

# **The Pawn that would be King: Macedonian Slavs in the Greek Civil War, 1946-49**

**by**

**James Richard Horncastle**

M.A., University of New Brunswick, 2011  
B.A., St. Thomas University, 2009

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# Approval

**Name:** James Richard Horncastle  
**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy  
**Title:** *The Pawn that would be King: Macedonian Slavs in the Greek Civil War, 1946-1949*  
**Examining Committee:** **Chair:** Ilya Vinkovetsky  
Associate Professor

**Andre Gerolymatos**  
Senior Supervisor  
Professor

---

**Thomas Kuehn**  
Supervisor  
Associate Professor

---

**Dimitrios Krallis**  
Supervisor  
Associate Professor

---

**Garth Davies**  
Internal Examiner  
Associate Professor  
School of Criminology

---

**Amikam Nachmani**  
External Examiner  
Professor  
Department of Political Science  
Bar-Ilan University

---

**Date Defended/Approved:** December 7, 2016

## **Abstract**

The Macedonian Question has confounded academics, politicians and the people of the Balkans since the nineteenth century. While countries have resolved the territorial component of the Macedonian Question, the critical and confusing problem surrounding the ethnic and linguistic identity of the people of the region continues to be the source of international debate. Part of the reason for this confusion is because the history of the Macedonian Question is shrouded in nationalist polemics. The role of the Macedonian Slavs involvement in the Greek Civil War is particularly contentious and embedded in nationalist polemics, which has impacted academic inquiry.

This dissertation argues that the preponderance of Macedonian Slavs within the communist forces during the Greek Civil War influenced the actions of all the major actors involved, and has been a significant factor in shaping the modern Macedonian national identity. Equally important was that the Macedonian people's cognizance of their contribution to the conflict initially allowed them to pursue political and social objectives that would have been impossible under conventional circumstances. Ultimately, regional and international politics prevented the most idealist sections of the Macedonian Slavs from achieving their goal of an independent Macedonian state. Those elements that followed the Yugoslav vision, which developments in the Greek Civil War helped facilitate, however, did achieve the goal of an independent Macedonian political entity. This dissertation demonstrates that one cannot gain a comprehensive understanding of the Greek Civil War without examining the role of the Macedonian Slavs and Macedonian Question in the conflict.

**Keywords:** Macedonian Question; Greek Civil War; Cold War; Guerrilla Warfare; Nationalism; Conflict Studies

## **Dedication**

To my grandparents.

## Acknowledgements

Anyone that has gone through the process of writing a PhD knows that it is not an easy process. While it is my name on my dissertation, there are a number of people who deserve recognition for their valuable contributions.

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## List of Acronyms

AJ	Archive of Yugoslavia
ASKI	Contemporary Social History Archive
AVNOJ	Anti-fascist Assembly for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia
ASNOM	Anti-fascist Assembly for the National Liberation of Macedonia
BCF	Balkan Communist Federation
BCP	Bulgarian Communist Party
BRCC	Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Community
BWP	Bulgarian Workers' Party
CC	Central Committee
CPA	Communist Party of Albania
CPM	Communist Party of Macedonia
CPS	Communist Party of Serbia
CPY	Communist Party of Yugoslavia
DAG	Democratic Army of Greece
EAM	National Liberation Front
EDES	National Republican Greek League
EKKA	National and Social Liberation
ELAS	Greek People's Liberation Army
EPON	United Panhellenic Organization of Youth
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
IMRO	Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization
IMRO (UNITED)	Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (United)
IMXA	Institute for Balkan Studies
KKE	Communist Party of Greece
MRO	Macedonian Revolutionary Organization
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NLA	National Liberation Army
NOF	National Liberation Front
PDGFG	Provisional Democratic Government of Free Greece
PEEA	Political Committee of National Liberation

SMC	Supreme Macedonian Committee
SNOF	Slav National Liberation Front
UDBA	State Security Administration
UDIA	Diplomatic and Historical Archive
UN	United Nations
UNSCOB	United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans
USSR	Union of Soviet Social Republics

## **Note on Terminology**

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century the origins of the terms Macedonia and Macedonians have remained controversial. This was the case in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and continues on to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I refer to Slavophone Macedonians for those persons who inhabited the Greek portion of Macedonia. I use a linguistic argument since it is impossible to disentangle the identity of those who use this dialect. Although I concede there are those who challenge this definition, this is a historic, not a linguistic, thesis. To differentiate those who were the citizens of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia from those who were citizens of the Greek Republic I use the term Macedonian as a definition of citizenship, not ethnicity.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, my dissertation addresses the issue of Macedonian identity and independence. To avoid repetition, I employ the term “Macedonian Question” throughout. I do indicate the historical context of the term Macedonian Question as it signifies different issues in the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Macedonian Question dealt with the territorial disposition of the Ottoman Empire’s territories in the Balkans. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Macedonian Question dealt with Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Greece. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Macedonian Question focuses on the debate between FYROM and Greece over the right of either party to employ the name as part of their state’s identity.

## Chapter 1. Introduction

*Stalin: 'How many Macedonians are there in Yugoslavia?'*

*Kardelj: 'About a million and a half.'*

*Stalin: (A little taken aback) 'Are there really a million and a half Macedonians in Yugoslavia?'*

*Kardelj: 'Yes.'*

*Stalin: 'Well, that's a considerable number. What language do the Macedonians speak?'*

*Kardelj: 'The Macedonians have their own language.'*

*Stalin: 'Do they have a literature and everything in their own language?'*

*Kardelj: 'They have folk songs and a literature of their own, and now there are newspapers, magazines and periodicals coming out in Macedonian. Their language is just maturing.'*

*Stalin: 'It seems that the Macedonians take their cultural roots from the Greeks.'*

*Kardelj: 'There is evidence to support that.'*

*Stalin: 'Are you thinking of doing anything with the Bulgarians?'*

*Kardelj: 'Yes, after the ratification of the Peace Treaty we are thinking of making an agreement with them similar to the one we have with Albania.'*

*Stalin: 'And rightly too.'*

*Kardelj: 'We have quarrelled once or twice with our Bulgarian comrades over the Macedonian issue.'*

*Popović: 'They threw a clause connected with the Macedonians out of the Constitution.'*

*Molotov (smiling): 'Yes, they are treating the issue cautiously.'*<sup>1</sup>

In the approximately seventy years since Stalin made the above comments, little has changed regarding the complexities of the Macedonian Question. Knowledge of the Macedonian Question, both inside and outside the Balkans, continues to rely primarily on polemical accounts that do little to advance awareness and understanding of the key factors involved in this difficult issue.<sup>2</sup> Most accounts use evidence selectively to reinforce pre-existing nationalist narratives. This issue has plagued studies of the problem since its modern inception in 1878.<sup>3</sup> Nowhere is nationalist and uncritical interpretation more apparent than in the limited analyses of Macedonian Slav participation in the Greek Civil War from 1943-49.

The principle causes of the Greek Civil War can be sought in the Second World War and the dramatic political changes that occurred because of the country's occupation by the Axis forces. The Greek Communists (KKE), quickly dominated Greece's primary resistance movement: the National Liberation Front (EAM). EAM attempted to eliminate competing groups, such as the republican National and Social Liberation (EKKA) and the increasingly conservative National Republican Greek League (EDES), in its efforts to control resistance in Greece. The internal Greek struggle devolved into official hostilities in the autumn of 1943.<sup>4</sup> Despite the ELAS' efforts, it was never able to eliminate all rival resistance organizations in Greece. As a result, the ELAS could not present a united resistance front to the Greek Government-in-Exile and the Anglo-American alliance, which returned in the autumn of 1944. The KKE faced with this

<sup>1</sup> Edvard Kardelj, *Reminiscences: The Struggle for Recognition and Independence: The New Yugoslavia, 1944-1957*, trans. David Norris (London: Blond & Briggs Limited, 1982) 93.

<sup>2</sup> Section 1.1 conducts a detailed examination of the issue.

<sup>3</sup> This was most evident in the nineteenth century, when demographic arguments often used different factors to make their claims. For a counterpoint to this perspective see: Raymond Detrez, "Relations between Greeks and Bulgarians in the Pre-Nationalist Era: The Gudilas in Plovdiv," in *Greece and the Balkans: Identities, Perceptions and Cultural Encounters since the Enlightenment*, ed. Dimitris Tziouvas (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2003), 30-46.

<sup>4</sup> C.M. Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1976 (2002)) 53-84

increasingly deteriorating political situation – and for other reasons that academics still debate – attempted to seize power through the use of EAM's military wing: the Greek People's Liberation Army (ELAS). Nevertheless, after a month's struggle against the Greek government and British forces, ELAS signed the disadvantageous Varkiza Agreement on 12 February 1945.<sup>5</sup> This defeat was a crushing setback for the Greek Communist Party (KKE) wing of EAM, which had revolutionary aspirations. In the aftermath of the Varkiza Agreement, the KKE, at least in the minds of its leadership, felt increasingly isolated from the levers of power. Following a period of right wing reaction known as the White Terror, the KKE reached the conclusion that it could only achieve power through open rebellion.<sup>6</sup> Officially, this attempt to seize power began on 30 March 1946 when a group of ex-ELAS members attacked an isolated police station in the village of Litchoro.<sup>7</sup> The KKE established the Democratic Army of Greece (DAG) on 28 December 1946, and over the next three years waged an insurgency, and eventually, a positional campaign, against the governments of Greece. While the DAG's campaign was initially successful, American involvement in the conflict, as well as the improved performance by the Greek government forces, resulted in the defeat of DAG in the

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 111-138.

<sup>6</sup> The exact reason for this shift remains debated in the historiography, with academics generally attributing Zachariadis for the shift. For an alternative view see: O.L. Smith, "A Turning Point in the Greek Civil War 1945-1949: The Meeting between Zachariadis and Markos," *Scandinavian Studies in Modern Greek* 3, no. 1 (1978) 36.

<sup>7</sup> While this is the generally agreed upon historiographic interpretation of the start of the Greek Civil War scholars, such as Ole L. Smith, have contested the argument that the KKE was committed to Civil War after this attack. In fact, Smith argues that KKE policy in 1946 sought to avoid a Civil War, and that it was only when it lost the ability to influence events through conventional means that it resorted to armed insurrection. For this viewpoint, see Ole L. Smith, "Self-Defence and Communist Policy, 1945-1947," in *Studies in the History of the Greek Civil War, 1945-1949*, ed. John O. Iatrides Lars Bærentzen, Ole L. Smith (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 1987), 159-77.

summer of 1949.<sup>8</sup> In a desperate act of bravado, the General Secretary of the KKE, Nikos Zachariadis, announced a temporary halt to hostilities on 16 October 1949. One factor that remains more contested than any other aspect of the Greek Civil War is the influence that the Slavophone Macedonian inhabitants of northern Greece had upon the conflict.<sup>9</sup> Not only do academics dispute this influence, but it also continues to be a source of popular discontentment in the region as a whole.

In the Greek Civil War, the Slavophone Macedonian inhabitants of Greece were part of the larger unresolved Macedonian Question that had plagued European policy makers with respect to the disposition of the Balkans since the Congress of Berlin in 1878. The Great Powers called the Congress to limit the gains of the newfound Bulgarian state created by the Treaty of San Stefano. The Congress of Berlin, called by Otto von Bismarck to re-establish the balance of power in Europe, reverted much of the territory the Treaty of San Stefano initially assigned to Bulgaria to the control of the Ottoman Empire. In so doing, however, the Great Powers sparked irredentist competition between the emerging Balkan nation-states. Macedonia, in the Nineteenth and early Twentieth centuries associated with Alexander the Great's classical empire, consisted of the Ottoman Vilayets (Provinces) of Kosovo, Monastir, and Salonica. Furthermore, the population of the provinces was diverse.<sup>10</sup> The disposition of these territories consumed European policy makers until the machinations of Bulgaria, Greece,

<sup>8</sup> William Hardy McNeill, *Greece: American Aid in Action, 1947-1956* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1957) *Passim*; Lawrence S. Wittner, *American Intervention in Greece, 1943-1949* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982) *Passim*; Tim Jones, "The British Army, and Counter-Guerrilla Warfare in Greece, 1945-49," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 8, no. 1 (1997) 88-106; Larry E. Cable, *Conflict of Myths: The Development of American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and the Vietnam War* (New York: New York University Press, 1986) 27-29; Howard Jones, *"A New Kind of War": America's Global Strategy and the Truman Doctrine in Greece* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) 3-17; Jr William D. Harris, *Instilling Aggressiveness: US Advisors and Greek Combat Leadership in the Greek Civil War, 1947-1949* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2013) 50; Christina J. M. Goulter, "The Greek Civil War: A National Army's Counterinsurgency Triumph," *The Journal of Military History* 78, no. July (2014) 1017-55.

<sup>9</sup> For a brief examination of the Greek Civil War historiographical debate on the Three Rounds thesis see: Marion and Martin Eve Saraphe, *Background to Contemporary Greece* (London: Merlin Press, 1990) 136.

<sup>10</sup> For an analysis of how ethnic relations as we perceive them did not apply to the nineteenth century Ottoman Balkans, see: Detrez, "Relations between Greeks and Bulgarians in the Pre-Nationalist Era: The Gudilas in Plovdiv," 30-46.

and Serbia in the two Balkan Wars (1912-13) altered their calculations. In the two wars, the aforementioned powers divided the territory amongst themselves.<sup>11</sup> The Balkan states solved the territorial question, at least as far as the Great Powers were concerned, but the most challenging aspect of the Macedonian Question remained unresolved: specifically, how to integrate the peoples of Ottoman Macedonia into the emerging nation-state system. The three newly aggrandized states of Bulgaria, Greece, and Yugoslavia (the successor to Serbia) attempted to integrate the peoples of Ottoman Macedonia into their existing polities, but the Christian population of Ottoman Macedonia was of particular importance. The Christian population was, by far, the most numerous group in the newly acquired territory.<sup>12</sup> For a variety of reasons, all three states failed to effectively integrate the Christian peoples of Ottoman Macedonia. These states' nationalizing policies, in turn, helped give rise to a new identity: a Slavic group that claimed the name Macedonians. The result was that by the beginning of the Second World War, a disaffected Slavic population inhabited Northern Greece, Southern Yugoslavia, and Western Bulgaria. This community played a significant role in the events that followed, particularly during the Greek Civil War, as their numbers in the DAG were significantly greater than their proportion of Greece's population.<sup>13</sup> The controversy over the Slavs' identity and its continued impact on the politics of the region have prevented a comprehensive analysis of their role in the conflict – even though almost seventy years have passed since its conclusion.

This dissertation argues that the Slavophone Macedonians' numbers within the DAG not only forced different political participants to adjust their policies to accommodate them but also that the Macedonian people's cognizance of this fact

<sup>11</sup> Andre Gerolymatos, *The Balkan Wars* (New York: Basic Books, 2000) 210-25. For a firsthand account of the Macedonian Question's importance to the decision-making of the actors, see: I.E. Geshoff, *The Balkan League* (London: Forgotten Books, 1915 (2015)) *Passim*.

<sup>12</sup> Anastasia Karakasidou, "Cultural Illegitimacy in Greece: The Slavo-Macedonian 'Non-Minority'," in *Minorities in Greece: Aspects of a Plural Society*, ed. Richard Clogg (London: C. Hurst & Co. Ltd., 2002), 122-64. For an examination of the complicated nature of pre-nationalist Macedonia see: Detrez, "Relations between Greeks and Bulgarians in the Pre-Nationalist Era: The Gudilas in Plovdiv," 30-46.

<sup>13</sup> For one of the more balanced estimates on the number of Macedonian Slavs in Greece as a whole see: John S. Koliopoulos, "The War over the Identity and Numbers of Greece's Slav Macedonians," in *Ourselves and Others: The Development of a Greek Macedonian Cultural Identity since 1912*, ed. Peter Mackridge and Eleni Yannakakis (Oxford: Berg, 1997), 39-58.



initially allowed them to pursue political and social objectives that would have been impossible under normal circumstances. Ultimately, regional and international politics prevented the most idealist sections of the Macedonian Slavs from achieving their goal of an independent and maximalist Macedonian state. Those elements of the Macedonian national movement that in the aftermath of the Second World War followed the new Yugoslav take on Macedonian identity, an identity that developments in the Greek Civil War helped rise to prominence. Eventually achieved the goal of an independent Macedonian political entity. An examination of the Slavophone Macedonian component of the DAG, and other groups' efforts to use them to their advantage, demonstrates that their preponderance within ELAS and the DAG allowed them to influence the conflict in ways disproportionate to what ethnic minorities in the state system can typically accomplish. This research will thus enhance our understanding of the roles of ethnic minorities in civil conflicts, while also offering insights into the political processes and discourses developed by the Modern Greek and Macedonian states.<sup>14</sup> The above assertions rest on three foundations. First, as Andrew Rossos points out, one would be remiss not to consider the impact that the Slavophone Macedonians had on the decision-making processes of the DAG and the KKE, given their numbers within the DAG's ranks.<sup>15</sup> Second, outside states like Yugoslavia were aware of the significant role played by the Macedonian Slav component of the DAG.<sup>16</sup> While Western scholarship may not emphasize the significance of the Macedonian Slavs in the Greek Civil War, contemporary participants were aware of their importance. This recognition is reason enough to examine the role that their disproportionate numbers within the DAG played in the Greek Civil War. Finally, the attitudes that the Macedonian and Greek states established during the Greek Civil War towards one another persist to the present day, as Greece's Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis made clear in a 2008 editorial in *The New York Times* when she stated:

<sup>14</sup> For an explanation of the author's choice of terminology, please refer to section 1.5.

<sup>15</sup> Andrew Rossos, "Incompatible Allies: Greek Communism and Macedonian Nationalism in Greece, 1943-1949," *The Journal of Modern History* 69, no. 1 (1997) 42-76.

<sup>16</sup> Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo, *Revolucija Koja Teče*, vol. 1 (Beograd: Kommunist, 1971) 417-24.

*Let me explain the problem as Greeks see it. When Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia changed the name of his country's southern province in 1944 from Vardar Banovina to the Social Republic of Macedonia, he did it to stir up disorder in northern Greece in order to communize the area and to gain an outlet to the Aegean Sea for his country.*

*This policy was also linked with the Greek civil war that at the time claimed more than 100,000 Greek lives, brought untold destruction to our country, and delayed our post-war reconstruction for a decade.<sup>17</sup>*

Thus, obtaining a greater understanding of how this national discourse developed in 1946-49 will lead to a better appreciation of contemporary Balkan politics, which is one of the author's principal motives in addressing this complicated issue.

## **1.1. Historiography**

The political dimensions of the Macedonian Question mean that the dissertation will examine its historiography and that of the Greek Civil War separately. The fact that Aegean Macedonia, the part of Ottoman Macedonia claimed by Greece after the Balkan Wars, is the most challenging component of the problem makes such a breakdown necessary.<sup>18</sup> The first part of this section will examine the literature on the Macedonian Question. In discussing that literature, I will demonstrate why scholars of the Greek Civil War have neglected it in their analyses of the conflict and why the topic has not lent itself

<sup>17</sup> Dora Bakoyannis. "The view from Athens," *The New York Times*, 31 March 2008.

<sup>18</sup> For an examination see: Kyril Drezov, "Macedonian Identity: An Overview of the Major Claims," in *The New Macedonian Question*, ed. James Pettifer (Houndsmill, Basingstoke, Hampshire: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1999), 48, 55. P.H. Evans, in his account of northern Greece during the Second World War, inadvertently made this point particularly clear. See: Andrew Rossos and P. H. Evans, "The Macedonians of Aegean Macedonia: A British Officer's Report, 1944," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 69, no. 2 (1991) 282-309. These issues resulted in Gounaris terming the current phase of Macedonian historiography as "combin[ing] all the shortcomings of the past with modern marketing techniques." See: Basil C. Gounaris, "Reassessing Ninety Years of Greek Historiography on the 'Struggle for Macedonia 1904-1908'," in *Ourselves and Others: The Development of a Greek Macedonian Cultural Identity since 1912*, ed. Peter Mackridge and Eleni Yannakakis (Oxford: Berg, 1997), 25-38. He subsequently built upon this work in: *Εγνωσμένων Κοινωνικών Φρονημάτων: Κοινωνικές Και Άλλες Όψεις Του Αντικομμουνισμού Στη Μακεδονία Του Εμφυλίου Πολέμου* (Thessaloniki 2002) and "Macedonian Questions," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 2, no. 3 (2002) 63-94.

to academic research. The second part of the section will examine the literature on the Greek Civil War itself. This consideration of the different historiographic camps dealing with the Greek Civil War suggests that a significant gap exists in the literature. This dissertation fills this gap by carefully examining the Macedonian Slavs and their role in the conflict.

While scholars often use the Macedonian Question as one encompassing term, there are, in fact, several Macedonian Questions. This dissertation deals with the most recent question, which remains politically significant: specifically, the identity of the Slavic population of what was once Ottoman Macedonia and this community's role in regional politics. The earlier questions in the nineteenth century about the territorial disposition of the region and its geopolitical ramifications have mostly been resolved.<sup>19</sup> As a result, this literature review will focus on the contemporary debates over the Macedonian Slav identity, rather than addressing questions that politics and time have largely resolved.<sup>20</sup> Finally, given the exhaustive list of literature on the Macedonian Question, the review will use key works to represent important historiographic features of the debate.

The major issue that confounds scholars when discussing the topic of Macedonian Slav identity is that this national movement developed relatively late in the Balkans. F.A.K. Yasamee, who conducted one of the few nationalist theory studies that use the Macedonian Slavs as a case study to examine nationalism's development within the Balkans, states:

*A striking instance of the mutability of nationality is furnished by that group of South Slavs who today call themselves Macedonians. Not only does their nationality continue to be disputed by several of their neighbours, but they themselves have accomplished the feat, unique in*

<sup>19</sup> For example, see Albanian claims on Northwestern Macedonia.

<sup>20</sup> For an account of regional developments see: John R. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History: Twice There Was a Country* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

*the modern Balkans, of assuming one national identity, and then discarding it in favour of another.*<sup>21</sup>

Yasamee clearly identifies the permeability that has characterized the Macedonian Slav identity from the end of the nineteenth century until the present and has complimented the vitriol in the discourse on the Macedonian Question. The permeability of the Macedonian Slav national movement has allowed scholars from a variety of nation states to create their unique vision of the identity, whereby researchers in accordance to their national stance emphasize one aspect of this developing identity to the detriment of other aspects.

The Bulgarian school of thought on the Macedonian Question has largely fallen into disuse in modern academic scholarship. Nevertheless, aspects of their analysis have remained prevalent. This prevalence is particularly the case when Bulgarian and Greek claims overlap. Bulgarian assertions over what would become the Republic of Macedonia centre on the fact that for much of the nineteenth century, the Slavic speakers in Ottoman Macedonia were referred to as Bulgarians.<sup>22</sup> As Chris Kostov explains, this has led Bulgarians to argue “since there was no Macedonian national identity and language in the past, it is not possible for such entities to exist today.”<sup>23</sup> Konstantin Tzarnushanov and Bozhidar Dimitrov are notable examples of Bulgarian historians who employ these claims and reject the possibility for the development of a new identity distinct from Bulgaria.<sup>24</sup> These authors’ works are likely prominent because they closely mirror the official position of the Bulgarian government today. Bulgaria was the first state to recognize the Republic of Macedonia under its chosen name, but it

<sup>21</sup> F.A.K. Yasamee, "Nationality in the Balkans: The Case of the Macedonians," in *Balkans: A Mirror of the New World Order* (Istanbul: EREN, 1995), 121.

<sup>22</sup> Nadine Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question, 1893-1908: From Western Sources* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1998) 28-34. For a full analysis of the literature concerning this period see: Roumen Daskalov, *The Making of a Nation in the Balkans: Historiography of the Bulgarian Revival* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2004) *Passim*.

<sup>23</sup> Chris Kostov, *Contested Ethnic Identity: The Case of Macedonian Immigrants in Toronto, 1900-1996* (Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2010) 13.

<sup>24</sup> Konstantin Tzarnushanov, *Makedonizmat I Sprotivata Na Makedonija Sreštu Nego [the Macedonianism and the Resistance in Macedonia against It]* (Sofia 1992) *Passim*. Bozhidar Dimitrov, *The Ten Lies of Macedonianism* (Sofia: St Clement of Ohrid, 2003) *Passim*. For an official refutation of the Yugoslav position on the Macedonian Question see: Tsola Dragoicheva, *Pobedata* (Sofia: Partizdat, 1979) *Passim*.

refuses to recognize the existence of a Macedonian people.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, Bulgaria's declining influence on the Macedonian Question has resulted in the marginalization of its scholars' literature in current debates. This waning influence is particularly evident concerning Macedonian Slav involvement in the Greek Civil War, and yet it has not prevented Bulgarian academics from challenging the assumptions of the other historiographic schools.<sup>26</sup>

The two schools which the historiographic debate are those of the Macedonian and Greek nationalists. Specifically, their debate centres on the use of the terms Macedonia and Macedonian. Scholars within the Republic of Macedonia and their supporters, who feel the Greece's refusal to recognize their chosen name challenges the basis for their identity, are particularly adamant in asserting the continuity that exists between the ancient Kingdom of Macedonia and the modern Republic of Macedonia.<sup>27</sup> In some instances, this has led to outright academic fraud. Ljudmil Spasov's 2005 work *Izbrani Poglavlja od Istorijata na Makedonskiot Pismen Jazik* [Selected Titles of the History of the Macedonian Literary Language] is emblematic of this problem.<sup>28</sup> As Chris Kostov explains, Spasov's claim that Konstantin Petkovich published *Macedonian-Russian Dictionary 1848* is a complete falsehood, as the original title of the work was *Bulgarian-Russian Dictionary*.<sup>29</sup> While such attempts to rewrite history to the point of changing archival sources are rare, the fact that a major Macedonian publisher, *Kultura*, published the original work speaks to the uneasiness within the Republic of Macedonia

<sup>25</sup> For an examination of Republic of Macedonia-Bulgarian relations see: Hugh Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians?* (London: Hurst & Company, 1995) 203-05.

<sup>26</sup> Hasip Saygılı, "Greek Band Activities in Macedonia between 1904-1908: On a Hellenic Army History Monograph " *Bulgarian Historical Review* 1, no. 2 (2014) 237-44; Tzarnushanov, *Makedonizmat I Saprotivata Na Makedonija Sreštu Nego [the Macedonianism and the Resistance in Macedonia against It]*, *Passim*; Dimitrov, *The Ten Lies of Macedonianism Passim*. For an analysis of Bulgaria's nation-building exercise during this period see: James Frusetta, "Bulgaria's Macedonia: Nation-Building and State Building, Centralization and Autonomy in Pirin Macedonia, 1903-1952" (University of Maryland, 2006) *Passim*.

<sup>27</sup> A notable example of an external work that takes the Macedonian Slav perspective is: Vladimir Ortakovski, *Minorities in the Balkans* (Ardsley, NY: Transnational Publishers, Inc., 2000) *Passim*.

<sup>28</sup> Ljudmil Spasov, *Izbrani Poglavlja Od Istorijata Na Makedonskiot Pismen Jazik [Selected Titles of the History of the Macedonian Literary Language]* (Skopje: Kultura, 2005)

<sup>29</sup> Kostov, *Contested Ethnic Identity: The Case of Macedonian Immigrants in Toronto, 1900-1996* 12.

regarding their national identity. Furthermore, the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for National Macedonian Unity, which is the current ruling party and one that draws its intellectual and ideological heritage from a romanticized view of the Macedonian Struggle in the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries, maintains a disproportionate influence over the university system in the country.<sup>30</sup> This state power keeps Macedonian academia in line with the official narrative.

While Spasov's outright manipulation of an academic source is an exception, many other Macedonian scholars make very selective or skeptical claims to prove that continuity exists between ancient Macedonia and the Republic of Macedonia. The most extreme proponent of this thesis is Taško K. Belčev. In his work, *Makedonia: 4000 Godini Istorija, Civilizacija I Pismenost* [Macedonia: 4000 Years of History, Civilization, and Writings], Belčev draws connections between ancient Macedonia and the present state. Belčev also goes so far as to claim that Crete derives its name from Macedonian.<sup>31</sup> Less extreme, although equally unconvincing, are Mihailo Apostolski's *Istorija na makedonskiot narod, vol I: Od predistoiskoto vreme do krajot XVIII vek* [History of the Macedonian People, vol. I: From the Prehistory Period until the End of the Eighteenth Century] and Lazar Koliševski's *Aspects of the Macedonian Question*.<sup>32</sup> These two books do not measure up to the academic standards of today, and did not meet academic standards even when their authors published them in the Cold War, as they serve a dual purpose. The authors not only intended the works for an academic audience but also aimed to lay the foundation of an official Macedonian history. Koliševski's work is, in fact, a collection of speeches that closely follow the official

<sup>30</sup> Martin Galevski, "Dimensions of Higher Education Governance in Macedonia: Exploring the Roles of the State," in *The Re-Institutionalization of Higher Education in the Western Balkans: The Interplay between European Ideas, Domestic Policies, and Institutional Practices*, ed. Kovacevic Maja Jelena Brankovic, Maassen Peter, Stensaker Bjørn, Vukasovic Martina (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2014), 147-48.

<sup>31</sup> Taško K. Belčev, *Makedonia: 4000 Godini Istorija, Civilizacija I Pismenost* [Macedonia: 4000 Years of History, Civilization and Writings] (Skopje: Strk, 1996) 5.

<sup>32</sup> Mihailo Apostolki, *Istorija Na Makedonskiot Narod, Vol I: Od Predistoiskoto Vreme Do Krajot Xviii Vek* [History of the Macedonian People, Vol I: From the Prehistorical Period until the End of the 18th Century] (Skopje: INI, 1969) *Passim*. Lazar Koliševski, *Aspects of the Macedonian Question* (Belgrade: Socialist Thought and Practice, 1980 (1962)) *Passim*.

Yugoslav interpretation of the Macedonian Question during the post-WWII period.<sup>33</sup> The quality of these works leaves much to be desired.

The desire of Macedonian nationalists to link their country's history to antiquity has not changed since the tumultuous 1990s. In fact, it has solidified. Andrew Rossos, a professor at the University of Toronto, published *Macedonia and the Macedonians: a History* in 2008.<sup>34</sup> In his account, Rossos links the Classical Age of Alexander the Great to the modern Macedonian nation-state. At around the same time, Todor Chepreganov published an edited volume entitled *History of the Macedonian People* in the Republic of Macedonia.<sup>35</sup> This volume, which references most of the Republic of Macedonia's most prominent scholars, demonstrates that Rossos' work is not unique, but rather part of a broader trend that has solidified in the aftermath of the Macedonian name dispute of the 1990s.<sup>36</sup>

Greek historiography on the Macedonian Question makes it equally difficult to understand issues relating to Slavophone Macedonian identity. In the case of Greece, the country claims to have a monopoly on the heritage of the Macedonian Kingdom. Most Greek politicians, academics, and the public view Macedonian's attempts to identify with the ancient kingdom as cultural appropriation. Manolis Andronikos, who was one of the most renowned Greek archaeologists due to his discovery of the Vergina tombs in the 1970s, explains:

*After they baptized their state Macedonia and its inhabitants Macedonians, they thought it very simple and expedient to appropriate the history of this people who lived in northern Greece 2500 years ago,*

<sup>33</sup> This is unsurprising, given Koliševski's role as Chairman of the League of Communists of Macedonia (1945-1963).

<sup>34</sup> Andrew Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians: A History* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2008) Kindle Edition.

<sup>35</sup> Todor Chepreganov, ed. *History of the Macedonian People* (Skopje: Institute of National History, 2008), *Passim*.

<sup>36</sup> See: Dimitar Ljorovski Vamvakovski, "Greek-Macedonian Struggle: The Reasons for Its Occurrence," *Macedonian Historical Review* 3 (2012) 117-32.

*when the Slavic people they themselves originate from, were still in the remotest Asian steppes.*<sup>37</sup>

In essence, the Greek claims rest on the assumption that the Macedonian Slavs, whose ancestors started migrating to the Balkans in the Sixth Century, have no claims to the cultural heritage of the Kingdom of Macedonia, whose people were of a different ethnicity.<sup>38</sup> As Yannis Hamilakis argues in *The Nation and its Ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology, and National Imagination in Greece*, Greek archeologists have played a critical role in the assertion of this position. Indeed, Greek archaeologists use it as a means of legitimizing their reputation within society.<sup>39</sup> Given the high stakes archaeologists have in maintaining their position within Greek society, they vigorously oppose those who contest linkages between the Modern Greek state and the ancient Greek world.

As Hamilakis also argues, historians have played a significant role in shaping the national message of the linkage between modern Greece and ancient Greece. Historians accomplish this by delegitimizing, or outright ignoring, the existence of Macedonian Slavs in the contemporary era. In so doing, Greek historians have largely mirrored Bulgarian arguments on the question of Macedonian identity. Specifically, they claim that the Macedonian Slavs are in fact Bulgarians and are not a distinct group.<sup>40</sup>

The Institute for Balkan Studies (IMXA) in Thessaloniki has been pivotal in shaping the Greek state's narrative over Macedonia and the Macedonians. IMXA has taken exception to Macedonian Slav claims on the region, which is unsurprising given its geographic location in northern Greece. Founded in 1953, IMXA has published

<sup>37</sup> Manolis Andronikos, "The Archaeological Recovery of Macedonia," *To Vima*, September 1988,

<sup>38</sup> For recent works that follow this argumentation see: Nicolaos K. Martis, *The Falsification of Macedonian History* (Athens: Athanassiades Bros, 1984) *Passim*; George C. Papavizas, *Claiming Macedonia: The Struggle for the Heritage, Territory and Name of the Historic Hellenic Land, 1862-2004* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2006) 1-9; Ernest N. Damianopoulos, *The Macedonians: Their Past and Present* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012) XV.

<sup>39</sup> Yannis Hamilakis, *The Nation and Its Ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology, and National Imagination in Greece* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) 162-67.

<sup>40</sup> For an example of the complications such a policy creates, see: Theodora Dragostinova, *Between Two Motherlands: Nationality and Emigration among the Greeks of Bulgaria, 1909-1949* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011) *Passim*.



extensively on the Macedonian Question, and nearly all of its publications on the subject follow the official line of de-legitimizing Macedonian Slav claims or outright rejecting them.<sup>41</sup> This perspective is unsurprising, as Thessaloniki is the heart of Greek nationalism with respect to the Macedonian Question. In 1992, the city was the site of the million-strong *Συλλαλητήριο για τη Μακεδονία* (Rally for Macedonia), a protest against the Republic of Macedonia's alleged appropriation of Macedonian Slav's cultural heritage. Given the intense political and cultural pressure that the event put forth, it is unsurprising that Greek academics in Thessaloniki have opposed Macedonian Slav claims. Further, nationalist tensions within the region make it almost impossible to take a non-partisan approach to examining the Macedonian Question.

The countries directly involved in the Macedonian Question treat those individuals who deviate from the nationalist norm in a harsh manner.<sup>42</sup> Their compatriots have condemned several people who have criticized the national line.<sup>43</sup> The most well-known of these individuals is Anastasia Karakasidou, who published an ethnographic study of the Slavic-speaking population in Northern Greece titled *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood: Passages to Nationhood in Greek Macedonia, 1870-1990*. This study was controversial even before it launched.<sup>44</sup> Cambridge University Press, the book's initial

<sup>41</sup> Some examples of these include: George B. Zotiades, *The Macedonian Controversy* (Thessaloniki: Society of Macedonian Studies, 1954); Χρ. Α Νάλτσας, *Το Μακεδονικό Ζήτημα Και Η Σοβιετική Πολιτική (the Macedonian Question and Soviet Policy)* (Thessaloniki: IMXA, 1954) *passim*. C. Vavouskos, *Macedonia's Struggle for Freedom* (Thessaloniki: IMXA, 1973) *Passim*. Α. Τούντα-Φεργάδη, *Ελληνο-Βουλγαρικές Μειονότητες. Πρωτόκολλο Πολίτη- Καρφώφ, 1924-1925 (Greek-Bulgarian Minorities: The Politis-Kalfop Protocol, 1924-1925)* (Thessaloniki: IMXA, 1986), *Passim*; and Βασίλης Κόντης, ed. *Η Επεκτατική Πολιτική Των Σκοπίων. Συλλογή Εγγράφων (1934-1992) (Resurgent Irredentism. Documents on Skopje "Macedonian" Nationalist Aspirations, 1934-1992)* (Thessaloniki: IMXA, 1993), *Passim*.

<sup>42</sup> A notable exception, and one that was more the result of its time of publication, was: Βασίλης Κ. Γουναρης, *Το Μακεδονικό Ζήτημα Από Τον 19ο Έως Τον 21ο Αιώνα* (Αθήνα: Εκδοσεις Αλεξανδρεια, 2010) *Passim*. Unfortunately, vitriol on the Macedonian Question has made the positive developments of Gounaris' work, which called for cross-historiographic engagement with the different schools, once more difficult, if not impossible.

<sup>43</sup> See: Kostas Kazasis, "Some Discordant Greek Voices on "the Macedonian Question", " in *Guard the Work Well Bound: Proceedings of the Third North American-Macedonian Conference on Macedonian Studies*, ed. Christina Kramer and Brian Cook (Bloomington, IN: Indiana Slavic Studies, 1999), 127-34; Jane K. Cowan, ed. *Macedonia: The Politics of Identity and Difference* (London: Pluto Press, 2000), 8.

<sup>44</sup> John Xanthopoulos, review of *Field of Wheat, Hills of Blood: Passages to Nationhood in Greek Macedonia, 1870-1990* by Anastasia Karakasidou. *Library Journal* 122 (9): 82.

publisher, declined to publish the manuscript over fears it would create a backlash in Greece. While there are certainly grounds for critiquing Karakasidou's important work, such as her approach to oral testimony, more often than not individuals attack it simply for addressing the issue in a manner that is not congruent with the Greek nationalist ideology.<sup>45</sup> The vitriol Karakasidou received was evident in 1993, when after publishing part of her findings in the *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* in 1993 the newspaper *Stohos* published her address and license plate, whereby she received multiple death threats.<sup>46</sup>

A small but significant movement that has sought to analyze the development of the Macedonian national movement without the political rhetoric has supplemented nationalist historiographic schools of thought on the Macedonian Question. The number of these works is relatively small given that the Macedonian Question elicits intense emotions and triggers strong political orientations.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, the importance of the insights that these works generate is evident in the fact that most contemporary sources cite them either directly or indirectly. Among them, Elizabeth Barker's *Macedonia: Its Place in Balkan Power Politics* is in many ways the foundational text for examining the Macedonian Question in the English language. Barker's influence is particularly the case concerning how the work relates to Greece. It provides the foundation of the argument that Yugoslavia sought to annex Northern Greece as part of a maximalist Macedonian

<sup>45</sup> Anastasia Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood: Passages to Nationhood in Greek Macedonia, 1870-1990* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1997) 31-53.

<sup>46</sup> Antonio Milososki, *Life in Aegean Macedonia*. Review of *Field of Wheat, Hills of Blood: Passages to Nationhood in Greek Macedonia, 1870-1990* by Anastasia Karakasidou. *Pollitecon Publications*. [http://www.pollitecon.com/html/life/hellenization\\_of\\_aegean\\_macedonia.htm](http://www.pollitecon.com/html/life/hellenization_of_aegean_macedonia.htm). Accessed 29 April 2014. The article in question was: "Politicizing Culture: Negating Ethnic Identity in Greek Macedonia," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 11, no. 1 (1993) 1-28.

<sup>47</sup> Examples of these include: Keith Brown, *The Past in Question: Modern Macedonia and the Uncertainties of Nation* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2003) *Passim*; John Phillips, *Macedonia: Warlords and Rebels in the Balkans* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004) *Passim*; Elisabeth Kontogiorgi, *Population Exchange in Greek Macedonia: The Rural Settlement of Refugees, 1922-1930* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006) *Passim*; Vladislav B Sotirović, "Macedonia between Greek, Bulgarian, Albanian and Serbian National Aspirations," *Journal of the North American Society for Serbian Studies* 23 (2009) 17-40; Raymond Alvanos, "Les Choix Politiques Des Slavophones De Macedoine Dans La Guerre Civile Grecque," *Cahiers balkaniques* 40 (2012) 2-18; Christina Alexopoulos, "La Question Macedonienne Pendant La Guerre Civile Grecque," *ibid.* 38-9, 1-28; Detrez, "Relations between Greeks and Bulgarians in the Pre-Nationalist Era: The Gudilas in Plovdiv," 30-46.

state within Yugoslavia. Academics have since widely accepted that argument.<sup>48</sup> Accordingly, it has dominated historiographies pertinent to the Macedonian Question as a whole.<sup>49</sup> In short, Barker's contention that Yugoslavia involved itself in the Greek Civil War to obtain Aegean Macedonia supports the arguments of both the Greek and Macedonian nationalist historiographies as well as those who examine it from an international relations' perspective.<sup>50</sup>

One of the overriding questions for scholars who focus on the development of Slavophone Macedonian identity has been how the Macedonians managed to forge an identity distinct from Bulgarian influence. Stephen E. Palmer, Jr. and Robert R. King's *Yugoslav Communism and the Macedonian Question* and Ivo Banac's *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* chart the Macedonian Slav's movement away from Bulgaria in the 1930s when the CPY became more actively involved in the construction of the Macedonian Slav identity.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, in *The Establishment of the*

<sup>48</sup> Elisabeth Barker, *Macedonia: Its Place in Balkan Power Politics* (Hertfordshire: Broadwater Press, 1950) 128. 99 academic works have directly cited Barker's *Macedonia: Its Place in Balkan Power Politics*, and many more do so indirectly by citing these works.

<sup>49</sup> For examples of works that take accept this argument without qualification see: W.C. Chamberlin and J.D. Iams, *Rebellion: The Rise and Fall of the Greek Communist Party* (Foreign Service Institute - Department of State, 1963) 279; Paul Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav National Question* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968) 146; Cable, *Conflict of Myths: The Development of American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and the Vietnam War* 10; Peter J. Stavrakis, *Moscow and Greek Communism, 1944-1949* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989) 1-3; John S. Koliopoulos, *Plundered Loyalties: World War II and Civil War in Greek West Macedonia* (New York: New York University Press, 1999) 201; Iakovos D. Michailidis, "Fragile Balance: Greek-Yugoslav Relations in the Period 1944-1946," *Balkan Studies* 45, no. 1 (2004) 112, 116; Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (London: Penguin, 2005) 35; Milan Ristic, "The December Revolt in Athens British Intervention and Yugoslav Reaction: December 1944 - January 1945," *Balkanica* 37 (2006) 279.

<sup>50</sup> The realist dominant perspective, while more commonly accepted in the West, can be equally problematic. See: Thanos Veremis, "Western Amateurs in the Balkans and the End of History," *ibid.* 36 (2005) 237-48; and Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford UP, 1997 (2009)) *Passim*; Pavlos Hatzopoulos, *The Balkans Beyond Nationalism and Identity: International Relations and Ideology* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008) 77; Tchavdar Marinov and Alexander Vezenkov, "Communism and Nationalism in the Balkans: Marriage of Convenience or Attraction?," in *Entangled Histories of the Balkans Volume Two: Transfers of Political Ideologies and Institutions*, ed. Roumen Daskalov and Diana Mishkova (Boston: Brill, 2014), 502.

<sup>51</sup> Robert R. King Stephen E. Palmer Jr., *Yugoslav Communism and the Macedonian Question* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1971) 199-200. Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984) 327.

*Balkan National States, 1804-1920*, Barbara and Charles Jelavich relate the emergence of the Macedonian identity to the development of Bulgarian, Greek, and Serbian identities.<sup>52</sup> Macedonian writers and more recent works from outside the region that have examined the development of the Macedonian identity challenge these claims. Nevertheless, Palmer, King, and Banać were certainly correct in identifying the CPY's change of policy in the 1930s as critical to the development of the modern Macedonian Slav identity, while the Jelavichs' account ably demonstrate its relationship to the development of other Balkan national movements and nation-states.<sup>53</sup> The problem with studies that follow this historiographic trend, however, is that they portray the Macedonians as secondary participants to their own identity formation.<sup>54</sup>

Unsurprisingly, political developments on the Macedonian Question in the 1990s brought the topic back into Western academics focus. The result of this renewed interest is that several books in recent years have sought to incorporate contemporary academic trends into their analyses to better understand the Macedonian Question and the question of Macedonian identity. In his work *Who are the Macedonians?*, Hugh Poulton examines the factors that have caused the different parties to take their respective positions on the Macedonian question, rather than passing judgment on the veracity of their claims.<sup>55</sup> While he is sympathetic to the Macedonian position, he is as fair as possible in presenting the reasons for the policies with respect to Macedonian identity taken by other countries. Keith Brown, in his recent works *The Past in Question: Modern*

<sup>52</sup> Barbara Jelavich Charles Jelavich, *Establishment of the Balkan National States, 1804-1920: A History of East Central Europe* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1986) *Passim*.

<sup>53</sup> For recent challenges to this perspective see: Phillips, *Macedonia: Warlords and Rebels in the Balkans* 41; Victor Roudometof, *Collective Memory, National Identity, and Ethnic Conflict: Greece, Bulgaria, and the Macedonian Question* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002) Kindle Edition.

<sup>54</sup> Other examples include: Patrick Moore, "Macedonia: Perennial Balkan Apple of Discord," *The World Today* 35, no. 10 (1979) 420-28; Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Twentieth Century*, vol. 2 (New York: Cambridge UP, 1983) 314-28; C.M. Woodhouse, *Apple of Discord: A Survey of Recent Greek Politics in Their International Setting* (Reston, Virginia: W.B. O'Neill, 1985) 280-84; Jože Pirjevic, "The Tito-Stalin Split and the End of the Civil War in Greece," in *Studies in the History of the Greek Civil War, 1945-1949*, ed. John O. Iatrides Lars Bærentzen, Ole L. Smith (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1987), 309-16; Elisabeth Barker, "Yugoslav Policy Towards Greece, 1947-1949," *ibid.*, 302. For a contemporary work that continues this trend see: Mark Biondich, *The Balkans: Revolution, War, and Political Violence since 1878* (New York: Oxford UP, 2011) Kindle Edition.

<sup>55</sup> Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians?* 104-10.

*Macedonia and the Uncertainties of Nation* and *Loyal Unto Death: Trust and Terror in Revolutionary Macedonia*, employs cultural anthropological practices to examine how the collective Macedonian memory and non-strictly nationalist forces, such as influence networks, helped create the contemporary Macedonian identity.<sup>56</sup> Like Poulton, Brown is sympathetic to the Macedonian Slav identity, but does not outright object to competing opinions. Instead, he critically engages with those claims. Finally, in his book *The Macedonian Conflict: Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World*, Loring Danforth provides an effective rebuttal against the distinction that Eric Hobsbawm makes between real and imagined traditions when examining Macedonian (Slav) and Macedonian (Greek) immigrants living in Australia.<sup>57</sup> In fact, the challenge Danforth issued against Hobsbawm's conceptualization of the real and imagined traditions that impacted the development of the Macedonian national movement was so effective that the author of this dissertation largely precluded it in his analysis.<sup>58</sup>

Thus, while individual scholars are conducting research on the Macedonian Question that have a critical orientation, nationalist-oriented writers who seek to advance their own country's agenda currently dominate the literature on the issue. Academics outside the region have attempted to redress this imbalance, but nationalist writers strive to discredit their insights. In some instances, the latter group's critiques have been valid, but in most cases, they are ideologically oriented, rather than focused on the former authors' arguments. This problem in the literature points to the critical importance of developing a foundational body of research and discourse on the Macedonian Question that is more analytical and not nationalistic in orientation.

As evidenced by the literature survey presented above, the modern political ramifications of Macedonian Slav's role in the Greek Civil War have inhibited scholars

<sup>56</sup> Keith Brown, *The Past in Question: Modern Macedonia and the Uncertainties of Nation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2003) 22-50; and *Loyal Unto Death: Trust and Terror in Revolutionary Macedonia* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 2013) 14-40.

<sup>57</sup> Loring M. Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict: Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995) 19.

<sup>58</sup> Hobsbawm's theory on national development remains one of the most influential in the field. See: E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1990) *Passim*.

from addressing the difficult questions raised by the Macedonian presence in the DAG. Authors outside of the countries in question have mostly confined their research to issues not pertinent to the Slavophone Macedonians, or only approached those matters in a cursory manner.<sup>59</sup> Given the contentious nature of most aspects of the Greek Civil War, it is not surprising that most studies dealing with the conflict have not stoked further controversy by tackling the Macedonian Question. Consequently, nationalist writers' polemics dominate the analysis of the Macedonian Question in the Greek Civil War.

Former Slavophone Macedonian members of the DAG predominate Macedonian scholarship on the Greek Civil War. Due to their vested interests in the conflict, these authors, and those influenced by their works, have established a highly nationalist narrative. Michailidis rightfully acknowledges that this bias inhibits their capacity to interpret the events in question.<sup>60</sup> Greek scholarship has likewise manipulated the Macedonian involvement for nationalist purposes by portraying it as foreign to the Greek state. The majority of Macedonians participating in the Greek Civil War, however, were native to Greece.<sup>61</sup> While some scholarship has broken free of

<sup>59</sup> For examples see: Amikam Nachmani, *International Intervention in the Greek Civil War: The United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans, 1947-1952* (New York: Praeger, 1990) 116; William D. Harris, *Instilling Aggressiveness: US Advisors and Greek Combat Leadership in the Greek Civil War, 1947-1949*, 67; Philip B. Minehan, *Civil War and World War in Europe: Spain, Yugoslavia, and Greece, 1936-1949* (New York: Palgrave, 2006) Kindle Edition; Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008) 330; Svetozar Rajak, "The Cold War in the Balkans, 1945-1953," in *The Cold War*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010), 198-220; Mehta Coleman, "The CIA Confronts the Tito-Stalin Split, 1948-1951," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 13, no. 1 (2011) 101-45; Milan Ristic, "The Bulkes Experiment: A "Greek Republic" in Yugoslavia 1945-1949," *Balkan Studies* 47 (2012) 134; Goulter, "The Greek Civil War: A National Army's Counterinsurgency Triumph," 1017-55.

<sup>60</sup> Iakovos D. Michailidis, "On the Other Side of the River: The Defeated Slavophones and Greek History," in *Macedonia: The Politics of Identity and Difference*, ed. Jane K. Cowan (London: Pluto Press, 2000), 77-78. For examples see: Novica Veljanovski, "Aegean Macedonia During the Second World War," in *History of the Macedonian People*, ed. Todor Chepreganov (Skopje: Institute of National History, 2008), 301-14; Koliševski, *Aspects of the Macedonian Question*, 8.

<sup>61</sup> For an example of the former category of literature see Evangelos Averoff-Tossizza, *By Fire and Axe: The Communist Party and the Civil War in Greece, 1944-49* (Athens: Aristide D Caratzas Pub., 1978) 351-52. For an example of the latter see Stavrakis, *Moscow and Greek Communism, 1944-1949* 179-204. A recent effort to challenge the significance of Macedonian Slavs in northern Greece is: Koliopoulos, "The War over the Identity and Numbers of Greece's Slav Macedonians," 39-58. The reason for the arguments initial sway was the dominance of the Greek right in the historiography. See: Andre Gerolymatos, *The International Civil War: Greece, 1943-1949* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2016) 295.

these constraints, the most consistently cited works – those most relevant to the Macedonian historiography – fall within the above framework. This issue again highlights the lack of literature that takes a more critical approach to Macedonian involvement in the DAG.

Furthermore, the publications of leftist writers understandably downplay Macedonian participation in the Greek Civil War. Because of the contemporary political dimensions of the Macedonian Question, the Greek left deliberately softens or ignores its previous role on the Macedonian Question. For example, recent works by Dimitris Zugouras and Dionysis Charitopoulos ignore the role of the Slavophone Macedonians. Charitopoulos does so despite the fact Aris Velouchiotis, the subject of his book, was actively involved in Macedonian politics during the Second World War.<sup>62</sup> These accounts are not exceptional, given that the Greek left, as Karakasidou notes, worked to distance itself from the Slavophone Macedonians in the aftermath of the Greek Civil War.<sup>63</sup> As will be indicated, part of the reason for this development pertains to the KKE's interactions with the Slavophone Macedonians during that war.

The Macedonian nation building exercise obscures the Slavophone Macedonians involvement in the conflict to the extent that it is hard to disentangle fact from fiction, even in works written by serious academics. The body of secondary literature that developed in the aftermath of the Greek Civil War further placed the Slavophone Macedonians' participation within the broader Macedonian nation building exercise. The main Macedonian ideologues Lazar Koliševski and Dmítar Vlahov sought to construct a unique Macedonian identity by portraying Greek actions in the conflict as the result of 'monarcho-fascism', which is hardly the basis for a comprehensive academic discussion.<sup>64</sup> In fact, Lazar Koliševski maintained these arguments for the rest of his life.

<sup>62</sup> Dionysis Charitopoulos, *Aris, Lord of the Mountains* (Athens: Topos Books, 2012) *Passim*; Δημητρης Ζυγουρας, *Ενα Μεγαλο Ταξιδι: Εθνικη Αντισταση, Εμφυλιος Πολεμος, Πολιτικη Προσφυγια* (Αθηνα: Θεμελιο, 2012) *Passim*.

<sup>63</sup> See: Anastasia Karakasidou, "Fellow Travellers, Separate Roads: The Kke and the Macedonian Question," *East European Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (1993) 455. In 1991 Kofos, a member of the KKE's Central Committee argued for a popular crowd that the Macedonian Slavs possessed a misguided sense of nationhood.

<sup>64</sup> Dmítar Vlahov, *Iz Istorije Makedonskog Naroda (from the History of the Macedonian People)* (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1950) 119

Koliševski's prominence in the discourse on the Macedonian nationalist identity left little room for objective discussion on the Macedonian Question within the Socialist Republic of Macedonia.<sup>65</sup> The Republic's independence from Yugoslavia only made arguments related to Macedonian identity in the Greek Civil War more polemical. Andrew Rossos and Ernest Damianopoulos, two of the best-known academics to focus on the development of the Macedonian identity, replicate these arguments rather than subject them to critical analysis.<sup>66</sup> Since the Greek Civil War occurred at a crucial period during the formation of the Macedonian identity, a critical discussion of the Macedonian Slavs' role in the DAG has proven elusive for Macedonian nationalists and their sympathizers.<sup>67</sup>

Studies on the Greek Civil War by scholars from outside the region remain primarily within the realm of traditional history. This focus on traditional history means that the literature emphasizes the military-political aspects of the conflict and tends to avoid addressing with the social and cultural implications of the war. C.M. Woodhouse's *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949* is one of the standard accounts of the conflict. While Woodhouse briefly examines the Macedonian Question, he mainly relates it to the strategic interests of the war.<sup>68</sup> The most significant works on the Greek Civil War in English include: Amikam Nachmani's *International Intervention in the Greek Civil War: The United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans, 1947-1952*; Harry Vliavianos' *Greece 1941-49: From Resistance to Civil War, the Strategy of the Greek Communist Party*; Charles L. Shrader's *The Withered Vine: Logistics and the Communist Insurgency in Greece, 1945-1949*; Mark Mazower's *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe*; and Andre Gerolymatos' *Red Acropolis, Black Terror: The Greek Civil War And The*

<sup>65</sup> See: Koliševski, *Aspects of the Macedonian Question* 184, 187.

<sup>66</sup> Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians: A History* Kindle Edition; Damianopoulos, *The Macedonians: Their Past and Present* 167-68.

<sup>67</sup> Stefan Troebst explores the extent to which Macedonian historiography has become distorted by nationalist factors in Stefan Troebst, "Imro + 100 = Fyrom? The Politics of Macedonian Historiography," in *The New Macedonian Question*, ed. James Pettifer (Houndsmill: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1999), 60-78.

<sup>68</sup> On the Macedonian Question, Woodhouse stated, "The attitude of the Macedonian people themselves is hard to assess." He then proceeded to list organizations that could have potentially influenced them, but does not assess this influence. Part of this dissertation will determine the extent of the influence that these organizations had upon the people of Macedonia. See: Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949* 9.



*Origins Of The Soviet-American Rivalry, 1943-1949*.<sup>69</sup> The only contemporary work that examines the issue of Macedonian identity in the Greek Civil War is Livanios' *The Macedonian Question: Britain and the Southern Balkans 1939-1949*, which employs a British perspective and only draws upon local sources in a limited manner.<sup>70</sup> Although this work is important, by itself it furthers the tendency of scholars to compare events in the Balkans to developments elsewhere and marginalize local initiative.<sup>71</sup>

The afore mentioned Elizabeth Barker started the trend of focusing on the state-level political dimensions of the conflict in her work *Macedonia: Its Place in Balkan Power Politics*. This development has detached the domestic aspects of the conflict from its foreign policy dimensions. One area where this has proven particularly problematic is in scholars' common reading of Yugoslav involvement in the conflict. For example, with respect to the CPY's Macedonian policy in the post-Tito-Stalin split era, Barker states that "the Yugoslav Communists still seemed committed to their maximum policy: the three parts of Macedonia should be united under Tito's aegis."<sup>72</sup> Recent scholarship by Djordi Caca, Paul Shoup, Ivo Banac, and Sabrina P. Ramet that focuses on events on the periphery of the Greek Civil War, however, suggests that domestic factors entered into the calculus of the Yugoslavs when they had to deal with the Macedonian

<sup>69</sup> Charles R. Shrader, *The Withered Vine: Logistics and the Communist Insurgency in Greece, 1945-1949* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999) 1-3, Andre Gerolymatos, *Red Acropolis, Black Terror: The Greek Civil War and the Origins of Soviet-American Rivalry, 1943-1949* (New York: Basic Books, 2004) 1-12, and Nachmani, *International Intervention in the Greek Civil War: The United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans, 1947-1952* 1-20. Woodhouse, *Apple of Discord: A Survey of Recent Greek Politics in Their International Setting* III-VI. Three other notable works in this vein are: Haris Vlavianos, *Greece 1941-49: From Resistance to Civil War, the Strategy of the Greek Communist Party* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992) 154-55; Richard Clogg, ed. *Greece 1940-1949: Occupation, Resistance, Civil War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 1-9; Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* 330-31.

<sup>70</sup> Dimitris Livanios, *The Macedonian Question: Britain and the Southern Balkans 1939-1949* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008) 243-50.

<sup>71</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* 140-60.

<sup>72</sup> Barker, *Macedonia: Its Place in Balkan Power Politics* 128.

Question.<sup>73</sup> One should not fault Barker for this assessment, which she based on a reasonable assumption in light of the available documentation and prevailing interpretations in 1950. The problem is that contemporary sources have relied on her initial assertion. Evangelos Kofos, Peter J Stavrakis, and Charles R. Shrader, for example, accepted Barker's original position without reservation.<sup>74</sup> Others – notably Greek nationalist writers like George C. Papavizas – merely expanded upon Barker's original thesis in an attempt to delegitimize the Slavophone Macedonian identity.<sup>75</sup> What began as an informed argument based on available evidence has since transformed into a basic tenant of the historiography. Consequently, establishing what exactly Yugoslavia's goals were in Aegean Macedonia will be one of the primary foci of my dissertation.

The Greek literature on the Macedonian Question in the Greek Civil War portrays the Slavophone Macedonians who participated in the conflict as either not native to the region or, failing the first goal, delegitimizing their claims to nationhood.<sup>76</sup> This line of argument is true for regional scholars that published in both Greek and English. The most representative example of the first trend is John Koliopoulos' work *Plundered Loyalties: Axis occupation and civil strife in Greek West Macedonia, 1941-1949*. In it, Koliopoulos seeks to demonstrate that the majority of the Slavic fighters in the DAG

<sup>73</sup> See: Ivo Banac, *With Stalin against Tito: Cominformist Splits in Yugoslav Communism* (London: Cornell University Press, 1988) 189-198, Sabrina P. Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia, 1962-1991* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1992) For a slightly polemical, but important book, in dealing with the domestic development of Macedonian identity see: Djordji Caca, *The Constitutional Development of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia* (Skopje: Macedonian Review Editions, 1980) *Passim*; Paul Shoup, "Yugoslavia's National Minorities under Communism," *Slavic Review* 22, no. 1 (1963) 69.

<sup>74</sup> Shrader, *The Withered Vine: Logistics and the Communist Insurgency in Greece, 1945-1949* 176. Stavrakis, *Moscow and Greek Communism, 1944-1949*; *ibid.* *Passim*. Evangelos Kofos, *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1964) *Passim*. Koliopoulos, *Plundered Loyalties: World War II and Civil War in Greek West Macedonia* *Passim*.

<sup>75</sup> Papavizas, *Claiming Macedonia: The Struggle for the Heritage, Territory and Name of the Historic Hellenic Land, 1862-2004* 180-210 and Stavrakis, *Moscow and Greek Communism, 1944-1949* 179, 204.

<sup>76</sup> For example, Polimeris Voulis' claims that the conditions for the emergence of a Slavic identity were not created until the KKE's decision to back them in 1949. See: Πολυμέρης Βόγλης, *Η Εμπειρία Της Φυλακής Και Της Εξορίας* "Οι Πολιτικοί Κρατούμενοι Στον Εμφύλιο Πόλεμο" (Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Αλεξανδρεια, 2002) 299.

were not native to the region.<sup>77</sup> This argument contradicts the remarks made by individuals who observed the Greek Civil War unfold as well as by generalist, non-nationalist historiographers.<sup>78</sup> Evangelos Kofos' work exemplifies the second trend. His seminal work, *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia*, has had implications that extend beyond Greece. In this work, Kofos repeatedly portrays the claims of the Macedonian Slavs in Greece as a product of external influence and intervention.<sup>79</sup> While it is true that external actors exerted considerable influence on the Slavophone Macedonians within Greece, this viewpoint does not consider their ability to shape their identity.<sup>80</sup> As a result, the national narrative ignores the factors that motivated individual Slavophone Macedonians and how the message of the various groups involved tried to manipulate those elements to serve their ends. What this dissertation demonstrates is that the Slavophone Macedonians exercised considerable independence in their actions, despite the extreme pressures outside participants placed on them. The agency of the local Slavophone Macedonians, in fact, has influenced the development of Macedonian identity as a whole.

The brief outline of the secondary literature in this chapter indicates the problems that historians face when discussing Macedonian Slav involvement in the Greek Civil War. Greek and Macedonian nationalists avoid, or embellish the question if possible because it is still politically sensitive. Scholars outside of the region typically avoid the issue as well, unless they are sympathetic to one nationalist historiography or the other, because of the political controversy that any discussion of Macedonian identity provokes. As a result, there is a critical need for scholars to break away from nationalist narratives and determine the extent to which the disproportionate numbers of Slavophone Macedonians within the DAG affected the course of the Greek Civil War. Determining this role, in turn, will assist scholars examining modern Balkan politics and the role of minority groups in civil conflicts.

<sup>77</sup> Koliopoulos, *Plundered Loyalties: World War II and Civil War in Greek West Macedonia* 226-27.

<sup>78</sup> See Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949* 188-90; Evans, "The Macedonians of Aegean Macedonia: A British Officer's Report, 1944," 282-309.

<sup>79</sup> Kofos, *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia* 103.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

## 1.2. Methodology

To better understand how the Slavophone Macedonians exploited their disproportionate numbers in the DAG to advance their nationalist objectives, and how their numbers impacted the decision-making policies of the states involved in the Greek Civil War, it is helpful to use two distinct, but mutually supporting theoretical schools: modernist nationalist theory and insurgency theory.<sup>81</sup> Specifically, this dissertation used Miroslav Hroch's theory on nationalism and David Kilcullen's theory on insurgency warfare to help guide the research process. This acceptance of employing theory is not to say that the author allowed these theoretical frameworks determine his interpretation of the material examined. Thus, while this dissertation would not have been possible without the insights gained from the theories it has referenced, it places evidence above theoretical considerations.

Kilcullen's theory on the Conflict Environment informs an analysis of the Slavophone Macedonians' role in the Greek Civil War because it represents one of the few systematic attempts to accommodate all of the varied factors that help shape an insurgency campaign. As Kilcullen explains, "insurgencies are popular uprisings that grow from pre-existing social networks (village, tribe, family, neighborhood, political or religious party), are conducted through those networks, and exist in a complex social,

<sup>81</sup> Insurgency literature frequently mentions the Greek Civil War. The problem, however, is that its examination is typically an addendum to a broader argument about insurgencies as a whole, particularly as it relates to the American experience in combatting them. See: Christopher K Ives, *Us Special Forces and Counterinsurgency in Vietnam: Military Innovation and Institutional Failure, 1961-1963* (London: Routledge, 2007) 73; Anthony James Joe, *Modern Guerrilla Insurgency* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1992) 13-52; Jones, "A New Kind of War": *America's Global Strategy and the Truman Doctrine in Greece*, 235; Cable, *Conflict of Myths: The Development of American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and the Vietnam War*, 29; David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 1964) 12. There has recently been some works that attempt to assess counter-insurgency practices in Greece by itself. Most notably, see: Goulter, "The Greek Civil War: A National Army's Counterinsurgency Triumph," 1017-55; and William D. Harris, *Instilling Aggressiveness: Us Advisors and Greek Combat Leadership in the Greek Civil War, 1947-1949*, 73; Frank J. Abbott, *The Greek Civil War, 1947-1949: Lessons for the Operational Artist in Foreign Internal Defence* (Damascus, MD: Penny Hill Press, 1994) *Passim*; D.G. Kousoulas, "The Guerrilla War the Communists Lost," *U.S. Naval Institute* 89, no. 4-6 (1963) 66-67.

informational and physical environment.”<sup>82</sup> Specifically with regards to the Greek Civil War, the KKE’s lack of influence in society means that such networks are critical to determining how the Slavophone Macedonians came to play a large role in the conflict. Kilcullen coined the term ‘Conflict Environment’ to describe the varied nature of the actors involved in insurgency conflicts and his theory includes the use of biological references to explain that the objectives of the different groups participating in an insurgency campaign are as varied as the groups themselves.<sup>83</sup> Kilcullen stretches the biological aspects of conflict environments too far in an attempt to increase the theory’s appeal and give it scientific credence. Nonetheless, the theory remains useful in that it helps scholars assess the conflict without necessarily prescribing solutions.

Kilcullen’s theory is at the same time both encompassing and reductionist. In terms of being encompassing, it is one of the few theoretical models that consider the diverse participants who are involved in an insurgency campaign and/or civil war.<sup>84</sup> Although Kilcullen never terms an insurgency campaign a civil war, other scholars term many of the examples that he cites as such, which suggests its findings are equally applicable to civil wars.<sup>85</sup> Kilcullen becomes reductionist when he attempts to use his model of the Combat Environment to construct three different facets of insurgencies that are essential to their success.<sup>86</sup> This problem also marks most other contemporary theories on insurgency. That is, the theories try to prescribe solutions without the

<sup>82</sup> David J. Kilcullen, "Three Pillars of Counterinsurgency," in *U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Conference* (Washington, D.C.2006), 2.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> For examples of works that describe the Iraqi insurgency as a civil war, and examine the blurred lines between insurgency and civil war, see Daniel L Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack, *Things Fall Apart: Containing the Spillover from an Iraqi Civil War* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007) *Passim*; and Anthony H. Cordesman and Emma R. Davies, *Iraq’s Insurgency and the Road to Civil Conflict* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008) *Passim*.

<sup>86</sup> Kilcullen, “*Three Pillars*” 4.

necessary empirical evidence to support them.<sup>87</sup> The desire for answers is understandable, particularly in light of the numerous insurgency campaigns that the United States is facing as the world's last remaining superpower. The majority of the theories on insurgency, however, attempt to simplify its aspects to provide formulaic responses. Kilcullen himself acknowledges that the "three pillars" model is clearly incorrect — all models are, insofar as they are systematic oversimplifications of reality."<sup>88</sup> This dissertation will not employ the unproven and unreliable three pillars model, given that one of its principle objectives is to provide, "a basis for further development", which is what Kilcullen desires but fails to accomplish.<sup>89</sup> Instead, it will emphasize the factors that make up a 'combat environment' when conducting its analysis.

Hroch's theory on nationalism is particularly useful for examining the construction of a Macedonian state and national movement in the age of nationalism. While Hroch is like most modernist theorists in allowing for the construction of nationalities, his theory is the best for assessing the different rates at which nationalist movements develop.<sup>90</sup> Hroch begins his analysis by noting that eight nationalities had emerged in Europe by the turn of the nineteenth century, and two more were starting to develop: German and Italian.<sup>91</sup> At the same time, there were over thirty "non-dominant" ethnic groups throughout the rest of Europe, with many of those located in the Eastern part of the continent.<sup>92</sup> These groups became self-aware of their identity for a variety of reasons and came to recognize that their nationalist movements had certain defects in terms of

<sup>87</sup> For example David Galula, one of the principle counterinsurgency experts, provides a series of steps to successfully pacify a region. See: Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* 54-5. Others include: Robert Raber, *The War of the Flea: A Study of Guerrilla Warfare Theory and Practice* (New York: The Citadel Press, 1970) 11; John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002 (2005)) 221; Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Age* (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1998 (2012)) 198-201.

<sup>88</sup> Kilcullen, "Three Pillars" 7

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Most prominent amongst the constructivist theorists is Benedict Anderson. See: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities" Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991) *Passim*.

<sup>91</sup> Miroslav Hroch, "From National Movement to the Fully-Formed Nation: The Nation-Building Process in Europe," *New Left Review* 1/198 (1993) 3-20

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. 7.

their capacity to become established nationalities. Hroch argues that the development of nationalism was one of the ways in which the leaders of these nationalist groups sought to overcome the perceived limitations of their movements. While some of these movements were already nascent, such as the Greek and Serb movements, others, like those of Slovenia and Croatia, developed later in the nineteenth century.<sup>93</sup> Within Hroch's framework, the Macedonian national identity is the last to develop, as it did not occur until the late nineteenth/early twentieth century.

Hroch's systematizes the development of national identity from its starting point to its successful completion. Hroch identifies three phases in this process. In the first phase, activists commit themselves to conducting an academic inquiry into the linguistic, historical, and cultural characteristics that make their nation unique. Hroch defines the second phase as the violence phase, where a new group of nationalists takes up the mantle provided by the academics and use a variety of available means to attempt to convert as many people as possible to the new ethnic identity. In the third phase, nationalist endeavours have succeeded, and the majority of the people affected by them have adopted the ethnic identity.<sup>94</sup> For Hroch, the critical period for any nationalist movement was transition between the second and third phases, as this was time in which many possible nationalities fail to develop fully due to their inability to overcome the change to their identities.<sup>95</sup> As the Macedonian national movement was transitioning from a contested to established identity during the Greek Civil War, Hroch's theoretical framework provides excellent guidance to the assessments made in this dissertation.

What makes the development of the Macedonian identity relatively unique (the Polish and Basque identities also being exceptions) was that it began the shift from the second to third of Hroch's stages under the auspices of three competing states: Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia (later Yugoslavia). This peculiarity was a significant role in the development of the Macedonian national movement, which drew upon a common Ottoman tradition but also encompassed three different political contexts subsequent to

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. 5.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid. 6-7.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. 7-8.

the Balkan Wars. The divisions in the Macedonian national movement also provided the Macedonian nationalist movement with different ideas that they could draw upon and apply to their political context.<sup>96</sup> As will be shown, considerations regarding the Yugoslavs and Bulgarians attempt to manage the Macedonian national movement led to them becoming involved in the Greek Civil War.

Fundamentally, this dissertation is a political analysis within the context of military history. Military history is amongst the oldest of the historical disciplines, although individuals whom historians rarely consider their peers have often practiced it. Before the twentieth century, members of the armed forces were the primary individuals who studied military history. The principle focus was on the outcomes of individual battles and campaigns and how they could use what they had learned to advance their knowledge of warfare.<sup>97</sup> Although military history became more of an academic discipline and less of a military science in the twentieth century, the field remained dominated by battlefield accounts, operational doctrine, and the minutiae of battles. This development was in part due to academics in the emerging fields of social and cultural history greeting military historians with hostility. According to John Whiteclay Chambers, military historians consequently started to become defensive about their work in the 1960s.<sup>98</sup> Battles and military operations remain crucial to the study of military history and provide the foundation for much of the historical analysis conducted by military historians today. Nevertheless, the strict narrowing of the discipline served to undermine its value to the broader academic community.

“New Military History” is an area of specialization within the discipline that this dissertation situates itself. It seeks to overcome the self-imposed limitations of previous

<sup>96</sup> For a pro-Macedonian perspective on this development, see: Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians: A History* Kindle Edition. For a pro-Greek perspective, see: Koliopoulos, "The War over the Identity and Numbers of Greece's Slav Macedonians," 39-58.

<sup>97</sup> The three most important examples of this kind of methodology were: Alfred Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History: 1660-1783* (Lenox, MA: Hardpress Publishers, 1890 (2012)) *Passim*; Baron de Jomini Antoine-Henri, *The Art of War* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1862 (2012)) *Passim*; Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Michael Howards and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1984) *Passim*.

<sup>98</sup> John Whiteclay Chambers, "Review Essay: The New Military History: Myth and Reality," *The Journal of Modern History* 55, no. 3 (1991) 396.



military histories and to look instead at warfare's interaction with politics, culture, and society, giving rise to its alternative name: war and society. It is generally separated into two branches: those that embrace sociological principles and those that embrace cultural principles. Both are 'new' in the sense that they are incorporating developments that historians have not traditionally examined. Peter Paret defines new military history as "an expansion of the subject of military history from the specifics of military organization and action to their widest implications, and also a broadening of the approaches to the subject, [and] of the methodological approaches."<sup>99</sup> Paret's definition allows for the incorporation of sociological and cultural practices seen elsewhere in the discipline. This dissertation has adopted such a perspective to understand the socio-cultural context of Macedonian identity in the Greek Civil War.

Despite the potential that these practices have had for reintegrating military history into the rest of the historical discipline, not all scholars have accepted the new military history. In fact, many have argued that military history should examine only battles and campaigns, and that foci outside of this limited purview were the domains of other disciplines. As a result, scholars refused to accept the new military orientation and many universities neglected the subject.<sup>100</sup> Although military history remained popular with the public, it was not until the 1980s that the discipline at least became remotely acceptable to scholars. As John Whiteclay Chambers explains in his 1991 article "The New Military History: Myth and Reality", the "study of war and the military is once again becoming recognized as an important means of understanding much historical development."<sup>101</sup> This development was in part due to military history evolving, as Robert M. Citino coined it, a "big tent" discipline.<sup>102</sup> Although 'new' military history has not displaced 'old' military history, nor regained the prominence it had at the beginning of the twentieth century, it has both reinvigorated the discipline and helped it achieve respectability with other disciplines.

<sup>99</sup> Cited in: *ibid.* 397.

<sup>100</sup> Robert M. Citino, "Military Histories Old and New: A Reintroduction," *The American Historical Review* 112, no. 4 (2007) 1070.

<sup>101</sup> Chambers, "Review Essay: The New Military History: Myth and Reality," 396

<sup>102</sup> Citino, "Military Histories Old and New: A Reintroduction," 1071.

This dissertation follows the principles of 'new' military history. It examines the impact of the Macedonian Slavs beyond the context of their battle contributions and assessing how their preponderant numbers within the DAG affected all facets of the conflict. Methodologically, it addresses the contemporary trend of determining the role of ethnicity and race in conflict.<sup>103</sup> Culturally, it is positioned within the field by examining what motivates a people to fight and how institutional culture influences the actions of political actors.<sup>104</sup> Combining these factors with an appreciation for the impact that wars and battles on them will ensure that this dissertation reflects the 'new military history', but also recognizes the importance of warfare and conflict central to 'old military history' analyses.

Although my study departs from 'old' military history because its form is not strictly narrative individual chapters that follow a rough chronological progression, the work must also foreground the multitude of participants involved in the Greek Civil War. Consequently, each chapter examines the perspective of the players involved and considers how the Macedonian Question shaped their intentions in the conflict.<sup>105</sup> Doing so will not only allow the reader to follow the actions of each of the individual actors but also demonstrate the complexity of the Macedonian Question.

<sup>103</sup> See: Carter Johnson, "Keeping the Peace after Partition: Ethnic Minorities, Civil Wars, and the Third Generation Ethnic Security Dilemma," *Civil Wars* 17, no. 1 (2015) 25-50; Jacques Bertrand and Oded Haklai, "Democratization and Ethnic Minorities," in *Democratization and Ethnic Minorities: Conflict or Compromise?*, ed. Jacques Bertrand and Oded Haklai (New York: Routledge, 2015), 1-17; Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000) *Passim*.

<sup>104</sup> For an analysis of this issue, see: Vivien Lowndes, "The Institutional Approach," in *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, ed. David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 60-79.

<sup>105</sup> Andre Gerolymatos has been particularly important in demonstrating how the Greek Civil War was, in many ways, the first proxy war during the Cold War. See Gerolymatos, *Red Acropolis, Black Terror: The Greek Civil War and the Origins of Soviet-American Rivalry, 1943-1949* *Passim*. Others include: Nachmani, *International Intervention in the Greek Civil War: The United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans, 1947-1952*, 152; Kostis Karpozilos, "The Defeated of the Greek Civil War: From Fighters to Political Refugees in the Cold War," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 16, no. 3 (2014) 62-87; Nikos Marantzidis, "The Greek Civil War (1944-1949) and the International Communist System," *ibid.* 15, no. 4 (2013) 25-54; John O. Iatrides, "Revolution or Self-Defense? Communist Goals, Strategy, and Tactics in the Greek Civil War," *ibid.* 7, no. 3 (2005) 3-33. Mark Mazower, "The Cold War and the Appropriation of Memory: Greece after Liberation," in *The Politics of Retribution in Europe, World War II and Its Aftermath*, ed. Deak et als (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2000), 212-32.

While the emphasis of this study will be on events within the standard timeframe of the Greek Civil War, the ideas surrounding the Macedonian Question – which the different participants in the conflict dealt with – developed before the Greek Civil War and had great significance with respect to the players' actions.<sup>106</sup> Specifically, the fragmentation of the Macedonian nationalist movement in the 1920s and 30s helped inform Yugoslav, Greek, and Bulgarian decisions for much of the period. Furthermore, the aftermath of the Greek Civil War had a significant bearing on the evolution of the Macedonian national movement. As a result, while the focus of this dissertation is on the years 1944-1949, the analysis would be incomplete without an exploration of pre-1946 and contemporary ideas about the Macedonian identity.

### **1.3. Primary Sources**

Due to the complexity of the participants involvement in the Greek Civil War, and the multiple state and sub-state actors involved, this dissertation employs a variety of archival and published primary sources. Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Greece were all actively involved in shaping the Macedonian identity, and hence the three countries' responses to the Greek Civil War are examined. Furthermore, the collapse of Yugoslavia and the fragmentation of related archival resources mean that one must examine the records of two successor states, Serbia and Macedonia. This dissertation used the records of American and British consuls and diplomatic officers serving in both the Federal Republic of Macedonia and Greece to augment knowledge of the region, although access to these sources was limited. Finally, there is an extensive amount of published primary literature on the Macedonian Question that scholars have largely ignored. Combining these sources with the archival records will provide a complete analysis of Macedonian involvement in the Greek Civil War.

<sup>106</sup> In conventional historiography, the official Greek Civil War of 1946-49 is actually the Third Phase of the Greek Civil War that began in 1943, when ELAS attempted by force to eliminate all other resistance groups within occupied Greece. See: Andre Gerolymatos, "Greek Democracy on Trial: From Insurgency to Civil War, 1943-49," in *Democracies and Small Wars*, ed. Efraim Inbar (London: Routledge, 2003), 119-34.

Archival records in Greece form the basis for this dissertation. The most crucial records were those of The Diplomatic and Historical Archive (UDIA). While scholars have conducted considerable research on the international dimension of the conflict, as demonstrated in the secondary literature analysis, this dissertation seeks to understand both the domestic and non-governmental responses to the Slavophone Macedonians in the region. The UDIA, which possessed an impressive intelligence-gathering network in the form of its officials, greatly assists in this task. The archival records at UDIA proved instrumental in determining the Greek government's decision processes and policies regarding Macedonian issue.

The perception and actions of the Greek government are just one dimension of the Macedonian Question in the Greek Civil War. The actions of the KKE were of particular significance. Unfortunately, only a partial record of the KKE's actions is generally available for examination. When the KKE split in 1968, the Communist Party of Greece (Interior), which pursued a Euro communist line, took a significant portion of the party's archives with them.<sup>107</sup> Eventually, the KKE (External) deposited these records at the Contemporary Social History Archives (ASKI), where they are accessible to researchers today. Although they do not provide a complete record of the period in question, the limited records, when combined with other available documentation provide insight into the workings of the KKE in relation to the Macedonian Question.

The Greek archival records are the most important, given that the Greek Civil War occurred on Greek soil. The international dimension of the conflict, however, requires historians to consult other records as well. The Archive of Yugoslavia (AJ) was the most important amongst these sources, as the Yugoslavs were the most significant participant in terms of both supplying the DAG and promoting a Macedonian identity during this period. The CPY, because of its direct interference in the Greek Civil War, was able to influence events with respect to the Macedonian issue. Furthermore, the AJ contain correspondence between the KKE and CPY that is otherwise unavailable in Greece due to the aforementioned incomplete record and archival restrictions. As a

<sup>107</sup> <http://askiweb.eu/index.php/en/>

result, examining the records of the AJ proved vital in determining both the extent and the ways in which the CPY influenced the Macedonian factor in the Greek Civil War.

The politicization of the issue of Macedonian identity and independence creates a major issue in gaining access to material on these subjects at the state archives. The author contacted the Archive of Macedonia in Skopje, but the authorities did not respond. Fortunately, as explained below, the Archives of Macedonia published much of their material on the Greek Civil War in a set of edited volumes that are certainly selective but give insight into events and decisions that otherwise are otherwise inaccessible.

While the aforementioned archives are of crucial importance in terms of understanding the problems of Macedonian Question it is fundamental to examine the actions of the Greek government's primary benefactors, Great Britain and the United States, influenced the conflict. This dissertation, therefore, includes a limited examination of records from the National Archives of the U.K. at Kew and the National Administration and Records Administration in Washington, D.C. While scholars have extensively examined these records, this research primarily concerns foreign policy. Instead of reviewing the reports of military attaches and diplomats for information on major political developments, I examined them for their reference to conditions in northern Greece and how the Greek National Government dealt with the civilian population.

There are several varieties of primary sources on the issues of Macedonian identity that historians have largely neglected. The most commonly used, and readily available, documents are the memoirs of the participants involved in the conflict. Nearly all the major actors in the conflict, ranging from members of the Central Committee of

the KKE to Macedonian nationalists, have published their memoirs.<sup>108</sup> The problem with these accounts, besides the obvious issue of memory, is that nearly all the authors published them with a political objective.<sup>109</sup> This political purpose of the memoirs means that in addition to dealing with the traditional problems posed by examining memoirs and accounts after the fact, historians must be cognizant of these sources' political agenda. As a result, I will only reference memoirs if another piece of material exists to cross-reference it with.

Finally, there is a plethora of published primary material on the Macedonian Question that historians either ignore or use sparsely. There are several reasons for this. First, scholars' preference for examining archival primary sources has caused them to overlook and bypass published primary sources, particularly within the fields of political and military history.<sup>110</sup> The second problem, which is dissertation-specific, is that the nationalist politics on the Macedonian Question has caused historians of differing nationalities to marginalize publically available sources if they derive from an opposing viewpoint. As a result, the politicization of the Macedonian Question limits scholars willingness to use/trust such primary sources.

Three texts exemplify the politicization of primary source collections. The first is *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People of Independence and a Nation-State*, edited by Hristo-Androv Poljanski et al.<sup>111</sup> Published in 1985 as part of a larger

<sup>108</sup> Examples of available published primary sources include: Petros Roussos, *I Megali Pentaetia, 1940-1945* (Athens: Sygchroni Epochi, 1982) *Passim*; Giannis Ioannidis, *Αναμνήσεις: Προβλήματα Της Πολιτικής Του Κκε Στην Εθνική Αντίσταση 1940-1945* (Athens: Εκδόσεις Θεμέλιο, 1979) *Passim*; Thanasis Hatzis, *7 Nikifora Epanastasi Pou Chathike*, vol. 1-3 (Athens: Dorikos, 1977-1979) *Passim*; Vukmanović-Tempo, *Revolucija Koja Teče*, 1; Kardelj, *Reminiscences: The Struggle for Recognition and Independence: The New Yugoslavia, 1944-1957*, *Passim*; Milovan Djilas, *Wartime*, trans. Michael Petrovich (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977) *Passim*.

