

*Greek occupied*  
*Macedonia*  
(1913-1989)



By  
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(Translated from Macedonian to English and edited by Risto Stefov)

# **Greek occupied Macedonia (1913-1989)**

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## **PREFACE**

Historical determinism (the doctrine that everything, especially one's choice of action, is determined by a sequence of causes independent of one's will) affects negatively or positively the historical destiny of nations. European historical determinism in the Balkans has seriously influenced the Macedonian people's historical destiny.

In the history of the Macedonian people the "historic" period ended with the signing of the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest and the "prehistoric" period began. The negative Greek historical determinism severely harmed the Macedonian people's historical destiny in Greek occupied Macedonia. With Greece's appearance on the historical terrain of Greek occupied Macedonia, the Greek political historical determinism, with its exclusive Greek nationalism, put in question the Macedonian people's biological existence.

The Greek political factor began its genocidal policy against the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia with a Greek desire to create "one state with one nation". The subject of this paper is in fact about the outcome of that desire which resulted in expulsions, oppression and assimilation of the Macedonian population, colonization of Macedonian lands with non-Macedonians (Greek and non-Greek), resistance against the affirmation of Macedonian national and cultural values, political mistreatment of the "Macedonian National Question" especially by the Communist Party of Greece (CPG), and other forms of mistreatment the Greek state applied against the Macedonian people living inside Greece.

We should emphasize at this point that we ran into objective difficulties while researching our material for the book "Greek occupied Macedonia (1913-1989)". The archives of the neighbouring countries which undoubtedly hold precious historical information (especially the Greek ones), and which would have allowed us access to comprehensive, purposeful and objective information on this issue, were inaccessible to us.

In the absence of archival information from the neighbouring countries, more attention was paid to published archival sources, especially the Macedonian archives, and other relevant historical literature.

We strived, within the existing possibilities, to objectify the historical past of the Macedonian people from Greek occupied Macedonia, a people who, like no one else, suffered as much in peace as they did in wars...

The author

## **CHAPTER ONE - NATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE POPULATION IN GREEK OCCUPIED MACEDONIA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE XX CENTURY (1900 - 1913)**

The population that lived in Greek occupied Macedonia was of varying ethnicities, church affiliations, and varied in numbers. There is extensive and diverse literature on its numbers and ethnicities.

With a desire to justify their territorial claims on Macedonia, these neighbouring Balkan states used historical science as a strong argument to justify their historical and national interests in Macedonia. Many intellectual forces were employed by these Balkan states to prove the Greek, Serbian, and Bulgarian character of Macedonia.

The statistics generated to prove the number and national structure of the population in Greek occupied Macedonia, due to the different state interests, were very different and always contradictory. In criticizing the Balkan statistics, André Wurbain concluded that they were “deliberately forged”. (André Wurbain, *L'echange greco - bulgare des minorités ethnique*, Lousanne, 1930, p. 23) But, to get to the truth about the statistics compiled by Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria, on the national structure of the same population in Macedonia, one must look at their theoretical principles which classify the same person being Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian at the same time. Later on we will review this concept and try to draw a different conclusion, not based on any simple conclusion (Vasil K'rchov or Iovan Tsviich), but based on the same scientific principles used to prove the Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian character of Macedonia. We will do this in order to get closer to the real ethnic situation in Greek occupied Macedonia. This is possible and logical and a way of getting closer to the historical reality and historical truth.



# 1. BULGARIAN STATISTICS ON THE NATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE POPULATION IN GREEK OCCUPIED MACEDONIA

Bulgarian authors, the likes of Vasil K'rchov, D. M. Brankov, Jordan Ivanov and Vladimir Rumenov, certainly had great influence on the scientific world, and their work was often used to prove the Bulgarian character of Macedonia. (V. K'rchov's work in particular.) Because V. K'rchov and D. M. Brankov's work on the ethnic composition of Macedonia was regarded as most reliable, we will look at their papers and endeavour to confirm the ethnic makeup of Macedonia, citing or taking their work as commendable evidence.

Vasil K'rchov's statistics on the ethnic composition in Greek occupied Macedonia are not based on church or language affiliation (in accordance with which church people attended or which language they were taught in Greek, Serbian or Bulgarian), but according to the linguistic affiliation of their family. In other words, K'rchov's basic element for determining the nationality of a person was by the language spoken at home by the entire family (this principle was applied to all of Macedonia, but for this study we will only look at the part of Macedonia that, after 1913, fell under Greek control). Based on the language spoken at home in Greek occupied Macedonia, K'rchov divided the origin of the people as follows: 358,290 or 49.92%, Bulgarian, 218,742 or 30.48% Greek, 59,720 or 8.32 % Jewish, 34,427 or 4.80% Vlach, 30,726 or 4.29% Roma, 6,875 or 0.95% Albanian and 8,910 or 1.24% others. (Vasil K'rchov, *Selected Sorts*, Sofia 1970, Volume 2, pp. 440-581). After Macedonia was partitioned by Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria in 1913, a large part of the Macedonian population ended up in Bulgaria and Serbia, but that did not seriously affect the composition in Greek occupied Macedonia in which, in addition to the Christians, also lived Muslims (Turks). It would appear that D. M. Brankov and Vladimir Rumenov also reached similar conclusions. According to D. M. Brankov, there were 382,054 Bulgarians, 133,782 Greeks, 26,153 Vlachs, 2,994 Albanians, 9,632 Roma, or a total of 554,615 inhabitants living in Greek occupied Macedonia. (D. M. Brankov published his book "La Macedoine et sa population Chretienne" in 1905 in Paris.) Brankov's statistics, however, only covered the

Christian population living in Macedonia. According to Vladimir Rumenov, after 1913, there were 339,369 Bulgarians, 314,854 Turks, 245,251 Greeks, 68,206 Jews, 44,414 Vlachs, 25,308 Roma, 15,108 Albanians and 8,016 others, living in Greek occupied Macedonia.

As we have shown, unlike the Greeks (who used only church affiliation), the Bulgarian authors have used the language spoken at home as an element for determining the national affiliation of the population in Macedonia. All Macedonians affiliated with either the Exarchate or Patriarchal Church who spoke the so-called “Bulgarian language” (which in fact was the Macedonian language) at home as a family, were counted as Bulgarians. This principle is not only logical but a lot more accurate than church affiliation. The Hungarian people are one ethnicity even though, according to their church affiliation, they belong to the Catholic or Protestant Church. The Bavarian Germans are Catholics and the northern Germans are Protestant but they are all Germans.

The Bulgarian state was very interested in Macedonia. This “great interest” was supported and protected by Bulgarian historiography which prompted many Bulgarian historians to introduce inaccuracies into their assumptions. One of those inaccuracies was that if the language spoken by the Macedonian people was Bulgarian then the population speaking that language was Bulgarian. This is equivalent to saying that if the people in Canada spoke English then the Canadian population was English.

This Bulgarian introduced inaccuracy also implied that the people in Macedonia spoke the Bulgarian language and that the Macedonian language somehow was part of the Bulgarian one. No one denies the fact, and it will be anti-scientific to deny it, that the Macedonian language shares some common elements with the Bulgarian language, but at the same time the Macedonian language has common elements with all the other Slavic languages spoken in the Balkans. This is natural because all these languages are Slavic and have a common Slavic origin. This is why this subject needs to be approached scientifically and not politically. The Ukrainians, for example, share common traits with the Russians but no one regards them as Russians. The Belarusians are also close to both the

Ukrainians and Russians, but nobody today denies their independent existence as a different people from the Russians and from the Ukrainians. The same holds true for the Slovak people and their language when compared to the Czech people and their language. The Slovak people, like the Macedonian people, have for many years shared a common language, a common past, a common history and many other common features which they nurtured and with which they lived, giving them the moral right to exist as a separate nation. That is why Krste P. Misirkov advocated for the preservation of the Macedonian people's language, which the Bulgarians call Bulgarian. Yes, there was a Bulgarian language but that particular language was only present in the educational institutions and in the exarchist church; it was never part of Macedonia in everyday life, at home, in the market, at weddings and in common people's conversations. Krste P. Misirkov was the first Macedonian historian who tried to compile statistics on the ethnic composition of coastal Macedonia based on the Macedonian language, which was actually present in the homes of the Macedonian people. (Blazhe Ristovski, First National Ethnographic Statistics of the Macedonians, Ethnological Review No. 8-9, Belgrade, 1969, pp. 65-70.)

So, on one hand Bulgarian authors use "language", specifically the language spoken at home, as an identifier of ethnicity and, on the other, they claim that the Macedonian language is Bulgarian and therefore the Macedonian people are part of the Bulgarian people. But from what we said above, what the Bulgarian authors are really saying is that the true ethnic or national character of the Macedonian people has not been revealed, but only their political character. Therefore, given that the Macedonian language is real and exists then we can use the same argument as the Bulgarians to get closer to the historical truth and to provide a more realistic picture of the ethnic character of today's Greek occupied Macedonia.

Foreign scientists have accepted our view. Leon Lamouš, E. Kurper, M. Irehec, Vejgan and Verkovic, for example, have concluded that the Slavic population was most widespread in Macedonia.

## 2. SERBIAN STATISTICS ON THE NATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE POPULATION IN GREEK OCCUPIED MACEDONIA

Statistics compiled on the population in Greek occupied Macedonia by Serbian historians are different in terms of size and structure when compared to the Bulgarian and Greek statistics. Serbian statistics show a much larger population and a large Serbian identity as well as various arguments used to prove the Serbian character of Macedonia. Ivan Ivanich, M. Veselinovich, S. Gopchevich and B. Miloievich have labeled the majority of the population in Macedonia as Serbian. According to Ivan Ivanich, 400,568 Serbians of the Patriarchate affiliation, 265,408 Serbians of the Exarchate affiliation, 400,000 Muslims, 60,000 Jews, 190,639 Orthodox non-Slavs, 15,000 Serbian Catholics, etc., lived in Macedonia. B. Miloievich labeled the majority of the population living in today's Greek occupied Macedonia as Serbian. There is no need to speak of a scientific methodology used by these authors, because there wasn't one. According to Iovan Tsviich, the work done by Ivanich and Veselinovich was misleading, unscientific and messy. (Iovan Tsviich, *Promatranie o Etnografii Makedonskih Slovena*, Belgrade, 1906, p. 62.)

Most credit for supporting the Serbian cause in Macedonia should certainly be given to Iovan Tsviich who did not make any small, simple, or obvious mistakes, did not produce pro Serbian statistics similar to the likes of Ivanich and Gopcevich, who created natural suspicion among the scientific world. Hardly anyone accepted Ivanich's thesis, who knew very little about the workings of the Macedonian language, when he declared the Macedonian language was Serbian. Even though both languages are Slavic, they are so distant that Macedonians could hardly understand Serbian. The Macedonian people began to study the Serbian language in school and gradually began to learn it after Macedonia's invasion, occupation and partition in 1913 when one third of historic Macedonia fell under Serbian control. Because of this, Iovan Tsviich recommended that "the Macedonian Question be examined under a completely new basis". (Iovan Tsviich, cit. part, p. 9.) Tsviich's new revelation is in fact the theory of mass flotation. "The Macedonian layers," he wrote, "don't have a certain national consciousness,

don't have their own historical past, and don't have their own literary language..." (Iovan Tsviich, cit. part, p. 9.)

It is true that the Macedonian people did not have their own literary language but why that was, was not explained in Tsviich's work. When the Serbian, Bulgarian and Greek literary languages were created there were no external interferences. It was not because the Macedonians did not want to have a literary language, despite the difficult historical circumstances, many times they made attempts to create such a language. Kirste P. Misirkov, mentioned earlier for example, made such an attempt but was scientifically and politically anathematized by Macedonia's neighbours. Our Balkan neighbours found it necessary to keep the Macedonian language at dialectal level and wait for an opportunity to manipulate the Macedonian peripheral dialects in their favour. Even Tsviich himself used this opportunity. But Tsviich was a scientist who did not lack scientific logic and knew very well that, under normal historical conditions, a Macedonian literary language could certainly be created from the various Macedonian dialects. It is true that a literary language can confirm the existence of a nation but at the same time lack of a literary language cannot deny the existence of a nation or people.

The Serbian conclusion that the Macedonian people had no national awareness was not a scientific conclusion. The national sense of a people in a certain state is based on their national origin and cultural development over the years. The Bulgarian, Greek and Serbian people developed strong national feelings for their states but such conditions were not allowed in Macedonia. This was because the Macedonian people faced much external resistance every time they attempted to form their own Macedonian state. The Macedonian people had a long history and, had they been allowed to act freely, would have quickly and easily formed a Macedonian consciousness and strong national feelings. Unfortunately the Macedonian people were pulled apart by strong foreign propaganda which, despite the effort put behind it, did not deliver the desired results. Not many Macedonians developed a permanent non-Macedonian feeling. This confirms that, even without a state, a Macedonian nation existed and it had a Macedonian historical consciousness and feeling. Unfortunately it was not allowed to exist among the neighbouring Balkan nations due to the existence of their own statehood. The

Macedonian national consciousness is a historic reality, it existed in many everyday manifestations in the Serbian kingdom which may have influenced I. Tsviich, who was a scientist with a natural intellectual gift, to see and intimately establish that there was a Macedonian historical and ethnic reality.

From what we saw we can conclude that pre-war Serbian scientists did not use scientific principles to establish the so-called “Serbian character” of Macedonia, especially in Greek occupied Macedonia. For example, Sima Tomich, a Serbian lawmaker in Macedonia, in his report to the Serbian government wrote: “There is nothing in the Serbian literature that seriously mentions anything about Macedonia.” Nevertheless, Serbian scientists, and others, particularly those who supported the theory of mass flotation, which marked some success in the scientific world (Vilari Luigi, Edmont Bushie and others), thought that the Macedonian people had neither a national life nor a national consciousness. This shows us that there were great weaknesses in their assumptions. Namely, foreign scientists learned about Macedonia mainly through intermediaries, be it Greek, Serbian or Bulgarian authors. The only foreign historians who were objective were those who visited Macedonia. These historians concluded that the Slavic element is in the majority in Macedonia and these people are not Greek, Serbian or Bulgarian, but simply Macedonian. This was confirmed by Karl Hron at the end of the IX century. Hron had a good knowledge of both the Bulgarian and Serbian languages. (Karl Hron, Nationality of the Macedonian Slavs, Skopje, 1966. (Hristo Andonov-Polanski).)

### 3. GREEK STATISTICS ON THE NATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE POPULATION IN GREEK OCCUPIED MACEDONIA

While examining the Greek statistics on the national structure of the population in Greek occupied Macedonia, we can see that, contrary to the Bulgarian and Serbian claims, the Greek claim is that the “Greek element” is the largest element present in Macedonia. This was “confirmed” by the statistics produced by the Greek Silogos in the works of S. Kireakides, V. Kolokotronis and other Greek authors. According to statistics published in 1878 by the Greek Silogos, out of the 1,330,000 inhabitants living in Macedonia,

349,000 were Turks, 338,000 Bulgarians, 438,000 Greeks, 70,000 Vlachs and the rest were classified as others. According to Stilipon Kiriakides, 373,227 Greeks and 207,317 Bulgarians lived in the Solun vilayet alone. According to the same author, 262,283 Greeks and 178,410 Bulgarians lived in the Bitola vilayet. According to V. Kolokotronis 423,490 Greeks and 135,110 Bulgarians lived in Macedonia.

According to Greek statistics published a number of times and in a number of publications, a Greek element has been shown to be different and always in favour of the Greek nation. The Bulgarian use of language as an element of the population's national determination was rejected by Greek scientists. The Greeks used secondary factors such as externally manifested national feelings as the basic element when determining the nationality of the people in Macedonia and to come up with their numbers. They believed that national feelings could be expressed through any language be it learned in a linguistic institution or through their native mother tongue.

We accept that a national sense can be created and developed on the basis of national origin, which is externally formally expressed and manifested through a suitable mother tongue when attending school or when visiting one's own church. But was the existence of, for example, Greek schools and a Greek church in Macedonia a confirmation that the Macedonians were Greeks or had expressed some kind of Greek external national consciousness?

In this, Greece has exploited Byzantine historical traditions to their fullest. While the Balkans were occupied by the Ottoman Empire, Christian education and the Christian Orthodox Church were administered by the Phanariots, a Christian educated middle class in service of the Ottoman Empire located in the Phanar district of Tsari Grad (Istanbul). The Phanariots, after the Greek state was created, became synonymous with Greeks. The Phanariots were in charge of all Christian education and Orthodox Churches, not only in Macedonia but in all of the Balkans. After the Macedonian church was abolished during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Macedonian population had no choice but to attend liturgy in this so-called Greek Church. But this was done without expressing any Greek national

consciousness. In fact, Greece as a state did not exist before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, so how could it be that Macedonians were affiliated with an entity that did not even exist? Therefore, without exception, Greek historians counted all those who were affiliated with Greek education and with the so-called “Greek Church” as Greeks and this is how they came up with their numbers and how they declared themselves to be a majority in Greek occupied Macedonia. If we accepted the principle of language spoken at home to determine the population’s national origin, then the Greek element in Greek occupied Macedonia falls in the minority... in an insignificant minority. Greek scientists, however, refuse to support this principle because it diminishes the Greek cause and Greek aspirations towards Macedonia. Statistics based on Greek school and Greek Church affiliation, however, gave Greek scholars the opportunity they needed to increase the “Greek population in Macedonia” by including non-Greeks, like Macedonians, Vlachs, etc., in their demographics of Macedonia.

Bringing Greek education and opening Greek schools and churches in Greek occupied Macedonia cannot be used as a scientific argument to determine national origin. Any statistical results developed under this assumption are far from historical reality and deeply deform statistics based on the so-called “externally manifested national feelings”. Therefore we cannot accept church and school affiliation as a scientific principle to determine national origin, especially in the Balkans.

If we were to examine the French or German situation in Alsace and Lorraine in Western Europe, we will discover that teaching seems to be evidence of appropriate national French or German affiliation and a reflection of French or German externally manifested national feelings. The real manifestation of feeling in Alsace and Lorraine, however, is a reflection of the people’s national German or French origin. In Macedonia, on the other hand, education not only does not reflect national affiliation but rather it does not even reflect an externally manifested national feeling. In Macedonia the so-called “education manifestation” is fabricated and forced on people by the Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian regimes through their schools and churches. Many Macedonian people have shown to manifest their Macedonian feeling as soon as they left these foreign schools. They



have manifested their Macedonian feeling through their mother tongue in interaction with other Macedonians and by taking part in their own Macedonian folk and ecclesiastical customs. That is because Macedonian historical consciousness has always existed and still exists to this day, which has nothing to do with the so-called school and church affiliated consciousness which the Greeks, for years, have tried to impose. According to Iovan Tsviich, a consciousness introduced through education is an “imposed consciousness created by propaganda”. (Iovan Tsviich, op. cit., p. 13.)

Similarly, a Macedonian visiting a Greek church is not proof that this Macedonian has Greek church affiliation as an outward expression of Greek national origin or Greek national consciousness. Greeks, Serbians and Bulgarians visiting their own churches in Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria, is a real and natural reflection of Greek, Serbian or Bulgarian national feeling. But in Macedonia, a person visiting a Greek, Serbian or Bulgarian church or attending one of their schools is not a real reflection of that Macedonian person’s national consciousness. This kind of church consciousness was not a formal expression of the Macedonian people’s consciousness, but rather an attempt to impose a desire and to influence the Macedonian people’s consciousness and, over time, impose a foreign national feeling on the Macedonian people. The Macedonian people, for example, had no choice but to visit a Greek church (the Patriarchate church) because, until later, that was the only Christian church in existence in Macedonia. And they did this in order to save themselves from being turned into Muslims. After 1870, however, when the Bulgarian church (Exarchate) was introduced in Macedonia, they began to visit it in order to save themselves from the Greeks. After that the Macedonian people, without success, strove to introduce their own church in order to save themselves from the Bulgarians.

The Macedonian people, all throughout history, strove to acquire their own state, church and schools, which again confirms their authentic Macedonian national consciousness as well as their Macedonian national feeling. On June 23, 1958, the Macedonian people finally succeeded in renewing the Ohrid Archbishopric which allowed them to again freely express their church

consciousness and to remove the two century-old great historic injustice perpetrated against them.

Even since they developed ambitions to possess Macedonian lands, the Greeks have professed that Macedonia and the Macedonian people are of Greek character and to prove this they theorized that the entire population in Macedonia, especially the one in Greek occupied Macedonia, regardless of whether it spoke Macedonian, Vlach, etc., was all Greek because those people who spoke the Slavic language were Greeks who had “lost their mother tongue”. However, these allegations have no scientific basis. According to Hariton Korizis, “The (Macedonian) dialect was poor and simple and that is why the Greeks started using it to communicate among themselves instead of using the more difficult rich Greek language.” (Hariton Korizis, *Makedonia ghi eliniki*, Athina, 1950, p. 68.) Because of this “the Greeks in Macedonia don’t always speak Greek and speak in this easier Macedonian dialect... because it’s easier.” (A. Pantutidis, *Istoriki ke ehnologiki meleti tu Valkaniki zitimatos*, p. 20, s. a., s. 1.)

There are examples in history where languages have disappeared over time. One such example is the Irish language. After many years of occupation by the English, the Irish gradually lost their language and accepted English as their mother tongue. A similar phenomenon took place during the period of symbiosis between the Dacians and the Romans, resulting in the formation of today’s Romanian people and the Romanian language. In parallel with the formation of the new people and their new language, this assimilation resulted in the disappearance of the less culturally developed people and language. The more affluent a people are, having a more developed material and spiritual side, the more they impose their mark on lesser developed people. This is a natural development which could be greatly resisted or not resisted at all, but it is inevitable. The people in Greek occupied Macedonia were no exception. So, if the so-called “Greek people” forgot their “Greek language” in the past and adopted the Slavic (Macedonian) language, as these Greeks claim, then it means that the Slavic language was much more robust, more developed and superior to the Greek one.

In their attempt to prove the Bulgarian, Serbian or Greek character of Macedonia, the Bulgarian authors (removing their claims that the Macedonian language is Bulgarian) came closest to the historical truth with their more authentic statistics. The following table is based on the real language spoken in the home by the family, in Greek occupied Macedonia, on the eve of the Balkan wars:

Ethnicity	Number	%
Macedonians	370,371	35.20
Turks	274,052	26.05
Greeks	236,755	22.50
Jews	68,206	6.49
Vlachs	44,414	4.22
Roma	25,302	2.40
Albanians (Tosks)	15,108	1.43
Others	18,019	1.71
Total	1,052,227	100

The above table represents the national structure of the population in Greek occupied Macedonia. Also included in the Macedonian population are the Macedonian Muslims who, according to their origin and the language they spoke, belong to the Macedonian nation. In the period from 1878 to 1913 the Macedonian population had sustained many losses due to the many conflicts taking place.

Following the 1912, 1913 Balkan Wars, the Greek state began to actively implement a policy to alter the ethnic composition of the population in Greek occupied Macedonia. It strove to remove the traditional ethnic Macedonian reality and replace it with a new fabricated Greek reality.

## **CHAPTER TWO - CHANGING THE ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION IN GREEK OCCUPIED MACEDONIA (1913-1928)**

After the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) and especially after the “Great War” (1914-1918), significant territorial, ethnic and economic changes were made in the Balkans. The small but ambitious Greek kingdom seems to have accomplished its territorial expansion and “historical ideals” and there was nothing in its way but to “rise to the Byzantine throne which was vacant since 1453”. (Dourmoussis E, *La verité sur un drama historique, La catastrophe de Smyrne*, September 1922, Paris, 1928, p. 13.)

Being a victor in the Balkan Wars, the Greek state significantly expanded its political borders to the north. By receiving Greek occupied Macedonia (34,356 km<sup>2</sup>) following the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest, the Greek political borders were extended past what was originally assumed to be Greek historical borders. The vast majority of the population living in Greek occupied Macedonia was Macedonian or of non-Greek origin. Out of the total of 1,052,227 inhabitants that lived in Greek occupied Macedonia after 1913, the non-Greek population, which spoke a non-Greek language and was of non-Greek culture and traditions, was 77.50%, while the so-called Greek population by origin and language was only 22.50% of the total population.

With the signing of the Neuilly Convention, the Greek state expanded its political borders even further. This Convention was concluded between Bulgaria, Greece, and the other victorious powers in Neuilly in 1919. This time the Greek kingdom acquired the western part of Thrace (between the Mesta and Maritsa Rivers), with a mixed population. According to the languages spoken by families, after the Great War, there were 74,000 Turks, 65,000 Bulgarians, 56,000 Greeks and about 195,000 Hellenized inhabitants living in Western Thrace. (Jacques Ancel, *Peuples et Nations des Balkans*, Paris, 1930, p. 183.)

With the acquisition of Western Thrace, the non-Greek population living in Greece increased significantly. Immediately after the Paris

Peace Accord, there were 954,482 non-Greeks (by origin, language and cultural traditions) living in Greece.

Following the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest and the 1919 Neuilly Convention, the Greek state ceased to be nationally homogeneous (one state with one nation). This resulted in an unresolved national issue. The non-Greek population that lived in that territory until 1913, in its own traditional ethnic and historical lands, was openly challenged by the Greek occupiers. Since its inception, the Greek state had been indisputably exercising the principle of “one state, one people”, which left no room for non-Greeks to live in Greece.

By putting this principle into practice, immediately after 1913, the Greek bourgeoisie began to implement a policy of creating one state with one nation, one language and the will to enlarge the Greek state until it occupied two continents and five seas. In other words, after the Balkan Wars and after World War I, the Greek bourgeoisie sought to bring back the Byzantine State in the Balkans through a fictitious idea called the “Megali Idea” or Greater Greece. To achieve this, the Greek government created a special ministry for Northern Greece with which it began to implement expulsion policies, expelling the non-Greek Macedonian population. It then began to occupy Macedonia by importing settlers and colonists from Asia Minor and other places. The colonists were settled in Greek occupied Macedonia and began to replace the traditional Macedonian ethnic and historical population. This policy of expelling Macedonians and colonizing Macedonia with non-Macedonians was carried out during favourable conditions in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Included in these conditions were the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) with the signing of the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest, the First World War (1914-1918) with the signing of the Paris Peace Accord (1919) and the Greek-Turkish War (1920-1922) with the signing of the 1923 Lausanne Peace Treaty.

# 1. THE BALKAN WARS AND THE FIRST POPULATION EXPULSION IN GREEK OCCUPIED MACEDONIA

The first large population expulsion in Greek occupied Macedonia took place during the First Balkan War when the Greek army occupied parts of southwestern Macedonia that included Kozhani, Kostur and Lerin and parts of central Macedonia that included Solun. In parallel with its military operations, the Greek army launched a war campaign against the Turkish and other Muslim populations living in Greek occupied Macedonia. Almost all the Turkish villages were burned down with aims at terrorizing and killing the Muslim population. A large number of frantic Turkish families sought protection in Solun and eventually left for Turkey, never to return. In the Praveshka district, for example, where 20,000 Turkish people lived, one to twenty people were killed in each village. This forced the Turks and other Muslims to leave Macedonia. (Anketa na Balkanig, Aoklag na Karnachevata comisia po vopnit pres 1912-1913, Sofia, 1914, p. 3.)

During the First Balkan War the entire Macedonian population experienced strong political, economic and psychological pressure from the Greek army. In the Kostur Region, for example, the Greeks advised the Macedonian people to declare themselves Greek and to accept the Greek language because otherwise "...life was not going to be easy". (Documents relatifs aux actions antibulgares des pouvoirs Serbes et grecs en Macedonine ou cours de l'anne 1912-1913, Sofia, p. 257.) At the same time Macedonian properties were plundered and schools, archives, books, etc., were burned down. (Ibid. p. 24.)

During the Second Balkan War, the dimensions of this Greek genocidal policy grew and became very anti-Macedonian in character. According to M. Markezinis: "Having full knowledge of the significance of this new war we go into, a war that was going to resolve the fate of the nation, we entered with greater hatred and fanaticism..." (M. Markezinis, Politiki istoria tis neoteris Elados, Athina, 1968, vol. 3, p. 272). There were peasants with low intellectual levels among the Greek soldiers who circled sketches of Greek soldiers eating the heads of their opponents. Such behaviour

showed that the Greek army was without military dignity and deprived of morality. Everything that was Macedonian was destroyed with rare cruelty. The Macedonian people, whom the Greek soldiers called Bulgarians, were seen as nothing more than animals. The crimes committed by the Greek soldiers were unbelievable. They burned down cities and villages, publicly and collectively raped women and girls, committed mass murders... According to a Carnegie Commission report: "Many mothers lost children because they had to leave one behind in order to save another..." (Anketa na Balkanig, page 26.) Crimes committed by the Greek army were also revealed in the letters and journals, written by Greek soldiers who had fallen into the hands of the Bulgarian army. Here is what was written in one of those letters: "We burned the villages and killed people as we were ordered. What we have done is indescribable..." "It has been a slaughterhouse and the Lord knows where we're going with this..." read another letter. (Ibid., p. 32.) During the two Balkan Wars, the Greek army burned down 160 populated places, destroyed blossoming towns, including Kukush, and forced 16,000 Macedonians to seek salvation in Bulgaria. The Greek army did not commit these crimes because of military necessity, it committed them to simply realize a specific pre-drawn policy and that was to remove the Macedonian population out of Greek occupied Macedonia. This is what was written in one of the Carnegie Commission reports: "There is no doubt that a 140-kilometre area, inhabited by Bulgarians (Macedonians), was purposely and completely destroyed and almost all the villages were burned down. And it can not be said that this was done because of some military necessity. The Greeks were more numerous than their enemies..." (In comparison to Alsace and Lorraine, Erdey (or Transylvania), the Carpathian Ukraine, Voivodina, Korushka, Kosovo, Istria, South Tyrol, Western Thrace, Bessarabia and North Bukovina, Shlionsk and Pomorie). And even though the Greek military inflicted unbelievable terror on the Macedonian people during the two Balkan wars, a large majority of the Macedonian population stayed at home and continued to live as the most compact and largest population in Greek occupied Macedonia.

## 2. THE NEUILLY CONVENTION AND THE SO-CALLED “VOLUNTARY” EXCHANGE OF POPULATIONS BETWEEN GREECE AND BULGARIA

After the First World War, Europe was politically re-configured. The new Versailles Europe was far from being a secure political framework for a European political establishment. The territorial problems that existed between France and Germany, Hungary and Romania, Czechoslovakia and the USSR, Yugoslavia and Hungary, Austria and Yugoslavia, Albania and Yugoslavia, Yugoslavia and Italy, Austria and Italy, Greece and Bulgaria, the USSR and Romania, Poland and Germany, (like Alsace and Lorraine, Erdey (or Transylvania), Carpathian Ukraine, Voivodina, Korushka, Kosovo, Istria, South Tyrol, Western Thrace, Bessarabia and Severna Bukovina, Shlionsk and Pomorie) as well as the existence of unsettled national questions (like the Macedonian, Basque, and Flemish), created territorial problems on the one hand, and unresolved national questions on the other, which in themselves seriously destabilized the political situation in Europe. In 1922, in addition to the French language, the Flemish language became an official language in Belgium. Before that there was no notable national Flemish existence in Belgium. But after Versailles the Flemish population demanded economic, cultural and linguistic affirmation in the regions where Flemish people lived. There was almost no country in existence in southeastern Europe which had just a single nation or people. Multiple nationalities, more or less, were present in all of them. In Finland, for example, the dominant nation represented 89.3% of the total population, in Estonia 88.2%, in Bulgaria 83.2%, in Lithuania 80.4%, in Romania 76%, in Poland 69.1%, while in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia the dominant nations represented only 42% of the total population.

