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**STRUGGLE OVER MACEDONIA: FLORINA 1906, ACCORDING TO
THE RECORDS OF RUMELI INSPECTORSHIP**

**The Institute of Economics and Social Sciences
of
Bilkent University**

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**In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
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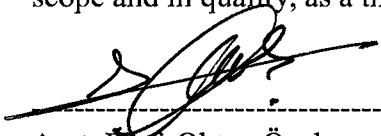
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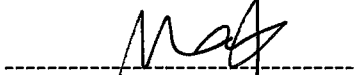
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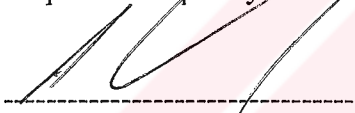
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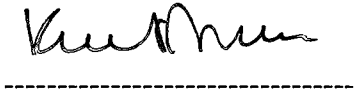
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ABSTRACT

Struggle over Macedonia: Florina 1906, According to the Records of Rumeli Inspectorship.

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The Macedonian Question was one of the diplomatic problems that statesmen and the international public opinion were mostly concerned with at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. The expansionist and irredentist desires of the Balkan states Greece, Serbia, and especially Bulgaria lied at the core of the problem. These states encouraged, and even organised terrorist activities in Macedonia. The Great Powers –Austria-Hungary, Russia, Great Britain, France, Germany, and Italy–, meanwhile, viewed the issue in terms of their own political and economic interests. These powers, while supporting this or that Balkan state in various ways and pressurising the Sublime Porte to conduct reforms so as to improve the lives of Christian communities in the European lands of the empire, also wanted the Ottoman Empire to preserve its territorial integrity. Under these circumstances, during the first decade of the twentieth century life in Macedonia was highlighted by anarchy, terror, insecurity and disorder.

This thesis deals with certain aspects of the Macedonian Question. The activities of the influence agents of the states that considered Macedonia within their national boundaries and aspired to annex the land, and put forth claims accordingly, such as the bands of Macedo-Bulgarian organisations or the Greek bands, are studied. In addition, the Greek and Bulgarian activities in the *kaza* of Florina, which is in the *vilayet* of Manastır, in 1906 are examined in particular with reference to the documents of Rumeli Inspectorship; attempting to construct a micro-history of the region.

Key Words: The Macedonian Question, Irredentism, Terror, Macedo-Bulgarian bands, Greek bands, Reform, Florina, 1906.

ÖZET

Makedonya Üzerine Mücadele: Florina 1906, Rumeli Müfettişliği Belgelerine Göre.

Kayalar, Anıl.

Yüksek Lisans, Tarih Bölümü.

Tez Yöneticisi: Yrd. Doç. Oktay Özel.

Makedonya Sorunu 19. yüzyıl sonu ve 20. yüzyıl başı itibariyle devlet adamlarını ve uluslararası kamuoyunu en fazla meşgul eden diplomatik sorunlardan bir tanesi idi. Sorunun temelinde Balkan devletleri Yunanistan, Sırbistan, ve özellikle de Bulgaristan'ın Makedonya üzerinde ki yayılmacı ve irredantist emelleri yatmakta idi. Bu devletler Makedonya içindeki terörist faaliyetleri teşvik ediyorlar, ve hatta örgütlüyorlardı. Aynı zamanda Büyük Güçler -Avusturya-Macaristan, Rusya, Büyük Britanya, Fransa, Almanya, İtalya- de konuya kendi siyasi ve ekonomik çıkarları açısından yaklaşılmaktaydılar. Bunlar, bir yandan şu veya bu Balkan devletini değişik şekillerde desteklerken ve Bâb-i Âli'ye imparatorluğun Avrupa topraklarındaki Hristiyan topluluklarının yaşamlarını iyileştirmek üzere reformlar yürürlüğe koyması için baskı uygularken, öte yandan da Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun toprak bütünlüğünü korumasını istemekteydiler. Bu koşullar altında Makedonya'daki hayata, 20. yüzyılın ilk on yılının büyük bir bölümünde anarşi, terör, ve artan bir güvensizlik ve düzensizlik ortamı damgasını vurmuştur.

Bu tez çalışması Makedonya sorununu belli açılardan ele almaktadır. Makedonya'yı milli sınırları içinde gören, burayı ilhak etmek isteyen ve bu doğrultuda iddialar ortaya atan devletlerin Makedonya içerisindeki Makedon-Bulgar örgütlere bağlı çeteler veya Yunan çeteleri gibi etki ajanlarının gerçekleştirdiği faaliyetler özellikle gözden geçirilmektedir. Ayrıca Makedonya Sorunu çerçevesinde, özellikle Manastır vilayetine bağlı Florina kazasında 1906 senesinde gerçekleşen Yunan ve Bulgar çete faaliyetleri ilgili Rumeli Müfettişliği Belgeleri üzerinden incelenerek bir mikro-tarih oluşturma denemesine girilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Makedonya Sorunu, İrredantizm, Terör, Makedon-Bulgar çeteler, Yunan çeteleri, Reform, Florina, 1906.

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I am heavily indebted to my grandmother Dr. Fatma Altuğ for providing me with an excellent environment to study. I also owe thanks to my uncle Prof. Turhan Tüzemen who kindly translated some documents of great value for my research. Hearty thanks are also due to my father Tunç Kayalar and my brother Onur for their constant support. Very special thanks go to my mother Dr. Rüçhan Kayalar for her unfailing understanding and invaluable help.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ÖZET.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER TWO: MACEDONIAN QUESTION AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.....	14
I. The Roots of the Macedonian Question.....	14
II. Actors in the International Arena.....	34
CHAPTER THREE: TERROR IN MACEDONIA, THE FIELD.....	46
I. The Macedo-Bulgarian Movement in Macedonia.....	48
II. The Greek Movement in Macedonia.....	61
III. The Serbian Movement in Macedonia.....	68
IV. Vlachs.....	72
V. Reforms.....	74
CHAPTER FOUR: FLORINA, 1906.....	83
I. Florina.....	83
II. Bulgarian activities in Florina in 1906.....	86
III. Greek activities in Florina in 1906.....	94
IV. The Battle of İstrebne.....	98
V. Unidentifiable crimes.....	102
VI. Muslims.....	102

VII. An interesting report of the <i>kaimmakam</i> of Florina.....	104
VIII. Conclusions.....	107
CONCLUSION.....	110
APPENDICES.....	115
APPENDIX A: Administrative Plan of the Three Provinces.....	115
APPENDIX B: Document Examples.....	119
APPENDIX C: The Treaty of Berlin, Article 23.....	124
APPENDIX D: Map of Macedonia, Circa 1900.....	125
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	126



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

One of the most challenging, intricate and prolonged problems for the Ottoman administration was the Macedonian Question. The matter occupied Ottoman, Balkan, and European policymakers in the period between the Berlin Congress and the World War I. The population in Macedonia was amalgamated elaborately with Slavs, Greeks, Albanians, Turks, and some minor elements such as Vlachs or Gypsies. There were both Christian and Muslim elements amongst these groups, as well.

Macedonia had an outstanding strategic significance. Any Balkan state would acquire the power necessary to dominate the region through controlling Macedonia. Thus, every single Balkan state had its own calculations. Macedonia meant not only command over the route along the valleys of Vardar and Morava, and a substantial agricultural wealth for all the protagonist Balkan states, but also a critical outlet to the sea for Bulgaria and Serbia, and Austria-Hungary as well. Furthermore, every single Great Power was supporting one claimant of Macedonia or the other according to its own scheming. For the Ottoman state, Macedonia meant not only rule over a large number of Muslims, but also a strategic security zone against the expansionist and irredentist ambitions of the Balkan states – Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia. The European provinces of the Ottoman Empire were also

generating substantial tax revenues. Moreover, these provinces were also important for the security of the imperial capital, Istanbul.

Until the end of the 19th century, the competition for Macedonia by and large took place in the international relations scene. However, starting with the last decade of that century, the Balkan nationalists formed terrorist organisations to publicise their messages both in and out of Macedonia. The three *vilayets* (provinces) Selanik, Manastır and Kosova entered the 20th century in an escalating reign of terror. Thus, the first decade of the 20th century meant violence and insecurity for Macedonia. Actions taken against this, all schemes of reforms, all precautions and new regulations proved futile, although some progress was achieved occasionally.

This dissertation is an attempt to conduct an analytical micro history of insecurity in a *kaza* –Florina– in a specific year –1906– within the context of the Macedonian Question in the light of the records of Rumeli Inspectorship. The activities of Greek and Macedo-Bulgarian bands in Florina are selected because the region was one of the hotbeds of the battle between the Greek and Macedo-Bulgarian bands that constituted the core of the problem; and 1906 was the year when the fight in Macedonia was at its peak. In this dissertation, it is put forth that although it is generally presumed that the Ottomans tolerated and turned a blind eye on the activities of Greeks and Greek armed bands, in Florina in 1906 this was not the case at all as the Greek bands suffered heavy casualties.

The general context will be presented through a survey of the Macedonian Question in the first chapter, and then in the second, the story of the struggle in the field will be given with accounts of rival organisations. Finally, in the third chapter, which is almost exclusively based on archival sources, the deeds of the bands and the activities of the authorities will be recounted. In addition, some conclusions

about the Greek and Macedo-Bulgarian movements are drawn within the context of their particular histories. In the last chapter, also various data will be provided not only on activities of violence, but also on a different aspect of the struggle in Macedonia, that is, the transactions of the immovable, based on a report of an official in Florina. In this report, the *kaimmakam* of Florina draws attention to the increasing scale of land purchases by the Christians, and points out that this was a considerable problem for the Muslims and the Ottoman administration.

In this dissertation the records of the Rumeli Inspectorship constitute the primary sources. The records include documents about Manastır, Selanik, Kosova *vilayets* and the *sancaks* (subprovinces), *kazas* (districts), *nahiyes* (subdistricts, communes) and villages of these *vilayets*. These records are generally about band activities, tax issues, the religious conflict between Bulgarian and Greek churches, ordinary crimes, misuses of administrative authority, matters of gendarmerie reform, construction activities, the activities of consulars, and religious personalities. I have, in particular, examined the documents about Florina for the year 1906. Then, the documents, which are particularly on the activities of Greek and Bulgarian bands have been selected and I have attempted to construct an analytical history of the activities of these bands in Florina in 1906. These documents put forth only the official point of view; yet, I believe, it is of crucial importance to utilise this hitherto rarely used collection of documents in the Turkish archives in order to widen the perspective in the literature.

The documents about Florina, for the year 1906, contain mainly telegrams and letters incoming to the centre in Thessalonica. As they are official documents, they present an official viewpoint. Hence, one should always bear this point in mind while making comments. Nevertheless, as they were prepared not with the aim to

publicise but for purposes of internal communication, they do possess a certain degree of credibility. Therefore, I do believe, the records of Rumeli Inspectorship contain a good deal of data, especially on the activities of the Bulgarians, Greeks, and others.

At this point, it might be useful to give a brief account of some other primary and secondary sources that have been of utmost use in my study. Apart from the archival sources, I have also used to some extent two collections of published documents. One of them is a collection of Austro-Hungarian documents edited by F. R. Bridge and was published by the Institute for Balkan Studies in Thessalonica in 1976¹. The documents in the book, which are diplomatic reports, cover the period of 1896 – 1912. The emphasis in the book is on Greeks. Although one might expect a certain bias as this book was published in Greece by a Greek institution, the compilation is not totally biased in favour of the Greek arguments on the Macedonian Question, and it also contains documents that are on Greek acts of violence against the population.

This compilation, without doubt, has great academic importance for the students of the field. The documents are all diplomatic documents; thus, they are of official quality, and they cover a wide scope of issues, including the attitude of the Turkish government, as well as attitude of the European press, from all sorts of bands' activities to international relations².

The second published compilation of documents is *Macedonia, Documents and Material*³. This compilation was published by the Bulgarian academy of

¹ *Austro-Hungarian Documents Relating to the Macedonian Struggle, 1896 – 1912*, ed. by F. R. Bridge (Thessalonica: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1976).

² The documents are published in German. I have used the documents related to Florina in 1906, which Prof. Turhan Tüzemen kindly translated for me.

³ *Macedonia, Documents and Material*, ed. by Voin Bozhinov and L. Panayotov (Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1978).

sciences in 1978, and edited by Voin Bozhinov and L. Panayotov. It covers an extensive period from 6th century to 1940. Documents related to the subject of this study are in the third section of the book under the heading 'National-Liberation Struggles (1878 – 1918)'. This compilation includes not only Bulgarian documents but some western documents as well. All the documents are translated into English. Hence, this book offers the researchers, who do not know Bulgarian or German, the opportunity to reach at least some Bulgarian or Austro-Hungarian documents, and for that reason it is an important and helpful book for researchers. However, there is a certain lack of objectivity, as it seems that the selection of documents seems to endeavour proving the rightfulness of the Bulgarian claims over Macedonia, principally against Greeks and Serbians. Nonetheless, this is a valuable work that ought to be present in all research libraries, and that ought to be inspected by the students of the field.

Books by several contemporaries have also been looked into during the process of undertaking this work. Of these, Brailsford *Macedonia* is the most prominent one⁴. Published in 1906, *Macedonia* contains the observations of its author who had been in Macedonia, and was interested in its state of affairs for some time. Apart from an obvious bias it contains in favour of the Bulgarians, this book is a good contemporary popular source.

Another contemporary work that ought to be mentioned is Durham's *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*⁵. Published in 1920, this work is another significant contemporary source. It contains the memoirs of its author who had spent almost twenty years in the Balkans during the first two decades of the 20th century. The seventh and eighth chapters are especially important for the subject of this study, as

⁴ H. N. Brailsford, *Macedonia, Its Races and their Future* (London: Methuen, 1906; repr. New York: Arno Press & The New York Times, 1971).

⁵ M. Edith Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1920).

these two chapters particularly deal with Macedonia in years 1903 and 1904. Durham's opinions are less prejudiced towards Turks and Muslims than the prevailing western opinion of the era. She bitterly criticises Bulgarian and Greek religious figures⁶ and she open heartedly explains the nature of the perception of Macedonia in western circles.

John Foster Fraser's *Pictures from the Balkans* also deserves to be cited here⁷. It is again the memoirs of a person who spent some time in the field, observing the events face to face. Fraser is also less biased against the Ottoman administration and the Muslims. He narrates the ferocities of Bulgarian and Greek bands without trying by any means to justify these or taking one side or the other.

Arthur D. Howden Smith's *Fighting the Turk in the Balkans*, on the other hand, is openly supportive of the Bulgarian claims⁸. In his book, published in 1908, the author, 'embedded' with a Bulgarian band like the 'coalition' journalists of the second Gulf War, recounts his memories with the bandsmen. As the title of his book also implies, he has no sympathy for the administration of the day. He actively wandered in Macedonia with a Macedo-Bulgarian band that took off from Bulgaria, and observed its activities in the field. Despite Smith's obvious biases, this book is nonetheless a good source for the historian, who needs to grasp what a band was and who a bandsman was in order to comprehend the issue more completely.

Tahsin Uzer's memoirs also provide valuable information on the matter and a vivid picture of the day⁹. Tahsin Bey acted as local civil administrator during the most critical phases of the Macedonian question, in different districts of the three

⁶ Durham, p. 95.

⁷ John Foster Fraser, *Pictures from the Balkans* (London: Cassell, 1912).

⁸ Arthur D. Howden Smith, *Fighting the Turk in the Balkans* (New York and London: The Knickerbocker Press, 1908).

⁹ Tahsin Uzer, *Makedonya Eşkiyalık Tarihi ve Son Osmanlı Yönetimi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1979).

provinces. Furthermore, being a Young Turk, he does not defend in his memoirs the administration of Abdülhamit blindly. On the contrary, he bitterly criticises not only Abdülhamit but also the local administrative echelons as well. He does not hesitate to disapprove the maladministration and misuse of state authority. Uzer's work is certainly an indispensable source for any student of not only the Macedonian question but also the history of the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey.

Fikret Adanır is one of the most important scholars, especially on the history of Macedonian Question. His doctoral dissertation *Die Makedonische Frage* is certainly a significant study. It was also translated into Turkish and published in 2001¹⁰. In his dissertation, Adanır uses mainly German, Austro-Hungarian, Bulgarian and Macedonian sources. Thus, his emphasis is on the Macedo-Bulgarian movement. It is also an analytical work in which the author approaches his sources with a critical eye, and this certainly increases the value of the book.

Adanır has also written quite a deal of articles, in German and in English mostly. Four of his articles have been referred to in this dissertation, and have contributed immensely to my grasp of the Macedonian Question. In his 1984-85 article, he fervently criticises the western and Balkan historiography on the issue¹¹. Adanır endeavours to expose some weaknesses in the historiographic analysis of the socio-economic phenomena in nineteenth century Macedonia. He provides some excellent examples of how the importance of these phenomena for political developments has been exaggerated.

¹⁰ Fikret Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu, Oluşumu ve 1908'e Kadar Gelişimi*, trans. by İhsan Catay, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2001).

¹¹ Fikret Adanır, 'The Macedonian Question: The Socio-economic Reality and Problems of its Historiographic Interpretation', *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, 3 (1984-85), 43-64

In another article¹², Adanır examines the formation of the national elite among the Macedonian Slavs. He uses the term 'elite' to denote the activists at the forefront of the Macedonian Slav movement. He tries to set forth how an elite formation took place under the 'powerful influence of social, economic and political forces in the country'¹³; and information about the social and geographic origins of leaders, the education they received, the professions they pursued, the organisational structures they created and the channels of communication they utilised, all contribute to a better understanding of the forms as well as of the outcome of the political struggle'¹⁴.

Adanır's 1994 article¹⁵ on socialism in Macedo-Bulgarian movement is also an important work. Here, he tries to make clear the connection between the national question and the development of socialism in Macedonia. Adanır gives some examples of socialist involvement in the nationalist struggle in Macedonia and tries to determine the consequences of such participation. He also discusses the relations between the Young Turks and the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (IMRO) and the Balkan socialists after 1908 revolution.

The context of Adanır's 1998 article is much wider in scope¹⁶. This is equally an invaluable contribution to historiography on the area as are his other articles. He examines the crucial determinants of nationalism and nation building in

¹² Fikret Adanır, 'The Macedonians in the Ottoman Empire, 1878-1912', in *The Formation of National Elites*, ed. by Andreas Kappeler and Fikret Adanır and Alan O'Day (Darmouth: New York University Press, 1992), pp. 161-191.

¹³ An interesting article is Roudometof's in this respect. See Victor Roudometof, 'The Social Origins of Balkan Politics: Nationalism, Underdevelopment, and the Nation-State in Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria, 1880-1920', *Mediterranean Quarterly*, 11 (2000), 144-163.

¹⁴ Adanır, 'The Macedonians in the Ottoman Empire', p. 175.

¹⁵ Fikret Adanır, 'The National Question and the Genesis and Development of Socialism in the Ottoman Empire: the Case of Ottoman Macedonia', in *Socialism and Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. by Mete Tunçay and Eric Jan Zürcher (London: British Academic Press, 1994), pp. 27-48.

¹⁶ Fikret Adanır, 'The Socio-political Environment of Balkan Nationalism: the Case of Ottoman Macedonia 1856-1912', in *Regional and National Identities in Europe in the XIXth and XXth Centuries*, ed. by Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, Michael G. Müller and Stuart Woolf (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1998), pp. 221-254.

Macedonia. He comments on certain historical biases concerning Ottoman rule, which are:

Ottoman rule was a 'dark age' of Islamic domination over Christianity; secondly, that this isolated the Balkan countries from the general course of development of European civilization; thirdly, that Ottoman rule represented a backward feudal system of socio-economic and political exploitation, which intensified under conditions of Ottoman decline from the eighteenth century onwards¹⁷.

Then, an analysis of developments in Macedonia is presented and some definite characteristics of the national question there are discussed.

Another Turkish secondary source is Gül Tokay's *Makedonya Sorunu*¹⁸. In this book, which is published in 1995, Tokay deals with the Macedonian Question and the Young Turk movement, and examines the Macedonian issue as a cause of the Young Turk movement. According to her, the developments in Macedonia in the period of 1903 – 1908 shows three characteristics: firstly, European powers interfered in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire behind the façade of pressuring for 'reforms'; secondly, those 'reforms' accelerated the local struggles, battles in the field; and thirdly, the events in Macedonia, in the three *vilayets*, induced the formation of a Muslim opposition, which would culminate in the Young Turk revolution of 1908. While, recounting general points of the Macedonian question, she also gives details concerning the Ottoman security establishment structures in Macedonia, such as the third Army and Gendarmerie. Apart from examining a wide range of secondary literature, Tokay also utilised Austro-Hungarian, British, and Ottoman archival material. Her work, therefore, is a sound analysis of the Macedonian Question, and her contribution to the literature in Turkish on the subject is immense.

¹⁷ Adanır, 'The Socio-political Environment', p. 221.

¹⁸ Gül Tokay, *Makedonya Sorunu, Jön Türk İhtilalinin Kökenleri, (1903 – 1908)*, Türkiye Üzerine Araştırmalar: 15 (İstanbul: Afa Yayınları, 1996)

A standard reference for any student of the Macedonian question is Douglas Dakin's *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia, 1897 – 1913*¹⁹. The Institute for Balkan Studies has first published this work in 1966 in Thessalonica. Dakin asserts that the Greek movement in Macedonia was based upon Hellenism as 'a way of life that existed in Macedonia among the more substantial Christian population, much of it (though not all of it) Greek by race and language and (what is more important) all of it fervently orthodox and conservative'²⁰. He continuously refers to the Exarchate as 'the Schismatic Church', and to the adherents of the Exarchate as 'schismatic' in his book. Hence, on the grounds of tendentiousness, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia* does not fulfil academic requirements. Therefore, one could easily classify this work as a 'semi-official Greek history' of Macedonian 'struggle', as the productive historian Basil Gounaris does in his highly enlightening article on the Greek historiography on the 'struggle for Macedonia'²¹.

Dakin uses mainly Greek and British sources. However, he does not approach his source with an investigating eye and takes them at their face values. He does not use any Turkish or Ottoman primary or secondary source at all. Nevertheless, it is the most extensive history of the Greek movement in Macedonia, and for a reader, who can approach the book with a certain degree of reserve, it is an important secondary source in English language.

¹⁹ Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia, 1897-1913* (Thessalonica: Society for Macedonian Studies and the Institute for Balkan Studies, 1966; repr. Thessalonica: Museum for the Macedonian Struggle, Institute for Balkan Studies, 1993).

²⁰ Dakin, p. 474.

²¹ Basil C. Gounaris, 'Reassessing Ninety Years of Greek Historiography on the "Struggle for Macedonia" (1904-1908)', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 14.2 (1996), 237-251 (p. 242). In this article Gounaris puts forth that the large Greek historiography on the 'Greek struggle for Macedonia', and its evolution during the 20th century is a clear reflection of the diplomatic aspects of the Macedonian Question.

Another important book I would like to refer to is Nadine Lange-Akhund's *The Macedonian Question*²². This book is originally written in French, and translated into English and published in 1998. Lange-Akhund's work covers the period of 1893 – 1908. She emphasises the role of Bulgarian, Greek, and Serbian movements within the Macedonian question. She also examines the establishment of reforms in detail, and pays particular attention to the gendarmerie reform. Lange-Akhund has used diplomatic archives of France along with Austrian diplomatic archives, and she has complemented these primary sources with recent publications on the topic from Germany, Austria, Britain, and the US. Although Lange-Akhund cannot free herself from the jargon of 'Ottoman (or Turkish) yoke'²³ throughout her study, she has nevertheless created a firm study on the subject, which is useful for the students of the area.

One should never fail to check Duncan Perry's *The Politics of Terror*²⁴, published in 1988. This book is the history of IMRO and its Bulgarian correspondent Supreme Macedonian committee, and covers the period of 1893, the year when the IMRO was founded in Thessalonica, to 1903, the year of the Ilinden uprising. Perry states in the preface that he intends to remain away from any sort of bias as regards the Macedonian Question. He sets his goal as 'to present a balanced rendering of the history of the Macedonian movements based on the available evidence, without regard to contemporary political or nationalistic considerations'²⁵. It might be asserted that he has reached his goal by and large throughout the book.

²² Nadine Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question, 1893 – 1908, From Western Sources*, trans. by Gabriel Topor (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1998).

²³ The following passage from the Encyclopedia of Britannica illustrates an example of what I mean by saying 'jargon of Ottoman yoke': '...The best lands in the plains were distributed among the Turkish chiefs (after the complete conquest of Macedonia) and a system of feudal tenure was developed. The Christian peasants were either were driven to the less fruitful regions or remained on the lands assigned to the Muslim lords, to whom they paid a tithe'. p. 511, volume 14.

²⁴ Duncan M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror, The Macedonian Liberation Movements, 1893 – 1903* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1988).

²⁵ Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, p. xiii.

He has used Austro-Hungarian, Bulgarian, American and Yugoslavian primary sources. Although he has not used any Ottoman primary source, he is not unaware of some of Adanır's and Kemal Karpat's studies. *The Politics of Terror* provides a comprehensive history of the Macedonian revolutionary movements during a critical period in Balkan affairs.

The main body of this study is intended to have a deductive structure. The first chapter deals with the general features of the Macedonian Question. First of all, the background of the Macedonian Question is presented, and the developments after the Russo-Turkish war of 1878 are briefly recounted. Secondly, some information about the land and peoples is given. This part of the first chapter contains information on the geographic, administrative, strategic, economic and demographic characteristics of Macedonia. The chapter ends with a brief account of the actor states of the issue where their intentions are also described. To sum up, this chapter tries to present a general picture, and acquaint the reader more deeply with the Macedonian Question.

In chapter 2, the actual actors in the field are presented. The rival Macedo-Bulgarian, Greek, Serbian, and Vlach movements are examined. The emphasis is laid upon the Macedo-Bulgarian paramilitary organisations inasmuch as they were the earliest actors in the Macedonian scene of terror. The histories of these organisations, their intentions, the 1903 Ilinden uprising, the developments after the failure of the Ilinden uprising, the divisions and animosities within the Macedo-Bulgarian movement, and a social anatomy of this movement are discussed. The Greek and Serbian movements are included in the picture for the period after 1903 since until 1904 the stage was almost completely dominated by the Macedo-Bulgarian movement. Particular attention is devoted to the Greeks among these

three, as they were the most important opponents of the Macedo-Bulgarian organisations.

Chapter 3 constitutes the essence of this dissertation. Here a history of the activities of the Macedo-Bulgarian and Greek bands in Florina in 1906 is presented. Based on primary sources completely, an analysis of the state of affairs in Florina in 1906 is thus constructed. The final section of the chapter includes a summary of conclusions drawn after the scrutiny of the particular records of Rumeli Inspectorship.

