaller detachments

On July 20th, 1944 a conference was held in the village Belkamen, Lerin Region which was attended by the Partisans active on Vicho and Western Kajmakchalan. One of the resolutions reached was the re-organization of the Partisan forces into three detachments. The first lead by Aetos was assigned to operate in Vicho, the second lead by Ilija Dimovski – Gotse was assigned to Bigla – Koreshtata and the third was ordered to go to Western Kajmakchalan. In August 1943 Hristo Kolentsev was appointed detachment commissar for Vicho, replacing Commissar Naum Shupurkovski – Leon who left for a new assignment.

The vast majority of leaders and fighters in these detachments were Macedonians and this did not bode well with the Communist Party of Greece but in spite of its objections Macedonians continued to conduct business as usual and recruit Macedonian fighters from an overwhelming pool of volunteers.

1943 - September, "Lazo Trpovski" detachment created. This new detachment was named "Lazo Trpovski" after the influential Macedonian fighter and political leader from Dmbeni who had been killed in the village Imera, Kozheni Region on April 11, 1943 by a band of collaborators belonging to the racist Panhellenic Liberation Organization.

The Macedonian lead detachments were very popular with the Macedonian people and attracted massive numbers of recruits from the Macedonian population which unfortunately disturbed the Greeks.

1943 - September 8, Italy capitulates

1943 - September detachment is transferred to Gramos

In September 1943, with orders from the 28th regiment of the National Liberation Army of Greece Ilija Dimovski – Gotse's detachment was transferred to Gramos where it remained until December of the same year when it was again ordered to return to Vicho to help put down enemy activities in that region.

1943 - October 20, SNOF is created. The CPG, EAM and ELAS leaderships, 'concerned' about the situation that existed in Greek occupied Macedonia, especially in Kostur, Lerin and Voden Regions, decided to create a separate Macedonian organization; SNOF (Slavo-Macedonia National Liberation Front). SNOF, for Kostur and Lerin Regions, was created on October 20, 1943 in the village Snichani, Kostur Region, and for Voden Region a little later. The people who created SNOF were Greeks who belonged to the CPG District Committee for Western Macedonia; Hristos Kalfas (Andreas), Antonis Andonopulos (Periklis), CPG District Committee Secretary for Kostur Region and Thanassis Kartsunis,

CPG District Committee Secretary for Kozhani Region. Less than 6 months after it was created SNOF was disbanded.

-- 1944 --

1944 - January, Slavo-Macedonian army formed

In January 1944, the CPG allowed the formation of a so-called "Slavo-Macedonian" army called SNOV and placed it under the direct leadership of EAM and ELAS. Later it was from this "army" that the "Aegean Brigade" was formed and transferred to Tito's Army in Yugoslavia.

1944 - February 24, CPG signed Plaka Agreement

The CPG also signed the Plaka Agreement on February 24, 1944 to end hostilities between ELAS and EDES. And finally, as part of the agreement, the CPG dissolved SNOF.

1944 - May, Macedonian NOF in Greece is disbanded

During the Macedonian National Liberation Front regional conference held on April 12, 1944 Greek representatives of the CPG and Greek National Liberation Front were very pleased with the Macedonian National Liberation Front's recent successes but a few days later the same Greeks suddenly and unexpectedly denounced the Macedonian organization calling it a redundant and useless and demanding that it be dismantled and its fighters be merged with the Greek Liberation Front. They argued that "two organizations with the same aims were not needed" and "national unity could not possibly be achieved by having redundant organizations".

In the beginning of May 1944, during a CPG conference held in the village Mogila, Kostur Region, a final decision was made to break up the Macedonian organization. A similar decision was also made during a conference held in the village Lagen, Lerin Region and another one in the Macedonian ward in Voden.

Naturally and justifiably the Macedonian people found it hard to accept this especially since Macedonians created this organization through struggle and personal sacrifice.

The fact that the Macedonians in the Republic of Macedonia were having their own organizations, their own army, their own general headquarters and their recognized right to separate as an ethnic Macedonian identity made the Macedonians in Greek occupied Macedonia feel like they were taking steps backwards. Besides being stripped of their right to be recognized as an ethnic Macedonian identity in Greece, these Macedonians began to lose everything they had worked for, even the rights they had achieved thus far. This was not only unacceptable, it was incomprehensible.

In addition to breaking up the Macedonian National Liberation Front's political body, the CPG leadership also disbanded its fighters and forced them to join ELAS. This was not what Macedonians wanted and naturally created negative feelings towards the Greeks which did not go unnoticed by the Fascists and directly fueled the autonomist propaganda which began to work hard to attract these disgruntled Macedonians who found themselves robbed not only of their rights but of also of their dignity.

The kind of politics the CPG was conducting was neither new nor unknown to the Macedonian leadership. As early as January 1944 Lazo Damovski, the secretary of the regional council of the Macedonian National Liberation Front for Kostur Region, addressed the CPG council for Macedonia and warned of this. On January 24, 1944 Damovski wrote: "The conditions created by World War II for the liberation movements in all of occupied Europe including the Balkans have opened new roads for the self-determination of all people. Macedonians are no exception. Macedonians have spilled blood in the 1903 Ilinden Uprising and are now fighting, spilling blood and making sacrifices to gain their freedom from the Fascists. Our friends in Vardar Macedonia are going in the right direction…"

"The Macedonians in Lerin and Kostur Regions represent the majority of the population (70%) and are fighting shoulder to shoulder with the Greek people. When they become liberated, will

they, according to the Atlantic Charter, have the rights to self declare? Will they be granted the promised rights?"

"The CPG promised the Macedonian people equal rights within the framework of a Peoples Republic of Greece, the same way it promised the people of the Dodekanis and Cyprus. If the CPG is serious about delivering on those promises when will it then allow the Macedonian people to freely express their ethnic culture? When will it let the Macedonians fight for their own ideals and for composing something unique to show that they are truly Macedonians? Is the CPG really afraid of being criticized by the chauvinist elements? If so, how then does it propose to form "national unity" and not receive any criticism? Does the CPG truly understand the Macedonian question? Because if it doesn't it better learn it fast and start facing reality and make the right decision…"

One by one the CPG ordered all regional Macedonian National Liberation Front wards to close down and all fighters to disband and join the ranks of ELAS. This however was not what the Macedonians wanted and some began to show dissatisfaction.

1944 - May, Macedonians fighters leave ELAS and cross into Yugoslavia

In May 1944 a large group of Macedonian fighters and activists lead by Naum Pejov, separated themselves from ELAS in a symbolic protest against the dismantling of the Macedonian National Liberation Front. Ilija Dimovski – Gotse too was suspended from duty because he was in support of this separation. Similar events also took place in Lerin Region where a group of Macedonian fighters lead by Gjorgij Turundzhov fled ELAS. Another group from Voden Region also fled but their leader Vangel Aianov, who insisted on forming Macedonian detachments, was caught, put in jail and taken away to Mount Pajak. Pursued by Greek communist forces most of these renegade groups crossed over the Yugoslav border and fled into the Republic of Macedonia.

These acts of protest demonstrated by the Macedonians were neither forgiven nor forgotten by the CPG-ELAS leaderships. The Greek communists immediately issued orders to hunt down, capture and

punish these renegades. Captured and jailed were Lazo Damovski, Paskal Mitrevski and Lazo Poplazov from Kostur region. In a disgraceful manner killed at Kajmakchalan were Macedonian ward leaders Pando Dzhikov, Dimitar Leskov from Ostrov Region, ten people from the village Chegan and three more from the village Rusilovo.

The CPG made no effort to explain why these people were killed or to justify its action or to take responsibility for its part in the destruction of the Macedonian National Liberation Front which propagated these demonstrations in the first place. Instead it took the easy way out and accused these people of subversion and of creating "division" among the Macedonians in Greek occupied Macedonia by allegedly spreading "autonomous ideas" to the population. In other words the CPG lied its way out by accusing the Macedonians of wanting to split away from Greece. Greeks have this inherent and primordial fear that the Macedonians one day will take away their precious part of Macedonia. I wonder why?

After the fleeing fighters from Greek occupied Macedonia crossed over to the Republic of Macedonia they joined the resistance movement there. The CPG however was not at all pleased with their action and demanded that they be immediately sent back to Greece. While the fighters explained their reasons for leaving, the CPG insisted that they were "deserters" and needed to be sent back so that "an example" could be made of them. Without bothering to explain the underlying reasons why these fighters fled Greece the CPG took their case to the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) and adamantly insisted that the fighters be immediately returned. The CPY however did not give in to the CPG's demands and used this opportunity to put pressure on the CPG to deliver on its promises to the Macedonian people. Further, the CPY recommended that if the CPG wanted its fighters back it would have to allow them to form their own Macedonian military units in Voden, Lerin and Kostur regions.

1944 - May 20, Lebanon Agreement is signed

The Greek resistance leadership signed an agreement on May 20th, 1944 in Lebanon to form a coalition government with other civilian

parties from Greece which was unwelcome to the Macedonians. The agreement was viewed with suspicion because much of its content was insulting and demeaning to the Macedonian people. The agreement called for disarming the Macedonian people and was interpreted as a means to destroy the National Liberation Front. The Lebanon agreement was the end result of the so called "national unity" with other Greek parties which the CPG so desperately desired to create.

The Lebanon Agreement for forming a "National Unity Government" was signed by the CPG and EAM on one side and by the Greek government in exile on the other.

1944 - July 16, Macedonian Voden battalion is formed in Kajmakchalan. The announcement was welcome news for the Macedonian youth who began to arrive in massive numbers to join as volunteers. The battalion was camped above the village Gorno Rodivo in Kajmakchalan and every day more than a dozen youths came from the local villages with a single desire, to be soldiers in the Macedonian army.

1944 - August 2, First ASNOM session held

The First session of the Antifascist Council for the National Liberation of Macedonia, ASNOM is held at the monastery Sveti Prohor Pchinski. The ASNOM presidium is formed. Metodia Andonov Chento is appointed first President. A decision is reached to constitute a modern Macedonian state that will become part of the new Federal Yugoslavia.

1944 - The Lerin-Kostur Macedonian battalion is formed

August 2, 1944 – The Lerin-Kostur Macedonian battalion is formed in the village Pozdivishcha, Kostur Region. This was due to the persistent demands from the Macedonian people in Lerin and Kostur Regions to have their own army. On August 2nd, 1944 Ilija Dimovski – Gotse along with 30 more Macedonian fighters arrived in Pozdivishcha and took command of the battalion as ordered.

1944 - August 21, Kostur rebels disarmed

Immediately after its creation, the so-called “Slavo-Macedonian” battalions received orders to prepare to liquidate the rebel formations. Then, on August 21, 1944, the Kostur battalion attacked several armed rebel villages and managed to disarm a number of rebels.

At the end of August about 300 rebels from Kostur Region joined the Lerin - Kostur Macedonian battalion which, at the time, belonged to ELAS under the command of Captain Markos. But Captain Markos did not want the Macedonian battalions in Macedonia and demanded that they be transferred to Epirus with new tasks.

1944 - September 10, Greek leads Macedonian battalion

Under orders from ELAS regiment 28, Kozmas Spatos – Amintas, a Greek of Albanian descent, was appointed commander of the battalion. Ilija Dimovski – Gotse was reduced to captain and Hristo Kolentsev was reduced to party secretary of the battalion.

Afraid that the Macedonians would develop their own military capabilities, and perhaps slip out of its control, the CPG leadership made every effort to prevent the renewed Macedonian movement from expanding but for the time the Greek communist tricks did not work.

Stringos, secretary of the CPG Macedonian bureau, questioned Renos’s rational for allowing the formation of a battalion when orders were given to only form one Cheta (unit) in Kostur Region and Karadzhova. Renos replied with a question: “And what will have been the damages if divisions were to be formed?” To which Stringos replied: “You are naïve. If the Macedonians had divisions, then they would not be found in Macedonia…” (Quote taken from a letter from Renos to Dobrivoje Radosavlejvich Ortse. The original text can be found in the Yugoslav military historical archives).

1944 - September 12, CPG stops Macedonians from joining the partisans

One of the measures undertaken was to stop Macedonians from joining the ranks of the Partisans. In a communiqué to the Central committee of the Macedonian Bureau on September 12, 1944 the Greek Communist Party, among other things, said: “Let it be noted that our side reckons it’s time to stop recruiting fighters from the ranks of the Slavo-Macedonians”.

The commissar of the Greek division of the National Liberation Army of Greece for Macedonia, Markos Vafiadis prohibited the Macedonian battalions from inducting new recruits, with aims of ultimately disbanding them.

Decisions made by the Greek party leadership to stop the recruitment of Macedonian fighters into the Macedonian battalions were ignored by the Macedonian leadership. The Macedonian battalions continued to induct volunteer Macedonian recruits into their ranks even though the commissar of the Greek division of the National Liberation Army of Greece for Macedonia, Markos Vafiadis sent them further orders by telegraph to cease the recruitment.

Later ELAS was immediate placed under the command of Georgios Papandreou’s government, in accordance with the September 26, 1944 Caserta agreement, brought into the forefront the question as to what to do with the Macedonian battalions. The rightist government as a direct commander of ELAS did not want to allow the continuation of the Macedonian units because their existence provided undeniable proof that a Macedonian population existed in Greece.

1944 - September 26, Caserta Agreement is signed

Under the Caserta agreement of September 1944, all the resistance forces in Greece were placed under the command of the British.

1944 - Stalin and Churchill discuss Balkan division

October 5th to the 20th 1944, Stalin and Churchill discuss Balkan division of spheres of influence in Yalta.

The Yalta Agreement guaranteed that no socialist system would be implemented in Greece. This Agreement negated and made the need for the Greek Civil War unnecessary. So if the War was not about "installing" socialism in Greece, then there was only one other option left: internationalize the problem, crush the communists and legally ethnically cleanse the ethnic Macedonian population in Greek occupied Macedonia and then replace it with the new Asia Minor colonists and settlers, commonly known as "Prosfigi".

1944 - Churchill on division of spheres of influence

Here is what Churchill wrote in his memoirs about the Balkans: We arrived in Moscow in the late hours of October 9, 1944. We had our first significant meeting and counseling in the Kremlin the next day, October 10. Attending the meeting were Stalin, Molotov, Eden and myself. The Majors Boris and Popov performed the translations… An agreement was reached on the division of spheres of influence. Under this deal, Greece was entirely left to the British sphere of influence with rights, if necessary, at any time to be able to intervene with all possible means.

Degree of influence as agreed:

Romania, Russia 90% Other 10%
Yugoslavia, Russia 50% Other 50%
Hungary, Russia 50% Other 50%
Bulgaria, Russia 75% Other 25%
Greece, Russia 10% Other 90%

1944 - Macedonian battalion surpasses 1500 fighters

Immediately after the "Gotse" and the "Voden" battalions were formed a massive number of Macedonians began to join the ranks of the Partisans. With these kinds of numbers, it was possible to not only form brigades but divisions. When the Gotse battalion was formed it had 400 fighters. About a month later (September 16) it was numbering 650 and by October 10th, 1944 the number jumped to 1,500. This was unprecedented for the resistance movement in Greek occupied Macedonia especially since the CPG had entered into the unfavorable Lebanon agreement with the enemy the "right".

1944 - Lerin-Kostur Battalion crosses to Yugoslavia

To avoid bloodshed, on October 13th, 1944 the Macedonian battalion crossed over the Greek-Yugoslav border in Prespa and entered the Republic of Macedonia where it was put to good use fighting against the Germans who had entered Bitola-Prilep from Lerin.

1944 - Voden Battalion crosses over to Yugoslavia

The Voden Region Macedonian battalion also facing similar prospects of being disarmed and destroyed, on October 16th, 1944 left Kozhuf Mountain and also crossed over the Greek-Yugoslav border in Kavadartsi Region and entered the Republic of Macedonia.

1944 - Lerin-Kostur Macedonian brigade is born

On October 22, 1944 in the village Dragosh, Bitola Region the battalion, in the presence of Dime Bojanovski – Dize the General Headquarters representative of the People's Liberation Army of Vardar Macedonia, was reorganized into a brigade called the Lerin-Kostur Region Macedonian brigade (LKRMB). Ilija Dimovski – Gotse was given command of the brigade and Naum Shupurkovski – Leon was appointed as its political commissar.

After the brigade's formation, the brigade's command presented a document to the General Headquarters of the People's Liberation Army of Vardar Macedonia outlining the Macedonian people's struggle in Aegean Macedonia, the Greek attitude and mistakes made towards the Macedonian People's national question, etc., which explained the overall situation in Greece and the battalion's decision and motives for leaving Greece.

In the village Graeshintsa, where the seat of command was situated, the brigade conducted exercises to prepare for operations at the roads and highways connecting Lerin and Bitola to Solun.

The commandant and commissar of LKRMB, Ilija Dimovski – Goce and Naum Shupurkovski – Leon, through their new orders, which they received towards the end of October, 1944 from the political leadership of Macedonia, wrote a letter addressed to the Communist Party of Greece in which they requested from the Greek Party leadership to allow the formation of a Macedonian army with its own Macedonian headquarters, in which there would also be a representative of ELAS, to allow the formation of a Macedonian organization – a Macedonian Aegean National Liberation**Error! Bookmark not defined.** Front with a representative from the Greek National Liberation Front as well as to allow a Macedonian representative in EAM. The Macedonian right to self-determination was to be propagated through the press and the right to unification to be propagated only by word of mouth. Unfortunately these requests were rejected by the Greek Communist Party, qualifying them as provocative, unfriendly and nationalistic demands.

1944 - British armed forces enter Solun before ELAS

On October 31, 1944 a large group of English soldiers in armoured vehicles entered Solun before ELAS did. Three days later the BBC in London announced that British troops had liberated Solun.

1944 - Lerin-Kostur brigade helps liberate Bitola

November 4, 1944 - The Lerin-Kostur Region Macedonian brigade takes part in the liberation of Bitola and on November 18, 1944 it added its first all Aegean shock brigade consisting of fighters from the Voden and Lerin-Kostur Region Macedonian battalions, which separated from ELAS in October 1944 and from the detachment of the “Gotse Delchev” brigade.

The brigade’s commanders at the time of its formation consisted of Ilija Dimovski – Gotse as its commandant, Naum Pejov as its second commandant, Mohailo Keramitdzhiev as its commissar, Vangel Ajanovski -Oche as its second commissar and Steve Georgiev - Dimov as its chief.

