



**THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREECE  
AND THE MACEDONIAN  
NATIONAL PROBLEM  
1918 - 1940**





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1918 - 1940**

Ireneusz Adam Ślupkov



In memory of my great grandparents  
Vasil and Vasilka Keramidžiev and  
my beloved grandparents  
Giorgi and Pena Ślupkov

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# CONTENTS

Introduction.....7

## CHAPTER 1

The Problem of Nationalities in Europe and the  
Policy of the Comintern.....9

## CHAPTER 2

The Communist Party of Greece (CPG) and its Policy of  
“Neither Statehood nor Nationhood” (1918-24).....17

## CHAPTER 3

The Communist Party of Greece and its Policy of  
“Statehood without Nationhood” (1924-31).....31

## CHAPTER 4

The Communist Party of Greece and its Policy of  
“Nationhood without Statehood” (1935-40).....49

## CHAPTER 5

The Real Reasons for the Greek Communist Party’s  
Change of Policy towards the Slogan of a  
“United and Independent Macedonia”.....63

Conclusion.....68

Notes.....79

Appendixes.....86

Bibliography.....128

Websites of interest.....141

Maps.....142



## INTRODUCTION

The subject of this book is the Communist Party of Greece (CPG) and the problem of Macedonia between 1918 and 1940. The book is based on my master's thesis which was defended at the University of Szczecin in July 1993. However, the book differs significantly from the thesis. I have checked once again the translations of documents and made changes and additions where I have thought necessary. I have considerably expanded the conclusion with a short account of the fate of Macedonians living in Northern Greece, the policy of the Greek government towards them and their struggle for human rights to which they are entitled by virtue of their Greek citizenship. Fresh aspects of the problem were provided by Professor Kole Simicizjew, former lecturer in South Slavonic literatures at the University of Wrocław, Poland, who himself participated in the events described in this book. My thanks are also due to Professor Włodzimierz Pianka, at the University of Warsaw, for many useful suggestions as well as to Dana Lundmark, Liljana Ristova, Pavle Filipov-Voskopoulos, Goce Jakovleski and Risto Stefov for discussions about Macedonia. I should also like to express my deep gratitude to Mr G. T. Owen, the director of the British Council in Szczecin, Poland, in the years 1995-1998, who offered to translate the whole text into English.

In this book I examine the way in which the CPG handled the Macedonian problem on the basis of documents released by the CPG, starting from the insurrection of 1918 and ending in 1940. These events are virtually unknown in English speaking countries. I have used publications mainly in Macedonian, Polish and English but my primary sources are the original documents of the CPG translated from Greek into Macedonian and then into English. Because these documents are unknown in the English speaking countries, my quotations from them have been translated into Polish. The translations may sometimes seem rather crude but this may probably be due to the uneven levels of education among members of the CPG. Moreover, the documents have been translated from Greek into Macedonian and then into English.



The documents show the influence of the Comintern on the CPG as well as internal conflict between the two factions, the so-called “majority” and “minority”, as well as their policies towards the Macedonian question.

These materials have been selected and translated by the Macedonian historian Professor Risto Kirjazovski of the National Historical Institute in Skopje in Macedonia under the title “*KPG i makedonskoto nacionalno prašanje 1919-1974*” Skopje 1982.

Another important source is that of the Macedonian historian and authority on the history of the CPG’s handling of the Macedonian problem, Professor Stojan Kiselinovski; “*Egejskiot del na Makedonija (1913-1989)*”, “*Etničkrite promeni vo Makedonija (1913-1995)*”.

A more thorough investigation of how the CPG treated the Macedonian problem has now been made possible by the Macedonian government’s purchase in the beginning of the 70s of all the original documents of the CPG.

This book consists of an introduction, five chapters and a conclusion followed by maps of the territory under discussion. The first chapter deals with the problem of nationalities in Europe immediately after the first world war and the policies of the Comintern. This chapter is necessary for an understanding of what follows. The second chapter deals with the handling of the Macedonian problem by the CPG between 1918 and 1924. The third chapter covers the period 1924 to 1931/5 which was marked by changes in the CPG’s approach to the Macedonian problem. The fourth chapter examines the events of the years 1931-40 in which an ideological “breakthrough” occurred. Some attention is also paid to the formation of the Macedonian Patriotic Party (VMRO) in Aegean (Greek) Macedonia and its activities amongst Macedonians. In the fifth chapter the real motives for the CPG’s change of support from the slogan “United and Independent Macedonia” to “Equal Rights for Minorities” are explained.

The history of the CPG’s relations with Macedonian question in Greece are best followed chronologically. Some of the documents bear only initials or surnames so authorship cannot always be identified. Names are given in the original or in transliteration. Greek place names, obligatory since 1917, are given next to Macedonian names. The accompanying maps show their locality. In the translations of the documents, the original style and phraseology has been retained as far as possible. Macedonian letters should be pronounced as follows; dž – dj, ž - zh, č - ch, š - sh.

Greek ‘dh’ and ‘gh’ are velarised versions of ‘d’ and ‘g’.

The author’s comments and additions are in square brackets.

## CHAPTER

### 1

# THE PROBLEM OF NATIONALITIES IN EUROPE AND THE POLICY OF THE COMINTERN

At the end of the first world war, Europe was faced with a difficult task, that of creating a new world order to take account of political and geographical changes in Europe. There was also the question of creating new nations with partly homogeneous nationalities. It was hoped that these problems would be solved at the Versailles peace conference which would provide a cure for all the festering wounds of Europe at the time.<sup>1</sup> In the event the peace conference solved nothing and the question of nationalities dragged on until the outbreak of the second world war. The source of these conflicts were the following; territorial conflict between France and Germany over Alsace-Lorraine, between Hungary and Romania over Transylvania, between Hungary and Czechoslovakia over Ukrainian Transcarpathia, between Yugoslavia and Hungary over Voivodina, between Yugoslavia and Austria over Carinthia, between Albania and Yugoslavia over Kosovo, between Yugoslavia and Italy over Istria, between Italy and Austria over South Tyrol, between Bulgaria

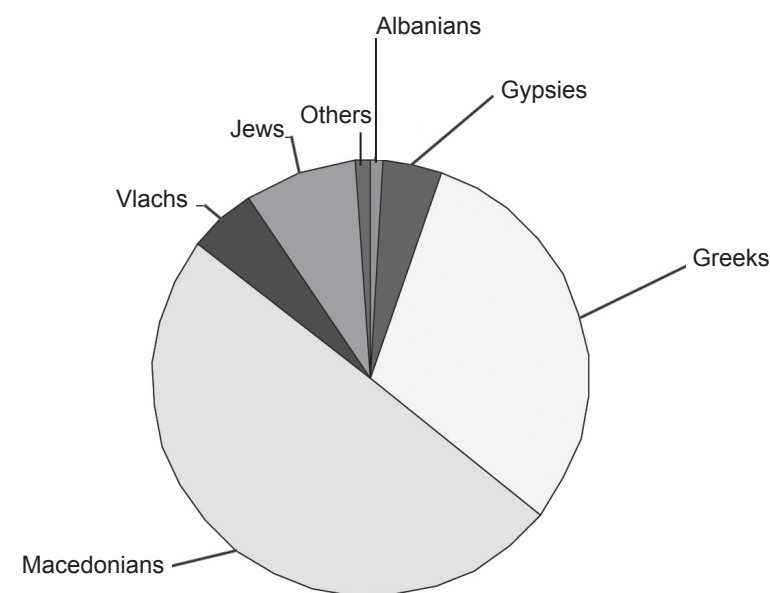
and Greece over Western Thrace, between the Soviet Union and Romania over Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, between Poland and the Soviet Union over the Curzon Line and between Poland and Germany over Upper Silesia and Pomerania. In addition there were three nationality disputes to be settled; the Macedonians, the Basques and the Flemings.<sup>2</sup> All these problems, including the latter, were essentially of both a territorial and a national nature. Thus it was that the recipe for permanent political instability was written into the history of Europe from the very start of the new post-war epoch.<sup>3</sup> In Southern Europe there was not one state which was able to claim a majority of any nationality. The countries of Central Europe were better off; the percentage of the native population of Finland comprised 89.3%, of Estonia 88.2%, of Bulgaria 83.2%, of Latvia 80.4%, of Romania 76%, of Poland 69.1% but of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia only 42%.<sup>4</sup> With such figures, it would not have been difficult to predict conflict which in fact arose almost as soon as these states were established.<sup>5</sup>

The Balkans provided a good example of the unresolved problems of nationality and territory. One of the worst consequences of the Versailles conference was that it failed to establish any Balkan state with a homogeneous population. Only “*natural*” states enjoyed some semblance of stability. Yugoslavia for example in 1924 had a population of 12,055,688 but no nation within Yugoslavia comprised more than 50% of the population. Some 7 million people, Croats, Macedonians, Slovenians, Montenegrins and Albanians had a sense of separate identity.<sup>6</sup> A similar situation obtained in Romania. So-called “Greater Romania” absorbed South Dobruđa Transylvania, Bessarabia, South Bukovina and the Romanian parts of the Banat and thus became a multinational country. In the Kingdom of Romania there lived one and a half million Hungarians, 800,000 Germans, 400,000 Bulgarians, 300,000 Ruthenians and more than a million Jews scattered throughout the whole territory of the kingdom.<sup>7</sup>

The Kingdom of Greece also moved into territory which had never had any Greek ethnicity<sup>8</sup> and thus, as in the case of Romania, no homogeneous Greek character. Greece only possessed a homogeneous Greek population in the territory of what was Ancient Greece, namely the Peloponese, Southern Epirus and Thessaly as far as Olympus. Everything north of these territories had no Greek identity. Thus Northern Epirus, for example, was inhabited by Albanians and Macedonia by Macedonians, often called Slavo-Macedonians while Thrace was inhabited by Turks and Bulgarians. According to the Bulgarian scholar Vasil Kynčov, the population of Aegean (Greek) Macedonia in 1913 consisted of 358,290

Bulgarians, (49.92%), 218,747 Greeks (30.48%), 59,720 Jews (8.32%), 34,427 Vlachs (4.8%), 30,726 Gypsies (4.29%), 6,875 Albanians (0.95%) and 8,910 other nationalities comprising 1.24% of the general population. (See graph below)

ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF AEGEAN (GREEK) MACEDONIA IN 1913



As his criterion for ethnicity, Kynčov disregarded the language spoken at school<sup>9</sup> (Greek, Serbian or Bulgarian) and religious affiliation and used the language spoken at home. The Greek authorities however used the language spoken at school as their criterion for ethnicity. Hence the divergence between Greek and Bulgarian statistics. Moreover, Bulgarian scholars have made and continue to make the error of regarding Macedonian as a dialect of Bulgarian. As a result, Macedonians living in Aegean (Greek) Macedonia are considered to be indigenous Bulgarians. Thus about a million people of non-Greek origin lived in Aegean Macedonia and Western Thrace during the 1920s.<sup>10</sup>

As far as Bulgaria is concerned, here too the population was not homogeneous. Turks, Macedonians and Armenians formed 16.8% of people living in Bulgaria. Such were the results of the treaty signed at Neuilly-sur-Seine.<sup>11</sup> The Balkans thus became an arena for political repression or, at the very least, political exploitation of minorities living there. Macedonians fell victims to repression in Greece, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria and Croats, Slovenes, Montenegrins and Albanians in Yugoslavia as well as Hungarians in Romania. The result was that they began to dream of creating their own independent countries.<sup>12</sup>

These unresolved questions attracted the attentions of those countries which had lost the war as well as the Communist International (the Comintern). The former made use of the peace treaties to revise international frontiers while the latter, under Lenin's guidance, saw opportunities to spread propaganda on the theme of national self-determination which, by appearing to offer one solution to the manifold problems caused by injustice, exploitation and pauperisation, served to attract thousands of people to the Communist Party in the Balkans.<sup>13</sup>

Let us return to the general political situation obtaining at the time in Europe. The group of vanquished nations expressed dissatisfaction with the resolutions of the peace treaties signed in Paris. These nations included Germany, Bulgaria and Hungary. In 1919 they began to agitate for changes to the treaties (signed at Versailles, Trianon, Neuilly and St Germain)<sup>14</sup> because they considered them to be detrimental to their interests.

Germany laid claim to Alsace and Lorraine in France, to Eupen and Malmedy in Belgium, to Gdańsk and Upper Silesia in Poland and to the Sudeten in Czechoslovakia. The Kingdom of Bulgaria also raised objections to the frontiers defined at Neuilly and laid claim to South Dobruđa which had been allocated to Romania as well as to Vardar Macedonia which had been given to the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (from 1929, Yugoslavia) and to Aegean (Greek) Macedonia and Western Thrace which formed part of Greece. Hungary also laid claim to territory ceded in the treaty of Trianon. This included up to 75% of its historical lands; Transylvania (ceded to Romania) and Voivodina (part of Yugoslavia). It also claimed territory in Southern Slovakia.<sup>15</sup>

All these plans to revise the frontiers did not meet with the approval of other states. On the contrary, France, Britain, Yugoslavia, Greece, Romania and Czechoslovakia opposed any revisions of the boundaries agreed at Versailles. The period between the wars was thus marked by bitter clashes between those countries urging boundary revisions and

those countries defending the status quo laid down at Versailles. The situation gave rise to serious political friction and, as a result, political instability<sup>16</sup> which was quite contrary to the aim of the Versailles treaty which was to create a new order for Europe. A new and totally unforeseen factor in this new order was the Soviet Union whose distinct ideology introduced more problems and complications into European politics than anybody could have predicted.

