

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: **BALKAN WARS BETWEEN THE LINES:
VIOLENCE AND CIVILIANS IN
MACEDONIA, 1912-1918**

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Directed By: Professor John R. Lampe, Department of History

This dissertation challenges the widely held view that there is something morbidly distinctive about violence in the Balkans. It subjects this notion to scrutiny by examining how inhabitants of the embattled region of Macedonia endured a particularly violent set of events: the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 and the First World War. Making use of a variety of sources including archives located in the three countries that today share the region of Macedonia, the study reveals that members of this majority-Orthodox Christian civilian population were not inclined to perpetrate wartime violence against one another. Though they often identified with rival national camps, inhabitants of Macedonia were typically willing neither to kill their neighbors nor to die over those differences. They preferred to pursue priorities they considered more important, including economic advancement, education, and security of their properties, all of which were likely to be undermined by internecine violence.

National armies from Balkan countries then adjacent to geographic Macedonia (Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia) and their associated paramilitary forces

were instead the perpetrators of violence against civilians. In these violent activities they were joined by armies from Western and Central Europe during the First World War. Contrary to existing military and diplomatic histories that emphasize continuities between the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 and the First World War, this primarily social history reveals that the nature of abuses committed against civilians changed rapidly during this six-year period. During the Balkan Wars and the opening campaigns of the First World War, armed forces often used tactics of terror against civilians perceived to be unfriendly, including spontaneous decisions to burn houses, murder, and rape. As the First World War settled into a long war of attrition, armed forces introduced concentration camps and other kinds of bureaucratically organized violence against civilians that came increasingly to mark broader European violence of the twentieth century. In all of these activities, the study reveals, Balkan armies and paramilitary forces were little different in their behavior from armed forces of the era throughout the Western world.

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VIOLENCE AND CIVILIANS IN MACEDONIA, 1912-1918

By

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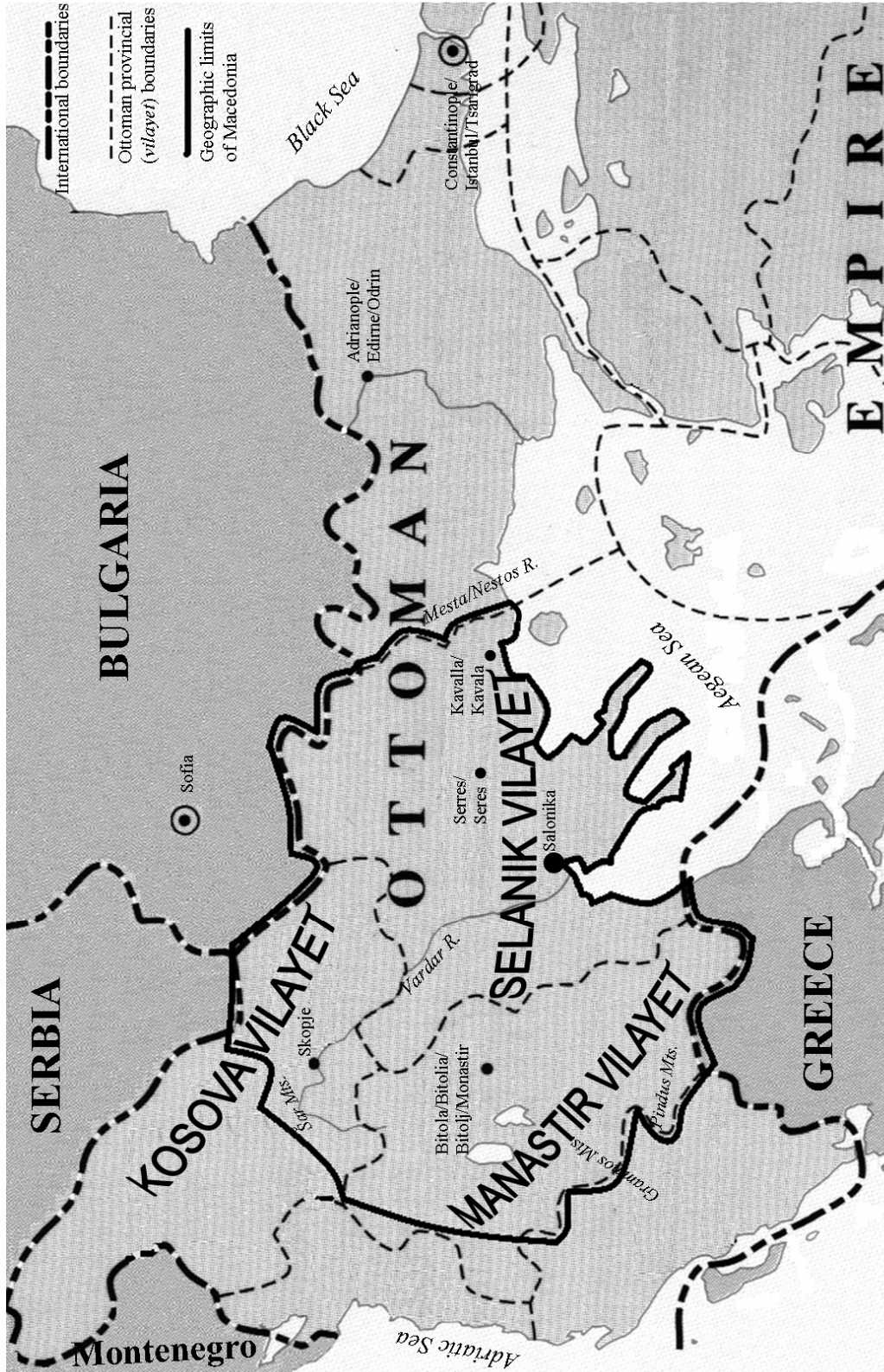
name belong above along with all those who advanced my work through helpful suggestions on my ideas and my writing, but it deserves a special place because of her constant support, sacrifices of her time, and love.

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Map 1: Macedonia within the Ottoman Empire (c.1910)



Adapted from Map 36 in Paul Robert Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of East Central Europe* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993), 119.

Map 2: Geographic Macedonia after the First World War (c.1919)



Adapted from Fig. 58 in H.R. Wilkinson, *Maps and Politics: A Review of the Ethnographic Cartography of Macedonia* (Liverpool: University Press of Liverpool, 1951), 232.

* Officially the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes.

Introduction

... My dear cousin, here we are burning villages and killing Bulgarians, women and children. Let me tell you, too, that cousin G. Kiritzis has a slight wound in his foot and that all the rest of us, friends and relations are very well...¹

The local population is divided into as many fragmentary parts as it contains nationalities, and these fight together, each being desirous to substitute itself for the others. This is why these wars are so sanguinary.... The populations mutually slaughtered and pursued with a ferocity heightened by mutual knowledge and the old hatreds and resentments they cherished.²

Compare the casual admission of cruelty in a Greek soldier's letter from the frontlines of the Second Balkan War with the judgement below it cited from the international community of the day. The authors of the Carnegie Report, from which both quotations are taken, implicated the "local population" that lived between the frequently shifting front lines at least as much as they blamed the soldiers of advancing and retreating national armies in their effort to account for such apparently wanton wartime violence against defenseless civilians. The events that gave rise to this grim report shocked international opinion and left a deep and lasting mark on the world's understanding of the peoples of the Balkans, a region whose very name came to carry pejorative connotations.³

¹ English translation of a letter from Anastasios Ath. Patros to Areistidis Thanasias in Kamniati, Thessaly, Jul. 27, 1913, printed in Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars* (Washington, D.C.: 1914), 311. The Greek handwritten original is printed in *Nouvelle série de lettres écrites à Mehomia, Nevrocope et d'autres localités du Razlog, par des soldats grecs du 19me régiment, VII-ème division, dont le courrier a été intercepté 14/27 juillet 1913. Témoignages des citoyens paisibles de Serrès, victimes des atrocités grecques et sauvés par miracle* (Sofia, 1913), 8-9.

² Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Report of the International Commission*, 148.

³ See Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). Charges and countercharges of Balkan Wars and World War I atrocities were published also in *Atrocités bulgares en Macédoine. (Faits et Documents). Exposé de la Commission d'enquête de l'Association Macédonienne rendue sur les lieux* (Athens, 1913); Commission Interalliée, *Rapports et enquêtes de la Commission Interalliée sur les violations du droit des gens, commises en Macédoine orientale par*

This dissertation challenges the widely held view that there is something morbidly distinctive about violence in the Balkans. It subjects this notion to scrutiny by examining how inhabitants of the embattled former Ottoman region of Macedonia endured a particularly violent period: the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 and the First World War. My research reveals instead that members of this “local population,” although ethnically divided, were not inclined to perpetrate wartime violence against one another. Though they often identified with rival national camps, inhabitants of Macedonia were typically willing neither to kill their neighbors nor to die over those differences. They preferred to pursue priorities they considered more important, including economic advancement, education, and security of their properties, all of which were likely to be undermined by internecine violence. National armies from Balkan countries adjacent to geographic Macedonia and their associated paramilitary forces were instead the perpetrators of violence against civilians. And in this, it will be argued, they were little different from armed forces of the era throughout the Western world.

Beginning almost exactly 100 years ago, the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 were, after all, the only major conflict to have occurred in Europe within the recent memory of Europeans who were yet to face the outbreak in 1914 of continental, eventually global, war. The Balkan Wars and the First World War together proved decisive for the political fate of the Balkan peoples, over 6 million of whom remained under

les armées Bulgares (Paris, 1919); L. Miletitch, *Documents relatifs aux actions antibulgares des pouvoirs Serbs et Grecs en Macedoine au cours de l'année 1912-1913* (Sofia: P. Glouchcoff, 1930).

Ottoman rule until 1912.⁴ The postwar consequences for the nation-states that inherited this large population have been long and well explored. Yet scholarship focusing on the wars themselves within the region has been curiously narrow in scope. Publication outside the Balkans since the 1930s has focused almost exclusively on the wars' military and diplomatic dimensions.⁵ Little has been written outside the region that explores in any depth how this set of wars in the Balkans affected local societies. It was, however, precisely the disturbing ways in which war and society were presumed to interact in the Balkans during the second decade of the twentieth century that subsequently shaped the enduring image of the region as a nest of overpowering ethnic hatreds and of a particularly savage brand of violence. Moreover, divergent understandings within the successor Balkan states of how the wars affected people who lived in the territories contested between 1912 and 1918 are at the heart of starkly contradictory national narratives.

As the first sustained English-language study to focus primarily on the social dimensions of the war years of 1912-1918, this dissertation aims to refocus these received images of local violence. It does so by examining how the majority Orthodox Christian population in geographic Macedonia responded to the

⁴ This number accords with figures given both in Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims 1821-1922* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1995), 135 and in Carnegie Endowment, *Report of the International Commission*, 418.

⁵ Ernst Helmreich, *The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars, 1912-1913* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1938); Alan Palmer, *The Gardeners of Salonika* (London: Deutsch, 1965); Alexandre S. Mitrakos, *France in Greece during World War I: A Study in the Politics of Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982); George B. Leon, *Greece and the First World War: From Neutrality to Intervention, 1917-1918* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1990); David Dutton, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Britain and France in the Balkans in the First World War* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998); E.J. Erickson, *Defeat in Detail: The Ottoman Army in the Balkans, 1912-1913* (London: Praeger Publishers, 2003); and finally the series of works by Richard Hall, *Bulgaria's Road to the First World War* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1996); *The Balkan Wars 1912-1913: Prelude to the First World War*, (London: Routledge, 2000); and *Balkan Breakthrough: The Battle of Dobro Pole 1918* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010) are all squarely within this mold.

extraordinary situation of living between a rapidly shifting set of military lines and national borders. Their experience offers a unique vantage point that sheds new light, not only on the nature and causes of violence in the Balkans, but on the evolution of twentieth-century wartime violence in general.

The Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, the First World War, and Geographic Macedonia

The Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 and the First World War marked the transformation of Macedonia from a longstanding dominion of the Ottoman Empire into a borderland uneasily divided between Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia (integrated into the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes soon after World War I.) The wars also concluded a decades-long competition between these relatively young Balkan nation-states over Ottoman Macedonia, a nationalist competition that occurred as the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire was widely perceived to be in decline and losing its grip on its remaining European territories. At stake for the Empire's Balkan neighbors during the late imperial period were the loyalties of Orthodox Christian Ottoman subjects in the contested region. Funding and volunteers poured into Ottoman Macedonia from private organizations and from governmental institutions in Bulgaria and Greece, and to a lesser extent from Serbia. They supported schools, churches, cultural institutions, and even irregular armed bands. All of these efforts were primarily aimed at convincing the linguistically heterogeneous Orthodox Christian population of Ottoman Macedonia to consider themselves, by persuasion or by force, either as Bulgarians, or Greeks, or Serbs. The competition over Macedonia between proponents of Bulgaria and Greece was particularly intense. Nevertheless,

heightened Ottoman vulnerabilities in 1912 encouraged the governments of Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, and Montenegro to set aside their mutual distrust and form an aggressive military alliance against the Ottoman Empire.

Claiming to liberate the Ottoman Christians of Europe from increasing maltreatment, in October 1912 the armies of the Balkan Alliance invaded the Ottoman Empire's European territories, Macedonia included. Their joint invasion launched what became known as the First Balkan War. The Balkan Alliance stunned observers with the rapid military success it achieved against the Ottoman army. Already by the beginning of December 1912, the Balkan states' armies pushed Ottoman forces out of almost all of the Empire's vast remaining European territory. This included all of geographic Macedonia, comprised of its Aegean, Vardar, and Pirin regions. But the Balkan states' rapid victories over the Ottoman Empire did nothing to resolve the longstanding disputes between Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia, each of which now occupied a portion of geographic Macedonia. Indeed, the tensions between them resurfaced with a new urgency once their national armies faced each other directly in the contested region. The Second Balkan War, which began at the end of June 1913, was thus a war centered in Macedonia over the spoils of the Balkan states' victory. Greece and Serbia, aided by Montenegro and eventually also by Romania and the Ottoman Empire itself, all fought against and quickly defeated Bulgaria's effort to take all of Vardar Macedonia from Serbia and most of Aegean Macedonia from Greece. Bulgaria now lost much of the Aegean and Vardar territory it had initially gained in the First Balkan War. Its government saw the geopolitical upheaval portended by the outbreak of the First World War as an opportunity to

rectify what Bulgarians called the “national catastrophe” they had suffered in 1913. Initially weighing offers of territorial rewards from both the Central Powers and the Entente, Bulgaria joined with Germany and Austria-Hungary for the third campaign against Serbia launched in September 1915. Bulgaria concentrated its advance against Serbia and subsequent occupation in the Vardar Macedonian territory it felt it had unfairly lost in 1913. In addition, Bulgarian forces soon occupied the eastern part and for a time a western salient of neutral Greece’s newly won Aegean Macedonian territory. There they faced off against primarily French, British, and Serbian Entente forces who occupied the central and western parts. Greece ended its neutrality and officially joined the Entente in July 1917 to fight against Bulgaria and its Austro-German allies. Beyond the involvement of Western and Central European forces, then, the First World War can also be seen in local political terms as a third installment of the Balkan Wars. Bulgaria again tried and ultimately failed to gain from Greece and Serbia the Macedonian territory it felt that it deserved. Existing scholarship has long noted the geopolitical significance of the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 in contributing to the tensions that brought about the First World War, whose cost in military casualties was far greater.⁶

But the historical significance of these conflicts also comes from the costs they exacted from the civilian populations. They weighed heavily on the Balkan peoples inhabiting geographic Macedonia, the only territory to have been the site of frontlines in all three conflicts – the two Balkan Wars and the First World War.

Available figures indicating the extent of Balkan military losses are staggering in

⁶ See Samuel R. Williamson, Jr., *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1991), 124-144; Hall, *Balkan Wars 1912-1913*, 142-143; and Hall, *Balkan Breakthrough*, 27-29.

their own right. Up to 18 percent of men mobilized in Bulgaria's army lost their lives to combat or disease during the two Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, while the First World War claimed around 20 percent of mobilized Bulgarian and 40 percent of mobilized Serbian soldiers' lives.⁷ In the First Balkan War alone, combat and disease took the lives of up to 125,000 Ottoman soldiers, comprising over 40 percent of Ottoman forces deployed then in the Balkans.⁸

Yet those military figures say nothing directly about the toll taken by the wars on civilians between these shifting front lines. Their experiences constitute the focus of this dissertation. Contemporary and retrospective accounts give qualitative evidence that noncombatant men, women, and children in Macedonia were the victims of murder, torture, arson, plunder, rape, deportation, and forced labor on a large scale. Existing estimates, however incomplete, give us some indication of the scale of suffering endured by civilians in the Balkans and in Macedonia in particular between 1912 and 1918. Civilian deaths in World War I from famine, disease, and violence appear to have run into the hundreds of thousands for each country holding Macedonian territory at the start of the war. The losses comprised 10-14 percent of Serbia's population, 2-6 percent of Bulgaria's population, and over 3 percent of Greece's population.⁹ For Serbia and especially Bulgaria, many of those deaths

⁷ Calculations based on Bulgarian military deaths and total forces mobilized in the Balkan Wars given in Hall, *Balkan Wars 1912-1913*, 16, 108, 135; for Bulgaria in World War I, Hall, *Balkan Breakthrough*, 41, 174; for Serbia in World War I, Liebmann Hersch, "La mortalité causée par la guerre mondiale," *Metron: International Journal of Statistics* 5, no.1 (1925): 14-20.

⁸ Erickson, *Defeat in Detail*, 52, 329.

⁹ The calculations of percentages use the population figures reported after the Second Balkan War in Carnegie Endowment, *Report of the International Commission*, 418. On civilians deaths in Serbia, see Liebmann Hersch, "La mortalité causée par la guerre mondiale," *Metron: International Journal of Statistics* 7, no.1 (1927): 65-76 for the lower figure; Michael Clodfelter, *Warfare and Armed Conflicts: A Statistical Reference to Casualty and Other Figures, 1500-2000*, 2nd ed. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2002), 787 for the higher figure. On Bulgaria, see B. Uralanis, *Wars and Population* (Moscow:

would have occurred among civilians from parts of the country other than Macedonia, but it appears that most of Greece's civilian losses in World War I were over 130,000 people from the Greek part of Macedonia. Thus, while civilian deaths accounted for around 3 percent of Greece's total population, they seem to have accounted for over 7 percent of the population in the Macedonian territory annexed in 1913.¹⁰

Although overall figures for civilian deaths in geographic Macedonia are not available for the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, the profusion of descriptive accounts suggests that they too were significant. More information is available about the waves of refugees created by these initial conflicts. Taken together, between 5 and 15 percent of Christians originally living in the Ottoman *vilayets* of Manastir, Selanik, and Kosova (the *vilayets* encompassing the geographic region of Macedonia) abandoned their homes during the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 alone. Up to 300,000 refugees from Macedonia resulting from both the Balkan Wars and the First World War may have ended up in Bulgaria and in Greece.¹¹ Although not the focus of this dissertation, geographic Macedonia's ethnically diverse Muslim inhabitants died and

Progress Publishers, 1971), 268 for the lower figure; Clodfelter, *Warfare and Armed Conflicts*, 788 for the higher figure. On Greece, see Clodfelter, *Warfare and Armed Conflicts*, 787 for a lower figure; Hersch, "La mortalité" (1927), 80-81 for a higher figure.

¹⁰ The calculation of 7 percent civilian dead out of the population in Greek Macedonia relies on the figure given in Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile*, 162, for the 1911 population of the former Ottoman area taken by Greece in 1913. This figure by the time of World War I would have changed – probably declined on net – due to death and in- and out-migration related to the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913. This, as well as the fact that Epirus and the islands that Greece annexed in 1913 were not the site of these civilian World War I deaths, suggests that the true civilian death rate in Greek Macedonia during World War I may have been considerably higher than 7 percent.

¹¹ The calculation of percentages uses the total number of Greek and Bulgarian Orthodox living in the three *vilayets* in 1911 given in McCarthy, *Death and Exile*, 135. For the range of estimates of Christian refugees fleeing to Bulgaria and Greece embodied in the calculations, see Dimitrije Djordjević, "Migrations during the 1912-1913 Balkan Wars and World War One," in *Migrations in Balkan History*, ed. Ivan Ninić (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 1989), 116; Carnegie Endowment, *Report of the International Commission*, 154; and Professeurs de l'Université de Sophia, *Réponse à la brochure des professeurs des universités d'Athènes, "Atrocités bulgares en Macédoine"* (Sofia: Imprimerie de la cour royale, 1913), 92-94.

became refugees at least as often as their Christian counterparts, especially as a result of the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913.¹² As the body of this dissertation will make clear, these refugees, whether Christian or Muslim, typically fled for their lives in quite justified terror of actions being committed against them by the armies and other state authorities of Greece, Serbia, or Bulgaria, and by paramilitary forces operating in tandem with one or another of those armies.

Wartime Violence, Balkan and European

The Balkan Wars were the first wars fought on European soil after the landmark Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907. The Hague Conventions were among the earliest agreed provisions to create a body of international law that among other things would set limits on how armies could treat each other and the populations of enemy territories they occupied. The articles of the Conventions bearing on military conduct toward enemy soldiers and civilians codified older informal ideals that had gained increasing acceptance as norms among European states since the sixteenth century.¹³ But, as Geoffrey Parker acknowledges, “those restrictions have been breached at regular intervals” over the same period and since.¹⁴ Indeed, it seems that the European military thinkers and practitioners who developed the conceptual distinction between soldier and civilian over several centuries, as well as those who invoked it to some extent in the 1899 and 1907 Conventions, did so less because of an

¹² See McCarthy, *Death and Exile*, 135-164.

¹³ The essays in Michael Howard, George J. Andreopoulos, and Mark R. Shulman, eds., *The Laws of War: Constraints in Warfare in the Western World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994) make this point clearly.

¹⁴ Geoffrey Parker, “Early Modern Europe,” in Howard, Andreopoulos, and Shulman, eds., *The Laws of War*, 58.

overriding concern to protect civilians than for the purpose of spelling out a distinction between lawful and unlawful combatants. Their primary goal was to specify how armies were entitled to protect themselves from unlawful combatants.¹⁵

But the fact that protecting civilians was not the main impetus for the first codifications of the laws of war at the turn of the twentieth century did not discourage leaders of a burgeoning international peace movement from seeing their hopes advanced by the Hague Conventions.¹⁶ Hence the particular dismay of these leaders upon observing not only the outbreak of the first wars on the European Continent since the Conventions but also the many ways in which the belligerents violated the newly codified international legal restraints on their behavior in war. Probably the single most influential expression of this dismay was the aforementioned publication in 1914 of a *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars* by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, an organization based in Washington, D.C., that had been founded only a few years before.¹⁷ The report, as its title suggests, was the collective work of a commission of prominent European and American intellectuals and politicians of generally liberal inclination recruited on behalf of the Carnegie Endowment during the Second Balkan War in 1913. They included a member of the French senate, Baron d'Estournelles de Constant, a member of France's Chamber of Deputies, M. Justin Godart, two British journalists, Francis W. Hirst and Henry Noel Brailsford, a member of the Russian

¹⁵ See Geoffrey Best, *Humanity in Warfare* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 157-215, and Karma Nabulsi, *Traditions of War: Occupation, Resistance, and the Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), especially 80, 175-176.

¹⁶ Best, *Humanity in Warfare*, 131-133.

¹⁷ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars* (Washington, D.C.: 1914).

Duma, Pavel Milyukov, a Professor of Education at Columbia University, Samuel T. Dutton, and professors of law from Austria and Germany. Prompted by disturbing reports of atrocities committed during the First Balkan War and by hints that new atrocities were occurring during the second war, members of the commission traveled in August 1913 to Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire to try to assess in person what had happened. Their detailed and conscientious investigation implicated all warring sides in failing first to do everything possible to prevent war and then in violating “[e]very clause in international law relative to war on land and to the treatment of the wounded.”¹⁸ The evidence they assembled and promptly published remains an important contemporary source on the treatment of civilians during the Balkan Wars.

The report’s authors viewed their sobering findings in part as a salutary lesson about the destructiveness of war and hatred that was applicable to the entire world, and in particular to European countries engaged in arms races, not just to the Balkans. As Columbia University president Nicholas Murray Butler wrote in its preface, “[i]f the minds of men can be turned even for a short time away from passion, from race antagonism and from national aggrandizement to a contemplation of the individual and national losses due to war and to the shocking horrors which modern warfare entails, a step and by no means a short one, will have been taken toward the substitution of justice for force in the settlement of international differences.”¹⁹ “[T]hat war suspended the restraints of civil life, inflamed the passions that slumber in time of peace, destroyed the natural kindness between neighbors, and set in its

¹⁸ Ibid., 13.

¹⁹ Ibid., iii.

place the will to injure,” the authors wrote elsewhere, “is everywhere the essence of war.” But the authors also conveyed their sense that the horrors they recorded reflected a particular proclivity among the peoples of the Balkans toward “extreme barbarity” in warfare, which was “a local circumstance which has its root in Balkan history.”²⁰ The authors also identified “the common feature which unites the Balkan nations” as a tendency for entire populations, not only soldiers, to engage in violence whose brutality was “heightened by mutual knowledge and the old hatreds and resentments they cherished.”²¹

Such ideas about the violent propensities of the Balkan peoples, according to Maria Todorova, were central to a modern global discourse about the region that she has called *balkanism*.²² Todorova locates the beginnings of that discourse in the nineteenth century when Westerners began to write popular accounts of their travels in the Balkans. But she identifies the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 as a formative moment in the development of balkanism, when “[t]he ‘civilized world’ ... was first seriously upset with the Balkans.”²³ The discourse of balkanism only became more entrenched over the twentieth century and produced generic terms such as “balkanization,” which suggested that the Balkans represented an archetype for seemingly inscrutable and unending fragmentation and conflict.²⁴ Thus, by the 1990s, international commentary on Balkan politics that tried to make sense of the

²⁰ Ibid, 108.

²¹ Ibid., 148.

²² Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). The influence of Edward Said’s term “Orientalism” is unmistakable in Todorova’s coinage of “balkanism,” but Todorova also emphasizes the significant differences between the two discourses and their historical contexts, including most importantly the Balkans’ concrete reality as a geographic region, the lack of a history of Western colonial rule in the Balkans, and the dominant image of the Balkans as a bridge between West and East rather than as the West’s ontological ‘other.’ Ibid., 11-20.

²³ Ibid., 3.

²⁴ Ibid., 32-36.

wars raging in the former Yugoslavia could and did readily draw on widespread notions about peculiarly “Balkan” ancient hatreds and cultural predispositions toward brutal violence.²⁵

Subsequent scholarship has questioned Todorova’s notion that the nature of discourse in the modern period about the Balkans has been uniformly pejorative.²⁶ For example, Eugene Michail has shown that political preferences could complicate British attitudes even towards the subject of violence in the Balkans. Many Britons were willing to forgive violence on the part of Ottoman Christians against Muslims, especially before the Balkan Wars. The inter-Christian violence that marked the Second Balkan War was unforgivable by comparison. Serbs, allied to the British during the First World War, gained a heroic image, while Bulgarians fell out of favor.²⁷ Nevertheless, all scholars who have studied the subject have agreed that, despite any variations over time and place and despite any counter-narratives, the dominant image of the Balkans for at least a century has been a negative one that in particular associates the region with atavistic violence.²⁸

²⁵ Examples include Robert Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1993); Tim Judah, *The Serbs: History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 83; Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 4-6 criticizes George Kennan’s introductory essay to the republication of the Carnegie commission’s report on the Balkan Wars, *The Other Balkan Wars: A 1913 Carnegie Endowment Inquiry in Retrospect*, (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment, 1993) for embodying this facile understanding as well.

²⁶ See Eugene Michail, *The British and the Balkans: Forming Images of Foreign Lands, 1900-1950* (London: Continuum, 2011) and Andrew Hammond, *The Debated Lands: British and American Representations of the Balkans* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007).

²⁷ Michail, *The British and the Balkans*, 79-102.

²⁸ Besides the works cited already, important works on this subject include Milica Bakic-Hayden, “Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia,” *Slavic Review* 54 (Winter 1995): 917-931; K.E. Fleming, “Orientalism, the Balkans, and Balkan Historiography,” *The American Historical Review*, 2000 105:(4), 1218-1233; Mary Neuberger, *The Orient Within: Muslim Minorities and the Negotiation of Nationhood in Modern Bulgaria* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004). Some of these authors explore how residents of the Balkans themselves have often selectively absorbed aspects of these negative stereotypes and directed them against people within the Balkans whom they perceive to be more ‘oriental’ or even ‘Balkan’ than themselves.

This dissertation, while informed by the recent scholarship that has criticized problematic discourse regarding the Balkans, goes a step further. In its focused reassessment of the fateful events of 1912-1918, so influential in shaping the world's views about violence in the Balkans, it provides a more historically grounded alternative to pejorative assumptions. Inhabitants of local communities in Macedonia, as anywhere else, had their political rivalries and frictions, some of which were related to ethno-religious or national differences. But the following chapters will argue that their behavior was far more complex and on the whole far less violent than would be concluded from the Carnegie Commission's initially cited judgment that "the populations" of Macedonia "mutually slaughtered and pursued" each other.²⁹ Instead, the authors of wartime abuses in geographic Macedonia were primarily the armies of the neighboring Balkan countries that invaded the former Ottoman region in 1912, joined during the First World War by their Western and Central European allies. Members of paramilitary formations, themselves closely associated with the armies of the Balkan nation-states, also participated in the wartime abuses. Whether the paramilitaries originated from Macedonia or, as was often the case, from neighboring countries, most inhabitants of geographic Macedonia resented and ostracized rather than embraced them.

This dissertation is thus not an argument that peoples of the Balkans were inherently peaceful, much less that anyone outside of the Balkans was responsible for the violence that occurred there (except of course to the extent that they participated in it during the First World War.) Nor is it an argument that in some way implicates pernicious, cynical political "elites" as against the innocent, ordinary "people." After

²⁹ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Report of the International Commission*, 148.

all, most of the soldiers who generally carried out crimes against noncombatants in Macedonia were quite “ordinary” young men from the belligerent Balkan countries of Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia (as well as those from Western and Central European armies during the First World War.) Instead, this study calls attention to a contrast in mentalities between most inhabitants of multi-ethnic imperial territories, on the one hand, and citizens of post-imperial countries founded on the principle of the ethnic nation-state, on the other. Ethnic violence in the Balkans was a modern phenomenon that accompanied and followed the nineteenth-century rise of nation-states in the region.³⁰ In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, agents of nation-states had been socialized to understand ethnic violence as normal or even necessary. During the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 and the First World War, they came into increasing contact with the inhabitants of an imperial territory, Macedonia, who largely did not accept the justification of this type of violence.

Continuities in international rivalries, most prominently Bulgaria’s frustrations over its losses to Greece and Serbia in 1913 and Austro-Serb tensions, have led scholars to treat the Macedonian front of the First World War as a straightforward sequel to the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913.³¹ This historiographic emphasis on continuities between the Balkan Wars and the First World War follows from a focus on high-level military and diplomatic dimensions of the wars as they related to the Balkans and Macedonia in particular. By shifting the focus from those

³⁰ This conclusion is now commonplace in scholarship on the Balkans, and is expressed with particular eloquence in the survey by Mark Mazower, *The Balkans: A Short History* (New York: The Modern Library, 2000).

³¹ Richard Hall’s series of publications cited above – *The Balkan Wars* which examines the wars of 1912-1913, *Bulgaria’s Road to the First World War* which focuses on the short period in between the Balkan Wars and the First World War, and *Balkan Breakthrough* which covers the First World War – constitute the most detailed example of this tendency.

dimensions to the ways in which war affected people who lived between the rapidly changing border lines and front lines, this dissertation will reveal sharp discontinuities in the nature of violence that civilians endured over that six-year period.

Moreover, rather than constituting unique forms of “Balkan” violence, these changes in the nature of violence against civilians closely tracked changes occurring elsewhere in Europe during the same period. Numerous cases of looting, arson, rape and executions of civilians had already occurred in wars throughout the nineteenth century, starting with Napoleonic campaigns in Italy and the Dutch provinces and Russian counter-campaigns in France all the way through the Franco-Prussian War. Some such cases were given justification as reprisals imposed on civilians for resistance, but many occurred even without such a justification.³² As historian of international law Adam Roberts sums up developments in nineteenth century Europe, “the idea that there was in the nineteenth century anything remotely like a golden age of the laws of war is historically untenable.... The laws of war had their value in the nineteenth century as they did later. However, if there was any progress at all in their application, it was halting and unsteady; and their codification, including at The Hague in 1899 and 1907, left many problems unsolved.”³³

The unsolved problems did first appear in Europe during the Balkan Wars in 1912-1913, but they resurfaced with similar crimes of executions, arson, pillage, and

³² Nabulsi, *Traditions of War*, 22-37. Gunther Rothenberg, “The Age of Napoleon,” in Howard, Andreopoulos, and Shulman, eds., *The Laws of War*, 97 confirms this for the Napoleonic period, even though his article emphasizes the normative power that “customary law restraining conduct in war” held. On the Franco-Prussian War, see also Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War: the German Invasion of France, 1870-1871* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962), 378-381, and Geoffrey Wawro, *The Franco-Prussian War: the German Conquest of France in 1870-1871* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 279-280.

³³ Adam Roberts, “Land Warfare: From Hague to Nuremberg,” in Howard, Andreopoulos, and Shulman, eds., *The Laws of War*, 119.

rape committed against civilians by German forces in Belgium and northern France and by Austro-Hungarian forces in Serbia during the opening months of the First World War.³⁴ In explaining Habsburg Army crimes during the invasion and occupation of Serbia, Jonathan Gumz's recent study implicates a backward-looking desire by Habsburg officers to resurrect an idealized "bureaucratic-absolutist" dominion. Notions of mass politics and national mobilization, epitomized by Serbia according to these Habsburg officers, represented a dangerous threat to the European order that must be eradicated.³⁵ In employing very much the same kinds of violence against civilians during the Balkan Wars, Balkan government and army leaders by contrast were motivated by the very modern ideologies that the Habsburg officers sought to prevent from taking hold in Europe. They believed that a state legitimately embodied the common interests of its core nation. Heterogeneous elements inherently posed a potential threat to the nation-state's consolidation and seemed to present a perennial temptation for foreign countries to undermine its sovereignty by intervening in the name of protecting minorities.³⁶ Tying together these diverse motivations of imperial and national elites was what Charles Maier calls the impulse

³⁴ The 1914 German actions in Belgium are documented extensively in John Horne and Alan Kramer, *The German Atrocities of 1914: a History of Denial* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001). Jonathan E. Gumz, *The Resurrection and Collapse of Empire in Habsburg Serbia, 1914-1918* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009) less extensively discusses such crimes by the Habsburgs in Serbia, though he does not mention whether or not rapes occurred.

³⁵ Gumz, *Resurrection and Collapse of Empire*, 1-3, 7-8, 10-15, 20-23.

³⁶ Mark Biondich, *The Balkans: Revolution, War, and Political Violence since 1878* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 7-11; Carole Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878-1938* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 5-15, 22-47, 361-362.

of “territoriality” among modern governments, the ambition to strengthen the state’s capacity to fully control all of its “space inside the frontier.”³⁷

Historians studying other fronts of the First World War have increasingly recognized this war as a watershed for the bureaucratization of violence against civilians and for demographic engineering in Europe, epitomized by forced migration and organized internments of civilians in camps. These features, previously assumed to be largely a phenomenon in Europe from World War II, originated in significant degree during the First World War.³⁸ The present study builds on this growing consensus to suggest a more precise specification for the causes and timing of this shift. The change generally did not occur immediately at the outset of the First World War. In Macedonia, it resulted instead from the evolution of the war from one of relatively rapid mobility (in this respect similar to the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913) to one characterized by trench warfare along the quite immobile Macedonian Front and general expectations of a long war of attrition. Studying the First World War as it followed the Balkan Wars allows us to see more clearly how violence against civilians evolved during this period.

³⁷ Charles Maier, “Consigning the Twentieth Century to History: Alternative Narratives for the Modern Era,” *American Historical Review* 105, no. 3 (June 2000): 819. As applied to the Balkan context, see John R. Lampe, *Balkans into Southeastern Europe: A Century of War and Transition* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 7-8.

³⁸ See Matthew Stibbe, “The Internment of Civilians by Belligerent States during the First World War and the Response of the International Committee of the Red Cross,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, 41:1 (2006), 5-19; Norman M. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Eric Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign against Enemy Aliens during World War I* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Annette Becker, *Oubliés de la Grande Guerre : humanitaire et culture de guerre 1914-1948. Populations occupées, déportés civils, prisonniers de guerre* (Paris: Hachette Littératures, 1998) ; Gumz, *Resurrection and Collapse of Empire*.