During the initiation ceremonies Lazo Kalajdzhiski – Dobri, the commandant of the Bitola Region Military District, surrendered the

flag for his brigade to Ilija Dimovski – Gotse and among other things said: “I surrender this flag to you from the Ilinden Uprising and trust that forever you will guard it until the ultimate liberation of all of Macedonia”. Upon receiving the flag Ilija Dimovski – Gotse replied: “We accept this flag and we will protect it to the last drop of our blood”.

The first military assignment given to the first all Aegean Shock Brigade was to clean up the Balisti bands in the village Ostrets, Bitola Region, which it did in the first ten days of December 1944.

1944 - Battalions combine to form brigade

On November 17th, 1944 the two Macedonian battalions from Greek occupied Macedonia came together in the liberated territory of Bitola and joined forces to create the first Macedonian Shock Brigade. Ilija Dimovski – Gotse was appointed commander and Mohailo Keramidchiev became its commissar. A few days later the brigade was dispatched to Mount Shar to put down the Balisti, an Albanian group of German allies.

1944 - December 2, Papandreou government resigns

Just barely two months after the Germans left Greece, the Leftist ministers in the Papandreou government quit after being unable to agree on the composition of the new police force and who should control the armed forces.

1944 - Britain begins intervention against ELAS

On December 3, 1944 Britain began its military intervention against ELAS in Athens. Given the situation the fighters and officers of the Macedonian brigade in the Republic of Macedonia could not remain indifferent about what was happening in Greece, being aware that defeat of the democratic forces in Greece would worsen the situation of the Macedonian people. They were all in agreement that there was a need to explore all means to help ELAS, which meant first hand involvement of the brigade in the conflict. At this point the Aegean Macedonian leadership contemplated around this question searching for conditions under which to become involved. Naum

Shupurkovski, a member of the Secretariat of the Macedonian Political Commission under Greece, in his report addressed to the Political Bureau of the Greek Communist Party commented that on December 3, 1944 on the day of the formation of the Political Commission, at a meeting attended by Mohailo Keramidchiev, Naum Pejov, Paskal Mitrevski, Dimitar Vlahov, Petse Trajkov and himself, Lazar Kolishevski addressed the preoccupied Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia, according to Naum Shupurkovski – Leon, as follows: "Leave immediately for down there (Aegean Macedonia). Get agreement from the Greek Communist Party and fight like democrats under its leadership without pretensions…" Several days later, Liljana Chalovska, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Greece in the accommodations of the Political Commission of the Macedonians under Greece, in Bitola, addressed Paskal Mitrevski, Naum Pejov, Mohailo Keramidchiev and Naum Shupurkovski – Leon and among other things told them the following: "You need not wait to be pacified by the parties. Take your own initiative and go down there without asking for anything from the Communist Party of Greece. As long as you stay here you tolerate liability. Down there (Greece) it is not only Greece's and Macedonia's fate that is decided, but that of all the Balkan nations…"

Four or five days later a joint meeting was held between the brigade's headquarters and the political committee to discuss the circumstances under which it would be appropriate for the brigade and all the Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia who were presently in Yugoslavia to return to Greece and to engage in the struggle on the side of ELAS and how to communicate these circumstances to the Communist Party of Greece. Naum Pejov, Lazo Poplazarov, Paskal Mitrevski and Mohailo Keramitdzhiev, keeping in mind what had happened in the past, insisted on going to Greece as a distinct people; they insisted that the brigade should have its own headquarters, its own flag with the five ray star and be recognized by Greece as a Macedonian army. Contrary to that, Naum Shupurkovski – Leon figured that such conditions were not necessary. Paskal Mitrevski intervened and insisted on having the political committee situated inside the city Lerin.

1944 - December 3, EAM demonstrates. An EAM organized demonstration brakes out in Athens and began to march towards Constitutional Square. The police opened fire and killed a number of demonstrators.

Fighting at the time was isolated to Athens and continued until January 1945 when both sides agreed to talk. Meetings were held at Varkiza, a seaside resort near Athens, and a treaty was signed on February 12th, 1945. Signed by the Right, Left and the British, among other things, the Varkiza Treaty called for (a) EAM to disband ELAS, (b) legalize the Communist Party of Greece (CPG) and (c) hold a referendum on the return of the monarchy. ELAS troops were to be given political amnesty for the return of their weapons, people were to be guaranteed free speech, martial law was to be lifted and people were to be given amnesty for all political crimes.

1944 - Damning British diplomatic report

December 11, 1944 – In a British diplomatic report sent from Leeper to Eden, dated Athens November, 14, 1944, referring to the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia, among other things Leeper said:

"4. The problem of the Western Macedonian Bulgarophones, who are briefly mentioned in paragraph 7 of the paper, also remains serious and formidable, in spite of its limited dimensions. This minority, which extends through the region from Florina and Kastoria through Siatista to the plain of Yannitsa, has proved exceedingly unreliable during the war. Satisfactory data are not available, but it appears from events during the occupation that the dissatisfied minority must be considerably larger than is suggested by Greek census figures; and it is certain that successive Greek Governments have shirked facing the problem and have preferred to persuade even themselves that it did not exist. On the assumptions (1) that the policy of His Majesty's Government is to treat Greece as the most important Balkan country from the point of view of British interests, and to support those elements in Greece which are most stably pro-British and (2) that Greece does not wish to belong to a Balkan Federation in which there would be a large Slav majority, it

would appear to follow that Greece had better not contain any Slav minorities at all. And since the amputation of the Slav areas in Western Macedonia and their annexation to a Slav Federation is a practical impossibility and would also be economically disastrous for Greece. It would follow that, difficult as it may be, a home must be found for perhaps 120,000 Slav Macedonians north of the Greek frontiers of 1941."

I would like to draw your attention to the sentence "It would follow that, difficult as it may be, a home must be found for perhaps 120,000 Slav Macedonians north of the Greek frontiers of 1941".

Allow us to give you an overview of the situation. Greece had always been lying to its patrons, particularly to Britain about its ethnic composition. In the late 1920's, after all the population exchanges with Turkey and Bulgaria, Greece declared itself a pure Greek nation with 98% of its population being Greek and 2% Muslim Greek. During World War II British spies and military personnel were dispatched in Northern Greece (Greek occupied Macedonia) to monitor the war situation during which time they discovered, contrary to Greek claims, that a sizable Macedonian population, speaking the Macedonian language and aware of its Macedonian consciousness, was living in this territory. The British panicked because they figured if Russia found out then it would want to carve out the Greek territory to accommodate the wishes of these Macedonians. So Britain decided that the Macedonian people had to go; leave Greek occupied Macedonia. This information was later discovered in declassified British diplomatic dispatches.

British Ambassador to Athens Mr. R.A. Leeper, back in November 1944, toyed with the idea of displacing 120,000 Macedonians from Greek occupied Macedonia and moving them north of the Greek border. Mr. Leeper suggested this to Mr. Eden, then UK Foreign Minister, in a letter dated November 24, 1944 in which, among other things, he wrote "…and since the amputation of the Slav areas in Western Macedonia and their annexation to a Slav Federation is a practical impossibility and would also be economically disastrous for Greece. It would follow that, difficult as it may be, a home must be found for perhaps 120,000 Slav Macedonians north of the Greek

frontiers of 1941." (5a) (See: FO 371/43649 XP 00201 R 20431/1009/67.)

In doing this the British requested the assistance of the former (fascist) Yugoslav government, before the communists came to power. The British received a positive response from Yugoslavia. The Fascist Yugoslav government in fact agreed to take these Macedonians out of Greece and resettle them on Yugoslav territory. The fascist Yugoslav government, however, fell to the communists before it had a chance to implement the plan. But after the war (WW II) it was difficult to move 120,000 people without causing world attention. So "someone" decided to force them out by other means… by legal means so that there would be no ramifications after the fact. But how? With the CPY/CPM's cooperation, for sure!

The idea here was to have the Macedonian people raise arms against Greece so that Greece would have "no other choice but to defend itself against an aggressor who wants to carve out parts of its territory"! Yugoslavia, for the sake of having good relations with the West, naturally prepared the groundwork through the creation and indoctrination of NOF and AFZH with aims at starting an armed uprising in Greek occupied Macedonia. The Macedonian people, however, did not want to fight and initially refused to participate. To get them motivated the Greek right, the Fascists, pitched in and initiated what was later termed the "white terror". Greeks indiscriminately began to kill people and burn properties and homes. Fearing for their lives many Macedonians fled to the mountains (Vicho and Gramos) where they were armed and trained to protect themselves. And this is how the conflict was started. This was a war that would be fatal to the Macedonian people; it had to be an ideological war in order to involve the international factor (US and Britain); a war that Greece would have no choice but to fight in order to save its territory. This was going to be a legal genocide because these "Slavs" were prepared to carve out Greek territory! The Macedonians were told they needed the guns to protect themselves but as soon as the shooting started they were told they were fighting to "re-unite their Macedonia" and after Yugoslavia abandoned them they were told they were fighting for their human rights to gain equality with the Greeks. Then, when the war became very hot, they were told to fight for their lives; "to fight or die!"

There was no single Macedonian in those days who not only publicly proclaimed that he or she was fighting to re-unite Macedonia but many Macedonians were made to believe that it was possible to do that! And why do you suppose they believed that? Because the architects of this war, through NOV and AFZH, told them so…, naturally through lies and deception!

1944 - CPG asks Macedonian brigade to return

On December 14, 1944 Andreas Dzhimas, the representative of the Communist Party of Greece and ELAS in Yugoslavia, came to Bitola and asked for the brigade to be disbanded and its fighters to enlist in the ELAS units, or at least to surrender its arms to ELAS. The Aegean leadership did not agree with this recommendation. To solve the problem Andeas Dzhimas, Naum Pejov and Paskal Mitrevski went to Skopje to discuss the situation with the Vardar Macedonian leadership. In the meantime orders came from Tito prohibiting the brigade from going to Greece because the brigade was part of the Yugoslav army. Anyhow immediate events confirmed that one more brigade could not have saved the democratic national front of Greece.

1944 - First Aegean Brigade formed in Bitola

The "First Aegean Brigade" was formed in free Bitola on November 18, 1944 from the fighters of the two battalions that fled Greek occupied Macedonia. This Brigade was deployed on December 28, 1944 in Western Macedonia, mainly in Kichevo, Tetovo and Gostivar, tasked with fighting Dzhemo Mefail's gang of balisti formed during the Italian-German occupation. The "First Aegean Brigade" was disbanded by special order number 236 (strictly confidential) issued by Marshal Tito on April 2, 1945.

-- 1945 --

1945 - Confidential documents found in USSR archives

Confidential documents about the Macedonian involvement in the Greek Civil War (1945-1949) found in the USSR archives

How long are we going to allow the cover up the greatest and longest lasting ethnic cleansing perpetrated against the Macedonian people? How long are we going to allow ourselves to live with a sense of injustice and inhumanity? How long are we going to endure listening to others claiming that we don't exist? And better yet, how much longer are we going to allow this genocide to be hidden?

Important historical research has surfaced from the former Soviet Union archives which deals with the indigenous Macedonian population living in Greek occupied Macedonia and reveals the lies and manipulation perpetrated against the Macedonian people, especially by the CPG, CPM/CPY, NOF and AFZH during the Greek Civil War years 1945 to 1949.

According to the former Soviet Union Ministry of Foreign, Zahariadis, the then leader of the CPG, delivered CPG confidential documents to the USSR and handed them over to the Soviet security organs.

So the question is:

1) Did the Macedonian NOF and AFZH activists, being in an original national liberation movement formed in Skopje, have independent political authority to act on behalf of the Macedonian people or were they pushed by someone else to act and purge the Macedonian people on mass under the Macedonian Testament "There is no greater virtue than to defend the roots of your ancestors!"

2) Did these activists feel guilt for creating the organization AFZH (women's organization) and turning the Macedonian family into a political family; something the Greeks did not do!?

3) Many decades later, in an interview with the Athens daily newspaper "Ta Nea" and with the Solun newspaper "Elinikos Voras", General Markos Vafiadis, said: "Zahariadis wanted and loved the disaster he created... He planned it this way… We were handed over to the leadership of the party!" (See "Ellinikos Voras", August 3, 1978). Vafiadis also said: "At that time I had not come to

the conclusion that Zahariadis was a provocateur... I did not know that Zahariadis played the English and American game…" Dim. Gusidis, a correspondent, asked him: "What kind of evidence do you have today for these accusations? Are there such documents?" To that Vafiadis replied: "I have documents… but his deeds also speak very loud!" (See "Ta Nea", August 22, 1978).

ΤΑ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΙΚΑ ΓΕΓΟΝΟΤΑ ΤΩΝ ΕΤΟΝ 1946-1949 ΣΤΗΝ ΕΛΛΑΔΑ ΚΑΙ Η ΣΟΒΙΕΤΙΚΗ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΗ

(Dramatic events in the years 1946-1949 in Greece and Soviet politics)

Απορρητα ντοκουμεντα του Υπουργειου Εξωτερικων τη ΕΣΣΔ

(Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Ministry of Foreign Affairs confidential documents)

Ο Νικος Ζαχαριαδη στα χεριa των σοβιετικων οργανων ασφαλεια-Απορρητα εγγραφα τη Κα Γκε Μπε

(Nikos Zahariadis delivered CPG confidential documents in the hands of Soviet security organs)

Following is a translation of Ambassador Chernishov's letter:

"7. USSR position in regards to the question of creating a Macedonian state in Greece, in March 1949, during the Greek Civil War.

On March 8, 1949, Chernishov, the Soviet accredited Ambassador to Greece, informed Moscow by wire that the Greek reactionaries use propaganda against the Communist Party of Greece and against the partisan movement with regards to the 'Macedonian Question' as outlined in the CPG Central Committee 5th Plenum resolution especially with the Macedonian National Liberation Front (NOF) 2nd Plenum taking place. Their basic claim used in the propaganda is that: "The Communist Party and the partisan units with their activities and movement are clearly and precisely turning against the territorial integrity of Greece..."

“The attitude regarding the question about the unification of Macedonia at this time”, continued Chernishov, “truly sets great propaganda challenges for the government of Athens which in turn is stirring its military forces to take armed action against the partisans. The Greek people are very sensitive about the territorial integrity of Greece and measures must be taken...

In connection to the Macedonian people’s NOF Congress, which is to convene on March 10, 1949, in the free areas in Greece, the Anglo-American bourgeois coalition press published an article with inflammatory remarks claiming that the Congress will continue with plans to unify Greek Macedonia with Bulgarian and Yugoslav Macedonia and that the Communist Party of Greece is ‘selling out Greek Macedonia’…”

According to information we have from the embassy in Moscow, the organizers of the Congress proved that this was a ploy to avoid discussions on the issue of the future of the Macedonian people and to keep this issue within the bounds of a Balkan Federation. The task of the Congress then was to focus on Greek Macedonia in a system of creating a free and democratic Greece.

1945 - LAW 697 enacted more regulations on renaming toponyms in Aegean Macedonia.

Establishment of Yugoslav socialist federation, comprising six republics, including Macedonia, with Tito as president.

1945 - Aegean brigade fights against the Balisti

On January 2, 1945 the brigade received orders from the General Headquarters of the Macedonian-Vardar National Liberation Front to go to Tetovo and eliminate the remnants of the Balisti bands that were active in the Gostivar and Tetovo Regions.

After about two months of campaigning in the Gostivar and Tetovo Regions (January-February 1945) the brigade completed its assigned task.

Then in the beginning of March 1945 the brigade was relocated to Skopje with orders from the General Headquarters to again relocate to Bitola and Gevgelija.

1945 - Varkiza agreement is signed on February 12, 1945 requiring all Partisan and other bands to demobilize and surrender their weapons. The British, once again, confirmed their allegiance to the Greek Government by giving Athens full political and military support, committing their willingness to fight to prevent a Partisan victory. The biggest losers of the Varkiza agreement were the Macedonians. As soon as the agreement was signed, all anti-Macedonian laws were back in force and the Macedonian people lost all that they had gained during the German occupation, including the right to form their own state as per the Atlantic Charter. The Greek Communist Party made absolutely no effort to safeguard Macedonian rights in the agreements with Britain. This was not only a betrayal to the Macedonian people but it also left them vulnerable to persecution from the Greek Fascists. The Varkiza Agreement was signed in a resort located near Athens. The Agreement was signed by the leadership of the resistance movement, i.e. the CPG and EAM on one side and the Plastiras government and British General Scobey on the other. With that Agreement EAM and ELAS practically handed power to the Right.

1945 - February 12, Macedonians jailed in Solun

On February 12th, 1945 18 citizens from the city Gumendzhe were jailed in Solun. Included among those jailed were Gjorgij Kostraki, Vangel Kostraki, Jovan Popnikov, Kostadin Korov**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Trajko Kalinov, Hristo Michjorov, Hristo Hadzhigjoriov, Vangel Hr. Nichev, Dimitar Shaldev, Hristo Chjakov and others.

1945 - March 24, “Elinikos Voras” vilifies Macedonians

“Elinikos Voras” in fact was so obsessed with the so-called phantom “Macedonian autonomous movement” and the so-called “Slav threat” from the north that it made it its most endearing theme to vilify the Macedonians by continuously publishing adventure stories and hypothetical scenarios of a non-existent enemy attempting to

"grab" their Macedonia. In one of its columns on March 24th, 1945 "Elinikos Voras" wrote: "We have information from a reliable source that Captain Amintas Avgerinos (I. Papadopoulos from the village Pesoshintsa) of the 28th ELAS (National Liberation Army of Greece or NLAG) brigade, in larger part composed of Slavo-Macedonians, does not recognize the Varkiza agreement, and has formed an armed group which now roams around the villages Pesoshintsa, Leskoves, Popozhani, Vrbenik, Kamenik and Voshtareni, where he is terrorizing the residents and forcing them to cross over to Bitola and to join the ranks of the Bulgarian detachments commanded by Ilija Dimovski - Gotse, who is fighting for Macedonia's autonomy…" (Andonovski, Hristo. Vistinata za Egejska Makedonija. Skopje: Misla, 1971, page 169)

"Elinikos Voras" did not care to know or report the facts. All it cared about was to propagate hatred against the Macedonian people by continuously publishing fantasies.

Contrary to "Elinikos Voras's" allegations, Amintas Avgerinos, did not send Macedonian fighters to join Ilija Dimovski – Gotse's Macedonian brigade in the Republic of Macedonia. In fact Amintas Avgerinos was a disciplined ELAS officer and trusted member of the Communist Party of Greece (CPG**Error! Bookmark not defined.**) who obediently followed the party line when the CPG itself was taking a stand against the Macedonian Liberation Movement Organization, the same organization that fought side by side with the Greeks to liberate Greece from the Germans and Bulgarians.