Few words ought to be said briefly on the origins of my interest in this subject. There are mainly two reasons. Firstly, I believe the phenomenon of the Turkish Republic and its history can be understood more effectively by evaluating the Macedonian Question soundly since the founders of the Republic of Turkey were originally from among the Young Turks or circles close to them, who had to deal with the Macedonian Question either actively or passively. Thus, this work might also be seen an endeavour to understand the past and present better so as to produce more accurate and fruitful ideas in the future. The second reason is of more personal nature. My paternal ancestors are originally from Macedonia. They were born in Kayalar and came to Bursa in the population exchange of 1924 between Greece and Turkey. Hence, this study may also be considered as part of my endeavour to come to terms with my personal history.

CHAPTER TWO

MACEDONIAN QUESTION AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

I. The Roots of the Macedonian Problem¹

The Treaty of San Stefano (3 March 1878), which ended the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878, made Bulgaria fully autonomous within the Ottoman Empire and most of Macedonia was given to Bulgaria. Russia had territorial gains in the Caucasus and Bessarabia. Montenegro, Romania, and Serbia were granted independence from Ottoman suzerainty. Moreover, all three states gained some territory. Only Bosnia, Albania, Epirus, Thessaly, and a small portion of Macedonia and a small piece of Thrace remained as Ottoman lands.

However, this treaty created great disturbance amongst other great powers since this treaty presented Russia with a secure outpost in the Balkans; and thus, equipped him with a significant advantage over his European competitor, Austria-

¹ See Stanford Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977; repr. 1997), II, pp. 187-191; and Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi VIII. Cilt*, 5th edn (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2000), pp. 57-78.

Hungary in terms of hegemony in the Balkans. Moreover, Russia became more able to penetrate to the eastern Mediterranean basin. Furthermore, Greece and Serbia were furious about the Greater Bulgaria on their very borders. The fragile peace between the Great Powers –France, Great Britain, Austria-Hungary, Russia, Germany, Italy- was threatened. It was German Chancellor Count Bismarck who was very anxious to preserve European balance of power and took the initiative of convening a congress at Berlin.

The Congress concluded on July 13, 1878. The agreement that was reached as a result of the Berlin Congress represented a compromise between British, Austro-Hungarian, and Russian interests. The independence of Montenegro, Romania, and Serbia was reconfirmed. Montenegro received an Adriatic port and a small piece of land. Serbia gained some territory but remained landlocked. Romania acquired the Dobruca. Greece had the support of the powers to negotiate acquisitions from the Ottoman Empire, and it obtained most of Thessaly and part of Epirus in a separate treaty signed in 1881. Austria-Hungary occupied Bosnia-Herzegovina and established a garrison in the Sancak of Novi Pazar.² Great Britain occupied Cyprus and France was promised Tunis. In 1881 France put Tunis under its military control. The most outstanding of all was that Greater Bulgaria, as it was designed by the treaty of San Stefano, was broken into three parts, with autonomous Bulgarian Principality extending only from the Danube to the Balkan Mountains and remaining under Ottoman suzerainty, with a Christian prince, an army, and Christian administrators. The remaining portions of Great Bulgaria were divided into two sections. The area south of the Balkan Mountains remained under Sultan's rule, with special regulations, as the province of East Rumelia, which was annexed by

² Arthur J. May 'The Novibazar Railway Project', *The Journal of Modern History*, 10 (1938), 496-527 (pp. 498-499).

Bulgaria in 1885. Macedonia remained under direct Ottoman rule, with Article 23 of the treaty, which required major reforms for such Ottoman lands as Macedonia. Hence, as result of the Congress of Berlin, the Sultan lost significant amount of territory, population and revenue. Austria-Hungary's occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Sancak of Novi Pazar obstructed any attempt by Serbia to claim the region and any hope of direct access to the Adriatic Sea. Hence, Serbia had to direct its attention to the south.

As a result of these developments, Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia were sharing borders with Macedonia; and, the provisions of Berlin Treaty led to a struggle among Balkan countries to establish control over Macedonia instead of bringing them together towards a united policy for their common good. It also aggravated the time-honoured contest between Austria-Hungary and Russia for influence over the Balkan peoples.

Geographical presentation of Macedonia³

Harsh mountains, rocky landscape, and wooded areas are mixed together with regions of arable land and greenery. Lakes, rivers and brooks, and canyons are everywhere. The region is cut across on a generally northwest to southeast axis by mountains that extend along both sides of the Vardar River. There were also the Struma and Karasu (Mesta) river valleys farther east. The Pelagonian plain lies in central Macedonia. Shepherds and their flocks used to wander at certain mountains for pastoral purposes in appropriate times of the year, while other mountains were stony, rough and steep. In summer Macedonia is hot and dry, in winter it is cold and wet.

³ See Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*, p.2; Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, pp. 12-13; *Makedonya'daki Osmanlı Evrakı*, ed. by Orhan Sakin and Uğurhan Demirbaş (Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı, 1996), pp. 3-4.

It has been accepted that Macedonia is roughly the territory that lies between the Shar and Osogov Mountains in the north, the Pindus Mountains, the Aliakmon River, and the Aegean Sea in the south, the lower Mesta River and the Rhodope Mountains in the east, and the Albanian highlands in the west.

Macedonia in administrative terms

Macedonia was more or less divided between the two *eyalets* or *pashaliks* of Rumeli (or Manastır) and Selanik, until the early 1860s. The former consisted of the *sancaks* of Manastır, Görice (Korytsa), and Ohri (Ochrida), the latter consisted of the *sancaks* of Selanik, Serez, Drama, and Tırhala in Thessaly.⁴ Macedonian territories also belonged to the *sancaks* of Üsküp (Skopje) and Prizren. With the administrative reform of 1864, the Manastır *eyalet* lost the Adriatic districts but the two *sancaks* of Üsküp and Prizren were incorporated into it. In 1867 the *eyalet* of Manastır was attached to Thessalonica as a *sancak*, but only for few years.⁵ Due to the administrative reform in 1864-67 all *eyalets* were renamed *vilayets* and they were divided into *sancaks*, *kazas*, and *nahiyes*;⁶ and Kosova was also made a *vilayet*. Every *vilayet* was governed by a *vali*, who was appointed by the Sultan. He had a hierarchy of officials under his command with the *mutasarrıfs* heading the *sancaks*, the *kaimmakams* supervising the *kazas*, and the *müdürs* supervising the *nahiyes* (groups of several villages)⁷. After the Berlin Congress and the incorporation of Thessaly into Greece, the boundaries of the three *vilayets* were fairly established. Macedonia encompassed 12 *sancaks*, divided into 71 *kazas*, of which 26 belonged to

⁴ Tırhala was detached from Thessalonica in 1861.

⁵ Basil C. Gounaris, *Steam over Macedonia, 1870-1912* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1993), pp. ix-x.

⁶ Kemal H. Karpat, 'The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 3 (1972), 243-281 (p. 275). See also İlber Ortaylı, *Tanzimat Devrinde Osmanlı Mahalli İdareleri (1840-1880)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2000).

⁷ For detailed information on *nahiyes* see Ortaylı, *Tanzimat Devrinde*, pp. 99-106.

the Thessalonica *vilayet*, 22 to Manastır, and 23 to Kosova.⁸ It should be noted that the term Macedonia was not being used by the Ottoman administration. Instead, the region was called '*vilâyet-i selâse*', that is, the three provinces.

Strategic Importance of Macedonia

Through Macedonia runs the route, which had become a key trade route by the eighteenth century, from central Europe along the Morava to the Vardar River Valley and from there to Thessalonica. Also, the Struma Valley runs through Macedonia as a secondary north-south connection with the Morava. Via Egnatia, which runs from Durres on the Albanian coast through Thessalonica and across Thrace to Constantinople, renders travelling east to west across Macedonia relatively easy.

The increasing scale of railway construction after 1869 was another factor that contributed to the importance of Macedonia. The railway construction during the period 1873-1896 enabled a link between the Thessalonica harbour and the interior parts of the country.⁹ As a result, trade was facilitated, and railways led to various economic and social consequences. The railway construction and schemes were subjects of heated debates and negotiations between the Ottoman State, the Great Powers, particularly Austria-Hungary and Russia, and the Balkan states throughout the period under consideration.¹⁰

⁸ Nadine Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question, 1893-1908, From Western Sources*, trans. by Gabriel Topor (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1998), pp. 13-14.

⁹ See Erol Çetin, '1878-1908 arasında Makedonya Sorunu' (unpublished M. A. thesis, Istanbul University, 1995), pp. 24-29; and, Gounaris, *Steam over Macedonia*.

¹⁰ For railways in Macedonia see Arthur J. May, 'Trans-Balkan Railway Schemes', *The Journal of Modern History*, 24 (1952), 352-367; and also May, 'The Novibazar Railway Project'; Gounaris, *Steam over Macedonia*; and Basil C. Gounaris, 'Greco-Turkish Railway Connection', *Balkan Studies*, 30 (1989), 311-332.

The extensive Aegean coast, the plains, and most importantly, the harbour at Thessalonica, made Macedonia an attractive land. It was a region with economic potential, and an essential military value.

Economy

The majority of the population lived in the countryside¹¹. Although there were regions where sharecropping was relatively widespread, commercial agriculture on *çiftlik*s (large estates) played merely a secondary role in the economy. Adanır asserts that at the turn of the twentieth century, probably about ten per cent of the peasant households still lived as sharecroppers on *çiftlik*s.¹² The vast majority of Macedonian peasants were, therefore, independent small farmers. Their villages, generally, were located on the hillsides or in mountain valleys. In many regions “the higher the villages were situated, the more numerous and prosperous were their inhabitants”.¹³ The main taxes, which the Ottoman peasantry had to pay toward the end of the nineteenth century, were: 1) the tithe, 10 per cent of the crop yield in

¹¹ There were 59 towns, 30 of them being in the Salonica vilayet, with a population of 598,319 in Macedonia in the period of 1888 – 95. See Michael Palaret, *The Balkan Economies, c. 1800 – 1914, Evolution without Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 26-27. Palaret's source for this figure is Kınchov. According to his source, the population that was residing in towns constituted 26.6 per cent of the total population in Macedonia.

¹² Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*, pp. 38-42. Adanır summarizes the general descriptions on these large estates in the historiography of Balkan countries and west in general as follows: “the larger proportion of the cultivated land, especially the land in fertile plains, had by about 1830 been appropriated by Muslim beys, and the expropriated Christian peasants lived and labored as sharecroppers in miserable circumstances on the new *çiftlik* farms, their lot being comparable to that of the serfs of mediaeval Europe; only the inhabitants of mountain villages had managed to remain freeholders, apparently only because their tiny fields on mountain slopes were of such poor quality as not to have attracted the greed of Ottoman landlords”, in Fikret Adanır, ‘The Macedonian Question: The Socio-economic Reality and Problems of its Historiographic Interpretation’, *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, 3 (1984-85), 43-64 (p. 45). One can trace signs of these perceptions; for example, in Gounaris, *Steam over Macedonia*, pp. 15-23; Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia, 1897-1913* (Thessalonica: Society for Macedonian Studies and the Institute for Balkan Studies, 1966; repr. Thessalonica: Museum for the Macedonian Struggle, Institute for Balkan Studies, 1993), pp. 23-25; Lange-Akhund, pp. 17-19; Traianan Stoianovich, ‘Land Tenure and Related Sectors of the Balkan Economy, 1600-1800’, *The Journal of Economic History*, 13 (1953), 398-411 (pp. 406-407); Traianan Stoianovich, ‘Factors in the Decline of Ottoman Society in the Balkans’, *Slavic Review*, 21 (1962), 623-632 (pp. 628-630). Adanır puts forth counter arguments in ‘The Macedonian Question’, pp. 44-52.

¹³ Adanır, ‘The Macedonian Question’, p. 49.

kind; 2) a tax for the support of education and public works, 1.5 per cent of the crop yield in kind; 3) a sum paid for exemption from military service by non-Muslim male subjects, 37 piasters (approximately 0.33 sterling); 4) a tax on small livestock, 2.5 piasters per animal.¹⁴ As İlkin and Tekeli point out the mode of tax collection was the chief cause of complaint¹⁵, especially in the case of tithe, rather than the amount of produce due to be delivered. The government was farming out the taxes to the *mültezims*, usually to the highest bidder. Then these *mültezims* were farming out their dues to sub-contractors, and these did the same¹⁶. Perry states that the collection agent became the major point of contact with the state for the vast majority of peasants¹⁷. Moreover, the peasants could not begin the harvest without the permission of the *mültezim*. This system was open to malpractices, and it was a major source of distress for the population as recounted by Tahsin Uzer through related examples in his memoirs.¹⁸ John Foster Fraser, a contemporary writer, has labelled the way the taxes were collected as 'pernicious'.¹⁹ Paying off European operated railway tariffs also caused additional burdens. Railway investments necessitated intensive taxation of farmers' income.²⁰

The production in Macedonia was largely based upon agriculture. The major exports of the port of Thessalonica at the end of nineteenth century were cereals such as wheat, barley, maize, oats, rye, and millet. Cotton, tobacco, cocoons, opium, and poppy seed were the other agricultural exports from the port.²¹ Products such as

¹⁴ Adanır, 'The Macedonian Question', pp. 49-50.

¹⁵ See İlhan Tekeli and Selim İlkin, 'İttihat ve Terakki Hareketinin oluşumunda Selanik'in Toplumsal Yapısının Belirleyiciliği', in *Social and Economic History of Turkey, (1071 – 1920)*, ed. by Osman Okyar and Halil İnalcık (Ankara: Meteksan Limited, 1980), pp. 351-382 (p. 363).

¹⁶ Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*, pp. 39-40.

¹⁷ Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, p. 26.

¹⁸ Tahsin Uzer, *Makedonya Eşkiyalık Tarihi ve Son Osmanlı Yönetimi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1979).

¹⁹ John Foster Fraser, *Pictures from the Balkans* (London: Cassell, 1912), pp. 156-158.

²⁰ Gounaris, *Steam over Macedonia*, pp. 74-130.

²¹ Gounaris, *Steam over Macedonia*, pp. 87-134; Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*, pp. 42-44..

sugar, coffee, beer, petroleum, domestic wares, furniture, bed-steads, glassware and clothes were the major import items.²²

Industrialisation could be observed on a very modest scale in relatively developed centres such as Selanik, Kavala, Gevgili or Vodina. There were some modern flourmills; breweries, textile manufacturers and ship repair yards, and these were owned by Jewish entrepreneurs. Tobacco pressing plants were controlled by foreign capital.²³

There was also the phenomenon of migration. Periodic migration of labour was a traditional practice in the highlands of Macedonia and Albania.²⁴ Migrant workers, tens of thousands of them, mostly from Western Macedonia, left every year for Istanbul, Asia Minor, Egypt and the neighbouring Balkan countries, and returned to their villages in late autumn. Between 1880 and 1900 200,000 migrants went to Bulgaria; in 1889-90 the annual rate of emigration from the *vilayet* of Manastır was 30,000.²⁵ These migration cycles also created first seasonal and eventually permanent urbanisation. Local peasant urbanisation was more significant than emigration within or outside the Ottoman Empire. The Christian proportion of the urban population rose notably in towns like İştîp, Köprülü (Veles), Üsküb, and Kumanovo, throughout the nineteenth century. Emigration abroad, outside the Balkans, primarily to North America, played a role as well. Between 1902-1906 about 25000 persons emigrated overseas, which constituted 10 per cent of the male labour force.²⁶ The peasants escaped bankruptcy and a new class of returned

²² Basil C. Gounaris, 'From Peasants into Urbanities, from Village into Nation: Ottoman Monastır in the Early Twentieth Century', *European History Quarterly*, 31 (2001), 43-63 (p. 47).

²³ Fikret Adanır, 'The National Question and the Genesis and Development of Socialism in the Ottoman Empire: the Case of Ottoman Macedonia', in *Socialism and Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. by Mete Tunçay and Eric Jan Zürcher (London: British Academic Press, 1994), pp. 27-48 (p. 30). See also Palaret, pp. 346-356.

²⁴ Gounaris, 'From Peasants into Urbanities', p. 46.

²⁵ *Steam over Macedonia*, p. 263.

²⁶ Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*, p. 44.

emigrants emerged with enough cash to buy lands and start businesses in towns. Remittances kept the market going well. They also acquired a wider political outlook abroad. Hence they were important agents of change in Macedonian society.²⁷

Because of widespread labour intensive production, and constant emigration, there was a labour shortage in Macedonia. Real wages tended to increase after 1900. Wages started to rise in about 1905-6 particularly²⁸. This also resulted in labour immigration, as well. For instance, in the 1890s, up to 30 per cent of the labour force working in the railway construction was from Italy, chiefly from central and southern Italy, Belgium, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, and even Russia. Yet, it is controversial whether the presence of foreign labour was the cause of emigration of natives or vice versa.²⁹

Economy in general was not promising at the turn of the century. The downward tendency in prices that appeared in the 1880s turned upwards starting from 1894 in the Ottoman Empire on the whole. It has been argued that this situation contributed to the economic backdrop for the Young Turk revolution of 1908.³⁰ In Macedonia, there occurred from 1897 to 1910, except for 1904, a series of low harvests; and commercialisation of crops was not so successful. Moreover,

²⁷ Fikret Adanır, 'The Macedonians in the Ottoman Empire, 1878-1912', in *The Formation of National Elites*, ed. by Andreas Kappeler and Fikret Adanır and Alan O'Day (Darmouth: New York University Press, 1992), pp. 161-191 (p.165).

²⁸ Palairot, p. 353. Issawi provides some data that suggests the same. See Charles Issawi, 'Wages in Turkey, 1850-1914', in *Social and Economic History of Turkey, (1071 – 1920)*, ed. by Osman Okyar and Halil İnalcık (Ankara: Meteksan Limited, 1980), pp. 263-270.

²⁹ See Gounaris, *Steam over Macedonia*, pp. 261-269; Adanır, 'The National Question'.

³⁰ See Carter Vaughn Findley, 'Economic Bases of Revolution and Repression in the Late Ottoman Empire', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 28 (1986), 81-106; and Donald Quataert, 'The Economic Climate of the "Young Turk Revolution" in 1908', *The Journal of Modern History*, 51 (1979), D1147-D1161.

1902 earthquake was a serious blow and the turmoil of 1903 Ilinden uprising was of no positive use at all.³¹

The Churches

The conflict between the two churches, that is, the Patriarchate and the Exarchate, lies in the background of the Macedonian question. In the Balkans, the Serbian Patriarchate of İpek (Pec) and the Bulgarian archdiocese of Ohri (Ohrid) existed until 1766 and 1767 respectively. But, from then on until 1870, nearly all Balkan Christians, including Bulgarians, Greeks, the Slavs of Macedonia, Vlachs, and the majority of Christian Albanians, were under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Greek patriarch in Constantinople. Throughout the 19th century, during the Tanzimat period, the influence of the lay element had increased in church and school affairs. Moreover, since the end of 18th century, there had been a recognisable increase in the number of Bulgarian tradesmen, which meant the formation of a Bulgarian middle class with a hunger for national consciousness³². The separatist Bulgarian and Romanian clergies, together with a newly formed Bulgarian bourgeoisie, accelerated the anti-patriarchate development, which was, by definition, against old structures that favoured the hellenisation of the population³³, as Greek was used in both schools and churches. The population, or at least some of the population, demanded that Bulgarian should replace Greek. The conflict over this issue led to a confrontation with the Greek Orthodox patriarchate. As Elisabeth Barker asserts, Russia, who had seen Bulgaria as the best channel for expansion of its influence in the South-eastern Europe, was also putting pressure upon Istanbul to allow the

³¹ Gounaris, 'From Peasants into Urbanities', p.46; and Findley, 'Economic Bases of Revolution'.

³² See Tekeli and İlkin, pp. 356-366.

³³ For hellenisation policies of the Patriarchate and a brief account of the rise of Bulgarian nationalisms see Halil İnalcık, *Tanzimat ve Bulgar Meselesi* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi, 1943; repr. Istanbul: Eren, 1992), pp. 17-24.

formation of a separate Bulgarian church, with extending its authority over Macedonia.³⁴

In 1860, Bulgarians de facto separated themselves from the Greek community. In 1870, the Sublime Porte acknowledged the already existing situation. As a result, in 1870, a *ferman* was issued establishing the Bulgarian exarchate, an autonomous Orthodox church under the Greek patriarch's jurisdiction, and so ending the Greek monopoly in matters of faith. The sultan's decree provided that the new church would have spiritual jurisdiction over most of Bulgaria and districts as far west as Veles in Macedonia and Niş and Pirot. According to article 10 of the *ferman* the residents of the areas that were not specifically mentioned and remained under the Greek patriarch's direct control, were given the right to choose the Exarchate if two-thirds of the population of a particular region voted for the incorporation. Between 1872 and 1875 plebiscites were held, and consequently, most Slavic districts voted to adhere to the new church. Thus, at the beginning of the 1890s the influence of the Patriarchate had declined in favour of the Exarchate. Moreover, the Greek Patriarchate had lost a great deal of revenue to the Exarchate³⁵.

The Greeks viewed the Exarchate as a political creation. For them, the goal of the Exarchate was to replace the patriarchate in the Ottoman European provinces, and to block the expansion of Greece into Macedonia and Eastern Thrace.

By the turn of the twentieth century there were 1,854 churches in the fifteen dioceses of Macedonia, 1,232 of which were Exarchist³⁶. The remainder were chiefly patriarchist. The rivalry between churches for devotees in Macedonia was a

³⁴ Elisabeth Barker, *Macedonia, Its Place in Balkan Power Politics* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1950), pp. 7-15.

³⁵ İnalçık says that all the important sees in Bulgaria were held by the Greek clergy. He claims, 'this clergy, who obtained those positions by bribery, did think nothing but to squeeze out from the community'. İnalçık, *Tanzimat*, p. 19.

³⁶ Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, p. 17.

reflection of national competitions for the possession of Macedonia itself. The rivalries rendered collective action for a common cause against the Porte impossible, and kept Macedonia on a 'downward spiral of violence'.³⁷

The population

Ottoman Macedonia had a mixed population where different ethnic groups and religions co-existed. It was an agricultural region, with more than 80 percent of its population consisting of peasants. Ottoman statistics indicate that there were 2,505,503 people living in the Macedonian provinces by 1895, and the figure by 1904 is 2,911,700. The Ottomans divided the subject people according to confession, and all Christians were classified by the authorities as 'Greeks' until 1870, no matter what their native language or ethnic background was. This approach was the result of the *millet* system.³⁸

Greeks inhabited major trading centres in Macedonia, also the Thracian coast, and in Southern Macedonia as far north as Monastir.

Vlachs (also identified as 'Kutsovlachs' and 'Aromun') lived mostly in the Pindus area and in trading centres such as Manastir, Krushevo, Görice, Moskopole, and Vodina (Edessa). Many were nomadic shepherds. Some others were sedentary farmers and merchants and craftsmen. Vlachs had been linguistically and

³⁷ Perry, *The politics of Terror*, p. 17.

³⁸ In the Ottoman Empire the population was divided into autonomous communities, that is the *millets*, under their respective religious leaders. The scope of the *millet* included all individuals confessing a certain faith wherever they were, regardless of territory. Hence, a person was subject to the jurisdiction of his own religious community in civil matters, not considering locality. *Millets* enjoyed other important privileges. One of them was their jurisdiction in school matters. See *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire, The Functioning of a Plural Society*, ed. by Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (New York and London: Holmes & Meier, 1982); and Kemal Karpat, *An Inquiry Into the Social Foundations of Nationalism in the Ottoman State: From Social Estates to Classes, From Millets to Nations*, Research Monograph No. 39 (USA: Center of International Studies, Princeton University, 1973), pp. 31-40; Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*, pp. 45-53; and Kemal H. Karpat, 'The Social and Political Foundations of Nationalism in South East Europe after 1878: A Reinterpretation', in *Der Berliner Kongress von 1878, Die Politik der Grossmächte und die Probleme der Modernisierung in Südosteuropa in der Zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1982), pp. 385-410 (p. 389).

historically tied to Romanians. Yet, some Vlachs were Hellenised and often were impossible to differentiate from Greeks linguistically or otherwise.³⁹ For instance, in 1905 the British Consul in Monastir claimed that, albeit in approximately 70 per cent of the houses the spoken language was Vlach, most of them had received 'their instruction entirely in the Greek language and have come to regard themselves almost as belonging to that nationality'.⁴⁰ Still, at the turn of the century, a separate Vlach movement, which was backed by Roumania, was increasingly becoming active and made the Greeks utterly furious. And, Vlachs were closer to the Ottoman government as the Bulgarians, Serbians, and Greeks refused to recognise the Vlachs as a different ethnic group and endeavoured constantly to assimilate them.⁴¹

Jews inhabited the urban areas, primarily Thessalonica. As many as 80,000 lived in there during the period under consideration, and they were the dominant community in Thessalonica. In addition to Thessalonica, they were also located in Monastir, Üsküp (Skopje), İştîp, Kesriye (Kastoria), and a few other towns.

Gypsies were a small minority in Macedonia. They lived mostly on the outskirts of the cities and towns. They did not have any political aspirations.

Christian Slavs of Orthodox confession lived in most parts of the Macedonian provinces, generally in completely Slavic, but sometimes in mixed ethnic and religious communities. They were by and large illiterate peasants. Beginning with the late eighteenth century Slav peasants began to move to cities. The national identity of these people has been the subject of a heated debate. Studies using linguistic, cultural, historical, and religious criteria yield different results, with

³⁹ Gounaris, 'From Peasants into Urbanities', pp. 44-50.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 45.

⁴¹ Kemal H. Karpat, 'The Memoirs of N. Batzaria: The Young Turks and Nationalism', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 276-299 (pp. 287-288).

each conclusion being motivated by the prejudices and preferences of the individuals, who conducted the research.

Muslims also had a large population. Shaw suggests that they formed the largest single *millet* in Macedonia⁴². The two main groups were Turks and Albanians. Although there were Christian Albanians, it is generally accepted that two-thirds of the Albanians were Muslims. They were mostly residing in western Macedonia, particularly in Kosova *vilayet*. In essence, the Muslim population was generally not against the Ottoman administration. Still, as Somel notes, ban over instruction in Albanian, the increasing political tensions in the western Balkans and the inability of the Ottoman state to counter interventions of the Great Powers led to its loss of control over the Albanian population⁴³. There were also concentrated Muslim communities in the cities in western Macedonia, and both in towns and rural areas of Salonica, Kozani, Kayalar, Drama, Seres, and Kavalla⁴⁴. Furthermore, Brailsford states that the region between Drama and the Bulgarian border was purely Muslim⁴⁵. There were also a lot of refugees from lands to the north.

Statistics are over and over again used to put forth the predominance of one group over another in Macedonia. The statistics available on the numerical strength of the individual ethnic groups in Macedonia are of no reliability. Most figures are

⁴² Shaw and Shaw, p. 209.

⁴³ Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1908, Islamization, Autocracy and Discipline*, The Ottoman Empire and its Heritage: 22 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 214-215.