<sup>109</sup> For an analysis of how memory becomes distorted over time see: Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (New York: SUNY, 1991) 1-28.

<sup>110</sup> Academics have long debated this issue, but military/political historians themselves have largely ignored the issue. See Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins UP, 1978) 125.

<sup>111</sup> *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-state: from the end of World War One to the Creation of a Nation-State*, ed. Hristo-Androv Poljanski et al., vol. 2 (Skopje: The University of "Cyril and Methodius", 1985).

series of works explaining the history of the Macedonian people, it attempts to demonstrate to the reader that a clear continuity existed within the Macedonian national movement. In so doing, it relegates differing opinions on the development of the Macedonian national movement, such as those pertinent to the original Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization, to obscurity.<sup>112</sup> Importantly, the fact that the authorities of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia translated the work into English shows the importance that they attached to conveying the message of a unique Macedonian national identity to the outside world. While the purpose of producing such a compilation may be problematic, in many instances the work provides access to otherwise restricted documents that historians cannot simply disregard because they disagree with the editors' biases. This and other similar document collections that were published by either the Socialist Republic of Macedonia or its political successor, FYROM, will, therefore, be used in conjunction with other sources to establish a more complete perspective on Macedonian involvement in the Greek Civil War than otherwise would be possible.

The impetus for the publication of the primary sources was the initiative of the different parties to create a cohesive narrative. For example, the book *Σαραντα Χρονία του ΚΚΕ, 1918-1958, Επιλογή Ντοκουμέντων (Forty Years of the KKE, 1918-1958, Selection of Documents)* – the second text that exemplifies the politicization of primary source collections – is one of the most important collections of documents pertinent to discussing the actions of the KKE.<sup>113</sup> The official records of the KKE remain sealed to most researchers. While the ASKI possesses a number of the KKE's documents from this period, its collection is not complete. Even though *Forty Years of the KKE, 1918-1958, Selection of Documents* was written with a political purpose in mind, it is still an invaluable resource for understanding the internal workings of the KKE and how the party addressed the Macedonian Question during the period in question. As such, one must balance its use with other materials.

<sup>112</sup> One way that Poljanski's work does so is through a careful selection of sources to convey continuity throughout the period in question.

<sup>113</sup> *Saranta Xronia Tou Kke, 1918-1958: Epilogi Ntokoumenton*, (Athens1964). *Passim*.

Third, the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences published *Macedonia: Documents and Material*, ed. by D. Kossev et. al., in 1978.<sup>114</sup> This document collection attempts to link the medieval Bulgarian Kingdom's control over what would become Ottoman Macedonia to the present Bulgarian identity. The political agenda of the collection is clearly an attempt to discredit a separate Macedonian Slav identity and emphasize how people throughout history regarded the Slavic people of the region as Bulgarian. It provides sources from Bulgarian and other archives, however, which would have been otherwise impossible to access. As a result, incorporating the sources it includes into the dissertation is important for creating a comprehensive assessment of Macedonian Slav involvement in the Greek Civil War.

Archival records are subjective. Collections are filtered through notions of national security and political expediency. Accordingly, scholars must tread through archives carefully and the records they make available to researchers. In the emerging Balkan states control of the written materials of the past are necessary to secure how a state and nation are defined. In effect, the issues of Macedonian identity, state, as well as ethnic origins have become the subject of polemics that have the sole purpose of advancing nationalist arguments about the connection of the nation to the state, particularly within the context of the Greek Civil War. Furthermore, by introducing the Macedonian Question as an important factor for all the involved parties in the Greek Civil War and not just the KKE, the dissertation demonstrates that its significance extends beyond the ongoing dispute between Greece and FYROM over the cultural heritage of Alexander the Great.

## **1.4. Chapter Breakdown**

This dissertation is organized into eight chapters, which includes the introduction and conclusion. Chapter Two provides the historical context to the complicated issue of the development of the Macedonian national movement to understand what ideas and actions motivated Macedonians and Slavophone Macedonians immediately before the

<sup>114</sup> *Macedonia: Documents and Material*, ed. D. Kossev et. al. (Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1979) *Passim*.



outbreak of civil conflict in Greece. Chapter Three explores the CPY's efforts to gain control of the Macedonian Question in the Second World War. The CPY's actions during this period informed its policies on the Macedonian Question throughout the 1940s. Chapter Four examines the 'Second Round' of the Greek Civil War, the *Dekemvriana*, and the Macedonian Question's role in these events. Specifically, the *Dekemvriana* demonstrated that while the CPY was now the dominant political organization on the Macedonian Question, it still had to appease local participants exploited the history of the Macedonian national movement as a contemporary event both inside and outside of Yugoslavia. The Slavophone Macedonians were most prominent amongst these groups, while the party most disadvantaged by this development was the KKE. Chapter Five analyzes developments in the Macedonian Question from the aftermath of the *Dekemvriana* to the formation of the DAG. During this period, Yugoslavia's increased control over Macedonians within Yugoslavia allowed it to support the KKE. However, the emergence of an indigenous Macedonian organization in northern Greece: the National Liberation Front (NOF) restricted the ability of the Yugoslavs to exploit the issue. Chapter Six analyzes the Macedonian Question during the period between the formation of the NOF and the outbreak of the Tito-Stalin split in June 1948. At this time relations between the CPY and KKE were at their strongest. For this reason, it is this period that gave birth to the myth that Yugoslavia's primary goal was territorial aggrandizement. Chapter Seven, which examines the period from the Tito-Stalin split until the end of the Greek Civil War, demonstrates how the policies of the different parties involved in the conflict fundamentally shifted after this turning point. In particular, it examines the reasons that the KKE returned to its pre-1935 Macedonian policy in February 1949, despite the political backlash that this move engendered in the rest of Greece. The KKE and Zachariadis, in particular, reached the decision to revert to the pre-1935 Macedonian policy amidst a confluence of domestic and international pressures. Finally, Chapter Eight, the conclusion, will summarize the critical points pertinent to the role of Macedonian Slavs in the Greek Civil War, as well as consider the potential impact that this new study has on the ongoing legacy of the Macedonian Question in Balkan politics.

## Chapter 2. Historical Background

In 1876, Otto von Bismarck spoke to a tumultuous German Reichstag as European popular sentiment clambered for intervention in the Balkans. He summed up his policy for the region in a phrase scholars often quote: “Not worth the healthy bones of a single Pomeranian grenadier.”<sup>115</sup> What is not usually noted, however, was that Bismarck’s perspective on the Balkans informed much of his policy for the remainder of his Chancellorship. Bismarck’s efforts to avoid Balkan entanglements and preserve the European balance of power resulted in the Congress of Berlin in the aftermath of the Ottoman Empire’s military collapse in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78. The Treaty of San Stefano that ended the conflict threatened to upset the European balance of power and entangle Germany and Europe in a pan-continental conflagration over Russia’s greatly enhanced influence in the region through the creation of a large new Balkan state: Bulgaria. Bismarck solved this potential powder keg by convening the Congress of Berlin in the summer of 1878. The Congress subsequently redacted many of Russia’s gains and ensured that a critical region of the Balkans would remain under Ottoman control: Macedonia.<sup>116</sup>

After the Congress of Berlin, the political and intellectual establishments of the Balkan states sought to address the Macedonian Question – the question of how to divide the lands and peoples of Ottoman Macedonia. The antecedents of the Macedonian Question, however, influenced their struggle. By the time that the Slavophone Macedonian minority in Greece would come to play a significant role in the Greek Civil War, all the participants involved were drawing upon historical legacies to buttress their political and ideological claims. Serbia (and then Yugoslavia), in particular, sought to overcome Bulgaria’s long-established dominance over the Slavic population of Ottoman Macedonia. Tito’s efforts to fight this legacy provided much of the impetus for Yugoslavia’s involvement in Greece in the 1940s.

<sup>115</sup> Bismarck, cited in Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* 11.

<sup>116</sup> For an examination of the legacies of the Congress of Berlin that, while dated, remain indispensable see: William Norton Medlicott, *Congress of Berlin and After* (New York: Routledge, 1963) *Passim*.

## 2.1. The Balkans during the Ottoman Period

The Ottomans, after they entered the Balkans in 1356, expanded their conquests rapidly by defeating the declining Serbian Empire at the Battle of Kosovo Polje in 1389 and eliminating the Byzantine/Eastern Roman Empire after a successful siege of Constantinople in 1453.<sup>117</sup> While the Ottoman Empire's defeat at the gates of Vienna in 1683 marked the end of Ottoman expansion in the Balkans, it remained a significant force in the region until the Bulgarian, Greek, Montenegrin and Serbian armies mostly expelled it during the First Balkan War of 1912. Importantly, these nation states drew on the intellectual and cultural legacies of the period to construct their political identities.

The Ottoman Empire's policy of 'divide and rule' inadvertently helped give rise to ethnic tensions in the Balkans during the Nineteenth Century.<sup>118</sup> Karen Barkey makes a significant contribution to this argument in demonstrating that ironically in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that rural bandits and rebellions were a facet of Ottoman centralizing policies in the Balkans. The Ottomans used bandits as part of the divide and rule system to maintain order in areas which were otherwise difficult to police. As Koliopoulos notes, the Balkan nation states later continued this policy after their establishment in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>119</sup>

One cannot ignore the long-term effects of the policy on the peoples of the Balkans. As James Reid explains when he describes the governance issues faced by the late Ottoman Empire:

*Factional conflicts created instability in governmental and military circles, as well as extending that instability into Ottoman society. Ottoman officials accustomed to factional politics at high states ruled Ottoman*

<sup>117</sup> Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The History of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Basic Books, 2007) Kindle Edition.

<sup>118</sup> This point has recently become under contestation in the literature, with an increasingly broad variety of works examining how the Ottoman Empire attempted to create a cohesive identity. For a recent compilation from preeminent scholars that explore these ideas see: Christine Ison-Verhaaren and Kent F. Schull, ed. *Living in the Ottoman Realm: Empire and Identity, 13th to 20th Centuries* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 2016), *Passim*.

<sup>119</sup> Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1994) *Passim*.

*provinces with the same attitude. By causing faction conflict within their provinces, Ottoman governors could obtain important advantages and benefits.*<sup>120</sup>

Although James Reid principally examined the early to mid-nineteenth century Ottoman policy, the empire faced similar difficulties after the Congress of Berlin.<sup>121</sup> The early nineteenth century simply represented the apex of the problem. The Ottomans' divide and rule policy effectively prevented subjected peoples from uniting against the sultan. This dynamic of Ottoman rule, however, also prevented the development of a trans-confessional Ottoman identity, while simultaneously aggravating the peoples of the empire and creating divides between them.<sup>122</sup>

The *Millets* (Confessional Communities) divided the peoples of the Ottoman Empire along lines of religious identity and the Ottoman bureaucracy, for the most part, left the administration of non-Muslims to their respective religious authorities.<sup>123</sup> A significant legacy of the *Millet* system was the increasing power of the Phanariotes – Greek speaking Rum (Orthodox) subjects who specialized in trade and affairs of state – within the Ottoman Empire between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>124</sup> Molly Greene explains that the Ottoman Empire favoured the Phanariotes over its other subjects because of their importance in commerce and affairs of state.<sup>125</sup> The Phanariotes, however, were not an ethnic organization. As Christine M. Philliou explains in *Biography of Empire*, the Phanariotes simply represented the highest strata of the Rum *Millet*. People whom modern historians would consider to be of a different nationality, such as Stefan Bogoridi (later Stephanos Vogorides), could become a

<sup>120</sup> James Reid, *Crisis of the Ottoman Empire: Prelude to Collapse, 1839-1878* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000) 45.

<sup>121</sup> The empire, however, did recognize this issue and attempted to create a unifying ideology. See: Deringil Selim, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire 1876-1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998) *Passim*; Kemil Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam. Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001) *Passim*.

<sup>122</sup> John S. Kolipoulos, *Brigands with a Cause Brigandage and Irredentism in Modern Greece 1821-1912* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986) *Passim*.

<sup>123</sup> Thomas W. Gallant, *Brief Histories: Modern Greece* (London: Hodder Publishing, 2001) 4

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid* 5-6.

<sup>125</sup> Molly Greene, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks, 1453 to 1768: The Ottoman Empire by Molly Greene* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2015) Kindle Edition.

member of the Phanariotes.<sup>126</sup> The Phanariotes were able to maintain their monopoly on key Ottoman positions such as the rule of the Danubian Principalities and the Patriarchate well into the nineteenth century because they were an open organization, as opposed to a closed religious or ethnic group.<sup>127</sup> The Phanariotes also played pivotal role in introducing the ideas of the Enlightenment and nationalism to the Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman Empire, which would significantly influence the course of its development.<sup>128</sup>

One consequence of the Phanariotes' influence within the Ottoman Empire was that their culture became the basis of high culture amongst the Christian peoples of the Balkans.<sup>129</sup> The Greek language was the *Lingua Franca* of business and trade in the Ottoman Balkans. Individuals throughout the Balkans in the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries began learning Greek due to the Phanariotes' influence in business, trade, as well as the desire to pursue greater economic opportunities. As Raymond Detrez makes clear, most people as a matter of course for doing business accepted this reality without complaint. A common language is a necessity for doing commerce, so it made sense to learn the language that would gain one the greatest economic opportunities.<sup>130</sup> Furthermore, Greek was the language of the Patriarchate, which meant that advancing within the ecclesiastical hierarchy necessitated learning it.<sup>131</sup> The dominance of the Greek language in ecclesiastical and commercial affairs was not a significant issue for the people of the Rum *Millet* in the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries as it was not an issue of ethnic or national rivalries. Instead, language was an administrative and cultural issue. The Greek language's dominance

<sup>126</sup> Christine M. Philliou, *Biography of an Empire: Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011) Kindle Edition.

<sup>127</sup> Ironically, the Phanariotes, many of whom were part of the most progressive elements of the Ottoman Empire, would lose their position of influence as the empire began to modernize in the nineteenth century. See: *ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> Stratos Myrogiannis, *The Emergence of a Greek Identity (1700-1821)* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012) *Passim*.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> For an example of how this system worked prior to the rise of nationalism see: Detrez, "Relations between Greeks and Bulgarians in the Pre-Nationalist Era: The Gudilas in Plovdiv," 30-46.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.* 32.

over commerce and religion in the nineteenth century, however, would become a focal point for the development of the Greek national movement. In addition, language would become a rallying point of resistance against the Greeks, particularly by the Bulgarian national movement.

## 2.2. The Emergence of Nationalism and the Nation-State

The Ottoman government's policy of only recognizing religious groups and ignoring ethnicity contributed to the spread of nationalism in the nineteenth century. Miroslav Hroch's work on the development of national movements in Eastern Europe provides a critical and explanatory view of this event. Hroch states:

*The onset of the modern stage of nation-building can be dated from the moment when selected groups within the non-dominant ethnic community started to discuss their own ethnicity and to conceive of it as a potential nation-to-be. Sooner or later, they observed certain deficits, which the future nation still lacked, and began efforts to overcome one or more of them, seeking to persuade compatriots of the importance of consciously belonging to the nation. I term these organized endeavours to achieve all the attributes of a full-fledged nation (which were not always and everywhere successful) a national movement.<sup>132</sup>*

As Hroch explains, the intelligentsia and elites' abilities to convince the broader population that they belonged to a singular entity were critical to the task. The people of the Balkans, influenced by both the French Revolution and (as Stratos Myrogiannis notes) increased interactions with Western European intellectual thought, proved susceptible to the new ideas.<sup>133</sup> The Ottomans' legacy of not recognizing ethnicity or nationality, however, would make convincing the people that they belonged to a cohesive nation difficult. Nowhere would this be more evident than Ottoman Macedonia.

The Balkans' first major rebellion was The Serbian Uprising in the nineteenth century. The Serbs rebelled as a result of the abuses of the ruling Janissaries – the once

<sup>132</sup> Hroch, "From National Movement to the Fully-Formed Nation: The Nation-Building Process in Europe," 62.

<sup>133</sup> Myrogiannis, *The Emergence of a Greek Identity (1700-1821) Passim*.

elite Ottoman soldiers who had become more efficient at extorting their own state than fighting its enemies.<sup>134</sup> The revolt only took on national characteristics after the Ottoman Sultan Selim III proved incapable of reining in the Janissaries. As the uprising expanded, the Serbs developed their own institutions between 1804 and 1813, such as the founding of the University of Belgrade in 1808.<sup>135</sup> The Ottomans eventually suppressed the revolt, but a more determined insurgency between 1815-17 succeeded and the Serbs gained *de-facto* autonomy.<sup>136</sup> The majority of the South Slavs, a linguistic subgroup in the Balkans that spoke several varieties of Slavic, still lived outside the new state's territory, including the people that the Serb nationalists eventually called the South Serbs, who were Slavs living in Ottoman Macedonia.<sup>137</sup> This dispersion was problematic for the new Serbian state. Henceforward, the Serb national movement pursued a policy of uniting its entire people within the Serbian state. Who the movement defined as a Serb, was open to interpretation and would affect its efforts to recruit the 'unredeemed' elements in Macedonia.

The Greek War of Independence (1821-1832) resulted (as the name suggests) in the establishment of what would become the Kingdom of Greece. Alexander Ypsilantis, the leader of the *Philiki Etairea (Friendly Society)* – an organization devoted to constructing a pan-Orthodox state in the lands of the Ottoman Empire – entered the Danubian Provinces in 1821 in an effort to encourage the provinces and the Principality of Serbia to rebel.<sup>138</sup> Russia, however, refused to support Ypsilantis' actions, which in turn caused the Danubian leaders to withdraw their commitment.<sup>139</sup> As a result, Ypsilantis' rebellion in the Danubian Provinces failed, while a revolt in the Peloponnese

<sup>134</sup> Mesut Uyar and Edward J Erickson, *A Military History of the Ottomans: From Osman to Atatürk* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2009) Kindle Edition.

<sup>135</sup> Sima M. Cirkovic, *The Serbs* (Victoria: Blackwell, 2008) Kindle Edition.

<sup>136</sup> This state will henceforward be referred to as Serbia.

<sup>137</sup> Cirkovic, *The Serbs* Kindle Edition.

<sup>138</sup> The Phanariotes had ruled the Danubian Provinces under the auspices of Ottoman rule for centuries prior to 1821. Their frequent mismanagement of the Danubian Provinces, and abuse of the special privileges granted to them by the Ottoman Sultan, caused considerable resentment amongst the local population. For a more expansive explanation see Charles Jelavich, *Establishment of the Balkan National States, 1804-1920: A History of East Central Europe* 45.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

flourished and eventually assumed the trappings of a national movement.<sup>140</sup> After several years of protracted struggle, the intervention of the Great Powers (Great Britain, Russia, and France) led to the founding of the Kingdom of Greece on 1832.<sup>141</sup> Subsequently for all of the nineteenth century, and part of the twentieth century, foreign powers played a significant role in the evolution of the Balkan states.

It is important to note that the new Greek Kingdom was confined to the southern tip of the Balkan Peninsula and contained only a fraction of the Ottoman Empire's Greek population. Consequently, irredentism soon became the policy of the Greek state: the *Megali Idea* (Great Idea). In 1841, the mid-nineteenth century Greek politician Ioannis Kolettis articulated Greece's desire to unify all the Greeks living within the Ottoman Empire. In order to accomplish this task, Greece needed to annex a major part of the empire.<sup>142</sup> Serbia would soon follow Greece's lead in formalizing its irredentist sentiment with the *Nacertanije* (draft) in 1844. The author of the *Nacertanije*, Serbia's Prime Minister Ilija Garašanin, noted that its goal was the "to absorb all the Serbian people around Serbia".<sup>143</sup> Nineteenth Century Greece and Serbia defined their national identities in the most expansive of terms. Both parties exploited the boundaries of their historical territories to support their arguments. One region where the irredentism of the new states overlapped was Ottoman Macedonia.

While Serbia and Greece were the first two nation-states to emerge in the Balkans, other national movements were also competing for Ottoman Macedonia. The Bulgarian national movement had coalesced within the Ottoman Empire from at least 1762, when Paisius of Hilander, a monk on Mount Athos, produced a nationalist manuscript titled the *History of Slaveno-Bulgaria*.<sup>144</sup> Few individuals, however, took up

<sup>140</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453* (New York: NYU Press, 1958 (2000)) 279-81; Gerolymatos, *The Balkan Wars* 176.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1983) 56.

<sup>143</sup> Cited in Stjepan Mestrovic, *The Balkanization of the West: The Confluence of Postmodernism and Postcommunism* (New York: Routledge, 2004) Kindle Edition.

<sup>144</sup> Kofos, *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia* 11.



the cause of Bulgarian nationalism until the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>145</sup> The Bulgarian national movement would not expand beyond the writings of a limited number of individuals until the Russian Empire became actively involved in the region (a policy its successor, the USSR, maintained well into the 1940s). Nineteenth-century Russia used a provision of the Treaty of Kuchuk Kaynarca (1774) to claim the status of patron and protector of all the Ottoman Empire's Orthodox subjects.<sup>146</sup> More often than not, Russia used this policy to advance its strategic goals and territorial aspirations at the expense of the Ottoman Empire. For example, the Russian Empire used the First Serbian Uprising to its advantage in the Russo-Ottoman War by supplying arms and moral support to Serb rebels in an attempt to advance its sphere of influence in the region (1805-1812).<sup>147</sup> Russia's intervention in the Balkans expanded in the nineteenth century due to the advent of the idea of Pan-Slavism, which entailed the belief that Russia should support other Slavic groups and led Russian individuals to take it upon themselves to advance the cause of their Slavic brethren.<sup>148</sup> As a result, by the middle of the nineteenth century, Russian support convinced members of the Bulgarian national movement to embrace the ideas of earlier Bulgarian national thinkers like Paisius. Furthermore, the development of an independent Bulgarian church became critical to the movement's struggle.<sup>149</sup>

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> The Treaty of Kuchuk Kaynarca, furthermore, inaugurated Russia's efforts to control the Bosphorus: the strait connecting the Black and Aegean Seas. Russia's desire to control the Bosphorus, and resulting access to the Mediterranean, caused Russia to intervene in Balkan affairs to an even greater degree than otherwise necessary, and continues to be a key part of Russian foreign policy today. See Andre Gerolymatos, "Turkish Straits: History, Politics, and Strategic Dilemmas," in *Ocean Yearbook*, ed. Scott Coffen-Smout Aldo Chircop, and Moira McConnell (London: Brill, 2014), 58-79.

<sup>147</sup> Orlando Figes, however, has recently challenged twentieth century historians' tendency to downplay religious motives. See: Orlando Figes, *Crimea: The Last Crusade* (London: Allen Lane, 2010) *Passim*.

<sup>148</sup> George Gavrillis, "Conflict and Control on the Ottoman-Greek Border," in *Understanding Life in the Borderlands: Boundaries in Depth and in Motion*, ed. Ira William Zartman (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2010), Kindle Edition.

<sup>149</sup> For an explanation of Pan Slavism in this period, see: Jelena Miloković-Djurić, *Panslavism and National Identity in Russia and the Balkans, 1830-1880: Images of the Self and Others* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1994) *Passim*. Arguably, Pan-Slavism's ties continued well into the Twentieth Century. See: Erik van Ree, *The Political Thought of Joseph Stalin: A Study in Twentieth Century Revolutionary Patriotism* (New York: Routledge, 2003) Kindle Edition.

The Phanariotes' dominant role within the Orthodox Church, which did not initially cause resentment in a pre-nationalist era, became a focal point of resentment among Orthodox peoples with the emergence of the Bulgarian nationalist ideology. Many individuals who historians later labelled as Bulgarians preferred to be Greek to signify their high standing in society.<sup>150</sup> In addition, by the 1830s the number of Bulgarian priests within the Patriarchate had grown significantly. Russia educated the priests, which included the Pan-Slavists' goals of raising the cultural awareness of their brethren and increasing Russian influence in the region. As a consequence, Russian-educated priests did not have the same attachment to Hellenism and Greek high culture as the Bulgarians who had been educated under the Patriarchate.<sup>151</sup> The measures Russia implemented led the Bulgarians to increase their demands that the Patriarchate appoint priests who spoke the vernacular of the local inhabitants to serve in their districts. The Patriarchate refused these demands outright throughout the 1830s and 1840s.<sup>152</sup> By 1870, however, the Sublime Porte considered the loyalty of the Greek-dominated Patriarchate suspect because of the Greek state's irredentist policies. The Sultan, therefore, issued a *firman* (decree) granting a degree of autonomy to the Bulgarian church. In 1872, the Bulgarian Exarchate unilaterally declared its independence from the Patriarchate.<sup>153</sup> This move was the first concrete step towards the creation of a distinct Bulgarian identity.

The Bulgarian national movement's development was critical to the emergence of the modern Macedonian Question. The Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee (BRCC), an émigré group based in Russia committed to the ideals of revolutionary nationalism, launched the April Uprising in 1876. This uprising occurred in Ottoman territory that would become modern Bulgaria and the Macedonian states.<sup>154</sup> It was initially a disaster, as few of the peasants rallied to the revolutionaries' cause and the

<sup>150</sup> Detrez, "Relations between Greeks and Bulgarians in the Pre-Nationalist Era: The Gudilas in Plovdiv," 30-43.

<sup>151</sup> R.J. Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997) Kindle Edition.

<sup>152</sup> Ironically, Bulgarian demands for increased rights occurred at the same time that the Greek Church had broken away from the Patriarchate, and would provide a model for the Bulgarian and other Balkan nation-states to follow. See: Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question, 1893-1908: From Western Sources* 6-13.

<sup>153</sup> Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* 307-10.

<sup>154</sup> Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria* Kindle Edition.

Ottoman Empire rapidly deployed the *Bashibazouks* (Ottoman irregular forces that often responded with destruction, rape, and plunder) to suppress the revolt.<sup>155</sup> The *Bashibazouks'* excesses, however, turned international opinion against the Ottomans, and Russia exploited this sentiment to declare war on the Sultan on 24 April 1877.<sup>156</sup> Russia resoundingly defeated the Ottoman Empire and forced the Sublime Porte to sign the humiliating Treaty of San Stefano on 3 March 1878. The most critical provision of The Treaty of San Stefano included the creation of a Greater Bulgaria that encompassed not only the borders of modern Bulgaria, but also large sections of northern Greece, FYROM, and even parts of Albania.<sup>157</sup> The Bulgarian national movement realized its greatest dream of incorporating all the peoples it considered to be ethnically Bulgarians, but in so doing, went against the ambitions of Serbia and Greece.<sup>158</sup>

The Great Powers feared that the Treaty of San Stefano significantly altered the balance of power in the region by creating a powerful Russian client state. They convened the Congress of Berlin later that year and significantly reduced the territory the Treaty of San Stefano granted Bulgaria. The Congress of Berlin resulted in Ottoman Macedonia remaining under the direct control of the Sublime Porte and created two autonomous states in the Eastern Balkans: Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia.<sup>159</sup> Bulgaria would be a *de-facto*, if not *de-jure*, independent state, while the Sultan appointed Eastern Rumelia's Governor General. Furthermore, Greece and Serbia received territorial concessions adjacent to Ottoman Macedonia.<sup>160</sup> The three nation-states and their respective national movements were therefore in a position directly to influence Macedonian affairs.

The post-Conference of Berlin political landscape in the Balkans gave the various national movements opportunities for aggrandizement that had been previously impossible. The Bulgarian, Greek, and Serb national movements, could now operate

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Charles Jelavich, *Establishment of the Balkan National States, 1804-1920: A History of East Central Europe* 155.

<sup>159</sup> Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria* Kindle Edition.

<sup>160</sup> Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* 358-73.

with relative impunity in opposing the Ottoman Empire provided they did not upset the balance of power in the region. The Great Powers, however, were quick to intervene when events within the Balkans threatened to upset European strategic understandings. The Austro-Hungarian Empire's restraint of Bulgaria in the aftermath of Serbia's defeat in the Serbo-Bulgarian War (1885) ably demonstrated this point.<sup>161</sup> In taking this and other actions, the Great Powers further reminded the Balkan states that direct military action was not a practical policy. Instead, the Balkan national movements relied on the twin initiatives of education and guerrilla warfare. By the turn of the twentieth century Ottoman Macedonia had become a region of competition for the Balkan nation states, as it would remain, in new forms, in the 1940s.

### **2.3. The Unredeemed Territories and Mutual Competition**

After the Congress of Berlin in 1878, there were three principal national movements competing in Ottoman Macedonia: Bulgarian, Greek, and Serb.<sup>162</sup> Initially, the Balkan national movements established schools to promote their respective identities and received support from the Balkan nation-states to advance their claims regarding the unredeemed territories. The various identities held by the Christian Orthodox population of Ottoman Macedonia meant that all three national movements attempted, with considerable zeal, to enlist the inhabitants of the region to their respective national movements.<sup>163</sup> The Greek national movement was at a significant disadvantage relative to the Bulgarians and Serbians, as the majority of its population spoke a Slavic dialect. As a result the Greek national movement claimed that the Slavic population were Greek who had forgotten their identity.<sup>164</sup> The Greek national

<sup>161</sup> Ibid. 370-71.

<sup>162</sup> Romania was also nominally active in Ottoman Macedonia, given the Vlach population, but was less interested in territorial gains than using the issue to further its objectives elsewhere. While further working to destabilize the region, it was a distant fourth to Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece, had minimal bearing on the Slavic population of the region. This dissertation therefore does not examine Romania's aspirations in the region.

<sup>163</sup> Although the parties focussed their efforts primarily on the Slavic Christian Orthodox inhabitants of Ottoman Macedonia, there were attempts by all parties to recruit Vlachs and Albanians to their cause. Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Twentieth Century*, 2 91-92.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

movement's proponents and supporters were able to do this in part because most Ottoman Macedonians in the late nineteenth century did not strictly adhere to any national identity.<sup>165</sup> The lack of a collective ethnic identity amongst the people of Ottoman Macedonia meant that the different national movements were able to manipulate data and information in order to pursue their nationalist agendas.

Bulgarian schools possessed two additional advantages that allowed them to overcome the Patriarchate's initial monopoly of education and high culture. The first was the fact that the Bulgarian national movement and the Bulgarian Exarchate worked in unison in a manner that was not possible for the Greek national movement and the Patriarchate. The Patriarchate officially attempted to stay out of nationalist politics as doing so would limit its flock and its authority over Orthodox Christians.<sup>166</sup> This division was not the case with the Bulgarian Exarchate, which linked itself to Bulgarian identity and national aspirations from the outset. As Lange-Akhund notes, "If a partisan of the Exarchate was necessarily Bulgarian, one of the Patriarchate was for most of the time Greek, but sometimes Serbian or Vlach."<sup>167</sup> Further, a Patriarchate partisan could assume neither of these identities and instead place the Patriarchate above nationalist politics. Thus, the Bulgarians presented a unified front to the peoples of Ottoman Macedonia. The Greek national movement could not do the same because of the ambiguity of its relationship with the Patriarchate, and nor could the Serb national movement, because of its lack of official status within the Ottoman Empire. The Bulgarians unity of purpose combined with their second major advantage: free education. The Bulgarians offering a free education made the message all the more effective and incentivized for the region's inhabitants. As Andrew Rossos notes, it is unsurprising that the Bulgarian national movement became pre-eminent in Ottoman Macedonia by the close of the century, given that individuals in Ottoman Macedonia chose their identity on account of self-interest.<sup>168</sup>

<sup>165</sup> Peter Mackridge and Eleni Yannakakis, "Introduction," in *Ourselves and Others: The Development of a Greek Macedonian Cultural Identity since 1912*, ed. Peter Mackridge and Eleni Yannakakis (Oxford: Berg, 1997), 5.

<sup>166</sup> Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question, 1893-1908: From Western Sources* 29.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid. 22.

<sup>168</sup> Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians: A History* Kindle Edition.

The Bulgarian national movement's efforts at using education as a means of gaining pre-eminence in the region, however, had an unintended side effect: the development of the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (MRO) (a secret society dedicated to the overthrow of Ottoman rule and Macedonian autonomy) and the Supreme Macedonian Committee (SMC).<sup>169</sup> The generation entering the school system in the late 1880s/early 1890s were old enough to remember both the initial joy of liberation by the Russian army and the Congress of Berlin stripping it away.<sup>170</sup> The free Bulgarian education system became a perfect breeding ground for revolutionary discontent, especially given the country's irredentist aspirations in the region and Bulgarian nationalists' desire to revise the Congress of Berlin's ruling.<sup>171</sup> The Bulgarian Men's High School in Thessaloniki became a focal point for revolutionary dissent after its establishment in 1880. Five of the six founders of the MRO received their education, or taught, at the Bulgarian Men's High School.<sup>172</sup> Many Ottoman Macedonian Slav intellectuals saw the MRO as the means of achieving their goals. Exploiting the Exarchate's extensive educational network in the region enabled the MRO to become a well-established revolutionary organization by 1897, when their activities finally brought them to the attention of the Ottoman authorities.<sup>173</sup>

The MRO was not alone in seeking to establish an autonomous Macedonia as Bulgarian military officers and immigrants from Ottoman Macedonia founded the Supreme Macedonian Committee (SMC) in 1895 in Sofia. The SMC, like MRO, sought the creation of an autonomous Macedonia. As both organizations sought the same goal,

<sup>169</sup> The precise name of the MRO underwent several variations over the course of its existence. For purposes of clarity, this dissertation refers to the pre-First World War organization as MRO, while the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) refers to the post-First World War organization.

<sup>170</sup> Julian Allan Brooks, "Managing Macedonia: British Statecraft, Intervention, and 'Proto-Peacekeeping' in Ottoman Macedonia, 1902-1905" (Simon Fraser University, 2014) 651-56.

<sup>171</sup> Ottoman efforts at combating nationalism in the late nineteenth century were often heavy-handed, and simply served to create further discontent. See Erickson, *A Military History of the Ottomans: From Osman to Atatürk* Kindle Edition.

<sup>172</sup> Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia, 1897-1913* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1966 (1993)) 38.

<sup>173</sup> Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question, 1893-1908: From Western Sources* 70.

they have often been confused with one another.<sup>174</sup> Nevertheless, there were critical differences between them that had a significant bearing on the Macedonian Question. The first was the means of obtaining autonomous status for Macedonia. The MRO believed that it could do so by waging an insurgency campaign that would draw the attention and intervention of the Great Powers, as had taken place in Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Crete.<sup>175</sup> The SMC, however, believed that liberation could only come through careful cooperation with Bulgaria in general, and particularly the Bulgarian army.<sup>176</sup> Furthermore, their goals for an autonomous Macedonia also differed. The MRO favoured an independent Macedonia as part of a Balkan federation of peoples, whereas the SMC saw the autonomy of Ottoman Macedonia as the first step to an eventual union with Bulgaria, as had occurred with Eastern Rumelia in 1885.<sup>177</sup> Finally, and perhaps most critically, the MRO had a much more ambiguous relationship with the term Macedonian than the SMC. The SMC equated being Macedonian with being Bulgarian.<sup>178</sup> The MRO, while predominately organized by individuals who considered themselves Bulgarian, initially believed in a pan-Macedonian vision in which ethnicity mattered less than being an inhabitant of the region.<sup>179</sup> Given the similarities between the objectives of the two organizations, it is easy to see how historians and social scientists have confused them.<sup>180</sup> Nevertheless, their ideologies would become the two dominant perspectives of Ottoman Macedonia's Slavic population in the interwar period.

The practical issue of who was in charge of the revolutionary movement in Ottoman Macedonia further divided the two organizations. This division was particularly pertinent to the SMC, which sought to make the MRO recognize it as the supreme

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Twentieth Century*, 2 93.

<sup>176</sup> Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question, 1893-1908: From Western Sources* 49.

<sup>177</sup> Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Twentieth Century*, 2 94.

<sup>178</sup> Duncan M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror: The Macedonian Liberation Movements 1893-1903* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1988) 46-47.

<sup>179</sup> Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question, 1893-1908: From Western Sources* 36-39.

<sup>180</sup> For an example of this issue see: Randall Law, *Terrorism: A History* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009) 153-55.

authority of Macedonian revolutionary groups throughout the 1890s.<sup>181</sup> At the Sixth Congress of the SMC in 1899, however, the MRO managed to appoint Boris Sarafoff, a former Bulgarian army officer, to the position of President of the SMC's Central Committee.<sup>182</sup> While the organizations continued to disagree about the ultimate goal of revolution in Ottoman Macedonia, Sarafoff's more lenient stance towards the MRO allowed it to get much needed external support.<sup>183</sup> Further, Sarafoff's presidency allowed the MRO to exercise more influence over the SMC than the latter could exert over the former, given that the SMC lacked a similarly placed individual in the MRO.

The MRO's growing influence within the SMC coincided with a policy shift that increased both the scale and intensity of its revolutionary actions. As Balkanski notes, Gotze Deltcheff, the leader of MRO, became infatuated with libertarian ideology, particularly the belief that revolutionary terror was a necessity for the establishment of an autonomous Macedonia.<sup>184</sup> The formation of *četas*, organized bands that drew on the heritage of the Balkan highway bands that the Ottoman government had tacitly supported for centuries, were critical to the achievement of revolutionary terror.<sup>185</sup> The *četas*, however, combined both revolutionary and military discipline, as a small number of Bulgarian military officers trained the MRO bands.<sup>186</sup> By 1903, the MRO effectively paralyzed political and social functions in Ottoman Macedonia by using the *četas* in conjunction with the pre-existing revolutionary committees.<sup>187</sup> Unfortunately for the MRO, a series of anarchist bombings in Salonica in 1903 forced it to declare prematurely an armed uprising (the Ilinden Uprising) on 2 August 1903.

<sup>181</sup> Perry, *The Politics of Terror: The Macedonian Liberation Movements 1893-1903* 31-69; Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question, 1893-1908: From Western Sources* 49.

<sup>182</sup> *The Macedonian Question, 1893-1908: From Western Sources* 110.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Gr. Balkanski, *Liberation Nationale Et Revolution Sociale: À L'exemple De La Révolution Macédonienne* (Antony: Edition du Groupe Fresnes Antony, 1982) 51-52.

<sup>185</sup> Hajduk culture, as Hanioglu notes, had a long tradition and acceptance in the late nineteenth century, see: M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2010) 52.

<sup>186</sup> Perry, *The Politics of Terror: The Macedonian Liberation Movements 1893-1903* 157-58.

<sup>187</sup> Gerolymatos, *The Balkan Wars* 190-92.



The details of the Ilinden Uprising are well known and covered in detail in *The Politics of Terror*, but past and current interpretations have been subject to considerable scholarly debate. After disrupting communication lines throughout Monastir province, the insurgents successfully seized Kruševo and declared the short-lived Kruševo Republic.<sup>188</sup> Although the rebellion quickly spread to other Vilayets of Ottoman Macedonia, it had one critical failing: it lacked a message that unified all the peoples of Ottoman Macedonia. The tension that had plagued the MRO from its inception, which included the degree of its connection to the Bulgarian state and the Bulgarian national identity, helped ensure that different peoples of Macedonia did not all receive the identical message. In fact, some MRO *četas* attacked Patriarchist and Muslim communities. These actions unsurprisingly served to undermine the appeal of a pan-Macedonian message.<sup>189</sup> Without a means of unifying the population of Ottoman Macedonia and external military support, the Ilinden Uprising was doomed to fail.

By December 1903, Ottoman authorities had regained control of the situation and their paramilitary forces had exacted a heavy toll on the local population.<sup>190</sup> Contrary to the MRO's expectations these actions did not lead the Great Powers to put pressure on the Ottoman Empire to create an autonomous Macedonia, as they had done with Bulgaria in the aftermath of the Bulgarian Horrors in the 1870s.<sup>191</sup> Instead, the Great Powers – under the leadership of Austria-Hungary and Russia – pushed forward a reform program in an attempt to address the needs of the peoples of Ottoman Macedonia: the Müzzsteg Reforms.

The Müzzsteg Reforms offered great promise for reconstructing a civil society within Ottoman Macedonia, but outside interests prevented its realization.<sup>192</sup> While the Ottoman Empire attempted to implement the Müzzsteg Reforms, Bulgaria, Serbia, and

<sup>188</sup> The Kruševo Republic, as Keith Brown argues, has become a critical focal point in the development of a modern Macedonian national identity. See Brown, *The Past in Question: Modern Macedonia and the Uncertainties of Nation* 1-8.

<sup>189</sup> *The Past in Question: Modern Macedonia and the Uncertainties of Nation* 196-99.

<sup>190</sup> Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Twentieth Century*, 2 94.

<sup>191</sup> Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria* Kindle Edition.

<sup>192</sup> Brooks, "Managing Macedonia: British Statecraft, Intervention, and 'Proto-Peacekeeping' in Ottoman Macedonia, 1902-1905," 657-60.

Greece increased their paramilitary activities in the region. A temporary détente between Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire in April 1904 enabled Bulgaria to secure the release of all political prisoners taken during the failed Ilinden Uprising. Afterwards, Bulgaria quickly assumed its attempts to destabilize the region by covertly supporting the men the Ottoman authorities had just released.<sup>193</sup> The Bulgarian government also used this opportunity to transform the revolutionary movements in Ottoman Macedonia by using its control over the SMC and having the SMC assume authority of the MRO in 1904.<sup>194</sup> The coup, however, caused the movement to fragment between the right wing, which favoured a pro-Bulgarian stance, and the left wing, which preferred an autonomous Macedonia as part of a broader Balkan entity. As will be shown, the Macedonian National Movement would draw much of its intellectual heritage from the marginalized left wing of the organization.

The Ilinden Uprising further altered the balance of power in Ottoman Macedonia by motivating the Greek and Serbian paramilitaries to return in force. As Evangelos Kofos notes, the Kingdom of Greece, which previously engaged with the Macedonian Question only in an informal capacity, realized that it could potentially lose Ottoman Macedonia to the Bulgarians and stepped up its revolutionary and educational activities in the region.<sup>195</sup> Furthermore, as Ioanis Zalepos notes, the Greek government began taking a more direct role in fulfilling the *Megali Idea*, instead of leaving it in the hands of amateur organizations.<sup>196</sup> The Serbian government likewise recognized that the Ilinden Uprising threatened its interests in the region. Under the new leadership of Peter I, it increased its involvement in the Macedonian Question.<sup>197</sup> Importantly, Greece and Serbia's reengagement with the Macedonian Question and the need to use violent and

<sup>193</sup> Fikret Adanır; İhsan Catay, *Makedonya Sorunu : Oluşumu Ve 1908'e Kadar Gelişimi* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2001) 231.

<sup>194</sup> Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question, 1893-1908: From Western Sources* 206-07.

<sup>195</sup> Kofos, *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia* 34.

<sup>196</sup> Ioanis Zelepos, "Amateurs as Nation-Builders? On the Significance of Associations for the Formation and Nationalization of Greek Society in the Nineteenth Century," in *Conflicting Loyalties in the Balkans : The Great Powers, the Ottoman Empire and Nation-Building*, ed. Robert Nathalie Pichler Hannes Clayer Grandits (London: I.B. Taurus, 2011), 84.

<sup>197</sup> Andrew Rossos, "Serbian-Bulgarian Relations, 1903-1914," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 23, no. 4 (1981) 396; Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question, 1893-1908: From Western Sources* 276-77.

terrorist means to achieve their goals destabilized Ottoman Macedonia.<sup>198</sup> The majority of people in Ottoman Macedonia were more concerned with surviving the terror inflicted by the marauding nationalist bands than with following any particular ethnic ideology.

The Young Turk Revolution of 1908 presented a potential alternative to the Macedonian Question by providing a plausible substitute for the ethnic nationalism that the Balkan states employed in their irredentist/terrorist campaigns. Beginning in mid-April 1908, the revolutionaries, many of whom were military officers, marched on Constantinople.<sup>199</sup> Although Sultan Abdulhamid II initially attempted to suppress the rebellion, his efforts failed, and he agreed to the Young Turks' demands for a return to the 1876 Constitution and the reinstatement of parliament.<sup>200</sup> The reinstatement of the 1876 Constitution, along with a general amnesty for the revolutionary bands, induced the rebels to return from the mountainside to the cities and villages. The Young Turk Revolution thereby effectively ended revolutionary terror in Ottoman Macedonia.<sup>201</sup>

Although the revolutionary bands returned to the cities, the Young Turk Revolution further solidified the division of the MRO. Only the left-wing branch of the organization, which argued for an autonomous Macedonia within a Balkan federation, surrendered its arms. The right-wing branches of the organization, which advocated for union with Bulgaria, refused to do the same.<sup>202</sup> Ultimately, while the Young Turks did not realize many of their liberalizing ideals, such as more efficient governance, they potentiated a military coup within the Ottoman Empire in 1913. Nevertheless, the Young Turk Revolution presented an opportunity for reform and most parties seized the opportunity, given that they had experienced four years of revolutionary terror.<sup>203</sup>

<sup>198</sup> İpek Yosmaoglu, *Blood Ties: Religion, Violence and the Politics of Nationhood in Ottoman Macedonia, 1878-1908* (London: Cornell UP, 2013) 289.

<sup>199</sup> Feroz Ahmad, *Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics 1908-14* (New York: Oxford UP, 2009) 1-12.

<sup>200</sup> Sukru Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908* (New York: Oxford UP, 2001) 312.

<sup>201</sup> Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question, 1893-1908: From Western Sources* 319.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid. 320.

<sup>203</sup> Erik-Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004) 107.

The legacy of the attempts (both peaceful and violent) made by the Bulgarian, Greek, and Serbian national movements to gain influence in Ottoman Macedonia created social and political cleavages in Macedonian society that had not previously existed in any substantial form. In many ways, the chaos inflicted upon the region also caused individuals to distance themselves from the competing national identities – the MRO's activities being an early, but failed, attempt at such a goal. As a result, there were now four distinct groups that sought to capture the hearts and minds of Ottoman Macedonia's inhabitants: Bulgarian, Greek, Serbian, and the still-ambiguous Macedonian national movement. The political machinations of the Balkan nation states, however, would not give the people of Ottoman Macedonia sufficient time to redress these issues between themselves.

## **2.4. The Balkan Wars, the First World War, and their Impact on the Macedonian Question**

Geopolitical developments undermined the Balkan states' attempts to utilize both education and revolutionary violence to convert the people of Ottoman Macedonia to their respective national movements. The Young Turk Revolution of 1908, which had the potential to revitalize the Ottoman Empire, caused considerable trepidation amongst both Balkan nationalists and Great Power imperialists. Upon seeing the Ottoman Empire's weakness, several European countries sought to seize its territories. Italy, having coveted Libya since 1878, declared war in 1911 and quickly occupied Libya's major population centres, only to become involved in a protracted conflict because the Ottoman Empire refused to surrender.<sup>204</sup> As the stalemate between Italy and the Ottoman Empire continued, the Balkan states' leaders came to realize that it presented the ideal opportunity for striking at the Sultan's European possessions. After hasty negotiations, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, and Montenegro reached several agreements to wage a joint war against the Ottoman Empire.<sup>205</sup> The Great Powers worked to dissuade

<sup>204</sup> Erickson, *A Military History of the Ottomans: From Osman to Ataturk* 223-24.

<sup>205</sup> Rossos, "Serbian-Bulgarian Relations, 1903-1914," 403-5; Richard C. Hall, *Bulgaria's Road to the First World War* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1996), 17-18; Gerolymatos, *The Balkan Wars* 190-94.

the Balkan nation-states from going to war, but were unable to do so in time. On 8 October 1912, Montenegro declared war on the Ottoman Empire, and within weeks, the remaining states followed suit, thus commencing the First Balkan War.

The inability of the Balkan countries to divide Ottoman Macedonia overshadowed their military success in the First Balkan War. Initially, Serbia and Bulgaria had agreed to a partition of Ottoman Macedonia that included defined Bulgarian and Serbian zones, with a separate middle zone to be determined at a later date and settled by the arbitration of Russia's Tsar Nicholas II if necessary.<sup>206</sup> Furthermore, the alliance between Greece and Bulgaria did not include a pre-arranged territorial settlement, meaning they determined the disposition based on what territory their respective armies occupied.<sup>207</sup> The fact that the First Balkan War did not go to according to plan for any of the Balkan states made the territorial disposition of Ottoman Macedonia an even greater challenge. As Bulgaria faced the bulk of the Ottoman forces in Eastern Thrace, it only made minimal gains in Ottoman Macedonia.<sup>208</sup> Serbia and Greece, which consequently confronted significantly fewer military forces, exceeded their pre-war expectations. Greece even managed to seize Salonica before the Bulgarian Army.<sup>209</sup> Serbia added insult to injury by refusing to evacuate areas that the Serbian-Bulgarian agreement initially assigned to Bulgaria because the Great Powers' refusal to let it seize what would become the Albanian state.<sup>210</sup> As Bulgaria felt deprived of an important part of its national territory after fighting the bulk of the Ottoman forces, it did not accept this solution. On 29 June 1913, Bulgaria attacked its former allies to get what it could not obtain at the bargaining table: the majority of Ottoman Macedonia.

The Second Balkan War started with Bulgaria going to war against its former allies and ended with its defeat on all fronts. After Serbia and Greece repulsed the initial Bulgarian attack and successfully counter-attacked, Romania and the Ottoman Empire took advantage of the situation and attacked the weakly guarded Bulgarian flanks in an

<sup>206</sup> Richard C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars 1912-1913* (New York: Routledge, 2000) Kindle Edition.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> Gerolymatos, *The Balkan Wars* 221.

<sup>210</sup> Hall, *The Balkan Wars 1912-1913* Kindle Edition

attempt at territorial aggrandizement. Bulgaria exhausted from fighting in the First Balkan War and facing defeat on all fronts, called for an armistice.<sup>211</sup> The Treaty of Bucharest, which ended the conflict, significantly reduced Bulgaria's territorial gains, with the majority of Ottoman Macedonia going to Serbia and the coastal regions going to Greece. Although Bulgaria protested this division, Greece's Prime Minister, Eleutherios Venizelos, explained the situation bluntly: "General Fichev [Bulgaria's Chief of Staff], we are not responsible. Before June we were afraid of you and offered you Serres and Drama and Kavala, but now when we see you, we assume the role of victors and will take care of our interests only."<sup>212</sup> In short, the victors based their decisions on political and military expediency, not complicated ethnographic or religious considerations. The work that the nation-states had put into proselytizing along the lines of their national message in Ottoman Macedonia now mattered very little to the newly enlarged states. Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria divided Ottoman Macedonia in three, with the latter only getting a small portion of the territory. The three Balkan states decided the territorial portion of the Macedonian Question, but the ideological and social divisions they created in their earlier pursuit of the same goal continued to affect both the societies into which the people were incorporated and the politics of the region. That effect is still evident today.

Greece and Serbia's incorporation of large segments of Ottoman Macedonia created significant problems for both states. Nation-states, as the name suggests, are premised on the idea that they derive political legitimacy by representing a collective group of people.<sup>213</sup> Incorporating the people of Ottoman Macedonia – particularly the Slavic speaking inhabitants – proved particularly difficult for Serbia and Greece. Serbia sought to integrate the people in its section of Macedonia (Vardar) by internal colonization and denying the Macedonian identity. Although the exact numbers of Slavic inhabitants in the region at the time are unknown, Rossos argues that they were the majority and numbered approximately 728,000.<sup>214</sup> Greece encountered a similar issue

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Venizelos, cited in *ibid.*

<sup>213</sup> Valery A. Tishkov, "Forget the 'Nation': Post-Nationalist Understanding of Nationalism" " *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23 (2000) 627.

<sup>214</sup> Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians: A History* Kindle Edition.

when it initially incorporated 260,000 Slavic speaking inhabitants. Greece not only employed internal colonization, but also engaged in population exchanges with Bulgaria.<sup>215</sup> The result of these policies was that by the beginning of the Second World War, roughly 130,000 Slavic speakers remained in northern Greece.<sup>216</sup> The policies that both Serbia and Greece implemented in their parts of formerly Ottoman Macedonia were problematic. These policies caused considerable discontent amongst the Slavic populations of the region and provided both Bulgarian nationalists and the emerging Macedonian national movement with an idealized climate for revisionist claims.

Understandably, Bulgaria was resentful about its loss in the Second Balkan War and sought to overturn the treaty and incorporate former Ottoman Macedonian lands into its state. The First World War provided it with an opportunity to do so. For all of 1914 and much of 1915, Bulgaria vacillated between accepting the advances of the Entente or the Central Powers, favouring whichever party appeared momentarily to have the upper hand in the conflict.<sup>217</sup> The Central Powers, however, offered Bulgaria something that the Triple Entente could not: Serbian (Vardar) Macedonia.<sup>218</sup> On 14 October 1915, Bulgaria declared war against the Entente and seized Vardar Macedonia for nearly three years. The inhabitants of Bulgarian-occupied Vardar Macedonia were initially enthusiastic, given Serbia's policy of internal colonization, but the consequent rapid decline of their economic and social condition led to mass uprisings by 1917.<sup>219</sup> The Bulgarian occupation forces quashed these uprisings, but they represented a significant shift in the identity politics of the region.<sup>220</sup> Individuals who previously looked towards Bulgaria for their liberation now saw it as little better than the other powers. When Bulgaria and the

<sup>215</sup> The Bulgarian numbers, as Koliopoulos acknowledges, are more representative than the Greek numbers, which only included those Slavic speakers who were of 'Bulgarian Sentiment.' See: Koliopoulos, "The War over the Identity and Numbers of Greece's Slav Macedonians," 49.

<sup>216</sup> The official Greek census of the period gives the number at 86,000, although Koliopoulos notes that this number likely needs revision upwards by at least 40,000. See *ibid.* 50-51. Rossos in *Macedonia and the Macedonians* argues that the number was as high as 200,000.

<sup>217</sup> Hall, *Bulgaria's Road to the First World War* 335.

<sup>218</sup> After the Second Balkan War Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia's portions of Ottoman Macedonia were referred to as Aegean, Pirin, and Vardar Macedonia. Many Greek scholars have stopped using these names, but they continue to be prominent amongst Bulgarian and scholars from the former Yugoslavia.

<sup>219</sup> Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria* Kindle Edition.

<sup>220</sup> Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians: A History* Kindle Edition.

rest of the Central Powers sued for peace in late 1918, the Entente Powers drove Bulgaria from the region. The Entente Powers' brief occupation ultimately furthered the Macedonian Slavs' impetus to forge a unique national identity by temporarily reopening the territorial disposition of the territory, which intellectuals seized upon to further their nationalist arguments.<sup>221</sup> The intolerance of the Balkan national movements towards each other unintentionally gave rise to yet another movement that would compete for the hearts and minds of Ottoman Macedonia: the Macedonian national movement.

## **2.5. Greece, the Asia Minor Catastrophe, and the Macedonian Question, 1919-1923**

During the Asia Minor Catastrophe, Greece lost a war against the Turkish nationalists and formally renounced its the *Megali Idea* policy and agreed to a population exchange with Turkey. This development forever altered the Macedonian Question, both domestically and internationally. During the First World War, Greece was a country divided between the supporters of Eleutherios Venizelos, the most prominent politician during this period, and the supporters of Constantine I, the King of the Hellenes. Politically, Greece vacillated between open support for the Entente Powers, which Venizelos desired, and neutrality, which Constantine I and his supporters favoured.<sup>222</sup> This divide ultimately culminated in the National Schism, whereby Venizelos formed an alternative government in Thessaloniki in August 1916. The Entente Powers, which had been exercising their predominant military influence in the Mediterranean, forced Constantine I to abdicate in favour of his brother, Alexander, in 1917.<sup>223</sup> With Constantine I removed from Greece, Venizelos brought Greece into the war on the side of the Entente Powers and put the country in a position to fight for the spoils of war. One of Venizelos' most critical post-war goals was to expand the Greek state into Asia Minor, which would fulfill the idea of the Kolettis' *Megali Idea*.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Some historians have claimed that Constantine I favoured the German cause during the First World War. While this may be true, he was, ultimately, a realist and realized that Greece could not survive without the food imports that the country received from the Entente powers.

<sup>223</sup> Gerolymatos, *Red Acropolis, Black Terror: The Greek Civil War and the Origins of Soviet-American Rivalry, 1943-1949* 17.



In the immediate aftermath of the First World War, Greece pursued a policy of territorial aggrandizement and the realization of the *Megali Idea* at the expense of a defeated and exhausted Ottoman Empire. Eleutherios Venizelos, however, failed to anticipate the emergence of a Turkish national movement under the command of Mustafa Kemal. Kemal, a former Ottoman military officer best known for his role in the defence of Gallipoli, quickly organized the disparate Turkish forces in Asia Minor. He did so in opposition to both the Greek Army and Ottoman Sultanate, which had signed the Treaty of Sevres and granted Greece's initial concession in Asia Minor.<sup>224</sup> Kemal, with the assistance of several foreign powers (most notably the Soviet Union), managed to expel the Greek forces from the region in 1922, which culminated in the Catastrophe of Smyrna in September of that year.<sup>225</sup> Although Venizelos was the architect of the disaster, he escaped responsibility for it because he had lost the 1920 elections and the conduct of the Asia Minor campaign was therefore in the hands of the loyalists. Furthermore, officers loyal to Venizelos organized a coup in September 1922, and subsequently executed the six individuals they held responsible for the crisis. This act solidified the National Schism between Constantine I and Venizelos in the First World War.<sup>226</sup> The Greek state that attempted to integrate the Slavophone Macedonians was, therefore, starkly divided.

The Treaty of Lausanne (1923) that ended Greece's Asia Minor campaign finished the Greek state's territorial aspirations. The treaty reversed the majority of Greece's territorial gains under the Treaty of Sevres (1920). These territories, instead, became a core component of the new Turkish state.<sup>227</sup> The provisions for a population exchange between Greece and Turkey were of critical importance. In order to avoid future conflicts between themselves and under considerable pressure from the Great

<sup>224</sup> Andrew Mango, *Ataturk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey* (New York: The Overlook Press, 1999) 312.

<sup>225</sup> Smyrna had been the centre of Hellenic culture in Asia Minor for much of the Modern Era (1500-present). Although the circumstances of the fire that consumed the city remain suspect, the fact that it largely went up in flames came to symbolize the destruction of three millennia of Hellenic culture in Asia Minor.

<sup>226</sup> Gerolymatos, *Red Acropolis, Black Terror: The Greek Civil War and the Origins of Soviet-American Rivalry, 1943-1949* 13-52.

<sup>227</sup> Colin Nicolson, *Longman Companion to the First World War: Europe, 1914-1918* (London: Routledge, 2014) 278

Powers, the two countries agreed to exchange their respective 'Turkish' and 'Greek' populations, which the treaty defined based on religion.<sup>228</sup> Greece and Turkey exchanged approximately 1.5 million Anatolian 'Greeks' and 350,000 Balkan 'Turks'. As a result, Greece had a net influx of over a million new people.

Slavophone Macedonians already felt alienated from the Greek state, and the aftermath of the Asia Minor Campaign and the Treaty of Lausanne confirmed their status as, at best, second-class citizens. Immediately after the Balkan Wars, the Greek government's refusal to recognize a Slavic identity in northern Greece and attempts to actively eliminate this identity caused an estimated 127,000 Slavic-speaking individuals to leave Greece for Bulgaria between 1913 and 1928.<sup>229</sup> This number represented a significant decline in the percentage of Slavic-speaking individuals in Aegean Macedonia. Nevertheless, Greece's solution to the Asia Minor Catastrophe, and the necessity of settling 1.5 million Anatolian Greek refugees in the country, created an even greater shift in the Macedonian Question.

After the Asia Minor Catastrophe, the largest threat to Greece's national security was Bulgaria – at least in the minds of many Greek politicians. The Treaty of Neuilly that ended Bulgaria's participation in the First World War reduced Bulgaria to a secondary power. Bulgaria's post-1923 governments, however, became actively irredentist in their policies after the 1923 coup of moderate Alexander Stambolisky.<sup>230</sup> This nationalist coup only served to stoke the fears of Bulgarian irredentism among Greek politicians who were already sensitive to Bulgarian aspirations on northern Greece and subject to attacks by the now completely Bulgarian-backed IMRO.<sup>231</sup> As Elisabeth Kontogiorgi noted in *Population Exchange in Greek Macedonia*, one of the Greek government's principle reasons for settling Asia Minor refugees in northern Greece and particularly the

<sup>228</sup> This definition would prove problematic, as a significant minority of the both the 'Greek' and 'Turkish' populations did not consider themselves ethnically members of the Greek or Turkish nations. Furthermore, because religion defined identity, many of those exchanged did not even speak the language of their new nation-state.

<sup>229</sup> Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians: A History* Kindle Edition.

<sup>230</sup> R.J. Crampton, *Aleksandur Stamboliiski: Bulgaria* (London: Haus Publishing, 2009) 113-25.

<sup>231</sup> Kontogiorgi, *Population Exchange in Greek Macedonia: The Rural Settlement of Refugees, 1922-1930* 205-09.

border hinterlands was that it feared for the security of the northern territories.<sup>232</sup> In addressing this issue, Greece went well beyond 'securing' its frontiers and in the process, created the potential for a fifth column that they had actively worked to prevent. These same politicians still considered the Slavic population of its territories to be Bulgarians, which played into their pre-existing fears of Bulgarian revisionism. As a result, they made northern Greece a primary settling point for Greeks coming from Asia Minor and Pontus to dilute the Slavic influence in the region. According to Richard Clogg, Greeks accounted for 43% of the population in 1913 and over 86% by 1926.<sup>233</sup> While this may have helped secure the borders of northern Greece and made the country the most ethnically homogenous state in the region, Greek society did not welcome the refugees with open arms. In his analysis of 1920s Greece, David Close notes that "[...] many [refugees] were distinguished from natives by speech, manners, or poverty, they were targets of resentment and scorn."<sup>234</sup> The economic uncertainty that Greece faced during the interwar period magnified the tendency of native Greeks not to trust the refugees, as they directly competed for the limited number of available jobs and land.<sup>235</sup> I.M. Panayotopoulos captures the sentiment of the period:

*Should a person leave his house to give it to one of them? Forget the fact that all of them smell, that they're sick and penniless. One and a half million people! What can poor Greece do for them? ... There isn't a school, a shed, or a tent left unused. [They are in] theaters, cinemas, churches, coffeeshouses - all over Greece. Everywhere! And what people! God protect you from them! ... Let them stay in their homelands.*<sup>236</sup>

Panayotopoulos effectively describes how many 'Old Greeks' felt during this time. Greece was a poor and war-strained country, and its citizens simply lacked the means to incorporate such a large group of refugees. As a result, old Greece's distrust of new Greece's national credentials made northern Greeks insecure about their identity. Attacks on the Greek refugees' identity (which was the reason their homeland had

<sup>232</sup> Ibid. 209.

<sup>233</sup> Richard Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge UP, 2002) 121.

<sup>234</sup> David Close, *The Origins of the Greek Civil War* (New York: Routledge, 1995) Kindle Edition.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Cited in: T. Doulis, *Disaster and Fiction: Modern Greek Fiction and the Impact of the Asia Minor Disaster of 1922* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1977) 64-65.

expelled them in the first place) led the refugees to magnify their efforts to be 'the best' Greeks possible.<sup>237</sup> The Slavic population of northern Greece thus served as a readily contrastable 'other' for the new arrivals from Asia Minor and Pontus.

During the interwar period, Greece continued its socio-cultural and political efforts to Hellenize the Slavophone Macedonians. Social-culturally, the flood of Asia Minor refugees displaced Slavic culture in the rural north and created conditions that favoured their adoption of predominant social and cultural organizations. In many instances, however, this simply had the effect of reinforcing the Slavic identity, as the Asia Minor refugees came to see themselves as the enforcers of Greek nationality.<sup>238</sup> Politically, the fact that the Greek state passed a number of legislative acts designed to restrict and eliminate Slavic language within its territorial boundaries only heightened this tendency for the new Greek citizens to discriminate against the Slavophone Macedonians.<sup>239</sup> Although Greece initially reached an agreement with Bulgaria to protect the rights of the Slavophone Macedonians within its borders, Yugoslav protestations that the group was not Bulgarian, but rather Serbian, meant that the parties never ratified the agreement.<sup>240</sup> As a result, the Slavic minority within Greece had few legal protections during the interwar period, and the Greek government used this as an opportunity to attempt to resolve the Macedonian Question permanently.

The living conditions of the Slavophone Macedonians within Greece further deteriorated when Metaxas seized control of the country on 4 August 1936. On 4 August Metaxas had convinced George II, the King of Greece, that a communist takeover was imminent and that the constitution needed to be suspended. This authority gave

<sup>237</sup> For an analysis of how this process took place see: Efithia Voutira, "Population Transfers and Resettlement Policies in Inter-War Europe: The Case of Asia Minor Refugees in Macedonia from an International and National Perspective," in *Ourselves and Others: The Development of a Greek Macedonian Cultural Identity since 1912*, ed. Peter Mackridge and Eleni Yannakakis (Oxford: Berg, 1997), 111-32.

<sup>238</sup> Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood: Passages to Nationhood in Greek Macedonia, 1870-1990* 159-61.

<sup>239</sup> Philip Carabott, "The Politics of Integration and Assimilation *Vis-À-Vis* the Slavo-Macedonian Minority of Inter-War Greece: From Parliamentary Inertia to Metaxist Repression," in *Ourselves and Others: The Development of a Greek Macedonian Cultural Identity since 1912*, ed. Peter Mackridge and Eleni Yannakakis (Oxford: Berg, 1997), 66-67.

<sup>240</sup> Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict: Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World* 70.

Metaxas extensive powers over Greek society. Metaxas rose to power with anti-communist pretences in a country and period that associated Slavism with communism.<sup>241</sup> As a result, Metaxas fully enforced new laws concerning the use of the Slavic language and the practice of Slavic culture. These laws were even more restrictive than the laws passed by previous Greek administrations to assimilate the Slavophone Macedonian population.<sup>242</sup> As Phillip Carabott notes, although historians often blame Metaxas for alienating the Slavophone Macedonians, there was considerable ideological overlap between Metaxas and the interwar Greek governments. Metaxas' authoritarianism, along with the deteriorating international situation, simply gave his government the means of enforcing national homogenization that previous Greek governments had lacked.<sup>243</sup> Because of the Greek government's policies, the Slavophone Macedonians did not identify with Greece by the time the Axis powers occupied the country in 1941.<sup>244</sup> A sizeable minority of Greece's population, therefore, were willing to listen to any promises for a better existence than the one they had under the Greek state. The Bulgarians recognized this when they occupied major parts of the Greek province of Macedonia as part of the Axis from 1941-44, and the Yugoslav communists used it in their efforts to exploit the Macedonian Question.

## **2.6. Communism, IMRO and a distinct Macedonian Identity (1919-1941)**

The expansion of communism in the Balkans during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was slower than elsewhere on the continent. The reason for the lack of popular communist support in the Balkans was simple: communism's emphasis on the proletariat as a revolutionary class did not reflect the economic conditions of the Balkan states. Most inhabitants of the Balkans during this period did not inhabit the cities and

<sup>241</sup> Evangelos Kofos, "The Impact of the Macedonian Question on Civil Conflict in Greece," in *Greece at the Crossroads: The Civil War and Its Legacy*, ed. John O Iatrides and Linda Wrigley (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 274-318.

<sup>242</sup> Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict: Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World* 72.

<sup>243</sup> Carabott, "The Politics of Integration and Assimilation *Vis-À-Vis* the Slavo-Macedonian Minority of Inter-War Greece: From Parliamentary Inertia to Metaxist Repression," 68.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.* 69.

had not developed a discernable class-consciousness.<sup>245</sup> The First World War, however, served as a catalyst for the development of communism within the Balkans. The Russian Revolution and the emergence of the Soviet Union demonstrated that revolution was possible in a predominately agrarian society.<sup>246</sup> In addition, First World War created social discord in many European states and the military futility of many campaigns during that war spurred their citizens to turn away from their governments and look for alternative ways of governance. Greece was no exception, given that it had suffered through the National Schism and that the impending Asia Minor Catastrophe would further provoke discontent with the government. Communism, in time, appealed to some of these anti-government sentiments.

Despite its ideological shortcomings during the interwar period, communism obtained considerable traction in the Balkans. The first reason for this was that many left-wing individuals in the post-war period saw communism as a panacea for all the world's problems.<sup>247</sup> The fact that communism promised to modernize countries in which intellectuals felt were falling behind the rest of the world was sufficient motivation for many intellectuals and radicals to support the developing communist movement.<sup>248</sup> Communist parties during the period, however, quickly learned that the interests of the Soviet Union trumped their national interests. For the emerging Greek Communist Party (KKE), this became painfully evident in the Macedonian Question.

The Third Communist International (Comintern) made the Macedonian Question one of its areas of focus in the Balkans, to the detriment of the Yugoslav and the Greek

<sup>245</sup> Hatzopoulos, *The Balkans Beyond Nationalism and Identity: International Relations and Ideology* 41-68.

<sup>246</sup> Zara Steiner, *The Lights That Failed: European International History, 1919-1933* (New York: Oxford UP, 2005) 131-36.

<sup>247</sup> Tim Rees and Andrew Thorpe, "Introduction," in *International Communism and the Communist International, 1919-43*, ed. Tim Rees and Andrew Thorpe (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1998), 3-4.

<sup>248</sup> For an exploration of this issue see: Vezenkov, "Communism and Nationalism in the Balkans: Marriage of Convenience or Attraction?," 469-555. Although the Soviet Union establishing the International Lenin School to educate foreign communists, nevertheless one of the Moscow authorities' consistent complaints was the lack of ideological correctness displayed by the Balkan communist parties. This almost resulted in the dissolution of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) in the 1930s.

Communist Parties (KKE).<sup>249</sup> The Comintern founded the Balkan Communist Federation in 1921 with the twin goals of serving Soviet interests and eventually forming a Balkan Federation, but the first goal always took precedence over the second.<sup>250</sup> As the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) was the most developed and organized of the Balkan communist organizations, it dominated all the others and used this advantage to advance its interests. The BCP also sought to have all the Ottoman Macedonia lands united under the auspices of a Balkan Federation.<sup>251</sup> The Soviet Union favoured the Bulgarians on the Macedonian Question for the most part because of the relative weakness of the Greek and Yugoslav communist parties. As a result, the Fifth Congress of the Balkan Communist Federation in 1923 voted for an “autonomous and Independent Macedonia.”<sup>252</sup> Although the CPY and KKE initially resisted the Balkan Communist Federation’s demand that they incorporate this decision into their party platforms, they yielded on the issue the following year. For the KKE, the result was a political disaster because Greek society was particularly sensitive to the surrender of Greek territory in the aftermath of the Asia Minor disaster. The KKE’s decision to accept the Comintern line eliminated its political base in the 1928 elections, with their front organization, the United Front, polled only 1.4% of the vote. The Greek Communist Party only began to recover its supporters in 1935, when it called for the “equal rights of all” and deemphasized the Macedonian Question entirely.<sup>253</sup> Unfortunately, for the KKE, this change of policy occurred immediately before Metaxas assumed power in 1936, after which he and his Minister of Public Safety Maniadakis would devastate the organization through mass arrests and subvert it through the creation of a government controlled Central Committee masquerading as an organ of the KKE.<sup>254</sup> Thus Metaxas and the

<sup>249</sup> The Comintern was the name for the Third Communist International established by the Soviet Union in 1919.

<sup>250</sup> Artiern Ulunian, "The Communist Party of Greece and the Comintern: Evaluation, Instructions and Subordination," in *International Communism and the Communist International, 1919-43*, ed. Tim Rees and Andrew Thorpe (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1998), 187-204.

<sup>251</sup> Kofos, *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia*, 73-74.

<sup>252</sup> Hatzopoulos, *The Balkans Beyond Nationalism and Identity: International Relations and Ideology* 69-96.

<sup>253</sup> 1935 was a critical period for the KKE in its development. See: "Το 6ο Συνέδριο – 1935," in *Δεκα Χρονία Αγώνες*, ed. G. Zevgou (Athens: Proeia, 1977), 41-88.

<sup>254</sup> Gerolymatos, *Red Acropolis, Black Terror: The Greek Civil War and the Origins of Soviet-American Rivalry, 1943-1949* 29.

Comintern's line on the Macedonian Question was part of the reason why the KKE was in shambles by the start of the Second World War.

Although the BCP's pressure for an autonomous Macedonia in the early 1920s served their political interests, it also coincided with the development of the IMRO (United): the first true Macedonian nationalist organization. In the aftermath of the First World War and Bulgaria's defeat, Bulgarian nationalists re-founded the IMRO as a means of pursuing their irredentist objectives through unconventional means.<sup>255</sup> However, the IMRO proved to be an incredibly efficient organization, but many of its members no longer believed that a close association with Bulgaria was in their best interests.<sup>256</sup> In 1924, key members of the IMRO leadership, the BCP, and the Federalists (pre-war MRO operatives who did not re-join the reformed organization after the war) produced the May Manifesto, which called for an autonomous Macedonia. Prominent members of the IMRO, however, felt betrayed by the organization's abandonment of Macedonia's incorporation into Bulgaria and assassinated the head of the IMRO, Todor Alexandrov, in August 1924. Ivan Mihailov, a devout Bulgarian nationalist, succeeded Alexandrov as President of the IMRO and proceeded to purge the organization of those individuals espousing Macedonian nationalism and/or autonomy.<sup>257</sup> This development led DIMITAR Vlahov, the most prominent surviving member of IMRO, to support the May Manifesto and found the IMRO (United) in 1925. The IMRO (United) affiliated itself with the Comintern and attempted to convey its message to the world through the multilingual periodical *Federation Balkanique* (Balkan Federation), although the overall influence of the periodical was marginal.<sup>258</sup> The IMRO (United) remained affiliated with the Comintern until it dissolved the nationalist organization in 1936 and its members dispersed to the Bulgarian, Greek, and Yugoslav communist parties.

<sup>255</sup> Phillips, *Macedonia: Warlords and Rebels in the Balkans* 31.

<sup>256</sup> Steiner, *The Lights That Failed: European International History, 1919-1933* 270-71.

<sup>257</sup> While the IMRO were Bulgarian nationalists, their policies eventually became so radical, and their influence so pervasive, that a collection of Bulgarian military officers launched a coup on 19 May 1934 in part to eliminate their influence in the government. See: Hugh Seton-Watson, *Eastern Europe between the Wars, 1918-1941* (London: Cambridge UP, 1946) 247-51.

<sup>258</sup> IMRO (united) published *Federation Balkanique* between 1925-1934, and sought to encourage a separate Macedonian identity.



The IMRO (United) garnered little popular support during the course of its existence. Nevertheless, it represented the first organization to propose a separate Macedonian identity. Through the mechanism of the *Federation Balkanique*, DIMITAR Vlahov and his associates established a Macedonian Slav identity that was independent of the Bulgarian and Serb national movements' aspirations in the region.<sup>259</sup> Furthermore, as the majority of the organization's members were from Vardar Macedonia, the IMRO (United) came under the auspices of the CPY when the Comintern dissolved the organization in 1936.<sup>260</sup> Thus, there was a small but vocal segment within the CPY that espoused a separate Macedonian identity. The CPY needed not only to integrate this group, but also appease it to maintain control of the Macedonian Regional Committee to ensure it did not come under the influence of the Bulgarian Communist Party. This struggle between the parties played out during the Second World War, with Greece and its Slavophone Macedonians in the middle.

## 2.7. Conclusion

By the start of the Second World War, the intellectual legacies that the different parties drew upon were set. The KKE recognized the problematic nature of the Macedonian Question in Greece, and actively sought to avoid entanglements on the issue. The CPY, however, was in a particularly precarious position. The Bulgarian Communist Party was pre-eminent in this period, but the Yugoslavs possessed a significant minority of individuals who espoused a competing version of Macedonian nationalism. In order for the CPY to counter Bulgarian claims, it had to embrace this group. The Second World War provided an opportunity to not only fully integrate the former members of IMRO (United) into the Yugoslav Party, but also the chance to challenge the Bulgarians' ascendancy on the issue.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Seton-Watson, *Eastern Europe between the Wars, 1918-1941* 313-14.

### **Chapter 3. The Second World War and the Development of the Macedonian National Movement within Yugoslavia, and the impact it had on Greece**

Operation Barbarossa, the German-led invasion of the Soviet Union, caught the global communist parties by surprise. Previously, they urged accommodation with Nazi Germany at the orders of the Soviet Union. Now that Germany had invaded the USSR, however, the Soviet leadership ordered the communist parties in occupied Europe to begin resistance operations to assist the communist motherland in its moment of need. The CPY quickly answered the call. On 4 July 1941 the Central Committee of the CPY published a plea to the people of Yugoslavia. Specifically, it stated:

*Peoples of Yugoslavia: Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Montenegrins, Macedonians and others! Now is the time, the hour has struck to rise like one man, in the battle against the invaders and hirelings, killers of our peoples. Do not falter in the face of any enemy terror. Answer terror with savage blows at the most vital points of the Fascist occupation bandits. Destroy everything – everything that is of use to the Fascist invaders.<sup>261</sup>*

Some groups responded to this call more than others. Specifically, the Macedonian branch of the CPY, due to the pressure of the Bulgarians, proved reluctant to engage in open hostilities. The CPY's efforts to regain control of their Macedonian cadres and eliminate the Bulgarian Communist Party's influence would inadvertently result in important developments in its relationship with the KKE.

This chapter analyses how the policies that the KKE and CPY established on the Macedonian Question developed as a result of the occupation had a significant role on their later relationship. Specifically, the CPY sought to use Macedonian irredentist sentiment as a way of countering Bulgaria's influence in Yugoslav Macedonia. The KKE

<sup>261</sup> Cited in: *History of the Second World War*, vol. 4 (Somerset, UK: Purnell and Sons, 1967) 1477.

recognized this development in CPY thought, and actively sought to avoid entanglements on the issue. Yugoslav fears concerning Bulgaria, although not overtly disrupting relations between the CPY and KKE during this period, proved to be a defining characteristic throughout the 1940s.

### **3.1. Yugoslavia and the Problem of Macedonian Nationalism, 1941-Summer 1944**

The Second World War provided the impetus for the development of the Macedonian National Movement in many ways. As has been indicated although the Macedonian national movement was developing before the Second World War, the number of members in the movement was marginal.<sup>262</sup> The situation became significantly more fluid after the start of the Second World War. The occupation of both Yugoslavia and Greece by Axis forces in 1941, and Bulgaria's participation in the occupation of what had previously been Ottoman Macedonia, meant that the latter actively used persuasion or coercion to incorporate the former Ottoman Macedonian lands into the Bulgarian state. In Greece alone, this caused over 100,000 individuals to flee the Bulgarian occupation zone.<sup>263</sup> The Macedonian national movement, and the CPY and BCP's struggle for dominance on the Macedonian Question, made the issue significant. The latter factor exacerbated the problems that Greece's left-wing resistance organization, the Greek People's Liberation Army (ELAS), and the KKE would face during the war. The aspirations of the Balkan communist parties to use the Macedonian Question for their benefit threatened to undermine the KKE's struggle for popular legitimacy. Consequently, it attempted to chart a middle path of catering to the wishes of Greece's minorities and appealing to nationalist sentiment.

The CPY and CPB had struggled to control the Macedonian Question in the 1920s and 1930s, but the Second World War brought this struggle into the open. After Operation Barbarossa, the CPY sought to mobilize the population of Yugoslavia into

<sup>262</sup> Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians: A History* Kindle Edition.

<sup>263</sup> Mark Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece: The Experience of Occupation, 1941-44* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001) 20-21.

active resistance against the occupation forces to support to protect the bastion of world socialism. The CPY, however, encountered significant difficulty achieving this goal in Yugoslav Macedonia. In fact, the leader of the Macedonian branch of the CPY, Metodi Shatarov, held pro-Bulgarian sympathies that were not compatible to the CPY's goal of a Yugoslav-wide insurgency. Shatarov actively urged Yugoslav Macedonians to comply with the Bulgarian occupation authorities.<sup>264</sup> His efforts led to an extensive exchange of letters between the CPY, the CPB, and the Comintern, with the Yugoslavs ultimately prevailing. The Comintern, nevertheless, encouraged the Yugoslavs to cooperate with the Bulgarians on the issue.<sup>265</sup> The problem was that by the end of 1941, the CPY had lost contact with the Macedonian communists due to its withdrawal into Bosnia after a German offensive. Furthermore, the Bulgarian occupation forces captured Lazar Koliševski, the individual whom the CPY had appointed to represent their interests in the region.<sup>266</sup> As a result, for much of 1942, the Macedonian communists turned to the BCP for guidance by either sympathy or design, and there was little partisan activity in the region.<sup>267</sup>

Partisan activities in Yugoslav Macedonia only became prominent in 1943, when the CPY's Svetozar Vukmanovic-Tempo arrived in the region. The Bulgarian communists' influence over the Macedonians was an unacceptable state of affairs for the CPY. As a result, in late 1941 the CPY's Central Committee decided to dispatch a special representative to enforce its interests in the region and reassert its authority over Macedonia. That representative was Dobrivoje Radosavljević, who did not arrive in Macedonia until six months later because of the difficulties in mobility imposed by the occupation forces.<sup>268</sup> Although Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo later replaced him as the special representative of the Central Committee, Radosavljević laid the foundation for

<sup>264</sup> Marshall Lee Miller, *Bulgaria During the Second World War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1973) 131.

<sup>265</sup> Comintern, "Comintern Rules That Responsibility for Macedonia Should Remain with the Cpy, but Speaks of Self-Determination for the Macedonian People, August 1941," in *Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union: A Documentary Survey*, ed. Stephen Clissold (New York: Oxford UP, 1941 (1975)), 153.

<sup>266</sup> Koliševski, *Aspects of the Macedonian Question* 272.

<sup>267</sup> Report cited in: Stephen E. Palmer Jr., *Yugoslav Communism and the Macedonian Question* 69.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*

much of Vukmanović-Tempo's later success in dealing with the Macedonian Question.<sup>269</sup> The CPY had begun its struggle to regain control over Macedonia and, incidentally, provided the basis for contacting the KKE.

Vukmanović-Tempo's arrival in Macedonia significantly accelerated Radosavljević's efforts to bring the Macedonian Communists into alignment with the CPY. As Palmer and King note, Vukmanović-Tempo had two immediate tasks to fulfill when he arrived in Skopje in February 1943: developing the partisan resistance and asserting CPY control over the Macedonian party.<sup>270</sup> For the CPY, these were interrelated tasks. As Tito explained in a letter to Radosavljević on 16 January 1943 (the general ideas of which Vukmanović-Tempo would have been well-acquainted) "With the correct stand in the national question ... with organization and participation in this [National Liberation War] ... our Party can raise all of the Yugoslav peoples to an armed uprising ... preparing the conditions for the solution to other problems."<sup>271</sup> Vukmanović-Tempo's description of his mission parrots this formal letter. He stated that its aim was "to implement, together with Macedonian communists, the CPY line in the conditions of war and the occupation of the country."<sup>272</sup> This line was, in fact, the one of armed uprising against the invader, but it also asserted the right of every nation to decide its future for itself.<sup>273</sup> Vukmanović, in initiating an armed uprising, would thus provide the foundation to solve the Macedonian Question in favour of Yugoslavia.

One of the means by which Vukmanović-Tempo sought to ensure the control of the region and placate Macedonian nationalists was by upgrading the regional committee of the new Communist Party of Macedonia (CPM). The CPM would still operate within the framework of Yugoslavia, but Vukmanović-Tempo and the CPY evidently believed that such a measure appealed to Macedonian nationalists. This plan though had the potential to backfire – a possibility that Vukmanović feared.<sup>274</sup> The CC of

<sup>269</sup> Ibid.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid. 75.

<sup>271</sup> Report cited: *ibid.* 75-76.

<sup>272</sup> Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo, *Struggle for the Balkans* (London: Merlin Press, 1990) 58.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid. 188.