"Elinikos Voras" took it upon itself to label the Macedonian detachments as "having autonomous tendencies" knowing full well that the very same Macedonian detachments fought bloody battles against the autonomist counter-bands in Kostur and Lerin Regions and against the Bulgarian sponsored "Ohrana" in Voden Region.

1945 - April, first Macedonian government founded with Lazar Kolishevski as its first President.

1945 - April 23, NOF is formed along with the Women's Anti-Fascist Front (AFZH) and the Youth organization (NOMS). The

ELAS fighters who earlier had left Greek occupied Macedonia and went to Yugoslavia came under the leadership of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and the Communist Party of Macedonia (CPY/CPM). It was from these fighters that, in Skopje on April 23, 1945, the organization NOF was formed under the initiative of the CPY/CPM and sent to organize the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia in preparation for a new conflict - the Greek Civil War. From the day it was formed to the day it was handed over to the CPG as part of the so-called "brotherhood and unity" formation, NOF acted under CPM/CPY directives. After that it was placed under CPG command until it was disbanded.

1945 - April 26, Tito hints to Macedonians uniting

This may have been as a result of Tito's following statement made in Moscow on April 26, 1945, when he gave an interview for the "New York Times" during which he said: "If the Macedonians from the Greek regions of Macedonia express desire to unite with other Macedonians, Yugoslavia will respect their aspirations." See: Yugoslav-Soviet treaty of friendship signed April 11, 1945 in Moscow, and FO 371/48388/7762.

1945 - May, Captain Pat Evans reports from Lerin on "a general lack of confidence... a number of people have been remarking in cafés and other public places: 'There is no State'. 'The Communists did at any rate make things run, whatever else they may have done.' 'The present Government is useless'!" (Mazower, Mark, "After the War was Over Reconstructing the Family, Nation, and State in Greece, 1943-1960", 2000, Princeton University Press. Pages 11 and 12)

1945 - Terror committed in Greek occupied Macedonia

Between 1945 and early 1946 force was the rule of law in Greek occupied Macedonia where beatings and atrocities were committed daily against democratic citizens. Not only the jails but barns and stables everywhere were filled with people who supported the resistance movement. According to official statistics in 1945 there were 17,985 people jailed of whom 15,596 were jailed without a trial. Another 18,401 were accused of various crimes and 48,936

were accused of being members of EAM and ELAS. About 80,000 people in total were pursued by the Greek government in 1945.

The terror, as a means to break the movement, took frightening measures with each passing day. This is how the situation was described on July 5th, 1945: “After the December incident terror became the rule of law with the arming and unprecedented growth of the extreme Right. Every day life for the non-royal citizens became unbearable. This is a sad affair and the state cannot be without responsibility. The terrorist organizations of the far right most of which were armed by the Germans and cooperated with them, now cooperate with the government to extinguish the democratic spirit. It was the government that enlisted the skills and services of these terrorists and is allowing the atrocities to multiply daily. Therefore the government is responsible for the lockups, imprisonments, the raping of women, the hangings, the beatings and humiliations carried out against the free citizens. This represents a black spot on our civilization.” (Andonovski, Hristo. Vistinata za Egejska Makedonija. Skopje: Misla, 1971, page 155)

Here is how the Regional Governor of Kozheni Region described the situation in a letter to the Minister of Internal Affairs: “From a standpoint of public order the district is finding itself in a savage situation. Disgusting things are happening; multiple hangings, known criminals are being freed from jails, etc. These acts are carried out by known collaborators of the Germans, under whose leadership they developed these blood thirsty skills.” (Andonovski, Hristo. Vistinata za Egejska Makedonija. Skopje: Misla, 1971, page 155)

1945 - June, British soldiers kill Macedonian

After receiving information from informant Hristo Petsi, British soldiers, in June 1945 went in pursuit of Petar Stamenitov from the village Pendalofos and had him killed in the chestnut grove above the village Kriva.

1945 - June 20, Voden NOF holds regional conference at a place near the city Voden. The conference was attended by 125 city and countryside delegates. Pavle Rakovski, member of the top NOF

leadership, presented a report outlining the ideological content and form of the struggle. Vangel Ainovski – Oche, NOF Trustee and District Secretary reported on the organization's financial status. The delegates, among other things, called for the liquidation of the rural guards causing terror in the countryside. (Nova Makedonija, /94.)

1945 - June 25, Aris Veluhiotis found dead

Aris Veluhiotis, commissar of the main headquarters of ELAS, along with about one hundred Partisans who had no faith in the Varzika agreement, detached themselves from the battalion and took to the mountains. The central committee of CPG naturally responded by calling Veluhiotis a "deserter" who on June 25th, 1945 was found dead on Mount Pind. Circumstances surrounding his death to this day have not been explained.

Historians that support the Right, leave it to be understood that Veluhiotis was killed by people from the CPG, claiming that only they know his whereabouts and movements.

In view of the disagreements between the various resistance leaders, the CPG purged Petsopulos, Orestis and Zaharias from the ranks of the party and took measures against the leadership of the Macedonian battalion by initiating a campaign of slanderous propaganda rivaling that of Gables. Macedonian leaders opposing the Varkiza agreement were automatically labeled "autonomists" and "sell outs to the Intelligence Service".

A flyer released in Voden on October 10th, 1944 referring to Veluhiotis's splinter group puts it this way: "Those are autonomists and anarchists and with their own brand of adventurism are solely responsible for bringing hardship to the Slavo-Macedonians. They claim to be your protectors but far from it, they are provocateurs who by their actions have provoked the fascist elements to new and more brutal acts against you Slavo-Macedonians."

Anyone from the CPG or from the GNLF who spoke up in the defense of the splinter group was labeled a traitor. The CPG high

leadership openly suggested to people who harboured such thoughts that they were better off going to jail then going to the mountains.

In reference to Veluhiotis fleeing to the mountains, Zahariadis said "it was an attempt to pass with yesterday's expired ticket". Attempting to explain what happened, Zahariadis blamed it on a misunderstanding by putting it this way: "A large number of our membership had difficulty comprehending what it is that we are trying to do and where we want to go with the Varkiza Agreement. The confusion comes from a number of members who have a small difference of opinion. Some, like Veluhiotis for example could be dangerous that is why the party had to take decisive action. Party members like him wanted to hold on to their guns and to continue the guerilla war." (Quotes from Zahariadis's speech from the CPG plenum of the central committee, July 1, 1945).

1945 - June 28, CPG sees NOF as threat

The CPG Central Committee, during its 10th Plenum, made the following decision: "NOF with its rapid promotion of its military formations is dangerously threatening the Greek character of Macedonia. It is threatening Greek interests and the territorial integrity of the Greek state."

1945 - June 29, Decree denouncing NOF is issued by members of the CPG District Committee for Voden Region and by the people of Voden Region.

1945 - Law 543/45 is passed by Greek legislature against the organization NOF, AFZH and NOMS. I.e. "Against NOF and all persons working for the secession of Greek territories."

1945 - Macedonian homes looted, people abused, women raped by Greek murderous bands and by the Greek National Guard

In the summer of 1945 a band of well known occupier collaborators from Drama Region appeared in Lerin Region. Lead by the murderous Andon Chaush the band of nationalists took control of entire villages and sealed the doors of the Macedonian homes with wax so no one could get in or out. Macedonians were placed under

house arrest overnight for at least 12 hours without an explanation. No one dared break the seal for fear of what might happen to them.

Members of the National Guard roamed the streets during the nights and broke into the houses of those jailed and abused and raped their wives and daughters. In the village Setina, National Guardsmen raped the young wives of two brothers. Another young woman was then taken to the barracks and repeatedly raped overnight. The next morning she was taken and surrendered to her relatives, half dead. One particular woman from the village of Petoratsi was targeted, because of her activities in the United Panhellenic Organization of Youth, and raped.

1945 - May 17, Greeks beat Macedonian villagers to near death

On May 17th, 1945 a National Guard band from the village Inon (Tsakoni) attacked the village Polipotamos and severely beat most of the villagers. After beating him to near death, Zhivko Poptrajanov was taken to Kostur for interrogation.

1945 - May 19, Macedonians fight back against armed Greeks

On May 19th, 1945 a band of around 200 armed nationalist bandits from the villages Shijaki, Chetirok and Gorno Paprechko attempted to enter the village Polipotamos in order to plunder it. The villagers however did not succumb to fear and fought back with sticks and stones as they met the gangsters before reaching their village. The village came out victorious with only a single casualty. Lazo Antonopoulos was wounded.

1945 - May 23, Guard detains and beats villagers

On May 23rd, 1945 the villages Shijaki, Chetirok and Gorno Paprechko were blockaded by the National Guard. The guardsmen detained and beat many residents accusing them of being communists. Fifteen people were beaten to near death and the entire village was plundered and three flocks of sheep were stolen.

1945 - May 31, Macedonians severely beaten by Greeks

On May 31st, 1945 Andreas Papadopoulos with a group of 15 residents from the village Zagorichani, armed with rifles and wearing military uniforms blockaded the Macedonian part of the village and summoned all the Macedonians. Some were tied to a post and severely beaten with whips as they were forced to run like horses around the post and humiliated. Mitse Popjovanov, the village mailman, was beaten so badly that his life hung by a thread.

1945 - May, colonists attack Macedonians

Christian Turkish colonists from Asia Minor settled in Greek occupied Macedonia attack Macedonians

In May 1945 armed bands of nationalistic elements of Asia Minor settlers, who were settled in Macedonia by the Greek state in the 1920's, attacked the village Brest and stole a flock of 1,200 sheep. They stole all the flocks of sheep from the village Dolno Papretsko and about 300 sheep from the village Setoma. When the people from the robbed villages went to the Regional Governor in Kostur to complain, he kicked them out of his office and told them "to go to hell".

In spite of EAM numerous attempts to publicize the terror in an attempt to curb it, the ultra-nationalists continued to commit crimes unabated.

1945 - July 1, Greeks beat Macedonian villagers

On July 1st, 1945 Andreas Papadopoulos's band of nationalists attacked the village Breshtani, summoned all residents and began to indiscriminately beat them. Many, including three women, fell unconscious from the beatings. Lazar Panduli's wife was purposely undressed in public and while bare naked was raped by 4 of the bandits. Afterwards they carried her off and locked her in a room until they found a donkey and then as she rode the donkey she was paraded through the village and further humiliated. When she was returned to lockup, the man responsible for guarding her felt sorry for her and let her escape.

1945 - July 2, Greeks attempt to turn Macedonian into spy

On July 2nd, 1945 Andrea Papadopoulo's nationalist band entered the village Tsakoni and committed all kinds of atrocities. Andon Sjula was badly beaten in an attempt to convert him to a turncoat so he could spy for them but they were unable to break him. He later died from the ordeal. Also badly beaten were Vasilis Suklidis, Naum Nartea, Andreas Stavridis and Petar Chocho.

Other thefts reported at the time included 5 heads of large livestock stolen from the village Tikveni by the nationalist Pavle Sjagari.

Other atrocities committed by the nationalists and the National Guard included the rape and execution of Dafina Valtova from the village Izglebi and the rape of 20 women from the village Gratsi.

1945 - July 6, Macedonian women raped by Greeks

On July 6th, 1945 members of National Guard from the 165 battalion raped 4 women in the village Gornichovo because their husbands were serving in the Yugoslav army. Rapes and robberies were also committed in the villages Gorno Kleshtina, Elovo, Sorovich and Rudnik.

1945 - July 7, Law 453 enacted in Greece
1945 - July 7, Law TOD:/45 enacted in Greece

"For order, peace and justice" to ensure public safety and to stop "autonomist activities" of which the Macedonian political organizations NOF, AFZH and NOMS were accused. NOF, AFZH and NOMS were found to be autonomist, separatist and anti-Greek and were placed outside of the law and their members were to be judged for possessing and using weapons.

1945 - CPG admits Macedonian nation exists

An article entitled "The truth about the Slavo-Macedonians" was published on July 8, 1945, in the newspaper "Rizospastis", the CPG Central Committee's organ, in which, among other things, it was said that the Macedonian nation has its own customs, personality and history and its national awareness is quite developed."

This is further evidence that the CPG not only has admitted that Macedonians exist but gave the world proof of their existence inside Greece as a unique nation. What is peculiar about all this is that today the CPG says Macedonians do not exist and has taken either the amnesia route about its past or it claims that "it is not the same CPG".

1945 - Greek gendarmes murder Macedonian children

On July 10th, 1945 the Greek Gendarme located in the village Lukovtsi detained 4 girls from the same village. No reason was given. The girls were taken away to jail and placed under guard in the city Sobotsko where they were subjected to torture. A few days later, 14 boys all under the age of fifteen were also detained in Lukovtsi and beaten to death. This was a tragedy not just for their parents but for the entire community.

1945 - Greek National Guard expropriates livestock

On July 10th, 1945 Balkanski, in a report to the leadership of the PLF, stated that the National Guard had stolen 250 sheep from the village Eksisu, 2 herds of sheep, 6 oxen and 6 pigs from the village Zelenich and one herd of sheep from the village Mokreni.

1945 - July 18, Law CC 43 passed

Law "against autonomist activities" was passed in Greece with which the organizations NOF, AFZH and NOMS were declared autonomist, placed outside of the law and their members were declared criminals to be caught and tried for high treason.

Forced Law (CC) 4124/1945; "Prosecution of suspected persons."

1945 - July 20, Law (CC) 4124 passed
Law against "Prosecution of suspected persons" was passed. Law (CC) 4124/45 was enacted to be applied only against the Macedonians.

1945 - July 20, Decree "G" passed

1945 - July 20, Laws PZ 433/45 and PZ 753/45 passed

Decree "G" and other laws: PZ 433/45 "For illegal possession of weapons", PZ 753/45 "For illegal possession and use of arms", "For extraordinary measures for public safety" were passed.

1945 - Greek National Guard fires at Macedonian children

On July 25, 1945 the National Guard flag bearer pulled out his pistol and fired at children he heard praying out loud in the Macedonian language at the Kjuprija neighbourhood in Voden.

Ianis Perchemlis, Gerimdzhes and Fotiadis, well known collaborators and Fascists who spied for the Germans during the occupation, were seen pacing up and down the streets calling out loud "lists of those going to jail are already made". In other words they were openly threatening the population with harm without naming names, clearly a terror tactic to frighten everyone.

1945 - The "Nea Alithia" newspaper fans flames of hatred

Another Greek nationalist newspaper that also fed the flames of hatred against this phantom "Slav threat" from the north was "Nea Alithia" which on August 8th, 1945 wrote: "Greece fought, suffered, sacrificed and today is victorious but it cannot ignore threats from the north…" (Andonovski, Hristo. Vistinata za Egejska Makedonija. Skopje: Misla, 1971, page 170)

1945 - Macedonian people beaten badly by Greeks

On August 15th, 1945 the Fascist Socrates Tumanidis and his band of cut throats invaded the village Lukovtsi, detained 10 people and took them to the village Dragomentsi where they subjected them to beastly torture. Tortured the worst was Nikola Markov who in addition to being badly beaten had to endure hot eggs placed under his armpits and salt poured on his wounds.

1945 - Greek officer rapes Macedonian woman in front of her father

On August 19th, 1945 the Greek Gendarme detained and jailed 25 people from the village Sarakinovo. A Greek Captain from the nearby army base, together with several soldiers, raped a young Macedonian woman in the village Tresino in front of her father-in-law. In a beastly manner, Jovan Dokov from the village Pozhartsko was ferociously beaten and while still conscious was buried alive. In the village Strupino 13 houses were burned down. One of those houses belonged to Tasho Bojchev, a Macedonian resistance fighter. Bojchev's wife was killed and her body was thrown in the fire to burn. The same day Germanos Papadopoulos and his band of nationalists detained and killed 2 Macedonian boys.

1945 - Greek army and gendarme kill Macedonians

On August 25th, 1945 army and Gendarme Greek nationalists killed Kosta Dzhina from the village Laka, Atanas Koroveshov from the village Smrdesh and Atanas Lubchev from the village Kastaneri. These individuals were executed in Krombi, Edindzhe-Vardar Region.

1945 - Greek guardsmen beat and imprison Macedonians

On October 5th, 1945 a group of National Guardsmen blockaded the village Shtrkovo and imprisoned 7 Macedonians, who after been beaten were sent to Lerin. Among the 7 beaten included were Joshe Grozdanov, Bozhin Kostov, Pando Kostov and Stavre Katielov.

1945 - October 10, Greeks blockade Rudari 15 people sent to prison

On October 10th, 1945 the village Rudari was blockaded and 15 people were taken and sent to the Lerin jail. Joshe Tsaklarovski and Mihail Mihailovski were beaten to a state of unconsciousness.

1945 - November 17, Greek Guard executes Macedonians

On November 17th, 1945, upon their surrender by the collaborator Dimitar Dojara from the village Kastaneri, the National Guard executed Gjorgij Shashev from Kastaneri, Hristo G. Tartev, Trifun Ajta, Dimitar Parlapanov, Hristo Gatsov, Gjorgij Gulev, Petar

Karamutev and Aleksandar Vasilev from Kriva, Gumendzhisko Region. The executions took place in the Sehovo area near the village Barovitsa.

On August 14th, 1946 in the village Izvor executed were Hristo Sima and Vasilios Kustalidis.

1945 - December 16, 106 Macedonians prosecuted, accused of collaborating with the occupiers from the town Rupishcha in Kostur Region, began in Kostur. This was done in spite of the fact that these people were ELAS fighters and fought against the occupiers. Many were sentenced to life in prison the rest were given shorter sentences.

1945 - December 28, Zahariadis speaks positive of NOF

In a hypocritical sense, even Nikos Zahariadis, the CPG General Secretary spoke positively about NOF. During the December 28th, 1945 General Assembly of the Provincial Committee for Macedonia and Thrace**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, speaking about a flyer published by the Voden branch of NOF, Zahariadis, among other things said: "Every Greek democratic citizen, I am sure, will agree with the call of NOF from Voden Region, to fight together for our freedom, for political rights and social equality and for a general amnesty. We will struggle together for our bread, our freedom and for a new Greek democracy." (Quote taken from the Newspaper "Laiki Foni", organ of the CPG for Macedonia and Thrace, Solun, December 29th, 1945.)