⁴⁴ According to Brailsford the Muslims of Kayalar, Serez and Drama were 'genuine Osmanli Turks'. For him the rest of the Muslims elsewhere were either Albanians or Slavs, 'converted by force or allured by self-interest to Islam'. He adds that these are generally known as 'Pomacks', and they formed a solid population in the 'purely Muslim belt' between Drama and the Bulgarian border. Brailsford, 87-88. The Muslims in Salonica, Kozani, Kayalar, Drama, Seres and Kavala were sent to Turkey in 1924 exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey. See Raoul Blanchard, 'The Exchange of Populations between Greece and Turkey', *Geographical Review*, 15 (1925), 449-456 (p. 449).

⁴⁵ Somel notes that in three reports compiled in 1886 and submitted to the Sublime Porte, Mustafa Radovişi observes the existence of Bulgarian-, Vlach-, and Greek-speaking Muslim village communities in the *kazas* and *nahiyes* of Tikveş, Gevgili, Yenice-i Vardar, Vodina, Nevrekob, Kesendire and Razlık. Somel, pp. 216-217. For Mustafa Radovişi see Fazlı Necib, *Rumeli'yi Neden Kaybettik*, Hayat Tarih Mecmuası İlavesi, ([n.p.]: Hayat Tarih, 1972), pp. 25-31.

based upon the estimates of politically motivated parties who used them as “an exercise in numerical manipulation for political ends”.⁴⁶ For example, as Perry notes, the research of J. Larmeroux clearly demonstrated this situation, in which the researcher systematically collected available statistics on the ethnic categorisation and national identity of the Macedonian population. He has found out that the Bulgarians of Macedonia were said to number anywhere between 120,000 and 1,200,000; Serbs ranged from 210,000 to 900,000; Greeks were estimated at between 50,000 and 1,000,000; and Vlachs numbered between 24,000 and 1,200,000⁴⁷. Another researcher has reveals that Turks were numbered between none to 550,000 according to western and Balkan statistics.⁴⁸ These researches demonstrate that statistics are of little objective worth in attempting to grasp the question of numbers and national identity of any group lived in Macedonia before World War I.

Nevertheless, it may still be useful to present some statistics here to give some idea to the reader:

Table 1: The official statistics⁴⁹, 1906-7⁵⁰

<i>Vilayet</i>	<i>Muslim</i>	<i>Greek</i>	<i>Bulgarian</i>	<i>Vlach</i>	<i>Jewish</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Total</i>
Selanik	419,604	263,881	155,710	20,486	52,395	9,283	921,359
Manastır ⁵¹	204,587	203,976	185,566	2,356	4,583	1,315	602,383

⁴⁶ Perry, *The politics of Terror*, p. 19. See also Justin McCarthy, ‘Greek Statistics on Ottoman Greek Population’, *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, 2 (1980), 66-76.

⁴⁷ Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, p. 19.

⁴⁸ Altan Deliorman, ‘Birinci Cihan Savaşı’nın sonuna kadar Makedonya’da Türk Nüfusu Meselesi’, *Türk Kültürü*, 33 (1965), 589-593.

⁴⁹ Perry asserts that the Ottoman statistics are the most credible. Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, p. 17.

⁵⁰ Kemal H. Karpat *Ottoman Population, 1830 – 1914, Demographic and Social Characteristics* ([Wisconsin]: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), pp. 166-169. McCarthy states that generally, Ottoman population numbers were recorded 20% low on the average due to undercounting of women and children, see McCarthy, p. 66.

⁵¹ Only the data pertaining to the prefecture of Üsküb have been considered.

Kosova ⁵²	113,603	8,604	144,545		1,198	778	268,728
Total	737,794	476,461	485,821	22,842	58,176	11,376	1,792,470

Table 2: Kinchov⁵³'s figures⁵⁴

<i>Ethnic Group</i>	<i>Christians</i>	<i>Muslims</i>	<i>Jews</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>In %</i>
Bulgarians	1,032,533	148,803		1,181,336	52.31
Turks	4,240	494,964		499,204	22.11
Greeks	214,329	14,373		228,702	10.13
Albanians	9,510	119,201		128,711	5.70
Vlachs	77,267	3,500		80,767	3.58
Jews			67,840	67,840	3.00
Gypsies	19,500	35,057		54,557	2.42
Others	13,570	3,337		16,907	0.75
Total	1,370,949	819,235	67,840	2,258,024	100.00

And finally, the figures of 1905, which were the result of the count that was undertaken under the supervision of Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa⁵⁵, who was the Inspector-General at the date, should also be mentioned here, as Hilmi Paşa's figures were

⁵² Exclusive of the districts of Görce and Elbasan, which are situated in Albania.

⁵³ Vasil Kinchov is the author of the *Makedonija. Etnografija i statistika*, Sofia, 1900. Adanır labels Bulgarian ethnographer's figures as a scientific work that can correct false figures for the Turkish-speaking portion of the population. He also states that Kinchov's work was well appreciated by the Austro-Hungarian diplomacy, "which generally had the best information on Balkans". Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*, p. 7. Palairot also uses Kinchov's work.

⁵⁴ Adanır, 'The Macedonians in the Ottoman Empire', p. 164.

⁵⁵ Turgut Işıksal, 'Makedonya üzerinde oynanan oyunlar ve bilinmeyen bir nüfus sayımı', *Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi*, 43 (1971), 13-19.

generally held reliable by the foreign diplomats.⁵⁶ Beydilli affirms that this counting was undertaken by special commissions, which consisted not only of Ottoman officials but also of persons chosen by local communities.⁵⁷ The result was that there were 2,911,700 souls living in Macedonia. The number of Muslims and non-Muslims was relatively equal with 1,508,507 Muslims, 896,497 Bulgarians, 307,000 Greeks, 100,717 Serbians, and 99,000 Vlachs.⁵⁸

Many Slavs that were living along the border with Bulgaria tended to identify themselves as Bulgarians, and some of them, who were living alongside the Greek frontier considered themselves to be Greek. For majority, this was a religious affiliation, not an ethnic identity. It is by and large accepted that the Slavs of Macedonia did not use the term 'Macedonian' in an ethnic sense. Foreign diplomats, travellers, and scholars who visited or lived in Macedonia at the turn of the century labelled the Slav inhabitants of Macedonia as Bulgarian. Writers and journalists such as A. H. Smith, M. E. Durham, J. F. Fraser,⁵⁹ the Austrian vice consul to Manastır, August Kral,⁶⁰ as well as the compositors of the Carnegie Report,⁶¹ took this position. In sum, it is rather difficult to speak about a separate Macedonia nationality for the period under consideration, and it can be concluded that the Macedonian Slavs, who wanted to assume some nationality, referred to themselves as Bulgarian at the given time period.

⁵⁶ *Austro-Hungarian Documents Relating to the Macedonian Struggle, 1896-1912*, ed. by F. R. Bridge (Thessalonica: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1976), p. 29.

⁵⁷ Kemal Beydilli, 'II. Abdülhamit Devrinde Makedonya Mes'elesine Dair', *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, 9 (1989), 77-99 (p. 79-80).

⁵⁸ Yusuf Hikmet Bayur, *Türk İnkılabı Tarihi*, 4th edn. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1991), p. 164.

⁵⁹ Arthur D. Howden Smith, *Fighting the Turk in the Balkans* (New York and London: The Knickerbocker Press, 1908); M. Edith Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1920); William LeQueux, *Pictures from the Balkans, An observer in the Near East* (London: Unwin, 1907)

⁶⁰ *Macedonia, Documents and Material*, ed. by Voin Bozhinov and L. Panayotov (Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1978), pp. 505-507.

⁶¹ *ibid.* pp. 658-659.

One could support the arguments that the Slavs of Macedonia were Bulgarian, Serbian, a separate nationality, or perhaps Greek, using one or more of linguistic, cultural, historical, or religious criterion. There were Muslim Slavs for instance, who were taking side by the Muslims naturally. It is not easy to decide whether the peasants of Grebene to whom Bekir Fikri made a speech in the eve of the 1908 revolution, were Muslim Greeks or Greek speaking Muslims⁶². In actuality, linguistic, cultural, historical, or religious factors had only superficial value in establishing nationality. The actual resolution was based on different considerations. The feelings of most of the peasant Slav population of Macedonia and their identity were determined by local, regional, socio-economic, and religious dynamics. They did not see themselves generally as a part of a distinct nationality. Their self-image was formed by what they were not – not Muslim, not wealthy, not members of the ruling castes. The following incident narrated by Brailsford demonstrates this situation. Brailsford questioned some boys from a remote mountain village near Ohri:⁶³

I took them to the ruins of the Bulgarian Tsar's fortress which dominates the lake and the plain from the summit of an abrupt and curiously rounded hill. "Who built this place?" I asked them. The answer was significant—"The free men." "And who were they?" "Our grandfathers." "Yes, but were they Serbs or Bulgarians or Greeks or Turks?" "They weren't Turks, they were Christians." And this seemed to be about the measure of their knowledge.

Survival and protection of one's own land and family were the major concerns of the peasant masses at the turn of the century Macedonia. As Mazower states, it was often considerations of education, personal advancement, economic

⁶² Bekir Fikri spoke in Greek in his speech. See Bekir Fikri, *Balkanlarda Tedhiş ve Guerilla, Grebene* (Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1976), p. 21.

⁶³ H. N. Brailsford, *Macedonia, Its Races and their Future* (London: Methuen, 1906; repr. New York: Arno Press & New York Times, 1971), pp. 99-100.

advantage that led individuals to move in a particular direction.⁶⁴ Brailsford again presents an example:⁶⁵

I was talking to a wealthy peasant who came in from a neighbouring village to Monastir market. He spoke Greek well, but hardly like a native. "Is your village Greek," I asked him, "or Bulgarian?" "Well," he replied "it is Bulgarian now, but four years ago it was Greek." The answer seemed to him entirely natural and commonplace. "How" I asked in some bewilderment, "did that miracle come about?" "Why," said he "we are all poor men, but we want to have our own school and a priest who will look after us properly. We used to have a Greek teacher. We paid him 5 pounds a year and his bread, while the Greek consul paid him another 5 pounds; but we had no priest of our own. We shared a priest with several other villages, but he was very unpunctual and remiss. We went to the Greek bishop to complain, but he refused to do anything for us. The Bulgarians heard of this and they came and made us an offer. They said they would give us a priest who would live in the village and a teacher to whom we need pay nothing. Well, sir, ours is a poor village, and so of course we became Bulgarians.

As it is observed in this instance, national consciousness in general was outside the peasantry's interest and wholly irrelevant in its impact on the business of the day that was survival. Moreover, the Balkan peasantry outside Macedonia was not zealot irredentists at all as the urban strata of the Balkan countries. Its political parties most often wrangled with the officer corps, which was the group most strongly associated with irredentism.⁶⁶

Education

Until the establishment of the exarchate, the Greek Orthodox Church had a monopoly over the education of Christians in the European provinces. After the exarchate was founded, there was a considerable increase in the number of Bulgarian schools. The education of most Christian Slavs was placed under

⁶⁴ Mark Mazower, 'Introduction to the Study of Macedonia', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 14.2 (1996), 229-235 (p. 233).

⁶⁵ Brailsford, *Macedonia*, p. 102.

⁶⁶ See Victor Roudometof, 'The Social Origins of Balkan Politics: Nationalism, Underdevelopment, and the Nation-State in Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria, 1880-1920', *Mediterranean Quarterly*, 11 (2000), 144-163.

Bulgarian Church. This was a very significant development in terms of the spread of Bulgarian national consciousness, since, as Durham states, 'when you have an ignorant peasantry to deal with, a National Church is one of the best means for producing acute nationalism'.⁶⁷ Education was the most important weapon for the protagonists to produce zealots for their respective claims. The exarchate was an engine of propaganda for Bulgarians as the Patriarchate had been for the Greeks. The Bulgarian schools increased from 150 in 1885 to more than 400 in 1894. This educational work cost the Bulgarian government between one and two million francs annually.⁶⁸ Moreover, the Serbs also demanded religious and educational autonomy, and they were granted the right to open schools in 1896, which were to be non-religious establishments. Around 1900, different schools were producing Bulgarians, Greeks or Serbs. The prelates were divided between faith and national aspirations of the states on which they depended financially to some extent.

A number of Patriarchist teachers in Macedonia became Exarchist and others that came to the region from Bulgaria were already Exarchists. Big sums of money for these schools and for student stipends were sent from Bulgaria into Macedonia. According to exarchist figures there were 781 exarchist schools, 1,221 teachers, and 39,973 students in 1900. Greek sources indicate that there were 613 Greek schools, 951 teachers and 32,476 students by the early 1900s. Their greatest successes were in the south of Macedonia, around Florina and Vodina. According to their own figures, there were 260 Serbian schools in Macedonia by 1900, while the Romanians had only around 30.⁶⁹

Through religion and education, the Christians of Macedonia were to acquire a national identity depending upon one's religious affiliation and the school a child

⁶⁷ Durham, *Twenty Years*, p. 94.

⁶⁸ William L. Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890 - 1902* (New York: Knopf, 1968), p. 305.

⁶⁹ Perry, *The politics of Terror*, p. 27; Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question*, p. 33.

attended. Once large numbers of people adopted an identity coincident with one church, then the state with which the church was affiliated would seek to save its portion of Macedonian lands for its people. And the schools themselves were breeding grounds of national programmes.

II. Actors in the International Arena

As narrated earlier, Macedonian Question as a diplomatic issue was a product of the balances in the international relations scene. It was not a problem that could be explained and understood solely by the internal dynamics of Macedonia and the Ottoman Empire. In order to grab the essence of the problem few words should be said on Great Powers and the Balkan States. Their attitude towards the Ottoman Empire and the Macedonian Question was affected by their interrelations, rivalries and alliances amongst them, and domestic political developments, particularly in the case of the Balkan States. The developments in the international relations scene directly affected the approach and the ways of operating of the central administration in Istanbul, which was headed effectively by Abdülhamit II. Accordingly, one ought to have some awareness of international relations of the period in consideration, as well as knowledge of internal dynamics of Macedonia, so as to comprehend and appreciate fully the fundamental nature of the Macedonian Question.

The Great Powers and the Macedonian Question⁷⁰

The European powers had pursued two controversial policies with regard to the Ottoman Empire. The first policy was of interventionist nature. This policy had accelerated the disintegration and collapse of the empire, by supporting the national movements in order to encourage the creation of states. The other policy contributed to the maintenance of the sultan's sovereignty over the integrity of its territories, hoping to exercise a major influence there and defend their economic and political interests⁷¹, and avoiding a full-scale war by preserving the Ottoman Empire's territorial integrity. This had to be maintained so as to guarantee order and peace. By the end of the nineteenth century the Empire was one of the most important pillars of European stability as the Powers competed to spread their influences and controls in the Balkans. The intervention of the Powers in Macedonia was felt in two ways: firstly, they attempted to advance their economic interests, particularly on the subject of railways and mining, then again, they were worried about the fate of the Christians, whom they saw as 'victims' of the Ottoman administration, suffering Christians under 'Turkish yoke'.

Six powers, Austria-Hungary, Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy, and Russia, had the right to intervene in Macedonian affairs to oversee the application of the reforms to make better the lives of the Christian populations, mentioned by article 23 of the Berlin Congress, which was held in 1878. Austria-Hungary and

⁷⁰ For a general picture see *The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. by Marian Kent (London: Cass, 1996); Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism*; M. S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774 – 1923, A Study in International Relations* (London: Macmillan, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966); Barbara Jelavich, *The Habsburg Empire in European Affairs, 1814-1918* (Chicago: McNally, 1969); Barker, *Macedonia*; Barbara Jelavich, *Russia's Balkan Entanglements, 1806-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

⁷¹ Anderson states that no major European state depended on the Ottoman Empire for more than a marginal contribution to its national wealth. Still, international competition for railway and other concessions, for trade with the empire and investment opportunities there influenced the nations involved 'quite disproportionate to the real value of what was at stake', Anderson, p. 263.

Russia were directly interested in *vilayat-i selase*, while each had opposite objectives.

The Austrians obtained the right to administer the two Ottoman provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the right to maintain a garrison in the *sancak* of Novi-Pazar in 1878. Since then, Austria-Hungary was a major operator in the Balkan Peninsula. Vienna was aspiring to have a maritime outlet in the Mediterranean and to control the Morava and Vardar valleys to reach the Thessaloniki port. Furthermore, it had supported the Serbians since 1878 in their attempt to expand toward Macedonia⁷², as it feared of the programs that called for the unification of all of the South Slavs. Austria-Hungary did not have conquest objectives for Macedonia since it already had a multinational empire in which Slavs were a notable minority.⁷³ It followed a policy of gentle diffusion by means of strengthening its commercial relations with the Ottoman Empire. Austrians also feared that Albanians might get under Italian influence.⁷⁴ Hence, it supported the demands of Albanians as well, as the official protector of the Catholics.

Russia had endeavoured to establish its dominance on the Balkan Peninsula by supporting the claims of the Slav states against the Ottoman Empire. The Tsar had proclaimed himself as the natural protector of all Slavs, and had the ambition to control the eastern Mediterranean. Russia had pursued a policy of founding vassal states on the road of the straits. However, its policies failed above all in the

⁷² Langer, p. 306.

⁷³ There were Germans, Italians, Czechs, Croats and Serbs, Slovenes, Romanians, Hungarians (Magyars), Slovaks, Ruthenians, and Poles in Austria-Hungary. For the national problem in Austria see Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), II, pp. 51-79.

⁷⁴ Nuray Bozboru, *Osmanlı Yönetiminde Arnavutluk ve Arnavut Ulusçuluğunun Gelişimi* ([İstanbul]: Boyut Yayın Grubu, 1997), p. 238.

Bulgarian Principality.⁷⁵ Moreover, Russia was extremely antagonistic to the idea of an autonomous Macedonia.

Austria-Hungary was at odds with the Russian policy of expansion in the Balkans, Macedonia in particular. But, the desire of both states to maintain the status quo led them to act in accord, beginning in 1897, so as to prevent any unpleasant incident that could jeopardise European stability. In addition, Russia was already entangled in the Far East. In April 1897, the rulers of these countries agreed on some principals of a common policy in the Balkans. These principals were briefly maintaining the status quo as long as possible, not interfering in the affairs of the Balkan states, cooperating on diplomatic levels to evade intrigues against each other, and acting in concert in a case of an unavoidable change. With this understanding, the Russian government was free to focus its attention on the Far East. It considered this pacifist attitude as an insurance of peace, and Austria-Hungary was quite satisfied with the agreement as by that it could act more unreservedly. As a result, two powers acted in harmony to solve all the crises in the three vilayets between 1897 and 1908.

Germany, on the other hand, was defending openly the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire⁷⁶. Throughout the period 1890-1900, the Ottoman Empire was a necessary outlet for the commercial products of the Reich, and a space for economic expansion. Germans were helping in the modernisation of the Ottoman Empire. Wilhelm von der Goltz supervised the German military mission to Turkey between 1893 and 1896. He advocated a strategy that emphasised the role of the

⁷⁵ For Russian influence in the internal affairs of Serbia and Bulgaria in the period 1879-1886 see Charles Jelavich, *Tsarist Russia and Balkan Nationalism* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1978).

⁷⁶ One of the best analyses on relations between Germany and the Ottoman Empire is in İlber Ortaylı, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Alman Nüfuzu* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1983).

ground forces rather than the navy.⁷⁷ The presence of German troops contributed to the Turkish victory against Greeks in 1897. Important financial concessions were granted to German firms in exchange, such as the Baghdad railway line. In 1881, German holdings amounted to 5 per cent of the Ottoman public debt, whereas they accounted for 20 per cent of it in 1914.⁷⁸ Apart from its economic activity, Germany supported Austrian policies in the Balkans in general, where its action was compact except for the Thessalonica-Manastır railway line. The Germans did not take any great initiative in the Balkans. Instead, they endorsed all initiatives that were carried out by Austrians in agreement with the Russians. And, “through very astute diplomatic manoeuvring”⁷⁹, in Macedonian question particularly, Germany obtained a very strong position in Istanbul. Ortaylı states that one of the reasons for Germany’s increasing prestige among the Ottomans was its policies, which were smoother and less pressurising than those of the other powers on the issues of reforms⁸⁰.

French policies in Macedonia could be explained as defending and increasing its economic interests⁸¹, and preserving its traditional cultural ties. In addition, there was a strategic interest in the geographic position of the Balkan Peninsula. The French wanted to prevent Austro-German influence to increase. France also wanted to preserve peace in the region. Paris considered the Ottoman presence in Macedonia more desirable than a territorial partition whose only

⁷⁷ Shaw and Shaw, p. 45.

⁷⁸ Still, the economic importance of the Ottoman Empire for the Germans should not be exaggerated. Anderson says that just about 10 per cent of Germany’s foreign investment in 1914 was in the Ottoman Empire; in 1910 only about 1.4 per cent of its exports were to and 0.7 per cent of its imports were from the Ottoman Empire. He adds that Britain was the most important trading partner of the Ottoman Empire until 1914. Anderson, p. 267.

⁷⁹ Ulrich Trumpener, ‘Germany and the End of the Ottoman Empire’, in *The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. by Marian Kent, 2nd edn (Norwich, Norfolk: Cass, 1996), pp. 111-140 (p. 123).

⁸⁰ Ortaylı, p. 118. For reforms see Chapter Two.

⁸¹ See Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question*, pp. 89-91.

beneficiaries would have been Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Russia. France also assumed the role of negotiator and referee.

Great Britain did have no direct political or economic interests in the Balkans comparable to those of Russia or Austria. London conducted a policy of observation. Its main objectives were centred on issues such as Africa, Egypt, the Red Sea area, and especially India. It also defended the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, so as to hold back Russian expansionist desires.

On the other hand, a new current of ideas arose in English public opinion that was sensitive to the Armenian and Macedonian events since the mid-1890s. Both of the British foreign secretaries of the first decade in the 20th century, Landsdowne⁸² and Grey⁸³ were obliged to press Macedonian reform on the Sultan under pressure from public opinion and particularly from the Balkan Committee, a group of political, religious and academic humanitarians, though this was harming Britain's own interests, and the efforts were by and large ineffectual. Kent quotes from a letter of Gerald Fitzmaurice, a famous British Dragoman, dated April 1908:

During the last few years of our policy, if I may so call it, in Turkey has been, and for some time to come will be, to attempt the impossible task of furthering our commercial interests while pursuing a course (in Macedonia, Armenia, Turco-Persian Boundary etc.) which the Sultan interprets as pre-eminently hostile in aim and tendency. These two lines are diametrically opposed and consequently incompatible with one another.⁸⁴

After 1905, London turned itself again toward the Balkans and reconciled with Russia.

⁸² Henry Charles Landsdowne was secretary for foreign affairs in the period 1900-05. He was a liberal.

⁸³ Edward Grey was secretary for foreign affairs from 1905 until 1916. He was a liberal, too.

⁸⁴ Marian Kent, 'Great Britain and the End of the Ottoman Empire', in *The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. by Marian Kent, 2nd edn (Norwich, Norfolk: Cass, 1996), pp. 172-205 (p. 178).

Italy was also interested in the Balkan Peninsula, chiefly because of its geographical position. It was not so much opposed to a total or partial disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. In 1900, with the ascendancy of Victor Emanuel III to the throne, Italy turned toward the Balkans from its daring policies in Eastern Africa. Although Italy had some designs on the Albanian coast, it could take no decisive action because of Trentin and Trieste questions. Moreover, Austria-Hungary, with its military base at the end of the Adriatic, Pula, was strongly opposing any Italian plans on Albania that would result in the makeover Adriatic an Italian sea.

Italy was not directly interested in the three provinces. Nevertheless, there was still an important Italian community in Thessalonica with schools that were competing with the French ones. Furthermore, the Italian government was not put into effect any real influence over the Catholics in Macedonia or in the Albanian vilayets as it had disputes with the Pope, and this was an advantage for Austria-Hungary.

The Balkan States

The Serbian independence was recognized during the Congress of Berlin in 1878. Nish and Pirot districts were given to Serbia in 1878, and a border contact with Macedonia was established. In addition, Austrian administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina induced any hope of enlarging Serbian Kingdom to the west unattainable. Moreover, the Austrian government encouraged the Serbs to concentrate its attention on Bulgaria and Macedonia.⁸⁵ Hence, the Serbians attempted to bring to the surface their claims of rights in Old Serbia, that is, the

⁸⁵ Langer, p. 306.

Kosovo vilayet, which was the seat of the Dushan's empire in the fourteenth century.

Of the three Balkan states, Serbia had the weakest position. The Serbian claim did not advance in Macedonia first to the reason that the Serbians had been primarily interested in the west, toward Bosnia and Herzegovina until 1878,⁸⁶ and secondly, the Serbian government did not have religious institutions unlike the Bulgarian or Greek governments.

The Obrenovich dynasty was in rule in Serbia. Between 1890-1900, the policies of the king's government were marked by instability. This was because of the personality and the youth of Alexander, and the fierce fight in the internal political arena among the three rival parties, namely, the Radicals, the Progressives, and the Liberals. The Serb Kingdom had been subject to influences from Russia and Austria-Hungary since its very independence. The rivalry of these two powers was reflected in the country's internal politics as the Radical Party was supported by Russia, whereas the Liberal Party was traditionally Austrophile. Until 1885 Austria had been the more influential power in Serbia, but after 1889, with the Radical government, the relations with Austria-Hungary were strained, and Russian influence increased gradually.⁸⁷ In sum, the conditions for Serbia were not favourable.

The weakness of the government, and the lack of financial means⁸⁸ held back the development of an ambitious nationalistic program toward the vilayet of Kosovo. Still, the diplomatic mission was active in Constantinople. According to

⁸⁶ Jelavich, *Tsarist Russia*, p. 174.

⁸⁷ Langer, pp. 306-307.

⁸⁸ Financial means were of utmost importance in the educational competition in Macedonia, as a result of which zealots for respective rival currents were produced. For example, Brailsford narrates that a sharp French Consul once spoke out that with a fund of a million francs he would undertake to make all Macedonia French; "he would preach that the Macedonians are the descendants of the French crusaders who conquered Salonica in the twelfth century, and the francs would do the rest"; Brailsford, *Macedonia*, p. 103.

instructions from Belgrade, the policy pursued by Serbian diplomats was defined as an attitude of anticipation, of neutrality, but observing the events in Kosovo with awareness.⁸⁹ The Serb minister was constantly putting out the demands of opening of new schools or churches. Serbia's target was to obtain the Serbian community in Kosova recognised as separate *millet*. This tactic, of which a similar one had been conducted more or less successfully by Stambolov, gained more and more supporters in Serbia as the negotiations with the other Balkan states on the partition of Macedonia proved futile. The Serbian representative in Constantinople was also frequently complaining about the violence and extortions of the Albanian Muslims against the Serb populations in Kosovo. In spite of various regulations and intervention of Serbian government, the constant conflict between the two communities remained unchanged.

Bulgaria had been reigned by Ferdinand of Saxe-Goburg-Gotha since 1887. During the first years of his reign Stambolov was the prime minister.⁹⁰ Ferdinand left him to rule the country. Stambolov ran an anti-Russian policy, maintaining good relations with Constantinople at the same time⁹¹. He had established an authoritarian regime and a repressive system. He had pursued a policy that let a quiet penetration into the three *vilayets* by using the administrative structures of the Bulgarian church. He obtained the nomination of exarchist bishops by negotiating with Abdülhamit, the opening of schools with teachers under the authority of the Bulgarian clergy were achieved. Hence, a network to develop the influence of Sofia progressively

⁸⁹ Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question*, p. 75.