The Balkans was a synthesis and a classical example of unresolved national and territorial issues. After the Treaty of Versailles, no Balkan nation was nationally homogeneous. In Yugoslavia, for example, out of a total of 12,055,688 inhabitants as it was in 1924, the largest nation (the Serbians) did not even account for half of the total population. In Yugoslavia, of the total 12,055,688 people, 7 million were Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians, Montenegrins,



Albanians and today's Muslims. Each one of these people felt like they were a different nation.

The situation was similar in the Romanian Kingdom. With the creation of a "Greater Romania" after receiving Southern Dobrudia, Erdey, Beasarabia, Severna Bukovina and the Romanian Banat, Romania became a very nationally diverse country. In addition to Romanians there were 1,500,000 Hungarians, 800,000 Germans, 400,000 Bulgarians, 300,000 Russians and more than one million Jewish people spread across the whole territory of Versailles Romania.

After its large territorial expansion to non-Greek historical territories, the Greek kingdom ceased to be nationally homogeneous. More than 1 million non-Greeks lived in Greek occupied Macedonia and Western Thrace alone.

About 16.8% of the entire population living in Bulgaria following the Neuilly Convention was non-Bulgarian which included a large Macedonian minority as well as a Turkish and Armenian minority.

After Versailles, Europe was left with many unresolved national, territorial and minority problems. The principle that was accepted for resolving these problems was respect and recognition of minority rights within the newly created states. Respect for minority rights was also foreseen in the peace agreements with Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Greece, etc. An exception to this principle was put in the peace agreement between Greece and Bulgaria. The Greek-Bulgarian agreement called for theoretical respect of minority rights, but also with the right for minorities to "voluntarily" leave. Based on Article 56 of the Neuilly Convention, on November 27, 1919, Greece and Bulgaria signed an agreement calling for Greeks in Bulgaria to "voluntarily" leave and go to Greece and for Bulgarians in Greece to "voluntarily" leave and go to Bulgaria.

What was to be "voluntary" the Greek government immediately turned into "compulsory" and began to evict the Macedonian population from Greek occupied Macedonia. The Greek authorities began implementing a policy of state terror which forced

Macedonians to “voluntarily” move to Bulgaria. This daily terror, maltreatment, killings and confiscation of properties, forced many Macedonians, who were no longer sure if they would “see the next day”, to leave. (Macedonian Archives (AM), Foundation of the Macedonian National Committee (MNK), 1912-1913, k. no. 3.) Part of the Macedonian population was evicted from Greek occupied Macedonia under such conditions:

Macedonian people expelled from Greek occupied Macedonia to Bulgaria in the period from 1913 to 1928. (Rumenov Vladimir, *Blgaria v Makedonia pod Grchka vlast*, Macedonian Review (MP), Sofia, book 4, page 90.)

Region	People expelled
Kukush	18,989
Seres	11,404
Zrnev	11,223
Demir Hisar	10,756
Solun	7,285
Enidzhe-Vardar	7,257
Gumenche	5,195
Drama	4,233
Kostur	3,577
Solun (without the city)	1,782
Lerin	1,676
Laganda	1,581
Zhnies	1,442
Meglen	1,233
Voden	449
Kailari	381
Nigrita	326
Ber	114
From the southern regions	285
<b>Total</b>	<b>86,582</b>

The expelled Macedonian population that was forced to cross the Bulgarian border left everything behind; relatives, land, houses, livestock... everything was left behind to accommodate the new

colonists. According to eyewitness accounts: “The expelled Macedonians left Bansko and Gorno-Dzhumaisko in the morning and the colonists arrived in the afternoon... This went on for days...” (V. “Nova Makedonija”, 19 IX 1975, p. 5.)

Initially, the Greek state began to colonize the various places where Macedonians were expelled and replaced with so-called Greeks from inside Greece. The internal colonization was silent but persistent. This “internal” colonization that began after 1913, in various forms, is still ongoing today. In the brief historical period, from 1913 to 1928, various Greek governments brought into Greek occupied Macedonia 53,056 colonists who originated from Greek territories.

Territorial origin of Greek colonists deposited in Greek occupied Macedonia (1913-1928)

(Statistika apotelezmata tis apografis tu plithizmu tis Elados tis 15-16 maiu 1928, Topos geniseos, Hriskia ke glosa, ipikotis, Athina, 1935.)

Region	Number	%
Thessaly	11,346	21.39
Stereia Hellas and Euboea	9,752	18.39
Peloponnesus	7,727	14.57
Epirus	6,757	12.73
Aegean Islands	5,764	10.86
Western Thrace	5,350	10.09
Crete	3,360	6.33
Ionian Islands	1,766	3.32
Kyklades	1,234	2.32
Total	53,056	100

These so-called internal Greek colonists were deposited in Greek occupied Macedonia.

Greek colonists deposited in various regions inside Greek occupied Macedonia (1913-1928)

(Statistika apotelezmata tis apografis tu plithizmu tis Elados tis 15-16 maiu 1928, Topos geniseos, Hriskia ke glosa, ipikotis, Athina, 1935.)

Region	Number	%
Solun	26,324	44.6
Kavala	7,610	14.3
Drama	4,830	9.1
Seres	4,178	8.0
Kozhani	3,877	7.3
Lerin	1,777	3.3
Pela	1,554	3.0
Chalkidiki	1,611	3.0
Sveta Gora	1,295	2.4
Total	53,056	100

With the colonization shown on the table above, the regions in Greek occupied Macedonia began to experience demographic change. Major demographic changes began to appear in eastern and central Greek occupied Macedonia in regions such as Seres, Demir-Hisar, Kukush, etc. In addition to the so-called “voluntary eviction”, the Greek state found creative ways to reduce the Macedonian population. One of those ways was to not allow Macedonians who, for some reason or another, went abroad, to return home. The names of these Macedonians were kept in so-called “black books” and these people were strictly forbidden from returning to their native places.

### 3. THE LAUSANNE PEACE TREATY AND EXCHANGE OF POPULATIONS BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY

The Greek-Turkish War (1920-1922) was the last historical attempt by the small but ambitious Greek kingdom to impose itself on Turkey in order to expand its territory and create a Greater Greece. Because Turkey, led by Kemal Mustafa, refused to accept the provisions derived from the Sevres Peace Agreement, Greece in 1920 sought to impose its will on Turkey through war. Kemal Mustafa, however, came out victorious after the Greeks lost the battle at the Sakaria River and Turkey put a permanent end to these grand-Greek ambitions.

After the Greeks were defeated at the Sakaria River, the Greek state, on October 11, 1922, was forced to accept a truce which was concluded in Moudania. The two countries resolved their disputes with talks that took place in 1923 in Lausanne (Switzerland). Apart from territorial issues, and the issue of prisoners of war, the two states also discussed the status of minorities and what to do with them. Signing the Treaty of Lausanne had special significance for Greece and Turkey and for the wider international community. The Lausanne Peace Accord was the first revision to the recently signed Paris Peace Accord.

During the talks in Lausanne, the generally recognized European principles for respecting minority rights within Greece and Turkey were found to be unacceptable and were rejected. Instead, the two states opted for compulsory eviction of minorities, i.e. the expulsion of Muslims from Greece and the expulsion of Christians from Turkey. "We prefer to be injured 30% or 50% if necessary," said a Turkish representative in Lausanne, "than to have foreigners and enemies among us..." (Grigori Dafni, *Elas metaxi dio polemon*, 1923-1940, Athina, 1955, volume 1, p. 34). And thus, "based on a compulsory and total population exchange" a process of eviction was initiated. (Société, de Nations, *Conseilet etats members*, dc 736-m. 477, Genève.) Greece began to evict all Muslims by religion, all ethnic Macedonians and Muslims by faith, all Albanians by ethnicity and Muslims by faith, all Jews by ethnicity and Muslims by faith. While Turkey, on the other hand, began to evict all

Christians by religion including Armenian Christians and the Karamanli Turks who were Muslims by faith.

By virtue of the Treaty of Lausanne, 350,000 Muslims were evicted from Greek occupied Macedonia despite their origin, language and cultural tradition. This mandatory population exchange excluded the Turkish population that lived in Western Thrace and the so-called Greek population that lived in Istanbul before October 1918. Outside of the Turkish population evicted from Greek occupied Macedonia, 40,802 Macedonian Muslims, 6,014 Albanian Muslims and a small number of Muslim Jews were also evicted.

The Greek state began to immediately replace the Muslim population it had evicted from Greek occupied Macedonia with Christians from Asia Minor and from other parts of the world. With a great desire to Hellenize Greek occupied Macedonia, the Greek state began to develop “broad political activities” to return the so-called “Greeks” to their homeland. A number of so-called Greeks, based on the right of “ius sanquinis” (being of Greek origin), returned to Greece. On that basis, 1,159,311 people came to Greece. Subsequent Greek governments, with the financial generosity and moral support of the League of Nations, began to settle this vast number of settlers and colonist all throughout the territory of Greece.

Places where settlers and colonists were deposited in Greece (1923-1928)

(Statistika Apotelezmata..., Athina, 1935)

Place	Number	%
Greek occupied Macedonia	565,143	48.75
Stereia Elada and Eubea	317,188	27.36
Western Thrace	100,485	8.67
Aegean Islands	51,550	4.45
Thessaly	36,427	3.14
Peloponnesus	32,873	2.84
Crete	32,411	2.80
Cyprus	10,348	0.89
Kiklades	6,697	0.58
Ionian Islands	6,189	0.53
Total	1,159,311	100

The colonization was more massive in the new territories, particularly in Greek occupied Macedonia and Western Thrace, and less significant in the southern part of Greece where, in some regions, no colonization took place. In fact, many of the places in Greece that were not colonized served as an inexhaustible source of Greek migration to Greek occupied Macedonia and to Western Thrace. In other words, Greece moved so-called Greeks from its southern regions to its newly acquired territories in Greek occupied Macedonia and in Western Thrace. In total, 565,143 people or 48.75% of the total colonist population was moved to Greek occupied Macedonia, with 210,425 originating from Europe. This population came from European countries or regions such as Eastern Thrace 140,915, Bulgaria 29,439, Istanbul 14,138, Yugoslavia 13,038, Albania 5,168, Russia 5,083, Romania 1,077, Italy 438, Germany 298, France 293, Austria 133, England 109, Czechoslovakia 63, Switzerland 44, Hungary 44, Belgium 40, Poland 34, Estonia 3, Lithuania 3, Latvia 2, Norway 2, Netherlands 2, Finland 2 and Ireland 1. Another part totaling 353,652 people, came from Asia from countries and regions such as Asia Minor

(Turkey) 201,173, the Pont (Turkey) 122,180, USSR (Caucasus) 29,313, Dodecanese 394, Cyprus 324, Syria 100, Iraq 89, Iran 31, Palestine 29, Yemen (Aden) 10, India 4, Philippines 3 and China 2. Another 567 people came from America from countries such as the United States 537, Argentina 12, Canada 11, Brazil 2, Uruguay 2, Cuba 1, Mexico 1 and Chile 1. Another 486 people came from Africa, from countries such as Egypt 446, Ethiopia 10, South Africa 10, Algeria 5, Tunisia 5, Libya 4, Sudan 3, Tanganyika 2 and Morocco 1. Another 3 came from Australia for a total of 565,143 people. These colonists were settled in various regions in Greek occupied Macedonia.

Regions in Greek occupied Macedonia occupied by colonists and settlers (1923-1928)

(Statistika Apotelezmata..., Athina, 1935)

Region	Number	%
Solun	234,203	41.44
Seres	71,694	12.69
Kavala	66,299	11.73
Drama	66,104	11.70
Pela	45,683	8.08
Kozhani	42,504	7.52
Lerin	19,154	3.39
Halkidiki	16,848	2.98
Sveta Gora	2,654	0.47
Total	565,143	100

The great majority of colonists were deposited throughout the Macedonian villages in Greek occupied Macedonia, creating the so-called village or agricultural colonization. A smaller number of colonists were deposited in the cities, creating the so-called urban colonization.

The village or rural colonization was the most massive which involved mostly Christian colonists. In the period from 1924 to 1918, 116,403 families with 427,297 people colonized the



agricultural sector in Greek occupied Macedonia. (Megali eliniki enikiklopedia (Pirsos), Athina, 1931, volume 16, p. 503.) These people were not only given the most fertile soil, but the Greek government offered them inventory and expert advice for faster economic training in order to colonize and take advantage of the best Macedonian and Turkish villages and to create new rural settlements. According to the Geneva Convention, Greece was obligated to supply the agricultural colonists with 500,000 hectares of land. An agreement between Greece and Bulgaria was signed by Molov from Bulgaria and Kafandaris from Greece in 1927, which called for regulating property issues that arose from the Macedonian population being evicted from Greece and sent to Bulgaria, and the so-called “Greek” population was evicted from Bulgaria and sent to Greece.

The urban colonization of Greek occupied Macedonia was not as drastic as the rural colonization. About 41,296 colonist families with about 152,989 people were sent to colonize Macedonian cities in Greek occupied Macedonia. (Pirsos p. 503.) Macedonian urban regions colonized included the towns in Solun Region occupied with 99,937 colonists, the towns in Kavala Region occupied with 22,446 colonists, the towns in Drama Region occupied with 14,374 colonists, the towns in Seres Region occupied with 7,627 colonists, the towns in Pela Region occupied with 7,556 colonists, the towns in Lerin Region occupied with 1,307 colonists, and the towns in Kozhani Region occupied with 752 colonists.

In the period from 1913 to 1928, through its colonization policy, the Greek state managed to colonize Greek occupied Macedonia with so-called “Greeks from inside and from abroad” who were not exactly Greeks but fit the desired Greek profile suitable for denationalizing and stripping Macedonia of its Macedonian national character.

External and internal colonists deposited in Greek occupied  
Macedonia by region (1913-1928)

Region	Colonists from abroad	Colonists from inside Greece	Total
Solun	234,203	26,324	260,527
Seres	71,694	4,178	75,872
Kavala	66,199	7,610	73,929
Drama	66,104	4,830	70,934
Pela	45,683	1,554	47,237
Kozhani	45,504	3,877	46,381
Lerin	19,154	1,775	20,929
Chalkidiki	16,848	1,611	18,459
Sveta Gora	2,654	1,245	3,949
<b>Total</b>	<b>565,143</b>	<b>53,056</b>	<b>618,199</b>

This great Greek colonization of Greek occupied Macedonia created severe ethnic, political and economic consequences for the Macedonian people. The Macedonian people identified the newcomer colonists by the name “Madzhiri” meaning foreigners, strangers or newcomers.

## 4. ETHNIC AND POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES IN GREEK OCCUPIED MACEDONIA AFTER THE GREAT GREEK COLONIZATION

### A) ETHNIC CONSEQUENCES

The great Greek colonization of Greek occupied Macedonia with non-Macedonian Christian settlers and colonists, undoubtedly, had an impact on the Macedonian people with severe ethnic, linguistic, political and economic consequences. The great ethnic changes that took place, in fact, further complicated the Macedonian National Question.

The most severe of all consequences was the loss of so many Macedonians and their replacement with non-Macedonians. In addition to the Turkish Christian colonists and settlers deposited in the period from 1923 to 1928, another group of 210,000 Turkish Christians known as the “Karamanli” was deposited in Greek occupied Macedonia. Since none of them spoke Greek, the Greek Patriarch ordered the liturgy to be read in Turkish during celebrations of important holidays. In addition to the Karamanli’s, the Greek government also deposited 80,000 Armenians and another 75,000 people of various ethnicities. The Armenians deposited in Solun created the “Society of the Armenian Minority” and, in the period between the two world wars, published the newspapers “Ashkatan” (Effort) and “Akhtanak” (Victory). The 75,000 people that came from the Caucasus were different in terms of origin, languages and traditions. So, after all these colonists and settlers were deposited in Greek occupied Macedonia, according to the languages spoken in the home by the family, there were 636,428 or 45.06% so-called Greeks, 240,000 or 16.99% Macedonians, 210,000 or 14.87% Turks, 80,000 or 5.66% Armenians, 75,000 or 5.31% Caucasians, 68,206 or 4.83% Jews, 44,414 or 3.14% Vlachs, 25,302 or 1.79% Roma, and 33,127 or 2.35% others, for a total of 1,412,477 people.

In fact, even after this great migration of people, Greek occupied Macedonia was still not “Hellenized”, but simply received a non-

Macedonian ethnic character and became a “true ethnic lace” of people that differed in origin, language, cultural traditions and temperament. (E. Driaudet, M. L’heritier, *Histoire diplomatique de la Grèce de 1821 r nos jouás*, Paris, 1926, p. 477.) As a result of this new ethnic reality, interesting ethnic events were observed. On the one hand, there was a decline in the Macedonian population and, on the other, there was an increase in the non-Macedonian population. If in 1913 the Macedonian population accounted for 35.20% of the total population, after this migration it was reduced to 16.99%. With the eviction of 127,384 Macedonians, as per the Lausanne Treaty, and the importing of 618,199 Christian settlers and colonists, the eastern and central part of Greek occupied Macedonia lost their ethnic Macedonian character. The only places where Macedonians lived as a compact majority was the western part of Greek occupied Macedonia, in regions such as Kostur, Lerin, Voden..., where the Macedonian population numbered more than 50% of the total population.

With the above ethnic changes, the Macedonian people not only lost their traditional national historical status but, from a majority living in their own native country, they became a minority with national, political and economic consequences. The so-called Greek population grew at the same time the Macedonian population declined. If in 1913 the so-called Greek population was 22.50%, after the migrations it grew to 45.06% of the total population living in Greek occupied Macedonia. In the short years after Macedonia was invaded, occupied and partitioned by Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria, the so-called Greek population in Greek occupied Macedonia turned from a minority into a majority replacing Macedonia’s historical ethnic status. Greece did this, not with so-called “ethnic Greeks” from inside Macedonia, but with an ethnic mix of foreigners it imported from all over the world, predominantly Christian Turks who were coaxed into supporting the Greek cause. All mixed marriages between Greeks and Turks, Greeks and Caucasians, Greeks and Armenians, Armenians and Turks, etc., were without exception in support of and sided with the Greek cause.

After Greece succeeded in evicting much of the Macedonian population and replacing it with foreigners who supported its cause,

Greek authorities in 1926 enacted a law to change all toponyms in Greek occupied Macedonia from Macedonian to Greek. On the basis of this law, all the names of rivers and mountains, villages and cities received Greek names. For example, the city Kukush was renamed to Kilkis, Voden to Edessa, Lerin to Florina and so on, and the village Bomboki was renamed to Stavropotamos, Zagorichani to Vasiliada, Oshchima to Trigono, and so on. This literally, without exception, erased every single Macedonian place name from the Macedonian historic landscape. The Law used to rename the Macedonian Toponymia was published in the official Greek state newspaper No. 332 of 1926.

## B) ETHNIC CHANGES AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE MACEDONIAN LANGUAGE (1913-1940)

After Macedonia was invaded, occupied and partitioned in 1913, the Macedonian people continued to live compactly in Greek occupied Macedonia. This compact Macedonian population created the right conditions for the survival of the Macedonian language, despite the Greek state's terror and attempts to eradicate it. This is because the Macedonian language was a mother tongue with long roots and a historical tradition. In the period immediately after the Second Balkan War, the Macedonian language in Greek occupied Macedonia played the role of a "langue usuelle" (the most used language) not only by the Macedonian population, but also by the other traditionally historical minorities that lived with the Macedonian population for centuries, which included Turks, Jews, Vlachs, Roma, etc. Of the total of 1,052,227, 815,472 people spoke and used the Macedonian language in their everyday lives.

At the same time, in the period from 1913 to 1923, the Greek language had no role as the "langue usuelle" in Greek occupied Macedonia, despite its status of being a "langue officielle" (state official language). This was because the Greek population living in Greek occupied Macedonia, which actually knew and spoke the Greek language, was a small minority, which gave the Greek language the status of being a "langue de la minorité" (a language of a minority) or a "langue de famille" (a family language). The so-called Greek language was spoken and used by 236,755 people in a population of 1,052,227 inhabitants.

After 1923, the Macedonian language began to gradually lose its status as a “langue usuelle”, and after the forced population exchanges between Greece and Bulgaria and between Greece and Turkey, the Macedonian language became the “langue de famille” of the Macedonian people and a “langue de la minorité”.

With the forced eviction of 86,582 Macedonians to Bulgaria, the Macedonian population in Greek occupied Macedonia not only lost its physical compactness, but also its linguistic diversity. The forced eviction from eastern and central Greek occupied Macedonia, from regions such as Drama, Seres, Kavala, Solun, Kukush, Demir Hisar, etc., and with its replacement with settlers and colonists, these regions became affected not only ethnically but also linguistically. The Macedonian people’s departure and the addition of settlers and colonists limited the Macedonian language to be spoken by a smaller population but still remained alive in the east-central parts of Greek occupied Macedonia. It is important at this point to mention that even though discouraged by the Greek authorities, the Macedonian language was spoken not only by the Macedonian people but also by the newcomers who had no choice but to learn Macedonian in the streets before they learned Greek in school. The settlers and colonists spoke Macedonian in the marketplace when purchasing their food and other goods. They had to learn the language of the people so that they could interact with the people. This included colonist children who played in the yards and streets with Macedonian children. The colonists and settlers continued to speak their own languages (non-Greek) at home for many years, some past the first generation. The older colonists never learned Greek.

The forced expulsion of the Macedonian population to Bulgaria and the compulsory population exchange between Greece and Turkey were done in parallel. The Muslim population in Greek occupied Macedonia, despite its ethnic origin, according to the Lausanne Treaty, was obliged to leave for Turkey. About 350,000 Muslim Turks left for Turkey under these conditions. These Muslims, in addition to speaking Turkish, also spoke and utilized the Macedonian language in their daily lives. Another 40,802 Macedonian Muslims were evicted because of their Muslim religion.

These Macedonians did not want to leave their ancestral homeland but were forced to. With their departure the Macedonian language was further eroded and began to lose its traditional historical status, becoming the “*langue de la minorité*” which, by this time, was spoken only by 240,000 Macedonians. These Macedonians were left to remain in their ancestral lands in Greek occupied Macedonia in regions like Kostur, Lerin, Voden and so on. With time, the Greek language became more prominent and after 1923, when more people were obligated to learn it in school, it began to replace the historic Macedonian language. And thus, as mentioned earlier, as the Greek language slowly began to become the “*langue usuelle*”, the Macedonian language slowly shrank to the “*langue de famille*” or the “*langue de la minorité*”. The homes and properties left behind by the evicted Macedonian people were immediately settled by 618,199 non-Greek colonists from all over the world. With the expansion of this non-Greek Christian colonist element, and with its mandatory teaching in the schools, the Greek language began to spread. Out of a total of 1,412,477 people living in Greek occupied Macedonia after its colonization, 1,172,477 people, so-called Greeks, Christian Turks, Armenians, Caucasians, Jews and others, in time were obligated to learn and use the Greek language. With this, the Greek language, in addition to its *langue* “*officielle status*”, became a “*langue usuelle*” or “*langue majoritaire*” for the entire population living in Greek occupied Macedonia.

### C) POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES

The political consequences that arose after the large migrations were of major concern to the Macedonian people. With the Christian colonization of Greek occupied Macedonia the political reality in that country, and in Greece itself, had drastically changed and thus substantially influenced the Macedonian National Question. The replacement of much of the ethnic composition in the Macedonian population contributed to a new political polarization and changed political party attitudes both inside and outside of Greece.

The Greek defeat in the Greek-Turkish war created a national, economic and political crisis. Similar experiences were felt in Germany, Hungary, Austria and Bulgaria; that is in almost all the countries defeated during World War I and subsequently humiliated

by the Versailles, Sen-Germanic, Tririan and Neuilly Peace Accords. No proper territorial benefits were offered for the many lives sacrificed during the First World War, which caused much discord giving birth to strong political tectonic movements in almost all defeated countries. (We are talking about the rise of revolutionary movements in Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, etc.)

After the signing of the Lausanne Peace Treaty, Greece did not acquire what it considered “historic territories” in Asia Minor, and that created a deep national crisis. However, there was no noticeable left-wing revolutionary movement in Greece as there was one in Germany and Hungary, which would have put the political system into question and accused it of being guilty of creating a “national catastrophe”. After the Greek defeat in Sakaria, despite the apparent unstable political situation that approached the level of political chaos, politicians in Greece acted fairly quickly to politically and economically stabilize the country.

While national frustration was felt in Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria, Greece did not feel such frustration despite external appearances calling their debacle “a great historical catastrophe”. Despite the defeat in Sakaria, the Greeks still had a feeling of being winners, and after the “Great War” they were winners with territorial expansions in Greek occupied Macedonia and in Western Thrace. So-called Greece or Hellas, in its entire history, was never a single state let alone having such a vast territory. This fact alone acted as a stabilizer in the consciousness of the so-called Greek people.

The settlers and colonists also played a great political stabilizing role in Greece. Because the Christian population in Asia Minor played the role of a fifth column working against Turkey during the Greek-Turkish war, it felt like it was its own fault for being evicted from its ancestral hearth. So, from the moment it arrived in Greece it showed keen interest in establishing a stable political situation. It fully cooperated with the Greek authorities so that Greece could become economically stable as quickly as possible. After the settlers and colonists arrived in Greece, they became a serious stabilizing factor. With the internal political situation well-stabilized, the Greek political parties, the Liberal Party in particular, streamlined their



efficiency for faster accommodation of the colonist population. Eleftheros Venizelos, then leader of the Greek Liberal Party, was named “father of the colonists”. If the political centre-right rose in popularity, it awakened the CPG because the communists had an unrealistic and dogmatic political orientation, an orientation that was before its time.

## D) ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES

The changes in demography that took place in Greek occupied Macedonia from 1913 to 1928 had major economic consequences which affected almost all spheres of life.

Greek occupied Macedonia was and remained to be an agricultural sector. After its occupation, it became the main economic engine for Greece despite its massive colonization policy with foreign and domestic settlers. The first act that Greece implemented was to expand the agricultural lands intended for growing various agricultural products, especially grains and tobacco. (Jacques Ancel, *op. cit.*, p. 118.) The agricultural land was expanded by converting pastures into arable land, by drying swamps and small lakes, and by dividing monastic lands which were largely unused. (Nicholas Svoronos, *Histoire de la Grèce moderne*, Paris, 1968, page 20.) Greek occupied Macedonia at the time had 4,216,236 strema (ten strema equal to one hectare) of fertile land good for cultivation. The agricultural sector alone provided jobs for 68% of the total population living in Greek occupied Macedonia, which resided mostly in villages and grew cereals and tobacco. In the period from 1923 to 1924, for example, the lands on which cereals were grown covered 830,930 strema, and in the period from 1927 to 1928 they covered 1,811,855 strema. This massive increase in agricultural land, planted mainly with tobacco, caused a glut when economic conditions in the world were in crisis (1929-1933). As a result, tobacco production in Greek occupied Macedonia entered a serious crisis of its own with a significant fall in prices in the traditional European markets which, at the time, were also facing a financial crisis. If in the period from 1923 to 1924 the land intended for growing tobacco was 93,727 strema, in the period from 1927 to 1928 it grew to 330,460 strema. In other words, tobacco production grew from 25,000 tons in the period 1923-1924, to 80,000 tons in

the period from 1927 to 1928. But, agricultural production was subject to various factors including land fertility, climatic conditions and the ability to properly manage it. Even though the colonists were forced to occupy agricultural lands and depended on agricultural production for their survival, they did not have the agricultural knowledge and the necessary skills to properly cultivate the kind of soil in existence in Greek occupied Macedonia. The difference in agricultural productivity between the indigenous Macedonian population and the newly arrived colonists was enormous and obvious. The indigenous Macedonian population had greater agricultural results due to its vast knowledge and experience with the soil and climatic conditions, a kind of experience the colonists lacked. For these reasons, out of the 11 crops grown in Greek occupied Macedonia in this period, the smaller number of indigenous Macedonians achieved more results in 6 crops than the newly arrived colonists, even though their numbers were greater and they possessed the best and most fertile lands. (Jacques Ancel, op. cit., p. 160). When it was found out that the colonists did not have the necessary agricultural experience to work the lands, they began to hire Macedonians to cultivate them. “In the early years, the colonists in Lerin paid Macedonians to cultivate their fields and to familiarize them with the basic elements of agriculture.” (Comment made by A.T., originally from the village Leskoets, Lerin Region, now a resident of Skopje.)

But over time the colonists gained enough relevant knowledge to affect productivity and increase agricultural production. In 1937, for example, tobacco production in Greek occupied Macedonia and in Western Thrace amounted to 44,465 tons, representing more than half of Greece’s total tobacco production. This increase in agricultural production did not mean that it was a matter of intensive farming; on the contrary, this was due to experience gained by the colonists over the years on how to manage the Macedonian soil they were given for free by the Greek state.

Another economic consequence in Greek occupied Macedonia was the decline in livestock and the liquidation of nomadic life practiced by the Vlach population. This was a natural consequence of the various wars (1912-1913, 1914-1918 and 1920-1923) and of the expansion of agricultural lands converted from pastoral lands. The

expansion of agricultural lands at the expense of pastoral lands also had severe consequences for the indigenous Macedonian population. The newly deposited colonists and settlers not only replaced the large number of forcibly evicted Macedonians, but their economic expansion took place at the expense of the Macedonians still living there. With the Greek imposed land re-distribution programs of Macedonian lands, the Macedonian people lost more and more of their fertile land to a point where they could no longer support themselves. As a result much of the Macedonian population was forced to leave and seek employment elsewhere including overseas to countries like the USA, Australia and Canada.

Several branches also developed in industry, although it was not a significant pillar of the main economy in Greek occupied Macedonia. One of those branches was the tobacco industry which processed quality tobacco harvested in Macedonia and Thrace. Another branch, which saw apparent growth, was the textile industry, which was mainly concentrated in Solun. But the most developed branch was the novelty industry which handled the manufacturing of oriental carpets and textiles. Many of the colonists were highly skilled in producing quality rugs. These people were well-known for their capability of producing quality Turkish rugs, which were much sought after in the European and non-European markets. The process for making carpets, however, was not automated and did not develop into a real industry. It continued with traditional practices of making rugs by hand with low productivity and expensive labour, only producing enough rugs for the domestic market.

There was also some innovation in the pottery industry. The famous potters from Kiutahia brought their skills and techniques with them when they were settled in Greek occupied Macedonia. These potters made quality products which were exported abroad.

This industrial progress was not a reflection of the internal economic development; it was not even the result of a strong and dynamic economy. But due to the character of this industry (textile, tobacco), even the simplest economic production was not possible mainly because the techniques were old, the machines were antiquated and the labour was unskilled. Whatever production was done, it was not

a result of high productivity but of simple economic needs, realized with imported capital.

Despite the difficulties experienced in the development of the economy in Greek occupied Macedonia, the new historical and ethnic changes, due to the forced eviction of a large number of Macedonians and the importation of a large number colonists, the new and subsequently created economic conditions made a more efficient economic existence for the people, especially for the colonists. In 1923 for example, 205,365 tons of goods were imported into Solun and 15,803 tons were exported, in 1926 the import was 253,432 tons and the export was 18,294 tons.