<sup>274</sup> Stephen E. Palmer Jr., *Yugoslav Communism and the Macedonian Question* 78.

the CPM confirmed his fears in June 1943, when they issued a document stating that their goal was “the unity of all Macedonians, without regard to whether they were earlier ‘Burgophiles,’ ‘Serbomans,’ or ‘Grecomans.’”<sup>275</sup> Vukmanović-Tempo realized that such a statement undermined Yugoslav control of the region by disrupting the people’s unity and quickly corrected this “tremendous political mistake”.<sup>276</sup> By 2 August 1943, the CC of the CPM released a new document that emphasized the Yugoslavs’ role in the struggle for Macedonian independence.<sup>277</sup>

As the war progressed, the CPY became increasingly proud of its contributions to the war effort. Historians who have studied the Balkans have taken this development for granted. Generally, historians focus on the post-Second World War ramifications of the CPY’s efforts and particularly highlight how those actions contributed to the Tito-Stalin split.<sup>278</sup> The CPY’s belief in its abilities, a confidence that border on hubris, however, did not emerge at the end of the Second World War. To the contrary, the CPY built its confidence throughout the war, as was demonstrated by the CPY’s increasing willingness to challenge the CPSU directives as the war progressed.<sup>279</sup> The CPY knew well the consequences of ignoring Soviet prerogatives, as Moscow had purged the previous Secretary General Gorkić and several other important Yugoslav communist leaders before the Second World War. This political reality meant that each case in which the CPY succeeded in challenging Moscow’s directives reinforced the hubris within the party. In a statement made to the CPY CC in the summer of 1944, Tito asserted, “Even if Stalin asked us to back down regarding Macedonia, I would not agree!” Although he may have been boasting, the statement reflected a growing independent spirit within the CPY and indicated the importance of maintaining

<sup>275</sup> *Istorijski Arhiv Komunističke Partije Jugoslavije*, vol. VII (Belgrade: Kultura, 1951) 222.

<sup>276</sup> Vukmanović-Tempo, *Struggle for the Balkans* 161

<sup>277</sup> Stephen E. Palmer Jr., *Yugoslav Communism and the Macedonian Question* 79.

<sup>278</sup> This point was noted in: Leonid Gibianskii, “The Soviet-Yugoslav Conflict and the Soviet Bloc,” in the Soviet Union and Europe in the Cold War, 1943-53,” in *The Soviet Union and Europe in the Cold War, 1943-53*, ed. Francesca Gori and Silvio Pons (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 222.

<sup>279</sup> One of the more prominent examples of this was the formation of the 1<sup>st</sup> Proletarian Brigade on 21 December 1941. Although this move was criticized by the Soviets in late 1942, which feared that it would give the resistance a communist appearance, Tito kept the formations name. See: Geoffrey Swain, *Tito: A Biography* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010) 216.

Macedonia within Yugoslavia.<sup>280</sup> The party's status as first amongst equals over the satellite parties was established during the occupation. This mindset would directly affect how they would deal with the KKE.

The fact that Vukmanović attempted to appeal to Macedonian nationalist sentiments to gain domestic support becomes clear when one remembers his mission from Tito, whom he had been out of contact with for some time, as well as how he portrays it in his memoir.<sup>281</sup> As previously stated, this mission was to pacify Yugoslav Macedonia by expanding partisan warfare within the region. The KKE's creation of Slav National Liberation Front (SNOF) would not only encourage Macedonians to view the liberation struggle as their own within Greece but also potentially increase guerrilla warfare activities within Vardar Macedonia. In his memoirs, Vukmanović-Tempo, immediately after his first meeting with the KKE, focused his attention on the response of the Macedonian leadership. He notes: "the Macedonian leadership, for its part, took the agreement seriously and did everything to accomplish the agreed goals in areas settled by the [Slavophone Macedonian] people in Greek Macedonia."<sup>282</sup> Vukmanović-Tempo's efforts were evidently successful in getting Slavophone Macedonians to resist. Unfortunately, this occurred at the expense of the KKE, particularly after ELAS and the Greek communists founded SNOF in October 1943 in an effort to tap into Macedonian nationalism for their own benefit. It was a decision that the KKE would regret.

The CPY sought to exploit the Axis occupation as a means of obtaining political and ideological dominance on the Macedonian Question. The political backing that the CPY received from Moscow was critical to its efforts to dominate on the Macedonian Question during this period. Soviet support, however, was always a tenuous affair. In the summer of 1944, the CPY's current strength on the Macedonian Question was not due to any particular action of its own, but rather because the Soviet Union derived greater utility from it than from the BWP. The CPY was at the head of the most successful resistance movement in Europe, whereas the BWP was capable of only minor acts of

<sup>280</sup> Djilas, *Wartime* 398.

<sup>281</sup> "Svetozar Vukmanović's letter to the CPY CC, 8 August 1943" Cited in: Vukmanović-Tempo, *Struggle for the Balkans* 116.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.* 221

resistance against its Axis-aligned government.<sup>283</sup> Bulgaria transformed from an Axis to a cobelligerent state after a communist backed military coup on 9 September 1944.<sup>284</sup> This improved the Allies' overall strategic military position in the Balkans, but weakened Yugoslavia's domestic position.<sup>285</sup> In order to fully understand the CPY's concern about Bulgaria's transition to an Allied state, one must chart the party's efforts to control the Macedonian national movement between 1943 and 1944.

The CPY's efforts to stabilize the Macedonian Question in the fall of 1944 led to a considerable decline in the optimism that had seized the party in the summer of 1943. Vukmanović's reports from this period confirm that he believed he was reaping gains from his activities in the region, including his attempt to use Macedonian irredentist sentiment against Greece and Bulgaria as a means of stabilizing Vardar Macedonia. Vukmanović-Tempo letter on 8 August 1943 letter to the Central Committee of the CPY stated: "A new militancy has seized the Macedonian people. The unification of the Macedonian masses and their involvement in the national liberation struggle is gathering momentum."<sup>286</sup> This newfound aggression was a significant development for the CPY, as the lack of militancy exhibited by the Macedonian Regional Committee had previously been one of the CPY's major criticisms of the organization, and was the reason the Yugoslavs dispatched Vukmanović-Tempo to the region.<sup>287</sup> Vukmanović-Tempo, nevertheless, made it clear that the unification of the Macedonian masses was critical to the party's success. 'The masses' referred not only to the people in Vardar Macedonia, but also to the people in Pirin and Aegean Macedonia. The commander of the Damjan Grujev partisan detachment, a unit that operated in southern Yugoslavia and across the border into Greece, provided evidence of Vukmanović-Tempo's early efforts to use Macedonian nationalism to consolidate Yugoslav control in the region on 18 June 1943.

<sup>283</sup> Stephen Clissold, *Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, 1939-1973* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1975) 30-32.

<sup>284</sup> R.J. Crampton, *The Balkans since the Second World War* (New York: Routledge, 2002 (2014)) Kindle Edition.

<sup>285</sup> Chris Bellamy, *Absolute War: Soviet Russia in the Second World War* (London: MacMillan, 2007) 621. Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Twentieth Century*, 2 319.

<sup>286</sup> Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo, "Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo's Letter to the Cpy Cc, 8 August 1943," in *Iakjp* (Belgrade: 1943), 235.

<sup>287</sup> *Struggle for the Balkans* 76



Vukmanović-Tempo officially obtained the right for Macedonian units to operate in Greece at his meeting with EAM/ELAS in June 1943.<sup>288</sup> The commander of the Damjan Grujev partisan detachment in his report noted, “[...] almost all of our actions were political in character.”<sup>289</sup> These activities, at first glance, do not appear to be congruent with increasing resistance, but it was in line with Vukmanović’s efforts to use Macedonian irredentism to improve the party’s control in the region. In his report, the commander noted that the detachment’s military activities consisted solely of “disarm[ing] two Kastoria villages which happened to be en route.”<sup>290</sup> In describing the villages as en route, the commander implied that it was not the military value of the targets that mattered, but rather their convenience.<sup>291</sup> The commander further confirmed that military targets were of secondary importance when he explained “[the band] continued our propaganda campaign, because we reckoned that we would, to a large extent, counteract Bulgarian propaganda, which had great effect in the Kastoria region and which was the driving force behind the arming of villages against the Partisans.”<sup>292</sup> This quote has two key points First, the commander perceived the influence of the Bulgarians to be detrimental to the Macedonian nation-building process that was still ongoing in the period. The statement was indicative of the growing distinction between Macedonian and Bulgarian identities.<sup>293</sup> Secondly, the quote demonstrated the commander’s prioritization of political over military concerns. That the CPY, and particularly Vukmanović-Tempo, managed to marry their political objectives to military developments in an effort to obtain the optimum benefits for Yugoslavia must be considered in any analysis of CPY policies during the period.

Vukmanović-Tempo and the CPY were optimistic about the role of the partisan movement in establishing control in Macedonia, but this optimism did not extend to the

<sup>288</sup> Conclusions of a Meeting of Delegates of the Central Committees of the Communist Parties of Greece, Yugoslavia and Albania, held on 20 June 1943, cited in *ibid*.

<sup>289</sup> "Report by the Commander of the 'Damjan Grujev' Unit, Dated 18 June 1943, to the Yugoslav Macedonian Partisans on Actions Carried out in Greek Territory," in *Zbnor* (1943), 253.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>292</sup> "Report by the Commander of the 'Damjan Grujev' Unit, Dated 18 June 1943, to the Yugoslav Macedonian Partisans on Actions Carried out in Greek Territory," 253.

<sup>293</sup> See Chapter 1 for a summation of the debates surrounding Macedonian identity.

party organization. In fact, Vukmanović-Tempo's control of the CPM declined over the course of 1943. In a 30 December 1943 report to the CPM's Central Committee, Kuzman Josefovski, a member of the party's Central Committee and a renowned Partisan commander, confirmed that the political situation in Macedonia remained in flux.<sup>294</sup> Josefovski commented that "the immature obsession with national autonomy, which Comrade Tito accuses our leadership of, is now quite plainly affecting [the party]. This chauvinism is so widespread that it is harmful and dangerous for the National Liberation Struggle today."<sup>295</sup> Josefovski's criticism of the party extended to its leadership. He further noted that:

*Other delegates of ASNOM ... are giving the impression that going to the front might jeopardize work in the rear. I am convinced that they attach the greatest importance to the front but they, nevertheless, come out with assertions that the rear is disorganized and that this should be put right ... and even that it will become much more important when Bulgaria capitulates, as if they want to remain behind at the moment, 'if the situation allows', 'in order to give orders from where they are'. They believe that conditions can change and that ASNOM could be formed in the rear when Bulgaria capitulates.*<sup>296</sup>

In other words, Josefovski argued that in 1943, the party consisted of the same opportunists who had damaged the development of the partisan movement in 1941.<sup>297</sup> Furthermore, in claiming that the leadership was more interested in waiting for liberation, Josefovski indirectly referenced the differences between the Partisans and the Četniks, a distinction that was likely made to draw the attention of the CPM leadership.<sup>298</sup> As Josefovski was exactly the type of individual that the CPY was attempting to pull into its vision of Macedonia, given that he was a political as well as military leader, his opinion

<sup>294</sup> Dimitar Bechev, *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Macedonia* (Toronto: The Scarecrow Press, 2009) Kindle Edition.

<sup>295</sup> Kuzman Josefovski, "Kurzman Josefovski's Report of 30 December 1943 to the Communist Party of Macedonia Central Committee Regarding Objections to the Manifesto of the Macedonian Partisans' Hq," in *Zbnor* (1943), Vol. VII, 270.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>297</sup> The CPY, specifically Tito, had argued that Sharlo and his clique had worked to actively wreck the uprising in Macedonia. Given the concern that the CPY had for such matters, and that they were common knowledge, it is likely that Josefovski chose those words with the deliberate intent of raising Yugoslav concerns. See Chapter 2.

<sup>298</sup> Vukmanović-Tempo, *Struggle for the Balkans* 33.

carried considerable weight in the party. Unfortunately for the CPY, the issues Josefovski raised were not new developments.

A radio address given by Tito to the peoples of Yugoslavia on 28 October 1943 indicated that the CPY shared Josefovski's sentiments, and Tito used them to buttress his argument. In the broadcast, Tito noted that the "the national liberation movement is steadily spreading in Macedonia."<sup>299</sup> Given the bombastic prose that Tito typically used to describe the capabilities and achievements of the National Liberation Movement, such a mild statement spoke to the extent of the CPM's advances, or lack thereof, in Vardar Macedonia.<sup>300</sup> The reply that Tito received from Macedonia confirms that he and the CPY leadership did not believe in the CPM's loyalty. In the same broadcast, Tito noted that the main Partisan Headquarters in Macedonia had made the following statement:

*In the name of the units of the People's Liberation Army of Macedonia we greet our Supreme Commander. We are convinced that under your leadership and with your help he (sic) shall win through and liberate Macedonia, and that afterwards Macedonia will be really free and equal in a liberated, People's Yugoslavia. Commander of the HQ of Macedonia, Apostolski, General Staff Major of the former Yugoslav army.*<sup>301</sup>

The CPY, in a direct statement to the people of Yugoslavia and specifically Macedonia, chose to have General Apostolski, a Partisan general of Macedonian extraction, respond to Tito with the Yugoslav vision for Vardar Macedonia.

The CPY's decision to focus on Apostolski's role and the responsibilities of main political leaders could be due to several factors, but an examination of the pertinent circumstances demonstrates that it was likely concerns over the loyalty of the CPM that caused Tito to focus on the military. As the Anti-Fascist Council of Macedonia (ASNOM)

<sup>299</sup> Josip Broz Tito, "Radiogram Sent by Josip Broz Tito on October 28, 1943, to the Radio Station "Free Yugoslavia" on the Combat Actions of People's Liberation Army Units in Serbia, Macedonia and Croatia," in *The National Liberation War and Revolution in Yugoslavia (1941-1945): Selected Documents*, ed. Fabijan Trgo (Beograd: Military History Institute of the Yugoslav People's Army, 1943 (1982)), 532.

<sup>300</sup> Ivo Goldstein, *Croatia: A History* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999) 149-50.

<sup>301</sup> Tito, "Radiogram Sent by Josip Broz Tito on October 28, 1943, to the Radio Station "Free Yugoslavia" on the Combat Actions of People's Liberation Army Units in Serbia, Macedonia and Croatia," 532.

had not yet had its first meeting, it might not have been appropriate for a member of the CPM to respond to Tito's statement.<sup>302</sup> CPY regional leaders elsewhere in Yugoslavia, however, frequently responded to Tito's press releases and gave statements of their own.<sup>303</sup> With this in mind, it was unlikely that the CPY precluded the CPM from replying to Tito's statement simply because the ASNOM had yet to hold its first assembly. Tito and the CPY had a better reason for choosing to have General Apostolski respond to Tito's statement: they could be confident of his loyalty. The Manifesto of the Macedonian Partisan Headquarters, distributed at the beginning of October 1943, demonstrated to the CPY that the partisans were loyal to its vision. It stated:

*The fascist imperialists, together with the Bulgarian, Serbian and Greek expansionist-hegemonists, have torn our homeland to pieces and transformed it into a mere bargaining counter in their imperialist designs [...]. We should all, therefore, rally to the help of our national liberation movement, regardless of whether anyone in the past had pro-Bulgarian, pro-Greek, or pro-Serb sentiments. We should create, together with all the Balkan peoples, a front in the struggle against the fascist invader and against any form of imperialism in the Balkans.*<sup>304</sup>

The Macedonian Partisan Headquarters' statement expressed all the major themes that the CPY sought in Vardar Macedonia. The manifesto rejected earlier loyalties and instead clearly stated that all peoples, regardless of their past, should unite under the auspices of the Macedonian Partisan Headquarters' – and by extension the CPY's – vision for Macedonia. Vukmanović-Tempo later rejected the argument that he forced the Macedonian Partisan HQ to issue this manifesto.<sup>305</sup> The Macedonian Partisan HQ willingly pursued the CPY's directives. Whether it did so because of a genuine affinity with the CPY's vision or because Vukmanović-Tempo had coerced the organization was irrelevant from the Yugoslav perspective.

<sup>302</sup> ASNOM was the temporary government that the CPY installed in liberated Macedonia during the Second World War.

<sup>303</sup> For comparison, the actions and statements of Andrija Hebrang, the leader of the Croatian Communists, during this time-period, were downright bombastic. See: Reneo Lukic and Allen Lynch, *Europe from the Balkans to the Urals: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union* (New York: Oxford UP, 1999) 75.

<sup>304</sup> "Manifesto of the Macedonian Partisans Hq (Beginning of October 1943)," in *Iakjp* (Belgrade: 1943), 260.

<sup>305</sup> For a full examination of Vukmanović's rebuttal to this accusation see: Vukmanović-Tempo, *Struggle for the Balkans* 230-45.

The CPY did not trust the CPM to follow its policy until it could guarantee that the latter's statements conformed to the former's intentions in the region. It chose to marginalize the CPM until it was certain that this had occurred, or until circumstances necessitated a change of position. The CPM's earlier address to the people in June 1943 – while Vukmanović met with the KKE and EAM and where the CPM discriminated against those Macedonians who had identified themselves as Greeks, Serbs, or Bulgarians – clearly demonstrated to the CPY that the Macedonians could not be trusted to follow its directives when not under strict supervision.<sup>306</sup> Thus, one must regard the CPY's efforts at constraining the CPM in this light. The CPY's difficulties in controlling the CPM meant that its decision to have Apostolski reply to its message most likely meant that, unlike the majority of the CPM, he could be trusted to carry out the CPY's orders and present a united front not only to the people of Macedonia, but also to Yugoslavia as a whole.

As evident in the partisans' address, the CPY's use of Macedonian irredentism slowly made gains. The partisans, however, were also a difficult force for the party to control. The Macedonian Partisan Headquarters issued orders on 17 June 1944, via a document entitled "Instructions from the Yugoslav Macedonian Partisans HQ to all political workers and Macedonian Partisans crossing into Greek territory". The Macedonian Partisan HQ's instructions stated: "It has been noticed recently that some comrades have been making mistakes on the question of Greece. It is, therefore, necessary to repeat our standpoint on these matters and convey it to all Macedonian Partisans and reservists."<sup>307</sup> The political workers' and partisans' main failing, thus far, was their overzealous pursuit of Macedonian irredentist objectives. The Macedonians' encouragement of ELAS fighters to join the Yugoslav Partisans was one of the major fulcrums of growing discontent between the parties.<sup>308</sup> Nevertheless, the Macedonian Partisan HQ's desire to limit the influence of Macedonian irredentism was constrained by its recognition that a complete reversal was impossible. In the same address, the Macedonian Partisan HQ noted that the unity of the CPM, Fatherland Front, and EAM

<sup>306</sup> *Istorijski Arhiv Komunističke Partije Jugoslavije*, VII 222.

<sup>307</sup> *Struggle for the Balkans*

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*

assisted the Macedonians in gaining “the national freedom and equality of the whole Macedonian nation [...]”<sup>309</sup> The statement’s ambiguity demonstrated the careful balancing act that the CPY and its subordinates had to perform on the Macedonian Question. The CPY could not outright reject Macedonian nationalists’ claims, for fear of alienating them as they attempted to build their centralized yet multi-ethnic state. Nevertheless, the CPY also recognized the importance of maintaining positive relations with its neighbours, as the Macedonian Partisan Headquarters stressed when it stated that one of its goals was “realising the brotherhood and concord of all the Balkan peoples.”<sup>310</sup> Realist centric histories of international relations dismiss the importance of such sentiments, but as Marinov and Vezenkov note, one cannot ignore the importance of communist ideology to in the decision-making processes of the Balkan communist parties during the 1940s.<sup>311</sup> Knowledge of the tension between the CPY’s determination to support their communist brethren and its simultaneously pursuit of its state-building enterprise is crucial to understanding its later actions.

The BWP’s fragmented political leadership complicated relations between the Yugoslav and Bulgarian communist parties. During the Second World War, significant portions of the Bulgarian Communist leadership remained trapped in the Soviet Union. Georgi Dimitrov, the nominal head of the Bulgarian Communist Party, was in Moscow for the duration of the war.<sup>312</sup> In the eyes of the CPY, the local BWP leaders exercised a disturbing degree of independence because of Dimitrov’s isolation. In the early summer of 1944, Tito wrote to Dimitrov and noted:

*The explanation of [Fatherland Front’s] standpoint on the Macedonian question is based on alleged historical experience. No attempt is made to base it on current political relations in connection with the liberation struggle of all the occupied countries, nor in connection with the*

<sup>309</sup> Ibid.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid. 225.

<sup>311</sup> Vezenkov, "Communism and Nationalism in the Balkans: Marriage of Convenience or Attraction?," 502. By Realist centric histories, I mean those that regard politics as a zero-sum game and where the actions of states are determined by the anarchical environment of international relations.

<sup>312</sup> Dimitrov had been head of the Comintern until its dissolution in 1943. Nevertheless, he remained an important advisor to Stalin and remained in the USSR until November 1945. See: Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Twentieth Century*, 2 293.

*achievements of the national liberation struggle in Yugoslavia, nor, finally, in connection with the tendencies, not only of Germany but of some other imperialists as well.*<sup>313</sup>

Dimitrov actually agreed with Tito's argument on the Macedonian Question and had done so as early as 1941.<sup>314</sup> The problem was that Dimitrov was not in Bulgaria, and would not return there until late 1945. In the interim, the CPY had to deal with individuals such as Traicho Kostov, who were more in touch with the domestic situation in Bulgaria. This disparity convinced the CPY to realize that the one overriding feature of Bulgarian politics at this time was nationalism, as Crampton observes.<sup>315</sup> Nevertheless, for the CPY, its relationship with the BWP-led Fatherland Front was of secondary importance so long as Bulgaria remained an enemy. This lack of concern regarding the Bulgarian aspect of the Macedonian Question was evident when the CPY only briefly mentioned it in the Macedonian Partisan Headquarters' address to party activists on 17 July 1944, and also evident in the considerable attention the CPY devoted to Greece, rather than Bulgaria.<sup>316</sup> The CPY maintained a position of moral and international superiority over the Macedonian Question, but circumstances would soon bring the Bulgarian faction to the forefront.

The ASNOM's first assembly on 2 August 1944, which had been delayed by the CPY, did not alleviate the CPY's concerns about adequately conveying its message in Vardar Macedonia. In fact, the ASNOM's first assembly only served to emphasize how little control the CPY exercised in Vardar Macedonia. The ASNOM's founding date was itself a reflection of this weakness. In 1942 and 1943, the CPY formed all of the state-level organizations in Yugoslavia, with the exception of Slovenia and Macedonia. Slovenia, however, was not far behind, holding its first republic-level session in February

<sup>313</sup> Josip Broz Tito, "Tito's Letter to Dimitrov, June or July 1944," in *Jugoslavija-Bugarska, Ratno Vreme (Yugoslavia-Bulgaria: War Time)*, ed. Slobodan Nešović (Belgrade: Provesta, 1944 (1978)), 271.

<sup>314</sup> Vezenkov, "Communism and Nationalism in the Balkans: Marriage of Convenience or Attraction?," 542.

<sup>315</sup> Crampton, *The Balkans since the Second World War* Kindle Edition.

<sup>316</sup> Jefto Šćepanović, "Politički Komesar Baze Novj U Bariju Za Marka (Aleksandra Rankovića), Organizacionog Sekretara Ckpkj," in *Dokumenti Centralnih Organa Kpj nor I Revolucija (1941-1945)*, ed. Milovan Dželebdžić (Beograd: Izdavački Centar Komunist, 1944 (1987) (12/17/1944)), 330.

1944.<sup>317</sup> Macedonia did not have its first ASNOM session until the beginning of August 1944.<sup>318</sup> In his analysis of the ASNOM, Rossos did not elaborate on the reason for the late emergence of ASNOM.<sup>319</sup> Certainly, the CPY simply lacked the confidence in its ability to control the regional party that was needed for it to believe that instituting the ASNOM was sound policy.

Although the CPY continued to hold suspicions about the extent of the CPM's loyalty in August 1944, the potential political consequences of not holding ASNOM would have been more significant than the effects of holding it. The CPY required the ASNOM to be officially founded on 2 August 1944, the anniversary of the Ilinden Uprising. Not doing so would have undermined its pan-Yugoslav message, especially if it had ignored Ilinden Day, which after 1903 had quickly become the most important day for the Macedonian national movement. Regarding the region's integration of Macedonia into Yugoslavia, however, the official founding of the ASNOM was a setback.<sup>320</sup> The CPY's favouritism of the Macedonian Partisan Headquarters demonstrated that it preferred to marginalize the CPM and other Macedonian leaders that it could not control politically. In August 1944, the ASNOM's initial manifesto confirmed how the CPY was at a disadvantage when it brought these leaders – particularly the assembly's President Metodija Andonov-Čento – into the region's political process. Specifically, the ASNOM's section regarding Macedonians living outside of Yugoslavia was problematic. It stated:

*Macedonians under Bulgaria and Greece*

*The unification of the entire Macedonian people depends on your participation in the gigantic anti-fascist front. Only by fighting the vile fascist occupier will you gain your right to self-determination and to unification of the entire Macedonian people within the framework of Tito's Yugoslavia, which has become a free community of emancipated and*

<sup>317</sup> Arguably, the delay in hosting the Slovenian meeting was due to the lack of an open resistance organization in the region. See: Gregor J. Kranjc, *To Walk with the Devil: Slovene Collaboration and Axis Occupation, 1941-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013) *Passim*.

<sup>318</sup> Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians: A History* Kindle Edition.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>320</sup> 2 August was also the anniversary of the Ilinden Uprising which made it a convenient, and symbolic, for ASNOM to have its first session on that date.



*equal peoples. May the struggle of the Macedonian Piedmont incite you to even bolder combat against the fascist oppressors! May the path of this part of Macedonia become your path since it is the only one that leads to freedom and unification of the entire Macedonian nation! May your participation in the general anti-fascist struggle give life to the principles proclaimed by the first Macedonian National Council and erase the borders erected dividing brother from brother, Macedonian from Macedonian.*<sup>321</sup>

The ASNOM, under the leadership of Metodija Andonov-Čento, immediately put forward a maximalist claim on Macedonian territory. This was problematic for the CPY, but not in the sense that it rejected such sentiments, as the Yugoslav communists were quite vocal on the rights of Macedonians living outside the Yugoslav state. Rather, the source of the problem was that the claim was forwarded by an unregulated source beyond the CPY's control that potentially threatened its relations with the other Balkan countries and communist movements.<sup>322</sup> Furthermore, the ASNOM's manifesto was advanced at a time just when the CPY, as has been shown, attempted to mollify the KKE by moderating its stance.<sup>323</sup> When the CPM issued its Proclamation to the People of Macedonia on 4 August 1944, it demonstrated that the ASNOM's manifesto was not an isolated event, nor one that could be easily rectified. The proclamation stated:

*With the participation of the entire Macedonian nation in the struggle against the fascist occupiers of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Greece you will achieve unification of all parts of Macedonia, divided in 1915 and 1918 by Balkan imperialists. The Atlantic Charter and the Tehran agreement adopted by the great powers, England, the Soviet Union and America,*

<sup>321</sup> "Manifest Issued at the First Session of the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Macedonia to the People of Macedonia, August 2 1944," in *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State*, ed. et al. Hristo Andonov-Poljanski (Skopje: University of "Cyril and Methodius", 1944 (1985)), 636.

<sup>322</sup> See Chapter 2 for when Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo attempted to quell unnecessary nationally antagonist thoughts in the party.

<sup>323</sup> "Kiro Miljovski, Predsednik Odbora Privermenog Makedonskog Predsta Vništva U Sofiji Tempu (Svetozaru Vukamnoviću), Delegatu U Makedoniji," in *Dokumenti Organa Kpj nor I Revolucija (1941-1945)*, ed. Milovan Dželebdžić (Beograd: Izdavački Centar Komunist, 1944 (1987) (10/02/1944)), 182-188.

*gives you the guarantee of the right to self-determination earned in the struggle against the German occupier and his agents.*<sup>324</sup>

Less than two days after ASNOM's proclamation, the CPM parroted the ASNOM's line on the Macedonian Question, specifically with respect to Yugoslav Macedonian irredentism. It is unclear whether the CPM did so in order to undercut Andonov-Čento's appeal, or whether it genuinely believed in the ASNOM's sentiment. Regardless of whether the CPM's statement was unregulated or designed by the CPY to undercut Andonov-Čento's support, it demonstrated that the CPY had lost the initiative on the Macedonian Question. The ASNOM kept up the appearance of supporting Tito's vision when it noted that unity for the Macedonians was only possible "within the framework of Tito's Yugoslavia". This meant that CPY individuals who were not associated with Yugoslav party's message spoke for it.<sup>325</sup> In many ways, this was worse for the CPY than having a clearly defined enemy, as it could not simply and directly attack the ASNOM.

The formation of the ASNOM negatively affected the CPY's objectives in the region because it legitimized competing visions of Macedonian identity. Macedonian nationalism was not a unified entity in 1944. Instead, there were several variants of the identity, which not only made it difficult for any political actor to harness, but also made it potentially dangerous. Although Sfetas claims that there were two strains of Macedonian nationalism in 1944, there were, in fact, three major strains.<sup>326</sup> The CPY's official version of the identity was the first and in many ways the least influential. This version stressed that the best way for the Macedonian people to achieve their goals was to work within

<sup>324</sup> "Proclamation to the People of Macedonia Issued by the Communist Party of Macedonia," in *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State*, ed. et al. Hristo Andonov-Poljanski (Skopje: University of "Cyril and Methodius", 1944 (1985)), 647.

<sup>325</sup> "Manifest Issued at the First Session of the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Macedonia to the People of Macedonia, August 2 1944," 636.

<sup>326</sup> Sfetas, in his analysis, took a binary view of Macedonian nationalism, dividing it between pro- and anti-Bulgarian factions. See Spyridon Sfetas, "Autonomist Movements of the Slavophones in 1944: The Attitude of the Communist Party of Greece and the Protection of the Greek-Yugoslav Border," *Balkan Studies* 35, no. 2 (1995) 297-317.

the framework of the Yugoslav federation.<sup>327</sup> In stressing the importance of a Yugoslav federation, CPY and CPM leaders appealed to those elements within the Macedonian national movement that had previously emphasized that a Balkan Federation was essential to the Macedonian nation's realization of its national aspirations. Dmatar Vlahov is especially notable amongst the individuals that the CPY sought to coopt. Vlahov was a key Macedonian leader and held a critical position as Macedonia's representative in the USSR.<sup>328</sup> For the CPY to consolidate control in the region, it was critical for it to coopt Vlahov and other individuals to counter its limited appeal. Lazar Koliševski, the CPM's Secretary General and most important advocate of 'Yugoslav Macedonianism', was unavailable during much of the war as Bulgarian authorities imprisoned him from late 1941 until the fall of 1944.<sup>329</sup> Thus, Vukmanović-Tempo was the CPY's most influential advocate in Yugoslav Macedonia for much of the Second World War. Although FYROM now considers Vukmanović-Tempo to be a hero of the national movement, in 1944 as a Montenegrin he lacked political influence in the region and his influence was limited to his position as the CPY's representative.<sup>330</sup> As a result, in 1944 the CPY was at a severe disadvantage in conveying its message to Vardar Macedonia.

In 1943 and 1944, the CPY demonstrated the weakness of its version of Macedonian nationalism in its desperation to co-opt Vlahov's more expansive, and popularly supported, version of the identity: the second major strain. The CPY's decision to elect Vlahov to the Presidium of the AVNOJ in November 1943 caught Dimitrov and the Soviet Union by surprise. In a 26 December 1943 letter to Tito, Dimitrov requested that Tito determine a means of quietly removing Vlahov from his position because his

<sup>327</sup> Various Yugoslav and Macedonian officials constantly throughout 1944 repeated this message, although the extent of its impact is questionable. See: Ljupco Arsov and Vera Aceva, "The Report of Ljupco Arsov and Vera Aceva to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Macedonia.," in *From Recognition to Repudiation (Bulgarian Attitudes on the Macedonian Question) - Articles, Speeches, Documents*, ed. Vangja Casule (Skopje: Kultura, 1944), 369. Georgi Dimitrov, "Georgi Dimitrov's Letter to the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Workers Party," *ibid.*, ed. Vangja Casule, 270.

<sup>328</sup> Alexander Maxwell, "Slavic Macedonian Nationalism: From "Regional" to "Ethnic"," *Ethnologia Balkanica* 11 (2007) 126.

<sup>329</sup> Jozo Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945: Occupation and Collaboration* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001) Kindle Edition.

<sup>330</sup> Vukmanović in his memoirs acknowledges that his influence in the region, while officially substantial, was not substantive. See: Vukmanović-Tempo, *Struggle for the Balkans* 230-31.

status as a member of the BWP.<sup>331</sup> Tito assured Dimitrov that he would do so, but did not remove Vlahov. In fact, he appointed Vlahov deputy chairman of AVNOJ's council, which led Dimitrov to complain in a 16 April 1944 letter to Stalin.<sup>332</sup> It is not clearly stated in the historiography why Tito blatantly refused to adhere to Dimitrov's seemingly innocuous request, especially given that it coincided with his request that Dimitrov help him to obtain arms from the USSR.<sup>333</sup> If Tito was willing to risk potential weapons deals to keep Vlahov in the AVNOJ's Presidium, he evidently valued Vlahov more than the much-needed weaponry. As Vlahov was not even in the country at this time, Tito appreciated him more for what he represented than for any physical action that he could immediately perform for the party.<sup>334</sup> For Tito and the CPY to be the new embodiment of Macedonian nationalism and challenge Macedonian nationalists such as Metodija Andonov-Cento whom they could not control, they had to coopt the past by any means possible. Vlahov, as the most prestigious of the Macedonian 'old guard' was, therefore, worth more than any potential weapons the USSR could offer in early 1944.

Tito and Dimitrov's struggle for Vlahov demonstrated the third form of Macedonian nationalism that the CPY feared above all else: Bulgarian Macedonianism. Since the commencement of the Second World War, the CPY had struggled to minimize Bulgaria's historical influence over the Macedonian Question. Nevertheless, the prominence that the BWP gained in the CPM and wartime Macedonia through its attachment of Mitko Zafirov to the party was such that it maintained significant influence over the Central Committee of the CPM until late 1944.<sup>335</sup> Officially, this influence should

<sup>331</sup> Georgi Dimitrov, *The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov, 1933-1949*, ed. Ivo Banac (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2003) Kindle Edition. Despite Dimitrov's complaints, he too was using Vlahov for political purposes. Dimitrov, in a 22 April 1944 entry into his diary, noted that he had a discussion with Vlahov about the "Macedonian Question". The quotations were no doubt included to show his contempt for Vlahov's assessment of the issue.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid.

<sup>335</sup> Mitrovski Boro et al., *The Bulgarian Army in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945* (Beograd: Medjunarodna Politika, 1971) 156. In fact, Yugoslav officials would complain about Bulgaria's influence in the region well into 1945. See: Miha Marinko, "Miha Marinko, Instruktor Ckpkj U Makedoniji Centralnom Komitetu Kpj," in *Dokumenti Centralnih Organa Kpj nor I Revolucija (1941-1945)*, ed. Branko Vuković (Beograd: Arhiv Jugoslavije, 1945 (1996) (04/18/1945)), 415.

not have been a significant issue for the CPY. The BWP's official position on the Macedonian question was that:

*The Communist Party is opposed to the forced annexation of Macedonia to Bulgaria and the occupation of Macedonia by Bulgarian and German troops. [...] The Communist Party considers that the question of the future of Macedonia can be settled only on the basis of a fraternal accord between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia [...] but this presupposes Bulgaria's breaking with Hitlerite Germany and joining Yugoslavia in the fight to drive the German invaders out of Bulgaria.*<sup>336</sup>

On the surface, this position was in accordance with the CPY's plans for the region. Nevertheless, Dimitrov's comments in his diary makes it clear that the CPY did not fully trust the BWP's official argument: Tito actually believed that BWP policy was directed not by Dimitrov, but by Vasil Kolarov, another prominent Bulgarian communist living in Moscow.<sup>337</sup> Furthermore, in his diary Dimitrov acknowledged that BWP members' actions in Vardar Macedonia were damaging relations between the two parties.<sup>338</sup> As the CPY's position in Vardar Macedonia was tenuous at best, challenges from the BWP – traditionally the strongest communist party on the Macedonian Question – were a cause for great concern.

### **3.2. The KKE on the Macedonian Question, 1943-44**

Vukmanović-Tempo's plans for expanding the Yugoslav Macedonian Question caught the KKE in a vulnerable position. As previously noted, the Macedonian Question had been problematic for the KKE since the formulation of Comintern policy. In fact, the KKE's position on Macedonian autonomy cost it significant domestic support because an autonomist Macedonia would require the Greek state to lose its northern provinces.<sup>339</sup> Although the KKE was active in its efforts to secure its post-occupation position in 1944,

<sup>336</sup> Dimitrov, *The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov, 1933-1949* Kindle Edition.

<sup>337</sup> Ibid.

<sup>338</sup> Ibid.

<sup>339</sup> John C. Loulis, *The Greek Communist Party, 1940-1944* (London: Croom Helm, 1982) 1; Karakasidou, "Fellow Travellers, Separate Roads: The Kke and the Macedonian Question," 458-59.

it had, for the most part, ignored the Macedonian Question after adopting an ambiguous policy on it at the Sixth Congress in 1935.<sup>340</sup> Specifically, the Sixth Congress on the Macedonian Question noted:

*Marxism-Leninism requires that the communist parties base their policy and their slogans on firm and realistic grounds. In the part of Macedonia that Greece holds, Greek refugees have been settled. Today, in the Greek part of Macedonia, the population, in its majority, is Greek. And in the present circumstances, the Leninist-Stalinist principle of self-determination demands the substitution of the old slogan.*<sup>341</sup>

Marxist principles guided the KKE's policy, but its policy better reflected the political realities of 1930s Greece.<sup>342</sup> The KKE tried to maintain this ambiguous policy throughout the Second World War.

The KKE recognized its vulnerability on the Macedonian Question, and attempted to avoid addressing it whenever possible. When forced to take a position in 1943 (likely because of BWP and CPY pressure), the KKE attempted to deny that there was an issue. G. Zevgos, one of the KKE's chief theoreticians, noted:

*If [the Bulgarians] took yesterday Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace and today they advanced to Central Macedonia, there is no doubt that they will jump over to Western Macedonia also. However, in Greek Macedonia the racial mixture which existed prior to 1922 has ceased to exist. [...] Greek populations – more than a million persons – have settled in Greek Macedonia and Thrace from the Balkans and Asia Minor ... [with the result] that the ethnological composition of Greek Macedonia changed drastically and became as Greek as any other region of Old Greece. The Slav Minority of Western Macedonia, numerically insignificant, is also struggling [against occupation forces].*<sup>343</sup>

The position that the KKE adopted when forced to deal with the Macedonian issue was one of evasion.

<sup>340</sup> For the full-text of the Sixth Congress see: "Το 6ο Συνέδριο – 1935," 41-88.

<sup>341</sup> Kofos, *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia* 91.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid.; Ireneusz Adam Ślupkov, *The Communist Party of Greece and the Macedonian National Problem, 1918-1940* (Szczecin: Ireneusz A Ślupkov, 2006) 49-62.

<sup>343</sup> G Zevgos "For Greek Macedonia and Thrace." Κομμουνιστική Έπιθεώρηση, August 1943, 332.

In the summer and fall of 1944, the EAM and the KKE faced two issues that would have a significant bearing on the *Dekemvriana*: the looming confrontation with the government-in-exile and the Macedonian Question. In July 1944, Giannis Zevgos, a member of the KKE's Politburo, noted: "The minorities which live in other countries will acquire full national, economic, social, and political equality of rights [after the war]."<sup>344</sup> Zevgos' statement was, in essence, a reiteration of the Sixth Party Congress' perspective on the question of minorities. The KKE maintained the territorial integrity of the Greek state while applying the ambiguous term "political equality of rights" to minorities (i.e. Slavophone Macedonians).<sup>345</sup> The policy of the KKE and the EAM initially assisted their domestic position amongst the Greeks, but political developments in Greece forced them to deal with the Macedonian Question in a manner that alienated the Yugoslavs, which in turn undermined their ability to exert pressure on the returning Greek government-in-exile.

Contrary to some interpretations, the KKE did not initially desire to seize power by force in late 1944, but realized that if political developments forced them to do so, external support would be crucial to its success.<sup>346</sup> The KKE's desperation to contact the Soviet Union from 1941-1943, as Ulunian notes was caused by the anxiety of being separated from not only its ideological, but also political benefactor as well.<sup>347</sup> Since the resistance's inception British agents were involved in its development.<sup>348</sup> Britain provided the Greek Resistance with significant material and moral support, but also directed much

<sup>344</sup> Giannis Zevgos, "The National Minorities and National Demagogy," Κομμουνιστική 'Επιθεώρηση, July 1944. 632.

<sup>345</sup> Although other minorities existed in Greece, despite the government largely arguing otherwise, the Macedonian population was the one that attracted the majority of the attention.

<sup>346</sup> The most famous of these works remains D. George Kousoulas, *Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965) *Passim*.

<sup>347</sup> Artiom A. Ulunian, "The Soviet Question and 'the Greek Question', 1946-53; Problems and Appraisals," in *The Soviet Union and Europe in the Cold War, 1943-53*, ed. Francesca Gori and Silvio Pons (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 144-60.

<sup>348</sup> Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949* X-XVI, Nicholas Hammond, *Venture into Greece: With the Guerrillas, 1943-44* (London: William Kimber & Co Ltd, 1983) *Passim*. Lars Baerentzen, ed. *British Reports on Greece 1943-44* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1982), *Passim*.

of its aid towards EDES: ELAS' chief military rival.<sup>349</sup> The EAM's fear of domination by the Greek government-in-exile and the British caused it to attack rival guerrilla bands in the so-called First Round, between late 1943 and early 1944.<sup>350</sup> If the members of the ELAS were pawns, they at least had the right to choose their master.

The Popov Mission in July-August 1944 gave the KKE/EAM confirmation that the USSR would not act as their external patron against the government-in-exile. The Popov Mission initially received great fanfare from the KKE/EAM, as it was the first time since the start of the Second World War that the Greek communists had direct contact with the Soviet Union.<sup>351</sup> Nevertheless, the actions of the USSR's representatives quickly shattered the KKE's expectations about the level of support they would receive from the Soviet Union. In his memoirs, General Stefanos Sarafis, the commander of the ELAS, explained that:

On the question of the Red Army undertaking our supply [the Popov Mission] made no promises, as they had no instruction about this, but said they would send word of our needs to Moscow by radio, and Moscow would decide. They asked for a list of our requirements and this was handed to them within two days. However, to the end we received no aid.<sup>352</sup>

The Soviet Union presented a false front to the KKE/EAM in indicating that it was prepared to support their goals. In reality, the USSR did very little to support the

<sup>349</sup> Andre Gerolymatos, *Guerrilla Warfare and Espionage in Greece, 1940-1944* (New York: Pella Publishing Company, 1992) 159-69.

<sup>350</sup> Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949* 59. Gerolymatos, *Red Acropolis, Black Terror: The Greek Civil War and the Origins of Soviet-American Rivalry, 1943-1949* 85

<sup>351</sup> William Hardy McNeill, "View from Greece," in *Witnesses to the Origins of the Cold War*, ed. Thomas Taylor Hammond (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1944), 112-15.

<sup>352</sup> Maj-Gen. Stefanos Sarafis, *Elas: Greek Resistance Army*, trans. Sylvia Moody (London: Merlin Press, 1946 (1980)) 364-65.



resistance.<sup>353</sup> Giannis Ioannidis, a leading member of the KKE, recalled in his memoirs that Chernichev – the deputy leader of the delegation and the individual he suspected was the de-facto leader of the Popov Mission – grimaced in dismay whenever the KKE broached the subject of the USSR supplying arms to the Greek communists.<sup>354</sup> Thus, while the Popov Delegation maintained the appearance of wishing to help the KKE, the KKE would have to look elsewhere for support.

### 3.3. Conclusion

The fall of 1944 marked a new and volatile phase in the Macedonian Question. The members of the Macedonian national movement, now validated as a distinct people by Tito, were eager to further their mission to incorporate all of Ottoman Macedonia into the new national territory. Political developments, however, would significantly restrain their ability to accomplish this goal. This issue was particularly the case in Greece, where the Macedonian Question had considerably shifted since its formalization in the late nineteenth century. People that identified themselves as ethnic Greeks now dominated Aegean Macedonia, but Macedonian nationalists within Yugoslavia would not let this new political reality affect their nationalist visions.

The CPY, still new and very much in need of legitimacy, was in no position to deny Macedonian aspirations in late 1944 if it hoped to prevent the Bulgarians from presenting themselves as the champions of the Macedonian cause, which they had been for much of the 1920s and 1930s. The CPY, in fact, needed to be more

<sup>353</sup> Demonstrative of the Soviet's feigned support was a 16 September 1944 report by Andreas Tzimas that the Soviet delegation would request that the Bulgarians withdraw from Greek territories, which did not occur until much later. See Andrea Tzimas, "Le Radiogramme D'andrea Jimas, Representant De Peea Dans L'etat-Major General (Emg) De L'armee De Liberational Nationale Et Des Detachements Des Partisans (Aln Et Dp) De La Yougoslavie a Yanis Yoanidis, Membre Du Bureap Politique (Bp) Du Pcg Par Lequel Il Transmet Le Rapport De Yanis Zevgos, Membre Du Bp Du Pcg, Relatif a L'activite Des Ministres Du Pcg-Eam-Peea Dans Le Gouvernement De G. Papandreou.," in *La Macedoine D'eege Au Cours De La Gln, Septembre 1944 - Fevrier 1945*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Archive de la Macedoine, 1944), 95-97. Miller, *Bulgaria During the Second World War Passim*.

<sup>354</sup> Ioannidis, *Αναμνήσεις: Προβλήματα Της Πολιτικής Του Κκε Στην Εθνική Αντίσταση 1940-1945* 250-51.

'Macedonian' than the Macedonians themselves in order to reassure them that the Yugoslav federation best served their interests, and not Bulgaria. Bulgaria and Yugoslavia's struggle for dominance on the Macedonian Question caught Greece, and specifically the KKE and ELAS, in the middle of these two centrifugal forces. The two countries involved themselves in Greece because its small yet politically significant Slavophone Macedonian minority. How both the KKE and the Slav minority dealt with Yugoslavia's ascendancy on the Macedonian Question would play a significant role in the Greek left's expectations for political dominance in the country.

## Chapter 4. The Macedonian Question and its impact on the Dekemvriana

Josip Broz Tito outlined the complications that the Macedonian Question represented regarding the relations between Yugoslavia and its neighbours, particularly Greece and Bulgaria, when he spoke at a session of the Politburo of Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) in late 1944. He stated: "Macedonia controls what [we] do with the Greek Party. This is incorrect. There is the danger of chauvinism. This [Macedonian Question] is not only ours, but that of our allies."<sup>355</sup> That the Macedonian Question proved problematic for relations between the Balkan peoples was not a new development. Since its inception in the late nineteenth century, the Macedonian Question had strained ties between the Balkan nation-states as each sought to use it to increase its prestige and, more importantly, to expand territorially.<sup>356</sup> As the Second World War neared its conclusion, the CPY became the preeminent player on the Macedonian Question. Yugoslavia's newfound position of power within the Balkans gave it the ability to influence its neighbours in ways that were previously impossible. The country's heightened influence, however, came at the cost of increasing its entanglement in the Macedonian Question. The CPY's attempt to balance between both its newfound influence in the region and the limitations imposed by the Macedonian Question would define its foreign policy towards Bulgaria and Greece during this period.

<sup>355</sup> T. Kostov, "A Letter from the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Workers Party (the Communists) to Comrade Tito," in *From Recognition to Repudiation (Bulgarian Attitudes on the Macedonian Question) - Articles, Speeches, Documents*, ed. Vangja Casule (Skopje: Kultura, 1944), 125-126.

<sup>356</sup> For an examination of this issue see: Biondich, *The Balkans: Revolution, War, and Political Violence since 1878* 64-84. Kofos, *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia Passim*. Gounaris, "Macedonian Questions," 63-94.

During the *Dekemvriana*, the KKE was the primary loser of the CPY's efforts to assert its dominance over the Macedonian national movement. The *Dekemvriana*, an uprising of the KKE-backed ELAS against the Government of Unity, ultimately failed and the Treaty of Varkiza on 12 February 1945 established a tenuous peace between the parties. At the beginning of the *Dekemvriana*, the KKE and the EAM/ELAS were arguably in a position to seize power before Britain brought the full weight of its military to bear on Macedonia.<sup>357</sup> Securing the CPY's support was critical to the EAM's chances. Unfortunately for the EAM, the *Dekemvriana* occurred when Bulgaria's transformation from an enemy to co-belligerent state unsettled Yugoslavia's domestic political situation. CPY politicians feared that Bulgaria's emergence as an allied nation posed a threat to Yugoslavia's nation-building efforts in Vardar Macedonia. Additionally, the EAM complicated matters for the CPY in late 1944 by disbanding the Slavophone Macedonian units in the ELAS, provoking outrage amongst the CPM and key members of the CPY, who saw this as a continuation of the Greek state's policy to deny a Macedonian identity. If Tito did not have the collaboration of these elements within the CPY, he could not supply the Greek resistance forces without undermining his domestic position. Vardar Macedonia, the only Yugoslav territory connected to Greece, was critical to Yugoslav efforts to supply the ELAS/KKE.<sup>358</sup> The CPY, while initially committing itself to support the EAM and the ELAS, retracted its pledge in the latter group's moment of need for fear of the damage such an action would do to its domestic position. Internal Yugoslav politics regarding the Macedonian Question, as well as the external pressure brought on by the policies of the KKE and the BWP, caused the CPY to placate Macedonian nationalism to an even greater degree than it had in the past. The result of this was that the Yugoslavs withdrew their support from the ELAS in the middle of the *Dekemvriana*.

<sup>357</sup> Gerolymatos, *Red Acropolis, Black Terror: The Greek Civil War and the Origins of Soviet-American Rivalry, 1943-1949* 97-8. Stavrakis, *Moscow and Greek Communism, 1944-1949* 26-40. Edgar O'Ballance, *The Greek Civil War: 1944-1949* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966) 15.

<sup>358</sup> This point was persuasively argued in Shrader, *The Withered Vine: Logistics and the Communist Insurgency in Greece, 1945-1949* 2. Given that during the period examined the CPY was the government of Yugoslavia, and thus had significantly more resources available, Macedonia's role in supply Greece was even more critical than before this assumption of power.

## 4.1. Yugoslavia and the Macedonian Question

On 9 September 1944, the BWP backed the Fatherland Front, a collection of Bulgarian nationalist organizations united only by their opposition to the pro-German government, and conducted a coup. After seizing power, the BWP quickly concluded an armistice with the Soviet Union and declared war on Germany and the other Axis states.<sup>359</sup> The coup immediately impacted the CPY's plans for the Macedonian Question and intensified the CPY's pre-existing concerns about the intentions of the BWP in Bulgaria. As long as Bulgaria was a member of the Axis, the BWP's ability to influence the Macedonian Question declined as a result of the CPY's immensely more successful insurgency campaign. Also, the USSR's ambiguous policy on the Macedonian Question in 1941-42 gave way in 1943-44 to a position that favoured the CPY.<sup>360</sup> Bulgaria's abandonment of the Axis, however, gave the BWP a powerful advantage in the campaign to secure the USSR's influence and patronage: the Bulgarian army. Immediately after Bulgaria's change of alliance, Soviet Marshal Tolbukin placed the Bulgarian Army under his command and tasked it with cutting off the retreat of German forces in Greece and Yugoslavia.<sup>361</sup> While this action aggravated the CPY and the KKE, due to its potential to reopen the Macedonian Question, Soviet strategic prerogatives outweighed the sensitivities of its Balkan satellite parties.

In the aftermath of the coup, the CPY leadership linked its fears about Bulgarian influence in Vardar Macedonia to the latter's ability to challenge the National Liberation Army, which was the only firm Yugoslav institution in the region.<sup>362</sup> When Bulgaria became a co-belligerent country, the former Axis Bulgarian occupation armies instantly

<sup>359</sup> Crampton, *The Balkans since the Second World War* Kindle Edition.

<sup>360</sup> Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin* (London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1962) 36.

<sup>361</sup> Kofos, *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia* 137-38; Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945: Occupation and Collaboration* Kindle Edition.

<sup>362</sup> The National Liberation Army was the formal name for the Yugoslav partisans, which became more apt in 1944 as it transitioned towards a conventional force.

became an ally.<sup>363</sup> Furthermore, Bulgaria stoked Greek and Yugoslavian fears about its irredentist agenda by its deliberately slow withdrawal of Bulgarian forces from both countries' respective regions of Macedonia and by not cooperating with the local resistance.<sup>364</sup> General Popović, one of Yugoslavia's leading generals, felt that the Bulgarian Army's failure to withdraw promptly was a deliberate provocation, and sent the following telegram to the Bulgarian National Liberation Army HQ:

*We are unpleasantly surprised by your completely incorrect and unacceptable standpoint on the question of the districts of Bosilegrad, Caribrod and Trn, which, before the war, belonged to Yugoslavia. Please take note of the fact that these districts are now a constituent part of the sovereign territory of the free Democratic Federative Yugoslavia and issue the appropriate orders to all your units and administrative bodies. We regret that you have forced us to explain to you things that are not negotiable.*<sup>365</sup>

While Bosilegrad, Caribrod, and Trn were part of Serbia and not Macedonia, they were like Macedonia territories that Bulgarian nationalists felt belonged to their state.<sup>366</sup> Popović's general disdain for Bulgaria's machinations was well-reflected elsewhere in the party, particularly in Yugoslav Macedonia.<sup>367</sup> The CPY leadership, given its feelings of vulnerability on the Macedonian Question, pressured the Fatherland Front and the BWP for the Bulgarian Army's immediate withdrawal from Macedonian territory. Under Soviet auspices, the two parties reached the Tito-Terpeshchev Agreement on 5 October

<sup>363</sup> Prior to the 9 September Coup, the CPY had used the Bulgarian Army, and the excesses that it committed in Vardar Macedonia, as one of the primary arguments for Macedonian interests being best served under Yugoslav auspices. See: Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945: Occupation and Collaboration* Kindle Edition; al., *The Bulgarian Army in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945 Passim*.

<sup>364</sup> Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945: Occupation and Collaboration* Kindle Edition.

<sup>365</sup> Popović, "Telegram from the Commander-in-Chief of the Hq of the National Liberation Army of Serbia to the Xiiith Corps of the National Liberation Army of Serbia, 24 September 1944," in *Viiith Book of Telegrams of the Hq of the National Liberation Army of Serbia, 591/2-1015* (1944), 23.

<sup>366</sup> These territories were ceded to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes as a result of the Treaty of Neuilly in 1919, making it, like Macedonia, a target of Bulgarian irredentism. See: Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*. Kindle Edition.

<sup>367</sup> For a full explanation of the agreement, see Slobodan Nešović, *Yugoslav-Bulgarian relations: 1941-1945* (Skopje: Macedonian Review Editions, 1985) 34.

1944, which stated that the Bulgarian forces would only operate at the express consent of the Yugoslav authorities.<sup>368</sup>

For the CPY, the conclusion of the agreement was merely a continuation of their previous policies to assert control over the region. On 19 September 1944, B. Milevski, a member of the General Staff of the National Liberation Army's 50th Division, communicated the following statement to the Bulgarian forces in their zone of operation: "After receiving directives from the General Staff of Macedonia, you must immediately remove your units from Macedonia. No movement can occur without our knowledge and permission."<sup>369</sup> Milevski not only ordered the Bulgarian units to leave, but also asserted the National Liberation Army's control over the Bulgarians by noting that their withdrawal could only occur with the Macedonian General Staff's permission. The CPY could not have taken a more provocative, and aggressive, posture.

The CPY and National Liberation Army went to extreme and occasionally comical lengths in their stance of gaining control over the Bulgarian units in Vardar Macedonia. On 14 November 1944, the General Staff of the Brégalnitza-Stroumitza Army Corps told the Bulgarian army that "the telephone and telegraph lines which are found within the borders of the Macedonian state in the Yugoslav federation, cannot be used by you or your units without authorization of the Macedonian [Headquarters]."<sup>370</sup> While the CPY was attempting to force the Bulgarian army to withdraw from Vardar Macedonian territory, it simultaneously made it highly difficult for the army to proceed. In fact, how the Bulgarians could have quickly acquired such authorization without the use of the telephone or telegraph lines remains unclear. In fact, on 17 November 1944, Siravkov, the general commander of the Partisans' IV Army, wrote to the Commander in Chief of the Bulgarian Army that its forces near the village of Kotchani were to withdraw

<sup>368</sup> *Pregled Narodnooslobodilačkog Rata U Makedoniji* (Beograd: Vojno-istoriski Institut JA, 1950) 141-42. Even this agreement was only the result of Soviet pressure on Yugoslavia during this period.

<sup>369</sup> B Milevski, "General Staff of the 50th Division of the National Liberation Army on the 19th September 1944," in *Documents Sur La Politique Hostile Et Agressive Du Gouvernement Yougoslave Contre La Republique Populaire De Bulgarie* (Sofia: Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, 1944 (1952)), 33.

<sup>370</sup> "Etat-Major Du Corps D'armée De Brégalnitza-Stroumitza De L'armée De Liberation Nationale De Yougoslavie," *ibid.*, 45.

immediately from the village and that no Bulgarian soldier could enter the village without written authorization.<sup>371</sup> Siravkov, like the Brégalnitza-Stroumitza Army Corps' General Staff, did not state how the Bulgarian soldiers would be able to receive such orders if they were unable to use the telegraph or telephone lines inside the village. The CPY and the NLA were more concerned about removing Bulgarian units from Macedonian territory, and when the task proved impossible, chose to isolate and control them.

A 7 October 1944, communiqué between Vukmanović-Tempo and the unidentified Bulgarian Commandant for the Kriva-Palanka Sector demonstrated the extent to which the CPY viewed the Bulgarian Army as a threat to destabilize its control of Vardar Macedonia. As the Bulgarians and Yugoslavs were under Soviet pressure to cooperate, the harsh measures previously imposed by the CPY were, for the most part, unworkable in the long-term.<sup>372</sup> The CPY nevertheless sought to ensure control over its borders. In his communiqué with the Bulgarian Commandant in Kriva-Palanka, Vukmanović-Tempo stated that the Bulgarians were "required to have the authorization of Marshal Tito for [Bulgarian] troops to enter Yugoslavia."<sup>373</sup> Vukmanović-Tempo noted that Yugoslavia would deem any Bulgarian deviation from this policy a hostile act and "respond accordingly."<sup>374</sup> Objectively, Vukmanović-Tempo did not need to take such an aggressive posture towards the BWP, given that this communiqué was delivered immediately in the wake of the 5 October 1944, agreement between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. Instead, his position reflected the CPY's sense of vulnerability on the issue. Vukmanović-Tempo continued using this specific line of argument towards the Central Committee of the CPM in late 1944, when he stated: "... [the CPY] believe that it would

<sup>371</sup> Commandant of the Village of Kotchani, *ibid.*, 39.

<sup>372</sup> Tomasevich notes that one of the Soviet Union's first tasks upon the Fatherland Front's seizure of power was to place Soviet military advisors in Bulgarian military units as quickly as possible. This meant that cooperation between the Bulgarians and Yugoslavs had to exist, at a minimum, at the official level. German military reports from late 1944, however, indicate that cooperation between the two parties was, at best, contentious. See Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945: Occupation and Collaboration* Kindle Edition.

<sup>373</sup> Svetozar Vukmanović Tempo, "Afin D'arreter Les Operations Militaires Et De Sauver L'armee Hitlerienne De La Debacle, Les Titistes Menacent D;'User De La Force Contre L'armee De Liberation Bulgare," in *Documents Sur La Politique Hostile Et Agressive Du Gouvernement Yougoslave Contre La Republique Populaire De Bulgarie* (Sofia: Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, 1944 (1952)), 35.

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid.*



perhaps be a good thing if the Bulgarian units withdrew from the region. We are endeavouring to cast aside our old views about the Bulgarian Army but when these things are going on we find it very difficult, so you can imagine what it is like for our soldiers.”<sup>375</sup> As will be indicated, Vukmanović-Tempo’s previous stances and later actions regarding the Macedonian Question give credence to the view that he genuinely believed in this statement. Thus the CPY, or at least its point man in Vukmanović, viewed the Bulgarian Army not as a cobelligerent and asset, but rather as a potential threat to its state-building exercise in Vardar Macedonia.

Internally, the CPY and the CPM attempted to justify their attitude towards the Bulgarian Army and its use of communications on practical grounds. In late 1944, after the issues with the Bulgarian Army had largely been settled, Vukmanović-Tempo offered the following explanation in a direct letter to the Central Committee of the CPM:

*Great misunderstandings have arisen over the telephones. Wherever the Bulgarian Army arrives, it takes over the post offices and telephone exchanges. We have taken steps to get them back, but Kopchev opposes this and attempts to impose the line that the Bulgarian Army has the right to take control of our telephone exchanges. We were unrelenting on this matter and finally managed to regain control over them. Again, we were accused of being chauvinists ... Now, of course, we are getting letters about the lines being bad. The lines are bad, but they are bad for us, too, and we are trying to improve them.*<sup>376</sup>

Vukmanović-Tempo’s portrayal of the Bulgarians in this letter confirmed that the CPY/CPM’s obstruction of the Bulgarian Army was political in nature. First, Vukmanović-Tempo implied that the issues with the telephones were not the CPY’s fault, but caused instead by the Bulgarians. Second, by regaining control over the telephones, the CPY demonstrated to the CPM that the party was relatively stronger than the Bulgarians. While telephones may seem like a trifling matter, the communications network in occupied Macedonia was in such a state of disrepair and neglect that gaining control of it (as Vukmanović suggests) gave the CPY significant advantages in conveying its

<sup>375</sup> Ibid.

<sup>376</sup> Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo, "Cpy Cc Delegate, Svetozar Vukmanović to the Communist Party of Macedonia Central Committee, at the End of 1944," in *Izvori Za Osloboditel'nata Vojna I Revolucija Vo Makedonija, 1941-1945*, ed. Mihailo Apostolski (Skopje: National History Institute, 1944 (1968)), 383.

message to the Macedonians.<sup>377</sup> In its efforts to gain control of the Macedonian Question, the CPY clearly used even basic necessities as a political weapon.

In the aftermath of the Fatherland Front's coup on 9 September 1944, the CPY did not just go on the defensive against the BWP to address the issue of armed forces. The CPY also went on the propaganda offensive about the status of Macedonians living outside of Yugoslavia, and specifically those living in Pirin Macedonia. This move amounted to a pre-emptive strike and response to the ASNOM's proceedings. In September 1944, the CPY's two foremost experts on the Macedonian Question, Vukmanović-Tempo and the recently released Lazar Koliševski, met with the BWP's Central Committee. According to the minutes of the meeting, the Yugoslav representatives and the Central Committee of the BWP agreed that:

*1. The Macedonian people in the Bulgarian part of Macedonia have the right to self-determination even to the extent of secession or voluntary union with other peoples.*

*2. On the basis of this their fundamental democratic right the Macedonian people have the right voluntarily to form their own national military units [...]*

*3. Similarly, on the basis of this their democratic right the Macedonian people have the right to form their own separate national liberation committees in all the towns and villages throughout the Bulgarian sector of Macedonia." [...]*<sup>378</sup>

Immediately after the emergence of the Fatherland Front, Vukmanović-Tempo and Koliševski sought to take the initiative away from Čento and his allies and put them on the political defensive by minimizing the Bulgarians' ability to interfere in Yugoslav affairs. The BWP and the CPY agreed that Pirin Macedonia possessed the right to national self-determination and that its inhabitants were a separate entity with their own political institutions. By establishing that Pirin Macedonia was distinct from Bulgaria,

<sup>377</sup> Ibid.

<sup>378</sup> Svetozar Vukmanovic and Lazar Kolisevski, "Svetozar Vukmanovic and Lazar Kolisevski to the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Workers Party (the Communists) (September 1944)," in *From Recognition to Repudiation (Bulgarian Attitudes on the Macedonian Question) - Articles, Speeches, Documents*, ed. Vangja Casule (Skopje: Kultura, 1944), 30-31.

Vukmanović-Tempo and Koliševski fulfilled a key tenet of Macedonian nationalist thought. This policy would be a crucial component of all subsequent Yugoslav efforts to maintain control of the Macedonian Question up until the Tito-Stalin split in 1948.

For Vukmanovic and Koliševski, the most important point of the September 1944 agreement with the BWP was the final one. It stated:

*Finally, on the basis of this their fundamental democratic right the Macedonian people have complete freedom to propagandise for the union of the Macedonian people that is for the integration of the Bulgarian sector of Macedonia in the heartland. It is understood that the call for union need not be given as a call to action, which is we do not at present raise the question of immediate union.*<sup>379</sup>

Delaying the integration of Pirin Macedonia into Vardar Macedonia was important to the CPY for several reasons. First, international politics made it impossible to integrate the two regions at this time. Officially, the absence of a peace treaty between Bulgaria and the Allied Powers delayed such an agreement.<sup>380</sup> The second reason, thus far neglected in the historiography, was that leaving the status of Pirin Macedonia in flux during this period was beneficial to both parties from a domestic standpoint. The BWP sought to avoid Yugoslav pressure for it to oversee the integration when Yugoslavia had the political advantage.<sup>381</sup> By delaying Pirin's integration, the CPY ensured that it would be able to secure Vardar Macedonia before enlarging it, which might put it beyond the CPY's ability to control. In short, the international political situation provided the CPY and the BWP with a convenient justification for not taking a step that neither party wished to make.

<sup>379</sup> Ibid.

<sup>380</sup> Tito was concerned about following proper legal procedures, or at least maintaining the veneer of legality, throughout the war. After the failure of the Balkan HQ Tito sent to Vukmanović in December 1943 noting "we must ... be on our guard not to overstep formally the legal boundary in our speeches." The way in which Tito phrased it suggests that violations were permissible so long as they could not be used against the CPY at a later date. See Lazar Mojsov, *Kommunist*. FN 30.

<sup>381</sup> Vezenkov, "Communism and Nationalism in the Balkans: Marriage of Convenience or Attraction?," 542-44.

The BWP recognized Yugoslav superiority over the Macedonian Question, but nevertheless attempted to obtain political advantages on the issue during this period. Immediately after signing the above agreement with Vukmanović and Koliševski, Traicho and Kostov ignored many of the principles the agreement had outlined.<sup>382</sup> When Koliševski later confronted him on the issue, Kostov responded: "We must now concentrate our joint efforts against the main enemy - the Germans, and give as much support as we can resolutely rejecting all the remnants of distrust which, until yesterday, were quite justified but today, now that we have a new government, can only be a hindrance."<sup>383</sup> In other words, the BWP portrayed Koliševski's valid claims about Bulgarian intransigence as inappropriate and belittled those assertions in the face of the greater German threat. The BWP recognized its country's weakness, and instead tried to use the politics of the Second World War in the Balkans to mask its failings. Although Kostov's remarks only succeeded in delaying the Yugoslavs, it demonstrated that the BWP was not negotiating from a position of complete weakness.

The BWP would also take exception to the CPY's aggressive actions in Bulgaria. In a 14 November 1944, telegram to the CPY, the BWP bluntly told its nominal allies "we believe that the work of your representatives in Bulgaria should be coordinated with our Central Committee and that they cannot perform any action without our knowledge and consent."<sup>384</sup> That the CPY interfered in internal Bulgarian affairs was not a surprising development, given that on 26 September 1944, Vukmanović-Tempo wrote a letter to the CPY in which he noted how easily the Yugoslavs had coopted the Pirin Macedonians.<sup>385</sup> Vukmanović-Tempo's remarks implicitly excluded the BWP. His assessment, in turn, was simply a continuation of his previous policies of exporting the Macedonian problem for the CPY's benefit. The CPY, in its pursuit to stabilize Vardar Macedonia, was conducting operations that were detrimental to the Bulgarian state.

<sup>382</sup> Traicho Kostov, "A Letter from the Bcp Cc Secretary, Traicho Kostov, to Lazar Koliševski, 23 September 1944," in *Iakpj* (Belgrade: 1944), 361.

<sup>383</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>384</sup> Koliševski, "Svetozar Vukmanovic and Lazar Koliševski to the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Workers Party (the Communists) (September 1944)," 30-31.

<sup>385</sup> Svetozar Vukmanović Tempo, "Svetozar Vukmanović Tempo, Delegat U Makedoniji, Centralnom Komitetu Kpj," in *Dokumenti Organa Kpj nor I Revolucija (1941-1945)*, ed. Milovan Dželebdžić (Beograd: Izdavački Centar Komunist, 1944 (1987) (09/26/1944)), 226.

In the autumn of 1944, the CPY was willing to destabilize Bulgaria in the name of Macedonian nationalism, but unwilling to do the same Yugoslavia. This rationale clarifies the seemingly contradictory remarks that Vukmanović-Tempo's letter made and that he sent to the CPM on 28 October 1944. Accordingly, Vukmanović-Tempo stated: "The question of the annexation of the Bulgarian [Province of Pirin] Macedonia is for us the basic and primary task. We should accomplish this task immediately and without delay."<sup>386</sup> As Vukmanović-Tempo was speaking directly to the CPM, he could not phrase it in any other manner. If he did so, it would have cost the CPY the support of the irredentist elements within the CPM. Immediately after making the previous statement, Vukmanović-Tempo listed the tasks the CPY needed to undertake in order to achieve the annexation of Pirin Macedonia. The majority of the tasks served long-term objectives, such as increasing propaganda efforts in the region and establishing Committees of Unification to help with the conversion process.<sup>387</sup> For an outside observer, the contrast in his statement is obvious.

The likely cause of the dichotomy in Vukmanović-Tempo's statement was the conflict between his personal feelings on the Macedonian Question versus and the sentiments of the CPY and Tito. Although Vukmanović-Tempo was sympathetic to the Macedonian cause, as Djilas describes in his memoir *Wartime*, he remained "an individual that did everything possible to fulfill Tito's orders, and when presented with a task approached it with dogmatic fervour."<sup>388</sup> When issues caused Vukmanović-Tempo to experience conflict between his personal feelings and loyalty to Tito, he always favoured the latter.<sup>389</sup> As a result, while Vukmanović-Tempo may have personally disagreed with the CPY's policy, he placed the needs of the party above his own and presented the CPY's message to the CPM in a way that guaranteed it would placate members of the latter.

<sup>386</sup> Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo, "Tempo (Svetozar Vukmanović), Delegat U Makedoniji Kiru Miljovskom, Političkom Predstavniku Ckcp Makedonije U Sofiji," *ibid.* (1944 (1987) (10/26/1944)), 361.

<sup>387</sup> *Ibid.* 362.

<sup>388</sup> Djilas, *Wartime* 190.

<sup>389</sup> This loyalty extended, allegedly, up to the point of not intervening to save the life of his brother, Luka, a priest who the Partisans executed along with Metropolitan Joanikije, in May 1945.

## 4.2. The CPY and the KKE, late 1944

In the aftermath of the 9 September coup, the CPY did not limit its aggressive posturing to Bulgaria. It also attempted to impose its vision of the Macedonian Question upon the KKE. Once again, Vukmanović-Tempo was the leading figure in articulating the CPY's policy for the Macedonian people. Tensions between the KKE and CPY over the Macedonian Question had been building in Bulgaria before the 9 September coup. In a 4 August 1944 radiogram, Vukmanović-Tempo and Dobrivoje Radosavljević raised the issue of the growing tensions between themselves and the KKE/EAM. They stated:

*The Greeks [...] have begun to take revenge on the Macedonian population. As a result, the mass destruction of the Macedonian community in the region has begun and many have fled to Bitola, where they were received by Vancho Mihailov's men who have been organising them into military units to fight the Greeks. Given this situation our commanders, together with [Dobrivoje Radosavljević] made the correct decision to accept these emigrants and form them into units for operations in the Bitola-Florina sector.<sup>390</sup>*

Vukmanović-Tempo's and Radosavljević's decision to allow the Slavophone Macedonians into Vardar Macedonia made sense, given the region's domestic situation in 1944. The CPY could not claim that it was the champion of Macedonia after the first meeting of the ASNOM had they not allowed the Slavophone Macedonians to enter the region. Nevertheless, Vukmanović-Tempo and Radosavljević recognized the danger that such a policy posed for interparty relations. As they noted: "in implementing this directive, some of our commanders have overstepped their brief and begun with the propaganda that any Macedonian can join our army and that it does not matter whether they join our army [or ELAS]."<sup>391</sup> Vukmanović-Tempo and Radosavljević, however, viewed the KKE/EAM, and specifically their failure to implement fully the formation of a Macedonian brigade, as the cause of the conflict. Vukmanović-Tempo and Radosavljević noted: "We believe that we should demand of the Greeks that they form a brigade of this kind, otherwise we shall set about forming one ourselves. This will

<sup>390</sup> Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo and Dobrivoje Radosavljević, "Svetozar Vukmanović and Dobrivoje Radosavljević's Radiogram on the Attitude of the Kke to the Macedonian Population in Aegean Macedonia 4 August 1944," in *Iakjp* (Belgrade: 1944), 330-31.

<sup>391</sup> Ibid.

inevitably lead to a clash with the Greeks. There is likewise the need for the formation of a joint commission to oversee the implementation ... of decisions."<sup>392</sup> In other words, fraternal relations between the parties could only occur to the extent that they did not interfere in the CPY's own policies. The belief of key CPY/CPM members that the KKE/EAM were oppressing the Macedonians and that this was damaging their own domestic interests would gain intensity as the year progressed.

By the autumn of 1944, a distinct dichotomy developed between how the CPY's efforts were progressing in Bulgaria versus Greece. In a 29 September 1944 report to the Central Committee of the CPY, Vukmanović-Tempo expressed satisfaction with the CPY's efforts at asserting control over Pirin Macedonia. He noted that:

*In the part of Macedonia under Bulgaria we gain control of the leading personalities of the [Fatherland Front]. [The CPY] have advised [the Bulgarians] to agree to reinforce the Macedonian military formations [...] and to accede to the formation of the Macedonian national liberation committees for the whole area.*<sup>393</sup>

In other words, the CPY made positive gains in the Bulgarian sector, notwithstanding its aggressive posturing and what it was telling the CPM to allay its nationalist fears.

Vukmanović-Tempo's assessment of CPY efforts in Greece was considerably worse. He noted that: "the Greek partisans have restarted mass terrorism against the Macedonian units in Greece."<sup>394</sup> The CPY leadership demonstrated that it took Vukmanović-Tempo's report seriously when two party leaders, Edvard Kardelj and Aleksandar Ranković, implicitly cited his arguments. In a speech that Kardelj gave to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovenia on 1 October 1944, he noted that relations with "the Greeks were much more difficult" than relations with other Balkan communist parties because of the Macedonian Question.<sup>395</sup> Ranković, the man in charge

<sup>392</sup> Cited in Vukmanović-Tempo, *Struggle for the Balkans* 273. By 1949, as we shall see, this was still a point of consternation between the parties, only except the Greeks now advocated for the formation of such a unit.

<sup>393</sup> Tempo, "Svetozar Vukmanović Tempo, Delegat U Makedoniji, Centralnom Komitetu Kpj," 226.

<sup>394</sup> Ibid.

<sup>395</sup> Edvard Kardelj, "Krištof (Edvard Kardelj), Član Politbiroja Ckpkj Centralnemu Komiteju Slovenije," *ibid.* (1944 (1987) (10/01/1944)), 163.

of the CPY's security, was far less diplomatic in a 5 October 1944 report to the Central Committee, which explained the CPY's assessment of the Greek Communist Party as follows:

*The Greeks are again trying to break the Macedonians in Greece. They are forbidding and preventing with arms the mobilization of Macedonian units. They are replacing Macedonians from leading positions [...]. They are arresting leaders and killing innocent people. They are forbidding songs about Tito. These are reports from the comrades from Macedonia. I asked for concrete examples in order to file an official protest. Our men wanted to send our units to Greece to fight against the Germans and the protection of our population. For now, we have forbidden this.*<sup>396</sup>

Ranković and Kardelj were two of the primary leaders of the CPY. Accordingly, their statements demonstrated that the senior leaders of the CPY took an increasingly dim view of the KKE. Ranković's report to the Central Committee reflected two key aspects of CPY policies and concerns during the period. First, his statement displayed the CPY's willingness to interfere in KKE affairs. The CPY, however, did not do so lightly. Instead, as Ranković noted, the CPY did so only when it had sufficient evidence to advance proper claims against the KKE.<sup>397</sup> Secondly, the report made it clear that the CPY had to balance carefully the interests of all parties on the Macedonian Question. As Ranković noted, the CPY was only able to halt Macedonian nationalists "for now."<sup>398</sup> In fact, only a day later, on 6 October 1944, Vukmanović-Tempo argued that the National Liberation Army should transfer units to Greece in order to protect the Slavophone Macedonian population.<sup>399</sup> While Ranković did not elaborate on why the CPY had only temporarily forbidden the transfer of Yugoslav units to Greece, the growing instability in Vardar Macedonia, and pressure from key CPY individuals like Vukmanović-Tempo, likely meant that long-term promises regarding the transfer of units were impossible in such a

<sup>396</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, 836 KMJ I-3-B/235 (1)

<sup>397</sup> Aleksandar Ranković, "Aleksandar Ranković, Organizacioni Sekretar Ckpkj Centralnom Komitetu Kp Makedonije," in *Dokumenti Organa Kpj nor I Revolucija (1941-1945)*, ed. Milovan Dželebdžić (Beograd: Izdavački Centar Komunist, 1944 (1987) (10/05/1944)), 218.

<sup>398</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>399</sup> Svetozar Vukmanovic Tempo, "Svetozar Vukmanovic Tempo, Delegat U Makedoniji, Centralnom Komitetu Kpj," in *Dokumenti Organa Kpj nor I Revolucija*, ed. Milovan Dželebdžić (Beograd: Izdavački Centar Komunist, 1944 (1987) (10/06/1944)), 226.



fluid situation.<sup>400</sup> In other words, although the CPY wished to help its fellow communists, it used all the means at its disposal to advance its own interests.

Communications between the Slavophone Macedonian forces in Greece and their CPM counterparts demonstrated the degree of concern that the CPY had about the Macedonian Question's ability to destabilize Vardar Macedonia. The Slavophone Macedonians' direct communications with the CPM certainly contributed to the CPY's inability to yield on the issue of the KKE's disbandment of the Slav-Macedonian battalions in the ELAS. For the CPY to do otherwise at this critical juncture would have undermined its pan-Yugoslav message. The EAM had disbanded the SNOF in May 1944, allegedly due to Yugoslav involvement in the organization, but the KKE Central Committee agreed to the formation of discrete Slavo-Macedonian units on 16 June 1944.<sup>401</sup> On 19 September 1944, the headquarters of Ilias Dimikis (who was installed as commander of the Slavophone Macedonian battalion) addressed a report to the National Liberation Army of Macedonia. The report noted that "the [ELAS] leadership here looks on the work of our Macedonians fighting for freedom with suspicion and with a thousand obstacles it wishes to halt the development of our activities and stifle the endeavours of our people [...]."<sup>402</sup> Although there is no way to confirm that this was one of the reports Ranković referred to when he gave his scathing critique of KKE policy, the vague nature of how the Greek leadership was oppressing the Slavophone Macedonians is compatible with the general thrust of his argument. As Ranković was the chief of the Department of National Security (OZNA), he was keenly interested in matters that threatened to destabilize Yugoslavia, which is evident in his concern about direct communications between the Greek Slavophones and the CPM.<sup>403</sup> Renos Mihaleas, a political delegate of the 9<sup>th</sup> ELAS Division, ably demonstrated the prominence of the Slavophone Macedonians' communications with Yugoslavia when he advised Dimikis to

<sup>400</sup> Vukmanovic, in fact, would later be recalled to Belgrade in November 1944. Officially, this was because of the capital's liberation, although unofficially there were indications that Tito was growing upset with his fervent support of Macedonian nationalism. For Vukmanović's account of his recall see: Vukmanović-Tempo, *Revolucija Koja Teče*, 1 431.

<sup>401</sup> Ioannidis, *Αναμνήσεις: Προβλήματα Της Πολιτικής Του Κκε Στην Εθνική Αντίσταση 1940-1945* 247.

<sup>402</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 96/22509 Α/Μακεδονία – Θρακή 7-1-45

<sup>403</sup> Ibid.

exert pressure on Tito.<sup>404</sup> Although the purpose of the pressure that Mihaleas wanted Dimikis to exert was unclear in the archival record, based on the context of the period it likely pertained to the CPY's rhetoric towards Aegean Macedonia. As the CPM later established the Political Commission for Macedonians in Greece, and attacked KKE policy in Greece (on 12 and 29 November 1944), Ranković's earlier fears about the KKE's actions being a destabilizing force that helped foster Macedonian irredentist sentiments were well-founded.<sup>405</sup> As indicated, available evidence does not definitively demonstrate that Ranković was referring to one of Dimikis' communications with the Yugoslavs when he made his report to the CC of the CPY. Reports of this nature, however, contributed to the CPY developing a less than favourable attitude towards the KKE.

The KKE ultimately disbanded the Slavophone Macedonian forces on 16 October 1944, despite Yugoslav pressure to the contrary. Ilias Dimikis and large portions of the Macedonian Slav battalion fled Greece to Yugoslavia.<sup>406</sup> While the CPY publically championed the Macedonians' cause in the fall of 1944, its true appreciation for the movement became evident upon its members' arrival in Yugoslavia. The CPY placed Dimikis under house arrest until after the Second World War, when they sent him back to Greece in the emerging Greek Civil War.<sup>407</sup> In 1944, Dimikis' rabid maximalist nationalism and his unwillingness to compromise had the potential to destabilize the already unsettled situation in Vardar Macedonia. As a result, the CPY isolated Dimikis

<sup>404</sup> Renos Mihaleas, "Lettre De Renos Mihaleas a Ilija Dimovski-Goce Relative a La Position Du Pcg Vis-a-Vis Des Macedoniens," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Antifasciste 1941-1945*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski et al. (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1944), 494-95.

<sup>405</sup> "Proclamation Issued by the Provisional Political Commission for Macedonians in Greece," in *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State*, ed. et al. Hristo Andonov-Poljanski (Skopje: University of "Cyril and Methodius", 1944 (1985)), 736-7. "Letter from the Political Commission of Macedonians to the Macedonian Bureau of the Communist Party of Greece," in *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State*, ed. et al. Hristo Andonov-Poljanski (Skopje: University of "Cyril and Methodius", 1944 (1985)), 737-39.

<sup>406</sup> Markos Vafiadis, "Ordre Relatif Aux Operations Du Groupe De Divisions De L'elas En Macedoine. On Ordonne, Entre Autre, La Liquidation Des Bataillons Macedoniens.," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Antifasciste 1941-1945*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski et al. (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1944), 496-97.

<sup>407</sup> McNeill, *Greece: American Aid in Action, 1947-1956* 266-67.

from the general population lest he damage Yugoslavia's state-building endeavours. The CPY also gathered Dimikis' compatriots together on 18 November 1944 to create the Aegean Brigade, as Ajanovski notes.<sup>408</sup> Although the CPY organized the Aegean Brigade as a military unit, it was a means for the CPY to control its activities.<sup>409</sup> For the CPY, keeping the Aegean Brigade isolated from the rest of Macedonia was sufficient cause for celebration.

It becomes evident that the CPY lost faith in the KKE due to the Greek communists' policy on the Macedonian Question when one compares Kardelj's innocuous 1 October 1944 critique with that of Milovan Djilas' 7 November 1944 speech in Kolorač (which was recorded in the Yugoslav newspaper *Politika*). Djilas stated: "the question of the unification is today before the Macedonian people who have the right to unite themselves wherever they may live."<sup>410</sup> He further claimed that the unification of Macedonia was a security issue not only for the Macedonians, but also for the Yugoslav federation as a whole.<sup>411</sup> Djilas accepted Ranković's perception that resolving the Macedonian Question in a satisfactory manner was critical to the stability of the Yugoslav federation. It is also worth noting that Ranković was a pragmatist in that the internal security of Yugoslavia was his highest priority, while Djilas by his own admission was still a devout communist.<sup>412</sup> Djilas, therefore, viewed the matter of Macedonian nationalism not only in practical terms related to security, but also in ideological terms. The CPY leadership's practical and ideological policies in this period aligned against organizations that threatened Yugoslavia with the Macedonian Question, such as the Bulgarians and the Greeks. This alignment meant that the CPY had minimal sympathy for the plight of the KKE and the EAM as they approached the *Dekemvriana*.