⁹⁰ Stefan Stambolov was the leader of the anti-Russian national-liberals. He was minister-president from 1887 to 1894, and was assassinated in 1895. For Stambolov's story see Duncan Perry, *Stefan Stambolov and the Emergence of Modern Bulgaria, 1870 – 1895* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993); see also, R. J. Crampton, *Bulgaria, 1878 – 1918, A History* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1983).

⁹¹ It is suggested that the intrusion of Imperial Russia in Bulgarian politics provoked Stambolov to pursue a decidedly "pro-Turkish" policy, and even propose a political union with the Ottomans with the Sultan as Bulgarian Tsar; Mary Neuburger, 'Bulgaro-Turkish Encounters and the Reimaging of the Bulgarian Nation, 1878-1995', *East European Quarterly*, 31 (1997), 1-20 (p. 3).

was established, by teaching the Bulgarian language and culture, and by affecting the shift of villages from the Patriarchate to the Exarchate.

However, Stambolov was forced to resign in 1894 and a new government was formed under Stoilov. Stambolov's policies were gradually abandoned, and a rapprochement with Russia was tried. Another issue in Ferdinand's mind was the vassalage issue. He wanted to have the independence of his country recognised. On various opportunities, such as the war of 1897 Ferdinand tried to achieve this goal.

In the three *vilayets* Sofia had a much more voluntary policy than Belgrade during the last decade of the nineteenth century. Macedonia was extremely important for Bulgarians, particularly after the annexation of Eastern Roumelia in 1885. Unlike the Greeks, who had aspirations for other parts of the Ottoman dominions, and unlike the Serbians and Romanians, who had hopes from the ultimate break up of the Habsburg Empire, Bulgarians had nowhere else to direct their irredentist energies and they wanted to reconstitute the Great Bulgaria of San Stefano Treaty that was signed on 3 March 1878. After 1895, Stoilov government allowed an increase in the formation of organisations that were defending the Macedonian cause. These organisations endeavoured to arouse a Bulgarian national conscience in Macedonia so as to provoke an uprising of Christian masses in the three *vilayets* that would result in their corporation in Bulgaria, as was the case in East Rumelia in 1885. The strength of the Supreme Macedonian Committee increased and its connection with the Bulgarian government was strengthened around 1900. Moreover, Ferdinand tried to use Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation's (IMRO)⁹² activities to serve his policies in Macedonia, through members of his government. Nonetheless, in January 1898, Stoilov ordered the

⁹² See Chapter Three.

commercial agents in Macedonia to stay away from IMRO, at the same time watching their activities and inform Sofia if the organisation was operating in accordance with Bulgarian policies.⁹³

The representatives of the Principality also undertook the mission of developing Bulgarian influence. These were commercial agents who acted as consuls, as Bulgaria was not independent. These agents established relationships with the villagers. They collected their complaints, and demanded the opening of schools wherever the number of children was sufficient enough.

Between 1890-1900, the Greek government did not follow such an active and enthusiastic policy in Macedonia as the one that Bulgarians conducted. Events were carefully watched as Bulgarian influence grew. And, the power of the Patriarchate had been continuously declining due to Exarchate's increasing weight in the region. Furthermore, the Greek government was preoccupied with the affairs of Crete, and this was another reason that left to Bulgarians more open field for action.

Between 1893 and 1910, twenty governments rose and fell in Greece, with fourteen foreign ministers, which hindered the establishment of a coherent foreign policy. And, finally, in May 1897 the Ottoman army defeated the Greek army. Following this defeat, the Greek movement became quite reserved in Macedonia and in the Greek kingdom itself until 1904. The Greek representative in Constantinople regularly protested against the activities of Bulgarians, such as the nomination of Exarchist bishops, and the opening of Bulgarian schools.

Nevertheless, the three Balkan powers tried to reach an understanding on the areas of influence in Macedonia from time to time. In the last decade of the

⁹³ Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question*, p. 81.

nineteenth century various negotiations took place between Serbians and Bulgarians, Serbians and Greeks, and Greeks and Bulgarians. These negotiations, however, did produce no results but to some extent severed the animosity amongst these states.⁹⁴



⁹⁴ Langer, pp. 308-311; Çetin, pp. 57-63.

CHAPTER THREE

TERROR IN MACEDONIA: THE FIELD

‘Ever-seething cauldron’. Karakasidou notes, this term belongs to Trotsky, who used it to describe the situation in Macedonia at the beginning of the twentieth century¹. Throughout most of the first decade of the twentieth century, turmoil reigned in Macedonia, the major source of which was the battle fought between the agents of different claimant states of Macedonia.

Hardman has defined terrorism as “the method (or the theory behind the method) whereby an organised group or party sought to achieve its avowed aims chiefly through the systematic use of violence”.² This definition is especially true for the Macedo-Bulgarian³ organisations, which used violence systematically so as to realise their declared objectives. Although the Greeks and Serbians, who entered the scene after 1903, did not have that well-defined structures and goals as the Macedo-Bulgarian organisations, their deeds were pretty much the same: murders, kidnappings, burning houses or entire villages. Thus, terror was the essence of the

¹ Anastasia Karakasidou, ‘The Burden of Balkans’, *Anthropological Quarterly*, 75.3 (2002), 575-589 (p. 578).

² Walter Laqueur, ‘Interpretations of Terrorism: Fact, Fiction and Political Science’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 12 (1977), 1-42 (p. 3).

³ The term Macedo-Bulgarian is the most appropriate term to refer to the IMRO and the Supreme Committee. The Ottoman sources, as well as the contemporary writes, always categorised these organizations as Bulgarians. Hence, I am going to use this term. The term makes no claim as to the ethnic origins of the committees’ members.

activities of different nationalist groups in Macedonia. Moreover, the term terror is the most objective term that can define the events in Macedonia at the given period of time⁴.

The major party, especially before 1904, was the Macedo-Bulgarians. The IMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation), and Supreme Macedonian Committee⁵ were the two main groups fighting for this side. IMRO was established by the Slavs of Macedonia to lead the people against the Ottomans and rival groups. As Shaw points out, IMRO was reflective of Macedonian points of view, demanding autonomy for Macedonia, whereas the Supreme Committee of Sofia was more Bulgarian in terms of its aims, promoting union with Bulgaria once the Ottomans were driven out.⁶ Starting with 1904, Serbs and Greeks had their own terrorist organisations in the field. The period between 1904 and 1908 was marked by constant reign of political violence.

The governments and consuls of the nations concerned were supporting these groups in and out of Macedonia. They provided not only financial support and encouragement but also arms and ammunition and at times legal protection to the terrorists. Internal dynamics in these countries also contributed their involvement in Macedonia, as there were irredentist urban circles constantly pressurising their governments.⁷

During the decade many people were killed no matter whether they were Christians or Muslims. Macedonia became an expression of horror in the foreign

⁴ Greeks call the period 'the Greek struggle', while for their rivals it can be completely a different thing. For some others, the activities of IMRO and the others are struggles for salvation from the "Turkish yoke". Yet, one thing that is for certain is that terrorist methods were being employed. Hence, terror is the most appropriate term.

⁵ It would later be labelled as the External organisation.

⁶ Shaw and Shaw, p. 209.

⁷ See Victor Roudometof, 'The Social Origins of Balkan Politics: Nationalism, Underdevelopment, and the Nation-State in Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria, 1880-1920', *Mediterranean Quarterly*, 11 (2000), 144-163.

press, especially when incidents involved foreigners or Christians. Durham gives the ethics of murder in Macedonia as follows:

When a Moslem kills a Moslem so much the better. When a Christian kills a Christian it is better not talked about, because people at home would not understand it; when a Christian kills a Moslem it is a holy and righteous act. When a Moslem kills a Christian it is an atrocity and should be telegraphed to all the papers⁸.

Adanır and Faroqhi state another aspect of the terror in Macedonia and claim that terrorists tried to bring out a violent response from the Ottoman administration, and in most cases reprisals would be directed at non-Muslim subjects. As a result, the victims would see little alternative to espousing the cause of some Balkan nationality, and at the same time terrorism contributed quite a deal to the fears of disloyalty in the minds of the Ottoman administrators.⁹

In this chapter, the Bulgarian, Greek, Serbian, and Vlach movements in the field will be examined to provide the reader with a better understanding of the situation in Macedonia at the beginning of the twentieth century.

I. The Macedo-Bulgarian Movement in Macedonia¹⁰

Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (IMRO)

IMRO was the secret society, which was founded in Selanik on 23 October 1893¹¹, which originally called itself the “Bulgarian Macedono-Adrianapolitan Revolutionary Committees (BMARC).”¹² It was founded by four teachers (Damyan

⁸ Durham, p. 96.

⁹ *The Ottomans and the Balkans, A discussion of Historiography*, ed. by Fikret Adanır and Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and its Heritage: 25* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), p. 35. See also Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*, pp. 199-202.

¹⁰ Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*; Perry, *The politics of Terror*; Lange-Akhund; Crampton, pp. 229-287; Dakin, pp. 44-112.

¹¹ It has also been asserted that the place in where the IMRO was founded was Resne.

¹² Adanır, ‘The Macedonians in the Ottoman Empire’, p. 171.

Gruev, Petir Pop Arsov, Dr. Anton Dimitrov, Hristo Bostanciev), a physician (Hristo Tatarcev) and a bookseller (Ivan Hacinikolov). Its aim was to prepare for the union of the territories with the Bulgarian fatherland, which is Bulgaria. Dr. Tatarcev was elected president of the Central Committee. During the summer of 1894, local committees in İstip, Pirlepe and Manastır were created. In 1895, Goce Delcev¹³ joined the organization. Delcev and Gruev were sharing the common conviction that the liberation had to be accomplished from the inside by a Macedonia organization without any foreign intervention.

At first, only an ethnic Bulgarian could become a member of the organization. According to the statute that was accepted in the first convention¹⁴ in 1896:

Membership is open to any Bulgarian, irrespective of sex... who promises to be of any service in some way to the revolutionary cause of liberation; the aim of the Bulgarian-Macedonian-Adrianople Revolutionary Committees is to gain full political autonomy for Macedonia and the Odrin district. The BMARC are divided into regional, district and village committees and above them all stands a Central BMARC...¹⁵

By 1902, however, a new statute reformulated the ultimate goal of the organization:

‘To unite in a whole all the dissatisfied elements in Macedonia and the province of Adrianople, irrespective of nationality, in order to acquire through revolution full political autonomy.’¹⁶ Furthermore, the word ‘Bulgarian’ was deleted from the name

¹³ Macedonian revolutionary. He was defending a socialist revolution for Macedonians. He thought Macedonians should rely merely on their own powers, should not count on any foreign intervention. He was a student in the military school in Sofia, but dismissed from there because of his relations with socialist circles. When he joined the IMRO, he was a teacher in a Bulgarian school in İstip. See Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*, pp. 128-129.

¹⁴ The date of the convention and the content of the statute had been subjects of debates, particularly between the schools of Sofia and Skopje. The generally accepted view is the former one. See Adanır, ‘The Macedonians in the Ottoman Empire’, pp. 171-172, Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, pp. 44-47, Lange-Akhund, p. 39.

¹⁵ *Macedonia, Documents and Material*, ed. by Voin Bozhinov and L. Panayotov (Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1978), pp. 419-422.

¹⁶ Adanır, Fikret, ‘The Socio-political Environment’, p. 246; Tokay, Gül, *Makedonya Sorunu* (Istanbul: Afa Yayınları, 1996), p. 38.

of the organization; it was declared that the organization should struggle 'to eliminate chauvinistic propaganda and national discordance which divide and weaken' the population; any Macedonian and any inhabitant of the province of Adrianople could become a member of the organization.¹⁷

The Macedonian territory was divided into seven departments, which in turn were divided into sectors. IMRO quickly covered Macedonia with a strong network of village committees. They put in place a hierarchical and centralised structure, based on cell organisation. Every member belonged to a group of ten men or 'comitat', controlled by a leader. According to the article 4 of 1896 statute 'each member knows only the members of his group and its chief, while the latter knows only the leader of the committee or his intermediary'.¹⁸ At his admission into the organisation, the new member swore allegiance on a dagger and a revolver placed on the Bible.¹⁹

In the beginning the band members were selected particularly from *haiduks* or bandits, who were used to handling weapons and fighting against the soldiers. Later on peasants were drafted. The peasants were the most numerous. They formed the combat units and the officer corps was represented by teachers, who were originally peasants educated at schools.

Through its activities, IMRO attempted to bring into being an administration parallel to the Ottoman one in the three vilayets. It sought to put in place a popular government over the entire territory.

Until 1897, the Ottoman authorities were not aware of the organisation. After the murder of Kazım Aga in Vinitsa in the Kotchana kaza on November 27,

¹⁷ Adanır, 'The Macedonians in the Ottoman Empire', pp. 171-172. In spite of all these democratic changes the Organization remained the political home of the Exarchist population.

¹⁸ *Macedonia, Documents*, p. 419.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 421.

1897, the existence of the IMRO came into realisation as the authorities discovered a load of weapons and ammunition. After that date, the IMRO moved into offensive.

The Supreme Macedonian Committee²⁰

This was the organisation of the Macedonian emigrants in Bulgaria. Toward 1900, 18,000-20,000 of the 70,000 inhabitants of Sofia were born in Macedonia, and 430 officers of a total of 1289 originated from the three vilayets.²¹ These emigrants gathered in organisations such as “the Young Macedonian Association” or “the Brotherly Union” prior to 1895. In 1895, the Supreme Macedonia Committee came into being, in which the smaller organisations were united.

The Supreme Committee was the most outstanding revolutionary movement outside the three vilayets. It has considerable financial means, and Prince Ferdinand was supporting them. The Bulgarian government used the movement as a means of pressure on the Ottoman government and also on Western public opinion. With this significant support, the Supreme Committee was able to organise regular armed incursions into Macedonia.²² They demanded measures of administrative autonomy for the three vilayets.

Between the IMRO and the Supreme Committee, there was no cooperation or common action. However, contacts, which were necessary for IMRO on the grounds of material and financial reasons, were kept. IMRO was fairly busy in developing and consolidating its network of propaganda in Macedonia. Therefore, it did take no part in the events of 1895, when an attempt of uprising was tried by the

²⁰ *Vrhoven Makedonsku Komitet.*

²¹ Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, p. 35. Lange-Akhund, p. 44.

²² See Mahir Aydın, ‘Arşiv Belgeleriyle Makedonya’da Bulgar Çete Faaliyetleri’, *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, 9 (1989), 209-234.

bands originating from Bulgaria.²³ Moreover, the Supreme Committee was ready to accept the involvement of IMRO, on condition that IMRO remained in an entirely subordinate position. Naturally, this was not acceptable at all by the Central Committee of IMRO in Thessalonica. Nonetheless, IMRO kept permanent representatives in Sofia.

In 1899, the relationship between the two organisations changed during the 6th Congress, held in May 1899, and became more intermingled. Boris Sarafov, who was backed by Petrov, a member of the Central Committee, was elected president.

However, the relationship of the two committees deteriorated thereafter chiefly because of the election of General Tsonchef to the presidency in the 8th Congress. The revolutionary politics that was founded on the systematic utilisation of terror in Macedonia was severely criticised and condemned as being unworthy to the Macedonian cause. Relations further deteriorated, and in March 1902, IMRO denounced the activities of the Sofia Committee, which sought to rash the revolt on grounds of domestic politics: 'We, Macedonian Slavs, fight against the disrespect of our rights, here in Turkey, as part of this state and not agents of Bulgaria'.²⁴

Macedo-Bulgarian Terror

IMRO's and the Supreme Committee's strategy and tactics were intending to affect a great power intervention in European Turkey. Its activists assumed that Europe would not tolerate a bloody suppression of a Christian popular revolt in Macedonia. Hence, a European intervention on behalf of the Christians could be foreseen. That would culminate, if not in Macedonian statehood then for the union of the country with Bulgaria, which would come after autonomy, as was the case in East Rumelia.

²³ Adamir, *Makedonya Sorunu*, p. 124.

²⁴ Lange-Akhund, p. 112.

The organisations intensified terrorism. They thought, 'If Europe does not help us we have to act in such a way as to attract its attention to our problem'.²⁵ This was 'the politics of the worse', equally used by Armenians to incite Turks towards brutal massacres so as to call in the Great Powers. Hence, the IMRO's task now was to prepare the population politically and militarily for a general uprising.

Two important incidents, which drew attention of western public opinion to Macedonian affairs, ought to be mentioned here. One is the Ellen Stone affair. In September 1901, the American protestant missionary Ellen Stone was kidnapped for ransom, along with a Bulgarian woman by Yane Sandanski and Hristo Chernopeev. Stone and the Bulgarian woman remained hostages of IMRO for six months, and they were finally freed for 14,000²⁶ Turkish liras that was gathered by the ABCFM.²⁷ Later on Miss Stone joined the Macedonian cause and gave several conferences in favour of the IMRO in the United States.

The second of these significant events is the uprising of Cuma-yi Bâlâ (Blagoevgrad), which burst out at the beginning of October 1902. It was organised and prepared by General Tsonchef, who was the leader of the Supreme Committee of Sofia²⁸. He wanted to escalate events in Macedonia to allege for himself the direction of the Macedonian revolutionary movement. However, the timing proved to be utterly wrong, as winter was so close. Moreover, the IMRO was against such an action as it judged it premature, and thus, did not support it. The "insurrection" was conceived, planned, and controlled by the Sofia Committee, and the gangs that were sent by Sofia could not succeed in receiving the vital support of the Christian

²⁵ Lange-Akhund, p. 94.

²⁶ Sadık Poğdan, who was with the gang that undertook the kidnapping as the bandsman Stoianov, tells that the amount paid was 500 liras more, 14,500, in his memoirs. He also claims that Sandanski embezzled 2,000 liras of the money. M. Sadık Poğdan, *Bulgar Sadık*, ed. by M. R. Yalkın, 2nd edn (Istanbul: Gün Basımevi, 1944), pp. 40-41

²⁷ See Randall B. Woods, 'Terrorism in the Age of Roosevelt: The Miss Stone Affair, 1901-1902', *American Quarterly*, 31 (1979), 478-495.

²⁸ He was also a friend of Prince Ferdinand.

peasants. In conclusion, the attempt of uprising failed absolutely. However, it had an important result. The Great Powers asked Abdülhamit for reforms to improve the lives of the Christian population of Macedonia.²⁹

By 1903 two strong tendencies had crystallized within the Macedonian movement. The Bulgarian nationalist majority was convinced that if the IMRO would unleash a general uprising simultaneously in Macedonia and in the Edirne Vilayet, Ottoman power would collapse. The left wing, led by Goce Delcev, warned against the risks of such an insurrectionary course (he advocated instead the intensification of terrorism against selected targets – sabotaging railways, kidnapping foreigners, assassinating prominent members of society)³⁰.

Apart from the major terrorist groups of IMRO and the Supreme Committee, there was a small group of anarchists, known as the ‘Gemicii’ in Selanik.³¹ This group mainly consisted of high school students that were originally from Veles (Köprülü).³² In 1900 a shop was rented across the street in front of the Ottoman Bank and they started to dig a tunnel in order to blow the Bank up. The tunnel was finished in 1903. Both Delcev and Gruev requested the postponement of the bombings but their requests were disregarded.

In April 28th, 1903, the French passenger liner “Quadalquivir” was sunk in noon. In the evening of April 29th/30th the Ottoman Bank was blown up. The neighbouring German bowling club was destroyed and bombs were thrown to the German school. Until May 3rd firefights occurred in the streets of Selanik³³.

²⁹ See reforms section.

³⁰ Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*, pp. 158-160; Adanır, ‘The National Question’, p.37; Tokay, pp.57-58.

³¹ Çetin, pp. 68-73.

³² Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*, p. 183.

³³ See Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*, pp. 183-192. Fazlı Necib, who was in Salonica at the date, also presents a vivid picture of those days; see Fazlı Necib.

The anarchists, too, hoped by such terrorism to induce the powers to intervene directly in Macedonia. But this was not to be the case. The deeds of the members of Gemicii group raised quite a deal of anger in the western public opinion³⁴. Adanır quotes from the Times, which wrote on 4 May 1903:

The calculation of the Committees is as stupid as it is nefarious. Their object, as they have all along acknowledged, is to compel Europe to intervene and liberate Macedonia from the Turks. They first sought to attain it by exasperating the Turks into wholesale massacres of the fellow Christians whom it is their professed purpose to deliver. They have hitherto failed, in spite of the many murders and other crimes they have instigated against the Muslims, in provoking retaliation upon a scale, which would lend colour to an effective 'atrocities campaign' in the European Press. They have therefore fallen back ... upon a second method of appealing to Europe, which they are now pursuing simultaneously with their original plan. They have determined to attack European life and property, and the dynamite outrages in Salonica inaugurate their efforts.³⁵

As a result, two thousand arrests were made of those who had any contacts with IMRO. Local committees were scattered. Goce Delcev was killed while he was escaping from a possible arrest in Selanik.³⁶

The Selanik bombings forced IMRO to act prematurely. It advanced the date for a general uprising to St. Elias (Ilinden) Day on August 2nd, 1903, although the preparations were still incomplete.

The Ilinden uprising is the climax and a turning point in the history of Macedonian movement. The uprising had begun with insurgents, or *çetniks*, setting several Muslim villages on fire. Turks and Albanians resisted them. Moreover, the adherents of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in South Western Macedonia openly supported Ottoman troops. The insurgents gained short-lived victories in their stronghold, the mountainous Vilayet of Manastır. They succeeded in entering the small mountain town of Krushevo and in holding it for about a week.

³⁴ Uzer, pp. 154-157.

³⁵ Adanır, 'The National Question', p. 38.

³⁶ Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*, p. 187.

However, the insurgents did not achieve the one essential goal: the unity of the popular masses against Ottoman rule. More importantly, the expected intervention by the great powers – or at least by the principality of Bulgaria – failed to take place. At the end of August, the Ilinden Uprising was virtually suppressed. The anticipated Great Power intervention failed to take place

At the beginning of 1904, the leaders of IMRO met in Sofia. Two tendencies were running high in the debates. Those, who had been against the Ilinden uprising, were sternly criticising the Central Committee. They were called the “Seres Group”, with Yane Sandanski being one of its most prominent members. They demanded a decentralisation in the organisational structures of the IMRO in favour of the local committees. The second group was dominated by Christo Matov. They were still contemplating a new general insurrection and the slightest change to the structures of the Organisation was not considered at all.

After 1903 uprising, the Seres group, under the leadership of Jane Sandanski³⁷, were the only ones who could protect and strengthen their position in the Seres Sancak in the Selanik Vilayet.³⁸ Sandanski was close to the Bulgarian ‘broad’ socialists of Yanko Sakazov, and in Macedonian politics he let himself be guided by Dimo Hacı Dimov. The IMRO congress of 1905 entrusted Hacı Dimov with the editorship of its official organ, the ‘Revolutsionen List’. Dimov was also given the responsibility for the formulation of a policy paper on the future strategy of the organization. It is argued in this paper, namely “Principles Guiding the Future Activities of the Organization”, for a federal solution to the Macedonian question within the framework of the Ottoman State. Dimov realized that demanding political autonomy for Macedonia would mean asking for the partition of the province among

³⁷ For Sandanski see Mete Çetık, ‘Osmanlı Solundan Bir Portre, Yane Sandanski’, *Tarih ve Toplum*, 128 (1994), 13-17.

³⁸ Tokay, pp.155-156.

the neighbouring states. The Macedonia he envisaged was not an autonomous Macedonia forming part of a socialist Balkan federation, but a Macedonia of federated peoples enjoying autonomy within the framework of the Ottoman State. Jane Sandanski publicly disowned Bulgarian nationalism.³⁹ A new political document was drafted which was later to serve as the program of the 'People's Federative Party' under the leadership of Sandanski. The new document is concerned with:

- Democratisation of the political system
- Administrative autonomy for the provinces
- Abolition of national, religious and social privileges
- Separation of religious from state affairs
- Secular education in state schools
- Universal conscription⁴⁰

Another important feature of the IMRO movement was the increasing cooperation with the Exarchate after the announcement of the Mürzteg reform program. The article 3 of the program stipulated an administrative distribution dependent on the nationalities.⁴¹ And, the notion of national awareness was intimately linked with religious affiliation. Thus, the Macedo-Bulgarian movement became closely connected with the Bulgarian church question, as a result of the *millet* system.⁴² As the adherence to this or that church was the criterion of nationality, the bands now started to force patriarchist villages to convert to the Exarchate, in an increased scale. The movement was associated more with Bulgaria inevitably, henceforth.

³⁹ Adamır, 'The National Question', pp. 38-44.

⁴⁰ Adamır, 'The Socio-political Environment', pp. 250-252.

⁴¹ See, reforms section.

⁴² Adamır, 'The Macedonian Question', p. 56.

As a result, after the failure of the Ilinden uprising, the Macedonian organisation was torn by internal strife. At the end of 1905, three rival fractions could be seen within the IMRO: 1) the moderate conservatives, with the chiefs such as Tatarchev, Gruev and Matov. 2) The Radicals, the leftist group, in which the most prominent members were Sandanski, Petrov, Tchernopev and Pop Arsov. They rejected foreign aid, and refused to get under the influence or dependence of any Balkan state. And finally, 3) The Sarafov circle. Sarafov was killed later on in 1907 by one of Sandanski's men. Furthermore, the Greeks and Serbians were increasing their activities. The Ottoman official organs tolerated, even supported Greek armed bands.⁴³ The cooperation of the State and Greeks and Patriarchists resulted in a more efficient struggle against IMRO. Consequently, IMRO found itself under increasing pressure from an effectively mobilized pro-Hellenic party, especially in the southern districts of the country. From 1904 onwards, Bulgarian movement was forced into a defensive position vis-à-vis the 'armed propaganda' of its rival Greek and Serbian organizations.

Social Anatomy of Bulgarian Nationalist Terror⁴⁴

Approximately 80 per cent of the leaders of Bulgarian national movement were born in a Macedonian district, and the rest originated either from Danubian Bulgaria or more frequently from Eastern Rumeli. More than 40 per cent originated from southwestern Macedonia.⁴⁵ In the prefectures of Manastır and Üsküp about two thirds of the activists had an urban background. On the other hand, in the eastern

⁴³ Süleyman Kani İrtem, *Osmanlı Devleti'nin Makedonya Meselesi, Balkanlar'ın Kördüğümü*, ed. by O. S. Kocahanoğlu (Ankara: Temel, 1999), pp. 248-257.

⁴⁴ Adanır, 'The Macedonians in the Ottoman Empire', pp. 175-178. The term 'terror' belongs to me.

⁴⁵ A mountainous region of the country that became the centre of the 1903 Ilinden uprising.

prefecture of Seres the situation was vice versa, as 80 per cent of the leaders had rural backgrounds.