## **CHAPTER THREE - NATIONAL SUBJUGATION AND RESISTANCE OF THE MACEDONIAN PEOPLE IN GREEK OCCUPIED MACEDONIA (1913-1940)**

### **1. NATIONAL SUBJUGATION OF THE MACEDONIAN PEOPLE (1913-1940)**

With the annexation of Greek occupied Macedonia, the Greek state began to implement policies to de-nationalize and assimilate the Macedonian population. The name “Macedonia” and “Macedonians” was forbidden from use and the Macedonian people were called everything but Macedonian. The most common pejorative and insulting words used to refer to them were “Paleovulgaros” (old Bulgarian) “Servos” (Serbian) or simply “Endopios” (Indigenous). At the same time, all Macedonian given and surnames were changed by force to Greek sounding names and every surname ended with a compulsory suffix such as -os, -es or -poulos. A name such as Georgi Volchev was turned into Georgios Voltsidis, while Stoian Popov was turned to Yannis Papadopoulos, Liuba Popova to Olimpia Papas, and so on.

The Greek state refused to recognize the Macedonian nation and the Macedonian language, implying that if a Macedonian nation did not exist then how could a Macedonian language exist. The Macedonian language was banned, belittled, and regarded as barbaric, primitive and unworthy of a cultured and civilized citizen. It was forbidden in all communication including in communications between parents and children, among peasants, in weddings, in meetings and even in funeral rituals. In other words, the Macedonian language and the words “Macedonia” and “Macedonian” were forbidden from oral and written use in every aspect of human life including in poetry, drama, humour, etc. Those who violated this rule and were caught speaking Macedonian were penalized and morally and psychologically harassed. Punishments included spitting in the person’s mouth, fierce beatings, putting needles through the person’s tongue; one needle for each Macedonian word spoken, and so on. For example, a Macedonian child was severely punished in the village Konomladi in Kostur Region for accidentally speaking a few Macedonian words. While playing in the schoolyard the child forgot about the language ban and spoke several Macedonian words.

Angered by this, the Greek teacher threw a sharp metallic object and hit the child on the head creating a deep gash. The child was traumatized and was no longer normal. According to witnesses, the child experienced episodes of what was described as “wild craziness”. (Veritas, Makedonija pod igo 1919-1929, Dokumenti I svedetelstva, Sofia, 1931.)

Even with the similarities between the Macedonian, Bulgarian and Serbian languages, the authorities caused problems of medieval proportion for the Macedonian people in both Serbian and Bulgarian occupied Macedonia. That, however, was mild in comparison to the problems the Greek authorities caused for the Macedonian people over their language in Greek occupied Macedonia, which could only be described as unprecedented in contemporary historical practices. With the annexation of 51% of Macedonian lands in 1913, the Greek state forbade and severely punished every public manifestation of Macedonian national feeling, of external expression through language, and of Macedonian traditions and customs. The Greek state directed its authorities to eliminate and liquidate any and all written and oral forms of Macedonian traditions manifested. So, immediately after 1913, the Greek state began a genuine campaign to eliminate all Macedonian literacy in Greek occupied Macedonia. As a result, all Macedonian inscriptions on buildings, monuments, churches and even gravestones were removed. In fact the Greek state, with much satisfaction, ordered the destruction of everything that existed from the Ilinden era, including the gravestones of the Macedonian heroes who fought for Macedonia and died during the 1903 Ilinden Uprising. The Greek state took its campaign of destruction even a step further and began to destroy Macedonian archaeological finds. Everything that was reminiscent of the Macedonian people’s historical and cultural existence in Greek occupied Macedonia was destroyed. Everything Macedonian that was found disappeared without a trace. All Macedonian churches were renamed with Greek names and meticulously examined. Any traces of the Macedonian alphabet found in church inscriptions were removed. All church books written in the Macedonian language were burned. Burning Macedonian books, however, was nothing new. The Phanariots had been burning Macedonian books since medieval times. Their persistence was so great that randomly missed Macedonian church inscriptions were removed 20 and even 30 years

later. One such removal took place in the village B'mboki, Kostur Region, where several Macedonian words in the church's dome had been missed. They were removed 20 years later.

Simultaneously with the removal of traces of Macedonian history, the living Macedonian language was hunted down. Various Greek nationalist gangs began to visit Macedonian villages and not only hunted down those who continued to speak Macedonian but tormented the rest of the Macedonian population in an attempt to "persuade" it to speak only Greek - if it wanted to live and see the next day alive. The Greek nationalist organization "Eliniko - Makedonki pigmi" (Greek-Macedonian fist), in its 1926 declarations, warned the Macedonian people that they were strictly forbidden from speaking their mother tongue and that they were obliged to speak only Greek. (Veritas, op cit.)

The most severe attack on the Macedonian language came during the General Joanis Metaxas dictatorship. Two hours before the general all-Greek strike began on August 4, 1936, General Metaxas suspended the Greek constitution and introduced his personal dictatorship.

General Metaxas's dictatorial rule, among other things, began with the suspension of the Greek constitution, the burning of books written by famous ancient writers, the banning of the Macedonian language, and the introduction of Metaxas's version of "the third Greek civilization" modeled after the so-called "Ancient and Byzantine Greeks". With intentions of removing every basic element that characterized the Macedonian nation, Metaxas began to ban the Macedonian language, not only in everyday public life such as the market, in ordinary communications, in church, in funeral rituals, etc., but also in the family, in the privacy of the Macedonian home. To force the Macedonian people not to use the Macedonian language, even in the privacy of their own homes, Metaxas issued orders for the police to spy on Macedonian families inside their homes. Policemen were obliged to go under people's windows at night and listen to family members speaking in order to determine which language they spoke. If they spoke Macedonian, they were immediately arrested. For every Macedonian word that was uttered, either publicly or in the privacy of the family circle, people were

fined, jailed and tortured. Some of the torture methods applied included rubbing a person's tongue with a hot pepper, forcing a person to eat salted fish and refusing to give them water, forcing a person to drink castor oil and refusing to let them go to the toilet, plucking hairs from a person's moustache, beating a person with a stick all over their body and so on. The cruelty was so great that at times people were physically and psychologically damaged. With the cruelty shown for the Macedonian people, Metaxas surpassed even the cruelty of his teachers, the Italian fascists, who spat in the mouths of Slovenian and Croatian people who dared to utter a Slovenian or Croatian word. Spitting in the mouth and various other methods were used by the Italian fascists to belittle the national and linguistic dignity of Croats and Slovenes under the Italian occupation. At the same time, Metaxas introduced night school for adults and, regardless of their old age, Macedonians were forced to go to so-called evening school and learn "the melodious and culturally superior Greek language". Because of violations due to the ban of the Macedonian language, especially in the villages where people spoke no other language, more than 5,000 Macedonians were sentenced and sent to prison to serve their sentences in the harsh Greek islands. Macedonian people were mainly sent to Corfu, Pylos, Akronavplia, Gavros, Ikaria and other desolate and cruel places. The Macedonian people described these severe Greek repressive measures as "far worse than those of the Ottoman regime".

Between the two World Wars, the international democratic community and the League of Nations put some pressure on the Greek state to take some formal action as a European country, and show some respect for the provisions on the protection of minorities as was required by the Paris Peace Accord, so that the Macedonian National Question could be resolved calmly. Greece was obligated to respect the rights of its minorities by the Neuilly Peace Treaty but refused to honour that obligation. Greece was also obligated to honour the 1924 "Kalfov-Politis" protocol, but that too was set aside. The Greek Ministry of Education, for example, had tasked a committee composed of Papazahariou, Saiachkis and Lazarou to publish a primer intended for Macedonian children. This primer, called the ABECEDAR, was completed in early September 1925 and was printed with the Latin alphabet but in a Macedonian (Lerin-Bitola) dialect. Despite the fact that the "ABECEDAR" never



reached the Macedonian children, its publication was official recognition of the Macedonian people and their language for which the Greek authorities persistently persecuted them. But, immediately after the ABECEDAR was published, it was seized by the Greek authorities and promptly destroyed.

The processes of assimilation and denationalization of the Macedonian people were simultaneously carried out in parallel with the terror perpetrated against them over their Macedonian language. Official Greek policies for faster assimilation were not only put into place but also upgraded and accelerated. Teaching played a special role in the process. This was the first time the Macedonian people were included in an educational system en masse with aims at teaching the Greek language fast. This was the first time the vast Macedonian population had met the Greek language. Education was carried out exclusively in the Greek language and its main goal was to “root out non-Greek feelings out of the souls of these young Macedonians...” (Viviadou Lazarou, i Prespa ke i omorfes tis, Athina, 1940, p. 69.) If the closeness of the Macedonian language, nevertheless, contributed to the teaching process as much as it would normally do, in Serbian and Bulgarian occupied Macedonia, the great difference between the Macedonian and the Greek language initially made teaching very difficult in Greek occupied Macedonia. But two hours of the day dedicated to learning the Greek language and Greek history, and all other subjects taught through “singing and dancing”, over the long term, proved to be the best method of penetrating the Greek language and Greek consciousness in the young Macedonians. One of the mandatory songs sung was: “I am a Greek, I know my origin and my Greek soul always lives free...”

Another way to entice the Macedonian children to learn the Greek language faster and to infiltrate “Greek tradition and pride” into the consciousness of the Macedonian youth was through various excursions. (Makedoniko imerologio, Thesaloniki, 1939, p. 41.) Macedonian children were taken on historical excursions, organized especially for the Macedonians, in Thermopylae, Salamina, Marathon, Mesolongi and other historical places where the Macedonian children had the opportunity to learn about the heroic feats of “their supposed ancestors the likes of Leonidas, Kolototronis, Diakos, Papavlesas, Miaoulis, Kareskakis and others”.

Every child was taught and knew Diakos's dying words by heart: "Grekos genithika and Grekos tha pethano!" (I was born a Greek and a Greek I shall die!)

Cultural organizations, especially music societies, also played a major role in assimilating the Macedonian people into the Greek fold and spreading the Greek language among the Macedonian population. The music repertoire was composed mainly of music about the glorious Greek historical past and almost always music bands, performing at various national and religious holidays, played Greek patriotic songs in front of a Macedonian audience.

Sports societies played a role in promoting "everything Greek" to the young Macedonian people. In addition to promoting sports, they also promoted and nurtured Greek patriotic feelings. A place was made where the Greek language could be practiced and studied every day. The Greek press also played a role in the process of assimilating the Macedonian population and spreading the Greek language. The Greek press always took the Greek side when it came to the Macedonian National Question. There were 26 chauvinistic Greek newspapers published in Greek occupied Macedonia, which included the papers "Ditiki Makedonia", "Kastoria", "Makedoniki", "Foni tou laou" and so on.

The political and cultural advancements made, especially in the fields of education, church, the military, etc., certainly contributed to the assimilation of the Macedonian people and to the spread of the Greek language in Greek occupied Macedonia. The Christian colonists, who were also busy learning the Greek language, were also a factor in expanding the Greek language into the ranks of the Macedonian population. Their everyday presence forced the Macedonian people, mostly for economic reasons, to learn Greek, a foreign language which the Macedonians hated. In this regard, one example will be sufficient to prove that conditions were tough and unnatural for the Macedonian language's struggle for its survival. Before 1923, there were two Turkish villages, Vratolom and Pleshevitsa, located in the vicinity of the Macedonian village Leskoets, Lerin Region. Until then, the Macedonian language was exclusively used as a means of conversation and communication between all the villagers in the market and the bazaar. Under those

circumstances, the Macedonian language played the role of the “official language”. After the Turks were evicted from their villages, they were replaced with Christian colonists who spoke only Turkish. At the same time the village names were changed. Vortolom became known as Agios Bartholomeos and Pleshevitsa was called Kolokiti. With the arrival and settlement of the colonists, after 1923, the Macedonian language was quickly replaced with the Greek language as people began to speak it more and more. Something similar also took place in the village Medovo in Lerin Region, located near two Turkish villages, Shaovtsi and Bostandzhovtsi. When the colonists arrived they were settled on the properties of the Turks evicted from the two Turkish villages. But, at the same time, several colonist families were settled in Medovo, a Macedonian village. The properties in Medovo given to these colonists were confiscated from the Macedonians. An ordinary fence erected in the middle of the properties divided the Macedonians from the colonists. Until that time the Greek language in Medovo was only present in the school and the church. After that, with the arrival of the colonists, the Greek language was heard in the village streets as well as out in the fields. (Statement given by P.M. from the village Medovo, now a resident of Skopje.) So, even the Turkish speaking colonist element, to a large extent, was also responsible for spreading the Greek language in Greek occupied Macedonia.

## A) APPEARANCE OF DUALISM IN THE MACEDONIAN LANGUAGE

Pressures applied due to the Greek political and cultural improvements, as well as everyday pressures from the new demographic reality, greatly contributed to the Macedonian language losing its physical integrity. Many Macedonian-ized Greek words began to penetrate the Macedonian language and, in time, dualism began to appear which had nothing to do with bilingualism. Among the first words to enter the Macedonian language were korofilak (policeman), astonom (police chief), dikastirio (court), stenohoria (grief), anisihia (harassment), etc. This infiltration of Greek words in the Macedonian language continued to be used and over time became common, and even considered native by the next generations. Dualism in languages also appeared in the Serbian and Bulgarian occupied parts of Macedonia.

Dualism in the Macedonian language, through its erosive everyday processes, contributed greatly to the divergence of the language. Instead of the various dialects spoken throughout Macedonia converging towards the central Macedonian dialects such as the one spoken in Bitola, Veles, Prilep, etc., as they had done until the Balkan Wars, in a natural way starting to objectively form the Macedonian literary language, the introduction of the Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian languages in the three divided parts of Macedonia, gradually but systematically began to push the Macedonian language away from its natural convergence. The penetration of foreign words is not unique to the Macedonian language but is an indication that this kind of penetration usually occurs in nationally enslaved nations, and is a corridor for the transition from one language to another. Dualisms in languages also appear under conditions of freedom.

This kind of dualism in languages has also occurred in Canada, Australia, the United States, New Zealand, etc. Both Europeans and non-Europeans, gradually but surely allow English words to infiltrate their mother tongue. Among the first English words to infiltrate the Macedonian language were fridzho (refrigerator), karo (car), fono (telephone), floro (floor), baxi (boxes), biznes (business), etc. The power of the Anglophone reality is so great that dualism has been shown to appear even in the French language in Quebec.

But this kind of dualism that appears, for example, in the languages of the Macedonians, Poles, Italians, Croats, Greeks, Serbs, etc. in overseas countries always appears and develops outside of their home country. This kind of dualism does not appear in the native lands of people, in their historical and national territory where their language develops naturally and where its historical, national, cultural and biological development is guaranteed. Unfortunately the dualism that appeared in Macedonia, in the native land of the Macedonian people, was due to the invasive and forceful intrusion of dominating powers that had aims at assimilating the Macedonian people and extinguishing their culture. This invasive intrusion has placed the historical, national, cultural and biological survival of Macedonian people in jeopardy.

## 2. THE MACEDONIAN PEOPLE'S RESISTANCE FOR THE PROTECTION OF THEIR MACEDONIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY (1913-1940)

National and social oppression of the Macedonian people inside Macedonia contributed to the emergence of a worldwide Macedonian resistance movement, struggling to preserve the Macedonian national identity and culture. The Macedonian language, as one of the basic elements characterizing the Macedonian nation, was jealously guarded and protected by Macedonians everywhere. This continuous struggle took various passive and active forms and was present in the everyday lives of the Macedonian people.

Even under oppressive restrictions, the Macedonian family played a decisive and unwavering role in the preservation of the Macedonian language and culture. Banned, belittled and persecuted, the Macedonian language found a safe and lasting shelter within the Macedonian family. The Macedonian language was secretly present in the family every day, in daily conversations, in Macedonian songs, in Macedonian dances, in Macedonian stories and riddles, in Macedonian sayings and jokes, etc. Inside the Macedonian family, young generations created a sense of respect and love for their mother tongue which was secretly passed on from generation to generation. This way the Macedonian language played an invaluable role in the preservation of the Macedonian identity.

In addition to nurturing and safeguarding the Macedonian language, the Macedonian family has also preserved, nurtured and safeguarded the Macedonian historical consciousness and the Macedonian cultural tradition. The new Macedonian generations learned about the Macedonian Ilinden Uprising and the legendary deeds of Gotse Delchev, Damian Gruev, Vasil Chakalov, Pando Kliashev, Lazo Poptraiov, Hristo Uzunov, Nikola Karev, Pitu Guli and many, many others, from their families, as they did about the criminal deeds of the Greek Andari (cutthroats) the likes of Pavlos Melas and Kote from Rulia. By making the next generation aware of its true Macedonian identity and by passing on this relevant and vital historic information, the Macedonian family not only slowed down

the forced Greek assimilation but, in many cases, prevented it. The same role was played by the Macedonian family in the Serbian and Bulgarian occupied parts of Macedonia. At the same time, in the period between the two world wars, the Macedonian family jealously protected its national integrity and made a conscious and collective effort to resist mixed marriages, whose ultimate goal was to “to dilute the Macedonian identity” and to turn more Macedonians into Greeks. In the period between the two world wars, there were almost no mixed marriages between Macedonians and Greeks or between Macedonians and colonists. It is worth mentioning at this point that the Greek government had introduced a policy of encouraging Greeks, including the non-Greek colonists, to marry Macedonians, especially Greek men marrying Macedonian women, in an attempt to further dilute the Macedonian population.

As a result of struggling to preserve the Macedonian language, the Macedonian family passively showed strong resistance to the forcible learning of the Greek language. This resistance was particularly intensified and publicly expressed during the Metaxas dictatorship. Adult Macedonians included in the so-called evening schools for studying the Greek language found various ways to devalue the lessons and in that way expressed their dissatisfaction with being forced to learn Greek. There was hardly a single Macedonian village where people did not make fun of the teachers in the way they taught the Greek language. And, without exception, every one of these stories of ridicule was gladly recounted in fluent Macedonian. The same kind of resistance was observed everywhere among the Macedonians. Even Macedonian children in Greek classes whispered to one another in the Macedonian language. During holidays and after hours they spoke exclusively in their beautiful Macedonian dialects, despite the cruel treatment they received from their teachers, Greeks and the Greek authorities. For every Macedonian word uttered, students were beaten with rods on the palm of their hands, on their fingers, legs or head while being yelled at and called derogatory names including “hondrokefale” (thick-headed).

Thanks to the Macedonian national collective solidarity and to the role the Macedonian family played, the Macedonian language survived and remained the primary language of the Macedonian

people. Everything spoken and learned in the privacy of the family was always expressed in the Macedonian language. Over time, the Macedonian people did learn Greek in school but the Greek language was always regarded as secondary and foreign. This is confirmed by the fact that Macedonian people cannot naturally say the Greek sounds that do not exist in the Macedonian language. For example, Macedonians cannot pronounce the Greek letters “Γ” gamma and “Δ” delta, as much as Greeks cannot pronounce the Macedonians letters “Ч” (CH) and “Ш” (SH). As a result, Macedonians always spoke Greek with an accent which was often looked down upon and ridiculed by Greeks.

With the foreign Christian colonist element deposited in Greek occupied Macedonia, resistance against the Macedonian population intensified. “This unexpected and peaceful colonist invasion truly took a genocidal approach against the Macedonian population.” (Jacques Ancel, *op. cit.*, p. 122.) “The Greek authorities turned the colonist element into a political instrument aimed at the Macedonian population”. (Hagi Gogu, *Occidentalii..*, p. 150.) Knowing that the Greek state supported them, the colonists took an inhuman attitude towards the Macedonian people. Their behaviour, their daily deposition about the Macedonian human and national dignity, their rape and murder of innocent people..., were everyday occurrences. Their vicious attacks usually began with the defamatory words: “Are you still here? You filthy Bulgarian! Go back to Bulgaria!” Greek gangs, consisting mainly of colonists from Asia Minor, invaded Macedonian villages and viciously attacked the Macedonian population, beating people and yelling and screaming for them to leave while chanting: “Slavs get out of Greece!” (Veritas, *op. cit.*, p. 125.) Captain Stephanos’s band, a gang of colonists from Lerin Region, for example, specialized in terrorizing the Macedonian population. In the Drama Region 11 villagers from the villages Trlis, Lovcha and Starchina were killed because someone accused them of cooperating with the communists. Similarly, a number of villagers from the villages Livadishte, Butin and Chereshevo were badly beaten, women raped and “many Macedonians disappeared without a trace...” (Balkan Federation, 1925, No. 15, page 205).

The Macedonian people, under these circumstances, were left with no other choice but to resist the colonists in order to protect their

national and material interests. One form of resistance was not to allow the properties of the evicted Macedonians to be plundered by the colonists. The Macedonians in the village Zagorichani, Kostur Region, for example, would not allow colonists to enter their village at all. The Macedonian population in the village Nestrum attacked the colonists who were there to plunder them, calling on all Macedonians to “beat the dogs out of here...” (Rizospastis, March 3, 1934). The constant robberies and frequent violence, perpetrated by the colonists against the Macedonian population, forced the Macedonian people to actively defend themselves. When the colonists tried to forcibly seize Macedonian properties, the Macedonian people violently fought back. For this reason, there was a build up of intolerance between the Macedonians and the colonists in the period between the two world wars. These acts of violence created animosities and isolation between the two peoples. This resulted in no intermarriage between Macedonians and colonists during this period. All in all, the Greek colonization of Greek occupied Macedonia entered the realm of yet another real struggle “against nature and against the people...” (Societè de Nations, *L'establissement de Refugies en Grèce*, Genève, 1926, p. 136.) The once passive Macedonian resistance, in time turned into an active resistance with a conscious political aim against the Greek policy of assimilation and denationalization.



## **CHAPTER FOUR – THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREECE AND THE MACEDONIAN NATIONAL QUESTION (1918-1940)**

### **1. COMINTERN POLICY AND THE MACEDONIAN NATIONAL QUESTION IN EUROPE**

The existence of unresolved national and territorial issues attracted the attention of the Comintern but its position and treatment of the Macedonian National Question corresponds to one “continuous discontinuity” or a “discontinued continuity”.

But what was the reason for the Comintern’s policy of “continued discontinuity” or “discontinued continuity” towards solving the Macedonian National Question? The next revolution always has universal character and adds new values and new qualities to the values and benefits of the previous revolution, representing a real step forward in the historical evolution of human kind. Such a role was played in human history by the French Revolution of 1789 and tried to be played by the Russian Socialist Revolution. Before 1789 people enjoyed hardly any political or economic freedom, but after the French Revolution people gained political freedom but, unfortunately, did not gain much economic freedom. The French Revolution replaced one form of economic exploitation (feudal) with another form (capitalist) and retained the principle of economic exploitation of people by other people, i.e. of a class by another class. But, putting things in perspective, in time many economic problems were solved but through a socio-democratic orientation.

By gaining political freedom, the people took one real step forward in an astronomical evolution. Every other revolution took its universal character from the French Revolution. Everywhere where there was no respect for political freedom the peoples strived to gain it through a revolution. During the massive student demonstrations in the Heavenly Peace square in Beijing, the students sang French Revolution songs.

The Russian Socialist Revolution was expected to only add economic freedoms, i.e. to remove the principle of economic exploitation of a person by another person or a class by another

class, and take a real step forward in human evolution. But the attempt made by the Russian Socialist Revolution to create symbiosis between political and economic freedom was interrupted by the Stalinist discontinuity. Instead of justifying the political and economic freedom of equality on the basis of the new state order, the Stalinist discontinuity abolished almost all political freedoms gained through the French Revolution and only formally proclaimed economic freedom. Here the harsh capitalist economic exploitation was replaced by another difficult exploitation, State economic exploitation. The socialist crisis was precisely due to the absence of political and economic freedom in the foundation of the socialist state order. With the abolition of political and economic freedom, the Russian Socialist Revolution increasingly lost its universal character and became a hallmark of a typical Russian historical phenomenon. This historical discontinuity could not, and did not influence the way in which the Macedonian National Question was posed and resolved and, as a result, there exists a “discontinuous continuity” or a “continuous discontinuity”.

Contrary to the bourgeois concept of solving National Questions, Lenin recognized the right to self-determination for every nation and its “secession from foreign national collectives”. But the right to self-determination and secession, like any other national secession, was seen and treated solely as a “class struggle”. (V.I. Lenin, *On the Right of Nations to Self-Determination*, Zagreb, 1979, p. 21.)

By recognizing the right to self-determination of “enslaved peoples”, Lenin took one step forward (as an expression of continuity), but when he made this step conditionally part of “the class struggle for the interest of the working class”, he essentially denied people the right to self-determination (as an expression of discontinuity). Consequently Communist Parties were expected to recognize class struggle as a primarily (principled) issue, and the national struggle as a secondary (tactical) issue. But, at the same time, “class-nation” relationships and the national interests of large “enslaved nations” were preserved and protected. The national interests of the “dominant nation” always had to correspond to the class interests; whereas the national interests of the “enslaved nation” were either in opposition or partially in the same direction as the working class interests. The national interests of the “enslaved

nation” were supported only when they coincided with the interests of the dominant nation which was in support of working class interests. In other words, Stalin did not create his policy of discontinuity with regard to unresolved national questions based on the national interests of “enslaved nations”, but on the basis of “working class interests”. Basing his policy on the national interests of dominant nations and working class interests seriously hampered the Macedonian National Question. On the basis of this, the Comintern dealt with National Questions in Europe by replacing “national” policies with “working class interest” policies which largely depended on USSR state interests. That is why the Comintern, in relation to “unsettled national questions” took the road to supporting the benefits of revisionist states (1919-1935), once in favour of the Versailles political status quo (1935-1939) and again in favour of the revisionist states (1939-1941). The third stage of the Comintern’s policy began with the 1939 Ribentrop-Molotov Agreement. But after Nazi Germany attacked the USSR, the same Comintern policy became antifascist again.

The Communist Party of Greece (CPG) was obliged to review the Macedonian National Question under the framework of these principles. The Communist Party of Greece was created in 1918 and was initially named “Socialist Workers’ Party of Greece”.

## 2. THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREECE AND ITS POLICY OF - “NO STATE, NO NATION” - (1918-1924)

Following the Bucharest and Neuilly Peace Agreements, the Greek state ceased to supposedly be nationally heterogeneous and became a homogeneous state with a single Greek nation. As a result of this, all unresolved ethnic problems with the non-Greek population living in Greece, all of a sudden, disappeared. This was irrespective of the fact that Greece expanded its territory into Greek occupied Macedonia and Western Thrace and with it acquired non-Greek territories and non-Greek people. At this time the Dodecanese islands and Cyprus were still outside of the political boundaries of this small but overly ambitious Greek kingdom. The islands Astypalaria, Kalimpos, Karpathos, Leros, Rhodes, Chios and others remained under Italian occupation after the Treaty of Versailles.

According to their national origin and corresponding manifested external national consciousness, such as language, customs and traditions, about 133,761 or 93.5% Greeks, 6,874 or 4.8% Turks, and 2,455 or 1.7% Jews, for a total of 143,080 inhabitants lived in the Dodecanese islands. (Megali eliniki enkidlopedia, Athina, 1930, tomos th, p. 600). Similarly, a large and compact Greek population lived in Cyprus, which at the time was under British rule. According to their ethnic origin, as well as on their basis of cultural traditions, 274,180 or 79.7% of these people were Greeks, 64,180 or 18.65% were Turks and 5,666 or 1.65% were others. (Ibid. p. 405.)

But despite the fact that a non-Greek population lived in the Greek territory, there were also so-called Greeks living as a Greek minority in traditionally foreign ethnic and national territories. These were the so-called Greek minority that lived in present day southern Albania and the so-called Greek minority that lived inside the Turkish state in the vicinity of Smyrna and Istanbul.

There were 200,000 or 83% Albanians (Christians and Muslims) and 40,000 or 17% so-called Greeks by origin, language and national feeling living in Southern Albania. (Ibid. p. 341.)

There was a mixed so-called Greek, Turkish and other distinct Christian population living in the western parts of Asia Minor, especially in Smyrna Region. As a result of the active economic life in Smyrna, the so-called Greek population continuously grew, especially with the intense migration of so-called Greeks from the Dodecanese islands. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, there was a greater presence of a Turkish ethnic element in the region of Smyrna. According to 1919 French Chamber of Commerce reports, the total number of people living in Smyrna Region was around 400,000. But only 50% of that population was considered to be Greek. (Jacques Ancel, *Peuples et Nations des Balkans*, Paris, 1930, p. 185.)

So as far as the Greek national question was concerned, which interested the Greek state, it existed in three different forms: 1) There was an unresolved Greek national and territorial issue where a compact Greek population lived in a traditionally Greek ethnic-historical territory in the Dodecanese and Cyprus; 2) There was a

Greek minority issue with a Greek minority population living within other ethnic-historical territories such as Southern Albania and Turkey; and 3) there was an unresolved national and territorial issue inside Greece where a compact Macedonian population lived in a traditional ethnic and historical Macedonian territory.

## A) THE SOCIALIST WORKERS' PARTY OF GREECE AND ITS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE UNRESOLVED NATIONAL AND TERRITORIAL ISSUES

The existence of unresolved national and territorial issues in the Balkans and beyond very much attracted the attention of the young Greek Socialist Party. At its founding congress in 1918, the Socialist Workers' Party of Greece paid special attention to the unresolved national and territorial issues that arose in Europe after the Great War. The discussions that took place, about the position the Socialist Workers' Party of Greece should be taking, were so appalling that the commission that was supposed to summarize the Party proposals for the resolution of these international questions were incapable of making a single decision before the founding Congress, due to their differing views. The views supported by the so-called "reformist socialists" led by N. Ianiou and A. Sideris, contradicted the views of the Left led by D. Ligdopoulos, N. Komiotis and Dzhoulatis, and not only on ideological issues. This is why two resolutions were submitted to the Socialist Workers' Party of Greece just before its founding Congress. Submitted on one side was the resolution of the so-called "minority", which essentially covered the views of the "reformist socialists", and on the other the resolution of the "majority" which expressed the views of the Left and which was increasingly reinforced in the ranks of the Greek labour movement.

The resolution on settling national and territorial issues in Europe, submitted by the "minority" group, demanded respect for the right to self-determination especially for the people in Alsace, Poland and Trieste. The "minority" group demanded the problems in Alsace and Lorraine be resolved in favour of France because France actively supported the Greek territorial claims in Greek occupied Macedonia, Western Thrace and the region around Smyrna. The "minority" group also advised the Congress to be "cautious and wise at all costs" when dealing with national and territorial issues in the

Balkans, which the Greek state was interested in. (Gheorghi D. Kaculi, *Istoria tu KKE*, tomos 1, 1918-1922, Athina, 1976, p. 119.) Representatives of the “minority” group proposed that Eastern Thrace, a part of European Turkey, become an Autonomous Republic (Autonomous Republic of Marmara) with a hinterland on two sides of the Marmara Sea and the Bosphorus and with Istanbul internationalized. They proposed that these regions become a protectorate of the Society of Nations. The “minority” group also proposed that “the Bulgarian part of Thrace” be taken away from Bulgaria and included in the composition of the Autonomous Republic of Marmara. Western Thrace, as we have shown, was awarded to Greece in accordance with the Paris Peace Accord. Greece did not aspire to lay claim to the so-called “Greek region in Bitola” and the Serbians did not recognize the so-called Greek character of Solun. Neither Greece nor Serbia agreed that an “independent Muslim” Albanian state be created. But, since the Albanian state already existed after 1913, the “minority” group demanded that Albania be weakened by giving power to the ranks of the non-Muslim population, of which its vast majority was of Albanian origin. The “minority” group demanded that the Italian kingdom recognize Albania’s right to Avlona, but with southern Albania in favour of Greece. At the same time, the “minority” group supported Romania’s territorial pretensions to Southern Dobrudzha, Erdei, Transylvania, etc. Southern Dobrudzha was an ethnic Bulgarian territory occupied by Romania after the Second Balkan War. This territory was returned to Bulgaria after World War II under the Kraiova Agreement concluded between Bulgaria and Romania on September 7, 1940. Transylvania was a territory disputed between Hungary and Romania.