National Identity, Indifference, and Other Priorities

This dissertation also offers a new approach to the emergence of modern nationalism, a major concern among historians of Eastern and Central Europe. Nationalism has elicited particularly keen interest among scholars who have focused on the region of Macedonia, perhaps because of the fateful and sometimes bloody role that four contending national movements – Macedonian, Bulgarian, Greek, and Serbian – have played in its modern history. Historians writing in local Balkan languages on the social aspects of the Balkans Wars of 1912-1913 and the First World War in Macedonia have long recognized the centrality of nationalism to the conflicts, but have themselves been divided according to the influence of the competing national narratives. Most have until recently tended to highlight abuses committed by the other side, ignore or absolve their own side of the same sorts of deeds, or attempt to document the preponderance of one or another national group within Macedonia.³⁹ This body of scholarship has nonetheless been valuable in bringing to light specific detail about the wartime experiences of local civilians in Macedonia, a feature that is almost completely lacking in studies published in the West that examine this set of wars in the region.⁴⁰ It has also pointed to the use that

³⁹ Examples are Ivan Katardžiev, *Istorija na Makedonskiot Narod: Makedonija Megju Balkanskite i Vtorata Svetska Vojna (1912-1941)* (Skopje: Institut za Natsionalna Istorija, 2000); Petar Stojanov, *Makedonija vo vremeto na Balkanskite i Prvata svetska vojna (1912-1918)* (Skopje: Institut za nacionalna istorija, 1969); Etaireia Ellinikou Logotehnikou kai Istorikou Arheiou, *I Ellada ton Valkanikon Polemon, 1910-1914* (Athens: Etaireia Ellinikou Logotehnikou kai Istorikou Arheiou, 1993); Dimitŭr Gotsev, *Natsionalno-osvoboditelnata borba v Makedoniia 1912-1915* (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Bŭlgarskata Akademiia na Naukite, 1981); Momchil Ionov, "Bŭlgarskata Armiiia i Kulturnite Protsesi v Makedoniia prez Balkanskite Voini, 1912-1913 Godina" *Voennioistoricheski Sbornik*, 65, no. 2 (1996): 53-64; Natsionalen Tsentŭr Po Voenna Istoriiia, *Natsionalnoosvoboditelnite Borbi na Bŭlgarite ot Makedoniia I Odrinska Trakiia Prez Balkanskata Voina (1912-1913)* (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Ministerstvoto na Otbranata "Sv. Georgi Pobedonosets", 1994).

⁴⁰ There are several partial exceptions to the neglect of social history on the topic among Western publications. L.L. Farrar, "Aggression versus Apathy: The Limits of Nationalism During the Balkan Wars, 1912-1913" *East European Quarterly*, 37, no. 3 (2003), 257-80; Victor Roudometof, "The

could be made of the rich and relevant primary sources available in Balkan archives for such social history. Yet few historians working in local languages have taken into account recent social theory, which emphasizes the historically contingent and constructed nature of national communities, when studying the case of Macedonia during the Balkan Wars and the First World War.⁴¹

Some recent scholarship has applied to the case of Macedonia a now large body of theory arguing that nations are primarily modern social constructs.⁴² Using those theoretical insights as well as empirical research in archives and in the field,

Social Origins of Balkan Politics: Nationalism, Underdevelopment, and the Nation-State in Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria, 1880-1920" *Mediterranean Quarterly*, 11, no.3 (2000), 144-63; George B. Leon, *The Greek Socialist Movement and the First World War: The Road to Unity* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1976); Eyal Ginio, "Mobilizing the Ottoman Nation During the Balkan Wars (1912-1913): Awakening from the Ottoman Dream," *War in History*, 12, no. 2 (2005), 156-177 all deal with aspects of home front societies in Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, or the Ottoman Empire (but not Macedonia itself). Theodora Dragostinova, *Between Two Motherlands: Nationality and Emigration among the Greeks of Bulgaria, 1900-1949* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011) and James Frusetta, "Bulgaria's Macedonia: Nation-Building and State-Building, Centralization and Autonomy in Pirin Macedonia, 1903-1952" (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 2006) devote some illuminating but limited attention to the wartime period of 1912-1918 in Macedonia as part of larger studies covering much longer periods. Finally, Katrin Boeckh, *Von den Balkankriegen zum Ersten Weltkrieg: Kleinstaatenpolitik und ethnische Selbstbestimmung auf dem Balkan* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1996) focuses to a considerable extent on how Greek, Serbian, and Bulgarian governments approached the diverse populations they incorporated during the first year following the Second Balkan War with similar goals of national homogenization and on the often harsh policies that resulted from this mindset.

⁴¹ This is not to say that they have failed to take into account such theoretical insights when dealing with other historical periods. Historians writing in local Balkan languages and dealing with the broader sweep of the history of the region or with periods other than the extremely sensitive conflicts of 1912-1918 have indeed increasingly been challenging the strictures of their respective national narratives. A rare example of social history of the wartime period of 1912-1922 itself that tries both to undermine the nationalist narrative of the author's own country and to highlight cases where his country's forces committed atrocities against civilians of other ethnicities is by Greek author Tasos Kostopoulos, *Polemos kai ethnokatharsi:i xechasmeni plevra mias dekaetous ethniki exormisis (1912-1922)* (Athens: Vivliorama, 2007).

⁴² The potentially relevant body of theory is too large to cite here, but among the theoretical works that have been most influential in Balkan studies are Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed. (New York: Verso, 1991); Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), and *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1986); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983); and Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

these scholars have argued that the modern concept of identification with a national community had made only limited inroads into the largely rural population of Ottoman Macedonia in the years before the First Balkan War in 1912. In other words, the sometimes violently competing efforts over the preceding decades by pro-Greek, pro-Bulgarian, pro-Serbian, and Macedonian autonomist activists to get Orthodox Christian residents of Ottoman Macedonia to identify themselves with a national collectivity are seen to have met with little success for any of the parties. This more recent scholarship has argued that before the Balkan Wars most inhabitants of the region still identified themselves primarily according to traditional categories such as religion, social or occupational status, or even immediate locality.⁴³ According to Vassilis Gounaris, those were the key axes of local tensions in the region, and it would be more fruitful to think of national labels during this time period (e.g. “Greek”, “Bulgarian”, “Serbian”) as names for constantly shifting political-economic “parties” or interest groups, rather than as broad and firmly held “identities.”

Several studies have extended their timeframe up to the present, charting the decades-long and divergent processes of national acculturation that inhabitants of geographic Macedonia experienced after the First World War, when the region was split between Greece, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria.⁴⁴ Intimidation, education systems,

⁴³ For the pre-1912 era alone, see Duncan Perry, *The Politics of Terror: The Macedonian Revolutionary Movements, 1893-1912* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1988), and Vassilis Gounaris, “Social Cleavages and National ‘Awakening’ in Ottoman Macedonia,” *East European Quarterly*, 1995 29(4): 409-426. Koliopoulos, *Brigands With a Cause* argues that even apparently nationalist irregular bandsmen from the area came from traditions of brigandage and were motivated by material gain at least as much as by supposed patriotism.

⁴⁴ Keith Brown, *The Past in Question: Modern Macedonia and the Uncertainties of Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Anastasia Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood: Passages to Nationhood in Greek Macedonia, 1870-1990* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997);

state holidays, intermarriage, and patronage opportunities acted on locals, most of whom eventually began to identify themselves nationally as Greeks, Macedonians or Bulgarians. Loring Danforth, Keith Brown, and Anastasia Karakasidou in particular have found that for some people from the region national identity can still be a fluid category even today. Their work forms part of a broader trend of scholarly literature on Eastern and Central Europe that has emphasized how recent and tenuous has been the grip of national identities in the region and with what difficulty they supplanted older forms of communal identification.⁴⁵

Implicit within much of this scholarship, however, is a dichotomy that sees populations' embrace of nationalism as a necessary component of their modernization, on the one hand, and the many cases of failure to do so well into the twentieth century as the persistence of pre-modern mentalities, on the other. Dimitris Livanios, for example, suggests that "[v]iolence and a campaign of terror of a distinctive kind ... proved to be the only effective way to determine the peasants' choice" of national affiliation.⁴⁶ This view suggests that nationalities were simply forced on peasants, whose pre-national mentalities had not comprehended new political realities and who thus did not themselves participate meaningfully as political actors. But Orthodox Christians in Macedonia had generally been exposed

Victor Roudometof, *Collective Memory, National Identity, and Ethnic Conflict: Greece, Bulgaria, and the Macedonian Question* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002); Vasilis Gounaris, Iakovos Michailides, and Giorgos Agelopoulos, eds., *Taftotites sti Makedonia* (Athens, Greece: Papazisis, 1997); Loring Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict: Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Frusetta, "Bulgaria's Macedonia."

⁴⁵ See Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); Gary Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague, 1861-1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); Keely Stauter-Halsted, *The Nation in the Village: The Genesis of Peasant National Identity in Austrian Poland, 1848-1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001).

⁴⁶ Dimitris Livanios, "Conquering the Souls: Nationalism and Greek Guerilla Warfare in Ottoman Macedonia, 1904-1908," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 23 (1999): 203.

to decades of propaganda, education, and violent pressure by rival national movements before the outbreak of the Balkan Wars in 1912. It is therefore doubtful that instances of the rural population identifying themselves as simply peasants or Orthodox establish that no national ideology had “yet” penetrated into their presumably pre-modern consciousness. Such anational assertions on the part of rural inhabitants fall instead within a broader spectrum of modern behaviors. These include also often-cited examples of residents of Macedonia who easily switched back and forth between national sides as well as some residents who exhibited passionate and consistent commitment to a single national cause.

A more recent wave of scholarship on Central and Eastern Europe has usefully suggested that “national indifference” ought itself to become the object of study as an active and modern response to the proliferation of national ideologies, rather than as a passive residue of pre-modern cultural inertia.⁴⁷ This modification points to a more realistic way to understand developments in Macedonia during the Balkan Wars and First World War. In a thoughtful synthesis of this newer literature on national indifference of which her own work is a part, Tara Zahra warns that “it is ultimately too easy to substitute one reductionist view of loyalty for another. In exploring national indifference, we should not seek to replace the nation with

⁴⁷ See Pieter M. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Pieter M. Judson and Marsha L. Rozenblit, eds., *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005); Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008); James E. Bjork, *Neither German nor Pole: Catholicism and National Indifference in a Central European Borderland* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008); and Dragostinova, *Between Two Motherlands*.

something else, assuming that other modes of collective identification were more authentic, real, compelling, or genuine than nationality.”⁴⁸

This dissertation suggests that the most effective way to avoid such a pitfall would be to shift the set of research questions away from a central focus on people’s identity or even on the degree of their national indifference, and towards a broader examination of people’s life goals and balance of priorities. In simple terms, then, rather than ask who Orthodox Christian inhabitants of Macedonia thought they *were*, this study focuses on exploring what they *wanted* as they lived through the set of destructive conflicts that most fatefully shaped their future. By more fully elucidating the fabric of people’s lives through the analysis of their balance of priorities, this approach, it can be hoped, puts in broader perspective the role that the phenomena of nationalism and national indifference played in the overall social and political developments of the period. As the following chapters will suggest, this population typically put their economic interests, education, access to political representation, and the ability to remain in their homes ahead of appeals to national sentiment even during a set of wars that were famously fueled by Balkan and wider European national rivalries.

Although this dissertation focuses on a common civilian experience with violence of the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 and the First World War, it also examines important differences between the roles of women and men. Existing literature on women’s experience during the First World War is large, but little of it has paid

⁴⁸ Tara Zahra, “Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis,” *Slavic Review* 69 (Spring 2010), 111.

attention to Southeastern Europe.⁴⁹ Moreover, the “home front” has constituted the typical spatial context in studies of women and wartime, to the comparative neglect of female civilians who lived in the vicinity of the frontlines of war for an extended period of time as occurred in wartime Macedonia. The present study explores the degree to which women shouldered important social roles and to some extent public responsibilities. Their scope, as in the West and in the more extensively studied mobilization of the home front, increased during the social disruptions occasioned by war. Here the similarities with situations more familiar in the literature on Western home fronts seem to end, less because of undoubtedly existing differences in gender roles between the Balkans and the West and more because of the unique situation of civilians living between the shifting front lines being explored in this study. By focusing on a region traversed by invading and occupying armed forces, this study explores how the discursive exclusion of women as potential political actors and their simultaneous elevation as symbols of communal honor increased their chances of becoming targets of rape but also reduced the extent to which they were targeted for other abuses such as internment in concentration camps.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ For an illuminating study dealing with Serbia, see Jovana Knežević, “Prostitutes as a Threat to National Honor in Habsburg-Occupied Serbia during the Great War,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 20, no. 2 (May 2011): 312-335. On Romania during the First World War, see Maria Bucur, “Between the Mother of the Wounded and the Virgin of Jiu: Romanian Women and the Gender of Heroism during the Great War,” *Journal of Women’s History* 12, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 30-56. For a lone but path-breaking volume on war in Eastern Europe more broadly, see Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur, eds., *Gender and War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006).

⁵⁰ Existing analyses of how wartime abuses differentially affected the sexes during World War I and before have tended to focus on rape to the exclusion of other crimes. On German rapes of Belgian women in World War I, see Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities of 1914*, 196-200; on the significance of rape in World War I era Syria, Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); on the Lebanese Civil War, Michael Johnson, *All Honourable Men: The Social Origins of War in Lebanon* (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2001). Although not about rape, Knežević, “Prostitutes as a Threat to National Honor,” also emphasizes the way in which nationalist

Scope, Sources, and Approach

The Balkan territory contested between 1912 and 1918 was not limited to the region of Macedonia (defined in this study as the area encompassing the former Ottoman *vilayets* of Manastir and Selanik and the southeastern third of the Kosova *vilayet* and divided since the First World War into Aegean, Vardar, and Pirin regions.) It also encompassed the former Ottoman regions of Thrace, Kosovo (in other words, the central and northwestern two thirds of the Kosova *vilayet*), Epirus and much of Albania, as well as much of the pre-1912 territories of Serbia, Romania, and Bulgaria. Macedonia is nonetheless a more appropriate place to start exploring the social history of the war years of 1912-1918 for two important reasons. First, it is the only region that experienced fighting during both the First and Second Balkan Wars and during the First World War. Second, Macedonia had long been the most intensely contested region between three major Balkan countries (Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia) by the time of the wars. Muslims' experiences in Macedonia during this period undoubtedly deserve further detailed study in their own right. This study nonetheless makes frequent reference to the experiences of Muslims primarily as they help to illuminate the story of the majority Orthodox Christian populations, whom the successor states of Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia specifically targeted for incorporation into their respective national bodies.

The study also focuses most closely on episodes that involved at some level the activity of Bulgarian or Greek government authorities during the period. This was

discourse in Serbia connected women's sexuality with national honor during the First World War. Irvin Cemil Schick, "Christian Maidens, Turkish Ravishers: The Sexualization of National Conflict in the Late Ottoman Period," in *Women in the Ottoman Balkans: Gender, Culture, and History*, ed. Amila Buturović and Irvin Cemil Schick (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 273-305 shows clearly that Western societies also typically linked rape in war with the notion of national humiliation.

undoubtedly the national rivalry among Balkan states over Macedonia that attracted by far the most emotional investment among nationalists. Serbian pretensions in Macedonia were serious and longstanding as well, but were decidedly of secondary importance for Serb nationalists in comparison to their preoccupations with Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁵¹

The argument relies first and foremost on archival and other materials originating from all three of the countries that today share the geographic region of Macedonia: Greece, Bulgaria, and the Republic of Macedonia. This is not done to achieve some illusory balance or reconciliation between opposed national narratives. Rather, this approach recognizes that varying political conditions and historical contingencies allowed different sorts of relevant materials to end up in different state, private, and regional archives and libraries. It also recognizes the fragmented nature of contemporary administrative sources resulting from fluctuating, discontinuous, and often short-lived national sovereignties over different parts of geographic Macedonia over the years 1912-1918. Many of the people who constitute the focus of this study would have been illiterate at the time. Insight into their behavior, attitudes, and mentalities involves the critical reading of sources with varying agendas that indirectly shed light on the situation of ordinary people in the region of Macedonia between 1912 and 1918. In order to understand the situation of civilians who lived during the wars not strictly “behind” the lines as part of any home front, but in a sense between them, the researcher must also read sources “between the lines.” Even when reading the ostensible words of a a petition from a possibly illiterate peasant

⁵¹ Charles and Barbara Jelavich, *The Establishment of the Balkan National States, 1804-1920* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977), 210; Perry, *Politics of Terror*, 16-17, 27-28.

commenting upon his situation to authorities, one must take into account the incentive for both the peasant and a hired writer to tailor the words of the petition to what they think will achieve the intended effect with their government interlocutor. The words on the page are then a refraction, not an unmediated expression, of whatever that peasant might “really” think.

Such documents created and deposited in different political environments, during different time periods, and following different discursive conventions can be instructively read against each other to reveal common threads and also gaps in understanding between different parties. The sources used for this study were sifted with this goal in mind. They come, as mentioned earlier, mainly from three different countries. They include accounts of events more or less as they happened as well as retrospective accounts. They come from a variety of governmental and private institutions including diplomatic consulates, government ministries, army units, gendarmerie, schools, and cultural associations. They also come from individual men and women of a variety of social backgrounds.

Among these sources, I draw on a number that have not to date been used by Western scholars. These include the vast materials of Bulgaria’s Central Military Archive in the town of Veliko Tŭrnovo, which have been useful in shedding light on Bulgarian military and paramilitary abuses of civilians, including mass internments during the First World War, and the motivations behind them. Perhaps surprisingly, the military archive’s holdings also offer unique access to the perspectives and initiatives taken by local civilians in Macedonia through records of correspondence regarding specific civilian complaints about Bulgarian military actions. Also

unconsulted previously are the thousands of memoirs from men and women of different walks of life that have been recorded in Bulgaria between the 1940s and the 1980s and deposited in the Central State Archive in Sofia or the regional State Archive in the Bulgarian Macedonian provincial town of Blagoevgrad. Some of these were recorded privately and then later made their way into archives, while others appear to have been solicited and recorded by employees of the archives. Many of them therefore undoubtedly bear the mark of attempts by citizens to prove their longstanding progressive-revolutionary credentials and national patriotism to the communist regime.⁵² But scrutinized with these ideological motives in mind, they nonetheless offer extremely rich details that recall much about the fabric of ordinary people's wartime lives during the second decade of the twentieth century.

In addition, a large set of recently discovered First World War letters sent back and forth between soldiers drafted into the Serbian and Bulgarian armies and their families in Vardar Macedonia has been published with some commentary by Macedonian historians but otherwise not yet incorporated into larger historical scholarship.⁵³ The letters justifiably attracted considerable attention and formed the centerpiece of a museum exhibition in Skopje in the Republic of Macedonia when they were discovered, as they offer an unparalleled window into the everyday wartime concerns of both men and women.

⁵² Keith Brown, *The Past in Question* provides an instructive discussion of the ways in which the Yugoslav Macedonian republic encouraged the institutionalization of a common national narrative by soliciting the submission of this type of memoir from citizens as a requirement for the receipt of special government pensions.

⁵³ Jasmina Najdovska, ed., *Otpretani svedoštva: Vojnički pisma od golemata vojna: 1914-1918* (Skopje: Fondacija Institut Otvoreno Opštество - Makedonija, 2008).

The most important Greek archival sources used here are the records of the General Administration of Macedonia housed in the Historical Archive of Macedonia in Thessaloniki and personal papers of prominent Greeks involved in Macedonia housed in the Gennadius Library in Athens. Previous scholars have made greater use of these sources, though not with a focus on the war years of 1912-1918 and rarely with any comparisons drawn to archival sources in neighboring states.

The chronologically organized chapters that follow reveal not only turbulent changes in the lives of civilians who lived amid shifting front lines and political boundaries, but also remarkable continuities. Chapter 1 describes how the linguistically heterogeneous Orthodox Christian populations of Ottoman Macedonia came to be the objects of competing Bulgarian, Greek, and Serb nationalist and Macedonian autonomist interpretations of their “true” identity between the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870 and the eve of the Ottoman constitutional revolution in 1908. It argues that most people’s typical eschewal of violence and their prioritization of economic advancement and education over active cultivation of ethnic identity reflected well-considered responses to modern developments rather than pre-modern mentalities.

Chapter 2 argues that, in the wake of the Ottoman (Young Turk) constitutional revolution of 1908, ordinary Orthodox Christian residents of Macedonia understood their first introduction to modern (and historically Western-derived) political principles such as liberty and equality as primarily an indigenous Ottoman development. But their optimism faded as the new Ottoman regime’s promises appeared to prove illusory. Orthodox Christians then looked hopefully in 1912 to the

invading armies of the Balkan Alliance, whose governments promised to deliver those same modern political ideals.

Chapter 3 examines the short but eventful period from December 1912, after hostilities of the First Balkan War had ended in Macedonia, through to the conclusion of the Second Balkan War in August 1913. It explores the local reaction to the First and Second Balkan Wars, which were characterized by rapidly changing front lines and by brutal, unruly violence against civilians perceived by oncoming armies and paramilitary forces as ethnic enemies. Having seen how this kind of violence was directed against their Muslim counterparts during the First Balkan War, Orthodox Christians in former Ottoman Macedonia exhibited little enthusiasm upon the outbreak of the Second Balkan War as they realized they were now likely to become victims of it themselves.

Chapter 4 treats the short and troubled period of peace between the end of the Balkan Wars and the onset of the First World War in Macedonia in September 1915. The nation-states' new citizens, even ethnic minorities, overwhelmingly showed their willingness to conform with harsh assimilative measures rather than challenge state authority or sovereignty. Their overriding priority was to continue to survive and prosper if possible in the homes where they had always lived. Nationally-minded authorities fundamentally misjudged their new ethnic minority citizens' intentions, tending to see incipient disloyalty at every turn, and began to experiment with bureaucratically planned expulsions of ethnic minorities whom they deemed undesirable on a case by case basis.

Chapter 5, in charting geographic Macedonia's step-by-step involvement in the First World War, explores how the stabilization of the front in Macedonia, as in Western Europe, created the conditions for a Europe-wide shift towards new coercive methods of dealing with untrusted populations. Military authorities now saw civilians in the vicinity of the front lines not only as potential sources of danger due to their status as ethnic minorities, but as potentially strategic sources of labor and war production in a long war of attrition. These authorities (not only Balkan in origin but also French and German) began to use their bureaucratic apparatus to intern civilians on a mass scale and with often fatal consequences.

In focusing on these six most fateful and violent years in geographic Macedonia's modern history, this study considers the challenges encountered by its civilians as they were defined by life in the vicinity of a military front, not simply in an ethnic borderland as scholars have until now usually construed the social dimensions of what is known as the Macedonian Question. Viewing civilian life defined by proximity to a military front will allow the reader to consider how, in line with changes occurring across Europe, people of the region faced forms of violence during the First World War that differed radically from those of the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 that had occurred so shortly before. But it will also suggest that their behavior throughout reflected local priorities that remained constant despite these changing forms of violence and rapidly fluctuating political conditions.

Chapter 1: Political Violence and National Identity in Late Ottoman Macedonia

British journalist and travel writer Henry Noel Brailsford describes an encounter he had in 1903 with “some boys from a remote mountain village near Ochrida” in the western part of Ottoman Macedonia:

I took them up to the ruins of the Bulgarian Tsar’s fortress which dominates the lake and the plane from the summit of an abrupt and curiously rounded hill. “Who built this place?” I asked them. The answer was significant – “The Free Men.” “And who were they?” “Our grandfathers.” “Yes, but were they Serbs or Bulgarians or Greeks or Turks?” “They weren’t Turks, they were Christians.” And this seemed to be about the measure of their knowledge.¹

Historians have cited this anecdote in order to underscore the scant penetration by the start of the twentieth century of any kind of national identity among the Orthodox Christian rural peasantry that constituted the majority of Ottoman Macedonia’s inhabitants.² But the conclusion apparently warranted by Brailsford’s encounter with the rural boys would appear to sit awkwardly with a pervasive feature of Macedonia’s social history at the beginning of the twentieth century: ethnic violence.

In fact, Brailsford’s travels in the region occurred directly after the Ottoman suppression of a failed large-scale revolt there by roughly 25,000 Christian guerillas against Muslim Ottoman authorities, an insurgency waged in the name of autonomy

¹ H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and Their Future* (London: Methuen & Co., 1906), 99-100.

² See Duncan Perry, *The Politics of Terror: The Macedonian Liberation Movements, 1893-1903* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1988), 22-23; Mark Mazower, *The Balkans: A Short History* (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), 40; Basil G. Gounaris, “Social Cleavages and National ‘Awakening’ in Ottoman Macedonia,” *East European Quarterly* 29 (Winter 1995): 421; Dimitris Livanios, “‘Conquering the Souls’: Nationalism and Greek Guerilla Warfare in Ottoman Macedonia, 1904-1908,” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 23 (1999): 198-199.

for the Macedonian population.³ The revolt, known as the Ilinden Uprising, did not primarily reflect Christian-Muslim religious tensions. Among the Orthodox Christians who took active part in the events, those who supported the Greek national cause typically joined the Ottoman authorities in helping to suppress the revolt. But those who favored the Bulgarian cause or those who considered the Macedonians to be a distinct people joined the insurgent group, the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (known in abbreviated form as VMRO). Non-combatants constituted a majority of the casualties on both sides. In other words, the insurgents disregarded to a significant extent the VMRO pledge not to attack Muslim civilians, while Ottoman authorities and allied irregular armed bands targeted large numbers of Christian civilians in reprisals.⁴ A picture of mass violence and atrocity based on ethnic animosity has emerged from events like this. Both of the seemingly contradictory images of early twentieth century Macedonia introduced above – that of a rural population with a non-national identity and that of a region plagued by nationalist violence – contain some measure of accuracy. But as this chapter will show, both images are also misleading in important ways.

³ Estimates of militant participation in the revolt vary, but the number is almost certainly in the tens of thousands. I arrive at the approximation above by excluding the smaller number of participants in an almost simultaneous action in Ottoman Thrace in the figures given by Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, 139.

⁴ Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, 139-140. Upwards of 2,000 Macedonian Christian civilians are estimated to have been killed in the revolt's suppression. Though figures for Muslim noncombatant victims of insurgent attacks are not available, anecdotal evidence suggests they were commonly targeted as well.

Ottoman Macedonia at the Turn of the Century: Ferment in a Reforming Empire

By the turn of the twentieth century, the term “Macedonia” had come into widespread use as a geographic designation for the Ottoman *vilayets* (provinces) of Manastir and Selanik and southern districts of the *vilayet* of Kosova.⁵ The region so defined faces the Aegean Sea to the southeast. Otherwise, it is landlocked – bounded by the Mesta/Nestos river to the east, by lakes Ohrid and Prespa and the Grammos and Pindus mountain ranges to the west and southwest, and by the towns of Kriva Palanka and Kumanovo and the Šar mountains to the north and northwest. Ottoman Macedonia was among the most urbanized regions in both the Ottoman-held Balkans and Balkan successor-states at the turn of the century, with over a quarter of its population living in settlements of more than 2,000 inhabitants during the 1890s.⁶ Salonika was both the largest city, with 130,000 inhabitants in 1910, and the region’s chief port and hub of long-distance trade.⁷ The only other port with any trading importance in the region was the town of Kavalla,⁸ also on the Aegean. Other urban

⁵ İpek Yosmaoğlu-Turner, “The Priest’s Robe and the Rebel’s Rifle: Communal Conflict and the Construction of National Identity in Ottoman Macedonia, 1878-1908” (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2005), 30, suggests that the delineation of a modern region with the name ‘Macedonia,’ which was never an official Ottoman territorial designation, came about during the nineteenth century as a process of cultural invention or re-invention among both European travelers and local intellectuals.

⁶ See the table in Michael Palaret, *The Balkan Economies c. 1800-1914: Evolution without Development* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 26-27.

⁷ The population figure for Salonika is taken from Nikolaos K. Moutsopoulos, *Thessaloniki, 1900-1917* (Thessaloniki: M. Molho, 1981), 23. Richard C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars 1912-1913: Prelude to the First World War* (London: Routledge, 2000), gives a figure of 120,000 in 1912.

⁸ Kavala in its Bulgarian spelling, the town has been internationally recognized since the First World War as part of Greece and for simplicity will henceforward be consistently rendered by its Greek spelling, Kavalla.

centers, the most important among them Bitola/Manastır, Skopje, and Serres,⁹ functioned as market towns, administrative centers, and military garrisons.

Nevertheless, Macedonia's population and especially its productive base were predominantly rural, despite the modest amount of light industry that existed in cities and towns whose economic role was primarily commercial. Cultivation in Macedonia's river valleys and plains by the turn of the century was marked by share-cropping farms called *çiftliks*, sometimes consisting of entire villages or groups of villages, whose mostly Muslim (Albanian or Turkish) absentee owners resided in towns and cities.¹⁰ *Çiftliks* increasingly specialized in producing cash crops that found international markets, as their owners took advantage of newly built railroad lines and investments in agricultural machinery.¹¹ Chief among these cash crops was tobacco, but cotton, opium, rice, sesame, and silk cocoons were also important.¹² The less productive farms of smallholders also produced staples such as wheat and other crops that were consumed and traded locally.¹³ Increasingly burdensome crop exactions on *çiftliks* as well as physical insecurity spurred many peasants during the second half of the nineteenth century to abandon their smallholdings and tenancies in lowland areas for cities, foreign countries, or highland villages. Inhabitants of some

⁹ Seres or Ser in its Bulgarian spelling, the town has been internationally recognized since the First World War as part of Greece and for simplicity will henceforward be consistently rendered by its Greek spelling, Serres.

¹⁰ Palairret, *Balkan Economies*, 342; John R. Lampe and Marvin R. Jackson, *Balkan Economic History, 1550-1950: From Imperial Borderlands to Developing Nations* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 283.

¹¹ Palairret, *Balkan Economies*, 343. On the positive, yet modest, effect of railroads, see also Basil C. Gounaris, *Steam Over Macedonia, 1870-1912: Socio-Economic Change and the Railway Factor* (New York: East European Monographs, Boulder, 1993) and Lampe and Jackson, *Balkan Economic History*, 301-303.

¹² Palairret, *Balkan Economies*, 343-344; Lampe and Jackson, *Balkan Economic History*, 282.

¹³ According to Lampe and Jackson, *Balkan Economic History*, 280, 282, wheat far outstripped all other crops in production in Macedonia despite its relative lack of importance among the region's exports.

of those upland settlements in the several mountainous regions of Macedonia now engaged profitably in small-scale textile manufacture and craft production, in addition to the longstanding highland specialization in transhumant stockbreeding supplemented by small-scale agriculture.¹⁴ They also traveled long distances as merchants and seasonal laborers.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the export of cash crops, the penetration of railroads, the expansion of banking and credit, and emigrants' remittances had done much to transform Macedonia's population into participants in a cash economy linked to wider markets and into consumers of imported manufactured goods.¹⁵ Indeed, as Michael Palairet has argued, the productivity and export orientation of *çiftliks*, proto-industrial activity in upland areas, and the larger internal market offered to economic output within the Ottoman Empire put Ottoman Macedonia's per capita economic production ahead of that of the neighboring Ottoman successor nation-states of Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria. The latter countries' peasants had relied more on inefficient subsistence smallholding since the first decades of their independence.¹⁶ Yet, it should be stressed, better per capita production may not have translated to more comfortable living standards for the typical inhabitant of Ottoman Macedonia in comparison with his counterparts in neighboring Balkan countries. Indeed, as Palairet suggests, precisely those more exploitative land tenure arrangements – *çiftlik* estates – and their side-effects such as the cheap labor of peasants who fled from them to cities and upland settlements were responsible for the greater production. As will be seen below, such conditions

¹⁴ Palairet, *Balkan Economies*, 76-77, 346-347.

¹⁵ Gounaris, *Steam Over Macedonia*, 168-205.

¹⁶ Palairet, *Balkan Economies*.

contributed to discontent especially among Christian inhabitants of Ottoman Macedonia.

According to the last Ottoman census taken of the region from 1906-1907, Muslims of diverse ethnic backgrounds constituted a substantial minority of over 40 percent of the roughly 2-2½ million inhabitants of Ottoman Macedonia during the first decade of the twentieth century.¹⁷ In the historically Muslim-led Ottoman Empire, the vast majority of soldiers, gendarmes, civil servants, and large landowners in the Macedonian *vilayets* were still Muslim at the turn of the twentieth century, despite nineteenth century reforms that legally opened these positions up to non-Muslims. Nevertheless, the majority of Muslims in Macedonia were, like the majority of Christians, peasants, craftsmen, or laborers of modest or humble means.

Muslims in the region were far from ethnically homogeneous. Among Muslims, Albanian-speakers predominated west of the Vardar River. Further east were Pomaks, speaking a Slavic language close to Bulgarian, and Turkish-speakers. The proportion of Muslims in the remaining European provinces of the Ottoman

¹⁷ The total population estimate of 2.4 million cited in Table 9.1 of Lampe and Jackson, *Balkan Economic History*, 281 falls within the range of prominent turn-of-the-century estimates by a Bulgarian (roughly 2.26 million) and by a Serb (roughly 2.87 million) quoted in Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars* (Washington, D.C.: 1914), 28, 30. The Ottoman 1906/7 census figures reproduced in table I.16.A in Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 166-167 suggest that the population figures of around 2½ million include all of the Kosova *vilayet*, much of which fell outside of Ottoman Macedonia. Including only the southernmost district, Prizren, from the Kosova *vilayet* from the census figures gives a total of roughly 1.84 million, surely to some extent an undercount as in a few districts females were not counted, and, as Karpat, *Ottoman Population*, 9, notes, Ottoman censuses tended generally to undercount. The lower overall number is closer, however, to a prominent contemporary Greek estimate of the total population of Ottoman Macedonia of 1.73 million that excludes the Kosova *vilayet* from the definition, quoted in Carnegie Endowment, *Report of the International Commission*, 30. The 1906/7 census figures imply that 43% of the population of Manastir and Selanik *vilayets* were Muslims; the figure rises to 45% if the entire Kosova *vilayet* is included. The Greek estimate of 1904 puts the number of “Turks” (read “Muslims”) at 37%.

Empire actually increased during the last decades of the nineteenth century.¹⁸ Territories with more pronounced Christian majorities had formed newly independent states of Greece, Serbia, Romania, and Bulgaria. The formation of those successor states plus Russian imperial expansion in former Ottoman and other predominantly Muslim territories sent large waves of Muslim refugees fleeing violence and dispossession.¹⁹ Many of these refugees (*muhacirs*) of Bosniak, Circassian, Turkish, and Tatar origins, settled in Ottoman Macedonia, where they helped to boost the proportion of Muslims in the general population. Despite the linguistic heterogeneity of Muslims in Ottoman Macedonia, such distinctions generally did not reflect distinct political groupings. Politically speaking, Muslims of different ethnic backgrounds were aware of their membership in the historically dominant religious group of the Empire, and the state in turn made no official distinctions between Muslim subjects of different ethnic backgrounds. Elite or politically active Muslims by the late nineteenth century generally showed a keen interest in preserving and strengthening the Ottoman state as well as the leading role of Muslims within it, even if, as will be seen in Chapter 2, they sometimes disagreed about the specific meaning of such goals and about how best to achieve them. Non-Ottoman contemporary sources generally referred to Ottoman Muslims in the Balkans as “Turks,” even if they were in fact not Turkish speakers. Indeed, the term “Turk” had long carried a pejorative connotation even among Ottoman Muslims, although elites involved in the Young Turk movement had more recently begun to embrace the designation. Because Muslims of diverse ethnic backgrounds usually viewed their common religious background as

¹⁸ Karpat, *Ottoman Population*, 72.

¹⁹ Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims 1821-1922* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1995), 15-126 provides an extensive exposition of these events.

more important to their political identity than their ethnicity, and because references to Muslims as “Turks” in many of the sources used in this study are often in any case inaccurate, they will usually be referred to here as “Muslims” unless they identified themselves or can otherwise clearly be identified by a more specific ethnic term.

Nor did ethnic distinctions primarily define non-Muslim populations politically in Ottoman Macedonia for most of the Empire’s history. Increasing claims among European powers to protect non-Muslim Ottoman religious communities from the eighteenth century as well as the Ottoman drive to centralize authority and rationalize administration during the nineteenth century helped to institutionalize a system whereby non-Muslim subjects were classified on an empire-wide level by their membership in a confessional community, called a *millet*.²⁰ By the mid-nineteenth century Eastern Orthodox Christians, whether living in the Balkans, Anatolia, or the Ottoman Arab lands and whatever languages they spoke, belonged to the Orthodox Christian *millet*, whose leader (*millet başı*) was the Orthodox Christian Patriarch of Constantinople. Followers of the Armenian Apostolic Church and other monophysite Christians within the Empire, whether Armenian-speaking or not, belonged to the Armenian *millet* whose Patriarch was also based in Constantinople. Jews throughout the empire belonged to the Jewish *millet* with a nominal Chief Rabbi (*Haham Başı*) in Constantinople, although the *millet*’s leadership in practice remained

²⁰ The basic work on Ottoman *millets*, which revised the understanding of their historic origins, is Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, eds., *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Function of a Plural Society, Volume I: The Central Lands* (New York: Homes & Meier Publishers, 1982). See especially the essay by Benjamin Braude, “Foundation Myths of the *Millet* System,” 69-88. For more recent works describing in greater detail the origins of a *millet* system and the processes by which religious and even sectarian affiliation increasingly came to structure the modern political identities of Ottoman subjects during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004) and Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000).

decentralized in comparison with the other *millets*. The organizing principle of the *millet*, or large communities defined by confessional association, continued in important ways to shape notions of political belonging in the Balkans through the end of the Ottoman Empire's existence and even beyond, despite the rise during that period of contending ideas of secular citizenship and nationalism.²¹

This was certainly the case for Ottoman Jews, who made up just over 3 percent of Ottoman Macedonia's total population according to the Ottoman census of 1906-1907.²² Despite their small overall numbers, the mostly Sephardic Ladino-speaking Jews in Ottoman Macedonia had a greater social visibility than their proportion of the population might suggest because they tended to live in towns and cities. In Salonika, they constituted a slight majority. Ottoman Jews, including those in the Macedonian *vilayets*, were typically considered enthusiastic and consistent supporters of the Ottoman Empire.²³ There was some truth to this perception.²⁴ As non-Muslims their rights had historically been circumscribed in some ways and at times they faced hostility and attacks (usually from Christians rather than from Muslims). Still, Ottoman Jews typically compared their situation favorably with that of their co-religionists elsewhere in Europe including neighboring Ottoman successor states. Ottoman Macedonia's Jews thus saw their interests aligned more with Muslims than with Christians and they feared the consequences of the Ottoman state's further loss of power and disintegration. They recognized nationalism as a

²¹ Kemal H. Karpat, "Millets and Nationality: The Roots of the Incongruity of Nation and State in the Post-Ottoman Era," in Braude and Lewis, eds., *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire, Vol. I*, 141-170.