In view of the Soviet Union's distinct ideological stance, it could not nor did not guarantee the resolutions of the Versailles treaty and furthermore expressed its dissatisfaction with the distribution of territories in Europe because it ignored the principle, upheld by Lenin, of the right of national self-determination. The USSR also laid claims to the territories of its neighbours, those for example of Poland (the question of Vilnius, Western Belarus and Western Ukraine), Romania (Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina) and Czechoslovakia (Transcarpathian Ukraine). Nor was the USSR willing to tolerate its isolation, both political and economic, which had been brought about with a view to causing its collapse.<sup>17</sup> As it happened, the USSR overcame this problem by reaching an agreement with Germany in Rappallo in 1922.<sup>18</sup>

Stalin maintained that to build socialism and at the same time weaken the western powers, the USSR had to adopt policies which would foment unrest among the signatory countries of the Versailles treaty leading to political destabilisation and increased national and class struggle. These policies, he maintained, would weaken those countries' aggressive stance towards the USSR.<sup>19</sup> An excellent means of attaining this end was the creation of the Comintern<sup>20</sup> and the Balkan Communist Federation (BCF).<sup>21</sup> The aim of the Comintern was to promote Lenin's policy of world revolution whereas the aim of the BCF was to turn the whole of the Balkans into a soviet republic. As a result of these aims being adopted both by the Comintern and the BCF, Stalin's aims were fully realised. Under their auspices, the USSR planned to subvert the whole world, thereby creating communist regimes dependent on the USSR. The BCF's task was to bring about a communist revolution in the Balkans and create a Balkan Soviet Socialist Republic. The BCF upheld the demands of all peoples living in the Balkans for self-determination, particularly those of the Macedonians,<sup>22</sup> a people spread over four states, Albania, Bulgaria, Greece and Yugoslavia. As mentioned earlier,<sup>23</sup> the neglect of these problems of nationality provided the Comintern with excellent opportunities of putting their programmes into action with an almost 100 percent chance of success.

The years 1935 to 1939 brought political changes as a result of the growing influence of fascist regimes. The Comintern's efforts were devoted to a struggle with these regimes leading to changes of policy and abandonment of previously held positions, especially those relating to self-determination for minor nationalities.<sup>24</sup> Before that however, the unresolved nationality problems of such peoples as the Macedonians, Croatians, Ukrainians, Belarussians, Slovenes, Albanians, Bulgarians and Hungarians brought about destabilisation in post-Versailles Europe. The gravity of these problems was underlined by the Fifth Congress of the Comintern, held in Moscow in 1924, which was entirely devoted to this theme. Particular attention was paid to the questions of Hungarians in Romania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, Ukrainians and Belarussians in Poland, Bulgarians in Thrace and South Dobrudža, Macedonians in Greece, Bulgaria and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and Croats, Montenegrins and Albanians in Yugoslavia. Dmitriy Manuilskiy emphasised that *"the revolt of the peoples is a bomb we can plant with the aim of causing revolution in Europe"*. The Comintern further decided that instead of the social and national discrimination prevailing in Europe after 1919, it would follow, together with the BCF, the path of socialist revolution fighting for liberty and equal rights for all peoples of the Balkan-Danube area and their right to self-determination.<sup>25</sup> Moreover they demanded the right of all people in this area to be united in a Balkan-Danubian Soviet Socialist Republic.<sup>26</sup> The oppressed peoples living in Greece, Yugoslavia, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Poland would be granted the right to self-determination.<sup>27</sup> As far as Croats, Montenegrins and Slovaks were concerned, the Comintern not only recognised their rights to self-determination but also their rights to establish their own states in the countries in which they were already living. At the same time, the right of Hungarians living in Romania, Czechoslovakia and the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes to self-determination and union with Hungary was recognised. However the question of Macedonia was raised for the first time and very carefully considered at the Fifth Congress. It was noted that their dispersal was the very factor which strengthened their desire for a united homeland divided between Albania, Yugoslavia, Greece and Bulgaria. The Fifth Congress therefore confirmed the right to self-determination and the simultaneous creation of an independent Macedonian state as well as a Balkan Federation of equal and independent worker and peasant republics.<sup>28</sup> The BCF adopted the resolutions which were passed at the Fifth Comintern Congress at its own Sixth Congress and declared that the *"policy of the communist parties regarding*

*the desire of the Macedonians for their own united and independent state is just and fair"*.<sup>29</sup> The adoption by the BCF of the resolutions concerning Macedonia was not unanimous and objections were raised.<sup>30</sup> Such resistance had been expected given the interests of other states and nationalities, especially in the Balkans, as well as certain Party members,<sup>31</sup> but there was also no agreement to accept these resolutions as binding. The Bulgarian Communist Party was keenly interested in the Macedonian question given the fact that after the Treaties of Versailles and Neuilly, Bulgaria had lost much of its territory to its neighbours. Romania had been given Dobrudža, Greece Aegean (Greek) Macedonia and Thrace and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes Vardar Macedonia to which Bulgaria had laid claim as well.<sup>32</sup> Bulgaria was also dissatisfied with this solution of the Macedonian question because Macedonians were considered to be Bulgarians. There was of course a degree of political manoeuvring in this context because in reality the Bulgarians considered the Macedonians to be a distinct if slightly retarded ethnic element compared with true Bulgarians. But officially, Macedonia was considered to be Bulgarian territory. It is thus understandable that the Bulgarian Communist Party (CPB) could not afford not to take a position on this important and sensitive issue and thus declared that all the above-mentioned territory was ethnically and historically Bulgarian. Taking its cue from the Comintern, the CPB demanded the creation of a united and independent Macedonia and similarly for Thrace and Dobrudža. It was therefore plainly demonstrated that the CPB was bravely defending national interests.

In pursuing the policy of the establishment of new states, Bulgaria was seeking its own advantage. Let us examine this more closely. If a united and independent Macedonia were to be established, then this would automatically weaken the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.<sup>33</sup> If a united and independent Thrace were to be created, then this would be to the detriment of Greece and Turkey. In both cases, Bulgaria would emerge in a strengthened position. At the same time the CPB would support the territorial claims of Hungary to Romania concerning Transylvania and to Yugoslavia concerning Voivodina as well as those of the USSR to Romania concerning Bessarabia. All this was calculated to weaken Bulgaria's natural enemies, namely the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Greece and Romania and strengthen her natural allies, namely Hungary and the USSR.<sup>34</sup>

As far as a united and independent Macedonia was concerned, the BCP considered the territory to be *"populated by Bulgarians"*. Obviously



such a view provoked opposition from the Communist Parties of Greece and Yugoslavia (CPG and CPY). In this situation the Comintern attempted to reconcile the divergent views of the Balkan parties with regard to the Macedonian question. Unrelenting pressure by the Comintern on these parties achieved results. During the Fifth Congress of the Balkan Communist Federation in 1922, a consensus was reached about the formation of a united and independent Macedonia. This consensus however was fatally compromised. It emerged that all nationalities living in the Balkans would co-exist in Macedonia and no one nationality would have an absolute majority. The result was that whichever nationality would predominate in Macedonia, (Serbs, Bulgarians or Greeks), the others would automatically be discriminated against. The Sixth Congress of the CBF therefore declared that the establishment of a single, united and independent Macedonia under the auspices of the Balkan Federation would ensure the rights and liberties of all nationalities.<sup>35</sup> Thanks to this solution, the BCF accepted the statement that different nationalities lived in Macedonia. However, the Communist Parties of Greece and Yugoslavia accepted the policy of a united and independent Macedonia which in the framework of the Balkan Federation would have to guarantee peaceful development of all peoples living in Macedonia. Despite this compromise, voices of protest began to be raised immediately after the Sixth Congress. These protests came from different nationalities and different countries in the Balkans but the most vociferous opposition to the concept of a united and independent Macedonia came from the ranks of the Communist Party of Greece.<sup>36</sup>

## CHAPTER

## 2

**THE COMMUNIST PARTY  
OF GREECE (CPG) AND ITS  
POLICY OF “NEITHER STATEHOOD  
NOR NATIONHOOD”  
(1918–24)**

In order to comprehend the position of the CPG with regard to Macedonia, it is necessary to recall the main political themes in Greece before and after the uprising of 1830. The concept of the so-called “*Great Idea*” (meaning a Greater Greece) was present in Greek political thought throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. It was also accepted by the CPG even though its origins were to be found in Greek bourgeois circles and thus inimical to the Communists. The concept itself (Gr Meghali Idhea) came from the Phanariots, members of the old Byzantine aristocracy living in Constantinople (Tur Istanbul) who took their name from the area of the city, Phanar, in which they lived. Here too was, and still is, the seat of the Greek Patriarchy which administered to the orthodox churches of the Middle East. The Phanariots<sup>1</sup> were closely linked to the Patriarchy and supported it financially, thus enabling them

to wield influence over the whole Greek orthodox church. Not all this interest was beneficial to the church.<sup>2</sup> Aided and abetted by the orthodox church, they wished to assert its supremacy over the non-Greek church by forbidding, among other measures, the use of vernacular languages in the liturgy and insisting on the use of Greek [called *katharevousa* (*pure Greek*) which was used only by an intellectual elite and was not understood by ordinary people who used Greek called *dhimothiki* (*popular Greek*)]. Gradually, the Phanariots became civil servants in the imperial Ottoman administration. From 1699 to 1821 they held the offices of Dragomans and Hospodars.<sup>3</sup> Dragomans were both interpreters, political advisors and secretaries of state. Hospodars were directly responsible to the Ottoman authorities and ruled the principalities of Walachia and Moldavia in their names. Their superior education and knowledge both of Balkan and western European languages and western thought enabled them to wield considerable power even though they were in theory captive subjects of the Turks. It was no accident, therefore, that plans for the rebirth of Greece were first mooted among their ranks. They founded secret societies, so-called “*heteries*” whose task it was to prepare Greeks, step by step, for a national uprising. This task only became possible during the 19th century when the Ottoman Empire had begun to decline.

The best example of their increasing influence was the creation of the “*Republic of the United Seven Islands*” (the Ionian Islands)<sup>4</sup> under the terms of the Russo-Turkish treaty of 21 March 1800. This was to be a first step in the gradual process of winning back territory under Turkish rule. The Phanariots, who initiated this process, together with the church hierarchy, adumbrated the so-called “*Great Idea*” (Greater Greece). In historical perspective, the idea may be a fantasy but it nevertheless found many supporters, particularly among adherents of the future Greek monarchy, including King Otto and his successor George I.<sup>5</sup> The “*Great Idea*” envisaged the extension of the Kingdom of Greece to the Adriatic Sea in the west, to the Black Sea in the east and to the Mediterranean Sea in the south. In other words, they took as a territorial basis for a reconstituted Greece the Byzantine Empire at its fullest extent. In so doing, they ignored the fact that these territories were only under Byzantine rule for a limited period and, moreover, were ethnically never Greek. In such areas as Northern Epirus, Macedonia, Thrace and Anatolia (now in Turkey), Greeks lived only on the peripheries. They never lived in the core of these territories. None of this however presented a problem for the proponents of the “*Great Idea*”. The Macedonians, like other nations, were characterised according to this theory as “*slavophones*” (Greek slavophon

meaning Slavic-speaking) or as “*foreign language speakers*” (Greek *alophon* meaning alien, foreign speaker). They all had to be hellenised<sup>6</sup> and this was done by establishing various educational institutions and above all by setting up Greek schools and consulates in non-Greek territories with a view to realising the “*Great Idea*”. After 1870, Greek activities to achieve this aim gradually began to increase. Despite Greek efforts, the Macedonians retained their feeling of separateness as the Macedonian insurrection of 2 August 1903<sup>7</sup> abundantly demonstrated. It broke out on St Elijah’s day (Mac. *Ilindenskoto vostanie*) and is thus known as the Elijah Uprising. The Macedonians wished to demonstrate to the whole of Europe that they wanted a separate and independent state that would not be part of Albania, Greece, Serbia or Bulgaria. Although the uprising failed after three months, the fact that it had occurred strengthened the Macedonian’s demands for independence. Greece realised that it would have to restrict its policies to opening schools on Macedonian territory rather than forcing a wholesale hellenisation of the Macedonian people. They thus organised military units of Greek “*andarts*”, Greek officers for the most part who were sent to Macedonia to terrorise and kill the innocent civilian population (see Lithoxou: *Ellinikos antimakedhonikos aghonas. A: Apo to Ilinten sti Zagkoritsani*) and force them to abandon their national aspirations and become Greek “*on return to Greece*”.<sup>8</sup> This was what the “*Great Idea*” meant in practice on territory which had never been Greek. After the Balkan wars of 1912/13, however, some success in this direction was achieved. Two factors were instrumental. The first was the movement of Greek-speaking (Greeks, Turks) or Christian population (Ponti (Pondi) Greeks speaking older form of Greek [mixture of Attic, Koine, Byzantine Greek, Turkish, Persian and Caucasian languages] not understood by mainland Greeks, Turkish-speaking Greeks, Turks, Armenians and of mixed origin like Karamanli [mixture of Greeks, Turks and Persians] so-called in Greek “*prosphighes*” (refugees) from Turkey to Macedonia and secondly, the expulsion of Christian Macedonians to Bulgaria and Muslim Macedonians to Turkey, thus altering the ethnic structure. Macedonians became a minority in Macedonia whereas previously they had been a majority. For the Greeks, the reverse happened.<sup>9</sup>

This description of the “*Great Idea*” is necessary to understand the stance of the CPG towards Macedonia. Even if the CPG had abandoned the idea, it is none the less true that the model of Greek patriotism accepted by the CPG is derived from it. In effect, the CPG and the “*Great Idea*” are identical. Only after 1924 did a section of the Greek communists distance itself from this concept with the result that they accepted

the existence of a distinct Macedonian nationality in Aegean Macedonia (today Northern Greece).