The combined educational efforts of various national movements raised the literacy rate in Macedonia. Adanır notes that recent research assumes a literacy rate of 80 to 90 per cent among the Christians of Macedonia in the first decade of the 20th century⁴⁶. The literacy rate of the activists' fathers was about 65 per cent. They were mostly merchants and priests.

The teachers played a very important role in the Macedonian movement. Durham writes, 'each school was an active centre for nationalist propaganda. All the schoolmasters were revolutionary leaders'.⁴⁷ In the period of Ilinden uprising about 60 per cent of the IMRO activists were teachers. On the other hand, persons with a military background were the most influential group in the case of the Supreme Macedonian Committee of Sofia. More than a third of the Supremist activists were from army officer corps.

The IMRO central committee announced the formation of armed squads, that is, the *tchetas* (bands) at the end of 1899.⁴⁸ The purpose was to develop revolutionary terror in Macedonia. A *tcheta* was an armed group about 7 to 10 men, organised in the areas of each local revolutionary committee, and from that committee it received orders. The chief was called *voivoda*. Only he knew the contents of a mission his band was entrusted to do. The men in these bands were 18 to 40 years old.⁴⁹ The *voivodas* were often enrolled from among the brigands. Schools were established to train the *voivodas*. For example, as Perry writes, in the

⁴⁶ Adanır, 'The Macedonians in the Ottoman Empire', p. 177.

⁴⁷ Durham.

⁴⁸ See Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, pp. 155-163.

⁴⁹ Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, p. 157.

Florina (Lerin) district in 1900 or 1901, a school was created by Marko Lerinski, who was known as the 'pedagogue of revolutionary affairs'.⁵⁰

Tchetas were the paramilitary arm of the IMRO. Their main mission was to prepare the conditions in the three vilayets and Edirne for rebellion. Hence, they were to intensify the revolutionary propaganda in the countryside. They were also the main executors of terrorist actions. Revolutionary committees were chiefly in charge of winning the Macedonian masses over their cause and the *tchetas* constituted the active army of IMRO. A tcheta regulation, which was prepared by Delchev and Petrov, states an additional mission for the tchetas that all peasants, men, women, and children, will be mobilised either by persuasion or by force, to complain about the maladministration and crimes of the Ottoman officials and troops, to the consulates at the capitals of each vilayet, and to the valis. Moreover, according to the same regulation, damaging or useless Christians would be killed systematically so as to blame village guards, proprietors, and tax collectors in courts.⁵¹

These gangs depended on peasants for the logistical and intelligence needs. The *comitadjis* had to move constantly and at night.⁵² They used four models of rifles. These were: the Martini-Tetovski rifle, the Gras rifle, the Krnka-Berdan II or Krinkov rifle, and the Mannlicher (the most valuable).⁵³ Weapons were obtained from Bulgaria, and also bought from Greece and Albania, and some local Ottoman officials were ready to sell weapons.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, pp. 157-158.

⁵¹ Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*, p. 137.

⁵² See Arthur D. Howden Smith, *Fighting the Turk in the Balkans* (New York and London: Putnam's Sons, 1908).

⁵³ Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, p. 165-166.

⁵⁴ Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*, pp. 141-143.

Also, the significance of priests in the Macedonian national movement ought to be noted at this point. It was by and large expected that a prospective member of the revolutionary organization at the local level would first join the Bulgarian exarchate. The exarchist priests in the countryside were sometimes leaders, and politically important as the village teachers. Brailsford writes in *Macedonia*: 'It is notorious, for example, that most if not all of the Bulgarian bishops and their lay secretaries are involved more or less directly, and more or less voluntarily, in the rebellious activities of the Macedonian Committee.'⁵⁵

II. The Greek Movement in Macedonia⁵⁶

As Karakasidou asserts, Greek involvement in Macedonia and the dispatch of terrorist forces was a reaction to Bulgarian activities in the region as well as part of the *Meghale Idea* (Great Idea).⁵⁷ This was an irredentist ideology that considered Macedonia (along with Anatolia, Crete, Eastern Roumelia, and Thrace) as yet unredeemed territories of the ancient Greeks. The current of thought was called the *enosis*, proposing to regroup all the Greeks living outside the Greek Kingdom.

The Greeks of Macedonia did not found an organisation similar to IMRO. In 1894, a group of officers founded the *Ethniki Hetaria*, that is the 'National Company', in Athens. The objective was to arouse Greek national feeling amongst the Christians living outside Greece. The Ethniki Hetaria organised several armed

⁵⁵ Adanır, 'The Macedonians', p. 178.

⁵⁶ The most detailed work on this subject is Dakin's, which is labeled as "semi-official history" by Gounaris. See Basil Gounaris, 'Reassessing Ninety Years of Greek Historiography on the "Struggle for Macedonia" (1904-1908)', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 14.2 (1996), 237-251 (p. 242). See also Tokay, pp. 60-63, Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*, pp. 233-238.

⁵⁷ Anastasia N. Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 89.

incursions in Macedonia prior to the war of 1897. However, this war caused an interruption for these incursions that would last until 1904.

At the beginning of 1904, Greek gangs reappeared in Macedonia. Nevertheless, the summer of 1904 was a period of establishing organisational structures for an armed struggle in Macedonia. The Greek government was involved in the armed conflict with the appointment of Lambros Karomilas as general consul in Salonica, and things gained momentum. He created a new organisation, using the consulate as the centre to direct offensives of gangs formed in Greece, therefore he demanded gangs that were formed in Greece, and gangs that consisted mostly of Cretans were formed.⁵⁸ The organisation in Salonica also conducted an economic warfare against the Exarchists. All Greeks were forbidden to buy goods in Exarchist shops or to employ Exarchist workmen. Whereever possible Greeks bought up “schismatic” land and houses, the organisation providing help in the form of mortgages. All the Greeks were prohibited from selling or renting any house or land to an Exarchist⁵⁹. The economic warfare was similarly organised in other towns and large villages. Austro-Hungarian diplomats were well aware of the situation⁶⁰:

There are local Greek committees in many towns and large villages... The duty of these committees is to strengthen the Greek party economically, and to weaken their rivals financially. For this purpose, committees demand their supporters to buy only from Patriarchists, and to boycott Bulgarian and Vlach tradesmen, and impose financial penalties on Greeks, who buy from them despite the ban. The situation is the same for insurance companies, banks, and commissioners.

This situation was also against the good of foreigners according to the diplomat who conducted the report. For example, it says ‘Banque de Salonique lost quite a

⁵⁸ However, the Cretans created various problems. They hated all Muslims and they were reluctant to fight with other Christians.

⁵⁹ Dakin, pp. 206-207.

⁶⁰ *Austro-Hungarian Documents*, doc. no. 214.

deal of customers after Banque d'Orient has opened its Monastir branch'; Banque d'Orient was an Athens centred bank.

The Macedonian Committee of Athens was directing the activities in the Monastir vilayet and Germanos Karavangelis⁶¹ was highly influential in that area in operational, material, and spiritual terms.⁶² In 1900, he was appointed to the Metropolitan see of Kastoria. He reorganized the schools in his diocese on Hellenic lines and founded new ones. Since the very beginning of his days in Macedonia, he had tried to form his own armed bands. The finances were coming from Grecophil circles in Europe and from Athens. In early 1902, he convinced Kota, an IMRO bandleader, to join the Hellenic movement. He converted some other IMRO militants⁶³ mainly by offering them higher payments.⁶⁴ The Macedonian Committee used his support and contacts in entering the vilayet and recruiting members for gangs.

Commencing in 1905, the Greek terrorist started offensive in Macedonia. The operations developed in the Southern part of Manastır and Thessalonica vilayets, to the south of Manastır-Gevgili-Demirhisar line. The main target of the Greeks was the Exarchists. In Manastır vilayet clashes developed mostly between the Greek border and the Vardar River. The men of the gangs were usually entering Macedonia from the Pindus Mountains, and some from the sea⁶⁵. The strength of gangs varied between 50 to 100 men. In Manastır, the Greek gangs were more successful than they were in Thessalonica. One reason for that situation was that

⁶¹ Karavangelis was born in 1866 in the village of Stipsi, Midilli (Lesbos). His father was a merchant at Adramittı. He went (for six years) to the Theological College of Chalchi in 1882. Afterwards, he went to Germany and took a doctorate of philosophy under Wundt in 1891. After some six months' study under the historian Langen at Bonn he became professor of ecclesiastical history at Chalchi, in September 1891. He remained there until February 1896 when he became the bishop of Pera. See Dakin, p. 119.

⁶² See Dakin, pp. 119-132.

⁶³ Vangelis and Gulev.

⁶⁴ Dakin, pp. 117-130.

⁶⁵ See Chapter Four.

Sandanski controlled Seres region in Salonica *vilayet*. At the end of December, the French ambassador reported that 200 murders took place in the three vilayets in November 1905 only.⁶⁶

The Greeks changed their strategy in 1906. The power duality⁶⁷ between the Manastir and Selanik *vilayets* caused various inconveniences during the previous year. Therefore, Karomilas was made sole responsible for the entire Greek activities in Macedonia.

Greek terrorism was highly active in 1906. Various skirmishes took place between the Bulgarians and the Greeks. Moreover, in 1906, individual murders increased to a considerable extent⁶⁸.

The Greek activities in 1907 can be summarised as follows: They attacked the Bulgarians, but fought particularly against the Ottoman forces and the Vlachs. Less numerous than the two previous years, they were concentrated between Kesriye, Florina and Morihovo in the west with eighteen gangs; between Gevgeli and Lake Ostrovo in the centre with ten gangs; and between Kavala, Serez and Drama in the east with seven gangs.⁶⁹

In 1908, the Greek bands were more active than they were in 1907. Hilmi Paşa⁷⁰ counted eighteen gangs in the beginning of summer⁷¹. Although a backward-looking Austro-Hungarian report dated 18 April 1908 shows that the year March

⁶⁶ Lange-Akhund, p. 215.

⁶⁷ The activities in Monastir province were directed by the Macedonian Committee in Athens, whereas Koromilas was the director in Salonica.

⁶⁸ For more detailed information see Dakin, pp. 250-273.

⁶⁹ Lange-Akhund, p. 248.

⁷⁰ Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa was born in 1855 in the Sarlıca village of Midilli. His father was a merchant, Kütahyalızaade Mustafa Efendi. He had been the Governor of Yemen for five years before he was appointed as the Inspector-general of Rumeli in 1902.

⁷¹ Lange-Akhund, p. 249.

1907-April 1908 had been more tranquil in terms of political terrorism than the previous year, crimes committed by the Greeks increased⁷².

The Nature and Characteristics of Greek Activities in Macedonia in general⁷³

'Hellenism', which was the concept the Greek bands claimed to be protecting in Macedonia, covered simultaneously the concept of nationality (Greece) and religion (the Patriarchate). Therefore, the Greek cause was guarded and fostered by the clergy, and by representatives of the government of Athens, the consuls, in the three vilayets. The bishop of Kesriye, as has already been noted, was the most outstanding figure in that context, not only spiritually, but fairly actively, as well. He warned the Ottoman authorities of the presence of *comitadjis*, or even suggested ambush.⁷⁴ The metropolitans of Manastır, Drama, Florina, and Thessalonica were also other important religious figures, who carried on activities similar to Karavangelis'. As a result, the bishops of Kozani, Drama, Kesriye and Manastır were excluded from the discussions of the vilayet councils, where they sat until that time, in May 1907. In September, the bishops of Drama, Manastır, and Grebene, were suspended from their seats because of their participation in revolutionary activities.⁷⁵

The Greek consuls also played a decisive role, after 1904. The appointment of Lambros Koromilas as general consul in Thessalonica was a turning point. He was the major figure in organising the Greek movement in Macedonia. Still, the involvement of diplomatic agents in the conflict in one way or another was not particular to the Greek case. A French representative in Manastır reported, 'The

⁷² *Austro-Hungarian Documents*, doc. no. 335.

⁷³ See Dakin pp. 198-220, and Dimitri Livanios, "Conquering the Souls": Nationalism and Greek Guerrilla Warfare in Ottoman Macedonia, 1904-1908', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 23 (1999), 195-221.

⁷⁴ Brailsford says that the kaimmakam of Kesriye was dismissed in the autumn of 1903 because he had fallen 'too palpably and too publicly' under the influence of Karavangelis. Brailsford, p. 63.

⁷⁵ Lange-Akhund, pp. 247-248.

most necessary reform in this *vilayet*, principal source of agitation, would be the suppression of Greek, Serbian, and Rumanian consulates, and the Bulgarian agency'.⁷⁶ The consulates, like the structures of the church, also served as intermediaries in recruiting men.

The nature of the armed struggle undertaken by the Greeks was dissimilar to that of IMRO, who was the chief opponent and the main target for the Greeks. Unlike the IMRO, whose main target was organising a general insurrection to 'liberate' themselves from the 'Ottoman yoke', the main concern of the Greeks was to defend Greek interests and to establish Greek predominance in Macedonia. In other words, 'the main aim of the Greek struggle was to 'conquer the souls' of the peasants and to check the activity of the Bulgarian bands rather than to liberate Macedonia from the Turks'.⁷⁷ As a result, the Greek gangs fought against the *comitadjis* of IMRO and Bulgaria, and the Vlachs.

It is generally accepted in the literature of the field that until 1907 Ottoman authorities, who were 'pleased to see the Christians slaughter themselves',⁷⁸ condoned the Greek activities, and did nothing to stop Greek actions.⁷⁹ It has been asserted that the fear of a new insurrection by the Bulgarian committees or IMRO caused the Ottoman authorities to tolerate the Greek actions.⁸⁰ The hatred against Bulgarians was widespread among the Muslims of the region. There were Muslims fighting alongside with Greeks⁸¹, even Muslim leaders of Greek bands.⁸² However, particularly after 1907, as the successes of the Greeks became too many, and with

⁷⁶ Lange-Akhund, p. 243.

⁷⁷ Livanios, p. 203. In his article, what he means by the concept 'conquering the souls' is that keeping the peasant masses affiliated to the Patriarchate.

⁷⁸ Lange-Akhund, p. 213. This situation was one of the biggest advantages of the Greeks over Bulgarians. Still, the Greeks considered this alliance temporary. See Brailsford, pp. 192-194.

⁷⁹ This is not true for Florina in 1906. See chapter Four.

⁸⁰ Lange-Akhund, p. 218.

⁸¹ Adamir, p. 235.

⁸² Document 312 in *Austro-Hungarian Documents Relating to the Macedonian Struggle, 1896-1912*, ed. by F. R. Bridge, (Thessalonica: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1976), pp. 338-341.

pressure from the Great Powers, the force that was directed on the pursuit of the Greek terrorists was increased by the Ottoman authorities⁸³. Therefore, the activity of Greek terrorists presented the following characters: they frequently were hiding in mountains or woods, and took offensive only when they were certain of victory.

The consulate of Thessalonica ordered assignments, such as attacking a particular village or a monastery,. The Greek gangs also undertook to force communities to convert to the Patriarchate. A French diplomat wrote, 'the conversions were as frequent as they were insecure, the members of a same family call themselves Exarchist or Patriarchist and consequently either Bulgarian or Greek'. He added, 'the villages that the gangs required successively that they adhere to the Exarchate or to the Patriarchate, did not know themselves anymore which was their religion of the day'.⁸⁴ When a Greek band succeeded in convincing the population of a village to return to the Patriarchate, it burned the holy books of the Exarchate in the presence of all residents. Sometimes the name of the village was changed⁸⁵.

The officers of the Greek army were quite numerous in the gangs, and the armed groups were organised from Greece by and large. Crete was also an important source of militants, until 1907.⁸⁶ In Macedonia itself volunteers for the Greek side were few. A reason for that was since 1893, the population was influenced and controlled widely by IMRO.⁸⁷ On the other hand, local brigands were recruited.⁸⁸

⁸³ The Greek bands were already suffering heavy blows from Ottoman troops in 1906 in Florina. See Chapter Four.

⁸⁴ Lange-Akhund, p. 251.

⁸⁵ For place names see Todor Hristov Simovski, *Atlas of the Inhabited Places of the Aegean Macedonia* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1999); Nuri Akbayan, *Osmanlı Yer Adları Sözlüğü* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2001).

⁸⁶ In 1907, there occurred a change in Greek strategy. Henceforth, only officers, weapons, and financial aid would be sent to Macedonia, and no gang would be organised in Greece.

⁸⁷ Livianos, p. 209.

Mixed bands were formed, in which men from different regions of Greece, together with local Patriarchists and brigands were grouped in the same band.⁸⁹

The strength of Greek gangs varied according to the sources between 1,000 and 2,000 men throughout the period under consideration. Adanır, citing a German source, says that in autumn 1905, there were twelve gangs of 100 men each operating in Macedonia.⁹⁰ Dakin, mentioning a British source, states that 1,500 to 2,000 Greek militants in 70 to 80 gangs took part in battles throughout the summer of 1906.⁹¹

As the Greek gangs did not have an organised structure like the one of IMRO they could not develop a network like the IMRO's because of the time shortage.⁹² This was both the reason and cause of the lack of popular support. Hence, they had to be on constant move only at night. The only secured shelters were the monasteries, where they could acquire logistic support. The structures of the Patriarchate, like monasteries and churches, were centres of information as well.

III. The Serbian Movement in Macedonia

The 'Macedonian Serbs' did not establish an organisation such as IMRO. The fondness of the Serbs for Macedonia originated from outside, from Serbia. They were claiming that western Macedonia was the cradle of the Dushan's empire of 14th century and the *vilayet* of Kosovo was right within the boundaries of 'Old Serbia'.

⁸⁸ For the use of brigands in the Greek movement, see Giannes S. Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause, Brigandage and Irredentism in Modern Greece, 1821 – 1912* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), pp. 215-136.

⁸⁹ Livianos, 211.

⁹⁰ Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*, p. 235.

⁹¹ Dakin, p. 254.

⁹² They became active in 1904-1905, whereas IMRO had been present for more than a decade.

As in both the other two Balkan countries that were bordering Macedonia, there also existed an irredentist current in Serbia. The Association of Saint Sava was founded in 1886.⁹³ Its chief purpose was the awakening a Serbian national consciousness in 'Old Serbia'. In Vranja, a town right at the frontier, the Committee of Slavo-Macedonians and Old Serbia was established in the following year. Its goal was to prepare some raids into the Kosovo vilayet. In the same year, an official department in charge of supervision of the functioning of Serbian schools and Churches outside the Kingdom was established.

The royal government played a significant role in the development of Serbian faction in Macedonia. Their strategy was to expand the use of the Serbian language by asking the Sublime Porte permission to open schools, so as to let children 'realize they were Serbs'⁹⁴, to try for the election of Serbian metropolitans and bishops in Old Serbia (Raskoprizen, Skopje) and Northern Macedonia (Dibar, Veles [Köprülü], Ochrida [Ohri], and Bitolj [Manastır]), through the activities of the Serbian diplomacy in İstanbul and elsewhere as well as the ecclesiastical and educational propaganda⁹⁵, and to encourage the groupings of Macedonian emigrants in Serbia in associations to set up their demand in an organised fashion.

But, the outcome attained by the Department of Serbian Propaganda in Macedonia⁹⁶ was limited. The insufficient financial means, and the instability that reigned over in the domestic political scene, were the chief reasons. Moreover, the Progressive government by and large tried to preserve good relations with the

⁹³ Serbians were active before, but in a less organized fashion. See Ivan Hadjinikolov's passage in *Macedonia, Documents*, pp. 414-416.

⁹⁴ Durham, p. 95.

⁹⁵ See Athanasios Angelopoulos, 'Relations Between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Church of Serbia', *Balkan Studies*, 13 (1972), 119-127.

⁹⁶ All pro-Serbian organizations in Macedonia were reassigned to the Ministry of foreign affairs in 1889.

Sublime Porte so as to gain concessions in favour of the Serbs of Macedonia, particularly the nomination of Serbian bishops in Kosovo.

Serbians suffered from the lack of popular support as well as the Greeks. Thus, internal dynamics in both Macedonia and Serbia was not fairly favourable for the Serbians. Consequently, the results of Serbian propaganda was not quite successful vis-à-vis the Bulgarian efforts, by 1900.

The Ilinden uprising and its aftermath was a turning point for Serbian and Greeks movements, as well as it was for the Bulgarian and Macedonian movements. The Serbian movement increased its influence continuously after that incident.

As noted earlier, the Serbian movement was organised and controlled from Belgrade. Peter I Karadjordje was the King, who took power in 1903, following the murder of Alexander Obrenovitch. The Radical Party was the party in power, with Pasitch at the head of the government. The policy of Macedonia was also changed, beginning to have a more aggressive nature. Still, from the viewpoint of Belgrade, the status quo of Macedonia had to be preserved. Belgrade government was sternly against the idea of autonomy⁹⁷ that would benefit Bulgaria, as it had been in the case of Eastern Roumelia in 1885.

In the spring of 1904, the Serbs organised some incursions in Kosovo. According to a text that was supposedly a statute, the Serbian armed struggle was “not against the Turks but against Bulgaria or IMRO *comitadjis*”.⁹⁸ Agitation reigned in the kazas of Kumanova, Kratova, and Pirlepe. The Serbs fought chiefly against the *comitadjis*. Pasitch issued the following instructions: ‘Protect our people against the exclusion tendencies of the Patriarchate, battle the agents of Exarchate, who, organized as armed committees, want to establish themselves in an area under

⁹⁷ Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*, p.239; Tokay, p. 64.

⁹⁸ Lange-Akhund, p. 220.

our influence like Porec, Kicevo, Drimkol, Dibra, Köprülü'.⁹⁹ Moreover, although there were some initiatives of rapprochement between the IMRO and the Serbians, they proved to be futile.¹⁰⁰ In the beginning of 1905, Serbs and the bands of IMRO and Bulgaria became engaged in a war in the vilayet of Kosovo and the north of Manastır. Furthermore, Serbs were also fighting against Albanians, and Greeks. In 1905, there were 11 Serbian gangs with 62 men in Macedonia around Üsküb, and an additional 55 men were in Vranje.¹⁰¹

By the end of 1906, the Serbian terrorists were in a dominant position in the *kazas* of Preşova (Prechovo), Kumanova, Köprülü, Palanka, and the western slope of Morihovo Mountain as far as Ohri. According to German ambassador in Belgrade, there were around thirty Serbian bands, each consisted of twenty men, in Macedonia in February 1906.¹⁰² In 1907-1908 Serbs were successful in Kosovo and were active in the northern part of Manastır. In this period, the material and financial means¹⁰³ of the Serbians also increased significantly, and this gave them an advantage over the IMRO, which forced people to contribute financially to their cause. By the end of 1907, the Serbians had strengthened their grip in the *kazas* named above and broadened their area of influence across Kratova and Koçana to the north and to Tikveş and Pirlpepe to the south. However, the progress of the Serbian movement was still limited comparing that of the IMRO or the Greek one.

As Adanır summarises, the Serbian movement was organised as follows:¹⁰⁴ a 'High Committee' or 'Central Committee' was dealing with the recruitment and formation of bands, with its centre in Belgrade. Its president was Milorad Popovitch,

⁹⁹ Lange-Akhund, p. 221.

¹⁰⁰ Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*, pp. 239-240.

¹⁰¹ Çetin, p. 90.

¹⁰² Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*, p. 242.

¹⁰³ Adanır, utilising German archives, states that Serbian Consulate's annual budget for only propaganda was exceeding 300,000 francs in the middle of the first decade of twentieth century. Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*, p. 242.

¹⁰⁴ Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*, p. 224-225.

who was also the chief of staff at the War Department. Other prominent members were colonel Rasitch and lieutenant colonel Draga.¹⁰⁵ There was a local committee in Vranja, which carried out the task of helping Serbian bands crossing the border. In Macedonia, there was an organisation similar to IMRO with “Central Committees” in Üsküb and Manastır. A network of committees was created in Kumanova, Köprülü, Ohri, Pirlepe, Kichevo, Porets, Drimko, Debre, and Kruchevo.¹⁰⁶ The Serbian committees were organised hierarchically like IMRO.

IV. Vlachs

The revolutionary actions of Vlachs in Macedonia were limited compared to the other nationalist movements. Although the Romanian (Vlach) activities were not comparable with the Greek or Bulgarian ones, there was an issue of Vlachs in Macedonia as a factor of unrest that contributed to the deterioration of the situation in Macedonia. Romania was the defender of Vlachs of Macedonia. Romania had no territorial claims because of the non-existence of any common frontier with the region. The Romanian government strove to get recognised the existence of a Vlach nationality in Macedonia, and the Romanian influence over them. On the other hand, Athens was utterly against the Romanian movement. The Greeks considered the Vlachs as Greeks already. Any success of the Romanian propaganda would weaken the Greek position in Macedonia. Thus, the main enemy of the Vlachs were the Greeks.

¹⁰⁵ Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*, p. 241.

¹⁰⁶ Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu*, p. 241.

Between 1904-1905, the Romanian government convinced the Sublime Porte to recognise the existence and the rights of the Romanian community. In May 1905, an *irade* was issued “carrying recognition of the equality among the Christian nationalities of European Turkey of all Vlachs of the Ottoman Empire, which will exercise their rights, especially using their language in churches and schools, appointing *moukhtars* in their communities and being represented in the council of their vilayet”.¹⁰⁷ In general, the Ottomans were not as much against the Vlachs, who did not have separatist aspirations, as they were against the other nationalist groups. For example, The Governor of Manastır, Reşit Bey, was known as favouring the Vlachs in accordance with the instructions of the Sublime Porte.¹⁰⁸

Vlachs lived a pastoral life in general, between the Pindus Mountains and the Gevgeli region. Yet, there were settled Vlach groups in towns like Manastır¹⁰⁹, Seres, Kavala, Drama, and Köprülü, engaged in artisanship by and large. However, especially some of these urban settled Vlachs were to some extent assimilated to the Greeks. Nevertheless, after the Vlach aspirations came into being, especially after 1904, increasing proportion of Vlachs pursued their national and religious goals.¹¹⁰ Confessionally, the Vlachs depended on the Patriarchate. But, the relationships with the Patriarchate were not pleasant as the Patriarch banned the usage of Romanian language during religious ceremonies, in 1904. Hence, the Vlachs pursued their cause mainly on religious grounds. Romanian demands from the Patriarchate were, as Lange-Akhund notes:

Creation of Vlacho-Orthodox independent communities recognised by the Patriarch; the Vlacho-Orthodox communities may hire priests, arch-priests, and archimandrites; liberty of saying the mass in Romanian; to

¹⁰⁷ Lange-Akhund, p. 229.

¹⁰⁸ Uzer, p. 204. On the other hand, there were also some characters like the vali of Yanya, who was favouring the Greeks against the Vlachs; Tokay, p. 68.

¹⁰⁹ See Gounaris, ‘From Peasants into Urbanities’.

¹¹⁰ Brailsford, pp. 181-190.

facilitate the relations between Patriarchate and Vlachs, designate an ecclesiastic representative who will be the interpreter of their wishes¹¹¹.

The Patriarch rejected all these wishes.