²² The percentage is calculated from figures given for the *Vilayets* of Manastir and Selanik and the *Sanjak* of Prezrin in table I.16.A in Karpat, *Ottoman Population*, 166-167.

²³ Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue, *The Jews of the Balkans: The Judeo-Spanish Community, 15th to 20th Centuries* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1995), 104.

²⁴ Avigdor Levy, *The Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1992), 122-124.

cause of these threats to the Ottoman state, and were thus usually unreceptive to ideas about nationalism, including Zionism, as they related to their own community.²⁵

Although national identities did begin to take hold among groups of Orthodox Christians during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the legacy of the *millet* structure nevertheless exerted a profound influence on understandings of nationhood in the Balkans. As Victor Roudometof has observed, what became known as the Greek War of Independence during the 1820s was “conceived of as a revolution of the Orthodox *millet* against the Ottoman authority structure.” For example, many of the organizing members of the group that coordinated the revolt, *Philiki Etairia*, were Orthodox ethnic Bulgarians, not Greeks, based in the Danubian Principalities, Russia, Constantinople, and Bessarabia. One of these organizers actually enlisted 14,000 Bulgarians to fight.²⁶ The new Greek state recognized by international treaty in 1830, however, only encompassed a part of the area in which revolts against Ottoman authority occurred. Politicians from all factions soon began to articulate variations of an irredentist vision, known as the *Megali Idea* (Great Idea), of incorporating all areas where Greeks were said to live eventually into an enlarged state or federation. Greece’s first prime minister, Ioannis Kolettis, delivered a characteristic statement of this irredentist ideology in an 1844 speech to parliament:

But the Greek kingdom is not the whole of Greece, but a part of it, the smallest and poorest part of Greece. Autochthon [indigenous] then is not only an inhabitant of the kingdom, but also one from Jannina, Thessaly, Serres, Adrianople, Constantinople, Trebizond, Crete,... in general every inhabitant of land which is Greek historically and ethnically.²⁷

²⁵ Mark Mazower, *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews, 1430-1950* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 264-267.

²⁶ Victor Roudometof, *Nationalism, Globalization, and Orthodoxy: The Social Origins of Ethnic Conflict in the Balkans* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2001), 64.

²⁷ Quoted in Gerasimos Augustinos, *Consciousness and History: Nationalist Critics of Greek Society 1897-1914* (Boulder, Col: East European Quarterly, 1977), 14.

Inspired by but also reacting to the establishment of the Greek state in the 1830s and its growing irredentism afterwards, many Macedonian or Bulgarian-speaking Ottoman subjects chafed under often heavy-handed Greek cultural and administrative dominance within the Ottoman Orthodox Christian millet.²⁸ Most of the top ranks of the church hierarchy were chosen from among the elite, Greek-speaking families originating from Constantinople, where the Orthodox Patriarchate was itself based. Bishops and even priests assigned to Bulgarian and Macedonian-speaking communities often understood little of the local languages. Clergy and lay people raising those grievances eventually convinced the Porte in 1870 to grant the establishment of a separate Bulgarian Church (Exarchate) whose members would constitute a new Bulgarian *millet* within the Ottoman Empire. The Exarchate's jurisdiction initially covered the northernmost areas of present-day Bulgaria, but it was also allowed to operate bishoprics in other areas where two thirds of the Orthodox Christian population expressed the desire to join it. Through this allowance Exarchate bishoprics soon came into existence alongside those of the Patriarchate in many parts of Ottoman Macedonia. In 1872 the Ecumenical Patriarch pronounced the Exarchate schismatic on the grounds that it committed the heresy of "*filetismos*," dividing the church according to ethnic or racial criteria.

A struggle ensued between "exarchists," followers of the Exarchate, and "patriarchists," followers of the Patriarchate, typically cast in ethno-national Bulgarian and Greek terms. Nevertheless, the very fact that the newly established ecclesiastical structure, the Exarchate, stood as the preeminent Bulgarian "national"

²⁸ See R.J. Crampton, *A Short History of Modern Bulgaria* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 11-17.

institution within the Ottoman Empire testifies to the continued importance of the *millet* structure and of the unifying principle of the religious community during the age of nationalism in the Balkans. Furthermore, although Bulgarian nationalist supporters of the Exarchate considered the Slavic language spoken by the majority of Christians in Ottoman Macedonia to be Bulgarian and believed that this bolstered their claim of the essentially Bulgarian character of Macedonia, the behavior of many inhabitants did not seem to support the nationalists' assumptions. Instead, a large portion of Ottoman Macedonia's Orthodox Christians who spoke a Slavic language (Bulgarian or Macedonian) chose to remain under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate, even if that entailed continuing to attend church services in Greek. Subsequent supporters of Bulgarian and Macedonian national movements often referred to people who spoke their language but adhered to the Patriarchate or even supported the Greek cause as *grûkomani/grkomani*, or Grecomans, in other words "Greek maniacs."²⁹ The term pejoratively implied that denying one's supposedly natural national orientation by choosing to belong to a Greek institution required a dose of fanaticism or irrationality. The phenomenon of the Bulgarian-speaker who supported the Patriarchate or the Greek cause was often also represented, even by observers from outside the region, as a lonely exception, an oddity.³⁰ In fact, Grecomans were a mass phenomenon in Ottoman Macedonia, not an exceptional one, as attested by almost daily and often rather unassuming references to them in Bulgarian consular reporting on the region before the Balkan Wars. The continued adherence of so many

²⁹ The evocative and quite appropriate translation "Greek maniac" is offered by Theodora Dragostinova, *Between Two Motherlands: Nationality and Emigration among the Greeks of Bulgaria, 1900-1949* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), 1-2, 26.

³⁰ See for example Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Report of the International Commission*, 51, 170.

Bulgarian or Macedonian-speaking Christians in Ottoman Macedonia to the Patriarchate or even their support of the Greek cause should appear as no mystery, however. It reflects the continued importance of the inherited religious community structure, the *millet*.

A more radical generation of Bulgarian activists during the 1870s began to work underground not only for the release of Bulgarians from Greek cultural dominance but for the overthrow of Ottoman authority in Bulgarian lands in favor of the establishment of an independent Bulgarian state.³¹ They took advantage of the disorder created by the 1875 rebellion in Bosnia by organizing their own rebellion in 1876, known as the April Uprising. Ottoman reprisals carried out during the suppression of the uprising triggered the intervention of Russia in 1877 in favor of the insurgents. The resulting Russo-Turkish War ended in the Ottoman Empire's decisive defeat. Among the terms of the Treaty of San Stefano that Russia imposed on the Ottoman Empire in March 1878 was the creation of a large Bulgarian state that included most of Ottoman Macedonia among other former Ottoman territories. But other European Great Powers, uneasy at the prospect of such a large new state in the Balkans that they believed would be a client of Russia, called a congress later that year in Berlin with the aim of modifying the San Stefano settlement. At Berlin the Powers pressured Russia to accept a Bulgarian state drastically reduced in size. This shrunken Bulgaria did not include any part of Macedonia, which was returned to Ottoman rule. The Berlin settlement greatly disappointed Bulgarian nationalists, who felt their goals had been attained with the earlier San Stefano treaty. Subsequently,

³¹ Crampton, *Short History of Modern Bulgaria*, 17-20.

the idea of “San Stefano Bulgaria” stood for Bulgarian irredentism as the counterpart to Greece’s *Megali Idea*.

Nevertheless, Greek and Serbian nationalists were disturbed by the ambitions and success of Bulgaria, which by 1885 almost doubled its territory by adding Eastern Rumelia (roughly northeast of Ottoman Macedonia). Bulgaria’s defeat of Serbia in a short war in 1885 confirmed its recent territorial acquisition.³² To Greek nationalists in particular, the expansionism of the Slavic nations into former Ottoman territory began to look like a more immediate threat to Hellenism (Greeks and Greek cultural presence) than Ottoman rule was. Among nationalists in Greece, this disquiet was expressed prominently by the scion of an old Greek political family with roots in Macedonia, Ion Dragoumis. Dragoumis passionately argued that Greeks should focus their energies on preserving and strengthening Hellenism wherever it existed rather than expanding incrementally the borders of the small, weak Greek state if that would result in the abandonment of Greeks outside the state’s borders.³³ A Greek struggle to defend Hellenism in Macedonia, in particular, against the Slavic threat would also serve to revitalize what he saw as the moribund condition of the Greek nation itself.

Such a struggle between Balkan nation-states over Ottoman Macedonia was well under way by the time Dragoumis wrote in the first decade of the twentieth century. Greece began already during the 1870s to lend support to the Patriarchate in its struggle with the Exarchate, hoping it could head off the advance of Bulgarian

³² Charles and Barbara Jelavich, *The Establishment of the Balkan National States, 1804-1920* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977), 152-155, 165-167, 189. On Greece’s reaction specifically, see Evangelos Kofos, *Greece and the Eastern Crisis 1875-1878* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1975).

³³ For a discussion of Dragoumis’ views as exemplary of the outlook of Greek nationalists of his generation, see Augustinos, *Consciousness and History*, 84-116.

nationalism in Ottoman Macedonia.³⁴ Serious Serbian interest in claiming Ottoman Macedonia came relatively late, as it had initially focused on Bosnia-Herzegovina as an Ottoman territory in which Serbs were a plurality. But when Austria-Hungary occupied Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1878, Serbian interests turned south toward Ottoman Macedonia. There they encountered rival claimants in Bulgaria and Greece.³⁵

Competing irredentist organizations with close ties respectively to the Greek, Bulgarian, and Serbian governments formed with the aim of advancing the competing national causes in Ottoman Macedonia. Serbian activity was primarily focused on the funding of Serbian schools in Ottoman Macedonia through the establishment in Belgrade of the Society of St. Sava in 1886. However, some armed bands also began to infiltrate from Serbia into northern Ottoman Macedonia during the first decade of the twentieth century where they tangled with pro-Bulgarian bands.³⁶ In the wake of the Russo-Turkish war, highly placed Greek government officials in Athens organized a Macedonian Committee in January 1878. The Macedonian Committee used government funds and arms and worked clandestinely with the Greek consulate in Salonika to infiltrate armed bands into Ottoman Macedonia. The Committee attempted, but largely failed, to organize a pro-Greek insurrection in Ottoman Macedonia.³⁷ In 1894 a group of influential journalists, professors, former politicians, and military officers in Athens formed the *Ethniki Etairia* (National Association), which aimed to advance Greece's irredentist goals. It sent armed bands into Ottoman Macedonia beginning in 1896, some of which took part in a losing war

³⁴ Kofos, *Greece and the Eastern Crisis*, 24, 29-30, 33-36, 182-184.

³⁵ Charles and Barbara Jelavich, *Establishment of the Balkan National States*, 210.

³⁶ Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia, 1897-1913* (Thessaloniki, Institute for Balkan Studies, 1966), 18, 171-173.

³⁷ Kofos, *Greece and the Eastern Crisis*, 173, 182-184.

against the Ottoman Empire in 1897. Yet another Macedonian Committee was formed with similar aims in Athens in 1902 and led by a major newspaper publisher and a parliamentary deputy.³⁸

Outside of the close relationship between the Bulgarian state and the ecclesiastical organization of the Exarchate within Ottoman Macedonia, other organizations based in Bulgaria or with vital support from within Bulgaria also attempted to influence the political fate of Macedonia. Not all of these called for Bulgaria's annexation of Macedonia. In 1893, men living in Salonika, but who had common origins in rural Ottoman Macedonia and education in Bulgaria, founded an organization that eventually came to be best known as the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (*Vŭtreshna Makedonska Revoliutsionna Organizatsiia*) or VMRO.³⁹ VMRO advocated the establishment of an independent or autonomous Macedonia, and believed this goal should be brought about primarily through a struggle waged by the inhabitants of Macedonia, themselves. Over the years, VMRO, which stressed its nature as organized "internally" within Macedonia rather than outside it, operated through regional "committees" based in different parts of Macedonia.

Despite its organization internally within Macedonia, members and factions of VMRO often differed as to whether and how closely to cooperate with Bulgaria and with the Exarchate in achieving their goal of Macedonian autonomy. This

³⁸ Dakin, *Greek Struggle in Macedonia*, 139-143.

³⁹ Perry, *Politics of Terror*, 36-41. The organization was beset by factionalism over the years and never had a consistent name. At times its name made reference to the region of Adrianople in addition to Macedonia, for example. However, it is best known today by the acronym VMRO. Perry simply refers to it as MRO. The proceeding introduction to VMRO and to the Supreme Committee is generally drawn from Perry's work on the subject, which remains the standard English-language account.

disagreement in part stemmed from ideological differences. A leftist faction emerged around the Serres region, led by Jane Sandanski. Sandanski's Serres faction often expressed opposition to cooperation with Bulgaria because it was led by a monarch and thus represented further imperial tyranny – what the organization was ostensibly fighting to overthrow in Ottoman-ruled Macedonia. Other VMRO activists, who also sometimes distrusted the Bulgarian government's intentions and worried in particular that Bulgaria would be willing to divide Macedonia with neighboring Balkan countries rather than keep it whole, were nonetheless more inclined to accept Bulgarian government assistance in their struggle.

In 1895, émigrés from Ottoman Macedonia based in Sofia formed another organization called the Supreme Committee. Although the Supremists advocated the establishment of an autonomous Macedonia as VMRO did, they believed that only the Bulgarian state and military could successfully lead such an effort and their leaders tended to view VMRO's more populist strategy with condescension. The differences in outlook between VMRO and the Supremists led to bitter rivalry and even occasionally armed clashes between them. Nevertheless, VMRO also relied crucially on arms and funding from Bulgaria and at times even on support from members of the Supreme Committee organization.⁴⁰ Observing the links to Bulgaria, pro-Greek and pro-Serb activists tended to view both VMRO and the Supreme Committee as ultimately representing Bulgarian interests. They believed the advocacy of autonomy for Macedonia masked eventual Bulgarian aims to annex Macedonia, as Bulgaria had annexed Eastern Rumelia in 1885 after an initial period of Ottoman autonomy for that province.

⁴⁰ Perry, *Politics of Terror*, 74-75.

Lending further complexity to the competition between Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia in Macedonia was the presence of smaller ethnic and linguistic groups among the Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman region. Although most Albanian-speakers were Muslims, some of them were Orthodox Christians. Another group spoke the Vlach language, a Romance language similar to Romanian. Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and the Macedonian autonomist movement tried to woo these smaller groups to their cause. Romania also attempted to exert influence on the Vlachs, mainly through supporting Romanian schools and churches in Ottoman Macedonia. Although the Romanian government made little headway and did not in any case expect to be able ever to annex the territory (Macedonia was not contiguous to Romania) it viewed its activities as a bargaining chip against Bulgarian expansion, which it considered to be threatening.⁴¹

The rival national movements from Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia competed more peacefully though no less intensely to influence the loyalties of inhabitants of Ottoman Macedonia through the funding of schools in the region. Bulgarian and Greek schools each amounted to several hundred and enrolled tens of thousands of students at a time. Serbian schools were considerably smaller in number and primarily concentrated in the northern part of the Vardar region.⁴² Where schooling in Ottoman Macedonia had earlier been controlled by religious institutions, namely

⁴¹ Charles and Barbara Jelavich, *Establishment of the Balkan National States*, 210.

⁴² See İpek Yosmaoğlu-Turner, "The Priest's Robe and the Rebel's Rifle: Communal Conflict and the Construction of National Identity in Ottoman Macedonia, 1878-1908" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2005), 208-214, and Dakin, *Greek Struggle in Macedonia*, 18-20. As Yosmaoğlu suggests, the wide range in estimates of numbers of Greek and Bulgarian schools (from several hundred to over a thousand) owed much to the fact that those who produced contemporary statistics were themselves often engaged in national propaganda on one or another side and had an interest in maximizing the estimate of schools representing their own national movement and minimizing that of their national rivals.

the Patriarchate and eventually the Exarchate in the case of Bulgarian schools, by the beginning of the twentieth century sources of educational funding and teachers were increasingly dominated by the Greek and Bulgarian governments and secular benevolent organizations in those states and in Ottoman urban centers. Funds were often channeled through the Greek and Bulgarian consulates in Ottoman Macedonia.⁴³ These investments, Greek and Bulgarian nationalists hoped respectively, would work to cement the commitment of the younger generations in Ottoman Macedonia to the Greek or Bulgarian national cause. As will be shown below, although local parents typically welcomed the support provided for the education of their children, the results of this education in terms of consolidating national commitments among inhabitants often fell far short of the nationalists' goals.

School teaching was the one important avenue through which Orthodox Christian women in the Balkans made publically recognized contributions during the early twentieth century to the competing national causes, both within the independent Balkan nation-states and when sent from the independent states to serve in schools in Ottoman Macedonia.⁴⁴ Nationalists and national governments championed girls' education in part because, as future mothers, women were presumed to exert the most formative influence on their children, both male and female, and they must be educated in order to transmit proper national values to their children. By extension,

⁴³ Yosmaoğlu-Turner, "Priest's Robe and the Rebel's Rifle," 215-224.

⁴⁴ See Eleni Varikas, "National and Gender Identity in Turn-of-the-Century Greece," in *Women's Emancipation Movements in the Nineteenth Century: A European Perspective*, ed. Sylvia Palatschek and Bianka Pietrow-Ennker (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 263-282; Krassimira Daskalova, "Women, Nationalism and Nation-State in Bulgaria (1800-1940s)," in *Gender Relations in South Eastern Europe: Historical Perspectives on Womanhood and Manhood in 19th and 20th Century*, ed. Miroslav Jovanović and Slobodan Naumović (Münster: LIT Verlag Münster, 2004), 15-38; and Ana Stolić, "Vocation or Hobby: Social Identity of Female Teachers in the Nineteenth Century Serbia," in Jovanović and Naumović, eds., *Gender Relations in South Eastern Europe*, 55-90.

women's "motherly" qualities were seen as useful in nurturing schoolchildren, and educated daughters of middle and upper class families as young as fifteen were often sent long distances away from home, including to Ottoman Macedonia, to serve as teachers for their nations' schools.⁴⁵ Women's distinctive role in public education aside, however, political elites throughout the Balkans during the early twentieth century overwhelmingly construed women's proper role as inhabiting the domestic sphere, and thus excluded the possibility or desirability of their participation in public as political actors.⁴⁶ On the other hand, this cultural expectation created some opportunities for the armed nationalist organizations operating in Ottoman Macedonia to use women in their clandestine activities, precisely because they would be less likely to come under suspicion as women. Zlata Serafimova, a girl during the late Ottoman period, recalls in her memoir that women and children in her village served as lookouts and reported the whereabouts of Ottoman authorities to VMRO militants who mostly hailed from outside her village. Serafimova even reports that VMRO members were training two young women from her village in the use of guns and swords, although this kind of role for women was decidedly exceptional.⁴⁷

The Balkan conditions fostering the proliferation of armed bands representing political causes in Ottoman Macedonia, whether infiltrated from outside or organized internally, long predated the formation of groups like VMRO, the Supreme Committee, or the *Ethniki Etairia* and the introduction of ethnically-motivated

⁴⁵ Varikas, "National and Gender Identity," 266-267.

⁴⁶ Andrej Studen, "A Woman's Place is in the Home," in Jovanović and Naumović, eds., *Gender Relations in South Eastern Europe*, 39-54. See also Varikas, "National and Gender Identity" and Daskalova, "Women, Nationalism and Nation-State."

⁴⁷ TsDA, Fond 771k opis 2 [Collection of the national liberation movement of the Bulgarians in Macedonia, 1806-1985] a.e. 294 (Memoirs of Zlata Serafimova).

violence in the region. The decentralized nature of the Ottoman state in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries created conditions in the Empire's Balkan provinces that allowed local notables and even brigands to form their own armed organizations that challenged the central state's monopoly over the use of force. To some extent these forces supplanted the official state's function of maintaining social order in areas where they held sway. They also supported themselves or supplemented their compensation through plunder and extortion of local inhabitants. The state even called on such forces periodically when it needed extra men for a military campaign or to suppress major internal unrest.⁴⁸ The phenomenon of irregular armed bands persisted in the Balkan states that succeeded the Ottoman Empire, as the new governments also faced difficulties in consolidating legitimate armed force in official institutions such as the army and gendarmerie.⁴⁹ Such unofficial organizations, which straddled the boundary between brigandage and paramilitary activity in the service of political causes, played crucial roles in the nineteenth-century struggles against Ottoman rule that brought the successor states into being. Nationalist intellectuals in the newly formed Balkan states thus retrospectively romanticized members of such irregular armed groups (when they served their own national cause), while politicians at times called on their services in subsequent irredentist struggles.⁵⁰ Thus, as the irredentist struggle between Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia over Ottoman Macedonia developed during the last two decades

⁴⁸ See Fikret Adanir, "Semi-Autonomous Provincial Forces in the Balkans and Anatolia," in *The Cambridge History of Turkey: The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 157-185.

⁴⁹ On this problem during the early period of modern Bulgarian statehood, see Veselin Ianchev, *Armîia, obshtestven red i vûtreshna sigurnost. bûlgarskiiat opit, 1878-1912* (Sofia: IF-94, 2006). On post-independence Greece, see John S. Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause: Brigandage and Irredentism in Modern Greece 1821-1912* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

⁵⁰ Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause*, 215-236.

of the nineteenth century, patriotic societies in each country recruited irregular armed bands to infiltrate into the contested territory where they alternately fought Ottoman forces and each other.

Patterns of Political Violence in Late Ottoman Macedonia

The Ilinden insurrection of 1903 mentioned at the beginning of this chapter remained by far the most prominent episode of political violence to occur in Ottoman Macedonia during the decades preceding the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913. The respective national traditions of the Republic of Macedonia and of Bulgaria have long commemorated it as a genuine popular uprising for (Macedonian or Bulgarian) national liberation. Yet despite its impressive scale, involving 25,000 Orthodox Christian militants who fought for an autonomous Macedonia, this violent revolt cannot be considered the result of popular sentiments of aroused national consciousness among the Orthodox masses of Ottoman Macedonia. As Duncan Perry has argued, those ordinary local Christian men who did participate in the armed struggle were motivated by a mix of armed pressure to participate on the part of VMRO leaders, threatened Ottoman repression, and increasing impoverishment. A smaller 1902 attack on Ottoman authorities and local Muslims by Supreme Committee bands that had infiltrated into Ottoman Macedonia from Bulgaria had resulted in widespread and continuing Ottoman reprisals against Christian residents of Macedonia who by and large had not taken part in the attack. The local revolutionary organization, VMRO, despite opposing the 1902 attack, became the target of systematic repression by Ottoman authorities. Its leaders, feeling that their

organization was now under threat of decimation, decided to plan for the 1903 Ilinden revolt before the Ottoman crackdown could weaken them irreparably. The seasoned paramilitary members of VMRO fanned out into the Macedonian countryside to augment their forces by recruiting Christian peasants, often using threats. They correctly warned villagers that they should expect heavy Ottoman reprisals (including massacres and destruction of villages) as a result of the revolt. A good number of peasant men concluded, based on their experience from the 1902 events, that they would face the reprisals whether they participated or not. They decided to throw their lot in with VMRO in order at least to give the insurrection the best chance of victory and thus avoid the reprisals.⁵¹

Yet, it must be emphasized that an even greater number of Christian villagers in Macedonia avoided participating in the armed struggle, despite the pressure from the armed Christian paramilitary bands and despite the hardships they already endured over the past year from reprisals at the hands of Ottoman authorities. Between 40,000 and 60,000 locals, for example, simply fled their villages, unarmed, to hide in the mountains and wait out the conflict.⁵² All in all, using population figures from 1900 and VMRO's own account published in 1904, Perry estimates that less than one percent of Ottoman Macedonia's Slavic and Vlach-speaking inhabitants participated in the Ilinden insurrection.⁵³ The highest rate of participation occurred in the *vilayet* of Manastir, where 19,850 people joined the revolt (around 5 percent out of a total of 379,856 members of the Bulgarian Exarchate church there). In other Macedonian provinces, the proportion of Bulgarian Exarchate members participating

⁵¹ See Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, 110-134.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 135.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 153-154. The insurgents came overwhelmingly from the Slav and Vlach population.

was a tiny fraction of a percent. These numbers, and the context within which many participants joined the revolt, do not bespeak a popular uprising in the cause of national liberation. The considerable ethnic diversity among those who did join in the Ilinden revolt further complicates any straightforward nationalist interpretation of it, whether Macedonian or Bulgarian. One of the most important centers of the uprising, the town of Krushevo in Vardar Macedonia, provides a prominent illustration. There, ethnic Vlachs, rather than simply Macedonians or Bulgarians, were instrumental in leading the revolt.⁵⁴

Though reluctant to intervene militarily against Ottoman forces during the Ilinden uprising as the insurgents had hoped, the European Great Powers pressed the Ottoman government later in 1903 to accept a package of reforms. Known as the Müritzsteg Program, the reforms proceeded on the theory that the underlying problem in Macedonia had been the Ottoman state's general failure to ensure security for the region's inhabitants, coupled with the inequitable treatment of the Empire's Christian subjects in the Macedonian provinces. The centerpiece of the reforms was a reorganization of the gendarmerie in Macedonia. Christians were to be recruited to serve in Christian-majority districts, and European (non-Ottoman) officers would lead the gendarmerie and be paid out of the Ottoman treasury.

The Müritzsteg reforms unintentionally encouraged an upsurge in day-to-day political violence in Ottoman Macedonia versus the period before the 1903 Ilinden

⁵⁴ Keith Brown, *The Past in Question: Macedonia and the Uncertainties of Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003) explores the case of Krushevo in depth to reveal how the multiplicity of narratives of Ilinden articulated by the town's past and present residents undermines any stable national understanding of the event.

insurrection.⁵⁵ The intensive involvement of foreign consuls and military officers in Ottoman internal security policy whetted the appetites of hopeful Christian revolutionaries. More unrest might invite more foreign intervention, further weakening Ottoman sovereignty in Macedonia, and perhaps ultimately ending Ottoman rule there. Article III of the Mürzsteg Program appeared to lend credence to such hopes. It suggested that administrative districts in Ottoman Macedonia would be reshaped along ethnic lines. An Ottoman census carried out between 1903 and 1905 registered religious denomination (typically seen by political activists in Macedonia as a marker of nationality) as the principal means of differentiation among the Christian population, while also recording information about inhabitants' ethnicity. During the run-up to the census and afterwards, paramilitary groups who supported the Greek, Bulgarian, and Serbian causes used whatever means they could, including violent intimidation, to convince Christian inhabitants of Macedonia to switch to their respective national churches or schools. Each side aimed to convince the Ottoman administration, and ultimately the European Great Powers, of the predominance of its respective national element in Macedonia. The Great Powers would presumably consider the perceived ethnic composition of Macedonia in deciding how much of its territory to award to Bulgaria, Greece, or Serbia, or to a single, separate Macedonian entity if at some point in the future the region were to be detached from Ottoman rule.

⁵⁵ This point is persuasively made in Steven W. Sowards, *Austria's Policy of Macedonian Reform* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1989), 43-45, 74-77, and in İpek Yosmaoğlu-Turner, "The Priest's Robe and the Rebel's Rifle: Communal Conflict and the Construction of National Identity in Ottoman Macedonia, 1878-1908" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2005), 64, 108-109, 115-136. Dakin, *Greek Struggle in Macedonia*, 148-149 also seems to support this assessment of the Mürzsteg reforms.

Thus, despite or in part because of the introduction of reforms in 1903 meant to curb violence in Ottoman Macedonia, ethnically motivated violence increased from 1904 through 1908, when the Young Turk revolution introduced a new regime in the Ottoman Empire. But who, in Ottoman Macedonia, was actually promoting such violence? Were ordinary residents violently attacking their neighbors because of deep-seated and pervasive ethnic hatreds, conforming to the stereotype of Balkan violence? Such violence between neighbors was not completely absent, but it was an exception to the rule. Members of irregular armed bands supported from Bulgaria, Greece, or Serbia, and Ottoman armed forces, both of whom circulated across large distances within Ottoman Macedonia, were almost always the culprits. Unarmed residents were often the victims. Illustrating though perhaps exaggerating this pattern were statistical tables compiled by the Bulgarian Commercial Agency in Serres at the request of the Bulgarian foreign ministry reporting “killings and arson in the *sanjaks* of Serres and Drama in 1907.”⁵⁶ According to the commercial agent’s figures, of 323 killings that took place in the two *sanjaks*, all but seven were known to have been committed by the “Bulgarian Organization” (the agent’s shorthand for VMRO), “Greek armed bands and terrorists,” “Turkish armed bands,” or “Turkish soldiers.” Also of the 323 killed, only 53 were members of these armed bands (“*chetnitsi*”). The rest were unarmed residents.

⁵⁶ TsDA, Fond 332k [Records of the Bulgarian commercial agency in Serres] opis 1 a.e. 27, 1 (Political Secretary Radev of the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Political Department, to Bulgarian commercial agency in Serres, Jan. 27, 1908); TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 27, 3 (Bulgarian commercial agency in Serres to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, “General table of killings and arson in the *sanjaks* of Serres and Drama during the year 1907”, undated). The Bulgarian commercial agencies in Macedonia and elsewhere were analogous to consulates, but called “commercial agencies” because Bulgaria was at the time nominally an autonomous principality under the titular sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire, and thus could not establish official embassies or consulates.

Many of the men of Christian background peopling these armed bands (pro-Greek, pro-Bulgarian, pro-Serbian, Macedonian autonomist) themselves hailed from outside of Macedonia or else had roots in the region but lived outside it as emigrants. This was overwhelmingly the case for the Sofia-based group known as the Supremists who staged the aforementioned Gorna Djumaia revolt of 1902 as well as other smaller-scale raids in the name of their stated goal of Macedonian autonomy. Origins outside of Ottoman Macedonia were also common among the pro-Greek *andartes*. Out of a group of 385 *andartes* who died in the 1904-1908 “Macedonian Struggle,” 136 came from the island of Crete alone, according to an official Greek military history. The proportion of leaders of pro-Greek armed bands hailing from outside Ottoman Macedonia was even higher; out of 70 armed band commanders who died in the “Macedonian Struggle,” the Greek army recorded “places of origin” outside Ottoman Macedonia for 45 of them.⁵⁷ “As is known to you,” the Bulgarian commercial agent in Serres remarked to his superior in the Bulgarian foreign ministry with some measure of scorn and perhaps exaggeration, “the majority of [the Greek] *cheti* have been recruited of people from Crete and Greece.”⁵⁸ But proponents of the Greek cause in Macedonia would not have been ashamed to acknowledge the truth of that assertion. Pavlos Melas was an officer in the Greek army who was killed shortly after he entered Macedonia under cover in the wake of the Ilinden revolt to organize Greek armed bands. He quickly became known to the Greek public as a “national

⁵⁷ Genikon Epiteleion Stratou, Diefthinsis Istorias Stratou, *O Makedonikos Agon ka ta eis Thrakin gegonota* (Athens: Ekdotis Diefthinseos Istorias Stratou, 1979), 375-378.

⁵⁸ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 27, 15 (Bulgarian commercial agency in Serres to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, “Table of Greek *andartes* killed and imprisoned in 1907”, undated). The number born outside Ottoman Macedonia may have been higher, as the birthplace of four of the *andartes* was unknown to the Bulgarian commercial agent.

martyr” and the face of the Greek struggle. The romantic image of his self-sacrifice inspired many more volunteers from Greece to enter Ottoman Macedonia as *makedonomachoi* (fighters for Macedonia).⁵⁹

These outsiders, especially, showed more concern about ultimate victory for their side in the larger national struggle over Macedonia than about individual lives or communities that might be damaged in the process. Such casualties they viewed as inevitable and even necessary, if unfortunate. The account of a 1905 massacre at the village of Zagorichani by Germanos Karavaggelis, the Greek patriarchist bishop of the southwestern Macedonian town of Kastoria at the time who was born on the Aegean island of Lesbos, vividly illustrates this mentality. Vardas, a band leader from Crete who was close to Karavaggelis, informed the bishop that he had decided to punish the Bulgarian residents of Zagorichani collectively because some of them had aided a Bulgarian armed band in the burning of a monastery. Some of the attackers (it is not clear whether villagers of Zagorichani were among them) also murdered the monastery’s patriarchist abbot during the raid. But Zagorichani was a mixed village, where exarchists and patriarchists had found a *modus vivendi* and regularly alternated conducting their respective liturgies in the church every other week. This stable, practical arrangement within the local community did not seem to impress Karavaggelis, who worried that the minority “Greeks” (patriarchists) of the village were “starting to show cowardice” as villagers increasingly switched to the Exarchate. Karavaggelis registered no objection to Vardas’ plan for a punitive expedition upon hearing it. Quite the contrary, “I sent him the names of ours [i.e. the patriarchist villagers] so that he would not hurt them,” Karavaggelis recalls. Vardas’

⁵⁹ Douglas Dakin, *Greek Struggle in Macedonia*, 192.

band invaded Zagorichani with guns and killed 79 exarchists, including several women. But, as Karavaggelis explained, “[a]mid the hullabaloo it was not easy for anyone to distinguish the Greeks from the Bulgarians,” most probably because all of the villagers were in any case “Slavophones” and the members of the armed band did not have familiarity with the community. Thus, “unfortunately some of our people, Slavophones yes, but valuable,” were also killed in the action in addition to the 79 “Bulgarians.”

Karavaggelis later told the Ottoman governor Hilmi Pasha that although he “disapproved” of this action of the Greek *andartes*, its “cause” was the burning of two monasteries, one of which Karavaggelis did not accuse Zagorichani villagers of taking any part in, and the killing of the abbot. The massacre was only the “natural consequence” of previous Bulgarian crimes. He rationalized the massacre at Zagorichani to the Patriarch of Constantinople as “revenge.” Writing of what he considered to be Vardas’ “bravery and prudence” directly after recounting the grisly event at Zagorichani, Bishop Karavaggelis left no doubt in his memoir that he believed a collective punishment that massacred 79 people was broadly justified. He regretted only the “unfortunate” additional deaths of patriarchists that he had tried to prevent by supplying a list in advance to the perpetrator.⁶⁰

Yet whether members of paramilitary groups hailed from inside or outside of Ottoman Macedonia, the region’s local residents typically perceived them as outsiders who preyed upon the local community and caused unwelcome trouble. In

⁶⁰ Germanos Karavaggelis, *O Makedonikos Agon (Apomnimonevmata)* (The Macedonian Struggle: Memoirs) (Thessaloniki: Eteireia Makedonikon Spoudon), 1959, 40-41. Livianos, ““Conquering the Souls,”” 217, shows that another Greek captain, Mazarakis, retroactively deplored this massacre and others like it as counterproductive, not least because of their usefulness as propaganda for the Bulgarian cause.

his study of nineteenth and early twentieth century Greece, John Koliopoulos identifies the fraught relationship between rural Christian peasants and brigands who doubled at times as guerilla protagonists in nineteenth and early twentieth century struggles for national independence from the Ottoman Empire.⁶¹ Extolled retrospectively in Balkan national traditions as freedom fighters and even Robin Hood-like characters, the brigands made their careers by extorting villagers, who typically feared them and viewed them as social outcasts. Yet these nineteenth century brigands/guerillas usually sought out ultimate government patronage (from Ottoman or successor state governments). Many brigands who through their superior military prowess could demonstrate their ability to control an area and keep competing outlaws at bay, or who distinguished themselves in a national struggle, eventually found more stable legal employment by the state as irregular gendarmes or rural guards.

This close connection between extortion and freedom-fighting persisted in its broad outlines into early twentieth century Ottoman Macedonia, but with a difference. There appeared new sources of the guerillas' alienation from the peasant majority: either their urban origins or professions, or their secondary education in a town or city away from the village of origin. The "Macedonian problem" and in particular the proliferation of revolutionary bands was called "the fault of the Bulgarian schools" by an Ottoman administrator in Salonika. As he explained to Noel Brailsford in 1904:

In these nests of vice the sons of peasants are maintained for a number of years in idleness and luxury. Indeed, they actually sleep on beds. And then they go back to their villages. There are no beds in their fathers' cottages, and these young gentlemen are much too fine to sleep on the floor. They try the life for a little, and

⁶¹ John S. Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause: Brigandage and Irredentism in Modern Greece 1821-1912* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

then they go off and join the revolutionary bands. What they want is a nice fat Government appointment.

For Christians in the Ottoman system, Brailsford elaborated, “Official careers are closed to them, and in the long run, finding themselves unfitted for their environment, the only course which remains to them is to alter the environment itself.”⁶²

The Ottoman official’s observation of course cannot in fact suffice to explain “the Macedonian problem,” however defined. But his diagnosis of the membership of paramilitary groups such as VMRO parallels Koliopoulos’s analysis of the type of paramilitary activity that occurred several decades earlier. In both cases, the paramilitary figures came to stand apart in some important way from the fabric of the peasant communities in which they carried out their violent activities. And in both cases this social chasm fueled their ambitions to secure income and gain respectability through the patronage of a state (either the currently existing state or a new one that would presumably accommodate their ambitions). Duncan Perry’s analysis of the social origins of the membership of VMRO also supports the conclusion that paramilitary organizations in early twentieth century Ottoman Macedonia were far from representative of the Christian population of the region at large. Although peasants made up the large majority of the Christian population, a paltry 3 percent of the VMRO leadership and the rank and file were peasants. Around 20 percent, on the other hand, were teachers, whom Perry rightly considers “the backbone and moving force” of VMRO. Other educated urban professionals and craftsmen were also better represented than peasants in the VMRO membership.⁶³

⁶² Brailsford, *Macedonia*, 42-43.

⁶³ Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, 180-183.