<sup>408</sup> Vangel Ajanovski-Oce, *Egejski Buri : Revolucionernoto Dviženje Vo Vodensko I Nof Vo Egejska Makedonija* (Skopje: Institut za nacionalna istorija, 1975) 140.

<sup>409</sup> In fact, the CPY did not assign the Aegean Brigade any definitive tasks, which caused morale within the organization to plummet by the spring of 1945. See: Miha Marinko, "Miha Marinko, Instruktor Ckcpj U Makedoniji, Centralnom Komitetu Kpj," in *Dokumenti Centralnih Organa Kpj nor I Revolucija (1941-1945)*, ed. Branko Vuković (Beograd: Izdavački Centar Komunist, 1945 (1996) (03/14/1945)), 87.

<sup>410</sup> *Politika*, 8 November 1944.

<sup>411</sup> Ibid.

<sup>412</sup> Djilas, *Wartime* 1-5.

The Macedonian Question forced Tito to re-evaluate his assessment of the KKE. He enthusiastically supported the KKE throughout 1944, but by the end of that year, the party leadership's concerns about the KKE's activities with respect to the Macedonian Question forced him to alter his position. A 16 November 1944 meeting of the CPY Politburo ably demonstrated this point. Initially, Tito simply stated that "Our party will help the Greeks" and argued that Yugoslavia should provide aid to the Greek partisans.<sup>413</sup> Tito's statement provoked immediate denunciation from Djilas and Vukmanović-Tempo. When Djilas discussed the assistance that Yugoslavia would provide, he referenced an ethnographic map of Greece in noting that assisting Greek partisans was unrealistic, as they did not include the Slavophone Macedonians.<sup>414</sup> Making this statement demonstrated that Djilas' first concern was the Macedonians in Greece; the KKE came second. Djilas' position was a continuation of the policy that he outlined on 7 November 1944.<sup>415</sup> Tito tried to retort Djilas' initial rebuke by stating, "The Greeks need help because they are a progressive movement". Tito went so far as to claim that the problems the KKE faced were similar to those of the Yugoslavs in that a minority (the Macedonians) were dictating the actions of a majority in both cases.<sup>416</sup> Vukmanović-Tempo rejected Tito's claims and stated that the Greeks lacked a proper attitude towards the Macedonian Question, which had caused them to conduct a campaign of terror against the Macedonian population.<sup>417</sup> Tito ultimately withdrew his hardline policy and instead sought to accommodate the members of his own party.

The CPY's efforts to control the Macedonian Question and the problems created by those efforts demonstrated how important and delicate an issue it was for the Yugoslavs in late 1944. Even the military, which had been the bedrock of the CPY's policies in the region in 1943, were no longer reliable. As Troebst notes, the rapid expansion of the Yugoslav Macedonian partisan bands in late 1944 meant that these

<sup>413</sup> Kostov, "A Letter from the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Workers Party (the Communists) to Comrade Tito," 123-126.

<sup>414</sup> Ibid.

<sup>415</sup> *Politika*, 8 November 1944.

<sup>416</sup> Kostov, "A Letter from the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Workers Party (the Communists) to Comrade Tito," 28-29.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid.

units lost their devout cadres.<sup>418</sup> In an effort to reassert control over the Macedonian Partisans in late November 1944, the CPY ordered the dispatch of Macedonian formations to other fronts in Yugoslavia that limited their ability to influence the domestic political situation in Vardar Macedonia.<sup>419</sup> As Troebst points out, when members of the Goce Delčev Brigade, a Yugoslav Macedonian National Liberation Army unit, received their orders to redeploy, they disregarded the orders and rioted, demanding that the CPY instead dispatch them “down to Solun (Thessaloniki).”<sup>420</sup> The CPY’s use of Macedonian irredentism to secure its domestic position created blowback. This background of civil unrest in Macedonia and the strength of Macedonian irredentism would determine the extent of the CPY’s involvement in the *Dekemvriana* in late 1944.

### 4.3. The KKE on the road to the Dekemvriana

In response to the Soviet intransigence in the summer of 1944 about support, the KKE turned to the Yugoslavs for help in its struggle against the Greek Government of National Unity. The Macedonian Question was the most significant barrier between the two parties. Andreas Tzimas, the KKE’s representative to Tito, wrote acting-Secretary General George Siantos on 11 June 1944 to (amongst other things) explain the problems between the KKE and the CPY and the necessity of overcoming them to secure the Yugoslavs’ support.<sup>421</sup> Before discussing the need for a close alliance with the Yugoslavs, Tzimas noted that the ELAS faced critical supply issues, as it had “60 rounds on average for [every] rifle, and 500 rounds for each automatic”. He further stated that Siantos should secure more supplies.<sup>422</sup> The ELAS’ low quantity of supplies, in short, limited its military options. In Tzimas’ view, the only party that could provide the aid the ELAS needed to was the CPY, but Yugoslavia attached a price for its support.<sup>423</sup>

<sup>418</sup> Stefan Troebst, "Yugoslav Macedonia, 1943-1953: Building the Party, the State, and the Nation," in *State-Society Relations in Yugoslavia, 1945-1992*, ed. Jill A. Irvine and Carol S. Lilly Melissa K. Bokovoy (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 249.

<sup>419</sup> Ibid.

<sup>420</sup> Solun in the most common name used by Slavic speakers for Thessaloniki. See: *ibid.*

<sup>421</sup> Archives of Yugoslavia, CKJ 507 IX 55/VI-9-48

<sup>422</sup> Ibid.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid.

As Tzimas had argued that the CPY was the only party that could provide support to the KKE, he recognized that it was critical the Greek communists placate the Yugoslavs over the Macedonian Question. Tzimas introduced the topic by noting that the “Macedonian movement has caused us new and greater difficulties [in our relations with other parties.]”<sup>424</sup> Tzimas’ words were almost the same as those used by Tito in late 1944, which thus demonstrated the ubiquity of the Macedonian Question in Balkan politics. Unsurprisingly, the CPY’s increased use of Macedonian irredentism as a way of controlling Vardar Macedonia created strains in its relations with other parties. Tzimas’ solution to the Macedonian Question, however, was much the same as Zevgos’: “[The KKE’s] policy is to concentrate all the power of our people in the general struggle for the destruction of fascism and the victory of the people, which, when it has gained freedom, will be able to solve all the problems [that currently exist].”<sup>425</sup> Tzimas’ reason for proposing such a plan could only be that he completely misread the cause of increased Macedonian irredentism. Tzimas’ claim that “the Germans and Bulgarians [... who had] inserted an anti-communist movement in the area [...] for the independence of Macedonia” provides further evidence for this assertion.<sup>426</sup> As Koliopoulos notes, Tzimas was correct in asserting that the Bulgarians and Germans attempted to coopt Macedonian nationalist sentiment, but his proximity to the Yugoslav leaders likely caused him to downplay their role in fomenting it.<sup>427</sup> Despite Tzimas’ misconception about the development of the Macedonian Question, he recognized that the KKE should devote “special attention [...] to just this problem.”<sup>428</sup> Tzimas was aware that the Macedonian Question had to be resolved in a manner satisfactory to the CPY if the KKE/EAM were to secure needed supplies from the Yugoslavs.

<sup>424</sup> Ibid.

<sup>425</sup> Ibid.

<sup>426</sup> Ibid. Tzimas’ concern about the Bulgarians was not an isolated case. The KKE and ELAS, as demonstrated in a radio bulletin by the General Staff of ELAS concerning the proclamations of Bulgaria’s Minister for Propaganda, Kavakov, about the future of Macedonia. See: "L'extrait Du Radio-Bulletin De L'emg D'elas Concernant La Declaration Du Ministre Bulgare Kazakov Relative Au Destin De La Macedoine.," in *La Macedoine D'eege Au Cours De La Gln, Septembre 1944 - Fevrier 1945*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Archive de la Macedoine, 1944), 113.

<sup>427</sup> Koliopoulos, *Plundered Loyalties: World War II and Civil War in Greek West Macedonia* 116-17.

<sup>428</sup> Archives of Yugoslavia, CKJ 507 IX 55/VI-9-48

Tzimas was not the only member of the KKE who recognized the importance of the Macedonian Question to their relationship with the CPY. By June 1944, key members of the KKE leadership came to acknowledge the importance of the issue of Macedonian autonomy in Greece to its relationship with the CPY. In a 14 July 1944 telegram to Tzimas, Siantos agreed with Tzimas' assessment that the Macedonian Question was complicating matters for the Yugoslavs.<sup>429</sup> Siantos concluded his telegram by telling Tzimas to "Beware of this delicate issue. Lack of understanding will help the Greek reaction in its struggle against the (KKE) and the liberation movement."<sup>430</sup> Although Siantos hinted to Tzimas that the Macedonian Question was a sensitive issue for the CPY, he concluded his telegram by emphasizing that the domestic consequences of the issue took precedence over foreign policy concerns. Siantos indicated that this was of outmost importance when he sent a letter to the Macedonian Bureau of the KKE on 12 September 1944, in which he repeated the former almost verbatim: "Be very careful on the national question of Macedonia, [...] and to maintain friendly relations with Tito."<sup>431</sup> Petros Roussos, an important member of the KKE's Central Committee, echoed these sentiments on 25 September 1944, when he wrote to the Macedonian Bureau of the KKE to explain that Macedonia "will return to being the cause of discord in the Balkans."<sup>432</sup> Roussos was more or less repeating Tzimas' and Zevgos' solution to the issue when he prefaced his concern by noting the KKE could solve the problem by means of "democratic solutions".<sup>433</sup> Although the KKE wished to avoid a confrontation with the CPY, it prioritized its domestic position above the concerns about antagonizing the Yugoslavs. The KKE failed to realize that its relationship with the CPY and its domestic position were intimately linked.

<sup>429</sup> Kofos, "The Impact of the Macedonian Question on Civil Conflict in Greece," 284.

<sup>430</sup> Ibid.

<sup>431</sup> Georgie Siantos, "Letter from George Siantos, Secretary General of the Central Committee of the Kke, to Leonidas Stringos, Secretary of the Macedonian Bureau of the Kke," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Antifasciste 1941-1945*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski et al. (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1944), 191-92.

<sup>432</sup> Petros Roussos, "Letter from Petros Roussos, Member of the Poliburo of the Cc of the Kke, to the Macedonian Bureau of the Kke," *ibid.*, 199-200.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid.

The method that the Macedonian Bureau of the KKE, the sub-branch of the KKE most responsible for dealing with the Slavophone Macedonians, chose to resolve the issue could not have been more problematic. A member of the Macedonian Bureau wrote to the KKE's Politburo on the same day that Siantos wrote to the organization to request that it modify its policy. The member noted, "our view is to stop the recruitment of fighters from amongst the Slavomacedonians and to continue the policy of greater integration of the Greeks and Slavomacedonians."<sup>434</sup> This viewpoint was indicative of the fact that while the KKE leadership wished to avoid provocations, members of the lower echelons of the party worked either deliberately or unintentionally (which remains unclear) to provoke the CPY.<sup>435</sup> The KKE's leadership, however, shares some of the blame for continuing to provoke the Yugoslavs on an issue that the organization recognized was particularly sensitive to them.

The KKE directed its appeal to alleviate CPY concerns over the Macedonian Question to Georgi Dimitrov. This petition was standard communist policy, given Dimitrov's position within the Soviet hierarchy. As has been shown, however, the CPY feared Bulgarian interference on the Macedonian Question. Unfortunately for the KKE, the Yugoslavs discovered the appeal. Correspondence between Kiro Milievski and Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo in October 1944 confirms this point.<sup>436</sup> Another unidentified member of the CPY also reported the appeal to its leadership on 3 October 1944, presumably from Sofia.<sup>437</sup> Given the CPY's concerns about the KKE and Bulgarian machinations in the Balkans, the KKE's action of going directly to Dimitrov undoubtedly

<sup>434</sup> "Le Rapport Du Bureau Provincial Du Pcg Pour La Macedoine Au Bureau Politique Du Comite Central Du Pcg Relatif a La Situation Et a L'activite De L'organisation," in *La Macedoine D'egree Au Cours De La Gln, Septembre 1944 - Fevrier 1945*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Archive de la Macedoine, 1944), 86.

<sup>435</sup> There exists evidence to support both of these claims. For an example of deliberate provocation, see the later examination of Comrade Nikos. For an example of unintentional provocation, see Giannis Andoniyadis' report to Leonidas Stringos on 31 October 1944 concerning the fallout over the decision to disband the Slavomacedonian battalions. See: "La Lettre De Yanis Andoniyadis, Instructeur Du Bureau Provincial Du Pcg Pour La Macedoine Adressee Au Secretaire Du Bureau Leonidas Stringos Dans Laquelle Il L'informe De La Situation En Macedoine, De La Question Macedonienne, Etc.," in *La Macedoine D'egree Au Cours De La Gln, Septembre 1944 - Fevrier 1945*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Archive de la Macedoine, 1944), 262.

<sup>436</sup> A/CC/CPY Kiro Milievski (Sofia) to Tempo and Koliševski, October 1944. "Greece IX-29-IV-2".

<sup>437</sup> Archives of Yugoslavia, CKJ, 507/IX,33/V-3



played into Yugoslav fears about the KKE/ELAS' actions in Aegean Macedonia. This revelation explains why distinct sources made the same point. In short, although the KKE's appeal to Dimitrov followed standard procedure amongst the communist parties, it aggravated the CPY's already-heightened sensitivities.

The Macedonian Question's emergence as a significant problem in KKE-CPY relations coincided with the KKE/EAM's efforts to secure domestic support for a potential seizure of power. Macedonian nationalism caused the KKE/ELAS significant domestic problems due to its linkage to Yugoslav state building. Although EAM disbanded the SNOF in the spring of 1944, Slavophone Macedonian nationalists dominated the regional committees in northern Greece.<sup>438</sup> Nevertheless, in the summer of 1944, the KKE decided to form Slavophone Macedonian units. According to Giannis Ioannidis, this was done for altruistic reasons. The political game that the KKE/EAM played with the national question, however, indicates that less altruistic reasons played a role in this decision.<sup>439</sup> As Sfetas argues, the fact that Macedonian agents from Vardar Macedonia actively recruited Macedonian Slavs on the Greek side of the border throughout the spring and summer of 1944 points to the probability that the KKE/EAM sought to prevent Yugoslavia's cooption of its manpower.<sup>440</sup> In forming the Slavophone Macedonian units, the KKE sought to keep the units in Greece. Ultimately, the KKE/EAM's efforts to use the Slavophone Macedonian units for its own objectives were a dismal failure. The Lerin-Kostur Battalion, the main Slavophone Macedonian unit in Greece, clearly exemplified this failure. The struggle between the Lerin-Kostur Battalion and the KKE/EAM came to a head in October 1944. That same month, the Lerin-Kostur Battalion sent a letter to the headquarters of both EAM and the ELAS arguing that: "[it should have the right for] the

<sup>438</sup> Koliopoulos, *Plundered Loyalties: World War II and Civil War in Greek West Macedonia* 116-21.

<sup>439</sup> Ioannidis, *Αναμνήσεις: Προβλήματα Της Πολιτικής Του Κκε Στην Εθνική Αντίσταση 1940-1945* 247. Sfetas, in fact argues that the decision was reached "[...] by the necessity for closer collaboration with Tito, both at the military level – owing to the Germans' massive mopping-up operations against ELAS in the summer of 1944 and the re-establishment of the autonomist Bulgarian organisation *Ohrana*, chiefly in the Edessa area – and at the political level – on account of the KKE's embarrassment after the signing of the Lebanon Charter. See: Sfetas, "Autonomist Movements of the Slavophones in 1944: The Attitude of the Communist Party of Greece and the Protection of the Greek-Yugoslav Border," 305.

<sup>440</sup> "Autonomist Movements of the Slavophones in 1944: The Attitude of the Communist Party of Greece and the Protection of the Greek-Yugoslav Border," 301.

free and full mobilization of the Macedonian people in the Kostur, Lerin, Voden and Karadžovo regions where the majority of the population is Macedonian. All Macedonian Partisans that are now in mixed Greek units should be transferred to Macedonian units."<sup>441</sup> This message demonstrated Yugoslavia's influence (both direct and inadvertent) in Greece, as its demands were notably similar to those put forward by both the ASNOM and the CPM with respect to Macedonian rights. The ASNOM's and the CPY's success in convincing the Aegean Macedonians that their best interests were not being served by the EAM/ELAS is best seen in the fifth and sixth points of the note. These points stated that there "Should be a halt to the persecution of Macedonian cadres [...]" and "There should be a halt to the persecution, abuse and falsification of Macedonian aspirations."<sup>442</sup> These points were particularly noteworthy because they not only insisted that the physical attacks stopped, but also asserted that the Macedonians should be allowed to pursue their nationalist objectives without interference. Given the nationalist nature of Greek politics in the Second World War, such a stance was incompatible with the EAM's goal of building a national government.<sup>443</sup> Furthermore, the letter by the Lerin-Kostur Battalion was evidently a formality, given that the battalion's commander, Ilias Dimikis, ordered one of his lieutenants, Blagoja Daskalov, to begin recruiting on 6 October 1944.<sup>444</sup> This was in contrast to the position advanced by the KKE's Macedonian Committee as much a month earlier, which (as previously noted) called for Slavophone Macedonian integration into ELAS, not expansion.<sup>445</sup> If the EAM/KKE were to secure their domestic position, they needed to rein in the Macedonian Slavs. In other words, the KKE faced precisely the same problem that confounded the CPY.

<sup>441</sup> "A Letter from the Headquarters of the Lerin-Kostur Macedonian Battalion to the Central Committee of the Greek Anti-Fascist Front (Eam) and to the General Headquarters of the Greek National Liberation Army (Elas)," in *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State*, ed. et al. Hristo Andonov-Poljanski (Skopje: The University of "Cyril and Methodius", 1944), 733.

<sup>442</sup> Ibid.

<sup>443</sup> Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949* 111-25. Gerolymatos, *Red Acropolis, Black Terror: The Greek Civil War and the Origins of Soviet-American Rivalry, 1943-1949* 102

<sup>444</sup> Goce, "Order from Goce to Blagoja Daskalov," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Antifasciste 1941-1945*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski et al. (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1944), 223.

<sup>445</sup> "Le Rapport Du Bureau Provincial Du Pcg Pour La Macedoine Au Bureau Politique Du Comite Central Du Pcg Relatif a La Situation Et a L'activite De L'organisation," 86.

The KKE/EAM bowed to mounting domestic political pressure and disbanded the Slavophone Macedonian battalions in ELAS. On 16 October 1944, Markos Vafiadis, a member of the KKE's Central Committee and political advisor to the ELAS forces operating in northern Greece, signed the order calling for the disbandment of the Slavophone Macedonian units and their direct incorporation into ELAS.<sup>446</sup> Those Slavophone Macedonian units that refused incorporation into ELAS, particularly those under the direct command of Dimikis, defected to Yugoslavia.<sup>447</sup> The defection removed a potential domestic problem for the KKE, but also created an international situation at a highly inopportune moment, as German forces had withdrawn from Athens two days earlier and the government-in-exile and British forces would soon return to the country. Immediately before the formal disbanding the Macedonian Slav battalions, E. Kentros met with Dimikis, who allegedly stated:

[The Slavophone Macedonians] are connected with Serbian Macedonia from where we receive instructions and liaison men regularly, and in turn, we send our own liaison men. We received orders to draft as many men as possible, but they should be pure Slav-Macedonians. [Yugoslavia] is giving us 5000 rifles and the appropriate number of sub-machine guns.<sup>448</sup>

Although Dimikis' statement came from only one source, it is aligned with previous Yugoslav actions on the Macedonian Question.<sup>449</sup> In other words, CPY support for the KKE was readily available so long as the Greek communists maintained the Slavophone Macedonian units. The CPY thereby argued to its domestic audience that it championed the Macedonian identity abroad.<sup>450</sup>

Kentros' report also revealed that the CPY went beyond supplying the Slavophone Macedonians to act as their external patrons in political matters. According to Kentros, Dimikis further alleged that the Yugoslavs had stated the following: should

<sup>446</sup> Vafiadis, "Ordre Relatif Aux Operations Du Groupe De Divisions De L'elas En Macedoine. On Ordonne, Entre Autre, La Liquidation Des Bataillons Macedoniens.," 496-97.

<sup>447</sup> GFM Archives, A/30946/Γ5-1947.

<sup>448</sup> GFM Archives, A/30946/Γ5-1947.

<sup>449</sup> See Tito's previous statement about overzealousness in regards to Vukmanović's willingness to dispatch troops.

<sup>450</sup> Kardelj, "Krištof (Edvard Kardelj), Član Politbiroja Ckpkj Centralnemu Komiteju Slovenije," *Politika*, 8 November 1944.

the KKE/EAM attempt to prevent them from forming Slavophone Macedonian units, he and his men “should come to [Yugoslavia].”<sup>451</sup> While Dimikis’ allegation went against Tito’s explicit orders in the summer of 1944, it was aligned with the overzealous nature of certain CPY/CPM representatives in the period, particularly that of Vukmanović-Tempo. Consequently, one cannot easily dismiss Dimikis’ accusations as false bravado that aimed to pressure the KKE into acceding to his demands.

The Yugoslavs may have appeared willing to assist Greece’s Slavophone Macedonian population, but this willingness was ultimately a propaganda effort carried over from Vukmanović-Tempo’s realization that Macedonian nationalism could, if properly harnessed, be used to stabilize Yugoslavia’s position in Vardar Macedonia. The KKE’s actions directly threatened this policy. According to a confidential report compiled by the Central Committee of the KKE, Vukmanović-Tempo continued to dispatch agents into Greece after the disbandment of the Slavophone Macedonian units to inflame the “Slavic villages” and call for the “uniform freedom of Macedonia from the Haliacmon to the Aegean.”<sup>452</sup> While the origins of this source are problematic in that there was no outside confirmation on the Yugoslav side that this indeed occurred, the source is important because it demonstrates the KKE’s fears about the Macedonian Slavs’ ability to destabilize its domestic position.

The KKE expressed its fears about Yugoslavia’s Macedonians in a confidential memo on 2 November 1944, which noted that Dimikis’ battalion “walked into Greek territory and it acts in the region of Florina.”<sup>453</sup> Given that Yugoslavia isolated Dimikis’ battalion upon its arrival, its alleged activities must have been carried out either by elements of the Macedonian population in Yugoslavia that the CPY/CPM could not control or by individuals who defected from the battalion. The KKE’s assertion that the

<sup>451</sup> GFM Archives, A/30946/Γ5-1947.

<sup>452</sup> "Bulletin Confidentiel Du Cc Du Pcg Relatif a La Prise Du Courrier Petre Urtovski," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Antifasciste 1941-1945*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski et al. (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1944), 503.

<sup>453</sup> "Bulletin Confidentiel Du Cc Du Pcg Relatif a L'activite Du Bataillon Macedonien "Goce"," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Antifasciste 1941-1945*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski et al. (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1944), 520.

ELAS had only arrested a relatively paltry 15 individuals is further evidence that the alleged incursion was an uncoordinated and/or limited affair, and that the CPY leadership was not likely behind it.<sup>454</sup> Nevertheless, the KKE's fear of such activities indicates the degree of its concern regarding the Macedonian Question in northern Greece.

The KKE attempted to mitigate the damage resulting from its decision to disband the Slavophone Macedonian units by launching a propaganda campaign aimed at the local northern districts. Immediately after Vafiadis had disbanded Dimikis' unit, the Lerin District Committee of the Communist Party of Greece issued an appeal to the Slavic-Macedonian population of the region.<sup>455</sup> The text of the appeal was nothing short of fanciful and placed the burden for the Macedonian Slavs' current position in their own hands by noting that "Any other slogan (besides the KKE's), no matter whose it is, aims to separate us and any other path will only be damaging."<sup>456</sup> Given that the District Committee's appeal explicitly mentioned the occupiers, one can interpret the ambiguity in the statement as a reference to the appeal forwarded by Dimikis and the CPY/CPM. This is further likely given that the publication of the appeal occurred in the immediate aftermath of the Slavophone Macedonian units' disbandment.<sup>457</sup> The KKE intended for this and other statements to alleviate the negative implications of their decision to carry out the disbandment.<sup>458</sup> The fact that 4,000 Slavophone Macedonians fled to Yugoslavia to fight under its banner by the end of the Second World War – which was comparable to their number who initially participated in the ELAS/SNOF – indicated that the KKE was

<sup>454</sup> Ibid.

<sup>455</sup> District Committee, "An Appeal from the District Committee of the Communist Party of Greece for the Lerin Region Addressed to the Macedonian People in the District," in *Documents on the Struggle for the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State*, ed. et al. Hristo Andonov-Poljanski (Skopje: The University of "Cyril and Methodius", 1944 (1985)), 731.

<sup>456</sup> Ibid.

<sup>457</sup> Ibid.

<sup>458</sup> Ibid. "Proclamation of the Temporary Political Commission for Macedonia in Greece," in *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State*, ed. et al. Hristo Andonov-Poljanski (Skopje: The University of "Cyril and Methodius", 1944), 736-37.

not successful in its intended message.<sup>459</sup> The KKE's propaganda campaign was a failure, but even more importantly, it failed to alleviate CPY/CPM concerns about its stance on the Macedonian Question. This had grave consequences for its looming conflict with the Greek government.

The KKE's lack of unity played a critical role in its inability to soothe Yugoslav and Slavophone Macedonian concerns. As German authorities had Zachariadis under lock and key and the party had largely reconstituted itself during the war, it was rife with competing opinions and ideologies.<sup>460</sup> The driving force of the EAM was popular resistance to the occupation, rather than the KKE's influence.<sup>461</sup> The EAM was also strongly influenced by Greek nationalism. Maj. Gen. Sarafis, the ELAS commander, expressed a note of satisfaction when he stated that "So successfully was the region [formerly inhabited by Dimikis' men] cleared of these separatists that at the demobilization of ELAS (March 1945) they had been completely broken up and not a single one of their bands was still in existence."<sup>462</sup> Sarafis was not alone on this stance. On 3 November 1944, Euripides Bakirtzis, the head of the EAM's Political Committee of National Liberation (PEEA), ordered that loyal units, which meant non-Slavic units, man the Macedonian border.<sup>463</sup> While there were individuals within the KKE who recognized the significance of the Macedonian Question, such as Roussos, Tzimas, and Siantos, the EAM clearly could not yield on the issue. Nonetheless, the EAM had to yield to the KKE's broader concerns regarding the issue, given its importance to the KKE's objectives.

While the EAM was by far much more factional than the KKE, the same divisions existed within the KKE. They came to the forefront when the KKE dispatched a

<sup>459</sup> Number cited in Ajanovski-Oce, *Egejski Buri : Revolucionernoto Dviženje Vo Vodensko I Nof Vo Egejska Makedonija* 145.

<sup>460</sup> Gerolymatos, *Red Acropolis, Black Terror: The Greek Civil War and the Origins of Soviet-American Rivalry, 1943-1949* 101.

<sup>461</sup> Ibid.

<sup>462</sup> Sarafis, *Elas: Greek Resistance Army* 411-12.

<sup>463</sup> Evripidis Bakirtzis, "Bulletin Confidential Du Cc Du Pcg Relatif a L'activite Du Bataillon Macedonien "Goce", " in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Antifasciste 1941-1945*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski et al. (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1944), 264-65.

representative to the CPY in an effort to resolve the issues between the parties. On 26 October 1944, the KKE dispatched a Comrade Nikos to meet with the CPY concerning the Macedonian Question. This meeting had an unfortunate impact on the Greek communists' relationship with the CPY.<sup>464</sup> Niko did not take the conciliatory approach that the KKE Central Committee members had taken less than one month before. Instead, he requested that the CPY issue a statement:

1. To condemn the work of the Macedonian national liberation movement
2. To terminate all relations with it
3. To support the KKE party line.
4. To return to Greece all the Macedonian brigades that withdrew to our territory.<sup>465</sup>

Unfortunately for the KKE, it was Vukmanović-Tempo who received Comrade Nikos. Vukmanović-Tempo had grown to deeply resent the KKE's position on the Macedonian Question, and responded accordingly. As a result, he was enraged by Nikos' comments. According to his own account, he presented Niko with the CPY's rebuttal to the KKE's position on the Macedonian Question. It stated that:

1. Greeks should allow the Macedonian liberation movement to organize its own units, which for now would stay within the Yugoslav National Liberation Army
2. Greeks should allow for the free political organizing of the Macedonian nation in Greece within the Macedonian national liberation front, which for now should remain within the National Liberation Front of Greece.
3. Greeks should allow the Macedonian nation in Greece full freedom of organizing its own democratic peoples authorities, which for now should remain within the Greek state.
4. The Greeks should allow the Macedonian nation in Greece full freedom of organizing its own antifascist and democratic propaganda. They should openly speak about its own right for self-determination, and about the position of the Macedonian nation in a Democratic and Federal Yugoslavia.
5. Create a mutual, mixed, commission with our delegates that would work on all complex issues.<sup>466</sup>

<sup>464</sup> The ambiguous appellation of Comrade Nikos makes it difficult to discern precisely his identity. Other sources, however, confirm that Comrade Niko was the *nomme de guerre* for Leonidis Stringos, who at this time was the leader of the Macedonian branch of the KKE.

<sup>465</sup> Military Archives of Serbia, KMJ 836 I-3-6/235

Vukmanović-Tempo's proposals completely contradicted what Comrade Niko had presented. Vukmanović-Tempo wrote a letter to the Central Committee of the CPY, which he concluded by noting that it should immediately consider sending additional weapons to "the Macedonian brigades from Greece that are constantly growing in strength and that could reach 10,000 volunteer fighters in a short period of time."<sup>467</sup> In other words, the KKE's attempt to directly impose its solution on the Macedonian Question had the opposite effect. Vukmanović-Tempo's prominence regarding the Macedonian Question ensured that the CPY would perceive the KKE's future actions regarding the question more negatively than it had perceived them actions in the past.

Furthermore, Comrade Nikos' conversation with Vukmanović-Tempo, indicated that the KKE did not recognize that the CPY's position on the Macedonian Question had shifted considerably from the spring and summer of 1944 as a result of Bulgaria re-entering the Macedonian Question and its deteriorating domestic situation. The KKE's inability to recognize the shift in Yugoslav policy becomes clear when comparing Nikos' meeting with Vukmanović-Tempo to one that took place between the ELAS and the CPY on 23 May 1944. At the earlier meeting, Adjutant Haralambidis, the ELAS representative, met with the CPY's representative, Georgijevski, and expressed the following points:

1. That recruiting cease on Greek territory,
2. That all anti-EAM propaganda cease,
3. That Yugoslav partisans seek refuge on Greek territory only when under strong enemy pressure and only for a few days at a time, pending the resolution of all the contentious issues, [...]
8. That in the absence of ELAS from certain areas, SNOF liaises with the political organizations in its contacts with the people.<sup>468</sup>

The similarities between these demands and those made by Comrade Nikos in October are striking, but the responses to them were quite different. In the case of the first

<sup>466</sup> Ibid.

<sup>467</sup> Ibid.

<sup>468</sup> Haralambos Haralambidis-Atanasos, "Rapport De Haralambos Haralambidis-Atanasos Sur La Separation De Macedoniens De L'elas Affirmant Que Les Dirigeants Du Pcm Et De L'aln De Macedoine En Sont Responsables," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Maceoine Egee a La Guerre Antifasciste 1941-1945*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1944), 423.



meeting, Tito was able to use his own personal judgement of the issue. This ability resulted in the CPY (at least officially) suspending operations in Aegean Macedonia for fear of the damage that those operations would inflict on the Greek resistance movement and the CPY's relationship with it.<sup>469</sup> According to Vukmanović-Tempo, the CPY sent out a memorandum to its agents in Greece on 17 June 1944, stating:

*Only through fraternal concord and the common struggle with the Greek and Bulgarian people can the Macedonians in Greece and Bulgaria achieve their full national liberation and equality, achieve the right to determine their own destiny, a right which the Atlantic Charter guarantees to all enslaved peoples struggling against Fascism.*<sup>470</sup>

Compared to the Vukmanović-Tempo's belligerent reception of Nikos in October, the CPY's response to Haralambidis in June was markedly different.

The CPY maintained the appearance of supporting its fellow Greek communists during this period, which contributed to the KKE's confusion.<sup>471</sup> In October 1944 Petros Roussos joined Andreas Tzimas, who was already in Belgrade as the KKE/ELAS' representative to Tito. According to Woodhouse, Roussos arrived with the explicit goal of securing Yugoslavia's support against the returning Greek government. Kousoulas, citing a conversation with Orestis, the *nomme de guerre* of ELAS leader Andreas Mountrihias, notes that the KKE received confirmation of Tito's intent to support them on 27 November 1944.<sup>472</sup> As mentioned earlier, this occurred after the 17 November 1944 meeting, at which the CPY's Politburo reached the decision not to support the KKE. Woodhouse dismisses the sincerity of Tito's gesture and agrees with Palmer and King that Tito was more concerned with Bulgaria, but this is because the three scholars emphasize the foreign policy dimensions of the CPY, and fail to recognize the extent

<sup>469</sup> S. Neshovich, "The Correspondence between Tito and Dimitrov on the B.W.P. (C) and Macedonia," *Macedonian Review* 3 (1975) 272-73.

<sup>470</sup> Vukmanović-Tempo, *Revolucija Koja Teče*, 1 417-24.

<sup>471</sup> Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949* 122.

<sup>472</sup> Kousoulas, *Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party* 200-1. Vlavianos, however, notes that based off British sources, which captured the telegram, that the KKE did not receive the affirmative reply until 30 November. See Haris Vlavianos, "The Greek Communist Party: In Search of a Revolution," in *Resistance and Revolution in Mediterranean Europe 1939-1948*, ed. Tony Judt (London: Routledge, 1989), 188.

of the domestic tensions that existed within the CPY.<sup>473</sup> The 17 November 1944 meeting of the CPY Central Committee makes it abundantly clear that by late 1944, Tito weighed the balance of his personal relationship with the KKE/ELAS against the increased strain that the latter's actions were causing in Yugoslavia proper.<sup>474</sup> Thus, while it was possible that Tito did indeed encourage the KKE/ELAS on 27 November 1944 – if this indeed was the case – he could not have done so in a substantive manner due to the KKE/ELAS' stance on the Macedonian Question.

The KKE, for the most part, was consistent with its policies for the latter half of 1944. It was willing to accommodate Slavophone Macedonian aspirations only if they did not conflict with KKE/EAM's goals in the country. When such a conflict arose, as occurred in the cases of both the SNOF and the Slavophone Macedonian units, the KKE/EAM reacted quickly to squash such sentiment. In this instance, the differences between the party's leadership and its rank-in-file were more in terms of means than identity. The ELAS/KKE, however, failed to realize how the Yugoslav's priorities shifted over the summer in response to Bulgaria's re-entry on the Macedonian Question. When the KKE was assertive in the spring/summer of 1944, Tito was in a position to affirm his dominance over other elements of the CPY and the CPM. When the KKE attempted to assert its own dominance on the Macedonian Question in the autumn of 1944, it forced Tito to appease hardliners within his own party in response to the Greek communists' failure to distinguish the shift in CPY policy. This failure, and the KKE leadership's inability to tightly manage its party apparatus meant that instances of alienation were bound to occur between the two parties. Unfortunately for the KKE, it cost them the one supporter they needed the most: Yugoslavia.

<sup>473</sup> Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949*; Stephen E. Palmer Jr., *Yugoslav Communism and the Macedonian Question* 159.

<sup>474</sup> Kostov, "A Letter from the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Workers Party (the Communists) to Comrade Tito," 29.

#### 4.4. The Dekemvriana, and the CPY's decision to reverse its decision to aid the KKE

The tensions that the Macedonian Question caused both between and within the CPY and KKE became apparent in the *Dekemvriana*. When the *Dekemvriana* commenced, the CPY supported the KKE and the ELAS by providing them with arms and supplies. Although Zachariadis later claimed that CPY support in the *Dekemvriana* amounted to nothing and that the CPY in fact planned on invading Greece, his assertion is questionable.<sup>475</sup> Zachariadis' imprisonment in Dachau meant he missed the Second World War and the *Dekemvriana*, so he was not directly acquainted with the events in question. The notoriety Zachariadis later gained by blaming the CPY for all the KKE's failures makes this assertion even more suspect.<sup>476</sup> It is clear that the CPY supported the KKE in a limited manner, at least immediately before the *Dekemvriana*, but chose to halt that aid at the critical juncture.

Scholars' confusion over the CPY's support for the KKE stems from the fact that the Yugoslavs initially fulfilled their promises to provide military support during this period. A meeting between Tito and an unidentified member of the KKE in late 1944 confirms that although Tito was upset with many of the KKE's policies, particularly its policies towards the British and the Macedonian Question, he was sympathetic to the party's goals of establishing a revolutionary government in Greece.<sup>477</sup> His critiques of the KKE were withering, but he promised to support it – although what his purpose was in doing so remains vague. Tito pledged that he would support the ELAS in its struggle against external forces.<sup>478</sup> He guaranteed that the CPY would provide “artillery and all”

<sup>475</sup> Zachariadis also gave these remarks as he was attempting to preserve his position within the KKE, further giving him an incentive to extend the truth. See KKE, *Η 7η Πλατιά Ολομέλεια Της Κε Του Κκε : 18-24 Φλεβάρη 1957 : Εισηγήσεις, Αποφάσεις, Ομιλίες, Πρακτικά*. (Αθήνα: Σύγχρονη Εποχή, 1957 (2011)) 182, 275.

<sup>476</sup> See: Nikos Zachariadis, “Tito Clique's Stab in the Back to People's Democratic Greece,” *For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy!* No. 15 (42), 1 August, 1949. *Passim*.

<sup>477</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, 636 KMJ I-2-9/39. I have made several efforts to track down which KKE member would have taken part in this meeting. Based off current evidence from the memoirs of KKE leaders it is most probable that it was Stergios Anastasiadis, Andreas Tzimas, or Petros Roussos.

<sup>478</sup> *Ibid*.

and that “[The CPY] will put [to the aid of the KKE] Peko Dapčević who is a corps commander and is somewhat of an international. I will contact you when we have reached more concrete measures.”<sup>479</sup> Tito’s promise to put Peko Dapčević, one of Yugoslavia’s most renowned generals, at the KKE’s disposal suggests that he was taking the matter seriously, or at least wished to give the impression that this was the case. Furthermore, Tito’s promise of artillery support highlights the seriousness that his support entailed, given that heavy weaponry was in short supply for the KKE and CPY as resistance organizations.<sup>480</sup> Tito, however, included the caveat that the KKE would use the CPY’s support to assist it “in the struggle against the Germans.”<sup>481</sup> As the Wehrmacht withdrew from mainland Greece before the *Dekemvriana*, this is a critical caveat.<sup>482</sup> Nevertheless, Tito closed the conversation with his promise of support, and noted that to him, the most important aspect of this support was that it would “contribute to the brotherhood of our peoples”. Framing the argument in such a way made it easy for the KKE’s representative to focus on the promise of support, rather than the conditions Tito had put on that support.<sup>483</sup> When Tito’s promise is considered in combination the vague promise of support given to the KKE/ELAS by the CPY in late November, it is clear that the Yugoslavs helped ferment the KKE’s aggressive policy as the party approached the *Dekemvriana*.<sup>484</sup> This pledge raises the question as to why the CPY began to withdraw his its support.

Jefto Sćepanović, a CPY political commissar from Dalmatia, provides proof that the CPY withdrew its support at a critical juncture of the *Dekemvriana*. Communications between Sćepanović and the CPY’s Central Committee demonstrate that the CPY had

<sup>479</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, 636 KMJ I-2-9/39

<sup>480</sup> Demonstrative of the scarcity of heavy arms was that the DAG did not begin employing heavy arms until the end of 1947, and this was with the more explicit support of the CPY. See Shrader, *The Withered Vine: Logistics and the Communist Insurgency in Greece, 1945-1949* 95.

<sup>481</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, 636 KMJ I-2-9/39

<sup>482</sup> This excludes Crete and other Greek islands, which would remain under German occupation for the duration of the war.

<sup>483</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, 636 KMJ I-2-9/39

<sup>484</sup> Kousoulas is not the most reliable source. Taken in combination with the other factors, however, his argument and information appear reasonable. See Kousoulas, *Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party* 201.

been providing the KKE with support in the lead-up to the *Dekemvriana*, but chose to halt it under suspicious circumstances. In the first of several letters on 17 December 1944, almost two weeks after the commencement of the *Dekemvriana*, Šćepanović questioned whether the CPY would continue giving supplies to the EAM in future.<sup>485</sup> Given that Šćepanović asks whether he could ship supplies to Greece at a later date, it is clear that the tension that the Central Committee the CPY felt on the Macedonian Question had not permeated to the lower levels of the party.<sup>486</sup> Despite Šćepanović's enthusiasm for supplying Greece, the committee ordered him to halt his efforts. In explaining its position on 21 December 1944, the Central Committee noted that the reason for halting the supplies was that "there is [now] a civil war [in Greece]."<sup>487</sup> As the CPY actively encouraged the KKE/EAM to seize power in the early autumn of 1944, the Central Committee's justification does not hold up to proper scrutiny. The CPY's decision evidently confused Šćepanović, who requested clarification of the party's position on 27 December 1944.<sup>488</sup> Although Šćepanović did not receive a reply to his inquiry, the documents examined indicate that the Central Committee's ambivalence with regard to his question and the fact that the KKE was (according to Woodhouse) already sending out peace feelers to the government made a reply unnecessary.<sup>489</sup> As Gerolymatos argues, the ELAS' success depended upon it achieving immediate success in the *Dekemvriana*.<sup>490</sup> The CPY's failure to provide assistance at this critical stage meant that by 27 December 1944 the question of supplies was a mute point.

The traditional justifications that scholars provide to explain the CPY's non-intervention in Greece during the *Dekemvriana* rely on the fact that the Soviet Union pressured it into withdrawing its support. This argument, however, does not correlate

<sup>485</sup> Šćepanović, "Politički Komesar Baze Novj U Bariju Za Marka (Aleksandra Rankovića), Organizacionog Sekretara Ckpkj," 330.

<sup>486</sup> Ibid.

<sup>487</sup> "Centralni Komitet Kpj Političkom Komesaru Baze Novj U Bariju," *ibid.* (1944 (1987) (12/21/1944)), 349.

<sup>488</sup> "Jefto Šćepanović," in *Dokumenti Centralnih Organa Kpj nor I Revolucija (1941-1945)*, ed. Milovan Dželebdžić (Beograd: Izdavački Centar Komunist, 1944 (1987) (12/27/1944)), 375-76.

<sup>489</sup> Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949* 131.

<sup>490</sup> Gerolymatos, *Red Acropolis, Black Terror: The Greek Civil War and the Origins of Soviet-American Rivalry, 1943-1949* 146-47.

with the CPY's increasing independence from the USSR during this period. On 11 January 1945, four days before the EAM and the Greek government would agree to a ceasefire, Andrija Hebrang, the leader of the Croatian Communist Party, reported to Tito that during a meeting with Stalin the latter had argued that there was a gap between two parties on policy issues.<sup>491</sup> According to Hebrang, Stalin specifically argued that "[The CPY] should be cautious in foreign policy issues. Our main task is to secure the victory achieved. Large scale issues between you and neighbouring countries should be avoided as they could cause bad relations or a potential confrontation."<sup>492</sup> Given that Stalin had previously specifically mentioned Bulgaria and Albania in his meeting with Hebrang, he implicitly referred to the CPY's activities in Greece.<sup>493</sup> As the CPY by this point had largely stopped supporting the KKE, one must seek an alternative reason for why it interfered in Greek affairs.

A reason for the CPY's increased vulnerability on the Macedonian Question, and subsequent lashing out at Greece, was that the *Dekemvriana* further threatened the CPY's control of the Macedonian Question. The second session of the ASNOM, held on 28-31 December 1944 in liberated Skopje, demonstrated how vulnerable the CPY had become on the Macedonian Question. Instead of letting the local leadership handle the conference, the CPY dispatched Edvard Kardelj – who by this point was Tito's *de-facto* lieutenant – to be AVNOJ's official representative at the proceedings. Kardelj was direct in his assessment of the issues facing the ASNOM. He began by declaring, "Macedonia will remain an integral part of Yugoslavia."<sup>494</sup> His conclusion reemphasized this point, and he finished by stating, "all separatist tendencies must be eliminated."<sup>495</sup> In a similar vein, Vukmanović-Tempo likewise stated, "We have won the fight on the battlefield. We

<sup>491</sup> Andrija Hebrang, "Andrija Hebrang Josipu Brozu Titu," in *Dokumenti Centralnih Organa Kpj nor I Revolucija (1941-1945)*, ed. Branko Vuković (Beograd: Arhiv Jugoslavije, 1945 (1996) (01/11/1945)), 100. Hebrang's account of Stalin's critique, as a devout Stalinist, was all but certainly representative of Stalin's thought on the issue.

<sup>492</sup> Ibid.

<sup>493</sup> Ibid.

<sup>494</sup> FO 371/48181. R316, 4/1/1945. Cited in Livanios, *The Macedonian Question: Britain and the Southern Balkans 1939-1949* 188.

<sup>495</sup> Ibid.

must also win it in the political field."<sup>496</sup> This perspective indicated why Vukmanović-Tempo felt the pressure to adopt a more Yugoslav line, as was seen in his earlier communiqué with the CPM. The CPY leadership demonstrated a more aggressive stance at this meeting in comparison to the first session, where it had largely let the affairs proceed with minimal interference, which suggested that it had learned from its mistakes. The CPY, however, did not transmit this sentiment to the party base, including individuals like Sćepanović, as it would have undermined its claims to a pan-Yugoslav identity.

The KKE, in its efforts to secure Yugoslavia's support during the *Dekemvriana*, only heightened the tensions within the CPY. On 6 December 1944, the KKE contacted the CPM in order to request that it send the Aegean Brigade to support the KKE against the Greek government forces.<sup>497</sup> Ironically, the request called for the "united Macedonian masses to work in a common and united struggle with the Greek people".<sup>498</sup> The KKE's direct interference in CPY affairs gave the Yugoslavs reason to distance themselves further from the Greeks. The KKE addressed the request to the CPM, but Koliševski's return to the party meant that the CPY was now well informed of the Macedonians' activities, at least on matters involving external interference.

The argument that the Soviet Union pressured the CPY into withdrawing its support for the KKE becomes increasingly improbable when considered in light of the late 1944 rebellion of Macedonian soldiers demanding that they go to Thessaloniki.<sup>499</sup> The CPY's fear of the Macedonians' rebellion became acute over the course of December. On 12 December 1944, Tito ordered the General Headquarters of the

<sup>496</sup> Ibid.

<sup>497</sup> Political Commission of Aegean Macedonia, "Lettre De La Commission Politique De La Macedoine D'eege, Sous La Domination Grecque, Au Pc De Macedoine, Par Laquelle Elle Lui Fait Connaitre La Resolution a Faire Participer La Premiere Brigade Egeenne a Lutte Contre L'intervention Militaire Anglaise, Lutte Menee Par L'elas," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Antifasciste 1941-1945*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski et al. (Skopje: Les Archive de la Macedoine, 1944), 284-85.

<sup>498</sup> Ibid.

<sup>499</sup> Troebst, "Yugoslav Macedonia, 1943-1953: Building the Party, the State, and the Nation," 249.

Macedonian Partisans to “in no way let [15<sup>th</sup> Army Corps] cross the Greek frontier.”<sup>500</sup> The 15<sup>th</sup> Army Corps eventually rebelled in January 1945 over the General Headquarters’ refusal to “send them to Salonica”, which was the same phrase used by previous Macedonian activists. This insurrection provides evidence of the severe issues that the CPY faced in its nation-building activities.<sup>501</sup> In other words, the KKE’s request only served to provoke the CPY on what was already a sensitive issue for the party. With the KKE’s actions causing the CPY domestic discomfort, it is no surprise that the Yugoslavs disowned themselves of Greek affairs at least temporarily, and instead sought to gain whatever political advantages it could from the ensuing chaos.

Although the CPY halted its support of the KKE over the Macedonian Question, it significantly increased its attacks against the Greek state, justifying the concern that Stalin had about the CPY’s policies. The Yugoslav communists, in their official press, permitted Dimitar Vlahov to attack the Greek government directly in a hostile manner. This demonstrates how the CPY’s concerns about how Greece could impact its ability to resolve the Macedonian Question. In his address to Papandreou, Vlahov stated:

*I must declare to you, Mr. Premier, that the Macedonians from Vardar, the Aegean and Pirin Macedonia – who are most actively participating in the struggle against Fascism, as is proved by the blood shed by the best sons and daughters of the Macedonian people – not only will never allow anybody to menace their liberty but will defend also the liberty and independence of every people entering the New Federative Yugoslavia; just as all the peoples of Federative Yugoslavia will defend Macedonia’s frontiers against every aggression, from whichever country it comes. Your statement gives an unpleasant impression to all Macedonians. On behalf of the Macedonian people who I represent, I must strongly protest against your statements, which have an imperialistic character and which I consider absolutely unfounded. At the same time, I protest against (indistinct) Macedonian anti-Fascists in Aegean Macedonia by the organs of the Greek Government for their fighting against the German occupation and their desire to speak Macedonian and enjoy their national rights and liberties.*<sup>502</sup>

<sup>500</sup> Cited in Ristic, "The December Revolt in Athens British Intervention and Yugoslav Reaction: December 1944 - January 1945," 273.

<sup>501</sup> Ibid.

<sup>502</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 23006/22597 A/Μακεδονία 31/12/44



Vlahov's address helps to clarify several aspects of CPY policy during this period. In allowing Vlahov to send a letter to Papandreou, and then publishing it via the New Yugoslav Telegraph Service in English, the CPY demonstrated the CPY's desperation to appease Macedonian nationalists.<sup>503</sup> While Tito and the CPY had ignored Dimitrov's protests regarding the removal of Vlahov from the party in early 1944, this occurred during a time when the CPY stood to benefit by having Vlahov's prestige attached to the party, and there was minimal risk of him damaging the party's objectives. The CPY's decision to allow him to speak in December 1944, however, reflected its lack of options on the Macedonian Question. In publishing Vlahov's claim to represent all the people of Macedonia, the CPY gave him additional credence that would not have been necessary had it been operating from a position of strength. Its decision to publish the letter in English, furthermore, was a distinctive break from its standard policy of producing items on the Macedonian Question solely for domestic consumption in major Yugoslav periodicals.

The KKE, for its part, never appreciated the significance that the CPY attached to the Macedonian Question, and how its actions had compromised the Yugoslavs willingness to support it. This lack of willingness was evident in a letter Giannis (presumably, by the tone of the letter, Ioannidis) wrote to Tzimas on 4 January 1945, in which he reports on the CPY's stance towards Greece and how the news portrayed the *Dekemvriana*. The letter notes that Yugoslavia received a delegation of EPON, the EAM's youth wing, and feted its activities with "unprecedented enthusiasm".<sup>504</sup> This context makes it evident that Giannis saw the CPY's displays as genuine, and not necessarily as a matter of formality and/or as representative of the lower levels of the party, but not its leadership.<sup>505</sup> Although Giannis recognized that *Politika*, one of the

<sup>503</sup> Ibid.

<sup>504</sup> Giannis, "La Lettre De Yanis a Andreas Jimas Dans Laquelle Il L'informe De La Rection D'epon En Yougoslavie, De La Declaration Du Marechal Tito Concernant Les Evenements En Grece, Des Informations Dans La Presse Yougoslavie Etc.," in *La Macedoine D'eege Au Cours De La Gln, Septembre 1944 - Fevrier 1945*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Le Archive de la Macedoine, 1945), 359-60.

<sup>505</sup> Ivo Banac notes that there was nothing particularly irregular about the factionalism within the CPY. In fact, it had been the norm for much of its existence. It is therefore unclear why the KKE did not see it as the systematic problem that it was for the CPY. See: Banac, *With Stalin against Tito: Cominformist Splits in Yugoslav Communism* 45-116.

major newspapers in Yugoslavia, published more material than the CPY's press, *Borba*, he largely attributed this discrepancy to the Yugoslavs' reliance on news "taken from English sources and the comments of the English and American press" and believed that the way to correct this would be to provide more material about developments in Greece.<sup>506</sup> As Kofos argues, however, the CPY was well aware of developments in Greece.<sup>507</sup> The KKE, which was not willing to believe that the CPY would not support it, sought reasons to justify the unfraternal actions of its brotherly party. The KKE's fundamental problem in its relationship with the CPY was that it did not understand the significance that the Yugoslavs attached to the Macedonian Question. This problem persisted throughout the *Dekemvriana*. This being the case, it is not surprising that the KKE never managed to secure from the CPY anymore than the token gestures that Giannis outlined in his letter to Tzimas.

## 4.5. Conclusion

The Macedonian Question in the *Dekemvriana* poisoned the relations amongst the KKE and CPY. Although key members of both the CPY and the KKE were genuinely willing to maintain positive interparty relations, the dynamics of the Macedonian Question prevented the Yugoslavs from assisting the Greeks. In deciding to disband the Slavophone Macedonian military forces in order to escape the domestic problems caused by the Macedonian Question, the KKE, and the EAM unwittingly further entangled themselves in it. This predicament caused the CPY to withdraw support at a critical time in the ELAS' development. Given that the Greek government had a powerful external patron in the British Empire, the EAM and the KKE needed support from outside if they were to stand a legitimate chance of seizing power – even in the limited form that Yugoslavia could provide. The CPY's feelings of vulnerability on the Macedonian Question, caused by Bulgaria's re-entry into the issue, led it to take a hard line against the KKE in an effort to shore up domestic support in Vardar Macedonia. Although it is

<sup>506</sup> Giannis, "La Lettre De Yanis a Andreas Jimas Dans Laquelle Il L'informe De La Rection D'epon En Yougoslavie, De La Declaration Du Marechal Tito Concernant Les Evenements En Grece, Des Informations Dans La Presse Yougoslavie Etc.," 359-60.

<sup>507</sup> Kofos, "The Impact of the Macedonian Question on Civil Conflict in Greece," 294-95.

impossible to determine whether the CPY's promises of support would have been sufficient to allow the EAM/KKE to present the British Empire with a *fait accompli*, the CPY's lack of support certainly contributed to the EAM/ELAS/KKE having to accept the harsh terms imposed by the Varkiza Agreement. While the Macedonian Question did not dictate the actions of any party during this period, it played a substantial role in all the parties' decisions that were disproportionate to what minority groups could otherwise accomplish in either state, should conditions be peaceful.

Despite the CPY's decision not to support the KKE in the *Dekemvriana*, the Yugoslavs' choice did not rupture relations between the two parties, but merely strained them. Tito was sympathetic to the KKE and (as demonstrated in the introduction) realized that the politics surrounding the Macedonian Question limited his ability to support what he considered a fraternal party. The internal dynamics of the Macedonian Question in Yugoslavia in late 1944 prevented him from supporting the KKE and EAM, which would have meant that he risked alienating his party. Furthermore, the KKE's internal fragmentation and conflict meant that even if the party leadership recognized that maintaining Yugoslav support was important and that a subtle approach on the Macedonian Question was critical to this process, individuals like the unidentified Nikos inevitably contaminated relations by heightening tensions between the parties. The defeat of the KKE and EAM in the *Dekemvriana*, and their loss of political power, would provide the foundation for improved relations between the two parties in 1945, as they were no longer in a position to influence the Macedonian Question to the same extent that they had been in the past.

## Chapter 5. Towards a Civil War: The Macedonian Question in the Bulgarian-Greek-Yugoslav Interparty Dynamic

One of the critical questions in the historiography of the Greek Civil War is why the CPY chose not to support the KKE during the *Dekemvriana* but did so in 1946. In 1944, the KKE's odds of successfully seizing power were much more favourable than they were in 1946. The CPY, however, only fully supported the KKE during the Greek Civil War.<sup>508</sup> Traditional explanations for this change of course have privileged the Soviet dimension, largely denying the CPY and KKE any agency.<sup>509</sup> Contemporary scholarship, however, tends to take a more nuanced view of the CPY's actions but has largely avoided examining it in detail.<sup>510</sup> In particular, traditional and contemporary forms of scholarship have often overlooked a prominent factor: the Macedonian Question. This was not only a major element of the CPY's decision to renege on its support for the KKE in the *Dekemvriana*, but also factored into its decision to aid the KKE in 1946. The CPY's increased ability to manage the Macedonian Question throughout 1945 and 1946 expanded its political options, and one of the primary beneficiaries of this newfound liberty was the KKE.

<sup>508</sup> Aspects of this question are explored in Gerolymatos, *Red Acropolis, Black Terror: The Greek Civil War and the Origins of Soviet-American Rivalry, 1943-1949* 120-127. Ulunian, "The Soviet Question and 'the Greek Question', 1946-53; Problems and Appraisals," 144-60.

<sup>509</sup> Stavrakis, *Moscow and Greek Communism, 1944-1949* 48-126. Kousoulas, *Revolution and Defeat: The Story of the Greek Communist Party* 213-14. O'Ballance, *The Greek Civil War: 1944-1949* 116-20.

<sup>510</sup> Gallant, *Brief Histories: Modern Greece* 177. The one notable exception is Koliopoulos, *Plundered Loyalties: World War II and Civil War in Greek West Macedonia Passim* and Kofos, "The Impact of the Macedonian Question on Civil Conflict in Greece," 291. As Kofos acknowledges, however, there is still considerable work to be done on this issue, and this chapter helps clarify some of these outstanding issues. A notable example, coming largely from a foreign policy perspective, is: Jeronim Perović, "The Tito-Stalin Split: A Reassessment in Light of New Evidence," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 9, no. 2 (2007) 32-63.

This chapter argues that once the CPY had managed to obtain a sense of security on the Macedonian Question, it became more willing to support the KKE in its bid to seize power. This development considerably improved the KKE's position in the emerging Greek Civil War. By mid-1945, the CPY was in a position to replace the irredentist ASNOM leadership of 1944 with a regime more pliable to its interests. Once the CPY accomplished this task, it became more receptive to the Greek communists' requests for assistance. Furthermore, the KKE's loss in the *Dekemvriana* and the subsequent White Terror provided an effective diversion for the CPY, which redirected Macedonian angst towards the Greek state and away from the KKE. At the same time, Nikos Zachariadis' return to direct control of the KKE eventually provided a standardization of party policy that the Greek communists had lacked, particularly on the Macedonian Question. Both sides' recentralization eliminated the plague of factionalism that had created many of the outstanding issues between them. This control allowed the KKE and CPY leadership to even prevent the newly formed Macedonian National Liberation Front (NOF) from overtly disrupting relations. Both parties' increased ability to mitigate the excesses of the Macedonian Question meant that the CPY once more became a willing patron of the KKE as it approached the Greek Civil War.

## **5.1. The CPY's efforts at Nation-Building in Macedonia, 1945-1946**

The CPY was not in a position to assert effective control over the CPM at the beginning of 1945, which limited its ability to pursue a constructive policy with the KKE. This was the case when soldiers from Greece fled to Yugoslavia to join the National Liberation Army. The CPM sent a report to the CPY on 23 January 1945 in which they requested guidance on what to do with the people "from Aegean Macedonia who continue to come to volunteer for our army, despite the fact our advice [is for them] to go to ELAS."<sup>511</sup> The CPY's response less than a week later was a classic representation of its pragmatism and also enabled the Yugoslavs to maintain the appearance of adhering

<sup>511</sup> Central Committee of the Communist Party of Macedonia, "Centralni Komitet Kp Makedonije Centralnom Komitetu Kpj," in *Dokumenti Centralnih Organa Kpj nor I Revolucija (1941-1945)*, ed. Branko Vuković (Beograd: Arhiv Jugoslavije, 1945 (1996) (01/23/1945)), 230.

to international conventions. The CPY ordered the CPM to “[...] receive Macedonians from ELAS and [we] shall immediately send them to our front [...]”<sup>512</sup> The CPY’s reasoning was that “according to international law we cannot send back soldiers who defected to our territory.”<sup>513</sup> In order to minimize the damage done to the CPY’s relations with the KKE, however, the Yugoslavs ordered that “arms and ammunition [be returned] to ELAS.”<sup>514</sup> In choosing to pursue its interests at the expense of the KKE, the CPY used the same tenet of international law that it had used to justify halting support for the ELAS at the beginning of the *Dekemvriana*. Again, while the CPY’s argument rings hollow, it was demonstrative of the lengths to which it was willing to sacrifice the interests of the KKE to secure its own political stability. The CPY would only be in a position to support the KKE once it had eliminated the Macedonian Question’s pernicious influence on their relations.

Bulgaria’s efforts to arm ELAS demonstrated the extent to which the CPY lacked control of its subordinate institution. On 11 February 1945, Lazar Koliševski, the CPY’s loyal agent in the CPM, noted that the party apparatus had prevented Bulgaria from transferring arms to the ELAS, despite being ordered to do otherwise by General Vladimir Popović.<sup>515</sup> The Central Committee of the CPY was understandably upset about this development. In a 19 February memorandum to the CPM, it declared that the Macedonian communists should immediately place the arms under the control of the Yugoslav Army and that CPM members were not to use the weapons until further orders from the army’s Supreme Command.<sup>516</sup> Interestingly, the CPY added: “Nobody must

<sup>512</sup> Central Committee Communist Party of Yugoslavia, "Centralni Komitet Kpj Centralnom Komitetu Kp Makedonije," *ibid.* (1945 (1996) (01/29/1945)), 261.

<sup>513</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>514</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>515</sup> Lazar Koliševski, "Lazo Lazar Koliševski Sekretar Ckcp Makedonije Centralnom Komitetu Kpj," *ibid.* (1945 (1996) (02/11/1945)), 366-369.

<sup>516</sup> Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, "Centralni Komitet Kpj Centralnom Komitetu Kp Makedonije," *ibid.* (1945 (1996) (02/19/1945)); Central Committee of the Communist party of Macedonia, "Centralni Komitet Kp Makedonije Centralnom Komitetu Kpj," *ibid.* (1945 (1996) (02/21/1945)), 423. The Yugoslav Army’s transfer of the rebellious Macedonian units to the Strumica Front in the north of the country, and their replacement of said units with loyal divisions from elsewhere in the country, meant that the CPY once more considered it a beacon of stability in Vardar Macedonia Troebst, "Yugoslav Macedonia, 1943-1953: Building the Party, the State, and the Nation," 249-51.

know to whom [the arms] were intended. Elections should be no later than 10 March [...].”<sup>517</sup> In this passage, the CPY linked what was clearly a security issue – the transfer of arms from one party to another – to the upcoming local Macedonian elections. Thus, while the CPY’s inability to covertly transfer arms was disconcerting, it was more important that the CPM not use the arms to affect the local elections in a manner detrimental to the Yugoslavs’ interests. Despite the CPY’s pressure on the CPM, the Macedonian party did not yield. In its final reply to the CPY on 21 February 1945, the Central Committee of the CPM noted that “we have received the weapons, and we will not give [them] to anyone.”<sup>518</sup> The document record on the Bulgarian arms ended here, but it is clear that even if the CPM ultimately did surrender the arms, which seems plausible given the Yugoslavs later dominance of the region, it exerted a level of autonomy that the CPY found worrisome. The CPY’s initial reply indicated that it was deeply concerned that a pro-Bulgarian segment of the organization could turn the weapons against them due to the factionalism within the CPM.<sup>519</sup> The CPM possessed a degree of independence in 1945 that has been insufficiently researched. This can be seen by the level of autonomy it displayed on the issue of the monopoly of force within Yugoslav, and by its overall impact on CPY policy.<sup>520</sup> The CPM’s independence impacted the CPY’s ability to support the KKE during this period.

Additionally, when the CPM chose to follow CPY directives during this phase, it took considerable liberty with them. The most poignant example of CPM excess was Bloody Christmas: a series of pro-Bulgarian Macedonian purges that started in January 1945. The CPM’s efforts to purge pro-Bulgarians initially had the direct support of the CPY, which viewed these efforts as a means of consolidating their control of the

<sup>517</sup> Yugoslavia, "Centralni Komitet Kpj Centralnom Komitetu Kp Makedonije," 423.

<sup>518</sup> Central Committee of the Communist party of Macedonia, "Centralni Komitet Kp Makedonije Centralnom Komitetu Kpj," *ibid.* (1945 (1996) (02/21/1945)), 461.

<sup>519</sup> Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, "Centralni Komitet Kpj Centralnom Komitetu Kp Makedonije," *ibid.* (1945 (1996) (02/19/1945)), 423.

<sup>520</sup> Vezenkov, "Communism and Nationalism in the Balkans: Marriage of Convenience or Attraction?," 502 notes that this remains a critical problem in the field. Examples of sources where this remains an issue are: Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians: A History* Kindle Edition. Kofos, "The Impact of the Macedonian Question on Civil Conflict in Greece," 274-318. Rossos and Kofos approach to the Macedonian Question, being completely divergent, demonstrate how the idea remains a constant within the field.

country.<sup>521</sup> Nevertheless, the executions in Vardar Macedonia far exceeded the CPY's expectations. In a 26 February letter to the CPM's Central Committee, the Yugoslav's Central Committee noted: "it is not true that we have approved the executions in Veles and Kumanovo, on the contrary, we have criticized such work and pointed out the failures and mistakes of your leadership."<sup>522</sup> Although the author was unable to locate the earlier letter to which the CPY replied, one can infer from the Yugoslavs' response that the CPM claimed to conduct the executions at their request. The CPY was not adverse to mass executions, as was evident in May 1945 when the CPY executed thousands of individuals it identified as Ustasha sympathizers.<sup>523</sup> The CPY was adverse, however, to the killing of individuals who could serve its interests. It was not until 12 April 1945 that Miha Marinko, the CPY's Instructor in Macedonia, reported to the Yugoslav Central Committee that the Macedonian courts upheld the decision against executions without due process.<sup>524</sup> Furthermore, even though the CPY succeeded in limiting the bloodshed in Macedonia, Marinko believed that Mihailo Apostolski, Kiro Gligorov, and Metodija Andonov-Čento, who were now out of favour, could use the issue of the killings to cause dissent. Marinko implied in his report that these individuals caused the riots in Prilep over the court's decision to halt the executions.<sup>525</sup> The CPY's lack of control in the region extended beyond Andonov-Čento and his associates, as Gligorov was a member of the CPM and a key figure in ASNOM, and Apostolski was one of Macedonia's most

<sup>521</sup> Bechev, *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Macedonia* Kindle Edition

<sup>522</sup> Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, "Centralni Komitet Kpj Centralnom Komitetu Kp Makedonije," in *Dokumenti Centralnih Organa Kpj nor I Revolucija (1941-1945)*, ed. Branko Vuković (Beograd: Arhiv Jugoslavije, 1945 (1996) (02/26/1945)), 484

<sup>523</sup> Tea Sindbok, *Usable History?: Representations of Yugoslavia's Difficult Past - from 1945-2002* (Aarhus: Aarhus Univ Press, 2013) 33

<sup>524</sup> Miha Marinko, "Miha Marinko, Instruktor Cknpj U Makedoniji Centralnom Komitetu Kpj," in *Dokumenti Centralnih Organa Kpj nor I Revolucija (1941-1945)*, ed. Branko Vuković (Beograd: Izdavački Centar Komunist, 1945 (1996) (04/12/1945)), 363. Instructor was the CPY's title for the individual they dispatched to monitor the regional parties.

<sup>525</sup> The fact that Apostolski could go from being a CPY favourite to one suspected of disloyalty shows the dynamic impact of the Macedonian Question on the interparty relations. Ibid. 354. The literature does not generally recognize the CPY's about face on Apostolski, as the reliance on British sources for foreign policy insights mean that most historians have missed this shift. For an example of this issue see: Livanios, *The Macedonian Question: Britain and the Southern Balkans 1939-1949* 187.



prominent partisan commanders (and previously trusted by the Yugoslavs).<sup>526</sup> In other words, Bloody Christmas further underlined the CPY's problems in Macedonia. It demonstrated how the CPM's factionalism made it difficult for the Yugoslavs to assert control over the republic.

The CPY was largely ignorant about the Slavophone Macedonians in early 1945. It, for the most part, neglected them. This was ironic, given the critical role of the Slavophone Macedonians in sabotaging relations between the CPY and KKE in 1944, and in upsetting their own domestic position. In a letter to the Central Committee of the CPY on 12 April 1945, Marinko noted, "the problem of Aegean Macedonia is still the more delicate because the Greek and Bulgarian parties have mutually and for us opposing views. Moreover, the Bulgarians are actively working in Aegean Macedonia."<sup>527</sup> Importantly, Marinko demonstrated that even when the CPY dominated the Bulgarians on the Macedonian Question, the latter's actions continued to influence the former's decisions. Immediately afterwards, Marinko wrote that "Until just now I was not paying enough attention to the Aegean problem [...]."<sup>528</sup> Once Marinko began to assess the Slavophone Macedonians' situation, however, it was not favourable to the CPY.

A factor that contributed to the CPY's ignorance of the Slavophone Macedonians had been Tito's decision to recall Vukmanović-Tempo from Macedonia in November 1944 and replace him with Miha Marinko. For much of 1943 and 1944, Vukmanović was the CPY's trouble-shooter on the Macedonian Question.<sup>529</sup> Marinko, however, lacked Vukmanović-Tempo's intimate knowledge of the region. Although Lazar Koliševski's return to the CPM in the fall of 1944 partially offset this loss, the Macedonian leader was not a member of the Central Committee or the Politburo of the CPY. As a result, the CPY's ability to understand the contours of the Macedonian Question were more limited in 1945 than it had been in 1944.

<sup>526</sup> The Blood Christmas trials extended into the summer of 1945 due to the inability of the CPY to effectively regulate the CPM. See *The Macedonian Question: Britain and the Southern Balkans 1939-1949* 202.

<sup>527</sup> Marinko, "Miha Marinko, Instruktor Ckpkj U Makedoniji Centralnom Komitetu Kpj," 359

<sup>528</sup> Ibid.

<sup>529</sup> Vukmanović-Tempo, *Struggle for the Balkans* 25-27. Djilas, *Wartime* 398.

The Slavophone Macedonian situation in Vardar Macedonia was not favourable to the CPM or the CPY. As Marinko noted: "in general the Central Committee [of the CPM] almost did not take any care of the Aegean "political committee" and it was left entirely to itself."<sup>530</sup> This neglect directly contradicts the moral outrage that members of the CPM displayed on the treatment of Slavophone Macedonians throughout 1944. There was, however, a significant reason for the CPM's neglect of the Political Committee for Aegean Macedonia: Marinko indicated that the committee might not have been exclusively or even predominantly Slavophone Macedonian. His description of the Aegean political committee included the comment that: "Immediately it was quite difficult for me to work with them because they [speak] only limited Macedonian and they did not understand Serbian. Sometimes they send [me] reports in some strange language."<sup>531</sup> It is unclear what language the Aegean Committee spoke.<sup>532</sup> Regardless of what language was used, the fact that it was not Macedonian demonstrated that the Manichean approach the CPM pursued on the Macedonian Question did not represent the complex reality of ethnicity in the Balkans during the 1940s. This discrepancy likely caused the CPM to be tremendously cautious in interacting with the Aegean Macedonians. The fact that the Political Committee for Aegean Macedonia did not speak Macedonian not only served to limit its ability to communicate directly with the CPM, but in the nationalist environment of 1945 Vardar Macedonia, provided a disincentive for the CPM to engage with it. CPM members did not wish to remind themselves that their state-building exercise was still very much a work in progress.

Marinko, in his report, was highly critical of the Political Committee for Aegean Macedonia's ability to be an effective tool for Yugoslav policy in the region. He alleged that "So far, I have seen nothing to show that the [Political Committee] has created anything in organizational terms; certainly they are able to [but they do not]."<sup>533</sup> Marinko made his contempt for the committee clear when he concluded his report by noting that

<sup>530</sup> Marinko, "Miha Marinko, Instruktor Ckpkj U Makedoniji Centralnom Komitetu Kpj," 359.

<sup>531</sup> Ibid.

<sup>532</sup> Given Marinko's unfamiliarity with the language, and his discussion of Greece and Aegean Macedonia, it was unlikely Greek. Bulgarian is a possibility, although given Marinko's earlier concerns about Bulgarian influence he would have reported such a development.

<sup>533</sup> Marinko, "Miha Marinko, Instruktor Ckpkj U Makedoniji Centralnom Komitetu Kpj," 359.

"[... the Political Committee] are all just addled supporters of the Party."<sup>534</sup> This assessment was damning at a time when Marxist ideology was gaining strength in Yugoslavia after having been deliberately understated by the CPY during the early years of the Second World War.<sup>535</sup> Marinko had only involved himself in the affairs of the Aegean Macedonians to head off perceived Bulgarian political gains.<sup>536</sup> The Political Committee for Aegean Macedonia's 'addled' characteristics made them of little use in countering Bulgarian advances in the region, and in fact made them a potential liability.

In fact, Marinko's desire to eliminate Yugoslavia's direct influence on Aegean Macedonia was evident earlier, on 13 March 1945, when he discussed the status of the Aegean Brigade. He regarded the unit as being full of individuals who placed "personal ambition, anarchism, and individualism" above the CPY/CPM's needs.<sup>537</sup> Marinko, therefore, proposed the dramatic solution of breaking the Aegean Brigade into small bands and returning them to Greece to harass and stymie the British advance in northern Greece.<sup>538</sup> Given that such an action could have provoked a conflict between the British and the Yugoslavs, Marinko's proposal reflected his growing frustration with the Slavophone Macedonians and demonstrated his later ambivalence towards their Political Committee. The local 1945 Macedonian elections, however, were another reason for Marinko's desire to expel the Aegean Brigade from Vardar Macedonia.

For the CPY, the critical issues in Yugoslav Macedonia in early 1945 were the local elections, which were delayed until April. Before the CPY dealt with its relationship with the KKE, it had to resolve this issue. The CPY considered it crucial to take every precaution to guarantee a favourable outcome. The Yugoslavs purged Vardar Macedonia of differing opinions, and the election list consisted only of individuals whom the CPY approved.<sup>539</sup> Nevertheless, both the CPM and CPY were concerned about the wartime refugees' ability to influence the elections in a manner that was detrimental to

<sup>534</sup> Ibid.

<sup>535</sup> Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Twentieth Century*, 2 267.

<sup>536</sup> Marinko, "Miha Marinko, Instruktor Ckcpj U Makedoniji Centralnom Komitetu Kpj," 358.

<sup>537</sup> "Miha Marinko, Instruktor Ckcpj U Makedoniji, Centralnom Komitetu Kpj," 87.

<sup>538</sup> Ibid.

<sup>539</sup> Ian Jeffries Robert Bideleux, *The Balkans: A Post-Communist History* (New York: Routledge, 2007) 239.

their interests.<sup>540</sup> Some refugees, however, served both parties' interests better than others.<sup>541</sup>

The CPM and CPY agreed to undertake every action necessary to reintegrate the internally displaced refugees. In a communiqué to the Central Committee of the CPY on 26 February 1945, the Central Committee of the CPM noted that: "For us, the question has been solved; all Yugoslavs in Macedonia who had previously lived here can return that did not participate in the fight against the National Liberation movement."<sup>542</sup> This decision was politically expedient; to do otherwise would have ceded the moral high ground on the national question to Čento and his allies.<sup>543</sup> Furthermore, the CPY's decision was politically astute, as these displaced individuals possessed the right to vote in the forthcoming elections. Essentially, there was no way the CPY could deny Vardar Macedonians the right to return without compromising its domestic position.

The issue of Pirin Macedonia was a thorn in Yugoslav ambitions to integrate Vardar Macedonia into the Yugoslav federation. Yet, it was a manageable issue due to Yugoslavia's postwar dominance of Bulgaria and the BWP. In this context, the refugees from Aegean Macedonia were the primary problem facing the CPY. This was partly the fault of the CPY since it had encouraged the EAM and the KKE in 1944, but later withdrew the endorsement when it no longer supported their political interests. CPY reports throughout January and February 1945 indicated that the KKE's declining position in Greece corresponded to the increased flow of refugees from Aegean

<sup>540</sup> Central Committee of the Communist Party of Macedonia, "Centralni Komitet Kp Makedonije Centralnom Komitetu Kpj," in *Dokumenti Centralnih Organa Kpj nor I Revolucija (1941-1945)*, ed. Branko Vuković (Beograd: Arhiv Jugoslavije, 1945 (1996) (02/27/1945)), 496. The refugees from Aegean Macedonia arrived primarily as a result of the *Dekemvriana* and EAM-ELAS' loss, although some arrived earlier due to the latter's policies towards the Slavophone Macedonians. By mid February there were approximately 10,000 refugees from Greece in

<sup>541</sup> Roughly, based on the pre-war geographical breakdown of 'Greater' Macedonia, one can divide the refugees into three groups: Vardar, Pirin, and Aegean.

<sup>542</sup> Central Committee of the Communist Party of Macedonia, "Centralni Komitet Kp Makedonije Centralnom Komitetu Kpj," in *Dokumenti Centralnih Organa Kpj nor I Revolucija (1941-1945)*, ed. Branko Vuković (Beograd: Arhiv Jugoslavije, 1945 (1996) (26/02/1945)), 485

<sup>543</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 28509/7/10/1945/Αυτονομία Μακεδονία.

Macedonia to Vardar Macedonia.<sup>544</sup> In fact, according to the CPM, by 25 February 1945, there were 10,000 refugees of both Greek and Slavophone Macedonian origin in Yugoslavia. The majority of them were in Vardar Macedonia.<sup>545</sup> In a letter from the same day, the CPM also complained to the Yugoslav leadership about the status of indigenous peasants in Vardar Macedonia and the difficulty authorities would have supporting them.<sup>546</sup> As a result, there were both practical and ideological reasons for removing the Aegean Macedonian refugees. Ideologically, the Aegean Macedonian's pan-Macedonian message – personified by Dimikis – made them more inclined to support Čento's radical ideas. Practically, Vardar Macedonia's war-ravaged economy made supporting a significant refugee population difficult, if not impossible. Removing the refugees from Yugoslav Macedonia served the interests of both the CPM and CPY, and incidentally later helped improve relations between the Yugoslav and Greek communists by eliminating a source of tension.

The CPY's efforts to limit the ability of Aegean Macedonian refugees to affect events continued even after the election had secured the CPM *de-jure* control of Macedonia. On 16 April 1945, Lazar Koliševski became the 1st President of the Executive Council of the People's Republic of Macedonia, which was unsurprising given the CPY/CPM's electoral efforts.<sup>547</sup> The elections reduced Metodija Andonov-Čento to the position of Chairman of the Executive Council, a largely ceremonial position.<sup>548</sup>

<sup>544</sup> Yugoslav Ministry of Information, "Communique Du Ministere Yougoslave Des Informations a L'occasion De La Declaration Du Representant Grec Officiel Concernante La Bannissement Des Slaves En Grece," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1945*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski and Todor Simovski (Skopje: Les Archives de le Macedoine, 1945), 153-54.

<sup>545</sup> Central Committee of the Communist Party of Macedonia, "Centralni Komitet Kp Makedonije Nacionalnom Komitetu Oslobodjenja Jugoslavije Za Edvarda Kardelj," in *Dokumenti Centralnih Organa Kpj nor I Revolucija (1941-1945)*, ed. Branko Vuković (Beograd: Arhiv Jugoslavije, 1945 (1996) (02/25/1945)), 479.

<sup>546</sup> "Centralni Komitet Kp Makedonije Centralnom Komitetu Kpj," in *Dokumenti Centralnih Organa Kpj nor I Revolucija (1941-1945)*, ed. Branko Vuković (Beograd: Arhiv Jugoslavije, 1945 (1996) (02/25/1945)), 478.

<sup>547</sup> Metodija Andonov-Cento, "Decree Appointing the Government of Federal Macedonia," in *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State*, ed. et al. Hristo Andonov-Poljanski (Skopje: University of "Cyril and Methodius", 1945 (1985) (04/16/1945)), 669-70.

<sup>548</sup> Ibid.

Andonov-Čento's demotion, however, was not sufficient for the CPY. As Brown notes, the CPY later forced Andonov-Čento to resign and afterwards imprisoned him.<sup>549</sup> Nevertheless, although the CPM had secured *de-jure* control of the Macedonia, its position was still tenuous from a practical standpoint. On 25 April 1945, the Declaration of the First National Government of Federal Macedonia, the CPY's appointed government, made this point clear with its positive, yet cautious, message about the future of the state.<sup>550</sup>

In recognizing their continued vulnerability, the CPM and CPY decided to create the town of Bulkes. A village run by the KKE in northern Yugoslavia during the Greek Civil War, Bulkes has since become one of the key symbols of how far the KKE was willing to go to win the conflict.<sup>551</sup> The decision to create Bulkes emerged directly from the CPY's desire to isolate the Aegean Macedonian refugees during the Macedonian nation-building process. On 20 April 1945, Aleksandar Ranković wrote to Jovan Veselinov, the Secretary General of the Vojvodina provincial branch of the CPY, and ordered him to "Immediately state where would be the best place in Vojvodina to house the settlers from Greece, which are now in Macedonia."<sup>552</sup> Ranković's direct request for an immediate confirmation was a significant contrast to the implicit tone he used in other correspondence and statements. Nevertheless, it would have been impossible to move the refugees from Aegean Macedonia *en masse*, given their large number. As a result, Ranković narrowed the list to 1,100 for deportation.<sup>553</sup> Transfer of the group to Bulkes, in central Vojvodina, would serve such a function. In addition, moving the KKE's base of

<sup>549</sup> Brown, *The Past in Question: Modern Macedonia and the Uncertainties of Nation* 211. Even the Greek government took note of his fate. See: Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 6393 25/11/1946 Αυτονομίας Μακεδονίας

<sup>550</sup> "Declaration of the First National Government of Federal Macedonia," in *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State*, ed. et al. Hristo Andonov-Poljanski (Skopje: University of "Cyril and Methodius", 1945 (1985) (04/25/1945)), 670-74.

<sup>551</sup> For an analysis of Bulkes and its role in the Greek Civil War see: Ristic, "The Bulkes Experiment: A "Greek Republic" in Yugoslavia 1945-1949," 125-43.

<sup>552</sup> Aleksandar Ranković, "Marko Aleksandar Ranković, Organizacioni Sekretar Ckpkj, Žarku Jovanu Veselinovu, Sekretaru Pkpkj Za Vojvodinu.," in *Dokumenti Centralnih Organa Kpj nor I Revolucija (1941-1945)*, ed. Branko Vuković (Beograd: Izdavački Centar Komunist, 1945 (1996) (04/20/1945)), 426.

<sup>553</sup> Ibid.

operations away from the Macedonian border eliminated a source of tension between the KKE and the CPY, which benefited the latter party. The CPY could continue its state-building exercise in Macedonia, while the KKE had a solid foundation on which to re-establish itself after the disastrous developments in the *Dekemvriana*. Although unlikely that Ranković himself was concerned about the foreign policy dimensions of such a move, he inadvertently helped facilitate improved ties between the KKE and CPY.

Ranković's urgent focus on the presumed risk posed by the 1,100 individuals that he wished to dispatch to Bulkes immediately was the result of the CPY's lack of precise knowledge about the makeup of the Macedonian population throughout 1945. This absence of information even extended to the CPM. In a 7 January 1945 letter to the CPM, the CPY Central Committee requested that the Macedonians "most urgently provide us [...] with information about your leadership and management of all the Provincial Committee."<sup>554</sup> As the Yugoslavs requested the "name, year and place of birth, occupation, nationality, [and] party seniority [...]" of the members of the CPM's provincial committees, the letter demonstrated the CPY's ignorance of the latter to full effect.<sup>555</sup> The CPY's lack of knowledge about the composition of the CPM was the reason why it dispatched Miha Marinko to act as an instructor for the Macedonians. Later reports further underlined the CPY's lack of knowledge about the CPM.<sup>556</sup> In other words, the CPY dictated policy on the Macedonian Question based on the Macedonians' potential to disrupt their plans, rather than on substantive evidence. Although 1,100 individuals represented a small proportion of the total refugees from Greece, they still embodied the CPY's fear of the Macedonian Question. Perception of the Macedonian Question mattered more than reality – which continues to remain true today.