Returning to our main theme, however, it is necessary to describe the political and economic situation in Greece in order to appreciate the conditions in which the first Greek Socialists, and later Communists, lived and worked.

As a member of the Entente, Greece received additional territory after the first world war, namely, Epirus, Macedonia including the port of Salonika, and Thrace. But economically Greece was in crisis. There were no developed industries and the Greek market was badly supplied. The lot of the majority of the population was hard. Only the aristocracy and middle classes were better off. In many cases they were able to exploit the difficult situation of the country to enrich themselves, obviously at the expense of the poorer members of society. These included people who, although aware that they were being exploited, seized every opportunity to work. Such was the price exacted to satisfy their basic needs. Politically, Greece was not stable, although the leader of the liberal-national movement, Eleftherios Venizelos, dictator from 1936, endeavoured to bring it about. The Socialists however were able to progress step by step from one success to another under propitious internal conditions.

Another view of this situation is provided by G. D. H. Cole in his *History of Socialist Thought* (London 1958).<sup>10</sup> In his opinion, parlous economic situations and political instability were not factors conducive to the development of socialism and later communism. The history of the socialist movement in fact suggests the opposite, namely, that difficult economic and political situations actually promoted the acceptance and spread of socialism and communism in Europe. The best example is Germany at the end of the first world war.

The first congress of the one thousand socialist organisations throughout Greece took place at the *Piraeus Hotel* in Athens from 4 to 10 November.<sup>11</sup> Its aim was to establish one party to represent the Greek socialists - the *“Socialist Workers Party of Greece”*<sup>12</sup> (SWPG). At its inaugural congress, the SWPG drew attention to the continuing existence of unresolved problems both national and territorial from before the first world war. The SWPG committee, however, charged with the resolution of these matters, was not able to take any decisions which would be unanimously accepted. Only the inaugural congress could do this.<sup>13</sup> Thus two groups of socialists emerged; the so-called *“reformists”* (N Yaniou, A Sidheris) and those who opposed them on the left (D Lighdhopoulos, N Komiotis, Tzoulatis). The inaugural congress passed two resolutions; the *“Minority Resolution”* represented by the reformists and the *“Minority*

*Resolution”* put forward by the left representing mostly members of the Greek Workers’ Movement.<sup>14</sup>

Below I analyse the contents of both these resolutions concerning the national and territorial disputes existing in Europe after the end of the first world war.

#### THE MINORITY RESOLUTION.

“Our views concerning all current international disputes are as follows; all European disputes such as those of Alsace, Poland, Triest etc may be solved in accordance with the Wilson programme whose main points have been agreed to be Europe’s workers. We probably share the same views as workers in other countries although we are not acquainted with the details. Greek workers know at first hand the problems of the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean and are thus best qualified to express an opinion about them. Accordingly we make the following demands;

- 1 European Turkey to become an autonomous republic occupying both shores of the Sea of Marmara. The Straits of Marmara to become international and, like the Autonomous Republic of Thrace, to be placed under the protection of the League of Nations.
- 2 Bulgarian Thrace to be annexed to the Autonomous Republic of Thrace. [which latter being already Greek, the former would then also become part of Greece]
- 3 Greece never to lay claim to Bitola and Serbia to recognise that Salonika belongs to Greece.
- 4 The creation of an independent Albania outside the spheres of influence of Austria, Italy, Serbia and Greece.
- 5 Italy to withdraw from Valona which is to be recognised by Albania except for Northern Epirus which should be ceded to Greece.
- 6 Recognition of the right of Romania to Dobrudža and Transylvania and of the Serbs to Bosnia Herzegovina. The Yugoslavs to create separate, independent states and Bessarabia to become independent but as part of the Soviet State. [This concept of the “widest frontiers” was proposed by the USSR - footnote in the document] In this way it would

- escape the excessively expansionist policies of Serbia and Romania at the expense of other Balkan states.
- 7 The creation of a pan-Balkan Democratic Federation.
  - 8 In Asia, the areas of Smyrna and Aydin from the northern frontier of the Autonomous State of Thrace to the eastern and southern frontiers of Asiatic Turkey to be ceded to Greece.
  - 9 Italy to be denied its claim to Atalia which should be given to Turkey to grant it access to the sea.
  - 10 The Dodecanese to be returned to Greece.
  - 11 Syria from its northern and eastern frontiers with Turkey and its southern frontier with Israel to be ceded to France.
  - 12 The Old Town in Jerusalem to be part of the independent Republic of Israel.
  - 13 Southern Palestine to be ceded to Great Britain.
  - 14 A Republic of the Sea of Marmara to be created on the southern shore of the Black Sea bounded to the east by Soviet Russia and to the south by Turkey and Armenia.
  - 15 An independent republic of Armenia to be created in Asia Minor on Armenian territory.
  - 16 Turkey to form a free republic in the centre of Asia Minor with free access to the sea at the port of Alexandretta. <sup>15</sup>

The *Minority Resolution* appeared on 12 November 1918 in the journal “*Rizospastis*” (The Radical) which was soon to become the official organ of the CPG. It is clear that the “*Minority*” stood for self-determination, for example, of Alsace, Poland and Trieste. On the solution of national and territorial problems, the “*Minority*” supported policies favourable to Greece. The first point of the Resolution concerning European Turkey mentions Eastern Thrace which would become the Autonomous Republic of Marmara straddling both shores of the Sea of Marmara. In effect, this would become a Greek mini-state. The Bosphorus, linking Istanbul with the Republic of Turkey, that is the Republic of Marmara, would come under the protection of the League of Nations. This state would thus find itself between the rivers Mesta and Maritsa. The population of this territory was Greek. The Communists, with the interests of the state and the Greek people in mind, wished to establish an independent mini-state which would in future be annexed to Greece proper, thus achieving both independence from Turkey and a weakening of the Turkish state.

In the second point concerning Bulgarian Thrace, the *Minority Resolution* proposed the annexation of Western Thrace together with the Republic of Thrace.<sup>16</sup> The third point concerns the ending of the Greek-Serbian dispute as well as the status of Bitola and Salonika. Both parties wished to come to an agreement in order to ensure no territorial changes, i.e. to uphold the status quo, particularly as Greece wished to retain Salonika for access to the sea. In the fourth point, there is a very deliberate attempt to establish an independent state of Albania. The Albanians were both Muslims and Christians and so creating a Muslim state would lead to conflicts which Greece could exploit to its own advantage.<sup>17</sup> The fifth point was also cunningly thought out. Italy was to withdraw from Valona and Greece would receive in exchange (for nothing) Northern Epirus, non-Greek territory<sup>18</sup> but of vital strategic interest because it would afford access to the Adriatic. The sixth point was very advantageous to Greece. By recognising Romanian claims to Dobrudža, territory belonging ethnically to Bulgaria, it would provoke conflict between two countries which would weaken both of them to the advantage of Greece. Transylvania was disputed territory between Hungary and Romania. A further proposal in point six would also be advantageous to Greece. The annexation of Bessarabia, ethnically Romanian and part of the USSR would cause friction between the two states, weakening Romania and strengthening the Soviet Union. In Asia Minor, so-called Anatolia, the *Minority Resolution* demanded Smyrna and Aydin. The Dodecanese would also fall to Greece (see point ten). Furthermore, the *Minority Resolution* also mentioned establishing an independent Armenian Republic. The Armenians were the natural enemy of the Turks and so Greece would emerge in a stronger position vis-a-vis her ancient Turkish foe (see point fifteen).

Point twelve mentions the creation of an independent Israeli state including Jerusalem. This proposal completely ignores the interests of the Arabs even though they lived in Jerusalem. However, the proposal was made because the “*Minority*” wished to expel Jews living in Salonika and recognising an Israeli state appeared to be the best way of doing this. The Greek middle classes showed considerable interest in the wealth which would thus fall into their hands.<sup>19</sup> As is evident, the “*Minority*” programme was not so much socialist as nationalist.<sup>20</sup>

The “*Majority Resolution*” adopted a different tack.

## THE MAJORITY RESOLUTION

- 1 To open negotiations for a general peace without annexation or reparations and on the basis of the rights of the people, all warring nations including Russia to be included and all previous agreements annulled.
- 2 Representatives of the working class of different countries chosen by the organisers to participate in the negotiations.
- 3 All warring and neutral countries to accept the following conditions essential for a lasting peace;
  - a) immediate withdrawal of all armies from various countries, disclosure of all secret treaties and cessation of all secret diplomacy.
  - b) suspension of military service and substitution of a militia for a regular army.
  - c) immediate demobilisation and disarmament and demolition of all fortifications and bases.
  - d) all seas to be accessible internationally and all straits to be opened.
  - e) all factories producing military equipment to be placed under international control and changed to non-military production.
  - f) recognition of all nations and peoples, irrespective of size, with full rights defined by their own systems of government.
  - g) all national and territorial disputes to be decided by plebiscite without foreign interference.
  - h) colonial problems to be solved on the same conditions.
- 4 Dissolve current alliances and create a League of Nations to guarantee their respective independence.
- 5 An International Customs Union and an International Committee to be the political and economic basis of the League.

The Socialist Workers Party of Greece considers that to achieve the above aims, it is necessary to convene immediately an International Congress of Socialists whose decision will be binding on all members.

## BALKAN DISPUTES

In order to settle Balkan disputes, particularly in so far as they concern our country, the Congress proposes;

- 1 granting full independence to the islands of Cyprus, Imbros, Limnos, Tenedhos, Samothrace, the Dodecanese and Castellorizo (Castelrosso) as well as Northern Epirus so that they may determine their own status.
- 2 granting full rights of return and the payment of compensation to all refugees forced from their homes in Balkan countries and Asia Minor, irrespective of their nationality. Furthermore, the means for their return are to be provided.
- 3 transforming the present area into a federation comprising the vilayets on democratic lines so that peoples from the east would become an independent Commonwealth and thus form part of the Democratic Balkan Federation.
- 4 Concerning other Balkan questions, the Congress resolved the following;

Establishment of a Democratic Balkan Federation. The Congress of the Socialist Workers Party of Greece, convened at Piraeus 4-10 November 1918 predicts the following;

- the class struggle carried on by the Balkan proletariat will become more acute in response to the foreign policies of the Balkan countries and the Super Powers.
- the economic, political and social development of the Balkan countries will restrain the ruling classes who strive for political hegemony at the expense of their neighbours, thus weakening their own countries.
- as a result of these internal developments, the reactionary policies of the Super Powers will complement their external policies towards the Balkans which are of considerable interest to them because of their wealth and geographical position.
- the policies of the Super Powers, their influence and acquisition [of territory] will facilitate the break up of the Balkan peninsula into numerous small states, vassals of the Super Powers, who will exploit their desire for hegemony and make them pliant tools [of the Super Powers].

- the dynastic and Royalist-Fascist system will foster growth of nationalistic egoism and political intrigue and will support military actions (adventurism). independence, social progress and even the security of the Balkan people themselves will be endangered if they do not unite to defend the values of progress and civilisation.
- as history has shown in relation to the heterogeneous ethnic nature of the Balkan people, it is not possible to solve these problems by force of arms which simply complicates matters and maintains the status quo which serves only the aims of the imperialists.