Yet the paramilitary formations committed their violence mostly in the rural communities where peasants lived. Georgios Modis, a pro-Greek activist, was accurate in observing that “[o]ften the ‘*voevods*’ moved around from one province to another, like civil servants.”⁶⁴ He referred specifically to VMRO chieftains, but the same point would have applied to any of the paramilitary organizations, nationalist or autonomist. The peasants typically came to resent and fear them, whatever national liberation cause they might have stood for, especially after enduring the heavy consequences and destabilization of their communities caused by actions such as the Ilinden insurrection and the myriad smaller operations they carried out. Evidence of this fear and resentment emerges only indirectly from memoirs, as the retrospective national glorification of these “revolutionary” paramilitary figures encouraged the witnesses to highlight their association with them and support of them. Thus, Zlata Serafimova recounts the following anecdote, involving a rough similarity between the Bulgarian words meaning *onion* and *rebels*, of her acquaintance as a little girl with noted VMRO chieftain Jane Sandanski:

And he, the chieftain [*voivodata*], seemed a scary man, but he was very good. He often asked me “If the Turks ask you are there rebels [*komiti*] among you, what will you say?” I answered, “I will say that there is no onion [*kromid*] among us,” that is how our mothers taught us.⁶⁵

But even this reminiscence of willing mass participation in a struggle suggests the “scariness” of guerillas such as Sandanski, who indeed went to great lengths to enforce the cooperation of villagers, including apparently even small children.

⁶⁴ Georgios Modis, *O Makedonikos Agon kai i neoteri makedoniki istoria*, (The Macedonian Struggle and Recent Macedonian History) (Thessaloniki: Eteireia Makedonikon Spoudon, 1967), 145.

⁶⁵ TsDA, Fond 771k opis 2 a.e. 294 (Memoirs of Zlata Serafimova). The word *rebels* is an imperfect translation of *komiti*, which is connected to the word *komitadjii* (committee-men) and the Latin *comitatus* (armed group). Variants of this word were used in Bulgarian and Macedonian (and in Greek pejoratively) to denote members of armed bands connected with the Macedonian revolutionary movement.

Whatever residents (or former residents) of Macedonia said about their interactions with guerillas retrospectively, accounts actually dating from the early twentieth century indicate that residents usually feared and resented such paramilitary figures, even when the guerrillas were from the same ethnic or linguistic group as they were. Bulgarian or Macedonian-speaking villagers often complained to Ottoman authorities or to the Bulgarian consulate about violence and economic extortion from VMRO guerrillas, including those led by Jane Sandanski. Several examples recorded just during the summer and autumn of 1908 by a Bulgarian consul with jurisdiction in eastern Macedonia illustrate the nature of these frequent complaints. When Stefan Stoianov from the village of Spatovo was killed by members of Sandanski's group, his fellow villagers charged that the murder had occurred as punishment for the victim's bravery in speaking out against the forced collection of contributions from the village by the group.⁶⁶ Residents of the village of Latrovo sneaked into the nearby town of Demir Hisar⁶⁷ where they sought the help of the Ottoman gendarmerie against one of Sandanski's *cheti* (armed bands) that had arrived in their village and demanded contributions at gunpoint.⁶⁸ When villagers pleaded to another Sandanski associate their inability to pay new contributions after having already been

⁶⁶ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 25, 192 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Sep. 30, 1908).

⁶⁷ Demir Hisar in its Turkish and Bulgarian spellings and Demir Hissar in its Greek spelling, the town was renamed by the Greek government in the 1920s to Sidirokastro. For simplicity and to reflect usage during the period of this study, it will henceforward be consistently rendered by its Turkish spelling, Demir Hisar.

⁶⁸ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 25, 216, 220 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Oct. 27, 1908).

made poor by previous contributions, the guerrilla simply threatened to kill them if they did not pay.⁶⁹

Greek-speakers also complained about the activities of pro-Greek bands. Early in 1909, a Greek from the Serres area went to the Ottoman authorities to complain that the representative of a Greek committee allegedly tied to the nearby Greek consulate had demanded a large amount of money from his wealthy father.⁷⁰ The young man's individual complaint was one among a larger number lodged by wealthy Greeks from Serres. Encouraged by the promise of reforms in the wake of the Young Turk revolution of 1908, these residents began to protest to Ottoman authorities and to the Greek government in Athens about the extortionate activities of Greek armed bands and their apparent connection to Greek consulates in Ottoman Macedonia.⁷¹

In the rare cases when circumstances seemed to offer them the upper hand, residents dared to confront the paramilitaries directly. A group of Greek-speaking shepherds known as *Sarakatsanoi* refused to pay ransom for a boy from their community who was kidnapped by an inexperienced Greek armed band that had just arrived from Crete. Although it was clear that this band viewed the boy merely as a source of income and had nothing against his ethnic background, the *Sarakatsanoi* preferred to take the risk of liberating the boy rather than simply pay the ransom.

⁶⁹ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 25, 102-114 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Aug. 23, 1908). A request for help against extortion by Sandanski's men to the Bulgarian consulate from yet another village is detailed in TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 25, 94-95 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Aug. 15, 1908).

⁷⁰ TsDA, Fond 332k a.e. 24, 322 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Jan. 22, 1909).

⁷¹ TsDA, Fond 332k a.e. 24, 198 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Dec. 14, 1908).

They succeeded and killed some members of the armed band in the process.⁷² The widespread optimism and expectation of reforms shortly after the proclamation of a constitutional regime in 1908 seemed to stiffen the resolve of villagers in eastern Macedonia to resist Bulgarian-born *voivod* Todor Panitsa when he made his rounds in their communities during that period. Significantly, Panitsa was a prominent leader of the Serres-Drama faction of VMRO, the left-leaning faction typically regarded by historians as being more in touch with the sentiment of Christian masses in Macedonia. Panitsa's band had been sustained materially by the Christian villages in eastern Macedonia, but whatever moral support buttressed that sustenance had long since frayed. The sustenance came from extortion. His arrival in the village of Skrizhovo in December 1908 "was met with general indignation, which was expressed in a protest by the whole village." The entire village attended an assembly, at which the elders sharply rebuked him:

Panitsa, you are a murderer! With the murders that you personally committed yourself, you raised a wall between our region and the other parts of the fatherland. As if that were not enough, you sowed in our own village internecine strife, which led us to kill one another. As a result of all this the village has decided and we order you immediately to leave the village and never again to dare to appear in front of us!

Panitsa objected, pointing out the elders' own admission that murders in Skrizhovo were carried out by residents of the village. But the killers themselves then stepped forward to answer him: "No – to the contrary, you ordered us! Our error was only that we obeyed you. The true murderer of our own is you!" The residents, including small children, then reportedly followed Panitsa in the street with chants of "Down

⁷² TsDA, Fond 331k [Bulgarian Consulate in Bitolia 1897-1912] a.e. 367, 7-10 (Bulgarian consul in Bitolia to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Aug. 6, 1912).

with Panitsa!” all the way to the end of the village as he left in disgrace.⁷³ The local killers who merely followed orders, so to speak, from Panitsa may be accused of hypocrisy in placing the blame for the former strife solely on him. But the significant fact in this episode is that the entire village appeared to support them in this hypocrisy. Elders the previous evening had verbally chided one of the killers for his “misguided” service to Panitsa’s organization, but had not banished him. Panitsa was the outsider, the interloper who destroyed the moral fabric of the village community, and without his destabilizing actions, the village could presumably live in peace.

Residents of another village, Prosechen, had already expressed their opinion of *voivod* Panitsa as an outsider more explicitly in an encounter that occurred two months earlier. Panitsa appeared with his men in Prosechen and tried to force away a local teacher he did not favor, a native of the village named Karamanov. Karamanov impetuously confronted Panitsa in the village café, saying that he neither knew nor wanted to know him. The teacher continued:

I am appointed by the local leadership, which has nothing in common with you. As long as that leadership wants me, I owe nothing to you nor take any account of you. Besides that, as you know, I am from here, while you are a foreign dog and only as a bandit are you able to sit here by force.

Panitsa responded by smashing his chair over the teacher’s head, but he and his men were outnumbered by villagers who took the teacher’s side. Another café patron at the same moment struck Panitsa’s own head with a chair. Three more patrons grabbed hold of Panitsa and tackled him to the ground. Panitsa’s subordinates fled. Fortunately, Panitsa was so flustered by the unanimous will of the villagers in the

⁷³ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 25, 259-260 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Dec. 9, 1908).

café to confront him that he did not think to reach for his loaded revolver before he was disarmed. Panitsa was forced to leave this village too, in haste and disgrace.⁷⁴

The village teacher Karamanov and *voivod* Panitsa both conversed and understood each other in their common native language, Slavic rather than Greek. It is therefore significant that Karamanov nonetheless chose to insult and discredit the bandit/revolutionary by branding him again as an outsider, a “foreign dog,” while emphasizing that he, himself, was “from here” and had been appointed by the local leadership. Other contemporary sources also reveal a typical – perhaps unconscious – categorical mental distinction between paramilitary band members (*andartes*, *chetnitsi*, and *bashi-bazouks* depending on the language and affiliation) and “villagers” (*horikoi*, *seliani*) or “inhabitants” (*katikoi*, *naselenie*) regardless of how local the origins of paramilitary members might have been. For example, when the Bulgarian commercial agency in the town of Serres compiled a table of murders and arson committed in the Ottoman Macedonian Sanjaks of Serres and Drama in the year 1907, it created the following categories of victims: Bulgarians, Greeks, Vlachs, Turks, Albanians, Gypsies, and *chetnitsi*. The word *chetnitsi* meant members of armed bands. The commercial agent split the category of victims who were *chetnitsi* into Greek and Bulgarian sections for further analysis. In other words, according to the categories formulated by the Bulgarian commercial agent, “Bulgarian *chetnitsi*” did not overlap with the general category of “Bulgarians” in Ottoman Macedonia. “Greek *chetnitsi*” likewise did not form a part of the category, “Greeks.”⁷⁵ Certainly

⁷⁴ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 25, 185-188 (confidential report of the Bulgarian commercial agent in Serres to the Bulgarian foreign ministry, Sep. 23, 1908).

⁷⁵ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 27, 3 (table of murders and arson committed in the Seres and Drama Sanjaks, Jan., 1908).

at least a portion of the Greek and Bulgarian *chetnitsi* counted in these figures were in reality born in Ottoman Macedonia, but they were nonetheless presented as outside the Greek and Bulgarian communities of the region.

The violence-laden atmosphere created by paramilitary bands in Macedonia discussed above can be considered as more a consequence of a weak Ottoman state than of some kind of deep-rooted local culture that engendered an unusual disposition to violence. Indeed, as argued above, locals usually wanted little to do with paramilitaries of any stripe. İpek Yosmaoğlu has called attention to the difficulties the Ottoman state had in controlling violence by paramilitaries during the last years that it ruled Macedonia, and indeed its unwitting contribution to the rise of such violence through misguided policies undertaken partly at the behest of Western powers.⁷⁶ The men who stepped into the breach were, as discussed above, widely acknowledged by Macedonia's rural residents, by authorities and consuls, and by Western observers to be in important ways socially alienated from the local communities that constituted society in Ottoman Macedonia. Until the Ottoman Empire's loss of Macedonia in 1912, and despite the gendarmerie reforms of the Mürzsteg Program, such men repeatedly succeeded in usurping part of the government's control over the means of violence in the region.

⁷⁶ İpek Yosmaoğlu-Turner, "The Priest's Robe and the Rebel's Rifle: Communal Conflict and the Construction of National Identity in Ottoman Macedonia, 1878-1908" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2005), 64, 115, 143-144.

The Limits of National Affiliation among Ottoman Macedonia's Orthodox Christians

The observation that the vast majority of Orthodox Christian inhabitants of Ottoman Macedonia usually wanted nothing to do with the ethnic violence of the paramilitary groups should not, however, be taken to imply an absence of national consciousness or ethnic tensions in the region. The speculations of Georgios Modis, an avowed enemy of the Bulgarian national cause, that VMRO paramilitaries had to resort to using an other-worldly voice from the newly invented gramophone in order to dupe peasants into thinking that “the voice of God” commanded them to join them, should not be taken at face value as strong “evidence to suggest that the majority of the Slav peasants found it extremely difficult to identify with national ideologies, which others tried to impose upon them,” as it is by Dimitris Livanios.⁷⁷ The boys from a remote village who failed to comprehend Noel Brailsford’s question about whether they were “Serbs or Bulgarians or Greeks or Turks” in 1903 did not represent the norm at that time. Indeed, historians who have cited that anecdote usually fail to note that Brailsford presented it as a curious exception to the pattern that he generally encountered, as a throwback to the past. “One hundred years ago it would have been hard to find a central Macedonian who could have answered with any intelligence the question whether he were Servian or Bulgarian by race,” he wrote by way of introduction to the episode of his encounter with the boys. He implied precisely that as of the time he wrote, most central Macedonians would have had a ready answer to that kind of question.⁷⁸ As noted above, before the Ilinden uprising of 1903 Orthodox Christian inhabitants of Ottoman Macedonia had been subjected for at least a decade

⁷⁷ Georgios Modis, *O Makedonikos Agon kai i neoteri makedoniki istoria*, 149, cited in Livanios, ““Conquering the Souls,”” 197-198.

⁷⁸ Brailsford, *Macedonia*, 99.

to one or more competing national ideologies (Bulgarian, Greek, Serb, even Romanian), each of which staked claims over their identity. Most of them had the chance to become familiar with such ideologies chiefly through contact with schools, churches, and the “propaganda” of the paramilitary bands. It was quite common by the turn of the twentieth century for even small Christian villages to have a school oriented towards one of these national affiliations. Virtually all Christian villages had at least one church, and indeed they often had both a Greek-oriented patriarchist church and a Bulgarian-oriented exarchist church, presenting a choice of worship with national connotations to the villagers. Assuming that early twentieth century rural inhabitants of Macedonia were generally ignorant of national questions or had not developed informed opinions about their national identity is therefore unrealistic and underestimates their status as political subjects.

But acknowledging that by the early twentieth century most Christian residents of Ottoman Macedonia were quite conscious of issues of national identity and even perhaps affiliated with one national side or another still leaves open the question of how national identity actually functioned in people’s lives and in local politics. Why, in particular, did most people who identified with one or another nation avoid participating in the ethnic violence carried out by the rival paramilitary groups? National affiliations among Christians throughout the region rarely corresponded neatly to externally observable ethnic or linguistic characteristics. It was common for a Bulgarian/Macedonian/Slavic-speaker to identify with the Bulgarian, the Greek, the Serbian, or the Macedonian autonomist cause. A Vlach speaker could identify with the Greek, the Bulgarian, the Macedonian autonomist, or

even the Romanian cause. An Albanian-speaking Christian might support the Greek or the Albanian cause. Furthermore, individuals and even entire communities frequently switched national allegiances. To explain these phenomena, Vassilis Gounaris persuasively suggests that affiliation with a national group was essentially a political choice that was often influenced at least as much by local clan rivalries, social status, occupation, financial considerations, or fear of the actions of nearby paramilitary groups as by characteristics such as mother language. It would be more accurate, Gounaris concludes, to characterize national groups in early twentieth-century Ottoman Macedonia as “parties with national affiliations” (as they are in fact often characterized in contemporary primary sources), even as “political clubs,” than as the political expression of rival primordial ethnic groups.⁷⁹

Gounaris’ use of the term “parties” to characterize the divided national affiliations among Christians in early twentieth century Ottoman Macedonia offers insight into the question of why neighbors did not normally kill neighbors over national disputes. Members of a “party” or a “political club” with differing national ideologies would compete with their rivals for political influence, resources, or control of institutions such as churches or schools. They would try to undermine the analogous efforts of rival parties. But members of rival “parties,” forming part of the same political society, would not normally be expected to use violence against their opponents to attain their goals. Indeed, in late Ottoman Macedonia they reluctantly

⁷⁹ Gounaris, “Social Cleavages and National ‘Awakening,’” 413, 420.

came to arrangements such as alternating their use of the local church when more than one was not available and one party could not dominate politically.⁸⁰

The concept of a national collectivity functioned quite differently, by comparison, in the neighboring Balkan nation-states. In these polities, schools had taught children for generations that the state existed as the homeland of a core nation. Bulgaria was the state of the “Bulgarians,” Greece was the state of the “Greeks,” Serbia was the state of the “Serbs.” Members of other national groups who lived within the state’s territory were not seen simply as indigenous neighbors who belonged to different national “parties.” Rather, they were at best tolerated as ethnic minorities who were in some fundamental way culturally foreign to the core nation, and always potentially disloyal. To some extent, the minorities themselves often acknowledged and even promoted their distinctiveness from the majority, although they would not normally have accepted accusations of disloyalty.

As a set of anti-Greek riots in Bulgaria during the summer of 1906 showed, ordinary citizens in a nation-state could readily attack their ethnic minority neighbors in large numbers, a type of phenomenon that was not observed during the same period among Christians of different ethnic affiliations in Ottoman Macedonia. These attacks escalated from popular protests, spearheaded especially by groups of refugees from Ottoman Macedonia, against the violence being visited by Greek armed bands in Macedonia upon ethnic Bulgarians there. Much of the Bulgarian public suspected ethnic Greeks living in Bulgaria of supporting the Greek armed bands in Macedonia, and some vented their frustrations on local Greek communities. In the Black Sea

⁸⁰ Besides the example of this common phenomenon mentioned earlier in this chapter, see Yosmaoğlu-Turner, “The Priest’s Robe,” 171-180 for an expansive discussion of it.

coast cities and towns of Varna, Burgas, Kavarna, and Balchik, Bulgarian townspeople seized Greek churches and schools and destroyed and looted Greek properties, including businesses, homes, cultural institutions, and schools. In the city of Plovdiv, around 10,000 Bulgarians participated in the attacks. The attacks culminated in the almost complete destruction by fire of the predominantly Greek seaside town of Anchialo. The instigators of the fire in Anchialo appear not to have been local, but rather members of a Bulgarian patriotic organization, *Bûlgarski rodoliubets*, who had arrived from outside the town. *Bûlgarski rodoliubets* indeed was often at the forefront of the anti-Greek attacks, but it is also clear that in many of the locations in which they occurred local townspeople or villagers participated in significant numbers.⁸¹ The kind of ethnic violence that occurred in a young Balkan nation-state, in which ordinary residents attacked their fellow townspeople or fellow villagers, thus stands in contrast to the pattern of violence in Ottoman Macedonia. There ethnic violence was almost always perpetrated by mobile armed bands or ruling authorities and people rarely attacked their neighbors over ethnic differences.

Although the diverse Orthodox Christian residents of Ottoman Macedonia were conscious of national politics and even joined “parties” favoring one national cause or another, the other priorities of education and economic prospects trumped the national struggle. Rural residents placed a high value on education as a means of escape from their humble existence. Whether that education came from Bulgarian,

⁸¹ Dragostinova, *Between Two Motherlands*, 39-48 provides the best existing account of the anti-Greek movement of the summer of 1906 in Bulgaria. The 10,000 figure for participants in the Plovdiv riots is taken from this work. TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 19, 143-147 (Political department of the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, circular memorandum to all Bulgarian diplomatic agencies abroad, Aug. 4, 1906) makes clear that significant participation of local townspeople, numbering in the hundreds and in the case of Burgas in the thousands, occurred in several other locations besides Plovdiv.

Greek, or Serbian sponsors was at best a secondary concern for them. Dimitŭr Bozhikov Biliukbashiev, who was born in a small Bulgarian-speaking village and eventually became headmaster of a Bulgarian school, recalled his genuine appreciation for the Greek-influenced education he received as a boy.

During the following school years, 1877-78 and 1878-79, our teacher was K. Ikonmov, from the village Levcha in the Nevrokop region. From what I have told you so far, it is clear that the nature of our studies had been of the church, the monastery. We had studied only church books. Our new teacher pioneered for the first time the study of Greek language, grammar, reading, religion, arithmetic, etc. During his two years as a teacher in our village, he made great reforms in the monastic educational system that had been in place until then.... Obviously the teacher, K. Ikonmov, was very hard working. And his work was indeed very difficult. He replaced each Bulgarian word with a Greek one, so that we could grasp and understand more easily. Our main job at school was to read, write, and think. Reading was always translated into Bulgarian.

Although the pedagogical materials and training at the teacher's disposal were Greek ones, this was beside the point for Biliukbashiev. His memoir gives many examples of friendship and casual relations between himself, a self-identified Bulgarian, and people he identified as Greek. For Biliukbashiev, the new teacher opened intellectual and practical horizons that had been unavailable to him in his previous education by clerics. Biliukbashiev even recounts with pride how, when on a field trip to the town of Serres, he was able to stump some ethnic Greek pupils his age with his questions on the declensions of nouns and verbs.⁸²

Biliukbashiev received his primary education in the 1870s, before the competition between Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia to influence education of Orthodox Christians in Ottoman Macedonia got seriously under way. Yet after the national struggle intensified and pro-Greek, pro-Bulgarian, and pro-Serbian institutions increased their funding of schools in the region in order to win the Orthodox Christian

⁸² Dŭrzhaven Arhiv – Blagoevgrad [State Archive – Blagoevgrad] (DAB), Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria, Spomeni (Sp.) 225 (Dimitŭr Bozhikov Biliukbashiev), 4-5, 11.

youth of Macedonia to their respective causes, residents remained opportunistic. If offered free or heavily subsidized education, they typically welcomed it, regardless of sponsor. Such opportunities could indeed influence residents' national affiliations, as the sponsors intended. But that influence might not last permanently, and education itself and the social and economic opportunities it promised remained the priority for the residents. Residents of Bitolia who protested the decision by the Bulgarian Exarchate in Constantinople to close the Bulgarian girls' school in their town did make ample reference in their petition to the importance of this school to the national cause. "[I]t is in the interest of our national culture to have not only semi-literate women, but educated housewives and mothers and conscientious Bulgarian women [*bûlgarki*] who will instill in their children active devotion to their nation," they wrote, using an argument in favor of the education of girls that nationalists articulated frequently at that time.⁸³ The members of the school community knew that the Exarchate (which was apparently closing the school as part of an effort to resolve financial difficulties), and also the Bulgarian government and its consuls in Ottoman Macedonia, would place great weight on an argument that cast education as a crucial national imperative.⁸⁴

But the other side of the petitioners' appeal to the national cause was the threat that without the Bulgarian Exarchate's support for schools in Bitolia, Bulgarian national cohesion there would suffer as at least some would seek to educate their children in schools funded by rival national groups. Rival national "propaganda,"

⁸³ TsDA, Fond 331k [Records of the Bulgarian consulate in Bitolia, 1897-1912] a.e. 329, 4 (Petition of residents of Bitolia to Iosif, Bulgarian Exarch, in Constantinople, Sep. 28, 1911).

⁸⁴ TsDA, Fond 331k a.e. 329, 4 (Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Political Department, to Bulgarian consulate in Bitolia, Dec. 9, 1911).

they warned, “lies in wait for the smallest shaking of our sacred national structures to bring them down from the foundations” at a time when “national self-consciousness in a few of our still misguided brethren has not penetrated deeply enough to resist every temptation or force.”⁸⁵ The Bulgarian consul in Bitolia forwarded the townspeople’s petition to the Bulgarian foreign ministry with alarm, taking the petitioners’ warning seriously and elaborating upon it. For the consul, the ultimate purpose of Bulgarian schools in Macedonia was one of nation-building: “schools are the places for implanting in the youth the national spirit so needed here in Macedonia.” For the past thirty years, he observed, the population in the area of Bitolia had been accustomed to receiving free education. Thus, he wrote, “if the considerably heavy burden [of funding Bulgarian education] were now loaded onto the residents themselves, I am sure that the majority of them would refuse to accept it, especially here where all the other nationalities, thanks to the various bequests or subsidies from the governments of the kindred states, enjoy free education.”⁸⁶

Raising the stakes further was the apparent desire of so many families, “thanks to propaganda,” to have both a daughter and a son become teachers [*da ima dŭshteria uchitelka i uchitel sin*]. The petitioners in fact not only demanded the reopening of the girls’ school, but its expansion into a “full gymnasium” that could train women teachers. Teaching as a profession had come to carry great social prestige among the Christian population in Ottoman Macedonia. So much so, the consul observed, that families were willing to be flexible on the matter of which

⁸⁵ TsDA, Fond 331k a.e. 329, 2, 5 (Petition of residents of Bitolia to Iosif, Bulgarian Exarch, in Constantinople, Sep. 28, 1911).

⁸⁶ TsDA, Fond 331k a.e. 329, 1,6 (Bulgarian consul in Bitolia to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Oct. 6, 1911).

national curriculum their sons or daughters would be trained in, so long as they became teachers. With the impending closing of the girls' secondary school, the Bulgarian consul predicted, families "will be forced to knock on the doors of the Serbian and Protestant, and even the Greek gymnasia. And these are waiting to accept them immediately. With this we will not be deprived merely of some 20-30 young women, but maybe between 100-160 who would otherwise be good citizens and patriots; or at the very least we will have a mass of them with an unclear idea of their origins, open to reworking into all sorts of shapes [*godna za izrabotvane na razni figuri*]."⁸⁷ The prospect of aspiring teachers' defection to rival nations presented an especially ominous threat. These teachers would go to work inculcating generations of future pupils in Macedonia with enemy national ideologies – or so the nationalist institutions sponsoring these future teachers in Ottoman Macedonia hoped.

Those receiving training as teachers did not necessarily place their future service to the national cause first, much to the chagrin of their nationalist sponsors. Teachers-in-training at Bulgarian pedagogical gymnasia located in Ottoman Macedonia, for example, chafed at a condition that the Bulgarian Exarchate placed on their receiving tuition subsidies. They were required to sign a pledge upon graduating that they would serve for a certain amount of years as teachers in Bulgarian schools within Ottoman Macedonia. Such service would, of course, help to further "implant the national spirit so needed here in Macedonia," to recall the words of the Bulgarian consul in Bitolia. The Exarchate hoped with this policy to mitigate the trend of graduates leaving for Bulgaria, where they found much higher-paying teaching positions. In 1911, teacher-trainees in Serres and in Skopje threatened a strike,

⁸⁷ Ibid.

demanding an end to the requirement of service in Ottoman Macedonia after graduation. The Bulgarian consul in Serres himself lamented that the Exarchate's requirement was futile and unenforceable. Money made the difference. The graduates would only be induced to stay and carry out their patriotic duty in Ottoman Macedonia if the Exarchate could offer them competitive salaries.⁸⁸ Once again education itself, and the economic and social advancement that accrued from it, took priority for these students from Macedonia over any national struggle.

* * *

But, as this chapter has argued, Ottoman Macedonia's inhabitants' typical pursuit of priorities such as education and economic advancement over imperatives dictated by national identity was not the result of a pre-modern ignorance of national ideologies. By the first decade of the twentieth century, people throughout Macedonia had typically received intensive exposure to competing national ideologies through the activity of schools, rival church organizations, and armed bands sponsored in large part by nationalists resident in Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia. Many likely identified to some extent with one or another national group. Indeed, it is not implausible that even the village boys, who apparently misunderstood Henry Noel Brailsford's query about whether they were "Serbs or Bulgarians or Greeks or Turks" in answering simply that they were "Christians," in fact knew full well what he meant and decided to feign ignorance. For, depending on what armed band lurked nearby, giving a clear answer to that kind of question might be tantamount to risking one's life. A small segment of the male population in Ottoman Macedonia indeed

⁸⁸ TsDA, Fond 332k a.e. 28, 10-13 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Mar. 11, 1911).

participated in these armed bands, although a large proportion of their membership and especially leadership came from outside the region. Their activity culminated in the Ilinden insurrection of 1903, into which they managed to draw thousands of inhabitants as participants by persuasion and by coercion. But such violence alienated the vast majority of locals, who typically evinced resentment of armed band members of whatever national or political stripe and spoke of them as unwelcome outsiders (even when they were from the region.) As the next chapter will demonstrate, Orthodox Christian inhabitants of Ottoman Macedonia would prove receptive in 1908 to the promises of constitutional rule within the framework of a reformed Ottoman state, promises which among other things seemed for a time to put an end to the violence of the armed bands.

Chapter 2: From the *Hürriyet* to the First Balkan War, 1908-1912

This chapter assesses the extent to which there had developed a figurative “Balkan Alliance” among the majority Orthodox Christian populations in Macedonia that mirrored the one struck by Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, and Montenegro to launch the First Balkan War against the Ottoman Empire in 1912. As residents of an old multi-ethnic empire in which religious distinctions played a larger administrative role than ethnic ones, Orthodox Christians in Macedonia had undergone less formal socialization under national ideologies than had their counterparts in the neighboring nation-states. Evidence dating from the years immediately preceding the First Balkan War indicates increasing resentments, felt in common among various groups of local Orthodox Christians, against Ottoman governing authorities. The proclamation of constitutional rule by the Young Turks in 1908 engendered widespread local acclaim and optimism for the prospect of a reformed Ottoman Empire. But by 1911-12, such optimism was noticeably on the wane. Political violence became more frequent and threatened peaceful inhabitants. Moreover, violence committed by Muslim authorities and irregular bands against Christians had begun to outstrip violence between Christian factions, which, as described in the previous chapter, had predominated between 1904 and 1908. Pessimism among local Christians that the Ottoman government could or would provide stability, let alone political equality or liberty, cut across lines of ethnicity, class, and locality on the eve of the Balkan Wars.

This shared frustration, however, did not translate into a conscious or organized movement of pan-Orthodox Christian solidarity. No figurative “Balkan Alliance” developed among Orthodox Christians within Macedonia to complement the one struck by Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, and Montenegro to launch the First Balkan War against the Ottoman Empire in 1912. Indeed, the numerical minority of Orthodox Christians who had actively participated in the ethnic struggles of the past decades (including members of revolutionary groups such as factions of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization) continued to engage in intrigues and occasional violence against each other at least as often as they formed episodic coalitions. Nonetheless, palpable and widespread pessimism among Macedonia’s Orthodox Christians of various backgrounds about their future under Ottoman rule contributed to their behavior during the First Balkan War in 1912. At the start, most of them genuinely welcomed the arrival of the Bulgarian, Serbian and Greek armies in their successful campaign against Ottoman forces and aided the victorious armies in important ways. Some of them were even moved to commit abuses against local Muslim civilians, whom they connected with the departing Ottoman rule.

The “Hürriyet” Ottoman Constitution of 1908 and Macedonia

In July of 1908, Ottoman garrison towns in the Macedonian provinces, including Salonika, Manastır, and Resne, constituted the nodes of a largely peaceful revolution, initially taking the form of an army mutiny, against the autocratic rule of the long-reigning Sultan, Abdulhamid II. Known commonly today as the Young Turk revolution, its participants (a fractious coalition of army officers, students, urban

professionals, and political exiles informally called “Young Turks”) demanded the restoration of the Ottoman constitution first promulgated in 1876 but quickly suspended in 1878 by Abdulhamid. Because of the popularity of the movement among the Ottoman officer corps, the Sultan had no means to suppress it. He agreed only days after the start of the revolution to restore the constitution and announced elections for a parliament to take place two months later in September. The days immediately following the revolution saw widespread public expressions of euphoria from almost all corners of the Ottoman Empire, including Macedonia. Young Turk leaders gave outdoor speeches attended by massive crowds, liberally peppered with the rallying cries of liberty (*hürriyet* in Turkish), equality, justice, and fraternity. Pro-Greek, pro-Bulgarian, pro-Serbian, and Macedonian autonomist armed bands came out from hiding and descended into the cities, where they mingled freely at celebratory banquets with Young Turk leaders who offered them amnesty. Men – even leaders – of different ethnic and religious groups made a point of embracing and kissing each other in public.¹

The longstanding goal of the Young Turk movement, in broad terms, was the strengthening of the Ottoman state against both the internal and external threats that had plagued it for decades. A key component of the Young Turk ideology was the concept of “Ottomanism,” the consolidation of a homogeneous Ottoman identity, patriotism, and citizenship that encompassed all of the Empire’s historic *millet*s (religious communities). A successful Ottomanism would counteract the separatist

¹ On the political and ideological origins of the Young Turk revolution, see Şükrü Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) and M. Naim Turfan, *Rise of the Young Turks: Politics, the Military and Ottoman Collapse* (London: I.B. Taurus Publishers, 2000). Dakin, *The Greek Struggle*, 378-385 provides a good summary of the phenomenon of Christian armed bands turning themselves in and receiving amnesty, specifically.

nationalisms that portended the state's dismemberment. Young Turk factions differed in important ways, however, on the specific ideological content of Ottomanism. To the Liberal Union, a Young Turk party that included a high proportion of non-Muslims in its membership, Ottomanism meant equality but also significant autonomy within a decentralized polity for the various religious and ethnic groups. All groups would profess loyalty to the Ottoman fatherland as its citizens.

But the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), the Young Turk party that initially took power and held it for most of the rest of the Empire's existence, pursued instead an aggressive centralization of the state's authority and the cultural homogenization of society. Legal and customary distinctions that had in some ways discriminated against non-Muslim religious communities but also provided them a large measure of communal autonomy were to be abolished. On the other hand, the CUP leadership wanted Ottomans of Muslim background to remain firmly in control of politics, as they fundamentally doubted the loyalty of many non-Muslim citizens. Furthermore, much of the leadership by 1908 had come to believe that for the Empire to survive and flourish, the ethnic Turkish element, historically "the dominant element in the empire," must lead and establish the cultural norms for all Ottoman citizens.²

Even though the CUP appeared to sideline some of these specific elements of its agenda in the days following the 1908 revolution in favor of vaguer public slogans of liberty, equality, and fraternity, its members had already laid out its centralizing

² "Küstahlık," *Şûra-yı Ümmet*, no. 75 (May 20, 1905), 1, as quoted in Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution*, 299.

and Turkist platforms extensively in exile publications.³ The centralizing and Turkist elements of CUP ideology were hardly compatible with the aims of Christian activist groups in Ottoman Macedonia (pro-Greek, pro-Bulgarian, pro-Serb, or Macedonian autonomist). Even the goals of activists who genuinely disavowed outright separatism clashed with the prospect of a culturally Turkish homogenization and centralization of the Ottoman Empire.

Recognition of these contradictions, as well as a preoccupation with their respective nationalist goals, underlay the inward skepticism of Greek and Bulgarian state and high-ranking church officials involved in Macedonian affairs about the Young Turk revolution even as they publically praised it. According to the Bulgarian consul in Serres, the public embraces and kisses between the Greek bishop and the head of the Serres region's Bulgarian Exarchist community occurred at the urging of the local Ottoman official, who proclaimed that this act would show the public that the new constitutional era spelled the end of enmity between Bulgarians and Greeks.⁴ But neither the consul, nor, it seems, the Greek or Bulgarian church hierarchs saw the situation so idealistically. Although the Greek metropolitan held an evening reception in Serres's Greek theatre to which he invited Ottoman officials, prominent townspeople, and foreign diplomats ostensibly to celebrate the proclamation of constitutional rule, he noticeably failed to invite the Bulgarian Exarchist leader whom he had kissed and embraced. The Bulgarian consul nonetheless attended the festivity in his capacity as a foreign representative. He later criticized the Greek consul's speech at the event, which praised the Ottoman army for giving "the Greek people

³ Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution*, 295-302.

⁴ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 25, 11-12 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Jul. 24, 1908).

their freedom.” This the Bulgarian consul saw as a snub to those who were neither Greek nor Turkish. When obliged to offer some words himself the consul retorted with a speech calculated to impress the Ottoman officials present and show his inclusiveness in contrast to the Greek consul: “I spoke most of all about ‘brotherhood,’ which I emphasized must be the first stage in the path to freedom in a country where the population is of several nationalities.”⁵ But the Bulgarian consul ultimately viewed all such speeches in the wake of the Young Turk revolution, including his own about “brotherhood,” as so much political posturing. “The theatrical kiss between the [Greek] bishop and the [Bulgarian Exarchate community] leader, the unceasing speeches about brotherhood and equality – these are all acts in which no one, neither Greek nor Bulgarian, places any value.”⁶

But the Bulgarian consul does not appear to have been correct in his cynical assumption that “no one” among the Christian population harbored genuine hopes in the wake of the Young Turk revolution. The skepticism present among the Greek and Bulgarian consuls and church hierarchs stands in contrast to the optimism with which much of the population, and even to some extent members of armed bands, viewed the developments. The candidate from the Serres region who received the most votes from the ethnic “Bulgarian” delegates in the 1908 Ottoman parliamentary elections, Hristo Dalchev, was indeed too committed to the Young Turks’ vision of Ottomanism for the Bulgarian consul’s liking.⁷ In a private meeting with Dalchev, a lawyer and a

⁵ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 25, 32-34 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Aug. 1, 1908).

⁶ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 25, 46-50 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Aug. 3, 1908).

⁷ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 25, 252 (Table of “Distribution of Bulgarian delegate votes by kaaza [in Serres sanjak] among the three Bulgarian candidates” reported by Bulgarian Consul in Serres to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion) shows Dalchev’s success among “Bulgarian”

Sandanski supporter, the consul emphasized the importance of defending “our national culture and national unity” against impending Young Turk policies. He also tried to remind Dalchev of “our national ideal, however distant,” of the union of all Bulgarians. But Dalchev seemed uninterested in these priorities, to the consul’s frustration. He looked poised to be “an extremely weak defender of our national cause in the Turkish parliament.” Instead, the consul lamented, Dalchev “looks like he has already become an excellent Ottoman.”⁸

Inhabitants’ memoirs commonly emphasized the genuine sense of optimism they and even apparently members of armed bands felt upon hearing about the declaration of constitutional rule. “First to our village came the Greek *cheta* [armed band]. They entered the village firing their guns in celebration. ‘Freedom has been given to Macedonia,’ everyone shouted. In the square everyone embraced each other without regard to nationality,” recalled Kiril Ivanov Shatarov from the village of Gorni Poroj near Demir Hisar.⁹ Dimitър Ianev Dimitrov, then a member of an armed band, remembered feeling the same kind of optimism:

A new life set in. All the armed bands [*cheta*] came down from the mountains.... The prisoners were let free, bells rang, musical instruments, drums, general merriment. [W]e dressed ourselves in trousers and dedicated ourselves to culture and to Democratic Clubs, with an especially strong enthusiasm that our ideals had finally been realized.¹⁰

It is telling that local inhabitants both at the time and retrospectively referred to the 1908 revolution in ways that highlighted its apparent character as a broadly

delegates as compared with Paskalev, a candidate favored by the Bulgarian consul and Bulgarian Exarchate organization.