<sup>554</sup> Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, "Centralni Komitet Kpj Centralnim Pokrajinskim I Oblasnim Komitetima," in *Dokumenti Centralnih Organa Kpj nor I Revolucija (1941-1945)*, ed. Branko Vuković (Beograd: Arhiv Jugoslavije, 1945 (1996) (01/07/1945)), 66.

<sup>555</sup> Ibid.

<sup>556</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 28509/7/10/1945/Αυτονομία Μακεδονία 128-131. Politbureau of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, "Zapisnik Sa Sednice Politbiroa Cknpj," in *Dokumenti Centralnih Organa Kpj nor I Revolucija (1941-1945)*, ed. Branko Vuković (Beograd: Izdavački Centar Komunist, 1945 (1996) (04/22/1945)), 439-42.

Two meetings of the CPY's Politburo in March-April 1945 aptly demonstrated the Yugoslavs' fear and lack of understanding about Macedonian nationalism. On 21 March 1945, the CPY Politburo debated whether Metodija Andonov-Čento or DMITAR Vlahov posed the biggest threat to the party in the region.<sup>557</sup> Kardelj argued for Vlahov, whereas Ranković for Čento.<sup>558</sup> Kardelj and Ranković's positions on Vlahov, however, reversed by the second meeting on 22 April 1945. Kardelj suggested that the CPY give Vlahov the authority to "punish the party," while Ranković was adamant that the party needed to address Vlahov's failings.<sup>559</sup> For Ranković, this about-face was likely the result of Marinko's 19 April letter to Ranković, in which the former expressed his misgivings about Vlahov.<sup>560</sup> Nevertheless, Tito refused to assign blame to Vlahov but accepted that "the leadership [of Vlahov and Koliševski] was poor" and suggested that they and a few other members of the CPM's Central Committee should be brought to Belgrade to discuss matters. In other words, Tito's plan was to criticize them for their ideological failings.<sup>561</sup> Three months after acknowledging that it did not have a grasp of the CPM's status in Macedonia, the CPY was no closer to resolving the question of whom to trust in Macedonia than it had previously been. The CPY could not pursue a constructive policy towards the KKE without having a clear knowledge of the current domestic situation in Vardar Macedonia.

While the CPY felt vulnerable on the Macedonian Question in the first half of 1945, its relationship with Greece during this time changed in a manner that made supporting the KKE again a viable option. Ironically, the ELAS' defeat in the *Dekemvriana* was critical to this change. Before the signing of the Varkiza Agreement on 12 February 1945, ELAS controlled northern Greece and, by extension, access to Vardar Macedonia.<sup>562</sup> The signing of the Varkiza Agreement and the disarming of ELAS

<sup>557</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 28509/7/10/1945/Αυτονομία Μακεδονία.

<sup>558</sup> Ibid.

<sup>559</sup> "Zapisnik Sa Sednice Politbiroa Ckcpj," 440.

<sup>560</sup> Miha Marinko, "Miha Marinko, Instruktor Ckcpj U Makedoniji, Marku Aleksandru Rankoviću, Organizacionom Sekretaru Ckcpj," *ibid.* (Arhiv Jugoslavije, 1945 (1996) (04/19/1945)), 420.

<sup>561</sup> Politbureau of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, "Zapisnik Sa Sednice Politbiroa Ckcpj," *ibid.* (Izdavački Centar Komunist, 1945 (1996) (04/22/1945)), 440.

<sup>562</sup> Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949* 111. Gerolymatos, *Red Acropolis, Black Terror: The Greek Civil War and the Origins of Soviet-American Rivalry, 1943-1949* 182.



meant that the Greek government – and by extension, the British government – were now in control of the approaches to Vardar Macedonia. As early as 11 March 1945, even before the Greek government had reasserted effective control over northern Greece, Lazar Koliševski complained to the CPY that the British had twice tried to cross the border and enter Yugoslav Macedonia in the previous three days.<sup>563</sup> The next day, Marinko proposed to the Central Committee of the CPY his fantastical idea of using the Aegean Brigade against the British in Greece.<sup>564</sup> Marinko's idea was outside the realm of possibility but it was also indicative of the extent of the CPY's concern about British activities during this period.<sup>565</sup> This apprehension contributed to the CPY and CPM shifting their rhetorical attacks towards the Greek government, which the Yugoslavs argued was a tool of British interests in the region.<sup>566</sup>

The CPY and CPM took the opportunity presented by these developments to contend that the Greek government was the cause of the Macedonian nation's problems. Although Vukmanović-Tempo was not known for his subtlety, he was particularly blunt in his assessment of Aegean Macedonia in a 2 August 1945 speech he made to the people of Skopje. In that speech, Vukmanović-Tempo declared: "Comrades, you know very well that there is a part of the Macedonian people which is still enslaved. We must openly state this case. We are not the only ones to do this; there are tens of thousands of Macedonian men and women who suffer today under the yoke of the Greek monarcho-fascist bands."<sup>567</sup> Vukmanović-Tempo's use of the term 'monarcho-fascist bands' represented a significant shift from his previous critiques of the Greek communists. Having been one of the KKE's most explicit critics, Vukmanović-Tempo was now one of its supporters. His speech represented the ongoing tendency of the CPY to rehabilitate the KKE in light of growing civic distress in Greece.

<sup>563</sup> Lazar Koliševski, "Lazo Lazar Koliševski Sekretar Ckcp Makedonije Centralnom Komitetu Kpj," in *Dokumenti Centralnih Organa Kpj nor I Revolucija (1941-1945)*, ed. Branko Vuković (Beograd: Izdavački Centar Komunist, 1945 (1996) (03/11/1945)), 38.

<sup>564</sup> Miha Marinko, "Miha Marinko, Instruktor Ckcpj U Makedoniji, Centralnom Komitetu Kpj," *ibid.* (1945 (1996) (03/14/1945)), 87.

<sup>565</sup> Kofos, "The Impact of the Macedonian Question on Civil Conflict in Greece," 295.

<sup>566</sup> For a good, if somewhat dated, analysis of Yugoslavia's foreign policy during the 1940s see: Duncan Wilson, *Tito's Yugoslavia* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1979) 32-48.

<sup>567</sup> Svetozar Vukmanovic-Tempo, *Bulletin (Skopje)*, 10 August 1945.

Two speeches given by Tito in late 1945 demonstrated that the CPY's proclamations during this period – which Greek accounts have used to argue that the Yugoslavs were engaged in machinations in northern Greece – were, in fact, more concerned with the domestic audience. Tito made his first speech at the founding congress of the CPS. In it, Tito stated that “Neither we nor the current Greek government want to work closer together because they broke the Greek people, as the forces of ELAS were despoiled and tens of thousands of the best sons of the Greek people were thrown into prison.”<sup>568</sup> While Tito cited the Greek government's attack on the ELAS as the primary reason for the difficulties between the Greek and Yugoslav governments, he hinted at its relationship to Macedonia when he added: “But the provocation of the Greek [government] with [their] geographic maps says that they [...] are idiots.”<sup>569</sup> Tito's reference to the issue of Greek nationalist maps disputing Yugoslav dominance was not new, as Djilas had referred to it as one of the major provocations in November 1944.<sup>570</sup> This time, however, the actions of the Greek government had given the CPY the chance to rehabilitate the Greek left. The fact that this speech was given in Serbia and away from Macedonia, where it would have been necessary, strongly indicates its importance to Tito's calculations on the Macedonian Question.

The points that Tito emphasized when he discussed the Macedonian Question in Skopje on 12 October 1945 were entirely different. In that speech, he stated:

*Some Greater Macedonian advocates appeared, who took the liberty of speaking in your name, and spoke, as you have no right to speak. You must speak – it is your duty to say whether you have achieved your rights by your blood. There are some people in Bulgaria who are composing memoranda and sending them to the Great Powers, demanding the unity of Macedonia – that is of Perinian, Aegean, and Vardarian Macedonia, under the protection of the foreign Powers.*<sup>571</sup>

<sup>568</sup> Josip Broz Tito, "Govor Josipa Broza Tita Na Osnivačkom Kongresu Komunističke Partije Srbije," in *Dokumenti Centralnih Organa Kpj nor I Revolucija (1941-1945)*, ed. Branko Vuković (Beograd: Izdavački Centar Komunist, 1945 (1996) (05/12/1945)), 598.

<sup>569</sup> Ibid. 599.

<sup>570</sup> "Zapisnik Sa Sednice Politbiroa Ckkpj," *ibid.*, ed. Milovan Dželebdžić (1944 (1987) (11/16/44)), 125-126.

<sup>571</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 24581/A/Γιουγκοσλαυια/30-10-45; *ibid.*

Rather than refusing to acknowledge that Macedonian irredentism existed, Tito instead highlighted the problematic nature of the Bulgarian version of it. He fuelled Macedonian nationalist sentiment by arguing that the Macedonians had appealed to the Great Powers for protection and were therefore incapable of defending themselves. Given that Macedonia had been the subject of Great Power manipulations since the middle of the nineteenth century, such an argument was bound to resonate amongst the population.<sup>572</sup> Thus, Tito's aggressive tone was not the result of his desires for Greece. Quite the contrary, it reflected his intention to solidify the party's control of Vardar Macedonia.

In the remainder of the speech, Tito emphasized the notion that Yugoslavia served the Macedonian nation's interests better than any competing force. Immediately after demonstrating the weakness of the Bulgarian position, he argued: "[The CPY] will never renounce the right of the Macedonian people to be united. This is our principle and we do not abandon our principles for temporary sympathies."<sup>573</sup> Tito further stated: "In international relations, Yugoslavia is well placed. If you compare today's Yugoslavia with the Versailles Yugoslavia, you will see the difference. Today, we are respected by the majority in all Allied countries. They admire our heroism."<sup>574</sup> Yugoslavia, in other words, would always allow Macedonian nationalists to pursue their objective of integrating all Macedonian peoples into one state. In addition, Yugoslavia, as an Allied Power, was in a significantly better position to help the Macedonian nationalists achieve the goal of integration than Bulgaria, which was in a much weaker position as a defeated member of the Axis. Tito, Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo, and D Mitar Vlahov constantly reiterated

<sup>572</sup> The Communist Party of Macedonia, at the peak of Macedonian irredentism, acknowledged the influence of the Great Powers. Furthermore, NOF's invocation of the Great Powers made the message particularly poignant. See: "Proclamation to the People of Macedonia Issued by the Communist Party of Macedonia," NOF, "Proclamation De La Direction Principale Du Fln Au Peuple Dans La Macedoine D'eege Et Aux Gouvernements Des Etats Allies Relative a La Terreur Sur Les Macedoniens Par Les Autorites Grecques," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1945*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski and Todor Simovski (Skopje: Les Archives de le Macedoine, 1945), 108.

<sup>573</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 24581/A/Γιουγκοσλαβια/30-10-45

<sup>574</sup> Ibid.

these points throughout 1945 and 1946.<sup>575</sup> In doing so, the Yugoslav leaders sought to show that the Yugoslav state served the best interests of the Macedonian nation, while the Bulgarian state did not. As 1945 ended, Yugoslavia presented itself as the only power that worked to build a maximalist Macedonian state. In this way, Tito provided a justification to the Macedonian nationalists for becoming involved in Greece.

The foundation for the aid that Yugoslavia would provide the KKE, and later its armed wing the Democratic Army of Greece (DAG), were allegedly established in the town of Petrich along the Greek-Bulgarian border on 15 December 1945. At Petrich, representatives of the Bulgarian, Greek, and Yugoslav Communist Parties met to coordinate policy.<sup>576</sup> Although minutes of the meeting are not available, O'Ballance argues that the CPY promised to support the KKE in its insurgency.<sup>577</sup> Furthermore, Shrader states that the participants made Aleksandar Ranković, who represented the Yugoslavs in their efforts to aid the Greek communists in their insurgency campaign, responsible for coordinating support between the parties.<sup>578</sup> Ranković was the Minister of Internal Affairs of Yugoslavia and the Chief of the Department of National Security (OZNA), which demonstrated that because of the Macedonian Question, the Yugoslavs assessed their need for support from both domestic and foreign perspectives.<sup>579</sup> The three countries nominally came together in support of the Greek communists during this period, but it was another instance in which the ascendancy of the CPY was on display. By late 1945, the CPY had fully assumed the position of first-among-equals in the

<sup>575</sup> Ibid, Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo, "Žasto Su Pobili Makedonski Komunisti (Kongres Kp Makedonije)," in *Dokumenti 1948*, ed. Vladimir Dedijer (Beograd: Izdavačka Radna Organizacija "Rad", 1948 (1979) (12/29/1948)), 623-7. For Vlahov's speeches, see: Dimitar Vlahov, *Govori I Stati, 1945-1947* (Skopje 1947) *Passim*.

<sup>576</sup> Shrader, *The Withered Vine: Logistics and the Communist Insurgency in Greece, 1945-1949* 173.

<sup>577</sup> O'Ballance, *The Greek Civil War: 1944-1949* 121.

<sup>578</sup> Shrader, *The Withered Vine: Logistics and the Communist Insurgency in Greece, 1945-1949* 173.

<sup>579</sup> There remains considerable debate about whether the Petrich Meeting actually occurred, as the main source of information about it is considered circumspect at best. It has, however, been generally confirmed that meetings to this effect were taking place in late 1945, even if the exact details of the Petrich Meeting can be debated. See: Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949* 155; O'Ballance, *The Greek Civil War: 1944-1949* 121.

communist world just below the Soviet Union.<sup>580</sup> Even the BWP, which had previously been the most influential communist party in the world outside the USSR due to Georgi Dimitrov, yielded to the CPY in numerous areas, most notably in regards to Macedonia.<sup>581</sup>

It is important to note that there is a considerable scholarly debate about the Petrich Meeting. Some scholars, with Woodhouse being the most prominent among them, argue that the meeting never occurred.<sup>582</sup> These arguments hinge on the fact that the French journalist who reported it never acknowledged whether or not Stalin sent a message to the meeting. Woodhouse argues that such a letter was a requirement for any agreement between communist parties.<sup>583</sup> This line of argumentation, however, presumes that Yugoslav support for the KKE was contingent upon the USSR's approval. The CPY, however, demonstrated several times over the course of the war, as well as numerous times after it ended, that it conducted affairs outside the aegis and/or knowledge of the CPSU. Furthermore, as Djilas notes in *Conversations with Stalin*, one of the issues of Yugoslav policy that particularly aggravated the Soviets throughout the second half of the 1940s was the CPY's tendency to conclude agreements with other parties and only inform the USSR of them after the fact.<sup>584</sup> Thus, Woodhouse bases his arguments on a false presupposition. With this in mind, and barring evidence to the contrary, one has to assume that the general parameters of the reported meeting are accurate.

Now that the CPY possessed greater control of the Macedonian Question, it took its role as the KKE's benefactor very seriously in 1946. In an early spring 1946 letter to Aleksandar Ranković, Milovan Djilas described the CPY's objective in Greece as an effort "to increase the [ongoing] partisan movement [in Greece] as well as its

<sup>580</sup> Perović, "The Tito-Stalin Split: A Reassessment in Light of New Evidence," *Passim*.

<sup>581</sup> Georgi Dimitrov, *The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov – 1933-1949* (London: Yale University Press, 2003) 419-39.

<sup>582</sup> Woodhouse, in particular, was not convinced that the meeting took place. See: Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949* 155.

<sup>583</sup> *Ibid.* 155.

<sup>584</sup> Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin* 179.

supplies.”<sup>585</sup> Given that Ranković was allegedly the CPY member in charge of supplying the KKE with arms and equipment, his letter provides incidental evidence supporting the claim that the Petrich Meeting did occur in December 1945.<sup>586</sup> Regardless, Djilas noted he had provided the KKE with all the means available for it to conduct its work against the Greek government and that “it would be necessary [for the CPY] to enable them to work immediately.”<sup>587</sup> Djilas’ sense of urgency indicates that the CPY did everything within its power to ensure the KKE’s success in the forthcoming Greek Civil War. Djilas’ new stance also represented a significant deviation from his policy in November 1944, where he expressed his willingness to consign the KKE to defeat.<sup>588</sup> Tito succeeded in rehabilitating not only the KKE in Yugoslav society but also the party as a whole.

Critical to the CPY’s improved relationship with the KKE in 1946 was its ability to minimize the role of the Macedonian Question in interparty relations. Yugoslavia’s first post-war constitution in 1946 helped accomplish the task of placating the Macedonian nationalists. The Constitution not only granted the central state new and extensive powers but also helped smooth over existing tensions between the ethnic groups through its emphasis on equality.<sup>589</sup> With its domestic position solidified, the CPY could give nationalist agitators like Vlahov more leeway than they had in the past. Palmer and King claim that the Yugoslav authorities kept Vlahov “solely for window dressing” while they purged other radicals like Andonov-Čento. The degree of difficulty that Tito previously went to acquire and keep Vlahov, however, contradicts their argument.<sup>590</sup> Vlahov served a purpose, and the Greek government became fully acquainted with it. Dalietos, Greece’s representative in Belgrade, reported that the 21 January 1946 issue of *Politika* covered Vlahov’s attendance at the Federal Chamber of the Constitutional Assembly. It stated:

<sup>585</sup> 507 IX CKSKJ 33/I-17.

<sup>586</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, 507 IX CKSKJ 33/I-17

<sup>587</sup> Ibid.

<sup>588</sup> *Politika*, 8 November 1944.

<sup>589</sup> Aleksa Djilas, *The Contested Country: Yugoslav Unity and the Communist Revolution, 1919-1953* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1991) 162-65.

<sup>590</sup> Stephen E. Palmer Jr., *Yugoslav Communism and the Macedonian Question*. 137.

*[...] at the end of his speech, [Vlahov] explained the situation in which the Slavic minority of Aegean Macedonia found itself, and underlined the terror that was applied to Slavs in this region. He notably insisted that the antinational politics of the Greek governments in Aegean Macedonia have had the consequence of expelling 250,000 Macedonians, which has completely transformed the ethnic composition of the region.*<sup>591</sup>

Vlahov's numbers are certainly debatable but were useful in demonstrating the Greek state's alleged persecution of the Aegean Macedonians. In this sense, the veracity of the numbers mattered less than the Yugoslav demonstration, through Vlahov, that they served the Macedonian nation's best interests

In a meeting of the party's Central Committee early in the spring of 1946, the CPY recognized that "strengthening our influence [in Aegean Macedonia] comes at the expense of the Greek parties."<sup>592</sup> As it had been during the Second World War, the dynamics of the Macedonian Question were as much a nuisance as a benefit for the CPY. Its Central Committee noted that the NOF had made significant gains in areas such as Voden, largely through Yugoslav efforts. There were, however, some "unhealthy phenomena and weaknesses in [NOF's] organization."<sup>593</sup> The specific issues that the CPY cited as a problem in the NOF were not new to their critiques of the Macedonian Question. The CPY leadership focused on the "factionalism and conspiratorial [actions] in the leadership."<sup>594</sup> In other words, the NOF presented the same problem as previous political manifestations of the Macedonian Question. The CPY succeeded in inciting the NOF to greater nation-building exercises, as it did the CPM. Yet, both developed beyond what the Yugoslavs' had the ability to regulate. Traikov, Skopje's commandant at this time, noted that the emergence of the NOF in Aegean Macedonia was a problem for the CPY as it affected Skopje.<sup>595</sup> In other words, the CPY had to keep NOF's activities within Greece to prevent them from disrupting their state-building exercise.

<sup>591</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 85417 21-2-46

<sup>592</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 35073 31/12/1946 Αυσ. Μακεδονίας

<sup>593</sup> Ibid.

<sup>594</sup> Ibid.

<sup>595</sup> Ibid.

The emergence of civil conflict in Greece provided the CPY with a way to effectively redirect the growing Macedonian nationalist sentiment away from its interests in the People's Republic of Macedonia. CPY officials feared that the Greek right would conduct a military coup after the predicted electoral defeat of the left.<sup>596</sup> It viewed the elections through a Macedonian lens, although this seemed counterintuitive. The CPY recognized that the Slavophone Macedonians were liable to revolt due to Greek government persecution, especially if the right won.<sup>597</sup> For the CPY, the only way to maintain control of such a revolutionary sentiment was to be at its forefront.

Throughout the remainder of 1946, the CPY intended for its speeches to redirect Macedonian nationalist sentiment towards the problems in Greece, rather than Yugoslavia. Tito's 1 April 1946 exposé on foreign affairs demonstrated the CPY's increased control over the Macedonian Question. The way in which external actors misinterpreted his comments, which were intended for domestic consumption, also factored into CPY control. Tito aspired for Yugoslavia "to concentrate all our energies in order that Yugoslavia may realize her rights, both those which were denied to her at the end of the last war, [...] as well as those which come out of this war and are based on the tremendous sacrifices and damage suffered by our country, our peoples."<sup>598</sup> The Greek government mistook the last portion of Tito's statement as an expression of hostile intent, rather than seeing that it aimed to give the people of Yugoslavia a cause to rally behind.<sup>599</sup> This misinterpretation by the Greek government was entirely understandable, as Tito's public assessment of Greek-Yugoslav relations was not optimistic. He stated:

*Our relations with Greece are normal, but our Government is carefully following developments in that country. It would certainly be of great benefit to lasting peace and cooperation between the Balkan nations, if Greece were speedily to overcome the present crises, and the Greek*

<sup>596</sup> Ibid.

<sup>597</sup> Ibid.

<sup>598</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archives, 16341 Γιουγκοσλ. Τιτο 26/4/46

<sup>599</sup> Ibid.



*people were to enjoy the benefits of genuine democracy, which they have deserved through their sufferings and sacrifices.*<sup>600</sup>

Tito's proclamation contained nothing overtly aggressive, likely because it was to receive worldwide coverage. Nevertheless, his comment about "genuine democracy" and his assertion of what the Greeks "deserved through their sufferings and sacrifices" implicitly demonstrated his support for the KKE against the Greek government. The CPY often used the term "genuine democracy" and extolled the sacrifices of the Greek people, which contrasted them with the actions of the Greek government.<sup>601</sup>

The CPY also used its newfound powers as the legitimate ruling party to assert increased control over the People's Republic of Macedonia. The measures the CPY used to obtain this power, however, were extreme. George Clutton, First Secretary to the British Embassy in Belgrade, reported that the Yugoslav authorities oppressed eleven members of the *Democratic Front of Macedonia - Ilinden 1903*, a secret society "responsible for drafting a memorandum in favour of the creation of a separate Macedonia, to include Bulgarian and Greek Macedonia."<sup>602</sup> The CPY gave each member a lengthy prison sentence. Clutton astutely recognized that the CPY viewed the society's vision as particularly problematic because "the creation at this stage of a large autonomous Macedonian State might well endanger the position of the present highly centralized Government of Belgrade."<sup>603</sup> Unfortunately for the British, Clutton never completely connected Yugoslavia's rhetorical actions towards Greece to its policy of integrating Vardar Macedonia into the Yugoslav federation.<sup>604</sup> While the British government recognized that Yugoslav policy was part of a "war of nerves," they never

<sup>600</sup> Ibid.

<sup>601</sup> The Yugoslavs often liked to extoll the fact that they were responsible for their own liberation where as Greece, they argued, owed its to Britain. This criticism even extended to the KKE. See: Vukmanović-Tempo, *Struggle for the Balkans* 77, 107-14, 161-64.

<sup>602</sup> Mr. Clutton, "Mr. Clutton to Mr. Bevin," in *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print*, ed. Paul Preston and Michael Partridge (University Publications of America, 1946), 523.

<sup>603</sup> Ibid.

<sup>604</sup> Livianos, *The Macedonian Question: Britain and the Southern Balkans 1939-1949* 209-34.

connected it to Yugoslavia's policy towards Macedonia.<sup>605</sup> Consequently, the British could not influence the Greek government to recognize the action as such.

In 1946, Dmítar Vlahov was the CPY's best weapon for antagonizing the Greeks and highlighting their Macedonian nationalist credentials. The CPY's increased control of the Macedonian Question in the second half of 1945 and 1946 meant that Tito's original goal of using Vlahov to help integrate Macedonia into the Yugoslav federation was now a distinct reality. Alexander Dalietos, Greece's ambassador to Yugoslavia, reported that a 17 April 1946 issue of *Borba* extolled how "the Vice President of the National Assembly of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, Dmítar Vlahov [...] visited refugees from Aegean Macedonia."<sup>606</sup> By linking Dmítar Vlahov to his position as Vice President of Yugoslavia, *Borba* and *Politika* connected Vlahov's actions to Tito's contention that Yugoslavia best served Macedonian interests. Furthermore, in the *Borba* article, Vlahov reiterated points made in the earlier *Politika* article when he criticized the Greek government for the "monarchofascist terror" it perpetrated against the people.<sup>607</sup> As noted, one of the KKE's complaints in the *Dekemvriana* was that *Borba* and *Politika* had differing opinions.<sup>608</sup> The fact that both newspapers emphasized the same points demonstrated that the CPY exerted increased control over Yugoslavia's domestic position. As a result, the CPY was able to take the KKE's concerns regarding the Macedonian Question into consideration.

Vlahov's comment about monarchofascist terror, however, was a mild rebuke of the Greek government in comparison to his actions at the Paris Peace Conference. The CPY demonstrated its newfound trust in Vlahov by giving him an international forum to convey his views on the Macedonian Question. Vlahov did not disappoint Macedonian nationalists in his speech to reporters. Evidently, he also did not disappoint his Yugoslav

<sup>605</sup> Mr. Bevin, "Mr. Bevin to Sir C. Norton," in *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print*, ed. Paul Preston and Michael Partridge (University Publications of America, 1946 (9 September)), 57.

<sup>606</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 17119 Γιουγκοσλ. Τίτο 8/5/46

<sup>607</sup> Ibid.

<sup>608</sup> Giannis, "La Lettre De Yanis a Andreas Jimas Dans Laquelle Il L'informe De La Rection D'epon En Yougoslavie, De La Declaration Du Marechal Tito Concernant Les Evenements En Grece, Des Informations Dans La Presse Yougoslavie Etc.," 359-60.

handlers, as *Borba* published his entire speech on 19 September 1946. Vlahov began his speech by stating he “would speak to [the Paris Peace Conference] as president of a popular front of the [People’s Republic of Macedonia] which, with its 350,000 members represents all the Macedonians of this part of Macedonia.”<sup>609</sup> Vlahov not only established his credentials but also emphasized that the Macedonian nation-building exercise was not yet complete. He then argued: “The representatives of the Greek government have exposed in front of the peace conference that their territorial pretensions on Bulgaria and Albania are completely without foundation.”<sup>610</sup> Vlahov used the 1912 demographic statistics from these regions to claim that only 23% of the area’s population was Greek.<sup>611</sup> The veracity of Vlahov’s statements were dubious, but they resonated with the Macedonian population in its quest for national legitimacy.<sup>612</sup> Vlahov concluded that the only way that the Macedonian “apple of discord” could be permanently resolved was through the creation of a Balkan Federation.<sup>613</sup> Throughout the entirety of his speech, Vlahov not only appeased Macedonian nationalists but also linked their aspirations to the creation of a Balkan Federation – something that Tito earlier stated only Yugoslavia could accomplish – due to its favourable post-war position.

Vlahov was not alone in advancing an irredentist vision of Macedonia. He was simply the most prominent individual to do so. Dalietos, in his post as ambassador, reported other instances of notable people within Yugoslavia propagating a Macedonian nationalist vision. In the 26 August 1946 edition of *Borba*, he noted that the newspaper argued that the Greek government sought to “cleanse” Aegean Macedonia of the “Macedonians and democratic Greeks.”<sup>614</sup> This article is significant not only because it showed that the CPY produced its arguments solely for domestic consumption, but also because it demonstrated that the CPY had fully rehabilitated the KKE. Instead of restating Tito’s earlier vague statements about the Greek people, the article instead equated the ‘democratic Greeks’ (i.e. the KKE) with the Slavophone Macedonians

<sup>609</sup> 27630 Αυτονομίας Μακεδονίας 25-9-46

<sup>610</sup> Ibid.

<sup>611</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 17119 Γιουγκοσλ. Τίτο 8/5/46

<sup>612</sup> Ibid.

<sup>613</sup> 27630 Αυτονομίας Μακεδονίας 25-9-46; *ibid.*

<sup>614</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 1645 27/08/1946 Αυτονομίας Μακεδονίας

themselves. The reason that the CPY adopted this stance becomes evident when one compares this statement to the rhetoric of Kiro Gligorov, a finance commissioner, in this period. In 1946, the CPY regarded Gligorov, the future president of FYROM in the 1990s, as suspect due to his nationalist policies. In a 27 August 1946 article of *Borba*, Gligorov stated:

*If we take a look at the history of the Macedonian people [...] we will see that what is happening now in Aegean Macedonia is the continuation in full measure methods of denationalization, looting and the Macedonian population that chauvinists and the Greek Imperialists applied from mid-nineteenth century to the present day against the Macedonian people.*<sup>615</sup>

Although this statement was similar to Vlahov's proclamations, and Gligorov later acknowledged that the EAM/ELAS and the Macedonians were mutually beneficial to one another, the conclusion to his article demonstrates why Yugoslavia needed to maintain an aggressive posture in 1946. Gligorov stated: "The new Yugoslavia cannot be a silent spectator of what happens to our brothers who, through their struggle, acquired the right to self-determination and the right to unite with their brothers in Yugoslavia."<sup>616</sup> Yugoslavia was just a means to an end for Macedonian nationalists like Gligorov. Furthermore, the CPY had to consider the nationalists' role within society, given the level of influence that they exerted. As Koliševski, Yugoslavia's point man in Macedonia explained to the First Congress of the Popular Front of the People's Republic of Macedonia in the summer of 1946: "[the Yugoslav Macedonians] cannot indifferently consider the suffering of the Macedonians and the allied Greek people of Aegean Macedonia."<sup>617</sup> If Yugoslavia could not address the Slavophone Macedonians' plight, the Macedonian people would seek new means of obtaining the goal of unity. Beyond the ideological function of assisting a fellow communist party, Yugoslavia had a vested interest in exporting its Macedonian problem to Greece, and, incidentally, in fuelling the Greek Civil War.

<sup>615</sup> Ibid.

<sup>616</sup> Ibid.

<sup>617</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 1466 08/08/1946 Αυτονομίας Μακεδονίας

The CPY used Macedonian angst over the division of their people between Yugoslavia, Greece, and Bulgaria to explain shortcomings in the country. In 1946, Vardar Macedonia was amongst the least developed regions in Yugoslavia.<sup>618</sup> While this was largely the result of the Yugoslav state's interwar policies, the CPY attempted to portray it as a consequence of the 'unnatural' boundaries between the Macedonian regions. According to an August edition of *Borba*, the artificial division of Macedonia that separated the port of Thessaloniki from its hinterland was the actual cause of Vardar Macedonia's relative economic backwardness.<sup>619</sup> The strength of this argument was evident when Dimitar Vlahov reiterated it.<sup>620</sup> Even the British – who were not sympathetic to the idea of Yugoslavia incorporating Aegean Macedonia – noted that Vlahov's "best points (in regards to Macedonian irredentist claims) [were] scored when [the Yugoslavs turned] to economic history and the disastrous consequences in that respect of the partition of Macedonia and the establishment of the present Greek frontier."<sup>621</sup> Aegean Macedonia made an effective scapegoat for the CPY when it tried to explain Vardar Macedonia's economic woes in the post-war period. This explanation thus provided another point for Yugoslavia's dominance over the Macedonian Question. Only Yugoslavia, according to the CPY, was in a position to seize Aegean Macedonia and restore Vardar Macedonia to economic prosperity. Both the domestic audience and international community accepted that viewpoint and the Yugoslavs would not stop reiterating it, even if it proved embarrassing for its KKE allies.

## 5.2. NOF and its development in 1945

During the spring of 1945, the National Liberation Front (NOF), a Slavophone Macedonian nationalist organization based in Greece, emerged concurrently with the CPY's efforts to assert control over the Macedonian Question. In the wake of the EAM's

<sup>618</sup> The average income in Macedonia in 1947, relative to the rest of Yugoslavia, was on 62% of the Yugoslav average. The only region whose per-capita income was lower was Kosovo. See Fred Singleton and Bernard Carter, *The Economy of Yugoslavia* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1982) 221.

<sup>619</sup> Mr. Peake to Mr. Bevin R 13507/298/67.

<sup>620</sup> Ibid.

<sup>621</sup> Belgrade Chancery to Southern Department, "Macedonian Problem" R 8828/407/92.

defeat in the *Dekemvriana*, Paskal Mitrovski, Mihail Keramidzhiev, Georgi Urdov, Atanas Koroveshov, Pavle Rakovski, Mincho Fotev and other Macedonian intellectuals sought to re-establish a Slavophone Macedonian organization in Aegean Macedonia. Greek accounts commonly portray these individuals as a collective group and scholars such as Raymond Alvanos claim that they were all members of Gotse's "Slavic communist group."<sup>622</sup> In truth, they represented a variety of perspectives. The Greek government's persecution of the Slavic minority created a mutual bond for individuals whose other sole affiliation was their Slavic identity.<sup>623</sup> Thus, on 23 April 1945, they formed the NOF to resist monarcho-fascist aggression (in other words, resist the Greek government) and to preserve the Slavic minority in Greece.<sup>624</sup> It quickly transitioned from an organization focused on self-protection to one with irredentist claims.<sup>625</sup> Operating independently of the KKE and the remnants of the EAM, the NOF would complicate matters for both parties throughout 1945 and 1946 by espousing revolutionary violence as the means of obtaining Slavophone Macedonian rights and self-determination. This belief not only went against the KKE's policies in 1945, but it also meant that the KKE had to reconcile with NOF to gain the support of the CPY in 1946.

Throughout 1945, the NOF's primary concern was countering the Greek government's persecution of the Slavophone Macedonians, which occurred concurrently with the White Terror. The exact extent of the persecution of the Slavic minority is subject to wide-ranging historical debate, like most aspects of the Macedonian Question.<sup>626</sup> The NOF, however, was certain in its perception that the Greek state, and to a lesser extent the KKE and the remnants of the EAM, persecuted the Slavophone

<sup>622</sup> Alvanos, "Les Choix Politiques Des Slavophones De Macedoine Dans La Guerre Civile Grecque," 7.

<sup>623</sup> Banac, *With Stalin against Tito: Cominformist Splits in Yugoslav Communism* 36.

<sup>624</sup> "Les Archives de la Macedonine" - (The Constitution of NLF).

<sup>625</sup> The nature of this transition is open to considerable dispute, depending upon the historiographic school of the historian. For an example of the Greek school, see: Koliopoulos, *Plundered Loyalties: World War II and Civil War in Greek West Macedonia Passim*. For the Macedonian school see: Rossos, "Incompatible Allies: Greek Communism and Macedonian Nationalism in Greece, 1943-1949," 42-76.

<sup>626</sup> For two of the extremes within the field, albeit with more academic rigour than most, see: Koliopoulos, *Plundered Loyalties: World War II and Civil War in Greek West Macedonia* 169-219 and Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians: A History* Kindle Edition.

Macedonians. Its perception that even its supposed ideological allies on the left oppressed the Slavophone Macedonians during this period further radicalized the organization. As a result, the NOF advanced extremist means of pursuing Macedonian self-determination. This was a means that conflicted, as we shall see, with the KKE's objectives in this period.

Beginning in June of 1945, the NOF systematically documented both real and perceived instances of terror performed by the Greek authorities against the Slavophone Macedonian population in Greece.<sup>627</sup> Initially, these documents spoke in general terms and placed emphasis on the rights of peoples as outlined in the Atlantic Charter.<sup>628</sup> A focus on the general rights of the Slavophone Macedonian people made sense from a propaganda standpoint, especially considering the 'Big Three' were preparing to meet at Potsdam to sort out the outstanding issues of the post-war world.<sup>629</sup> Furthermore, the NOF's stress on generalized statements speaks to the fact that it was still developing its grassroots base as an organization. The NOF was an organization founded by intellectuals, and as such, not representative of the large rural Slavophone Macedonian

<sup>627</sup> "Proclamation Du Conseil Departmental De L'epon Pour La Region De Florina Au Peuple, Relative a La Terreur Contre Les Habitants Democratiques Par La Droite Et Par Les Organes Du Gouvernement," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1945*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski and Todor Simovski (Skopje: Les Archives de le Macedoine, 1945), 104-05; NOF, "Proclamation De La Direction Principale Du Fln Au Peuple Dans La Macedoine D'egée Et Aux Gouvernements Des Etats Allies Relative a La Terreur Sur Les Macedoniens Par Les Autorites Grecques," *ibid.*, 104-05. This was a key phase in the White Terror. See: Βασιλική Λάζου, "Η Συγκρότηση Και Η Δράση Της Εθνοφυλακής. Νοέμβριος 1944 – Σεπτέμβριος 1945: Η Περίπτωση Της Λαμίας," *Κλειώ. Περιοδική έκδοση για τη νεότερη ιστορία* 3 (2006) 63-95.

<sup>628</sup> NOF, "Proclamation De La Direction Principale Du Fln Au Peuple Dans La Macedoine D'egée Et Aux Gouvernements Des Etats Allies Relative a La Terreur Sur Les Macedoniens Par Les Autorites Grecques," 108.

<sup>629</sup> These arguments, in particular, appealed to the United States, the 'swing-vote' of the Big Three concerning the Balkans. For an assessment of US policy during this period see: Michael Neiberg, *Potsdam: The End of World War II and the Remaking of Europe* (New York: Basic Books, 2015) 23-46.

population that made up its natural constituency.<sup>630</sup> As a result, the NOF had to rely upon general pronouncements that were straightforward enough that the majority of the Slavophone Macedonians could understand them. In other words, the simpler and more direct the message, the better.

As the NOF developed a grassroots organization, its reports of persecutions by the Greek government became more detailed. In July 1945, for example, the NOF proclaimed, "20,000 Macedonians were forced to escape to free Yugoslavia."<sup>631</sup> The NOF inflated this number, as the CPM's number at the peak of the refugee crisis was 10,000. Presenting such a high number, however, lent credence to the NOF's argument about the general persecution of the Slavophone Macedonians.<sup>632</sup> The peasants NOF sought to convert, furthermore, could not check the numbers. A report by Vangel Ajanovski-Oče to the NOF's Central Committee on 27 August 1945 describes the government's massacre of the village of Meglensko in detail.<sup>633</sup> Reports by NOF officials throughout the remainder of the year followed this pattern of detailing the government's campaign of terror against the Slavophone Macedonian people. They increasingly named specific individuals and villages to convey the severity of the Greek government's

<sup>630</sup> The Greek government, for example, had settled refugees from Asia Minor in the rural sections of northern Greece in part because of the disproportionate number of Slavs that lived there as opposed to in the cities. Little had changed since Greece finished its program in the early 1929, although precise numbers are difficult to obtain due to the numbers issue that plagues all aspects of the Macedonian Question. See: Kontogiorgi, *Population Exchange in Greek Macedonia: The Rural Settlement of Refugees, 1922-1930* 200-30. Alvanos, "Les Choix Politiques Des Slavophones De Macedoine Dans La Guerre Civile Grecque," 3.

<sup>631</sup> "Proclamation De La Direction Principale Du Fln Aux Macedoniens, Grecques Et Valaques Dans Laquelle Ils Sont Appelles De Saboter La Mobilisation Annoncee Par Le Gouvernement Grec," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1945*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski and Todor Simovski (Skopje: Les Archives de le Macedoine, 1945), 202-03.

<sup>632</sup> Macedonia, "Centralni Komitet Kp Makedonije Nacionalnom Komitetu Oslobodjenja Jugoslavije Za Edvarda Kardelj," 479.

<sup>633</sup> Vangel Ajanovski-Oče, "Information De Vangel Ajanovski-Oče, Secretaire De 3ieme Departement Du Fln, Relative Aux Evenements a Meglensko," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1945*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski and Todor Simovski (Skopje: Les Archives de le Macedoine, 1945), 248.



transgressions.<sup>634</sup> The geographic reach of the reports further indicated the increased strength of the NOF's network throughout northern Greece. As it intended the majority of its reports for internal consumption, these documents were not part of an effort by the party to gain either domestic or international support. Instead, what they show is that the NOF genuinely believed in the veracity of its reports, regardless of whether they exaggerated the Greek government's persecution of the Slavophone Macedonians, as Koliopoulos claims.<sup>635</sup> At the same time, the NOF's fear of persecution directly affected its relationship with the other parties involved in the Greek dimension of the Macedonian Question.

The intensification of NOF rhetoric on the issue of Slavophone Macedonians in the summer of 1945 was accompanied by its increased recognition that the latter's numbers were too limited for them to accomplish self-determination on their own. The NOF's Principal Directorate on 10 July 1945 targeted their proclamation only to the "Macedonians and the Greeks."<sup>636</sup> If the NOF were to succeed at least obtaining greater rights for the Slavic minority in Greece, it needed the support of the Greek majority. Nevertheless, by limiting its appeal to just the two groups, the NOF undermined its claim in the organization's charter that it supported an equal democracy for all the people of Greece; in an equal democracy the Slavophone Macedonians limited numbers would limit their ability to conduct policy. There were several other ethnic groups in Greece in addition to the Slavophone Macedonians, despite the Greek state's insistence (which

<sup>634</sup> "Rapport Politique De La Direction Principale Du Fln Sur La Situation Dans La Macedoine D'eege (19 October)," *ibid.*, "Rapport De La Direction Principale Du Fln Relatif a La Situation En Macedoine D'eege," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1945*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski and Todor Simovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1945), NOF, "Rapport Du 3ieme Commissariat D'apartemental Du Fln a Gumendže Et a Enidže-Vardarsko," *ibid.* (Les Archives de le Macedoine), 441-43. "Information Du Bulletin Du Fln No 1 Sur La Terreur Dans La Macedoine D'eege," 151-52. Marko Duvalevski, "Information De Marko Dubalevski Sur La Terreur Dans La Macedoine D'est Sur Le Peuple Macedonien," *ibid.*, 198-200.

<sup>635</sup> Koliopoulos, *Plundered Loyalties: World War II and Civil War in Greek West Macedonia* 148-58.

<sup>636</sup> NOF, "Proclamation De La Direction Principale Du Fln Aux Macedoniens Et Aux Grecques Dans Laquelle on Les Appelle De Resister Ensemble a La Terreur De La Droite," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1945*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski and Todor Simovski (Skopje: Les Archives de le Macedoine, 1945), 142-43.

continues to the present). The NOF quickly recognized this irregularity when its Central Committee directed a proclamation to the “Macedonians, Greeks, and Vlachs in late July 1945.”<sup>637</sup> The Central Committee’s proclamation to the people in September 1945 again uses the same terminology.<sup>638</sup> The likely reason for the NOF’s inclusion of the Vlachs, a people that spoke a form of Romanian and distributed throughout the Balkans, was that it did not have a negative perception of them, as it did for the minority groups in northern Greece, such as the Albanians. Unlike the Albanians, the Vlachs did not have competing territorial claims in the region. The NOF recognized this reality, stating that the Vlachs were fighting for “their country.”<sup>639</sup> One cannot say the same for the Albanians, who were the other principal minority group. Even today, FYROM continues to have trouble reconciling their demands.<sup>640</sup>

Throughout 1945, the close alignment between the NOF’s leadership and key figures within Yugoslavia assisted the organization’s development. The NOF kept leaders of the CPM and the CPY closely informed of their activities in Aegean Macedonia, as well as those of the Greek government and KKE. In its reports to the CPM and CPY, the NOF focused on the persecution of the Slavophone Macedonians by

<sup>637</sup> "Proclamation De La Direction Principale Du Fln Aux Macedoniens, Grecques Et Valaques Dans Laquelle Ils Sont Appelles De Saboter La Mobilisation Annoncee Par Le Gouvernement Grec," *ibid.*, 202-03.

<sup>638</sup> "Proclamation Du Conseil Principal Du Fln Aux Macedoniens, Grecques Et Aux Valaques De La Macedoine D'eege Dans Laquelle on Les Invite De Resister a La Terreur Monarchofasciste," *ibid.*, 577.

<sup>639</sup> *Ibid.* 577.

<sup>640</sup> The modern dimensions of the crisis, while not completely exploring the historical antecedents, can be seen in: Bashkim Iseni, "One State, Divided Society: The Albanians in Macedonia," in *Civic and Uncivic Values in Macedonia: Value Transformation, Education and Media*, ed. Ola Listhaug Sabrina P. Ramet, Albert Simkus (Houndsmill, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 175-93.

government forces.<sup>641</sup> The NOF's access to the leadership of the CPM and CPY meant that it could directly convey its concerns to them and thereby influence Yugoslav policy. NOF members with access to Yugoslavia were not the only ones to see the CPY as a benefactor, as evident in a 21 July 1945 report that NOF activists delivered to the CPM.<sup>642</sup> Other reports from this period further hint at this link with the CPY/CPM and demonstrate how NOF appealed to both parties.<sup>643</sup> The NOF activists identified a connection between the terrors committed against the Slavophone Macedonian people in Greece, including a lengthy list of looting and murders committed by Greek government forces, and those that began in 1903 with the suppression of the Illinden Uprising and the 1912-13 division of Ottoman Macedonia by the Balkan nation-states.<sup>644</sup> The NOF astutely appealed to the CPM's desire to build historical continuity between their contemporary actions and earlier proto-nationalist efforts. Its activists knew what issues to raise in order to gain the CPM's attention and, in turn, the CPY's consideration. Whether the NOF activists knew it not, they were also playing a critical role in the construction of a pan-Macedonian national identity by linking the trials of the past to

<sup>641</sup> "Rapport D'un Groupe D'activistes Du Fln a La Direction Departementale Du Pcm Relatif Aux Crimes Commis Par Des Autorites Grecques Et Par Des Bandes Dans Le Village Ezerec, Region De Kastoria," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1945*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski and Todor Simovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1945), 174-77. Vangel Ajanovski-Oče, "Lettre De Vangel Ajanovski-Oče a Naum Fejov Dans Laquelle Il L'informe Des Succes De L'organisation Du Fln.," *ibid.* (Les Archives de le Macedoine), 454-55. "Le Lettre De Protestation Du Secretaire Du Commissariat Du Quartier Du Fln Pour Buf Trajan Kufev a La Direction Principale Du Fln Relative a La Terreur Dans La Region De Florina Faite Par Les Aurorites Grecques," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1946*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1946), 137-38.

<sup>642</sup> "Rapport D'un Groupe D'activistes Du Fln a La Direction Departementale Du Pcm Relatif Aux Crimes Commis Par Des Autorites Grecques Et Par Des Bandes Dans Le Village Ezerec, Region De Kastoria," 174-77.

<sup>643</sup> NOF, "Proclamation De La Direction Principale Du Fln Aux Macedoniens Et Aux Grecques Dans Laquelle on Les Appelle De Resister Ensemble a La Terreur De La Droite," *ibid.* (Les Archives de le Macedoine), 142-43. "Information Du Bulletin Du Fln No 1 Sur La Terreur Dans La Macedoine D'eege," 151-52.

<sup>644</sup> "Rapport D'un Groupe D'activistes Du Fln a La Direction Departementale Du Pcm Relatif Aux Crimes Commis Par Des Autorites Grecques Et Par Des Bandes Dans Le Village Ezerec, Region De Kastoria," *ibid.* (Les Archives de la Macedoine), 174-77.

those currently being experienced in Greece.<sup>645</sup> As the NOF focused its reports on the acts of violence perpetrated by the Greek government, its arguments to the CPM and the CPY helped account for the shift in Yugoslavia's policies towards Greece, which existing literature does not examine.<sup>646</sup> There was not only a foreign policy prerogative for the CPY to step up political attacks on Greece, but also a domestic one, as the NOF's communications with the CPM undoubtedly spurred domestic angst. The available evidence is unclear on the importance that the CPY assigned to each policy, but both certainly factored into the party's calculations, particularly given the fact that its engagement in Greece was against the USSR's wishes.

The NOF leadership had intimate ties with the CPY and the CPM, which influenced the actions of both parties. Koliopoulos, for instance, cites a report by NOF members who discussed the recreating of the 'Aegean Brigade,' Gotsis' unit, in the summer of 1945.<sup>647</sup> In mentioning the report, Koliopoulos is making an effort to associate NOF policies with Yugoslavia. An internal memo by Gotsis to Dmirar Vlahov on 12 December 1945, however, proves that Koliopoulos' assertion is not correct. At this time, four months after the event in question, Gotsis pleaded with Vlahov to "reform the Aegean Brigade."<sup>648</sup> NOF members had advocated for the CPM/CPY to restore the Aegean Brigade in the summer, and by December, the CPY had still not acted on the request. The Yugoslav government may have been very public in its support of the Slavophone Macedonians living in Greece, but it was very cautious in its approach. In light of the CPY's otherwise aggressive actions, the reason for its hesitancy was its desire to ensure that the Macedonian nationalists, with whom the Slavophone Macedonians communicated, did not end up in a position to challenge the Yugoslav party's ascendancy within Vardar Macedonia. The members of the NOF demonstrated a

<sup>645</sup> Veljanovski, "Aegean Macedonia During the Second World War," *Passim*. Risto Stefov, *History of the Macedonian People: From Ancient Times to the Present* (Toronto, Canada: Risto Stefov Publications, 2005) 369-85.

<sup>646</sup> Barker, "The Yugoslavs and the Greek Civil War of 1946-1949," 115-120. Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Twentieth Century*, 2 314-321. Rajak, "The Cold War in the Balkans, 1945-1953," *passim*. Richard C. Hall, *The Modern Balkans: A History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011) 131-32.

<sup>647</sup> Koliopoulos, *Plundered Loyalties: World War II and Civil War in Greek West Macedonia* 222.

<sup>648</sup> *Arhiv Josipa Broz Tita*, 836 KMJ I-3-6/241

great cognizance of the Yugoslavs' internal dimensions by addressing their complaints to the CPM, rather than the CPY itself. The NOF's appeal, however, would have been more appropriate in 1944, when the CPM had a considerable degree of autonomy. By the second half of 1945, the CPY was not in complete control of the CPM but exercised enough power that it could ignore issues on the Macedonian Question should they be a gamble for them, rather than a calculated assessment.

The NOF's desire to build up its party base in 1945 brought it into conflict with the KKE, which affected the CPY's ability to assist the Greek communists. As early as 9 May 1945, which was a little over two weeks after NOF's formation, two Macedonian activists, Perikal Micanov and Dimitar Kirov, wrote the NOF claiming that "the KKE [told the people] not to organize the Macedonian anti-fascist organization NOF."<sup>649</sup> The KKE's active discouragement of the NOF's formation was a common theme in the NOF's reports in 1945. In June, Vangel Ajanovski-Oče wrote to the Central Committee of the NOF and noted that the party's organization in his region suffered from "heavy pressure by the KKE."<sup>650</sup> The NOF Central Committee's assessment of the KKE's stance on the Macedonian Question on 19 July 1945 made it clear that the actions of the Greek communists extended beyond the party's lower and regional ranks. Included in the assessment was the statement that the KKE had "No change in position on the Macedonian Question. On the contrary, they make great efforts [to attack] former armed Macedonian bands."<sup>651</sup> From the NOF's perspective, the KKE conducted operations similar to those of the Greek government in the White Terror.

Relations between the NOF and the KKE declined to such a point that the Slavophone Macedonian organization could no longer keep its criticism of the Greek communists within the party. Although there were public leaks before this time, both

<sup>649</sup> Perikal Micanov and Dimitar Kirov, "Declaration De Perikal Micanov Et Dimitar Kirov Relative a L'exces Antimacedonien D'un Activiste Du Pcg," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1945*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski and Todor Simovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1945), 46-47.

<sup>650</sup> Vangel Ajanovski-Oče, "Rapport De Vangel Ajanovski-Oče a La Direction Principale Du Fln Relatif a Quelques Questions D'organisation.," *ibid.*, 116.

<sup>651</sup> "Rapport De La Direction Principale Du Fln Sur La Situation Politique Dans La Macedoine D'eege," *ibid.*, 160.

sides eventually used them in efforts to discredit the other organization. For example, on 9 December 1945, Petre Popovski openly objected to the fact that Nikos Keremidzhis and Dimitar Birlev, the KKE's Secretary and Vice-Secretary for the region of Ostrovo, behaved in an "anti-Macedonian" manner.<sup>652</sup> Specifically, Popovski took exception to Keremidzhis' comments on 3 December 1945 that "the [Slavophone] Macedonians of the Macedonian battalion who fled are separatists and traitors to their country."<sup>653</sup> Keremidzhis' comments, which did have some empirical basis, obviously incensed Popovski. Keremidzhis clearly intended his remarks to provoke such a reaction, given that many Slavophone Macedonians saw Dimikis and the Aegean Brigade as heroes.<sup>654</sup> As an individual in charge of a region on the border of Yugoslavia, Keremidzhis would have known that such a remark was inflammatory at the very least. When one considers the KKE's struggles on the Macedonian Question in 1944, the possibility that he would not have known the implications of his statement borders on the absurd.<sup>655</sup> While one can only speculate as to Keremidzhis' motivation for making such an inflammatory remark, it had the effect of causing Popovski to lodge his protest in a very public manner. At the start of 1946, the NOF was not an asset to the KKE. Like SNOF in 1944, it had become a liability, and one that compromised its ability to gain Yugoslav support.

### 5.3. The Greek Government and KKE-CPY Relations

With the Yugoslav and NOF stances on the Macedonian Question in 1945 examined, it is important to examine the Greek government policy on the Macedonian Question, starting in 1944. Their policies, in many ways, shaped the dynamics of the Macedonian Question that the CPY, NOF, and the KKE would seek to exploit in the Greek Civil War. The Greek government was, for the most part, a minor actor with regards the Macedonian Question before and initially during the *Dekemvriana*, but helped shape the contours to which NOF, the CPY, and KKE responded. At the time, it

<sup>652</sup> Petre Popovski, "Declaration De Petre Relative Aux Exces Des Cadres Du Pcg Contre Le Mouvement Macedonien Pour La Liberation.," *ibid.* (Les Archives de le Macedoine), 421.

<sup>653</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>654</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>655</sup> Chapter 3 explores this in detail.

was more overly concerned with consolidating its control over the levers of government and the city of Athens. This, however, is not to say that the Greek government completely ignored the matter. C. Diamantopoulos, Greece's ambassador to the United States, noted in a 10 April 1944 memo to the Greek Foreign Ministry that the Bulgarians were up to their old tricks on the Macedonian Question.<sup>656</sup> The memo also illustrated how Greek officials perceived the Macedonian Question in late 1944 when Diamantopoulos recorded that the Bulgarians operated under the guise of Tito's Partisans.<sup>657</sup> The 9 September 1944 coup, however, eliminated the Bulgarians with respect to the Macedonian Question and left Yugoslavia as the principle entity advancing Macedonian nationalism. The archival records, however, indicate that the Greek government did not make a significant shift in its perceptions on the Macedonian Question until the *Dekemvriana* brought Yugoslavia's role in the crisis to its attention.<sup>658</sup>

During the *Dekemvriana* and its aftermath, the Greek government was primarily concerned first with survival and then control of the state. Yet, it remained cognizant of the Macedonian Question and understood its potential utility for courting support from Great Britain.<sup>659</sup> An examination of Greek Foreign Ministry documents confirms this point. As early as 29 December 1944, Rafail, Greece's representative in Ankara, sent his superiors a cryptographic telegram recommending that given the EAM's actions after seizing Thessaloniki, the British should immediately occupy the city.<sup>660</sup> Interestingly, Rafail concluded by noting that there was "no mention [by the EAM] of Slavo-Macedonians or autonomy."<sup>661</sup> It was not surprising that the EAM did not mention the

<sup>656</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 4837/4738

A/Μακεδονια

22-5-44

<sup>657</sup> Ibid.

<sup>658</sup> This argument is contrary to Michailidis's argument, one of the standards in the field.

Michailidis argues that the Greek government ignored the Yugoslav connection until the summer of 1945. The Greek government, as we shall see, was much more active on the Macedonian Question than is commonly acknowledged. See: Michailidis, "Fragile Balance: Greek-Yugoslav Relations in the Period 1944-1946," 111-12.

<sup>659</sup> This issue is explored in greater detail in: Livanios, *The Macedonian Question: Britain and the Southern Balkans 1939-1949* 115.

<sup>660</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 96/22509 A/Μακεδονια – Θρακη 7-1-45

<sup>661</sup> Ibid.

Macedonian Slavs. In the aftermath of their decision to eliminate their battalions in late 1944, the EAM distanced themselves from the movement.<sup>662</sup> Rafail's recognition that the EAM avoided the Macedonian Question, however, did not prevent the Greek government from using it as a means of keeping British support. On 3 January 1945, Romanos, Greece's representative in London, presented a letter to Winston Churchill detailing Slavophone Macedonian atrocities. In that letter, he argued that Tito directed the movement for Slavophone Macedonian autonomy. Romanos' letter began by noting "The movement for [Slavophone Macedonian] autonomy which has been sponsored by the supporters of EAM and by elements of doubtful national allegiance acting in conjunction with pro-Bulgarian collaborators of Tito, who have made their way into these provinces, had recently assumed a particularly disturbing, and indeed critical, character."<sup>663</sup> Romanos' letter underscored Greek fears over the *Dekemvriana*, which Churchill had personally intervened in, by further noting that the movement for Macedonian Slav autonomy "ha[d] gathered strength from the fact that British and Greek forces are occupied in quelling the EAM insurrection in Athens."<sup>664</sup> This assessment was later proven to be true when Yugoslavia condoned a Slavophone Macedonian autonomist movement in the aftermath of the *Dekemvriana* in late 1945. At the time, however, Yugoslavia was concerned with ensuring that it did not lose control of its Macedonian population and it did not want to compound its domestic problems by gaining Greece's recalcitrant Slavophone Macedonians. Romanos' final point sought to link the British government's interests in supporting the Athens regime with the struggle for northern Greece.<sup>665</sup> It stated "school inspectors at Florina who are followers of EAM have ordered the opening of Bulgarian schools, and have threatened the teachers with reprisals if they decline to teach the Bulgarian language. Pressure is being exerted upon Greek pupils to call themselves Macedonian Slavs and to attend the Bulgarian

<sup>662</sup> Ibid.

<sup>663</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 593 A/Μακεδονία 20-1-45. For Churchill's reaction to the *Dekemvriana* see: John Keegan, *Winston Churchill: A Penguin Life* (New York: Penguin, 2002) Kindle Edition.

<sup>664</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 593 A/Μακεδονία 20-1-45. For Churchill's outlook during this period see: Richard Clogg, *Anglo-Greek Attitudes: Studies in History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000) 1-2.

<sup>665</sup> John Sakkas, *Britain and the Greek Civil War, 1944-1949: British Imperialism, Public Opinion and the Coming of the Cold War* (Mainz: Franz Philipp Rutzen, 2013) 14.



schools.”<sup>666</sup> As Veljanovski notes, that EAM taught Macedonian Slavs in their native language was not a new development, and had been ongoing since early 1944.<sup>667</sup> By making it appear more recent, however, Romanos linked it to Britain’s fight against the EAM in the *Dekemvriana*.

The extent to which the Greek government would go in its efforts to use the Macedonian Question to lure the British into cooperating with it was revealed in a 4 January 1945 communiqué. In that communication, Romanos passed on to the British government the plea of an unidentified individual who claimed to be a “representative of the people of Macedonia and Thrace.”<sup>668</sup> Given that the report did not provide the individual’s credentials, and that it was in an official communiqué between the Greek and British governments, the ability of this person to speak for the people of Macedonia and Thrace was immediately suspect. If credentials had been available, the Greek Government would certainly have passed them on to legitimize its claims.<sup>669</sup> Romanos claimed that the representative worked for the Association of Macedonians and Thracians, which was known to be closely affiliated with the government in a period when its influence in northern Greece was minimal.<sup>670</sup> The supposed representative’s plea noted that the Slavophone Macedonians’ actions in the north compelled him “to protest most emphatically and denounce to you and through you to all the civilized world the effort made with the goal of establishing a so-called autonomy of Macedonia through [the] cooperation of EAM-ELAS-Bulgarians and other anarchist elements in the Balkans.”<sup>671</sup> In contrast to Romanos’ previous communication, this message dispelled the notion that America would assist Greece and simply stated “We appeal to Great Britain for protection [...]”<sup>672</sup> The representative who made the appeal played on Britain’s belief that it was the protector of the civilized world during the Second World

<sup>666</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 593 A/Μακεδονία 20-1-45

<sup>667</sup> Veljanovski, "Aegean Macedonia During the Second World War," 302-04.

<sup>668</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 1514/9/9 A/Μακεδονία 15-2-45

<sup>669</sup> While one can argue that in wartime conditions such credentials were unavailable, the timing of the appeal, as well as the Greek government’s limited control in northern Greece, renders it immediately suspect.

<sup>670</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 1514/9/9 A/Μακεδονία 15-2-45

<sup>671</sup> Ibid.

<sup>672</sup> Ibid.

War.<sup>673</sup> As made clear by Woodhouse, given the EAM's dominance of the north it is more likely that the Greek Government produced the message in a direct attempt to guarantee that it resonated with the British government and in particular, Winston Churchill.<sup>674</sup>

Interestingly, the Slavophone Macedonian issue dominated Greek-Yugoslav relations in early 1945. The Greek government, however, received evidence from credible sources that Yugoslavia's actual policy was to avoid the Macedonian Question for fear of destabilizing their domestic situation. On 6 February 1945, Dimitris Pappas, the Greek Ambassador to Cairo, sent a cryptographic telegram to Athens noting that for unknown reasons, the Yugoslav government had "completely ceased" disseminating its propaganda on the Macedonian Question in the past week.<sup>675</sup> Pappas correctly asserted that the attacks likely stopped due to the ceasefire between the EAM/ELAS and the Greek Government. He incorrectly believed, however, that the role of the British government was paramount in halting the political attacks.<sup>676</sup> British influence did not play a major role in the Yugoslav's decision-making processes, but Pappas' assumption demonstrated the extent to which the Greek Government saw itself as reliant upon Great Britain in the immediate aftermath of the *Dekemvriana*. Furthermore, this belief helped to explain why the Greek government did not heed the advice of their ambassador in Moscow.

Athanasios G. Politis, the Greek government's Ambassador to the USSR in 1945, was one of Greece's most influential bureaucrats. Politis went on to serve as Greece's Ambassador to the United States in the 1950s when this relationship had become of paramount importance. Nevertheless, in 1945, the Greek government did not heed Politis' observations and recommendations with respect to the Macedonian Question. In a telegram to the Greek Government on 11 April 1945, Politis noted: "A foreign source

<sup>673</sup> Churchill during the Second World War frequently contrasted the barbarity of Germany with the supposed civility of Britain and her allies. For a summary of how this was done see: Keegan, *Winston Churchill: A Penguin Life* Kindle Edition.

<sup>674</sup> Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949*

<sup>675</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 1189 A/Makedonia 7-2-45

<sup>676</sup> Ibid.

states that key Yugoslav leaders avoided conversations [with the Soviets] concerning an autonomous Macedonia, including Greek territories, however [they] talked vaguely concerning the wishes of the supposedly Slavic population of Greek Macedonia [to be] included in the creation of a new autonomous state.”<sup>677</sup> Politis claimed that the Yugoslavs did so in order to give the impression that there “are no outstanding issues to be solved in the future.”<sup>678</sup> Politis thereby demonstrated an awareness of the CPY’s political position that had eluded his peers at the time. Politis kept track of further actions by Tito and the Yugoslavs on the Macedonian Question. On 17 April 1945, he reported that Tito had taken an ambiguous stance on the Question and quoted Tito as stating: “today the issue is not moot, but neither will we [... act] to resist the desire of Macedonians [for] unification.”<sup>679</sup> In other words, Tito would not promote calls for unification, but neither would he impede individuals who did so. Had he done otherwise, he would have undermined the integration of the Yugoslav peoples by the CPY. As late as 21 September 1945, Politis stressed to the foreign ministry that Yugoslavia was more interested in parts of Tyrolian Austria than Greek Macedonia.<sup>680</sup>

Politis subsequently received indirect support for his position on 31 October 1945, when Athanasios Agnidis, Greece’s ambassador in London at the time, filed a telegram that was no less critical of Greek beliefs on Yugoslavia than the one Politis had sent in April. In that telegram, Agnidis stated that Yugoslavia was not interested in Aegean Macedonia.<sup>681</sup> While Politis and Agnidis believed that the issues they raised were important, it is clear that the Greek Government did not act on their advice in 1945. In early autumn 1945, Agnidis engaged in a conversation with Ralph Stevenson, Britain’s ambassador to Yugoslavia. In the process, he formed a more critical perspective on the Macedonian question than many of his colleagues. Stevenson told Agnidis “Yugoslav nationalists will not cease to show interest in Aegean Macedonia.”<sup>682</sup> Stevenson, however, did not believe that Yugoslavia would push the issue in a

<sup>677</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 4026/A/Μακεδονία/11-4-45

<sup>678</sup> Ibid.

<sup>679</sup> Archives of Yugoslavia, AJ, CKJ, 507 IX, 33/VI-8

<sup>680</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 3943/3942 A/Γιουγκοσλαβία 9-21-45

<sup>681</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 24599/24598 A/Ελληνο-Γιουγκοσλαβία 31/10/45

<sup>682</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 24602/24599 A/Γιουγκοσλαβία 21/10/45

significant way. He noted that an autonomous Macedonia, the main goals of the nationalists, “would benefit Bulgaria much more than Yugoslavia” and that the Serbs preferred for Serbian (Vardar) Macedonia to remain within the country.<sup>683</sup> Stevenson’s commentary raises an interesting point that scholars of the period often neglect: that in the 1940s, the Macedonian Question affected groups not only within Vardar Macedonia but also outside the future republic’s boundaries.<sup>684</sup> While the Yugoslav leadership aggressively asserted the Slavophone Macedonian’s case, it simultaneously had to guarantee that it did not alienate the other groups within the country. As previously discussed, the CPY’s solution was to talk a hard line but do little in reality.

Nevertheless, throughout 1945, the Greek government chose to ignore Politis and Agnidis’ advice that the Yugoslavs were not interested territorially in Aegean Macedonia. The likely reason for this was that the Greeks received contradictory information from elsewhere, information that portrayed the CPY’s unwillingness to rein in the Macedonians in a negative manner.<sup>685</sup> On 14 April 1945, an unidentified member of the ambassadorial staff in Ankara wrote to Athens to complain about the pronouncements of Harizanov and DIMITAR Vlahov.<sup>686</sup> As both Harizanov and Vlahov were high-ranking members of the CPM, their opinions had legitimacy for both domestic and international standpoints. Furthermore, on 17 April 1945, Greece’s ambassador in Washington dispatched a telegram to Athens in which he claimed: “Tito [is] agitating on the Slavophone Greek Macedonian issue with the obvious purpose of including Greek territory in the creation of an autonomous Macedonia state up to and including Thessaloniki [...]”<sup>687</sup> Politis’ telegram on the same day was, in fact, a retort to the Washington Ambassador’s telegram.<sup>688</sup> The messages from Ankara and America,

<sup>683</sup> Ibid.

<sup>684</sup> See: Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics Passim*. Minehan, *Civil War and World War in Europe: Spain, Yugoslavia, and Greece, 1936-1949* 208-24. Koliopoulos, *Plundered Loyalties: World War II and Civil War in Greek West Macedonia* 201-10.

<sup>685</sup> This was just one of several factors. For a full analysis of how these views set in, see: Eleni Paschaloudi, *Enas Polemos Choris Telos: I Dekaeitia Tou 1940 Ston Politiko Logo 1950-1967* (Thessaloniki: Epikentro, 2010) 43-4, 67-68.

<sup>686</sup> Archives of Yugoslavia, AJ, CKJ, 507 IX, 33/VI-8

<sup>687</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 4331/16/4/45/Aut Μακ.

<sup>688</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 4389/4331 A/Μακεδονια 18-4-45

however, were much more in line with Prime Minister Voulgaris' conviction than the more measured beliefs expressed by Politis and Agnidis.<sup>689</sup> The proximity of Voulgaris' views to those of his representatives in Ankara and Greece caused him to favour their arguments over the arguments of Politis, who was better placed to make such an assessment.

Politis' position that Yugoslavia was more concerned about Tyrol Austria than Aegean Macedonia was further undermined within the Greek political establishment in 1945 and 1946, as Ramet notes, by Greece's ambassadors in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia.<sup>690</sup> Throughout 1945, Rafail, Greece's Ambassador to Bulgaria, reinforced the belief that Yugoslavia and Bulgaria had used the Macedonian Question to gain territory or political advantage in Greece. This was a major shift from his nuanced position on the Macedonian Question in late 1944, which recognized that the conditions in Vardar Macedonia placed Yugoslavia in a difficult political position.<sup>691</sup> In 1945, for reasons that remain unclear, Rafail reported on newspapers in Bulgaria with no discernible analysis. These articles invariably portrayed Aegean Macedonia in a way that was conducive to Bulgarian irredentism.<sup>692</sup> Admittedly, Bulgarian domestic politics certainly played into Raphael's newfound assessment of Bulgarian and Yugoslav intentions. As Crampton notes, given that nationalism was the prevailing political ideology in Bulgaria at the time, the media had to conform to people's expectations to ensure that it did not upset the Fatherland Front's tenuous position of power.<sup>693</sup> This issue, however, was not recognized anywhere in Rafail's 1945 reports. Instead, Rafail's reporting reinforced the notion that there was a Slavic plot against northern Greece by

<sup>689</sup> Rational choice theory posits that individuals will choose the action that they most prefer when confronted by a variety of choices. For a discussion on the usefulness of this theory, as well as potential problems with its application, see: Donald Green and Ian Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1996) *Passim*.

<sup>690</sup> Sabrina P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006) 163-84.

<sup>691</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 528/22657 A/Μακεδονία 18-1-45

<sup>692</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 22922 A/Ελληνογυγκοσλαυία 13-7-45

<sup>693</sup> Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria* Kindle Edition.

simply copying newspapers verbatim.<sup>694</sup> The limited ability and/or willingness of Rafail and many other Greek ambassadors to analyze the material that they sent to Athens no doubt reinforced preexisting notions that the small Macedonian minority in northern Greece represented an existential threat to the Greek nation.

The Greek government sought to consolidate its control of Greece through the imposition of the White Terror in 1945 and early 1946. The White Terror, which was alluded to in the earlier examination of the NOF, did not just target the Slavophone Macedonian population of Greece. Instead, it affected the population of Greece as a whole and had the critical effect of radicalizing much of it.<sup>695</sup> As Andre Gerolymatos noted, “the persecution of the left during the period of White Terror (1945-1946) . . . affected a large segment of Greek society and forced many to seek refuge in the communist-led bands forming in the mountains.”<sup>696</sup> Gerolymatos further states that the White Terror was, in fact, a reaction to EAM’s excesses during the occupation and the *Dekemvriana*.<sup>697</sup> By persecuting the left rather than reintegrating it back into society, the Greek government created the impetus for a future resistance movement. Furthermore, the Greek government opened itself to political assault by its neighbors.<sup>698</sup> In short, the Greek government’s persecution of the Greek left, and specifically the Slavophone Macedonian population of northern Greece, created a political climate that allowed the neighboring Balkan states, most notably Yugoslavia, to manipulate the Macedonian Question to the Greek state’s disadvantage.

The Greek government actively sought to counter Yugoslav claims that it persecuted the Slavophone Macedonians during this period. On 9 July 1945, the Greek Foreign Ministry responded to Yugoslav claims of Slavophone persecution by

<sup>694</sup> For an example see: Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 22922 Α/Ελληνογυγκοσλαυια 13-7-45. Here Rafail copied the *Otechestven Front’s* 19 June 1945 issue, which took a highly polemical stance on the Macedonian Question, and did not provide critical analysis.

<sup>695</sup> Sfikas *The British Labour Government*, 48.

<sup>696</sup> Gerolymatos, *Red Acropolis, Black Terror: The Greek Civil War and the Origins of Soviet-American Rivalry, 1943-1949* 194.

<sup>697</sup> Ibid.

<sup>698</sup> Bulgaria and Albania were also quite vocal in their critiques of the Greek government during this period. See: Crampton, *The Balkans since the Second World War* Kindle Edition.

investigating their claims in northern Greece. Given that the Greek government tacitly condoned the White Terror to which the Yugoslavs took issue, its findings that the Yugoslavs were incorrect were not surprising.<sup>699</sup> The report noted that contrary to the Yugoslavs' arguments, there was "no exodus of the Slavophones and that no acts of terrorism have been committed against them."<sup>700</sup> Despite this assertion, the report later noted that there had been "a mass exodus of Bulgarophones" in Central and Eastern Macedonia.<sup>701</sup> In other words, Slavophones were those individuals that identified with the Greek state. The Greek state labeled people that did not identify with Greece as Bulgarophones and attributed their exodus to their underlying Bulgarian identity, rather than to their persecution of the group. The Greek government did not recognize that the Bulgarophones were members of the Greek society due to the threat that they represented. As a result, their flight was seen as a positive rather than negative development.<sup>702</sup>

At the same time, the Greek government desired to eliminate the potential threat that the Slavophone Macedonians posed to the country, regardless of whether it was real or perceived. The judicial organs of the Special Collaborator Courts, in fact, did little to persecute collaborators and began identifying links between the left-wing resistance and Bulgarian sympathizers, i.e. Slavophone Macedonian nationalists.<sup>703</sup> As Kousouris notes, once the Special Collaborator Courts made this connection in 1945, they "push[ed] the legislator to adopt as official state ideology a geostrategic version of anticommunism, the theory of Slavo-communism, identifying the internal enemy with the external one."<sup>704</sup> By 1946, the Greek government extended this logic to anti-communist laws that went so far as to link Greek communists with the Slavic threat to the north.<sup>705</sup>

<sup>699</sup> Rajak, "The Cold War in the Balkans, 1945-1953," 204.

<sup>700</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 17975/17948 ΑΓιουγκοσλαυια 10-7-45

<sup>701</sup> Ibid.

<sup>702</sup> John S. Koliopoulos, and Thanos M. Veremis, *Greece: The Modern Sequel from 1831 to the Present* (New York: New York UP, 2002) 56, 222, 251-52.

<sup>703</sup> Dimitris Kousouris, "From Revolution to Restoration. The Transnational Implications of the Greek Purge of Wartime Collaborators," in *Dealing with Wars and Dictatorships*, ed. Liora Israel and Guillaume Mouralis (The Hague: T.M.C. Asser Press, 2014), 158.

<sup>704</sup> Ibid. 432.

<sup>705</sup> This process is examined in detail in: Mazower, "The Cold War and the Appropriation of Memory: Greece after Liberation," 212-31.

The literature, however, fails to explore the question of how the Yugoslav's use of the Macedonian Question played into these developments. Based on the evidence presented above, it is clear that at the very least, Yugoslav foreign proclamations contributed to pre-existing fears within Greek society and the Greek government. They created a climate in which fear and suspicion mutually reinforced each other.

In 1946 members of the Greek Foreign Ministry continued to send reports without analysis to Athens that created a false impression of Yugoslav motives. Dalietos, Greece's ambassador to Belgrade, reported information to Athens in a similar fashion. Like Rafail, Dalietos sent regular reports on activities in Belgrade to the Foreign Ministry office in Athens. The amount of analysis in his reports declined over the course of the year to a level comparable to Rafail. On 15 February, Dalietos looked into why the Yugoslav newspaper *Jez* portrayed the Greek state in a negative manner.<sup>706</sup> At the least, this analysis served as a counterpoint to the arguments put forward by other members of the Greek diplomatic corps. Dalietos' reports in the second half of 1946, however, largely replicated Rafail's tendency to only quote the newspapers verbatim. In his 27 August 1946 communiqué, he cited an article in *Borba* by Kiro Gligorov in exact terms. Gligorov's message, as previously covered, represented the CPM's politics and not the CPY's more muted version of those politics. Dalietos' mechanical reporting of the news meant that he failed to distinguish between the two competing ideologies, and did not consider that a newspaper produced for domestic consumption might have a limited view of Yugoslavia's foreign policy. Consequently, the Greek Foreign Ministry, which was removed from developments in Belgrade, had difficulty making informed opinions about what was occurring in Yugoslavia. As a result, it is understandable that the Greek government assumed that the proclamations issued by Yugoslav officials were representative of their intentions, and not simply a political ploy to assuage domestic issues.

The late 1946 shift in the Greek government's diplomatic proclamations regarding Yugoslavia can be partially accounted for by Greece's increased reportage on Yugoslavia, and the latter's aggressive posturing on the Macedonian Question. As

<sup>706</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archives, 13146/A/Ελληνογιοθηγκοσλαυια/5/3/46



Ristović notes, the Greek government was polite in its formal relations with Yugoslavia until September 1946, when it suddenly shifted to a hostile stance.<sup>707</sup> What Ristović does not account for, however, was the reason for this change. Both parties escalated their public discourse on the Macedonian Question in the lead up to the breakdown in relations. On 2 July 1946, *To Vima* (The Tribune) published a particularly inflammatory article calling for the ethnic cleansing of northern Greece. Therein, it argued that the “removal of the Slav populations from Western Macedonia is a necessary condition for the securing of peace in the Balkans.”<sup>708</sup> In other words, the atmosphere surrounding the Macedonian Question was poisonous to Greek-Yugoslav relations. On 20 August 1946, Yugoslavia officially recalled its ambassador, Izidor Cankar, due to insults a Greek newspaper made about Tito.

There are indications that the Macedonian Question was the reason for the recall of its diplomatic representative, although the Greek government did not say this officially. S. Stefanopoulos, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, noted that Yugoslavia’s recall of its ambassador was “[...] part of the carefully organized and persistently pursued campaign of Greece’s enemies at the Peace Conference.”<sup>709</sup> As we saw earlier, the Yugoslav government employed Vlahov and supported his virulent form of nationalism at the Paris Peace Conference. In relation to the official, yet questionable, reason given for Yugoslavia’s withdrawal of its ambassador, Stefanopoulos’ assessment offered a more probable rationale due to the importance Yugoslavia attached to the Macedonian Question at the Peace Conference.

During this period, the British government, unlike their Greek counterparts, continued to recognize that the CPY was more concerned with domestic affairs than overt aggression. Ernest Bevin, Britain’s Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, explained to Konstantinos Tsaldaris, Greece’s Prime Minister at the time, that Yugoslavia’s rhetoric

<sup>707</sup> Milan Ristovic, "Small War on the Yugoslav-Greek Border (1945-1950)," *Balkan Studies* 45, no. 1 (2004) 99.

<sup>708</sup> *To Vima*, 2 July 1946. Members of the Greek government, as we shall see, later argued for this plan to be put into action.

<sup>709</sup> *To Vima*, 22 August 1946.

about the Slavophone Macedonians was merely a “war of nerves.”<sup>710</sup> According to Bevin, the only way Greece could lose was if it overreacted. As Bevin felt the need to remind Tsaldaris that this was the case, the latter evidently failed to appreciate the reasoning behind Yugoslavia’s actions.<sup>711</sup> In other words, the Greek government continued to take Yugoslavia’s aggressive rhetoric verbatim, rather than analyzing the reasoning behind it: the CPY’s desire to integrate Yugoslavia’s Macedonian population into the Yugoslav federation. Despite frequent changes in leadership, this issue continued to plague the Greek government throughout the war.

The Greek Government was responding to a real threat, despite misinterpreting the reason for Yugoslavia’s increased posturing on the Macedonian Question. Overall, however, it did understand the threat. A report to the Foreign Minister from Thessaloniki on 30 September 1946 noted that Ilias Dimikis had returned to Greece and established himself near Florina.<sup>712</sup> Lt. Col Allen Miller, the U.S. Military Attaché in Greece, confirmed Dimikis’ return (albeit at the end of October). The initial report was likely valid, a result of increased Greek government fears about the Macedonian Question.<sup>713</sup> Dimikis’ infiltration was not, however, an attempt to annex Aegean Macedonia, as Nikolareizis feared.<sup>714</sup> Instead, it was a matter of the Yugoslav state-building exercises, in this case exporting a troublesome nationalist to Greece, taking priority over good relations with the Greek government.

By September 1946, the Greek government was no longer concerned about its Slavophone citizens’ well-being, but instead feared that outside states would potentially use them as a fifth column against the Greek state. Reports filed with the Greek Foreign Ministry in September 1946 demonstrated the government’s concern about the Macedonian Question. One such report from September 1946 noted that nothing was

<sup>710</sup> Bevin, “Mr. Bevin to Sir C. Norton,” 57.

<sup>711</sup> Ibid.

<sup>712</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 28859 12/10/46 Αυτονομησις Μακεδονιας

<sup>713</sup> Report in Shrader, *The Withered Vine: Logistics and the Communist Insurgency in Greece, 1945-1949* 150.

<sup>714</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archives, 25151 30/8/46 Αυτ. Μακεδονιας. Yugoslav authorities designed the map to be inflammatory, but for the Macedonians, not the Greeks.

known about the bastion of Bulkes at the time.<sup>715</sup> In a 25 September 1946 report, Perrakis, a mid-ranking bureaucrat, recorded how unidentified elements had coerced the Slavophone Macedonians into joining a criminal gang against the Greek state, which reignited the Greek government's fears.<sup>716</sup> The document makes it clear that the gang Perrakis feared was the NOF. In particular, Perrakis feared the return of Dimikis, whom he recognized was a tool of Yugoslav policy in the region.<sup>717</sup> The Greek state still refused to acknowledge that an ethnic minority existed, but it did recognize how outside states could use them in their destabilization efforts. Unfortunately for the Greek state, the Greek Civil War would see this fear realized.

#### **5.4. The Return of Zachariadis, and the Macedonian Question during the KKE's drift towards Civil War: 1945-mid 1946**

In the immediate aftermath of the *Dekemvriana*, the KKE was a party in crisis. As Edgar O'Ballance notes, "within the Central Committee of the KKE, the defeat in the field had caused bitter soul-searching."<sup>718</sup> This soul searching within the Central Committee of the KKE, however, did not immediately affect the party's structure in a significant manner. Siantos remained the (acting) Secretary General, and there was no major shuffling of the party's other key leaders.<sup>719</sup> Because of this discrepancy, scholars have

<sup>715</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 28898 11-10-46 Αυτονομησις Μακεδονιας

<sup>716</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 28760 10/10/46 Αυτ. Μακεδονιας

<sup>717</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 28859 12/10/46 Αυτονομησις Μακεδονιας

<sup>718</sup> While O'Ballance's assessment is dated, it remains one of the standards in the field. See: O'Ballance, *The Greek Civil War: 1944-1949* 114. For an endorsement of O'Ballance's work see: Gerolymatos, *Red Acropolis, Black Terror: The Greek Civil War and the Origins of Soviet-American Rivalry, 1943-1949* IX.

<sup>719</sup> O'Ballance, *The Greek Civil War: 1944-1949* 114.

advanced several different theories about Siantos' post-war plans during this period.<sup>720</sup> While some of these theories are more persuasive than others, all remain speculative.

The KKE recognized that resolving the Macedonian Question was critical to its success, even if Siantos' motivation on the matter remains subject to debate. This was the case regardless of whether the KKE found reasons to choose the electoral or revolutionary path for its future. The KKE's actual ability to resolve the Macedonian Question, however, is open to debate. The Florina branch of the KKE recognized the problem of gaining the support of the Slavophone Macedonians on 5 January 1945, when it reported to the KKE that "The Slavomacedonians have little confidence in the KKE."<sup>721</sup> This explains why the Yugoslavs, as seen earlier in the chapter, dealt with a large number of Slavophone Macedonian refugees at this time, which cost ELAS significant manpower. The KKE needed to alter its policy on the Macedonian Question if it were to obtain the support it needed from the Slavophone Macedonian population.