It seems that the change in attitude on the part of the CPG towards NOF is owed mainly to the CPG's need to reorganize for a new armed struggle against the Greek right. A new armed struggle at this point was not possible without involving the Macedonians. The call for a new struggle was made during the December 28th, 1945 CPG General Assembly when the slogan "We call on the people wherever they are, in the cities and in the villages, to carry out an armed struggle against the reactionaries" was first introduced. ("Laiki Foni", December 29th, 1945)

Too many mistakes had been made by the left in allowing the right, more commonly known as the Republicans and Royalists**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, in Greece to highjack power and abuse the innocent to no end. For the leftists more commonly known as the democrats, there was little choice left but to fight back; this time for their own survival.

-- 1946 --

1946 - January 13, Rizospastis defends Macedonians

The newspaper "Rizospastis", in defense of the Macedonians who were terribly persecuted, harassed and mistreated, said: "…this is the greatest and most dreadful persecution ever heard of in modern Greek history..."

1946 - January 28, Greek newspapers attack

Attacks against the Macedonian people living in Greece from Athenian newspapers were just as vicious engaging in brutal anti-Macedonian campaigns through the newspapers "Elefteria" and "Elenikos Kirix". On January 28th, 1946 "Elefteria" published an open letter demanding the expulsion of all Macedonians from their native homeland. "The Slavo-Macedonians can leave our Macedonia. They can go wherever they want. They need to disappear from here; they need to emigrate immediately and compulsorily. There is no place for them here." (Andonovski, Hristo. Vistinata za Egejska Makedonija. Skopje: Misla, 1971, pages 171, 172)

In a similar tone the nationalist paper "Ethnikos Kirix" paved the way for conflict and for persecuting the Macedonians when it proposed, "that there is a need to get rid of 180,000 Slavo-Macedonians as soon as possible".

Even stronger criticism against the Macedonians came from the newspapers "Foni tis Kastorias" and "Ethnos" when they published quotes from Periklis Ilijadis, a former Nazi collaborator, insisting that, "there is no place for Greeks and Macedonians in Greek-

Macedonia". (Andonovski**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Hristo. Vistinata za Egejska Makedonija. Skopje: Misla, 1971, page 172)

In spite of the sacrifices the Macedonian people made to safeguard the security and integrity of Greece, the rightist elements of Greece were bent on destroying them. When they thought their situation could not get any worse, it did. If terrorizing and threatening them with death was not enough, the Greeks were now bent on exterminating the Macedonian people to the last one. The Macedonian people were now faced with a dilemma: remain at home and accept fate in the hands of the blood thirsty Nazi collaborators or forever leave their homes and ancestral lands and cross over the border? Out of the two evils, the Macedonians chose to remain at home and together with the democratic people of Greece, resumed their struggle for their freedom, equality and human rights for all (in theory).

The people had had enough of the lawlessness and brutality committed by the Greek nationalists and their armed wings the National Guard, armed bands and police. The very same sentiment was echoed by the world public which vehemently disapproved of how the Greek government and the British handled the situation.

1946 - February 12, CPG CC holds Plenum in Athens during which a decision was made not to take part in the parliamentary elections and to start the uprising (which later became known as the Greek Civil War).

1946 - Greek Guard jails innocent Macedonians

On March 5th, 1946 members of the National Guard jailed 10 people from the village Nered. They were all taken to court and without a shred of evidence, presented as members of the Greek National Liberation Front and of the National Liberation Army of Greece. Similar events took place in the villages Neokazi, Popozhani, Boreshnitsa, and Sekulevo.

1946 - March 6, Gendarme jails Macedonians

Betrayed by Irini Mechkari a number of people were picked up by the Ofchareni Gendarmes at 9 pm on March 6th, 1946 and sent to jail. Among those jailed included were Dimo Kratev and Vane Alamchev from Krushoradi.

1946 - March 8, Many Macedonians imprisoned

On March 8th, 1946 imprisoned were Petros Hadzhikarmenis, Janis Hadzhikarmenis, Kostas Hadzhikarmenis, Janakis Kostas, Dimitar Uzunov, Hristo Uzunov, Stamat Stamenov, Todor Vaskov and Gligor Tumbov from the village Petgas. Among the 35 men and women interned from the village Kriva included were Vangel Janakev, Atanas Jankov, Jovan Ropkov, Tano Janakev, Jovan Mladev, Petar Hadzhikarmenis, Tano Tsegli, Hristo Sjagli, Gjorgij Janakov, Paskalina Mitrova, Anastas Karadzha, Elisabeta Gatsi, Katerina Stoju, Marika Pulka and others.

1946 - March 13, 10 people from Petoratsi sued in the Lerin court and were given 10 to 15 year prison sentences. They were accused of belonging to illegal socialist organizations. Among those sued were Bitko Mijalev, Lazo Damianov, Naso Zhinzov and Vasil Popov. Another 18 people from the village Setina were also sued by the same court and handed 8 to 10 year prison sentences. These people were accused of various crimes. Their accuser was the teacher Miltiadis Dulukas who was a witness at their trials.

1946 - March 15, Gendarme abducts Macedonians

On March 15th, 1946, the Gendarme from Ofchareni, lead by collaborator and spy Janis Apostolidis, stormed into the village Krushoradi and abducted resistance fighters Petar Donevski, Pando Vesev, Spase Dzhodzhov and Gjorgij Majnov. The next day they were taken to Lerin and put in prison.

More Macedonians were rounded up and taken before the courts in Lerin, even decent resistance fighters like Iordan Vitkov who was sentenced to life imprisonment with hard labour, Katerina Ts. Shabalova sentenced to 3 years imprisonment and Alekso Gashtarov, Sveto Charkev and Gjorgij Chakalov from the village Setina sentenced from 8 to 12 years imprisonment which prompted

one to speak up and say "We are Macedonians and that is why it is not difficult that we must lie in prison. This is our tax for our freedom. The Macedonians are used to spending time in prison, but for us one day the sun will shine".

1946 - March 18, Macedonians accused of working for "Ohrana" sent to jail in Solun

On March 18th, 1946 citizens Risto Kostarski, and Stamat Ljapa were sent to jail in Solun because they were accused of being under the influence of "Ohrana", a Bulgarian sponsored organization that operated in Kostur Region.

1946 - March 1, Elections take place in Greece
1946 - March 1, Greek Civil War officially begins

March 31, 1946 – Elections take place in Greece, Greek Civil War officially begins. While the British and the Greek press continued to speak of free elections in Greece, the nationalist and chauvinistic elements continued to rain terror on the civilian population arresting and imprisoning people uncontrollably. By the time the elections took place on March 31st, 1946, almost all of the former resistance fighters were either missing or serving jail sentences under trumped up charges.

Interestingly some of these election irregularities were confirmed by British, Colonel Shepard who was quoted by the newspaper "New Democracy" on December 8th, 1947 as saying: "During the election a Greek officer was watching a British officer and finally got enough nerve to speak to him. The Greek officer boasted to the British officer about how his regime was capable of creating conditions where 100% of the people would vote for the royalists. 'Even if not 100% then at least 95% and for those 5% who vote differently we will call them the enemies of the regime and invent reasons as needed to bring them in' explained the Greek officer."

1946 - March 31 Greek elections a total farce, not only because of the coercion by the rightist regime forcing voters to vote for them but also because of the perpetrated election fraud. In most European countries like France, Italy and others the population had naturally

shrunk because of the war but not in Greece. In spite of the half million deaths due to starvation and war, Greece, according to the number of people who voted in 1946, showed a massive population increase, much greater than those voting in 1936. For example, 1,753,000 voters participated in the 1936 elections and 2,200,000 voters participated in the 1946 elections (voting in Greece was mandatory). Above that another 250,000 voters, known democrats were intentionally left off the lists so that they could not vote.

1946 - March 31, Uprising starts by one of the most characteristic acts performed by the partisans, which was to attack the village Litohoro, in which 23 government soldiers were killed. This, as one of the first major acts performed in the Greek history of DAG, was accepted as the beginning of the Greek Civil War. The Greek Civil War officially began on March 31, 1946 by decision of the CPG Second Plenum held on February 12, 1946. It did not happen by accident, it was planned.

1946 - March 31, Zahariadis arrives in Belgrade and met with Tito. Among other things, they discussed the "strategy of the armed struggle" (the Yugoslav model) for which Tito promised Zahariadis material and moral assistance. See: "Danas" published on 6.03.1990, pages 418, 419 and 420. Among other things on page 64 the article said: "…the network was organized under the leadership of Alexander Rankovich (third man from the top in CPY politics) who, up until 1948, supplied the Greek partisans with 35,000 rifles 2,000 mortars (German), 7,000 anti-tank guns, 10,000 landmines, 12,000 complete army uniforms and 30 wagons of food." The article then went on to say that: "… 8,000 people had fled Greece (and lived miserable lives in the Skopje streets) and how important it was for the first man, General Markos, to confirm the newly established General Headquarters created on October 28, 1946."

But we must never forget that more than 50% of the participants in DAG were Macedonians. A very large proportion considering that the Macedonian population was much, much smaller than the Greek. We must also never forget that the Greek Civil War, with all its Party and military functions, was led and commanded almost exclusively by Greeks. So, the question that comes to mind is: "if the Greek Civil War was a revolution for socialism, does that mean

that we Macedonians had to resolve this problem, i.e. turn Greece into a socialist state before we could obtain our national rights?"

1946 - April 2, Zahariadis initiates armed struggle in Greece and Tito supports him.

CPG General Secretary Zahariadis, after returning from Moscow, went to Belgrade where he met with Marshal Tito and discussed his decision to initiate an armed struggle against the Right in Greece. Tito gave Zahariadis his full support and promised to supply him with moral and material aid. This meeting was arranged to also accomplish the following:

1. Place the Macedonian national liberation movement in Greek occupied Macedonia led by NOF, which as of April 1945 was under the leadership of the CPY-CPM, under the CPG.

2. Transfer part of the CPG Central Committee Politburo composition, headed by Ianis Ioanidis, to Belgrade with the task of managing supplies for the armed struggle and representing the CPG abroad. I.e. to take care of supplying the partisans with weapons, clothing, food and other materials.

3. To organize recruitment of fighters from the Republic of Macedonia, more specifically from the so-called Greek political emigrants who fled Yugoslavia. To organize hospitals for the wounded and sick DAG fighters and for Yugoslavia to take on the role of organizer and coordinator of assistance for DAG from other countries.

1946 - April 4, Greeks call for Macedonians to be killed

The Solun right wing newspaper "Nea Alithia" (New Truth) published an article entitled "Our Sudetenland, speaking about the Macedonians who qualify as Sudetenland-ers and as such" writes the newspaper "in the interest of peace and security in Greece, they should be liquidated…"

1946 - May 4, First Macedonian Detachment formed at the "Trsie-Turie" mountains in Lerin Region. The detachment was led by Petre Markov from the village Neret, Lerin Region.

1946 - May 21, Greeks call for expulsion of Macedonians

The newspaper "Ethnikos Kirikas" wrote: "Greece should soon expel 80,000 Slavo-Macedonians." The same was said in the weekly Republican newspaper "Eleftheros Typos" on January 28, 1946 in an article entitled: "Let the Slavo-Macedonians leave our Macedonia - let them go wherever they want to go."

1946 - Terrorist activities against the Macedonian peak

Terrorist activities against the Macedonian population peaked on July 7th, 1946 when the Greek government voted to take "extraordinary measures" to further deprive the people of their rights by prohibiting political and professional organizational activities and by openly moving towards reinstating a military dictatorship.

In view of the MNLF and its activities, these "extraordinary measures" were particularly brutal against the Macedonians who were now being treated more harshly than the citizens of southern Greece. By treating the Macedonians differently and by accusing them of having "separatist tendencies" the regime was promoting division between the democratic people. Here is a quote of "article one" from the "extraordinary measures" adopted on July 7th, 1946: "Those who aim to partition a section of the national territory or create opportunities to conspire inside this country or take part in them will be sentenced to death…" (Quote taken from the newspaper "Makedhonia", July 7th, 1946)

Ironically these measures were only a pretext to attack the innocent Macedonians and not the real conspirators; the British consulate in Lerin, Vice-Consul Hill, Captain Evans and the Greek Colonel Bafas who started this conspiracy in the first place.

The "extraordinary measures" were immediately put into effect and the courts were transformed into death factories in which tens of real patriots, the ones who spilled blood and freed Greece from the

occupiers, were sentenced to death on a daily basis. All one had to do was accuse someone of "committing subversive activities against the state" and the military did the rest.

"Article ten" of the "extraordinary measures" allowed for the searching of premises at all times. This part of the law was utilized to justify the brutal measures taken against innocent people in response to press allegations of conspiracies. Names of so-called "autonomists" were printed and people were pursued by state organs without the slightest proof of wrong doing.

While the Greek parliament was voting to pass the "extraordinary measures" the newspaper "Makedhonia", published the following:

"Our competent government officials have uncovered concrete information that proves that in the first 15 days of June disorder of a revolutionary character was taking place, which spread throughout the entire region of Macedonia, both inside and outside of cities. According to government sources, bandits who entered the villages and are concentrating their forces have been advised to act on a moment's notice. We have information that these orders came directly from the NOF whose long term objectives are to free Macedonia from the Greek yoke and proclaim it a "Peoples' Republic" and then join it with Tito's federation of Peoples' Republics." (Andonovski, Hristo. Vistinata za Egejska Makedonija. Skopje: Misla, 1971, pages 190 and 191). This well planted Greek propaganda, by the way, today serves as the "Greek side" of the story.

With this well fabricated, well planned and well executed program along with the use of well paid "professional witnesses" the Greek government managed to send thousands of Macedonians, sometimes entire families, to the Greek concentration prison camps in the waterless and parched Greek islands not to mention the many that Greece senselessly sentenced to death and executed. Among the many executed were six high ranking Macedonian NOF cadres one of them Mirka Ginova sentenced to death by the military court in Enidzhe-Vardar.

The campaign against NOF was becoming fiercer by the day especially in the spring of 1946 after the appearance of the Macedonian detachment in Kajmakchalan. The detachment's rapid growth was seen as a threat to the Republican and Royalist control of Greek occupied Macedonia and they took immediate action to liquidate it. Gendarmes from Western Meglen were dispatched in pursuit and one day in the middle of July 1946, when the detachment was taking a rest near the village Pochep, it unexpectedly came under attack from three sides. Over 500 gendarmes were involved and in view of such an overwhelming force the Macedonians decided it was wise to retreat. Unfortunately during the withdrawal a group of seven people, leaders of t NOF, who that day were having a conference, were left behind and mistakenly took the wrong route to escape. During their retreat they ran into the enemy and were captured alive. Of the seven only Mirka Ginova was armed with a pistol. As the seven were rushed by enemy soldiers, Mirka fired all her rounds and in frustration threw the pistol at the soldiers. Among the seven was also a Greek. All seven were taken to the city of Voden.

Mirka Ginova's capture was touted as a big success for the Republicans and Royalists. To demoralize her and the Macedonian people, the gendarmes had her dressed in rags and paraded through the streets as a scarecrow. But this fiery revolutionary walked with her head up and saluted onlookers calling on them not to cry for her. "Mothers don't cry the revolution will be victorious!"

A local woman, wife of Andon Shulov, who lived near the gendarme station in Voden, afterwards reported that for three nights in a row a motorcycle was left running just outside the station under Mirka's cell to mask Mirka's screaming. Mirka had been severely tortured by the gendarmes using middle age inquisition methods. Several times she was lead to the city cemetery and buried in an open grave up to her neck. She was then fired at with blank shells to frighten her to disclose information on activities and on people in her organization's network. Even after all that torture Mirka told them nothing.

1946 - July 12, Chereshnitsa attacked by Greeks

At six o'clock in the morning on July 12th, 1946 the army and police from the villages Dmbeni and Gabresh attacked the village Chereshnitsa, using grenade launchers and machineguns. After burning several barns they gathered the entire population in the village square and began to beat people with sticks and metal rods. Thirteen people were beaten unconscious. Among them were Hristo Markov, Vasil Palev, Hristo Andreev, Vasil Skivinov, Poptrajanov and Andon Terziev. Dimitar Anastasov was captured while working and taken to the village Gabresh where he endured prolonged beatings until he was dead. Afterwards his body was taken out of the village, doused with gasoline and burned. This was the second attack against the village Chereshnitsa. The village was also attacked three days earlier on July 9th, 1946 and the following people were abducted and sent to the island of Corfu concentration prison camps: Lambrovitsa Popfilipova, Marko Vivkov and Filip Palev. They were punished because they were relatives of people who illegally fled the country.

Others who were jailed and tortured included Ivan Kizov from the village Gabresh. Unfortunately Ivan Kizov could not withstand the torture he received and died in prison the same night he was jailed. His body was taken and tossed in front of the door of his house and left there. The next day the police jailed Lena Makrieva, Nikola Rompov and Hristo Robov, no reasons were given. Seventy people, fifty women and twenty men, from the village Biraltsi were turned in by the village informer Minche Shpirov. They were detained, locked up and severely beaten by the army and gendarme.

1946 - July 17, British Commission says Greece 90% fascist

During 1946 a Commission made up of British Labour Representatives (Solej, Tifanis and Dode (sp?)), visited Greece and examined the political situation in some detail. Upon their return to their own country, on July 17th, 1946 they announced that Greece is 90% Fascist, after which Laski, the former British President of the Labour party of Great Britain prophetically said: "The return of King George to Greece will convert this state into a second Spain…" (Andonovski, Hristo. Vistinata za Egejska Makedonija. Skopje: Misla, 1971, page 168).

1946 - July 23, Mirka Ginova captured and tortured

On July 23rd, 1946 Mirka and the other six (Gjorgij Projev, Petre Popdimitrov, Risto Stojanov – all from Voden, the Greek Alekos Mutsakis from the village N'te, Mitse Ljumbata from Vlahovo and Tomo Mihailov from Teovo), were taken to a military court in Enidzhe-Vardar where they were sentenced to death. Mirka's words in her defense will remain a testament for the Macedonian people from Greek occupied Macedonia. To her last breath Mirka defended NOF and all Macedonians from the slanders of her captors. "I am a leader of NOF" said Mirka before the court" and during the occupation I fought against the Germans and the executioners Kalchev and Dimchev, who jumped upon us like beasts, especially against us Macedonians so that they could mislead us into the claws of 'Ohrana'. We fought the Ohrana with fanaticism, just as we fought against the German occupier. NOF is not a military organization; it is a political Democratic Macedonian organization, which is struggling for equal rights for our people within the framework of the Greek State. We are fighting for freedom and democracy!"