The Socialist Workers Party of Greece considers that socialist parties in the Balkans are obliged to;

- 1 Oppose all political claims of the imperialist forces concerning unsolved problems because they stir up hatred and destroy confidence which may lead to future wars.
- 2 Oppose every alliance of those Balkan peoples wishing to attain to the rights and freedoms of other Balkan peoples because this would lead to catastrophe instead of solidarity and friendship. Without recognising territorial changes as a means to solving Balkan disputes, the parties should proclaim that the sole route to the union of the Balkan peoples is the establishment of a Democratic Balkan Federation on the basis of a radical democracy which would guarantee full and lawful political participation, national and linguistic freedoms irrespective of race or creed and which would have a legislative body and local parliaments with free and direct elections on the basis of proportional representation, enforced by a militia.

In order to realise the above aims, the Congress proposes as a first step the immediate formation of a Post, Telegraph and Customs union and a political and economic alliance of Balkan countries opposed to any foreign intervention or influence; furthermore, the convening of a Pan-Balkan Socialist Workers Congress with the aim of working out a common policy for the working classes of the Balkans towards a renewal of the Pan-Balkan Socialist Bureau. ”

Comparing the two resolutions, we note that from the beginning, the first one mentions the need for negotiations, thanks to which world peace had been established. All warring nations should take part in these talks. Besides the governments of these countries, representatives of the working class [see paragraph 2] should also participate in these talks. This declaration was crucial because probably for the first time representatives of the working class would be able jointly to participate in the new post-war Soviet order which they would otherwise not have been able to. Paragraph 3 concerns the conditions under which peace could be guaranteed in the future. Some of these paragraphs however ignored reality and could not be realised. These included the demands for the publication of all secret agreements and the abandonment of all secret diplomacy. Similarly for paragraph c concerning complete disarmament and destruction of military bases. Equally futile was paragraph e. Other sub-paragraphs of paragraph 3 and the first part of sub-paragraph a and c and sub-paragraphs f and g were reasonable. Similarly for paragraphs 4 and 5. Concerning Balkan affairs, the “*Majority Resolution*”, in contrast to the “*Minority*” demanded liberty and rights of self-determination for the populations of the islands of Cyprus, Imbros, Limnos, Tenedhos, Samothraki, the Dodecanese and Castellorizo (Castellosso) as well as for Northern Epirus (Southern Albania). Paragraph 2 demanded the right of repatriation of all refugees from other Balkan countries and Asia Minor and mentioned the possibility of financial assistance. Paragraph 3 mentioned the establishment of a Balkan Federation based on democratic principles. The reasons for Balkan underdevelopment were ascribed to the ruling classes. The Super Powers were seen as the major exploiters of the wealth of the Balkans. The “*Minority*” adopted a contrasting approach by calling for unity within a Balkan Federation. In this way the problems of all peoples on foreign territories would be automatically resolved. National freedoms and languages, irrespective of race or creed would be guaranteed.

Of the two resolutions put forward to solve the Balkans’ pressing problems, the “*Majority Resolution*”<sup>21</sup> was carried at the SWRG Congress. Both resolutions however had much in common. Both suggested answers to questions posed by the Dodecanese, Cyprus, Northern Epirus [or preferable, Southern Albania] and Aegean Macedonia. Greece was keenly interested in all these questions.

The policy of the “*Majority*” towards the unsolved problems of nationalities and territories was as follows;

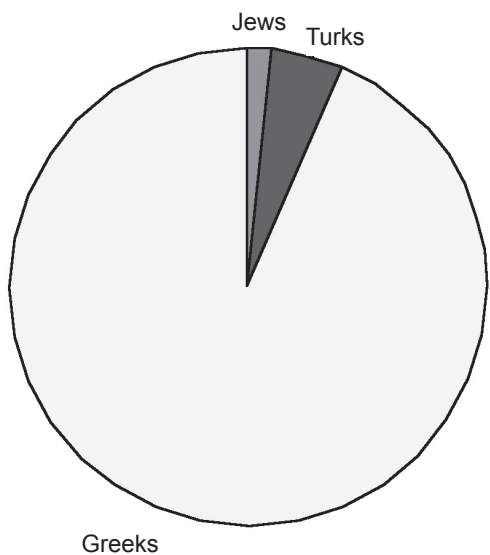
Ethnically Greek territories, i.e. the Dodecanese and Cyprus, formally under foreign control, should have the right of self-determination.

This demand was made because Greece envisaged the annexation of these territories given that the majority of the inhabitants were actually Greek. Statistically, in the Dodecanese 131,761 people (93.5% of the population) were Greek, 6874 (4.8%) Turkish and 2455 (1.7%) Jewish. The total population was 143,090 in 1918. (See graph on page 28 )

It is thus clear from the statistics that those wishing to unite with Greece were justified. Both *'ius solis'* (rights to historical territory) and *'ius civitas'* (rights of settlement) were in favour of the Greeks. The Turks were a minority, 14.35% of the whole population and lived on territory both ethnically and historically foreign to them.<sup>23</sup>

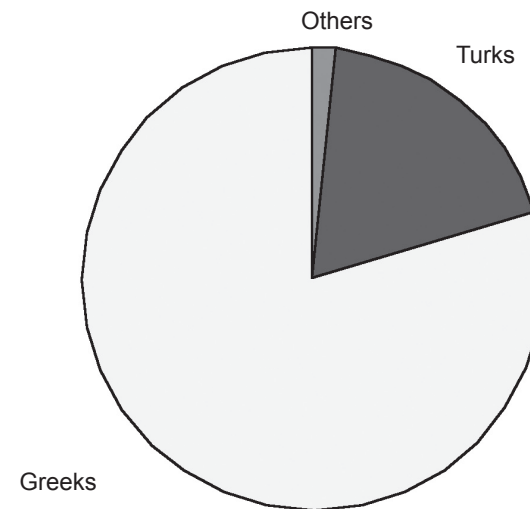
ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE DODECANESE IN 1918

Number of inhabitants



ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF CYPRUS IN 1918

Number of inhabitants



In Cyprus, 274,180 people (79.9%) were Greek, 64,180 ((18.65%) Turkish and 5666 (1.65%) were of mixed origin.<sup>22</sup> (See graph above )

Albanian territory, more specifically its modern Southern part, was inhabited by 40,000 people of Greek origin, comprising 17% of the population. Both *'ius solis'* and *'ius civitas'* (rights of the Christian and Muslim Albanians comprising 83% of the population) would lay the foundations of a new Albanian state.<sup>24</sup> The Greeks would retain their rights of language, culture and nationality as a minority living in Albania. But despite these obvious facts, the *"Majority Resolution"* demanded that the Greek minority, comprising only 17% of the population and living on territory both historically and ethnically foreign, be granted the right of self-determination, thus in effect constituting annexation by Greece.<sup>25</sup> However, the most important problem which Greece faced both after the Balkan wars and the first world war was that of Macedonia. The vast majority of the population of Aegean Macedonia (now Northern Greece) was of non-Greek origin (as much as 77.5%) and lived on territory which was ethnically and historically Macedonian.<sup>26</sup> Both *'ius civitas'* (right of territory historically Macedonian) and *'ius solis'* (rights of

Macedonians) demanded that this problem be treated as a Macedonian one. Two factors favoured this treatment despite the fact that only 22% of the population in Aegean Macedonia were Greek, the SWPG was not consistent in its handling of the Macedonian question. If we compare its demands for the self-determination of various peoples with the lack of any such demand for the Macedonians (comprising a majority of 77.5%) or for Albanians in Southern Albania (83%) as well as Western Thrace, then this is tantamount to an endorsement by the SWPG of the “*Great Idea*” which automatically rejects the rights of all non-Greeks. The SWPG considered Aegean Macedonia as an inherent part of Greece, ignoring the rights of the Macedonians to their historical territory (*ius civitas*) and their declarations on the matter,<sup>27</sup> the SWPG stated that the Macedonian problem had been solved. Up to 1924 the Macedonian question was of little interest to the SWPG. Only in 1924 were they forced to take decisions, not because they wanted to but because of the new situation in which they found themselves. The “*Resolutions*” began to reflect the official views of the Greek authorities. The “*Great Idea*” began to be understood as “*Greater Greece*” and decisions taken about non-Greek territories (Aegean Macedonia, Southern Albania, Western Thrace) offer indisputable proof of this. But the greatest and most pressing problem, the Macedonian national problem, remained.<sup>28</sup>

## CHAPTER

## 3

THE CPG AND ITS POLICY OF  
 “STATEHOOD WITHOUT  
 NATIONHOOD”  
 1924–31

From the very beginning, the CPG consistently denied the existence of a Macedonian problem which had in fact arisen in 1918 when Aegean Macedonia was annexed by Greece. If the question arose at all, it was treated as an internal matter. It was due only to the insistence of the International Communist Movement and the Balkan Communist Federation that Macedonia ceased to be a matter for Greece alone but was placed firmly on the Balkan agenda.

In the spring of 1921 a delegation of the CPG went to Moscow to take part in the III Congress of the International Communist Movement — the Comintern.<sup>1</sup> The CPG had changed its name from the Socialist Workers Party of Greece which it called itself at the II Congress in Athens on 5 April 1920. They had then decided to take part in the III Congress of the Comintern<sup>2</sup> and sent a delegation led by Gheorghios Gheorghiadhis. In Moscow for the first time the CPG had to adopt a position on the question of autonomy for Aegean Macedonia at the instigation of Vasil Kolarov,



future secretary of the Communist Party of Bulgaria (CPB). Gheorghiadhis expressed astonishment and refused to give any undertaking.<sup>3</sup> The Politburo of the CPB brought the matter up again in May 1922 when Kolarov demanded autonomy for Macedonia and requested backing from other Communist Parties. But Yanis Petsopoulos rejected the demand<sup>4</sup> and requested that the matter be postponed until the next meeting of the Central Committee of the CPG — after their return to Greece of course. The question was raised again in 1923 at a conference of the BCF in Sofia. A spokesman for the CPG, A. Stavridhis, resisted pressure brought on him by the conference saying “*The policy of a united and independent Macedonia is not acceptable to the Greek colonisers [people settled in Aegean Macedonia by the Greek authorities] who are a majority there, nor does it interest political emigres in Bulgaria whose government is more interested in uniting Macedonia with Bulgaria*”.<sup>5</sup>

The Macedonian question arose again at a meeting of the BCF which was convened after the defeat of the September uprising in Bulgaria. The uprising had been directed against the bourgeois government of Tsankov but the party had remained neutral, the insurgents lacked co-ordination and as a result the uprising had failed.<sup>6</sup> A meeting of the BCF took place in Moscow where Georgi Dimitrov and Vasil Kolarov again urged the acceptance of the slogan “*A United and Independent Macedonia*”. The representative of the CPG, N. Sarghologhos, however, refused to accept their arguments.<sup>7</sup> Like his predecessor, Stavridhis, he maintained that this slogan was not acceptable to the CPG, particularly after the forced exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey and the mass settlement of Greeks in Aegean Macedonia.<sup>8</sup> This exchange of populations occurred after the signing of an agreement between Greece and Turkey in Lausanne in 1923. Christians were moved to Greece [some of them were Greek-speaking Greeks but others were Turkish-speaking Christians] and Muslims moved to Turkey [they were both Turks and Muslim Macedonians].<sup>9</sup> However at the V Congress of the Comintern in Moscow in 1924, the CPG was severely criticised by the leader of the Comintern and expert on Balkan affairs, Dmitriy Manuilskiy as well as Vasil Kolarov, chairman of the BCF for “*Austro-Marxism*”. The CPG recognised a “*United and Independent Macedonia*” in theory but refused to accept it in practice.<sup>10</sup> Kolarov’s arguments were supported by Manuilskiy who declared that “*in Greek, Serbian, Bulgarian and Albanian Macedonia there live a people who, independently of the ethnic diversity about them, have nurtured their own Macedonian historical traditions and are thus entitled to the unwritten law of national independence and sovereignty*”.<sup>11</sup>

Predictably the CPG was reluctant to accept these facts. The Greek delegate at the V Conference of the Comintern, Serafim Maximos, disputed the arguments of Kolarov and Manuilskiy. He said that the policy of a “*United and Independent Macedonia was not acceptable to the CPG because more than 700,000 Greek refugees and workers now lived there and they were not disposed to accept Macedonian autonomy*”.<sup>12</sup>

In the face of intense pressure, the Greek delegates at the V Congress, Serafim Maximos, Pantelis Pouliopoulos and N Meghas, accepted the declaration of the Comintern and BCF on Macedonia. The best description of the feelings and attitudes of the Greek communists towards Macedonia appeared in an article by Serafim Maximos published in “*Rizospastis*” on 6 February 1927 entitled “*An Explanation*”.