Lazar Ošenski, a member of the KKE's Politburo, was one of the few individuals who expressed this need. On 12 March 1945, Lazar Ošenski wrote to the party's Macedonian Bureau and stated: "Comrades, there is a danger that the Macedonian patriots, coming into contact with people from the Serbian part (Macedonia), [will] organize the Macedonian people in separate organizations, and this will have as its result the division of the [...] the party."<sup>722</sup> For the KKE, Yugoslavia's involvement in Greece in 1944 and early 1945 had developed to a point that Marxist dogma could not

<sup>720</sup> Thanasis Hajis, "Eam-Elas: Resistance or National Liberation Movement?," in *Greece: From Resistance to Civil War*, ed. Marion Sarafis (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1980), 75-76; John O. Iatrides, *Revolt in Athens: The Greek Communist "Second Round," 1944-1945* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1972) 179-80; Ole L. Smith, "Communist Perceptions, Strategy, and Tactics, 1945-1949," in *Greece at the Crossroads: The Civil War and Its Legacy*, ed. John Iatrides and Linda Wrigley (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 103-04.

<sup>721</sup> Lazar Koliševski, "Political Report Submitted by Lazar Koliševski, Vice-Chariman of the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Macedonia, at the Second Extraordinary Session of the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Macedonia, April 15th, 1945," in *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State*, ed. et al. Hristo Andonov-Poljanski (Skopje: University of "Cyril and Methodius", 1945 (1985)), 323.

<sup>722</sup> Lazo Damovski-Ošenski, "Explication De Lazo Damovski-Ošenski Relative a La Reaction Grecque Et a Ses Methodes [Sic] Pour La Destruction Du Peuple Macedonien," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1945*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski and Todor Simovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1945), 111.

mask. Ošenski's views represented a dramatic shift away from the ambiguity that had previously characterized the KKE's position on the Macedonian Question since 1935.<sup>723</sup> Nevertheless, this was not Ošenski's most damning condemnation of the KKE's previous policy on the Macedonian Question. Ošenski noted:

*The fact is that [the KKE's] wrong policy led to conflict not only with the Macedonian people, but also with the Communist Party of Macedonia, so that we have fallen into a sad state where the two communist parties have two different tactics and collide [...].*<sup>724</sup>

Furthermore, Ošenski cited previous party congresses on the Macedonian Question to support his argument and demonstrate that the KKE did not even follow its own rulings in the Second World War.<sup>725</sup> In Ošenski's view, because Zachariadis was still in captivity, his earlier rulings, whereby the Central Committee had recognized the rights of the Slavophone Macedonians, should be the basis for policy moving forward.<sup>726</sup> One could not find a more radical departure from the KKE's previous policy of blaming everyone but the party for problems relating to the Macedonian Question.

Several factors worked against the KKE's adoption of the policy recommended by Ošenski. First, as his name suggests, Ošenski was a Slavophone Macedonian. His arguments were therefore not reflective of the majority of the KKE, which had become a Greek nationalist party. Given the KKE's nationalist fervour in late 1944 and early 1945, Ošenski's ethnicity prevented the party from taking his arguments seriously. Two other, more general, factors, informed how the KKE responded to the Macedonian Question and, later, the NOF's emergence in the spring of 1945: Zachariadis' return to the party in the spring of 1945 and the 12<sup>th</sup> Plenum of the Central Committee of the KKE, held in June 1945. Allied forces advancing in Germany discovered that the KKE's Secretary General, Nikos Zachariadis, was alive in the Dachau Concentration Camp.<sup>727</sup> As the

<sup>723</sup> Wittner, *American Intervention in Greece, 1943-1949* 271.

<sup>724</sup> Damovski-Ošenski, "Explication De Lazo Damovski-Ošenski Relative a La Reaction Grecque Et a Ses Methodes [Sic] Pour La Destruction Du Peuple Macedonien," 111.

<sup>725</sup> Ibid.

<sup>726</sup> Ibid. 111.

<sup>727</sup> Jonathan Haslam, *Russia's Cold War: From the October Revolution to the Fall of the Wall* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2011) 80.

KKE had never removed Zachariadis from his position as Secretary General, he immediately resumed his place as head of the party when he returned in August 1945.<sup>728</sup> Nevertheless, there are indications that upon his return, Zachariadis did not exercise absolute control over the KKE. As Ole Smith notes, "The KKE was in 1945-46 still dominated by pre-war strategy and tactics".<sup>729</sup> As previously mentioned, the Central Committee's control over events during the *Dekemvriana* was almost non-existent. The KKE had transformed from a small, negligible party of 15,000 at the time of Zachariadis' arrest to an organization with a few hundred thousand active members, despite declining in numbers since the *Dekemvriana*. This expansion caused significant organizational strains.<sup>730</sup> Even the ablest of administrators would have found his or her skills taxed by such a dramatic increase in the size of a party. Other scholarly analyses of Zachariadis indicate that he was not an elite administrator.<sup>731</sup> His efforts to reintegrate the party throughout 1945 and 1946 gave the party members considerable latitude in their interpretation of KKE directives. The KKE's party branches in northern Greece would exploit this ambiguity to pursue its objectives on the Macedonian Question.

Zachariadis initially maintained the 1944 policy towards the Slavophone Macedonians. In fact, in late August 1945, in an interview for *Laiki Foni*, he responded to a question about Aegean Macedonia with the statement "Macedonia is and will [always] be Greek."<sup>732</sup> This rhetoric mirrors the rhetoric used by Greek politicians in the 1990s and indicates that Zachariadis had not yet come to recognize the importance of the Macedonian Question to the KKE's relations with the other Balkan communist parties. He viewed the NOF's activities as working against the KKE's domestic goals. Without a

<sup>728</sup> Gerolymatos, *The International Civil War: Greece, 1943–1949* 23.

<sup>729</sup> Ole L. Smith, "Marxism in Greece: The Case of the Kke," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 3, no. 1 (1985) 59.

<sup>730</sup> David Close, *Greece since 1945: Politics, Economy and Society* (London: Routledge, 2002) 19. One issue in Close's numbers, that's problematic in the field, is that academics are unclear on distinguishing between the KKE's support and that of EAM. Although Close explicitly says that these numbers were for the KKE, the source of these numbers is unclear.

<sup>731</sup> This viewpoint is common throughout the historiography, although Ole Smith makes a notable challenge to it. See: Smith, "Marxism in Greece: The Case of the Kke," 62. While Smith makes an important point that Zachariadis operated largely within his means and capabilities, even his assessment of the Secretary General's capabilities would have meant that he was overwhelmed.

<sup>732</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, AJ, 507, IX, 33/V-21

doubt, this explains why Zachariadis took a Greek nationalist approach on the Macedonian Question in the summer of 1945.

As stated above, the other critical element that would shape the KKE's policy towards the Macedonian Question in the summer of 1945 was the 12<sup>th</sup> Plenum of the Central Committee of the KKE, held in June 1945. The 12<sup>th</sup> Plenum called for the party to implement a policy of self-defence. There is considerable confusion amongst scholars as to what the KKE intended in pursuing such a policy.<sup>733</sup> The 12<sup>th</sup> Plenum passed a resolution concerning self-defence which stated: "The murderous terror from the Right calls for the urgent and immediate organization of mass self-defence to face it ... The democratic people must be ready to defend their own life and to face any fascist coup with all available means."<sup>734</sup> The KKE adopted a strategy of non-violent resistance rather than combatting government terror with arms. Many individuals in the post-Civil War era have been critical of this approach, but as Ole Smith notes these criticisms were made in hindsight and ignore the dire conditions of the party in the aftermath of the *Dekemvriana*.<sup>735</sup> After its defeat, The KKE mobilized the theme of self-defence in order to grant itself a new sense of purpose.<sup>736</sup> The KKE party leadership, however, still faced the issue of having to integrate the Greek left as a whole – and not only its party membership – to a unified policy. It had particular difficulty integrating the NOF into its policy of self-defence.

Throughout the latter half of 1945, the leadership of the KKE tried to implement the decisions reached at the 12<sup>th</sup> Plenum of the Central Committee of the KKE. One of the resolutions passed at the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress of the KKE in October 1945 concerned expanding the policy of self-defence. It stated: "[self-defence is] a close-meshed network of mass organizations must embrace all sections of the people, all of the poor in the cities."<sup>737</sup> Furthermore, as Smith notes, the KKE leadership used the party's organ, *Rizospastis*, to implore the party membership to recognize the importance of the self-

<sup>733</sup> "Self-Defence and Communist Policy, 1945-1947," 175-76.

<sup>734</sup> *Deka hronia agones 1935-1945*. (Athens: Kentriki epitropi tou KKE 1945) 309.

<sup>735</sup> Smith, "Self-Defence and Communist Policy, 1945-1947," 176.

<sup>736</sup> *Ibid.* 162.

<sup>737</sup> "Το 7ο Συνέδριο Του Κκε," in *Σαραντα Χρονια Του Κκε* (Αθηνα: 1964), 543.

defence policy and to do their utmost to implement it.<sup>738</sup> The KKE took self-defence very seriously, and at the time it only hinted at the possibility of undertaking a directed, violent response to the Greek government's actions.<sup>739</sup> The fact that the KKE's leadership only hinted at the possibility of such a response, rather than simply carrying it out in the face of attack, spoke to the significance that the party attached to the policy. The KKE aimed to achieve its goals through the political realm as opposed to armed struggle, at least during 1945.

While the KKE attempted to implement its policy of self-defence, it simultaneously sought to manage the Macedonian Question in a manner that served its interests. The KKE set out its initial post-war position on the Macedonian Question at the 12<sup>th</sup> Plenum of the Central Committee of the KKE – at the same meeting where it established its position on self-defence. In this session, Zachariadis defined the KKE's stance on the national question. He stated: "We are against any forced change of the boundaries of 1939 from any side. The only democratic solution we recognize is the principle of the self-determination of peoples."<sup>740</sup> This explanation was a classic example of the double-speak by which the KKE seemingly promised a great deal, but in reality delivered very little. The 1939 boundaries were to remain intact, but only against changes made by force. Zachariadis did not specify the party's policy on voluntary changes to the boundaries. Furthermore, the KKE recognized the right of self-determination. Zachariadis did not define what he meant by self-determination, and the Yugoslavs could see it as a means of peacefully changing the borders. Zachariadis was thus able to use ambiguity to avoid addressing the issue.

The KKE's full embrace of self-defence helps clarify the tension between it and the NOF in late 1945. The NOF, unlike the KKE, sought to protect the Slavophone Macedonian population in Greece by any means necessary, including violence. As Evangelos Kofos notes, after the Varkiza Agreement, the NOF "proceeded to form armed bands, dispatched them across the border [from Yugoslavia], and commenced a

<sup>738</sup> "Self-Defence and Communist Policy, 1945-1947," 164-5.

<sup>739</sup> Ibid.

<sup>740</sup> Αποφαση του Πολιτχου Γραφειου της Κ.Ε. του ΚΚΕ. (Athens: Central Committee of KKE, 1945) 48.



small-scale, local, guerrilla war."<sup>741</sup> Although Kofos argues that the NOF was an appendage of the CPM during this period, the NOF's internal reports from this period indicate that many of its provocative activities had local origins.<sup>742</sup> The close association between the NOF and the CPY/CPM at this time, and the mutual importance that each party attached to the other, made it easy to overestimate the degree of control the Yugoslavs/Macedonians exercised in the Aegean Macedonian organization. Instead, the NOF's actions simply furthered CPY/CPM claims and objectives. In order to maintain its image of promoting Macedonian interests in the region, the CPY agreed with those claims and objectives due to a lack of policy alternatives. While not important to KKE-CPY relations in 1945, by the end of the year the CPY's linkage with NOF meant that the Greek communists would have to find a way of appeasing the Slavophone Macedonian group.

Not only did NOF pursue a different policy than the KKE in the summer of 1945, but its armed struggle was detrimental to the Greek communists' interests. Antanasios Zogas, a high-ranking member of the KKE, noted as much in September 1945, when he stated:

*I believe the ideas that underlie this tactic do not contribute at all to the interests of the Macedonian people in today's living conditions. In my opinion, this tactic is based on emotion and completely undermines the objective factor. [These tactics of NOF] inevitably creates a gap not only*

<sup>741</sup> Kofos, "The Impact of the Macedonian Question on Civil Conflict in Greece," 295-96.

<sup>742</sup> Ibid. 296. Examples of NOF's independence can be seen in: "La Lettre De Directive De La Direction Principale Du FIn Au Commissariat Departemental Du FIn Pour La Region De Florina Relative a L'organisation De La Resistance Contre La Terreur Et Le Boycottage Des Elections Parlementaires," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1946*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1946), 220-22. "La Lettre Des Macedoniens Prisonniers Politiques Dans Le Prison "Edi Kule a Thessalonique Au Commandant De La Premiere Brigade De Choc Egeenne Ilija Dimovski-Goce," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1946*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1946), 3-5.

*in relations between our nations, but even within the Macedonian people as they are isolated and remain exposed to the rage of today's fascists.*<sup>743</sup>

The NOF, in other words, undermined the KKE's policy of self-defence at a time when it was of paramount importance.

When political circumstances forced Zachariadis to deal with the issue of the Slavophone Macedonians in late 1945, he once more demonstrated his ability appear to offer a great deal to the Yugoslavs while promising little. In October 1945 at the 7<sup>th</sup> Party Congress of the KKE, he told those gathered:

*[...] We declare that a fundamental prerequisite for the peaceful coexistence with the Yugoslav Republic is the absolute respect of the rights of the Slav-Macedonian minority and the securing for this minority of a regime of full equality of racial, religious and linguistic rights. This is the only way to avoid conflicts, misunderstandings, and discussions over Greek Macedonia, which is inhabited by 90 percent Greeks, a fact which renders it an inseparable part of the Hellenic land.*<sup>744</sup>

As has been noted, much of the Yugoslav rhetoric in this period centered on the treatment of the Slavophone Macedonians within Greece. Therefore, the only way that the KKE could effectively defend itself to the Yugoslavs in the face of their demands was to have Zachariadis declare that these Slavophone Macedonians would have full equality of rights. This policy also allowed the KKE to construct a platform upon which it could juxtapose its position with that of the Greek government. According to the KKE's position, northern Greece was an "inseparable part of the Hellenic land", but that did not mean the Slavophone Macedonians did not enjoy certain rights.<sup>745</sup> Furthermore, all issues between the Yugoslavs and the KKE were simply 'misunderstandings' because there was no such equality between the peoples of Greece. When the KKE assumed power, it would rectify this situation, as once the nationalities achieved equality the

<sup>743</sup> Antanasios Zogas, "Lettre D'atanasis Zogas, Activiste Du Pcg Dans La Region D'est De La Macedoine D'eege, a Lazo Damovski-Osinski Relative a L'activite Du Fln Et Aux Rapports Avec Le Pcg.," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1945*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski and Todor Simovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1945), 305-06.

<sup>744</sup> "Zachariadis' Introductory Speech before the Seventh Party Congress," *To 7<sup>o</sup> Συνεδριο*, Issue C (Athens: Central Committee of the KKE, 1945) 30.

<sup>745</sup> Ibid.

tensions between them would disappear. Furthermore, as Chiclet notes, 55% of the individuals who attended the KKE's 7<sup>th</sup> Congress in October 1945 were from northern Greece. Zachariadis could not directly challenge them, as it would have severely damaged the strength of the party.<sup>746</sup>

While the KKE consistently pursued a policy of self-defence during this period, the divisions within the party's leadership made it difficult for Zachariadis to ensure that tensions between the KKE and the NOF did not escalate. The inability of the KKE to control its party membership – which was similar to the problem that the CPY faced concerning the CPM and the NOF – meant that individual party members greatly influenced the policy of the party as a whole. Both KKE and NOF reports confirm this point. On 8 August 1945, the KKE's Kastoria Branch issued a proclamation to the people where it claimed: "These (NOF) bands are the same as the bands organized by the (Greek) right."<sup>747</sup> In other words, the KKE directly challenged the NOF's official justification for forming armed bands. In a 9 August 1945 proclamation, the KKE's Vodensko Branch echoed the Kastoria branch's sentiments when it stated that "dubious, anarchist elements known as Autonomists, with their reckless activities, have only done harm to Slavomacedonians [...]."<sup>748</sup> In comparing the NOF to anarchists, a group reviled by communists, these KKE members demonstrated their disdain for the organization. In many ways, the feeling was mutual. The antipathy these actions caused during the summer and autumn of 1945 becomes evident in a 14 December 1945 declaration made by two members of the NOF about the KKE's actions. The two NOF members announced that five lower-level individuals from the KKE were incessantly "attacking the Macedonian organization": Pavle, Nico Papasermedzhis, Stathis Peshos, Kostadni

<sup>746</sup> Christophe Chiclet, *Les Communistes Grecs Dans La Guerre* (Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 1987) 155.

<sup>747</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, AJ, 507/IX, 33/V-15

<sup>748</sup> Vodensko District Committee, "Proclamation from the Vodensko District Committee of the Communist Party of Greece," in *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State*, ed. et al. Hristo Andonov-Poljanski (Skopje: University of "Cyril and Methodius", 1945), 746-48.

Kuzis, and one identified by the pseudonym Turk.<sup>749</sup> The two NOF members, however, did not blame the KKE's leadership for the actions of its lower-level operatives. In fact, they noted that the lower leadership countermanded the directives of Zachariadis, pointing out that he had condemned the actions of these operatives.<sup>750</sup> In late 1945, the NOF members came to view Zachariadis as a benefactor of the Macedonians, believing that lower-level functionaries were disrupting his efforts at harmonizing relations.

Relations between the KKE and NOF, in other words, were fraught with tension. Zachariadis and the KKE leadership, however, recognized that they needed to make a shift in policy, particularly because of the Slavophone Macedonians' importance to the CPY. Zachariadis' speech on 28 December 1945 to the Macedonian and Thracian branches of the KKE captures the transition that was occurring in his policy as it unfolded. He began by stating that "Marshal Tito, in his last speech in Skopje, stated that those who appear as autonomists are agents and drivers of foreign anti-Balkan interests."<sup>751</sup> Zachariadis provides no context for Tito's statement. That said, in light of Tito's other speeches from this period, it appears that Zachariadis, at the very least, took the comments out of context.<sup>752</sup> Given that he sought to maintain the support of the KKE membership in a region where the Greeks and Slavophone Macedonians had been at odds, he could not simply claim that the previous policy was wrong while maintaining his position. In citing Tito to support his argument, Zachariadis confirmed for the party's membership that the KKE was correct in taking an aggressive stance towards the Slavophone Macedonians. Furthermore, given that the speech was for internal rather than public consumption, Zachariadis could take a few more liberties with regards the CPY and specifically, Tito.

<sup>749</sup> "Declaration De Deux Activistes Du Fln De Voden Sur La Position Ennemie Du Pcg Envers Le Fln," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1945*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski and Todor Simovski (Skopje: Les Archives de le Macedoine, 1945), 431-32.

<sup>750</sup> Ibid.

<sup>751</sup> Nikos Zahariadis, "Partie Du Discours De Nikos Zahariadis a La Reunion Plenièrè Du Pcg Pour La Macedoine Et La Thrace Relative a La Questionne Macedonienne.," *ibid.*, 450-53.

<sup>752</sup> Tito, "Govor Josipa Broza Tita Na Osnivačkom Kongresu Komunističke Partije Srbije," 598-9. "Zapisnik Sa Sednice Politbiroa Ckpkj," *ibid.* (1945 (1996) (04/23/1945)), 440.

Zachariadis sought to transition the KKE's policy to one that would ameliorate the tension caused by the Macedonian Question. Yet he also placated the regional parties by confirming that their policy in the past had been correct. To this end, he stated that the poor relations between the "Greeks and the Slavomacedonians" were the result of "instigators of unrest and the enemies of democracy."<sup>753</sup> KKE and CPY rhetoric towards the Greek government during this period frequently referred to the government as fascists – in other words, the embodiment of an undemocratic government in the post-Second World War period. By invoking such terms, Zachariadis redirected blame towards the Greek government. He finished his speech by noting that "[the KKE should] walk shoulder to shoulder with the Slavomacedonians."<sup>754</sup> He could not have made a more dramatic reversal of the position he took in his summer interview with *Laiki Foni* in Thessaloniki. Thus, while Zachariadis did not debate the validity of the KKE's previous policy on the Macedonian Question, he simultaneously sought to adjust the party's position.

It was critical that Zachariadis explained the reasons for such a shift in policy. Alleviating tensions with the Slavophone Macedonians would, he claimed, "stop [the KKE's] isolation."<sup>755</sup> He hoped that such a reversal of policy would secure the support of the CPY and the CPSU, although he did not directly state this point. In 1945, the two parties were distant from the Greek communists, only communicating with it through various half-gestures.<sup>756</sup> The KKE needed an external benefactor regardless of whether it chose to pursue its policies through elections or armed resistance. This need, however, was higher for the latter course, which was becoming increasingly likely.

International developments were critical to CPY-KKE relations. According to Zachariadis, the decisions reached at "Yalta, Potsdam, and now in Moscow" were

<sup>753</sup> Zahariadis, "Partie Du Discours De Nikos Zaharijadis a La Reunion Plenièrè Du Pcg Pour La Macedoine Et La Thrace Relative a La Questionne Macedonienne.," 452.

<sup>754</sup> Ibid.

<sup>755</sup> Ibid.

<sup>756</sup> Stathis and Marantzidis Kalyvas, Nikos, *Εμφύλια Πάθη: 23 Ερωτήσεις Και Απαντήσεις Για Τον Εμφύλιο* (Αθήνα: Μεταίχμιο, 2015) 280, 305.

problematic to the KKE's struggle.<sup>757</sup> Zachariadis' recognition that the Soviet Union did not pursue the best interests of the KKE at these meetings goes against the majority of the literature in the field, which portrays him as a simplistic follower of Soviet policy.<sup>758</sup> Furthermore, his realization concerning Soviet Policy clarifies some scholars' confusion about the KKE's attitude towards the Soviet Union at this critical juncture.<sup>759</sup> Zachariadis was not a tool of Soviet policy. Instead, he recognized that if his party was to succeed in gaining power, it needed the support of the "northern Balkan republics and [relations with them had to be] based on fraternal understanding and peaceful democratic bargaining to resolve any disputes."<sup>760</sup> Zachariadis recognized that the KKE could only continue the struggle in Greece if it had the support of neighbouring countries, particularly Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. For the KKE to obtain the support of the surrounding Balkan states, and specifically Yugoslavia, the Greek communists had to reconcile themselves with the NOF. In short, the Greek communists' practical concerns trumped their previous ideological concerns about the NOF's conduct.

Fortunately for the KKE, Marxist dogma provided a means of facilitating such reconciliation. An article by Solon Grigoriadis in the 1 January 1946 issue of *Rizospastis* captured how the KKE leadership transitioned from blaming the Slavophone Macedonians to eventually accepting them. Grigoriadis wrote, "The question of the Slav-Macedonians is one of the serious problems of Macedonia."<sup>761</sup> The KKE's recognition that the Macedonian Question was an issue represented a significant shift from its previous dismissal of Slavophone Macedonian claims. Nevertheless, that did not mean

<sup>757</sup> Zahariadis, "Partie Du Discours De Nikos Zahariadis a La Reunion Pleniere Du Pcg Pour La Macedoine Et La Thrace Relative a La Questionne Macedonienne.," 452.

<sup>758</sup> A critical book on this matter is: Stavrakis, *Moscow and Greek Communism, 1944-1949* 50-51.

<sup>759</sup> Leonid Gibianskii, "The Soviet Bloc and the Initial Stage of the Cold War: Archival Documents on Stalin's Meetings with Communist Leaders of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, 1946-1948," *Cold War International History Project* 10, no. 1 (1998) 112-34.

<sup>760</sup> "La Rapport De La Direction Principale Du Fln Relatif a La Situation Politique Et L'activite Du Fln Dans La Macedoine D'eege," in *La Lettre De Directive De La Direction Principale Du Fln Au Commissariat Departemental Du Fln Pour La Region De Florina Relative a L'organisation De La Resistance Contre La Terreur Et Le Boycottage Des Elections Parlementaires*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1946); Zahariadis, "Partie Du Discours De Nikos Zahariadis a La Reunion Pleniere Du Pcg Pour La Macedoine Et La Thrace Relative a La Questionne Macedonienne.," 451.

<sup>761</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, AJ, 507/IX,33/V-27

that the KKE accepted the validity of the Slavophone Macedonian claims in Aegean Macedonia. Grigoriadis extolled the Slavophone Macedonians' role in the Second World War and their cooperation with EAM. He noted that nonetheless "today, after [the *Dekemvriana*] the Greek-English regime re-creates and escalates [the Macedonian Question]."<sup>762</sup> Grigoriadis completely ignored the tension that has been shown to exist between the Slavophone Macedonians and the EAM/ELAS. Instead, he created an image of an idyllic past shattered by the machinations of the Greek state and its English imperialist backers. While Grigoriadis' argument did not reflect reality, he had incorporated a sufficient number of Marxist tenets to sway communist ideologues to accept it. The Greek communists' lack of theoretical expertise, as Gerolymatos notes, aided Grigoriadis and the shift of policy in the KKE leadership.<sup>763</sup> Having provided an effective excuse for the tensions between the KKE and NOF, Grigoriadis concluded his article by noting there was now no reason why the Greeks and Slavophone Macedonians could not resume their idyllic pre-*Dekemvriana* relations.<sup>764</sup> In this regard, the NOF, the CPY, the CPM, the Greek government, and the KKE were not so dissimilar from one another. All parties viewed history as a medium they could reinterpret to serve contemporary political conditions. Sadly, the major participants on the Macedonian Question maintain this policy to the present.<sup>765</sup>

The NOF recognized that the KKE leadership ameliorated its position on the Macedonian Question, but the local organs of the party still proved to be a problem. An early February 1946 report by the NOF's Central Committee demonstrates this point. In describing events near Kastoria, the committee noted: "The KKE in Kastoria, before the arrival of Tzimas, continued the same tactics – polemics [against NOF]. The statement of Zachariadis [towards] NOF has been twisted by fanatics who claimed Zachariadis recognizes only [the] Voden NOF, because it's the only organization formed and

<sup>762</sup> Ibid.

<sup>763</sup> Gerolymatos, *The International Civil War: Greece, 1943–1949* 151, 226.

<sup>764</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, AJ, 507/IX,33/V-27

<sup>765</sup> See the introduction for the many ways in which politicians have manipulated the historical events of the Macedonian Question to further a political objective.

managed by the KKE."<sup>766</sup> According to this document, the NOF's membership recognized the divides between KKE's rank and file and its leadership.

Furthermore, the NOF did not limit its faith in the KKE's leadership to just Zachariadis. As Woodhouse noted, the CPY also considered Tzimas to be a reliable supporter. This assumption is not surprising, as Woodhouse notes the KKE believed Tzimas to be an individual sympathetic to Yugoslavia, and by extension, sympathetic to Macedonia's efforts in the region.<sup>767</sup> It is also evident that the CPY helped convey this perspective to the NOF. Tzimas declared to the NOF that Zachariadis had clearly stated that they were a "democratic antifascist organization."<sup>768</sup> Even though the NOF apparently had the support of the KKE's leadership, it remained skeptical about the KKE's ability to control its rank and file members. The NOF demonstrated this perspective when it concluded its earlier report with the comment that "now it remains to see what tactics the district leadership of the KKE will conduct in practice."<sup>769</sup> By this point, the NOF clearly believed more in actions than words.

The decision of the KKE's Central Committee at their Second Plenum on 12-15 February 1946 was crucial to the improved relations between the Greek communists and the NOF. As Heinz Richter argues, the meaning of the decisions reached at the Second Plenum is open to considerable debate, which remains a significant problem in contemporary analyses of the Greek Civil War.<sup>770</sup> Richter convincingly argues that the KKE did not reach a decision to engage in hostilities, and Ole Smith supports the conclusion by stating that the Second Plenum represented a significant shift in the tone that the KKE used not only to the Greek government, but also to the peoples of

<sup>766</sup> "La Rapport De La Direction Principale Du Fln Relatif a La Situation Politique Et L'activite Du Fln Dans La Macedoine D'eege," 91.

<sup>767</sup> Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949* 172, 178.

<sup>768</sup> Although this information comes second hand, it is unclear what the NOF would gain by further muddling the water between itself and the KKE, "La Rapport De La Direction Principale Du Fln Relatif a La Situation Politique Et L'activite Du Fln Dans La Macedoine D'eege," 91.

<sup>769</sup> Ibid.

<sup>770</sup> Heinz Richter, "The Second Plenum of the Central Committee of the Kke and the Decision for Civil War: A Reappraisal," in *Studies in the History of the Greek Civil War, 1945-1949*, ed. John O. Iatrides Lars Bærentzen, Ole L. Smith (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1987), 179-81.



Greece.<sup>771</sup> The KKE was successful in conveying its new message of potential armed resistance to the party membership. In fact, it was almost too successful. In response to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Plenum, the Macedonian and Thracian Bureaus of the KKE wrote to Zachariadis that they had 25,000 men ready to fight.<sup>772</sup> Zachariadis replied to the bureaus in a particularly blunt manner, telling them to “Stop this [action]. The whole business [of encouraging revolt] was only a bluff to force the government to give in [to our demands].”<sup>773</sup> Zachariadis’ threats of employing force were in line with what Ole Smith calls his double strategy.<sup>774</sup> Zachariadis’ ambiguity encouraged the most militant members of the party in the north to view civil war as inevitable. Although his letter to the Macedonian and Thracian branches indicated that he had not yet committed to an armed struggle, the ambiguous policy advanced at the KKE’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Plenum indirectly contributed to a new militancy amongst the party branches of Greece. The KKE’s northern party branches, which had previously been the most critical to the NOF, now pursued the same policies as their old rivals.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Plenum of the KKE also offers proof that Grigoriadis’ 1 January line became the KKE’s position on the Macedonian Question during this period. At the Plenum on 12 February 1946, Zachariadis blamed the Greek government and its English patrons for the Slavophone Macedonians’ dissatisfaction. He noted: “Greek authorities lead truly destructive policies against the Slavomacedonian population in Greek Macedonia, something that causes agitation and dissatisfaction among the population.”<sup>775</sup> It became apparent that Zachariadis was interested in the Macedonian Question for selfish rather than altruistic purposes when he stated: “and domestic

<sup>771</sup> Ibid. 186. Ole L. Smith, “Self-Defence and Communist Policy, 1945-1947,” *ibid.*,

<sup>772</sup> Heinz Richter, *British Intervention in Greece: From Varkiza to Civil War, February 1945 to August 1946*, trans. Marion Sarafis (London: Merlin Press, 1985) 512.

<sup>773</sup> As this comment comes from Vafiadis, later one of Zachariadis’ fiercest opponents, he would have had minimal reason to alter it to make it more favourable to Zachariadis’ later arguments. See: “Omilia”, 50.

<sup>774</sup> The north was the initial centre of the Greek Civil War and, by 1949, would take on even greater significance as the KKE led Democratic Army of Greece was defeated elsewhere.

<sup>775</sup> Nikos Zahariadis, “Une Partie Du Rapport Du Secretaire General Du Cc Du Pcg Nikos Zahariadis a La Iiime Seance Plenièrè Du Pcg, Relatif a La Question Nationale Macedonienne,” in *Documents Relatifs a L’attitude Du Parti Communiste Grec Envers La Question Nationale Macedonienne, 1918-1974*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de Macedoine, 1946), 348.

reaction uses [an] 'autonomist' movement and converts [... them as a] weapon against KKE."<sup>776</sup> Although Zachariadis' statement was unclear on how the Slavophone Macedonians represented a weapon against the Greek communists, he clarified this matter in an 11 April 1946 speech to the KKE membership in Thessaloniki. After describing the degree of terror that the Greek authorities imposed on the Slavophone Macedonian population, Zachariadis explained that the government's purpose for the terror was "to maintain a constant tension in relations between Greece and Slavic national republics in the Balkans."<sup>777</sup> As he had just returned from his February-March 1946 tour of the Soviet Union and the Balkan states, he viewed developments through an international relations lens. He made his newfound appreciation for the Slavophone Macedonians clear to the party on the next day, when he stated that KKE policy "should not be satisfied with our protection of the Slavomacedonians. We need to pay more attention to that question. Our task is to protect a minority that in the past and during the dictatorship of Metaxas, the Albanian War, and in the years of occupation fought with [the KKE]."<sup>778</sup> In other words, Zachariadis argued that the KKE was not assisting the Slavophone Macedonians for reasons of strategic interest. Rather, it was providing this assistance simply because it was the right thing to do. Given that Zachariadis' appeal was distributed throughout northern Greece in the KKE newspaper *Laiki Foni*, and given the tensions within the KKE and Greek society, he could not frame it in a different manner.

The NOF's leadership recognized the importance of the shift in KKE policy. On 7 March 1946, Paskal Mitrovski, one of the nominal leaders of the NOF, reported to the CPY's Central Committee that the KKE recognized his organization as an antifascist one, and took great satisfaction in this development.<sup>779</sup> Mitrovski likely referred to the KKE's decision at their 15 February 1946 plenum.<sup>780</sup> The NOF leader, however, was

<sup>776</sup> Ibid.

<sup>777</sup> "Extrait Du Discours Du Secretaire General Du Pcg, Nikos Zahariadis, Devant Les Membres Du Parti a Salonique, Ou Il Parle Aussi De La Poursuite En Masses Des Macedoniens.," 377.

<sup>778</sup> "Reponse De Nikos Zahariadis Aux Communistes De Salonique En Ce Qui Concerne Les Macedoniens," 368.

<sup>779</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 35073 31/12/1946 Aut. Μακεδονίας

<sup>780</sup> These speeches built upon the points raised in Zachariadis' December 1945 speech to the KKE.

upset because the decision that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Plenum reached included the liberated Slavophone Macedonian territory within the Greek state.<sup>781</sup> In other words, the KKE's plan would still leave the Macedonian people divided. The KKE began to bring the NOF into the fold, but it was by no means an easy process.

Zachariadis' decision not to contest the 31 March 1946 elections caused the KKE's options to eventually decline to the point that by the fall one option was left: civil war.<sup>782</sup> In this regard, Yugoslavia's support of the KKE and the rehabilitation of the NOF in its entirety were of paramount importance. Zachariadis' recognized that the KKE, now removed from the mainstream political process, needed to adopt a new policy on the Macedonian Question to gain the CPY's support. He put himself at the forefront of this change in a 12 April 1946 speech given at a party meeting in Thessaloniki. In that speech, he argued for the new policy on the Macedonian Question and demonstrated just how far he was willing to go to gain Yugoslav support. Early in his speech, Zachariadis noted that northern Greece's unnatural separation from its hinterland made it dependent on foreign capital.<sup>783</sup> Although Zachariadis' argument had a basis in the communist thought of the period, it also supported Yugoslav arguments that the economic problems within the People's Republic of Macedonia were the result of the republic's separation from its port in Thessaloniki.<sup>784</sup> This is not surprising given that Zachariadis had recently returned from Yugoslavia and worked to align the KKE's policies with that of the Yugoslavs.<sup>785</sup> By arguing that his policy benefitted Greece, Zachariadis avoided alienating his party base.

Zachariadis was unable to avoid making inflammatory remarks when he addressed the Slavophone Macedonians in Greece over Thessaloniki's detachment from its hinterland. He did, however, have one means of preventing a possible backlash. This was to employ the same tactic that the CPY had employed when it sought to

<sup>781</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 35073 31/12/1946 Αυτ. Μακεδονίας

<sup>782</sup> The March elections in 1946 were a pivotal moment in modern in Greek history

<sup>783</sup> Zachariadis, cited in: Richter, *British Intervention in Greece: From Varkiza to Civil War, February 1945 to August 1946* 511.

<sup>784</sup> Clutton, "Mr. Clutton to Mr. Bevin," 232-33.

<sup>785</sup> Smith, "Self-Defence and Communist Policy, 1945-1947," 170.

ameliorate relations with the KKE: blame the Greek government. In a speech Zachariadis gave in the late spring of 1946, he listed a litany of crimes that the Greek government had committed against the Slavophone Macedonians. He then noted: "if [they] can't endure the terror and the murders anymore, then the persecutors talk of 'bandits' and of 'autonomists' and start 'cleansing' operations again."<sup>786</sup> According to Zachariadis, installing a popular democracy was the only way to stop the persecution and cleansing of the Slavomacedonians.<sup>787</sup> In short, the previous issues KKE members had about the Slavophone Macedonians and the NOF being autonomists were the result of the government persecution, and the institution of a popular democracy would resolve these matters. Zachariadis did not provide substantive details as to exactly how popular democracy would solve the issue and he continued to use communist rhetoric to obfuscate much of the Macedonian Question. Zachariadis officially adopted a new policy on the Slavophone Macedonians, but in reality he contributed little to ending their persecution.

In a plenary session of the KKE's Regional Macedonian Branch on 16 June 1946, Zachariadis continued his efforts to rehabilitate the Slavophone Macedonians as the party marched towards war. He began his speech by largely reiterating earlier. He stated, for example, "The truth is that in Macedonia there [exists an] autonomist movement. It would be a crime if it is not watched [...] the autonomist movement is organized and governed by British agents, and their monarchofascist servants."<sup>788</sup> In re-emphasizing these points, Zachariadis helped establish their importance to KKE policy.<sup>789</sup> The resolutions adopted at the end of the Plenary Session demonstrated a genuine change in strategy with regards to the Macedonian Question. Furthermore, the KKE's Macedonian branch adopted the following resolution:

<sup>786</sup> Richter, *British Intervention in Greece: From Varkiza to Civil War, February 1945 to August 1946* 512.

<sup>787</sup> Ibid.

<sup>788</sup> Zahariadis, "Une Partie Du Discours Du Secretaire General Du Pcg, Nikos Nahariadis a La Seance Pleniere Du Bureau Regional Du Pcg Pour La Macedoine, Ou Il Mentionne Aussi Le Mouvement Autonomiste Des Macedonies, Etc.," 391.

<sup>789</sup> Given that KKE policy fluctuated considerably during this period, its re-emphasis demonstrates the degree of the shift that occurred in KKE thought.

*Once again, we declare that the KKE has nothing to do with the autonomist movement. Our policy towards Slavomacedonians was and always remains the same: Slavomacedonian full equality, the unity of the Grecophone and Slavophone elements in the fight against fascism, democracy, protection of independence and sovereignty of our country. This political line is agreeable with the national anti-fascist organization of the Slavomacedonians 'NOF'.<sup>790</sup>*

The KKE's Macedonian Branch completely rehabilitated the NOF, which it had previously dismissed in 1945 as being comprised of anarchists who worked against the interests of the Greek people. The KKE now argued Slavophone Macedonian autonomists collaborated with the British and Greek government. The resolution went on to state: "[An] Autonomist movement that exists and does not reflect the Slavomacedonians is a product of the English, who used to work the old agents of the occupiers [...]."<sup>791</sup> The NOF was a positive, anti-fascist force, and the KKE's position towards the NOF did not replicate its stance against the Slavophone Macedonians. Instead, the KKE opposed the tactics that had been employed by the English. As the resolution noted, England's goal was "to defame the Communist Party and to sow discord among the Balkan countries."<sup>792</sup> In taking its lead from Zachariadis, the Macedonian Branch of the KKE stated that one of its paramount concerns regarding the Macedonian Question was its potential to affect relations between the KKE and its neighboring Balkan countries, specifically Yugoslavia. This Yugoslav focus was the case given that Zachariadis had derided the Bulgarian intentions towards Aegean Macedonia in the 16 May 1946 edition of *Laiki Foni*, and that the Slavophone Macedonians were of little concern to the Albania: Greece's other Balkan neighbour.<sup>793</sup> He was cognizant of the fact that the KKE needed Yugoslav support and assuaged the CPY's fears on the issue by having the KKE's Macedonian Branch, which had previously been the most

<sup>790</sup> "Une Partie De La Resolution De La liieme Seance Pleniere Du Comite Regional Du Pcg Pour La Macedoine Ou Est Mentionee Aussi L'attitude Du Pcg Envers La Question Macedonienne," in *Documents Relatifs a L'attitude Du Parti Communiste Grec Envers La Question Nationale Macedonienne, 1918-1974*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de Macedoine, 1946), 392.

<sup>791</sup> Ibid.

<sup>792</sup> Ibid.

<sup>793</sup> Nikos Zahariadis, "Discours De Nikos Zahariadis, Secretaire General Du Cc Du Pcg, Devant Les Membres Du Pc a Athenes Ou Il Parle Aussi Des Pretentions De La Bulgarie a La Sortie Sur La Mer Egee.," *ibid.*, 384-86.

adamant voice against the Slavophone Macedonians, issue a statement of full support for that population. As the civil war approached, Zachariadis made sure that the KKE's patron was amenable to supporting the Greeks.

## 5.5. The Macedonian Question and the Civil War

By the summer of 1946, the KKE distinguished between Slavophone Macedonian autonomists and the NOF, which for the party was fundamental to their efforts to gain Yugoslav aid. In a 30 June 1946 edition of *Laiki Foni*, Mitchos Partsalidis noted that there was "not a single autonomist" within the KKE or the EAM.<sup>794</sup> This was at least a slight exaggeration, given the CPM's close association with the NOF. Twisting the truth, however, proved to be the one constant in Partsalidis' article. He further declared that KKE "policy on the Macedonian issue and Slavomacedonian minority was and remains clear."<sup>795</sup> This 'clear' policy was to let the Slavophone Macedonians "follow the faith that they want to have their own free and legal organizations, such as NOF."<sup>796</sup> The KKE clearly aimed to gain politically from its rehabilitation of the NOF in 1946. This attempt to use the Slavophone Macedonians is evident when one contrasts its active attempt to undermine the NOF in 1945.

Partsalidis' article also demonstrated the potential for the KKE's close alignment with the CPY on the Macedonian Question in order to damage the Greek communists support base: the nationalist Greek left. He spent an extensive portion of his article attempting to disprove the Yugoslav connection. When he discussed the NOF, he exclaimed: "And I am talking about NOF. About NOF and not CPM, since in Greek Macedonia, there is no CPM. There is only the KKE."<sup>797</sup> Partsalidis and the KKE evidently felt it necessary to distinguish the NOF from the Yugoslavs due to the Slavophone Macedonian party's alleged alignment with Yugoslavia being of great

<sup>794</sup> Mitchos Partsalidis, "Extrait Du Discours De Mitchos Partsalidis, Secretaire Du Cc D'eam a Salonique, Ou Il Parle Aussi De L'attitude D'eam Envers La Question Macedonienne," *ibid.*, 395.

<sup>795</sup> *Ibid.* 396.

<sup>796</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>797</sup> *Ibid.*

propaganda value to the government in its political campaign against the left.<sup>798</sup> The KKE's close association with the Slavophone Macedonians left it open to attack by the government – Partsalidis' article was a direct response to this issue.<sup>799</sup> Its efforts to strike a balance between appeasing the Slavophone Macedonians to gain Yugoslav support and not alienating the Greek left proved to be one of the enduring facets of its policy in the Greek Civil War.

The CPY's newfound ability to rein in the NOF's extremist behaviour was the result of an increased confidence in its ability to control the Macedonian Question. Letters exchanged between Lazar Koliševski and Tito in September/October 1946 prove this point. Koliševski told Tito that the Greeks "are not willing to carry out decisions in the spirit of the discussions held with Zachariadis, but they try, with every means at their disposal, to disorganize and dissolve the Macedonian units."<sup>800</sup> One would assume that Koliševski's argument carried significant weight, since he was the individual the CPY believed was most able to carry out its objectives in the region. Tito's reply on 7 October 1946, however, demonstrated that the concerns of the CPM were no longer paramount to the CPY, as they had been in late 1944 and early 1945. Tito began his retort by asking what units Koliševski considered to be his in Greece.<sup>801</sup> Despite the NOF's close ties with the CPM, Tito distanced himself from both parties to create plausible deniability as the country descended into civil war. Tito then proceeded to answer his question, stating that

*[the CPY] consider that in this situation all units in the territory of Greece should be under the unified direction of Greek commands, with which you should now be in touch. Your people should not be mixed now with the organization and direction of the armed struggle in Greece. You should limit your activity in Aegean Macedonia only to offering specific assistance, as with the press, etc.*<sup>802</sup>

<sup>798</sup> Ibid. The Greek government throughout the Civil War, as we shall see, attempted to brand the KKE as serving northern interests.

<sup>799</sup> Ibid.

<sup>800</sup> Cited in Kofos, "The Impact of the Macedonian Question on Civil Conflict in Greece," 299.

<sup>801</sup> Ibid.

<sup>802</sup> Ibid.

The differences between Tito's late 1944/early 1945 and late 1946 policies for Greece were stark. The CPY, which in late 1944 had interfered in Greek affairs without concern for the KKE's sensibilities, now absolved itself of direct interaction with Greece and ordered the CPM to do the same. The CPM, in fact, now took orders for its activities in Aegean Macedonia from the KKE. This was a reversal from the CPY's late 1944 policies, and entailed a return to their pre-ASNOM approach. In short, the CPY felt that its domestic position in Vardar Macedonia was secure to the point that it could now pursue its foreign policy objectives without having to placate the Macedonian minority.

In order to remove a substantial political headache from his domain, Tito placed the NOF under the control of the KKE. There was still considerable confusion, however, about this newfound relationship. The minutes of the CPY's Central Committee meeting on 15 October 1946 noted: "The [Slavophone] Macedonian Party organizations in Aegean Macedonia are included in their entirety in the Yugoslav Communist Party."<sup>803</sup> The Central Committee's assertion contrasted significantly with the comments made by Tito to Koliševski on 7 October 1946. Although one can derive a number of explanations from contrast – up to and including the thesis that Yugoslavia maintained control of the Slavophone Macedonian groups as part of its irredentist strategy – the available evidence does not support this argument.<sup>804</sup> Tito would not risk alienating Koliševski, whom the CPY now considered one of its few loyal elements within the region. More plausibly, Tito was honest with the one individual he could trust on the Macedonian Question, while maintaining a more nationalistic and communist stance amongst the larger, and less reliable, Central Committee. The Central Committee, one may recall, had in the past thwarted Tito's plans towards Greece. Tito still treaded carefully on the Macedonian Question, even if he possessed increased control over it.

The double game that Tito played on the Macedonian Question was demonstrated by a secret agreement signed by Ioannidis and Karaivanov (of the CPM) on the same day that Tito gave his speech on the Aegean Party to the CPY's Central Committee. As Kofos notes, this agreement formed the basis for the eventual agreement

<sup>803</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, AJ, CKJ/507/IX, 33/V-32

<sup>804</sup> Koliopoulos, *Plundered Loyalties: World War II and Civil War in Greek West Macedonia* 116; Kofos, "The Impact of the Macedonian Question on Civil Conflict in Greece," *Passim*.



that the CPY and KKE signed on 28 November 1946 regarding the status of the NOF.<sup>805</sup> Specifically, the agreement stated:

- a. NOF will be incorporated into the KKE and, more particularly, into its Regional Committee for Macedonia and Thrace, severing its links with the CPM.
- b. NOF will set up a central organ under Keramidzhiev and Mitrovski that will report to the Regional Committee of the KKE for Macedonia and Thrace. NOF will have its own youth organization and press.
- c. The andartes in Aegean Macedonia [sic] and Greece will have complete organizational and political unity and action. No special "Macedonian" units will function.
- d. Dzodze Urdarov, a member of the Aegean Committee of the CPM, will be assigned the task of supervising compliance with the [Yugoslav] party line in the partisan movement in "Aegean Macedonia."<sup>806</sup>

Through this agreement and its later formulation on 28 November 1946, the CPY distanced itself from taking an active part in the Greek component of the Macedonian Question. While the CPY assigned Dzodze Urdarov the role of ensuring that the partisan movement in Aegean Macedonia followed the Yugoslav line, this was not an exceptional development. Leftheris Eleftheriou, a member of the KKE who would edit *Dimokratikos Stratos* during the Greek Civil War, noted that it was "no coincidence that, both in its political concepts and in its organisation, the Democratic Army followed the prototype of the Yugoslav Partisan Army."<sup>807</sup> The fact that the CPY controlled the regional party through Koliševski meant that the actual influence of the Macedonians in Greece would be limited. Thus, the first point where the KKE would integrate NOF into its party organization was the critical clause of the agreement, rather than the reservation inserted by the CPM member.

As a result of these changing interests in 1946, the CPY, KKE, and NOF reached an agreement whereby the NOF would be incorporated into the Greek Communist Party. This occurred just before the formal outbreak of the Greek Civil War. Whether or not the parties formalized this agreement remains subject to debate, especially since Kofos

<sup>805</sup> "The Impact of the Macedonian Question on Civil Conflict in Greece," 299-300.

<sup>806</sup> Cited in: *ibid.*

<sup>807</sup> Leftheris Eleftheriou, *I Avghi*, 27 January 1980. *Dimokratikos Stratos* was the chief journal of the DAG and thus well acquainted with the inner workings of it during the conflict

notes that Zachariadis denied that a written treaty existed in June 1949.<sup>808</sup> Documents provided by the Archive of Macedonia, however, confirm that the parties based the 28 November 1946 agreement on the 15 October pact, although it was not drawn up in a contractual form.<sup>809</sup> Furthermore, in a 1947 report, Paskal Mitrovski considered the formal agreement between the NOF and the KKE to have begun in October 1946.<sup>810</sup> While the agreement between the KKE, CPY, and NOF was not a legal treaty, it would nonetheless have long-term impacts on the parties involved.

The 28 November 1946 agreement simply formalized pre-existing arrangements. As Paskal Mitrovski, the NOF's liaison with the KKE, noted as early as 13 September 1946: "We did not leave a single issue unresolved or in the dark [with the KKE]."<sup>811</sup> In other words, Tito was honest with Koliševski in their earlier discussion. The CPY had in fact abandoned its active role on the Macedonian Question in Aegean Macedonia by the time of the communication between Tito and Koliševski.<sup>812</sup> It was critical that Tito did not inform the CPM's membership of this development, as doing so would have undermined his position. While Tito felt comfortable enough on the Macedonian Question to support the KKE, he did not want it to undermine his position within the party. In this regard, Tito and Zachariadis' use of the Slavophone Macedonians to advance their personal interests was not dissimilar.

<sup>808</sup> While Kofos accepts Zachariadis' explanation, it should be noted that Zachariadis frequently changed his statements, particularly as the KKE's position declined, in order to cover up for earlier failings. See: Kofos, "The Impact of the Macedonian Question on Civil Conflict in Greece," 299-300.

<sup>809</sup> Kirjazovski, *Narodno Osloboditelniot Front*, 155-69.

<sup>810</sup> Paskal Mitrovski, "La Rapport De Paskal Mitrovski, Relatif Aux Rapports Du Fln Et Du Pcg, a La Maniere De L'execution Du Contrat Relatif a L'union Du Fln Et Du Pcg," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece, 1947*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1947), 133.

<sup>811</sup> Partsalidis, "Extrait Du Discours De Mitchos Partsalidis, Secretaire Du Cc D'eam a Salonique, Ou Il Parle Aussi De L'attitude D'eam Envers La Question Macedonienne," 396.

<sup>812</sup> Kofos, "The Impact of the Macedonian Question on Civil Conflict in Greece," 299.

## 5.6. Conclusion

Because of the KKE-CPY agreement, the NOF found itself placed under the direct control of the Greek communists. The KKE demonstrated its newfound control of the NOF upon coming to terms with the CPY when it immediately dispatched the Slavophone Macedonian units to central Greece. The units, far removed from the north, would presumably no longer be able to engage in irredentist activities.<sup>813</sup> A new basis for relations between the KKE and the CPY emerged in late 1946 that did not allow the interests of the Slavophone Macedonians to dictate the actions of either party, as had occurred in the past. Although Marantzidis implies that the KKE's de-facto recognition of the NOF was a failure on its part, that recognition represented the culmination of the KKE's plan to mitigate the pernicious Macedonian Question.<sup>814</sup> Under these circumstances, the KKE and the CPY minimized the NOF's influence over their internal affairs, allowing them to focus on the mutual goal of defeating the Greek government.

It was a critical oversight that the Greek government did not make a distinction between the policies of the CPY and the KKE. Instead, it viewed the CPY's rhetoric as part of a greater Slavic plot that had emerged at the behest of the Soviet Union that aimed to seize northern Greece and integrate it into Yugoslavia. An examination of the CPY's actions during this period indicate that this assertion was incorrect, even though the idea continues to enjoy popularity among scholars today.<sup>815</sup> Instead, while foreign policy considerations certainly dictated the CPY's aggressive actions on its southern frontier as a result of the personal political capital that Tito had attached to these measures, the CPY's concern over a stable Vardar Macedonia took precedence. Once

<sup>813</sup> Several Macedonian academics, most notably Kirjazovski and Rossos, claim that this action represented a betrayal of the Macedonian people. See: Risto Kirjazovski, *Narodnoosloboditelniot Front I Drugite Organizacii Na Makedoncite Od Egejska Makedonija, 1945-1949* (Skopje: Kultura, 1985) *Passim*; and Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians: A History* Kindle Edition.

<sup>814</sup> Marantzidis, "The Greek Civil War (1944-1949) and the International Communist System," 32.

<sup>815</sup> Barker, "Yugoslav Policy Towards Greece, 1947-1949," 128. Ulunian, "The Soviet Question and 'the Greek Question', 1946-53; Problems and Appraisals," 297-308. Ioanna Papathanasiou, "The Cominform and the Greek Civil War, 1947-49," in *The Greek Civil War: Essays on a Conflict of Exceptionalism and Silences*, ed. Ioanna Papathanasiou (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2004), 58-62.

the CPY had achieved stability in Vardar Macedonia, it could use its otherwise empty aggressive rhetoric to help the KKE pursue a Greek communist state, thereby situating it within the traditional rubric of the Balkan Federation that those communist leaders had spoken of for the previous 20 years.<sup>816</sup>

Thus, the Macedonian Question directly or indirectly affected the major aspects of the outbreak of the Greek Civil War in ways that scholars previously have not considered possible. While the Macedonian Question looms as an omnipresent factor in Greece's relations with its northern neighbours, the emotions that it elicits have resulted in scholars neglecting the more nuanced factors pertinent to the question for those that fit within the existing nationalist narrative. When these factors are looked at critically the extent to which the Macedonian Question impacted the actions of different participants in the lead up to the Greek Civil War becomes clear. The Macedonian Question would continue to affect these actors throughout the course of the conflict.

<sup>816</sup> Elisabeth Barker, "The Yugoslavs and the Greek Civil War of 1946-1949," 209-302.

## Chapter 6. The Macedonian Question in the Greek Civil War, January 1947-June 1948

The 25 May 1948 edition of *Nova Makedonija* alarmed Kaloutsis, Greece's representative in Yugoslavia, more than usual. Kaloutsis and other diplomats in Yugoslavia usually took exception to Yugoslav pronouncements, but this was different.<sup>817</sup> Yugoslav sympathizers had written previous pronouncements against the Greek government, but in this case a member of NOF, acting as a representative for Keramidzhiev, wrote an article for the Macedonian public, stating:

*[The Greek government] is attacking Macedonians of Greece because they are Slavs and part of the heroic Macedonian people that won its national freedom in the fight for liberation, together with other Yugoslav peoples under the wise leadership of glorious Marshal Tito. [...] They are strengthened in their common struggle under the leadership of EAM. Under the direction of NOF, the Macedonians participate in the struggle arms in hand, as members of the invincible Democratic Army of Greece with General Markos, supreme leader and president of the provisional democratic government [...].*<sup>818</sup>

By 1948 it was uncharacteristic for a Macedonian paper to print such a speech, even though the Macedonian press was typically more bombastic than the Belgrade media. The above quotation emphasized that Yugoslavia now supported the Greek communists in their insurgency, whereas just four years prior the Macedonian press had emphasized the failures of both the Greek communists and the Greek government. The excerpt also linked Aegean and Vardar Macedonia. Given the Greek's sensibilities, the Yugoslavs could not have published a more provocative piece.

<sup>817</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 50898 22-9-48 A/Γ1; Diplomatic and Historic Archives, 52014 30-7-48 Αut Μακ.; Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 38664 19-6-48 Αut. Μακ.; Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 44991/29-10-47/Εσωτ. Κου; Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 42316 3-10-47 Εσωτ. Κατ.

<sup>818</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 28253 30/5/47 A/ΓΙου; *ibid.*

This chapter argues that while scholars use the late 1946-June 1948 period as the basis for the Macedonian Question in the Greek Civil War, this time frame was in fact riddled with contradictions. During this period, the CPY increasingly transformed its ideological and political role amongst the Aegean Macedonians to the KKE. The KKE, with the CPY's tacit blessing, slowly subsumed the NOF within the DAG. The NOF, however, did not surrender its independence easily. In fact, the NOF leaders sought to play the KKE and CPY against one another to pursue the Macedonian nation-building exercise, but to also settle scores amongst themselves. At the same time, the Greek government exploited the increasingly large Slavic component of the DAG and KKE to rally national and international opinion against the left resistance. This endeavour was successful, as was evident when the Greek government gained the support of the United States on account of the threat of 'slavo-communism'; a position congruent with the emerging ideological battle lines of the Cold War.

## **6.1. The CPY and the Macedonian Question, November 1946-June 1948**

By the end of 1946, the CPY was in a position to reduce the problem of the Macedonian Question in its relations with the KKE. Yet this process of removal was by no means easy. Even though the Yugoslav authorities were satisfied with the status of Vardar Macedonia, they still believed that the Slavophone Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia could be a destabilizing force. On 4 March 1947, *Nova Makedonija* published a declaration by the CPM's Minister of the Interior that stated:

*The ministry of internal affairs of the PR of Macedonia, under Article 83, paragraph 2 of the Constitution of the PR of Macedonia orders: All refugee Greece / Macedonians, Greeks, etc. // ages over 14 years, of both sexes, that are located in the territory of the PR. [The Refugees] are required to report to the premises of the Department of Internal Affairs of the Regional Executive Committees [near] the place where they are domiciled and to bring with them three 6 x 9 photographs and their identity papers. Declarations need to be received by the Department of*

*Internal Affairs between 5 March and 5 April 1947. Violators will be called to answer by law for the non-implementation of this order.*<sup>819</sup>

The Yugoslav/Macedonian authorities could not expel the Aegean Macedonians from the People's Republic of Macedonia not to undermine their leadership of the movement. The CPY did take steps, however, to guarantee that it accounted for those individuals whom it did not send to the northern town of Bulkes.<sup>820</sup> Scholars, however, tend to neglect this group of Slavophone Macedonians and instead focus on the political dynamics at Bulkes.<sup>821</sup> Nevertheless, the Yugoslav authorities kept a close eye on the Slavophone Macedonians in other regions of Macedonia. Although the People's Republic of Macedonia may have been stable, the Yugoslav authorities took care to ensure that there was no backslide towards the political unrest of 1944.

To this end, the CPY managed to marry its concerns about the Slavophone Macedonians with its ideological and pragmatic support for the DAG in the Greek Civil War. One way in which it advanced this course of action was by encouraging the Slavophone Macedonians to complain to the Commission of Investigation Concerning Greek Frontier Incidents and later the United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans (UNSCOB).<sup>822</sup> The United Nations (UN) was newly formed and had followed the recommendation of The Commission of Investigation Concerning Greek Frontier Incidents to create UNSCOB in October 1947. UNSCOB was responsible for investigating claims by the Greek government that Greece's northern neighbours (Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia) supported the communist insurgency, despite their protestations to the contrary.<sup>823</sup> It is quite clear that all three countries actively supplied the KKE.<sup>824</sup> Yugoslavia, however, could not admit complicity for political reasons.

<sup>819</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 21806 22/3/47 Ελληνικογιουγκοσλαυιας Σχεςεις

<sup>820</sup> Ristovic, "The Bulkes Experiment: A "Greek Republic" in Yugoslavia 1945-1949," 123.

<sup>821</sup> Ibid. Marantzidis, "The Greek Civil War (1944-1949) and the International Communist System," 223-31. Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece* 137.

<sup>822</sup> For a full analysis of UNSCOB and its role in the Greek Civil War, see: Nachmani, *International Intervention in the Greek Civil War: The United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans, 1947-1952 Passim*.

<sup>823</sup> Ibid. 36-41.

<sup>824</sup> Ibid.

Instead, Yugoslavia sought to redirect the UN's attention by using the Macedonian Question to divert the Greek government's claims.

The Greek government's denial of the existence of a Slavophone Macedonian minority population within Northern Greece gave Yugoslavia the opportunity to exploit it and petition both the Commission and UNSCOB on their status. Furthermore, the Yugoslav authorities cooperated with the KKE/DAG to give the UNSCOB numerous examples of the Greek state's abuse of the Macedonian minority. In March 1947, the Political Refugees of Aegean Macedonia in Yugoslavia sent the Commission a memorandum on their situation. The memorandum began by noting that "There are 20,104 Macedonian, Greek, and Vlach emigrants in Yugoslavia [... with] the vast majority of political emigrants from Greece arriving after Varkiza."<sup>825</sup> It also acknowledged that the vast majority of the refugees had arrived after Varkiza and placed the responsibility for the crisis on the Greek government, rather than on EAM/ELAS. After outlining the reasons for the persecution of Slavophone Macedonians and situating this event in the still developing Yugoslav version of Macedonian identity, the memorandum outlined several measures that it felt the UN should undertake. These included:

- 1. To examine the witnesses and victims of monarchofascist atrocities, some of which we stated in this memo [...] that will underpin our every allegation;*
- 2. The Commission or its organs inspect the sites of [...] monarchofascist terror [...];*
- 3. As soon as possible to [identify] the British armies as culprits [...];*
- 4. Do not allow the interference of external forces and factors national affairs of Greece, in particular, that it would not have allowed entry of foreign military units on the soil of free Greece;*

<sup>825</sup> "La Memorandum Des Refugies Politiques De La Macedoine D'eege En Yougoslavie, Envoye a La Commission De L'ONU," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece, 1947*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1947), 62.



5. To form a new democratic government in Greece with the participation of EAM [...].<sup>826</sup>

The refugees, by portraying themselves as loyal sons and daughters of Greece who had to flee due to monarchofascist oppression, provided a plausible excuse for any border incidents; these were individuals returning to fight for their land, not Yugoslav military forces.<sup>827</sup> As Nachmani noted, the UNSCOB did not accept the Yugoslav's excuses.<sup>828</sup> The fact the Yugoslavs used the Slavophone Macedonians to mask their involvement, however, at least gave them a form of deniability. Furthermore, given the Commission's mission to focus on external intervention, it is probable that the Yugoslav authorities sought to delegitimize the Greek government. Part of this process involved placing the burden for outside intervention in the conflict on the British state. Point 4 of the memo specifically redirected Greek government accusations of external intervention against their erstwhile ally: Great Britain.<sup>829</sup> In short, the Slavophone Macedonians provided the Yugoslavs with an ideal means to legitimize their actions in Greece, but also to delegitimize those of the Greek government.

The Political Refugees of Aegean Macedonia in Yugoslavia did not raise these points in isolation. The refugees' protestations, in fact, represented part of a concerted CPY/KKE strategy. Isolated letters repeated the complaints that the Slavophone Macedonians sent to the Commission in early 1947. Risto Kolevski, a peasant from the village of D'mbeni near Kastoria, wrote to the United Nations to complain that the Greek authorities (monarchofascists) burned down the village's barns and arrested 13 women

<sup>826</sup> Ibid. 72.

<sup>827</sup> The memorandum noted earlier that the Macedonian population was concentrated along its border with Greece. See *ibid.* 63. That said, it is quite evident that both Yugoslav and Greek forces actively facilitated border incidents. See: Ristic, "Small War on the Yugoslav-Greek Border (1945-1950)," 95-108.

<sup>828</sup> Nachmani, *International Intervention in the Greek Civil War: The United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans, 1947-1952* 35.

<sup>829</sup> Great Britain's involvement in the Greek Civil War is well-established in existing literature. See: Goulter, "The Greek Civil War: A National Army's Counterinsurgency Triumph," 1017-55; Sakkas, *Britain and the Greek Civil War, 1944-1949: British Imperialism, Public Opinion and the Coming of the Cold War* 14. Iatrides, "Revolution or Self-Defense? Communist Goals, Strategy, and Tactics in the Greek Civil War," 3-33.

and 9 men.<sup>830</sup> On 3 March 1947, Konstandin Kondakov wrote the UNSCOB to detail the abuses of the authorities against members of his village throughout 1946. Kondakov stated that on 4 June 1946, 40 British soldiers and 14 Greek "monarchofascists [...]" "came at night and took, four children from 5-14 years after they beat us with their rifles" was particularly noteworthy.<sup>831</sup> Kondakov alleged that the government had committed a morally reprehensible act in taking children away from their parents and did so with the full complicity of the British forces. Other letters from this period consistently reported similar atrocities.<sup>832</sup> Consequently, one can only conclude that the CPY influenced these reports to divert the international community's attention away from its role in supplying the KKE's armed forces.

While the CPY sought to refocus international attention on the plight of the left in Greece, in early 1947 it also continued its nation-building policy of Yugoslav Macedonianism in Vardar Macedonia by using Macedonian irredentism to gain domestic support. According to a letter that Dalietos, Greece's ambassador to Yugoslavia, sent to Athens on 7 April 1947, Yugoslav authorities had stated in the People's Republic of

<sup>830</sup> Hristo F. Kolevski, "La Lettre De Protestation De Risto Kolevski Du Village D'mbeni, Region De Kastoria, a La Commission D'enquete De L'ONU, Relative a La Terreur Des Monarchofascistes Dans Le Village D'mbeni," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece, 1947*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1947), 48.

<sup>831</sup> Konstandin Kondakov, "La Lettre De Protestation De Konstandin Kondakov Du Village Zrnovo (Region De Drama) Et Du Village Starčista (Region De Demir-Hisar), a La Commission D'enquete De L'ONU Relative Aux Crimes Des Monarcho-Fascistes," *ibid.*, 49.

<sup>832</sup> "La Memorandum Des Refugies Politiques De La Macedoine D'eege En Yougoslavie, Envoye a La Commission De L'ONU," *ibid.*, 62-73. Simo Hadžievski Vangel Manov, Leonid Virlov, and Boris Dimov, "La Lettre De Protestation De Boris Dimov, Vangel Manov, Simo Hadžievski Et Leonid Virlov Du Village Rakite, Region De Kajlari, a La Commission D'enquete De L'ONU, Relative a La Ferocite Des Monarchofascistes Au Village Rakite Et Autres Dans La Region De Kajlari," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1947), 59-61; Ivan Hristo Kerov, "La Lettre De Protestation D'Ivan Hristo Kerov Du Village Tušim, Region De Meglen, Et De Velika Atanasova Šumentu Du Village Crna Reka, Région De Gumendže, a La Commission D'enquete De L'ONU, Relatives Aux Crimes Des Monarchofascistes.," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece, 1947*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1947), 51-52. Viktorija Andreeva-Panajatova, "La Lettre Protestation De Viktorija Andreeva-Panajatova Du Village Višeni, Region De Kastoria, a La Commission D'enquete De L'ONU, Relative Aux Ferocites Des Monarchofascistes Dans Son Village," *ibid.*, 50-51.

Macedonia that northern Greece “belonged to the Macedonian people in [Aegean Macedonia].”<sup>833</sup> On 6 May 1947, a film titled “Macedonia” premiered in Skopje. As indicated by Dalietos, the film sought to connect all of Macedonia (Aegean, Pirin, and Vardar) into one collective identity with a shared history.<sup>834</sup> The fact that Dalietos reported on both these events demonstrates that the Yugoslav authorities were not subtle, even if the People’s Republic of Macedonia was less restive than it had been in the past.

The Bled Agreement of 1 August 1947 was critical to Yugoslavia’s approach towards the Macedonian Question in Greece. It was a pact between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. In it, the CPY received the Bulgarians’ agreement to allow Macedonian cultural workers to enter Pirin Macedonia and conduct their nation-building exercise.<sup>835</sup> Pirin Macedonia, in effect, gave the CPY an outlet for Macedonian nationalism by allowing Macedonians from Yugoslavia to proselytize in the region. Consequently, it did not have to be as aggressive towards Aegean Macedonia as it had been in the past. In addition to having an effective outlet for Macedonian irredentism, the CPY was also very likely to acquire Pirin Macedonia, which contrasted with the evasive and ultimately insubstantial promises of the KKE, as seen in Chapter 5. CPY propaganda on the issue thus refocused on Pirin Macedonia, and for the time being, left Aegean Macedonia alone.

Older and Greek nationalist works on the Greek Civil War claimed that the KKE and CPY decided the Macedonian Question at Bled.<sup>836</sup> According to Burks, the KKE agreed to readjust the Greek borders to create a greater Macedonia.<sup>837</sup> As Marantzidis notes, other scholars adopted the same claim, even though they have not found proof in

<sup>833</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 23348 8/4/47 ΓΙΟΥΚΟ.

<sup>834</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archives, 28177 30/5/47 Α/Γ2

<sup>835</sup> Georgi Dimitrov, *Political Report deliered [sic] to the V Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party* (Sofia: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1949) 67.

<sup>836</sup> For examples, see: Papavizas, *Claiming Macedonia: The Struggle for the Heritage, Territory and Name of the Historic Hellenic Land, 1862-2004* 200; Kofos, “The Impact of the Macedonian Question on Civil Conflict in Greece,” 303.

<sup>837</sup> R.V. Burks, *The Dynamics of Communism in Eastern Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1962) 99-101.

the Bulgarian, Greek, or Yugoslav archives.<sup>838</sup> The argument, however, failed to take the CPY's domestic policy on the Macedonian Question into account. As Vulko Chervenkov, a leading figure of the Bulgarian Communist Party, stated at the first meeting of the Cominform, the Bled Agreement was the beginning of an important phase in Bulgarian-Yugoslav relations.<sup>839</sup> While scholars traditionally portray the Cominform as a means for the USSR to exercise control over the rest of the communist world, the Tito-Stalin split blurs the events that preceded it and thus prevents them from being sufficiently analyzed.<sup>840</sup> Therefore, one needs to dismiss the claim that the KKE and the CPY decided the fate of Aegean Macedonia at Bled because of an absence of archival proof and because scholars base the argument on a false premise.

Analyzing Yugoslav propaganda towards Greece during this period confirms that the Bled Agreement allowed the CPY to redirect Macedonian irredentist sentiment towards Pirin Macedonia rather than Aegean Macedonia. As indicated earlier, in the spring and early summer of 1947, Yugoslav domestic propaganda argued for a maximalist Macedonia that incorporated Aegean Macedonia.<sup>841</sup> There was, however, an immediate shift in Yugoslav propaganda on Greece after the Bled Agreement towards emphasizing the imperialist nature of the Greek government. Dalietos, who frequently reported on Macedonian irredentist propaganda in early 1947, stopped after Yugoslavia reached the agreement. His reports in August of 1947 instead focused on the Yugoslavs' accusations of Greek imperialism. On 3 August 1947, Dalietos recounted to Athens an article in *Borba* that complained about Anglo-American imperialism.<sup>842</sup> On 12 August

<sup>838</sup> Marantzidis, "The Greek Civil War (1944-1949) and the International Communist System," 36. As Nešović argues, the Bled Agreement was much more about Yugoslav and Bulgarian relations than Greece. This makes such assessments about Bled problematic. See: Slobodan Nešović, *Bledski Sporazumi* (Zagreb: Globus, 1979) 241-42.

<sup>839</sup> Chervenkov, cited in: G et. al Proacci, ed. *The Cominform: Minutes of the Three Conferences, 1947/1948/1949* (Milan: Feltrinelli Editore, 1994), 103.

<sup>840</sup> This perspective started early, due to Western attempts to rehabilitate Yugoslavia after the 1940s. For an analysis of this process see: Lorraine M. Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat: The United States, Yugoslavia, and the Cold War, 1945-1960* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010) 43-88.

<sup>841</sup> Even the Bulgarian Communist Party was open to these developments. See: B. Kondis, "The "Macedonian Question" as a Balkan Problem in the 1940s," *Balkan Studies* 28, no. 1 (1987) 151-160.

<sup>842</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archives, 2451 11/08/1947

1947, an article in *Republika* argued that the Greek Civil War was a war of imperialist aggression.<sup>843</sup> On 17 August 1947, Dalietos conveyed to Athens that *Politika* had published an article on the “calamities and provocations of the monarchofascist Greeks.”<sup>844</sup> That Dalietos deliberately sought out such remarks, yet did not send any to Athens, shows that the newspaper’s focus had shifted, and in turn Yugoslav domestic arguments on the Macedonian Question.

While the CPY turned away from the Macedonian Question, key members of the CPM continued to argue for a greater Macedonian state. In particular, the CPY found it difficult to rein in Dmatar Vlahov. After the CPY had unleashed Vlahov, it could not control him directly. Although the CPY had changed rhetoric towards Aegean Macedonia after the Bled Agreement, the CPM and Vlahov continued their nation-building activities. Vlahov confirmed that he had not given up his greater Macedonian aspirations in several speeches made after the agreement.<sup>845</sup> His 16 October 1947 speech in Skopje demonstrates that the Yugoslavs could not easily silence either him or the Macedonians. In that speech, he stated:

*Aegean Macedonia, like all Macedonia, represented and was still representing a well-defined geographic, national, ethnic, historical, cultural, and economic entity, notwithstanding the forcible changes of population. There is irrefutable evidence that from the beginning of the Slav migration to the Balkan Peninsula that Aegean Macedonians have constituted an exclusively Slav element. Many scholars and the political representative of various European countries emphasized the Slavonic character of Macedonia.*<sup>846</sup>

In other words, Vlahov stressed the same points he raised in his 1946 communications. Although he did tailor some of his speeches to suit the crowd, his credentials for advancing the Macedonian cause were beyond reproach.<sup>847</sup> Put simply, by 1947 he realized that the Yugoslavs represented the best means available for pursuing his maximalist vision of Macedonia.

<sup>843</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 44615 22.10.47 Εσωτ. Κου

<sup>844</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 47566 20-11-47 Γιουγκοσλαβία

<sup>845</sup> Vlahov, *Govori I Stati, 1945-1947* 158-225.

<sup>846</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archives, 1947.80.7.1 Μεθοριος

<sup>847</sup> Brown, *The Past in Question: Modern Macedonia and the Uncertainties of Nation* 270.

Tito's comments on Aegean Macedonia to foreign journalists during this period provide a significant contrast to the party's domestic position on the Macedonian Question. On 16 October 1947, Tito met with American journalists to discuss a variety of foreign policy points, and the question of Aegean Macedonia arose. Tito indicated that the Yugoslavs did not anticipate raising the question of Aegean Macedonia at the Paris Peace Conference.<sup>848</sup> Tito's statement was disingenuous because the Yugoslavs would not have sent Vlahov to the conference if they did not intend to raise the Macedonian Question. Tito, however, quickly got to the matter at hand. In discussing Aegean Macedonia, he stated:

*It must be understood that we cannot remain indifferent to the situation which has now resulted in connection with the persecution of the Macedonian population by the organs of the Government. What measures we shall take before the UN I cannot say, but certain measures we shall undertake, because I believe that, simultaneously with the session of the UN and the discussion of the rights of small nations and minorities, the minorities in Greece, and particularly Aegean Macedonia, are being terrorized.*<sup>849</sup>

Tito promised a great deal, but in reality provided nothing of substance. He stated that the Yugoslavs could not remain indifferent, but simultaneously committed to no new course of action. In fact, Tito focused more on countering UN claims that he was actively involved in the Greek Civil War than on explaining its importance to Yugoslav domestic politics. This was in line with Tito's concluding remarks on Yugoslavia's involvement, which included the following statement:

*Naturally, I refute all the slanders which are being spread against Yugoslavia – such as that Yugoslavia is partly responsible for the events in Greece – as groundless. I must also stress that Yugoslavia will not undertake any measures in this connection not in the spirit of the principles of the UN. All rumours to the contrary are intended merely to harm our country.*<sup>850</sup>

<sup>848</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archives, 1947.80.7.1 Μεθόριος

<sup>849</sup> Ibid.

<sup>850</sup> Ibid.

Now that the CPY possessed a legal outlet for Macedonian nationalizing activities in Pirin Macedonia, Tito was more concerned with the damage that supporting the KKE in the Greek Civil War could do to the country's international reputation. Hence, when Tito discussed the Macedonian Question, he quickly sought to relate it to the broader geopolitical aspects of the region; in effect diluting it with other issues.

Yugoslavia's increased control of its Macedonian population, and its pre-eminent position amongst Macedonian nationalists after Bled, meant it could actively support the KKE without the domestic problems of the past. As Shrader notes, the primary result of this was that the CPY increased the supplies it gave the DAG.<sup>851</sup> Furthermore, Marantzidis' work built upon Shrader's research in demonstrating that the DAG became more dependent upon Yugoslav supplies. These supplies were critical in 1947, as the DAG transitioned from a guerrilla force to a conventional one.<sup>852</sup> Correspondence between Markos Vafiadis and the Yugoslav Central Committee prior to the Bled Agreement indicates that it continued to influence KKE activities.<sup>853</sup> The information that Vafiadis reported – such as details about individual battles and particularly the morale of units – extended beyond the information that an allied force usually provides in such situations. Vafiadis went so far, in fact, to report on operations while the result of the battles was still in question. These reports, therefore, speak to the CPY's influence over the DAG. After Bled, Yugoslavia's influence over the DAG increased because Popović, a Yugoslav general, began operating out of DAG HQ and Yugoslav soldiers began actively training the DAG.<sup>854</sup> Consequently, the CPY used the resulting period to maximize its influence amongst its neighbours.

<sup>851</sup> Shrader, *The Withered Vine: Logistics and the Communist Insurgency in Greece, 1945-1949* 159-60.

<sup>852</sup> Nikos Marantzidis, *Democratic Army of Greece (1946–1949)* (Athens: Alexandria Editions, 2010).

<sup>853</sup> Arhiv Josipa Broza Tita, 836 KMJ/I-3-6/261 (21) Arhiv Josipa Broz Tita, 836 KMJ/I-3-6/261 (36) Arhiv Josipa Broza Tita, 836 KMJ/I-3-6/261 (19) Arhiv Josipa Broza Tita, 836 KMJ/I-3-6/261 (55) Arhiv Josipa Broza Tita, 836 KMJ/I-3-6/261 (61) Arhiv Josipa Broza Tita, 836 KMJ/I-3-6/261 (63)

<sup>854</sup> Shrader, *The Withered Vine: Logistics and the Communist Insurgency in Greece, 1945-1949* 175.

While Yugoslavia did not involve itself in Greece because of the Macedonian Question, it did not share this fact with its domestic audience. An internal 17 November 1947 memo by the Macedonian nationalists within Yugoslavia argued that given the struggle's importance to the Macedonian people, it was important to provide all arms and supplies possible to the DAG.<sup>855</sup> The signing of the Bled Agreement increased Yugoslav material support for the KKE and, even more, the Macedonian nationalists embraced what it allowed in its aftermath. This development meant that the Yugoslavs could support the KKE/DAG in a less self-serving and more altruistic manner, even if the Macedonians themselves thought it was for territorial aggrandizement.

Entering 1948, the CPY was willing to let events pertinent to the Macedonian Question continue to transpire as they had in late 1947. Individual members of the CPM and their CPY patron DIMITAR VLAHOV continued to emphasize the importance of uniting Aegean Macedonia within a Greater Macedonian state in public addresses, and Yugoslavia's support of the Greek communists indirectly advanced their agenda.<sup>856</sup> The CPY, however, had bigger issues to deal with as 1948 progressed. As a result of the UNSCOB's reporting on Yugoslavia's involvement in the Greek Civil War, the country's leadership became more concerned with countering challenges that it had violated Greek sovereignty.<sup>857</sup>

## 6.2. The KKE and the Macedonian Question, 1946-1948

The KKE and its armed wing, the DAG, began 1947 with the policy aim of reconciling their manpower dependency on the Slavophone Macedonians.<sup>858</sup> A 13 March

<sup>855</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, AJ, CKJ, 507/IX,33/V-44.

<sup>856</sup> Vlahov even continued his rhetorical offensive after the Tito-Stalin split, with minor modifications that will be explored later. See: Vlahov, *Iz Istorije Makedonskog Naroda (from the History of the Macedonian People)* 119-33.

<sup>857</sup> Nachmani, *International Intervention in the Greek Civil War: The United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans, 1947-1952*, 114-15.

<sup>858</sup> For an analysis of how the Macedonians were criminalized in the aftermath of the Second World War, see: Mark Mazower, "Three Forms of Political Justice: Greece, 1944-1945," in *After the War Was Over: Reconstructing the Family, Nation, and State in Greece, 1943-1960*, ed. Mark Mazower (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2000), 24-41.



1947 report presented by the KKE's Regional Committee for Macedonia to the Politburo demonstrated the party's effort to emphasize the Slavophone Macedonian people's importance to its supporters. Now that open conflict had broken out, the KKE's Regional Committee for Macedonia realized it needed the Slavophone Macedonians' support and did everything possible to secure it. The Regional Committee concluded the report by noting: "We [are working to] establish unity among Slavomacedonian and Greek populations."<sup>859</sup> The committee's actions, however, speak to how seriously it took its task. In order to reconcile with the Slavophone Macedonians, it agreed to accept some individuals of NOF who had signed the declaration.<sup>860</sup> This was a significant accommodation, especially given the KKE's past relations with the NOF.<sup>861</sup> By 1947, the KKE fully embraced the fact that it had to assist the Slavophone Macedonians as much as possible.

Zachariadis' increased control over the party during this period was instrumental in the KKE's effort to capitalize on the Slavophone Macedonians' utility to the party. As shown in Chapter 5, he possessed a limited ability to centralize policy when he returned to the fragmented party. Throughout 1947, however, his overall control of the KKE increased. His efforts included the elimination of rivals such as Siantos, whom he marginalized within the party in late 1946/early 1947.<sup>862</sup> Furthermore, the KKE Politburo's February 1947 decision to shift the DAG from an irregular to conventional army meant that he now exercised increased control over the military, since regular units

<sup>859</sup> Macedonian Committee of the KKE, "Rapport Du Comite Regional Du Pcg Pour La Macedoine Au Bureau Politique Du Cc Du Pcg Relatif a La Situation En Macedoine, Aux Liaisons Et a La Collaboration Avec Des Macedoniens, Etc.," in *Documents Relatifs a L'attitude Du Parti Communiste Grec Envers La Question Nationale Macedonienne*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de Macedoine, 1947), 409.

<sup>860</sup> Ibid. Although the exact nature of the declaration is left unclear in the source material, given the Greek government's policy of getting individuals to sign declarations renouncing their support of communism it is likely of this nature.

<sup>861</sup> Aris Velouchiotis, arguably the most successful leader of ELAS, was officially condemned for signing a letter of renouncement. For a sympathetic account of Velouchiotis see: Dominique Eudes, *The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949* (New York: Monthly Review Press Classics, 1972 (2009)) 9, 238-40. More recently, Dionysis Charitopoulos' account is increasingly challenging Eudes' account as the standard in the field. See: Charitopoulos, *Aris, Lord of the Mountains Passim*.

<sup>862</sup> Although the party greatly mourned Siantos' passing on 20 May 1947, Zachariadis subsequently denounced him in 1950 to justify their failure in the Greek Civil War. See: Richter, *British Intervention in Greece: From Varkiza to Civil War, February 1945 to August 1946* 494.

require a centralized organization. This action also sidelined the DAG's commander Markos Vafiadis, a potential rival.<sup>863</sup> The result of these purges/appointments was that groups within the KKE that had previously proved problematic, such as the Regional Committee for Macedonia, now adhered completely to the party line throughout 1947.

The outbreak of full-scale war further facilitated Zachariadis' centralization of the party apparatus. As Strachan and Barkawi note, war in itself is a creative force, and this was evident in the Regional Committee of Macedonia's increased integration within the KKE.<sup>864</sup> Wartime conditions meant that the Regional Committee for Macedonia continued its transition to viewing the Slavophone Macedonians as an asset, rather than a threat. Immediately before the aforementioned 13 March 1947 report, the Regional Committee for Macedonia had written another report to the KKE's Politburo. In that essay, it provided a detailed description of how NOF and KKE cooperation yielded positive dividends. Specifically, it noted that ever since the Central Committee of the NOF had merged with the DAG, amicable relations existed between the organizations.<sup>865</sup> The Regional Committee of Macedonia went so far as to claim that it collaborated with the Slavophone Macedonians in a "twinning movement" in the villages.<sup>866</sup> The KKE, as a result, embraced the NOF instead of representing it as an opposing organization, as it had done in 1945.