⁸ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 25, 253-254 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Dec. 2, 1908).

⁹ DAB, Sp. 592 (Memoirs of Kiril Ivanov Shatarov), 1.

¹⁰ TsDA, Fond 771k opis 1 [Collection of the National liberation movement of the Bulgarians in Macedonia, 1878-1980] a.e. 29 (Memoirs of Dimitър Ianev Dimitrov), 3.

supported movement, indigenous to the Ottoman Empire, for liberation of society. Personal memoirs recorded in the Bulgarian or Macedonian languages almost always label the event and the era it seemed to usher in as *hurietût/urietot*, using the Turkish word for liberty in a form that translates into English as “the liberty.”¹¹ For some Christians who heard the Turkish term *hürriyet* repeatedly proclaimed but did not know its precise meaning of liberty, it nonetheless clearly portended an auspicious development whose meaning they might fill in according to their own more specific aspirations. Zlata Serafimova recalled that mothers in her village abruptly came in from the fields one day and “spoke cheerfully, tomorrow is the *Huriet* – autonomy.”¹² In any case by embracing the Turkish term, residents implicitly acknowledged a local, Ottoman origin to their potential liberation rather than an external liberator such as a neighboring Balkan state. Shortly after the Balkan Wars, orphans in the village of Metaxa in southern Macedonia who submitted a letter to the Greek government referred simply to the Ottoman period after 1908 as “the Constitution” [*to Syntagma*].¹³ These terms suggest Christian residents of Ottoman Macedonia initially interpreted the events of 1908 as the proclamation of a kind of liberation, or autonomy, or constitution, or simply *huriet* – an indigenous accomplishment of Ottoman society. By contrast, contemporary representatives of the Greek and Bulgarian states commonly employed the term “Young Turk” followed by revolution,

¹¹ Examples are DAB, Sp. 592 (Memoirs of Kiril Ivanov Shatarov), 1; TsDA, Fond 771k opis 1 a.e. 29 (Memoirs of Dimitûr Ianev Dimitrov), 3; TsDA, Fond 771k opis 2 a.e. 294 (Memoirs of Zlata Serafimova); DAB, Sp. 225 (Memoirs of Dimitûr Bozhikov Biliukbashiev), 160; Todor Pop Antov, *Spomeni* (Skopje: Državen Arhiv na Republika Makedonija and Muzej-Galerija-Kavadarci, 2002), 153.

¹² TsDA, Fond 771k opis 2 a.e. 294, 1.

¹³ Istoriko Archeio Makedonias, Geniki Dioikisi Makedonias (IAM, GDM), Thessaloniki, Greece, file 117.1 (Petitions of individuals and communities, 1902-1937), 1-2 (Letter from orphans of massacres in Metaxa to King Constantine of Greece, May 23, 1914).

movement, or coup, when reporting on the event. Rather than highlight ideals or aspirations, this terminology (still standard in English language references as well) called attention to the event as the action of a party, the Young Turks, engaged in a factional struggle.

Ordinary residents of Macedonia thus received their first concrete introduction to liberal political principles such as liberty, equality, fraternity, and representative government while they lived as citizens of the Ottoman state. Though brief, the constitutional period (especially its initial phase) served as an original historical reference point for such principles to people who experienced further oscillations between political openness and repression over the course of the twentieth century. As a Bulgarian headmaster remembered the elections of 1908, “for the first time in Turkey elections occurred for popular [*narodni*] representatives in the parliament in Constantinople [*Tsarigrad*]. On this occasion there was quite a stir. Bulgarians for the first time took part as voters and as candidates.”¹⁴ And, according to tabulations of delegates and votes cast received by the Bulgarian consul in Serres, Bulgarian delegates voluntarily voted at least to some degree for non-Bulgarian candidates. Likewise, instances occurred of Muslims voting voluntarily for non-Muslims, Greeks for non-Greeks.¹⁵ The consul remarked in amazement about the VMRO leader Jane

¹⁴ DAB, Sp. 225, 159.

¹⁵ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 25, 243-244 (Table No. 1 of “Turkish,” “Bulgarian,” and “Greek” delegates by kaaza; Table No. 2 of votes cast for each candidate by kaaza). Delegates in the *sanjak* of Serres could apparently each vote for up to four candidates. Every single delegate in the *sanjak* voted for the two main Muslim candidates, a fact that suggests an element of implicit or explicit coercion in the process. But as regards the remaining, non-coerced, votes, “Greek” candidates did not receive all of the possible “Greek” votes, “Bulgarian candidates did not receive all of the possible “Bulgarian” votes, and “Turkish” candidates did not receive all of the possible “Turkish” votes. Nor can these observations be fully accounted for by the few instances of delegates not choosing to cast third or fourth votes. Beyond these facts, the data are not detailed enough to draw any general conclusions about the extent of such non-coerced, cross-ethnic voting. For a useful discussion of the two-stage

Sandanski, a candidate whom he considered to be ethnically Bulgarian, that “of the fifty votes which he received, more than 30 were given by Turks, 3-4 by Greeks, and only 12-15 by Bulgarians.”¹⁶ Sandanski had courted this diverse array of votes with the avowedly Ottomanist rhetoric he employed in the days following the proclamation of constitutional rule. “Gentlemen! We fought each other for long years, but we accomplished nothing. All of today’s success we owe to the Young Turk party. Long live the Young Turk party! Long live freedom!” Sandanski exclaimed to a crowd at the train station in Serres while en route from Melnik to Salonika.¹⁷ He also had members of his armed VMRO band distribute leaflets of a manifesto in Bulgarian, Turkish, and Greek to scores of villages. Sandanski’s manifesto began by explicitly addressing “all of the nationalities of the empire,” in order to proclaim that freedom had arrived and that “our suffering fatherland is reborn.” He then addressed his “Turkish compatriots” and his “Christian compatriots” in separate paragraphs, claiming to each that their past perceptions of the other group as their enemy had been shown to be false – instead their common enemy had been “tyranny” and “absolutism.” Finally, Sandanski’s leaflets addressed his “co-nationals” [*sûnarodnitsi*], warning them not to “give [them]selves over to the criminal agitation which might be waged by the official authorities in Bulgaria

electoral process governing Ottoman parliamentary elections and the 1908 election in particular, see Hasan Kayali, “Elections and the Electoral Process in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1919,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 27 (August 1995): 265-286.

¹⁶ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 25, 291-294 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Nov. 12, 1908).

¹⁷ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 25, 21-22 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Jul. 29, 1908).

against your comradely struggle alongside the Turkish people.” The Bulgarian consul in Serres was especially displeased with this part of the manifesto.¹⁸

Nor was such Ottomanist rhetoric from Sandanski’s group merely intended as a public façade. In a private conversation, the Bulgarian consul of Serres asked a militant of the local branch of Sandanski’s organization what they thought of the recent events. The militant replied, in keeping with the radical anti-monarchist ideology of the left wing of VMRO, that his group saw the recent proclamation of constitutional rule as “a step along the struggle, a temporary situation.” Ultimately their goal was the removal of the Sultan, and in Macedonia “popular [*narodna*] autonomy” and a “people’s parliament [*narodno sùbranie*] only for Macedonia or at most for Macedonia plus the *vilayet* of Adrianople.” But what the militant – who referred to himself and his comrades as Bulgarians – did not indicate in his private message to the Bulgarian consul was any ultimate desire to unite with Bulgaria, although words to that effect would certainly have pleased the consul. His vision was a radically reformed and decentralized Ottoman state, perhaps with “another people’s parliament for [Turkey’s] Asian populations.” “We take great pleasure in the fact that the struggle which we waged until now for the freedom of Macedonia will bring related benefits also for the populations of the other parts of the Turkish state,” he explained. The VMRO militant insisted that his group’s struggle was waged in common with the Young Turks of his region, “who are sincere in their activity.” He believed that the Young Turks had the support of “the great part of the local ordinary Turkish population, which no less than our Bulgarians is tired of the present

¹⁸ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 25, 71 (Copy of manifesto signed “Sandanski,” Jul. 31, 1908); 42-43 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Aug. 2, 1908).

regime.”¹⁹ The frustrated consul wrote two days later that in his view Sandanski and his comrades had replaced the slogan “Macedonia for the Macedonians” with “Turkey for the Turks.”²⁰ Sandanski’s partly successful efforts to steer students to leave the Bulgarian Exarchate’s pedagogical training academy to study instead at the Ottoman *Idadie* in Salonika only aggravated the consul’s annoyance at Sandanski’s commitment to the new Ottoman regime.²¹

Other groups of Christian residents of Macedonia, not only Sandanski and his militant autonomist group, also showed more interest in securing the promise of stronger local political representation within the Ottoman state. That now seemed more tangible than the uncertain prospect of uniting with a neighboring Balkan nation-state. As discussed above, memoirs published or deposited subsequently in the Bulgarian state archives make clear that many residents embraced the constitutional regime of 1908 because of the local “autonomy” it seemed to promise and the chance to elect local representatives to an Ottoman parliament.²² Teachers who had worked in schools of the Bulgarian Exarchate (which as an institution had close ties with the Bulgarian state) joined Sandanski’s group in demonstrations. Not only did they call for easing the economic burden of peasants; they urged the transfer of control of Bulgarian schools from the Exarchate to the Ottoman state, supposedly according to the will of the “majority.” Finally, they openly denounced the activities

¹⁹ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 25, 53-55 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Aug. 4, 1908).

²⁰ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 25, 70 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Aug. 6, 1908).

²¹ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 25, 291-294 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Nov. 12, 1908).

²² TsDA, Fond 771k opis 2 a.e. 294, 1; DAB, Sp. 225, 159.; Pop-Antov, *Spomeni*, 154-155.

of “agents of Bulgaria” in Macedonia.²³ The Bulgarian “constitutional clubs” organized in Macedonia after the 1908 proclamation of the Ottoman constitution did not have such adversarial relations with the Bulgarian state. Yet they also saw in the new regime an opportunity for increased local power and political representation within the Ottoman system rather than simple reliance on Bulgarian government leadership. In their demonstrations they called not only for reforms in taxation that would help peasant farmers but for selecting half of the Ottoman civil servants in their area from the local majority Bulgarian population.²⁴

Meanwhile, the proclamation of the Ottoman constitution was driving a wedge between the large self-identified ethnic Greek community in the town of Serres and representatives and allies of the Greek state. Wealthy Greek merchants went to Ottoman authorities to denounce the activities of the local Greek consulate and its ally, the Greek Orthodox metropolitan. The merchants reported that both before and after June 1908 these individuals had been responsible for organizing all of the terror and propaganda coming from the Greek side. (In this they were largely correct.) The Greeks in Serres lodged similar complaints about such destabilizing activity directly to Athens and to the Greek legation in Constantinople, calling for the replacement of the Greek consul.²⁵

Also, a vaguely socialist People’s Federative Party was formed with Sandanski’s backing and featured “Greek” and “Bulgarian” sections, each

²³ TsDA, Fond 332k a.e. 24, 263 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Mar. 10, 1909).

²⁴ TsDA, Fond 332k a.e. 24, 264 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Mar. 22, 1909).

²⁵ TsDA, Fond 332k a.e. 24, 198 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Dec. 14, 1908).

proclaiming their alliance with the new Young Turk government. The Greek section allied itself explicitly against the activities of the Greek consuls. One of its members in Serres even apparently assassinated the Greek consulate's dragoman, but according to the Bulgarian consul was dubiously acquitted of the murder by the Ottoman court. The Federativists hoped for a large measure of autonomy for the several nationalities within an Ottoman state, an outcome they saw as possible under the new constitutional regime. The clear hostility of the Greek section of the People's Federative Party to the activities of Greek consulates did not endear the People's Federative Party to the Bulgarian consul of Serres, despite his own rivalry with the Greek consuls. The problem for him was the Federativists' apparent commitment to the vision of a reformed Ottoman state. The Bulgarian consul derided the Federativists' platform as "some kind of Ottoman utopia" and believed it would only serve "to frustrate the process of national self-determination" in Macedonia, a process that he believed would redound to Bulgaria's benefit.²⁶ These preferences shown after July 1908 by politically active Christians in the Serres region of Macedonia for the prospect of greater autonomy within the Empire over integration with either the Bulgarian or Greek states coincide with James Frusetta's findings in the Pirin region of Macedonia.²⁷ Here however they apply to the Greek as well as the Bulgarian or Slav Macedonian-oriented population studied by Frusetta.

But such desires for autonomy and stronger local political power would eventually come into conflict with the increasingly apparent ambition of the ruling

²⁶ TsDA, Fond 332k a.e. 24, 204 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Dec. 21, 1909).

²⁷ James Frusetta, "Bulgaria's Macedonia: Nation-Building and State-Building, Centralization and Autonomy in Pirin Macedonia, 1903-1952" (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 2006).

Committee of Union and Progress after 1908 to centralize Ottoman imperial authority and to consolidate standardized Ottoman institutions throughout the provinces of the Empire. The central government in Constantinople had already made concerted efforts to increase the state's reach during the nineteenth century Tanzimat reforms and subsequently Abdulhamid II's "legitimation policies" and attempted "fine-tuning" of the Empire's subjects' behavior.²⁸ But the CUP's activities after 1908 represented a significant escalation within the Ottoman state of what Charles Maier has identified as a global trend of deepening "territoriality" that took place from the late nineteenth through the late twentieth century.²⁹ For example, Young Turk officials declared their intention (in fact at least a goal of Tanzimat reformers since the mid-nineteenth century) to institute the regular conscription of Macedonia's Christians. Conscription would in part serve the goal of integrating young men of Christian background fully within a key Ottoman state institution, the military. Rather than be concentrated in homogeneous local units, the Christian conscripts from Macedonia would be spread out among units stationed throughout Asia Minor and the Arab provinces of the Empire.³⁰ A group of Bulgarian and Greek Orthodox Christians in Serres were alarmed when a Muslim member of the local CUP branch informed them that by the end of September 1908 all of the Christian schools in the town above the elementary level would be closed. In the nearby town of Drama, authorities had already assembled a committee to collect contributions toward the

²⁸ The terms are coined by Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire 1876-1909* (New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1998), 2, 10.

²⁹ Charles Maier, "Consigning the Twentieth Century to History: Alternative Narratives for the Modern Era," *The American Historical Review* 105, no. 3 (June 2000): 807-831.

³⁰ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 25, 102-114 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Aug. 23, 1908).

building of a new “Ottoman” middle school to replace existing Christian secondary schools.³¹ But when local Greeks attempted to protest the reopening later that year of the Bulgarian school in the town, they were dismayed at being forbidden to hold up banners in Greek. The authorities only permitted them to hold up protest banners in the Turkish language.³²

The CUP’s pressure for Turkification of Ottoman political culture once in power could even affect Muslims in Macedonia. In 1912, an Albanian-Muslim *halva* (type of dessert) monger in the town of Radovish in Vardar Macedonia, Ali Chaush, objected when policemen roughed up some Bulgarian customers inside his store. If the police must behave with such “arbitrariness,” Chaush chided, they should do so outside his store. At that, the policemen let the Bulgarians go, and detained Chaush at the police station. There Chaush was brutally beaten, under the accusation that he “and all Albanians from Skopje northwards” (Chaush originally hailed from Prizren in Kosovo) were traitors and infidels “in brotherhood” with the Bulgarians. Chaush’s protests to the contrary were in vain and he was beaten some more.³³

In the initial months of its rule, the CUP did not commonly feel the need to use such force to compel the population’s observance of Turkish cultural norms. Indeed, its efforts – as with those of Tanzimat reformers and Abdulhamid II before them – were successful in inducing the cooperation of a good portion of Ottoman Christians, who believed they could further their own local goals by working with the

³¹ Ibid.

³² TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 24, 203 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Dec. 31, 1908).

³³ TsDA, Fond 331k a.e. 359, 6 (Bulgarian Consul in Bitolia to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, May 31, 1912).

CUP.³⁴ Already mentioned were the efforts of Sandanski and his followers to steer Christian students away from the Bulgarian pedagogical school to the Ottoman *Idadie* as well as their dismissive attitudes toward the Bulgarian Exarchate and the Bulgarian state, which exasperated at least one of Bulgaria's consuls. And as the Committee of Union and Progress formed commissions to establish "Ottoman" schools that threatened to replace the "Greek" and "Bulgarian" schools, local Greeks and Bulgarians could be found to sit on those commissions.³⁵ Even in the Bulgarian schools in Macedonia, the policy of requiring Turkish language instruction in all schools, originally introduced by Abdulhamid II, had produced partly unintended results. Ethnic Bulgarians who had been trained as Turkish language teachers gave speeches after the 1908 revolution extolling the Ottoman fatherland, the Ottoman people, and the historic Bulgarian-Turkish common struggle for freedom (and implicitly against Abdulhamid's autocracy).³⁶

Nevertheless, the Committee of Union and Progress leadership viewed its initiatives to expand the reach of the central state and to integrate citizenship around Turkish culture as bound up with the process of the state's modernization and even civilization, not simply as elements of a Turkish nationalist project. The same can be said for the objectives of the neighboring Balkan governments of Bulgaria and Greece in sponsoring rival national educational institutions in Ottoman Macedonia. It was important for each side to demonstrate to the outside world its status, also honestly

³⁴ Isa Blumi makes a similar argument in *Reinstating the Ottomans: Alternative Balkan Modernities, 1800-1912* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

³⁵ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 25, 102-114 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Aug. 23, 1908).

³⁶ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 25, 38-39 (Speech delivered by A. Bukureshtliev, instructor of Turkish at Serres Bulgarian Pedagogical Academy, Aug. 2, 1908).

believed, as the legitimate bearer of modern order and civilization. This competitive dynamic came into clear view at elaborately staged school celebrations. Western consuls attended respective celebrations marking the end of the 1907-1908 school year at the Greek and Bulgarian pedagogical academies in Serres. The Bulgarian consul reported triumphantly how impressed the British and French representatives were with the Bulgarian celebrations, which featured a student choir and orchestra, as compared with the Greek ones. “They expressed great wonder at how the Greeks – generally considered by everyone to be the more highly developed nation – do not have an orchestra, something that the Bulgarians have already succeeded in organizing.”³⁷ The British and French representatives were likely especially impressed with the orchestra’s repertoire, which included not only Bulgarian folk music and an Ottoman military march, but several selections from Western classical music and opera.³⁸

The Resumption of Violence, Increasingly Muslim versus Christian

A lull in the violence committed by paramilitary bands and by Ottoman authorities accompanied the broad optimism following the declaration of the constitutional regime in the summer of 1908. But this promising period did not last long. Residents of some villages, who believed the new constitutional regime would protect their freedom to choose their church affiliation, began to declare their

³⁷ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 27, 25-27 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Jul. 1, 1908).

³⁸ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 27, 28 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, handwritten copy of program of the annual celebration of the Serres Bulgarian pedagogical academy, enclosed to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Jul. 1, 1908).

intention to switch from the Patriarchate to the Exarchate. This prompted pro-Greek armed bands to threaten villagers. When they complained to Ottoman authorities, the villagers were counseled that they should not change their existing religious affiliation before the matter was discussed in general in the newly convened parliament.³⁹ Armed bands – pro-Greek as well as those connected to Sandanski – generally resumed their activity, extorting villagers and occasionally committing murders.⁴⁰

But whereas political violence in Ottoman Macedonia after the 1903 uprising was dominated by rivalries between different groups of Christian background, violence between groups of Muslim background and groups of Christian background (state-sanctioned and irregular) became more prominent after 1908 than Christian-on-Christian violence. The failed attempt by opponents of the Committee of Union and Progress to overthrow the newly established regime in the spring of 1909 marked the turning point. Proponents of the attempted coup, a newly formed group known as the Society of Muhammad, opposed among other things the secular orientation of the Committee of Union and Progress leadership. They feared that the CUP's promise of equality to all religious groups would undermine the position of Muslims in the

³⁹ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 25, 142-143 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Sep. 9, 1908).

⁴⁰ Such actions by Sandanski affiliates are reported in TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 25, 180-181 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Sep. 10, 1908); 185-188 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Sep. 23, 1908); 216, 220 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Oct. 27, 1908); TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 24, 244 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Feb. 4, 1909); and 140 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Mar. 10, 1909). Actions by pro-Greek bands are reported in TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 24, 367 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Nov. 19, 1908); 371 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Mar. 2, 1909); and 374-375 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Mar. 18, 1909).

Ottoman state.⁴¹ This attitude translated into a series of threats and attacks on Christian residents of Macedonia by supporters of the coup. In one incident, Muslim landowners sent a group of Muslim paramilitaries into the vicinity of the village of Mustratli near the town of Drama “whose mission was to kill all the opponents of Islam – Young Turks and Christian revolutionaries,” according to a report received by the nearby Bulgarian consul.⁴² When the Bulgarian consul along with his British counterpart decided to investigate the causes of the Muslim-initiated attacks on Bulgarian and Greek Orthodox Christians in their area, they learned about the recent formation of the Society of Muhammad. The Bulgarian consul understood the Society as a “movement of reaction” whose intention was “to act against the long term survival of the constitutional regime.” He and the British consul concluded that this movement was connected to the recent attacks.⁴³ During the height of the coup attempt, the Bulgarian consul (who generally sympathized with Bulgarian but not Greek Christians) reported that “[t]he Christian population, without distinction, is afraid.” He added, “[t]his evening the fear is intensifying, because the town [Serres] is full of armed-to-the-teeth bashi-bazuks, who are out of control in the streets and the cafés.”⁴⁴

⁴¹ The supporters of the counterrevolution reflected diverse disaffected constituencies, and their grievances with the CUP’s new regime did not simply reflect religious anxieties. Nader Sohrabi, *Revolution and Constitutionalism in the Ottoman Empire and Iran* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 224-263 provides the most up to date and thorough account of the Society of Muhammad and the 1909 coup attempt.

⁴² TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 24, 76 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Mar. 24, 1909).

⁴³ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 24, 77-78 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Mar. 27, 1909).

⁴⁴ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 24, 84-85 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Apr. 15, 1909).

Although supporters of the Committee of Union and Progress quickly defeated the coup attempt and sent Sultan Abdulhamid II into exile, violence between Christians in Macedonia and Muslims, including Ottoman authorities, continued to increase. Militant Christian groups who had supported the revolution of July 1908 were at best ambivalent about the increasingly prominent policy of centralization and cultural homogenization pushed by the Committee of Union and Progress leadership. The latter in turn had always harbored skepticism about the ultimate commitment of the Empire's Christian population to their particular vision of Ottoman regeneration.⁴⁵ As early as November 1908, Young Turk authorities distributed arms to residents of predominantly Muslim villages in Macedonia following Bulgaria's outright declaration of independence from the Empire, fearing that ethnic Bulgarians in Macedonia might act as a fifth column if war were to break out with Bulgaria.⁴⁶ In the aftermath of the Society of Muhammad's coup attempt, ethnic Greeks now came under suspicion by Committee of Union and Progress leaders. They had apparently stood aside rather than join with the CUP-led army that defeated the coup.⁴⁷ This tension, along with continuing turmoil in Ottoman Crete after ethnic Greek politicians there prematurely declared union with Greece, fed what the Bulgarian consul of Serres observed to be a clandestine arms race in eastern Macedonia and Western

⁴⁵ Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution*, 40-42, 295-302.

⁴⁶ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 25, 211 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Nov. 12, 1908).

⁴⁷ Feroz Ahmad, "Unionist Relations with the Greek, Armenian, and Jewish Communities of the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1914," in Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, eds., *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society Volume I: The Central Lands* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1982), 410, shows that at least some influential ethnic Greeks in Constantinople who opposed the CUP had actually come out in support of the Society of Muhammad movement.

Thrace. Ottoman authorities distributed arms to local Muslims to face off against ethnic Greeks, who were receiving arms smuggled from Greece.⁴⁸

In 1911 and 1912, a new pattern emerged. Christian militants, though without much popular backing, committed high-profile crimes, successfully calculating that they would induce Ottoman authorities and Muslims to respond with large-scale and indiscriminate repression of Christians. Ultimately, the goal was to destabilize the Ottoman government or to invite foreign intervention. In October 1911, retired members of the Ottoman gendarmerie called for an exemplary massacre of Bulgarians in the village of Novo-selo, just outside the town of Shtip in northwestern Macedonia, because Bulgarians had unpatriotically ignored appeals to volunteer for the Ottoman army to fight in the Italo-Ottoman war that had just commenced. The Ottoman governor of Shtip took energetic measures to protect the Bulgarian population, forestall the massacre, and arrest the plot leaders among the gendarmerie. Yet only days later, someone that the Bulgarian consul in Skopje believed to be a member of the “Macedonian revolutionary organization” infiltrated the very same Ottoman governor’s residence in Shtip and planted a bomb there. Although the bomb detonated too late to kill the governor, the Bulgarian consul concluded that the incident would only serve to increase the “fanaticism” of Ottoman authorities and local Muslims.⁴⁹ That a Christian militant had targeted this particular Ottoman governor – one who had acted conscientiously to protect the local Christian population – suggested that the attacker was trying to stir up an anti-Christian

⁴⁸ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 24, 411, 414, 415 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Jun. 24, 1909).

⁴⁹ TsDA, Fond 335k [Records of the Bulgarian consulate in Skopje] a.e. 131, 297 (Bulgarian consul in Skopje to Bulgarian Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Religion Ivan Evstratiev Geshov, Oct. 21, 1911).

reaction among Muslims and thus inflame the political situation. Another potential terrorist act was averted in February 1912 when a dynamite bomb being assembled in the house of a pro-Greek armed band member in the town of Kastoria exploded prematurely.⁵⁰

Ottoman authorities, sometimes joined by local Muslims, became increasingly indiscriminate in targeting Christian residents in the face of the provocations. In 1911-12 dynamite bombings orchestrated by the Bulgaria-based Central Committee of VMRO in two towns in northwestern Macedonia prompted large-scale massacres in reprisal. In Shtip in December, 1911, a bomb exploded in a mosque and wounded several people. Ottoman Muslims, led by soldiers and gendarmes, killed dozens of Christians and wounded over 150 in response. On August 1, 1912, two bombs exploded within ten minutes of each other in two different parts of Kochani, killing at least three and wounding around a dozen. Immediately after the evidently coordinated bombings, Ottoman soldiers, policemen, and paramilitary forces attacked Christian neighborhoods of Kochani, killing over 150 residents and wounding hundreds more.⁵¹

⁵⁰ TsDA, Fond 331k a.e. 370, 9 (Bulgarian consul in Bitolia to Bulgarian ambassador to the Ottoman Empire Mihail K. Sarafov, Feb. 7, 1912); 10 (Bulgarian consul in Bitolia to Bulgarian ambassador to the Ottoman Empire Mihail K. Sarafov, Feb. 14, 1912).

⁵¹ Historical scholarship on these two events is remarkably scarce. They are mentioned in Petar Stojanov, *Makedonija vo vremeto na Balkanskite i Prvata svetska vojna (1912-1918)* (Skopje: Institut za nacionalna istorija, 1969): 37-38 and in Ernst Helmreich, *The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars, 1912-1913* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938): 37, 39. More details about both the bombings and the reprisals appear in a confidential memorandum from Bulgaria's prime minister to Bulgaria's ambassadors to the Great Powers. Although coming from a contemporary source with direct and immediate interest against the Ottoman Empire in these events and thus particularly prone to a biased portrayal, the numbers of victims the Prime Minister gives for each side in the Kocani events are in rough agreement with those quoted by Helmreich: TsDA, Fond 331k a.e. 369, 7, 8, 10 (Bulgarian Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Religion Ivan Evstratiev Geshov to Bulgarian Ministers Plenipotentiary to the Great Powers, Aug. 17, 1912).

Such conditions, especially the increasing violence between Muslims led by Ottoman authorities and Christians, resulted in a general change from a mood of optimism in the months following the declaration of constitutional rule in 1908 to one of pessimism by 1912 among all sections of the Christian population of Ottoman Macedonia with regard to their future under Ottoman or Muslim rule. Typical of an ordinary Christian villager's perspective was Zlata Serafimova's summation: "The period of freedom after the *huriyet* was very short. Again the Turks began to commit mischief, to oppress the Bulgarians."⁵² Also indicative of this shift in sentiment was the general refusal mentioned earlier of Christians to volunteer for the Ottoman army at the start of the Italian-Ottoman conflict in 1911. Less than three years before in 1909, Christians in significant numbers had joined or supported the so-called Action Army that marched from Macedonia to Constantinople. In the name of protecting the Ottoman Constitution, this mixed force had defeated the coup attempt by the Society of Muhammad.⁵³

Although, as we shall see, Christian political activists in Macedonia remained sharply divided because of ethnic and other kinds of factional rivalries, they had generally begun to see themselves by the eve of the Balkan Wars as common targets of the Young Turk regime. Instances of cooperation and acts of solidarity consequently increased, although they remained occasional. In 1910, the majority of ethnic Bulgarian or Macedonian and ethnic Greek deputies (as well as a slight majority of ethnic Arabs) in the Ottoman parliament voted as a bloc against the ruling

⁵² TsDA, Fond 771k opis 2 a.e. 294 (Memoirs of Zlata Serafimova).

⁵³ Tachat Ramavarma Ravindranathan, "The Young Turk Revolution – July 1908 to April 1909: Its Immediate Effects," (master's thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1970), 279-283. Also TsDA, Fond 332k a.e. 24, 89, 98, 103 (reports from Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Apr. 18, Apr. 20, Apr. 26, 1909).

Committee of Union and Progress.⁵⁴ In October 1911, the Greek metropolitan of Salonika met personally with the Bulgarian consul there, Atanas Shopov, to discuss the recent murder of Greek Metropolitan Emilianos of the town of Grevena in southwestern Macedonia. Shopov's summary of the meeting indicated his revulsion at the "heinous murder," as well as his implicit agreement with the Greek metropolitan's assessment that the murder had been the work of "the local [Ottoman] authorities."⁵⁵ The very fact that a high-ranking Greek Orthodox Church official and a Bulgarian consul would have met privately to discuss such an event, let alone reinforced by the Bulgarian consul's sympathetic attitude in his private government correspondence, would before then have been uncharacteristic of relations between such highly placed officials on opposite sides of the Greco-Bulgarian nationalist struggle. The two figures were now drawn together by the perception that they faced a common foe, the aggressive officials of the newly constituted Ottoman regime. Members of formerly rival pro-Greek, pro-Bulgarian, and Macedonian autonomist paramilitary groups even began to cooperate in some attacks and bombings against Ottoman targets.⁵⁶ In the past, by contrast, they would have sooner cooperated opportunistically with Ottoman authorities in order to undermine the rival Christian movement.

⁵⁴ Calliope Papathanassi-Moussiopoulos, "Le Rapprochement des grecs et bulgares membres de la Chambre des Deputés Turque à 1910 presage des lutes pour l'indépendence," in *Relations et influences réciproques entre grecs et bulgares XVIIIe-XX-e siècle: Art et littérature, linguistique, idées politiques et structures sociales* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1991).

⁵⁵ TsDA, Fond 331k a.e. 333, 3-4 (Bulgarian consul in Salonika, Shopov, to Bulgarian Legation in Constantinople, Oct. 31, 1911).

⁵⁶ TsDA, Fond 331k a.e. 367, 3-5 (Bulgarian consul in Bitolia to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, May. 14, 1912); TsDA, Fond 331k a.e. 370, 62-63 (Bulgarian consul in Bitolia to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Sep. 25, 1912).

Nonetheless, instances of cooperation between formerly rival Christian militant groups remained sporadic during the period immediately preceding the Balkan Wars. They reflected the awareness of a growing common pessimism among Orthodox Christians in Ottoman Macedonia about the prospects for Christians of any ethnic or political background under Ottoman or Muslim rule after the initial euphoria of the Young Turk revolution had dissipated. But this sentiment did not translate into any kind of united movement or group identity among Christians across Ottoman Macedonia. Instead, divisions among Christians persisted in some cases right up to the eve of the Balkan Wars. On August 25, 1912, just over a month before Bulgaria and Serbia began fighting as allies in the first Balkan War, the Metropolitan of Debûr-Kichevo of the Bulgarian Exarchate reported to the Bulgarian consulate in Bitolia in northwestern Ottoman Macedonia:

At the start of this month the Serb armed bands under the chieftainship of Arso and Mihail threatened the villagers in the village of Dupiani in order that they become *serbomans*. The Bulgarians in the village in question decided not to complain to the authorities out of fear that the armed bands would punish them. At 2 this afternoon the *serboman* priest Velko in the village of Iagol and his bodyguard Kamber forcibly coerced the Bulgarian exarchist Hristov, from that village, to declare himself as a *serboman*.⁵⁷

According to Georgios Modis, a pro-Greek activist in Macedonia during the early twentieth century, the declaration of a Balkan Alliance bringing Bulgaria and Greece together in October 1912 even provided the occasion for pro-Bulgarian paramilitaries to settle scores with their Greek counterparts:

Much was said then about a regular Greco-Bulgarian alliance. It was only natural for the *komitatzides* and the *andartes* to stop the war of extermination between them. They made “reconciliation”. One day, however, a few days before the war of 1912, where Lazos Dougiamas and Athanasios Betsios of Karpi were going together, carefree and in brotherhood with the *voivod* Giouptse and other *komitatzides* to

⁵⁷ TsDA, Fond 331k a.e. 361, 64 (Bulgarian consul in Bitolia to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, May. 14, 1912).

Karpi, a murderous barrage of fire from the good comrades and fellow travelers cut them down. The Bulgarians did not easily forget their old craftiness.⁵⁸

This account of course reflects the point of view of a Greek patriot who wanted to highlight what he saw as the incorrigible “craftiness” of the Bulgarians, but it paints an accurate picture of the tenuous nature of the newly announced Balkan alliance as it related to seasoned militants who had long fought for rival national causes.

All the same, divisions within national camps continued to be even more prominent sources of disunity than those between the national camps. Bulgarian consuls in Serres, Salonika, and Bitolia spent more time reporting on violence and intrigue between rival groups they considered to be Bulgarian than on tensions between pro-Bulgarian and pro-Greek activists. Jane Sandanski’s leftist and anti-clerical organization frequently clashed with representatives of the Bulgarian Orthodox Exarchate, with more centrist members of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization who were more inclined to work with Bulgaria, and with remnants of the Supreme Committee. The Bulgarian consul of Serres decried this “daily more terrible and more internecine strife” when reporting on the murder of a Bulgarian merchant, Mita Pliakov by a rival Bulgarian faction: “The Greeks did not succeed in killing him. For the time had come for his own national brethren to kill him, those who most of all should have praised him for his beautiful and brave initiative of establishing Bulgarian commerce in Demir Hisar.”⁵⁹ The same consul remarked on the “treachery” of a Greek armed band for murdering a Greek priest.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Georgios Modis, *Makedonikos Agon kai Makedones Archigoi*, (Macedonian Struggle and Macedonian Captains) (Thessaloniki: Eteireia Makedonikon Spoudon, 1950), 310.

⁵⁹ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 25, 217-219 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Oct. 27, 1908).

⁶⁰ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 24, 388 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, May 5, 1909).

When the Greek and Bulgarian sections of the People's Federative Party were formed to contest elections on a platform of decentralized government within the Ottoman Empire, each section focused its strongest efforts on undermining political rivals of its own respective ethnic background. The rivalries resulted in more instances of intra-Bulgarian and intra-Greek violence, such as when Greek Federativists assassinated the dragoman of the Greek consulate in December 1909.⁶¹

Thus, the retrospective assessment of Konstantinos Tsopros, a law student in Salonika during the Young Turk era, that the Young Turks' supposed aim "to thwart the autonomy of Macedonia actually accelerated the understanding among the Christian minorities, expressed ... eventually by the alliance between Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Montenegro," seems an exaggeration.⁶² The constitutional regime brought by the Young Turks did not produce a unified movement or political identity among Ottoman Christians, even of those of purportedly the same ethnic background. But Tsopros was right that Christians felt increasingly dissatisfied with their position as non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire. By 1912 they were receptive to the notion that the neighboring Balkan states who declared war on the Ottoman Empire in the name of liberating the inhabitants of Macedonia from Ottoman tyranny might indeed offer them better political rights and more basic security. The first government to make such explicit promises of ending tyranny to inhabitants of Macedonia was the Ottoman constitutional movement that took power in 1908. These aspirations had led Christian inhabitants of Macedonia initially to show a genuine eagerness to embrace

⁶¹ TsDA, Fond 332k opis 1 a.e. 24, 204 (Bulgarian Consul in Serres, Semenov, to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Dec. 21, 1909).

⁶² Konstantinos Th. Tsopros, *Anamniseis (Meleniko – Thessaloniki)* (Thessaloniki: Idrima Meleton Chersonisou Tou Aimou, 1992), 53.

that new Ottoman leadership and even to distance themselves from the ambitions of neighboring Balkan governments. The same aspirations, more than ethnic nationalism, were behind Christian inhabitants' subsequent disillusionment with the Ottoman constitutional regime. They turned for relief to the Balkan military alliance of 1912.

The First Balkan War in Ottoman Macedonia

The national designs of the Balkan states of Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia on Macedonia since the late nineteenth century generally faced two contradictory obstacles: Ottoman rule and each other. For much of the period shown above, the three nation-states spent more energy in working to prevent their rivals from gaining the advantage in Macedonia than in directly opposing Ottoman rule over the territory. From 1908 onwards, this pattern began to change. A series of international developments encouraged the independent Balkan states to try to put aside their differences and finally form an alliance against the Ottoman Empire by the autumn of 1912. A brief review of this more familiar sequence of international events follows before turning to their local impact.