“I was a delegate of the Party (together with Pouliopoulos) at the V Congress of the Comintern. I well remember how Comrade Kolarov attacked the Serbian delegate (a Macedonian by origin) who had asked a question about autonomy. “We” he said “are not autonomists. We are communists and as such we ask this question”. The Comintern delegate spoke in the same vein. [This was Manuilskiy] I explained how the Macedonian problem is regarded and how our Party became embroiled in a coup for contentious or similar reasons. As representatives of the Party, we received orders to defend what in my opinion were divergent views and convictions. This we eventually did. But as a participant at the Congress I heard, discussed and accepted justifiable views buttressed by facts. I consider it greatly mistaken when some Party warriors express their disappointment about what they consider to be erroneous and destructive policies but which were in fact not only utterly right but powerfully supportive of the revolution”.<sup>13</sup>

Maximos’ words precisely reflect the views of the majority of the Greek communists, the minority fraction, concerning Macedonia. The resolution of the Macedonian question was accepted because the majority fraction considered it to be the best way to incite revolution in the Balkans. It was of course predictable that accepting this resolution by the Comintern, the BCF and the CPG would cause “*concern among members of the CPG*”<sup>14</sup> because this policy “*did not reflect the wishes or points of view of the Greek communists*”.<sup>15</sup> The first hostile reaction came from Yanis Kordhatos, director of the Party newspaper “*Rizospastis*” and member of the Central Committee of the CPG who wrote;

*“The policy of a united and independent Macedonia and Thrace is totally irrelevant [meaning unreal] because Macedonia is divided into three parts and all the inhabitants of Greek Macedonia are Greeks, a fact I can personally vouch for.”<sup>16</sup>*

The CPG realised that the whole question of Macedonia caused feelings to run deep amidst the rank and file of the Party. Moreover there was strong resistance to any positive resolution of the problem. The Party leadership despatched an officer to gauge the mood at grass roots level in order to prepare for the inevitable questions at the next Party congress. As expected, the officer reported negative feelings. All regional parties in Greece expressed their opposition to the policy of the Comintern towards Macedonia.<sup>17</sup> There were only two exceptions; the Party organisation in Piraeus and the Young Communists of Greece (strictly speaking only some of them). Despite this negative reaction, the Macedonian national question was placed on the agenda of the *Extraordinary Congress* of the CPG held in Athens from 26 November to 4 December 1924.<sup>18</sup>

At this congress, an attempt to solve the Macedonian problem along the lines envisaged by the Comintern met with “*prolonged and fierce arguments*”<sup>19</sup> among the rank and file of the Greek communists. In the course of these heated discussions, two main standpoints began to emerge. The first one was a call for a new “*minority*” within the CPG led by Yanis Kordhatos and Thomas Apostolidhis whose aim would be to bring about by any means united and independent Macedonia. The second one called for the formation of a “*majority*” under Pantelis Pouliopoulos and favoured the acceptance of the Comintern’s view of the Macedonian question. Kordhatos himself explained his negative stance towards Macedonia in an article published in “*Rizospastis*” on 18 February 1927. Kordhatos referred to the Bulletin of the CPG of 2 May 1926 which published a message from the Central Committee of the Comintern. This he considered the best exposition of his own views of Macedonia and why he agreed with it.

“We proclaim as a basic principle the right of the minorities in Macedonia and Thrace to self-determination and oppose the oppression of the people ... But this problem is not central to the policies of our Party. If such a minority fights for self-determination on its own, we, as their allies, will help them in their struggle. The struggles of [national] minorities are just. As their allies the CPG will support the Macedonian and Thracian minorities in their struggles provided these struggles continue. We will not provide means to create a movement amongst the minorities in Macedonia or Thrace nor solve their problems for it must not be

forgotten that the bourgeois elements in these minorities have interests which conflict with those of the proletariat. We are not basically a Party of national minorities but a Party of the proletariat. The Comintern will aid national liberation movements of people against colonialism provided the mass of the people together with their leaders fight for self-determination. The Comintern will not create national liberation movements at grass roots level who are fighting to realise the aims of paragraphs in their various Resolutions. We, the CPG, shall fight for the rights of national self-determination and against national oppression in Macedonia and Thrace. But the Party as presently constituted must not make the national problem central to our role of political struggle or use slogans such as “Independence for Macedonia and Thrace” as a call to action. Remember that the Communist Party supports national liberation movements but does not directly create them nor shoulder their problems.”<sup>20</sup>

Kordhatos went on to quote Stalin who had assumed the leadership of the Comintern on Lenin’s death. His speech to the Yugoslav delegation, according to Kordhatos in the same article “*put things into perspective*”. He quotes Stalin as follows;

“In order to avoid any misunderstanding, I must confine myself to this particular problem. The right to independence cannot be understood as a debt owed to oppressed people. Certain comrades, misunderstanding this right, consider that Croatia is “obliged” to seek independence from Yugoslavia. But this is a mistake. Do the same conditions prevail in Macedonia, now under Greek rule? Does a small, defined minority exist which demands the establishment of a separate state? Are not the problems of minorities and of Macedonia under Greek rule the same as those in Southern Serbia, Croatia or Bulgaria? Did there not exist at this time a revolutionary situation in the whole of the Balkans and especially in Macedonia under Greek rule and also in Thrace? This is the truth and nothing but the truth. This is how the problem must be understood and not in the way it has been done at the Congress. On the contrary, it has been turned on its head. It is considered that the Balkans have been set ablaze by revolutionary forces and national minorities. This is a fundamental error, (the first error of the CPB) from which a whole chain of errors has sprung. This is revolutionary adventurism. This mistake must not be covered up when the time comes to judge the CPB. Did not the CPB commit one of its gravest errors on 9 June 1923 and subsequently?”<sup>21</sup>

Kordhatos very adroitly availed himself both of the Comintern's communiques and those of Stalin. In his article, he quotes part of Stalin's declaration to the effect that the Comintern supports first of all the revolutionary movements and only secondly rights to independence. All this was true except that the Comintern slightly changed its tactics after the death of Lenin when Stalin took over. Kordhatos quoted him from the declaration. However, this declaration was published in 1925, after Lenin's death the previous year. Lenin himself declared that the revolutionary movement can progress only when the rights of peoples to self-determination have been recognised. Only then can Communism be accepted as the ruling system. The next phase after the recognition of the rights of nations, small or large, to self-determination is then the creation of a communist national state within one united Soviet republic,<sup>22</sup> a supranational entity.

Returning to Stalin's declaration, we note that it breaks new ground in his approach to revolutionary matters. In quoting him, Kordhatos does not mention that the revolutionary fervour, which actually existed, was not exploited but dampened down by himself among others. All revolutionary actions in Greece were discouraged unless they were carried out by Greek revolutionaries. No other minority had the right to demonstrate. The reason was simple. The revolution existed to serve only one covert end, that of "*Greater Greece*", allowing Greece to expand into territory which was ethnically non-Greek and to transform old ruling bourgeois regimes into new, communist ones. Returning again to Kordhatos's quotation from the above declaration, it is worth considering an extract from the Proclamation of the Executive Committee of the CPG of 25 January 1925 on the death of Lenin. The CPG categorically declared its stance to Lenin's policy on national issues;

"Lenin proclaimed and actively supported the rights of oppressed peoples to self-determination together with secession from the countries in which they lived. No bourgeois party in Greece wishes to heed the words of Lenin, words with which the Party demands the cessation of attempts to buy off the peoples of Macedonia and Thrace. Let them fight for their own unity and independence. The parties of Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian and Turkish plutocrats know that if Lenin's ideas of national liberation take root, they will lose control of Macedonia and Thrace which they have carved up between them as the spoils of war. Bourgeois parties will brand the Communists as traitors and claim they have sold out the interests of the people and delivered them into the hands of foreign capitalists."<sup>23</sup>

Comparing this document with the one quoted by Kordhatos we note that they are diametrically opposed. The one published immediately after the death of Lenin contains his views of the national question while the earlier quoted Comintern document presents a somewhat watered down version of them. Stalin's influence was no doubt the cause of this.

After long and acrimonious discussion, both for and against accepting the concept of a united and independent Macedonia, the matter was put to the vote. 19 delegates voted; 17 voted for the acceptance of the Comintern's proposal for a united and independent Macedonia. Only two voted against — Kordhatos and Apostolidhis, representing the "*Minority*." Despite opposition, the "*Majority*" took the decision at the Third Extraordinary Congress on 3 December 1924. For the first time in the history of the CPG, a decision was taken about the Macedonian national problem.<sup>24</sup> The text of this historic resolution, entitled "*Independence for Macedonia and Thrace*" is as follows;

"In order to achieve their aims, the Capitalist Powers have never hesitated to use military and economic weapons or to shed the blood of the toiling masses. We need only look at Asia Minor, the Balkans and the Ukraine. They hold us fettered at arm and leg, constantly exposed to all manner of exploitation at the hands of the European bourgeoisie while ensuring their own security. In the Balkans and Asia Minor, the bourgeoisie are preparing themselves for aggressive actions. They are constantly building up their armed strength; three-quarters of their budgets are earmarked for military equipment, weaponry and officer training. Three quarters of their "Loans for Emigrants" [money for Greek refugees from Bulgaria and Turkey settled in Aegean Macedonia in 1924 for whom the Greek authorities demanded and received the sum of £12,300,000. - footnote in the document] are used for the same purpose, the death of the refugees. They oppress national minorities in Macedonia and Thrace and plot new wars in the Balkans. Together with the bourgeoisie of Bulgaria and Serbia they sew hatred among peoples and seek their destruction.

By means of intrigue and "national" propaganda, the bourgeoisie seeks to occupy the whole of Macedonia. The Bulgarian bloodsucker Tsankov demands access to Kavala [town in Aegean Macedonia] while the Serbian reactionary Pašič and the royalist-military clique thirst for Salonika. A new imperialist war is about to be unleashed on the Balkans. The Greek bourgeoisie has gathered 700,000 wretched refugees, packed them together like sardines and callously relocated them by colonising Macedonia so as to provide cannon fodder for future wars.

Like the Bulgarian and Serbian bourgeoisie, the Greek bourgeoisie terrorises sections of the Thracian and Macedonian people and their lands with fire and sword. Without pressure on Macedonia, Thrace or other peoples, the bourgeoisie cannot be supported by us to restore social rights. Our bourgeoisie are the exploiters and oppressors of the Macedonians and the Thracians as well as exploiters and oppressors of the working class and poverty stricken peasants and refugees. If we do not destroy the control of the bourgeoisie over Macedonia and Thrace, we will not be able to break the social yoke under which that same bourgeoisie holds us all captive. There is no escape from the imperialist war about to be unleashed on us while the present situation of divide and rule by the Balkan and Turkish bourgeoisie is maintained.

This is why we struggle against weapons, against war which capitalism is preparing to unleash, against the oppression of the people and their forced exploitation. This is why we struggle for the union of the three parts of Macedonia and Thrace and for their national independence. This is why we demand national committees (Soviets) for refugees and peasants in a free and independent Macedonia so that we ourselves may share out the land among poor emigre farmers in accordance with their own interests. Only then will we save the exhausted refugees in Macedonia".<sup>25</sup>

For the first time in the "*Resolution*", mention is made of the Macedonian people and thus a de facto recognition of their existence. It refers to the inhuman exploitation and political aims of the Greek authorities in colonising the whole of Aegean Macedonia with refugees from Bulgaria, Turkey and the Caucasus in accordance with the peace treaties signed in Paris and Lausanne.

The "*Resolution*" of the III Extraordinary Congress was an attempt by the "*Majority*" fraction of the CPG to tackle the Macedonian question and find a solution. The views of the "*Minority*" fraction, however, at odds with the "*Majority*" were rejected and dismissed as "*Trotskyist*" and "*opportunistic*".<sup>26</sup> The Comintern's Balkan expert, Dmitriy Manuil'skiy, said that "Kordhatos represented Social-democratic views for he was himself the embodiment of Bavarian Austro-Socialism".<sup>27</sup>

Immediately after the decisions of the III Extraordinary Congress of the CPG, the Party found itself in deep crisis because of the Comintern's decision about Macedonia. At the same time this crisis coincided with the stabilisation of the Greek economy. The Greek authorities had colonised Macedonia with an enormous number of Christian Greeks as well as

Turkish-speakers from Bulgaria, Turkey and the Caucasus, all thanks to the financial aid given by the League of Nations. This same aid enabled Greece to achieve political stability which had been seriously threatened after its defeat at the hands of the Turks under Kemal Pasha at the Sakarya river, 24 August 1921.<sup>28</sup> This defeat dealt Greece a grievous blow because Greek forces were within 50 kilometres of Ankara and its fall would have automatically broken Turkish resistance and given Greece enormous territorial gains. However, after the disaster of Sakarya, Greek forces in turn began to suffer heavy defeats. The Turks seized Izmir [Gr. Smyrna] on 8 September 1922 and ten days later Mustafa Kemal announced that the "*whole of Anatolia had been liberated from the Greek yoke*".<sup>29</sup> However according to the agreement signed at Madanya<sup>30</sup> on 11 October 1922, Greece had to withdraw its forces to behind the Maritsa river in Thrace. The Peace Conference opened at Lausanne<sup>31</sup> on 20 November 1922 and on 24 July 1923 the final peace treaty was signed<sup>32</sup> which granted sovereignty to Turkey<sup>33</sup> and confirmed its frontiers as they were in 1915<sup>34</sup> — frontiers which remain to this day.<sup>35</sup>

After these turbulent events, a period of calm ensued during which the Communist movement in Greece stagnated. However, friction between the *Majority* and *Minority* factions in the Party did not diminish but, on the contrary, increased as a result of the adoption of the policy of a united and independent Macedonia. This friction was in fact the sign of a deeper crisis in the Party itself which concerned the interpretation of Marxism as it applied to Greek society and to Greek historical awareness.<sup>36</sup> The *Minority* demanded that the broad tenets of Marxism be adapted to Greek society as it was whereas the *Majority* supported the wholesale adoption of Marxism as an infallible dogma to Greek society without reference to its specific identity. This was in contradiction to Greek mentality.