Consequently, the NOF, while previously a thorn in the Regional Committee for Macedonia's plans, was now a valuable ally. As a result, the KKE Regional Committee for Macedonia agreed to "an array of organizational issues that would enable it to

<sup>863</sup> The process, however, took a considerable amount of time. In part, this was due to the nature of converting an irregular force into a conventional one. It was also due to the time it took for Zachariadis to centralize his control. For a description of this shift, see: Shrader, *The Withered Vine: Logistics and the Communist Insurgency in Greece, 1945-1949*, 216-18.

<sup>864</sup> Often neglected in the emerging fields of conflict and security studies is that war, in itself, can serve a creative purpose. In this instance, the wartime conditions assisted Zachariadis in centralizing his control of the party by creating conditions conducive to this shift. For an exploration of this issue see: Tarak Barkawi, "From War to Security: Security Studies, the Wider Agenda and the Fate of the Study of War," *Millennium - Journal of International Studies* 39, no. 3 (2011); Hew Strachan, *The Direction of War: Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013) 10-25.

<sup>865</sup> KKE, "Extrait Du Rapport Du Comite Regional Du Pcg Pour La Macedoine Envoye Au Bureau Politique Du Pcg, Relatif a Son Activite Parmi Les Macedoniens, Etc.," 405.

<sup>866</sup> Ibid.

strengthen the work of twinning the Greeks and Slavomacedonians."<sup>867</sup> One can argue that the KKE's embrace of the NOF only went so far, in that the former still referred to the latter using the ethnic designation Slavomacedonians. Nevertheless, the Regional Committee's new approach represented a significant shift in policy, especially when compared with its position in 1945. It was one thing for the KKE's Central Committee to recognize the need for change, but all branches of the party now did so as well.

The KKE/DAG consciously sought to improve the image of the Slavophone Macedonians in the eyes of their core constituency. In a 3 March 1947 letter to Georgios Protopapas-Kikicas, the DAG's commander for Central and Western Macedonia, Markos Vafiadis explained that Panos Kapetanios, a local commander, had an incorrect attitude towards the Slavophone Macedonian combatants. Vafiadis stated that Protopapas-Kikicas should "consider [Panos' actions against the Slavophone Macedonians] and correct them."<sup>868</sup> While Vafiadis later acknowledged that some of Panos' complaints might have been valid, he urged Protopapas-Kikicas to deal with them in a very careful manner, particularly if they involved arming Slavophone Macedonians.<sup>869</sup> This action speaks to both the DAG's distrust of the Slavophone Macedonians, and to the fact that it needed them. Vafiadis, however, only called for the immediate disarming of Slavophone Macedonians if they had performed criminal activities.<sup>870</sup> This approach was largely a continuation of a strategy he first put forward in a 4 February 1947 letter to Protopapas-Kikicas. In this earlier letter, Vafiadis also seemingly granted liberty to the Slavophone Macedonians, while restricting serious policy matters to his control – in this instance,

<sup>867</sup> Ibid.

<sup>868</sup> Markos Vafiadis, "La Lettre Du General Markos Vafiadis, Commandant De L'adg, a Georgios Protopapas-Kikicas, Commandant De L'adg En Macedoine Centrale Et Occidentale, Relative a L'attitude De Panos Kapetanios Envers Les Combattants Macedoniens.," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece, 1947*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1947), 48.

<sup>869</sup> Ibid. Unfortunately, Vafiadis does not go into detail about which of Panos' complaints were valid.

<sup>870</sup> Ibid.

policies that opposed potential Bulgarian machinations.<sup>871</sup> In short, Vafiadis recognized that the army's effectiveness relied on granting considerable tactical leeway to local commanders, while he simultaneously preserved overall strategic control. One of his most critical strategic tasks was to maintain control of local party commanders and ensure that they did not sabotage the DAG's efforts to reconcile with the Slavophone Macedonians.

Vafiadis was even more bombastic in his praise for the Slavophone Macedonians in public. In March 1947, he explained the DAG's policy on the Macedonian Question to a journalist from *L'Humanite*, the French Communist Party's daily newspaper. He noted:

*We demand full equality of the Macedonians and others [...]. The first do not remember anything else other than duties, persecution, torture and murder. The Greek government sought to denationalize, not recognizing their most basic rights, even the right to speak mother tongue ...*<sup>872</sup>

The difference between this comment and his letter to Protopapas-Kikicas speaks to the KKE/DAG's strategy in the period. Vafiadis largely stuck to the KKE's line in public addresses, using Marxist dogma and emphasizing the excesses of the Greek government against the Slavophone Macedonians. Although Vafiadis recognized that there were internal problems with integrating the Slavophone Macedonians, he needed to gloss them over to maintain the party's strength in the north. The DAG did not reach the 50,000 soldiers that its leadership set as a goal before the civil war. Yet, the Slavophones offered the best chance for the achievement of this target, provided that it could integrate them without alienating the KKE's supporters as well as the majority of Greek citizens.

<sup>871</sup> "La Lettre Du General Markos Vafjadis, Commandant De L'adg, a Georgios Protopapas-Kikicas, Commandant De L'adg En Macedoine Centrale Et Occidentale, Relative a Quelques Questions Sur Les Cadres Et Autres Dans L'adg," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece, 1947*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1947), 41-43.

<sup>872</sup> "Extrait De La Declaration Du Commandant General Markos, Relative Aux Macedoniens, Qu'il a Donne Au Correspondant De "L'humanite"," in *Documents Relatifs a L'attitude Du Parti Communiste Grec Envers La Question Nationale Macedonienne*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de Macedoine, 1947), 414.

Although the KKE sought to accommodate the Slavophone Macedonians in 1947, this did not mean that its newfound camaraderie with them was without tension. The strain was evident in a 30 May 1947 letter that Atanasios Jogas, the secretary of the KKE's Departmental Committee for Kastoria, wrote to Todoros Evtimiadis, the secretary of the KKE's Departmental Committee for Florina. In that letter, Jogas complained about certain NOF cadres. He noted: "I think those [Slavophone Macedonian] comrades can cause for us many ills, if we are not vigilant."<sup>873</sup> Jogas extended his complaints to individuals in the highest ranks of the organization. He argued that Pando Keramidzhiev "is involved [with the seditious activities] and has connections with Goce."<sup>874</sup> In connecting Pando to the reviled Goce, Jogas spoke to the gravity of his suspicions regarding the NOF's alleged treasonous activities. While Jogas' comments certainly expressed an extreme concern about the NOF amongst the KKE, it was not the first time that members of the KKE voiced such anxieties. KKE officials frequently complained about NOF provocations throughout this period. In October 1947, the NOF's Second Secretary in Voden, Fidan, reported to NOF HQ that "Comrade Stathis [the KKE's second secretary for Voden] attacked [us over] the escape of the Macedonian battalion on Yugoslav territory." Fidan further claimed that the Macedonian battalion's retreat was a deliberate provocation in response to the KKE's suspension of Goce that the same day.<sup>875</sup> The veracity of both Stathis and Fidan's statements are debatable, although Goce's dismissal is confirmed. The most important element of Fidan's account was its demonstration that this period of KKE-NOF relations – which scholars such as Kofos neglect as a result of the NOF's subservience to the KKE – was fraught with tension.<sup>876</sup>

<sup>873</sup> Atanasios Jogas, "Lettre D'atanasios Jogas, Secetaire Du Comite Departemental Du Pcg Pour La Region De Kastoria, a Todoros Evtimiadis, Secetaire Du Comite Departemental Du Pcg Pour Ga (Sic) Region De Florina, Dans Laquelle Il Exprime Ses Suspects Envers Quelques Cadres Du Fln," *ibid.*, 414.

<sup>874</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>875</sup> Fidan, "La Declaration De Fidan, Second Secetaire Du Comite Departemental D'epon Pour La Region De Voden, Relative a Quelques Evaluations Du Second Secetaire Du Pcg Pour La Ville De Voden, En Ce Qui Concerne Le Fln Et La Question Macedonienne," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece, 1947*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de Macedoine, 1947), 360.

<sup>876</sup> Kofos, "The Impact of the Macedonian Question on Civil Conflict in Greece," 300-01.

There were two reasons that the KKE appeased the Slavophone Macedonian population as they fought the Greek government. The first and most obvious reason was the Slavophone Macedonians' role in the KKE-CPY's political dynamic. Although the CPY had officially transferred the NOF to the KKE, it still maintained a stake in the Macedonian Question in Greece. Vlahov's activities on the Macedonian Question in 1947 meant that either the CPY continued to employ him in this capacity or that it could not completely stop him once he had been so employed (the latter being the more likely possibility).<sup>877</sup> The NOF likewise still viewed the CPY as its patron and maintained communications with the party during this period.<sup>878</sup> Given the CPY's interest in Slavophone Macedonian affairs, the KKE had to appease the group, even if they were its nominal superiors.

The second reason that the KKE needed the Slavophone Macedonians' support during the war was their numeric superiority in the DAG. As Vafiadis noted, the DAG faced an acute manpower shortage as the war progressed. Vafiadis noted that by mid-1947, approximately only 10% of the DAG's forces consisted of willing volunteers.<sup>879</sup> Given this manpower shortage, the DAG turned towards the one group of individuals who were also highly motivated to resist the Greek government than the average Greek citizen and whose lives had become increasingly regimented under the KKE and NOF: the Slavophone Macedonians. Furthermore, as Shrader notes, after the DAG had transformed to a conventional force, it quickly exhausted the supplies the KKE had stashed away after the Varkiza Agreement. Consequently, the KKE's dependency upon Yugoslavia for material support increased.<sup>880</sup> Although the KKE embraced the Slavophone Macedonians out of necessity, the ramifications extended beyond even the KKE's fears concerning that population.

<sup>877</sup> Vlahov, *Govori I Stati, 1945-1947* 158-225; Diplomatic and Historical Archives, 1947.80.7.1 Μεθοριος

<sup>878</sup> Archive of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, A CK SKJ IX-33/I-51 199-203. Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 35073 31/12/1946 Αυτ. Μακεδονιας

<sup>879</sup> Vafiadis, cited in Marantzidis, *Democratic Army of Greece (1946-1949)* 137.

<sup>880</sup> Shrader, *The Withered Vine: Logistics and the Communist Insurgency in Greece, 1945-1949*, 122.

On 24 October 1947, Ioannidis – the KKE member most responsible for the northern affairs of the party, including its relationship with Yugoslavia – lectured the KKE cadres on the significance of the Macedonian Question. Ioannidis began by noting that “The 3rd Plenum of the Central Committee of the KKE paid special attention to the issue of the Slavomacedonians.”<sup>881</sup> The points that followed in the lecture were KKE policy and not open for debate. Ioannidis elaborated that “almost all of them participated in the fight [and should] not be underestimated. [The KKE] will need to raise more [Slavomacedonian] cadres.”<sup>882</sup> This underscored that the Slavophone Macedonians were becoming a core element of the DAG and that the KKE could not ignore them. Indeed, they should in fact raise their numbers even further. Furthermore, as Ioannidis stated: “Slavomacedonians represent 3/4 of the armed forces [...] for Central and Western Macedonia. They represent the foundation. Any understatement of them is a crime.”<sup>883</sup> In determining its war strategy, the KKE could not ignore the fact that three-fourths of the DAG in Central and Western Macedonia were Slavophone Macedonians. Ioannidis, speaking at what was ostensibly a private meeting, had no reason to lie about this number. In addition, Yugoslav sources later confirmed it.<sup>884</sup>

The Limnes Plan, formalized by the KKE in late 1947, enhanced the role of the Slavophone Macedonians, even if the KKE did not directly say so. The plan outlined that “the Democratic Army must transform guerrilla tactics into conventional warfare and establish free areas not only in the mountains but also in areas that are essential from the political as well as the military perspective.”<sup>885</sup> For the DAG to transform into a conventional army and seize and hold territory, two things were vital. The first was obviously manpower. As stated earlier, the Slavophone Macedonians’ predominance within the DAG and potential to expand made them vital to the success of Limnes, even

<sup>881</sup> Giannis Ioannidis, "Une Partie De La Discussion De Ianis Ioanidis Devant Les Membres Du Pc - Cadres Militaires Et Politiques - De La Macedoine Occidentale Et Orientale Le 24 Octobre 1947," in *Documents Relatifs a L'attitude Du Parti Communiste Grec Envers La Question Nationale Macedonienne*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de Macedoine, 1947), 418.

<sup>882</sup> Ibid.

<sup>883</sup> Ibid.

<sup>884</sup> Archives of Yugoslavia, AJ, CKJ, 507/IX,33/V-45

<sup>885</sup> Cited in: John O. Iatrides, "George F. Kennan and the Birth of Containment: The Greek Test Case," *World Policy Journal* 22, no. 3 (2005) 139.

though it later failed.<sup>886</sup> Furthermore, the fact that the Limnes Plan called for the seizure of Northern Greece meant that the KKE focused its efforts on the precise area where the Slavophone Macedonians comprised seventy-five percent of the armed forces.<sup>887</sup>

By the end of 1947, the level of control that the KKE had over the Macedonian Question was evident in its decision to establish the Provisional Democratic Government of Free Greece (PDGFG) on 24 December. The PDGFG did not deal with the Macedonian Question specifically in its initial proclamation, but instead focused on the general themes of “monarcho-fascist” and Greek government terror.<sup>888</sup> The EAM’s Departmental Committee of Edessa acknowledged the KKE’s success at centralizing authority and maintaining message integrity on 30 December 1947, when it responded to PDGFG’s formation by arguing for Greeks and Slavophone Macedonians to unify under its banner because national harmony “was the most decisive factor for final victory.”<sup>889</sup> Through its subsidiary organization, the KKE managed to phrase the call for unification in a way that appealed to the Slavophone Macedonians without alienating the Greek base. Considering the nationalist atmosphere in post-war Greece, this was not an easy task. Nonetheless and contrary to its portrayal in both Greek and Macedonian literature, the NOF was not wholly servile to its new Greek masters. As a result, the KKE could not completely avoid antagonizing nationalist sentiment in Greece.

<sup>886</sup> The Limnes Plan largely failed due to the fact that while the DAG was transitioning to a conventional force, it was still inferior to the National Army of Greece in set-piece battles.

<sup>887</sup> Iatrides, "George F. Kennan and the Birth of Containment: The Greek Test Case,"

<sup>888</sup> "La Proclamation Du Gouvernement Democratique Temporaire De La Grece a L'occasion De Sa Nomination," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece, 1947*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1947), 413-15.

<sup>889</sup> "La Proclamation Du Comite Departemental D'eam Pour La Region De Voden, Aux Habitants Grecs Et Macedoniens, Par Laquelle on Les Invite De Se Reunir Sour Le Drapeau Du Gouvernement Democratique Temporaire, Pour Acquerir La Liberte Et La Democratie," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece, 1947*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1947), 426.



### 6.3. NOF's Submersion within the KKE, and Internal Dissent, 1946-1948

For the most part, the NOF adhered to the KKE's public messaging after it had been incorporated into the DAG following the October 1946 agreement. This subservience was evident when the NOF adopted the KKE's distinction between the 'good' Slavophone Macedonians (its own members), and the 'bad' autonomists. In a 21 November 1946 address, the Commandant of the DAG in Vičo noted that "especially we, the Slavomacedonians of the Democratic Army, with our actions prove that we have no connection with the 'autonomist movement', that the autonomists are our enemies, and at the same time they are agents of the intelligence services and friends of the monarchofascists."<sup>890</sup> At this time, the rhetoric of a self-identified Slavomacedonian was the same as the KKE's rhetoric on the Macedonian Question. While the commandant would have been required to use such language because his speech was a public one, the fact that he used it also demonstrated that the Slavophone Macedonians were willing to take the KKE's lead publicly. In fact, the NOF employed similar language in a private party address in 1947.<sup>891</sup> The NOF carefully maintained this line of argument throughout 1947 in its public statements as well as in much of its private correspondence.<sup>892</sup>

While the NOF officially followed the KKE's lead in this period, the CPY still held the organization responsible for its actions when they posed a potential threat to Yugoslav interests. In the spring of 1947, Paskal Mitrovski, one of the NOF's key leaders, had to respond to Yugoslav concerns that originated from a State Security Administration (UDBA) agent in Skopje about his activities in Greece.<sup>893</sup> Mitrovski

<sup>890</sup> Denys Hamson, *We Fell among Greeks* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1946) 404.

<sup>891</sup> Mihailo Keramitčiev, "Le Rapport Du Secrétaire Du Comité Principal Du Fln, Mihailo Keramitčiev, Lu Devant Les Membres De Senafit Le 20 Mai 1947," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece, 1947*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1947), 157.

<sup>892</sup> In a 20 May 1947 report, Keramidzhiev broke down the Macedonian population into four camps: 10% Hellenophiles on the side of the Greek government; 20% who took a passive stance; 30% that were NOF sympathizers; and finally, 40% that actively participated in the struggle. The NOF claimed to speak for the Slavophone Macedonian people, but they and the party had differing opinions on what this meant. This made the NOF maintaining a unity of message in its public addresses all the more important. See *ibid.* 151-52, 158.

<sup>893</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, AJ, CKJ, 507/IX,33/I-30

demonstrated the NOF leaderships' efforts to play the CPY against the KKE when he claimed that circumstances had completely justified his actions and that he had "received orders from the Greek party."<sup>894</sup> At the same time, he used the opportunity to slander his rivals to the Yugoslav authorities. Mitrovski noted that Andreja Cipcva was "typically a drunkard" and that in his opinion, Cipcva was a man "without moral and spiritual values."<sup>895</sup> He also pointed out that Lazar Ošenski, "kept close ties with anti-party elements in Aegean Macedonia and that "his character [was] without any moral or party base."<sup>896</sup> Given that Mitrovski sought to discredit other members of NOF in his reports to the Yugoslavs, the CPY still had considerable influence in the party. Furthermore, NOF members could use that influence to downplay and attack their rivals. The particularly harsh prose that Mitrovski used to describe the failings of his rivals was commonplace amongst the NOF's leadership, and a way for them to pursue their own objectives despite their submersion within the DAG.

While the NOF followed the KKE's lead publicly, privately members of the organization were critical of their erstwhile patrons. In April 1947, Paskal Mitrovski noted that the strained relations that existed between the Slavophone Macedonian and Greek parties were due to the "chauvinist tendencies and tactics [of the Greeks]."<sup>897</sup> On 3 July 1947, Tašo Gazepov, a local NOF leader in Lugunci, wrote the regional committee in Gumendže to describe the various quarrels between the NOF and the KKE. These quarrels primarily related to money and supply requirements.<sup>898</sup> In a similar vein, on 13 September 1947 Mihailo Keramidzhiev wrote the KKE's Macedonian and Thracian Bureaus, arguing that the NOF and the KKE were both responsible for the strained relations.<sup>899</sup> Nevertheless, Keramidzhiev concluded his report by observing that Paskal

<sup>894</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, AJ, CKJ, 507/IX,33/I-30

<sup>895</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, AJ, CKJ, 507/IX,33/I-30

<sup>896</sup> Archive of Yugoslavia, AJ, CKJ, 507/IX,33/I-30

<sup>897</sup> Mitrovski, "La Rapport De Paskal Mitrovski, Relatif Aux Rapports Du Fln Et Du Pcg, a La Maniere De L'execution Du Contrat Relatif a L'union Du Fln Et Du Pcg," 138-39.

<sup>898</sup> Tašo Gazepov, "La Rapport De Tašo Gazepov, Membre Du Comite Regional Du Fln Pour La Region De Lugunci, Au Comite Regional Du Fln Pour La Region De Gumendže, Avec Laquelle Il L'informe De Quelques Querelles Du Fln Avec Le Pcg," *ibid.*, 206-07.

<sup>899</sup> Mihailo Keramitčiev, "La Rapport Du Secretaire Du Comite Principal Du Fln, Mihailo Keramitčiev, Au Bureau Du Pcg Pour La Macedoine Et La Thrace, Relatif Aux Relations Malsaines Dans La Direction Du Fln," *ibid.*, 261-66.

Mitrovski's policies caused the tension.<sup>900</sup> Although he subtly hinted that both parties were to blame for the tension, he placed the ultimate blame upon his personal rival: Mitrovski. NOF members used their subservient position to garner outside support in order to eliminate political rivals. This would become a defining characteristic of their relationship with the Greek communists in 1948.

Despite the tensions between the parties, one way that the KKE ensured that the NOF operated as it desired was by organizing joint meetings. These meetings made it difficult for the NOF to reject the KKE's demands openly. The meetings grew in importance as the conflict progressed. The 24 October 1947 meeting of key NOF and KKE members at the DAG Headquarters for Western and Central Macedonia is commonly passed over in the literature but was critical to the evolution of the Macedonian Question in the Greek Civil War.<sup>901</sup> During this meeting, the KKE representatives informed the NOF of its decision to shift to a conventional military approach. Specifically, the DAG would focus on seizing territory and constructing a regular army with reserves.<sup>902</sup> This decision, as mentioned above, increased the NOF's importance to the KKE. Participants at the meeting acknowledged that the primary areas of strength for the DAG and the KKE were the north and Roumeli.<sup>903</sup> The north was all the more vital to the DAG's success as Roumeli was on the front lines, and the KKE agreed that in the previous eight months, its forces had not made political gains even in the heavily working-class areas of Piraeus.<sup>904</sup> Therefore, Northern Greece was the only place where the KKE could reasonably hold territory and develop reserves away from the front lines.<sup>905</sup>

<sup>900</sup> Ibid. 267.

<sup>901</sup> For example, it is not included in Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949* nor Koliopoulos, *Plundered Loyalties: World War II and Civil War in Greek West Macedonia*.

<sup>902</sup> Keramitčiev, "La Rapport De Mihailo Keramitčiev, Secrétaire Du Comité Principal Du Fln, Relatif à La Situation Générale De L'organisation Du Fln Et Aux Relations Avec Le Pcg," 354.

<sup>903</sup> Ibid.

<sup>904</sup> Ibid.

<sup>905</sup> It was at this meeting that Ioannidis acknowledged the preponderance of the Slavomacedonians in the northern armed forces.

Keramidzhiev displayed the extent of his loyalty to the KKE at the 24 October 1947 meeting. That is, he would remain loyal only so far as it furthered Slavophone Macedonian interests. While Keramidzhiev took pride in Ioannidis' acknowledgment of the significance of the Slavophone Macedonians in the armed struggle, the private nature of the meeting gave him an opportunity to air his grievances against the KKE. He listed a plethora of issues between the KKE and the NOF. Most of these points were minor, but two stood out as indicative of KKE-NOF relations. These two problems were: the KKE/DAG's tendency to mobilize the NOF's cadres without the permission of the NOF's Central Committee; and the KKE's tendency to favour those Slavophone Macedonians not seeking positions of power in the NOF.<sup>906</sup> Other reports from this period echo the complaints that Keramidzhiev made against the Greeks.<sup>907</sup> The KKE, while embracing the NOF to secure the Slavophone Macedonian population, was not willing to make themselves dependent on it. The NOF, because of its continued independent streak, was trusted only in so far as an asset for the KKE.

The fact that the NOF internalized the Greek communists' language, however, demonstrated the latter's growing influence. Keramidzhiev's letter to the party on 31 October 1947 made this point abundantly clear. He argued that tensions between the KKE and NOF had to stop, as the only groups to benefit from them were the "IMRO [...] along with the Greek monarchofascist parties."<sup>908</sup> Importantly, Keramidzhiev acknowledged that the NOF, along with the KKE, was responsible for the fault-line

<sup>906</sup> Keramitčiev, "La Rapport De Mihailo Keramitčiev, Secetaire Du Comite Principal Du Fln, Relatif a La Situation Generale De L'organisation Du Fln Et Aux Relations Avec Le Pcg," 356-68.

<sup>907</sup> Paskal Mitrovski, "La Rapport De Paskal Mitrovski, Relatif Aux Rapports Du Fln Et Du Pcg, a La Maniere De L'execution Du Contrat Relatif a L'union Du Fln Et Du Pcg," *ibid.*, 132-41; Mihailo Keramitčiev, "La Rapport Du Secetaire Du Comite Principal Du Fln, Mihailo Keramitčiev, Au Bureau Du Pcg Pour La Macedoine Et La Thrace, Relatif Aux Relations Malsaines Dans La Direction Du Fln," *ibid.*, 261-66; "La Rapport De Mihailo Keramitčiev, Secetaire Du Comite Principal Du Fln, Relatif a La Situation Generale De L'organisation Du Fln Et Aux Relations Avec Le Pcg," 346-60.

<sup>908</sup> "La Rapport De Mihailo Keramitčiev, Secetaire Du Comite Principal Du Fln, Relatif a La Situation Generale De L'organisation Du Fln Et Aux Relations Avec Le Pcg," 350. IMRO, by this period, was effectively defunct. Its association with the Axis authorities, however, made it an effective propaganda tool. See: Stephen E. Palmer Jr., *Yugoslav Communism and the Macedonian Question* 199-202.

between the Slavophone Macedonian and Greek peoples.<sup>909</sup> This acknowledgement was a significant development in itself, particularly in light of the NOF's position in 1945 and 1946, which considered the KKE to be the source of the problem. While Keramidzhiev's admission that the NOF was partially responsible for the tensions may seem like common sense, this attitude indicated the degree to which the KKE curtailed the NOF's freedom of action. Keramidzhiev, however, was a Macedonian nationalist, and the strategic necessity of embracing the KKE motivated his decision.<sup>910</sup> That he was loyal to the KKE only so long as it furthered the nationalist goal would have significant consequences for the Greek communists' ability to use the Macedonian Question in the wake of the Tito-Stalin split.

In other words, the NOF at the end of 1947/beginning of 1948 was stuck in a position that many ethnic minority groups find themselves in during situations of civil conflict.<sup>911</sup> The NOF's numbers made it significant because it provided recruits for the insurgent forces, yet they were not large enough to allow it to dictate the policy of such forces. As 1947 drew to a close, the improved relations between the KKE and the CPY made it increasingly difficult for the NOF to play the two against each other. The NOF, therefore, found itself increasingly isolated and exploited as time progressed. It no longer held the negotiating position it had in 1945 due to the CPY's and KKE's newfound strength with respect to the Macedonian Question.

#### **6.4. The Slavophone Macedonians and the Greek Government, 1946-1948**

The full emergence of the Greek Civil War posed a fundamental challenge to the Greek state. In fact, as John Iatrides notes, the successive Greek governments that

<sup>909</sup> Keramitčiev, "La Rapport De Mihailo Keramitčiev, Secrétaire Du Comité Principal Du Fln, Relatif à La Situation Générale De L'organisation Du Fln Et Aux Relations Avec Le Pcg," 348.

<sup>910</sup> Kofos, *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia* 21.

<sup>911</sup> There have been several extensive studies on the role of ethnic minorities in civil conflict, and how it leads to their marginalization. See: Haklai, "Democratization and Ethnic Minorities," 1-17; Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* 443-562; Johnson, "Keeping the Peace after Partition: Ethnic Minorities, Civil Wars, and the Third Generation Ethnic Security Dilemma," 25-50.

ascended to power in the aftermath of the conflict were obsessed with the threat communism posed to the state.<sup>912</sup> As Roudometoff notes, the Greek state closely associated Slavism and communism.<sup>913</sup> As early as November 1946, Greek government leaders argued that the weapons captured from the communist insurgents had origins in the emerging Eastern Bloc.<sup>914</sup> It was not only the Greek state that saw a connection between Slavism and communism. Instead, as Greek organizations against Slavocommunism, rose from below as opposed to being controlled by the Greek state, it demonstrates the nature of this fear in Greek society.<sup>915</sup> The traditional association of Slavism and communism, however, underwent an evolution in the aftermath of the Second World War.

Within the context of the Greek Civil War, the Greek government exploited Slavocommunism as an additional means of ‘othering’ the Slavophone Macedonians and, by extension, the Greek communists. The Greek government’s traditional view of the external Slavocommunist threat now expanded to viewing the Slavophone Macedonians with the same lens. As Roudometoff notes, “citizenship rights were “extended to an individual via the person’s membership in the Greek nation.”<sup>916</sup> Given that all people of the Greek state were citizens, the Greek government had difficulty explaining why the insurgents chose to reject their national heritage. The Slavophone Macedonian component of the DAG, however, provided a convenient explanation that delegitimized not only the opposition but also justified the existing Slavocommunist ideology. Danforth and Boeschoten note that for the Slavophone Macedonian minority,

<sup>912</sup> John Iatrides, "The Doomed Revolution: Communist Insurgency in Postwar Greece," in *Stopping the Killing: How Civil War End*, ed. Roy Licklider (New York: New York UP, 1993), 209.

<sup>913</sup> Roudometof, *Collective Memory, National Identity, and Ethnic Conflict: Greece, Bulgaria, and the Macedonian Question* 136.

<sup>914</sup> Cited in: Shrader, *The Withered Vine: Logistics and the Communist Insurgency in Greece, 1945-1949* 131.

<sup>915</sup> See: Gounaris, *Εγνωσμένων Κοινωνικών Φρονημάτων: Κοινωνικές Και Άλλες Όψεις Του Αντικομμουνισμού Στη Μακεδονία Του Εμφυλίου Πολέμου Passim*.

<sup>916</sup> Roudometof, *Collective Memory, National Identity, and Ethnic Conflict: Greece, Bulgaria, and the Macedonian Question* Kindle Edition. Roudometoff relies extensively on Anderson’s conception of the “imagined community” to explain his argument. While many aspects of Anderson’s argument are problematic, in this instance it works well to explain the context of the Greek government’s decision-making. See: Anderson, *Imagined Communities" Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism Passim*.

“the Civil War took on overtones of a conflict between loyal Greeks on the right and ‘Slavocommunists’ on the left.”<sup>917</sup> Although this perspective did not reflect reality, as the Greek left had significant issues with the Slavophone Macedonians, it created a powerful narrative for the Greek state to exploit in its efforts to discredit the insurgency.

The successive regimes in Athens were obsessed with fears of Slavocommunism, and this affected how they interacted with the outside world. According to the US representative at the United Nations, on 3 December 1946, the Greeks reported that Slavocommunism was a direct threat to Greece. Specifically, Greece’s delegation argued that the communist forces were “supported by the seditious organization N.O.F., which is recruiting volunteers and supplying arms. The organization is under foreign leadership and has its headquarters at Skoplje [sic].”<sup>918</sup> The delegate continued:

*The battalions which for long existed in Yugoslav Macedonia and comprised Slav-speaking Greeks who similarly had sought refuge in Yugoslavia, following the Varkiza Agreement in order to escape prosecution in the Greek courts, were disbanded and the men attached, in small groups, to various units of the Yugoslav Army. Men from battalions in question, which had been commanded by Elias Demakis (known under the assumed name of Gochev), are permitted to enroll on a voluntary basis in the armed bands operating in northern Greece.*<sup>919</sup>

This statement was not an isolated comment to the international community, as during this period the Greek government frequently claimed in international forums that the actions of its northern neighbours were part of a broader, Slavocommunist plot.<sup>920</sup>

As Iatrides notes, by the end of 1946 key members of the United States government already believed that the Soviet Union had aspirations in Greece.<sup>921</sup>

<sup>917</sup> Loring M. Danforth and Riki van Boeschoten, *Children of the Greek Civil War: Refugees and the Politics of Memory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012) Kindle Edition.

<sup>918</sup> Johnson, "The United States Acting Representative at the United Nations (Johnson) to the Secretary of State," in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946: The near East and Africa* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), 273.

<sup>919</sup> Ibid. 273-4.

<sup>920</sup> Kofos, "The Impact of the Macedonian Question on Civil Conflict in Greece," 300.

<sup>921</sup> Iatrides, "George F. Kennan and the Birth of Containment: The Greek Test Case," 129-31.

Maynard Barnes, the United States' representative to Bulgaria, reported to the Secretary of State John Byrnes that the DAG's main goal was the detachment of Greek Macedonia from Greece so that a Greater Macedonian state could incorporate the territory.<sup>922</sup> While Barnes related this plan to Bulgaria's aspirations to annex Western Thrace, the first stage of it was the separation of Greek Macedonia.<sup>923</sup> Barnes was not alone in his fears regarding a Slavic plot from the north. Harry N. Howard, a researcher who rose to become a key advisor on Greek, Turkish and Iranian Affairs within the Department of State in 1947, echoed Barnes' concerns in a 9 December 1946 memorandum.<sup>924</sup> American officials, like their Greek counterparts, accepted Yugoslavia's rhetoric on the Macedonian Question without hesitation. The Yugoslavs' aggressive posturing elsewhere admittedly did not help Americans to view their activities in a nuanced manner. In fact, Yugoslavia's decision to shoot down an American C-47 in August 1946 caused the Americans to view Yugoslav actions as malignant.<sup>925</sup> In other words, Yugoslavia's activities in other international arenas influenced the United States to perceive its actions in Greece in the worst possible light, to the benefit of the Greek government.

The increased prominence of the Slavophone Macedonians in the DAG and Yugoslav involvement in the Greek Civil War provided the Greek government with convenient scapegoats with which to justify its weakness and failures. Its use of the Macedonian Question was not a new development. The Justice for Greece Committee, a Greek government-backed group operating in the United States, argued on 12 December 1946 that, "A weak Greece will not survive long the intensive aggression of

<sup>922</sup> Barnes, "The United States Representative in Bulgaria (Barnes) to the Secretary of State," in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946: The near East and Africa* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), 270.

<sup>923</sup> Ibid.

<sup>924</sup> Harry N Howard, "Memorandum by Mr. Harry N. Howard of the Division of Research for near East and Africa," *ibid.*, 277.

<sup>925</sup> See: Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat: The United States, Yugoslavia, and the Cold War, 1945-1960* 14.



Pan-Slavism and Communism.”<sup>926</sup> The US State Department was not sympathetic to this statement, particularly because in the department’s view, it was linked to the question of Northern Epirus. The statement, however, demonstrated the Greek government’s efforts to employ the diaspora to connect the alleged Slavic threat to communism in a simplified narrative.<sup>927</sup> The Greek state’s use of the diaspora to advance its position on the Macedonian Question has continued to the present day.

Greek government officials linked their struggle against the DAG and the KKE to Slavocommunism because it advanced their ideology, as well as had practical benefits with the United States. Throughout 1947, diplomatic reports from the Greek government frequently referred to Yugoslav aspirations for northern Greece. Ambassador Dalietos wrote a cryptographic telegram to the Balkan desk on 21 March 1947, nine days after Truman declared his intent to support Greece.<sup>928</sup> In the telegram, Dalietos noted how the Greek government should ensure that America was aware of the threats that Tito had made against the country in 1945.<sup>929</sup> The Greek government’s inability to see this domestic aspect of Yugoslav policy made Dalietos and others see continuity in policy where it did not exist. Dalietos’ reports throughout the rest of the year made this point clear.<sup>930</sup> For example, he reported that Tito’s vague statements to the *Skupstina* on 4 January 1947 indicated that he pursued a pro-Soviet policy.<sup>931</sup> Dalietos was correct in that Yugoslavia pursued a pro-Soviet policy, but the timing of his report is suspect. Dalietos only sent the report on 3 April 1947 and made sure to mention that a pro-Soviet

<sup>926</sup> Cited in: Peter A Zervakis, "The Greek Lobby and the Reemergence of Anti-Communism in the United States after World War II," in *Enemy Images in American History*, ed. Ursula Lehmkuhl Ragnhild Fiebig-von Hase (New York: Berghahn Books, 1997), 332. The Greek-American diaspora took up the call against Slavomacedonian aspirations upon Greece as early as 1945.

<sup>927</sup> The Greek state later employed the diaspora in opposing the Socialist Republic of Macedonia’s declaration of independence. See: Nikolaos Zahariadis, *Essence of Political Manipulation: Emotion, Institutions, & Greek Foreign Policy* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005) 170.

<sup>928</sup> This point is explored in detail later when America’s reaction to the Slavomacedonian ‘threat’ is examined.

<sup>929</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 21793 21-3-47 Κρυπτογραφικον Τηλεγραφημα

<sup>930</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 24489 24/4/47; Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 28253 30/5/47 Α/Γιου; Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 32281 7/7/47 Α/Γ1; Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 44615 22.10.47 Εσωτ. Κου

<sup>931</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 25772 8/5/47 Γιουγκοσλαβια 1.

policy equated with an anti-British/American one.<sup>932</sup> In the wake of the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine, Dalietos recognized the political utility of portraying the Yugoslavs as part of a broader communist threat that was opposed to the United States. The Greek government's psychosis regarding a Slavocommunist threat provided it with a convenient framework to advance political objectives.

Dalietos was not an isolated Greek functionary who commented on the Slavic threat from the north. His reports were representative of Greek government thinking in the late 1940s. In the spring of 1947, Stefanou, another diplomat in Yugoslavia, wrote to the Balkan Desk to report that a 16 March 1947 article in *Borba* linked the Truman Doctrine to a new phase of imperialism. The article argued that the Americans had just replaced the British as the Western forces of imperialism.<sup>933</sup> Stefanou did not note that the article made no mention of the Macedonian Question, but by this stage the association of communism with Slavism in Greek government thought outstripped the need to mention it. In fact, in August 1947, when Dalietos gave a report to the Greek government regarding a Yugoslav press clipping from *Republika* that did not deal with the Macedonian Question, he still emphasized that the Marxist rhetoric constituted part of the Slavic threat to Greece.<sup>934</sup> And yet, this press clipping was published after the Yugoslavs had directed their rhetoric away from Greece and towards Bulgaria.

Later in the year, on 10 October 1947, the Greek government published a report titled *Memorandum on Slav Menace to Greek Macedonia*. The memorandum began by noting that in previous months, Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia had “launch[ed] a campaign aimed at reviving the old Macedonian Question.”<sup>935</sup> However, as mentioned earlier, Yugoslavia had redirected its propaganda away from Greece and towards Bulgaria after the Bled Agreement.<sup>936</sup> The memorandum made the claim that the key tenet of the reinforced campaign was “Intensive propaganda in favour of the incorporation of Greek Macedonia (called ‘Aegean Macedonia’) within Yugoslavia as

<sup>932</sup> Ibid.

<sup>933</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 22815 A/Γ/M 7/5/47

<sup>934</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archives, 44615/22.10.47/Εσωτ. Kou

<sup>935</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archives, 1947.80.7.1 Μεθοριος

<sup>936</sup> *Macedonian Problem* R 8828/407/92.

part of the federal Yugoslav sub-state of Macedonia.”<sup>937</sup> The British also noted that Yugoslavs were relatively quiet on the question of Aegean Macedonia in the fall of 1947.<sup>938</sup> The memorandum cited a speech given by Dmītar Vlahov in Skopje as evidence that there was a communist plot from the north.<sup>939</sup> Vlahov, however, could not give a speech in Skopje that did not emphasize the Aegean Macedonian connection. Even a statement by Tito regarding the conflict in Greece passed over his initial statement that “The Problem of Aegean Macedonia was not raised by our Government as one which should be solved in the first phase of the Peace Conference.”<sup>940</sup> In other words, the Greek authorities overlooked the fact that Tito, in a rare moment of public honesty, indicated that he did not wish to examine the Macedonian Question. It is, nevertheless, not surprising that the Greek government’s propaganda did not acknowledge the reality of this comment. The oversight was either because the Greek government believed so adamantly in a Slavocommunist plot or because recognition of the shift in the direction of Yugoslavia’s propaganda would undermine its efforts to secure support from the United States. Consequently, it did not acknowledge the existence of that change.

Most of the style and content of the memorandum was not distinct from Greek government propaganda during this period, except for one thing: it was published in English.<sup>941</sup> The Greek government designed the memorandum for international consumption, much as it did in its statements to the United Nations. This international focus renders the final point of the memorandum particularly significant. It noted the presence of a terrorist organization of approximately 4,000 people near Monastir. Interestingly, the Greek government identified these terrorists as “Macedonian Slavs from Greek Macedonia who [...] carry out raids in Greek territory.”<sup>942</sup> This acknowledgement that a Slav population existed was a substantial divergence from the Greek government’s official policy of not recognizing most minority populations in the

<sup>937</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archives, 1947.80.7.1 Μεθοριος

<sup>938</sup> *Macedonian Problem* R 8828/407/92.

<sup>939</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archives, 1947.80.7.1 Μεθοριος

<sup>940</sup> Ibid.

<sup>941</sup> For examples of Greek government propaganda intended for internal consumption, see: Archive of Yugoslavia, AJ, CKJ, 507/IX,33/I-30.

<sup>942</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archives, 1947.80.7.1 Μεθοριος

country, with the notable exception of the Muslim population of Western Thrace.<sup>943</sup> As communists, however, the Greek government argued that the Slavophone Macedonians were not members of the Greek nation-state, and therefore not a minority. In arguing that the Macedonian Slavs were disrupting national life, the Greek government re-emphasized to its foreign audience that Greece faced external subversion.

The English language memorandum demonstrated that the Greek government was not above using the Slavophone Macedonian threat to encourage American involvement in the country. The NOF, however, remained the Greek government's main foil. On 11 September 1947, Marinos Cosmetatos, a senior diplomatic official, thought it necessary to send a cryptographic telegram stating that the insurgents emphasized the Slavomacedonian question in their propaganda.<sup>944</sup> A military report forwarded to the Foreign Ministry on 26 January 1948 further underlined that the NOF's recruitment efforts in the villages were an ongoing threat.<sup>945</sup> These two sources from different branches of the Greek government in early 1948, after they had already involved the Americans, demonstrates the pervasiveness of its fears about the KKE and the DAG's use of the Macedonian Question to further Slavocommunist objectives. It was therefore not shocking that the Greek government took the drastic step of removing children from the affected villages to install a sense of Greek identity.<sup>946</sup>

The plan to convert the Macedonian Slavs into 'proper citizens' was not the most extreme form of nation-building that the Greek government considered in its efforts to combat the 'Slavic threat.' Elements of the Greek government even contemplated what is now considered ethnic cleansing. On 24 July 1947, Napoleon Zervas, the wartime leader of the EDES and then Minister of Public Order, wrote to the Greek Foreign

<sup>943</sup> The Greek state recognizes some minorities, although most are discriminated against due to their failure to assimilate. See: Stephanos Stavros, "Citizenship and the Protection of Minorities," in *Greece in a Changing Europe*, ed. Kevin Featherstone and Kostas Ifantis (New York: Manchester University Press, 1996), 120.

<sup>944</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 38431 11/9/47 Εσω. Κατα

<sup>945</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 18289 26/1/48 Αυτ. Μακ.

<sup>946</sup> Boeschoten, *Children of the Greek Civil War: Refugees and the Politics of Memory* Kindle Edition. Lars Bærentzen, "The "Paidomazoma" and the Queen's Camps," in *Studies in the History of the Greek Civil War, 1945-1949*, ed. John O. Iatrides Lars Bærentzen, Ole L. Smith (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1987), 52-55.

Minister and future Prime Minister Konstantinos Tsaldaris to discuss a plan to expel “Bulgarian sympathizers” from the north of the country.<sup>947</sup> Zervas suggested that the Greek government expel fifty-six thousand Slavophone Macedonians.<sup>948</sup> The Americans were fully cognizant of such schemes, as they were not a new development. In a written communication to Mark Ethridge on 20 February 1947, a delegate to the UN Commission of Investigation to study the Greek border disputes, American Secretary of State George Marshall noted that “should Commission and [the Security Council] recommend an exchange of Slavophone or any other minorities whose situation may be found to be a cause of border disturbances, [State Department] feels that [the Security Council] should itself assume responsibility for ensuring voluntary character of exchange.”<sup>949</sup> The extent of influence that the United States had with respect to such a plan remains unclear. Yet the fact the Greek government managed to convince them of the necessity of at least considering the plan demonstrates that it successfully conveyed its fear to the Americans.

The Greek government’s plans to ethnically cleanse northern Greece plays into the contention of modern Macedonian scholars that the Greek state sought to commit genocide in Aegean Macedonia, though Greece had no such plans.<sup>950</sup> Although the number that Zervas proposed is significant, it does not prove Risto Kirjazovski’s contention that the Greek government committed genocide against the Slavophone

<sup>947</sup> Bibliothèque Gennadios, ΑΦΔ 104,5/134, Ministère de l’Ordre Public, n° 115/10/26/78 au ministère des Affaires étrangères, secret, « Βουλγαρόφρονες και Ρουμανόφρονες Βορείου Ελλάδος », 24-7-1946. Cited in: Alvanos, "Les Choix Politiques Des Slavophones De Macedoine Dans La Guerre Civile Grecque," 11.

<sup>948</sup> Ibid.

<sup>949</sup> George Marshall, "The Secretary of State to Mr. Mark F. Ethridge, at Athens," in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947: The Near East and Africa* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947), 824.

<sup>950</sup> Risto Kirjazovski, "The Situation of the Macedonian Minority in Greece after the Second World War," *Macedonian Review* 24, no. 1 (1994) 53-54. The Association of Aegean Refugees, a Macedonian nationalist organization, likewise in 1994, argued before the UN that the Greek state committed genocide against the Macedonian inhabitants of the region. See: John Shea, *Macedonia and Greece: The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1997) 150-51.

Macedonian population.<sup>951</sup> Instead, the Greek government's plans demonstrate that it viewed the Slavophone Macedonians as a legitimate and long-term threat. The Greek government sought to resolve the problem with a population exchange that resembled the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923.

The Greek government's concerns about the Slavophone Macedonians from northern Greece and its plan to deal with them through mass expulsion brought the United States closer. Scholars commonly deny the Greek government an independent policy in its interactions with the United States.<sup>952</sup> Although it negotiated with the United States from an inferior position, it nevertheless knew what factors to emphasize in those interactions to advance its own interests.<sup>953</sup> In fact, after the Tito-Stalin split, the United States believed that the Slavophone Macedonians were the most serious problem in the relations between the two countries. As a result, certain elements of the United States government considered an earlier form of Zervas' plan to ethnically cleanse northern Greece to achieve better relations between the two countries.<sup>954</sup> The Greek government genuinely feared the Slavophone Macedonians in northern Greece, and later used them as another factor to bring the Americans into the war. By the end of 1947, the Greek

<sup>951</sup> Even if the Greek government carried out this action, it would not fall under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. While some definitions of genocide would include these actions, most common ones do not and using them betrays the author's sympathies. See: Benjamin A. Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the 20th Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2004) Kindle Edition. Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2010) 13-51; George J. Andreopoulos, ed. *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 29-108.

<sup>952</sup> James Edward Miller, *The United States and the Making of Modern Greece: History and Power, 1950-1974* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009) Kindle Edition; Zervakis, "The Greek Lobby and the Reemergence of Anti-Communism in the United States after World War II," 301-338; Wittner, *American Intervention in Greece, 1943-1949 Passim*; Yiannis P. Roubatis, *Tangled Webs: The Us in Greece, 1947-1967* (New York: Pella, 1987) 7-8.

<sup>953</sup> Evanthis Hatzivassiliou, "Shallow Waves and Deeper Currents: The U.S. Experience of Greece, 1947-1961. Politics, Historicity, and Cultural Dimensions," *Diplomatic History* 38, no. 1 (2014) 83-110.

<sup>954</sup> Bibliothèque Gennadios, ΑΦΔ 104,5/134, Ministère de l'Ordre Public, n° 115/10/26/78 au ministère des Affaires étrangères, secret, « Βουλγαρόφρονας και Ρουμανόφρονας Βορείου Ελλάδος », 24-7-1946. Cited in: Alvanos, "Les Choix Politiques Des Slavophones De Macedoine Dans La Guerre Civile Grecque," 11.

government had conveyed this fear to the United States and, to a lesser extent, the international community.

In this period the Greek government had both ideological and realistic reasons for emphasizing the Slavic threat. This obsession with the Slavic threat was based on the belief that there was a potential fifth column threat by the Slavophone Macedonians that the northern states could and would exploit them to achieve territorial gains. The actions of the Slavophone Macedonians and the propaganda emanating from Yugoslavia played into this perception. The Greek government emphasized the Slavic threat from the north, thus convincing the United States that a local Slavic insurgency was part of a broader struggle against the communist world.

## **6.5. The Macedonian Question in the Lead up to the Tito-Stalin Split**

By the beginning of 1948, Yugoslavia was finally able to pursue its interests in Greece with minimal domestic interference. In part, this was because Yugoslavia could accomplish the goal of redirecting Macedonian nationalist sentiment towards Bulgaria. Yugoslav officials, however, also appreciated the problems that the Slavophone Macedonians brought with them regarding their nationalizing policies. A 24 February 1948 internal Yugoslav report assessed that there were two rival camps within the NOF: one centered on Mitrovski and the other on Keramidzhiev.<sup>955</sup> The report noted that Keramidzhiev's faction primarily consisted of the "chauvinistic" elements and expressed considerable frustration about the factionalism, but did not offer any constructive suggestions.<sup>956</sup> The report noted that there were certain favourable elements within the NOF, most notably Rokovski and Čolakov, but also added that overall, the current "[...] state of the NOF and certain procedures of the Greek comrades [...] encourage local chauvinism, not only amongst the heads of NOF, AFZ, [but also] with the Macedonian village."<sup>957</sup> While KKE policies did not help matters, the CPY report clearly assigned

<sup>955</sup> Archives of Yugoslavia, AJ, CKJ, 507/IX,33/V-45.

<sup>956</sup> Ibid.

<sup>957</sup> Ibid.

blame to the NOF's factionalism. The divisions within the NOF provided a further disincentive for the CPY to play the Macedonian nationalist card in Greece. After all, the CPY witnessed how such a policy could backfire in 1944 and 1945. Instead, Yugoslavia pursued a more communist than minority-driven policy while it consolidated control of Vardar Macedonia.

Unbeknownst to the CPY, its benevolence on the Macedonian Question and its genuine and newfound support for the KKE helped lead the Yugoslavs into the Tito-Stalin split. The Tito-Stalin split to the Greek Civil War is one of the few elements of the political struggle not underestimated in the literature.<sup>958</sup> However, while scholars ascribe the Tito-Stalin split's significance to its effect on the outcome of the Greek Civil War. The contribution that Yugoslavia's activities in Greece made to the split has only begun to emerge in the contemporary literature, and this has occurred largely within Yugoslav studies, and not in accounts of the Greek Civil War.<sup>959</sup> That Yugoslavia's involvement in the Greek Civil War was a significant cause of the Tito-Stalin split can be understood from Milovan Djilas and Edvard Kardelj's accounts of a meeting between Stalin and key members of the CPY in early February 1948. At the meeting, Stalin told the CPY leaders that the "The uprising in Greece will have to fold up" and that the Greek communists "have no prospect for success at all."<sup>960</sup> Kardelj confirmed that in this meeting, Stalin pressured Yugoslavia over its involvement in the Greek Civil War.<sup>961</sup> The Yugoslavs saw this as only a minor factor in the declining relations between the two parties. As Mastny observes, however, the Soviet Union saw Yugoslavia's activism as one of the principal problems in its dealings with their lesser counterpart.<sup>962</sup> The CPY's understanding that its

<sup>958</sup> Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* 140-45; Evanthis Hatzivassiliou, "From Adversity to Alliance: Greece, Yugoslavia and Balkan Strategy, 1944-1959," *Balkan Studies* 45, no. 1 (2004) 126; Pirjevic, "The Tito-Stalin Split and the End of the Civil War in Greece," 309-16.

<sup>959</sup> Two recent articles, in particular, demonstrate the importance of the Greek Civil War to the Tito-Stalin split. See: Perović, "The Tito-Stalin Split: A Reassessment in Light of New Evidence," 32-63; Rajak, "The Cold War in the Balkans, 1945-1953," 198-220; Vojtech Mastny, *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity: The Stalin Years* (New York: Oxford UP, 1996) Kindle Edition.

<sup>960</sup> Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin* 140-41.

<sup>961</sup> Kardelj, *Reminiscences: The Struggle for Recognition and Independence: The New Yugoslavia, 1944-1957* 107.

<sup>962</sup> Mastny, *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity: The Stalin Years* Kindle Edition.



policy on the Macedonian Question did not affect its relationship with the USSR benefited the KKE in its struggle against the Greek government as it ensured Yugoslavia continued to provide supplies to the DAG. Nevertheless, it was one of the several factors that facilitated the break between the Yugoslav and Soviet governments in the summer of 1948.

Despite Keramidzhiev's complaints about the KKE by 1948 the NOF was clearly under the Greek communists' direct control. This point was evident at the First Congress of the NOF, which occurred on 13 January 1948. As Rossos notes, although the NOF had organized earlier meetings, the First Congress of the NOF was a seminal moment in the organization and Macedonian national movement's development.<sup>963</sup> It was at this conference that the KKE demonstrated its complete dominance of the NOF to the party faithful.

Two speeches given by Mihailo Keramidzhiev and Giannis Ioannidis at the First Congress provide a clear demonstration of the NOF's official submission to the KKE. Mihailo Keramidzhiev, the NOF's General Secretary, made his association with the KKE's policies evident when he identified the weaknesses of the party. One particular weakness he discussed was that many individuals from among the cadres maintained an IMRO based identity.<sup>964</sup> As seen in Chapter 5, the KKE made the IMRO/autonomists its scapegoat for any perceived fault in its policy on the Macedonian Question. In other words, Keramidzhiev helped justify the KKE's existing policy. The extent to which the KKE's accusations were based in reality is unclear, but given the factionalism within the NOF, having a convenient target on which to pin the blame for their shortcomings was useful for both parties. Keramidzhiev again made this association with the KKE when he identified another weakness: its lack of cooperation with "other anti-fascist organizations."<sup>965</sup> This point was an implicit reference to NOF, although there were several other anti-fascist organizations. The faults of the KKE and the NOF, and the

<sup>963</sup> Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians: A History* Kindle Edition.

<sup>964</sup> Mihailo Keramidzhiev, "La Rapport Politique Et D'organisation, Presente Au Premier Congres Du Fln Par Le Secretaire Du Comite Principal Du Fln Mihailo Keramidzhiev," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece, 1948*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1948), 25.

<sup>965</sup> Ibid. 25.

problems between them, were the result of the Slavophone Macedonian organization, and it was up to them to correct. Keramidzhiev's statement at the First Congress of the NOF contrasts with his earlier statements covered in Chapter 5, in which he blamed the KKE for the friction between it and the Macedonian organization. The NOF's official subservience to the KKE, and the CPY's increasingly ambivalent position, made it imperative for the Macedonian party to align its policies with those of the Greek communists.

While Keramidzhiev was critical of his organization, Ioannidis avoided criticism and instead focused on more general matters. Importantly, Ioannidis chose Yugoslavia as the model for Greece to follow. Therein, he noted that Yugoslavia's success on the issue of minorities was "[...] something [one] does not come across anywhere in the capitalist countries. It is because the people there have taken power into their own hands."<sup>966</sup> In one comment alone, Ioannidis managed to: appease the Slavophone Macedonians, who still looked to the People's Republic of Macedonia; appeal to the Yugoslavs, whom the KKE depended upon for material support; and discredit the Greek government, as its capitalist-based system (allegedly) would not allow for the equality of Macedonians. After this masterstroke, Ioannidis got to the heart of why the KKE supported the Slavophone Macedonians and their ambitions: their contribution to the armed forces.

Ioannidis' speech indicates the reasoning behind his appeal to the Slavophone Macedonians: their importance to the DAG. Ioannidis – the individual who in late 1947 had argued for the KKE's accommodation of the Slavophone Macedonians – took the opportunity to argue that the parties needed unity if they were to realize the equality he had mentioned earlier. Ioannidis stated that to make progress towards equality, "we need to fight [...] united and together."<sup>967</sup> Furthermore, the only means by which the

<sup>966</sup> Giannis Ioannidis, "Extrait Du Discours De Ioanis Ioanidis, Vice-President Du Gouvernement Provisoire Grec Et Membre Du Bureau Politique Du Cc Du Pcg a L'occasion Du Iieme Congres Du Fln," in *Documents Relatifs a L'attitude Du Parti Communiste Grec Envers La Question Nationale Macedonienne*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de Macedoine, 1948), 423.

<sup>967</sup> Ibid.

Greeks and Slavophone Macedonians were uniting was with a strong army.<sup>968</sup> The “need to strengthen the Democratic Army with new forces was critical to creating a strong army.”<sup>969</sup> Given the forum to which Ioannidis spoke, the inference could not be clearer. The Slavophone Macedonians should contribute more soldiers and units to guarantee the success of the Provisional Government and therefore protect their new rights. Ioannidis had succeeded at getting Keramidzhiev to point out the NOF’s failures with respect to the contribution of the Slavophone Macedonians, which stemmed from its lack of commitment to the KKE/DAG. Then, he gave the Slavophone Macedonians a valid reason for pursuing the new policy.

That the NOF now looked to the KKE to resolve internal disputes, rather than the CPY, further demonstrates the extent of the Greek communists’ control of the Slavophone Macedonians. Evdokija Baleva-Nikolova, the leader of NOF’s women’s affiliate organization, the Antifascist Front of Women in Aegean Macedonia, in an internal report on 2 March 1948, complained about factionalism within the party.<sup>970</sup> Throughout April and May 1948 Mitrovski also sent several missives to Ioannidis in which he complained about the NOF’s organization and more specifically, about

<sup>968</sup> Ibid.

<sup>969</sup> Ibid.

<sup>970</sup> Evdokija Baleva-Nikolova, "La Rapport D'evdokija Baleva-Nikolova Relatif a La Reunion Dans L'etat-Major De L'adg, Concernante Les Rapports Malsains Dans La Direction Du Fln," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1948*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1948), 124-28.

Keramidzhiev's leadership.<sup>971</sup> The majority of Mitrovski's letters, significantly, went to Ioannidis, whose role as the Provisional Democratic Government's Foreign Minister lent him considerable influence over the Macedonian Question. The leadership of the NOF, in other words, recognized that they had to tailor their message, both in content and form, to achieve their desired effect. Furthermore, Mitrovski, by addressing his complaints to the KKE when he had previously referred them to the CPY, demonstrated the former's increased role on the Macedonian Question as the Yugoslavs redirected their activities elsewhere.<sup>972</sup>

While the NOF came steadily under the control of the KKE, some elements within its leadership sought to keep contacts with the CPY to counter pressure from the Greeks. For example, at the First Congress of the NOF on 13 January 1948, greetings were dispatched to the Women's Antifascist Fronts of both Yugoslavia and the People's

<sup>971</sup> Paskal Mitrovski, "La Lettre De Paskal Mitrovski a Joanis Joanidis, Secetaire Du Cc Du Pcg Dans Laquelle Il L'informe Des Reunions Relatives a La Mobilisation Des Cadres Du Fln Etc.," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece, 1948*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1948), 182-83; "La Lettre De Paskal Mitrovski a Joanis Joanidis, Secetaire Du Cc Du Pcg, Dans Laquelle Il L'informe De La Reorganisation Du Fln Apres La Mobilisation Des Cadres, Etc.," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece, 1948*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1948), 187-88; "La Lettre De Paskal Mitrovski a Joanis Joanidis, Membre Du Bureau Politique Du Comite Central Du Pcg Et Ministre Du Gouvernement Democratique Provisoire, Relative Aux Questions D'organisation Du Fln Et Autres," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1948*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1948), 234-35; "Le Rapport De Paskal Mitrovski Au Bureau Politique Du Cc Du Pcg Sur 'Activite Militaire Des Cadres Du Fln, Sur Les Relations Reciproques Des Dirigeants Du Fln, Etc.," *ibid.*, 244-48.

<sup>972</sup> It was not just the NOF's inner circle that sought the KKE's assistance in resolving internal party disputes. Lazo Poplazarov, a member of the party leadership but not of its inner circle, likewise wrote the Politburo of the KKE on 23 April 1948 about the accusations regarding NOF officials Lazo Kamčev and Marika Velkova's involvement in the development and failures of the movement in Voden. See: "Le Declaration De Lazo Poplazarov Au Bureau Politique Du Pcg, Dans Laquelle Il Nie Les Acusations De Lazo Kamčev Et Marika Velkova, Liees a La Situation En Department De Voden Qu'il Explique," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece, 1948*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1948), 189-93.

Republic of Macedonia.<sup>973</sup> The First Congress' letters followed a standard formula expected by the communist camp, and provided a good indicator of relations between the parties.<sup>974</sup> Even as late as the spring of 1948, the NOF's leaders (Mihailo Keramidzhiev, Vera Nikolovska, Pavle Rakovski, Ajanovski-Oče, and Ilija Dimovski) sought the CPY's support in countering pressure from the KKE.<sup>975</sup> Although the KKE subsumed the NOF, its leaders still tried to use the tension that existed between the CPY and the KKE to pursue its agenda.

Furthermore, these letters indicate that the NOF played a double-game with the KKE to advance Slavophone Macedonian rights within the country. Those who signed the letters included individuals the KKE identified as serving their cause, such as Mihail Keramidzhiev and Paskal Mitrovski, as well as those whom the KKE identified as autonomists/IMROists, such as Ilija Dimovski. Keramidzhiev publically acceded to KKE pressure in denouncing autonomists like Dimovski (Goce). Nevertheless, the NOF still emphasized its connection with Dimovski in its interactions with the Yugoslavs, having wrongly assumed that the CPY regarded him in a positive light. The NOF's leadership, in other words, still pursued its agenda.

The NOF members could not directly challenge KKE officials, but they used the power structure of the KKE-CPY alliance to further their objectives. Nonetheless, there were limitations to the NOF's double game. These challenges were apparent in a letter from Dinko Delevski, a soldier in the DAG, to Vangel Ajanovski-Oče on 18 June 1948, just before the Tito-Stalin split. NOF officials had previously raised the issue that the

<sup>973</sup> "Le Tekegramme Der Salutation Du Premier Congres Du Fln-Faf a La Federation Mondiale Des Femmes, Au Front Antifasciste Des Femmes (Faf) De La Republique Populaire Federative De Yougoslavie Et Au Front Antifasciste Des Femmes (Faf) De La Republique Populaire De Macedoine," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece, 1948*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1948), 27.

<sup>974</sup> For example, as the Tito-Stalin dispute began to emerge in the Spring of 1948, none of the Soviet leaders or their Eastern Party counterparts (with the exception of Dimitrov) sent Tito a congratulatory letter on his birthday, a normally formulaic response. See: Vladimir Dedijer, *The Battle Stalin Lost: Memoirs of Yugoslavia, 1948-1953* (Viking Press: New York, 1970) 190-91.

<sup>975</sup> Archive of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, A CK SKJ IX-33/I-51 199-203.

Slavophone Macedonians were in a position of inferiority to Greeks within the DAG.<sup>976</sup> In the eyes of the Slavophone Macedonians, this state of affairs persisted. Delevski noted that the status of NOF officials within the DAG was less than those of “assistant cooks.”<sup>977</sup> Delevski had complained about this same issue in 1947, and noted that both Goce and the Central Committee of the NOF had largely echoed that earlier complaint.<sup>978</sup> In effect, the Slavomacedonians were no longer masters of their own destiny. NOF propaganda materials captured by the Greek government in May 1948 underscores this point. It was addressed to “Slavomacedonians and Greeks.”<sup>979</sup> The political context of 1948 made it impossible for the NOF to differentiate itself from the KKE by embracing groups other than the Slavophone Macedonians and Greeks, which it had done in 1945. The NOF’s placement under the KKE was originally an expedient measure implemented by the CPY to limit the pernicious influence of the Slavophone Macedonians. Yet, the NOF was able to exploit its subservience, which increasingly resulted in the marginalization of Slavophone Macedonians. As Ioannidis and the Yugoslavs noted, the Slavophones’ loss of power occurred at the very same time that an increase in their numbers was becoming critical to the DAG’s fortunes.

Thus, while the well-known argument during this period – that the KKE consolidated its control over NOF – has some merit, the reality of the situation was considerably more muddled. The NOF officially acceded to the demands of the KKE, but this was only what appeared on the surface. Analyzing high politics alone ignores the considerable tensions that characterized KKE-NOF relations and existed within the Macedonian organization itself. Both parties had to address these tensions to avoid

<sup>976</sup> Keramitčiev, "La Rapport De Mihailo Keramitčiev, Secretaire Du Comite Principal Du FIn, Relatif a La Situation Generale De L'organisation Du FIn Et Aux Relations Avec Le Pcg," 348-60.

<sup>977</sup> Dinko Delevski, "La Lettre De Dinko Delevski a Vangel Ajanovski Dans Laquelle Il Le Prie De L'aider Pour Passer De L'adg En FIn," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece, 1948*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1948), 255.

<sup>978</sup> Ibid. 255.

<sup>979</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 37516 12-6-47 Aut. Mak.

damaging their relationship.<sup>980</sup> Furthermore, there were tensions within the NOF regarding its ultimate purpose. While NOF officials deferred debates regarding those concerns with the KKE, in most instances, individuals within the party exploited them to advance their interests. In other words, the KKE found itself entangled in NOF politics even as it sought to control the Slavophone Macedonians. The fact that Dimovski remained prominent within the NOF, despite the KKE's aversion to him, spoke to the fact that the NOF retained a degree of autonomy in its actions during the period. This autonomy would only remain, however, so long as the NOF could play the KKE and CPY against one another.

## 6.6. Conclusion

The Macedonian Question deeply affected all the parties involved in the Greek Civil War between late 1946 to mid-1948, influencing their actions in subtle yet significant ways. For the CPY, increased control of the Macedonian Question in Yugoslavia and the opening of an outlet in Bulgaria as a result of the Bled Agreement meant that it was able to mitigate and redirect the CPM's concerns in order to adequately supply the KKE. Even when the NOF attempted to entangle the CPY in its internal power struggle, the Yugoslavs refused to intervene and encouraged the NOF to work with the KKE. Although the CPY did not completely renounce the Slavophone Macedonians, the party leadership made it clear that the interests of that population were now of secondary importance to its other policies.

The KKE recognized the CPY's newfound ambivalence concerning the Slavophone Macedonians and worked to place the NOF under its control, largely succeeding in this task. NOF officials recognized they were now at a disadvantage, but this did not completely hamper their ability to advance their objectives. In fact, the NOF tried – with varying degrees of success – to use the divisions between the CPY and KKE

<sup>980</sup> This is most evident in the propaganda from this period, as it mimicked the KKE's arguments. Kofos likely reached this assessment based on his extensive use of the Greek Diplomatic and Historic Archive, whose documents create this impression. See: *ibid.* Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 43145 24.7.48 Αυτ. Μακ.; Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 43736 30-7-48 Αυτ. Μακεδονία; Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 43737 20-7-48 Αυτ. Μακ.

to promote its interests. The fact that the NOF officials were able to do so provides further proof of the need to examine the role of the Macedonian Question in the conflict.

Finally, the Greek government's success at exploiting the Yugoslav propaganda on the Macedonian Question to create the impression of a Slavocommunist conspiracy with the Slavophone Macedonians proved effective in drawing the United States into the conflict. The Greek government was able to selectively cite specific examples of virulent Yugoslav rhetoric to construct the image of a Slavocommunist plot to dismember and even take over Greece that was, it argued, orchestrated by the Soviet Union. Although there was no such plot, there is a lack of evidence supporting the view that the Greek government fabricated it for purely strategic reasons. Instead, it appears that the Greek government actually believed that a Slavocommunist-Soviet linkage indeed existed and simply sought to convey its fears to the United States. The United States readily accepted the Greek government's perception of a Slavocommunist threat because of its burgeoning concerns about the Soviet Union, which aligned with their desire to prevent the incorporation of northern Greece into a Greater Macedonian state. In fact, the United States overlooked the fact that the Greek government's involvement in the persecution of the Slavophone Macedonians had played a pivotal role in creating the domestic unrest. Yugoslavia's domestic imperatives and Cold War politics, however, resulted in the United States viewing Greece through a proto-Cold War gaze.

The Macedonian Question, therefore, continued to play a pivotal role in the Greek Civil War during this phase of the conflict, despite historians' tendencies to sidestep it altogether. The Slavophone Macedonians continued to influence the actions of the major participants in the Greek Civil War. While the parties in the Greek Civil War often defined their activities solely in terms of realpolitik, the Slavophone Macedonians and the Macedonian Question were ever-present factors in their calculations.



## Chapter 7. The Macedonian Question in the Greek Civil War after the Tito-Stalin split, July 1948-September 1949

This chapter examines how the Tito-Stalin split was both a turning point in the relationships between the various actors involved in the Greek Civil War, and a watershed moment for the role of the Macedonian Question in the region. A substantial body of literature has already established that the Tito-Stalin split played a major role in the conclusion of Greek Civil War.<sup>981</sup> The researchers who created this body of work, however, generally neglect the Macedonian Question in their analysis.<sup>982</sup> A close examination of how the Macedonian Question affected the various actors demonstrates that the dynamics it created in their relations were crucial to the conflict ending in 1949.

### 7.1. The KKE's Initial Reaction to the Tito-Stalin Split

The Tito-Stalin split affected all the communist parties in the world. The party that it had the largest impact upon, after the CPY and CPSU, was the KKE. For the KKE, the CPY was the only party that could adequately supply the DAG, as was demonstrated by Dimitrov's complaints to the CPSU about Greek demands for provisions in the summer of 1948.<sup>983</sup> While these material ties were important for the leading members of the KKE's Politburo and Central Committee (including Secretary General Nikolas

<sup>981</sup> Clogg, *Greece 1940-1949: Occupation, Resistance, Civil War*, 220; Dragan Kljakic, *Izgnubljena Pobeda Generala Markosa. Gradanski Rat U Grckoj 1946-1949. I Kpj* (Beograd: Narodna Knjiga, 1987) 180-201; Gerolymatos, *The International Civil War: Greece, 1943-1949* 206-07; Perović, "The Tito-Stalin Split: A Reassessment in Light of New Evidence," 32-63; Hatzivassiliou, "From Adversity to Alliance: Greece, Yugoslavia and Balkan Strategy, 1944-1959," 123-33; Wayne Vucinich, ed. *At the Brink of War and Peace: The Tito-Stalin Split in a Historic Perspective* (Brooklyn, NY: Brooklyn College Press, 1982), 219-237.

<sup>982</sup> A notable exception is Gerolymatos' aforementioned *The International Civil War*.

<sup>983</sup> Kalyvas, *Εμφύλια Πάθη: 23 Ερωτήσεις Και Απαντήσεις Για Τον Εμφύλιο* 286.

Zachariadis), for reasons that remain debated he placed loyalty to the Soviet Union above other concerns.<sup>984</sup> These key members were typically not engaged in active combat and lacked direct knowledge of the importance of the CPY to their struggle. Consequently, it was easy for them to disconnect themselves from the reality of the DAG's dependence on the CPY and view the Tito-Stalin split primarily in terms of ideological correctness or the potential to acquire arms from elsewhere.<sup>985</sup> As a result, on 28 July 1948 the Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee of the KKE, the party, at Zachariadis' urging, decided to adhere to the Cominform line on the Tito-Stalin split.<sup>986</sup> While Zachariadis allowed ideology to triumph over practical concerns, he was not disconnected from the political reality confronting the DAG. Thus, the KKE chose to keep the decision secret for the time being in order not to provoke a negative Yugoslav response.<sup>987</sup> Although this was a sensible precaution, it was only a temporary solution.

On 30 June 1948, in the immediate aftermath of the Cominform's 28 June 1948 proclamation, the KKE Politburo wrote to their political commissars to convey their position on the Tito-Stalin split. This was unsurprising, given the KKE's efforts to marginalize the Macedonian Question's ability to damage its efforts to seize power. The political commissars, as the guarantors of the KKE's vision amongst the soldiers, were the vanguard of the Greek communists' efforts to control the increasingly Slavophone Macedonian dominated DAG. The proclamation began by noting: "The policy of the leadership of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia creates serious threats to the survival

<sup>984</sup> Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949* 253-55. For a good analysis of the debate see: Gerolymatos, *The International Civil War: Greece, 1943-1949* 19-26.

<sup>985</sup> After the Tito-Stalin split, the Eastern Bloc countries embarked on efforts to supply the DAG, but these efforts came up short. See: Marantzidis, "The Greek Civil War (1944-1949) and the International Communist System," 44-52.

<sup>986</sup> Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949* 254.

<sup>987</sup> Ibid.

of the people's democracy in Yugoslavia."<sup>988</sup> The KKE's sympathies were clear in its indication that the split was the fault of the Yugoslav communist leadership.

As the reality of the Tito-Stalin split became apparent to the Greek communists, the Politburo of the KKE earnestly began their efforts to keep control of the NOF. It began the 10 July letter by noting several of NOF's most prominent failures, which it previously had either ignored or tacitly condoned. These included its inability to meet the objectives set out at the First Congress of NOF and to effectively carry out its role as the head of the Slavomacedonian minority; its failure to adequately support the DAG in its struggle against the Greek government (i.e. the mobilization of forces); and its failure to properly promote the policy of the Provisional Government.<sup>989</sup> The Soviet Union published a similar list of the CPY's failings, which was not coincidental.<sup>990</sup> Once the KKE established the many failings of the NOF, it put forward the reason for the NOF's failure: the divided control of Paskal Mitrovski and Mihail Keramitčiev. According to the KKE, this division had "led to a split in the leadership of NOF, to its division into two opposing groups, and prevented the organization [from addressing the First Congress' tasks]."<sup>991</sup> The KKE also mimicked the Soviet formula in arguing that the two leaders' failings were largely the result of their chauvinistic struggle for power, which had caused them to betray the Slavomacedonian people.<sup>992</sup> The KKE, completed its paraphrasing of the Soviet message to the CPY, noted that "the Politburo of the Central Committee of KKE is under the impression that party members will realize the damage caused by the personal factionalist activity of Keramitčiev and Paskal to the case of the Slavomacedonian people and will [... act] as communists and will fully complete their

<sup>988</sup> Politburo of the Central Committee of the KKE, "La Lettre Circulaire Du Bureau Politique Du Comite Central Du Pcg Aux Commissaires Politiques De L'adg. On Les Informe De La Resolution De L'informbureau Contre Le Pc De Yugoslavie Et De L'attitude Du Pcg a Cet Egard," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1948*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1948), 260.

<sup>989</sup> Politburo of the KKE's Central Committee, "La Resolution Du Bureau Politique Du Comite Central Du Pcg Ou on Emprime L'opinion Negative Du Travail De La Direction Du Fln," *ibid.*, 266.

<sup>990</sup> Perović, "The Tito-Stalin Split: A Reassessment in Light of New Evidence," 32-33.

<sup>991</sup> Committee, "La Resolution Du Bureau Politique Du Comite Central Du Pcg Ou on Emprime L'opinion Negative Du Travail De La Direction Du Fln," 267.

<sup>992</sup> *Ibid.*

revolutionary task.”<sup>993</sup> The KKE not only sided with the Soviet Union in its struggle against the Yugoslavs but also displayed ideological correctness by mostly parroting the Soviet model in its criticism of a deviant faction.

While the leaders of NOF sought to guarantee their status in the wake of the Greek communists’ sudden assault, the KKE’s Politburo moved to assert its full dominance over them while the Yugoslavs’ attention were focused elsewhere. The Resolution of the First Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the NOF on 8 August 1948 demonstrated that the NOF had become a full appendage of the KKE. This fact is not immediately evident from the text of the resolution. In a straightforward manner, the Resolution agreed with the KKE’s criticism of the party in noting that its leadership had not acted in the best interests of the Slavomacedonian people and did not advance the policies of the Provisional Government.<sup>994</sup> The NOF essentially accepted all the critiques that the KKE put forward and agreed with it that the main reason for the problems in the DAG’s struggle against the Greek government was the factionalism caused by Keramitčiev and Mitrovski.<sup>995</sup> Finally, the resolution concluded by noting that the NOF’s primary function was to aid the DAG in its struggle against the Greek government and that any “other opinion is an anti-democratic, anti-revolutionary act against the people.”<sup>996</sup> While the resolution’s critiques parroted the KKE’s line, it stated that the Central Committee reached the conclusion of its own.<sup>997</sup> This statement was false.

<sup>993</sup> Ibid.

<sup>994</sup> Executive Board of NOF, "La Resolution De La 1ere Seance Pleniaire Du Comite Principal Du Fln Relative a La Lutte Fractionniste Parmi Les Dirigeants Du Fln," *ibid.*, 302.

<sup>995</sup> Ibid.

<sup>996</sup> Ibid. 303.

<sup>997</sup> Ibid. 302.

The KKE dispatched Giannis Ioannidis to guarantee the resolution's success in the removal of Keramitčiev and Mitrovski from power.<sup>998</sup> Despite the pressure that Ioannidis put on the NOF's Central Committee, only four of its members marked their ascent. The rest abstained and allowed the measure to pass.<sup>999</sup> Dimovski, who had a suspect history with the KKE and Macedonian ultranationalism, wrote the report on the meeting.<sup>1000</sup> While Dimovski undoubtedly exaggerated his personal role in the dispute, his account of the results does match what occurred: the KKE directly controlled the NOF and made sure to exert its influence in the wake of the Tito-Stalin split.<sup>1001</sup>

The reason that the KKE concerned itself so deeply with the status of the Slavophone Macedonians was that their preponderance within the DAG became more significant as the war progressed. In part, this was a matter of geography. As Gerolymatos notes, by 1948, the DAG's operations were mostly confined to northern Greece and the Peloponnese.<sup>1002</sup> Furthermore, Kalyvas persuasively argues that the KKE's uprising in the Peloponnese was devoid of leadership, and largely fueled by local

<sup>998</sup> Ibid. 302-03. Of course, the Resolution of the First Plenary Session did not mention this fact. However, Ilija Dimovski and Vangel Ajanovski recorded the proceedings of the plenary session. Their records show that Ioannidis played a pivotal role in guaranteeing that the NOF's Central Committee followed the KKE's line, even though there was mass disagreement over the veracity of the KKE's accusations. After Ioannidis led the Central Committee in condemning Keramitčiev, Mitrovski, and the ever-problematic Dimovski, the KKE leader then argued that the NOF must accept the KKE's agreement with the Cominform's resolution against the Yugoslavs.

<sup>999</sup> Ilija Dimovski et Vangel Ajanovski-Oče, "Le Rapport D'Ilija Dimovski Et Vangel Ajanovski Relatif a La 1iere Seance Pleniaire Du Comite Principal Du Fln Qui a Eu Lieu," *ibid.*, 309.

<sup>1000</sup> Ilija Dimovski remains a controversial figure within the historiography, due to his frequent lies and exaggerations to advance the Macedonian nationalist cause. Although the report does not indicate that they sent it to the Yugoslavs, given his constant efforts to garner the support of the Yugoslavs against the Greeks, he likely passed it along. If the developments he described did not occur, specifically the NOF's subjugation to the KKE, it would render the contents mute. Instead, it is best to consider them an exaggerated account of what happened.

<sup>1001</sup> The significance of the Tito-Stalin split to the KKE's decision to exert direct control is currently neglected in the literature. For examples of pieces that take a more long-term perspective on the KKE's control, see: Koliopoulos, *Plundered Loyalties: World War II and Civil War in Greek West Macedonia Passim*; Kofos, "The Impact of the Macedonian Question on Civil Conflict in Greece, "; Novica Veljanovski, in *History of the Macedonian People*, ed. Todor Chepreganov (Skopje: Institute of National History, 2008), 315-16; Vamvakovski, "Greek-Macedonian Struggle: The Reasons for Its Occurrence," 117-132; Damianopoulos, *The Macedonians: Their Past and Present* Kindle Edition; Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians: A History* Kindle Edition.

<sup>1002</sup> Gerolymatos, *Red Acropolis, Black Terror: The Greek Civil War and the Origins of Soviet-American Rivalry, 1943-1949* 225-26.

conditions.<sup>1003</sup> Given this reality, the KKE greatly needed the Slavophone Macedonians to support its efforts in the north. This need was likely the reason that even when the KKE attacked the NOF to unseat its leadership and assert control, it frequently mentioned that one of the Slavophone Macedonian Party's principal failings was its inability to support the DAG and the Provisional Government.<sup>1004</sup> The DAG's dire manpower issues explain why Zachariadis emphasized the Slavophone Macedonian soldiers' role in combating the "Greek-American fascists" in an address to them on 24 September 1948.<sup>1005</sup> The KKE was desperate for combatants, and it saw the Slavophone Macedonians as the solution to the crisis. In November 1948, the DAG's commander, Markos Vafiadis, in one of his last acts as commander went so far as to argue that the women in the Slavophone Macedonians' female organization, the AFZ, should be conscripted just like the men in the NOF.<sup>1006</sup>

Individuals within the NOF contributed to Zachariadis' belief that the Slavophone Macedonians were the solution to the KKE's manpower issue. His preoccupation was likely made all the more acute by the DAG's defeats in the summer and early autumn of

<sup>1003</sup> Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil Wars* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 388-89.

<sup>1004</sup> KKE, "La Lettre Circulaire Du Bureau Politique Du Comite Central Du Pcg Aux Commissaires Politiques De L'adg. On Les Informe De La Resolution De L'informbureau Contre Le Pc De Yugoslavie Et De L'attitude Du Pcg a Cet Egard," 260-261. Politburo of the KKE's Central Committee, "La Resolution Du Bureau Politique Du Comite Central Du Pcg Ou on Emprime L'opinion Negative Du Travail De La Direction Du Fln," *ibid.*, 266-268. Executive Board of NOF, "La Resolution De La 1ere Seance Pleniaire Du Comite Principal Du Fln Relative a La Lutte Fractionniste Parmi Les Dirigeants Du Fln," *ibid.*, 305-09.

<sup>1005</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 57236 13-11-48 Αυτ. Μακεδονίας

<sup>1006</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 55718 3.11.48 Αυτ. Μακ. While the KKE sought to ensure the loyalty of the Slavophone Macedonians in the late summer/early autumn of 1948, Zachariadis did not limit the purges to the NOF. In fact, the purges extended to the highest levels of the KKE. The most prominent example and the one that debatably had the largest impact was the removal of Markos Vafiadis from his position as commander of the DAG. The tension between the two leaders, nevertheless, reached a breaking point in November 1948, when Vafiadis presented his 'platform' to the KKE Politburo. That platform was highly critical of Zachariadis' leadership of the campaign. Vafiadis emphasized the necessity of mounting an insurgency, instead of continuing the set-piece battle that Zachariadis insisted on waging. Given that the United States was becoming involved in the conflict, and that the National Army of Greece was improving in both quantity and quality with regards to battles of position, Vafiadis' assessment of the DAG's position was accurate.<sup>1006</sup> Although Vafiadis' practical concerns were legitimate, Zachariadis succeeded in securing Politburo support and having the DAG commander denounced as a defeatist on 15 November 1948. See: Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949* 255.

1948, which further solidified the KKE as a northern regional, rather than national, organization.<sup>1007</sup> In a 15 November 1948 letter sent directly to Zachariadis, the NOF functionary Vangel Kojčev claimed that there were thousands of Slavophone Macedonians in Bulgaria that the DAG could recruit.<sup>1008</sup> The political climate of the NOF in the aftermath of its early August acquiescence to the KKE encouraged clientelism, which was the only way to avoid KKE persecution. He was not alone. In a letter to Zachariadis on 23 November 1948, NOF official Pavle Rakovski complained that another functionary, Stavros Kočopulos, inhibited the successful mobilization of Slavophone Macedonians.<sup>1009</sup> In short, the KKE's political offensives on the NOF made individuals within the Macedonian party focus on preserving their positions rather than on advancing the Slavophone Macedonian cause.

Most notable amongst NOF officials gaining favour with Zachariadis was the out of favour Paskal Mitrovski. In the fall of 1948, Mitrovski was rehabilitated in the NOF by reporting to Zachariadis on problematic developments within the party and suggesting how he could be of service in fixing them. On 3 November 1948, Mitrovski wrote Zachariadis a report made by Gjorgji Petričevski, a minor NOF official, on the status of the Slavophone Macedonian combatants and cadres. Specifically, Mitrovski reported on Petričevski's assessment that the primary reason members of the NOF fled (presumably to Yugoslavia) was their sense of humiliation and the ineffectiveness of the local Slavophone Macedonian officials.<sup>1010</sup> Mitrovski, instead of providing his reasons for the Slavophone Macedonians' issues with the KKE, attributed those problems to the failings of the NOF. Furthermore, a 29 November 1948 letter by Mitrovski to Zachariadis largely repeated the points he previously raised, and how he could be of service in fixing them.

<sup>1007</sup> Gerolymatos, *Red Acropolis, Black Terror: The Greek Civil War and the Origins of Soviet-American Rivalry, 1943-1949* 225-26; Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949* 268-69.