With regards to Asia Minor, a Turkish territory, the “minority” group drafted a resolution requiring the regions around Smyrna, Aidiniu and the Dodecanese be given to the Greek state, supporting the idea of creating an Armenian republic at the expense of Turkey, Greece’s eternal historical rival, and creating a Jewish state with Jerusalem as its capital, at the expense of the Palestinian people, etc. (Gheorghi D. Kaculi, *op. cit.*, p. 117). The “minority” group actively advocated for the formation of a Jewish state around Jerusalem, but it did not do it without self-interest. A Jewish state would have given the Greek state the opportunity to evict the large Jewish minority

living in Solun and acquire its assets for which the Greek bourgeoisie had shown great interest.

The “majority” group’s resolution, contrary to the “minority” group’s, was to seek recognition and respect for the right to self-determination for the people in Cyprus, Imbros, Lemnos, Tenedos, Samotrake, Dodecanese, and the right to self-determination of the people in so-called Northern Epirus (southern Albania). The “majority” group called for full rights to repatriation and reparation of the refugee population from the Balkan countries and from Asia Minor and to provide it with the means to return, as well as for the creation of a Balkan Federation. (Epiton eksoterikon zitimatos, To KKE, Episima Kimena, tomos 1, p. 11-12). The “majority” group supported and respected the political, national and linguistic freedoms of people and believed it was possible for all Balkan nations to politically and economically develop regardless of the people’s national and church affiliations. (Ibid.)

From the resolutions proposed for the settlement of territorial issues that existed in Europe and Asia, the Founding Congress of the Socialist Workers’ Party of Greece adopted the resolution proposed by the “majority” group. But, despite the differences that existed between the “majority” and “minority” groups, there were some things that were in common in their resolutions, i.e. in the way the territorial and national issues in the Dodecanese, Cyprus, southern Albania and Greek occupied Macedonia were handled, which were of interest to the Greek state.

## **B) THE SOCIALIST WORKERS’ PARTY OF GREECE AND ITS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE UNRESOLVED NATIONAL AND TERRITORIAL ISSUES IN THE DODECANES ISLANDS AND CYPRUS**

After the First World War, part of the now Greek territory was not included in the composition of the Greek state. The Dodecanese and Cyprus were still under foreign control, and the majority of the population living there was considered to be of Greek origin and traditionally lived on this so-called Greek ethnographic territory. *Ius Solis* (the right to the historical territory) as well as *Ius Civitas* (the right of the nation) were plundered in order to unite them with the

Greek state. However, Turkish people lived in these islands among the so-called Greeks representing 14.35% of the total population. The Turkish people demanded that the majority respect the rights of the minority which included their language, culture, traditions and customs and looked forward to their free national and economic development within the Greek majority. The rights of the Turkish minority in Cyprus, unfortunately, have never been respected by the Greek bourgeoisie, and the Turkish people have always distrusted the Greek majority which has been looking for ways to unite with Greece.

### C) THE SOCIALIST WORKERS' PARTY OF GREECE AND ITS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE SO-CALLED GREEK MINORITY IN SOUTHERN ALBANIA

The existence of a so-called Greek minority in southern Albania (or in so-called Northern Epirus), did not fail to draw attention from the Socialist Workers' Party of Greece. This so-called "Greek population" of southern Albania lived on a traditionally Albanian ethnographic territory and represented only 17% of the total population living in this region. We should mention at this point that the majority of these so-called "Greeks" living in southern Albania were in fact of Vlach origin. Even Eleftheros Venizelos, a symbol of Greek nationalism and expansionism, became involved in this issue when, during the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, he said: "A good part of the Greek population living in southern Albania has the Albanian language as its mother tongue and appears to be of Albanian descent..." (E. Venizelos, *La Grece devant le congres de la Paix*, Paris, 1918.)

*Ius Solis* (the right to Albanian historical territory), as well as *Ius Civitas* (the right of the Christian and Muslim Albanian population representing 83% of the total population living in southern Albania), called for southern Albania to remain inseparable from the newly formed Albanian state. At the same time, the so-called Greek population demanded its right as a minority which included respect for its national, linguistic and cultural traditions within the majority. However, the Socialist Workers' Party of Greece, even though this so-called Greek minority was only 17% of the total population, which lived in a traditionally foreign historical and ethnographic



territory, demanded that this minority be given the right to self-determination and unification with Greece.

## D) THE SOCIALIST WORKERS' PARTY OF GREECE AND ITS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE MACEDONIAN NATIONAL QUESTION

The most important and main unresolved national question that arose in Greece after the Balkan and World War I, was certainly the Macedonian National Question. The vast majority of the population living in Greek occupied Macedonia, before its occupation, was of non-Greek origin (77.50%) and traditionally lived on its own Macedonian ethnic and historic territory. According to *Ius solis* (the right to the Macedonian historical territory), as well as *Ius civitas* (the right of the Macedonian nation), the Macedonian National Question deserved a proper solution in favour of the Macedonian people. The right to the Macedonian historical territory, as well as the right of the Macedonian nation to have its own country, not only improved the Macedonian people's historical legitimacy to Macedonia, but also pledged in favour of the Macedonian people. This Macedonian historical legitimacy for the Macedonian people to have their own country had a long standing historical continuity and stemmed from the existence of the prehistoric and ancient Macedonians. With the Macedonian people being indigenous to Macedonia for many centuries, as well as the natural process of assimilation, all newcomers arriving in the region over the long years, added to the process of natural symbiosis evolving into the formation of the modern Macedonian people living in Macedonia today and speaking the Macedonian language which is probably the mother of all modern Slavic languages. The formation of the historical Macedonian people based on evolution and symbiosis between newcomers and indigenous Macedonians, contributed to the formation of the modern Macedonian people who are the legitimate heirs to the entire Macedonian territory as well as the successors of all Macedonian cultural traditions. A similar historical, territorial and cultural encounter, based on historical processes and symbiosis, took place between the Dacians, Romans and Slavs who today have resulted into the modern Romanians.

The so called Greek population (Vlachs, Albanians, Turks, Latins, etc.) living in Greek occupied Macedonia was only a small minority amounting to about 22% of the total population. But, in spite of the fact that every factor was in favour of the Macedonian people, i.e. to have the right to their own Macedonian historical territory, as well as to be a Macedonian nation with historical legitimacy, the Socialist Workers' Party of Greece refused to pay any attention to the Macedonian National Question. If the same Socialist Workers' Party of Greece could demand for Greek minority rights and the right to self-determination for only 22% of the so called Greeks living in southern Albania, which represented only 17% of the entire population in this region, why couldn't it demand for the right to self-determination for the large Macedonian majority living in Greek occupied Macedonia? Why was the Macedonian population, which amounted to 77.50% of the total population living in Greek occupied Macedonia, and, 83% of the non-Greek population living in Southern Albania and Western Thrace, denied the same rights? By all accounts, even though the so called Greek minority living on Macedonian soil was only 22% of the total population living on traditionally Macedonian ethnic and historical lands, the Socialist Workers' Party of Greece, on one hand, saw this minority as an inseparable part of the Greek state and, on the other, left the Macedonian National Question unresolved. The Socialist Workers' Party of Greece did not treat the Macedonian National Question seriously until 1924, when the CPG was forced to take a stand contrary to its wishes and convictions. But, as the CPG struggled to find a solution to the unresolved national and territorial issues plaguing Greece, it again opted for a resolution that would only benefit Greece. The Socialist Workers' Party of Greece, and later the CPG, decided to keep the clearly non-Greek historical and ethnic territories (Greek occupied Macedonia, southern Albania and Western Thrace) for itself and ignored the unresolved national issues that existed in Greece. This attitude later shaped the CPG's stand on the Macedonian National Question.

### 3. THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREECE AND ITS POLICY OF “STATE WITHOUT A NATION” (1924-1931)

The Socialist Workers' Party of Greece was well aware of the Macedonian National Question but was not much interested in the way it was handled, treated and resolved. Its first contact with it took place back to 1918, but later, after 1920, the Communist Party of Greece, the Socialist Workers' Party of Greece's successor, was forced to look at it more seriously. The CPG became entangled with the Macedonian National Question when Vasil Kolorov, a representative of the Communist Party of Bulgaria (CPB), made a request to the other Balkan Communist Parties to adopt a policy for a united and independent Macedonia. Being unprepared to immediately deal with the issue, Ianis Petsopoulos, the CPG representative, requested a postponement to give the CPG some time to study this “very important issue”. He said the issue needed to be looked at by the CPG Central Committee after his return to Greece. (Polikroni K. Enepediki, i Eliniki Andistasis, 1941-1944, Athina, 1964, p. 83.) The CPG again ran into the Macedonian National Question in 1923, at the Balkan Communist Federation Conference in Sofia. This time A. Stavridis, the CPG representative at the Conference, spoke against drafting a policy for a united and independent Macedonia.

According to Stavridis there was no need for such a policy because, on one hand, drafting a policy for a united and independent Macedonia was not acceptable to the colonist population deposited in Greek occupied Macedonia in the early 1920's, which was now in the majority, and on the other hand, such a policy would not be attractive to the large number of Macedonians who had emigrated to Bulgaria and who were now more interested in uniting Macedonia with Bulgaria. (Kosta A. Bramu, Slavokomunistikes organosis en Makedonias, Athina, 1969, p. 86.) The CPG again expressed its dissatisfaction with the Macedonian national question, this time during a Balkan Communist Federation Advisory Meeting in Moscow, held right after the September uprising defeat in Bulgaria. Here, Sargologos, the CPG representative at the Moscow Advisory Meeting, refused to accept arguments made by G. Dimitrov and V.

Kolarov which were in favour of drafting a policy for a united and independent Macedonia. Sargologos, as did Stavridis in 1923, found such a policy unacceptable to the CPG, especially after the mandatory exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey and after the massive colonization of Greek occupied Macedonia. (Nalca A. Hristoforu, *To Makedonike zitima ke i sovietiki politiki*, Thesaloniki, 1954, p. 112.) During the Comintern Fifth Congress, held in Moscow in 1924, Vasil Kolarov reopened the issue of a united and independent Macedonia which, this time, was also supported by Manuilski, President of the Comintern. Manuilski stated that there were people in Greek, Serbian, Bulgarian and Albanian occupied Macedonia who, despite their ethnic diversity, wanted to create their own Macedonian historical tradition. These peoples who lived in Macedonia, having a special historical tradition, “had the right to national independence and autonomy”. (Gheorghii D. Kaculi, *op. cit.* tomos 11, 1923-1927, Athina, 1976, p. 140-141.) Serafim Maximos, the CPG representative at the Comintern Fifth Congress, however, disagreed. According to Serafim Maximos a policy for a united and independent Macedonia was not acceptable to the CPG, because “there were already 700,000 Greek refugees... and Greek workers in Macedonia who would not be willing to accept Macedonian autonomy”. (Angelos G. Elefantis, *i apeglia tis adinatis epanastasis*, Athina, 1976, p. 38.) But representatives of the Fifth Congress pressured the CPG representatives (S. Maximos, P. Pulipulos and N. Megas) to accept the Comintern’s proposal. According to statements made later by Serafim Maximos: “As representatives of the Party, we had orders from the majority of the Central Committee to support a policy for a united and independent Macedonia, which was contrary to our personal convictions...” (S. Maksimos, *Mia eksigisi*, “Rizospastis”, 6. II 1927, p. 3.)

But the acceptance of a policy in support of a united and independent Macedonia by the Comintern, Balkan Communist Federation and the CPG caused “real anxiety among some CPG members”. (Kosta A. Bramu, *op. cit.*, p. 92.) This was because this policy was “not the wish or the view of the Greek Communists”. (Angelos Elefantis, *i apeglia tis adinatis epanastasis*, Athina, 1976, p. 38.) The first resistance to this policy came from Ianis Kordatos, a CPG Central Committee member and director of the newspaper

“Rizospastis”, an official CPG organ. In an article in “Rizospastis”, Kordatos wrote: “The policy of a united and independent Macedonia and Thrace is out of space and time, because Macedonia is divided into three parts and the inhabitants in Greek Macedonia are all Greeks, as I know this personally.” (Kosta A. Bramu, op. cit., p. 92.)

In view of the anxiety and resistance caused by the CPG’s acceptance of the Comintern policy regarding the Macedonian National Question, before seeking congressional approval of the policy, the CPG Central Committee decided to sample the mood of its various CPG Party organizations. When the delegate returned from his visit to these organizations he reported that, with the exception of the Piraeus Party organization and some sections of the Communist Youth of Greece, every other CPG Party organization opposed the adoption of the Comintern policy on the Macedonian National Question. But, in spite of all the resistance and the negative responses offered by the majority of the Party organizations, the Macedonian National Question was put on the agenda of the Third CPG Extraordinary Congress, which took place in Athens from November 26 to December 3, 1924.

This particular agenda item, however, caused “a lot of heated discussions” during the Third Extraordinary Congress. (Aleku A. Kiru, *Sinomasia enandion tis Makedonias*, Athina, 1950, p. 14.) Two clear tendencies emerged during these discussions. On one hand, a “minority” group, headed by Ianis Kordatos and Tomas Apostolidis, emerged which was against the policy of supporting a united and independent Macedonia. On the other hand, the “majority”, headed by Pantelis Pulipoulos, supported the acceptance of the Comintern’s policy towards the Macedonian National Question. In support for its stand on the disagreement, Ianis Kordatos, leading the “minority” group, argued that a policy for a united and independent Macedonia ignored the New Greek historical reality created after Greek occupied Macedonia was settled by colonists and after the various population exchanges between Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey took place. By accepting this policy of a united and independent Macedonia, argued Kordatos, the CPG is giving the Greek bourgeoisie “a dangerous weapon” to attack and slander the Party for being non-national and non-patriotic. This, he argued, will give the Greek bourgeoisie the

opportunity they need to fuel chauvinism and intolerance against the Greek element of “New Greece” and against the non-Greek peoples. By accepting such a policy the CPG will upset the Greek bourgeoisie and create conditions for introducing a dictatorial regime in Greece. (I. Kordatos, *To ethniko zitima ke e effhini tis epitropis Puliopulu*, “Rizospastis”, 18. II. 1927, p. 3.)

After a long and hard discussion for and against the policy of a united and independent Macedonia, the issue was put to a vote. Of the total 19 representatives who voted, 17 voted for accepting the Comintern policy. While the “minority” was against the acceptance of the policy, the “majority” voted for its acceptance. I. Kordatos and T. Apostolidis had no choice but to respect the will of the majority. The Third CPG Congress in 1924 was in fact the first time the CPG had to seriously deal with the Macedonian National Question.

The last imperialist wars and the peace treaties that followed not only did not resolve the Macedonian National Question, they further complicated it. The Macedonian people continued to be divided and occupied by Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria. On the one hand, the Macedonian people were exposed to national slavery by the bourgeoisie of those countries, and on the other, they were further aggravated by the antagonism between those states... Macedonia’s division between Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria further heightened the desire of the Macedonian people to unite their three parts of their crushed fatherland and to create a unified and independent Macedonia... The CPG Congress which adopted the slogans “United and Independent Macedonia” and “United and Independent Thrace”, proposed by the VI and VII Balkan Communist Advisory Council, were quite acceptable and truly revolutionary...” (To KKE, *Episima kimena, tomos protos, 1918-1924*, 1964, p. 114-115, s.1.)

With the decision taken during the CPG Third Extraordinary Congress, in relation to the Macedonian National Question, i.e. the “majority” imposed its views, but the views of the “minority” were rejected and characterized as Trotskyian and opportunistic. (I. Kordatos, *op. cit.* “Rizospastis”, 17. II 1927, p. 3.) The Comintern, again through D. Manuilski, its representative, labeled I. Kordatos and T. Apostolidis’s views as “social-democratic”. (Ibid.)

## A) THE CPG'S POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL CRISIS AND THE MACEDONIAN NATIONAL QUESTION

The idea that the CPG accepted a policy for a united and independent Macedonia caused a deep internal crisis in the ranks of the CPG's membership. This internal crisis was further intensified by the significant stagnation that lingered in the ranks of the Greek workers' and revolutionary movement. The stagnation was a result of the economic process initiated to stabilize the Greek economy. Subsequent Greek governments, with help and advice from the League of Nations, continued to settle colonists in Greek occupied Macedonia and thereby avoided political destabilization that would have otherwise seriously threatened the Greek state after its defeat at the Sakaria River in the Greco-Turkish war. The battle at the Sakaria River was a historical battle which ended in 1922 with Kemal's Turkey as the victor. The revolutionary crisis that gradually surfaced in Greece after the "Great War" and especially after the Asia Minor Greek catastrophe, under relatively stable economic conditions, slowly began to subside. This, according to the Greek bourgeoisie, of course, was due to its reprisal policies against the Greek workers' movement, especially expressed during the period of the Pangalos dictatorship. Its internal problems as well as the stagnation in the ranks of the Greek workers' movement further aggravated the CPG causing a greater split between the "minority" supporters and those who supported the "majority". By their actions the "majority" gave the "minority" the opportunity it needed to activate and continue the attacks against the policy of a united and independent Macedonia adopted by the CPG at the Third Extraordinary Congress in 1924. But, in order to avoid further internal conflicts and controversies, in November 1926 the CPG's Central Committee, prior to holding the Third Party Regular Congress in March 1927, decided to hold a public discussion on all CPG policies including the policy on the Macedonian National Question.

As it turned out, the contradiction that arose between the so-called "majority" and "minority" over the Macedonian National Question was, of course, a reflection of the deep political and ideological contradictions resulting from the way in which the Marxist theory

was understood and implemented in the Greek historical reality. On the one hand, the “minority” demanded that the general Marxist principles be adopted according to existing conditions in the country, but the “majority”, on the other hand, applied the Marxist science as “dogma” (J. Kordatos, Iperano olon to Koma ke ohi ta prosopa, alla miliktos agonas kata tis iperaristeras, “Rizospastis” 21. II 1927, p. 3.) Unfortunately the way this “dogma” was applied was in contradiction with the Greek historical reality. (X. Vatis, Liga gia tin sizitisi, tus aftoklitus prostates mu, “Rizospastis” 24. II 1927.)

The political and ideological perception demonstrated by the “minority” was championed in 1925 by Ianis Kordatos, leader of the “minority”. According to an article in “Rizospastis” which Kordatos wrote: “The Party cannot skip its historical past and with a single jump overcome its historical era because the Bolshevization of the Party is nothing more than knowing that every communist could adjust the basic Leninist principles in accordance with the real conditions in the country...” (I. Kordatos, Iperano olon to Koma..., “Rizospastis” 20. II 1927.) So, according to Kordatos, the maturity of each communist, especially the leadership, understands the full depth and breadth of the real political and social issues in their country, bearing in mind that in all countries there is not one uniform situation, but various situations due to various political and economic conditions. (Ibid., 21. II 1927, p. 3.) Kordatos concluded: “The crisis in the Party and the stagnation in the Greek workers’ movement can not be resolved by ‘personal attacks and dogmatic aphorisms’...”. (I. Kordatos, Zitima Puliopulu i zitima iperaristeras, “Rizospastis” 15. II 1927, p. 3.) “These problems can be solved by simply unifying the basic Marxist principles with the Greek historical reality which must be objectively reviewed and analyzed.” (I. Kordatos, Iperano olon to Koma..., “Rizospastis” 20. II 1927.)

Ianis Kordatos’s political views found support in H. Vatis who in 1927 published an article in “Rizospastis” entitled “Little for Discussion, Self-Titled Patrons, etc.” in which he argued that: “Marxism and Leninism are theories that are inseparable from the practice of a revolutionary struggle and lose their value if they become a dogma or a scripture...” (X. Vatis, Liga gia tin sizitisi..., “Rizospastis” 24. II 1927.)



After 1926, Pantelis Puliopoulos, CPG Secretary General and leader of the 1924 “majority”, finally accepted the political views of the “minority”, but only temporarily. Puliopoulos believed the stagnation of the Greek workers’ movement and other communist movements in Greece, were due mainly to the weaknesses in the Party being unable to systematically “conquer and properly process the Marxist-Leninist theory and adapt it to the real economic and social conditions in the country...” (Pantelis Puliopoulos, *Me pia enia mborume na milisume gia istorikes “diomorfies” tu kinimatos mas*, “Rizospastis” 6. II 1927.) So, in order to avoid and prevent the stagnation in the ranks of the Greek workers’ movement, Puliopoulos proposed that the Party “get to know the most important real issues it encounters on a daily basis,” and then take a good look at the Greek historical reality in “light of Marxism”. (Pantelis Puliopoulos, *Gia to melon tu Komatos*, “Rizospastis” 7. XII 1927.) Only this way can the Party “explain the Marxist Greek reality...” (Pantelis Puliopoulos, *Me pia enia...*, “Rizospastis” 6. II 1927.) Without the unification of the Marxist theory with the Greek reality, concluded Puliopoulos during the internal party discussion in 1927, it was not possible for the Greek workers’ movement to get out of the severe crisis, which came after 1923.

Based on this political and ideological concept the “minority” continued with its attacks against the policy of a united and independent Macedonia adopted during the 1924 CPG Third Congress - demanding its rejection. After the so-called population exchanges between Greece and Bulgaria and Greece and Turkey, the “minority” viewed Greek occupied Macedonia as a new ethnographic reality. After the large colonist population was settled in Greek occupied Macedonia, the so-called “Greek population” became the majority, and the policy of a united and independent Macedonia was not only a false reflection, but also a profound contradiction to the new Greek ethnographic reality. And, according to Kordatos: “All inhabitants in Greek Macedonia were Greeks...” (Kosta A. Bramu, *op. cit.*, p. 32). Kordatos supported this because he liked to believe that the Greek bourgeoisie expelled the entire “Slavic population” from Greek occupied Macedonia and settled “Greek Macedonia with Greek refugees”. (From Alkidamos’s letter which I. Kordatos published on the 20<sup>th</sup> VIII, 1926 in “*Revolution proletarienne*”.) Kordatos’s idea was supported by H. Vatis as was

shown in an article entitled “The National Question and Our Party”, published in the newspaper “Rizospastis” in 1927. “In the part of Macedonia that belongs to Greece, before 1912,” wrote Vatis, “there lived 513,000 Greeks, 415,000 Turks, 190,000 Macedonians (Bulgarian-Exarchates) and 98,000 others. Today, there are 1,341,000 Greeks, 78,000 Macedonians and 91,000 others (mainly Jews).” (X. Vatis, To ethniko ke to Koma mas, “Rizospastis” 24. III 1927, p. 3). The national structure of the population provided by Vatis, however, did not correspond to the historical reality before or after 1912, or up until the end of World War I. The name “Macedonia”, for Vatis, had only geographical meaning. After 1926, Pantelis Puliopoulos believed that the settlement of the so-called Greek colonists in Greek occupied Macedonia and Western Thrace was an apparent reality as well as “a deadly mistake for a political party to escape”. (Pantelis Puliopoulos, i krisi istera op ton noemvri 1924, “Rizospastis” 5. II 1927, p. 3). Puliopoulos concluded, as did Ianis Kordatos, T. Apostolidis and H. Vatis, that the Greek ethnographic reality required a new policy for the Macedonian National Question. According to the “minority” group, the contradiction that existed within the new Greek ethnographic reality, which was expressed through the non-Macedonian political and national interests for a united and independent Macedonia, i.e. the Macedonian National Question, contributed to the stagnation of the Greek workers’ movement. According to Kardotos: “This policy (the Macedonian Question.), delivered the last blow against the Party, scattering and liquidating it...” (From Alkidesmos’s letter published in “Revolution proletarienne”. Tomas Apostolidis, second representative of the “minority”, also viewed the policy of a united and independent Macedonia as a damaging factor harmful to the Greek workers’ movement, essentially making it an “anti-communist policy”. (Tomas Apostolidis, likvidarizmos, tihodiotizmos ke “ortodoksos” marksismos, “Rizospastis”, 12. III 1927.) The policy, adopted during the Third CPG Extraordinary Congress, since 1924 has been nothing but pure sophistry and political incompetence, unworthy of a serious political party. Supporters of the “minority” connected the policy of a united and independent Macedonia, to the interest of the colonists. In other words, those who supported this policy worked against the interests of the colonist population in Greek occupied Macedonia and Western Thrace.

Warning the “majority” that the “fate of the colonists” depended on the capitalists in Greece, the “minority” group argued that the policy for a united and independent Macedonia be changed to reflect the new Greek ethnographic reality. (X. Vatis, *To ethniko zitima...*, “Rizospastis” 24. III 1927.) If the policy was changed to reflect the new Greek ethnographic reality and to protect the new Greek national interests, argued the “minority”, the Party would essentially achieve two things. On the one hand, the CPG would attract the large colonist population; because these people would be assured that the Party actually supported their colonization of Greek occupied Macedonia. And, on the other hand, the Party would avoid the possibility of the colonists turning against it and becoming a “political reserve of the Greek bourgeoisie”. (Ibid.) If, on the one hand, the policy for a united and independent Macedonia remains as is, argued the “minority”, it will continue to contradict the Greek internal reality because that policy already contradicts the Balkan political reality. The “minority” argued that after the September uprising in Bulgaria failed, a new political situation was created in the Balkans. After the September 1923 uprising failed, Bulgaria ceased to be the revolutionary movement centre in the Balkans. That centre moved to Greece. The Greek kingdom, and later the Greek republic, after 1923, argued the “minority”, entered a profound national crisis similar to the 1919 Bulgarian national crisis. If such a policy, as the policy for a united and independent Macedonia, was to help the Bulgarian revolutionary movement, then the Bulgarian Communist Party would have attracted the Macedonian refugees, especially the right wing of the VMRO. But after the failed September uprising, and especially after VMRO’s defection to Todor Aleksandrov and Alexander Protogerov, the policy for a united and independent Macedonia, argued the “minority”, should be quickly changed to favour Greece in order to help the CPG attract the Greek population, i.e. the colonist masses, and thus maximize the Greek society’s needs for a proletarian revolution. But the Comintern, wrote Kordatos in the newspaper “Rizospastis” in 1927, instead of taking into account the objective historical reality and aligning the Marxist theory in accordance with the specifics of the country, it was satisfied with only setting CPG tasks and “with no knowledge of history, reality, true influence, and power...” (“Rizospastis” 21. II 1927, p. 3.) Naturally, the Greek and Balkan

situation was not described as it truly was but as the Comintern would have liked it to be..." (I. Kordatos, *Mia parantesi*, "Rizospastis", 8. II 1927.)

The "majority" group tried hard to reject the "minority" group's basic argument that the interests of the colonists in Greek occupied Macedonia were "endangered" by the policy for a united and independent Macedonia. P. Puliopoulos and the other leaders of the 1924 "majority" tried to answer this crucial question immediately after the CPG Third Extraordinary Congress was concluded. In the period from 1923 to 1925, Puliopoulos tried hard to dispel the "minority" group's views. In a 1924 article entitled "The Macedonian Volcano", among other things, Puliopoulos wrote: "The workers and the agricultural population, including the refugees in Macedonia and Thrace, have nothing to fear... immediately after the proclamation of autonomy for Macedonia and Thrace is made, the Greek population will be given the opportunity to organize itself in councils and engage in the development and prosperity of Macedonia and Thrace." (Pantelis Puliopulos, *To Makedoniko ifestio*, "Rizospastis", 14. XII 1924.) In regards to the fate of the country which was illegally taken from the Macedonian people, a problem that was of interest to both the Greek and non-Greek colonists, the "majority" group reassured the colonist population that it had no reason to be worried because, immediately after the proclamation of a unified and independent Macedonia was made, the Greek colonists and local villagers "would be called to the National Council to divide the land in accordance with the interests of the poor agricultural population." (Ibid.) The same idea was expressed in the CPG Central Committee Manifesto immediately after the policy for a united and independent Macedonia was adopted at the Third Extraordinary Congress in 1924. In its proclamation to the working people, the CPG Central Committee assured the colonist population that the land would be fairly distributed in favour of the local villagers and colonists within the framework of a unified and independent Macedonia, but through the "National Councils" consisting of colonists and local villagers. (Manifesto tu telefteu sinedriu tu Komunistiku Komatos pros ton ergazomenon lao, "Rizospastis", 14. XII 1924.) At the same time, the "majority" group figured that when the Party accepted the policy of a united and independent Macedonia, under these conditions, it

was possible to attract the colonist population. Despite the fact that the colonists were awarded lands by the Greek state, this population was in a difficult economic situation, and the Party figured it could turn this economic difficulty into class dissatisfaction and make it a class struggle. (“Rizospastis”, 28. II 1928.)

The controversy over the Macedonian National Question, which was also a central issue in the political discussions that led to the Party splitting into a “majority” and a “minority” in 1927, led Party members to question the logic of whether this was a “principle” question for a communist party? First attempting to provide a theoretical explanation was Georgios Siantos, future CPG Secretary General in the period from 1941 to 1944. According to Siantos, a “national question” by its very nature can never be a “principle” question for a communist party. The “principle” question for a communist party, according to Siantos, was the “class struggle” whose purpose was “to replace capitalism”. (G. Siantos, Giro apo tin Krisi tu Komatos, “Rizospastis”, 12. III 1927.) Therefore, Siantos concluded, a “national question” is always a secondary or tactical question and such a question needs to be resolved exclusively through the needs of the “proletarian class struggle”. On this basis, Siantos concluded that adopting the policy of a united and independent Macedonia was “extremely wrong...” despite the fact that in 1924 he had thought the opposite. (Ibid.)

Contrary to Siantos’s views, H. Vatis thought that a “national question could be both tactical and principle at the same time” for a communist party. According to Vatis, a struggle for national liberation of enslaved nations was a “principle” issue for a communist party, and “a communist party could not exist” with an unresolved national question. (X. Vatis, To ethniko zitima... “Rizospastis”, 24. III 1927.) At the same time, Vatis saw the “national question” as a tactical issue for a communist party where revolutionary reserves, including a national liberation movement, could be exploited in a class struggle against capitalism. (Ibid.)

The debates that took place inside the Party, especially around essential issues such as Marxism and its connection to the reality of each country, including the Macedonian national question, very much contributed to polarizing the forces inside the Party. If, on the

one hand, the political views of the so-called “minority” were condemned by the CPG “majority”, and the “majority” Party membership stood firmly behind the political views of the “majority” then, on the other hand, the views of the “minority” against the Macedonian National Question, were supported, but in different ways, by the “majority” of the membership. But, despite the conflict that existed between the “majority” and the “minority” regarding the Marxist theoretical application of the Macedonian National Question and its connection to the Greek reality, the “majority” did not rise in its argumentation to the level of the “minority”. “Majority” representatives were limited to quoting excerpts, mainly from Stalin’s writings. In that respect N. Kutvis (Nikos Zahariadis) was particularly emphasized. Another “majority” supporter (D. Sakarellos) believed that the crisis which existed in the Party, as well as the stagnation that existed and manifested itself in the ranks of the Greek labour movement, was not a real “crisis”, wrote Sakarellos in “Rizospastis”, but one that existed only in Puliopoulos’s mind and not on historical grounds.

## B) THE MACEDONIAN NATIONAL QUESTION AND THE STAGNATION OF THE GREEK WORKING MOVEMENT IN THE PERIOD FROM 1923 TO 1931

By the very nature of its establishment during the 1924 CPG Third Congress, the Macedonian National question certainly contributed to the stagnation of the Greek workers’ and communist movements. But was the policy of a united and independent Macedonia the main reason for this stagnation?