In 1925 Yanis Kordhatos elucidated the ideological stance of the *Minority* in the pages of *Rizospastis*.

"The Party cannot ignore its historical past and exist outside the present. As every communist knows, Bolshevism means the adaptation of the general principles of Leninism to the actual conditions prevailing in any given country ... Communists have to demonstrate sufficient intelligence to understand the actual political and social problems of their own country bearing in mind that one single situation cannot obtain for all countries but quite the contrary, different situations arise according to different political and economic conditions. Crises in the Party

and stagnation in the working class movement cannot be solved by personal attacks or dogmatic utterances. The fundamental tenets of Marxism must be adapted to Greek historical reality which we must endeavour to analyse objectively.”<sup>37</sup>

A similar approach was adopted by H Vatis in his article “*Further to the Discussion about the Self-styled Protectors*” (Rizospastis 24 February 1927) His view was that “*Marxism and Leninism are inseparable from the revolutionary struggle and that they would be devalued if they were regarded as dogma or Holy Writ*”.<sup>38</sup>

An interesting situation arose in the Party in 1926. Pantelis Pouliopoulos, First Secretary of the CPG and leader of the Majority faction since 1924 accepted the political views of the Minority. He wrote;

“the main reason for the stagnation in the Greek working class movement and the Communist cause in Greece is that there are no attempts in the Party to assimilate and transform Marxism-Leninism and make it relevant to the social and economic conditions prevailing in our country”.<sup>39</sup>

Pouliopoulos went on to say that:

“in order to overcome the stagnation of the Greek working class movement, we first have to acquaint ourselves more thoroughly with the concrete problems which confronts the Party each day then to examine Greek historical reality in the light of Marxist doctrines”.<sup>40</sup>

He concluded that:

“only in this way can the Party describe Greek objective reality according to Marxists tenets. Without adapting Marxism to Greek reality, the working class movement in Greece will not emerge from the grave crisis in which it has found itself since 1923”.<sup>41</sup>

The Minority, attached to its pure ideological interpretation, attacked the aim of a united and independent Macedonia and at the same time demanded that the policy be abandoned. The Minority thought that after the migration of people from Turkey, Bulgaria and the Caucasus to Greece and from Greece to Turkey, a new ethnic — historical reality had emerged in Aegean Macedonia in which the Greeks were now in

the majority. The result was that for the Minority, the aim of a united and independent Macedonia contradicted the new reality. A letter written by Alkidhamos (pseudonym for Yanis Kordhatos) published in the *Revolution Proletarienne* of 20 August 1926 stated that “*all the inhabitants of Greek Macedonia are Greeks because the Greek bourgeoisie has expelled the Slav population and settled Greek Macedonia with Greek refugees*”.<sup>42</sup> Pouliopoulos, accepting the arguments of Kordhatos about adapting pure ideology to Greek realities and recalling the 1924 crisis of the Party, wrote in 1927;

“The problem of Macedonia will not go away and keeps recurring in one form or another, demanding of each political party a clear statement of policy. For the CPG the dilemma is acute; either to continue to support the aim of a United and Independent Macedonia or to reject it. This policy (I refer to the mistaken policy of defending the rights of all oppressed peoples to self-determination and separate development if they so wish) aiming at a United and Independent Macedonia and a United and Independent Thrace, rejected by the CPG and somehow explained away as our stance towards the problem of nationalities, is bankrupt and cannot be anything but bankrupt because it is a reflection not only of a mistaken assessment of the balance of forces in the country but also of revolutionary romanticism. The policy ignores the concrete realities of the revolutionary movement in the country, especially in Greek Macedonia and Thrace which any policy towards the national minorities has to take into account. It ignores both the absence of any popular-revolutionary forces in Greece and the enormous changes brought about by the influx of refugees and the danger for the CPG if the rank and file neither understand nor accept it...”<sup>43</sup>

We note here how the attitudes of the CPG, even amongst the representatives of the Majority have begun to move in the direction of the Minority. Pouliopoulos consistently failed to appreciate the distinctive nature of the Macedonian nation and he viewed it purely in geographical rather than in national terms and failed to notice any revolutionary currents there. Indeed he could not have noticed them for what he actually saw were Greek refugees from Bulgaria, Turkey and the Caucasus who did not demand separation from Greece. Nevertheless the aspirations of the Macedonians were precisely that. The enthusiasm with which the Macedonians embraced the Communist movement was extinguished because when speaking of a Macedonian nation, the Party leadership

had in mind a Macedonian minority living on Macedonian territory yet were unable to discern a Macedonian people. This way of “*looking but not seeing*” was shared by Kordhatos who precipitated a crisis in the Party by referring to romanticism and immaturity in the revolutionary movement of the minority living in Macedonia. This is what he wrote about the mistaken policy of the Party concerning a *United and Independent Macedonia* in *Rizospastis*, 8 February 1927:

“Speakers on political matters at the Congress [the reference is to the crucially important congress of the CPG in 1924] presented Greek and Balkan realities with naive romanticism, describing them not as they actually were but as they wanted them to be. The Party, influenced by the youthful naiveté of its new leadership, thought it could act decisively on Balkan affairs. Such certainty made the leadership think that the prospect (of autonomy) was imminent and so they devoted all their efforts to settling the problem of the nationalities. These efforts were in vain because the minorities did not respond [in the revolutionary sense] and the working class showed not the slightest interest. Moreover, these efforts demonstrated that the Party leadership, buoyed up by enthusiasm, turned the Party overnight into a party of national minorities.”<sup>44</sup>

As a result of this article, the controversy surrounding the problems of the nationalities not only became more acute, but provoked fresh reactions from the members of the CPG. The question was raised whether in fact the Macedonian question really was central to the affairs of the CPG or merely peripheral.<sup>45</sup> An answer was provided by Gheorghios Siantos in an article in *Rizospastis* of 13 March 1927:

“Up to now no comrade has explained the problem of the nationalities clearly enough for all members of the Party to understand. The issue of the national minorities is either of fundamental or strategic concern of the CPG. How we handle this issue is a measure of whether we govern well or badly. This issue was raised during the 1924 Congress and the reasons for our failure lay in our tactical and organisational shortcomings. However, in my view, the issue of the national minorities can never be fundamental to the CPG. The fundamental issue of the CPG is the class struggle aimed at the overthrow of Capitalism and the establishment of Communism. Therefore any other movement which weakens capitalism can be supported and even fought for but only in so far as it contributes to achieving the final aim. In this sense,

I consider that our policy towards the problem of the nationalities has been mistaken from the very beginning. Despite the fact that we have different views, I do not think that the crisis in the Party had anything to do with this policy. The Party should formulate its policy concerning the national minorities with the ultimate aim in sight.”<sup>46</sup>

Siantos thus considers that the main problem cannot be in principle the nationality question but the class struggle. The previous policy of a *United and Independent Macedonia* is described as “*mistaken from the very beginning*”. This statement recalls that of another Greek communist, Vatis, who expressed his opinion in the 24 March 1927 edition of *Rizospastis* as follows;

“I discuss ... whether the problem of the national minorities is a fundamental or a strategic issue with reference to Siantos’ article. Concerning the former, we should consider the various stages in the struggles of the proletariat. One of these is the overthrow of imperialism. The victory over imperialism is impossible without the liberation of the colonies which provide the imperialists with such powerful economic support and this means that the struggle to liberate oppressed peoples is a “fundamental” issue for the Party. No Communist Party can exist without recognising the inevitability of such struggles with all their practical consequences, otherwise it would be a Social-Democratic Party. Therefore the nationality problem is at the same time a “strategic” one. The final strategic aim is the overthrow of imperialism and in this struggle we are obliged to make use of all revolutionary means which also include the national liberation of oppressed peoples. We must therefore consider Macedonia a “fundamental” issue if we recognise its right to self-determination and separation but as a “strategic” one if we fight for a united proletarian front to liberate oppressed peoples.”<sup>47</sup>

For Vatis, though not for Siantos, the “*struggle to liberate oppressed peoples*” is a “*fundamental*” issue for the Party. But the nationality problem, he declares, is at the same time a strategic issue, for the aim is the “*overthrow of imperialism and in this struggle we are obliged to use all revolutionary means including liberation movements*”.

So the CPG Congress of 1924 which adopted the aim of a *United and Independent Macedonia* became the scene of endless disputes concerning whether adopting this aim was a mistake or not. The reason for this was the lack of anything which might distinguish the Macedonians from

others living in Macedonia. This was in turn the reason why Macedonians became noticeably cooler towards the CPG, precipitating an internal crisis, the true nature of which was not understood by the members of the CPG. The Third Extraordinary Congress of the CPG was held in a stormy and crisis-laden atmosphere during which the slogan “*A United and Independent Macedonia*” was defended — a clear sign of the gradual recognition of the Macedonian question by CPG members. This Third Congress took place in Athens on 6 April 1927. The CPG *Resolution* at this Congress reads as follows:

### THE NATIONAL MINORITIES QUESTION

“The Extraordinary Congress of 1924 defined the Party’s policy towards the question of the national minorities. Because the Party erred in its handling of this issue and because some comrades attempted to force changes in the decisions of the Congress, the Party has decided the following:

- 1 The views of the comrades who proposed to reject the slogan of a “United and Independent Macedonia” are mistaken for they rest on dubious arguments about the existence and status of the Macedonian and Thracian people. The starting point for any Bolshevik definition of any particular case is the question, to what extent in any given country is there evidence of an oppressed minority and how can this minority be mobilised, together with the working class, to fight the ruling bourgeoisie who oppress it?
- 2 The principles of national self-determination and freedom from oppression should be enshrined in Party policies towards the question of national minorities. During 1923/4 when a revolutionary situation existed in the Balkans, the Balkan Communist Federation and the Comintern proposed an “Independent Macedonia” to define our basic policy towards the national minorities and at the same time to harness the revolutionary masses living in Thrace and Macedonia, which were divided up among four countries, for the struggle against the Pan-Balkan bourgeoisie. The best weapon in our struggle against the imperialist tendencies of Serbia and Bulgaria was the slogan “A United Macedonia and Thrace”.

- 3 Although we are not at present in a revolutionary phase, the aim of a “United and Independent Macedonia” should remain. The path from the revolutionary phase to serious preparations influences the Party line on national minority matters as we explain below. The CPG is currently committed to put forward the first plan which does not involve a struggle to realise the above aim but rather concerns itself with concrete measures to remove the means of national oppression (taxes, agricultural policies, language, colonisation etc.) The struggle must continue by means of the press and Party activity both inside and outside parliament. Besides this, the Party is committed to promote the aim of a “United and Independent Macedonia” which brings with it the immediate danger of a new Balkan war and at the same time to promote the aim of a Federal Republic of Balkan Workers and Farmers in which it will become possible to settle national minority issues. The Party is also committed to acquainting itself with the ways national minorities are oppressed in Greece and take effective measures to deal with them.
- 4 The Party’s mistake at the 1924 Congress was that it placed the question of the national minorities at the centre of its activities. From 1925 the Party’s error did not lie in the slogan as such but rather in the place assigned to it among other slogans and activities of the Party.
- 5 Downplaying the slogan “Independent Macedonia” during the last parliamentary elections was a mistake.
- 6 The Congress stressed the need to step up internationalist propaganda among the toiling masses and intensify the struggle against the bourgeoisie’s nationalist and chauvinistic propaganda, especially amongst immigrant populations. Ideological training is necessary to counter new wars and to strengthen worker resistance to the oppression of the national minorities. <sup>48</sup>

The “*Resolution*” itself was confirmed by the decision taken earlier at the 1924 Congress. The confirmation of the slogan “*United Macedonia*” was the response of the CPG to those members who wished to reject it. There was open acknowledgement of the Party’s mistakes such as those concerning the national minorities and the absence of the slogan

“*Independent Macedonia*” during the elections. Attention was drawn to the increased internationalist propaganda among the toiling masses and the necessity to counter the effects of nationalistic and chauvinistic propaganda. Paragraph 1 of the Resolution pointed out that rejection of the slogan “*United and Independent Macedonia and Thrace*” was mistaken as it was based on dubious arguments. The Congress pushed through changes in its Macedonian policy; by accepting the slogan “*United and Independent Macedonia*” it hoped to overcome the crisis which had arisen in 1924. A thorough analysis of this crisis including the reasons for the non-participation of Macedonians in the Greek Communist movement was given by Nikos Kyriakopoulos in his article “*Why the Macedonians spurn the United Front - A response to Messrs Dhraghoumis and Modhis*”<sup>49</sup> which appeared in *Rizospastis* on 8 April 1927.