1946 - Mirka Ginova is executed

July 27, 1946 – Greek military court sentenced to death and executed Mirka (Irina) Ginova, a school teacher from the village Rosilovo, Voden Region. She was secretary of AFZH for Voden District.

From Varkiza (February 12, 1945) until July 1946, 20,000 Macedonians were forced to seek shelter across the border, 22,458 were jailed, 21,202 were convicted, 225 were killed, 1,309 found refuge in the mountains…

1946 - July 28, Greek army attacks Macedonian villages

On July 28th, 1946 the army, stationed in the village Breznitsa attacked the village Besfina and jailed the following people: Dimitar Skenderov, Ristana Skenderov, Gjorgij and Yane Skenderov. The next day the army captured and violently tortured Donka Dukova, after which she was taken to Lerin and jailed.

The following women from the village Rabi, Prespa Region, were tortured and also taken to the Lerin jail: Sevasti Dimitrova, Barbara Kalkova, Metoditsa Jakreva**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Mitrovitsa Dimitrova, Stojantsa Dimitrova, Joshevitsa Nikolova and Sofija Bajlova. The following people were also jailed in the same prison on August 1, 1946: Vezo Karavanov, Ilija Nichov, Done Lazarov, Mitre Gogov and Ilija Srbinov. Also locked up were many residents from the villages Bukovik, Oshchima, German, Orovnik and Orovo.

According to press reports, during the months of May, June, July and August 1946, 5,246 people were killed, 415 heavily wounded, 1,446 tortured, 1,246 interned and 3,290 imprisoned. During the same period over 20,000 Macedonians fled Greece.

1946 - Bulgarians interfere in Macedonian affairs

August 9, 1946 - In regards to Macedonians in Bulgaria, political changes after the capitulation of fascist Bulgaria and the September 9th, 1944 coup d'etat positively influenced the Macedonians in Pirin. On August 9, 1946 the Communist Party of Bulgaria, under the leadership of Georgi Dimitrov, officially recognized the Macedonian nation and the right of the Bulgarian controlled part of Macedonia to attach itself to the People's Republic of Macedonia. After World War II the Macedonians in Bulgaria were recognized as a separate and distinct ethnicity. Demographic data from a free census in 1946 revealed that the majority of the population in Pirin Macedonia declared itself to be ethnic Macedonian. There was a period of cultural autonomy and affirmation of Macedonian national and cultural values. The Macedonian literary language and national history were introduced into the educational system and almost 32,000 students were taught Macedonian. In 1947 in Gorna Djumaja (Blagoevgrad) the first Macedonian bookstore, reading room and Regional Macedonian National Theater were opened. Macedonian newspapers such as "Pirinsko delo", "Nova Makedonija", "Mlad borec" etc. were also published. Literary, cultural and artistic associations were founded contributing to the spread of Macedonian culture.

In the 1956 census conducted by the Bulgarian government, 63.7% of the population living in Pirin Macedonia declared itself Macedonian. Since that census, and after Tito broke relations with Russia and Bulgaria, Bulgaria changed its attitude and negated the existence of Macedonians thus forbidding the expression of the Macedonian ethnicity and language. Another census conducted in 1965 shows only 8,750 or less than 1% of the total population living in the district of Blagoevgrad to be Macedonians. This was a region with the highest percentage of Macedonians shown to live there by a previous census.

1946 - August 15, Greeks kill Macedonians

On August 15th, 1946 in Gumendzhe the nationalists and gendarmes killed Gjorgij Hadzhipopov, Dimitar Karadzha from Gumendzhe, Kosta Popjanov from Karpi, Lazo Projchev from Gomendzhe, Gjorgij Tampov from Kastaneri, Petad Dautis, Jovan Shahsov, Trifun Minov, and Tano Mitachov from Karpi.

1946 - August 24, CPG moves part of HQ to Belgrade

Based on prior agreements between Tito and Zahariadis, one part of the CPG Central Committee Politburo composition, headed by Ioannidis, was moved from Athens to Belgrade. General Markos Vafiadis, who was appointed organizer and leader of the partisan groups, in June 1946 by Zahariadis, left Greece and moved to Belgrade. Here he received specific directives and promises of support from the CPG Politburo.

1946 - August, 100 Macedonians imprisoned

From January to August 1946 more than 100 citizens from Gumendzhe alone were imprisoned including members of the Menchev family. From the village Barovitsa imprisoned were Jovan Chutra, Hristo Sjuli, Hristo Ajta, Gjorgij Kjosev, Jovan Gata, Katina Kuta, the entire Vangel Shoshov family, Paskalina Garti and Gjorgij Todorov Shoshov. From the village Karpi imprisoned were Gjorgij Tekni, Hristo Pejkov, Hristo Kirkov, Hristo Kjoska, Gjorgij Kjoska, Gjorgij Dzharov, Gjorgij Popnikolov, Atanas Betov, Maria Beta, Aneta Benova, Gjorgij Erov, Aneta Tumba, Dimitar Popjanov and

Jovan Popjanov. From the village Mandelevo 16 people were imprisoned, from Isiklar 50, from Boemitsa 15 and from Gorgopik 50.

1946 - September 16, Greeks beat Macedonians to death

On September 16th, 1946 civilian nationalists aided by the Gendarme beat to death with sticks Janis Asaridis from Gerakona, Nikos Karamanlis and Janis Sideris from Aksiupolis.

1946 - September 20, Greeks loot and burn

On September 20th, 1946 a detachment of gendarmes and bandits entered the village Barovitsa and burned the houses of brothers Trifun and Gjorgij Kuplev and took 2 mules, 300 goats, cheese, butter and everything of value they could find. They did the same to Hristo P. Kurlev's house and to the houses and properties of Petar Ajta, Kosta Projchev, Tano Gatsev, Kosta Gatsev, Gjorgij Taratev, Jovan Kovachev, Hristo Cholakov and Gjorgij Poppetrov.

1946 - Greece enacts law to punish army deserter families

September 1946 - Greek government enacts a law designed to punish the families of army deserters. Imprisonment for political crimes was on the increase and as regular prisons became dangerously overcrowded, new systems of detention were being invented including detention centers, islands of deportation, concentration camps, etc.

Incarcerating large number of democrats, male and female of all ages, dated back to before the Metaxas dictatorship, which involved the punishment of people not for their deeds but for their ideas, but the sheer number of those incarcerated during this period was far larger than at any time in the past, and easily dwarfed even the thousands jailed or detained under Metaxas. There was a far greater number of women and even children detained during this period than ever before, necessitating the need for special women's camps. In 1934, for example, there were approximately 130 women jailed in the Averoff Women's Prison in Athens. By 1945 the number of prisoners had grown tenfold. "The strains upon the primitive

infrastructure required to support such an expansion of the system of incarceration can be judged in the remarkable collection of photos taken by women inmates and recently published under the heading Gynaikes exoristes sta stratopeda tou emfyliou." (Mazower, Mark, "After the War was Over Reconstructing the Family, Nation, and State in Greece, 1943-1960", 2000, Princeton University Press. Page 14)

1946 - October 28, DAG Headquarters is established

In September 1946 Vafiadis returned to Greek occupied Macedonia from Belgrade where, on October 28, 1946, he established DAG Partisan Headquarters.

1946 - Stalin directs Zahariadis to slow down movement

November 10, 1946 - Zahariadis receives directive from Stalin to NOT expand the armed movement during the winter of 1946-1947 because it was allegedly causing an international situation and that the CPG should focus more or less on its political struggle.

1946 - November 21, NOF falls under CPG

Based on decisions made by Tito and Zahariadis on October 14, 1946, the CPY, represented by Karaivanov, and the CPG, represented by Ioannidis, soon after announced the following joint agreement: "The Macedonian organizations NOF, AFZH and NOMS and their leaderships will now fall under CPG leadership and the Macedonian armed units will join DAG and fall under the leadership of General Markos."

NOF's new program goals were to instruct the Macedonian people to fight together with the Greek people in an alliance. The Macedonian people were told that they now had to fight for their survival in order to "save themselves".

A short time after this CPY and CPG agreement, members of the NOF Board, headed by Paskal Mitrevski, were received by Lazar Kolishevski, CPM Central Committee Secretary, who told them: "You now go down (to Aegean Macedonia) there. Your leader of

the struggle will be the CPG. The CPG Line is clear. Have confidence in the CPG. Struggle with all your might against chauvinism, separatism and local tendencies…"

1946 - Greek newspaper waves flag of Slav threat

Yet another rightist Greek newspaper the "Ethniki Floga", an organ of Napoleon Zervas, a former occupier collaborator now under British influence, on December 23rd, 1946 waved another "Slav threat" flag giving Greek nationalists the signal to start terrorizing the anti-Fascist democratic citizens of Greece by printing the following: "The danger is patient and is always there. As long as Soviet Russia is not contained within its own borders the danger will lurk and make us uneasy threatening our lives and our country. As long as Russian watchtowers are closer than 30 km from the Aegean Sea they will continue to attack. With burning heat provided by their branches Serbia, Bulgaria and Albania the communists will burn our state because it is in their nature. There is only one way to escape this –full destruction of this banditry which breaks the law of justice and makes this treachery possible. The lozenge is war without hesitation or mercy. War until the enemy is transformed into food for vultures and wild beasts or it is in chains in the prisons from which there is no escape." (Andonovski, Hristo. Vistinata za Egejska Makedonija. Skopje: Misla, 1971, pages 169, 170)

1946 - NOF unit ordered to join DAG

On December 27, 1946, NOF partisan units ordered to join DAG

An order, order number EP 13, from General Markos read: "As of today, all NOF Partisan Units are to be placed in the composition of DAG."

-- 1947 --

1947 - Legal Act L-2 is issued during the Greek Civil War, on the strength of which all who left Greece without the consent of the Greek government were stripped of their Greek citizenship and banned from returning to Greece. This included Greeks and

Macedonians. In its modernized version the Act is still binding for Macedonians.

1947 - February 12, UK informs US to take over in Greece

The UK government informed the U.S. government that, for economic reasons, as of March 31, 1947 it would stop helping Greece. The U.S. government agreed that it must inherit Great Britain's role in Greece because otherwise Greece would inevitably fall under Russian influence.

1947 - February 24, King tells partisans to surrender

The Greek King and Greek government publicly called on DAG fighters to surrender. They were given a deadline up to March 15, 1947. If they were to surrender before the March 15th deadline their offenses committed against the State and against the people would be absolved and they could return to their homes.

1947 - February 25, Greeks loot Macedonian villages

On February 25, 1947 armed Greek civilians and soldiers attacked and looted the village Lagen, Lerin Region, burned 16 barns, raped a girl and set fire to Evdokija Ivanova's house. The armed band of the notorious Skordas lead by the villains Garapis from Kalinitsa and Argir the Vlach from Plasnichevo was responsible for terrorizing the Macedonia population in Enidzhe-Vardar and Gumendzhisko Regions. Armed civilians and gendarmes with whips in their hands roamed the streets calling the Macedonians "Bulgars" and threatening to kill them. These where acts of torment and humiliation never before experienced by the Macedonian population. And if that was not enough the rampant unemployment and economic crisis created by the evacuation of the villages added another dimension of hardship to the people, a burden which forced them to look to NOF for relief.

Since the spring of 1947 hundreds of villages were emptied of their residents by force. In Negush Region alone 17 villages were evacuated among them were Gorno Seli, Dolno Seli, Kutsu Fljani,

Trasilovo, Golema Reka, Janakovo, Nea Strandzha, Ropan, Arkudohor, Chernevo, Javornitsa, and Tursko Selo.

1947 - March British Vice-Consul Hill weaves conspiracies

I also want to mention here that if anyone should be accused of having "autonomist ideas" it should be the British. It was no secret, at least not to the Macedonians, that during 1945-1946 the British government and Greek security forces, through the political officer Bafas and through various collaborators of the occupiers, were interested in creating an autonomous movement in Lerin Region. If anyone should be accused of irregularities it should be the British Vice-Consul Hill who was the one weaving conspiracies. This information was made available to the UN Inquiry Commission by Dr. Janidis, a Lerin Region doctor, in March 1947. It took a lot of courage on the part of Dr. Janidis to divulge this information and as a result of this he lost his life.

1947 - "Truman Doctrine" proclaimed

March 1, 1947 - U.S. President Harry Truman announced the decision to proclaim the "Truman Doctrine" for engaging the U.S. in Greece. Greece was granted credit and advanced military equipment to equip its government army. At the same time Van Fleet, an American General anti-guerrilla specialist, was made available to the Greek government.

1947 - March 31, US replace UK in Greece

The UK government informed the U.S. government that, for economic reasons, as of March 31, 1947 it would stop helping Greece. The U.S. government agreed that it must inherit Great Britain's role in Greece because otherwise Greece would inevitably fall under Russian influence.

1947 - February 20, US and Greece sign Agreement

The U.S. and Greek governments signed agreement in Athens. The U.S. government pledged to help Greece and as a result began to

exercise American dominance over Greece, pushing the UK to the side.

1947 - April 17, men forcibly taken to prison camps

Military age men are forcibly taken from the Lerin Region villages and sent to the Greek island prison camps. They were victims of American policies in Greece. They were victims of Lieutenant General James A. Van Fleet's military tactics. Van Fleet was familiar with the concept of how to starve a guerrilla army. In order to do that he had to rob it of the ability to feed itself and of the ability to recruit new fighters. To stop the partisans from recruiting new fighters, the Greek government arrested basically every man, capable of carrying a gun, who was not loyal to the government or was affiliated with the partisan movement. All these people were sent to the Greek island prison camps.

1947 - May 23, NOF issued fist edition of newspaper

The newspaper "Nepokoren", organ of NOF, edited by Pavle Rakovski, published its first issue with about 500 copies.

1947 - September 15, CPG's III Plenum held from September 15 to 17 during which time military matters were discussed. The following slogan was coined: "All to arms, everything for victory!" It was also decided that a free territory be created at the Kozheni Plateau surrounded by the mountains Pind, Pieria, Karakamen, Kaimakchalan and Vicho.

1947 - September 27, DAG GHQ issues mobilization order to mobilize all men ages 17 to 35. A mobilization which took from 4 to 9 months was conducted, which included mobilizing people from the Macedonian refugees who had fled Greece and had gone to Yugoslavia. Places of mobilization outside of the Greek borders included Skopje, Veles, Shtip, Bitola and various other places in the Republic of Macedonia. All these people were shipped out of Yugoslavia and sent to join DAG. (See: F.M in INI, SK. 4-271/60, p. 73-76.)

1947 - November 22, British officer describes situation

A British officer, who at the time was stationed in Greece, on November 22nd, 1947, made the following remarks for the newspaper "New Statesmen and Nation". In short he described the situation in Greece like this: "One week after the signing of the Varkiza agreement I witnessed the most horrific and antisocial behaviour committed by the newly formed National Guard made up from personnel from the former collaborators of the occupiers. Everyone who placed their faith in the word of the agreement (which the English had guaranteed) and did not leave in good time, were put in prison and mistreated. In an underground enclosure in the larger part of a kitchen in a small flat I saw 16 men, women and children. Two of the men were lying on the floor unconscious swimming in a pool of their own blood. Every prisoner had the right to go to the toilet only once in three hours and only for three minutes. An old man, because he was selling EAM newspapers, was tied and beaten for an entire hour. None of the prisoners were informed as to why they were imprisoned. None of the prisoners were taken to court, sued and found guilty but were kept in prison for nine months. This was not an isolated situation during the time when not a single group of communists existed and not even a single leftist activity was taking place." (Andonovski, Hristo. Vistinata za Egejska Makedonija. Skopje: Misla, 1971, pages 166 - 167)

The newspaper "Daily Mirror" published an article written by a British soldier who personally had witnessed atrocities committed by the Greek Rightist forces. The article was illustrated with photographs showing people being tortured and beaten. There were photographs of mass slaughters and decapitations. There was even a photograph of a 16 year old decapitated girl. People's decapitated heads were shown to be carried as trophies hung on the saddles of horses or propped up on spikes.

The people who had suffered and died at the hands of these blood thirsty Greeks were Macedonians who had done nothing wrong except to have being born Macedonian.

Connie (Koni Ziljakus (sp?)) wrote that the official Greek government and the military which was organized by General Charles Ujakam, (sp?) a well known enemy of the communist

ideology, well known from the time he was chief of the British military interventionist forces in the Soviet Union, were no better than the police and the gendarmes. “Four fifths of the forces in the official administration, in the courts and in the police are in the hands of these extremists. Surlas’s bands ruled the province and had established their own administration. They are well armed and do what they feel like.” (Andonovski, Hristo. Vistinata za Egejska Makedonija. Skopje: Misla, 1971, page 167)

1947 - December 7, Greece enacts decree “Z”

Greece enacted Decree “Z” on December 7, 1947, which stated that: “All persons abroad who express anti-national sentiments are to be stripped of their Greek citizenship.”

1947 - Royal Gendarme consists of collaborators

On December 12th, 1947, quoting British Colonel Shepard, the newspaper “New Democracy” wrote: “The backbone of the Royal Gendarme, making up Greece’s Security battalions today, consists mainly of German collaborators”.

Richard Mayer from the American Overseas Information Agency reported from Athens that “a large part of the former gendarme which a while ago served the Germans is now using the lists left by the Germans to oppress doubtful personalities…” (Andonovski, Hristo. Vistinata za Egejska Makedonija. Skopje: Misla, 1971, page 167)

1947 - December 23, Provisional Government established

The Provisional Government of Greece was created on December 23, 1947 in accordance with the decisions made by the CPG’s Central Committee Political Bureau. The seat of the provisional government was established in Prespa, in Asamati, located in the Peoples’ Republic of Macedonia. The seat of the government was supposed to be established in Konitsa (as claimed by Secretary-General Zahariadis when he said “… If we take Konitsa our government will probably be recognized…”). But unfortunately, it did not happen! DAG units fought tough battles and sustained heavy

losses in their attempt to take Konitsa, but to no avail. The arrival of members of the Provisional Greek Government in Prespa was accommodated by UDBA's Lieutenant Colonel Slobodan Krstich, a Yugoslav National Army officer. Originally the provisional Greek government consisted of eight members: President Markos Vafiadis, Yannis Ioannidis, Petros Rousos, Miltiadis Porfirogenis, Petros Kokalis, Vassilis Bardzhiotas, Dimitrios Leonidas and Vlandas Stringos. Then, by decree, 25 people were promoted to the rank of DAG colonels. But neither in the government nor among these officers, who represented the military and political factor of DAG, was there a single Macedonian!