In the period after the Greco-Turkish war ended with Greece’s defeat at Sakaria, when Greece was in a deep political, economic and psychological crisis, left political orientation intensified within the CPG and, immediately after 1923, political radicalism began to surface. This political radicalism which was “not unique to Greece”, in its programs, did not take into account and did not implement policies that were consistent with the Greek reality on the ground. (I. Kordatos, Iperano olon to Koma..., “Rizospastis”, 20. II 1927.) This “discrepancy” between the CPG’s political programs and the Greek reality, definitely contributed to the problems in the country, during a time when the Party was preparing to take power... to be “terra

incognita”. (Pantelis Puliopulos, Merika apo ta “paradoksa tu kinimatos mas”. “Rizospastis”, 1. II 1927, r. 3.) This was especially reflected in the views of the CPG in relation to the essential political issues, such as government problems, state regulations, the agrarian question, the Macedonian National Question, and so on.

## Government problems

Government problems were the main political problem in which all layers of Greek society were interested. This was one of the issues reviewed at the CPG Founding Congress in November 1918. According to the party program, adopted at the Socialist Workers’ Party of Greece’s Founding Congress, the Party pledged to fight for the removal of the monarchist institution, for the democratization of legislation, for reforming the executive and judicial system and for the establishment of a people’s democracy in preparation for the creation of a socialist society. (Programa simeron apetision, apetisis politika, to KKE, episima..., tomos protos..., p. 7.) But this clever little stance on the creation of a people’s democracy, as a transitional step to a socialist society, which could have been acceptable to a small property-owning Greek society, was quickly abandoned. In 1920, at its Second CPG Congress, the Party essentially changed its policy on this important issue. The idea of forming a so-called People’s Democracy was rejected during the CPG Second Congress. The Party concluded that a transition from bourgeois to a socialist society did not necessarily require a transition through a so-called “people’s democracy”. A transition could be made directly with the introduction of a proletariat dictatorship and a gradual liquidation of the classes. (Apofasi gia to programa tu SEKE, To KKE Episima... tomos protos..., p. 64.) This new Party position was clearly stated in the 1929 Second Congress final documents. According to the concluding statements made at the CPG Second Congress, the Party vowed to fight with all its might to take over the government and to nationalize all means of production and to create a socialist society through the establishment of a proletariat dictatorship. (Katastatikon tu SEKE, To KKE, episima... tomos protos..., p. 68.) In 1924, at its Third CPG Congress, the Party took a step forward in its political unrealism. In its Manifesto directed at the working people, adopted at the CPG Third Congress, the CPG vowed that it would fight against fascism

and take control of the government, even though there was no fascist movement in Greece at that time. “We will not achieve anything lasting for our working people,” said the Manifesto to the working people, “if we don’t take power into our own hands and if we don’t create our workers’ and agricultural government.” (Manifesto proston ergazomeno lao, op. cit., p. 530.) But were the conditions in Greece mature enough for an immediate Soviet type government?

Capitalism certainly took a couple of steps forward in Greece in the early 20th century, but was still in its primary stages. In time it inevitably affected the working class numbers, structure and political ideas in the country. Despite its rise, the Greek proletariat was still not a serious enough force capable of contributing to radical social and political change. The Greek proletariat was not really an industrial proletariat and was not concentrated in the great industrial centres, like that of Russia before 1918. According to a 1917 Greek state economic report, there were 2,213 different enterprises in Greece with 36,117 employees. (Apostolos Vacalopoulos, op. cit., p. 226.) Of the 36,117 workers who worked in the industrial sector, 10,680 worked in the textile industry, 10,136 in the food industry, and only 252 people worked in the metallurgical industry where the real class consciousness was created in the workers. (Ibid.) Worker awareness and class consciousness had not yet crystallized in the majority of the Greek proletariat. It was a miracle that in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Greek proletariat even had professional worker awareness, given the fact that the majority of the Greek proletarians were “more or less” owners of their own enterprises and, in a genuine Marxist sense, “the majority were not even proletarians”. (I. Kordatos, Iperano olon to Koma..., “Rizospastis” 19. II 1927.) According to I. Kordatos: “Almost all Greek workers had a cottage or a small field, some property in the village, a vineyard or even a garden...” (From Alkidamos’s letter published by Kordatos in “Revolution proletarienne”.) Dualism in property (working in a city while owning land and property in the village) did, however, influence the level of consciousness, especially political consciousness. Property dualism gave rise to political dualism and the vast majority of Greek workers still expressed and nurtured sensitive “minority” views. (Ibid.) This was due to the fact that the majority of Greek workers originated from villages or small property families, and that is why “the working



class expressed ‘minority’ views, especially bourgeois democratic views...” (X. Vatis, I krisi tu Komatos, ta etia ke ta simperazmata, “Rizospastis” 12. III 1927.) Of the total of 150,000 workers existing in Greece after the First World War Greek territorial expansion, only 10,000 were real proletarians (in property and consciousness) and had cherished the “tradition of a class struggle”. (“Rizospastis” 25. II 1927.) This number represented only 1.6% of the entire Greek population and these people were not able to carry out any proletarian revolution in Greece under peaceful economic and political conditions. On the other hand, the Party’s political program, which envisioned nationalization and direct establishment of a proletariat dictatorship, frightened the petty bourgeoisie who viewed the CPG’s radical, political and social programs with great distrust.

## The Agrarian Question

Another crucial issue to deal with was the solution of the agrarian question, especially when the majority of the people living in Greece worked in the field of agriculture. In 1907, for example, 76% of the working population was engaged in agriculture, and only 24% in other various professions. After 1924, after the large population of colonists was brought to Greece, it too became engaged in agriculture, mainly due to the fact that the majority of colonists were settled in the villages. In Greek occupied Macedonia alone there were 112,111 agricultural families with 427,297 people dependent on agriculture to make a living. The way in which this issue was handled and solved depended on who was going to be supported by almost 65% of the total population living in Greece after the “Great War”. At this point the CPG saw an opportunity that, with a realistic policy, it could get support from the agrarian class despite the fact that “there was no class consciousness” at the time. The desire of the so-called “Greek” peasant, shown for his own piece of land, has been expressed many times over the centuries. The so-called “Greek” peasant saw his personal freedom, as well as his economic security and economic prosperity, only in the land. And any political solution, which questioned the ownership of his land, was unacceptable and alien to him. That is why the CPG could not afford to give this subject too much attention. In its adopted resolution during its 1918 Founding Congress, the CPG demanded that Chiflik

(feudal estates) and monastery properties be nationalized and the land be given to the municipalities responsible for land redistribution. (Apofasi dia ton agrotikon, To KKE, Episima Kimena... tomos protos..., p. 59.) This approach would naturally benefit the so-called Greek peasant. By doing this the CPG, on one hand, attracted the naïve Greek peasant and, on the other, did not distract and scare the so-called Greek peasant who owned a piece of land. Unfortunately the CPG changed its mind regarding its approach and decided to alter its policy on the agrarian question. In its 1920 CPG Second Congress Resolution, the CPG said that the only possible and acceptable solution to the agrarian question was through the nationalization of lands and production of agricultural products. This was to take place as soon as the Party's political program "foresaw the takeover of government by the workers from the cities and by the peasants." (Ibid.) Unfortunately, this CPG approach and treatment of the agrarian question was in contradiction with the personal convictions of the so-called Greek peasant, who could not imagine his existence without his own piece of land. With this policy the CPG alienated many people and moved them from its side to the side of the bourgeois parties, which were willing to give the so-called Greek peasant his piece of land and recognize the right to his property. This, of course, created a political vacuum for the Agricultural Party to step in and fight against the economic exploitation of the so-called Greek peasant without questioning the ownership of his land.

## The Macedonian National Question

CPG dogmatism not only manifested itself on the political field with the slogans for a direct Soviet style government, the nationalization of lands and a general armed strike. CPG political dogmatism also took unfathomable measures in relation to the Macedonian National Question.

The internal Party struggles that took place in the period from 1924 to 1927 confirmed that the Macedonian National Question was a terra incognita for the CPG.

The dogmatic setting of the Macedonian National Question within the framework of the general CPG dogmatic policy, in the period

from 1924 to 1931, greatly contributed to the Macedonian National Question seriously affecting the stagnation of the Greek workers' and revolutionary movements. This stagnation was also due to the fact that the Macedonian National Question was not looked at in response to the interests of the Macedonian nation, but in response to other interests. In other words, with the policy for a united and independent Macedonia, the Macedonian National Question was put in place and treated as a Macedonian people issue and not as a Macedonian National Question. The Macedonian Question was not of national but of political concern placed there in the interest of the Comintern. This policy (a united and independent Macedonia) was in fact not a natural reflection of the historical reality; of the existence of the Macedonian nation. In essence it was in deep contradiction to the reality on the ground.

### Existence of the Macedonian nation

With Macedonia's invasion, occupation, division and illegal annexation in 1913 by Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and Albania, everything possible was done to extinguish the existence of the Macedonian nation. The Macedonian people, however, did not cease to exist or stop to express their national identity in its various forms in the four parts of occupied Macedonia. "Don't expect me, an ordinary Macedonian, to answer the question of what I am and to say that I feel Serbian. For a number of years the Bulgarians tried to brainwash me into thinking that I am Bulgarian. But all I can say is that I am a Macedonian!" (Yugoslav Archives, Kingdom of Serbia Ministry of Internal Affairs SHS, doc. 4,485, 17. XII 1923.) According to another Kingdom of Serbia Ministry of Internal Affairs confidential report, the Macedonian people "saw themselves as special and entitled to be autonomous". The Macedonian people felt and expected to be free and independent after the many centuries of slavery they had endured. (Ibid., doc. 5,546, 18. XII 1923.)

The Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia also thought that they "are a special people because behind them they have a great history, full of struggles for their liberation and for Macedonia's independence." (Information taken from a letter sent to the newspaper "Rizospastis" by the Macedonian people from the village Ekshi-Su, published on October 1, 1934.) Similar national

feelings were also expressed and cherished by the Macedonian people from the villages German, Medovo, Shtrkovo, Vineni and Orovnik, who protested in front of N. Kiriakopoulos, saying that they are Macedonians and, as Macedonians, felt offended when they were called by different names. “We are nothing but Macedonians!” shouted the villagers! (“Rizospastis”, 25. I 1927.) The same was confirmed by the people of Voden, who felt insulted when the Greek authorities called them “Bulgarians”, “rebels” and other slanderous names. (Ibid., 10. VI 1934.) The Macedonian national consciousness was not only present in Greek occupied Macedonia but it was also fiercely defended, even in the courts, along with their Macedonian national identity. (Ibid., 14. VI 1934.) The same was confirmed by Macedonian soldiers who served in the Greek military and who were accused by their superiors of being Bulgarian and for speaking a Bulgarian language. According to a letter published in the newspaper “Neos Rizospastis” the Macedonian soldiers insisted that they were “Macedonians only” and spoke the Macedonian language. “The language we speak is Macedonian, not Bulgarian...” (Information taken from a letter written by a Macedonian soldier from the 28<sup>th</sup> regiment stationed in Lerin, sent to the newspaper “Neos Rizospastis” and published on December 31, 1933.) It is well known that Macedonian soldiers refused to reject their Macedonian national identity even under the most extreme conditions; even when facing a Greek firing squad. The same was true for civilians like Paraskevov, an ordinary Macedonian villager who was accused of cooperating with the rebels. He not only rejected the accusation of being a traitor, but also the accusation that he was referred to as a Greek. A few minutes before his execution, Paraskevov said: “No, even though I was born in Sofia, I am not a Bulgarian, nor a Greek. I am a Macedonian!” (“Neos Rizospastis”, 5 VIII 1932.) According to the CPG representative in Greek occupied Macedonia, the Macedonian national consciousness was present in all the Macedonian people who wanted their own Macedonian state, not a state “subordinated to Bulgaria or to Greece.” (“Rizospastis”, 3, II 1934.) This Macedonian reality was also observed by M. Grae, the French Consul in Solun. In a confidential letter sent to S. Pizhon, the French Foreign Minister, Grae reported that a “Macedonian may obey under duress, like everyone else, but in his soul always remains a Macedonian”. (Ministere des Affaires Etrangeres, Archive diplomatique, Grèce 1918-1929, Paris, dosie 52, p. 110.)

But how was this “Macedonian reality” reflected in the CPG’s political program in relation to the Macedonian National Question? The CPG, in its 1924 Third Congress Resolution, referred to the Macedonian population as being of a variety of different people, and that is why the CPG undertook to support “all the national and political demands (national schools, local national autonomy, church freedom, and respect for national feelings) of the enslaved peoples living in Macedonia”. (To KKE Episima... tomos protos..., p. 517.) A similar spirit, which did not correspond to the historical and ethnographic reality in Macedonia, was also noted in an article written by P. Puliopoulos, published in “Rizospastis” in December 1924 under the title “Macedonian Volcano” in which Puliopoulos wrote: “All Macedonians from Turkish, Bulgarian, Albanian, Romanian and Greek descent in Serbian Macedonia should have been Serbs. Also, all Macedonians of Serbian, Bulgarian, Romanian, etc., descent should have been Greeks or Bulgarians in Greek and Bulgarian Macedonia.” (Pantelis Puliopulos, op. cit., “Rizospastis”, 11-14. XII 1924.) This spirit of a political and ethnographic compromise, made at the Balkan Communist Federation Conference, the CPG supported until 1931-1932. (“Rizospastis”, 21 III 1931.) This unprincipled positioning of the Macedonian National Question under conditions when there was only one nation in Macedonia - the Macedonian nation - and several national minorities - Vlachs, Jews, Roma, etc., - had heavy political consequences. Despite that, the CPG “minority” group still concluded that: “If there were different nations (Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, etc.), in Macedonia it would be normal then that they would have different national feelings and different national interests, i.e. Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian, which would be manifested through the Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian national consciousness. These “different” national interests, highlighted by the “minority” group, were viewed as deep contradictions to Comintern policies for a united and independent Macedonia. Therefore, the “minority” demanded that the policy for a united and independent Macedonia be immediately removed and replaced with the slogan calling for free self-determination of the Macedonian people (Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians, Vlachs) and the unification of Greeks with Greece, Bulgarians with Bulgaria and Serbs with Serbia. (X. Vatis, To ethniko zitima ke to Koma mas, “Rizospastis”, 26. III 1927.) The same idea was

expressed by Puliopoulos after 1926, who also claimed the right to self-determination of the “enslaved nations” in Macedonia and, of course, the unification of Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbs with their home countries. (Pantelis Puliopulos, op. cit., “Rizospastis”, 5. II 1927.)

This “unprincipled positioning” of the Macedonian National Question gave the “minority” group the opportunity it needed to attack the policy for a united and independent Macedonia even more profoundly. The various political problems highlighted by the “minority” group as issues requiring adjustments between Marxist theory and Greek reality did not include the Macedonian National Question. According to I. Kordatos, for example, there was no Macedonian National Question, because the Greek bourgeoisie with their policy of “voluntary” and compulsory exchange of populations between Bulgaria and Greece and between Turkey and Greece had already resolved that problem. This was said despite the fact that 240,000 Macedonians, of Macedonian origin, language and national consciousness, still lived in Greek occupied Macedonia. H. Vatis, however, believed that there existed a “mass of peasants... who spoke a language similar to the Bulgarian language... and who did not succeed in creating their own Macedonian national tradition...” Vatis did not know any of the Balkan Slavic language and his views of the Macedonian language, as well as the Macedonian National Question, were created from what he learned from Greek bourgeois literature.

The CPG’s position on the Macedonian National Question as a formal, rather than an absolute, Macedonian issue disillusioned the Macedonian population and basically stunted the emergence of a Macedonian movement which, according to the CPG, should be in favour of a single Macedonian state with Greeks, Bulgarians, Vlachs, Roma, but no Macedonians living in Macedonia. This is not, however, what the Macedonian people wanted. For them a United and independent Macedonia meant a Macedonian state with a Macedonian national character. This has always been the Macedonian people’s deep desire and historical aspiration. The inaction of the Macedonian population in Greek occupied Macedonia attracted P. Puliopoulos’s attention who thought he could get closer to the Macedonian people if he promoted the idea

that he believed the people in Macedonia are Macedonians (i.e. Greeks, Bulgarians, Vlachs, Roma, etc., but not ethnic Macedonians, who wanted their own state). He spoke of the people in Macedonia, particularly the Macedonian villagers, and promoted the idea that they did not nurture or manifest any Greek, Serbian or Bulgarian national consciousness, but only Macedonian. That is why the CPG's basic assumption, in relation to the Macedonian National Question between 1924 and 1931 was in error, wrote Puliopoulos at the camp in Akronavlia. We positioned the Macedonian National Question "as a geographical question" rather than a "national question", he added. (Pantelis Puliopulis, *Gia to Makedoniko, Arthra, thesis ke polemikes*, Athina, 1976, p. 76.) Our approach should have been to express the Macedonian National Question as "a principle issue", he added. (Ibid.) Instead, the CPG put forth a policy for an independent Macedonian state to benefit a nation which in essence did not exist, he concluded. The political, ideological and dogmatic approach used to solve essential problems such as the issue of governing, the agrarian question and the convoluted Macedonian National Question, all set up and treated as a "Macedonian Question", literally paralyzed the Party's activities. Because of this, the Party experienced modest growth in its activities. Despite its great efforts, especially in relation to the Macedonian National Question and the village issue, the Party did not achieve much success. In the period from 1923 to 1931, its political dogmatism was essentially a major obstacle in its effort to develop the Greek workers' and communist movements. Within the framework of this general dogmatic policy, and in the way it was treated, the Macedonian National Question greatly contributed to the stagnation of the Greek workers' movement. Unfortunately the aspirants of the "majority" were unable to see the basic underlying and unique obstacles that got in their way as they moved along.

Despite the strong internal and political clashes that took place inside the Party in relation to the substantive political issues experienced, as well as in relation to the Macedonian National Question, the CPG did not introduce anything new in relation to the "national question" during its Third Regular Congress held in Athens in 1927. According to the Party's adopted resolution, the Congress rejected the views of the "comrades who proposed eliminating the policy for a united and independent Macedonia".

The Congress also rejected their “idea that this policy was based on less important facts, and on speculation of whether there is or not a Macedonian and a Thracian nation.” (To KKE, *Episima Kimena, tomos defteros*, 1925-1928, p. 209.) The Congress also confirmed the Party’s policy on the Macedonian National Question adopted during the CPG Third Extraordinary Congress held in 1924 and requested that it remain unchanged. As a result of this and of the Party’s general political platform, in terms of handling essential political issues, the stagnation in the Greek labour movement continued to exist. All these deficiencies experienced by the CPG, especially the inaction towards realistically tackling the Macedonian National Question, were observed by the Comintern. Then, in 1931, the Comintern sent an open letter, addressed to members of the CPG, accusing them of falling behind in the “revolutionary struggle of the nations enslaved by the Greeks” and that the Party did not make any appropriate effort to use “the enormous sympathy the oppressed peoples have for the CPG in relation to the communist movement...” (Ekliksi tis ektelestikis epitropis komunistikis diethnus, *To KKE apto 1931 os to 1952*, p. 19-20, s.l.)

#### 4. THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREECE AND ITS POLICY OF “NATION WITHOUT A STATE” (1935-1940)

With the formation of the new CPG Central Committee in 1931, under Comintern intervention, which, besides Nikos Zahariadis, included Ianis Ioanidis, Stilianos Sklavenas, Ianis Mihalidis, Vasilis Nefeloudis, Leonidas Strindos and G. Konstantinidis, the CPG ended its “prehistoric” era and began a new “historic” period showing growing political practicality. Also, the proactive political realism experienced by the Comintern contributed to the CPG’s achievements and success in the Greek political elections, etc. A communist was elected mayor in Kavala in 1934 for the first time in Greece. Unfortunately, because the CPG’s new policy was imposed by the Comintern and the CPG again formally accepted it without question, it again found itself at odds with the Greek historical reality. Fortunately, but only by accident, the new CPG policy was a reflection and corresponded more closely than before to the objectives of the Greek historical reality on the ground. With this the CPG began to shape its agenda in accordance with the Greek



historical reality, but without getting rid of its political dogmatism that would be present as a glorious political characteristic in its future. It will naturally contribute to its revival in 1968, when several Communist parties in Greece will be formed: the CPG, with a pro-Soviet orientation, the CPG with a Marxist-Leninist- Stalinist orientation, and the CPG Internal with an EU-Communist orientation. In other words the decisions made in January 1934, during the CPG Central Committee Sixth Session, were more realistic and closer to the Greek reality on the ground than before. It did better than expected given that Greece belonged to the group of countries which the Comintern characterized as countries with a medium degree of capitalism and development. (To KKE apo 1931 os..., p. 30.) The CPG Central Committee also came to the conclusion, given that Greece had an average level of capitalist development and belonged to the category of such countries where it was possible to move from a bourgeois-democratic system to a socialist revolution and where “a proletariat dictatorship did not need to be immediately imposed”, that it would need to make a transition from a democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants to a “socialist dictatorship of the proletariat” but not right away - sometime in the future. (Ibid.) In this way, the CPG rejected the leftist views of imposing a direct Soviet style government, of imposing a direct proletariat dictatorship, and so on.

The political realism that came from the Comintern, as well as the pressure that was expressed from within the Party for creating policies that, as much as possible, approximate the country’s historical reality, could not be expressed without referring to issues relating to the Macedonian National Question. The existence of the Macedonian nation was an undeniable historical reality which was impossible to ignore. The existence of the Macedonian nation definitely influenced CPG views regarding the Macedonian National Question. There were clashes every day between the Macedonian people and the authorities, during which the Macedonian people manifested and expressed their Macedonian national consciousness. The Macedonians even expressed these feelings through the “Rizospastis” newspaper, an organ of the CPG, which published articles on a daily basis about the difficult Macedonian national and social situation experienced on their ancestral soil in Greek occupied Macedonia. A number of articles were also published in

“Rizospastis” for the benefit of the Macedonian nation in the column entitled “Rizospastis among the Macedonians”. Included among the many articles published in the period between 1932 and 1934, were the articles entitled “With the Macedonians in Macedonia”, “Down with national oppression - Macedonians under the yoke of the Greek bourgeoisie”, “We are not Bulgarians or Greeks, we are Macedonians”, and so on, in which - the Macedonian national consciousness was clearly and uncompromisingly expressed. Macedonian national feelings were also expressed in letters the Macedonian people sent and were published in “Rizospastis” in the Macedonian language but with the Greek alphabet.

Strongly influenced by the growing declaration of a Macedonian national consciousness, the CPG decided to reject the theory that the Macedonian people were Greeks, Serbians, Bulgarians, Vlachs, etc., and recognized the Macedonian nation. The CPG concluded that “the Macedonian nation is neither Bulgarian, nor Greek, nor Serbian, but MACEDONIAN”. (“O Neos Rizospastis”, 24. XI 1932.) The CPG also concluded that the people in all (occupied) parts of Macedonia, be they under Bulgaria, Greece or Serbia, are neither Greeks nor Bulgarians, nor Serbians..., they are only Macedonians. This was confirmed by articles published in “Rizospastis” which appeared from time to time after the 1924 CPG’s Third Extraordinary Congress. But these articles were a result of the pressure exhibited by expressions of a Macedonian national consciousness... Unfortunately the Party, as well as the Comintern and other parties in the countries that occupied Macedonia did not recognize the existence of a Macedonian nation and definitely rejected the theory. The CPY, for example, within its “statehood and nationality” policy for Yugoslav nations within Yugoslavia, did not recognize the Macedonian nation until after 1939. Before that it rejected the CPG’s theory. One of the last Yugoslav advocates of the theory of Greeks, Serbians, Bulgarians, Vlachs, etc., living in Macedonia was Milovan Djilas. “But to be sure of that,” wrote ‘Rizospastis’, “all we have to do is pay them an ordinary visit at one of the places in the Macedonian mountains, perhaps in Kostur or Lerin Region, and we will quickly figure it out. You get your answer from the people’s customs and their nature which is not Greek, Bulgarian or Serbian at all... Their clothes have

something special and so does their language... Their language may resemble the Bulgarian, but it is not the same... By knowing the Macedonian language, of course, you can understand both the Serbians and the Bulgarians. Today, another 100,000 people are speaking that language as THEIR MOTHER TONGUE. The people there know no other language. There have been so many centuries, since the Macedonian people settled in Macedonia, so that today they don't know anything more except that they are born in the place where they will die and that they are neither Greeks nor Serbians nor Bulgarians..." (Ibid.) It is worth mentioning at this point that the CPG experienced the brightest period in its history, from 1932 to 1935, in relation to the Macedonian National Question, after it recognized the Macedonian nation. Unfortunately, after 1935, the CPG decided to "suppress" the Macedonian National Question until it again needed the Macedonian people for "tactical" purposes.

Its recognition of the Macedonian nation, as well as the strong pressure applied by the Macedonian people, which was more pronounced after 1931, forced the CPG to allow the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (MRO United) to also be formed in Greek occupied Macedonia. The MRO (United), under a CPG initiative for minorities, organized a Conference in Solun in June 1932, which was attended by 4 delegates from Lerin Region, 2 from Kostur Region, and 1 each from Solun, Lagadina, Kukush, Drama and Voden Regions. This Conference was attended by eleven minority representatives as well as Sklavenas, a CPG representative. During the Conference it was decided to establish minority departments in all regional and district Party committees. Another Conference was held in September 1932 in Berovo and in 1934 the founding MRO (United) Conference for all of Greek occupied Macedonia was convened in Voden. This Conference was attended by 9 delegates representing the Macedonian people from the Lerin, Kostur, Voden and Enidzhe-Vardar Regions.

After reviewing the economic and political situation in Greece, the Conference adopted a decision to establish the MRO (United) in all parts of Greek occupied Macedonia and to appoint its political leadership. Among those appointed were Andreia Chipov, Secretary, Hristo Galabov, Deputy Secretary, Mihail Kleanev, responsible for

Lerin Region, and Aleko Tenekedzhiev, responsible for Voden Region. (Andreia Chipov, CPG and the Macedonian National Question, v. "Voice of the Aegeans", III, No. 29, 30, 31, Skopje, 1953.) Solun was selected as the seat of MRO (United) where it began to publish the first fliers in the Macedonian language and the newspapers "Makedonsko Delo" and "Balkanska Federatsia". (Ibid.)

After its formation, the MRO (United) political leadership began to organize its first groups in the territory of Greek occupied Macedonia. Two groups consisting of ten members and one commission consisting of three members were formed in the village Arsen in Voden Region, whose basic task was to form similar MRO (United) groups all over Voden Region. The newly created MRO (United) groups in the village Arsen took an oath that as Macedonians they would fight for Macedonia's full independence from the "Bulgarian, Greek and Serbian yoke" and demanded from the CPG to allow the publication of a Macedonian newspaper "in the Macedonian mother tongue". (This information was obtained from a letter written by the MRO (United) Macedonian groups from Arsen and sent to the newspaper "Rizospastis", which was then published on 12. IX 1934.) Similar MRO (United) organizations were also formed in other parts of Greek occupied Macedonia. Two such groups were formed in Ekshi-Su, Kostur Region, with a total membership of 15 people. The main task for the Ekshi-Su groups was to prove "to the Greek master that we are neither Greeks nor Bulgarians nor Serbs", but pure Macedonians and that the Macedonian people were committed to continuously fighting for their rights including the right "to speak our Macedonian mother tongue". (This information was obtained from a letter written by the MRO (United) Macedonian groups from Ekshi-Su and sent to the newspaper "Rizospastis", which was then published on 1. IX 1934.) At the same time the Ekshi-Su groups called on the Macedonian people from the villages Aitos, Zelenich and Liubenka to join the ranks of MRO (United) and to fight together for the right to publish a newspaper "in their native Macedonian language". (Ibid.) A MRO (United) group was also formed in the village of Pateli whose basic goal was to "liberate the many tortured Macedonian people" from the unbearable Greek yoke of slavery. (This information was obtained from a letter written by the MRO (United) Macedonian

groups from Pateli and sent to the newspaper “Rizospastis”, which was then published on 1. IX 1934.)

The appearance of MRO (United) in Greek occupied Macedonia, as a left-wing Macedonian political organization, was received with great admiration by the Macedonian population and, as a result, “managed to organize bases in Kostur, Lerin, Voden, Solun, Lagadina, Kukush, Seres and Drama. In total MRO (United) established 17 cells with 893 members”. (Information obtained from a letter written by A. Chipov and sent to Dimitar Vlahov, Archive of Macedonia, Dimitar Vlahov Foundation, No. 21 (18).) MRO (United)’s first success in Greek occupied Macedonia was the founding of a Macedonian language newspaper. Members from the Lerin Region branch began to operate a Macedonian language newspaper called “Zemiodelsko Zname” (The agricultural flag). Another remarkable success achieved by MRO (United), of course, was the candidacy of Secretary Andreia Chipov in the 1935 parliamentary elections. In the electoral list, in place of writing his profession, Chipov wrote “Macedonian”. (Ibid.)

The CPG changed its policy in relation to the Macedonian National Question simultaneously with the recognition of the Macedonian nation and the establishment of MRO (United). Now, instead of calling for a unified and independent Macedonia, which was MRO (United)’s main political slogan since 1931, the CPG adopted a policy that called for full equality of minorities within the Greek state. This policy was quietly and formally adopted by the Party during the CPG’s Sixth Congress in 1935. (This information was taken from Nikos Zahariadis’s speech which he gave during the CPG Central Committee Seventh Extended Sitting at 11-14. II 1957.) The shift in the CPG’s policy towards the Macedonian National Question after 1931 was necessary because the policy of a united and independent Macedonia “was a political-sectarian mistake that we accepted for reasons of political expediency... and with the intention of helping the Bulgarians in the fight they were leading against MRO...” (Information obtained from Nikos Zahariadis’s speech given at the CPG Central Committee Plenum at 18-24. II 1957.)

The new policy to provide the minorities equal rights within the Greek state, which the CPG began to implement since 1931, stagnated the MRO (United)'s activities in Greek occupied Macedonia. Unfortunately, the policy for a united and independent Macedonia, which the MRO (United) was implementing, was in deep contradiction with the new CPG policy for minority equality within the Greek state, which the CPG was implementing since 1931. The CPG, however, did publish an article to the benefit of the politics of a united and independent Macedonia, but in practical terms it did not do anything to help the Organization. The political contradiction between the MRO (United) and the CPG had severe consequences for MRO (United) activities and stunted the Organization's growth in Greek occupied Macedonia. According to information obtained from A. Chipov's memoirs published in the newspaper "Glas na Egeitsite", the CPG did not help MRO (United) and refused to allow Macedonian communists to join it.