“We are duty bound to reply to Messrs Dhraghoumis and Modhis’s attack, not against the Communists but against the rural population in Macedonia and against Macedonia in general. The Macedonians consider themselves to be a proud people who were among the first to understand their place in modern society, probably because they suffered very badly from capitalist exploitation and from those who wielded power in their lands as well as from the imperial superpowers who hold the Balkans in thrall. The imperialist forces subjected the Macedonians to appalling treatment during the war. Serbia and Eastern Macedonia were totally devastated by the Bulgarians and by “civilised” defenders of the people. All young men were rounded up and 90% of them died in Bulgaria at the hands of Bulgarian thugs. Most of the villages were razed to the ground. Whole families were deported and the majority of young girls raped by “cultured” Frenchmen and Englishmen. Women from the villages around lake Ohrid/Prespa<sup>50</sup> German, [Grk. Aghios Germanos,] Medovo, [Grk. Milio], Štrkovo, [Grk. Plati], Rudari, [Grk Kalithea], Orovnik, [Grk. Karie], Lak, [Grk. Mikrolimni] and many others were forced to leave them without taking anything with them and when they returned they found only heaps of rubble. The Macedonians have learnt to make the most of what they have to satisfy their needs. To feed his family, every farmer must have sheep, two or three oxen, chickens, pigs, granaries and sufficient equipment to cultivate his smallholding of 2 or 3 acres. Oxen from these villages and most of the sheep were requisitioned by the army as were their horse-drawn carts, horses and pigs and many villagers were beaten because they tried to conceal something in order to survive. Those whom the Bulgarians accused of being sympathetic to the Greeks are now accused by the

Greeks of being Bulgarians and supporters of the Komits [small groups of partisans fighting against Turkish rule, later Greek rule].

Understandably the Macedonians learnt bitter lessons from these experiences before eventually finding their role in the class struggle and seeking allies. Everybody who took up their cause betrayed them and turned against them. They have no confidence in the United Front of Workers and Peasants because they do not know any candidates nor are they interested in the tactics of the Party. I can assure you, Messrs Draghoumis and Modhis that the Lerin constituency<sup>51</sup> did not vote for Kyriakopoulos but for the United Front of Workers and Peasants and Refugees. It is an utter lie to say that I deceived the voters. They knowingly voted for the hammer and sickle.<sup>52</sup>

The views of Nikos Kyriakopoulos, a representative of the United Front differ considerably from those of many predecessors in the depth of his analysis and his understanding of the Macedonian problem. This may be because he was of Vlach origin [a pastoral people originally from Romania who emigrated to Macedonia]<sup>53</sup> and lived in Psoderi (Gr. Pisodherion) in the Lerin district of Macedonia. His article demonstrates for the first time the difficult situation of the Macedonians from his own perspective.

His statement that the Macedonians “*found their role in the class struggle and sought allies*” is the best proof for Kyriakopoulos of their receptiveness to the CPG for it was not him they voted for but for the “*hammer and sickle*”. This article marks a change in the CPG’s attitude towards the Macedonian national problem. At times he was a lone voice among many others who saw the problem quite differently. By contrast, consider the views expressed in the “*Resolution*” of the Third Plenum of the CPG Central Committee of 27-31 January 1930.

“ The issue of the national minorities does not play a large part in Greece because of the relatively small numbers of oppressed people. The strength of the revolutionary movement in Greece is the proletariat, the bulwark of the revolution together with its allies - active groups in the towns fighting national and foreign capitalists and imperialists and resolutely opposed to the relics of feudalism, poor farmers, the petty bourgeoisie, the oppressed peasantry and small-time urban landlords”.<sup>54</sup>

The “*Resolution*” generally ignores the existence of national minorities in Greece. It concentrates on the strength of the proletariat, the “*bulwark*



Commission was represented by Mr. L. Loucaides and Mr. S. Stravros.

It is important to mention that this is the first time members of Greece's ethnic Macedonian minority legally defend themselves against the discriminatory policies of the Greek government.

**July 10, 1998** - the European Court of Human Rights unanimously finds Greece in violation of Article 11 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Article 11 relates to the right to freedom of association of its citizens.

This finally brings to an end a drawn out court case that started 8 years ago in Florina and ultimately ended at the highest human rights court on the continent.

[http://www.florina.org/html/1998/conviction/1998\\_conviction.html](http://www.florina.org/html/1998/conviction/1998_conviction.html)

A press-release on this topic can be found at the website of Greek Helsinki Monitor at: <http://www.greekhelsinki.gr/english/pressrelease/13-7-98.html>

## NOTES

### CHAPTER 1

- 1 J Pajewski, *Historia powszechna 1871-1918*, Warszawa 1967, p. 453
- 2 S Kiseliovski, *KPG i makedonskoto nacionalno prašanje 1918 - 1940*, Skopje 1985, p. 27
- 3 *ibid.*
- 4 *ibid.* p. 7-8
- 5 H Batowski, *Rozpad Austro-Węgier 1914-1918*, Kraków 1982, p. 291
- 6 S Kiseliovski, *op.cit.* p. 28
- 7 *ibid.*
- 8 *ibid.*
- 9 S Kiseliovski, *Egejskiot del na Makedonija (1913-1989)*, Skopje 1990, p. 9
- 10 S Kiseliovski, *KPG i makedonskoto...* p. 28
- 11 *ibid.* p. 29
- 12 Vasil Kolarov, *Natsionalny Vopros na Balkanach, Kommunističny Internatsional 1924, Nr. 3-4* in Kiseliovski, *KPG i makedonskoto.*p.29
- 13 W I Lenin, *O Prawie narodów do samookreślenia*, Warszawa 1952.
- 14 S Kiseliovski, *KPG i makedonskoto...*p. 29
- 15 *ibid.*
- 16 *ibid.* p. 30
- 17 *ibid.*
- 18 H Batowski, *Między dwiema wojnami, 1919-1939*, Kraków, 1988, p 107-109
- 19 S Kiseliovski, *ibid*
- 20 *World Communism. A Handbook 1918-1965*, ed. W S Sworakowski, Hoover Institutions Press, Stanford 1973, p. 78-91
- 21 *ibid.* p. 29-30
- 22 *ibid.*
- 23 See below chapter 4

- 24 P Poulipoulos, *Ghia to Makedhoniko, Artha, Thesis kai Polemikes*, Athina 1976, p. 76
- 25 *Kommunističeski Internatsional*, 1920, No. 14 in S Kiselinovski, *ibid.*, p. 32
- 26 *ibid.*
- 27 5-ti Vsyemirny Kongryes *Kommunističeskogo Internatsionala*, *Tezisy, Ryezolutsii i Postanovleniya*, Moskva 1924 in Kiselinovski *ibid.*
- 28 Ch. *Balkanskaya Kommunističeskaya Federatsiya*, *Gozisdat RSFSR*, Moskwa 1930 in D G Kousoulas, *Revolution and Defeat*, OUP, London 1965, p. 60
- 29 *The Communist International*, 1924, No. 7, p.95. in S Kiselinovski *ibid.* p. 32
- 30 S Kiselinovski, *KPG i makedonskoto...*p. 30
- 31 See below chapter three
- 32 T Wasilewski, *Historia Bułgarii*, Wrocław 1988, p. 240
- 33 S Kiselinovski *op. cit.* p. 33
- 34 *ibid.*
- 35 *Žurnal Kommunističeski Internatsional*, 1924, No. 3-4 in *ibid.* p. 34
- 36 *ibid.* p. 35

## CHAPTER 2

- 1 See *The New Encyclopedia Britannica, Micropaedia Vol. 111* 1975, p. 925
- 2 See further in “*Enghromi Enkiklopedia Idhroghios*, tomos 15, *Ekdhosis <Dhomiki>*, Athina 1982, p. 160
- 3 See J Demel, *Historia Rumunii*, Wrocław 1986, p. 215-216
- 4 H Batowski, *Państwa bałkańskie 1800-1923*, Kraków 1938, p. 9-10
- 5 *ibid.* p 91-2. See also *Enghromi Enkiklopedia Idhroghios*, tomos 10, *Ekdhosis <Dhomiki>* Athina 1982, p. 143
- 6 See R Poplazarov, *Grčka politika sprema Makedonija vo vtorata polovina na XIX i početokot na XX vek*. This book gives a good description of the influence of the “Great Idea” on Greek political life. It accurately demonstrates Greek expansionism in Macedonia.
- 7 J Skowronek, M Tanty, T Wasilewski, *Historia Słowian południowych i zachodnich*, Warszawa 1988, p. 510
- 8 See R Poplazarov, *Grčka politika sprema Makedonija*
- 9 See S Kiselinovski, *Egejskot del na Makedonija 1918-1989*, Skopje 1990 p. 19-42
- 10 See G D H Cole, *History of Socialist Thought*, Macmillan, London 1958 p. 282-286
- 11 R Kirjazovski, *KPG i makedonskoto nacionalno prašanje 1918-1974*, Skopje

- 1982, p. 4. Documents show that the congress took place from 4 to 10 November 1948. See also D G Kousoulas, *Revolution and Defeat*, London 1965, p. 1.
- 12 D G Kousoulas, *op. cit.* p. 2
- 13 S Kiselinovski, *op. cit.* p. 59
- 14 *ibid.* p. 59
- 15 R Kirjazovski, *KPG i makedonskoto nacionalno prašanje*, Skopje, 1982, p. 6-7
- 16 S Kiselinovski in the notes to his book, p. 60. explains that at the Peace Conference Western Thrace was joined to Greece but the “Minority” did not know this. Hence in the Resolutions, reference is made to Western Thrace in the Republic of Marmara.
- 17 *ibid.*
- 18 See chapter one of this book.
- 19 S Kiselinovski, *op. cit.* p. 61
- 20 S Kiselinovski, *op. cit.* p. 2
- 21 S Kiselinovski, *op. cit.* p. 61
- 22 *Meghali Elliniki Enkiklopedia*, Athina 1930, vol. 4, p. 600 in S Kiselinovski *op. cit.*
- 23 S Kiselinovski, *op. cit.* p. 62
- 24 J Ancel, *Peuples et Nations des Balkans*, Paris 1930, p. 185 in Kiselinovski *op. cit.*
- 25 S Kiselinovski, *op. cit.* p. 63
- 26 *ibid.*
- 27 *ibid.* p. 64
- 28 *ibid.* p. 65

## CHAPTER 3

- 1 G Kousoulas, *Revolution and Defeat. The Story of the Greek Communist Party*. OUP London 1965, p. 54
- 2 *ibid.* p. 4
- 3 *ibid.* p. 54
- 4 See G Kousoulas, *op. cit.* Despite the merits of this book, tracing the history of the CPG from the revolution to 1949, it is too one-sided and the events are seen from a Greek perspective which vitiates its account of the Macedonian national problem. The author presents the views of the “minority” in the CPG and accepts the postulate of the “Great Idea”. Like the author of the book “*The Greek Tragedy*”, Constantine Tsoucalas, he considers the CPG’s handling of the Macedonian problem was a major political error.
- 5 K A Bramu, *Slavokomunistikes oraghanosis en Makedhonias*. Athina 1969.