The Provisional Democratic Government of Greece was a one-party government exclusively composed of Greek communists. Despite the fact that 50% to 60%, or more, of the DAG fighters were Macedonians, not a single Macedonian was in charge! But according to the "false" history of the Macedonians from Greek occupied Macedonia, NOF was a military and political factor. How was that even possible?

Note: The Provisional Democratic Government of Greece led by Markos was not recognized by any country, which means it was conducting illegal mobilizations, especially in the Republic of Macedonia.

NOF and AFZH remained silent on this "illegal" act.

There was also a "third period" for NOF which lasted from the time it was disbanded on December 23, 1947 until DAG was liquidated on August 30, 1949. This was the time when NOF accepted the program of the Interim Democratic Government of Greece, a government that was not recognized anywhere in the world. A self-recognized government desperate to continue the struggle by further committing the Macedonian people to war and by offering them: "Equal rights as national minorities and freedom to carry out national activities!" if they won the war. (See: AE: 179/47.)

-- 1948 --

1948 - January 1, Yugoslavia stops supplying DAG with military aid

DAG was receiving military equipment and assistance from Yugoslavia up until January 1, 1948. For the list of equipment provided see Risto Kiriazovski's book entitled "The Macedonians and relations between the CPY and the CPG, 1945-1949" page 263. See "Review of military equipment other assistance received by DAG".

1948 - January 13, James A. Van Fleet arrives in Greece in early 1948 and assumes command of IUSMARG. Van Fleet and his group began to work on a plan to liquidate DAG by a) Continuing with the population displacement from the villages close to the mountains which support DAG, b) Raising terror in the population by conducting military operations and other military actions.

1948 - January 13, NOF's 1st Congress is held in the V'mbel village church in Kostur Region during which it was concluded that more then 20,000 of the 25-28,000 DAG fighters in the entire country were Macedonians. This means that by 1948 8,000 fighters, at most, were Greeks i.e. of non-Macedonian origin.

1948 - January 20, legal Act M is issued, on the strength of which the property of those who were stripped of their citizenship was confiscated. The law was updated in 1985, but it is still binding on Macedonians.

1948 - February 10, Stalin said no to Greek Civil War

One of Greece's most prominent historiographers - Tassos Vournas, in his book "History of modern Greece – the Civil War", on page 176 wrote that Stalin, on February 10, 1948, literally told the Yugoslav delegation in Moscow that: "I do not agree with you, my Yugoslav comrades that the revolution in Greece should continue. That struggle has no hope of success. What do you think the UK and the USA, the strongest countries in the world, will allow it to bring down a line of communication with the Mediterranean Sea? Nonsense! And there's almost nothing of naval forces! No! The revolution in Greece should stop, as quickly as possible."

1948 - February 24, American military arrives in Greece

The American Military Advisory and Programming Group led by General Van Fleet arrived in Greece. It was announced as the "high visit" to Athens.

1948 - March 15, Call for evacuating children

The newspaper "Eksormisi", issued by DAG in Gramos Region, carried an announcement from the Provisional Greek Government's Ministry of Foreign Affairs dated March 7, 1948 entitled "Parents and children appeal to the government". Further down the article it said: "From mid-February to March 5, 1948 parents from 59 villages from the free territory gave 4,784 children." The same newspaper carried an article on March 20, 1948 saying that the Interim Government decided to evacuate all the children up to age 14.

1948 - March, 28,000 child refugees leave home, mostly Macedonians from areas of heavy fighting evacuated to Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania. Greece denies their right of return to this day.

RESOLUTION 193C (III) United Nations Resolution calls for repatriation to Greece of child refugees.

U.N. UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ARTICLE 19: Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive an impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

DECREE 504 continues property confiscations of exiles and colonization of Aegean Macedonia with people from Turkey, Egypt and other parts of Greece. Parcels of land given to the colonists along with financial incentives.

1948 - March 25, Mass evacuation of children

The evacuation program began to gain momentum in early March of 1948 starting with the recruitment and training of the special teachers. The actual evacuations were carried out on mass starting on March 25th through to March 30th, 1948 until all the designated villages were evacuated. Most children were transported through Yugoslavia and were sent to Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Poland. Some were evacuated through Albania and Bulgaria. As the numbers of the evacuated rose, children were also sent to East Germany and the USSR. It is estimated that about 28,000 children in all were evacuated, most of them from North-Western Greek occupied Macedonia. Although smaller in number some orphans, children of Partisans and children of families who were in trouble with the Greek Government authorities were also evacuated.

1948 - April 28, AFZH Congress held in Vicho

An AFZH Congress, led by Evdokia Foteva – Vera, was held in the free territory of Vicho.

1948 - June 1, Mitrevski and Keramitchiev suspended

The CPG Central Committee Political Bureau made a decision to suspend Mihailo Keramitchiev, President of NOF, and Paskal Mitrevski, NOF Board Secretary, because they were alleged to have conducted an “unprincipled factionist struggle”.

1948 - August 27, DAG reorganized

Sitting of the CPG Central Committee Politburo with an agenda:

a/ The struggle in Gramos called: “Epic of the Northern Pindus, political and military questions and decrees.”

b/ Removal of Markos Vafiadis as General and Leader of DAG due to illness and his departure for Moscow. (Note: Then, the system produced the term “ideologically crazy”, which grouped very smart and healthy people with the lunatics.)

c/ The New Military Council was to consist of:

1. Nikos Zahariadis - President and Supreme Commander of DAG.
2. Georgios Vonditsios - Head of military battles.
3. Vasilis Bardzhiotas - Political Commissar of General Headquarters.
4. Michos Vlandas - Responsible for military resources.
5. Leonidas Stringos - State Administration.

d/ Reorganization of General Headquarters by region and creating military divisions. Promotion of officers into DAG high military ranks.

1948 - November 15, Markos Vafiadis suspended

The CPG Central Committee Political Bureau decided to suspend General Markos as Chief of DAG and member of the CPG Central Committee. By a special flight from Tirana, Markos was transferred to Moscow in March 1949.

1948 - November 23, DAG HQ to mobilize Macedonians

DAG headquarters ordered the mobilization of Macedonian men and women ages 17 to 35 only in the Vicho area. Practically all Macedonians in Kostur and Lerin Regions were mobilized.

-- 1949 --

1949 - January 9, Zahariadis refuses to see reality of war wants more sacrifices from the Macedonians

During the CPG Central Committee's 5th Plenum, held on January 9th, 1949, Zahariadis, refusing to face reality and continued to speak of DAG as an invincible force that would defeat the Greek government's regular army, destroy the Republicans and Royalist, take over the government and bring victory to the Democratic people. He threw around slogans like "1949 will be the year of victory" and "Death to Monarcho-Fascism and American-Imperialism". He then called on the Macedonian people from the "free territories" to continue their struggle and sacrifice and in place of promising them "equal rights with the Greeks as a minority" as has been done before, he now promised them "National self-division

as Macedonians" but only when the CPG came to power. He said all this when even the most lay of people knew that DAG was facing an unavoidable defeat. Was this an act of an incompetent commander or an act of a treacherous and deceitful traitor? Let the historians of the future decide.

As was done during the 4th Plenum, the Macedonian contribution to the struggle was again complimented at the 5th CPG Central Committee Plenum. Among other things it was stressed that the Macedonians in Northern Greece have given their all in the struggle with outstanding heroism and self sacrifice which calls much admiration. There should be absolutely no doubt in anyone's mind that as a result of their effort and spilling of blood the Macedonian people have earned their full national restitution in the way they themselves would want it.

1949 - CPG Central Committee holds 5th Plenum on January 30-31, during which it coined the slogan "United and Independent Macedonia within a Balkan Federation." And because of this the Central Committee of NOF convened its 2nd Plenum on February 3rd, 1949 and proclaimed its new principles for the future of the Macedonians in Greece.

This was an unpardonable cruel manipulation: Just a few months before DAG's liquidation, during the CPG Central Committee 5th Plenum, held on January 30th and 31st, the CPG decided to: "Recognize the Macedonian people's right to self-determination". Why? And why at a time when the war was full blown and intense? Was it because the CPG "cared" for the Macedonian people or because it wanted them to become even more engaged until a critical situation was reached? And how do you suppose the "other side", the Greek government side, felt about that when it found out that the Macedonians were now fighting for "self-determination"? As you can see, this was only a ploy to "intensify" the war on both sides! And as it turned out, this "offer" lasted only until DAG was liquidated! After that it was business as usual…

1949 - 2nd NOF Congress held on February 3, program principled introduced

The Second NOF Congress was held on February 3, 1949, during which the new NOF program principles were introduced in which it was proclaimed: "That Macedonia will be unified and the Macedonian people will live in a single independent Macedonian state." This, as it turned out, was a drastic attempt, a last political maneuver on the part of the CPG to keep the Macedonians in the war. We already know how the Greek government and the West, Britain and the Unites States in particular, felt about splitting Greek occupied Macedonia from Greece.

1949 - CPG delegation goes to Skopje on February 9, to recruit Macedonians

As requested by Porfirogenis, member of the CPG Politburo, a CPG delegation was sent to Skopje to meet with NOF representatives who had deserted DAG and demanded that they recruit at least 300 new fighters from the refugees who had fled to Yugoslavia to save themselves. Those demands were not met.

1949 - Partisans fight battle for Lerin on February 12. This was one of the bloodiest battles in the so-called Greek Civil War, which was unnecessary because the partisans were already losing the war. But Zahariadis insisted on capturing Lerin because, as he said, if the Partisans won this battle and captured a city then they would be taken seriously by the outside world. DAG units attack in an attempt to enter the city Lerin. Their actions failed because of the poor coordination and strategy, DAG endured a catastrophic defeat. Around one thousand DAG soldiers died and were wounded.

1949 - March 7, CPG backtracks on promises

The CPG Central Committee denied coining the slogan "United and Independent Macedonia within a Balkan Federation." The CPG also denied accepting NOF's new program principles drafted during NOF's 2nd Congress on February 3, 1949. In March 1949 the Interim Government in Greece was overhauled. More specifically the CPG Central Committee issued a statement denying any decisions being made during the 5th CPG Plenum regarding the Macedonian Question and regarding NOF's programming principles outlined at the 2nd NOF Congress on February 3, 1949.

1949 - Second NOF Congress is held on March 25 in the village Nivitsi. It was here that resolutions were adopted to invite the Macedonian people to join the struggle (Greek Civil War) en masse. It was here that the Macedonian people were told and retold by the Greek Communists that they would allow them to create their own Macedonian state. But there was a condition, a catch. For that to happen, every able bodied Macedonian man and woman had to join the struggle. "All to arms – everything for victory," read one slogan. Zahariadis also said: "You Macedonians have a right to secession, within a Balkan federation…"

There were many slogans written especially in honour of Zahariadis, the so-called "greatest", wisest and most respected son of Macedonia and then, a little later, no one wanted to believe that he was the "greatest" liar and cheat! But the leaders of NOF (National Liberation Front) and all those serving under him, believed and trusted him and that is why they all suffered and many died; because of those beliefs!

1949 - KOEM created by Zahariadis

March 27, 1949 - Communist Organization of Aegean Macedonia (KOEM) created by Zahariadis

After his failure to win over NOF and turn it into an anti-Yugoslav weapon to satisfy his own purposes, Zahariadis invented another so-called Macedonian organization and imposed it on the Macedonian people. This time the CPG General Secretary created the organization KOEM (Communist Organization of Aegean Macedonia). At its founding meeting, on March 27, 1949, Zahariadis appointed the Organization's Committee comprised of Mihali Maliov, Vangel Koichev, Paskal Mitrevski, Stavro Kochev, Evdokia Baliova Vera, Vangel Nichev, Urania Pirovska, Hristo Kolentsev and Tashko Hadzhiianev. This Committee was tasked with leading KOEM until a Party leadership was elected at an all-Macedonian KOEM Conference. The First KOEM Conference was held on August 2nd, 1949. At Zahariadis's request, 17 regular and 14 deputy KOEM members were selected. Included among the regular members chosen were Mihali Maliov, Vangel Koichev, Stavro

Kochev, Hristo Kolentsev, Andon Sikavitsa, Paskal Mitrevski, Tashos Gushopoulos, Pando Vaina, Sterio Dachov, Evdokia Baliova Vera, Ziso Deliovski, Lazo Poplazarov, Vangel Nichev, Urania Iurukova, Traiko Popsermedzhiev, Giorgi Nedelkov and Foti Urumov. Included among the deputy members chosen for the KOEM leadership were Krsto Mangov, Ahileas Papaioanou, Lambro Gakidov Dzhavela, Dimitar Prikov, Argir Kuzevski, Paskal Paskalevski, Atanas Angelovski, Mincho Fotev, Lambro Moshov, Micho Velaki, Mahi Pilaeva, Hrisanthi Tsanzovska, and Andonia Filipova.

(KOEM (Communist Organization of Aegean Macedonia). NOF agitation and propaganda edition, May 1949, stored in the Macedonian archives in Skopje. For more of the same see "Aegean Macedonia in NOB 1949", T.VI..., doc. 80, p. 172, doc. 81, pp. 172-176 and doc. 82, pp. 177-178.)

1949 - AFZH passes resolution June 16 to induct Macedonian women

The AFZH women's Executive Board, led by Evdokia Foteva - Vera, passed a resolution to induct Macedonian women en masse into the fighting force in defense of the Vicho frontline.

1949 - Full equality granted on June 20 - Macedonians fight or die

Full equality was granted to the "Slavo-Macedonians" on June 20, 1949 just before DAG (Democratic Army of Greece) was liquidated. Final extermination of the Macedonian people; "Fight for your lives or die!"

1949 - Monarcho-Fascists attack DAG

The Monarcho-Fascists carried out a violent and hellish attack against DAG on August 10-14 with unprecedented air support supplied by the United States. The poet Atso Shopov was right when he wrote the poem "Gramos" telling us that "no bird can fly in Vicho from the hail of bombs and grenades". This struggle has been objectively presented in two volumes by Greek historian Giorgos Margaritis, a professor at the University of Crete. Margaritis has

relied on the memoirs of prominent anti-Fascists for his source material. The information presented is the best example I have read that describes why DAG aborted Vicho and pulled out of Gramos, leaving the population unprotected and running for its life.

One hundred and thirty bombing runs were made on August 10th, 1949 by the American supplied air support using "Dakota" and "Spitfire" military aircraft to bomb units of DAG and columns of fleeing refugees. The next few days the military aircraft did the same, at the same pace, providing air support for the Monarcho-Fascist artillery and infantry. There was not a square foot of space that had not been bombed on Mount Vicho, on Lisets, on Mount Malimadi and in Prespa along the Albanian and Yugoslav border. The entire area had been bombed with aerial bombs, grenades, napalm bombs and rockets and was garnished with machine gun fire by the dive-bombing aircraft. This clearly indicates the conditions under which DAG was placed and the kind of pot its fighters were put in to boil. There was an insurmountable amount of pressure and worry placed on the fighters not only for saving their own lives but also for caring for the wounded and for saving the huge columns of fleeing refugees. DAG was again attacked in Gramos with the same vigour. It was under these circumstances, created mainly by foreign intervention, that the "freedom-loving democrats" of Gramos dropped the "last flag".

The Greek government offensive initiated against DAG had a force of 60,000 Greek government troops, commanded by General Van Fleet of the U.S.A., organized in 6 divisions from all branches of the military, with 200 tanks and armoured cars and with about 100 aircraft of all types, was unleashed on Mount Vicho.

Opposing this force was commander Michos Vlandas of the resistance with 9,863 fighters and 40 cannons. DAG was defeated in the period during August 13 and 14 with 1,859 dead, wounded, missing and captured fighters. The Government side sustained only 256 dead and 1,336 wounded.

1949 - AFZH mobilizes women in war

July 16, 1949 - AFZH Executive Board passes resolution to activate the Macedonian women and mobilize them to defend the Vicho front. This was in response to the "Pirsos" strategic plan developed and implemented by US General Van Fleet's staff in preparation for the liquidation of the guerillas in Greece. And it is well known what happened to the Macedonian women after that, when they were shoved in the trenches to defend the frontline. Their patriotism, love for their homeland, for their fathers, husbands and brothers, drew them into this terrible war which, unbeknown to them, was waged for the benefit of strangers and against their own interests. And in the end they too faced the same humiliation… being labeled "traitors" and "wrongdoers"… and worse than that, they too were driven out of their homes and homeland and torn away from their families…

1949 - August 15-16, DAG units retreated into Albania but in the following days about 6,000 were transferred to reinforce the fighting in Mount Gramos.

1949 - August 20, CPG promises victory in Gramos

The CPG Central Committee Politburo held a meeting and promised its fighters that "Gramos has all the means necessary to deliver the enemy a death blow" and coined the slogan "Gramos will become the tomb of the Monarcho-Fascists Government troops". That, however, never happened! All Zahariadis wanted to do was kill more Macedonians.

1949 - August 24-29, Greek government attacks Gramos

During the night of August 29-30, government troops began a new campaign against Gramos. Commanded by U.S. General Van Fleet, this force was larger by three battalions than that of Vicho. Placed in charge, of the resistance side in Gramos and of Gramos DAG General headquarters, was General Georgios Vontisios-Gusias with about 12,500 fighters (6,000 were transferred from the battlefields of Vicho). The Greek government artillery and aviation alternately bombed DAG positions continuously. It was a hellish situation for DAG and its units. The last battles took place on August 29 and the retreat for Albania began on August 30. DAG losses amounted to

922 dead, 944 captured, 650 wounded and about 400-450 voluntarily surrendered. Losses on the government side amounted to 243 dead and 1,452 wounded.

The DAG 6th and 7th Divisions withdrew to Bulgaria during September and October 1949. The last DAG remnants, located in the southern parts of Greece, withdrew in early 1950.

1949 - The Greek Civil War ended on August 30. DAG was defeated by the Monarcho-Fascists on Mount Gramos with Anglo-American support. After Vicho fell to enemy hands, Nikos Zahariadis, General Secretary of the CPG Central Committee, said: "Gramos will be the tomb of the Monarcho-Fascists." But that did not turn out to be the case. DAG suffered numerous casualties but had it not backed down and fled to Albania, the opposite would have been true. Gramos would have been the tomb for DAG. For the longest part, after removing General Markos Vafiadis from his command and after abandoning the proven military strategies of the so-called "Supreme War Council Law", Zahariadis worked personally with his Politburo installing new "military strategists" who had absolutely no relevant experience. Units of DAG from Gramos and from other places withdrew to Albanian territory.