The Party formally and officially adopted the policy for minority equality within the Greek state at the CPG Sixth Congress held in December 1935. But, in order to find understanding and support within the Comintern on the new Macedonian National Question's political orientation, the CPG convened a meeting in Moscow, where it sought to persuade the Comintern leaders that there was need to urgently reject the policy for a united and independent Macedonia. With various statistics in their hands on the so-called "real ethnographic" population structure in Greek occupied Macedonia, produced after the settlement of the massive colonist population, the CPG delegates in Moscow persuaded the old Polish communist, Oskar Valetski, leader of the Balkan section, to carry forward the CPG resolution approved during the 1935 CPG Sixth Congress. In other words, by adopting the CPG's new policy regarding the Macedonian National Question, the CPG was hoping to make MRO (United)'s policy of a united and independent Macedonia, null and void. (D. Nefeludi, N. Athina, Anamnesis 1930-1940, Athina, 1974, p. 79.) Oskar Valetski, however, did not support the CPG recommendation and, in fact, spoke against the CPG Sixth Congress decision at the Comintern Executive Committee Meeting, attended by D. Manuilsky, P. Toliati, T. Gotwald, G. Dimitrov, V. Peak and others. CPG representative Vasilis Nefeloudis, member of the CPG Politburo, supported by Ianis Mihailidis, Elektra Sideridis

and Vasilis Bargotas, representatives of the Greek Communist Youth in the Communist Youth International, defended the CPG's decisions, insisting that they were right and that it was the right thing to do, which was in line with the Comintern's global policy. According to Nefeloudis, all the participants at the meeting eventually accepted the CPG's proposal. They agreed that the decisions made at the CPG's Sixth Congress, held in 1935, were correct and that the policy for a united and independent Macedonia should be replaced with the policy of minority equality for all the minorities living inside the Greek state. Now looking back, a decade or so ago, at the arguments made in 1924, the so-called "majority" in 1935 was in full line with the so-called "minority" in 1924, in relation to the Macedonian National Question. It took 11 years for the "minority" to defeat the "majority". But realistically speaking, the solution to the Macedonian National Question, as proposed by the "majority" in 1924, had already been defeated in 1924. The discussions that were led regarding the Macedonian National Question in the period from 1923 to 1927 in the ranks of the CPG, the views that were taken for or against the policy of a united and independent Macedonia, confirmed that the victory of the so-called "majority" was only formal and short-lived. Of the total 17 votes P. Puliopoulos received "for" the acceptance of the policy for a united and independent Macedonia, 8 withdrew their support immediately after the voting took place, and 2 opposed it during the voting itself. So, as it turned out, the "majority" was not really a "majority" but a minority because in reality Puliopoulos received only 9 of the 19 votes. This indeed was a "Pirian victory" for the "majority". (I. Kordatos, *op. cit.* "Rizospastis", 18. II 1927.) The same was also confirmed by P. Puliopoulos, representative of the so-called "majority", who then wrote in the newspaper "Risospastis": "Our victory proved to be a Pirian victory. We are victorious in practice but it is regrettable for the Party to have our eyes closed to such a reality..." (Pantelis Puliopoulos, *op. cit.*, "Rizospastis", 5. II 1927.) Puliopoulos, even then, had predicted that the Party would ultimately accept the arguments of the "minority" when it came to the Macedonian National Question. The so-called "majority" admitted to having to accept the "minority" recommendation at the CPG Sixth Congress in 1935, as a rationale for replacing the policy for a united and independent Macedonia, was the acceptance of the arguments made by the "minority" that after the population

exchanges between Greece and Bulgaria and between Greece and Turkey, and after the settlement of the colonists in Greece, the Greek element in Greek occupied Macedonia was the majority and therefore there was no need for a policy for a united and independent Macedonia.

Opinions for the replacement of the united and independent Macedonia policy with the minority rights policy were even invited during the CPG Central Committee Sixth Regular Plenum, in the presence of 51 delegates representing various Party organizations in the country. This is how the CPG justified the new policy with regards to the Macedonian National Question, at the CPG Sixth Congress, held in December 1935:

“After the March Revolution, which was an attempted coup in Greece with an anti-monarchal character, it was said that instead of supporting a policy for a united and independent Macedonia and Thrace, the Party has opted for supporting full equality for minorities. Changing this policy does not mean denying the Macedonian National Question. The change was made because of the changes made to the national composition in the Greek part of Macedonia. It is in close connection with the changes made in the Balkans where there are revolutionary movements and is brought in line with our basic tasks – the anti-fascist struggle. Marxist theory has urged the Communist Party to base its policy on the true interests of the country.

The part of Macedonia held by Greece is inhabited by a Greek-Madzhir population. The population of the Greek part of Macedonia in its majority today is Greek. As a result, Leninist-Stalinist principles for subordination of peoples under today’s conditions, requires us to change the old policy... The policy change, however, does not mean that our activities in Macedonia among the national minorities will be weakened. Quite the opposite, we are committed to increasing our efforts to provide full rights for the minorities. The Communist Party will not stop speaking out about the Macedonian Question and plans to resolve it fraternally after the victory of the Soviet government in the Balkans, when it will abolish the shameful conventions for population exchanges and will take all practical measures to eliminate imperialist injustices. Only then will the



Macedonian people fully find their national establishment.” (To KKE apto 1931 os ..., p. 74.)

The basic argument put forward by the CPG to justify its view, was that after the settlement (1913-1928) of the large colonist population in Greek occupied Macedonia, the Greek element became a majority and a policy regarding the Macedonian National Question had to reflect the new reality. According to Nikos Zahariadis, CPG General Secretary: “This is the only opportunity to avoid mistakes, controversies and talks about Greek Macedonia, which is 90% inhabited by Greeks and therefore constitutes an inseparable part of the Greek state...” (Nikos Zahariadis, Silogi Ergon, 1953, p. 173, s.1.)

After the colonization of Greek occupied Macedonia, however, the Greek population was not the absolute majority of 90%, as claimed by the CPG. It was in the minority of about 45%, compared to all the various nationalities that lived in Greek occupied Macedonia after the massive colonization. For more information on this, see the tables in the beginning of this book. If that was not so, then what was the CPG’s “real motive” for changing the policy, in relation to the Macedonian National Question, at its Sixth Congress?

## 5. REAL MOTIVES FOR CHANGING THE POLICY FOR A UNITED AND INDEPENDENT MACEDONIA

The motives that led the CPG to change its attitude towards the Macedonian National Question were of external and internal character. The factors, which mutually both conditioned and influenced each other, led the CPG to reject the policy for a united and independent Macedonia and to adopt the policy of minority equality within the Greek state.

### A) EXTERNAL FACTORS

The external factor played no small role in the direction of this CPG policy in relation to the Macedonian National Question. The new “Versailles Europe” with its unresolved national and territorial issues, as well as with the great revolutionary wave it encompassed between 1917 and 1923, upset the European bourgeoisie. This class

saw salvation in the removal of the liberal principle that lay in the foundations of the European states and its replacement with a totalitarian system. The introduction of a strong arm regime in Hungary with Admiral Horti's dictatorship, the appearance of fascism in Italy in 1922 when Mussolini introduced a totalitarian regime, with the coup in Spain in 1923 when Rivera introduced a dictatorship, with problems in Estonia, Austria, Pilsudski's tough government in Poland and Gomez da Costa's strong tactics in Portugal... All these factors eventually culminated in the introduction of a fascist dictatorship in Germany. Germany immediately began to implement active revisionist policies with respect to Denmark, Belgium, France, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, and to express open wishes for the unification of "German Austria" with Germany. For this reason fascist Germany instigated the "national movements" of the Germans in Czechoslovakia (Sudetes), in Poland (Gdansk), and in Romania (Erdei), and actively supported them to organize the fascist movement in Austria, thus seriously questioning the Versailles Peace Agreement. The external revisionist policies, as well as the anti-Communist ideology that underlined the fascist regime, could not help but affect the policy of the Comintern. The emergence, strengthening and successes of fascism seriously influenced the Comintern's global strategy and tactics. The uninterrupted fascist ideological and territorial expansion policies of fascism could only be stopped by an adequate Comintern political platform. The Soviet Union, whose national and ideological interests were already seriously threatened by fascist expansionism, was also interested in this respect. So, according to the Comintern's political assessment, developing a People's Front policy was the only political solution. During the period when fascism was most prevalent in Europe, G. Dimtrov, at the Comintern Seventh Congress in 1935, said: "The most important task is the creation of a broad-based popular anti-fascist front based only on a proletarian front. The success of the entire proletariat struggle is closely linked to the formation of proletariat fighting unions with the peasants and with the base mass of the petty bourgeoisie, which represent the majority of the population in the industrialized countries." (Georgi Dimitrov, *Fight in a Single Front against Fascism and War*, Sofia, 1975, p. 62.)

The Comintern's decisions during its Fifth Congress in 1924, to resolve the unsettled national issues in the Balkans by breaking the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia, Romania, Poland, Greece, etc., weakened the "successor states" (Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania and Greece) even more, and they became unsettled economically and politically. Due to this they also became weakened by the increasing fascist pressure applied by Germany, Italy and their allies Hungary and Bulgaria. The Communist parties in the Balkans had no choice but to implement appropriate policies, at all costs, so that they could turn the tide and contribute to the strengthening of these states to defend themselves against these revisionist countries.

With an active policy for a united and independent Macedonia, the Macedonian National Question placed doubt on the integrity of the Balkan states which occupied Macedonian territories and, in addition, contradicted the new Comintern strategy and tactics. Therefore, in line with its global political strategy, the Comintern decided to change its own policy on the Macedonian National Question, adopted at the Comintern Fifth Congress in 1924. Instead of breaking the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia, Greece, Romania, etc., the Comintern strove to consolidate these states vis-à-vis the revisionist states and the solution to unresolve national issues would be sought only through respect for minority rights within the already existing Balkan states. The new Comintern policy and tactics fully satisfied the CPG's most intriguing wishes, unlike the policy for a united and independent Macedonia, which the CPG had to accept with great anxiety.

## B) INTERNAL FACTORS

The internal motives that led the CPG to change its policy towards the Macedonian National Question were of primary importance and played an extremely important role in replacing and rejecting the policy of a united and independent Macedonia. What then were the internal factors that led the CPG to change its policy to such an essential and sensitive issue as the Macedonian National Question?

## Attracting the Greek people en masse

The policy of a united and independent Macedonia, implemented by the CPG after 1924, did not attract the Greek population in Old Greece such as the Peloponnesus, Euboea, Thessaly, Epirus, the islands, etc., nor did it attract the colonist population living in Greek occupied Macedonia. This so-called Greek and non-Greek colonist population was not at all interested in how this Macedonian National Question was established and especially not in how it was going to be solved. The only two basic factors that determined the colonist attitude were: national origin (with the corresponding national consciousness), on the one hand, and economic status (economic interest), on the other.

After the great Greek state rigmarole, sudden ethnographic changes took place in Greek occupied Macedonia. Immediately after 1913, the Greek state began to carry out an active colonization policy with a colonizing population that came from Old Greece and abroad. The Greek state did this with intentions to change the traditional Macedonian ethnographic character and impose a different ethnographic character in Greek occupied Macedonia, which had nothing to do with Macedonian habits and Macedonian historical traditions. Through the so-called Greek state internalization, the Greek state eventually succeeded in installing a population of non-Macedonian origin and language in Greek occupied Macedonia. (Statistika apotelezmata tis apografis..., Athina, 1935, p. 12, the internal Greek colonization lasted from 1913 to 1923.) These colonists originating from Thessaly (11,346), Sterea Elada and Euboea (9,752), Peloponnesus (7,727), Epirus (6,757) and the Aegean islands (1,726) were settled mainly in Eastern and Central Greek occupied Macedonia. Of them, 26,324 colonists were settled in Solun Region, 7,610 in Kavala Region, 4,830 in Drama Region, 4,178 in Seres Region, 3,877 in Kozhani Region, 1,777 in Lerin Region, 1,554 in Pela Region, 1,255 in Sveta Gora, and 1,611 in the Halkidiki Peninsula. The colonists from Old Greece nurtured and expressed strong Greek national feelings. When they were settled in Greek occupied Macedonia, the Greek state gave them land, houses, cattle, etc. That is why the policy of a united and independent

Macedonia was not attractive to them and had to be changed to reflect Greek national sentiments and economic interests in line with the colonists. In other words, a policy for a united and independent Macedonia was not only unacceptable and alien to these people but economically counter-productive. The policy for a united and independent Macedonia was also unacceptable to the so-called indigenous Greek population (236,755) which supposedly lived in Greek occupied Macedonia as a minority before 1913. This population, as well as the colonist population, cherished and expressed strong anti-Macedonian feelings over long periods of time, especially during the periods when the Macedonian people struggled and fought to free themselves and create their own free and independent Macedonian state. This is why the CPG had changed this policy.

As a result of the Lausanne Peace Treaty and the population exchanges between Greece and Bulgaria, 565,143 so-called Greeks and non-Greek Christians were settled in Greek occupied Macedonia. (Ibid.) About 200,000 of these so-called Greeks by language lived in Europe, America, Africa, but especially in the western parts of Turkey before they arrived in Greece and colonized Greek occupied Macedonia. Before the Greco-Turkish war started, the predominant Christian population living in Turkey felt strongly that it belonged with the Christian population living in Greece and was in favour of the idea of creating a "Greater Greece" that would encompass Asia Minor up to the Mendere River, to the city Edrenik in the north and, in the deep west, to the cities Izmir, Atdin and Manisa, Eastern Erakia with Edrene, the Gallipoli Peninsula, Western Thrace, Greek occupied Macedonia, Southern Albania with Argirokastro Region, the islands and Cyprus. Much of this population has developed an active movement in aid of creating a Greater Greece. After this population was expelled from Turkey, it was settled mainly in Greek occupied Macedonia, where it received 500,000 hectares of Macedonian land, 93,549 Macedonian houses, various building materials and other material assistance, worth millions of drachmas, from the Greek government. (Societe des Nations, L'establissement..., p. 85.) If, on the one hand, the CPG's policy for a united and independent Macedonia collided with the national sentiments and economic interests of the Greek colonists from Asia Minor, this policy, on the other hand, was in deep

contradiction with the economic interests of the non-Greek (Turkophone, Caucasian, Armenian, etc.) speaking Christian population that was settled in Greek occupied Macedonia. These non-Greek speaking Christian colonists, in their absolute majority, were illiterate and only understood the policy for a united and independent Macedonia on the basis of their property obtained from various Greek governments. In their profound awareness, the policy of a united and independent Macedonia, to them, meant that the Macedonian population that was evicted from its homeland by force would be allowed to return and reclaim its lost property. Therefore, the entire colonist population, as well as the so-called indigenous Greek population living in Greek occupied Macedonia, was prone to support the bourgeois parties, mainly the liberal ones, because they were prepared to guarantee the integrity of Greece, and to foster strong antipathy towards the CPG's policy in relation to the Macedonian National Question. Therefore, the accusations of the "minority" group leveled against the "majority" were in fact correct. The "majority", while preparing the policy for a united and independent Macedonia, had not taken into account the interests of the colonists and how they felt about this policy. This is why the colonist population was moving away from the CPG and looking to the Greek bourgeoisie for leverage. (G. D. Kaculi, *I istoria tu KKE*, tomos II..., p. 38.)

The CPG's policy for a united and independent Macedonia was in fact also in contradiction to the national and economic interests of the Greek population in Old Greece (the Greek peninsula south of Mount Olympus). Traditionally educated in the spirit that "Macedonia is Greek" and the "Macedonian people" are Greek, the so-called Greek people in Greece proper viewed the CPG's policy for a united and independent Macedonia as incomprehensible, unacceptable and treasonous.

In the presence of the loud Greek voices of discontent, as well as needing to look after the economic interests of the population of Old Greece, the CPG was under constant pressure to replace its policy for a united and independent Macedonia. This pressure and Greek sentiment, as well as colonists joining its ranks, in time, turned the tide in the Party. The colonists who joined the CPG were immediately promoted to run the main functions in the party

apparatus, and whenever the Macedonian National Question came up, Greek national feelings and Greek national interests were always present at the highest levels. With the formation of the new CPG Central Committee in 1931, headed by Nikos Zahariadis, a colonist from Asia Minor, the Party made sure Greek and colonist interests were always placed at the top of the Party agenda. Immediately after 1931, the new CPG Central Committee rejected the policy of a united and independent Macedonia and realistically began to implement the policy of minority equality within the Greek state. By doing so the CPG reassured the entire Greek and non-Greek colonist population that the Party was looking after its interests and that Greek occupied Macedonia was always going to remain inseparable from the Greek state. When the CPG rejected the policy for a united and independent Macedonia and accepted the minority rights policy during its Sixth Congress in 1935, it formally satisfied the national feelings of the entire so-called Greek indigenous and colonist populations. The CPG also assured this population that the new policy on the Macedonian National Question was a permanent CPG commitment. This guarantee was further strengthened during the CPG's Sixth Party Congress when a new CPG Politburo was elected. Of the 7 members elected, 4 were colonists. The 4 colonists were: Secretary General Nikos Zahariadis, D. Partzalidis, G. Porfirogenis and S. Sklavenas. From then on, these people made sure that the Greek national line was always placed ahead of the Macedonian National Question, which was treated as a secondary issue and always behind Greek national interests. The Greek national orientation, in relation to the Macedonian National Question, was further strengthened when Mitsos Partzalidis and Markos Vafiadis, also colonists from Asia Minor, later joined the CPG Central Committee. The aim of the new CPG policy, regarding the Macedonian National Question, was to attract the so-called Greek and non-Greek colonist population to its side and thus be able to escape from the costly "political isolation" in which the Party found itself in the period when it implemented the policy for a united and independent Macedonia. (Information obtained from a speech delivered by Nikos Zahariadis during the CPG Central Committee seventh extended meeting held between February 18 to 24, 1957. p. 204.)

## “Disarming” the Greek bourgeoisie

When the CPG initially adopted the policy for a united and independent Macedonia, at its Third Party Congress in 1924, it triggered a strong reaction from the Greek bourgeoisie, known for its “exclusive” state nationalism. By adopting the united and independent Macedonia policy, the CPG provoked the bourgeoisie and entered an “unnecessary conflict”. In other words, the CPG gave the Greek bourgeoisie a “dangerous weapon” with which to attack it. (S. Maksimos, op. cit., “Rizospastis”, 6. II 1927.)

Realizing that the Greek population, traditionally brought up in the spirit of believing in the “Megali Idea” (Greater Greece), was definitely opposed to any territorial secession made regarding the Greek state, the Greek bourgeoisie immediately exploited the situation and began to work on the Greek people’s sentiments. Many political points were scored at the CPG’s expense, which in time significantly isolated the Party. In their attacks the Greek bourgeoisie portrayed the CPG as nationally colourless, as a party to which the Greek national interests were incomprehensible and alien, and so on. But in reality none of this was actually true because the CPG always defended Greek national interests. The demonstrations carried out by some 500 people in Solun, in favour of an autonomous Macedonia, were used by the Greek bourgeoisie as examples of non-national criminal acts and this gave them yet another opportunity to condemn the “treacherous CPG policy”. (Ministere des Affaires, Etrangeres, Archive diplomatique, Grèce 1918-1929, p. 5.)

When in 1925 the ambitious but incapable General Theodoros Pangalos established a dictatorship in Greece, he not only immediately began a repressions campaign against the CPG, but did not even care to understand any of the CPG’s Greek national interests. To the Greek nationalists the CPG’s policies were “incomprehensible and alien”. Wanting to definitively discredit the CPG in the eyes of the Greek people, Pangalos organized a number of well-known autonomist processes against the Communists. In Solun alone 12 Communists were tried on the basis of Article 123 of the Law on State Security. They were tried for high treason and the



desire to secede territories from the Greek state. (I. Stavridis, *Ta paraskinia tu KKE*, Athina, 1953, p. 301). The following Communists were tried in Solun for attempting to secede territories from the Greek state: Tasos Kainoglou, Georgios Kurtidis, Tomos Dikalis, G. Papanikolaou, G. Marangos, A. Papadopoulos, Soporna (a Jew from Solun), Nikos Zahariadis and Markopoulos, editor of the newspaper “Voice of the Worker”. At the same time the CPG leadership in Athens was also tried. Included among those tried was CPG Secretary General P. Puliopoulos, leader of the Party, and S. Maximos, member of the CPG Central Committee. They were all accused of high treason and a desire to break up “Greek territories” from the Greek state. In order to avoid the death penalty, the Comintern, through Batulescu, its Romanian representative, advised the accused Communists to reject the slogan for a united and independent Macedonia before the court. Batulescu personally advised P. Puliopoulos to lower his tone during his plea and not to insist on the right of Macedonia’s autonomy. P. Puliopoulos, however, rejected Batulescu’s advice and spoke before the court for over 4 hours protesting and defending the rights of the national minorities and their right to decide their fate for themselves. Defense attorney Hristos Lagos, rejected the high treason charges and called for their dismissal because the policy for a united and independent Macedonia was only a theory which would be only be realized under one condition – the bolshevization of the entire Balkans. Even ordinary communists were tried. Some did not even know what the Macedonian National Question was. They only knew that it was generally of national ideological importance, at the moment. This also caused great damage to the CPG and gave the Greek bourgeoisie the opportunity to use the “national card” to maximize on its own gains. Most of what these convicted Communists, who spoke before the court, said was nothing more than “classical nonsense”. (I. Kordatos, *op. cit.*, “Rizospastis”, 18 II 1927.) This is what one of those convicted Communists said: “We are calling for Macedonia’s autonomy because we are Communists and because we are Communists we will demand that the Peloponnesus too become autonomous because we do not have a homeland.” (Ibid.) With this, the CPG lost a lot of points in the eyes of the masses, and it became significantly isolated.

The great repressive policy against the communists was also carried out by Eleftheros Venizelos in 1928 and all throughout the great economic crisis, as was carried out in 1925 by Theodoros Pangalos, with a desire to put an end to all the CPG's activities and, with the Macedonian National Question in hand, to justify its repressive policies waged against the communists and against the Greek workers' movement. Liberal leader Venizelos demanded that all communist activities in the country be prohibited. He insisted that there was no place in Greece where a communist circle did not exist and demanded that even the CPG itself be banned because this Party, with its policy, has put in question Greece's territorial integrity. (Ministere des Affaires..., Grèce...dos 61, p. 166.) M. Zaviatinos, Minister of the Interior in Venizelos's government, asked the MPs in the Greek Parliament to pass a law banning all communist activities in Greece at all costs, because "one great danger undermines our social foundations, and that is Greece's territorial integrity". (Ibid., p. 129.) Zaviatinos insisted that this be done so that "we can all sleep a little better..." (Ibid.) Zaviatinos insisted and demanded that all of Venizelos's MPs in the Greek Parliament do everything they can, at all costs, to ban the activities of a party that supports a policy that runs contrary to Greek national interests... (Ibid., p. 166.)

Unfortunately, despite all the opposition, the Greek Parliament passed Law no. 4,229 of 1929 prohibiting all communist activities in the country. This anti-Communist law was opposed during the voting by civic politicians who were known for their liberal political views. Unfortunately the situation on the ground was so bad that even those who were seen reading the newspaper "Rizospastis" or the magazine "Neolea" were accused of being communists and of spreading communist propaganda and sent to prison. The newspaper "Rizospastis" and the magazine "Neolea", at the time, were outlawed and circulating illegally among the left-leaning population. About 2,500 court actions were brought against party and union officials under this Law. Over 1,000 CPG members and supporters were imprisoned, 50 workers were killed and another 500 were wounded in clashes with the police. Unfortunately, even with all these new political measures, the situation in Greece still did not calm down. Political instability continued and culminated with the introduction of the 1936 dictatorship in Greece.

This was another reason why the CPG, during its Third Extraordinary Congress in 1924, rejected the policy for a unified and independent Macedonia and adopted the minority policy for full equality for the minorities living within the Greek state. By doing this, the CPG in effect took away the “dangerous weapon” from bourgeoisie hands and their main reason for attacking it and accusing it, among other things, of being non-national, colourless and non-patriotic. By removing the old policy, the CPG also found greater understanding in the Greek masses, in whom the idea of a Greater Greece was still fresh in their minds and, uninterruptedly, influenced their so-called “Greek consciousness”.

### Getting around the internal political crises and controversy over the Macedonian National Question

Immediately after it was created in 1918, the CPG began to experience factional struggles and internal clashes. Its internal political confrontations, as well as the various attitudes taken towards the Macedonian National Question, uninterruptedly followed the CPG through time until its “crisis turned into its own shadow” and the Macedonian National Question became the “apple of discord” that continued to interrupt its “inner Party peace”. (I. Kordatos, *op. cit.* “Rizospastis”, 19. II 1927.)

The CPG’s internal clashes over the Macedonian National Question inside the Party’s ranks began immediately after the issue was first identified. The various sides, be they in the “minority” or in the “majority”, were influenced by the current political situation on the ground that was acceptable to them. Their understanding of the importance of “class” as opposed to “Greek national interests” varied and was very much influenced by the Macedonian National Question. Eventually, in 1924, the “minority”, i.e. those who believed that Greek national interests were more important than class interests, very much contributed to getting closer to the official Greek state terminology and to the right political concept when it came to Greek occupied Macedonia. Instead of using the term Macedonia, Kordatos, for example, always used the term Northern Greece or Greek Macedonia. This terminology in time was accepted and used more frequently by the “majority” after 1935 and

especially in the period from 1941 to 1945. Clearly, contrary to the historical reality, this was purposely done to negate the Macedonian nation and to deny its existence. Being a supporter of the idea of conducting Marxist science in line with the Greek historical reality, Kordatos, for example, never visited or made contact with the Macedonians like Puliopoulos did. Puliopoulos personally and directly, and not through decisions made by the Comintern, made contact with Macedonians who told him exactly how they felt, thought, lived, grieved and died - only as Macedonians.

Because of the Macedonian National Question, even the “archaeomarxists” (old Marxists) were influenced to take a new position, contrary to the position taken by the “majority”. The archeomarxists demanded exclusive respect for the rights of minorities within the Greek state.

But in time even Puliopoulos’s views seriously evolved over the Macedonian National question. The new “minority’s” views, while Puliopoulos was in charge, evolved over the old “minority’s” views when Kordatos was in charge, and so did the views of the archeomarxists and those of the “majority”. The emergence of the new “minority” was a natural reflection of the internal clashes between Trotsky on one side and Stalin on the other, that arose in the ranks of the Communist Party in the USSR. The struggles between the opposition left headed by Trotsky and the other groups headed by J. Stalin were carefully watched by the CPG. Those struggles, naturally, were also reflected in events all over the international communist movement as well as within the CPG. Some of this was reflected in Puliopoulos’s intervention in 1927 during an internal CPG pre-party meeting discussion in which Puliopoulos advised to: 1. Reject Trotsky’s wild ideas and those of his notorious supporters; 2. The Party needed critical experience and should, at all costs, raise the cultural level of its members; 3. The Party was losing itself among its mass affiliation of uneducated and inexperienced members; 4. All defamatory elements needed to be removed from the ranks of the Party; 5. It was necessary to develop the theoretical work of the Party and to abandon the bureaucratic ways of working. All Puliopoulos wanted to do was “liquidate” all negative obstacles and “create a serious Party” that had greater internal freedom and “educated” members. The so-called liquidation

movement led by Puliopoulos appeared at a Party meeting held in Athens on November 6-8, 1926.

The ideological struggle between the new “minority”, headed by Puliopoulos, and the new “majority”, headed by H. Teu, G. Siantos, N. Kutvis (N. Zahariadis), A. Haitas and H. Eutychiadis, was further aggravated by the emergence of the so-called “centrists”, headed by S. Maximos, K. Sklavos and T. Hainoglou. The “majority” essentially accepted the Stalinist views which were passed on to the CPG through the Comintern. During the CPG Third Regular Congress, held in 1927, the “majority” condemned the views of the new “minority” calling them “Trotsky-ists”, with “liquidation-ist” tendencies. They also removed Puliopoulos from the CPG ranks. As a result, the so-called “liquidators” continue to fight the “majority” through the newly formed “Neo Xekinima” (New Movement). The provisional Politburo, elected by the “majority and by the “centrists” during the Third CPG Regular Congress, did not resolve the internal Party unrest. Also, political misunderstandings between the “majority” and the “centrists”, led by Maximos, forced the “centrists” to show greater sympathy towards the “minority” headed by Puliopoulos. On November 1, 1927, “centrist” representatives (Maximos, Sklavos and Hainoglou) and “minority” representatives (Puliopoulos, Giatopoulos, Nikolino, Hazistavrou and Papanikolaou) created the “United Opposition” and through the magazine “Spartacus”, continued to fight against the so-called “majority”, which, with help from the Comintern, took over the Party leadership. The Organization “Greek Communists – Internationalists” (OKDE), later renamed to AOKDE, after its formation, began to accept all members removed from the CPG. This organization later became the Communist Party of Greece - internationalists, a section of the Fourth International. OKDE was formed in 1934 by the supporters of “Spartacus” and by the permanent members of LAKKE (Leninist opposition of the Communist Party of Greece). This organization’s creation further complicated the Left political spectrum in Greece in the period between the two World Wars. The political orientation of the new “minority” changed its attitude towards “class-national” issues within the framework of the left ideology and this seriously affected Puliopoulos’s position regarding the Macedonian National Question.

The new “minority”, headed by P. Puliopoulos, like the other political groups that were later formed under the influence of the “Spartacus” magazine ideological platform, remained within the Left ideological framework and did not drift to the Right like the “minority” did when it was headed by Ianis Kordatos and Tomas Apostolidis. The left ideological and political orientation of these groups increasingly accentuated internationalism and suppressed the kind of Greek nationalism that had invaded the left ideological framework. They also took a more pristine attitude towards the Macedonian National Question. Puliopoulos himself, on the other hand, came much closer to the Macedonian people and, as a result, understood their national feelings and national and historical aspirations. While serving a prison sentence in the Akronavplion camp, Puliopoulos met many Macedonians and was strongly impressed by their national and class consciousness as well as by the fact that they continued to speak their Macedonian language despite the unprecedented terror the Greek authorities had unleashed on them. Puliopoulos also concluded that the Macedonian language was a separate Slavic language, and not a dialect of the Bulgarian or the Serbian languages, as claimed by supporters of the “minority” group in 1924, headed by Kordatos. In addition to having a good knowledge of French, English, German, Spanish, Russian, Italian, Bulgarian, Latin, Old Greek and Esperanto, Puliopoulos also taught himself to speak some Macedonian, even to write in Macedonian, which he learned while serving with Macedonians at the Akronavplion camp. Thanks to his excellent knowledge of the major European languages, Puliopoulos was able to get acquainted with the works of Marx, Engels, Kant, Schopenhauer, Schmidt, Ricardo, Plato..., thus creating a solid philosophical and political culture that raised him to one of the most interesting figures in the Greek workers’ and revolutionary movement. In parallel with speaking and writing in Macedonian, Puliopoulos paid special attention to the Macedonian Question and in 1940, while still in the Akronavplion camp, wrote an article entitled “On the Macedonian Question”, in which he recognized the Macedonian people’s right to self-determination and the unification of their fragmented homeland. Among other things Puliopoulos also wrote the following:

“1. He who does not recognize the existence of the Macedonian National Question in Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian (occupied)

Macedonia, in the past and today, is undoubtedly a lackey of the bourgeoisie,

2. He who does not recognize the Macedonian historical liberation movements is either illiterate, and should learn the history of those movements and about their national heroes, or is a lackey of one of the three oppressive bourgeois,

3. These (Macedonian) liberation movements have so far been suppressed in blood and betrayal and had devastating consequences for the interests of the Macedonia people (especially those in Bulgaria),

4. These (Macedonian) movements can find new developments in new and more favourable historical conditions: social, economic, political... (In the internal crisis of the Balkan counties, in war, in the exploitation of the Macedonian labour force by the oppressive bourgeoisie, in the problems with agricultural property, and so on),

5. Whoever does not recognize these possibilities is blind or deliberately blind, if he is not a lackey of the nationalist persecutors of a very tortured Macedonian nation,

6. Communists will not involve themselves in 'creating' national movements where they don't exist. That would be a waste of time. They will, however, support such movements if they already exist and are active,

7. Communists do not close their eyes on 'defeated' national liberation movements or allow the denationalization aspirations of the nationalist bourgeoisie to exist... and they certainly do not become supporters of such 'committed acts'. We will not give up on the nationally oppressed nations and the desires that exist in their hearts and thoughts (as they do in every Macedonian worker). The communists will adopt the libertarian desires of the Macedonian people and from now on the Macedonians can loudly declare that they have the right to self-determination and to state secession, if that is their will. The communists are prepared to support every national request, whether economic or political, and thus are preparing for a future revolutionary alliance with a Macedonian

social revolutionary movement against a common enemy - the Balkan bourgeoisie.” Three years after he wrote the article entitled “On the Macedonian Question”, using Macedonian grammar, Puliopoulos became seriously ill with tuberculosis and was shot dead by the Italian fascists along with 106 other communists.