As pointed out above, Vlachs were strongly opposed by the Greeks. Greece broke off its diplomatic relations with Romania in June 1906.¹¹² On the field, Greek bands were the main enemies of the Vlachs that pursued a national cause in some way or another. Vlach villages were systematically attacked and burned, and Vlachs were targets of many murders. Furthermore, as the religious demands of Vlachs were not recognised by the Patriarchate, there were always disputes over religious matters. For example, when the Greek Metropolitan of Monastir did not let Vlachs to hold the death ceremony for their deceased in their own language and by their own priest, tensions aroused considerably in Monastir in 1905. This was a widespread source of dispute. In the end, separate cemeteries were designated for Vlachs by local authorities.¹¹³ As a result, the Vlachs began to help the *comitadjis* of IMRO or Bulgaria by supplying information or food. In August 1906 the first Vlach gangs were noted by the Austrians.¹¹⁴ After 1907, the relations between the IMRO and Vlachs were strengthened. Nevertheless, there was presence of Vlachs in the Greek bands, as well.¹¹⁵

V. Reforms

Article 23 of the Berlin Treaty was promising for reforms and regulations for Macedonia similar to those in Crete. As at the beginning of the century the situation

¹¹¹ Lange-Akhund, p. 228.

¹¹² F. R. Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo* (London: Routledge & Keagan, 1972), p. 280.

¹¹³ Uzer, p. 204.

¹¹⁴ Documents 216-217 in *Austro-Hungarian Documents*.

¹¹⁵ Gounaris, 'From Peasants into Urbanities', pp. 45-46; Tokay, p. 68.

in Macedonia had been deteriorated, the signatory powers of Berlin pressured the Ottomans to make 'reforms' in Macedonia. Shaw states that the powers were hoping that this might satisfy the terrorists and induce them to stop terror¹¹⁶. In reponse, some reform schemes were proposed by Istanbul.

Abdülhamit issued an *irade* in 12 December 1902 that promised reforms in the European provinces of the Empire. This was to some extent an outcome of the pressure exerted by Austria and Russia. The text contained 18 articles arranged in four chapters regarding administration, justice, instruction, and public works. Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa¹¹⁷, the former governor of Yemen, was appointed Inspector-General of the three *vilayets* Selanik, Üsküp and Manastır, which was organised as a new province. The regulation of this new province was to be determined by a special Rumeli Provinces Reform Commission on the basis of investigations conducted by Hilmi Paşa. He was put in charge of instituting the reforms and removing incompetent officials, including the *valis*.

However, since December 1902, the Great Powers had attempted to establish a common basis of negotiations so as to present to Abdülhamit a program that was better and more solid in their view than the issued document. As a result, in 21 February 1903, an Austro-Russian project was presented to Istanbul. This project was swiftly accepted without any reservations as the so-called 'Viennese plan' merely completed the reforms of December 1902.¹¹⁸

According to the Vienna scheme, a general inspector was to be appointed to Macedonia for a three-year term and could not be recalled without the agreement of the two Powers, Austria and Russia. The *valis* must obey rigorously to his

¹¹⁶ Shaw and Shaw, p. 209.

¹¹⁷ For Hüseyin Hilmi see *Meşhur Valiler*, ed. by Harun Orhun and others ([Ankara]: İçişleri Bakanlığı Merkez Valileri Bürosu, 1969), pp. 133-140.

¹¹⁸ See Dakin, pp. 86-91.

instructions. If necessary, he might call in the army without any responsibility of consulting with the Sublime Port. The police and gendarmerie were to be established with foreign assistance. The gendarmerie force was to be composed of Christians and Muslims in proportion with the constitution of the local population. Hence, the rural guards would be Christians, where the bulk of population was Christian. A budget of incomes and expenses was raised in each *vilayet*. The provincial collections would be assigned to local administration. An amnesty was granted to all political defendants or convicts.¹¹⁹

The announcement of these new reforms did not create a positive reaction in the region. Bulgaria and Serbia were not content at all. Moreover, turmoil reigned the Albanian populated regions, as Albanians sternly opposed these reforms¹²⁰. Hence, Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa had to be preoccupied with the Albanian turmoil and this caused him not to implement the reforms in due course.

The Ilinden uprising and its aftermath induced the Great Powers to contemplate and demand a more extensive program of reforms. In 30 September 1903, Franz Joseph and Nicholas II met in Mürzteg, and decided on a new plan of reforms, which acknowledged their involvement in the adjustment of Macedonian question. The text of nine articles was presented to the Porte in 22 October 1903 and accepted in 25th November. According to the Mürzteg program:¹²¹ 1) Two civil agents, one Austrian and one Russian, were to be attached to the Inspector-General, Hilmi Paşa. 2) The task of reorganising the Ottoman gendarmerie was to be entrusted to a general of foreign nationality in the service of the Ottoman government. To him were to be attached military officers and, if thought necessary,

¹¹⁹ The immediate result of the amnesty was the influx of new forces to the insurgent groups of the Ilinden uprising says the French diplomat Steeg; see Lange-Akhund, p. 138.

¹²⁰ See Nuray Bozboru, *Osmanlı Yönetiminde Arnavutluk ve Arnavut Ulusçuluğunun Gelişimi* ([İstanbul]: Boyut Yayın Grubu, 1997), pp. 241-252.

¹²¹ Dakin, pp. 114-115; Lange-Akhund, pp. 142-144.

assistant officers and non-commissioned officers. Zones were to be allotted to the officers of each of the Great Powers. 3) As soon as an appeasement of the country will be noted, the Ottoman government will be asked for a modification in the administrative division of the territory in view of a more regular grouping of different nationalities. 4) The administrative and judicial institutions were to be reorganised. Christians were to be admitted to them and the development of local autonomy was to be fostered. 5) Mixed committees were to be established in the principal centres of the vilayets to enquire into political and other crimes. Consular representatives of Austria and Russia were to have a place on these committees. 6) Due financial precautions were to be put into effect for the harmed and affected Christians. 7) Christian villages burned by Turkish troops and Bashibazouks were to be freed for one year from all taxation. 8) The implementation of the Vienna reform scheme. 9) The *ilaves* (second-class *redifs* or reservists) were to be disbanded and bands of Bashibazouks were to be prohibited.

Graves, the British Consul in Salonica in the period of 1903-1909, remarks the reform deliberations and schemes in his memoirs as follows: 'the statesmen of the rival powers whose interests were most involved were anxiously seeking, not a solution, for that was an impossibility by peaceful methods, but some form of compromise which might postpone indefinitely the arbitrament of the sword'.¹²²

Hasan Fehmi Paşa, the vali of Selanik, is said to have commented on the reform scheme: 'rather than humiliate us in this way, it would be worth inciting us simply to evacuate Macedonia'.¹²³

After long debates, the zones of each Great Power, mentioned in the article 2, for the reorganisation of the Gendarmerie, was determined in spring 1904.

¹²² Sir Robert Graves, *Storm Centres of the Near East* (London: Hutchinson, 1933), p. 200.

¹²³ Lange-Akhund, p. 144.

Accordingly the sancak of Üsküb was given under the supervision of Austria; Seres, to France; Drama, to Britain; Manastır, to Italy; and Selanik, to Russia. Germany did not take part in this effort by its own will.

With the agreement of Münzteg, the three vilayets became the object of the attention of six powers: Austria-Hungary and Russia, which preserved supervision rights with priority but were still forced to admit the intervention of France, Britain, Italy, and Germany. Internally, article 3 had very important conclusions. It was perceived by the rival nationalisms as a ground to enforce their respective causes. Hence, after the Münzteg agreements Bulgarian current more actively associated and cooperated with the Exarchate, as the adherents of the Exarchate were accepted Bulgarian, and of the Patriarchate, Greek. As a result, although the Münzteg program produced some positive results, it also spurred the nationalist terror in Macedonia.

The Issue of Financial Reform¹²⁴

In 17 January 1905, the Austrian and Russian ambassadors presented Tevfik Paşa, the minister of foreign affairs, the project of financial reform for the three *vilayets*. The idea of the project was to place all revenue under the supervision of the general inspector and the civil agents. The agencies of the Ottoman Imperial Bank (OIB) in Selanik, Üsküb, and Manastır would act as general paying treasurer and would be responsible for public expenses. A general budget would be prepared for each *vilayet* along with a separate budget for each *sancak* and *kaza*. Every budget would become definitive after being submitted to the general inspector, OIB, and the powers. The imperial bank would submit the nominations for financial inspectors that would be Ottoman citizens for the approval of the general inspector.

¹²⁴ Çetin, pp. 81-82, Lange-Akhund, pp. 290-299, Tokay, pp. 100-105, Financial "Reglement".

The Sublime Porte did not react to the project but instead announced its intention of creating resources to meet the financial burden created by the events in Macedonia, and by the implementation of reforms. In effect, the Porte demanded an increase in the customs duties from 8% to 11%¹²⁵.

Austria and Russia accepted the demand on the condition of activation of the financial reform project that was prepared earlier. In response, the Ottomans created their own project, which was by and large in accordance with the Austro-Russian project except for establishing financial inspectors charged with the rigorous application of regulations. Abdülhamit viewed the control implied by the financial reform in Macedonia as a violation of his sovereign rights. In reply Austria and Russia accepted the Ottoman project on the condition that the governments of Germany, England, France, and Italy name four financial delegates, who will act in harmony with the general inspector and civil agents. Thus, a commission was to be formed that would also supervise taxation, and, it would name an inspector for each *vilayet*, who would be charged with overseeing the tax collectors.

Between May and November, the Ottoman government continuously refused the project. At the end, in 26 November an international fleet that consisted of warships of France, Italy, Austria, Russia, and Britain seized first the isle of Midilli, then 5 December, it captured the customs offices at Limni.¹²⁶ After that, following a few days of negotiations the Ottoman government accepted the nomination of a financial commission for two years. Then, late in December, the international fleet withdrew from Lemnos and Midilli. The international commission for financial control of Macedonia gathered officially for the first time in 23 December 1905. The Great Powers, who were uncompromising in the issue of financial reform, were not

¹²⁵ Shaw and Shaw, p. 211.

¹²⁶ Shaw, p. 211.

hasty at all in its implementation by allowing the 3 % increase of the customs duties. Only in 25 April 1907, the customs duties could be increased by 3 %.

The most important result of the creation of financial commission was that, from then on, Austria and Russia did not have the exclusive control in directing the Macedonian question, as France, Britain, Italy, and Germany had representatives in a permanent institution and rights in Macedonian affairs.

The Issue of Judicial Reform¹²⁷

The prospect of judicial reform was existent in the fourth article of the Mürzteg program. Towards the end of 1906 the Sublime Porte created a commission that would examine the condition of the judicial organisation and, accordingly put into effect the necessary measures. Esat Efendi and Hamit Bey were sent to Macedonia to examine the judicial situation. They prepared a report. Then a project was developed by the government, which surprised the Great Powers as it was beyond their expectations. According to the project, Christians, who fulfil certain criterion, could become judges. For that end, a law school was to be opened in Selanik. The wages of the judicial officials would be improved so as to prevent bribery. One Christian and one Muslim inspector would be appointed in Macedonia.

The Great Powers were not unanimously demanding a particular reform scheme in the judicial area. The most unrelenting power that demanded judicial reform was Britain. Although various schemes were presented to the Sublime Porte until 1908, Abdülhamit was not so anxious to put them into effect. On the other hand, Austria and Germany refused to pressurise the Ottoman government for judicial reforms.

¹²⁷ Çetin, pp. 82-83, Tokay, pp. 100-105, Lange-Akhund, pp. 300-309.

To sum up, the judicial reform was not implemented because of the divergence of opinion among the Great Powers and of the resistance of Abdülhamit.

Finally, the king of Great Britain and the tsar of Russia met at Reval in Estonia on 9 June 1908, to arrange an alliance against Germany. As part of the program to settle all the differences between each other, they agreed that the governor of Macedonia would be an Ottoman subject and ought to be appointed only with the agreement of the powers and that he should be aided by a large staff of European administrators, who would be paid from the provincial revenues.¹²⁸ However, this scheme could never progress as the Young Turk revolution broke out in late summer in 1908.

Comments

During the first decade of the twentieth century, especially until 1908 revolution, terror and chaos reigned in Macedonia. This turmoil was political in essence. Devotees of different nationalist claims endeavoured to dominate in Macedonia, and render their opponents submissive and ineffective. A blatant atmosphere of insecurity was prevailing in Macedonia as murders, burnings, kidnappings, threats, all sorts of violence were available. Furthermore, after sometime this situation creates a vicious cycle naturally, as people who had some sort of reason for revenge increased, given the lack of inefficient administration, which lacked necessary means to handle the situation and always had to reckon what the Great Powers would say. Moreover, the Ottoman administration was blamed for everything the terrorists did.

¹²⁸ Shaw and Shaw, p. 211.

The Great Powers, on the other hand, pressured Istanbul to make 'reforms' in Macedonia, hoping this might stop the chaos. However, they requested for reforms as long as their interests remained intact. One good example of this situation is presented in the section of financial reform. The power, aspiring reforms provided that their own interests were not involved, agreed on the 3% raise in customs duties demand of the Ottomans so as to secure the populace of Macedonia from an additional tax burden only after they gained some additional commercial concessions elsewhere¹²⁹. Hence, the Powers followed a hesitant and hypocritical policy vis-à-vis the Ottoman Empire and Macedonian issue.

On the other hand, the reforms that were implemented could not ease the state of affairs in Macedonia. It could satisfy neither the terrorists nor the irredentist circles in the Balkan states. As the reforms were viewed as concessions by the terrorists as well as some elements of the administration, they worsened the situation. Besides, the annexation of East Rumelia by Bulgaria had set a dangerous precedent. The third article of the Mürzteg agreement was particularly effective in accelerating the chaos, and added a extended dimension to the struggle in Macedonia as the Exarchate and the Patriarchate involved more actively afterwards.

¹²⁹ Shaw notes that the British gained an extension of the concession for the İzmir-Aydın railroad until 1940, while the Germans acquired an addition to the guarantee money paid by the Ottomans to their bankers for the Anatolian railroad. Shaw and Shaw, p. 211.

CHAPTER FOUR

FLORİNA 1906

The war in Macedonia was at its peak in 1906¹. It was also a decisive year in the conflict between the Greek and Bulgarian bands. This chapter examines the situation in the *kaza* of Florina during the year by focusing on the activities of the Greek and Bulgarian bands in Florina in 1906. I will attempt to evaluate the local developments within the context of the course of events at imperial level in the light of official documents produced by Rumeli Inspectorship², on Florina in this particular year. Some published Austro-Hungarian documents will also be referred to in related sections. Moreover, an interesting report written by the *kaimmakam* of Florina, Tahsin Bey, on land and property purchases by Christians is particularly scrutinised in a separate section.

I. Florina

Florina was one of the fifteen *kazas* (subdistricts) of the Manastır *vilayet* (province).

It was in the *sancak* (district) of Manastır. The town of Florina was 30 km south of

¹ According to Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa's records there occurred between troops and Bulgarian bands 56, Greek bands 32, and Serbian bands 10 skirmishes, in which 530 persons died. In 1907 there occurred in between troops and Bulgarian bands 46, Greek bands 24, Serbian bands 9 skirmishes, in which 435 persons died. İlkin-Tekeli, p. 371.

² Rumeli Müfettişliği Evrakı

Manastır, which constituted a six hours distance, situated at the east side of the Mount Nareçka³. A brook is passing through right in the middle of the town, running into Karasu River, which joins eventually to Vardar River. According to Şemsettin Sami's *Kamusü'l-Alam*, the town had a population of ten thousand. In the central town of Florina, there were seven mosques, two *tekkes*, one *medrese*, one *rüşdiye* with forty-three students and two instructors in 1898-99. In 1903 the number of the students increased to eighty, while the number of instructors remained the same⁴. In this year, we see one *ibtidaiye*, five Muslim, two Greek schools and one Bulgarian school for *sıbyan*, two churches, three hundred shops, nineteen *hans* (inn), and one *hamam* in Florina.

The *kaza* of Florina was bordered by Manastır central *kaza* and the *kaza* of Pirlpe in the north, Morihova *nahiye* of Pirlpe in the east, Kayalar *kaza* in the south, and Kesriye *kaza* in the west. Three *nahiyes* were attached to Florina *kaza*. These were Rodnik (Soroviç), in the east southwest, Noska in the south, and Veştoran in the north. There were eighteen villages in Rodnik, ten in Noska, and twenty in Veştoran⁵. Twenty villages were attached to Florina itself. Soroviç was at eleven hours distance from the *vilayet* centre, Manastır, and Noska was twelve hours away from the centre.

According to the figures from Ottoman general census of 1881/83 – 1893 total population of the *kaza* of Filorina was 43,379, of which 12,863 were Muslims, and 30,516 were non-Muslims with 3,354 of them being Catholics⁶. The Christians were Albanians, Vlachs, Greeks, and Bulgarians. Another official statistics, which

³ Ş. Sami, *Kamusü'l-alam*, 6 vols (Istanbul: Maarif Nezareti, 1306-1316; repr. Ankara: Kaşgar Neşriyat, 1996), V (1314), 3434.

⁴ Mucize Ünlü (Sarı), 'Manastır Vilayeti'nin İdari ve Sosyal Yapısı (1873-1912)' (Unpublished master's Thesis, On dokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi, 1996), pp. 160-161.

⁵ Veştoran was made a *nahiye* in 1905. Ünlü, p. 60.

⁶ Kemal H. Karpat, 'Ottoman Population Records and the Census of 1881/82-1893', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 9 (1978), 237-274 (p. 272); Karpat, *Ottoman Population*, p. 144.

did not particularly segregate any religious or national groups, show that the total population was 46,641 souls in 1896-97. Although we do not have the particular statistics for Florina for the year 1906, it might be safe to propose that there did not occur any major shifts in population figures as we have statistics of Manastır *sancak* that reveal no great changes. There were thirty-five mosques and forty-five churches in the whole *kaza* in 1887-88; ten of these mosques and ten of these churches were in the *nahiye* of Soroviç⁷.

Although the land is rough in Florina, it is still productive, says Şemsettin Sami, and he states that as in the rest of Macedonia, the economic activity was principally of agricultural nature. The major products were wheat, barley, rye, corn, bean, millet, and chickpea. The melons of Florina were also famous. There were four small lakes in the Florina *kaza*⁸.

The *kaimmakam* of Florina was Tahsin Bey⁹ for the most part of the year 1906¹⁰. He was an experienced official¹¹. Before appointed to Florina, he had been in Pürsıçan, Çiç, and Alnus as *nahiye müdürü*, and was appointed to Razlık in 1902 as *kaimmakam*. Thus, he was holding a critical position right in the heart of the Ilinden Uprising. After Razlık, he was the *kaimmakam* of Gevgili between 1904 and 1906. He started his new duty in Florina on 17 February 1321/2 March 1906¹². He held the office until 4 March 1324/17 March 1906. It seems that he was an energetic official who tried to do his best. There are plenty of occasions in which he

⁷ Ünlü, p. 106.

⁸ Şemseddin Sami, *Kamusü'l-Âlam*, 3434.

⁹ Hasan Tahsin Uzer.

¹⁰ He was appointed on 2 March 1906.

¹¹ His memoir is an invaluable source for the subject.

¹² A certain Refet was the *kaimmakam* before him. He did not have any significant deed in the documents.

personally joined the platoons in band chasing, and he was at the scene of skirmish in the Battle of Īstrebne right from the beginning¹³.

Florina had always been a hotbed for Bulgarian bands. It was one of the eight military regions fixed by IMRO. A school was created in Florina by Marko Lerinski in 1900 or 1901, so as to train the *voyvodas*, i.e., the band leaders¹⁴. Florina was also one of the districts, where major battles of 1903 Ilinden-Preobrazhenski Uprising were fought. Perry states that there is abundant data concerning band attacks in Florina region¹⁵. After the appearance of Greek bands in 1904, Florina became a major battleground for the Greek and Bulgarian bands. These two camps were still present in 1906, while there was no sign of Serbian or Vlach bands in this region.

II. Bulgarian activities in Florina in 1906¹⁶

Bulgarian movement had lost the power it had enjoyed before the Ilinden uprising. IMRO and Bulgarian bands had been continuously losing ground and forced into defensive vis-à-vis to rival nationalist bands. The two major reasons of this situation, as shown in the previous chapters, was firstly the inclusion of Greek and Serbian bands, which were hostile to the idea of autonomy that was being championed by IMRO and the Bulgarians. The second cause was the internal divisions in IMRO that led to formations of rival fractions, which were bitterly

¹³ See related section below.

¹⁴ Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, p. 158.

¹⁵ *ibid*, p. 139.

¹⁶ In this section, the bands which were closer to Bulgarian cause or Macedonian cause will not be differentiated because the documents do not contain any such segregation. In the documents only 'Bulgarian bands' appear. Thus, these bands are referred to as 'Bulgarian bands' here, as well.

hostile to each other. Moreover, Ottoman troops and officers had gained quite a deal of experience in guerrilla warfare¹⁷, and were hostile above all to Bulgarians¹⁸.

Nevertheless, in 1906, the Bulgarian movement and IMRO were still active in Macedonia, although they did not enjoy the advantage of being the sole active group in the field. Bands were still roaming the villages, and occasional skirmishes occurred between the Bulgarian and Greek bands.

The documents of Rumeli Inspectorship, which had come from or sent to the *kaza* of Florina, show that Bulgarians were fairly active in the *kaza* in 1906. Apart from recording actual events, these documents also give hints on the nature and characteristics of the Bulgarian movement. They also let the researcher learn about the most active bands and their leaders.

In 1906, the bands that were wandering in the *kaza* generally consisted of small numbers of fighters, except for two occasions. A telegram from the *kaimmakam* of Filorina Tahsin, addressed to the Inspector General, dated 28 April 1906, informs that Dedo Koço from 'Bulgarian bandits', came to the village of Armenceka¹⁹ in the company of his nine men, and stabbed to death the villager Resto Tome from the Greek *millet*, who was ploughing his field near the village²⁰. Again another telegram from *kaimmakam* Tahsin, dated 5 May 1906, informs that four Bulgarian bandsmen killed Mašo, Yane, and Vasil of the village Nefvan, all from Greek *millet*, while they were working in their fields outside the village²¹. Three of the Bulgarians were disguised as Albanians, and the other was wearing gendarme cavalry uniform. On another occasion, in 16 September 1906, a Bulgarian

¹⁷ For example, there were small platoons stationed in villages. Moreover, the troops were now patrolling the field day and night, and were ambushing the terrorists.

¹⁸ This led, according to some authors such as Lange-Akhund, Dakin, İrtəm, Ottomans to tolerate particularly Greeks.

¹⁹ Armensko; right south of the town Florina.

²⁰ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (hereafter BOA.) Rumeli Müfettişliği Manastır Evrakı (hereafter TFR.1.MN), 91/9097, 1324.3.4 (25 April 1906).

²¹ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 93/9205, 1324.3.16 (10 May 1906).

band of six killed twenty years old İstefo Miçe from the village Setne, a village which returned to Patriarchate after several years of being adherent to the Exarchate.²² This time, the band had to escape because the villagers defended themselves, and the troops were swift in coming after them. Apart from certain disadvantages that the Bulgarian bands possessed against Greek bands which generally consisted of big numbers, small units had certain advantages. They could be mobilised more easily, and it was easier for them to disappear in cases of emergency. One example of that is evident in the telegram of *kaimmakam* Tahsin dated 1 July 1906, which informs the Inspector General that a band of six under the order of Zorle of Baniçe had survived the ambush of Ottoman soldiers around the village of Leskofça, by splitting into two groups of three, while leaving their horses and donkeys²³. Nevertheless, there were occasions when bigger numbered Bulgarian bands operated. For instance, in 4 January 1906, a Bulgarian band of forty to fifty went to the Greek monastery, which was half an hour away from the Pisoder village, and did beat five men from the monastery and a woman heavily, and burned most of the monastery²⁴. Ottoman troops chased them afterwards but they were unsuccessful. On another incident, a Bulgarian band of sixty men attacked a Patriarchist village, which had been Exarchist before, on 16 September Sunday afternoon. All the same, it appears that Bulgarian bands generally preferred small bands in Florina, as many other examples confirm this situation²⁵.

The Bulgarians bands that were active in Filorina region in the year 1906 in general consisted of native locals. Not only ordinary bandsmen but also the

²² BOA. TFR.1.MN, 105/10405, 1324.7.27 (16 September 1906).

²³ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 97/9683, 1324.5.9 (2 July 1906).

²⁴ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 82/8154, 1323.11.9 (4 January 1906).

²⁵ For example, BOA. TFR.1.MN, 105/10441, 1324.8.1 (20 September 1906); BOA. TFR.1.MN, 105/10457, 1324.8.3 (22 September 1906); BOA. TFR.1.MN, 112/11136, 1324.11.2 (18 December 1906).

bandleaders were from villages of Macedonia. For example, Dedo Koço, who was the most active bandleader at the time, was from Zelnic village of Florina. Another prominent figure of the region was Luka, who, according to the *tahrirat* which was sent to the Inspector General by *kaimmakam* Tahsin²⁶, had been active in Vodina region and now gone to Kesriye, was originally from the village Mahzik(?) -i Balçe of the Razlık *kaza*. Luka was previously the director of the Bulgarian schools in Siroz²⁷, then in Cuma-i Bala, where he was arrested and imprisoned for some time. He is an example of a typical IMRO activist, who is portrayed in the previous chapter. He was educated, a native of Macedonia, and linked to the Bulgarian schooling system in Macedonia. Zorle, mentioned above, was also from Baniçe, Gevgili. Another native bandleader was Naydo from Gorinçova. On the single skirmish that occurred between his band and the Ottoman troops, his band had one casualty, and that was Reste Vasil from the Cegan village of Filorina²⁸. Another Bulgarian band, whose identity was unknown to the authorities, was originally Köprülü (Veles), and consisted of four members, one of whom was from Buf village²⁹. The Ottoman forces around the same village killed the son of the muhtar of Zaberdan village of Filorina, Apostol, on 23 February, who joined Bulgarian bands. Another Bulgarian bandleader, Miçe Şişkof, was from Ekşisu³⁰. It is however not safe to claim that all these bands had no connection with Bulgaria. A minute of Florina *kaimmakam*, dated 11 September 1906, informs the Inspectorship that a band under the leadership of İstoyan came from Bulgaria and entered Florina a week ago³¹. Moreover, plenty of intelligence came to the inspectorship about bands being

²⁶ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 95/9449, 1324.4.12 (5 June 1906).

²⁷ Seres, in Thessalonica.

²⁸ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 109/10842, 1324.9.24 (11 November 1906).

²⁹ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 112/11136, 1324.11.2 (18 December 1906).

³⁰ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 108/10746, 1324.9.11 (29 October 1906).

³¹ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 104/10357, 1324.7.22 (11 September 1906).

organised in Bulgaria³². Ottoman commissariat in Bulgaria was the office to confirm the intelligence. On one particular occasion, recorded in the documents of Rumeli Inspectorship, a minute of the Commissariat contains information on prominent bandleaders that were present in Bulgaria at the time. Amongst them, there were persons who had their brothers or wives and children killed by the Greek bands. These bandsmen all originated from Macedonia³³. Yet, the *kaimmakam* of Filorina informed the inspectorship in his telegram dated 25 October 1906, that one of his trustworthy informers informed him that a band of nineteen had entered Florina region the previous night, which consisted solely of men from Bulgaria³⁴.