The main culprits for DAG's defeat naturally were Nikos Zahariadis, General Secretary of the CPG Central Committee and his Politburo. But that's not who they found guilty. Instead of laying blame where it squarely belonged, Zahariadis and his clique pointed their fingers at the Macedonians, specifically at the NOF and AFZH leadership and at the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece. In Bureli, a town in Albania, Zahariadis staged a fake political trial, similar to those staged by Informburo countries. He had the last word.

While the last battles in Gramos were still raging on, DAG General Headquarters ordered all DAG units to withdraw claiming that their intended task was now completed. What intended tasks were they completing? With this DAG was declared liquidated and its units were ordered to go to Albania.

The great Greek offensive began on August 10th, 1949 but the war did not end until August 30th 1949.

Following is a list of battles that took place during the Greek Civil War. These were frightful battles where the opponents had forces as high as ten times larger and were much better equipped.

1. Battle at North Pindos, (June 26 to July 22, 1947);
2. Battle for the city Konitsa (December 24, 1947 to January 4, 1948);
3. Battle in Kailari, (October 18, 1948);
4. Battle in Bukovic (November 10 to 14, 1948);
5. Battle for the reception of the heroic unarmed phalanx from Rumeli to Mount Pieria, (March 16, 1948);
6. Battles in Agrafa: Villages Karoplesi, Smokovo, Kerasovo and Mount Niala (April 8 to 22, 1947);
7. Battle at Ilia, Furka, Taburi-Greco, (July 31, 1948);
8. Battle at Golio-Kamenik, (June 21, 1948);
9. Battle at Klevti (June 28 to August 1, 1948);
10. Battle at Taliaro-Likokremasma and Eastern Smolika, (July 31, 1948);
11. Battle at Alevitsa, (June 14, 1948);
12. Battles to conquer the cities Voden, Sobotsko and Negush, (December 22, 1948 to January 14, 1949);
13. Battle for the conquest of Lerin, (February 12, 1949);
14. Battles in Kajmakchalan, (June 4, 1949);
15. Major battles for the re-taking of Gramos (April 1 & 2, 1949);
16. Battles at the heights of Bulgara, Kotelsko-Gramos, (April 4, 1949);
17. Battles at Patoma-Gramos, (June 2, 1949);
18. Battles for Vicho. The fiercest battles were fought at Lisets and at Iamata, (August 10 to 14, 1949);
19. Dramatic battle fought at Kulata - Prespa between the two lakes, (August 14, 1949);
20. Battles at Black-Gramos, (August 24 1949);
21. The last battles of Gramos, (August 24 to 29, 1949);
22. Battles at Kiafa (elevation 2322) in Gramos, (August 30, 1949, just less than 10 hours before DAG's defeat).

On this day, history will witness a terrible event; the heroic death of Petso Romev, commander of the 426 battalion within brigade 118. He was born in the village Gornichevo, Lerin Region, in 1919.

Hundreds of fighters, members of the CPG and much of the democratic force that took part in this disastrous war, have wondered why the CPG continued the fighting in August 1949 after its defeat on the Vicho and Gramos frontlines.

1949 - Full equality extended to "Slavo-Macedonians"

Full equality was extended for the "Slavo-Macedonians" in October 1949. This was the period when people started returning to their homes.

Nearly all Greek officers, who had returned after the Greek Civil War, were promoted by the Greek government to three ranks higher than those who suffered during World War II. There were no Macedonian officers but those Macedonians who did try to return were told that "only Greeks by birth can return" and that "there is no place in Greece for the likes of you…" Yes, the CPG did grant the Macedonians rights; the right to be ethnically cleansed and exiled from their homes…"

1949 - NOF leaders arrested

While stationed in the "Burreli" locality in Albania, the CPG ordered the arrest of eleven NOF, AFZH and NOMS leaders suspected of being spies and traitors. Based purely on speculation and innuendo the entire leadership was found guilty and on October 7, 1949, 11 members and one other activist were arrested and later sent to the prison camps in Siberia. The rest of the DAG fighters were sent to the Soviet Union under the CPG slogan "Με το οπλο παραποδα".

1949 - All Macedonians organizations disbanded

The CPG, during its Central Committee 6th Plenum held on October 9, 1949, decided to disband all Macedonian organizations: NOF, AFZH, NOMS and KOEM and on February 19, 1951 proposed to

form a new organization called “Ilinden”. The reason given for dissolving NOF, AFZH and NOMS was because these organizations were managed by Tito’s agents and by traitors. The new “Ilinden” organization was created in order to combat “Tito’s agents”.

-- 1950 --

1950 - Greek minister admits Macedonians exist

Ioanis Sofianopulos, leader of the leftist liberals and former Foreign Minister of Greece, in a debate in the Greek Parliament, admitted that “there is a Macedonian minority in Greece but, according to international law, that minority does not exist and can not claim any protection because it did not prove itself to be loyal to the state in which it lives” on account of its mass participation in the Greek Civil War in the years 1945 to 1949. (See: “Dimokratikos Typos”, September 16, 1950)

1951 - CPG proposes creating Ilinden organization

February 19, 1951 – CPG proposes to form a new organization called “Ilinden”

The new “Ilinden” organization was created in order to combat “Tito’s supposed agents”.

1953 - August 23, Legal Act No. 2536 was issued, on the strength of which all those who left Greece and who did not return within three years time could be deprived of their property.

A decision on the resettlement of Macedonians was taken. A wide-flung campaign was launched in the mass media to induce the Macedonians to leave their native areas voluntarily and to settle in the south of the country and on the islands. The Greek authorities intended to create a 60 kilometer-wide belt along the border with Yugoslavia where “the faithful sons of the Greek nation” were to be settled.

In the first point of this Act it is stated that the resettlement was necessary owing to the humanitarian aspect of the matter as the living standard of the Macedonians would improve.

The actual intention was to separate Macedonians living in Greece from the Republic of Macedonia, then part of Yugoslavia. Due to a firm reaction from Yugoslavia the realization of that shameful plan was cancelled.

1956 - June 4, Ilinden organization disbanded

On June 4, 1956, a decision was made to disband "Ilinden" because the organization was regarded as sectarian, adventurous and harmful. This certainly was done to normalize relations between the SKJ and the CPG when in May 1956 the CPG Central Committee adopted a special resolution.

1959 - Legal Act No. 3958 was issued, on the strength of which the land of those who left Greece and did not return within five years time was confiscated. The law was amended in 1985, but it is still binding on Macedonians.

Acts from the years 1948, 1953 and 1959 concerning property confiscation are a consequence of the 7947 ban on returning.

Several villages in Aegean Macedonia are forced to swear "Language Oaths" to speak only Greek and renounce their mother Macedonian tongue.

1962 - Legal Act No. 4234 was issued, on the strength of which persons who were stripped of their Greek citizenship were banned from returning to Greece. The ban on crossing the Greek border also extends to spouses and children! It is still in force for Macedonians, even those who left Greece as children.

1967 - July 17, Ohrid Archbishopric is renewed. The Macedonian Orthodox Church becomes independent on September 8, 1991 following a referendum for the independence of the Republic of Macedonia as a separate state.

1968 - ECHR accuses Greece of human rights abuses

EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS accuses Greece of human rights abuses.

1969 - Legal Act was issued on the strength of which the settlement of the unoccupied Macedonian farms by Greeks by origin was permitted.

Currently it is planned to locate over one hundred thousand immigrants of so called Greek origin from the ex-Soviet Union on this territory. In the future this will be a source of new national tensions.

Council of Europe declares Greece "undemocratic, illiberal, authoritarian, and oppressive". Greece forced to resign from Council of Europe under threat of expulsion.

Military Junta continues the policy of colonizing the confiscated lands in Aegean Macedonia. Land handled over to persons with a "proven patriotism" for Greece.

European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms signed by Greece states: ARTICLE 10(1) "Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers".

1976 - DECREE 233 suspends about 150 past decrees, government decisions and laws since 1913. Regulations for the confiscation of properties belonging to Macedonian political exiles not affected.

1979 - 135 places renamed since 1940. The Greek vigil regarding names is an indicator of the Macedonian ethnic identity in Aegean Macedonia.

1980 - Tito dies, rise of nationalism among federation's constituent republics.

1982 - New attempts made to erase Macedonian language

Greek internal security police urges intensive campaign to wipe out remaining Macedonian language and consciousness in Aegean Macedonia.

LAW 106841 political exiles who fled during the Civil War and were stripped of their citizenship are allowed to return providing they are "Greek by ethnic origin". The same rights are denied to Macedonian political exiles born in the Aegean Macedonia.

U.N. UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ARTICLE 17, "No one can be deprived of his own property against his will".

1982 - Legal Act No. 10634l was issued

December 29, 1982 – While Andreas Papandreou was prime minister legal Act No. 10634l was issued. On the strength of that Act only Greeks by origin have the right to Greek citizenship and their right to return to Greece restored. Macedonians born in Greece and their families have been excluded. They were and are doomed to live in exile. Heads of various rungs of the state administration received the right to make free use of the property left in Greece by Macedonian refugees.

The Greek authorities refer to that hostile Act whenever they reject Macedonian demands for the recovery of Greek citizenship taken away by default. They refer to that "law" even in their explanations to the Centre for Human Rights in Geneva!

Universal Declaration of Human Rights - Paris, December 1948:
Art. XIII, Point 2: "Everyone has the right to leave every country, including one's own, and to return to his own country."

Art. XV, Point 1: "Each man has the right to have a citizenship."
Art. XV, Point 2: "No one can be freely dispossessed of his or her citizenship."

U.N. UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ARTICLE 13, “Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, as well as to return to his own country”.

1985 - April, hostile Act, No. 1540, was issued

While Andreas Papandreou was prime minister hostile Act, No. 1540, was issued. This amended the previously issued Acts regulating property relations so as to make it absolutely impossible for Macedonians to return. This Act permits the recovery of illegally seized property to “Greeks by origin only”. The Macedonian refugees from Greece are excluded.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights - Paris, December 1948: Art. XVII, Point 2: “No one can be deprived of his or her property freely.”

1986 - PEN condemns Greece

International writers’ organization, PEN, condemns Greece’s denial of the existence of Macedonians and their language.

Greece escalates climate of fear in Aegean Macedonia.

Greece officially calls the Republic of Macedonia as the “Republic of Skopje”, after the name of its capital city; and Macedonians are called “Skopjans”.

The term “Skopjans” used to label Greek citizens who declare themselves as ethnic Macedonians. “Skopjans” laced with hatred, and racism. It connotes a traitor to Hellenism.

1988 - September, CPG declares Macedonians don’t exist

In September 1988, almost one year after the May 1987 Congress, CPG Secretary General Harilaos Florakis held a press conference in Solun with Greek and foreign journalists to openly explain the position he took at the Congress. In his answer to a journalist working for “Mesimvrini”, among other things, Florakis said: “On this occasion I would like to say that for us, for our Party, the

Macedonian minority does not exist!" (Vecher, November 5, 1988, page 9)

1989 - OMO Ilinden formed

A group of Macedonians formed the United Macedonian Organization - Ilinden (OMO Ilinden) with aims at gaining cultural and national autonomy for the Macedonians in Pirin. OMO Ilinden PIRIN was a political party of the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria. It was registered as a political party in 1999 and participated in municipal elections in October 1999, where it elected five local officials. However, on February 29, 2000, the Constitutional Court in Bulgaria declared OMO "Ilinden" - PIRIN unconstitutional. This was in direct violation of the right to freedom of association and the right to freedom from discrimination.

1989 - Legal Act rehabilitating participants of War

August 30, 1989 - Legal Act rehabilitating the participants from the Greek Civil War of 1946-1949 was issued. These participants had hitherto been recognized as bandits.

The Act granted damages and disability pensions to fighters in the civil war who now have Greek citizenship. By the same token, the Macedonian fighters living in exile – who earlier had been stripped of their citizenship - were eliminated.

1990 - CSCE Conference on Human Dimension

CSCE COPENHAGEN CONFERENCE ON THE HUMAN DIMENSION, to which Greece is a signatory, states in ARTICLE 32: "Persons belonging to national minorities have the right freely to express, preserve, and develop their ethnic, cultural, linguistic, or religious identity and to maintain and develop their culture in all its aspects, free of any attempts as assimilation against their will". ARTICLE 33: "Participating states will protest the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of national minorities…and create conditions for the promotion of that identity".

GREEK HIGH COURT DECISION 19 refuses registration of "CENTER FOR MACEDONIAN CULTURE" in Florina (Lerin). Appeal is turned down by High Appeals Court in Salonika. Further appeal dismissed by Supreme Administrative Council of Greece in Athens.

1991 - CSCE meeting on minorities held in Geneva

CSCE MEETING ON NATIONAL MINORITIES IN GENEVA, in which Greece participated states: "Issues concerning national minorities…are matters of legitimate international concern and consequently do not constitute exclusively an internal affair of the respective State…Participating States reaffirm, and will not hinder the exercise of, the right of persons belonging to national minorities to establish and maintain their own educational, cultural and religious institutions, organizations and associations".

Belligerent anti-Macedonian propaganda incites Greek population into a state of chauvinistic hysteria.

Translation from Greek: "Hang the Skopje Gypsies"

-- REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA --

1991 - September 8, referendum held in ROM

Majority of voters support independence in referendum. 95% of eligible voters approved of a sovereign and independent Republic of Macedonia with Kiro Gligorov as its President.

New constitution enacted in the face of opposition by ethnic Albanian deputies. Declaration of independence. International recognition slow because Greece objects to the use of the name Macedonia, the same as one of its own provinces.

1991 - November 17, ROM Constitution drafted according to which "…Macedonia is constituted as a national country of the Macedonian people which guarantees complete civil equality and permanent mutual living of the Macedonian people with the

Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Roma and the other nationalities living in the Republic of Macedonia."

1991 - December, Yugoslav army withdraws

In December 1991, the Republic of Macedonia and the Coalition Secretariat for National Defense of the former Yugoslavia (SSNO) began negotiations for the peaceful creation of the Army of the Republic of Macedonia (ARM). After the talks an agreement was reached for JNA to be withdrawn from the Republic of Macedonia in February and March 1992. After JNA's withdrawal, the Republic of Macedonia, as the last republic to achieve its independence from former Yugoslavia, finally formed its own army. The ARM was a joint army of all nationalities living in Macedonia. After the agreement between the then government and SSNO, the JNA peacefully withdrew and took all military vehicles, equipment and other personal weapons belonging to the border guards who secured the border between the Republic of Macedonia and Albania, Greece and Bulgaria.

1992 - February 21, ARM established

The Republic of Macedonia maintains a defensive potential and combat readiness of its Armed Forces which function as a deterring factor in case of a potential aggression in accordance with our capabilities and international arrangements. In accordance with the Article 123 of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, no one in the state has the right to declare capitulation. Therefore, the defense system of the Republic of Macedonia is based on the determination to give resistance by use of an armed force against any possible aggression and for a defensive combat on the whole territory. For that purpose, the defense system is responsible to provide conditions so that all of the state authorities and institutions function and conditions for joining the collective defense and security systems as a protection of the independence and sovereignty are provided.

1992 - August 11, ROM National anthem adopted

August 11, 1992 - Republic of Macedonia's National anthem adopted

Denes nad Makedonija -- Today Over Macedonia

Lyrics by Vlado Maleski, 1941, Music by Todor Skalovski, 1943

This song was a popular Macedonian song performed during the time of Socialist Republic of Macedonia. Later the song was officially adopted as the anthem of the independent Macedonia.

The anthem has four stanzas, but the fourth stanza is mainly omitted from the national anthem.

Denes nad Makedonia se ragia,
novo sonce na slobodata!
Makedoncite se borat,
za svoite pravdini!
Makedontsite se borat,
za svoite pravdini!

Odnovo sega znameto se vee,
na Krushevskata Republika!
Gotse Delchev, Pitu Guli,
Dame Gruev, Sandanski!
Gotse Delchev, Pitu Guli,
Dame Gruev, Sandanski!

Gorite Makedonski shumno peat,
novi pesni, novi vesnitsi!
Makedonija slobodna,
slobodno zhivee!
Makedonia slobodna,
slobodno zhivee!

Ne plachi Makedonio maiko mila,
Kreni glava gordo visoko,
Makedonia slobodna,
slobodna ke zhivee!
Makedonia slobodna,

slobodna ke zhivee!

Today over Macedonia, is being born
the new sun of liberty.
Macedonians are fighting,
fighting for their rights!
Macedonians are fighting,
fighting for their rights!

Now once again the flag stands
(that) of the Krushevo Republic
Gotse Delchev, Pitu Guli
Dame Gruev, Sandanski!
Gotse Delchev, Pitu Guli
Dame Gruev, Sandanski!

The Forests of Macedonia are singing
new songs, new news papers
Macedonia is liberated
Lives in liberty!
Macedonia is liberated
Lives in liberty!

Do not cry dear mother Macedonia,
Raise your head proudly high,
Macedonia is free
Free to live!
Macedonia is free
Free to live!

1992 - Albanians want autonomy

1992 - Unofficial referendum among ethnic Albanians shows overwhelming wish for their own territorial autonomy.

Government resigns after mass demonstrations over failure to win recognition for the country's independence. Federal Republic of Yugoslavia acknowledges Macedonia's secession.

UN approves dispatch of troops to monitor inter-ethnic tension.

Greece and Serbia conspire to overthrow and partition the Republic of Macedonia.

1993 - Sideropoulos and Tasos prosecuted

Macedonian human rights activists Hristos Sidiropoulos and Tasos Boulis were prosecuted under Greek Panel Code: Article 36, Para 191; disseminating false information; Para 192; inciting citizens to disturb the peace. Their crime? Declaring themselves as Macedonians in an interview for Greek magazine ENA.

Macedonian human rights activist and priest Nikodimos Tsarknias derobed and expelled by Greek Orthodox Church because of his human rights activities. Tsarknias refused a Greek bribe which would have elevated him to bishop in 1989. He received death threats.

1993 - ROM admitted in the UN

April 8, 1993 - The Republic of Macedonia is admitted in the United Nations under the reference "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (FYROM). More than 130 countries recognize Macedonia under its constitutional name. Macedonia was admitted as the 181st full-fledged member.

1994 - Greece imposes trade restrictions, causing economic damage

Extremists of Australia's Greek Community burn two Macedonian churches, after Australian recognition of Macedonia.