Serbia was initially motivated by Austria-Hungary's annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in October 1908. Although occupied and administered by the Habsburg Monarchy since 1878, as noted in Chapter 1, Bosnia had until 1908 remained under nominal Ottoman sovereignty. Neither the Ottoman nor Russian governments felt themselves to be in a position to be able to oppose the annexation with anything stronger than indignant protests. The annexation passed as a *fait accompli*, but

Bosnia-Herzegovina, with its ethnic Serb plurality, had long constituted the central goal of Serbian ambitions. Austria-Hungary's annexation dealt a severe setback to Serbian nationalist objectives. The annexation also revealed Serbia's apparent powerlessness and pushed the Serbian government to make serious efforts to seek an alliance with its neighbor Bulgaria against Austria-Hungary.⁶³ Greece experienced a similar setback when its halting attempt after the 1908 Ottoman constitutional revolution to unify Ottoman Crete with Greece backfired. The newly assertive Ottoman government revoked the autonomy that it had been forced by the Great Powers to grant the island in 1898. This also prompted Greece to try to seek support from its Balkan neighbors to the north.⁶⁴

Neither did new Ottoman vulnerabilities escape notice in Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece or Montenegro. Ethnic Albanians in the westernmost Ottoman Balkan territories began an insurrection in 1910. The insurgents were reacting against the aggressive centralization and tax policies of the Young Turk government in Constantinople. They were also concerned about the perceived ineffectiveness of Ottoman authorities in protecting territories they lived in from the threat of irredentism from the surrounding Balkan states.⁶⁵ Ottoman forces had difficulty suppressing the uprising. Ironically with some Serbian assistance, it only intensified

⁶³ Samuel R. Williamson, Jr., *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1991), 65, 67-72; Richard C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars 1912-1913: Prelude to the First World War*, (London: Routledge, 2000), 7-8.

⁶⁴ Hall, *Balkan Wars 1912-1913*, 8, 12.

⁶⁵ See Stavro Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening 1878-1912* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), 397-447. The insurrectionists feared that Albanians would be left dominated by neighboring Balkan countries if the Ottoman Empire further disintegrated and demanded the consolidation of a well-defined autonomous Albanian Ottoman region both to guard against this eventuality and to better prepare themselves in case it nonetheless came to pass. Montenegro and Serbia provided some aid to the insurrectionists with the hope that they would respectively bring the region under their sphere of influence. The insurrectionists accepted the aid opportunistically, but with wariness of ultimate Montenegrin and Serbian intentions.

throughout 1911 and was still not completely stamped out by the eve of the first Balkan War in 1912. Not only did Balkan governments take note of the trouble the uprising was creating for Ottoman armed forces, which were now more vulnerable to any attack from outside. The Serbian, Greek, Montenegrin, and Bulgarian governments also worried about the implications of a possible Albanian national movement for their own ambitions in the territories affected, including the Ottoman-ruled areas of Kosovo, Shkoder, Manastir, and Epirus.⁶⁶

Reinforcing the military vulnerability of the Ottomans was the Italian invasion of Tripolitania (Libya) in September 1911. The Empire was forced to divert significant numbers of troops away from its Balkan territories in its ultimately losing effort to retain Tripolitania.⁶⁷ Balkan state leaders, starting with Serbia and Bulgaria, saw the opportunity to take advantage of this set of Ottoman weaknesses. In October, 1911, Prime Ministers Milan Milovanović of Serbia and Ivan Evstratiev Geshov of Bulgaria began negotiating an alliance directed against the Ottoman Empire, which they finally signed on March 7, 1912. The agreement secretly recognized Bulgaria's claim to Ottoman Thrace and Serbia's claim to Kosovo and northern regions of present-day Albania. Milovanović and Geshov did not fully settle their conflicting claims over Ottoman Macedonia, but their agreement appeared to make significant progress towards such a settlement. In particular, in the event that an autonomous status for Macedonia could not be obtained, the two countries would partition the territory between them. Bulgaria would acquire the southern and eastern parts of

⁶⁶ Skendi, *Albanian National Awakening*, 445-447; Hall, *Balkan Wars 1912-1913*, 9.

⁶⁷ Williamson, *Austria-Hungary and the Origins*, 76-77; Hall, *Balkan Wars 1912-1913*, 11, 19-20. In fact Ottoman troops and local inhabitants of Libya were successfully holding back Italian forces until the Ottoman government decided to come to terms with Italy in October 1912 so that it could face the new threat from the Balkan states.

Macedonia, including the important towns of Ohrid, Bitola, Prilep, Gevgeli, Veles, and Shtip. In the event that Bulgaria and Serbia could not reach an agreement for the partitioning of the remaining north western part of Macedonia, they would agree to accept the mediation of the Russian Tsar.⁶⁸ Bulgaria had also begun separate negotiations with Greece in the autumn of 1911. In May 1912 Bulgaria and Greece signed an alliance treaty directed against the Ottoman Empire that, however, said nothing specific about how Macedonian territory might be apportioned. Greece's agreement with Serbia did not come until the late summer of 1912, and remained in oral rather than written form. The ambiguous agreement between Serbia and Bulgaria regarding the future status of Macedonian territory, as well as the absence of any formal agreement between Greece and Bulgaria and between Greece and Serbia on the same issue, would prove to have an extremely destabilizing effect on the alliance almost from its inception.⁶⁹

Montenegro's agreements with Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece were the latest and generally least detailed of all. But it was Montenegro, whose proud King Nikola hoped to outdo Serbia's King Peter as leader of the pan-Serb national movement, which initiated hostilities against the Ottoman Empire on October 8, 1912.⁷⁰ The Balkan Allies then lodged an ultimatum to the Ottoman Empire demanding acceptance of autonomy for the Empire's European provinces. The Porte ignored the ultimatum itself but, in desperation and in vain, announced the intention to make

⁶⁸ Hall, *Balkan Wars 1912-1913*, 11; Stojanov, *Makedonija vo vremeto*, 31-36.

⁶⁹ Hall, *Balkan Wars 1912-1913*, 12-13; Helmreich, *Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars*, 36-89 still stands as the most detailed exposition of the development of the agreements between the Balkan states.

⁷⁰ Hall, *Balkan Wars 1912-1913*, 6, 15.

reforms in Macedonia. Bulgarian and Greek troops crossed the Ottoman frontiers on October 18, Serbian troops on October 19.⁷¹

The territorial disposition of each country's military would largely dictate the victorious path of the military forces of Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, and Montenegro during the First Balkan War. Because Bulgaria was the easternmost of the Balkan Allies and because her army was the largest, her task was mainly to invade and occupy Ottoman Thrace en route to Constantinople and thus hold off the expected effort by the Ottomans to reinforce their troops in the Empire's European provinces by land from Asia Minor. This military logic, reinforced by King Ferdinand of Bulgaria's ambition to march into the historic imperial capital of Constantinople, meant that the main part of Bulgaria's army would not be used to occupy what was perhaps Bulgaria's most important national objective: Macedonia. Only one Bulgarian division moved southwards into eastern Macedonia and towards Salonika. Located to the west, Serbia's main military mission was to move south into the heart of Macedonia. In the process, its forces occupied all of the area designated as a "disputed" zone in the secret Serbian-Bulgarian agreement as well as some of the area that had been designated outright as future Bulgarian territory. Greece's comparatively small army would push northwards into Ottoman Epirus, Thessaly, and southern Macedonia. But her main strategic mission was to use her navy to block the Ottomans from reinforcing their positions in Macedonia and Thrace by sea from Anatolia. This combination of Greek naval and Bulgarian land forces would cut off the Ottoman troops located in the Empire's European territories from supplies and

⁷¹ Ibid., 24, 47, 59; Helmreich, *Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars*, 125-126, 131-145.

reinforcements, leaving them outnumbered there by the combination of troops from the Balkan Alliance.⁷²

Accompanying the invading armies of the Balkan nation-states were high-minded declarations from the leaders of those states proclaiming their common mission to liberate the Christians from longstanding Ottoman misrule. “Our holy obligations to our dear country, to our enslaved brothers, and to humanity compel the State, after its failure of peaceful attempts to obtain and secure the human rights of Christians under the Turkish yoke, to bring about through force of arms an end to the misery they have suffered for so many centuries. Greece, fully armed along with her allies who are inspired by the same feelings and connected by common obligations, undertakes the sacred struggle of justice and freedom for the oppressed peoples of the East,” proclaimed King George I of Greece upon Greece’s declaration of war in a statement accompanied by the signatures of Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos and members of the Greek cabinet.⁷³ King Ferdinand of Bulgaria, in a statement endorsed by Bulgaria’s prime minister and cabinet, similarly announced that “war for the human rights of the Christians in Turkey has been declared,” and that “[s]ide by side with us the armies of Bulgaria’s allies, the Balkan countries, will fight against the common enemy for the same purpose And in this struggle of the Cross against the Crescent, of freedom against tyranny, we will have the sympathy of all those who love justice and progress.”⁷⁴ Much of this language, especially the references to freedom, justice, and liberation from tyranny, ironically echoed the promises of the

⁷² Hall, *Balkan Wars 1912-1913*, 14-15, 17, 22-24, 45-46, 52-53, 59, 64.

⁷³ Reprinted in Eleni Gardika-Katsiadaki and Georgios Margaritis, eds, *To Aigaiο ton Valkanikon Polemon 1912-1913* (Athens: Ypourgeio Aigaiο Logotechniko kai Istoriko Archeio, 2002), 75.

⁷⁴ Parashkeva Kishkilova, *Balkanskite voini po stranitsite na bŭlgarskiia pechat 1912-1913: Sbornik materiali* (Sofia: Akademichno izdatelstvo “Prof. Marin Drinov”, 1999), 40-41.

Young Turks four years before. The Balkan states now turned those slogans against the Ottoman constitutional regime, but combined them, as seen in the examples above, with the rhetoric of a crusade on behalf of fellow-Christians living under Muslim rule.

Having endured renewed insecurity with seemingly no end in sight after the initial promise of 1908, the Orthodox Christian population of Ottoman Macedonia now generally looked towards the invading majority Orthodox Christian neighboring countries with hope and anticipation. Yet naturally the local Christian population also feared the consequences of war. Biliukbashiev, the headmaster in Demir Hisar, recalled “eagerly awaiting” the invasion when he heard rumors about its imminence a few days before the war started. But after the war commenced, Biliukbashiev noticed a range of feelings amid the “great commotion” in his town: “[t]he news was greeted by one with joy, by another with terror – and a third a mixture of the one and the other.” In Demir Hisar, nonetheless, Christian residents heeded warnings from Ottoman authorities not to invite suspicion of aiding the invaders, and thus “did not dare to go outside the town” where they might have acted as guides to the allied Balkan armies.⁷⁵ Such was probably the behavior of the majority of civilians, both Christian and Muslim, who, whatever their opinion of the war, would have wanted to steer clear of danger.

Yet a significant number of Macedonia’s Christian residents did prove willing to aid the invading armies that were ostensibly fighting on their behalf. Internal Bulgarian military reports from the campaign reveal that ordinary civilians sometimes joined the fight and more often acted as scouts. Residents gathered vital intelligence

⁷⁵ DAB, Sp. 225 (Memoirs of Dimitŭr Bozhikov Biliukbashiev), 163-164.

on the whereabouts of Ottoman forces, intelligence that frequently influenced the Bulgarian army's operational decisions. Typical was the report of a commander of a detachment of the 3rd Brigade of Bulgaria's 7th Division advancing south into Macedonia: "By report of the inhabitants of the village Sushitsa, enemy forces are no longer in the village Krupnik; remaining is a small part of the Turkish population who are shooting from the houses and it is not possible to enter the village." A commander from a different detachment of the same brigade reported on the same day, "the inhabitants said that the enemy has halted at Kriva Livada. Yesterday the enemy attempted to take Zheliaznichki Hill, but was repulsed by local militia."⁷⁶ The next day the same brigade's 50th regiment registered an equally integral level of involvement of local Christian residents:

The Commander of the 50th regiment ... reports that, according to reports collected from local residents, the enemy has retreated towards Kresna. For this reason, he decided to advance forward and to occupy the heights around the village Oranovo, where the regiment is located at this moment. From the same population, which participated actively with the armed band [*cheta*] of Tane Nikolov in the engagement with the Turks on the 6th of this month [19th according to the new calendar], reports were received that all Turkish units have retreated to the Kresna Gorge.⁷⁷

Young Christian men who hailed originally from Ottoman Macedonia also volunteered in large numbers to participate on a more formal level in the military campaigns organized by the Balkan states. The vast majority of these young men were living as émigrés in Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece, and even in Western Europe or North America before the start of the Balkan Wars. Bulgaria hosted the largest community of Macedonian émigrés, who exercised a significant influence on Bulgaria's politics and some of whom even held top positions in the Bulgarian

⁷⁶ Tsentralen Voenen Arhiv [Central Military Archive] (TsVA), Veliko Tŭrnovo, Bulgaria, Fond 64 opis 2 a.e. 2 (Journal of the 3rd Brigade of the 7th Division, Sep. 17, 1912 – Jan. 4, 1913), entry from Oct. 19, 1912.

⁷⁷ TsVA, Fond 64 opis 2 a.e. 2, entry from Oct. 20, 1912.

military by 1912. By far the largest contingent of volunteers from Macedonia, consequently, was organized in Bulgaria. The day after the start of Bulgaria's general mobilization (September 18, 1912), Bulgarian army chief of staff Major-General Ivan Fichev formally ordered Lieutenant Colonel Aleksandûr Protogerov and Lieutenant Colonel Petûr Dûrvingov to recruit émigrés who had in the past taken part in armed band activity into new "partisan detachments" (*partizanski otriadi*). The mission of the partisan detachments would be to proceed in small clandestine groups ahead of the regular army to collect intelligence and disrupt communications behind Ottoman lines.⁷⁸ Protogerov and Dûrvingov both hailed from Macedonia themselves and had been leading members at different times of the Supreme Committee and the Central Committee of VMRO, based in Bulgaria. According to Dûrvingov, over 2,000 men were included in these partisan units by the start of the war.⁷⁹

Other émigrés from Macedonia in Bulgaria, who had not yet been included in the regular Bulgarian army, meanwhile clamored to volunteer and organized large meetings in Sofia and other locations. To channel their enthusiasm, Fichev authorized the creation of the Macedonian-Adrianopolitan Volunteer Corps on September 23. In its command he placed General Nikola Genev, a non-Macedonian Bulgarian. Protogerov became assistant commander and Dûrvingov chief of staff of the corps.⁸⁰ Unlike the irregular partisan detachments, the Volunteer Corps constituted an extension of Bulgaria's regular army structure, with three brigades led by Bulgarian army officers. Upwards of 14,000 volunteers, mostly resident in

⁷⁸ Petûr Dûrvingov, *Istoriia na Makedono-Odrinskoto opûlchenie, Tom Pûrvi: Zhivotût i deistviiata na opûlchenieto v voinata s turtsiia* (Sofia: Dûzhavna Pечатnitsa, 1919), 1-2, 9-10.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 14,

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 2-8, 26-29.

Bulgaria but also coming from as far as Western Europe and North America, joined the corps. Over 10,000 of these volunteers had roots in Macedonia.⁸¹ Tellingly, recent research into the social profile of the membership of the Macedonian-Adrianopolitan Volunteer Corps conforms to the pattern observed for the membership of armed bands operating in Ottoman Macedonia before 1912 described in Chapter 1. In other words, urban and educated men were disproportionately represented among the militants. Among those members of the Volunteer Corps for whom information about their vocation is available (9,091), fewer than 30 percent were peasant farmers or stockbreeders, rural occupations that engaged the large majority of Ottoman Macedonia's Christian population. The majority of the volunteers were craftsmen, merchants, entrepreneurs, teachers, intellectuals, and urban laborers. Among those for whom educational background is known, 77 percent had at least some formal education.⁸² Despite the vast majority of its membership's ancestry in Macedonia rather than in Adrianopolitan Thrace, the Macedonian-Adrianopolitan Volunteer Corps was sent to operate with the bulk of the Bulgarian army in the Thracian campaign instead of in Macedonia. As will be seen in Chapter 3, the corps' deployment away from the Macedonian theater, along with the later revelation that

⁸¹ Ibid., 656-659. Dûrvingov's count of 14,670 volunteers was likely on the low side. A recent catalog of the volunteers contains information about 18,870 names, although the compilers of the catalog caution that some of those names might be alternate versions of the same person. See Glavno upravlenie na arhivite pri ministerskîia sûvet, *Makedono-Odrinskoto opûlchenie 1912-1913 g.: Lichen sûstav po doumenti na Direktsiia "Tsentralen voenen arhiv"* (Sofia: 2006), 8. For more on the organization of the Macedonian units within and alongside the Bulgarian army, with emphasis on how this development represented an unprecedented integration of the Macedonian revolutionary movement into Bulgarian state structures, see Frusetta, "Bulgaria's Macedonia," 134-146.

⁸² Glavno upravlenie na arhivite, *Makedono-Odrinskoto opûlchenie*, 895. Frusetta, "Bulgaria's Macedonia," 165-167 cites figures from the interwar organization of Macedonian veterans of the Balkan Wars and First World War that indicate a membership that was more representative of Macedonia's prewar social profile, with a higher proportion of rural and uneducated veterans. The change can best be attributed to Bulgaria's more systematic conscription in its new territory of Pirin Macedonia plus among émigrés living elsewhere in Bulgaria during the First World War.

Bulgaria and its ally Serbia in their pre-war negotiations had only paid lip service to the notion of Macedonian autonomy in favor of partition of the territory, eventually became the cause of bitterness among many of the corps' members. They would begin to desert in large numbers the following spring.

Macedonian emigrants in Serbia and Greece also volunteered to serve in the war efforts of their respective host countries. But the specially created units were considerably smaller than Bulgaria's Macedonian-Adrianopolitan Volunteer Corps, most likely because of the much smaller overall size of the respective émigré communities. Hundreds of men with origins in Macedonia enlisted in the irregular detachments formed by Serbia's nationalist *Narodna Odbrana* organization on the eve of the First Balkan War. But the units also included Serbs from Serbia and were led by Serbian army officers.⁸³ In Greece, several hundred men originally from Macedonia were also organized into armed bands on the eve of the war. They were also commanded by Greek officers, not all of whom came from Macedonia.⁸⁴

Christian residents of Macedonia generally greeted soldiers of whichever of the three Balkan armies arrived in their area at the end of 1912 (Serbian, Greek, or Bulgarian) as liberators. They had become pessimistic about the possibility that the Ottoman constitutional regime of the Young Turks would realize their attractive promises of liberty, equality, and order. All three Balkan governments now promised to bring the same principles of government to Macedonia, and did so specifically on behalf of the Christian population. In the town of Kukush, Christian residents

⁸³ Stojanov, *Makedonija vo vremeto*, 81-89.

⁸⁴ Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia*, 446-448. Émigrés from Macedonia and their descendants also undoubtedly served to some extent in the regular Serbian and Greek armies, but specific records about them are not available and no structures analogous to Bulgaria's Macedonian-Adrianopolitan Volunteer Corps were formed in either Serbia or Greece before the First Balkan War.

expected the arrival of the Bulgarian army, and “all the houses ... prepared as if for a holiday,” according to Maria Bozhkova, who was a girl at the time. “[T]hey prepared the food, cleaned the houses, and put on new outfits.” Bozhkova’s family sent her, holding flowers and wearing festive dress, to the town square where other children had been sent to greet the army. When the army arrived, “[T]he people greeted them with kisses and embraces. Everyone wanted to invite to their houses a Bulgarian soldier, or two, or five, for lunch or dinner... All the women looked to outdo each other, they opened hope chests and gave gifts to the Bulgarian troops.”⁸⁵ A similar scene played out in the town of Demir Hisar where, according to the headmaster Biliukbashiev, “[w]e embraced and kissed each other, while some even wept with joy. The people immediately gave [the soldiers] food to eat and grain for the horses.” When in one instance an army unit cut off from its food supply ordered every family in the town to use their ovens to bake bread for the troops, the families “carried out such orders at first [*v nachaloto*] with great joy.”⁸⁶

The record of the joyous reception of the Balkan armies by Christians in Macedonia occurs not only in retrospective memoirs, but in contemporary military records as well. On October 18, the journal of the 3rd infantry brigade of Bulgaria’s 7th division recorded that in the countryside south of Gorna Djumaia in Pirin Macedonia, “[t]he population with bread and salt came to greet the brigade commander and his staff. The bells of the Bulgarian churches rang unceasingly. The

⁸⁵ DAB, Sp. 595 (Memoirs of Maria Bozhkova), 1-2. A very similar account of the festive reception of Bulgarian troops in Kukush from a woman who was an adult at the time is given in DAB, Sp. 33 (Memoirs of Maria Andonova Izmirlieva).

⁸⁶ DAB, Sp. 225, 170-171, 174. The phrase is not “*ot nachaloto*,” which would more firmly connote “from the start.” The difference in wording might not have any particular significance, except that Biliukbashiev does describe later ambivalence among locals towards the Bulgarian army.

people greeted and kissed every soldier that they encountered.”⁸⁷ Christians generally welcomed incoming Balkan armies regardless of which nation they represented. Thus on October 30, a Bulgarian squadron commander recorded that he “entered and was met with celebratory greetings by the population” of the mostly Greek-oriented town of Melnik.⁸⁸ Greek army reserve lieutenant Dimitrios Daras wrote home to his family that his battalion “stopped in many villages, Greek and Bulgarian, where they treated us very kindly.”⁸⁹ Ivan Tenchev Gelebeshev, then a student in Gevgeli but staying in his village of Machukovo during the outbreak of the war, recalls one final bitter experience with Ottoman authority as it was driven out of his region. His teachers were arrested when the war commenced and his school occupied. Finally, “[a]fter some days the Turks began to withdraw but during their withdrawal they killed whomever they met on their path,” including two brothers from his village who were unarmed. It seems no wonder then that, according to Gelebeshev, when “afterwards the Serbian army, the Greek army, and last of all the Bulgarian army arrived, all three armies were greeted by the population as liberators.”⁹⁰

Members of a large component of Ottoman Macedonia’s population, Muslims of Turkish, Albanian, Pomak, and *muhacir* background, were scarcely offered the opportunity to welcome the Bulgarian, Greek, or Serbian armies as liberators, even if they had been so inclined. The allied armies and their associated irregular forces may in some areas have left Muslim noncombatants relatively unharmed and concentrated

⁸⁷ TsVA, Fond 64 opis 2 a.e. 2, entry from Oct. 18, 1912.

⁸⁸ TsVA, Fond 64 opis 2 a.e. 8 (Transcripts of reports and journals of various units belonging to the 7th division’s 3rd brigade), journal of military activity of the 3rd squadron of the 5th cavalry regiment, entry from Oct. 30, 1912.

⁸⁹ Lydia Tricha, ed., *Imerologia kai grammata apo to metopo: Valkanikoi polemoi 1912-1913* (Athens: Etaireia Ellinikou Logotechnikou kai Istorikou Archeiou, 1993), 230.

⁹⁰ TsDA, Fond 771k opis 1 a.e. 40 (Memoirs of Ivan Tenchev Gelebeshev), 3.

on fighting the Ottoman army and irregular armed bands. But in all too many cases, Greece's, Serbia's, and Bulgaria's military and paramilitary forces murdered and plundered unarmed Muslim inhabitants and sent even more fleeing in terror. Although precise overall figures for Macedonia in the First Balkan War do not exist, it seems that noncombatant Muslim deaths from attacks and from starvation and disease resulting from their dispossession reached at least into the tens of thousands, while hundreds of thousands more became refugees.⁹¹ American and Serbian consuls stationed in Salonika in the spring of 1914 both recorded that around 240,000 Muslim refugees from the conquered territories had passed through the port city since November 1912 en route to Constantinople and other areas still belonging to the Ottoman Empire.⁹² The Muslim population of the part of Macedonia now controlled by Greece by this point had been reduced by as much as 25 percent from its level before the start of the Balkan Wars.⁹³

To find accounts of such crimes against Muslim noncombatants, one need not rely on Ottoman propaganda published at the time with the objective of influencing international opinion.⁹⁴ Archives in Greece and Bulgaria contain ample, unpublicized examples of military and paramilitary personnel of Balkan armies casually incriminating themselves or their compatriots in acts against civilians. Even

⁹¹ For a detailed account of the crimes committed by Balkan Christian armed forces against Balkan Muslims during the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, see Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims 1821-1922* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1995), 135-178.

⁹² Katrin Boeckh, *Von den Balkankriegen zum Ersten Weltkrieg: Kleinstaatenpolitik und ethnische Selbstbestimmung auf dem Balkan* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1996), 258.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 259.

⁹⁴ The Ottoman government sponsored the publication in 1913 in Constantinople of pamphlets under the authorship of Le Comité de la Défense Nationale with the following titles: *Les Atrocités des Coalises Balkaniques*, no. 1; *Les Atrocités des Coalises Balkaniques*, no.2; *Les Atrocités des Bulgares en Thrace*; and *Les Atrocités des Grecs en Macedoine*. Western internal consular dispatches, clearly not intended for propaganda, also recorded numerous incidents of Balkan army abuses of Muslim noncombatants. McCarthy, *Death and Exile*, 135-178, gives several examples from British consuls stationed in Macedonia.

published memoirs sometimes contained such accounts. A young Greek soldier, Stratis Stamatopoulos, wrote to his friend in 1912 while serving during the First Balkan War:

We were following the Turks by foot We burned all of Kailaria, the Turkish villages that struck at our troops during their retreat. We beat Turks, we disarmed them, we laid waste.... On our island freedom, eh? When I return (?) we will go together.⁹⁵

Stamatopoulos gained fame years later as Stratis Myrivilis, author of an impassioned antiwar novel.

At least some Greek and Bulgarian soldiers were, however, appalled at the time by the actions of their armies against the Muslim civilian population. About his short stay in the “Turkish” village of Pliassa, Greek army corporal Athanasios Velissarios wrote in his journal:

Today I understood all the cruelty of war. Turkish women [*chanoumises*] and children were crying. Inhabitants were being shot as if they were turtledoves. The houses from end to end were being burned. Horror, horror!⁹⁶

Similarly disturbed was a Bulgarian teacher in the Ottoman Macedonian town of Melnik, Ivan Hristov Gramatikov. Gramatikov was drafted into a militia at the start of the war by men of Sandanski’s Macedonian autonomist organization, which was now allied with the Bulgarian army. “General was the order to the groups [militia]: no Turk should be left alive, life should be reserved for the population suffering from the Turks, and the houses were to be burned,” Gramatikov recalls in an unpublished memoir preserved in Bulgaria’s state archives.⁹⁷ Gramatikov does not

⁹⁵ Gennadius Library Archive (GLA), American School of Classical Studies, Athens, Greece, Archive of Stratis Myrivilis, 16.1 (Letter from Stratis Stamatopoulos, stationed in Koplitsa, to Karolos Grigoriou, dated Dec. 12, 1912.) The “island” he refers to is Lesvos, taken by Greece from the Ottoman Empire in the First Balkan War, and the “(?)” in the text is the writer’s own poignant mark.

⁹⁶ Tricha, ed., *Imerologia kai grammata*, 63-64.

⁹⁷ TsDA, Fond 771k opis 2 a.e. 165 (Autobiography of Ivan Hristov Gramatikov), 31.

say whether or not his discovery of bodies of Bulgarians and Greeks massacred outside Melnik and his home village (including his family's house) burned by departing Ottoman forces made it any easier to carry out this order.⁹⁸ Most Muslim villagers fled, Gramatikov explains, but in the village of Petrovo they remained because of mutual promises between Christian and Muslim villagers to protect each other. The Christians stayed safe there through the departure of Ottoman forces, but things did not go according to the local plan when Christian paramilitary forces arrived from elsewhere. Instead, only five to six Muslim girls were left alive, and these, in Gramatikov's euphemistic language, "had been taken and married to some captains" [*gi biaha vzeli i gi ozheniha za niakoi voivodi*].⁹⁹ A *voivod* (leader of one of the Bulgarian partisan detachments) reported to the 3rd Brigade of the Bulgarian army's 7th Rila Division a slightly different version of the same incident, the aftermath of which he beheld when he arrived at the scene. After supposedly having been fired upon from within the village, Sandanski's forces locked the village's Muslim men (the *voivod* referred to them as "Turks" but they may well have been Bulgarian-speaking Pomaks) in a café and most of the women and children in the mosque and set fire to both. "As a result, almost every living Turkish thing in the village has been extinguished," the *voivod* reported. Surviving were "only a few Turkish women and children [who] had been arrested and taken into custody in a house in the village; some Bulgarian villagers are taking some of the children in order to look after as their own." Although the *voivod* was apparently not involved in this grisly crime about which he reported, he did not miss the opportunity also to inform

⁹⁸ Ibid., 32-33.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 33-34. Gramatikov himself does not claim to have been present during this event, and recounts it second hand.

his commander about the quantities of various categories of foodstuffs and livestock formerly belonging to those Muslims and now available “in case they might be useful for the needs of the army.”¹⁰⁰

Balkan military leaders saw such actions to some extent as legitimate reprisals either for abuses of Christian civilians committed by the Ottoman army or for armed resistance on the part of members of the local Muslim population. Crown Prince Constantine of Greece, who commanded his country’s army in Macedonia, justified actions in this way in a November, 1912 letter to his paramour (an Italian actress who had married a German aristocrat) that was published after his death:

The Turks, to avenge themselves for the defeats they are suffering, fire the Christian villages through which they pass, murder the men, ravish the women and carry them off. Our troops retaliate by setting fire to the Turkish villages, and as many of the peasants fire on us and kill a number of our men, we are obliged to shoot them down. On my arrival here, and seeing the horrors they have committed, I gave orders to burn a few of the Turkish villages through which we passed. The whole of the plain is illuminated by the glare...¹⁰¹

As will be shown in the next chapter, Constantine publically justified “reprisals” against Bulgarians during the Second Balkan War by similar reasoning. But even the Crown Prince expressed some shock privately about the actions of troops under his command: “As the town which [the enemy] were defending had been taken by assault, you can imagine what followed, or rather, no, you cannot imagine it, neither will I describe it to you.... It is too horrible!”¹⁰² He gave no indication, however, of efforts on his part to restrain the acts he found too distasteful to describe to his lover.

¹⁰⁰ TsVA, Fond 64 opis 2 a.e. 15 (Operational correspondence of the 3rd Brigade of the 7th Division, Nov. 2-Nov. 12, 1912), 61-62 (Doncho Zlatkov of *cheta* no. 42 to commander of the 3rd Brigade Major-General Georgiev, Nov. 2, 1912).

¹⁰¹ *A King’s Private Letters: Being Letters written by King Constantine of Greece to Paola Princess of Saxe-Weimar during the Years 1912 to 1923* (London: Eveleigh, Nash & Grayson, 1925), 97-98.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 83; ellipses are in the original.

Those Muslims who fled ahead of the Balkan Christian armies and paramilitary forces gravitated towards large towns and cities such as Edirne, Kavalla, and especially Salonika, while trying to make their way eventually to the relative safety of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁰³ Between the 24th and 26th of October 1912 alone, roughly 16,000 (primarily women and children) arrived in Salonika from the direction of Skopje in the wake of the Serbian advance. The almost 400 train cars that brought them were thoroughly packed with civilians occupying “the roofs, the running boards, and the coupling platforms between the cars.”¹⁰⁴ Refugees fleeing the Greek and Bulgarian armies also converged in large numbers in Salonika.¹⁰⁵ Because of its symbolic importance as a center of Byzantine heritage and its commercial importance as the major seaport of Macedonia, Salonika figured as a crucial military objective of both the Greek and Bulgarian armies. Greece and Bulgaria essentially engaged in a race against the other to reach the city during their Macedonian campaigns against Ottoman forces at the start of the First Balkan War. Nonetheless, the Ottoman commander, Hasan Tahsin Pasha, accepted the coordinated plea from the city’s most prominent Jewish, Muslim, and Christian notables and from foreign consuls to surrender the city peacefully in order to avoid an urban bloodbath.¹⁰⁶ Tahsin Pasha surrendered to the Greek army, but Bulgarian forces arriving only hours later insisted

¹⁰³ McCarthy, *Death and Exile*, 156-160.

¹⁰⁴ Dispatch from U.S. consul in Salonika, John Kehl, to U.S. State Department headquarters, Oct. 30, 1912, in *Correspondence of the American Consulate in Saloniki, 1912-1913*, Consular Post Files, Records Group 84, National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter abbreviated as CACS, RG 84, NARA).

¹⁰⁵ Dispatch from Kehl to State Department headquarters, Dec. 2, 1912 (CACS, RG 84, NARA); Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars* (Washington, D.C.: 1914), 71-75.

¹⁰⁶ Vasileios Nikoltsios and Vasilis Gounaris (translators into Greek), *Apo to Sarantaporo sti Thessaloniki: i Ellenotourkiki anametrissi tou 1912 mesa apo tis anamniseis tou stratigou Hasan Tahsin Pasa*, (Thessaloniki: Triantaphyllou & Sia, 2002), 61.

on stationing troops in the city as well, leading to a joint Greek-Bulgarian military occupation of the city.

Salonika's peaceful and orderly surrender, however, did not stop members of the Greek and Bulgarian armed forces from attacking and plundering both Muslim and Jewish residents of the city, especially during the initial days of the occupation. Jews became targets alongside Muslims, most likely because of their reputation as loyal subjects of the Ottoman Empire. In the wake of Greek complaints of an insufficiently warm Jewish reception upon the entrance of the Greek army, British journalist Crawford Price wrote, "[t]he Chief Rabbi put the Jewish case to me clearly and frankly when he explained that his people were Ottoman citizens, felt the keenness of the Turkish defeats as such, and it was but natural that they should appear more mournful than jubilant."¹⁰⁷ Attacks on Salonika's Muslim and Jewish civilians began on the very day of the armies' entry. A November 12th letter from Joseph Hazan, a secretary of Salonika's socialist organization Federation, to the Bureau Socialist International states that "[f]rom the next day [after the Greek army's entry] horrible acts, worthy of the Middle Ages, began to be committed."¹⁰⁸ Had Hazan written his letter a day later, he would likely have included the following incident in his inventory of "horrible acts." As Greek soldiers were marching in the marketplace on November 13th, "accidentally or otherwise a shot was fired from a nearby café. The Greek soldiers with fixed bayonets charged the café, killed 27 men (mostly

¹⁰⁷ W.H. Crawford Price, *The Balkan Cockpit: The Political and Military Story of the Balkan Wars in Macedonia*, (London: T. Werner Laurie Ltd., 1915), 145-6.

¹⁰⁸ The letter is reproduced in Paul Dumont, "La Fédération Socialiste Ouvrière de Salonique à l'Époque des Guerres Balkaniques," *East European Quarterly* 14, no. 4 (1980): 388.

Israelites and Turks) and wounded about 20 more.”¹⁰⁹ Greek Corporal Philippos Dragoumis, who belonged to a prominent Greek political family, casually acknowledged the involvement of the Greek army in plundering valuables, and apparently saw a humorous side to it: “Even the inkpots were snatched for souvenirs!”¹¹⁰ The frequency of such violent incidents died down considerably after the first week of occupation, but both Greek and Bulgarian soldiers continued to commit occasional abuses.¹¹¹

Local Christian residents of Macedonia, on whose behalf the Balkan nation-states claimed to fight and who generally welcomed and even aided the arrival of the allied armies in 1912, also committed abuses against Muslim residents at times during the First Balkan War, albeit far less commonly than did members of the allied armed forces and paramilitary formations. Instances of violent attacks by local Christian residents on Muslims appear to have been exceptional, especially in contrast to physical violence committed by military and paramilitary forces, but they did occur. In December 1912, the British consul in Salonika reported a significant episode. “Bulgarians” living in Kosturino, a village near Strumitsa, killed up to 800 Muslim refugees who were passing through and attempting to return to their homes in Strumitsa and Radovišta.¹¹² More frequent than such physical attacks on Muslims, though still not approaching the extent of analogous military and paramilitary looting, was the seizing of Muslims’ belongings by their Christian neighbors. Instances

¹⁰⁹ Dispatch from U.S. consul in Salonika, John Kehl, to State Department headquarters, Nov. 23, 1912 (CACS, RG 84, NARA).

¹¹⁰ Philippos Stephanou Dragoumis, *Imerologio: Valkanikoi Polemoi* (Athens: Dodone, 1988), 144; it should be noted that the specific incident that he jokes about involved a then-uninhabited public building that had housed the Sultan Mehmet on a visit years before.

¹¹¹ February, 1913 letter from Joseph Hazan, reproduced in Dumont, “La Fédération Socialiste Ouvrière de Salonique,” 388.

¹¹² Cited in McCarthy, *Death and Exile*, 158-159.

appear occasionally in the records of Bulgarian and Greek governing authorities and in memoirs. Thus, the journal of operations of a Bulgarian battalion recorded on October 21, 1912 that “[t]he village of Simitlii (a Turkish village) was looted” by residents of neighboring villages. The journal entry then discussed items reportedly left in the village, whose Muslim residents had apparently fled, that might be of use to the battalion.¹¹³ Meanwhile, in the midst of the Greek army’s campaign, Christian residents of the village Vlatsi in the Kailaria area of southwestern Macedonia wrote urgently to the nearby Cretan leader of an armed band, Ioannis Karavitis, requesting protection against Muslims from other villages in Kailaria, who they claimed were threatening to attack them as Ottoman forces (only temporarily, it turned out) reoccupied the area.¹¹⁴ But Karavitis explains in his memoir that the Christian villagers’ fear stemmed from the fact that they had just finished looting Muslim property while the Greek army had been there:

[W]ith the passage of the [Greek] Division by Kailaria, taking advantage of the intimidation of the Turks, [the residents of Vlatsi] seized thousands of sheep, and this is why they wrote us to come so urgently; their fears, because of their own acts, were justified.¹¹⁵

Biliukbashiev, the Bulgarian headmaster in Demir Hisar, even implicated himself in the looting that occurred there in his memoir:

When we approached the building of the [Ottoman] district government, we saw that the desk of an influential Turkish lawyer had been ransacked and his papers scattered on the street. I stumbled upon a handsomely bound book, which turned out to be “The Koran,” and I took it as a souvenir. During that transitional time, as the military were setting up posts, the population indulged in looting of abandoned Turkish houses and shops. They came from surrounding villages to plunder.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ TsVA, Fond 64 opis 2 a.e. 8, journal of military activity of the 2nd battalion of the 50th regiment, entry from Oct. 21, 1912.