But regardless of the different attitudes taken by the various “minorities” and “majorities”, in relation to the Macedonian National Question, it is a fact that the CPG had significantly been weakened by this. The Party’s polemics on the Macedonian National Question strongly contributed to “The party suffering major blows and losing its comrades, some of whom turned into social democrats, because of the National Question, or used this opportunity as a motive to abandon the struggle...” (Information taken from a letter written by Trohidromikos, published in “Rizospatis” on 9. II 1927.)

The opposition, including the “Archeomarxists” (Old Marxists), was always against the policy of a united and independent Macedonia in regards to the Macedonian National Question. The “minority” led by Kordatos, and in the period from 1926 to 1931 led by Puliopoulos, demanded that the CPG adopt a policy that would support Greek national interests and would not question the Greek national integrity.

Under strong pressure from the “archaeomarxists”, the “minority”, as well as its own membership, the “majority”, i.e. the CPG, decided to radically alter its policy in regards to the Macedonian National Question. With that it also changed the “majority’s” attitude towards “national” and “class” issues. If the CPG, in relation to the Macedonian National Question, favoured the Comintern policy with regards to “class issues” before 1931, after 1931 the CPG raised its favour towards “national issues” and rejected its policy for a united and independent Macedonia. This, of course, contributed to the appearance of two tendencies within the Party. Some thought that the Macedonian National Question was in profound contradiction with Greek national interests and that this question should not be treated as a tactical question. Others, especially those headed by Zahariadis, felt that if the political needs demanded it, the



Macedonian National Question could be turned into a tactical question to aid the needs of the “class struggle”.

By adopting a policy for full equality of minorities within the Greek state, the “majority” positioned itself in a new political orientation which not only influenced its overall political culture, but at the same time protected itself from political attacks. The CPG’s new orientation, in regards to the Macedonian National Question, also gave rise to new interpretations in its objectivity, logic and terminology. The Balkan Wars, for example, instead of being called “imperialist wars of the Greek bourgeoisie” were called “Liberation Wars”. Eleftheros Venizelos, a symbol of Greek nationalism and chauvinism, would find a suitable place in progressive Greek historical science. The CPG, for example, would rename the “Macedonian National Question” to the “so-called Macedonian Question”. This naturally also began to influence the political logic of the Party itself. Based on the large colonist settlements in Greek occupied Macedonia, the occupied Macedonian territories began to be seen as an inseparable part of the Greek state. The CPG not only acknowledged this but at the same time also denied the rights of the Macedonian majority living in Kostur, Lerin and Voden Regions and robbed the Macedonian people of the right to decide their own destiny.

The CPG’s new political orientation after 1935, in relation to the Macedonian National Question, also influenced the ethnographic terminology when it came to the Macedonian people. Instead of calling them Macedonians, like they called themselves and like the CPG used to call them during the period when it recognized them as a unique and separate nation, the CPG began to call them “Slavo-Macedonians”. The CPG did not use the term “Slavo-Macedonians” to distinguish the Macedonians from the foreign Christian colonists who were settled in Greek occupied Macedonia, but for other and deep political reasons. According to the CPG, in addition to “Slavo-Macedonians” living in Greek occupied Macedonia, there were also “Greek-Macedonians”, “Vlach-Macedonians”, and so on. With this the CPG aimed at turning Macedonia into a geographical region with no Macedonian national character. The CPG took careful measures not to use the name “Macedonians”, especially during the People’s Liberation Struggle. When Macedonian partisan units from

the Republic of Macedonia were passing through Greek occupied Macedonia, the CPG referred to them as “Serbian partisan units”.

And even today, in the presence of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, the CPG still uses double terminology for the Macedonians. It uses the name Macedonians for the Macedonian people living in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia and Slavo-Macedonians for the Macedonian people living in Greek occupied Macedonia, as if they were not members of the same nation. This, however, did not happen with the Communist Party of Britain, the Communist Party of Spain and the Communist Party of France, in regards to the territorial divisions in Ireland and Euskania (Basque). These parties did not change the ethnographic terminology of the divided Irish and Basques people. Those parties simply called all divided people Irish or Basque, the way these people called themselves. The CPG, however, did this to calm down its membership and to remove the controversial Macedonian issue from its agenda, which always created storms and indignation inside the party. It was “the only way to avoid mistakes, controversies and talks about Greek Macedonia, which is now inhabited by 90% Greeks and therefore constitutes an inseparable part of the Greek state.” (N. Zahariadis, *op. cit.*, p. 173.) By adapting the new orientation, in relation to the Macedonian National Question, the CPG managed to calm down internal opposition. In other words, by removing the “apple of discord” from its agenda, the CPG became stronger and began to deal with other serious political issues and gain legitimacy in the consciousness of the Greek people.

## The CPG’s real attitude towards the Macedonian National Question

The policy of a united and independent Macedonia was never a realistic reflection of the CPG’s intimate wishes. The presence of Greek national interests within the left component of the CPG, very much contributed to the divergence between the official Party policy and the membership’s real wishes, when it came to the Macedonian National Question.

On the one hand the Comintern forced the CPG to adopt a policy on the Macedonian National Question and, on the other, Greek national

interests expressed through Greek national feelings, including those expressed inside the Party, pressured the CPG to adopt a non-Macedonian attitude towards the Macedonian National Question. The standpoint that existed inside the Party was expressed externally through the position taken by Petsopoulos, Stavridis, Maximos, and others, during their various consultations with the Balkan Communist Federation or with the Comintern.

This internal standpoint continued to exert strong pressure on both the Comintern and the CPG leadership for the Party to formally accept and harmonize its official Macedonian National Question policy to reflect the true wishes of its membership.

With its 1931 adoption of the minority equality policy within the Greek state, the Party formally legitimized and aligned its position with its official policy. This was also the first independent move the CPG made and independent attitude it took in relation to the Comintern and the Macedonian National Question.

The contradiction that existed between the CPG's "formal" and "desired" approach towards the Macedonian National Question in the period from 1923 to 1931, greatly contributed to the Party's inactivity and to the Macedonian national progressive movement's stagnation. But even though the "majority", at the time, was convinced that the CPG's policy for a united and independent Macedonia was fair, it never did realistically advocate for its implementation on the ground. Therefore, remarks made by the "minority" that the "majority", in practice, had done little to nothing for the linguistic and educational rights of minorities were correct. ("Rizospastis", 5. II 1927.) This is what T. Apostolidis said in a 1927 article published in "Rizospastis", about the "majority's" activities in relation to the Macedonian National Question: "It should be noted that most of the proclamations drafted about the national question remained untouched in files even three months after they were drafted. None of them were circulated in the cells in Macedonia." (Ibid., 13. II 1927.) So, according to the "minority", the "majority" supported the Macedonian National Question in words only. (X. Vatis, op. cit., "Rizospastis", 26. III 1927.) This was also confirmed by the 1926 CPG Central Committee Bulletin no. 2 which, among other things, reported the following: "We did not take

any action to create a minority movement in Macedonia and Thrace nor did we take any actions to solve the minority problems...” (“Rizospastis”, 18. II 1927.)

The absence of anything tangible done in favour of the Macedonian National Question, in the period from 1923 to 1931, was due mainly to the fact that this issue “was never a CPG central issue. This was an issue the CPG had to accept (imposed externally by the Comintern) despite its great dissatisfaction”. For that reason, its membership demanded that this policy (for a united and independent Macedonia) be immediately replaced with an obligatory policy aligned with the official Party policy that reflected the intimate and real wishes of the Party membership.

### Presence of the “Megali Idea” (Greater Greece)

The “Megali Idea” present in the Greek people’s consciousness played no small role in the replacement of the policy for a united and independent Macedonia with the policy of full minority rights within the Greek state.

Before and after the Greek state was created for the first time in 1829, the Greek bourgeoisie began to systematically implement a territorial expansion policy in the direction of purely non-Greek national territories. The Greek state educational system, generation after generation, instilled into people the belief that Asia Minor, Thrace (eastern and western), Macedonia and Southern Albania were historical and ethnographic Greek territories. The strength and need to create a Greater Greece, through the “Megali Idea”, was present not only in the awareness of the Greek bourgeoisie and the intellectual world, but also in the villagers in Crete, for example, who were convinced that it was a necessity to achieve this. The people in Thessaly, Epirus, Sterea Hellas, Peloponnesus... the sailors in the islands... the small merchants in Volos, Ioannina, Athens... almost the entire Greek society, was on board with this ambitious idea.

The CPG ranks lived in an atmosphere where the “Megali Idea” was present in the pores and well-understood by every member of Greek society. But even though the CPG took the new communist

direction, it did not mean that it was prepared to abandon the “Megali Idea” that existed everywhere including in the consciousness of every individual member. “Greek patriotism” was a reflection of the “Megali Idea” everywhere including in the ranks of the CPG, which appeared since its inception, and influenced its attitude towards its current and future policies. The presence of the “Megali Idea” was also present at the 1918 CPG Founding Congress when the so-called “minority” group proposed a Resolution for resolving territorial and national issues through the ranks of the Greek workers’ movement. Here, the “minority’s” approach to resolving national and territorial issues did not differ at all in any way from the approach taken by the Greek bourgeoisie. The presence of the “Megali Idea” in the ranks of the CPG, in fact, was one of the reasons for the emergence of the so-called “minority” in 1924, which at the time was headed by I. Kordatos and T. Apostolidis. Nationalism was so deeply rooted in the “minority’s” ideology that it began to squeeze even Kordatos and Apostolidis from their left orientation. This “Greek patriotism” was also present in the so-called “majority’s” consciousness, which treated the Macedonian National Question not as a “principle issue” but as a tactical issue. In 1924, in its ideology, the “majority” supported “class determination” over “nationalism” but gradually “patriotism” began to creep into its ranks and when it became strong enough it began to play an increasing role in the ideology of the left. The “Megali Idea”, through Greek “patriotism”, created a lot of pressure within the “majority” which forced the Party to look for “a modus vivendi” between its national and social standing. This problem found its answer in the 1935 CPG Sixth Congress when the Party adopted the minority rights policy within the Greek state and rejected the policy for a united and independent Macedonia. The “Megali Idea” was also present in the “new minority” in 1926 headed by Puloopoulos. The CPG described this particular “minority” as a “liquidation movement” in regards to the Macedonian National Question. This left oriented “new minority” opposition in fact greatly contributed to the left’s political determination to play a greater role in the suppression of nationalism that existed within the framework of the left ideology. If the CPG developed patriotism and won the right of its citizenship with its ideology, the left opposition lost its nationalism at the expense of its ideology. In other words, ideology also played a major role on how the CPG decided to treat

the Macedonian National Question. So, as of 1935, the CPG either evaded the Macedonian National Question altogether or used it solely as a tactical issue to draw the Macedonian people into its affairs. Use of the Macedonian National Question was especially prevalent during the National Liberation War and during the Greek Civil War.

Consequently the presence of the “Megali Idea” in the CPG ranks was one of the motives that influenced the replacement of the policy of a united and independent Macedonia with the policy of minority rights within the Greek state. According to Zahariadis: “The ‘Megali Idea’ reigned everywhere and forced every ideological, political and economic movement to shelter under its wings...” (N. Zahariadis, *op. cit.*, p. 18.)

### Existence of the Macedonian nation

Even though the existence of a Macedonian nation was a historical reality in Greek occupied Macedonia, the CPG could not bring itself to recognize, accept and acknowledge it. Instead it played games with the Macedonian people by allowing the “minority” within its ranks to attack and abuse them. And, even though the CPG harboured a policy for a united and independent Macedonia, it never approached the historical reality to see what kind of population this Macedonian population was, what national feelings it nurtured, and what were its historical desires and current aspirations.

Had the CPG adopted a policy that would have taken care of the Macedonian national interests, it would not only have been a strong affirmation of the Macedonian national consciousness, but the CPG would have gained their full support. The CPG should have adopted such a policy, at all costs, to attract the Macedonian population to its side, but it did not. So, the basic question here is how far was the CPG willing to go and for what in return?

When creating its policy with respect to the Macedonian National Question, the CPG should have taken into account the presence of two national interests (Greek and Macedonian), that were in essence contradictory to each other. The presence of Greek “nationalism” in the CPG ranks contributed to the Macedonian National Question

being compromised. The resolution adopted in 1935 was implemented in order to protect Greek national interests through the protection of the integrity of the Greek state. The only thing provided for the Macedonian people in that policy was the protection of language, customs, etc.

By protecting the Greek national interests, the CPG satisfied the Greek people's national feelings as well as those of its own membership. But by doing so, it also disillusioned the Macedonian people who demanded their national interests be protected. But before that, the CPG promised to support the Macedonians and to allow the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (MRO (United)) to operate inside Greek occupied Macedonia. By doing so, the CPG received Macedonian support. The role of orienting Macedonian sympathies towards the CPG was played by MRO (United). Many MRO (United) members, Macedonians by origin, were sincerely and deeply convinced that they were working for the good of their people, so the people looked up to them with full confidence. Cadres of MRO (United), speaking in the Macedonian language, informed the Macedonian people about of the CPG policy which, of course, left a strong impression on them.

Under the given circumstances, the MRO (United), unfortunately, did not achieve the results it was aiming for. This was largely due to the CPG's 1935 compromise solution with regards to the Macedonian National Question. The CPG allowed Greek "patriotism" to invade its Left ideological framework and rejected and prevented Macedonian "patriotism" from doing the same. The CPG saw Macedonian "patriotism" within the Left ideology and in the ranks of the Macedonian progressive movement, as "dangerous" to Greek national interests. The CPG made sure that the level and intensity of Macedonian patriotism within the framework of the left ideology was carefully measured and controlled. The CPG, however, not only permitted Greek "patriotism" to invade the framework of the Left ideology, but allowed it to grow without limit. Outside of not allowing it, but to make sure Macedonian patriotism did not exist in the Macedonian progressive movement, the CPG fostered Greek patriotism in the ranks of the Macedonians. The CPG was more interested in suppressing Macedonian patriotism, at all costs, than helping the Macedonian people. So it

took the route of reinforcing and giving preference to social (class) awareness in the Macedonian population.

The presence of Greek “patriotism” in the Left ideology, as well as the narrow national framework imposed on the Macedonian progressive movement, had severe historical consequences for the Macedonian people. After 1931, all MRO (United) activities in Greek occupied Macedonia were paralyzed. Without the presence of Macedonian national interests in its Left framework ideology, the MRO (United) was unable to attract the Macedonian people, even those who were hardest hit by national oppression. “Without the Macedonian National Question on its agenda, the MRO (United) found it difficult to operate in its daily struggle with economic, political and other issues... There was not a single action organized against the terror perpetrated against the Macedonian people, against the banning of the Macedonian language, and so on.” (Materials for the ideological and political work of the party organizations on the topic “CPG Policies and the Macedonian National Question”, Macedonian Archives, 2 - / 29.) The only time the CPG allowed the MRO (United) to come to anything close to resembling a “Macedonian National Issue” was “when it allowed it to speak to members of the Macedonian community in the Macedonian language, which brought enthusiasm to the Macedonian people. This was about the only positive action that can be attributed to the MRO (United) membership that can be considered a positive result. The Party would not allow anything else.” (Ibid.) Maniadakis, then Minister of the Interior in the Metaxas dictatorship, was also responsible for imposing a “narrow national framework” on the Macedonian progressive movement. After the Macedonians N. Kachela, M. Keramidzhiev, R. Galabov, T. Poplazarov and G. Bozhikov were tried in Kostur for being communists they were brought before Minister Maniadakis, who was very interested to know to what extent the CPG, in addition to its ideological work in the ranks of the Macedonian population, also popularized the Party’s policy regarding the Macedonian National Question. They all admitted that they were communists, but “Maniadakis was simply astonished that they knew nothing about the CPG’s policy regarding the Macedonian National Question, and how Marxism dealt with unresolved National Questions”. (Statements made to the author of this book by Mihailo Keramidzhiev, on 10. XI 1980.)



Under pressure from all factors, external and internal, at its Sixth Congress in 1935 the CPG rejected the policy of a united and independent Macedonia and accepted the policy of full equality of minorities within the Greek state. With this, the Party thought it would intensify its activities inside the country and Greece would be able to more effectively resist Italian, Bulgarian and German revisionism. With this in mind, the CPG believed that had it implemented the correct policy which was also in line with the decisions made at the Comintern Seventh Congress.

## 6. THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN GREECE AND THE MACEDONIAN NATIONAL QUESTION DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

After the failed coup attempt in March 1935, some improvements were made to the centre-right political orientation in Greece, but they were only temporary. These improvements were made in part because of the devastating defeat the Liberal Party suffered under the coup attempt. The Tsaldaris government was strengthened thanks to the open support it received from the Greek political right led by D. Kondilis and Ioanis Metaxas. The new political situation also opened the door for King Georgios II to return to Greece and, with the plebiscite conducted on November 3, 1935, establish his monarchy. Greece was proclaimed a republic in 1924. But the defeat the liberals suffered in March 1935 did not weaken them to the extent that the People's Party and the Greek right were hoping. The parliamentary elections in January 1936 confirmed that. Political debates between the Liberal and the People's Party, as well as the noisy propaganda carried out during the elections, did not influence the voter to vote in favour of one or another of the main ruling parties. But, despite its defeat in 1935, the Liberal Party received 574,655 votes and sent 142 MPs to the new Greek parliament in 1936. The conservative formations that gathered around the People's Party during the 1936 elections also received their desired majority. They received 602,840 votes and sent 143 MPs to the new Greek parliament. The Popular Front, which united the left-wing forces, headed by the CPG, achieved some results. The Popular Front received 73,411 votes with 15 MPs ready to serve in the new Greek

Parliament. Unfortunately neither of the major parties had an absolute majority and was able to form a stable government.

This, however, was a great opportunity for the Popular Front which, with its 15 members, held the balance of power. If before 1936 the Greek bourgeois parties refused to allow any CPG compromises in regards to the CPG's policy for a united and independent Macedonia, after the elections both the Liberal and the People's Party took the first step to settling this issue. But, despite the CPG's leverage, they still insisted that if any talks were to take place, the CPG had to reject and replace its current policy for a united and independent Macedonia. Popular Front representatives, headed by M. Porfirogenis, "dressed in tailcoats", addressed King George II and informed him that "the CPG was not asking for Macedonian autonomy". (Polihroni K. Enerediki, i eliniki andistasis, 1941-1944, Athina, 1964, p. 83.) The Greek bourgeois parties established contact with the CPG, in context of this historical Macedonian National Question policy, without fearing that they would be attacked by their political opponents "for cooperating with the Party that sold out Greek national interests". Contact between the People's Party and the Left was made by K. Angielopoulos, representing the People's Party, and D. Glinos, G. Siantos, and M. Porfirogenis representing the Left. At the same time representatives from the Liberal Party established contacts with S. Sklavenas representing the Popular Front. At the end an agreement was signed between T. Sofoulis, representing the Liberal Party, and S. Sklavenas, representing the Popular Front. According to the agreement, the Popular Front demanded full freedom, general political amnesty, dissolution of the fascist formations, introduction of a proportional election system, reduction of the price of bread, etc. But despite the fact that this Sofoulis-Sklavenas Agreement did not offer any protection to the Macedonian people, it was strongly attacked by the political Right which refused to recognize the CPG's political legitimacy, and accused it of attempting to enter into the political consciousness of the masses and of creating a disgruntled population, as a historical precedent, and only in its favour. The only thing the CPG did for the Macedonian people, however, was that it made one statement. It was during a parliamentary debate on Metaxas's program when S. Sklavenas stated that "in order for the government to have pretensions on the Macedonian minority and

ask it to spill its blood on the northern borders, it will be necessary to guarantee some of its rights like use of its mother tongue, customs, etc.”

The Soufulis-Sklavenas Agreement was signed during a time when Greek society was experiencing strong economic and political instability. Mass economic and political dissatisfaction was expressed during the massive demonstrations in Solun. This dissatisfaction began with massive demonstrations in Kukush, Seres, Drama and Western Thrace and, on May 8, 1936, culminated with mass demonstrations in Solun during which about 15,000 tobacco workers participated. They were brutally suppressed which caused even greater demonstrations. About 150,000 demonstrators took part at the protest rally in Freedom Square in Solun to protest the May 8, 1936 bloody Solun suppression. After bloody clashes with the police, the working people of Solun and surrounding areas took over the city for almost 36 hours. This demonstration was also brutally and irresponsibly crushed by the police, during which 10 demonstrators were killed. After this, rallies and demonstrations took place all throughout Greece, which actively demonstrated solidarity and support for the workers who demonstrated in Solun. While the demonstrations were going on, Popular Front representatives in the Greek parliament demanded General Metaxas's immediate resignation. He was blamed for being the main culprit responsible for the bloody events in Solun. On July 24, 1936, the two largest Greek trade union organizations, the Confederation of Greek Workers and the United General Workers' Conference, decided to organize an all Greek general strike in protest against repressive government policies and the political Right's attempts to crush Greek political life.

The political instability that swept throughout the country began to seriously worry the Greek bourgeoisie, who saw an end to this only through the introduction of a dictatorial regime. This historical moment, naturally, was exploited by General Ioanis Metaxas whose dictatorial affinities were known long before that moment and, with benevolent support from the Greek Royal Court, the dictatorship was a done deal. The path to this personal dictatorial introduction was facilitated by the disappearance of E. Venizelos and his first Minister D. K. Demerdzhis from the political celebrity scene. These

two famous political figures lost their lives in order for Metaxas to come to power, especially Demerdzhis who was seen as “God’s gift”. With the approval of the king, the political vacuum was filled by the old and ambitious General Metaxas.

Political repressions against the left-wing forces, particularly against the CPG and EOKDE (United Organization of the Communist Internationalists in Greece), began in the evening of August 4, 1936, the same day the dictatorship took power. About 2,000 Communists and their sympathizers were arrested and sent to jail in the camps of Akronavplion, Aegina and Kerkira.

The Metaxas dictatorship demonstrated severe cruelty against the Macedonian people which, for them, was a dictatorship with a fascist character. Metaxas not only banished and outlawed every public manifestation of Macedonian national feeling, including Macedonian expressions demonstrated through language, traditions and customs, but also severely punished those who broke the law. In this regard Metaxas outdid in cruelty even the Italian fascists who spat in the mouths of the spiteful Slovenes who dared to speak Slovenian in their presence. Because of this profound national oppression, both Macedonians and Slovenes massively joined their common struggle for national freedom and Human dignity during the National Liberation War. In parallel with the persecution of the Macedonian people for being Macedonian and speaking Macedonian, Metaxas had aims to disable all political and national activities, especially those led by the Macedonian communists and by the MRO (United). At the time MRO (United) in Greek occupied Macedonia was led by A. Chipov, K. Galbov, L. Trpovski and T. Hadzhiianov who were all sent to the prison camps by the dictatorial regime.

But resistance against the dictatorship did not end, in fact it continued even in the prison camps. Both Macedonian and Greek communists turned the prison camps into real universities where Marxist theory was deeply studied. In addition to political resistance, the Macedonian people continued to express their national being, using the Macedonian language in secret, even inside the camps of the dictatorial regime. This was a rare historical

glimpse of how the Macedonian people had survived under duress over the ages...

## **CHAPTER FIVE – THE MACEDONIAN PEOPLE IN THE NATIONAL LIBERATION WAR (1940-1949)**

Germany's political and military successes (1938-1940) such as the annexation of Austria, the trials, the liquidation of Czechoslovakia, etc., encouraged Italy to lead a more active and militant policy in the Balkans. After occupying Albania in 1939, Italy began to act more aggressively towards Greece. On October 28, 1940, Graziani, the Italian ambassador to Greece, handed the Greek government an ultimatum demanding that Greece allow Italy to set up bases in Greece until the end of the war. The Greek government responded with "ohi" (no).

The Ioanis Metaxas government received the full, unconditional support from all Greek political parties, from the far left to the far right. The CPG, through its Secretary General Nikos Zahariadis, called on the Greek people "to make every terrain, every hut, every city and house into a turret" because the war the Metaxas government was leading for Greece was a struggle "for freedom, honour and national independence". (To KKE, *Episama kimena*, tomos V, 1940-1945, 1973, p. 16.)

The Macedonian people, who also had their own national honour and their own national interests, reacted appropriately. Given the political situation on the ground that both the Greeks and Italians were fascists, the Macedonian people did not play the role of a fifth column inside the Greek state and did not participate in the new war "with enthusiasm and admiration". Simply mobilized, the Macedonian people participated in the difficult battles at Ivan Mountain, Morava, Podgarats and other places. Of the 300,000 soldiers mobilized in Greece, 80,000 were from Greek occupied Macedonia, particularly from Lerin and Kostur Regions where the Macedonians were the majority and closest to the Italian front in Albania.

## 1. MACEDONIANS IN THE NATIONAL LIBERATION WAR (1941-1945)

The Greek-Italian war, as well as Dushan Simovich's coup in Yugoslavia, was sparked by fascist Germany, which decided to solve the Balkan problem by military means. On April 6, 1941, Prince Ehrbarch, German ambassador to Athens, delivered a note to the Greek government announcing Germany's declaration of war on Greece.

The German military attack forced the Greek King and the Greek government to leave Greece and relocate abroad. Greece's capitulation to Germany was signed on April 23, 1941 by generals G. Tsolakoglou, E. Bakos and P. Demestikas. Immediately after Greece's capitulation, Greek occupied Macedonia was re-occupied by Germany, Bulgaria and Italy. Bulgaria occupied Western Thrace and parts of Greek occupied Macedonia to the Struma River and the islands Tasos and Samothrace. Italy occupied the parts of Greek occupied Macedonia stretching from Kozhani, Lerin and Kostur Regions. Germany occupied central Greek occupied Macedonia including Solun, Kukush, Voden and Gumenzhe Regions. The German occupied part was left under the jurisdiction of G. Tsolakoglou's quisling Greek government. Greek occupied Macedonia was now subjugated by three antagonistic and belligerent occupiers. Macedonia's fate, once again, was left in Greek, Bulgarian and Macedonian hands struggling to resolve the Macedonian National Question to see who would get Macedonia after it was liberated.

The Bulgarians wasted no time in organizing their military presence in their occupied part and began to release Macedonian prisoners from the jails, share free food and protect the Macedonian population from the Greek nationalists. They wanted to attract the Macedonian population and thus legitimize their territorial claims on Greek occupied Macedonia.

After 1941, the Greeks immediately began to do everything in their power to preserve Greece's territorial integrity created by the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest and by the Neuilly Peace Accord. At the CPG

initiative EAM (National Liberation Front) and ELAS (National Liberation Army of Greece) were created. Later EDES (Greek Democratic and National League) was created at the initiative of Greek officer N. Plastiras and headed by Napoleon Zervas. After that EKKA (Greek Committee for National and Social Liberation) was created under the initiative of G. Kartalis and headed by Colonel Psaros. Even though these organizations were ideologically different (for some evolution without a revolution and for others evolution with a revolution) they were nationally united to serve Greek national interests including the sovereignty and national integrity of the Greek state. These Greek resistance forces were cooperating under the condition that they were allies in the fight against the occupiers and enemies in support of their classes. This was the basic political condition under which the Greek resistance forces operated in the period from 1941 to 1944.

As it turned out, the closer these organizations and their forces came to liberating Greece, the more they dedicated their struggle to their class. In time starting a civil war became inevitable. After Italy capitulated and the Bodoglio government was formed in 1943, clashes between ELAS and EDES and ELAS and EKKA became more common and took on the mark of a real civil war. In 1944, ELAS attacked and liquidated EKKA units along with their Colonel Psaros.

Both Greek political options had foreign allies and foreign support. The Left, which strived to maintain Greece's national and territorial integrity plus a socialist society, was supported by the USSR. The Right, which also strived to maintain Greece's national and territorial integrity plus support the upper classes, was supported by England. This problem, however, was solved by the Yalta Agreement signed by Churchill and Stalin in which Greece fell (90%) under English influence. In other words, instead of Greece becoming a socialist society because the Left had greater leverage inside Greece, the people in Greece were subordinated to England. The Left was further eroded with the signing of the Lebanon, Caserta and Varkiza Agreements. With the signing of the 1944 Lebanon Accord, between PEEA and the Greek government in exile, headed by Georgios Papandreou, for the sake of creating a "national unity" government, Middle East Headquarters was granted



the right to coordinate the Greek struggle and its resistance forces. By this Agreement the Left forces in Greece came under direct English control.

By the signing of the Caserta Agreement on October 26, 1944, all Greek Armed Forces were placed under General Skobi's English command, and England was granted the right to land its armies in Greece, in Athens, Piraeus and Solun, and to be placed under General Skobi's direct control.

The Varkiza Agreement was signed on February 12, 1945, by the Greek government in exile, on the one side, and by the CPG and ELAS on the other. The Agreement envisioned the disarmament of resistance units, clearing of the state apparatus, and free and democratic elections for all. The Agreement, unfortunately, did not envision the kind of political amnesty the CPG was looking for, which gave the Greek reactionaries the means to perpetrate white terror, especially against the Macedonian people. The Macedonian people were particularly targeted because of the role both the CPG and the USSR played in the period from 1941 to 1945, and later.

Under the re-occupation of Macedonian territories, the Macedonian people were a perfect fit for the antifascist struggle. There was great support for the realization of a "Macedonian National Program", which foresaw a "United Macedonia" under one Macedonian Communist Party and with a single Macedonian army. The initiator of this "Macedonian National Program" in Greek occupied Macedonia was Ilia Dimovski-Gotse. Ilia was joined by 10 other people from Lerin Region. This "Macedonian National Program" was part of the Comintern policy and the Balkan Communist Parties since 1935.

The "Macedonian National Program" unfortunately was not acceptable to any of the political forces in the Balkans right across the entire political spectrum - from left to right, - which the CPG quickly threw out in Greek occupied Macedonia. Lazo Trpovski played an important role in the termination of Ilia Dimovski-Gotse's initiative. The "Macedonian National Program" was unacceptable to the Balkan political forces it would appear, because there were differences within the resistance forces in the Balkans. The CPY,

with its policy of “statehood and nationality” within Yugoslavia, was able to create a broad political framework that included the affirmation of the Macedonian national interests. This CPY policy, in relation to the Macedonian National Question, was unacceptable and severely disturbing to the CPG and the CPB. The Balkan Communist Parties supported the “Macedonian National Program”, but only under the condition that the Macedonian National Liberation Movement act exclusively under the leadership of the respective Communist Party and within the appropriate Greek, Yugoslav or Bulgarian revolutionary movement.