<sup>1008</sup> Vangel Kojčev, "La Lettre De Vangel Kojčev a Nikos Zaharijadis, Relative a L'envoi D'une Delegation En Bulgarie Pour Y Recruter Les Combattants De L'adg," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1948*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1948), 351-52.

<sup>1009</sup> Pavle Rakovski, "La Lettre De Pavle Rakovski a Nikos Zaharijadis Dans Laquelle Il Se Plaint De L'attitude De Stavros Kočopulos Envers Lui," *ibid.*, 359.

<sup>1010</sup> Paskal Mitrovski, "La Lettre De Paskal Mitrovski a Nikos Zahariadis Dans Laquelle - En Base Des Declarations De Gjorgji Petričevski - Il Parle De L'attitude Incorrecte Envers Les Combattants Macedonien Et Des Problemes Des Cadres," *ibid.*, 345.

It dealt with the disobedient actions of the 14<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the DAG.<sup>1011</sup> The 14<sup>th</sup> Brigade, like much of the DAG at this point in the war, had a significant number of Slavophone Macedonians.<sup>1012</sup> For this dissertation, the exact nature of the acts of disobedience committed matter less than Mitrovski's reaction to them. In the past, Mitrovski largely excused the Slavophone Macedonians' actions, even if they worked against the KKE's interests.<sup>1013</sup> However, now that Mitrovski's position in the NOF was vulnerable, he took the KKE's assessments of the actions as fact.<sup>1014</sup>

Mitrovski managed to ingratiate himself back into the good graces of Zachariadis and the KKE. Adopting the KKE's perspective ultimately resulted in Zachariadis reinstating him as a member of the NOF's Secretariat in December 1948. On 1 April 1949, the KKE made him as President of the organization.<sup>1015</sup> In other words, Zachariadis properly rewarded those who adhered to the new system.

Zachariadis and the KKE leadership – having centralized its control of the party as well as the NOF's – moved to align publically with the Cominform. The Fifth Plenum of the Central Committee of the KKE on 29 January 1949 made it clear to all that under Zachariadis, the party took the Cominform's side in the dispute with Tito. One of the principal ways that the KKE conveyed this point was through its position on the Macedonian Question. As the Macedonian Question was now a perceived point of vulnerability for the CPY, the KKE parroted the lines of the CPSU and Bulgarians. Zachariadis specifically stated:

<sup>1011</sup> "La Lettre De Paskal Mitrovski a Nikos Zaharijadis Dans Laquelle Il L'informe De Certains Combattants Desobeissants De L'adg - 14ieme Brigade - Et De Leurs Actes Commis Dans Les Villages Macedoniens a Korestata," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1948*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1948), 369-70.

<sup>1012</sup> Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949* 262.

<sup>1013</sup> Mitrovski, "La Lettre De Paskal Mitrovski a Nikos Zaharijadis Dans Laquelle Il L'informe De Certains Combattants Desobeissants De L'adg - 14ieme Brigade - Et De Leurs Actes Commis Dans Les Villages Macedoniens a Korestata," 369-70.

<sup>1014</sup> Ibid. 369-70.

<sup>1015</sup> Rossos, "Incompatible Allies: Greek Communism and Macedonian Nationalism in Greece, 1943-1949," 73; Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949* 268.



*In Northern Greece, the people of Macedonia gave its best for the struggle and fights on an integration of heroism and self-sacrifice that is admirable. There must be no doubt that as a result of the victory of DAG and of the peoples' revolution, the Macedonian people will find its full national restoration as they want it, offering its blood today to conquer it. [...] The Greek and Macedonian people can win only united. If they are divided they can only be defeated. That is why unity of the two people must be kept as a precious element and must be strengthened constantly and at any time.*<sup>1016</sup>

This proclamation represented a complete reversal of the KKE's previous position on the Macedonian Question and was, in fact, what the CPY demanded from it in the Second World War. By opening up the Macedonian Question in relation to the KKE's relationship with the CPY in 1948, however, Zachariadis made clear his party's alignment with the Soviet Union in the Tito-Stalin split.<sup>1017</sup>

It is unsurprising that the Macedonian Question was one of the Greek communists' major avenues of assault against the Yugoslavs, given its importance to KKE-CPY relations. Senior KKE official Miltiadis Porfirogenis delivered the first missive on the issue when he went on a special mission to the Central Committee of the CPY on 8 February 1949 to discuss the matter of Yugoslav propaganda regarding the Macedonian population. Porfirogenis claimed: "Macedonian refugees from Greece that are located in Yugoslavia are systematically influenced not to return to Greece because

<sup>1016</sup> 5η Ολομέλεια της ΚΕ των ΚΚΕ (30-31 του Γενάρη 1949): Εισηγήσεις — Λόγοι — Αποφάσεις (Central Committee of the KKE: 1949) 16.

<sup>1017</sup> Zachariadis allegedly went even further than making a vague promise of self-determination. According to an NOF Bulletin from 3 February 1949, he stated that the NOF was the heart and soul of the Slavophone Macedonian people at the Second Plenary Session of the Central Council of NOF. As such, the party should be leading the Slavophone Macedonians "in all sectors of the struggle." After this laudatory statement, Zachariadis made his crucial point by arguing that the NOF should lead an "independent Macedonian state within the Balkan Federation." There has been considerable debate within the Greek literature over the veracity of this statement, although the arguments largely break down into right-left political standpoints. These arguments ignore the degree to which the NOF found itself under the influence of the KKE. This dissertation, however, directs attention to that question. The NOF, by 1949, quite simply, could not have issued such a statement without the KKE's approval. See: Nikos Zahariadis, "L'extrait Du Discours Du Secretaire General Du Cc Du Pcg Nikos Zahariyadis a L'occasion De La Ilieme Seance Pleniere Du Conseil Central Du Fln, Ou Il Reconait Aux Macedoniens Le Droit D'autodetermination Et Le Droit De Fonder L'etat Macedonien," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1949*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1949), 54-55.

they will be shot there and that they should wait until the combat is over.”<sup>1018</sup> Porfirogenis also outlined the KKE’s new position on the Macedonian Question. He reiterated the Macedonian people’s right to “self-determination and to establish their own separate state with full national freedom.”<sup>1019</sup> He even went so far as to promise that the DAG would form a Macedonian division, which was beyond even what the Yugoslavs demanded of the Greeks in 1944.<sup>1020</sup> The KKE was taking a deliberately provocative position towards the CPY for the first time in their relationship. The Yugoslav communists’ reaction, however, was not one of idle complacency.

While the KKE openly aligned itself with the Soviet Union in its struggle against the Yugoslavs, the CPY’s role as the chief supplier of the DAG meant that the Greek communists attempted to balance their loyalty to the CPSU with their material needs. The KKE continued to request material supplies from the Yugoslavs, even after the Fifth Plenum’s pronouncement on the Macedonian Question. In its 5 March 1949 reply to the CPY regarding the Yugoslavs’ accusations that the Greek communists were part of a Cominform plot against it, the KKE first argued that it just heeded the wishes of the Slavophone Macedonian people.<sup>1021</sup> The Central Committee of the KKE asserted that any tensions between the KKE and NOF were the result of Keramidzhiev and his accomplices.<sup>1022</sup> This argument was a particularly weak excuse, as Keramidzhiev’s low ranking within NOF in the aftermath of the August 1948 purge meant that he could not have been responsible. The fact that that the KKE’s Central Committee gave any excuse at all spoke to the DAG’s desperate need of supplies. The KKE concluded its reply by

<sup>1018</sup> Milt. Porfirogenis, 507 IX CKSKJ 33/I-56.

<sup>1019</sup> Militiyadis Porfiroghenis, "L'extrait De L'exposition Ecrite De Mitilityadis Porfiroghenis, Membre Du Cc Du Pcg Et Ministre Du Gouvernement Democratique Provisoire, Relative Aux Discours Avec Les Fonctionnaires Du Pcm a Skopje, Et - Entre Autre - a La Politique Du Pcg Envers La Question Nationale Macedonienne," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1949*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1949), 58-59.

<sup>1020</sup> The Macedonian division, however, was never formed.

<sup>1021</sup> Central Committee of the CPY, "Le Radiogramme Du Cc Du Pcy Au Cc Du Pcg Avec Lequel on Attire De Nouveau L'attention Du Cc Du Pcg Sur Les Consequences Nocives De La Devise "L'etat Macedonien Unique Dans Le Cadre De La Federation Balkanique"," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1949*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1949), 112-13.

<sup>1022</sup> Central Committee of the KKE, "Le Radiogramme Du Cc Du Pcg Au Cc Du Pcy Dans Lequel Le Cc Du Pcg Defend Son Attitude Envers La Question Nationale Macedonienne," *ibid.*, 115.

requesting that the Yugoslavs send them supplies, as “the material is very essential.”<sup>1023</sup> In striving to be the loyal scion of the USSR while simultaneously retaining access to the Yugoslav arsenal, the KKE played a game that it could not win. The strategy was untenable in the long run. Yet, the KKE sought to achieve the maximum benefit possible from both the CPY and the Slavophone Macedonians before relations between themselves and the Yugoslavs fully ruptured.

These issues would rest until April when both parties exchanged extensive letters outlining their mutual positions. In its April 1949 letter to the CPY, the Central Committee of the KKE was brutally honest in assessing its relationship to the CPY. The Central Committee argued:

*There is no doubt that the differences between the CPY and Cominform parties have influenced our operations in Yugoslavia and our struggle in general. As for the stand of our party, you were officially informed that our party is on the side of the Cominform both over the existing causes and matters of tradition. However, our party being in a war against Anglo-American interventionists and monarchofascism, as the leader of the DAG which is repulsing enormous enemy pressure, considered it expedient to preserve as much as possible loyal cooperation with the CPY in order to repulse plans of the imperialists and their supporters in the interest of the Greek people and other Balkan nations and the front of democracy in general.*<sup>1024</sup>

The KKE was direct in stating that it had maintained relations with the CPY over the previous nine months simply to ensure the DAG's continued ability to fight. The Central Committee of the CPY was in turn brutally honest in its reply to the Central Committee of the KKE. It stated that the “leading men of the KKE are subordinating the obvious interests of the development of national struggle in Greece to the slandering campaign of the Cominform against our country.”<sup>1025</sup> Relations between the two groups had reached a boiling point.

<sup>1023</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1024</sup> Central Committee of the KKE, 507 IX CKSKJ 33/I-63

<sup>1025</sup> Central Committee of the CPY, 507 IX CKSKJ 33/I-64

While the Yugoslav authorities publically began to distance themselves from the KKE, they also began cutting supplies to the Greeks in the aftermath of the bitter spring confrontation. On 24 May 1949, a letter from a KKE member named Vasilis to the Central Committee of the CPY noted: “[Yugoslav] border guards have prohibited the transfer of our truck to your territory.”<sup>1026</sup> The letter also requested that the Yugoslavs “allow [the DAG] transport of material for Kaimakčalan and West Beles in order to transport material to our units there that are in a very bad position.”<sup>1027</sup> The CPY’s position of providing support without conditions had definitively shifted. In their reply to the letter, the Yugoslavs stated that “suspension of aid is not definite, and it depends on the international situation and whether the rest of the democratic countries would support your struggle and remain in solidarity to Yugoslavia in international affairs.”<sup>1028</sup> While the CPY requested that the Greek communist and Cominform authorities develop a more positive relationship with Yugoslavia in general, the specific point of contention between the Yugoslav and Greek communists was the latter’s use of the Macedonian Question. Shrader claims that the Macedonian Question caused Tito to be merely “annoyed” at the KKE, but it was, in fact, the primary source of friction between the parties.<sup>1029</sup> After all, Yugoslav authorities did not completely halt supplies until after the KKE and CPY began to discuss their positions on the Macedonian Question.

The KKE’s newfound policy on the Macedonian Question in the winter of 1949 also left the party open to political attack from the Greek government. At the Fifth Plenum of the KKE’s Central Committee, the KKE’s position, at a minimum, endorsed self-determination for the Slavophone Macedonians. This development meant that the Greek government had new evidence to argue that the rebels were, in fact, tools of Slavocommunist. The KKE responded to these government attacks, but its defence was ambiguous at best. The KKE’s Central Committee addressed the matter in a 7 March 1949 statement published in *Pros ti Niki*, a journal issued by the General Staff of the DAG. The statement gave a very generalized account of the Fifth Plenum, noting

<sup>1026</sup> Vasilis, 507 IX CKSKJ 33/I-66

<sup>1027</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1028</sup> Central Committee of the CPY, 507 IX CKSKJ 33/I-66

<sup>1029</sup> Shrader, *The Withered Vine: Logistics and the Communist Insurgency in Greece, 1945-1949* 185.

that because the Slavophone Macedonians were “spilling their blood” in the struggle against the government, “the Macedonian people alone will decide how they want to live [...]”.<sup>1030</sup> The KKE would not decide their future, as only the Slavophone Macedonians could make that decision for themselves. In publishing its statement, the KKE’s Central Committee was more concerned with ensuring the loyalty of its soldiers than with refuting the claims of the Greek government. *Pros ti Niki* subsequently published additional articles that largely replicated the line established in the 7 March article.<sup>1031</sup> Additionally, during this time, it carefully documented the alleged excesses of the Greek government against the Slavophone Macedonians for both public and private consumption.<sup>1032</sup> The careful line these articles took speaks to the balancing act on the Macedonian Question that the KKE performed in its relations with not only the CPY, but also with Greek society. Related to this problem was that the KKE sought increased control of the Slavophone Macedonians through the creation of a new entity on 27 March 1949: the Communist Organization of Aegean Macedonia (KOEM).

The establishment of the KOEM was a pivotal step in the KKE’s efforts to centralize its control of the Slavophone Macedonian population. That said, the KKE’s decision to found KOEM receives scant attention in the literature, with Kofos’ brief mention of the organization being one notable exception.<sup>1033</sup> In part, the decision had minimal bearing on the conflict because the Greek Civil War had entered its terminal phase by the spring of 1949. Nonetheless, it was a crucial step with respect to the KKE’s

<sup>1030</sup> Central Committee of the KKE, "Le Dementi Du Cc Du Pcg Avec Lequel on Dementit Les Informations De La Droite Grecque Que Le Pcg Mene Une Politique Favorable a La Separation De La Macedoine D'eege De La Grece," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1949*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1949), 117.

<sup>1031</sup> Central Committee of the Communist Party of Greece, "La Communication Du Cc Du Pcg Avec Laquelle on Dementit Les Informations Du Gourvernement Grec Que Le Pcg Mene Une Politique Favorable a La Separation De La Macedoine Orientale Et De La Thrace De La Grece," *ibid.*, 186-87.

<sup>1032</sup> "La Declaration Du Representant De L'etat Major De L'adg Pour La Press, Relative a La Terreur Des Autorites Militaires Et Politiques Du Regyme (Sic) Militaire En Macedoine," *ibid.*, 281-282. "L'information Relative a La Terreur Des Autorites Grecques En Macedoine D'eege," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1949*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1949), 104-05.

<sup>1033</sup> Kofos, *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia* 197.

control of the Macedonian Question. The initial leadership of the party indicated that the KKE founded the KOEM with the idea that it would enable the Greeks to have tight control over the organization. The KOEM's organizational committee included: Mihail Malio, Vangel Kojchev, Paskal Mitrovski, Stavro Kochev, Vera Nikolova, Vangel Nichev, Uranija Pirovska, Hristo Kolencev, and Taško Hadzijavev.<sup>1034</sup> According to Zachariadis' address to the new party, he founded KOEM to provide the Slavophone Macedonians with a counterpoint to the KKE, as he considered the EAM and the NOF to be equivalent organizations for their respective peoples.<sup>1035</sup> While he provided a political justification for the decision to establish the KOEM, the actual reason was revealed at the end of his address, when he stated that the "KOEM [...] belongs to the KKE."<sup>1036</sup> Given how blatantly Zachariadis had manipulated the Macedonian Question in the past, there is no reason to believe that the ideological reasoning he provided in the past outweighed the practical consideration of guaranteeing the KKE increased access to Slavophone Macedonian manpower. Additionally, the formation of the KOEM provided the KKE with another ideological weapon to use against the Yugoslavs, which was not an inconsequential benefit.

The KKE sought to improve its strategic position by openly embracing the Slavophone Macedonians. This was in part due to its practical need for manpower and in part due to its ideology. In doing so, however, it managed to alienate every party from which it required support. Even the Greek left, which was sympathetic to the KKE's cause, was highly nationalist during this period.<sup>1037</sup> The KKE's open embracement of a segment of society that threatened to mutilate the country was too radical for the left to

<sup>1034</sup> These individuals had either proven their loyalty to the KKE or had been rehabilitated by the party, as was most notably the case for Mitrovski. See: "La Communication Relative a La Fondation De L'organisation Communiste Des Macedoniens De La Macedoine D'eege (Koem Mac. = Ocme)," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1949*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1949), 172.

<sup>1035</sup> Nikos Zahariadis, "Le Discours De Nikos Zahariyadis, Secretaire General Du Cc Du Pcg, a La Reunion De Fondation De L'ocme, Ou Il Explique Les Causes Pour La Fondation, Les Taches Et L'importance De L'organisation," *ibid.*, 177.

<sup>1036</sup> *Ibid.* 178.

<sup>1037</sup> The Greek left's apathy towards the Macedonian Slavs continues today. See: Karakasidou, "Politicizing Culture: Negating Ethnic Identity in Greek Macedonia," 9-12.

accept.<sup>1038</sup> The Slavophone Macedonians could, and indeed did, continue to fight for the KKE in overwhelming numbers. Some did so voluntarily, but many fought increasingly due to conscription. This need on the part of the KKE ultimately proved insufficient for the Slavophone Macedonians to overcome their marginalized position in Greece.<sup>1039</sup> As a result of its position on the Macedonian Question, the support of the Greek people for the KKE evaporated.

## 7.2. The CPY's reaction to the Cominform's effort to use the Macedonian Question

The CPY's reaction to the KKE's change of policy and its efforts to purge the party of Titoist forces were remarkably cautious, given how aggressive its policy on Greece had been previously. This careful approach was adopted partly because the Tito-Stalin split caused an existential crisis within the Yugoslav party itself. Yugoslav portrayals of the Tito-Stalin split typically depict the CPY as being resolute in the face of adversity and convinced of the righteousness of its cause as well as its eventual ultimate triumph.<sup>1040</sup> The reality, however, was starkly different. In his work *With Stalin Against Tito: Cominformist Splits in Yugoslav Communism*, Ivo Banac approaches the CPY as a party divided during the Tito-Stalin split. In fact, key members of the party defected or attempted to escape to the Soviet Union for many of the same reasons that the KKE

<sup>1038</sup> Although the protestations were well-backed by documented incidents of the government's oppression of the Slavophone Macedonians, they served only to highlight the KKE's alliance with an entity reviled by mainstream Greek society. For examples see: "La Declaration Du Representant De L'etat Major De L'adg Pour La Press, Relative a La Terreur Des Autorites Militaires Et Politiques Du Regyme (Sic) Militaire En Macedoine," 281-82; "La Comdamnation a Mort Proclamee Par Le Tribunal Militaire Des Detachements De L'adg Dans La Region De Payak-Kaymakchalane-Karakamen Conte Evstratios Vasiliyadis a Cause De Son Activite De Traitre Et Terroriste," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1949*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1949), 78-79; "L'information Relative a La Terreur Des Autorites Grecques En Macedoine D'egree," 104-05.

<sup>1039</sup> By 1949, the Macedonian Slavs, even at the high end of their estimated numbers, accounted for less than two percent of the total population. See: Koliopoulos, "The War over the Identity and Numbers of Greece's Slav Macedonians," 50.

<sup>1040</sup> For an excellent example of how these arguments are typically presented, see: Dedijer, *The Battle Stalin Lost: Memoirs of Yugoslavia, 1948-1953* 31-72.

ultimately chose to support the CPSU.<sup>1041</sup> This division certainly inhibited the party's ability to respond to external changes by diverting some of its attention inwards.

The calm initial response of the CPY was likely due in part to information it received from the Slavophone Macedonian population in the immediate aftermath of the split. On 20 July 1948, the Central Committee of the CPY received a report from an informant with the obvious codename Bitolja.<sup>1042</sup> His assessment of the Slavophone Macedonians gave the Central Committee little need for concern. He noted: "We are getting reports that the [Slavophone] Macedonians without reservation take the position of the CPY."<sup>1043</sup> Bitolja thereby alleviated the Central Committee's concerns about the potential of the Macedonian Question to be used against it. In fact, the Slavophone Macedonian leadership sought "advice on how to proceed in the case [... the Cominform] conducted a campaign against our party."<sup>1044</sup> They continued to remain loyal to the Yugoslavs, at least according to this report. Given this fact, the KKE's apparent ambiguity on the Macedonian Question gave the CPY reason to ignore Greece, at least temporarily.

The external pressures that the CPY dealt with were much more urgent than this ambiguity concerning the KKE. In the second half of 1948, all quarters of the international communist movement attacked Yugoslavia. Specifically, the Bulgarians, the Yugoslavs old opponent on the Macedonian Question, proved problematic. The CPY, facing attacks from all directions, felt particularly vulnerable to both external aggression and potential fifth columnists.<sup>1045</sup> As early as 24 July 1948, *Borba* reported that Vukmanović stated the following about the issue in a public address:

*We Macedonians demand of the Bulgarian Workers Party that they should form a special statute for the Pirin Macedonian district and not hinder the development of our brothers in Pirin Macedonia in their*

<sup>1041</sup> Banac, *With Stalin against Tito: Cominformist Splits in Yugoslav Communism* 255.

<sup>1042</sup> Bitolja is a significant city in the southwest of what was then the People's Republic of Macedonia.

<sup>1043</sup> Archive of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, A CK SKJ IX/33/I-48

<sup>1044</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1045</sup> The best account of this issue remains: Banac, *With Stalin against Tito: Cominformist Splits in Yugoslav Communism, Passim.*



*national culture and economy. Our people in Pirin Macedonia feel nearer to the Macedonian people of Vardar and Aegean Macedonia than to our brothers the Bulgarians of the Vidin, Trnovo and Silistrin districts, because they are our people.*<sup>1046</sup>

In closing off access to Pirin for the People's Republic of Macedonia, the Bulgarians demonstrated how opposed they were to a pan-Macedonian identity. This line of argument was part of Yugoslav policy, as was evident when Vlahov argued in support of Vukmanović.<sup>1047</sup> Koliševski, likewise noted during this period that "Undoubtedly the biggest help that the Central Committee of the CPY has granted to the Party organization in Macedonia was sending the member of the Central Committee of the CPY, Comrade Tempo, which helps our Party Organization to liberate itself of all opportunists influences, to repair all faults mentioned above and throw themselves resolutely in the fight for the liberation of Macedonia from the occupateur."<sup>1048</sup> That Vlahov, Koliševski, and Vukmanović's arguments supported one another demonstrated that the different factions of the CPY and CPM came together to manage the Macedonian Question by 1948.

Despite the CPY's concerns, the Bulgarian propaganda had a negligible effect upon the CPM. In fact, the CPM had the lowest expulsion rate for Cominformism amongst the Yugoslav parties.<sup>1049</sup> A British cable at the time noted that "there was, indeed, a wholesale purge of the trade union movement [within Macedonia, but these purges] had no counterpart in the strictly political field. The Ministers who were removed in governmental reshuffles in October 1948 and March of 1949 paid the penalty for inefficiency rather than [a] political error."<sup>1050</sup> Put simply, the CPY proved quite effective at purging the CPM of its most dangerous elements before the Tito-Stalin split, even if it did not recognize this accomplishment. Its concern over the Bulgarians' influence on the Macedonian Question, nevertheless, influenced its interaction with the KKE.

<sup>1046</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 48211 2-9-48 A/Γ1/7.

<sup>1047</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1048</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1049</sup> For a breakdown of expulsions, see: Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav National Question* 169-75; Livianos, *The Macedonian Question: Britain and the Southern Balkans 1939-1949* 237-38.

<sup>1050</sup> C. Peake, Future of Macedonia R 6531/1081/67.

The CPY's deliberate ignorance of the KKE's growing betrayal in the fall of 1948 could not last. The various purges conducted by the KKE against Greek party members who were known as key Yugoslav supporters did not fail to pique their interest.<sup>1051</sup> As early as October/November 1948, the Central Committee of the CPY had received reports that the Greek communists were likely taking the Cominform's side.<sup>1052</sup> The CPY ultimately did not act on these indications in a serious way. Although it began to gradually reduce the supplies that it provided to the KKE, without further evidence one can equally argue that this decline was the result of the economic restrictions that Yugoslavia faced in the wake of the Tito-Stalin split.<sup>1053</sup> It is more likely, however, that the CPY was content not to take action because it had more significant issues to deal with at the time, such as the Bulgarians and Albanians. Consequently, although there was an awkward tension between the parties, no definitive actions were taken by either party against the other until after the Fifth Plenum of the Central Committee of the KKE in January 1949.

The CPY's reaction was not immediate. A 16 February 1949 internal memo written by the CPY Central Committee stated that the "prevalence of Moscow members within the KKE is on the rise and that this policy will continue within the Greek party."<sup>1054</sup> Interestingly, the CPY did not immediately respond to the Greek communists with the same vitriol it had exhibited in its response to the Bulgarians. It was a fact that key elements of both the KKE and the DAG opposed the CPY and actively slandered

<sup>1051</sup> According to British journalist Kenneth Matthews, a DAG Brigade Commander named Stathakis could not help but express the view that "Tito was in the wrong and would have to give way or go under, perhaps both." The liberty that Stathakis took in telling Matthews the KKE's position on the Tito-Stalin split indicated that the Greek communist's efforts to keep the Yugoslavs in the dark were doomed to failure. See: Kenneth Matthews, *Memories of a Mountain War* (London: Longman, 1972) 231.

<sup>1052</sup> 507 IX CKSKJ 33/I-62. Archive of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, A CK SKJ IX-33/I-51 199-203.

<sup>1053</sup> Carter, *The Economy of Yugoslavia* 110-117; Shrader, *The Withered Vine: Logistics and the Communist Insurgency in Greece, 1945-1949* 184-86.

<sup>1054</sup> Central Committee of the CPY, Entrance no. 529. 507 IX CKSKJ 33/I-57

them.<sup>1055</sup> Porfirogenis' meeting with the CPY on 8 February 1948 should have taught the Yugoslavs the actual nature of the KKE's position, but it evidently did not, as the CPY would not begin to act against the KKE until March 1949.<sup>1056</sup>

The CPY was desperate enough that on 11 March 1949, it had unidentified Macedonian individuals present Mitrovski with a letter explaining that his actions were not in line with Bolshevik principles and that he should not support the obvious lies about Yugoslavia.<sup>1057</sup> In addressing the appeals personally to Mitrovski, and by speaking to his sense of Bolshevism, Yugoslav Macedonians demonstrated both their concern and self-perceived vulnerability. In fact, former members of the NOF who had fled to Yugoslavia wrote to the new NOF leadership in late March to formalize their complaints about the new direction of the party. The letter concluded that their new "attitude is not only detrimental to today's conditions, but was directed against the benefits of the Macedonian people realized today in the [People's Republic] of Macedonia."<sup>1058</sup> One of the authors of the letter was Dimovski, whom the Yugoslavs had once considered to be an extremist.

Two developments were evident in the CPY's usage of Dimovski to address its interests in Greece. The first was the Yugoslavs' increased control over the Macedonian Question. Although the CPY was initially fearful of Bulgaria's attempt to exploit

<sup>1055</sup> Vangel Ajanovski-Oče, in a 25 September 1948 report that was likely disseminated to the CPY, gave specific examples of DAG and KKE individuals in the Kajmakchalan region that opposed the CPY and actively spoke out against them. See: Vangel Ajanovski-Oče, "La Rapport De Vangel Ajanovski-Oče Relatif a La Situation Politique Et Militaire Dans Le Departement De Voden, Aux Rapports Entre Le Fln Et Le Pcg Etc.," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1948*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1948), 334.

<sup>1056</sup> Milt. Porfirogenis, 507 IX CKSKJ 33/I-56

<sup>1057</sup> "La Lettre (Sans Signature) a Paskal Mitrovski Avec Laquelle on Critique La Devise "L'ietat Macedonien Dans Le Cadre De La Federation Balkanique"," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1949*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archive de la Macedoine, 1949), 122.

<sup>1058</sup> "La Lettre En Forme Du Tract De Mihaylo Keramitchiev, Iliya Dimovski-Gotse Et Vangel Ayanovski-Otche, Envoyee Aux Dirigeants Du Fln De La Macedoine D'egree, Dans Laquelle Ils Accentuent Les Consequences Negatives De La Devise "La Macedoine Independante Dans Le Cadre De La Federation Balkanique" Pour La Mouvement De Liberation Nationale.," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1949*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1949), 184.

Macedonian nationalism, it felt sufficiently in control to use a former provocateur to defend its position. The second was that Macedonian nationalists such as Dimovski identified with Yugoslavia's vision of the state, or at the very least, accepted it. The Yugoslavs were not as vulnerable on the Macedonian Question as they were in the past, but the fear of becoming vulnerable again continued to shape their policy.

Finally, it is important to note that contrary to popular perception, the CPY was not actively moving towards alignment with the United States during this period. Most of the literature on the Greek Civil War accepts the presumption that Yugoslavia would align itself with the United States in early 1949.<sup>1059</sup> In part, this is because Zachariadis used the myth of a Yugoslav 'stab in the back' in order to explain the DAG's loss to the nationalist forces in the summer of 1949.<sup>1060</sup> Lorraine M. Lees, however, proves this argument conclusively incorrect in *Keeping Tito Afloat*.<sup>1061</sup> Tito did not actively court the United States until June 1949, well after he had begun cutting supplies to the DAG. The Macedonian Question was the only real issue that caused the CPY significant consternation. Thus, when the main explanation for the CPY's withdrawal of support is rightfully set aside, it becomes clear that the position that the KKE took on the Macedonian Question was one of the principle reasons for this withdrawal.

### **7.3. NOF's status in the wake of the Tito-Stalin Split**

With the NOF's political leaders more concerned about preserving their positions of power than addressing the Tito-Stalin split, the regional committees and the Slavophone Macedonian people themselves faced disorder. The literature on this subject largely focuses on the higher elements of the NOF organization. For example, Rossos emphasizes the NOF political leadership in his account.<sup>1062</sup> This stress is also

<sup>1059</sup> Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949*; Shrader, *The Withered Vine: Logistics and the Communist Insurgency in Greece, 1945-1949* 186.

<sup>1060</sup> Nikos Zachariadis, "La Clique De Tito Poignarde Dans Le Dos La Grece Democratique Populaire," *Pour une paix durable, pour une democratie populaire*, no. 42 (1949) 6.

<sup>1061</sup> Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat: The United States, Yugoslavia, and the Cold War, 1945-1960* *Passim*.

<sup>1062</sup> Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians: A History* Kindle Edition.

the case for most Greek accounts of the conflict, as even Koliopoulos focused on the decision-making processes of elites.<sup>1063</sup> The KKE and its followers in the NOF, however, recognized the importance of the regional committees. The Greek government intercepted the NOF leadership's new efforts to allay the regional committees' concerns in the wake of the KKE imposed reforms.<sup>1064</sup> A report by Gjorgji Mančov on 15 July 1948 indicated that the local party in Voden was in turmoil. In particular, Gjorgji noted that the party was indecisive about whether to support the Yugoslavs or the KKE/Soviets. The Voden Committee initially supported the KKE's line against the Yugoslavs, but Gjorgji explained that Koliševski's address on Radio Skopje swayed the local leadership to the Yugoslav side.<sup>1065</sup> The rest of the report covers similar instances in which NOF members possessed divided loyalties.<sup>1066</sup>

Furthermore, Gjorgji Petričevski, a mid-level member of the NOF, wrote the party leadership in late July 1948 to complain about the KKE's negative attitude towards the CPY. The KKE's efforts to limit the NOF's connection to the CPY went so far that KKE officials prevented the Macedonian soldiers from listening to the Yugoslav Communists' Congress on the radio.<sup>1067</sup> When this attitude is viewed in combination with the constant appeals that the NOF had made to the Slavophone Macedonian people to support the DAG in their struggle against the Greek government, it becomes clear that the near simultaneous denouncement by the KKE and the Soviets of their ideological brethren

<sup>1063</sup> Koliopoulos, *Plundered Loyalties: World War II and Civil War in Greek West Macedonia* 240-46.

<sup>1064</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 54229 19.10.48 Αυτ Μακεδονίας

<sup>1065</sup> Gjorgji Mančov, "Le Rapport De Gjorgji Mančov Sur La Situation Politique Dans La Region De Voden Apres La Proclamation De La Resolution De L'informbureau Contre Le Pcy," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1948*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1948), 273.

<sup>1066</sup> Ibid. 273-74.

<sup>1067</sup> Gjorgji Petričevski, "Le Rapport De Gogo Relatif a L'attitude Des Dirigeants Du Pcg Envers La Resolution De L'informbureau Contre Le Pcy," *ibid.*, 275.

unsettled the party base.<sup>1068</sup> While the NOF's leadership ultimately conformed to the KKE's demands, its party base did not.

The increased emigration of both party members and Slavophone Macedonians to Yugoslavia was the best indication that NOF members did not quietly accept the KKE's increasingly tight hold. Traditional arguments attribute the flight to Yugoslavia of Slavophone Macedonians to their fears of right-wing reaction at the close of the war.<sup>1069</sup> This interpretation results from the fact that Slavophone Macedonians left Greece in large numbers after the war.<sup>1070</sup> The evidence, however, clarifies that persecutions and decisions on the part of the left as well as the right contributed to the flight of Slavophone Macedonians to Yugoslavia and, to a lesser extent, the Eastern Bloc. Many of the NOF's leaders, such as Ilija Dimikis (Goce), fled to Yugoslavia to avoid having their erstwhile patron removed completely from their political existence. For some individuals such as Dimikis, the reasons for fleeing were undoubtedly personal. His previous encounters with the KKE, and its desire to remove him from power meant that he could no longer operate in Greece without the CPY to protect him.<sup>1071</sup> For others, the reasons were not clear. A 26 November 1948 report by Mičo Velaki, a political commissar for DAG, implied that the NOF and its AFZ cadres fled to Yugoslavia because of the party's decision to

<sup>1068</sup> Central Committee of NOF, "L'appel Du Conseil Central Du FlN Au Peuple Macedonien D'aider Encoure Plus De Toutes Ses Forces Les Combattants De L'adg a Vičo," *ibid.*, 315-316. A. Pindos, "L'aperçu D'a. Pindos Sur La Contribution Des Macedoniens Dans La Lutte De L'armee Democratique," *ibid.*, 325. "L'information Relative a La Participation Des Macedoniens Dans La Construction Des Objets De Defense a Vičo," *ibid.*, 335-36.

<sup>1069</sup> Karpozilos, "The Defeated of the Greek Civil War: From Fighters to Political Refugees in the Cold War," 62-87. Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict: Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World* 54. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil Wars* 312. Stefov, *History of the Macedonian People: From Ancient Times to the Present* 380-85. The latter comes the closest to dealing with the issue, but the evidentiary standard, as well as clear Macedonian nationalist agenda of the author, limit its utility to academics.

<sup>1070</sup> For an example see: Kostov, *Contested Ethnic Identity: The Case of Macedonian Immigrants in Toronto, 1900-1996* 155-77.

<sup>1071</sup> For Dimikis' previous encounters with the KKE, see Chapters 4 and 6.

remove Keramidzhiev and Mitrovski from their positions.<sup>1072</sup> The KKE's decision to purge the NOF did result in it obtaining a loyal cohort, but one that was considerably reduced.

The only choice available to those members of the NOF who remained within Greece was to conform. The proceedings for the NOF's Second Congress on 25 March 1949 demonstrate this point. The Congress' rhetoric was taken straight from the KKE's new position. For example, it noted: "The [Slavophone] Macedonian people are ready to give its all [...] for the joint destruction of the monarchofascists [...] and] alien invaders."<sup>1073</sup> If one replaced the 'Slavophone Macedonian' with 'Greek', the statement could be taken straight from the propaganda issued by the KKE. The same was true for other speeches made at the Congress, particularly the NOF's salutations to other parties in general and the Bulgarians in particular.

After the NOF's Second Congress, and for the remainder of the conflict, the party adhered rigidly to the KKE's position and policies. Mitrovski referred questions of substance to the KKE for clarification.<sup>1074</sup> In addition to following the orders of the KKE leadership, the NOF's leadership addressed its proclamations to both Greek and Macedonians, likely in an effort to counter government accusations about Macedonian irredentism.<sup>1075</sup> This effort, however, only provided fuel to government charges that the Greek communists were in the employ of Slavocommunists. Instead of demonstrating

<sup>1072</sup> Mičo Velaki, "La Declaration De Mičo Velaki Au Commissaire Politique De L'etat-Major De L'adg Relavive [Sic] a L'attitude Du Pcg Envers La Question Macedonenne Au Cours De La Lutte De Liberation Nationale, Aux Rapports Entre Les Dirigeants Du Fln, a Quelques Fautes Du Pcg-Adg En C Qui Concerne La Mise En Evidence Des Cadres Macedoniens, Etc.," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1948*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1948), 368.

<sup>1073</sup> "L'extrait Du Rapport Du Comite Executif Du Fln, Presente Au Iiime Congres, Relatif a L'activite Aux Succes Et Aux Fautes De L'organisation," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1949*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1949), 139.

<sup>1074</sup> Paskal Mitrovski, "La Lettre De Paskal Mitrovski, Membre Du Secretariat Du Fln Et Ministre Du Gouvernement Democratique Provisoire, Au Bureau Politique Du Cc Du Pcg, Relative Aux Questions Qui Sont Le Resultat De La Mobilisation Des Enfants Mineurs Par L'adg," *ibid.*, 211-13.

<sup>1075</sup> "Le Telegramme De Salutation Du Conseil Central Du Fln Aux Combattants Grecs Et Macedoniens a Gramos Dans Lequel on Exprime L'enthousiasme Cause Par Le Heroisme Montre a L'occasion Des Combats a Gramos Et on Les Encourage Et Les Incite De Continuer Le Combat Contre L'ennemi," *ibid.*, 281-82.

the KKE's nationalist credentials, the NOF's efforts only served to highlight the Greek communists' problem with the Slavophone Macedonians. Given the KKE's need for the NOF, which resulted from the high number of Slavophone Macedonians within the DAG, the Greek communists were left with little option but to ameliorate their rhetoric. This decision was the only available course of action. Yet, given the nationalist climate of 1940s Greece, it was not enough to prevent accusations that the KKE had betrayed the Greek people.

#### 7.4. The Culmination of Greek Government Policy

The successive Greek governments could barely contain their excitement in the aftermath of the Tito-Stalin split. The reason it was thrilled was that communist infighting gave it the potential to permanently end the conflict. In an anonymous secret report on 30 August 1948, a member of the Greek government outlined its perception of the conflict. Specifically, the report noted:

*Unless this threat (the leaky border) is countered, notwithstanding the victorious drive of the Greek Army, all the passes along the northern Greek border will have to be occupied by strong contingents of troops as the points from which the infiltration in Greek soil of guerrilla units cannot be determined in advance.*<sup>1076</sup>

The report recognized a well-known tenet of insurgency theory: it is nearly impossible to eliminate a rebellion that possesses an external base.<sup>1077</sup> The only alternative was to possess a force of overwhelming numbers, which is often impossible. As the United States would not finance the expansion of the Greek Army, despite the Greek

<sup>1076</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 48571 2-9-48

<sup>1077</sup> Kilcullen, "Three Pillars of Counterinsurgency," 2-3; Shrader, *The Withered Vine: Logistics and the Communist Insurgency in Greece, 1945-1949* 159-213; Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* 28-31.



governments' constant protestations that it needed additional soldiers, the only realistic option for ending the conflict was a change in the international political atmosphere.<sup>1078</sup>

The Yugoslav government did not officially change its position on Greece in the aftermath of the Tito-Stalin split. Greece's representatives outside the country kept a careful appraisal of the developments within Yugoslavia. A member of the Greek Embassy in Belgrade reported that on 11 October 1948, *Nova Makedonija* alleged that the Bulgarian government had changed its position on Pirin Macedonia.<sup>1079</sup> Although the report does not extrapolate on what *Nova Makedonija* stated, others from this period indicate that Greek officials took particular satisfaction when the Yugoslavs and Bulgarians came to blows over the Macedonian Question. Kaloutsis, Greece's representative in Yugoslavia, took satisfaction in this development.<sup>1080</sup> He was not alone, however, as the Greek Embassy in Washington D.C. also followed the feud between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia closely.<sup>1081</sup> At times, the two separate embassies reported the same information to Athens, as occurred when Belgrade and Washington D.C. both noted the Bulgarian Communist Party's provocative propaganda.<sup>1082</sup> Greece's Foreign Ministry may not have known what to make of the Yugoslav-Bulgarian feud, but key individuals within the organization recognized that it was important, which facilitated their later shift to viewing the Macedonian Question as a Bulgarian issue.

While there was a desire amongst Greek officials to view the Macedonian Question in strictly Bulgarian terms, they could not do so completely, as Yugoslavia continued to posture on both the Greek Civil War and Macedonian Question. In particular, throughout 1948 and 1949, Baizos, the Greek government's official in Skopje, maintained its tradition of reporting on Macedonian newspaper articles without giving

<sup>1078</sup> Ambassador Grady, in particular, was adamant about the need to reduce the size of the Greek armed forces as he argued the United States could not continue to finance it as it had in the past due to growing international demands for US capital and military financing. See: Grady, "The Ambassador in Grece (Grady) to the Secretary of State," in *Frus* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1948 (1974)), 210-12.

<sup>1079</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 53735 14.10.48 Αυτ. Μακ.

<sup>1080</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 57065 11-11-48 Βουλγαρία

<sup>1081</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 62210 23-12-48 Βουλγ.; Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 60859 10-12-48 Βουλγ.

<sup>1082</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 53735 14.10.48 Αυτ. Μακ.

Athenian readers a context with which to formulate an informed response.<sup>1083</sup> Several incidents in 1949 demonstrate why the Greek government responded to Yugoslavia's positive actions by remaining sceptical. On 29 January 1949, Baizos met with Koliševski, who proceeded to argue for the rights of the Slavophone Macedonians.<sup>1084</sup> Later, in a 6 March 1949 report, Baizos described a lecture series given by Vlahov, who lamented how the "Greek monarchofascists" continued to persecute the Slavophone Macedonians.<sup>1085</sup> It was not just Baizos who reported on Yugoslavia's continued involvement in the Greek Civil War, as various military and political officials took the opportunity to report the same conclusion.<sup>1086</sup>

Yugoslavia's marked reduction of propaganda towards Greece after the KKE's Fifth Plenum Meeting was not enough to convince some members of the Greek government that Yugoslavia had squashed its ambitions with respect to Greek Macedonia. Nevertheless, by April 1949, key figures within the Greek government realized there was a fundamental change on the Macedonian Question. Dalietos' 14 April 1949 report to the United Nations demonstrated this perspective. He was the former ambassador to Yugoslavia and remained amongst the most ardently anti-Macedonian members of the Greek government, which makes his shift all the more significant. The arguments he presented in his report were the polar opposite of Vlahov's arguments on the Macedonian Question. The report began by noting that the majority of the population of Aegean Macedonia in 1905 was, in fact, Greek.<sup>1087</sup> Dalietos proceeded to argue that Bulgarian terrorist activities had intimidated the Greeks living there from 1895 to the present, and he would not legitimize the Bulgarian terrorists by calling them Macedonian Slavs.<sup>1088</sup> By this point the Greek government had regarded Yugoslav involvement in Aegean Macedonia as of secondary importance. As Dalietos explained:

<sup>1083</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 59112 27-11-48 Αυτ. Μακ.; Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 59114 27-11-48 Αυτ. Μακ.; Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 59111 27-11-48 Αυτ Μακεονδίας;

<sup>1084</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 19671 10-2-49 Αυτ. Μακ.

<sup>1085</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 23118 8-3-49 Αυτ. Μακ.

<sup>1086</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 25275 24-3-49 Αυτ. Μακ.; Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 25491 28-3-49 Αυτ. Μακ.; Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 22485 2-3-49 Αυτ. Μακ.

<sup>1087</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 27790 14-4-49 Αυτ. Μακ.

<sup>1088</sup> Ibid.

*Following the Tito-Cominform conflict, the N.O.F. operating in Greece was by order of the Cominform removed from its position of subservience to Skoplje and placed under Sofia. As a result of these events, the situation in Macedonia has assumed new orientations in which the slav-speaking group is called upon again to play a leading role and to serve the Cominform's designs at the expense of Greece.<sup>1089</sup>*

Dalietos' recognition did not emerge by osmosis. Yugoslavia now played a secondary role regarding Macedonian propaganda to that of the Bulgarians. Before this point, Greek government officials had filed increasingly concerned reports regarding the Bulgarians' role on the Macedonian Question.<sup>1090</sup> As Bulgaria had historically been the strongest actor on the Macedonian Question, its newfound dominance on the issue facilitated Greek acceptance of Yugoslavia's new foreign policy.<sup>1091</sup> That said, Greece's acceptance of Yugoslavia's change of position on the Macedonian Question was not an easy process. Dalietos himself later backed away from his report in a public address, as he countered his earliest statement with the provocative question as to whether Yugoslavia stopped the flow of supplies to the DAG or halted its slanderous attacks against the country.<sup>1092</sup> For the successive governments and their officials, changing perceptions of Yugoslavia's involvement in the Macedonian Question was not a linear process in 1948 and 1949.

The Greek governments during this period did not, however, have to change the opinions of the Greek public. The KKE's decision to openly back self-determination for the Slavophone Macedonians in January 1949 played into the government's existing propaganda about the Slavocommunist connection. Throughout March and April, Greek

<sup>1089</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1090</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 21680 24-2-49 ΑΥΤ. ΜΑΚ.; Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 20265 14-2-49 ΑΥΤ. ΜΑΚ.

<sup>1091</sup> Lolidis, in fact, claimed that Bulgarians were Greece's national enemy. See: Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 27037 8-4-49 ΑΥΤ ΜΑΚ. Furthermore, the United States helped push Greece in this direction by reporting to Greek officials on 31 March 1949 that BCP and KKE officials met in October 1948 with the former advancing the argument that Slavomacedonians were actually Bulgarians. Given the time lapse, it is probable that the United States released the information with that effect in mind. See: Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 25963 31.3.49 ΑΥΤ. ΜΑΚ.

<sup>1092</sup> As this assessment was given in public, Dalietos simply could have been attempting to improve Greece's negotiating position in regards to Yugoslavia. See: Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 35939 28-06-49 ΑΥΤ. ΜΑΚ.; Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 26721 5-4-49 ΑΥΤ. ΜΑΚ.

government officials kept track of reports regarding mass meetings that a variety of civil organizations held to condemn the KKE's decision.<sup>1093</sup> For example, on 10 April 1949 the people in Kozani, a region where the DAG had strong ties, declared themselves against the KKE due to the Greek communists' arguments on the Slavophone Macedonians possessing the right to self-determination.<sup>1094</sup> The KKE's position on the issue completed its alienation of the moderate left, which had been started by the Greek communists' increased dominance within EAM and furthered by its position on the Macedonian Question (as described to the Greek Foreign Ministry in a 3 May 1949 report).<sup>1095</sup> Put simply, the Greek government did not need a consistent policy on the Yugoslav portion of the Macedonian Question in 1949 because the KKE's position and the Bulgarians' increased rhetoric meant that arguments against Yugoslavia were less significant than they had been previously.

Bulgaria's involvement gave both the Greek people and the Greek governments of the period a much simpler narrative to follow in addressing their concern about the Macedonian Question. Greek officials within Athens and at embassies outside the country followed Dalietos' lead in condemning the Bulgarians' newfound activism. On 5 May 1949, Vlastaris noted that Bulgarian propaganda invoked the Ilinden Uprising to further Bulgaria's interests.<sup>1096</sup> In a similar vein, on 12 May 1949, Serris sent a report to the United Nations in which he noted that the Bulgarians trained and equipped Slavophone Macedonians to send to Greece.<sup>1097</sup> This report left open the question of whether the Slavophones were native to Aegean Macedonia or Bulgaria. Maj. General Apokoritis, who advised the Greek Ministry, wrote to the United Nations to likewise convey the severity of Bulgaria's support for the Slavomacedonians in Greece. He noted that there were over "40,000 Slavomacedonians of Greater Macedonia" ready to fight the Greeks.<sup>1098</sup> Given that the number of 40,000 was more than the entire size of the

<sup>1093</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 29208 29-4-49 ΑΥΤ ΜΑΚ.; Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 28064 18-4-49 ΑΥΤ. ΜΑΚ.

<sup>1094</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 29713 30-4-49 ΑΥΤ ΜΑΚ.

<sup>1095</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 30849 9-5-49 ΑΥΤ ΜΑΚ.

<sup>1096</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 31101 10-5-49 ΑΥΤ. ΜΑΚ.

<sup>1097</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 31640 13-5-49 ΑΥΤ. ΜΑΚ.

<sup>1098</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 31441 9-5-49 ΑΥΤ. ΜΑΚ.

DAG at this stage of the conflict, either the information that the General received, or his interpretation of it, led the data to be misrepresented to stoke fears about Macedonian Slav involvement. Further reports of a similar nature on 11 and 17 May 1949 demonstrated the seriousness that he and the Foreign Ministry attached to the accusations.<sup>1099</sup> Yugoslavia remained tangentially within the minds of Greek officials during this period, but Bulgaria resumed its position as the preeminent threat in Greek government thought. The path to an eventual Greek/Yugoslav reconciliation was becoming clearer.

For a Greek-Yugoslav reconciliation to occur, the CPY ultimately needed to stop supplying the DAG and disseminating propaganda on the Macedonian Question. Although Greek officials recognized the significance of the Tito-Stalin split, in the Spring of 1949, they continued to express outrage over Yugoslavia's support of the Greek communists. In a 9 May 1949 report to the UN that condemned the Bulgarians, Maj. Gen. Apokoritis also took the opportunity to note that Yugoslavia persisted in accepting injured DAG soldiers into its territory.<sup>1100</sup> In his June reports to the United Nations, he furthered the trend of largely condemning Bulgaria, but also spoke of Yugoslavia's involvement with the "bandits."<sup>1101</sup> Ambassador Kaloutsis, likewise, remained concerned at this time about the Yugoslavs' continued publication of anti-Greek government propaganda.<sup>1102</sup> Nevertheless, the Greek government's willingness to redirect its angst on the Macedonian Question away from Yugoslavia and towards Bulgaria marked a critical development towards the eventual reconciliation of the two states in the 1950s. The Bulgarians laid the groundwork for this reconciliation when they emphasized the Macedonian Question in its rhetorical offensive against Yugoslavia.<sup>1103</sup>

<sup>1099</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 31441 12-5-49 Aut. Μακ.; Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 32368 20-5-49 Aut. Μακ.

<sup>1100</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 30862 9-5-49 Aut. Μακ.

<sup>1101</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archives, 35126 10-6-49 Aut. Μακ.

<sup>1102</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 36500 22-6-49 Aut. Μακ.

<sup>1103</sup> See: Evanthis Hatzivassiliou, *Greece and the Cold War: Front Line State, 1952-1967* (New York: Routledge, 2006)

## 7.5. The CPY breaks from the KKE

In July 1949, the CPY prepared to withdraw support from the KKE while also responding to the Greek communists' accusations that it worked against the Greek people. In an 8 July 1949 address, the Central Committee of the CPY refuted the KKE's allegations that it collaborated with the "monarchofascist" forces in opposing the Greek people.<sup>1104</sup> After making its initial statement, the CPY proceeded to contest the major accusations that the KKE made against it on Radio Free Greece.<sup>1105</sup> These accusations included: the contention that the Yugoslavs did not assist the monarchofascist forces; the charge that Yugoslav forces actively targeted Greek aircraft that violated its borders, and the claim that Yugoslavs did not provide medical assistance to those members of the DAG in need. Also, the CPY denied the various other misdeeds that the KKE had accused them of performing against the DAG.<sup>1106</sup> The Yugoslavs, however, did not mention the issue of Macedonia. By publically denouncing the KKE's accusations, the CPY kept its discourse focused on a subject they could negotiate from a position of strength, which they believed could not have been done if they opened up dialogue on the Macedonian Question. The CPY concluded its report by noting that its "attitude towards the struggle of the Greek people [has been] known from the outset."<sup>1107</sup> Tito reiterated the same points in an address on 10 July 1949. Importantly, Tito noted that the false attacks by the Cominform had reached the point where "[...] we have to close our borders to that sector to ensure the lives of our people working in that area."<sup>1108</sup> Tito therefore effectively presented his decision in strictly moral terms. Yugoslavia had fully

<sup>1104</sup> "La Communication Du Cc Du Pcy Relative Aux Calomnies Brutales De La Direction Du Pcg Au Compte De Pcy," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1948*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1949), 120.

<sup>1105</sup> After the Tito-Stalin split, Radio Free Greece moved from Belgrade to Bucharest in early 1949. See: Shrader, *The Withered Vine: Logistics and the Communist Insurgency in Greece, 1945-1949*, 280-81.

<sup>1106</sup> "La Communication Du Cc Du Pcy Relative Aux Calomnies Brutales De La Direction Du Pcg Au Compte De Pcy," 120-21.

<sup>1107</sup> *Ibid.* 121.

<sup>1108</sup> Josip Broz Tito, "Le Discours De Josip Broz Tito a Poula Dans Lequel Il Demasque Les Machinations De La Direction Du Pc De La Grece Et De L'informbureau Contre Le Pcy," in *Documents Relatifs a La Participation Du Peuple Macedonien De La Macedoine Egee a La Guerre Civile En Grece 1949*, ed. Risto Kirjazovski (Skopje: Les Archives de la Macedoine, 1949), 367.

supported the KKE in its struggle against the Greek government. In exchange for this support, the KKE betrayed the CPY by backing the Cominform resolution against it. While the KKE's alignment with the USSR certainly played a role in the CPY's decision cut ties with it, the split was not an overwhelming one given the Yugoslav Communists' actions, which involved doing their utmost to prove their communist credentials.<sup>1109</sup>

The fact that the CPY did not mention the Macedonian Question when it discussed the decision to halt supplies being sent to the Greeks contributed to scholars seeing it solely in terms of power politics. Elisabeth Barker's account of the Macedonian Question in the Greek Civil War, which remains the standard in the field, took the Yugoslavs' statements verbatim.<sup>1110</sup> However, through the examination of Yugoslavia's domestic policies and writings it is evident that the Macedonian Question figured prominently in the CPY's decision to withdrawal support from the KKE. In a speech on 3 August 1949 in Skopje, the fifth year anniversary of ASNOM, Tito noted: "As for the relations of the Communist Party of Greece towards the Macedonians in Aegean Macedonia, it is similar to the Bulgarian Communist leaders [position] towards the Macedonians in Pirin Macedonia." Tito also stated that the "Greek Communists have never had any proper position on the Macedonian Question."<sup>1111</sup> The Greek communists, whom Tito had previously aimed to rehabilitate in the People's Republic of Macedonia, were now *personae non grata*. In equating them with the Bulgarians – whom Tito and the CPY/CPM had spent considerable energy distancing themselves from in the previous year – he made clear to his audience that it was the Greeks who had betrayed the Slavophone Macedonians, not the Yugoslavs. Specifically, he charged that the KKE betrayed the Slavophone Macedonians by preventing them from attaining positions of command, and through the failure to establish Macedonian language schools.<sup>1112</sup> In seeking to guarantee the support of the Macedonian people, Tito, implicitly contrasted the support that the Yugoslavs provided them and the KKE's alleged apathy to the

<sup>1109</sup> Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Twentieth Century*, 2 326-27.

<sup>1110</sup> Barker, *Macedonia: Its Place in Balkan Power Politics Passim*.

<sup>1111</sup> Josip Broz Tito, "Pet Godina Makedonske Narodne Republike," in *Dokumenti 1948*, ed. Vladimir Dedijer (Beograd: Izdavačka Radna Organizacija "Rad", 1949), 255.

<sup>1112</sup> The second statement, in fact, was false, but Tito had to present the KKE's position on the Macedonian Question in such a way as to contrast it with that of the Yugoslavs.

Slavophone Macedonians. In fact, the 21 August 1949 issue of the Yugoslav paper *Glas* (Voice) argued that the Slavophone Macedonians were instrumental in constructing the People's Republic of Macedonia. This was different from the situation in Greece, where the state and KKE marginalized them.<sup>1113</sup> Naturally, Yugoslav officials made no mention of the fact that the CPY used the Slavophone Macedonians much like the KKE did, but only in a slightly more successful fashion.

## 7.6. Conclusion

August 1949 marked the culmination of not only the KKE's failure to limit the damage the dynamics of the Macedonian Question created in its relationship with the CPY but also of the other pertinent parties' beliefs that they could master the issue for their benefit. In the case of the Yugoslavs, while they succeeded in keeping Vardar Macedonia tranquil, they nevertheless saw significant blowback from their neighbours over their efforts to exploit the surrounding countries' vulnerability to support their stabilization efforts through 1943-1948. In the case of the Bulgarians, their efforts to regain strength regarding the Macedonian Question were ultimately unsuccessful. Yugoslavia's dominance on the issue since 1944 and its promotion of a distinct Macedonian identity made it impossible for Bulgaria to recapture its previous influence because it persisted in arguing that the Macedonians were, in fact, Bulgarians. In the case of the KKE, its acceptance of the Slavophone Macedonian population compromised its position throughout the majority of Greek society. The KKE's decision to back the Cominform against Yugoslavia certainly contributed to its decision to embrace the Slavophone Macedonians. Nevertheless, that decision remains questionable, given the KKE's strategic position after the failure of the 1948 summer offensive and Greek society's unforeseeable perception of the KKE in the aftermath of the conflict.

The Greek governments' policy, however, on the Macedonian Question resulted in positive dividends in 1949. For years, succeeding Greek governments had argued

<sup>1113</sup> Diplomatic and Historical Archives, 51812 22-10-49 ΑΥΤ. ΜΑΚ.



that there was an association between Slavism and Communism. The KKE's previous ambiguous policies and statements made it difficult for the Greek government to make the connection. The NOF and the KKE's declarations, however, made the correlation straightforward. For governments facing issues of political legitimacy in the wake of the *Dekemvriana* and dealing with an ongoing civil war, such an outcome was of immense value.<sup>1114</sup>

The parties that lost the most on the Macedonian Question during the Greek Civil War were the NOF and the Slavophone Macedonians. The NOF, caught between the CPY and the KKE's power struggle over the Macedonian Question, was completely coopted by the KKE. In the past, members of the NOF had exploited the ambiguous position between the two communist parties to achieve national or personal objectives. The KKE's domination of the NOF in the aftermath of the Tito-Stalin split dictated that this was no longer possible. The KKE's careful cultivation of NOF leaders, and its strategy of playing these leaders against one against another, meant that the NOF was not in a position to represent effectively the Slavophone Macedonians' interests, or to help the population transition to the new policies of the DAG. Instead, significant portions of the Slavophone Macedonian population fled to Yugoslavia near the war's conclusion and those that remained found themselves increasingly exploited by the KKE and the DAG. The elimination of the NOF's dream of a greater Macedonian state and the significant flight of the Aegean Macedonians into exile meant that it was the ultimate loser.

<sup>1114</sup> Neni Panourgia, *Dangerous Citizens: The Greek Left and the Terror of the State* (Bronx, NY: Fordham University Press, 2009) Kindle Edition.

## Chapter 8. Conclusion and Impacts

In the aftermath of Greek Civil War, the Macedonian Question had reverted in some ways to its 1878 configuration. In 1949, when the Bulgarian delegation went before the UN, it felt the need to defend itself from Greek accusations that it had interfered in the Greek Civil War by supporting the Slavophone Macedonians. To that end, Bulgaria noted:

*The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Bulgaria wishes to emphasize again that information coming from the Greek Military Authorities and alleging that Bulgaria was proceeding with the mobilization of men, from so-called Aegean Macedonia and of Greek children capable of bearing arms, are completely untrue and constitute a falsehood from the beginning to end. Likewise there are nowhere in Bulgaria camps housing Greek partisans, which makes a visit to such non-existing camps by high-ranking Bulgarian officers impossible. Among such officers, there is no General by the name of Steriouanas.*<sup>1115</sup>

Essentially, the Bulgarians rejected the (true) accusations that it had armed Slavophone Macedonian irregulars.<sup>1116</sup> Various international states accused Bulgaria of being involved in the armed discontent of the Macedonian region that had resulted from the modern inception of the Macedonian Question. The contours of the Macedonian Question, however, had fundamentally shifted. Instead of the various Balkan nations working together against one entity, as had been the case within the Ottoman Empire, they now competed against one another to increase their influence and prestige, as was the case before 1912. While the Greek Civil War did not initiate the competition amongst

<sup>1115</sup> Diplomatic and Historic Archive, 47748 16-9-49 ΑΥΤ. ΜΑΚ.

<sup>1116</sup> That said, the Bulgarian government's protestations did nothing to alleviate the concerns of the Greek government. For examples of their continued concern in 1949 see: Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 47109 10.9.49 ΑΥΤ. ΜΑΚ.; Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 47622 16.9.49 ΑΥΤ. ΜΑΚ.; Diplomatic and Historical Archive, 41926 1-8-48 ΑΥΤ. ΜΑΚ. This continued Bulgaria's previous arguments on the issue. See: Nachmani, *International Intervention in the Greek Civil War: The United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans, 1947-1952* 81.

national entities, it had defined the geographical boundaries of all the main participants with respect to the Macedonian Question. Problematically, none of the entities were completely satisfied with those boundaries. Furthermore, the Greek Civil War accentuated the differences in the competing visions to such a degree that reconciliation proved difficult, if not impossible, for all the states involved.

## **8.1. Summary of Findings**

An examination of the Macedonian Question in the Greek Civil War has yielded several insights that are useful not only for studies on the conflict but also to analyses on nationalism and the Cold War. These insights are:

The Macedonian Question was omnipresent in the decision-making processes of various participants in the Greek Civil War.

The NOF was not a passive contributor, nor was it completely subservient to the Yugoslavs.

The Greek Civil War played a vital role in constructing the post-Second World War perception of Macedonian nationalism.

The United States' involvement in the conflict and the linkage it identified between the Macedonian Question and broader Soviet machinations further demonstrate the Greek Civil War's relevance to Cold War studies.

While non-nationalist historiographies typically neglect the Macedonian Question in their analyses, the question played a pivotal role in the decision-making processes of the conflict's major participants. From the start of the occupation, the KKE recognized that Slavophone Macedonians were a potential source of manpower, but was simultaneously cognizant that openly embracing of them would alienate mainstream Greek society. The KKE was therefore torn between attempting to minimize its association with the Slavophone Macedonians while exploiting them as recruits, a balancing act at which it ultimately failed. The CPY forced the KKE into this position in many ways. Contrary to the accepted historiographic argument that the CPY supported the KKE-led insurgency so that it could seize northern Greece, this dissertation has demonstrated that an equal if not bigger concern was the Yugoslavs finding a constructive outlet for Macedonian irredentism as they sought to build a Macedonian identity compatible to their interests. The KKE ultimately made the decision to join the Cominform in its attacks against the

CPY by exploiting the Macedonian issue, but this decision allowed the Greek government – which actively sought to link the KKE to traditional Slavic threat in northern Greece to garner international support. In short, there was no major facet or players in the Greek Civil War that was not influenced by the Macedonian Question.

Contrary to many analyses, the NOF was not a passive accomplice to Yugoslav ambitions. In many ways, the NOF forced the hands of the different participants involved in the conflict. While all the pertinent parties sought to exploit the Macedonian Question to their advantage, there were many instances where the NOF leaders exploited the tensions between the different participants to further its interests. Unfortunately for those individuals who genuinely believed in the cause of Slavophone Macedonian nationalism, the NOF leaders frequently pursued their personal objectives, rather than the aims of the people they represented as a whole. Thus, when Yugoslavia *de-facto* abandoned its influence within the NOF, KKE leaders found it all the more easy to exploit the NOF's leadership's differences in pursuit of their objectives.

This dissertation has also highlighted that the Macedonian identity was constantly evolving during the Greek Civil War, in contrast to nationalist analyses of the subject that treat it as a fixed subject. Yugoslav involvement in the Greek Civil War almost marginalized the Bulgarian version of the Macedonian identity. Although Bulgaria has not formally renounced its claim that Macedonians are Bulgarians, its contemporary influence is minimal.<sup>1117</sup> The active role of the Slavophone Macedonians in the Greek Civil War and the international dynamics at work in that war resulted in the two dominant strands emerging: the previously side-lined narrow Yugoslav version and the Yugoslavs' subsequent irredentist maximalist version. Notably, before the Greek Civil War, these versions were secondary to the Bulgarian version.

That the Macedonian Question was a significant factor in the United States becoming involved in the conflict demonstrates that Cold War studies need to do a better job of integrating developments from the Greek Civil War into their analysis. Andre Gerolymatos' upcoming book *The International Civil War* conclusively demonstrates this

<sup>1117</sup> Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians?* 213-16.

necessity.<sup>1118</sup> Nevertheless, there is still a tendency amongst scholars to regard developments in 1940s Greece in isolation.<sup>1119</sup> It is essential for scholars to eliminate this historiographical oversight in exceptionalizing the Greek Civil War, and understand how many of the dynamics at play were related to broader trends in the 1940s.

Finally, this work emphasized how an ethnic minority – in this case the Slavophone Macedonians – played an exceptional role in the civil conflict that would not have been possible in peacetime. Although considerable research has been done on the role of ethnic minorities in civil wars, not enough of the works assign minorities the ability to influence the participants in such conflicts.<sup>1120</sup> Kilcullen tentatively concludes that ethnic minorities can exploit a conflict situation, but does not elaborate on this claim in detail.<sup>1121</sup> The tendency to portray the Slavophone Macedonians' marginalization as a given ignores the critical earlier period, in which they successfully manipulated and pressured various participants into supporting their pursuit of their nation-building. This work, therefore, builds upon the points raised by Kilcullen and, in so doing, is of benefit to those individuals who seek to understand the dynamics of civil conflict.

<sup>1118</sup> Gerolymatos, *The International Civil War: Greece, 1943–1949 Passim*.

<sup>1119</sup> Exceptions to this general practice include: Nachmani, *International Intervention in the Greek Civil War: The United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans, 1947-1952 Passim*; Karpozilos, "The Defeated of the Greek Civil War: From Fighters to Political Refugees in the Cold War," 62-87; Gerolymatos, *The International Civil War: Greece, 1943–1949 Passim*; Iatrides, "Revolution or Self-Defense? Communist Goals, Strategy, and Tactics in the Greek Civil War," 3-33; Nikos Marantzidis, "The Greek Civil War (1944-1949) and the International Communist System," *ibid.* 15, no. 4 (2013) 25-54.

<sup>1120</sup> Examples include: Haklai, "Democratization and Ethnic Minorities," 1-17; Joe, *Modern Guerrilla Insurgency* 23, 57, 106; Max Boot, *Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerrilla Warfare from Ancient Times to the Present* (New York: Liveright, 2013) 397, 484, 509. Warren Chin, "Fourth Generation Warfare in Afghanistan," in *Global Insurgency and the Future of Armed Conflict*, ed. Aaron Karp and Regina Karp Terry Terriff (London: Routledge, 2008), 133-34

<sup>1121</sup> David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009) 210-16.

## 8.2. Legacies of the Macedonian Question in the Greek Civil War

Part of the contribution of this dissertation was that the Macedonian Question continued to play a pivotal role in the relations between the participants involved in the Greek Civil War after its conclusion. Specifically, the way that the various states sought to manipulate and control the Macedonian Question in the aftermath of the Greek Civil War borrowed heavily from the legacies of the conflict. In order to understand how this was the case, it was best to break down the history into three phases: the Cold War, the collapse of Yugoslavia, and the post-2009 Greek Financial Crisis. Even a brief examination within this framework will highlight how the issues raised by the different participants' manipulation of the Macedonian Question in the Greek Civil War continue to influence the present-day politics.

In the aftermath of the Greek Civil War, there was a considerable pressure on Greece and Yugoslavia to put their relationship on solid footing. Not only did domestic forces promote reconciliation, but also the United States, which sought to secure NATO's southern flank against potential Soviet aggression.<sup>1122</sup> This effort eventually culminated in the Balkan Pact of 1953, which included Greece, Turkey, and Yugoslavia signing a mutual defence pact. This agreement, in effect, brought Yugoslavia into close alignment with NATO.<sup>1123</sup> The pact soon fell apart due to tensions between Greece and Turkey over the Cypriot issue, but relations between Greece and Yugoslavia remained relatively strong, except for the occasional issue that arose because of the Macedonian Question.<sup>1124</sup> A prominent example of the Macedonian Question's ability to strain Greek-Yugoslav relations were the 1961 local Macedonian elections, which resulted in Anton Gričkov's election as Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Macedonia.

<sup>1122</sup> David R. Stone, "The Balkan Pact and American Policy," *East European Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (1994) 393-407.

<sup>1123</sup> For an account of the conference proceedings see: *Balkanski Pakt 1953-1954, Zbornik Radova*, (Beograd: Institut za Strategijska Istraživanja Odeljenje za Vojnu Istoriju, 2008) *Passim*.

<sup>1124</sup> Hatzivassiliou, *Greece and the Cold War: Front Line State, 1952-1967* 114-15.

Almost immediately upon assuming office, Gliškov provoked Greece on the Macedonian Question. Yugoslavia's Foreign Minister, Drago Kunc, furthermore, provided him with limited political support.<sup>1125</sup> Konstantinos Karamanlis, Greece's Prime Minister, complained to Yugoslavia's Ambassador Peko Dapčević, the former Partisan general whom Tito once ironically proposed help the Greek communists:

*Yugoslavia knew that Macedonia was the only issue which could endanger our relations [...] Everything else can be corrected. The Macedonian issue is the only one which cannot. I have been repeating this for years. This issue causes damage, and those who bring it forward must choose. They must decide whether they prefer the advantages of our cooperation, or the damage which this issue causes to our relations.*<sup>1126</sup>

The passions the CPY whipped up in the 1940s to assert control of the Macedonian Question, and the Greek government's continued denial that the Aegean Macedonians existed, had an impact on regional politics well beyond the Greek Civil War. Although relations between Yugoslavia and Greece eventually recovered, the Macedonian Question still appeared with alarming regularity to disrupt what otherwise were amicable co-existence between the countries.

Yugoslav authorities eventually deposed Gliškov before he could do too much damage to Greek-Yugoslav relations. However, in 1977 the Greek archaeologist Manolis Andronikos' discovery of the alleged tomb of Phillip II of Macedon (Alexander the Great's father) at Vergina in northern Greece brought to the foregrounded questions about the 'Greekness' of the ancient Macedonians. A 16-ray star, a common decorative motif in classical Greece found at the tomb, became a symbol of consternation when Greeks renamed it the Vergina Sun.<sup>1127</sup> Both Greece and the Socialist Republic of Macedonia sought to appropriate the Vergina Sun and turn it into a national symbol and unofficial flag, with the only difference being the choice of background colours.

<sup>1125</sup> Konstantinos Karamanlis, *Konstantinos Karamanlis: Archeio, Gekonota Kai Kermena*, vol. 5 (Athens: C,G, Karamanlis Foundation and Ekdotike Ahtenon, 1992) 264-65.

<sup>1126</sup> Karamanlis, cited in: Hatzivassiliou, *Greece and the Cold War: Front Line State, 1952-1967* 115.

<sup>1127</sup> Hamilakis, *The Nation and Its Ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology, and National Imagination in Greece* 131.

Finally, the rise of the left-wing Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement government highlighted that the Macedonian Question and its relationship with the Greek Civil War remained an open sore within Greece. After the Greek Civil War, members of the Democratic Army of Greece fled the country and eventually ended up dispersed throughout the Eastern Bloc and the Soviet Union.<sup>1128</sup> In 1974, in the aftermath of the fall of the Greek Junta, a period of liberalization began in Greece. By 1981, this enabled Georgios Gennimatas, Minister of the Interior in the new PASOK government, to permit the veterans of the DAG to return to the country.<sup>1129</sup> Markos Vafiadis returned in 1983, and the Greek people eventually elected him as a member of parliament. For many in Greece, this reconciliation between the government and DAG veterans marked the official end of the Greek Civil War. However, the Macedonian Slavs were the one group the Greek state precluded from returning.<sup>1130</sup> Given that the Greek government was the active oppressors of the Slavophone Macedonians in the post-war period, leaders and scholars of the Greek Left chose to rewrite their past with them to one more conducive to national interests.<sup>1131</sup> Thus, even the Greek Left neglected the role of the Macedonian Slavs in the DAG for political purposes, which only served to fuel irredentist sentiments amongst the Aegean Macedonian diaspora.<sup>1132</sup>

At the end of the Cold War Greece and the Macedonian population within Yugoslavia were locked in a debate over what it meant to be Macedonian. Although this issue existed before the Greek Civil War, the conflict and both party's unwillingness to engage critically with the debate surrounding Macedonian identity meant nationalist arguments from 1949 were left unresolved. Consequently, the Greek and Macedonian

<sup>1128</sup> Karpozilos, "The Defeated of the Greek Civil War: From Fighters to Political Refugees in the Cold War," 62-63.

<sup>1129</sup> Mazower, "The Cold War and the Appropriation of Memory: Greece after Liberation," 228.

<sup>1130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1131</sup> Alexopoulos, "La Question Macedonienne Pendant La Guerre Civile Grecque," 1-28. For a slightly dated, but still accurate assessment of some of these trends see: Nikos Marantzidis and Giorgos Antoniou, "The Axis Occupation and Civil War: Changing Trends in Greek Historiography, 1941-2002," *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no. 2 (2004) 223-31.

<sup>1132</sup> Starting in 1984, when Aegean Macedonians founded the *Movement for Human and National Rights for the Macedonians of Aegean Macedonia*. This led to other groups being founded which, when combined with the Republic of Macedonia's declaration of independence in 1992, has re-inflamed these tensions. See: Shea, *Macedonia and Greece: The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation*



states' discourse entered non-traditional political realms, such as archaeology.<sup>1133</sup> This virulent scholarly discourse became the norm, despite the fact that both the Greek and Macedonian states' interpretation of the evidence regarding the Macedonian identity possessed several logical flaws. The only stopgap in the antagonism between the two parties was international pressure during the Cold War and the Socialist Republic of Macedonia's association with Yugoslavia.

The collapse of Yugoslavia, and the Republic of Macedonia's declaration of independence in 1992, brought tensions between Greece and the Yugoslav Macedonian population to the forefront of the world once more. The Republic of Macedonia provocatively included the Vergina Sun in its new national flag.<sup>1134</sup> Article 47 of the new state's constitution further complicated matters, which stated:

- (1) The Republic cares for the status and rights of those persons belonging to the Macedonian people in neighboring countries, as well as Macedonian expatriates, assists their cultural development and promotes links with them. In the exercise of this concern the Republic will not interfere in the sovereign rights of other states or in their internal affairs.
- (2) The Republic cares for the cultural, economic and social rights of the citizens of the Republic abroad.<sup>1135</sup>

The Greek government believed that the wording of Article 47 meant that the Republic of Macedonia harboured desires for Greece's northern territories. This fear was in part a carry over from the Greek Civil War when the KKE endorsed plans for a Balkan Federation that would have detached northern Greece to create a greater Macedonia.

It was during the Greek Civil War that both the Greek and Macedonian states' nation-building exercises crystalized. In the aftermath of the Greek Civil War, the local leadership of the League of Communists of Macedonia never reconciled the fact that a key portion of their idealized homeland remained outside the Macedonian nation-state.

<sup>1133</sup> Hamilakis, *The Nation and Its Ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology, and National Imagination in Greece* 131-32.

<sup>1134</sup> *Ibid.* 130.

<sup>1135</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, adopted 17 November 1991, amended on 6 January 1992.

Before the Greek Civil War, people and states external to the region as well as the Macedonians themselves debated what it meant to be Macedonian.<sup>1136</sup> In the aftermath of the conflict, however, the ideas about Macedonian identity solidified amongst the Macedonians, and they no longer considered it open to debate.

The potential for the 1990s' Macedonian name controversy to destabilize further the Balkans in the aftermath of the Yugoslav Wars led the International Community to exert pressure upon the parties involved to reach an accommodation on the issue. This pressure was particularly focused on Greece. The temporary solution that the parties arrived at was to use the name Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). States and people throughout the world, however, have increasingly used the name Republic of Macedonia. In fact, in recent news coverage of the refugee crisis facing Europe, reporters eschewed the acronym FYROM for Macedonia.<sup>1137</sup> Greece has lost the campaign to monopolize the term Macedonia and Macedonian.

While Greece may have failed to monopolize the term Macedonian at the international level, the term retains significant domestic utility. Since the Greek Civil War, local politicians have recognized that invoking nationalist sentiments against the Slavophone Macedonians is an effective way of covering up government failures – much as they invoked it against the KKE in the Greek Civil War to justify many of their initial failures to put down the insurgency. Greece's current financial situation, which looks unsolvable for the immediate future, has given the country's leaders reason to redirect public angst towards something that is easily understandable. Once again, Macedonia is of political and psychological utility. This value was evident on 26 October 2015, when President Pavlopoulos commented, "Macedonia is self-evidently and obviously Greek." Such comments from politicians are likely to be omnipresent in the future.<sup>1138</sup>

<sup>1136</sup> See: Roudometof, *Collective Memory, National Identity, and Ethnic Conflict: Greece, Bulgaria, and the Macedonian Question* Kindle Edition; Gounaris, "Reassessing Ninety Years of Greek Historiography on the 'Struggle for Macedonia 1904-1908'," 25-38.

<sup>1137</sup> The majority of the world's countries, furthermore, recognize it under the name of Republic of Macedonia, and not the name Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

<sup>1138</sup> Pavlopoulos: "Macedonia is self-evidently and obviously Greek" <http://www.tovima.gr/en/article/?aid=748907>. Accessed 14 July 2016.

In short, the unresolved elements of the Greek Civil War continue to affect present-day Greece and the Balkans as a whole. There is a significant body of literature on the legacies of the Greek Civil War and how they continue to impact the present, but the literature fails to consider the legacies of the Macedonian Question.<sup>1139</sup> While the left-right political divide that the civil war helped create in Greek society is among the most poignant impacts in these times of economic uncertainty, Pavlopoulos' comments underscore that the legacies of the Greek Civil War remain relevant to analyses of contemporary Greece.

### 8.3. Avenues of Future Research

This dissertation highlighted the role of the Macedonian Question in the Greek Civil War. In so doing, it has raised several questions that merit further research. These issues arose in part due to the author's methodological decision to focus on the Slavophone Macedonians and how the principal participants in the Greek Civil War perceived them and interacted with them. This decision was necessary to keep the dissertation manageable and focused but this choice meant that it did not explore several promising avenues for research.

The first area for future examination is the role of the Albanian minority in Greece during the Greek Civil War. Many of the dynamics that were at work amongst the Slavophone Macedonian minority within Greece characterized the country's Albanian minority as well. The Greek government discriminated against the Albanian minority, just as it did with the Slavophone Macedonian minority, and the Albanian state was an external patron for the population.<sup>1140</sup> That said, it is currently unclear precisely what role the Albanians played in the war. This lack of clarity was, in part, because the Greek state integrated the Albanian population into the state more successfully than the Slavophone

<sup>1139</sup> John Iatrides, ed. *Greece at the Crossroads: The Civil War and Its Legacy* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), *Passim*. While the book covers the Macedonian Question in Kofos' article, it does not expand upon its legacies to the present.

<sup>1140</sup> Nachmani, *International Intervention in the Greek Civil War: The United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans, 1947-1952* 115.

Macedonians and, in part, because Yugoslavia carefully regulated the Albanian state's autonomy for much of the period in question.

The Albanians' relationship to the Macedonian Question is fascinating because it was not only Greece that had an Albanian minority – Yugoslavia had one as well. Specifically, the territory that became FYROM contained a significant Albanian population. Consequently, both the Greek state and the restive Macedonian state were forced to deal with questions pertaining to an Albanian minority during the Greek Civil War. In the Second World War, the activities conducted by the Albanian national element of the *Balli Kombëtar* (National Front) in Yugoslavia were similar to the activities of certain Slavophone Macedonian nationalists within Greece. Thus, it provides a further reason to compare how Greece and Yugoslavia dealt with the Albanian minorities.<sup>1141</sup> Insights gleaned from such a comparison will not only inform the history of both national groups but also provide a greater understanding of the national and state-building dynamics in the region as a whole.

The second area of future research is Bulgaria. Bulgaria's actions towards the Aegean Macedonia within the period particularly merit examination. As noted in Chapter 2, the Bulgarians were the dominant player with respect to the Macedonian Question since its inception in the aftermath of the Congress of Berlin to the Second World War. However, they were increasingly marginalized by Yugoslavia when it assumed a dominant position the Second World War. While Bulgaria briefly re-entered the Macedonian Question in Greece after the Tito-Stalin split, by this point its influence was minimal and of no greater significance than that mentioned in the dissertation. However, this transition to Yugoslav dominance in the 1940s needs to be explored in greater detail as Cold War politics dominated many analyses of this development.<sup>1142</sup> While some recent research has considered Bulgaria's role in the Macedonian Question in the 1940s, it has emphasized Bulgaria's occupation of Northern Greece in the Second World

<sup>1141</sup> Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005* 141-42.

<sup>1142</sup> For an example see: A.E. Tachiaos, *The Bulgarian National Awakening and Its Spread into Macedonia* (Thessaloniki: Society for Macedonian Studies, 1990) *Passim*; Roubatis, *Tangled Webs: The Us in Greece, 1947-1967* *Passim*.

War, and not its role in the Greek Civil War.<sup>1143</sup> An examination of Bulgaria's efforts to remain influential in the Macedonian nation-building exercise would therefore further elucidate some of the trends examined in this dissertation.

Third, many of the conclusions drawn about the Slavophone Macedonians in the dissertation not only accentuate assumptions about ethnic minorities in civil conflict, but also challenge those conclusions. Traditional accounts of ethnic minorities in conflict, influenced by the United States' involvement in Vietnam tend to portray ethnic minorities as passive participants.<sup>1144</sup> The case of the Slavophone Macedonians is fascinating because it represents Americans' efforts to counter a tactic they would commonly employ themselves as the century advanced. The insights gained from this research are therefore not only part of the analyses of the Greek Civil War but apply to conflict studies as a whole. This research lends itself to comparative studies, especially in light of the prevalent role that ethnic minorities have played in Twentieth and Twenty-first century conflicts (the Kurds in the Syrian Civil War being just the most prominent contemporary example).

## 8.4. Conclusion

Examining the role of the Slavophone Macedonians in the Greek Civil War yielded not only new understandings about the conflict, but also raised several important questions. This dissertation has demonstrated that each of the participants involved in the Greek Civil War considered the Slavophone Macedonians in their strategies and that this minority group was able to exploit this consideration to pursue their nation-building

<sup>1143</sup> Even then, in many instances it is gone over in passing. See: Roudometof, *Collective Memory, National Identity, and Ethnic Conflict: Greece, Bulgaria, and the Macedonian Question* 81; Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict: Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World* 73-74; Violetta Hionidou, *Famine and Death in Occupied Greece, 1941-1944* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006) 16, 80.

<sup>1144</sup> This perspective is largely informed by American interaction in Vietnam. See: John Southard, *Defend and Befriend: The U.S. Marine Corps and Combined Action Platoons in Vietnam* (Bloomington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2014) 40-41; H.W. Brands, *The Devil We Knew: Americans and the Cold War* (New York: Oxford UP, 1994) 80-81; Ives, *Us Special Forces and Counterinsurgency in Vietnam: Military Innovation and Institutional Failure, 1961-1963* 130-31.

exercise. The significant questions raised by the dissertation pertain not only to the players involved in the Greek Civil War but also to the role of ethnic minorities in Twentieth and Twenty-First century conflicts. Developments in the Twenty-First century have resulted in ethnic minorities having an increasingly prominent role in civil wars and insurgencies, with the Kurds as the most prominent example. Understanding how minority groups operate is important from not only from an academic standpoint but a policy perspective as well. This dissertation has made a contribution to the literature by providing a basis that will allow scholars to pursue these questions.

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