- p. 86 in S Kiselinovski, Egejskiot del na Makedonija 1918-1989, Skopje 1980, p. 66
- 6 See further in T Wasilewski. Historia Bułgarii, Wrocław 1988, p. 247-250
- 7 S Kiselinovski op. cit. p. 66
- 8 N A Hristoforou. To Makedhoniko zitima kai i sovietiki politiki. Thessaloniki 1954 p. 112 in S Kiselinovski, op. cit. p. 66.
- 9 See H Batowski, Państwa Bałkańskie 1800-1923, Kraków 1938 p. 273
- 10 See V Kartov, Makedonskiot narod i pravoto na samoopredeluvanje 1912-1941 Skopje 1987, p. 447. The particular merit of this book is that it offers a balanced history of the Macedonian national struggle for self-determination in an historical perspective.
- 11 G D Katsouli, Istorija tou KKE, tom 11, 1923-27. Athina 1976, p. 140-141 in Kiselinovski op. cit. p. 66
- 12 A G Elefantis, I Apeghelia tis adhinatis epanastasis. Athina 1976, p. 38 in S Kiselinovski, op. cit.
- 13 R Kirjazovski, KPG i makedonskoto nacionalno prašanje 1918-1974, Skopje 1982 p. 34
- 14 K Bramou, op. cit. p. 92 in S Kiselinovski op. cit. p. 67
- 15 A Elefantis, I Apeghelia tis adhinatis epinastasis, Athina 1976, p. 38 in S Kiselinovski op. cit. p. 67
- 16 K A Bramou, Ibid. p. 92 in S Kiselinovski ibid.
- 17 S Kiselinovski op. cit. p. 67
- 18 V Kartov, op. cit. p. 448
- 19 A A Kirou, Sinomasia enandhion tis Makedhonias, Athina 1950, p. 14 in S Kiselinovski ibid. p. 68
- 20 R Kirjazovski, op. cit. p. 39
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- 49 "United Front" founded by the CPG, the Greek Farmers Party and other progressive organisations. Editorial note in the documents, p. 78
- 50 Villages around Lake Prespan. The lake is divided between the present-day republics of Albania, Greece and Macedonia.
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- 57 *Otto Kuusinen, O Natsionalnom Voprosie v kapitalističeskoj Yevropie, Kommunističeski Internatsional, No. 23/1931 in V Kartov ibid. p. 452*
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- 2 *ibid. p. 89-90*
- 3 *Komits - small bands of partisans numbering 15 to 20 fighting firstly against Turks and then against Macedonians to force them to support annexation to Bulgaria.*
- 4 *Comparing the translations of this extract of the document, I opted for Kiselinovski's version which is much more precise and gives a more accurate number of people speaking Macedonian. See Egejskiot del na Makedonija (1913-89), Skopje 1990, p. 91.*
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- 16 *ibid.*
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- 20 *S Kiselinovski, Egejskiot del na Makedonija 1913-89, Skopje 1969, p. 92 and H Ajdonovski, Vistinata za Egejska Makedonija, Skopje 1971, p. 60-81*
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- 24 *Letter by A Čipov, ibid.*
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- 26 *T Popovski, op. cit. p. 80*
- 27 *R Kirjazovski, op. cit. p. 129-130*
- 28 *ibid. p. 159-160*
- 29 *S Kiselinovski, op. cit. p. 95*
- 30 *ibid.*
- 31 *ibid.*

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- 2 *J A Gierowski, Historia Włoch, Wrocław 1985, p. 573-592. See also S Sierpowski, Faszizm we Włoszech, Wrocław 1973.*
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# APPENDIX VI

## GREEK ACTS AGAINST THE MACEDONIANS

(1912 - 1994)

By Peter Medichkov

The following chronicles the methods employed by Greece in its effort to eradicate the centuries old Macedonian ethnic presence in Aegean Macedonia (Greek-Macedonia) in the name of Greek territorial expansion. Specific laws and decrees are presented against the backdrop of relevant historical events affecting Macedonians in Aegean Macedonia.

The chronology begins in 1912 when Greece, for the first time ever, came into possession of Macedonian territory and this by force of arms, almost a decade after the 1903 Ilinden (St. Ilija Day) Uprising lead by the IMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization) in a failed effort to free Macedonia from the Ottoman yoke.

The ominous prophecy of Harilaos Trikoupis, Greek Prime Minister from 1882 to 1895, foretold what the neighboring Greek state had in mind for Macedonia and its people:

“When the great war comes, Macedonia will become Greek or Bulgarian, according to who wins. If it is taken by the Bulgarians, they will take the population Slavs. If we take it, we will make all of them Greeks”.

### 1912 BALKAN WARS

Irredentist Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and Montenegro drive a crumbling Ottoman Empire out of the Balkans and pursue territorial expansion into Macedonia. Greek army enters Aegean Macedonia ostensibly to “liberate” Macedonia from the Ottoman.

1913

Greek, Serbian, Bulgarian alliance breaks down over competing claims for Macedonia. Bulgaria miscalculates and attacks Serbia and Greek armies. Ottoman forces rejoin war against Bulgaria. Bulgaria defeated, loses territorial gains in Macedonia.

From “liberation to tyranny”, Greek army commences savage and bloody “ethnic cleansing” of the towns of Kukush, Doiran, Demir-Hisar and Serres in the Aegean Macedonia.

160 Macedonian villages burned, and atrocities committed. Mass exodus of refugees.

Treaty of Bucharest (Aug. 10, 1913), ends War and partitions Macedonia.

Greece refers to conquered Macedonian lands as the “new territories” under “military administration”. Not yet officially incorporated into the Kingdom of Greece.

Military occupation augmented by influx of administrators, educators; police brought from Greece.

Professor R.A. Reiss reports to the Greek government: “Those whom you would call Bulgarian speakers I would simply call Macedonians... Macedonian is not the language they speak in Sofia...I repeat the mass of inhabitants there (Macedonia) remain simply Macedonians.”

1917

LAW 1051 Greece inaugurates new administrative jurisdictions for governing newly acquired lands in Aegean Macedonia.

### 1919 TREATY OF VERSAILLES (PARIS)

England and France ratify the principles of the Bucharest Treaty and endorse the partitioning of Macedonia.

Greece pursues forced expulsion and denationalization of Macedonians and begins colonization by transplanting “Greeks” into Aegean Macedonia.

Article 51 of Treaty of Versailles espouses equality of civil rights, education, language, and religion for all national minorities which Greece violates and ignores.

Neuilly Convention and forced exchange of populations. About 70,000 Macedonians expelled from Aegean Macedonia to Bulgaria and 25,000

Greeks transplanted from Bulgaria to Aegean Macedonia.

Greek Commission on Toponyms issues instructions for choosing Hellenized names for Macedonian places in the Aegean Macedonia.

1920

Greek Ministry Of Internal Affairs publishes booklet: *Advice on the Change of the Names of Municipalities and Villages* in Aegean Macedonia.

1925

76 names of Macedonian villages and towns in the Aegean Macedonia Hellenized since 1918 by Greek authorities.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS pressures Greece to extend rights to Macedonian minority.

ABECEDAR Primer printed in Athens for use by Macedonian school children in Aegean Macedonia. Written in Latin alphabet and reflect the Macedonian spoken in Lerin district in western Aegean Macedonia.

Serbs and Bulgarians protest to League of Nations. Primer undermines their claim that Macedonians are Serbs and Bulgarians respectively.

Greece counters with last minute cable to League: “the population... knows neither the Serbian nor the Bulgarian language and speaks nothing but a Slav-Macedonian idiom.”

Greece “retreats” so as to preserve Balkan alliances. Primer is destroyed after League of Nations delegates leave Solun.

Thereafter, Greece denies existence of Macedonians. Refers to Macedonians as “Slavophone Greeks”, “Old Bulgarians” and many other appellations but not as Macedonians.

1926

Legislative Orders in Government Gazette #331 orders Macedonian names of towns, villages, mountains changed to Greek names.

1927

Cyrillic inscriptions destroyed or overwritten from churches, tombstones, and icons. Church services in the Macedonian language are outlawed.

Macedonians Ordered To Abandon Personal Names And Under Duress Adopt Greek Names Assigned To Them By The Greek State.

1928

1, 497 Macedonian place-names in the Aegean Macedonia Hellenized since 1926.

English Journalist V. Hild reveals, “The Greeks do not only persecute living Slavs (Macedonians)..., but they even persecute dead ones. They do not leave them in peace even in the graves. They erase the Slavonic inscriptions on the headstones, remove the bones and burn them.”

1929

Greek government enacts law where any demands for national rights by Macedonians are regarded as high treason.

LAW 4096 directive on renaming Macedonian place-names.

1936

Reign of terror by fascist dictator General Metaxas, 1936-40. Macedonians suffer state terrorism and pogroms.

Thousands of Macedonians jailed, sent to internal exile (EXORIA) on arid, inhospitable Greek islands, where many perish. Their crime? Being ethnic Macedonian by birth.

LAW 6429 reinforces Law 4096 on Hellenization of toponyms.

DECREE 87 accelerates denationalization of Macedonians.

Greek ministry of Education sends “Specially trained” instructors to accelerate conversion to Greek language.

1938

LAW 23666 bans the use of the Macedonian language and strives to erase everytrace of the Macedonian identity.

Macedonians fined, beaten, jailed for speaking Macedonian. Adults and school children further humiliated by being forced to drink castor oil when caught speaking Macedonian.

LAW 1418 reinforces previous laws on renamings.

1940

39 more place-names Hellenized since 1929.

1945

LAW 697 more regulations on renaming toponyms in the Aegean Macedonia.

1947

LAW L-2 citizens suspected of opposing Greek government in civil War stripped of their citizenship, including relatives, arbitrarily and without due process.

1948

LAW M properties confiscated from citizens who fought against government and those accused of assisting.

28,000 Child Refugees, mostly Macedonians, from areas of heavy fighting evacuated to Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania. Greece denies their right of return to this day.

RESOLUTION 193C(III) United Nations Resolution calls for repatriation to Greece of Child Refugees.

U.N. UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ARTICLE 19: Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

DECREE 504 continues property confiscations of exiles and colonization of Aegean Macedonia with people from Turkey, Egypt and other parts of Greece. Parcels of land given to colonists along with financial incentives.

1959

LAW 3958 allows confiscation of property of those who left Greece and did not return within five years.

Several villages in the Aegean Macedonia forced to swear “Language oaths” to speak only Greek and renounce their mother tongue (Macedonian).

1962

DECREE 4234 reinforces past laws regarding confiscated properties of political exiles and denies them right to return.

1968

EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS accuses Greece of human rights abuses.

1969

COUNCIL OF EUROPE declares Greece “undemocratic, illiberal, authoritarian, and oppressive”. Greece forced to resign from Council of Europe under threat of expulsion.

Military Junta continues the policy of colonizing the confiscated lands in Aegean Macedonia. Land handled over to persons with a “proven patriotism” for Greece.

EUROPEAN CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS signed by Greece states: ARTICLE 10(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers.

1976

DECREE 233 suspends about 150 past decrees, government decisions and laws since 1913. Regulations for the confiscation of properties belonging to Macedonian political exiles not affected.

1979

135 places renamed in the Aegean Macedonia since 1940. The Greek vigil regarding names is an indicator of the Macedonian ethnic identity in the Aegean Macedonia.

1982

Greek internal security police urges intensive campaign to wipe out remaining Macedonian language and consciousness in the Aegean Macedonia.

LAW 106841 political exiles who fled during the Civil War and were stripped of their citizenship are allowed to return providing they are “Greek by ethnic origin”. The same rights are denied to Macedonian political exiles born in the Aegean Macedonia.

U.N. UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ARTICLE 17, No one can be deprived of his own property against his will.

1985

DECREE 1540, Political exiles who fled during Civil War allowed to reclaim confiscated lands provided they are “Greeks by ethnic origin”. Same rights denied to Macedonian exiles born in the Aegean Macedonia.

U.N. UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ARTICLE 13.  
Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, as well as to return to his own country.

1986

International writers' organization, PEN, condemns Greece's denial of the existence of Macedonians and their language.

Greece escalates climate of fear in Aegean Macedonia.

Greece officially calls the Republic of Macedonia as the Republic of "Skopje", after the name of its capital city; and Macedonians are called "Skopjeans".

The term "Skopjeans" used to label Greek citizens who declare themselves as ethnic Macedonians. "Skopeans" laced with hatred, and racism. It connotes a traitor to Hellenism.

1990

CSCE COPENHAGEN CONFERENCE ON THE HUMAN DIMENSION, to which Greece is a signatory, states in ARTICLE 32: "Persons belonging to national minorities have the right freely to express, preserve, and develop their ethnic, cultural, linguistic, or religious identity and to maintain and develop their culture in all its aspects, free of any attempts at assimilation against their will". ARTICLE 33: "Participating states will protect the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of national minorities...and create conditions for the promotion of that identity".

GREEK HIGH COURT DECISION 19, refuses registration of "CENTER FOR MACEDONIAN CULTURE" in Florina. Appeal is turned down by High Appeals Court, in Salonika. Further appeal dismissed by Supreme Administrative Council of Greece in Athens.

1991

CSCE MEETING ON NATIONAL MINORITIES IN GENEVA, in which Greece participated states: "Issues concerning national minorities... are matters of legitimate international concern and consequently do not constitute exclusively an internal affair of the respective State... Participating States reaffirm, and will not hinder the exercise of, the right of persons belonging to national minorities to establish and maintain their own educational, cultural and religious institutions, organizations and associations". Belligerent anti-Macedonian

propaganda incites Greek population into a state of chauvinistic hysteria.

Translation from Greek: "Hang the Skopje Gypsies"

1992

Greece and Serbia conspire to overthrow and partition the Republic of Macedonia.

1993

Macedonian human rights activists Hristos Sideropoulos and Tasos Boulis were prosecuted under Greek Penal Code: Article 36, Para 191; disseminating false information; Para 192; inciting citizens to disturb the peace. Their crime? Declaring themselves as Macedonians in interview for Greek magazine ENA.

Macedonian human rights activist and priest Nikodimos Tsarknias derobed and expelled by Greek Orthodox Church because of his human rights activities. Tsarknias refused a Greek bribe which would have elevated him to bishop in 1989. Threatened with death.

1994

Extremists in Australia's Greek Community burn two Macedonian churches, after Australian recognition of Macedonia.

Greece continues to deny the existence of Macedonians in Aegean Macedonia despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

Greece continues repressive and unrelenting policies against Macedonians in Aegean Macedonia despite objections by international human rights organizations.



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