As noted earlier, after 1903 Bulgarian activities were directed not only against Ottoman forces, as had been mostly the case prior to the Ilinden uprising, but also to rival nationals and the adherents of the Patriarchate³⁵. Hence, not only armed bands of Greek or Serbian origins but ordinary peasants who refused to accept the Exarchate as the supreme religious authority were the target. This general situation was no different in Filorina. Bulgarian bands were frequently conducting murders outside or inside the villages. The first murder that was conducted by a Bulgarian band in Florina in 1906 occurred in the night of 18 February 1906 around two o'clock. The army squad that was stationed in the village Nert heard gun shots from the direction of the area where the church was located. When they got there, they found a woman from the Greek *millet* shot and stabbed to death, and left hanging on a tree near the church gate³⁶. On 9 May 1906, a Bulgarian band killed three from

³² *ibid.*

³³ *ibid.*

³⁴ 'Sırf Bulgaristanlı'. BOA. TFR.1.MN, 108/10713, 1324.9.7 (25 October 1906).

³⁵ See Chapter Three.

³⁶ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 85/8459, 1323.12.24 (18 February 1906)

the Greek *millet* in Nafvan village, who were working at their fields³⁷. On 4 September 1906, Lame, son of Miçe, from the Greek nation was killed by the Dedo Koço band in the forest, which was an hour away from his village Nolyan-i Bala, while he was cutting some wood. The Greek priest of Nert and his three companions were killed by the Bulgarians in 10 September 1906³⁸. A note, signed 'Revolutionary Bands of Kesriye', was left at the scene of murder which said that those who were killed were the 'enemies of the Bulgarian nation' and that was why they were 'punished'. It was also noted that the degree of violence used in their murders was in accordance with the graveness of the 'crimes they had conducted against the Bulgarian nation and its saviour, the committee'³⁹. To sum up, according to the documents of Rumeli Inspectorship, there are twelve verified murders of members of the Greek *millet* by Bulgarian terrorists in Florina throughout the year 1906⁴⁰.

Bulgarian community in Florina was not exempt from Bulgarian terror, either. Eight Bulgarians were murdered by Bulgarian bands in 1906⁴¹. The inspectorship was informed on 15 May 1906 that, after a siege conducted by the troops to the village Tarsiye to capture Dedo Koço, it was found out that not only the terrorist did escape but he also killed a villager named Mitre Petre right outside the village⁴². Dedo Koço killed a Bulgarian woman at the pastures of the village

³⁷ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 92/9197, 1324.3.15 (9 May 1906); BOA. TFR.1.MN, 93/9205, 1324.3.16 (10 May 1906).

³⁸ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 104/10339, 1324.7.21 (10 September 1906).

³⁹ *ibid.*

⁴⁰ See BOA. TFR.1.MN, 85/8459, 1323.12.24 (18 February 1906); BOA. TFR.1.MN, 99/9811, 1324.5.25 (18 July 1906); BOA. TFR.1.MN, 91/9097, 1324.3.4 (25 April 1906); BOA. TFR.1.MN, 92/9197, 1324.3.15 (9 May 1906); BOA. TFR.1.MN, 93/9205, 1324.3.16 (10 May 1906); BOA. TFR.1.MN, 103/10277, 1324.7.15 (4 September 1906); BOA. TFR.1.MN, 104/10339, 1324.7.21 (10 September 1906); BOA. TFR.1.MN, 105/10405, 1324.7.27 (16 September 1906).

⁴¹ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 93/9246, 1324.3.21 (15 May 1906); BOA. TFR.1.MN, 95/9411, 1324.4.9 (2 June 1906); BOA. TFR.1.MN, 101/10012, 1324.6.16 (7 August 1906); BOA. TFR.1.MN, 105/10441, 1324.8.1 (20 September 1906); BOA. TFR.1.MN, 105/10457, 1324.8.3 (22 September 1906); BOA. TFR.1.MN, 106/10595, 1324.8.21 (10 October 1906).

⁴² BOA. TFR.1.MN, 93/9246, 1324.3.21 (15 May 1906).

Tarsiye for an unknown reason in 8 August 1906⁴³. After midnight of 20 September, a Bulgarian band of four entered Kalnik-i Bala village and burned Tole Niko's hayloft, shot death Kote Tase with rifle in his household, and cut to death İlo Şiko after dragging him outside the village⁴⁴. All these three were members of the Bulgarian *millet*. Similarly, Kota son of Lazor from the Sakilova village was killed by the Naçe band outside his village on 2 October⁴⁵. A note was left on his dead body, saying he was a spy of the Ottoman authorities, and that is what happens to spies. A telegram by the governor of Manastır, dated 2 June 1906, tells that two days earlier a Bulgarian band entered the Setne village, which had a completely Bulgarian population, and killed three among the villagers⁴⁶. The governor Hazım states that the reason of this deed was that the Bulgarian villagers, who were tired and sick of Bulgarian bands and their demands, had decided to cooperate with the authorities, and defend their villages against the Bulgarian bands. The population of Setne village appealed to the authorities on 13 September to adhere back to the Patriarchate⁴⁷. This, and many other examples are signs of loss of support among the native population. An example of lack of discipline is also present in the documents. The bandleader Dedo Koço and his two men got into argument which eventually resulted in bad blood between the leader and the men. The reason was that the two men heavily criticised Koço about his womanising activities and his low morals in those issues. The argument went on and, at the end, the two men tried to kill Koço but he escaped. Instead, they killed one of Koço's lovers in the village Tarsiye⁴⁸. Later on, as we learn from Tahsin Uzer's memoirs, this Koço was killed by the

⁴³ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 101/10012, 1324.6.16 (7 August 1906).

⁴⁴ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 105/10441, 1324.8.1 (20 September 1906); BOA. TFR.1.MN, 105/10457, 1324.8.3 (22 September 1906).

⁴⁵ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 106/10595, 1324.8.21 (10 October 1906).

⁴⁶ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 95/9411, 1324.4.9 (2 June 1906). This Setne village later on appealed to the authorities to adhere back to the Patriarchate.

⁴⁷ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 105/10422, 1324.7.29 (18 September 1906).

⁴⁸ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 113/11201, 1324.11.9 (25 December 1906).

Ottoman forces led by the writer of the memoirs in Lopudur village, 'in the arms of his lover poetically'⁴⁹.

As Muslims were not the main targets of the Bulgarian terrorists, there are only two Muslims killed by Bulgarians in the year 1906, in Filorina. Three deserters were caught in an ambush of Bulgarians on the road of Zagoric, around Prekopian, on 1 October. One of them was killed at the skirmish⁵⁰. The other Muslim was Ömer son of Halil, from the Katip Ali quarter of Filorina town. While he was cutting wood at Tarsiye Mountain, Dedo Koço and his band killed him on the grounds that he informed the officials about the band's whereabouts. Dedo Koço also threatened the Muslims of the Nolyan in a letter dated 24 August. In the letter he says that the real target of the Committee is not Muslims but Greeks. However, he says, Muslim *Agas* (big land owners) of Nolyan consistently supported Greek bands and were openly hostile to Bulgarians. He threatens that if the Muslims will not stop these sorts of activities, he will bomb and burn their houses⁵¹.

The casualties of the Bulgarian bands were limited compared to the casualties they inflicted on the population. Only three bandsmen were captured dead by the authorities. Although on every occasion of Bulgarian activity, troops chased the bands, it cannot be said that they were successful, as the results were limited. Still, on one occasion, the platoon under the command of Receb Ağa killed Resto Naum on 2 July, who was the murderer of the Greek woman being killed ferociously in Nert in February. Along with Naum, there were documents and letters and a code key, which must have been of utmost value to the authorities as they contained plenty of information⁵². Apostol and Miçe Şişkof were the other

⁴⁹ Uzer, pp. 197-198.

⁵⁰ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 106/10540, 1324.8.13 (2 October 1906).

⁵¹ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 107/10685, 1324.9.3 (21 October 1906).

⁵² BOA. TFR.1.MN, 99/9811, 1324.5.25 (18 July 1906).

Bulgarian bandsmen that were captured by the authorities⁵³. On the other hand, Greek bands inflicted heavier casualties on Bulgarian bands. One instance was a skirmish between Greek and Bulgarian bands that occurred on 8 August at Kaymakçalan. The band of Tano fought that night against a Greek band, but after losing one man and having another injured, they had to escape as the hostile band outnumbered them⁵⁴. At another encounter, on 11 December, a Bulgarian band of four lost its three members⁵⁵.

III. Greek activities in Florina in 1906

As noted earlier, after the Ilinden uprising, starting in 1904, bands from Greece began to organise incursions into Macedonia. As time went by, Greek bands began to succeed over Bulgarian bands. In fact, Greek bands were quite active in Western Macedonia. Florina was at the centre of the areas where the Greek bands most actively operated, such as the *kazas* of Kesriye and Morihova. The *kaza* was a hotbed of Greek bands, as well as Bulgarian *komitadjis*. Since 1905, a struggle of domination had been going on in Florina *kaza* between Greek and Bulgarian bands⁵⁶. The year 1906 is marked generally as a year of the decisive Greek offensive, in Macedonia as a whole. However, in Florina *kaza*, Greek bands had some serious losses.

A major difference of the Greek bands from the Bulgarian ones was that they consisted of big numbers in general. A telegram from *kaimmakam* Tahsin to Inspector General, dated 23 March 1906, informs him that a Greek band of sixty had

⁵³ See above.

⁵⁴ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 101/10018, 1324.6.17 (8 August 1906).

⁵⁵ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 112/11136, 1324.11.2 (18 December 1906).

⁵⁶ See Dakin, pp. 223-232.

been to İstrebne⁵⁷ that morning and intended to pass to Morihova *nahiye* of Pirlepe *kaza*⁵⁸. According to another telegram, on the early morning of 7 May, a ‘crowded’ Greek band attacked Leskofça⁵⁹ village and tried to set it on fire⁶⁰. However, this time a troop, which had been patrolling around, arrived more swiftly than they generally did. As a result, the band had to escape, leaving three Bulgarians killed, one injured, and eight houses burnt down. On the night of 28 June, a Greek band of more than fifty men, under the command of Captain Georgi, kidnapped four Bulgarian shepherds at Gorinçova Balkan. The following night, the band led the shepherds go as they could not escape the troops at their chase. The *kaimmakam* reports that the band would stay at Kaymakçalan district, which was situated right at the border of three *kazas*, so as to be able to operate in or break out into either one of them⁶¹. Hence, Kaymakçalan was presumably a centre of operations for bands. Another large Greek band of eighty, under the command of Makri, who was originally from Greece, was wandering around Peristeri, Rakova, and Armensko. A telegram, dated 4 August, notifies the Inspectorship that a big Greek band with more than a hundred men was at Strebeno⁶². In conclusion, unlike the Bulgarian bands, the Greek bands always consisted of large numbers. This would obviously had advantages, as large number meant more power. Yet, this situation was not risk-free at all since large number might also mean large casualties. This was exactly the case at Strebeno in 11 June⁶³.

⁵⁷ Strebeno.

⁵⁸ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 88/8747, 1324.1.27 (23 March 1906).

⁵⁹ Lechovo.

⁶⁰ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 93/9211, 1324.3.16 (10 May 1906).

⁶¹ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 97/9680, 1324.5.8 (1 July 1906).

⁶² BOA. TFR.1.MN, 100/9989, 1324.6.13 (4 August 1906).

⁶³ See below, section “Strebeno Battle”.

Dakin states, 'the continual trek around the villages and the occasional skirmishes were the essentials of the Macedonian war'⁶⁴. This was what the Greek bands were doing most of the time in Florina in 1906. The major breeding grounds of Greek bands were villages of Strebeno, Prekopan, Belkameni, Rakova, and Morihova, which was bordering Florina. The main targets of these bands were Exarchist communities. Greek bands constantly tried to keep Exarchist villages under pressure. The attack on Leskofça, on 7 May, was not completely successful for the Greek bands as they were interrupted by the Ottoman troops. On 16 May, Greeks murdered the Bulgarian village guard of the same village⁶⁵. Lieutenant General De Giorgis, who was in charge of the reorganisation of the gendarme, wrote a letter to the Inspector General Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa, dated 15 May. In his letter, he states that he has information that various Greek bands in Florina were on move with their objective being the village Buf, which was an Exarchist stronghold. This was an accurate intelligence as two weeks later a Greek band, which came from Rakova Mountain of Manastır, murdered five Bulgarians from Buf village in their cabin, located ten minutes away from the village⁶⁶. Then, they got away back to Rakova Balkan. On 4 June, a Greek band went into another Bulgarian village, Frapeştina at night and killed the village priest and two villagers, and wounded three others⁶⁷. On 12 August, a Greek band went in Soviç village, killed two villagers from Bulgarian *millet*, and kidnapped four others⁶⁸. The band came from Kaymakçalan, and went back to that direction. Five days later, two of the hostages escaped from the band and provided the authorities with the band's whereabouts, and as a result, six days later the band let the remaining two hostages go.

⁶⁴ Dakin, p. 263.

⁶⁵ 9257.

⁶⁶ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 94/9396, 1324.4.7 (31 May 1906).

⁶⁷ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 95/9446, 1324.4.12 (5 June 1906).

⁶⁸ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 102/10190, 1324.7.4 (24 August 1906).

The primary purpose of the Greek bands with all these murders and acts of terror in general was to force Exarchist villages to re-adhere to the Patriarchate. In 1906, in Florina, their efforts produced the desired outcome on only one occasion. The villagers of Setne applied to the *kaimmakam* of Florina on 12 September, and demanded the recognition of their re-adherence to the Patriarchate by the official authorities⁶⁹. This was the village that was attacked by a Bulgarian band a few months ago. They say in their application that they had submitted to the Exarchate for the previous two years but this had done no good to them at all. Hence, they requested for the ratification of their demands. As far as the documentation reveals, this is the only village that gave petition to change church in 1906 in Florina. Thus, this was a relative success for the Greeks as no other village requested such a thing in favour of the Exarchate. An interesting point is that the ones who signed the petition in the name of the village used Cyrillic script in their signatures.

Besides attacking villages, killing and kidnapping villagers or burning their houses, Greek bands' real foe on the field was the Bulgarian bands. In a report dated 10 September, *kaimmakam* Tahsin Bey vigilantly warns the centre about an expected rise of band fighting in autumn. He states that Bulgarian bands decided to get into offensive against the Greek bands, and at the same time the Greek bands were increasing their numbers. He notes that Greeks being killed in Bulgaria had increased the religious and national tensions considerably. Moreover, he writes that the Greek consul came to Florina two days ago, and gave some secret instructions to the Greek bands there⁷⁰. In spite of everything, on only one occasion a skirmish between a Greek and a Bulgarian band occurred. At the end of the year, on 18 December, a Bulgarian band from Köprülü fought against the band of Panayotis,

⁶⁹ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 105/10422, 1324.7.29 (18 September 1906).

⁷⁰ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 104/10357, 1324.7.22 (11 September 1906).

which was operating in Pirlepe as well⁷¹. Bulgarians had three losses and had to flee because of the numerical superiority of their opponents⁷².

Apart from usual methods of terror, there was an economic warfare, which must have been equally effective. In a telegram from the *kaimmakam* of Florina, dated 17 September 1906, it is stated that in a letter signed by various Greek bandleaders, the villagers of Gorinçova, who happened to be Bulgarians, were warned against using the mills of Setne⁷³.

IV. The Battle of İstrebne

The most outstanding event in 1906 in Florina is the battle of İstrebne (Strebeno). The development of this event right from the start to the end contains the main characteristics of the war in Macedonia. Moreover, the documents⁷⁴ enclose plenty of information about social aspects of the nature of Greek bands' anatomy.

The *kaimmakam* of Florina, Tahsin Bey, had been to Noska, to meet the *nahiye müdürü* Zeynel Bey, around 10 June. While they were visiting a Vlach priest in his house, a letter from a Bulgarian informer arrived, notifying the presence of a large Greek band at İstrebne Balkan, with the intention of burning Zelnic village, which was an Exarchist stronghold. On the morning of 29 May 1322/11 June 1906, they moved with a troop to that direction. The battle started at nine o'clock. The position of the Greek band, which was reckoned to consist of 150 men, was at the upper hills of the İstrebne Balkan. Detachments from Florina, Kesriye, and Soroviç coordinated efficiently and the Greeks were besieged. Throughout the course of the battle, telegrams demanding more troops and artillery were sent to Manastır. During

⁷¹ See Dakin, p. 253.

⁷² BOA. TFR.1.MN, 112/11136, 1324.11.2 (18 December 1906).

⁷³ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 105/10422, 1324.7.29 (18 September 1906).

⁷⁴ The documents on İstrebne Battle is in BOA. TFR.1.MN, 98/9731, 1324.5.15 (7 July 1906).

the day some of the demanded help arrived. *Kol Ağası* Ali Fethi⁷⁵ from the General Staff was in command of the operation.

At around half past twelve the battle was over. Douglas Dakin states that ten were killed from the Greek band, and twelve were captured, meanwhile three hundred were killed from the troops and six hundred were wounded out of two thousand soldiers⁷⁶. On the other hand, Tahsin Uzer, the *kaimmakam* of Florina at the time, remembers that the Greek band consisted of 250 men and seventy-five of them were killed and fifty-seven were captured, and from the troops twenty soldiers were lost, and had thirty-five wounded. All these numbers, especially Dakin's figures on the Ottoman troops, seem to be exaggerated in the light of official documents. According to the telegram reporting the results of the battle, dated 12 June and was sent to the Inspectorship, signed by Tahsin, Ali Fethi, and Major Abdülkadir, twenty terrorists were captured alive, some of them being wounded, while twenty-five were dead. Losses of the troops were even much smaller; five were killed and four were wounded. Austro-Hungarian documents present the very same figures⁷⁷. Nevertheless, these figures should not be underestimated. The loss of Greeks, forty-five men, was truly grave, and Greek bands could hardly pull themselves together for a long time in Florina. Civil Agent Oppenheimer observed a notable decrease in the activities of Greek bands in Florina and Kastoria (Kesriye), in his telegram dated 31 July 1906⁷⁸. Dakin states that after the battle of İstrebne only one Greek band, that of Foufas remained at full strength⁷⁹.

In actual fact, the bands' total was ninety-three. This large group was essentially a combination of four smaller bands. These were the band of

⁷⁵ Fethi Okyar.

⁷⁶ Dakin, p. 266.

⁷⁷ Documents no. 206, 207, 208.

⁷⁸ Document no. 214.

⁷⁹ Dakin, p.266.

Kanelopoulos, with twenty-one men, all from Greece; the band of Pavle was comprised of fifteen men, the band of Barba Andreyka contained twenty men, both bands were Cretan bands essentially; and finally, there was the mixed band of Yorgi Bulanaki that contained forty men from both Greece and Crete.

It can be asserted that the document which contains the statements of twelve of the captured bandsmen, which is amongst the documents that are being utilised here, reveals various points that are characteristics of the Greek activities in Macedonia, at least for the year 1906. First of all, unlike Bulgarian bands, which chiefly consisted of native elements, the four Greek bands that attended the Īstrebne battle were made almost completely of elements out of Macedonia. On the administrative level, we know for sure that Pavle was a Cretan⁸⁰, and Yorgi Bulani was a Captain of the Greek army⁸¹. There was only one bandsman who originated from Macedonia, and was from Boġaġko village, a Patriarchist stronghold. Out of twelve captured men, eight were from Greece, five of those being from Athens, and two were from Crete. Among the dead the situation was no different. Although, it should well be presumed that these bands were getting aid from Patriarchist villages, the results of the Battle of Īstrebne put forth or at least indicate strongly that Greeks did still not overcome the problem of necessity of local recruitment in 1906, in Florina. Their rivals, on the other hand, had already been well spread among the native population as has already been noted.

The other difference that can be observed is related to the backgrounds of the Greek partisans. Among the dead and captured bandsmen in the Battle of Īstrebne, the most obvious group is the Athenians. There are shopkeepers, workers, a caf   worker, and a waiter. Although there are people with agricultural occupations like a

⁸⁰ Dakin, p. 266.

⁸¹ Uzer, p. 195.

shepherd, the majority were from urban occupations. There was even a graduate of the University of Athens amongst the dead. The band also had a doctor. As mentioned above, the leaders and the members of the Bulgarian bands that were operating in Florina in 1906 almost always originated from the villages of Florina or a neighbouring *kaza*, and hence, had rural backgrounds.

Another common feature of the captured Greek bandsmen is that they were aged between eighteen and twenty-five. The idea of protecting compatriots or co-religionists, and the offer of adventure must have attracted young souls throughout the course of the Macedonian war. All the captured band members stated that they crossed the frontier with the aspiration of killing Bulgarians and taking revenge from them. Nevertheless, romantic feelings could not have been sufficient to enter such a course, as these men also had to feed themselves, arm themselves, dress themselves, and earn some money. Hence, that was why the bandleaders also had to offer some material things so as to attract these young men. The story of the captured bandsmen is more or less the same, how they joined the band of this or that leader, how they crossed the border. The story of Yani son of Bulanaçe is fairly indicative. He was originally from Hanya. He had been working as a *reji kolcusu* before he joined the band of Yorgi Bulanaki, who was also from Hanya, Crete. He said that their purpose was to kill Bulgarian bandsmen and hence to take revenge of his compatriots. He was promised and paid 2.5 Napoleon gold liras for each month that exchanged fifty francs according to the Austro-Hungarian documents⁸². Then from Crete, they went to Pire, Athens, and to Golos next. After landing at Golos, the band went to Kalambaka⁸³ and met the other three bands. They were given cloths

⁸² Document no. 208.

⁸³ Kalambaka was one of the last stops for the Greek bands before crossing the border. The others were Tirhala, Golos (Volos), and Larissa. Dakin tells that the bands were assisted by Greek police

and rifles, which were Garra rifles and Mannlichers. They departed from Kalambaka in 5 or 6 May, and crossed the border on 9 May. He said that they did not stop in any village and passed from *balkan* to *balkan*⁸⁴. They obtained a man from each village they passed in order to be guided. The villagers, who brought bread outside their villages, fed them. At the end they reached İstrebne, where they suddenly met the Ottoman troops. He added that he knew all their expenses were afforded by the Greek government. The others' statements are almost the same.

An interesting note on the materials of the Greek bands that attended the Battle of İstrebne is that they were dressed with Greek infantry private uniform⁸⁵. Bulgarian bandsmen also had a distinctive dress coloured grey.

V. Unidentifiable crimes

There are also documents that are on crimes committed by *eşhas-i mechule* (unknown persons). In 1906, in Florina, eight individuals were killed and two were wounded by unidentified persons. Of the dead, seven were from Bulgarian community, one of them being a priest, and one of the wounded was a Bulgarian, as well. Two individuals were missing⁸⁶.

officers in these towns, and Mantchokis was the most prominent figure that undertakes the assistance to bands, in Kalambaka. See Dakin, pp. 253-254.

⁸⁴ *Balkan* means thickly wooded mountain range.

⁸⁵ In the documents it says: "efzon elbisesi labis".

⁸⁶ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 85/8407, 1323.12.17 (12 February 1906); BOA. TFR.1.MN, 90/8959, 1324.2.21 (16 April 1906); BOA. TFR.1.MN, 97/9694, 1324.5.10 (2 July 1906); BOA. TFR.1.MN, 100/9972, 1324.6.11 (2 August 1906); BOA. TFR.1.MN, 100/9981, 1324.6.13 (4 August 1906); BOA. TFR.1.MN, 100/9990, 1324.6.14 (5 August 1906); BOA. TFR.1.MN, 101/10056, 1324.6.21 (12 August 1906); BOA. TFR.1.MN, 103/10275, 1324.7.14 (3 September 1906); BOA. TFR.1.MN, 105/10483, 1324.8.7 (26 September 1906); BOA. TFR.1.MN, 106/10589, 1324.8.20 (9 October 1906).

VI. Muslims

Muslims in Macedonia did not have any organisation or bands such as the Macedo-Bulgarians, Greeks, or Serbians, initially. However, there were individual bands in the field. Moreover, particularly in the Albanian regions, especially in the *vilayet* of Kosova, the Albanians were fighting the Serbians. Also, there was some restlessness in Albanian regions in the first phase of reforms, in 1904 particularly, which was solved after some time⁸⁷.

It is widely accepted that there were some Turks who were fighting alongside with Greeks against the Bulgarians. Hanioglu quotes from a memorandum that Dr. Nazım wrote to Bahaeddin Şakir⁸⁸ in early September 1907 that Turks:

provided invaluable services to Greek committees; Greek committees that did not have Turkish members were rare. Since the Turks who joined these bands received Greek money, what they did was not something to be proud of from the point of view of our nationalism. Since the Greeks' interest in this matter is similar to that of the Turks, however, the Turkish nation benefited directly from the efforts of those Turks⁸⁹.

Hanioglu states that although the Ottoman authorities persistently denied the existence of any Turkish or Muslim bands in Macedonia, beginning in 1905 their existence became impossible to deny⁹⁰. Nevertheless, it was not until 1907 that the Turkish bands appear in number in the published Austro-Hungarian documents⁹¹. Dr. Nazım states in his memorandum that there were four or five Turkish bands

⁸⁷ For detailed information see Bozbora.

⁸⁸ Dr. Nazım and Bahaeddin Şakir were two of the most important leaders of the Committee of Progress and Union.

⁸⁹ Hanioglu, p. 222.

⁹⁰ Hanioglu, p. 221.

⁹¹ See Bridge.

under the command of Hasan the Sailor, Martin Mustafa, Arab, and others⁹². Committee of Progress and Union (CPU) leaders were contemplating about recruiting these Muslim bands, and convert the bands into CPU bands working under the instructions of the CPU's military members.⁹³ But certainly these Muslim bands were different from the Macedo-Bulgarian, Greek, and Serbian bands in essence, as they did not get any aid from an irredentist circle of the neighbouring Balkan states.

There is no sign of a Turkish or Muslim band that was active in Florina in 1906 amongst the documents of Rumeli Inspectorship. This is only natural as officially there was no Muslim band in Macedonia. However, there are two Muslims who were claimed to be operating in a Greek band. They were Süleyman son of Osman from the village Zelnic, and Muharrem son of Veli from Jarfan village of Kolonya and previously working in a farm in Florina. Although they were captured in İstrebne village after a siege, and arrested and sent to court, the court freed them on the basis of lack of sufficient evidence⁹⁴. This is the only instance in which a Muslim was involved in any band activity. Hence, it might be claimed that Muslims of Florina were not involved in band activities as offenders, when official documents about this particular district in a certain year have been examined.

⁹² Hanioglu, p. 223.

⁹³ For detailed information see Hanioglu pp. 221-227.

⁹⁴ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 83/8203, 1323.11.15 (11 January 1906); BOA. TFR.1.MN, 83/8283, 1323.11.25 (21 January 1906).