¹¹⁴ Ioannis Karavitis, *O Valkanotourkikos Polemos: Apomnimonevmata*, (Athens: Ekdoseis Petsiva, 2001), 175-176.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 179.

¹¹⁶ DAB, Sp. 225, 172.

Biliukbashiev also recalls physical violence (killings) of Muslims that occurred in his town after the Ottoman army withdrew:

In the first days, besides the looting there were also killings of Turks. From the prison in the *konak* the Bulgarians who had been arrested were released; in there were also Turks, who were killed. Entering the town were also armed bands [*cheti*], who in the main committed these outrages and murders.¹¹⁷

Exemplifying a larger distinction, then, residents of the town and surrounding villages engaged in plundering of valuables, but physical attacks on Muslims were generally carried out by military (or in this case paramilitary) formations. To the extent that Christian residents of Macedonia took part in abuses of their Muslim counterparts during the First Balkan War, it seems that they were motivated by a combination of simple greed and triumphal vengefulness towards a population whom they viewed as local representatives of their former Ottoman rulers. Christians' sentiments had by then turned decisively against Ottoman rule, whether earlier under Sultan Abdulhamid II or more recently under the initially promising constitutional regime of the Young Turks. It was now clear that Ottoman ruling power was vanquished for good in Macedonia. Some Christians there took advantage of this fact in the days following the entry of Balkan Christian armies, whose greater abuses of Muslim noncombatants only encouraged vengeful actions by locals.

What gave credence to the notion that Ottoman rule in Macedonia was now irrevocably banished was the tremendously rapid advances of the Serbian, Greek, and Bulgarian armies there. Those armies invaded in the middle of October, 1912, and by the end of November they had completely ejected the Ottoman army from Macedonia. Peace talks began in December between representatives of the Balkan

¹¹⁷ DAB, Sp. 225, 172.

Allies and the Ottoman Empire. During these negotiations, the Ottoman representative contested the future disposition of other theatres of the war where Ottoman troops still faced troops of the Balkan Allies under an uneasy truce (Thrace, the Aegean islands, what became Albania, and Epirus). But the question of the Ottoman Empire somehow regaining any part of Macedonia was simply not realistic, and Ottoman representatives did not raise it.¹¹⁸

There remained, however, the question of what Macedonia's territorial fate would be now that Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece had all taken a part in banishing Ottoman rule from it. The March, 1912, agreement between Bulgaria and Serbia stipulated that the region's northwestern corner would somehow be divided between the two countries with the help of Russian arbitration if needed, while it vaguely indicated that the Macedonian territories south and east of that zone would accrue to Bulgaria. This agreement did not explicitly consider whether Greece would annex any of Macedonia's territory. Nor did Greece's more informal prewar accords with Bulgaria and Serbia include agreements as to the disposition of Macedonia's territory.

Compounding these uncertainties now was the significant presence of all three of these allied Balkan armies in Macedonia. In effect, three zones of occupation were established corresponding to where the Serbian, Greek, and Bulgarian armies respectively ended up and met each other as they pushed out Ottoman forces.¹¹⁹ The landlocked Serbian zone encompassed the northwestern portion of Macedonia, including the cities and towns of Skopje, Kumanovo, Veles, Prilep, Bitolj, Resen, Ohrid, Debar, and Tetovo. The Serbian zone was contiguous to other territories

¹¹⁸ Hall, *Balkan Wars 1912-1913*, 70-71.

¹¹⁹ Stojanov, *Makedonija vo vremeto*, 52-54.

conquered by Serbia at the same time, including Kosovo and parts of what became Albania. The Greek zone included the southwestern part of Macedonia with the towns of Kastoria, Florina, Vodena/Edessa, Kozani, and Verroia, and further east included the coastal areas of the Halkidiki peninsula and the city of Salonika. It was contiguous with other territories taken by the Greek army including Thessaly, part of Epirus, and a small part of what became Albania. The Bulgarian zone in the northeast and southeast of Macedonia included the inland towns of Gorna Djumaia, Shtip, Strumitsa, Melnik, Nevrokop, Serres, and Drama and part of the Aegean coast including the port town of Kavalla. It was contiguous to Thrace, much of which was also conquered by the Bulgarian army in 1912 and early 1913. Although Salonika was effectively part of the Greek zone, some Bulgarian troops were also stationed there by agreement. Also, mixtures of Bulgarian, Serbian, and Greek troops coexisted uneasily in a small area, including the town of Gevgeli, where the three zones effectively met. The three zones had no formal legal status, and indeed the informal borders between them remained uncertain, contested, and jealously guarded during the entire period leading to the Second Balkan War several months later.

* * *

For the diverse Orthodox Christian population of Macedonia, the First Balkan War in 1912 had seemed to offer hope for a better political future. Orthodox Christian optimism in 1908 in the wake of the Ottoman constitutional revolution had reflected their embrace of ideals introduced into the Ottoman public political arena at that time: the French Revolution ideals of liberty, equality, fraternity, and justice. Nationalist ideals had little to do with this optimism. Despite Orthodox Christians' typical

familiarity with and even frequent embrace of one or another national identity propagated by the neighboring nation-states of Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia, they enthusiastically placed their hopes in 1908 in their continued existence within a reformed Ottoman state. In the autumn of 1912, they shifted their hopes to the advancing armies of Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia because these countries claimed to represent in effect the same governing principles initially espoused, but apparently abandoned, by the Ottoman constitutional regime.

But the often aggressive behavior of the incoming Balkan armies towards Muslim civilians in 1912 also offered a kind of warning to Orthodox Christians in Macedonia. These armies were willing to inflict immense suffering upon civilian populations they perceived to be representing or supporting enemy forces. As the following chapters will show, groups of Orthodox Christian civilians, if perceived by the newly ruling Balkan state governments to be hostile or disloyal because of their ethnicity, could become the targets of the Balkan state armies' cruelty just as Muslims had during the First Balkan War. Orthodox Christians in Macedonia, as Chapter 3 will reveal, would therefore not welcome the war between former allies (the Second Balkan War) that broke out in 1913.

Chapter 3: The Pressures of Impermanence: Macedonia from a Collapsing Balkan Alliance to a Second Balkan War, 1912-1913

This chapter examines the brief, but volatile period from the Balkan Alliance's victory over the Ottoman Empire in Macedonia at the end of 1912 to their war amongst themselves during the summer of 1913 over the territory they had just liberated. The longstanding tensions between Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia began to return to the fore at the beginning of this period, as their governments began to confront in concrete fashion the question of how they would partition their newly-won Ottoman territory. As if to lay permanent claims to Macedonian territory, each of the three would-be successor states rapidly set up mixed civilian and military administrations in the zones they occupied during the autumn of 1912. From the start they all imposed policies of national assimilation on the new multi-ethnic populations. Greece and Bulgaria also proceeded with incorporating their new territories into the state's central administration.

It was nevertheless clear to all, not least Macedonia's residents themselves, that the borders represented by the three occupation zones were fluid and likely to change. Macedonia's residents often took canny advantage of these international political rivalries in pushing for their varied interests, including economic prospects and control over local institutions. And more than in any other period analyzed here, many ordinary inhabitants acted as though they saw in this interim of uncertainty a window of opportunity to shape their own political destiny. Local civilians now

involved themselves directly in various efforts to secure an autonomous international status for Macedonia or later on (as autonomy proved unlikely) to ensure that one or another favored national government would rule over their local area.

Yet residents of Macedonia continued, with some notable exceptions, to stop short of violence in pursuing these efforts. In particular, local Christians showed little enthusiasm for the inter-allied war that broke out in June of 1913, a war which they correctly judged would spell disaster for their communities. The Balkan armies that had engaged in brutal violence against primarily Muslim civilians in the first Balkan War now did so against groups of Christians they deemed hostile to their respective national causes. The Second Balkan War thus generated unprecedented numbers of Christian refugees who hastily fled for their lives when they sensed they would be on the receiving end of the violence perpetrated by the armies and paramilitary forces of the Balkan states. However, the refugees almost uniformly saw the abandonment of their homes, property, and ancestral lands as a last, and hopefully temporary, resort. They had little intrinsic interest, as we shall see, in joining their purported “brethren” in some kind of imagined homogeneous national utopia. They much preferred to return home, even in the face of considerable danger.

The Second Balkan War featured brutal combat between states whose majorities all adhered to the same religion of Orthodox Christianity. Their excesses have subsequently been used to demonstrate the hopelessly deep ethnic (not simply religious) divisions and the endemic nature of local violence in the Balkans. This chapter provides an important corrective to that presumption. It calls attention instead to the gulf in mass sentiment that existed between most of the Orthodox

Christian population who had until then lived in the Ottoman Empire and their co-religionists who had been socialized in nation-states and fought in the Greek, Bulgarian, and Serbian armies. Orthodox Christian inhabitants of former Ottoman Macedonia identified to varying degrees with particular national groups. But they still considered local security, prosperity, and the liberating political principles they heard from the Young Turks and then from incoming Balkan armies to be more important priorities. More violence and war would only undermine those priorities. By contrast, soldiers in the Greek, Bulgarian, and Serbian armies and allied paramilitary forces were motivated by an exclusionary national ideal. Encouraged by their military and political leaders, they usually understood that they were obligated to fight, die, and kill for their nation. The wartime violence that accompanied such attitudes among army and paramilitary fighters included crimes against noncombatants, primarily Christian in the Second Balkan War. Yet the sorts of abuses committed were not uniquely “outrageous” for their time. They should be seen instead, as this chapter will also argue, as of a piece with the kinds of abuses that occurred in European wars of the nineteenth century and even those that occurred during opening campaigns of the First World War.

Advertising Permanence: Establishing Administrations in the New Territories

The partial armistice of December 3, 1912, ushered in an unstable period of eight months in Macedonia during which the hitherto veiled tensions lurking within the Balkan Alliance eventually overwhelmed the discord between the Allies and the Ottoman Empire. The Balkan allies did continue fighting the Ottoman forces on

other fronts until the signing of the Treaty of London ended the First Balkan War on May 30, 1913. Greece, having refused to sign December's partial armistice, initially continued its army's siege of the city of Iannina in Epirus. The Bulgarian, Serbian and Montenegrin armies also resumed hostilities against the Ottoman military in eastern Thrace and northern Albania when they abrogated the armistice in the wake of a Young Turk-led coup in Constantinople in late January, 1913. As of December, 1912, however, Ottoman rule had ended throughout the full extent of geographic Macedonia. Talks in London among representatives of the belligerent countries and the Great Powers dragged on until the treaty's signing on May 30. Yet the Ottoman delegate did not try to contest his government's loss of Macedonia. The banishment of Ottoman authority from Macedonia was indeed the only political change in the region of which anyone could be certain.

Manifestly uncertain for months was how Macedonia's territory would finally be apportioned among the successor states – Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia – each of whose armies occupied parts of the region. As noted in Chapter 2, the separate bilateral alliance agreements reached between Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria before the First Balkan War stopped well short of specifying definitively which country would receive what territory in the event of victory over the Ottoman Empire. The contents of the most specific agreement, that between Bulgaria and Serbia, now remained secret while the ambassadors of the Balkan states and the Great Powers were apparently negotiating the future of Macedonia and other Balkan territories in London. Furthermore, Greek and Bulgarian forces continued to share the important port city of Salonika uneasily after their contested entry there.

The very air of uncertainty that hung over the fate of Macedonia spurred the Bulgarian and Greek governments to demonstrate how permanent and legitimate their authority was over their respectively occupied territories. Rather than simply use their armies to impose a provisional order while war was still being waged, the Balkan states rapidly erected elaborate structures of mixed civilian-military administration, in effect signaling that their respective “new territories” were extensions of their respective old ones. At the top of the hierarchy and in the central administrative base of the conquered territory, each administration typically employed a mix of men imported from within the state’s old boundaries. They allowed local notables to fill only municipal and other positions lower in the hierarchy.

Thus, the Greek-held part of Macedonia came under the authority of a General Administration of Macedonia based in Salonika. The Greek Minister of Justice, Konstantinos Raktivan, was appointed Governor-General (replaced in a few months by former Prime Minister Stephanos Dragoumis, who was also Governor-General of Crete.) Greece’s Prince Nicholas became Military Governor of Salonika. The General Administration of Macedonia was itself subdivided into prefectures and sub-prefectures, replicating the regional administrative structure of the rest of Greece. In a deliberately symbolic gesture, Nicholas’s father King George of Greece reinforced Greece’s claim to the important port of Salonika by deciding to reside in the city only days after the entry of the Greek army in November, 1912. He became a conspicuous fixture there over the next months, taking a very visible – some said reckless – daily

walk through the center and port with practically no armed protection.¹ The King's bravado finally cost him his life in March of 1913, when on a clear spring day an indigent and mentally unstable local Greek assassinated him during his stroll near the city's famed White Tower.

Military authority played a larger role at the top of the mixed civilian-military administrative structure in the parts of Macedonia initially conquered by the Bulgarian army, as suggested by the name given to the administrative structure, the Macedonian Military Governorship. The Macedonian Military Governor, General-Major Mihail Vûlkov, resided at the administration's seat in the town of Serres, while General-Major Hristofor Hesapchiev was installed as the Representative of the Bulgarian Army in Salonika. These officials, in turn, answered to civilians in the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sofia and to the Bulgarian Prime Minister, Ivan Evstratiev Geshov. The Macedonian Military Governorship was, like the Bulgarian state itself, subdivided into smaller units of provinces and districts. As in the Greek case, local civilian notables were typically limited to serving in posts lower down the administrative structure.²

Both Greek and Bulgarian authorities broadcast liberal principles of rule by popular representation to contrast with the Ottoman regime that preceded them. In an interview published in a Salonika Jewish newspaper two weeks after the Greek

¹ Dispatch from U.S. consul in Salonika, John Kehl, to U.S. State Department headquarters, Mar. 20, 1913, from *Correspondence of the American Consulate in Saloniki, 1912-1913*, Consular Post Files, Records Group 84, National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter abbreviated as CACS, RG 84, NARA).

² The Serbian governing structure in its conquered territories was similar to that of the Bulgarian one – mixed civilian-military but more military-heavy at the top. However, locals were appointed less frequently as officials in lower-level positions. See Petar Stojanov, *Makedonija vo vremeto na Balkanskite i Prvata svetska vojna (1912-1918)* (Skopje: Institut za nacionalna istorija, 1969), 131-138.

army's entry into the city, the new Greek governor Konstantinos Raktivan emphasized these high purposes on his arrival: "Our aim is to bring to an end tyranny and bad government, which infests this land; we bring these principles, the treasures of freedom, completely irrespective of religion ... as befits a civilized state." Raktivan pointed out that a statement to this effect had already appeared in an earlier issue of the same newspaper and in greater length in domestic (Greek) newspapers, and then elaborated upon it again:

This is not at all to say that I mean to overturn everything. The administrative organization, the judicial, as well as the remaining branches of services we want to continue to work as they did under Turkish rule, after the changes, that is, established by the new situation.³

Raktivan's added qualification suggests that he may have anticipated some apprehension on the part of his audience about the concrete meaning of his promise "to bring to an end tyranny and bad government." The notion of replacing all former civil servants would not necessarily have comforted communities such as Salonika's Jews, who, as noted in Chapter 1, had generally supported Ottoman authority.

Raktivan's words notwithstanding, the Greek government proceeded to replace most of the city's top civil servants with telling swiftness. Of the new functionaries listed in a translation of a November 14th Royal Decree issued by King George announcing a provisional government in Salonika, all were Greek citizens from outside Salonika and even Macedonia, except for a sole Muslim listed as the mayor.⁴ Even that mayor, Osman Sait Bey, appears not to have wielded anywhere near the actual power to be expected from his title, if his typical absence from

³ Konstantinos Raktivan, *Egrafa kai Simeiosis ek tis Protis Ellinikis Dioikiseos tis Makedonias (1912-1913)* (Documents and Notes from the First Greek Administration of Macedonia, 1912-1913), (Thessaloniki: Eteireia Makedonikon Spoudon), 1951: 39.

⁴ Dispatch from Kehl to U.S. State Department headquarters, Nov. 23, 1912 (CACS, RG 84, NARA).

correspondence related to the governance of the city is any indication.⁵ Such thorough transplanting of officials from pre-1912 Greece into municipal posts did not generally occur in other areas occupied by the Greek army. The intense attention devoted to Salonika partly reflected the city's central significance for Greece's ambitions in Macedonia.

The Bulgarian government also claimed that popular representation would be a hallmark of its administration in Macedonia. Employing lofty rhetoric similar to that of Raktivan, Bulgarian General Hesapchiev insisted in a letter to his Greek counterpart in Salonika in response to allegations of Greek complaints that "our administration ... is established on the basis of a large tolerance respecting the sentiments of the population without distinction of nationality and of a perfect equality of all those we govern." Hesapchiev emphasized further that "a large number of Greeks have already been named as mayors, members of municipal councils and members of different commissions" in the regions of Serres, Drama, Kavalla, and Xanthi, whose populations he characterized as "in whole or in large part Greek."⁶ Yet Dimitŭr Bozhikov Bilukbashiev, headmaster of a Bulgarian school in Demir Hisar, revealed in his memoir what it might have meant in practice for a Greek to be named to a high position in an important town in the Bulgarian administrative zone:

For commandant of the town Captain Chomakov (or Cholakov) was chosen, for district constable the school inspector A. Madjarov, for mayor the Greek, Toma Maletov – and as deputy mayor, yours truly. In reality, I was the mayor of the town,

⁵ Mark Mazower indeed remarks that Osman Sait Bey had little power even to shield his co-religionists in the city from adverse treatment. See *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 317.

⁶ Tsentralen Voenen Arhiv [Central Military Archive] (TsVA), Veliko Tŭrnovo, Bulgaria, Fond 1647 [Macedonian Military Government] opis 2 a.e. 24 [Reports on Greek Complaints], 4-6 (Letter from General Hesapchiev to Prince Nicholas, Jan. 27, 1913).

while they chose Toma Maletov only as a formality. This “mayor” did not even come regularly to the office and wanted the town’s correspondence to be conducted also in the Greek language – but of such a thing there was no need because all of the “Greeks” knew Bulgarian, as they were in reality Grecomans.⁷

Indeed, ethnic Greeks appointed as mayors or municipal councilors could face beatings and threats of violence from Bulgarian police and military figures stationed in their areas.⁸

The victorious Balkan states demonstrated their ambitions to incorporate the territories they had won in Macedonia not only through the administrative structures they established but also through their initial interactions with the new populations they encountered. They thereby gave inhabitants of Macedonia a taste of what their transition from imperial subjects to citizens of nation-states might mean. First of all, such a transition would entail not only becoming a citizen of Bulgaria, Greece or Serbia but displaying one’s ethnic kinship to the satisfaction of authorities. The most striking imposition of such a policy occurred not against Orthodox Christians, but against the so-called Pomaks (Bulgarian-speaking Muslims) living in the areas occupied by the Bulgarian army. Based on Bulgarian ethnographic assumptions that the Pomaks (as distinguished from Turks or other Muslims) were of the same ethnic stock as Bulgarian Christians, Orthodox priests fanned out along with the occupying troops and presided over the forced conversion to Christianity of approximately

⁷ Dûrzhaven Arhiv – Blagoevgrad [State Archive – Blagoevgrad] (DAB), Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria, Spomeni (Sp.) 225 [Dimitûr Bozhikov Biliukbashiev], 171; the memoirist refers again to the Greek “mayor” in quotation marks, 186.

⁸ See, for example, TsVA, Fond 1647 opis 2 a.e. 24, 152, 157 (complaint by residents of Kavalla to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, dated Feb. 18, 1913).

200,000 Pomaks. The Pomaks were also forced to Slavicize their names and adopt other cultural markers of Bulgarian nationhood.⁹

The Serbian occupying authorities were the most forceful early on in applying such pressures for national assimilation on Orthodox Christian inhabitants of Macedonia. In December, 1912, the Serbian bishop Varnava of Debir-Kichevo toured districts throughout the Serbian-held part of Macedonia, at each stop summoning the local priests and warning them under threat of persecution to leave the Exarchate and join the Serbian church. Alongside priests, teachers and *chetnitsi* (paramilitaries who had nonetheless provided important aid to the Serbian army in its advance) active in the area were considered the potential agents of Bulgarian propaganda and became the prime targets of Serbian authorities. The Serbs also began, albeit less systematically, to intimidate ordinary Orthodox Christian inhabitants, forbidding them to call themselves Bulgarian or even to speak Bulgarian.¹⁰

Greek and Bulgarian actions toward national assimilation of Orthodox Christians were less thoroughgoing than those of the Serbs in the early weeks after the establishment of their respective administrations in Macedonia. They still left locals with comparable indications of what to expect. The Carnegie Commission report quotes a letter originating from a village near Kastoria in the Greek zone:

⁹ However, the majority of these Pomaks lived not in Macedonia, but in adjacent Thrace, also occupied by Bulgarian troops. For more on this episode of mass forced conversion, see Velichko Georgiev and Staiko Trifinov, *Pokrústvaneto na Búlgarite Mohamedani, 1912-1913: Dokumenti* (Sofia: Akademichno Izdatelstvo "Marin Drinov"), 1995 and Mary Neuburger, *The Orient Within: Muslim Minorities and the Negotiation of Nationhood in Modern Bulgaria* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), 2004: 41-42.

¹⁰ Ivan Fichev, *Balkanskata Voina, 1912-1913: Prezhivelitsi, belezhki i dokumenti* (Sofia: Dúrzhavna Pechatnitsa), 1940: 270-274.

The first care of the Greek officers and soldiers arriving here is to discover if the population of the said village and its environs is Bulgarian or Greek. If the population is pure Bulgarian, the officers order the peasants to “become Greeks again, that being the condition of a peaceful life.”¹¹

In December, 1912, a group of patriarchist residents of the town of Barakli Djumaia in the Bulgarian zone complained that during the previous month “Bulgarians,” led by the local occupying officer, forced them to give up their church against their will and had been conducting services there ever since.¹² The residents in fact never once identified themselves by any kind of ethnic label in their complaint, and a patriarchist bishop who later wrote on their behalf even emphasized the joy of his flock at their liberation from the Turkish yoke “with the honored blood of the Bulgarian army.”¹³ Nevertheless, the Bulgarian official who went to investigate and endorsed in his report the handing over of the church to the Bulgarian Exarchate clearly felt that the ethnicity of the petitioners was of utmost relevance to the question:

It became clear that the residents settled in the town speak only Bulgarian – even those who pretend that they are Greek do not know even one Greek word. I became convinced of this personally after I began to speak to those people in Greek.¹⁴

Thus, although the petitioners did not ask to keep their church “Greek” per se, but simply to keep their church, for the Bulgarian official the act of transferring the church from the Patriarchate to the Exarchate meant ensuring crucially that the church would drop a “Greek” identity and take on a “Bulgarian” one. However, such pressure on local Orthodox Christians to demonstrate the correct ethnic identification was still sporadic in the early days after the entry of the victorious Balkan armies into

¹¹ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars* (Washington, D.C.: 1914), 56.

¹² TsVA, Fond 1647 opis 2 a.e. 24, p.25-26 (petition from representatives of Barakli Djumaia to the provincial governor, date of submission Dec. 31, 1912).

¹³ TsVA Fond 1647 opis 2 a.e. 24 p.29-29g (letter from bishop of Melnik Constantine to Serres provincial governor, Mar. 16, 1913).

¹⁴ TsVA, Fond 1647 opis 2 a.e. 24, p.21 (memorandum in response to resolution of the Governor-General, undated).

Macedonia, particularly in the Bulgarian and Greek administrative zones. The ethnic pressures on civilians by officials, army personnel and paramilitaries increased considerably in frequency and intensity by the spring of 1913, when relations between Bulgaria and its allies Greece and Serbia had deteriorated markedly.

Beyond these pressures for national identification, the Greek and Bulgarian administrations also moved to extend central state authority to the new territories. The Bulgarian government instituted military conscription of local Christians, forming the Serres Brigade in April of 1913 and the Drama Brigade in May, as the threat of a second war approached. These new local brigades were separate from the Macedonian-Adrianopolitan Volunteers who were formed in Bulgaria on the eve of the First Balkan War and were still serving on the Thracian front against the Ottoman army. Bulgarian recruiters knowingly included young local “Greeks” and “Grecomans” rather than only youths they considered to be reliable “Macedonian Bulgarians” in the conscription efforts. This practice caused Bulgarian commanders to express doubts on the eve of the Second Balkan War over whether they would be able to control the recruits and prevent desertions.¹⁵

The Greek Minister of Interior and Minister of Defense also had a comprehensive military draft in mind. In April, 1913, they jointly asked the Macedonian Governor-General to order a census in his territory of all males “of all religions and ethnicities” born between the years 1862 and 1894. The Minister of Interior underscored the urgency of this priority with a deadline of only one month for

¹⁵ TsVA, Fond 1647 opis 2 a.e. 24, pp.169, 171, 171g (telegram from Doiran garrison commander Paskalev to Macedonian Military Governor, May 30, 1913, and memorandum from Strumitsa district constable to Macedonian Military Governor, May 29, 1913); TsVA Fond 64 opis 2 a.e. 18 (Operational Correspondence of the 3rd Brigade of the 7th Division, Mar. 26, 1913 – Jun. 6, 1913), p.85 (Col. Ovcharov to Brigade Commander); Fichev, *Balkanskata voina*, 435.

completing the census “under threat of the strictest disciplinary punishment for any employee of the [General] Administration who might delay.”¹⁶ Indeed, those living under Greek administration in Macedonia could not have failed to notice Greek officials’ various initiatives to gather detailed data on their new territory. The smoke had scarcely cleared from some of the battlefields of Macedonia when, in early December 1912 the prefecture of Thessaloniki ordered all local owners of antiquities to submit a detailed inventory of their holdings.¹⁷ In January 1913, prefectural officials throughout the General Administration began compiling statistical tables that dissected populations of individual villages and towns according to “ethnicity,” language, and religion. They then aggregated the statistics up to the overall sub-prefecture and prefecture levels.¹⁸

Yet the impulse to gather data went well beyond narrow nation-building concerns about the ethnic distinctions of different segments of the population. Ethnic affiliation was by no means the only question of interest in the vast tables and reports compiled by the general inspector of schools about only the Greek schools in the General Administration in June of 1913. In addition, these reports contained exhaustive information on number and gender of students; the birthplace, training, age, gender, salary, marital status, and previous postings of each teacher; the school’s

¹⁶ Istoriko Archeio Makedonias, Geniki Diikisi Makedonias (IAM, GDM), Thessaloniki, Greece, file 45, pp. 29-30 (Minister of Interior Emmanuel Repoulis to Governor-General of Macedonia, Apr. 18, 1913; Governor-General of Macedonia to prefects of Thessaloniki and Western Macedonia, high administrative commissioner of Kozani, and administrative commissioners of Macedonia, Apr. 19, 1913). Državen Arhiv na Republika Makedonija (DARM), Skopje, Macedonia, Fond 994 (Archival Materials on the Macedonians of Aegean Macedonia Between the Two World Wars), Box 1, 58-59 (petition from Ilias Traikou Giaprakis to the Army Recruitment Board, Kozani, Jul. 6, 1914); 60 (12th Mountain Artillery Squadron to the 12th Recruitment Office, Jul. 10, 1914); and 81-82 (certificate from mayor of Sorovits Nikolaidis regarding Markos Dimitrios Roikou, Dec. 11, 1914) refer to the draft census taken in the area by Greek authorities in 1913.

¹⁷ Dispatch from Kehl to U.S. State Department headquarters, Dec. 13, 1912, (CACs, RG 84, NARA).

¹⁸ The statistics and analysis produced by such investigations occupy several files in the archive of the General Administration of Macedonia housed in the Historical Archive of Macedonia in Thessaloniki.

sources of funding; and even pedagogical materials and furniture owned by each school.¹⁹ Thus, beyond consolidating national homogeneity through pressures for ethno-cultural assimilation, Greece and Bulgaria, through their rapid introduction of policies in Macedonia such as conscription and extensive data collection, were engaging in wider aspects of state-building. All of these were elements of what Charles Maier has called the drive for the “saturation of space inside the frontier” that characterized the modern nation-state.²⁰

Interbellum Politics and Local Activism

Local Christians in Macedonia were not persuaded by the vigorous rival efforts, both symbolic and substantive, of the Bulgarian and Greek administrations to advertise their authority over the respective territories they conquered in the autumn of 1912. Though Christian civilians had typically welcomed incoming allied Balkan armies and subsequently witnessed the new administrations’ policies of territorial “saturation,”²¹ they were also fully aware of the lack of genuine friendliness between the “Allies.” Macedonia’s inhabitants understood that far-reaching changes awaited their region, and they acted to exploit opportunities and alleviate suffering occasioned by those changes and by the still unsettled borders.

Naturally, some longstanding local supporters of national causes pressed their advantage when they perceived an opportunity to do so after the autumn, 1912,

¹⁹ IAM, GDM, file 46.1 [Public education in Macedonia, Tables of schools in Thessaloniki and Thessaloniki area], pp. 1-19, 26-32, 36, 50-52.

²⁰ Charles Maier, “Consigning the Twentieth Century to History: Alternative Narratives for the Modern Era,” *American Historical Review* 105, no. 3 (June 2000): 819.

²¹ *Ibid.*

liberation. The headmaster-turned-deputy mayor of Demir Hisar, Biliukbashiev, describes in his memoir the “cultural work” on which he and other local Bulgarian notables embarked soon after their town was taken by the Bulgarian army. A priest, Georgi, “took a mosque in the bazaar and turned it into a Bulgarian church,” which “assumed the name of the former Bulgarian chapel of the neighborhood, Sts. Kiril and Metodi.” Another mosque became a cultural center (*chitalishte*) named after the Macedonian guerrilla-hero Gotse Delchev. Biliukbashiev recalls that “Turkish notables ... bore witness that [the two mosques] had in the past been Bulgarian churches.” Leaving little doubt that the de-Islamization of the two mosques was in his mind part of a Bulgarian national project, not merely a religious one, Biliukbashiev recounts the naming of Demir Hisar’s streets as part of the same body of “cultural work”:

We gave names to the streets – Bulgarian historical names – while the main street we named “22 October,” (the day of the town’s liberation by Bulgarian soldiers.) The street where the Greek bishopric was located was named “Sts. Kiril and Metodi,” which the Greeks of Demir Hisar did not like one bit.²²

By converting mosques into “Bulgarian” institutions and naming streets after “Bulgarian” historical touchstones, Biliukbashiev and his colleagues were filling the symbolic space of Demir Hisar with their preferred national content, a process occurring in parallel, especially in large towns and cities, across the Bulgarian and Greek administrative zones of Macedonia.

Inhabitants of Macedonia saw opportunities to reap personal, as well as public, returns from the new situation created by the banishment of Ottoman authority. Biliukbashiev criticized some of his colleagues among the Demir Hisar

²² DAB, Sp. 225 (Memoirs of Dimitŭr Bozhikov Biliukbashiev), 177-178.

intelligentsia, members of the rival Sandanski and Supremist Macedonian revolutionary factions, for trying to “pursue their own personal benefit” as they jockeyed for position within the new political power structure.²³ As detailed in Chapter 2, in the first days of their liberation local Christians in several areas of Macedonia indulged in looting of properties abandoned by Muslim neighbors who had fled the advance of the Balkan armies. Euphemia Piatsa saw in the liberation of her area by the Greek army an opportunity to be compensated personally for her long years of struggle for the Greek cause. A native of Salonika, Piatsa was at twenty-nine years old already a fifteen-year veteran teacher and headmistress in Greek schools in southern Macedonia according to data collected on schools and teachers by the Greek administration in 1913.²⁴ While in the town of Edessa in May, 1913, she drafted a petition to the newly formed local Greek prefecture detailing her years of service in Edessa, Gevgeli, Halkidiki, Doiran and Korytsa. Piatsa emphasized that during all the years of her teaching she put her “national work” above her teaching, at risk to her life and without regard for her meager salary. At one point, she was dispatched to a transhumant village eight hours walk into the heights above Gevgeli “under the pretext of being a teacher to the Vlach children, while my real aim was national.” For Piatsa, this daring exploit, and the sacrifices she bore for her nation, made a compelling closing case in her petition whose resolution unfortunately remains unknown:

²³ DAB, Sp. 225, 182.

²⁴ IAM, GDM, file 53 [Population and education statistics, Vodena, Karadzova, Florina, Gevgeli areas, 1911, 1913, 1915], 47 (Information on Greek girls’ schools in Edessa).

I supplied the *andartes* with food, I carried the correspondence in coded letters. I was pelted with stones by the Bulgarians, I was wounded by the bayonet of the Turkish police. I ask now to be satisfied.²⁵

Nevertheless, while many residents of Macedonia identified opportunities for their own advancement or that of their community upon their liberation by the Balkan armies, many others also encountered hardship ranging from inconvenience to acute suffering. Residents acted frequently to influence the new Greek or Bulgarian administrations that ruled them to redress grievances, to change policies they did not like, or simply to act in their favor in specific cases. Many men and women lodged complaints about deprivations occasioned by severe military requisitions and by simple looting, itself often the result of military indiscipline. Among them were 28 Muslim “innocent women, left with our children without any resources and far from our husbands who are prisoners of war, killed, or injured.” According to their January, 1913, appeal to the German Consul General of Salonika for assistance, these refugee women, mostly wives of Ottoman officers and thus of a high social standing, had arranged to have their belongings transported in designated train cars as they fled Serres for Salonika ahead of the Bulgarian army’s advance in October of 1912. Rather than receiving their belongings, they learned that their “valuables, jewels, gold and silver, carpets, etc.” worth over 6,660 Turkish lira had been spirited away to Sofia by Bulgarian officers. Their less valuable items had simply been “sold on the spot for next to nothing” in Serres.²⁶ Similar to the way the group of women emphasized their vulnerable position as a result of the wartime conditions, a Christian *chiflik* owner named Nikola Nashadzhik called attention, when asking for the return of three mules

²⁵ GDM, file 53, p.70 (Petition from Euphemia Piatsa, May 14, 1913.)

²⁶ TsVA Fond 1647 opis 2 a.e. 32 (Correspondence regarding complaints of confiscated objects, etc.), 6-6g (Letter from 28 women to German Consul General in Salonika, Jan. 22, 1913).

requisitioned by the Bulgarian army in addition to compensation for dozens of goats and sheep, to “this uttermost time of need” in trying to recover from the recent war.²⁷

Occasionally, Christian natives of Macedonia such as Kosmas D. Velios, of Kastoria, even intervened with authorities in order to come to the aid of another beleaguered group. In a letter he addressed directly to the King of Greece, Velios in the spring of 1913 lamented that in and around his hometown “the Muslim Communities still have not been given back their holy temples and their philanthropic and educational institutions, something which naturally injects significant misgiving and anxiety about the future.” Professing “confiden[ce] that His Royal Highness would be so good as to agree to order immediately to put things right and return” the properties to the Muslims, Velios then launched into a defense of why the continued subsistence of the Muslim community in his area “would recommend itself from the economic, political and military point of view.” The local Muslims were “paragons of honor and industriousness.” Moreover, while still in power during the war of the previous autumn, they had maintained “a sympathetic and very tolerant bearing with respect to our²⁸ element.” Indeed, Muslim authorities would have caused no harm in the area had it not been for actions against “the Greek *andarte* units [that] committed rapes, extortions, murders and plunder in Mavrovo, Vogatsiko and elsewhere.”²⁹

As will be shown in the next chapter, this kind of deliberate display of local cross-group solidarity in Macedonia became more common after the Second Balkan

²⁷ TsVA Fond 1647 opis 2 a.e. 32, pp. 19-21 (petitions from Nikola Nashadzhik to Bulgarian General Governor in Serres, Jun. 20, 1913).

²⁸ The word is *omogenous*, which refers to the in-group. In the context, it could have either a Christian (religious) or Greek (ethnic) connotation.

²⁹ IAM, GDM, file 117.2 [Petitions and letters by individuals and communities, 1902-1937], 3-4 (Letter from Kosmas D. Velios to King Constantine, Jun. 29, 1913).

War when borders appeared permanent. During the period between the two Balkan Wars, initiatives such as Velios' to help a local group that he explicitly identified as different from his own were still comparatively rare. Instead, the presence in the autumn of 1912 and the spring of 1913 of neighboring Greek and Bulgarian administrations with conflicting aspirations over Macedonian territory encouraged separate local initiatives to take advantage of these conflicts and the uncertainty. Residents of Macedonia during this period often exploited the unsettled borders and the rivalry they perceived between ostensibly allied officials of the neighboring national administrations in order to further their varied interests.