The natural contradiction that existed between the Macedonian and Greek national interests during the National Liberation War, forced the CPG to lead “une politique intelligente et adequate” in relation to the Macedonian National Question. If the CPG in the ranks of the Greek Left movement gave preference to Greek national interests over class interests, it gave preference to class interests over national interests in the Macedonian national movement. This CPG policy was the main reason why there were so many serious political misunderstandings between the Greek and Macedonian resistance movements. The Macedonian people, for example, who saw their nation as a “historic Macedonian nation” living on its own ancestral lands, and not as a “minority”, and who believed they had the right to self-determination, was persecuted, isolated or liquidated. (Information obtained from a letter written by Naum Peiov, Ilia Dimovski-Gotse and Oshenski to CPG representatives. Collection of information about Greek occupied Macedonia in the National Liberation War, 1944-1945, vol. I, Skopje, p. 16 and 131.) The CPG was certain that it could control “Macedonian national sentiments” in the “restless Macedonian people”, especially those involved in the Macedonian national liberation movement, by placing them under appropriate Greek political control.

Several Macedonian organizations were established in the early 1940's. Included among them was MAO, the Macedonian Anti-Fascist Organization created in Voden Region in 1942, SNOF, the Slavo-Macedonian National Liberation Front, created in Kostur Region in October 1943 in the village D'mbeni and its formations constituted in the village Krchishta, and SNOF created in Lerin Region in the village Belkamen. Included among the people who

played a major role in creating MAO were Vangel Ajanovski-Oche then Secretary, Angel Gatsev, Risto Kordalov, and Risto Shorev. SNOF was led by Paskal Mitreski, Secretary, Lazo Poplazarov, Naum Peiov, Lazo Oshenski, Vasil Aleksovski, Spiro Vasilev, Kiro Pilaev, Georgi Turundzev and others. SNOF was only active for six months before it was liquidated by the CPG.

Several Macedonian military formations were also established in the early 1940's. Included among them was the Kostur Partisan Detachment formed in the spring of 1942, and the "Lazo Trpovski" Macedonian Detachment formed in the fall of 1943. The Kostur-Lerin Macedonian Battalion named "Gotse" was formed in the village Pozdivishta on Ilinden, on August 2, 1944, and the Voden Macedonian Battalion was formed in the village Gorno Rodevo in Kaimakchalan in June 1944. These military formations were created, among other things, to frustrate the Bulgarian propaganda which, through its various programs, tried to attract the Macedonian people to its own organization called "Ohrana". "Ohrana" was created by the Bulgarians on June 16, 1944 in Voden and was headed by Georgi Dimchev, from the village Bozets, Enidzhe-Vardar Region. The Macedonian people at the time were facing unprecedented terror perpetrated by the Greeks and this was exploited to the maximum by the Bulgarians to attract Macedonians into its ranks. Various Greek nationalist gangs like IEE (Protection of Northern Greece), ESA (National Social Defense), used medieval type terror tactics to drive the Macedonian people out of their homes and country. The Macedonian people had no other choice but to seek allies in order to secure their survival. Many Macedonians also joined ELAS units.

The CPG's backing of Greek nationalism over Macedonian patriotism, during the National Liberation War, was expressed in various forms and tones over time. But it all culminated in May 1944, when the Macedonian battalions left Greek occupied Macedonia and crossed over into the Republic Macedonia. This, according to Naum Peiov, was done to avoid an imminent armed clash between the Greek 28<sup>th</sup> ELAS Brigade and the Macedonian Gotse Battalion, a collision between Greek nationalism and Macedonian patriotism. The Macedonian fighters crossed over the border into the Republic of Macedonia on May 16, 1944. They were

led by Naum Peiov, Atanas Koroveshov, Vasil Makrievski, Pando Shiperkov, Evdokia Baleva-Vera and others. Included among those who at the same time left Lerin Region and also crossed over into the Republic of Macedonia were Nikola Shalvarinov, Mihali Apostolov-Graniti and the Turondzhiev brothers. The First Aegean Shock Brigade was formed in 1944 in Bitola from those leaders and fighters who fled Greek occupied Macedonia and landed in the Republic of Macedonia. The First Aegean Shock Brigade took an active role in the fight against the Albanian nationalist forces in the western part of the Republic of Macedonia. Appointed commander of the First Aegean Shock Brigade was Ilia Dimovski-Gotse and Mihailo Keramidziev was appointed Commissar.

Despite the narrow framework and limited maneuverability in which the restricted Macedonian national liberation movement began, thanks to the Macedonian political and military organizations, the Macedonian people succeeded in affirming their Macedonian national and cultural values. Among other things, the Macedonian people began to publish Macedonian newspapers in their local Macedonian dialects. The following Macedonian newspapers were published in Greek occupied Macedonia during the National Liberation War: “Slavo-Macedonian voice”, “Spark”, “Victory”, “Guardian”, “Voice of Prespa”, “Freedom”, “Red Star”, “Bulletin” and others. The stories in most of these newspapers were written in the Macedonian language but with Greek letters. This was because there were no typewriters or printing presses available to them with Macedonian letters. The Macedonian people also opened schools for teaching teachers and offered courses in the Macedonian language. Because the Macedonian language was banned and made illegal in Greek occupied Macedonia, there was a need to educate people not only to learn Macedonian but also to be able to teach it. One such school was opened in the town Rupishta and offered a course to 30 students. Because of the controversies created around the Cyrillic alphabet by the Greeks, calling it “Bulgarian”, “Serbian”, “Russian” and so on, an exclusively Macedonian alphabet was created by Pavle Rakovski. In 1944 Pavle Rakovski from the village Dolno Klestina, Lerin Region, created a Macedonian alphabet with 24 letters that was “different” and did not at all resemble the Greek or Bulgarian languages. A Macedonian primer, 1000 copies, and a Macedonian reader were printed and immediately sent to the Kostur and Lerin

Region villages. Included among the people who prepared and published the Macedonian primer were Andon Sekavitsa, Aleko Ivanovski, Risto Potianov, Vasko Karadzha and a priest from the village of Zagoricheni. These were the first Macedonian schools to be opened in Greek occupied Macedonia since 1913.

The Macedonian language was also successfully used by Macedonian cultural and artistic associations, in Macedonian songs, Macedonian dances, Macedonian stories, riddles, etc., all throughout the Macedonian villages in Greek occupied Macedonia. One of the many plays the Macedonian cultural and artistic associations performed, which was particularly impressive, was Jordan Chernodrinski's "Bloody Macedonian Wedding". This play was performed in the villages Armensko, Ekshi-Su, Visheni and others. On August 2, 1944, the Macedonian people in the village Pateli were treated to liturgy in the Macedonian language. The Macedonian people's development and affirmation of their Macedonian national and cultural values, during the National Liberation War, in Greek occupied Macedonia were also due to the influence of the Macedonian partisan units from the Republic of Macedonia when they were temporarily relocated in Greek occupied Macedonia. These Macedonian partisan units were met with great enthusiasm and welcomed by the Macedonian population in Greek occupied Macedonia.

After 1945, all national and cultural gains that were made by the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia, during the National Liberation War, were abolished. Immediately after the war, the Greek authorities began to implement a policy of white terror against the Macedonian population as a definitive means of solving the Macedonian National Question. Everywhere there were killings, torture, and rape... with aims at stamping out Macedonian national and human dignity... whenever and wherever it occurred in the Macedonian people's everyday lives.

## 2. MACEDONIANS IN THE GREEK CIVIL WAR (1946-1949)

After the Varkiza Treaty was signed in 1945, a new political polarization began to form in Greece. If a political polarization existed in Greece on the basis of national interests, i.e. regarding the Greek state's integrity and sovereignty, between 1941 and 1945, then a different polarization began to form after 1945. This political polarization was realized on the basis of class interests, i.e. the kind of political system that was to be implemented in Greece.

This new political polarization began to influence politics and change the balance of political power in Greece. On the one hand, the Left Forces (CPG) began to weaken and on the other, the centre-right forces began to strengthen. A thesis of one state, one nation, one language, political freedom, and private property, began to be more appealing to moderate left Greeks than a political thesis for a proletariat dictatorship, nationalization, collectivization, and so on, which were "class struggle" political concepts. As a result the CPG began to drift politically further to the left and could only represent those in the far left. This left the broad political space between the moderate left to the far right to be dominated by the Greek political centre.

A clash between the two political principles began to manifest on the ground as the centre Right political block began to gradually consolidate its power. After the bloody events in Athens in 1944, by some considered the "first Greek Civil War", after K. Tsaldaris's People's Party victory and after the establishment of the monarchy in Greece, established by a referendum in which 68% of Greeks voted for a monarchy, the CPG began to orient itself more towards an armed struggle and began to look for allies. The thesis for Greece being one state, one nation and speaking one language, was not acceptable to the Macedonian people because this thesis supported returning the Macedonian nation back to hatred and to its difficult past. At the same time the Macedonian people had unpleasant experiences with the CPG, especially during the National Liberation War. So, immediately after the Varkiza Agreement was signed, the Macedonian people began to organize themselves, initially against

Greek oppression, by forming a temporary Political Commission of Macedonians under Greece in 1944. Later the National Liberation Front (NOF) for the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia was formed. NOF was created on April 23, 1945 and headed by Paskal Mitrevski, Secretary, and members Mihailo Keramidzhiev, Georgi Urdov, Atanas Koroveshov, Mincho Fotev and Pavel Rakovski.

Two more Macedonian Organizations were created at the same time NOF was formed. The Women's Anti-Fascist Front (AFZH), headed by Secretary Evdokia Balova-Vera, and the Peoples' Liberation Youth Organization (NOMS), headed by Secretary Mincho Fotev. At the same time the Macedonian people began to form armed groups in order to protect themselves from Greek nationalism and chauvinism. For a short time NOF and the Macedonian armed groups acted independently from the CPG.

Mirka Ginova was sentenced to death and executed by a firing squad by the Greek Right in 1946 which upset many Macedonians. The CPG took advantage of this, and of such similar acts, and decided to include the Macedonian population in its left ideological framework, on a national basis, in the same way it did during the National Liberation War. By doing this it managed to attract many Macedonians into its ranks.

Cooperation between the two political movements was possible based on national and class interests for the Macedonian people and on class interests for the CPG. Cooperation between the CPG and NOF began in November 1946 and was based on a prior agreement reached between the CPY and the CPG. Talks between Ivan Karaivanov, representing the CPY, and Ianis Ioanidis, representing the CPG, were held in October 1946, with the following agreement being reached:

1. The Macedonian party organization from Greek occupied Macedonia to be fully involved in the CPG,
2. To form a central NOF leadership for Greek occupied Macedonia,
3. No separate Macedonian units were to be formed, etc.

On the basis of this agreement a definitive agreement between the CPG and NOF was reached on November 21, 1946. Preliminary talks for combining the Macedonian and Greek forces were held between Markos Vafiadis and Paskal Mitrevski.

Prior to the Agreement, the CPG took a more realistic view of the Macedonian Liberation Front (NOF) to make sure it was not an “autonomist organization” but a democratic organization like the EAM but for the Macedonians, whose purpose was to raise a voice against the white terror perpetrated by Greek authorities. In the period from 1945 to 1948, 533 Macedonians were killed and 17,647 were severely tortured.

The Macedonian people participated en masse in the Greek Civil War, which lasted from 1946 to 1949, and were the main bearers of that struggle. Of the 35,000 DAG fighters that participated in the Greek Civil War, 15,000 were Macedonians. On top of that, because the war front was almost entirely in Greek occupied Macedonia, the Macedonian civilian population bore almost the entire brunt of the struggle.

On top of the mass participation, the Macedonian people demonstrated legendary heroism, especially in the battles at Gramos and Vicho. They seriously and continuously put pressure on the CPG to legitimize the Macedonian people’s national rights for which they bled every day. Finally, in 1947, DAG General Headquarters recognized the national minorities living in Greece with rights to enjoy the same political rights and civil liberties as the rest of the people living in a “free, independent and democratic Greece”. It promised that in a future Greece they would have full freedom to develop their own national and cultural life, language, education, faith, etc. (Prokriksi, Praksis ke apofasis tu Geniku Arhighiu tu Dimokratiku stratu tis Elados, 1947, p. 6, s. 1.) With its statutory act no. 5, on August 10, 1947, DAG General Headquarters recognized the Macedonian people’s national rights, and thus enabled them the right to teach their children in the Macedonian language. According to statutory act no. 5, adopted by DAG General Headquarters: “Special schools will be established for children



belonging to national minorities... instruction will take place in the language of the minorities...” (Ibid.)

The Macedonian people immediately began to develop vibrant national and cultural educational activities. Two Macedonian schools were opened and taught Macedonian in Greek occupied Macedonia in the period from 1947 to 1949. The first schools were established in order to educate Macedonian teachers in the Macedonian language so that they could then in turn teach the Macedonian children in Macedonian. This needed to be done because the Macedonian language had been outlawed by the Greek state and no educators were available. The first school for Macedonian teachers, appropriately name “Gotse Delchev”, was opened in November 1947 in the village German in Prespa. The second school was opened in January 1948 in the village Zhelevo in Lerin Region. The courses given were attended by 257 Macedonian men and women. After that 87 Macedonian schools, with 10,000 students attending, were opened. Macedonian newspapers were also published in the Macedonian language. The following newspapers were published by NOF and AFZH during the Greek Civil War: “Buletin”, later “Bilton” (1945-1946), “Nepokoren” (1947-1949), “Zora” (in Lerin Region), “Pobeda” (in Voden Region), “Edinstvo” (in Kostur Region), “Borets”, organ of the 18<sup>th</sup> DAG brigade, “Nova Makedonia”, organ of the AFZH body, and others. Macedonian cultural and artistic associations were also formed. A Macedonian cultural and educational group was formed in March 1947 which consisted of 20 Macedonians who were always dressed in Macedonian folk costumes during tours and performances. The Macedonian language was also spread through drama, dance and songs. The most famous songs were: “Vo borba, borba Makedonski narode...” (On to war, on to war Macedonian people...), “A bre Makedonche kade se spremash” (Oh dear Macedonian for where are you getting ready?), “Zbogum majko, zbogum tatko, zbogum mila sestriche...” (Goodbye mother, goodbye father, goodbye my dear little sister...), “Eleno Mome”, and others. With the affirmation of the Macedonian language in Greek occupied Macedonia, the Macedonian language became official on the entire ethnic territory of Macedonia. This was the greatest success the Macedonian people had achieved since 1913. The Macedonian people managed to protect the name “Macedonia” and their Macedonian language even

in front of the Greek courts. The Macedonian people achieved all these successes thanks mainly to the activities of the Macedonian organizations NOF, AFZH and NOMS and to the sacrifices its members made. Evdokia Nikolova-Vera, from the village of D'mbeni, was mainly responsible for the development of most major political activities within AFZH.

While the Greek Civil War was still ongoing in 1948, the CPG became involved in the Tito-Stalin (CPY-CPSU) tiff and took a clear anti-Yugoslav stance. It did this in order to separate the Macedonian movement from Yugoslav influence and to impose its own political will and control. Almost immediately the CPG subordinated all Macedonian organizations (NOF, AFZH, NOMS) onto itself. After the First and Second NOF Congresses the CPG gradually replaced the "real Macedonian leadership" with its own people who it trusted to follow the CPG line and implement CPG policies. The First NOF Congress was held on January 13, 1948 in the village V'mbel, Kostur Region. The Second Congress was held on March 25-26, 1949. After that it became very clear that the anti-Yugoslav attitude that the CPG took would not only cause aggravation for the Macedonian people but the CPG, for tactical and war reasons, would change its policy to work against the Macedonian National Question. At the CPG's Fifth Plenum, in January 1949, instead of supporting its current policy of "a nation without a state", the CPG accepted a policy of "a nation with a state" for the Macedonian people. In other words the CPG in 1949 promoted the idea that the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia should have their own state. The CPG did this in order to draw more Macedonians into the Greek Civil War and cause them more damage. Its aim, as it became obvious after the war, was to make as many Macedonians as possible casualties of the war as well as to give the Greek government, its opposition, a clear reason to permanently exile all those who left Greece. Then, immediately after the Greek Civil War was over, in October 1949, the CPG again reversed its policy and promoted the idea of "a nation without a state" for the Macedonian people.

Two different political concepts emerged as a result of the CPG's flip-flopping, contradictions and policy changes with regards to the Macedonian National Question. One was supported by the

“majority”, led by Nikos Zahariadis, and the other was supported by the “minority”, led by Markos Vafiadis and Dimitrios Partsalidis. The argument supported by the “majority” called for the Macedonian National Question to be used as a tactical question. Representatives of the “minority”, on the other hand, felt that the Macedonian National Question was in such profound contradiction to the Greek national interests, that it should not be used as a tactical issue at all. Markos Vafiadis and Dimitrios Partsalidis were always against the Macedonian National Question and had taken an anti-Macedonian attitude towards most Macedonian issues.

The new political orientation, “a nation with a state” for the Macedonian people, was accepted by both NOF and the newly formed “Communist Organization for the Macedonians in Greek occupied Macedonia” (KOEM). Until then both NOF and KOEM politically acted within the framework of the CPG policy of full equality for the minorities in the Greek state. KOEM was formed on March 27, 1949 and was led by Mihali Malio. After DAG was defeated, all members of the NOF leadership were accused of being “foreign agents” and 11 of them were sent to Russian prisons and camps where they served their sentences for many years. As mentioned earlier, with its new political orientation, the CPG wanted to attract even more Macedonians, supposedly to solve the difficult problem of acquiring reserve fighters for its DAG units. This problem was so serious that the CPG resorted to mobilizing underage children (under the age of 16 and as young as 12). This act is one of the CPG’s black spots in its political history. The mobilization of underage children caused a great revolt among the Macedonian population in Kostur, Lerin and Voden Regions until it was finally stopped, but not before many Macedonian children were killed at the front, cut down by the then battle-seasoned Greek Monarcho-Fascist army.

Following the CPG’s decisions at its Fifth Plenum, in relation to the Macedonian National Question, the Greek Monarcho-Fascists stepped up their policy of repression against the civilian population, and against captured DAG fighters in particular. Many Macedonians were massacred in the villages B’mboki and Zagorichani in Kostur Region. All DAG soldiers, Macedonians and Greeks, who were convicted and who in court supported the CPG’s policy regarding

the Macedonian National Question, were sentenced to death without the right to appeal. About 2,000 people, mostly Macedonians, were sentenced to death for “high treason” and for attempting to “secede Greek territories”.

DAG’s defeat in 1949 had severe ethnic, political and economic consequences for the entire Macedonian population in Greek occupied Macedonia. Nearly 50,000 Macedonians, including 28,000 children, were forced to seek salvation in Eastern European countries. On top of that, about 20,000 Macedonians sacrificed their lives for what they believed to be Macedonia’s national liberation. But in reality they were used by the CPG (and by the CPJ) to fulfill foreign objectives. If the end justifies the means, then it is true, the Macedonian people were misled and used to fight for foreign objectives and, in doing so, Greece’s desire to expel them in order to possess a Macedonia without Macedonians. Greece was not alone in this; Britain and the United States were also involved and actively supported this. History, however, will never forget the Macedonian people who, rightly or wrongly, believed they were fighting for the good of the Macedonian people. We will never forget the people such as Lazo Angelovski, Georgi Urdov, Atanas Koroveshov, Mirka Ginova, Petar Tanurov, Petso Romev, Pando Shiperkov, Mihali Apostolov-Graniti, Tina Dunkova, Avrodita Duvalevska, Gena Kiriakova, Tsana Kirovska, Tinka Andreeva-Tsveta, Todor Doichinov-Morava, Vane Dorov, Germania Paikiva, and thousands of other Macedonians who laid their lives for the freedom of the Macedonian people. Many Macedonian villages were flattened to the ground and whole regions in Kostur, Lerin and Voden were destroyed. In total 46 Macedonian villages were deleted from the map.

As soon as the civilian Macedonian population left, in order to save itself from the Greek onslaught, Greek authorities began to quietly implement a policy of “mini colonization”, especially at the border regions, with a healthy “Greek national element”. At the same time, the Macedonians who left were deprived of their Greek citizenship and all their properties were confiscated because they supposedly participated in the so-called “bandit war”. The Law on Citizenship was enacted in 1947, and the Property Confiscation Act was enacted in 1948, way before the so-called “bandit war” was over in 1949.

This shows that the Greeks intended to exile the Macedonian civilian population all along and not to allow it to return back to its home.

## **CHAPTER SIX - MACEDONIANS AFTER THE GREEK CIVIL WAR (1949-1989)**

After DAG was defeated, the name “Macedonia” and the Macedonian language were once again banned and any expression of Macedonian national consciousness through language, song, drama, etc., was strictly prohibited. The words “Macedonia” and “Macedonian”, once again, became “dirty words”. On top of that the Greek regime forced the Macedonian people to take an oath that they would never again speak the Macedonian language. This is how the oath went: “I vow before the Lord, the people and the official state authorities, that from today on, I will never speak the Slavic dialect, which is just a misunderstanding, and that I will always and everywhere speak the Greek and official language of my homeland in which is written the sacred Gospel of our Christ...” This oath was forced on the Macedonian people, to be taken in public, all throughout the Macedonian villages, after 1949. (“Vecher”, January 19, 1987.)

These new circumstances seriously influenced the historical destiny of the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia and contributed to a new historical phenomenon. If, in the period between 1913 and 1950, the Macedonian people were able to exist and, to some extent, express some Macedonian national solidarity, after 1950, due to the unprecedented terror the Greek regime perpetrated against them, the Macedonian national solidarity began to gradually decline. The economic factor also played a major role in that direction since the Greek state refused to make investments in this region. In the period from 1951 to 1957, Greece’s national income grew by 6% per year, but its income per capita remained very low (\$200). Gradually, however, the national per capita income grew and created a relative economic well-being which eventually seriously affected the political awareness of the Macedonian people. Mixed marriages between Macedonians and Greeks became more frequent and more prevalent causing serious ethnic cracks within the Macedonian people.

The new political conditions also greatly influenced the historical destiny of the Macedonian language. If, in the period from 1913 to 1950, the Macedonian language was the primary and native

language of the Macedonian people, after 1950, it gradually began to lose that status and became a secondary language of the Macedonian people.

At the same time, the Greek language began to change its historical status. From being a secondary or foreign language for the Macedonian population, it began to become the primary or family language for part of the Macedonian population. The Macedonian people who were heavily influenced by learning Greek at a younger age later had difficulties pronouncing Macedonian words. They began to sound like the colonists and settlers who were attempting to speak Macedonian in the 1920s and 1930s. Thus the Macedonian language, according to the status of the most used languages, went through three stages of evolution from 1913 to 1989. It went through the first stage from 1913 to 1924. It went through its second stage from 1924 to 1950 and entered the third and last stage after 1950, with the “almost” historical disappearance of the Macedonian language when it began to lose its status as a family language for the Macedonian population. In order to speed up this process, i.e. to fully “Hellenize the Macedonian population”, the Greek state opened free nurseries and kindergartens in almost all Macedonian villages. This was done to separate Macedonian children in their earliest years from their families in order to fulfill two objectives: 1) stop the children from learning Macedonian, particularly from their grandparents, and 2) teach them the Greek language as soon as possible.

With the infiltration of the Greek language into the Macedonian home, and with the presence of Greek national, political and psychological logic in the Macedonian mind, the process of assimilating the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia was well under way. This was successfully achieved by the Greek authorities through unprecedented persistence and through the use of Medieval Greek terror against the Macedonian population. Greek authorities refused to recognize anything that was Macedonian, including the Macedonian nation and the Macedonian language, because if they did it would directly question the Greek territorial integrity.

Later on when the socialists came to power in Greece, nothing really changed in relation to the Macedonian nation and the Macedonian language. The old and usual Greek state political tactics taken towards the non-recognition of the Macedonian nation, adopted a long time ago, were continued. The only thing that did change, for the worse, was the attitude of the Greek nationalists who took one more step backwards and that was to deny the existence of the Macedonian nation and the Macedonian language outside of Greece. The Greek authorities began to more actively and more persistently deny the Macedonian nation and the Macedonian language everywhere in the world. Greek students studying at the University “Kiril and Metodi” in Skopje had to withdraw from their studies because of a Greek law enacted in 1982 denying the existence of, among other things, the Macedonian language in which they were taught.

Continuing its Greek historical tradition, i.e. creating “one state with one nation”, while attempting to implement a policy of “national reconciliation”, the socialist government in Greece decided to allow some of its exiled citizens, who fled Greece during the Greek Civil War, to return. Included among those Greek citizens, in addition to fighters and civilians, were the 28,000 children who were evacuated in order to be saved from Greek bombs and from the ravages of war. Unfortunately this so-called “national reconciliation” policy had a catch; only those who were “born Greeks” or “Greeks by birth” were allowed to return. So all the Macedonians, children, civilians and fighters, who left Greece and fled to Eastern European countries, to save themselves, while the communists were fighting in the Greek Civil War in Greece, were not allowed to return. Because, according to this arbitrary Greek definition, they were not “Greeks by birth”. In other words, even innocent Macedonians were prevented from returning to their native places. They were robbed of their rights to their Greek citizenship, simply because the Greek state decided that they were not “Greeks by birth”. As a result, they were not only permanently exiled but also lost the legitimate property rights to their ancestral homes and lands. A law on “regulating property rights for political refugees...” was adopted in 1985. The CPG supported this “national reconciliation” policy and this Party, yet again, “evolved” with regards to the Macedonian National Question even though it had previously accepted a policy



of “a nation without a state”. The CPG flip-flopped many times over the Macedonian National Question: “no nation and no state” from 1918 to 1924, “a state without a nation” from 1924 to 1931, “a nation without a state” from 1931 to 1949, “a nation with a state” from January 1949 to October 1949, and finally “no nation and no state” for the Macedonian nation. In other words the CPG played many games with the Macedonian National Question and, in the end, declared Macedonians do not exist.

This did not go well with the Macedonian people and they began to abandon the CPG and orient themselves towards the moderate left (Socialists) and moderate right parties, avoiding the extreme left and the far right. The CPG’s latest political orientation, with respect to the Macedonian National Question, was welcome news for almost all Greek political parties. One exception was the supporters and followers of Pantelis Puliopoulos, former leader of the so-called “minority” group which surfaced in the ranks of the CPG in the period between the two world wars. This small left oriented political party recognized the existence of the Macedonian nation and believed that the Macedonian people living in Greece were not only good workers, but they also paid taxes and had participated in wars to keep Greece safe. They believed the Macedonian people should enjoy equal national rights as Macedonians. Also, through their authority for Social change, have raised their voices against the national oppression of the Macedonian nation and have demanded the unconditional return of all political exiles from Greece. (“Nova Makedonija”, 8, XI 1983.)

The processes of assimilating the Macedonian people in Greek occupied Macedonia by force were actively and passively resisted. The passive resistance was expressed mainly through the more frequent use of the Macedonian language and Macedonian songs... because they were Macedonian. There was also active political resistance against these processes. A movement for human and national rights for the Macedonians from Greek occupied Macedonia was formed in Solun in 1984. At about the same time the organization “Central Organizational Committee for Macedonian Human Rights”, also based in Solun, was also formed. With the Manifesto for Macedonian Human Rights, the “Central

Organizational Committee for Macedonian Human Rights” demanded the following from the Greek authorities:

“1. Recognition of fundamental human and national rights and full freedom for the Macedonian people living within today’s Greek borders.

2. Allow the Macedonian people to establish their own educational system in their Macedonian mother tongue. Allow them to freely organize and use cultural institutions, such as schools, church services, access to radio and television programs, news services, as well as the ability to publish books and newspapers in the Macedonian language.

3. Draft and pass a law in the Greek Parliament, which will allow the Macedonian people to freely return to their native places from outside Greece’s borders, so that they can take an active part in the economic, cultural and educational life of this country...

4. We request from the Greek parliament and from the government to draft and pass a special law that will proclaim that the Macedonian people in Greece have indisputable rights and the right to exercise them without pressure, threats and intimidation, and that they should freely use their own native-Macedonian language, practice their Macedonian traditions, customs and culture, through words, books, newspapers, dances, songs...” (Manifesto for Macedonian Human Rights, Solun, 1984.)

The entire Macedonian nation is in support of the struggle for recognizing the Macedonian people’s human and national rights in Greece, Bulgaria and Albania. The existence of a Macedonian nation is not denied in Albania, but Albanian regimes have used subtle methods to assimilate the Macedonian minority living there. Solidarity rallies for the Macedonian people in Greek occupied and Bulgarian occupied Macedonia were held in Skopje, Bitola and other parts of the Republic of Macedonia in 1988 and 1989. A worldwide gathering of exiled children from Greek occupied Macedonia was held in Skopje from June 30 to July 3, 1988. More than 3,000 former refugee children from Canada, Australia, USA, Greek occupied Macedonia, and Eastern European countries

participated in the gathering. The meeting participants unanimously supported the right to freedom and human and national rights for all nations regardless of their size and cultural development.

“The right to be free and to be affiliated to a nation, the right to have your own national identity, the right to speak your mother tongue, the right to be educated in your mother tongue...” All these are fundamental human rights that are recognized by the international community. Every participant at the child refugee gathering believed that “every person, regardless of which creed, sex, race, or nation they belong to, has the right to life, freedom and happiness, and any kind of national oppression is an insult to their very human dignity”. (Stojan Kiselinovski, from a paper he wrote on the occasion of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the refugee children exodus from Greek occupied Macedonia.)

These Macedonian national aspirations were strongly supported by the exiled former Macedonian child refugees who now live abroad and have their own international organizations in the respective countries where they live including in Canada, Australia and the United States, and have raised their voices to protect the name “Macedonia”, “Macedonian identity” and “Macedonian national dignity”. On the occasion of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest, the “Macedonian National Committee” from Toronto, Canada, submitted a “Declaration on Human Rights and Freedoms” for the Macedonians living in Greece, Bulgaria and Albania, to the United Nations demanding that:

“1. Greece and Bulgaria are obligated by the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights to recognize the Macedonian people living in their respective countries and to stop denying their human rights, which include freedom of expression and affirmation outside of their countries (in Canada, Australia, USA, etc.) These two countries are obliged by the provisions of the Helsinki Accord to recognize the status of national minorities, including the Macedonians, and to respect the rights to equality before the law which affords them the right to enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms and protects and promotes their legitimate interests...”

2. Greece, Bulgaria and Albania are urged to allow the Macedonian people in their respective territories to develop human, cultural, spiritual and other ties with the Macedonian people in the Republic of Macedonia and multicultural democratic societies such as Canada and Australia, as well as with the Macedonian people in the United States of America and other countries in the world.

3. Greece and Bulgaria are obliged to allow the Macedonian people in their respective countries to education themselves in their Macedonian mother tongue. They should be granted the right to open schools and cultural institutions. They should be free to form their own organizations and associations. They should have the right to publish Macedonian language books and newspapers and to participate in radio and television programs. They should also have the right to freely use their mother tongue in the courts and church rites.

4. Greece needs to abolish all legal provisions that prohibit the Macedonian people exiled during the Greek Civil War from returning to their place of birth. All exiled Macedonians and their descendants, regardless if they are “Greek by birth” or not, should be allowed to return to their place of origin. Those who have been exiled should also be allowed to visit their father’s hearths, to light a candle at the graves of their ancestors and relatives as well as to reclaim their own properties, if they wish to do so.

5. Together with the restoration of their Macedonian national identity in Greece, it is also necessary for the Greek state to restore the changed personal and geographical names in Macedonia to the original form.

6. Greece, Bulgaria and Albania must reconcile their attitude towards the Macedonian people within the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Helsinki Accord and all other international norms.” (Declaration of Human Rights and Freedoms for the Macedonian people in Greece, Bulgaria and Albania.)

Greece and Bulgaria, by international norms, are obligated to recognize the Macedonian nation living in Greece and Bulgaria,

with full national, cultural and linguistic rights. By doing so, these two Balkan countries will undoubtedly affirm their historical, political and moral values.

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