VII. An interesting report of the *kaimmakam* of Florina

The phenomenon of migration has been noted before⁹⁵. Emigration from the Balkans, particularly to North America, was an important economic factor along with seasonal migration to other Balkan countries, Asia Minor, and Egypt. This phenomenon had outstanding results such as a decrease in the supply of labour force in the domestic market. Another result was the emergence of a new class with the homecoming of emigrants, who had enough cash to buy lands and properties, or to engage in commerce and start new businesses in towns.

The *kaimmakam* of Florina, Tahsin Bey, had recently been appointed to the *kaza* of Florina, when he undertook a research on the rate of land and property exchange between the Muslim population and the Christians of Florina. He composed a report dated 16 April 1906, which he submitted to the Governorship of Manastır⁹⁶. He was alerted with the constantly increasing extent of land and property selling by Muslims to Christians during the last three-four years. He states that Christians, who had worked in foreign countries, were coming back home with large amounts of money and they were willing to pay even two times of the actual value of lands and properties that belonged to Muslims. He adds that Muslims, who were struggling in debt because of taxes or extravagance, were selling their properties 'thoughtlessly', and spending their money mindlessly⁹⁷. He reckons that there are five thousand individuals, who were currently engaged in commerce with abroad, and they were earning two hundred liras annually, on the average. Hence, he concludes, in eight or ten years time all lands and properties that belong to the Muslims of Florina will change hands in favour of Christians. Even in the previous

⁹⁵ See chapter 1.

⁹⁶ BOA. TFR.1.MN, 86/8540, 1324.1.2 (26 February 1906).

⁹⁷ "... aldıkları parayı yemekte olduklarından..."

week, half of the shares of Katori-i Bâlâ *çiftlik* were bought by the Christians, and bargaining had been going on for the shares of Keleştene-i Bâlâ and Kaladerop farms. He complains that even one of the most prominent and respected members of the society, İzzet Paşa, was selling⁹⁸ some of his possessions to the Christians, and he believes this sets a bad example for the 'second strata' of the Muslim society. According to Tahsin Bey, this state of affairs was utterly preferable for the ones who had bad intentions for future of the country.

Tahsin Bey attaches to his report two tables so as to put his point forth more firmly and clearly. One of the two tables shows the buying and selling transactions in the town and *kaza* of Florina in one month, in March 1322. In that month half a *dönüm* of pasture and one house was bought by Christians in Florina town. In the rest of the *kaza*, 243 *dönüms* and three *evleks*⁹⁹ of fields, eleven *dönüms* of pasture, and eight houses were bought by Christians from Muslims. For all these transactions a total of 331,200 liras were spent in March 1322.

The second table has a wider scope. It shows transactions for years 1319 (1903), 1320 (1904), and 1321 (1905). It demonstrates that eleven shops, thirty-three houses, fifty *dönüms* of pasture, and twenty-six *dönüms* and three *evleks* of fields were sold to Christians in the town of Florina in three years. In the rest of the *kaza*, eighty houses, sixteen *dönüms* and one *evlek* of vineyards, 204 *dönüms* and one *evlek* of pastures, and 2137 *dönüms* and two *evleks* of fields were bought by Christians. For all these transactions, 1,635,880 liras were spent in total. One conspicuous point this table illustrates is that over the course of three years, the volume of transactions increased constantly. For example, while only three houses were bought by Christians in 1903, in 1905 sixty-two houses were sold to them. One

⁹⁸ March 1322 is 16 February 1906 – 17 March 1906.

⁹⁹ *Evlek* is a quarter of a *dönüm*.

reason must have been the turmoil that was created in that year by the Bulgarian bands. After all, Florina was one of the districts, where the effects of the Ilinden Uprising and its subsequent results must have been felt most heavily. Although there is no evidence that the volume of terror decreased during the following years, the constant increase in all transactions might be attributed to a higher degree of security. One additional reason could be a modification in the strategy of rival nationalisms, which might be linked to the article 3 of the Mürzteg Reform Programme¹⁰⁰.

The notes of the Governor of Manastır, Hazım Bey¹⁰¹, on Tahsin Bey's report are also interesting. He states that although travelling to America is forbidden¹⁰², people obtain passports for other foreign countries and go to America via that method. He thinks that banning Muslims from selling their lands and properties to the Christians is neither sensible nor possible. However, he proposes to encourage Muslims to spend the money they obtained from selling their possessions on more profitable activities such as commerce. He adds that the majority of the land in Florina still belongs to Muslims and Christians are using the fields as sharecroppers¹⁰³. A remarkable point that grabs attention is that he recommends the tables to the Inspector General as an indicator of the amount of wealth that *Bulgarians* acquired by working in America. In other words, he labels the *Christians* in Tahsin Bey's report and in the table as *Bulgarians*. It is not certain whether all those land and properties were being bought by Bulgarians. Hence, the words of Hazım Bey could be interpreted as an example of how the minds of Ottoman

¹⁰⁰ Article 3: 'As soon as an appeasement of the country will be noted, the Ottoman government will be asked for a modification in the administrative division of the territory in view of a more regular grouping of different nationalities'. See Chapter Three.

¹⁰¹ Ebubekir Hazım Tepeyran.

¹⁰² Travelling to America for work and emigration must have been forbidden.

¹⁰³ Tahsin Bey is not saying that Christians obtain the majority of the lands. He simply points to a pattern that might result in such a situation in eight or ten year's time.

authorities, at least of Hazım Bey, were preoccupied with Bulgarians. Hazım Bey must have been expecting all the danger from Bulgarians.

VIII. Conclusions

After the examination of the records of the Rumeli Inspectorship about Florina some conclusions might be reached:

On Macedo-Bulgarian activities in Florina in 1906, the following can be said: Bulgarian bands were generally consisted of small numbers. These small units had certain advantages, such as mobilising more easily, or disappearing in cases of emergency. The Bulgarian bands that were active in Florina in 1906 consisted of native locals generally. Not only ordinary bandsmen, but the bandleaders were originally from Macedonia; from villages that were not so far away from the region in which they were active. Not only armed Greek bands, but also ordinary peasants who were Patriarchists were the targets of Bulgarian bands. The same is true for the Greek bands as they were also targeting Exarchist villagers. Bulgarian terror was also directed to the Exarchist community as well. The casualties of the Bulgarian bands were limited compared to the casualties they inflicted upon the population. Greek bands killed more Bulgarian bandsmen than the Ottoman troops.

The examination of the documents also reveals the following points on Greek activities in Florina in 1906: Florina was at the centre of the areas where the Greek bands most actively operated. Greek bands consisted of large numbers of men in general. They were continually trekking around the villages in the area. The major bases of the Greek bands were Strebeno, Prekopan, Belkameni, and Rakova

villages. One village adhered back to the Patriarchate. Greek consul had links with the bands. Greek bands were also trying to conduct economic warfare. Greek bands originate outside of Macedonia, particularly from Crete and Athens. Greeks did not overcome the issue of local recruitment in 1906 in Florina.

Some general points are: The most used weapons by Greek or Macedo-Bulgarian bands alike were Gras (Garra)¹⁰⁴ and Mannlicher¹⁰⁵ rifles. Greek bandsmen were dressed with Greek army infantry private uniform in the battle of İstrebne. Bulgarian bandsmen were wearing a special dress coloured grey.

The most outstanding fact, which is revealed by the examination of the documents, is that the Greek terrorists were not tolerated by the Ottoman administration in Florina in 1906. Hence, the general assumption of Ottomans allowing Greek bands to undertake their activities more freely at least until 1907 does not hold by any means for Florina in 1906. Greek bands were inflicted big casualties in Florina.

¹⁰⁴ The Gras rifle was firing one shot and produced in France. Initially, the Supreme Committee bought the Gras rifles in Greece. Then they were routed secretly into Macedonia by ground or sea. See Lange-Akhund, p. 99.

¹⁰⁵ The Mannlicher was a 6-shot rifle. It was made in Austria and it was the most demanded weapon for its accuracy. Lange-Akhund also notes that it was reserved to the chiefs of gangs until 1902. See Lange-Akhund, p. 100.

CONCLUSION

From the Berlin Congress to the World War I, the Macedonian Question was one of the primary problems in the diplomatic arena, occupying the minds of Ottoman and European statesmen alike. The major cause of the problem was the aspirations of the Balkan neighbours of the Ottoman Empire, namely, Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia. Especially after 1885, when Bulgaria annexed East Rumelia and Greece had already obtained Thessaly, the competition for Macedonia amongst these three Balkan states gained momentum. Moreover, the Great Powers were also interested in Macedonia, each having its own interests to defend and develop, and each having supported this or that Balkan state according to the requirements of the day.

Nevertheless, it might be misleading to explain the Macedonian Question merely within the context of the dynamics in international relations. Internal dynamics also contributed to the problem. The development in urbanisation and accumulation of wealth particularly by the Slav population had been going on throughout the nineteenth century in Macedonia, and this constituted the necessary rudiments for a nationalistic struggle. Hence, it was no coincidence that the men power in Macedo-Bulgarian organisations was supplied from educated petite bourgeoisie circles in Macedonia, except for Seres region. Moreover, in the struggling Balkan states it was urban circles that composed the backbone of nationalist currents, which championed the irredentist cause.

The role of the churches should also be mentioned in this respect as the rivalry between the Exarchate and the Patriarchate was one of the main reasons of distress in Macedonia. Since the official establishment of the Exarchate in 1870 and its being declared as a schismatic church by the Patriarch in 1872, these two churches had been conducting a nationalist war on the ecclesiastical grounds. Later on, they provided the nationalist organisations and the terrorist bands with the necessary means to infiltrate the local communities whose chief definition of self-identity was Christianity.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, the means of this rivalry amongst different nationalist claims started to gain a more terrorist nature as IMRO was founded in 1893 in Macedonia and the Supreme Committee of Macedonia was established in 1895 in Sofia. The turn of the century in Macedonia was marked with a constantly increasing terror, especially conducted by the Macedo-Bulgarian organisations, which culminated in the Ilinden uprising of 1903. This ultimately unsuccessful trial of insurrection led to important consequences. Starting with 1904 Greeks and Serbians, who were alarmed by the influence of Bulgarians in Macedonia, started to organise band incursions to Macedonia. Thus, Greek and Serbian bands began to appear more frequently in Macedonia; with the latter's main field of operation being in the northwest in the Kosova *vilayet*. In other parts of Macedonia, fighting was fierce between Greeks and Macedo-Bulgarians, and this quarrel was the essence of the increasing chaos and disorder, which created a vicious cycle of terror after some time until 1908. In addition, the period after 1903 is marked by increasing interference of the Great Powers in the Macedonian Question under the pretext of pressuring for reforms and demanding for improvements in the lives of the Christian community in Macedonia.

In this dissertation, I have endeavoured to study the Macedonian Question and to construct an analytical micro-history of a particular district -Florina- in a specific year -1906- according to the records of Rumeli Inspectorship, within the context of the Macedonian Question. The records of Rumeli Inspectorship constitute the main primary source of this work. These documents, which have been hitherto scarcely used, are one of the most important and not much explored sources concerning the subject. The *kaza* of Florina had been selected for the reason that it was one of the hotbeds of terrorist activities. Although Florina was too small a region to reach common conclusions for Macedonia, it was still representative, to some extent, of the situation in Macedonia as Muslims –Albanians and Turks-, Slavs, Greeks, and Vlachs inhabited in the district. On the other hand, 1906 was the year in which the war in Macedonia was at its peak, and it was sort of a decisive year for the Greeks as they started to dominate in most parts of Macedonia over the Macedo-Bulgarians after 1906.

The developmental structure of this dissertation puts forth a process that moves toward the more specific from the general. The first chapter is on the wider subject of the Macedonian Question, which aims to endow the reader with a framework that is necessary to appreciate the information given in the following chapters in a more perceptive way. The second chapter is on the more specific subject of the rival terrorisms and reforms. In other words, the situation in the field is presented. This is followed by the third chapter in which a history of the Greek and Macedo-Bulgarian band activities in Florina in 1906 is imparted in the light of official documents.

Some general conclusions have been drawn throughout the study. For instance, each Great Power had its own calculations and conducted policies vis-à-vis

the Ottoman Empire and the Macedonian Question. Accordingly, the European powers had pursued two controversial policies with regard to the Ottoman Empire. The first policy was of interventionist nature. This policy had accelerated the disintegration and collapse of the empire, by encouraging the national movements. The second policy contributed to the maintenance of the sultan's sovereignty over the integrity of its territories, hoping to exercise a major influence there and defend their economic and political interests, and avoiding a full-scale war by preserving the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. The implications of their hesitant and hypocritical approach induced endeavours to solve the problem futile. Furthermore, the assistance each Great Power provided to different Balkan states not only caused the problem to last longer but also gave confidence to Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia to pursue their particular aspirations in an aggressive manner.

The interventions of Great Powers only worsened the situation in Macedonia. Although some progress had been achieved through the period of reforms from 1902 until 1908, the so-called reforms contributed to the chaotic situation essentially as the aspirations of opposing protagonists in Macedonia were only triggered. The results of the article 3 of the Mürzteg agreement constitute a typical example in this respect.

The examination of the records of Rumeli Inspectorship on Florina for the year 1906 reveals several points¹. For example, although it is generally believed that the Ottoman authorities tolerated and even supported the Greek bands against the Macedo-Bulgarian bands at least until 1907, it is obvious that the Greeks were not tolerated in Florina at all, and they gave important casualties there in 1906. The fight was mainly between the Greek and Macedo-Bulgarian bands in the district in 1906.

¹ See Chapter Four, last section.

These bands, both Greek and Macedo-Bulgarian ones, possessed different characteristics in terms of the size of bands or the origins of the bandsmen. An examination of the records also lets the researcher learn about some interesting details, as in the case of the *kaimmakam*'s report on the immoveable transactions between Muslims and non-Muslims. This report shows that non-Muslims were trying to buy land and property from Muslims at an increasing scale over the course of time. The records also let the researcher to grasp the system of thinking and perceptions of the administrators.

The Macedonian Question, which emerged towards the nineteenth century, still exists though in different dimensions. The study of history would definitely help the establishment of better policies in the present. Accordingly, the study of the essence of the problem and its development would shed light upon contemporary arguments not only concerning the Balkans but also other parts of the world where similar quarrels and problems exist.

APPENDIX A

ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN OF THE THREE PROVINCES

SELÂNİK

- I) Central *Sancak* (S.)
- a) Selanik (Central) K.: Vardar N., Gelemriye N.
- Kazas and Nahiyes:
- 1) Doyran *Kaza* (K.)
 - 2) Ustrumca (Stroumnitza) K.
 - 3) Yenice K.
 - a) Karacaabad N.
 - 4) Avrethisarı (Kılıkış) K.
 - a) Karadağ N.
 - 5) Kesendire (Poliroz) K.
 - 6) Tikveş (Kavadar) K.
 - a) Dernova N.
 - b) Roşden N.
 - 7) Langaza (Sirşin) K.
 - 8) Gevgili K.
 - a) Mayadağ N.
 - b) Nutiye N.
 - 9) Katerin K.
 - a) Lithor (Leftehor) N.
 - b) Gelendir N.
 - 10) Karaferye K.
 - a) Ağustos N.
 - 11) Vodina K.
 - a) Karacaâbâd N.
 - b) Ostrova N.
 - 12) Aynaroz K.
 - 13) Köprülü (Veles) K.
 - a) Nikodim N.
 - b) Bogomil N.
- II) Siroz (Serez) S.
- a) Siroz (Central) K. : Robcoz (Roycoz, Devlin) N.
- Kazas and Nahiyes:
- 1) Nevrekop K.
 - 2) Menlik K.
 - 3) Zihne (Zelhova) K.
 - 4) Petriç K.
 - 5) Demirhisar K.

- 6) Cuma-i Bâlâ K.
- 7) Razlık K.

III) Drama S.

- a) Drama (Central) K.: Drama: Çiç N., Pürsıçan (Persican) N., Pravişte N.

Kazas and Nahiyes:

- 1) Kavala K.
- 2) Sarışaban (Sarıçoban)K.

IV) Taşoz S.

MANASTIR

I) Manastır S.

Kazas and Nahiyes:

- 1) Manastır K.
 - a) Resne N.
 - b) İsmilova N.
 - c) Prespa N.
 - d) Kırşova N.
 - e) Demirhisar N.
- 2) Ohri K.
 - a) Esteroga N.
 - b) Debrece N.
- 3) Florina K.
 - a) Rudinik (Soroviç) N.
 - b) Noska N.
 - c) Veştoran N.
- 4) Pirlepe K.
 - a) Morihova N.
 - b) Vebeşna N.
- 5) Kırçova K.

II) Serfice S.

Kazas and Nahiyes:

- 1) Sefice K.
 - a) Volondos N.
- 2) Alasonya K.
 - a) Livâdî N.
 - b) Dumnik (Dömenek, Domanik) N.
 - c) Dışkata N.
- 3) Kayalar (Cuma, Cuma Pazarı) K.
 - a) Saruhanlar N.
 - b) Katranca N.

- 4) Nasliç K.
 - a) Siçeşte N.
 - b) Jopan N.
- 5) Kozana K.
 - a) Vençe N.
- 6) Grebene K.

III) Görce (Koritza) S.

Kazas and Nahiyes:

- 1) Görce K.
 - a) Bihlişte (Behişte) N.
 - b) Opar N.
- 2) Kesriye K.
 - a) Horpeşte N.
 - b) Klisura N.
 - c) Borbocko (Boğaçko, Bogatsiko, Borborciko) N.
- 3) Astrava K.
 - a) Kökes N.
- 4) Kolonya K.

IV) Debre S.

Kazas and Nahiyes:

- 1) Debre-i bâlâ K.
 - a) Kocacık N.
- 2) Debre-i zîr K.
- 3) Rakalar K.
- 4) Mat K.

V) İlbasan (Elbassan) S.

Kazas and Nahiyes:

- 1) İlbasan K.
 - a) Certika N.
- 2) Garamış K.
- 3) Peklin K.

KOSOVA

I) Kosova (Üsküb) S.

Kazas and Nahiyes:

- 1) Üsküb (Centre) K.
- 2) Orhaniye (Kaçanik) K.
- 3) İştîp K.
 - a) Bereketli N.
- 4) Koçana K.
 - a) Beyanca (Çarva) N.
- 5) Osmaniye K.
- 6) Kratova K.
- 7) Kumanova K.
 - a) Mezraa N.

- 8) Radovište K.
- 9) Palanka K.

II) Priştine S.

Kazas and Nahiyes:

- 1) Priştine K.
- 2) Firzovik (Verisoviç) N.
- 3) Geylan K.
- 4) Preşova K.
- 5) Mitroviçe K.
- 6) Vılçitrin K.

III) Yenipazar (Seniçe) S.

Kazas and Nahiyes:

- 1) Yenipazar K.
- 2) Kolaşin K.
 - a) Viraneş N.
 - b) Moykovac N.
 - c) Revânerika N.
- 3) Yenivaroş K.
- 4) Akova K.
 - a) Beşteriçe N.
 - b) Behur N.
 - c) Kamrat N.
 - d) Brezâva N.

IV) İpek S.

Kazas and Nahiyes:

- 1) İpek K.
- 2) Yakova K.
- 3) Berâne K.
- 4) Gosine K.
- 5) Tırgovişte K.

V) Taşlıca S.

Kazas and Nahiyes:

- 1) Taşlıca K.
- 2) Prepol K.
 - a) Peribovi N.

VI) Prizren S.

Kazas and Nahiyes:

- 1) Prizren K.
 - a) Rakofça N.
- 2) Kalkandelen K.
 - a) Gostivar N.
- 3) Luma K.
 - a) Kalis

DOCUMENT EXAMPLES

OSMANLI ARŞIVI DAİRE BAŞKANLIĞI

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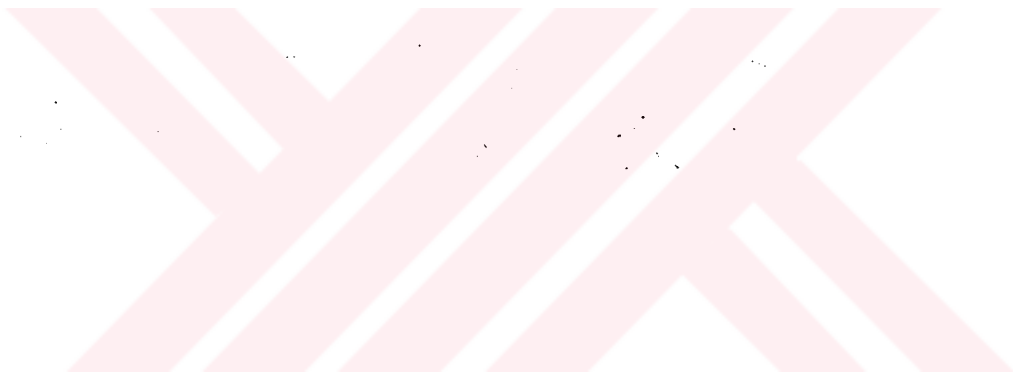
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1324.1.2 (26 February 1906)

ملاحظات

ملاحظات	تاريخ	فهرست و کلمات اصناف					فهرست و کلمات اصناف				
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OSMANLI ARSVI DAİRE BASKANLIGI

سنة 1906 في
Le 1906

وصول نومروسي
N° d'arrivée

دقيقة ساعة
h. m. du

ارسالي

Réexpédié

à

مأمورك امضاسي

Signature de l'Employé

De pour



سنة 1906 في
Le 1906

واستدسيه
Transmis par

دقيقة ساعة
h. m. du

Commencé à

مختتم عباره

Fin à

مأمورك امضاسي

Signature de l'Employé

عن فيلوريه الى

اشارات مخصوصه	طريق	روز وياشب	دقيقة	ساعة	محل تاريخي	غروب	عدد بات	محل نومروسي
Indications non taxées	Voies	Matin ou soir	Minutes	Heures	Date du dépôt	Group	Nombre de mots	N° du dépôt

خودسي مفهومي

فيلوريه نه يوشينه قزيره روم اهاليه ايجودل
طراحي نه كيم احورنده جوادلري با فاكهه ايجودل
طراحي قزيره قزيره روم اهاليه ايجودل
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APPENDIX C

THE TREATY OF BERLIN: ARTICLE 23

The Sublime Porte undertakes scrupulously to apply on the island of Crete the organic law of 1868 with such modifications as may be considered equitable.

Organic Laws. Laws similar to Organic Law for Crete to be introduced into other parts of Turkey in Europe, except exemption from Taxation.

Similar laws adapted to local requirements, excepting as regards the exemption from taxation granted to Crete, shall also be introduced into other parts of Turkey in Europe for which no special organization has been provided by the present Treaty.

Organic Laws. Special Commission to settle details of new Laws.

The Sublime Porte shall depute special commissions, in which the native element shall be largely represented, to settle the details of the new laws in each province.

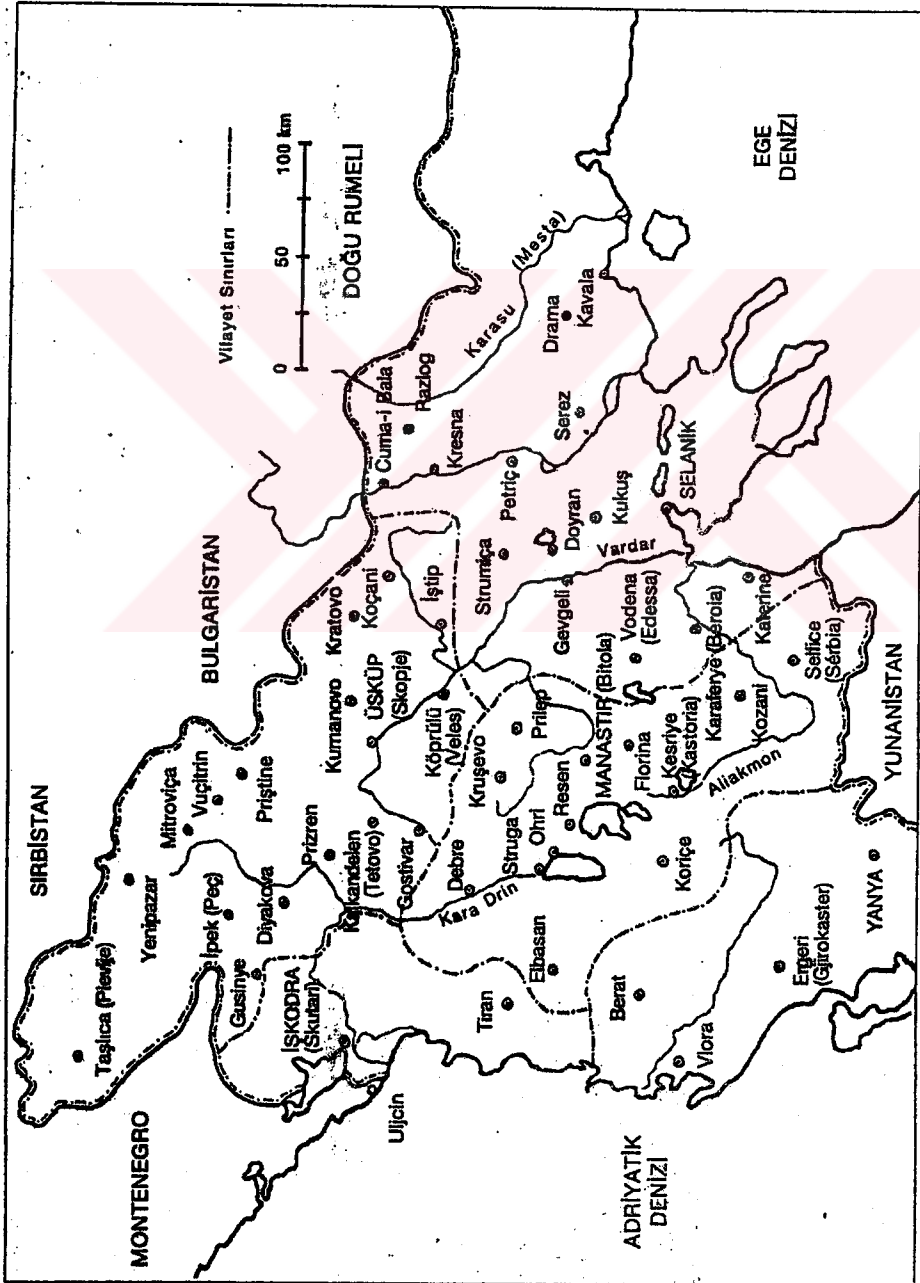
The schemes of organization resulting from these labours shall be submitted for examination to the Sublime Porte, which, before promulgating the Acts for putting them in force, shall consult the European Commission instituted for Eastern Roumelia.

Source: Duncan M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror, The Macedonian Liberation Movements, 1893-1903* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1988), pp. 213-214.

APPENDIX D

MACEDONIA CIRCA 1900

Source: Fikret Adanır, *Makedonya Sorunu, Oluşumu ve 1908'e Kadar Gelişimi*, trans. by İhsan Catay, (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2001), p.xvi.



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