Greece continues to deny the existence of Macedonians in Aegean Macedonia despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

Greece continues repressive and unrelenting policies against Macedonians in Aegean Macedonia despite objections by international human rights organizations.

1994 - Greece lifts trade restrictions

1995 - President Kiro Gligorov injured in assassination bid

Kiro Gligorov (May 3, 1917 – January 1, 2012) was the first President of the Republic of Macedonia, serving from 1991 to 1999. He held various high positions in the political establishment of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, including as Secretary of State for Finance in the Federal Executive Council, a member of the Yugoslav Presidency, as well as President of the Assembly of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from May 15, 1974 to May 15, 1978.

Kiro was born in Shtip, the Kingdom of Serbia (at the time under Bulgarian control), Gligorov later graduated from the University of Belgrade's Law School and was a participant in the National Liberation War of the ethnic Macedonians from 1941 as a secretary of the Initiative committee for the organization of the Antifascist Assembly of the National Liberation of Macedonia (ASNOM) and a finance commissioner in the Presidium of ASNOM.

After the promotion of parliamentary democracy in Macedonia in 1990, he became the first democratically elected president of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia on January 27, 1991. On April 16, 1991, the parliament adopted the constitutional amendment for removing the "Socialist" adjective from the official name of the country, and on June 7 the same year, the new name Republic of Macedonia was officially established, hence Gligorov continued his presidency as the President of the Republic of Macedonia.

He served for two terms, from January 27, 1991, to November 19, 1999. He was re-elected for his second term in office on November 19, 1994. He led his country to independence proclaimed after the referendum held on September 8, 1991, and tried to keep it out of the Yugoslav wars, a task made difficult by disputes with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Albania, Bulgaria and Greece who all faced separate issues with the country.

On October 3, 1995, Gligorov was the target of a car bomb assassination attempt in Skopje. While en route from his residence to his office, the vehicle carrying Gligorov was blown up by an

explosion from a parked vehicle, killing his driver and injuring several passers-by. Gligorov was seriously injured above his right eye and was immediately conveyed to the hospital.

Since the incident there have been no suspects brought to book and no progress has been made in the investigation of the case. However, there have been short-lived speculations as to who could be the culprits. Shortly after bombing, the Minister of Internal Affairs Liubomir Frchkovski publicly claimed that “a powerful multinational company from a neighbouring country” was behind the assassination attempt, with the Macedonian media pointing at the Bulgarian Multigroup and the Yugoslav KOS as possible suspects. During a meeting between Multigroup head Iliya Pavlov and Gligorov in Ohrid, Pavlov assured Gligorov that his organisation was not involved. All investigations were futile.

Gligorov was incapacitated until November 17, 1995. He was permanently blind in one eye as a result. Stojan Andov was acting president during Gligorov's recuperation.

The election for Gligorov's successor took place only a few days before the end of his term.

Gligorov died in the early hours of January 1, 2012, in his sleep. It is known that his request was that the funeral be private with only his closest family in attendance. He was buried in Butel Municipality, Skopje.

Kiro was the father of Vladimir Gligorov, a refounder of the Serbian Democratic Party.

1995 - Macedonia becomes member of Council of Europe

1995 - September 8, Vinozhito opens office in Lerin. In regards to developments with the Macedonians in Greece, members of the ethnic Macedonian political party in Greece, the RAINBOW PARTY, also known as the “VINOZHITO PARTY” in Macedonian, opened an office in Lerin.

1996 - Sporadic ethnic Albanian protests over curbs on Tetovo's Albanian-language university.

1997 - Constitutional court forbids use of Albanian flag, sparking protests. Parliament adopts law on restricted use of the Albanian flag.

1997 - January 19, Second "RAINBOW Conference. The "RAINBOW" party held its 2nd Conference in Lerin which was attended by 76 delegates of all local units. A Political Manifesto and Organizational Principles were adopted and a Central Council comprised of 19 members was elected.

1997 - January 26, The "RAINBOW" party Central Council held its first session in Voden on January 26th, 1997 and elected a five-member Political Secretariat, an Economic Commission, an Editors Council, etc.

1998 - Thousands of Albanians gather in Skopje in support of ethnic Albanians in Serbia.

Elections bring into power a coalition government which is led by Ljubco Georgievski and includes ethnic Albanian representatives.

1999 - March, NATO begins bombing Yugoslavia over its treatment of Kosovo Albanians. Serbian mass expulsion and killings of Kosovo Albanians leads to exodus into neighbouring countries, including Macedonia.

1999 - June, Yugoslavia accepts peace plan. Kosovo refugees start leaving Macedonia.

1999 - November, Boris Trajkovski elected president

2001 - February/March, Uprising by ethnic Albanians. National Liberation Army emerges demanding equal rights for ethnic Albanians.

2001 - February 16, firefight broke out between ARM and four men dressed in black uniforms near the village Tanushevtsi. The

battle took place near the village Debalde (SRY) as the armed men were traveling towards the village Tanushevtsi. The same day at around 15:55, in the forest about 150 metres north-west of the "old store", two persons were observed obtaining a tent. But before the border security guards could identify them, they made their escape over the border. They then opened fire on the border security personnel from the other side of the Yugoslav border and so did several other groups from a few places in the same woods. The Macedonian border security was attacked from the other side of the border on several occasions. It was the first element which indicated that acts of aggression by a foreign country were being carried out against our territory, especially since the very same aggressors were dressed in Kosovo Protection Corps uniforms. Later we will show that they not only wore Kosovo Protection Corps uniforms but that they were Kosovo Protection Corps supporters.

2001 - February 20, ARM border security sees movements of armed, uniformed men in the Kosovo part of the village Debalde. The same day men in camouflage uniforms were observed moving in the direction of the village Tanushevtsi

2001 - February 28, shooting spree takes place between ARM and a number of armed, uniformed men near the village Tanushevtsi. The same day around 15:40 Macedonian border security and police were attacked near the Tanushevtsi observation post. The attack was carried out by armed, uniformed groups of men from the village Tanushevtsi (the people who attacked wore Kosovo Protection Corps black uniforms).

2001 - March 4, three ARM personnel killed (two from a planted mine, one from sniper fire, killed at the village Tanushevtsi).

2001 - March 5, ARM personnel fired upon by mortar fire. The mortars were fired from the Kosovo side of the border; this means that artillery was fired into the territory of the Republic of Macedonia from a neighbouring state. Mortars were fired and aggression was initiated against legal Army members who were there to defend the integrity of their territory.

2001 - March 12, ARM "called" to take broader action to completely clean up the villages Tanushevtsi and Malina Maala with KFOR's alleged knowledge. After this was done, at 1700, the KFOR commander and the ARM commander in charge of the campaign met at the border to "establish a border regime." So, what happened to the terrorists, where did they go?

2001- March 14, armed men appeared in Tetovo Kule, Tetovo, and attacked a Ministry of the Interior police patrol traveling in the direction: Tetovo - Seltse - Lavtsi. Fifteen police officers were injured during the attack, seven of whom sustained gunshot wounds. It seemed like KFOR and ARM had not done their job in this common responsibility that they shared!

2001 - March 28, Captain Liupcho Mirchevski killed Around 16:45 hours, Captain Liupcho Mirchevski was killed when a planted mine exploded. Injured were Kostov Petre, Ilievski Blagoicho, Ivanov Tasho, Miloshevski Petso and Karaliovski Borche. This took place in Kika (1512 mm) Region.

2001 - May, National Unity government formed. Main Macedonian parties form government of national unity under PM Ljubco Georgievski which pledges to address minority grievances. Further incidents of violence.

Armed protesters besiege parliament in Skopje, angry at what they see as leniency towards ethnic Albanian rebels. President Trajkovski makes a national appeal for peace.

2001 - June 20, NATO assistance requested

In response to a request for NATO assistance, made by the Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski on June 20, 2001, this military organization drew up the operational plan that was dedicated to the peace and stability of the Republic of Macedonia. However, NATO had imposed three conditions for its help in resolving the crisis: conclusion of political agreement between the various parties in the Republic of Macedonia, armistice linked with amnesty for the members of the so-called NLA and finally a pledge of full demilitarization from the so-called NLA. Once the

Macedonian political parties signed the Ohrid Peace Agreement, the way was opened for NATO's first mission in the Republic of Macedonia. The NATO military support to the Republic of Macedonia effectively commenced on August 27, 2001, with Operation Essential Harvest / Task Force Harvest (TFH). This UK-led mission involved the rapid deployment of 4,600 Allied troops that were initiated to fulfill NATO's promise to assist the Macedonian people by collecting and destroying arms and ammunition on a voluntary basis from ethnic-Albanian extremists.

2001 - Macedonian security forces personnel killed

July 2001 - 5 Macedonian security forces personnel were killed, 25 wounded and 81 civilians were kidnapped

July 3, 2001 - A KFOR helicopter (UH - 60) was flying from the village Drachevo towards Vodno in the region TT - 416, a trigonometric point above the settlement Pintia (EM 390 442), near Skopje, activated its missile defense system (IC decoy) and then fired their bursts of machine gun fire.

In response to our inquiries, we were told that it was an act of the terrorists, which was not true because there were no terrorists acting in that region. Of course this was a direct action by NATO forces, or by KFOR forces, before the signing the ceasefire Agreement, although KFOR had no mandate for such actions.

The ceasefire Agreement was completely disregarded by the other side before the Ohrid Framework Agreement was signed. According to daily reports compiled by our commanders on the ground, 139 direct attacks were carried out on positions occupied by the Macedonian security forces. In Tetovo 117 attacks were carried out, 12 in Kumanovo and 10 in the Skopje crisis area. At the same time Republic of Macedonia security forces were hit 74 times; 60 times in Tetovo, 7 in Kumanovo and 7 in Skopje Region. In July 2001, 5 security forces personnel were killed, 25 wounded and 81 civilians were kidnapped (79 in Tetovo and 2 in Kumanovo). Only 61 of the kidnapped were freed during the same month.

2001- Ten Macedonians ARM soldiers killed on August 8 by Albanian terrorists

The ten army reservists were traveling with an army convoy of five vehicles and 120 reservists when they were ambushed. The reservists killed were Nane Naumovski, Sasho Kitanoski, Branko Sekuloski, Goran Minoski, Marko Despotoski, Erdovan Shabanoski, Lube Grujoski, Darko Velianovski, Vebi Rushidoski and Petse Sekuloski; all from the reserve forces of the Prilep Army Garrison.

An air defense report filed for that day, among other things, said that five minutes before the ambush a KFOR helicopter was spotted flying in the air space above Karpalak. Two KFOR Jeeps were also seen in the Karpalak area. When they spotted the Macedonian helicopters one escaped to Skopje and the other hid in Novo Selo.

Stavre Dzhikov, the public prosecutor for the Republic of Macedonia paid a short visit to the Karpalak site where the soldiers were executed by the terrorists. After examining the site he said that this entire incident was “just illogical”.

2001 - Macedonian government stops military actions

August 15, 2001 - The Macedonian Government decided to stop all military actions, on both sides, and after that to start the disarmament. Of course, this was to be done after the Ohrid Agreement was signed.

2001 - Ohrid Agreement is signed

August 2001- Government and rebels sign western-backed Ohrid peace agreement involving greater recognition of ethnic Albanian rights in exchange for rebel pledge to hand over weapons to NATO peace force.

2001 - NATO carries out Essential Harvest

September 2001 - NATO carries out month-long Operation Essential Harvest to disarm rebels, exceeding target of collecting 3,300 weapons.

2001 - October, Government announces amnesty for former members of the National Liberation Army days after it disbands.

Macedonian police begin entering villages formerly controlled by ethnic Albanian guerrillas.

2001 - Parliament approves new constitution in November incorporating reforms required by August peace deal. It recognizes Albanian as an official language and increases access for ethnic Albanians to public-sector jobs, including the police.

2002 - January, Parliament cedes more power to local government to improve status of ethnic Albanians.

2002 - March, Parliament amnesties terrorists - former ethnic Albanian rebels who handed in their arms during NATO-supervised weapons collection.

International donors pledge more than $500 million in aid to help recovery from 2001 fighting.

2002 - June, Parliament passes new law making Albanian an official language.

2002 - September, Elections: Georgievski is voted out of office. Social Democrats under Branko Crvenkovski become largest party. Most ethnic Albanian voters back Democratic Union for Integration under former rebel fighter Ali Ahmeti.

2002 - September 8, Macedonian soldiers in Kabul

The Republic of Macedonia began its participation in the NATO-led ISAF operation in August 2002, with the allocation of two officers to the Turkish contingent. On 8 September, Independence Day of the Republic of Macedonia, the Macedonian flag was flown for the first time in Kabul. In March 2003, the Army of the Republic of Macedonia increased its contribution in the ISAF mission by sending one section from the 2nd Infantry Brigade as part of the German contingent. As a result of the successful execution of the

mission and the high marks received for participation in ISAF, from August 2004 until the end of 2006, the ARM participated with one mechanized infantry platoon from the Leopard unit. At the same time, in August 2005 medical personnel was sent in ISAF as part of the Combined Medical Team in the A3 format (Macedonia, Albania, Croatia), which successfully carried out tasks at the Kabul airport, firstly in the composition of the Greek Field Hospital, and later in the composition of the Czech Field Hospital.

2003 - March, EU takes over peacekeeping duties from NATO.

2003 - June, ARM participates in Iraqi Freedom Mission

With the political consensus of all political entities in the RM as well as the overall Macedonian public in terms of the support of the Coalition in the "fight against terrorism", the Republic of Macedonia took active participation by sending its units in the Iraqi Freedom Mission. Based on all legal authorizations, the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia adopted decisions for sending its units to the Iraqi Freedom Mission in the period between June 2003 and December 2008 for each mission separately every 6 months during the term of the mission. The Mission started by sending 2 officers in the US Central Command in Tampa, in March 2003. Upon the completion of the major combat operations, the toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime, and the adoption of Resolution 1546 of the United Nations Security Council, in June 2003 on sending a special task platoon that executed the tasks as part of the 4th infantry division of the Multi-National Force Iraq. In 2008, our participation in the Iraqi Freedom Mission was increased by an additional platoon. A total of 11 rotations were conducted between June 2003 and December 2008. The eleventh rotation was the last, which completed our participation in the Iraqi Mission. The overall number of personnel that participated in this mission is 490.

In the execution of the mission, the soldiers and officers faced different challenges, threats and dangers resulting from their mission and profession. During the mission, the ARM representatives showed professionalism, a high level of training and readiness in the execution of the missions. With their dedication, courage, responsibility and patriotism shoulder to shoulder with the US

soldiers and the soldiers of the other coalition partners presented our homeland the Republic of Macedonia in a dignified manner and in the best possible light. The greatest confirmation of their success is the 120 medals presented by the US. Thus, we say that they are the best ambassadors of the country. The Army of the Republic of Macedonia gave its specific contribution by assisting in building strong credible democratic institutions and highly trained security forces in Iraq, forces which guarantee the future of their country as well as the stability and security in their environment and beyond.

2004 - February, President Boris Trajkovski killed

The Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and President of the Republic of Macedonia, Boris Trajkovski, was killed in a plane crash in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 27 February. He had been on his way to an investment conference in Mostar. The president was buried with the highest military honors.

2004 - March, Macedonia submits application to join EU

2004 - April, Branko Crvenkovski elected president

2004 - June, Parliament approves Kostov. Former interior minister, Hari Kostov, is approved for prime minister.

2004 - July, Thousands of Macedonians protest against proposals to redraw municipal borders and give minority ethnic Albanians more power in certain areas. The changes are required to further implementation of the 2001 Ohrid peace agreement.

2004 - August, Parliament approves legislation redrawing local boundaries and giving ethnic Albanians greater local autonomy in areas where they predominate.

2004 - November, Referendum by which Macedonian nationalists seek to force repeal of August legislation on local autonomy for Albanians fails because of low turnout.

2004 - November, Hari Kostov resigns as prime minister. Defense Minister Vlado Buckovski becomes leader of Social

Democratic Union. President Crvenkovski invites him to form government.

2005 - March, first local elections since municipal boundary changes in August 2004 pass off without major incident, although international observers report some irregularities and intimidation.

2005 - Albanians given right to fly Albanian flag

July 2005 - Parliament passes law giving Albanians the right to fly the Albanian flag in districts where they form the majority.

2005 - December, Macedonia candidate for EU membership

2006 - Nikola Gruevski leader VMRO-DPMNE party, asked to form a government after reaching coalition agreement with Democratic Party of Albanians and three small parties following general elections.

2006 - July 14, ARM in Bosnia

Macedonian army takes part in protecting Bosnia

On 14.07.2006 in the ALTHEA mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with one contingent in the operation "Bucephalus" for the first time in the history of the ARM, the Army Air Force (under the umbrella of JOC) also took part. The objectives of this operation were transportation of troops and VIP personnel, observation of airspace, particularly the border regions and providing assistance to the civilian structures in natural and other disasters.

2006 - November, NATO invited Macedonia to join the military alliance at its next summit in 2008.

2007 - February 18, Local elections are held

In regards to the Macedonians in Albania, at the local elections in Albania, held on February 18, 2007, a Macedonian from the party Macedonian Alliance for European Integration (MAEI) was, for the first time, elected as mayor. Edmond Temelko, a 36-year-old

veterinarian turned politician won the mayoral position in Prespa municipality, making him the first Macedonian elected in Albania.

2007 - May 16, Ljube Boskovski goes on trial at the international tribunal in the Hague charged with war crimes during the 2001 ethnic Albanian rebellion.

2007 - May 16, ARM officer in Lebanon

A staff officer from ARM took part in the mission UNIFIL in Lebanon

2008 - April, Greece blocks NATO invitation for Macedonia over objections to the country's name. Snap elections are called.

2008 - June, PM Gruevski's party wins elections, but violence leaves one dead and eight injured. Following criticism of voting irregularities, re-runs are held in ethnic Albanian areas to determine which of the two main ethnic Albanian parties will join the government.

2008 - October, Macedonia recognizes Kosovo, despite protests from Serbia.

2009 - January, Macedonia applies to International Court of Justice in the Hague for a ruling on its dispute with Greece over the country's name.

2009 - March, Gjorgje Ivanov emerges as candidate for Macedonia’s governing conservatives. He is a favourite for the presidency after the first-round of voting.

2009 - April, Gjorgje Ivanov wins presidential run-off, defeating his Social Democrat rival Ljubomir Frckoski.