In particular, and already by February of 1913, residents were submitting thousands of complaints about conditions in their administrative zones, not directly to their own governing officials, but indirectly through officials in the neighboring zone.³⁰ A minor criminal case involving a newspaper vendor, Dimitri Angelou/Angelov, provides an example of how even a single individual's scrape with the law might occasion an appeal to the rival national administration for help.³¹ On February 11, 1913, Greece's Military Governor in Salonika Prince Nicholas interceded with Bulgaria's representative in Salonika on behalf of Angelou. Nicholas claimed that, having been robbed of three Turkish lira by other passengers while on a train traveling in Bulgarian-held Macedonia, Angelou stopped off in Serres in order to file a complaint with Bulgarian authorities. At that point, however, Angelou was

³⁰ About the extent of residents in the Bulgarian zone lodging complaints through Greek authorities, see TsVA Fond 1647 opis 2 a.e. 24, pp.3, 3g (Hesapchiev to Vûlkov, Feb. 12, 1913); on residents in the Greek zone lodging complaints through Bulgarian authorities, TsVA Fond 1647 opis 2 a.e. 24, pp. 6, 6g (Hesapchiev to Prince Nicholas, Jan. 27, 1913).

³¹ The information on the case comes entirely from Bulgarian administrative documents, which refer to him sometimes as "Angelou", and others as "Angelov." For brevity's sake, he will be referred to henceforth as "Angelou."

himself arrested, accused of having robbed some of his companions of eight Turkish lira. On top of that, the Bulgarian authorities had demanded a guarantee of five hundred leva from Angelou for his release.³² An earlier decree of the examining magistrate of the Serres Field Court Martial confirms that Angelou had indeed been detained in Serres and required to post the five hundred leva guarantee for his release “in order to bar the possibility for [him] to evade prosecution.”³³ After ordering an investigation into the case, the office of the Bulgarian Military Governor in Serres replied to Prince Nicholas with details of the accusation against Angelou, indirectly rejecting the validity of the complaint.³⁴ It is impossible to deduce from the extant documents on Angelou’s case which of the two starkly contrasting versions corresponded to the truth. Perhaps Angelou had indeed been arrested under the capricious circumstances alleged by Prince Nicholas, or perhaps he had instead simply concocted an elaborate story of arbitrary arrest in hopes of evading prosecution for a crime he had committed. In either case, what is striking and typical for this period about the incident is that Angelou (or perhaps someone on his behalf) had appealed to the Greek administration located nearby for intervention against the Bulgarian authorities in what otherwise would have been nothing more than a common case of alleged pick-pocketing.

Macedonia’s residents also appealed to authorities (again, often authorities of the neighboring national administration) in order to raise issues of more general

³² TsVA, Fond 1647, opis 2 a.e. 24, p.11 (Note from Hesapchiev to Vŭlkov, Feb. 18, 1913).

³³ TsVA, Fond 1647 opis 2 a.e. 24, p.8 (Decree No.2 from examining magistrate 2nd Lieut. Tomov for measures taken against accused, Jan. 20, 1913).

³⁴ TsVA, Fond 1647, opis 2 a.e. 24, pp. 9, 13 (Macedonian Military Governor to Commandant of Serres, Feb. 21, 1913; office of the Macedonian Military Governor, Serres, to Representative of the Greek Headquarters, Solun, Mar. 6, 1913).

community interest. One of the most frequent subjects of complaint concerned the struggle in many villages in the Bulgarian and Greek zones to hold onto or gain control of local church properties. This struggle was, of course, a direct continuation of the longstanding tug-of-war between the Exarchate and Patriarchate described in Chapter 1. Yet, for the first time, each of the ostensible state patrons (Bulgaria and Greece) of those rival branches of Orthodox Christianity now directly controlled a section of Macedonia, instead of being limited as before to indirect influence through consulates and infiltration of guerilla bands. Individuals and groups on the losing sides of the new hegemony (patriarchists in the Bulgarian zone and exarchists in the Greek zone) protested, typically about the forceful seizures of their churches and schools in actions led by nearby military and civil officials sometimes accompanied by a number of zealous allies among the civilian population. In fact, Bulgarian and Greek government leaders at first took halting steps to rein in such transfers of church control, apparently fearing potential destabilization of their important military alliance as they still waged campaigns (in Thrace and Epirus) against Ottoman forces. Most significantly, Greek Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos and Bulgarian Army Representative Hesapchiev (under orders from Prime Minister Geshov) reached an accord in early February, 1913. It ordered their respective military and civil authorities in Macedonia to return all church and school jurisdiction to the status quo that obtained before the start of the war.³⁵ Administrative correspondence about Macedonian residents' complaints, however, suggests that lower-level military and

³⁵ TsVA, Fond 1647, opis 2 a.e. 24, p.50 (memorandum from Bulgarian Army Representative in Solun Hesapchiev to Macedonian Military Governor Vûlkov, Feb. 12, 1913).

civil functionaries on both sides violated the accord from the start without serious restraint from their superiors.³⁶

In contrast to the conversion of mosques and other Muslim properties to Christian uses, the seizures of Christian churches and schools by the competing Orthodox factions occurred almost exclusively in villages rather than large towns or cities during the period between the two Balkan Wars. The rival national governments (as well as the Western consuls and journalists who helped shape international public opinion of the Balkan governments) could not readily monitor such remote locations. Those Christians who openly complained about such seizures, as well as their rivals who justified them, typically cast themselves as representing the wishes of the majority, or at least of a substantial portion, of their village population. Yet whichever way they might have leaned inwardly, most Orthodox villagers continued their time-honored pattern, observed during the preceding Ottoman period, of outwardly accepting whichever church jurisdiction appeared safest. Most of the villagers of Radovo near Demir Hisar, for example, had switched their allegiance from the Exarchate to the Patriarchate in 1908 after a band of Greek *andartes* had appeared in the area and tortured and harassed three exarchist leaders. With the arrival of the Bulgarian army in 1912, most switched back to the Exarchate. Yet the Bulgarian district commander of Demir Hisar reported the following March that “a portion of the villagers declared themselves yet again as patriarchists” after a

³⁶ See, for example, TsVA, Fond 1647, opis 2 a.e. 24 pp. 31-33 (extracts of letters from Prince Nicholas of Greece to Bulgarian Army Representative in Solun Hesapchiev, Feb. 17, 1913); 35-39 (Serres provincial governor, results of examination of complaints, Mar. 18, 1913); 177-179 (letter from Prince Nicholas to Hesapchiev, May 17, 1913).

Patriarchate bishop and priest from Demir Hisar came to Radovo and declared that it had not yet been decided whether their area would go to Bulgaria or Greece.³⁷

An even broader swath of Macedonia's residents worried about their uncertain economic and commercial prospects after the First Balkan War than about the jurisdiction over their local church. Whatever its flaws, the preceding Ottoman rule over all of Macedonia had provided an integrated single market. In the large rural areas, peasant farmers and pastoralists produced crops and livestock, which they took to market in nearby commercial towns and cities. Further afield within this single market, of course, were the Empire's vast provinces in Anatolia, the Levant and North Africa. In addition, Macedonian port cities such as Salonika and Kavalla served by the early twentieth century as dynamic and growing outlets for the worldwide export of cash crops (primarily tobacco and cotton) from the entire surrounding Macedonian and Thracian hinterland. The First Balkan War brought this trade to an abrupt halt. In November, 1912, the American consul in Salonika reported that "since October 1st, trade with the interior has ceased." Urban merchants on the coast faced bankruptcy due to the decline in shipments and to the grim fact that credit customers in the interior were now often dead or penniless.³⁸ While minimal shipments soon resumed, the problems and worries of merchants only increased, as for many months there was no certainty of what would become of the surrounding territory.³⁹ Indeed, the only certainty was that permanent new borders of some kind

³⁷ TsVA, Fond 1647, opis 2 a.e. 24 pp. 35-39 (Serres provincial governor, results of examination of complaints, Mar. 18, 1913).

³⁸ 11/23/12 dispatch from Kehl to State Department headquarters (CACS, RG 84, NARA).

³⁹ See 12/30/12 dispatch from Kehl to State Department headquarters, and 4/26/13 letter from Kehl in response to a query by the New York-based Trading Corporation of America (CACS, RG 84, NARA).

would appear within Macedonia and Thrace where they had not existed before. And borders would most likely entail tariffs that would restrict the flow of trade.

For broader geographic Macedonia, prospective Greek rule of the Aegean coast at first appeared as the biggest threat to commerce. Drawing a border just north of the coast between new Greek and Bulgarian territory would cut the coastal port cities off from any of the rural hinterlands that had traditionally supplied them with products for export and markets for imports. Members of Jewish organizations in Salonika, representing both large labor and commercial classes, expressed precisely this concern. They initially favored Bulgarian rather than Greek annexation of the city as a second-best solution if they could not achieve their favored outcome of designating Salonika as an internationally-controlled free trade zone.⁴⁰ Under Bulgarian rule, their reasoning went, the contiguous hinterland deep into the agricultural heartland of the Balkans would form a more valuable market area for Salonika than the narrow coastal strip that Greek rule would have offered, though alas not as large as the free trade zone promised by an internationalized city. Furthermore, Greece had several other major ports, including Piraeus and Chalkis, to which Salonika would be an afterthought. The Greeks might therefore treat Salonika primarily as a border city and military bulwark against the Slavic threat.

Nevertheless, if Greek rule initially seemed disadvantageous from an economic point of view, a number of groups in Macedonia soon began to perceive the

⁴⁰ For more on the innovative proposals on Salonika put forth by members of the city's Jewish community during the period between the two Balkan Wars, see N. M. Gelber, "An Attempt to Internationalize Salonika," *Jewish Social Studies*, 17 no. 2 (1955); Rena Molho, "The Jewish Community of Salonika and its Incorporation into the Greek State, 1912-19," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 24 no. 4 (1988); and Paul Dumont, "La Fédération Socialiste Ouvrière de Salonique à l'Époque des Guerres Balkaniques," *East European Quarterly*, 14 no. 4 (1980).

new Bulgarian administration as discouraging even the most basic revival of economic activity and commerce. Villagers living in the Bulgarian zone near the towns of Serres, Pravishta, and Kavalla reportedly faced dire food shortages and were “sinking into dark misery.”⁴¹ They could not import wheat and other basic goods because Bulgarian authorities had banned the export of wheat from Kavalla and too often blocked villagers from traveling between the villages and the towns in order to buy and sell. Similarly, many merchants and others from Serres could not conduct their trading activities in Salonika and elsewhere because of the Bulgarian administration’s restrictions on civilian use of rail and road transport.⁴² Bulgarian authorities, in their investigations of such complaints, actually confirmed that customs officials in Kavalla had banned the export of wheat from that city, a policy endorsed by the Ministry of Finance.⁴³ They also confirmed (even while denying that such policies hindered civilian travel) that rail travel was forbidden to civilians between Serres and Salonika, while road travel by car, horse or foot required permission from the local Bulgarian commandant.⁴⁴ Residents in the Bulgarian zone often relayed allegations about these and other restrictions (they also included discrimination against Greek-flagged merchant vessels, high taxation, and double taxation) through officials of the neighboring Greek zone. Greek officials suggested in turn that Bulgarian authorities targeted ethnic Greeks with such policies.⁴⁵

⁴¹ TsVA, Fond 1647, opis 2 a.e. 24 p. 141 (Hesapchiev to Vûlkov, Apr. 14, 1913).

⁴² TsVA Fond 1647, opis 2 a.e. 24 p.232 (Hesapchiev to Vûlkov, May 8, 1913).

⁴³ TsVA Fond 1647, opis 2 a.e. 24 pp.156-157 (Drama province governor T. Dobrev to Vûlkov, May 12, 1913).

⁴⁴ TsVA Fond 1647, opis 2 a.e. 24 p.232 (Hesapchiev to Vûlkov, May 8, 1913) and pp. 233, 233g, 246 (Vûlkov to Hesapchiev, May 18, 1913).

⁴⁵ See for example TsVA, Fond 1647, opis 2 a.e. 24 p. 83 (telegram from Bulgarian Prime Minister Geshov to Vûlkov regarding complaint from Greek minister plenipotentiary, Apr. 11, 1913); pp. 222, 222g (counselor Dimitrov of the Political Division of the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and

Nonetheless, the perception that Bulgarian officials displayed indifference toward the revival of commerce in Macedonia was not limited merely to the Greek community. While the Greek customs authority allowed goods to come into Salonika duty-free from Serbia and Bulgaria (the former hinterland), Bulgaria and Serbia began to charge high tariffs on goods from Salonika in January of 1913.⁴⁶ The following month, the mostly Jewish Salonika Chamber of Commerce circulated a protest to the foreign consuls of the Great Powers against the Bulgarian and Serbian tariffs.⁴⁷ An American tobacco exporter complained about how Bulgaria had administered the Aegean port city of Kavalla before losing it in the Second Balkan War:

To sum the matter up, the Bulgarians at no time during their occupation showed any inclination to assist merchants in facilitating the running of their businesses; in fact the reverse was more often the case. Several deputations waited upon them on various business matters, which, however, were neither appreciated nor even considered by the Officials.

The merchant also complained that the Bulgarian authorities arbitrarily confiscated large sums of money from wealthy Jews and Turks, closed the port often with no warning and for seemingly arbitrary reasons (something the Greek administration did not do in Salonika), and imposed various new taxes on the tobacco trade.⁴⁸

Greek and Bulgarian officials in liberated Macedonia established (at least on paper) bureaucratic processes whereby they investigated locals' claims about misconduct or neglect by their respective administrations. From the start, however, rather than viewing residents' complaints as opportunities to correct problems and

Religion, note to Bulgarian Army Headquarters regarding complaint from Greek minister plenipotentiary, Apr. 10, 1913).

⁴⁶ *The Times of London*, January 1, 1913: 5.

⁴⁷ 2/10/13 dispatch from Kehl to State Department headquarters (CACs, RG 84, NARA).

⁴⁸ 8/14/13 letter from R.J. Wortham to Kehl (CACs, RG 84, NARA).

win over the populations they governed, officials often treated such complaints as manifestations of recalcitrance from potentially disloyal ethnic groups. Investigations of criticisms usually resulted in blanket denials of their validity, and sometimes in orders to threaten or punish those who had dared to submit them. Thus, Greece's Governor-General of Macedonia reported that soon after the Greek army's entry into Salonika, in response to Jewish newspaper publishers "stoking passions against the Greeks, I court-martialed one of them and installed preemptive censorship."⁴⁹ A week later, Prince Nicholas issued a general "[o]rder regarding the reporting of news in the press." The order prohibited "criticism of actions of commanders and of the army and the publication of images or representations that diminish their prestige." Also banned was the publication of items "that aim at negatively influencing the army and popular morale or which may bring about estrangement and antipathy between the different nations and sections of the population."⁵⁰ The next day, the Governor-General fumed that "the Bulgarian newspapers refused to submit to any kind of censorship,"⁵¹ and on December 13, 1912 his administration suspended publication of Salonika's Bulgarian newspaper, *Bulgarin*.⁵²

Bulgarian officials also suspected ethnic treachery behind complaints about their own administration in Macedonia, and they reacted accordingly. "Our tolerance towards all non-Bulgarian nations is almost criminal," wrote one, insisting that a

⁴⁹ Telegram by Konstantinos Raktivan to Prime Minister Venizelos, Nov. 16, 1912, in Raktivan, *Egrafa kai Simeiosis*, 21.

⁵⁰ Order from Prince Nicholas in Thessaloniki, Nov. 24, 1912, in Raktivan, *Egrafa kai Simeiosis*, 101-102.

⁵¹ Memorandum from Raktivan to Venizelos, Nov. 25, 1912, in Raktivan, *Egrafa kai Simeiosis*, 34.

⁵² 12/30/12 dispatch from Kehl to State Department headquarters (CACs, RG 84, NARA); 6/21/13 dispatch from Kehl to State Department headquarters (CACs, RG 84, NARA) reveals that this suspension apparently was never lifted – a revised list from the following spring of newspapers published in Salonika includes no Bulgarian publications.

nearby Greek commander's complaint about Bulgarian treatment of ethnic Greek civilians was nothing but a "Greek fantasy."⁵³ In reacting to a February, 1913 report that thousands of ethnic Greeks under Bulgarian administration were lodging complaints about mistreatment, the Bulgarian army representative did not pause to reflect upon which Bulgarian policies might be giving rise to such complaints. Instead, he urged Bulgaria's Military Governor of Macedonia to "issue the necessary orders to your dependent authorities to pursue and capture the Greek agitators who disturb the spirits of the inhabitants and incite them to file complaints."⁵⁴ Some days earlier, Bulgaria's Serres provincial governor directed his district authorities to "exercise a tight police surveillance especially over the non-Bulgarian elements" in those areas where "the majority of the population is not Bulgarian, but consists either of mixed elements or is pure Muslim or pure Greek."⁵⁵ Yet residents' complaints of misconduct or neglect by Greek or Bulgarian administrations were not generally attempts to destabilize those administrations. When filing complaints, residents never questioned the authority of the new administrations that governed them. On the contrary, they arguably reinforced their rulers' legitimacy by asking them to use their power to rectify problems. Even when local residents enlisted Western consuls or officials of the rival neighboring administrative zone to transmit their grievances as extra leverage, their express purpose was always to persuade those who governed them to address various concerns about property rights, security, corruption,

⁵³ TsVA, Fond 1647, opis 2 a.e. 24 p. 129 (telegram from Second Lieutenant Kalev, chief of Kavalla garrison, to Vûlkov, Apr. 28, 1913).

⁵⁴ TsVA, Fond 1647, opis 2 a.e. 24 p. 3, 3g (Hesapchiev to Vûlkov, Feb. 12, 1913).

⁵⁵ TsVA, Fond 1647, opis 2 a.e. 16 p. 54 (confidential memorandum from Serres province governor Ivan Hamandjiev to district chiefs in the province, Feb. 1, 1913).

restrictions on economic activity, and indeed even issues potentially related to ethnic questions such as church jurisdiction.

Yet, as months passed without a clear signal regarding what would become of Macedonian territories in a final settlement among the victorious allies of the ongoing Balkan War, some of Macedonia's residents did begin trying to influence the outcome themselves. Local calls within Macedonia for rule by a specific Balkan government (Bulgaria, Greece or Serbia) were, however, slow to appear. Instead, a growing and surprisingly diverse array of local residents became attracted to the notion of establishing some form of autonomous status for Macedonia, rather than partition by the Balkan states. Of course, autonomy for Macedonia was the ideal long advocated by many activists of VMRO. Their hopes were crushed as they came to realize, during the course of the Balkan Wars, that Macedonia's "liberation" would mean its partition. Upon the outbreak of war in 1912, one of its members, Todor Pop Antov, had volunteered with his wife Poliksena Mosinova as medical orderlies in the Bulgarian army's Macedonian-Adrianopolitan Volunteers unit. Yet Antov's support of Bulgaria's war effort was wrapped up with his impression that Bulgaria supported an autonomous status for Macedonia. While serving, Antov and his comrades became dismayed when during the course of the London negotiations it was revealed that Bulgaria (along with its Balkan allies) had in fact embarked on the war against the Ottoman Empire with the intention of partitioning Macedonian territory.

For the Macedonian volunteer it was a sad thing to entertain the notion that his fatherland, for which countless sacrifices had been given in the epic revolutionary struggles to realize the ideal of freedom for Macedonia in its geographic entirety, now, with the Balkan War, was being torn into pieces to be distributed like spoils to the Balkan Allies. The Bulgarian government, which only seven years before (during the European mission in Turkey to implement reforms in Macedonia) had supported the idea of an autonomous Macedonia, now discarded that principle in favor of the

Serbian principle of partition the Macedonian volunteer could not understand this!⁵⁶

But many others without connections to the Macedonian revolutionary movement also began to consider autonomy for Macedonia as an attractive practical solution to overlapping territorial claims, especially after experiencing some doubts that their “liberators” would treat them better than the preceding Ottoman imperial regime. A friendly sergeant who entered Demir-Hisar with the Bulgarian army in 1912 made a lasting impression even on the generally pro-Bulgarian headmaster from Macedonia, Biliukbashiev, when he predicted that the only difference Biliukbashiev would perceive with his liberation was that his “tsar” would now be Bulgaria’s Ferdinand instead of the Sultan.⁵⁷ Soon afterwards, stronger misgivings about the Bulgarian regime crept into Biliukabashiev’s mind as a lieutenant in the Bulgarian army frankly explained to him, “We, Mr. Biliukbashiev, fight Turkey because we need territory, because we need the White [i.e. Aegean] Sea; the liberation of Macedonia is only a pretext.”⁵⁸

As noted earlier, many of Salonika’s Jews strongly favored a settlement that would accord some form of autonomy to their city. More surprising agitation for local autonomy during the period between the two Balkan Wars arose among Greeks or Greek-speakers living in the Bulgarian zone of Macedonia. Traditionally, pro-Greek activists in Macedonia had not been associated with any proposals for the region’s autonomy. Yet Bulgaria’s Assistant Commander in Chief received

⁵⁶ Todor Pop Antov, *Spomeni* (Skopje: Državen Arhiv na Republika Makedonija and Muzej-Galerija-Kavadarci, 2002), 179-180. Although this memoir was recently translated from Bulgarian into Macedonian and published in Skopje, it was originally written by Antov in 1933 in Bulgaria, which makes its Macedonian-autonomist slant all the more remarkable.

⁵⁷ DAB, Sp. 225, 179.

⁵⁸ DAB, Sp. 225, 183; Biliukbashiev also states more explicitly (*Ibid.*, 160) that he came to realize that “an autonomous or independent Macedonia” had been the right goal.

disturbing reports by January 1913 that “Greeks in the various towns and villages” of Bulgaria’s Macedonian Military Governorship were collecting signatures to petition the Great Powers at the ongoing London conference for autonomy, “as they supposedly are not pleased with the Bulgarian administration.” Macedonian Military Governor Vûlkov ordered the arrest and exemplary punishment under military justice of those guilty of the agitation for autonomy.⁵⁹

In contrast to the relatively early appeals from various quarters for Macedonian autonomy, local public agitation in Macedonia in favor of rule by a particular Balkan government (either Bulgaria, Greece, or Serbia) took more time to surface. Certain long-time activists for one or the other national cause probably began working behind the scenes in the interest of their favored national government from the start of the First Balkan War. A memoirist recalled that a certain Stoian, who operated the most well-appointed café in the Bulgarian-administered town of Demir Hisar, was reportedly “not only a Grecoman, but a big fanatic.” Around the start of 1913, Stoian gained the trust of Bulgarian officers, who enjoyed sitting in his café and bantering about politics. Occasionally in conversation they would reveal Bulgarian troop movements. Unbeknownst to the officers, Greek sympathizers who sat nearby and “gave off the impression that they were uninterested” were listening intently and reporting what they heard to Greeks in Salonika and Serres.⁶⁰ Over time, the provisional nature of the three Balkan administrations in Macedonia became

⁵⁹ TsVA, Fond 1647, opis 2 a.e. 16 pp. 22-26 (Assistant Commander in Chief General Mihail Savov telegram to Macedonian Military Governor Vûlkov, Jan. 24, 1913; confidential memorandum from Serres province governor Ivan Hamandjiev to Prime Minister Geshov, Jan. 25, 1913; telegram from Savov to Vûlkov, Feb. 3, 1913; memorandum/order from Vûlkov to governors of Drama, Serres, and Kukush provinces); Bulgaria’s General Fichev also discusses this appeal by local Greeks for autonomy in his memoir, *Balkanskata Voina, 1912-1913*, 320.

⁶⁰ DAB, Sp. 225, p.180.

increasingly obvious. So did the lack of interest on the part of the Balkan Allies and Great Powers alike in any scheme for Macedonian autonomy. This political situation, combined with the kinds of disagreeable post-liberation experiences under new administrations surveyed above, eventually engendered more overt agitation for rule by a favored Balkan government.

The most dramatic – and even violent – instance of local agitation in favor of a national government occurred in June 1913 during the days immediately preceding the commencement of the Second Balkan War in Tikveš, an area under Serbian administration. From January 1913, Serbian authorities had begun exacting heavy requisitions from the local population, even as they exerted pressure on Christians to assimilate. They closed schools and cultural centers, required instruction and church services to be conducted in Serbian, deported and imprisoned teachers and priests deemed pro-Bulgarian, and in a May census forced local Christians to declare that they were Serbs who had been “Bulgarized” under Bulgarian pressure. Apparently in reaction to this repression, around 250 local civilians took up arms against the Serbian regime in early June, 1913, in what scholars have termed the “Tikveš Uprising.” The locals were organized by members of the Bulgarian-affiliated Macedonian-Adrianopolitan Volunteer Corps who had returned to Tikveš during the previous two months, and were joined by around 1,000 seasoned guerillas of VMRO. The insurgents managed to seize and proclaim a Bulgarian government in much of Tikveš, in anticipation of the arrival of Bulgarian troops who were now beginning their offensive against the Serbian and Greek armies. As the military momentum in the Second Balkan War turned against Bulgaria, the Serbian army regained control of

Tikveš and exacted severe reprisals. All in all, the Serbian reprisals claimed as many as 1,200 victims, along with up to a thousand houses burned.⁶¹

Tellingly, such instances of agitation in favor of a particular national government were most highly concentrated in those areas where jurisdiction seemed most uncertain or disputed. These districts either lay near the fuzzy provisional borders of the neighboring administrative zones (like Bulgarian-held Kukush province) or (like Serbian-held Tikveš) had been specified by Serbia and Bulgaria in their 1912 alliance as areas whose future would be determined with the help of Russian arbitration. The governor of the Bulgarian administration's Kukush province remarked upon this geographic pattern of instances of national agitation in March, 1913. A pro-Bulgarian resident from the town of Gumendje had informed the provincial governor that Greek priests, accompanied by "Grecoman" town elders made the rounds in Gumendje among the "Grecoman" inhabitants, having them sign a petition proclaiming their desire to remain under the rule of the Greek kingdom. According to the Bulgarian governor, "Grecoman" residents of the Lûgadinsko area even gathered signatures for a similar petition from Muslim villagers. The Muslims supposedly expressed their preference for Greece since "the Christian population living in the area is exclusively Greek and Grecoman and the Turks would live much better if they were to be under Greek authority." Muslims who might have harbored reservations about this petition no doubt reckoned they had better sign it, as the local

⁶¹ The estimates of casualties are from Zoran Todorovski, "Tikveshkoto vûstanie ot 1913 godina," in *Sbornik Mezhdunarodna Konferentsiia 90 Godini Balkanska Voina*, ed. Institut po Istoriiia pri BAN NTsMGII pri Ministerstvo na kulturata Regionalen istoricheski muzei - Kûrdzhali (Kûrdzhali, Bulgaria: SVERA Solutions, 2002), 177; on the Tikveš Uprising, see also Petûr Petrov, ed., *Makedoniia: Istoriiia i politicheska sûdba (1912-1941)* Vol. II (Sofia: Izdatelstvo 'Znanie' OOD, 1998): 30-33; Dimitûr Minchev, "Tikveshkoto vûstanie 1913 g.," *Makedonski Pregled* 15 no.4 (1992): 50-73; and Dimitûr Gotsev, *Natsionalno-oxvoboditel'nata borba v Makedoniia 1912-1915* (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Bûlgarskata akademiia na naukite, 1981), 46-51.

pro-Greek Christians who circulated it were “dressed up in military clothes and accompanied by soldiers and police.” Both sites of pro-Greek agitation (Gumendje and Lûgadinsko) at this time lay at the edge of the Greek administrative zone next to the Bulgarian one. Greece’s control over them at this time was still tenuous and their political future appeared unclear. However, the Bulgarian provincial governor managed to visit Greek-held villages around Salonika, where he spoke “with both Bulgarians and Grecomans.” There, no nationalist agitation was occurring “because it is reckoned that the area will surely remain under Greek rule.”⁶²

Descent into the Second Balkan War

As detailed in Chapter 2, Serbian forces during the First Balkan War had occupied all of the zone designated for Russian arbitration in the secret annex to the Bulgaro-Serb treaty of March 1912, along with much of the area designated in that annex to go to Bulgaria outright. But by January, 1913, Austria-Hungary had secured the Great Powers’ commitment not to permit Serbia any territorial outlet to the Adriatic Sea despite the latter’s successful campaign in Albania. Claiming that the 1912 Serb-Bulgarian agreement over Macedonian partition had been predicated on the assumption of acquiring such an Adriatic outlet, Serbia now demanded as compensation a revision of the treaty that would award it more territory in Macedonia.⁶³ Bulgaria rejected these demands. Talks between Greece and Bulgaria

⁶² TsVA, Fond 1647, opis 2 a.e. 16 pp. 33, 33g, 38 (Governor of Kukush province Karamanov memorandum to Macedonian Military Governor Vûlkov, Mar. 21, 1913).

⁶³ Serbia marshaled some additional justifications for this revision, while Bulgaria, not surprisingly, denied their legitimacy. See Samuel R. Williamson, Jr., *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War*, (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1991), 124-125, 132-133, 143-144 and Ernst Helmreich,

during the early months of 1913 to delineate a boundary between them in eastern Macedonia also broke down, as the quarrel over Salonika continued to frustrate any overall agreement. Their parallel disputes with Bulgaria spelled an increasingly apparent convergence of interests between Serbia and Greece.

By the spring of 1913, events on the ground demonstrated to Macedonia's local inhabitants the distinct possibility that this territorial impasse might bring about a second armed conflict, this time between the Balkan Allies themselves. Tension between the Greek and Bulgarian armies at all levels had been highly visible in Salonika from the start. Salonika was the one Macedonian locality where significant numbers of two allied armies (Greek and Bulgarian) were continuously stationed by mutual agreement after the expulsion of the Ottoman military.⁶⁴ The two armies did not share the city amicably, as shown by a highly visible fracas reported by the *Times* of London within the first two weeks of the city's joint occupation:

Another incident arose from an attempt of the Greeks to seize the mosque of Saint Sofia, of which the Bulgarians had taken possession in order to provide accommodation for their troops. The Greeks interpreted this as indicating a desire on the part of their allies to dedicate the mosque to the Bulgarian Church. The Bulgarians were forced on two occasions to drive the Greek troops away.⁶⁵

The mutual hostility between the two armies existed even at the rank and file level. In December, 1912, Bulgarian troops "threw the Greeks out bodily" after Greek soldiers had tried to occupy a telegraph post along the Salonika-Constantinople line, otherwise held by the Bulgarians. This occurred unbeknownst to the Greek and

The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars, 1912-1913, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1938), 353-355, for discussions of this diplomatic dispute and its context.

⁶⁴ There was mixed, though trivial, allied troop presence also in Strumitsa and Doiran (Serbian and Bulgarian) and in Gevgeli (Serbian, Bulgarian and Greek). See Petar Stojanov, *Makedonija vo vremeto na Balkanskite i Prvata svetska vojna (1912-1918)* (Skopje: Institut za Nacionalna Istorija, 1969), 141-142.

⁶⁵ "Problem of Salonika. Friction Between the Troops of the Allies," *Times* (London), November 20, 1912; the "mosque of St. Sophia" was originally a historically prominent Byzantine church.

Bulgarian high commands, who stepped in to reach a mutually face-saving solution to the confrontation.⁶⁶ Bulgaria's 7th Rila Division had only lightly occupied certain points along its 1912 invasion route against Ottoman forces south towards Salonika. Much of the division soon moved on eastward to the Thracian front where Ottoman resistance was fiercest, and Greek units took the opportunity to infiltrate those areas largely vacated by the Bulgarian forces. As a consequence, incidents occurred almost daily between Bulgarian and Greek soldiers, sometime resulting in fatalities.⁶⁷

Such clashes only increased in scale and seriousness over the winter and spring of 1913. Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia wrapped up their respective remaining campaigns against Ottoman forces in Thrace, Epirus and Albania and began concentrating their troops in Macedonia in order to press their competing claims there. One confrontation in March, 1913, between Greek and Bulgarian troops northeast of Salonika at Nigrita resulted in at least 300 deaths.⁶⁸ Large Greek-Bulgarian clashes followed in April and May as well. As noted above, the Bulgarian military formed two new brigades by conscripting young male residents in its occupied areas of Serres and Kavalla during the spring of 1913. The new Bulgarian brigades were intended to help guard against Greek designs on eastern Macedonia while the bulk of Bulgarian forces were still arrayed against the Ottoman army in Thrace.⁶⁹ There could be no more direct sign than this to locals that the currently allied Balkan governments were not only attempting to consolidate state power in

⁶⁶ 12/13/12 dispatch from Kehl to State Department headquarters (CACs, RG 84, NARA).

⁶⁷ Fichev, *Balkanskata voina*, 270.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 320.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 323.

newly occupied territories but also mobilizing for potential military campaigns against each other.

Following secret talks over the spring of 1913, Serbia and Greece agreed to a treaty essentially committing each other to defend the territory their armies had taken in Macedonia against Bulgarian claims. They signed the treaty on June 1, 1913, just a day after the Balkan Allies (Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro) signed the Treaty of London ending their war with the Ottoman Empire. The situation deteriorated rapidly afterwards. Bulgarian, Serbian and Greek leaders refused to back down on their territorial demands in Macedonia. They were each supported or even pressured by significant segments of their respective political elite to press these claims by force if necessary.⁷⁰ Clashes between Greek and Bulgarian soldiers and between Serbian and Bulgarian soldiers continued. On June 30, 1913 – only a month after the formal end of the First Balkan War – a Bulgarian attack along several points against Greek and Serbian lines inaugurated the Second Balkan War.

As shown above, many Christians living in Macedonia had become active during the preceding few months in promoting the territorial claims of a particular national government, especially after autonomy for the region proved an unrealistic goal. Nevertheless – and perhaps unlike many of their counterparts living within the old borders of the belligerent Balkan states – available evidence suggests that their activism generally did not translate into enthusiasm for a second war to resolve the

⁷⁰ Helmreich, *Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars*, 352-355, 361-362; although intending to call into question the all-consuming extent of bellicose nationalism in Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia in this period, both L.L. Farrar, "Aggression versus Apathy: The Limits of Nationalism During the Balkan Wars, 1912-1913," *East European Quarterly*, 37, no. 3 (2003): 257-80, and Victor Roudometof, "The Social Origins of Balkan Politics: Nationalism, Underdevelopment, and the Nation-State in Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria, 1880-1920" *Mediterranean Quarterly*, 11, no.3 (2000): 144-63 indeed confirm its importance within influential groups in each country.

territorial dilemmas. In Demir Hisar, fear of cholera infection from soldiers outweighed otherwise pro-Bulgarian civilians' potential desire to aid their own putative side in war preparations. Residents hesitated to house soldiers, and civilians often even administered beatings to "thirsty and tired [Bulgarian] soldiers who defied orders not to drink from the public fountains."⁷¹

Indeed, the widespread desertion among local men mobilized into various "volunteer" or "Macedonian" units, already feared by commanders, occurred even as war between the former Balkan Allies approached and commenced. By February 1913 the Bulgarian General Staff was struggling to combat demoralization among a large part of the Macedonian-Adrianopolitan Volunteer Corps who wanted to return to their homes in Macedonia and apparently saw little connection between their fighting in Thrace on Bulgaria's behalf and their personal aspirations for a liberated Macedonia.⁷² Yet the Volunteer units' subsequent relocation back to Bulgarian-held parts of Macedonia apparently did not satisfy many of their ranks either. A large number deserted on the eve of the Second Balkan War, defying arrest by Bulgarian authorities for some time by traveling in armed groups.⁷³ Fear of contracting the cholera then spreading within Bulgarian army ranks influenced the decision of some to desert.⁷⁴ Bulgaria's Chief of Staff Fichev blamed both a residual "spirit of Grecomanism" and a general "unpreparedness for war" for the particularly high

⁷¹ DAB, Sp. 225, p.186.

⁷² TsVA, Fond 422, opis 2 a.e. 2 (Account of the life of the Macedonian-Adrianopolitan Volunteer Corps after the fall into war with the allies – 1913) pp. 11-12 (Order No. 15 issued to Macedonian Volunteers, Feb. 21, 1913, quoted in the quartermaster's diary).

⁷³ TsVA Fond 422, opis 3 a.e. 1 (Macedonian-Adrianopolitan Volunteer Corps, Kochani Commandantship, correspondence related to intelligence and desertions), p. 36 (note from police superintendent in Vinitsa to commandant in Kochani, Jun. 14, 1913).

⁷⁴ TsVA Fond 422, opis 3 a.e. 1, p.27 (note from Kochani district constable to commandant, Jun. 11, 1913).

number of desertions from his army's newly formed "Drama" and "Serres" brigades in the first days of the Second Balkan War.⁷⁵ Indeed, the young men from Macedonia drafted into those units had been exempt as Christians under Ottoman rule from military service in return for payment of a special military tax. Many of them no doubt now balked at this onerous and dangerous new civic obligation.⁷⁶

Anxiety and even panic – not belligerence or anticipation of national redemption – were the most widespread sentiments among civilians in Macedonia when the Second Balkan War actually broke out. Many local Christians had seen only months before what Balkan armies had done to Muslim civilians perceived as enemy populations. They now feared (often with justification, as it turned out) what might happen to them at the hands of invading armies if they were perceived as enemy civilians. Four days before the formal outbreak of war, civilians escaped across to Bulgarian lines from the villages of Braikovtsi and Bogdantsi, reporting acts of cruelty against them by Serbian and Greek soldiers who were setting up positions there.⁷⁷ According to a commissioner of Vodena in Greek-held western Macedonia, he and other local Greek officials were powerless in the opening days of the war to assuage the panicked flight of roughly 500 civilians in his area when the Bulgarian army occupied Gevgeli and false rumors circulated that Bulgarian units had come even closer. Although certain "trained and tested Muslim former soldiers" requested arms to resist the expected invasion, militarily inexperienced Christian Greek

⁷⁵ Fichev, *Balkanskata voina*, 435.

⁷⁶ Evidence points to considerable threats of desertion and reluctance to fight their former allies just before the second Balkan War also among regular Bulgarian, Serbian and Greek army units – for example, TsVA Fond 64, opis 2 a.e. 20 (Operational correspondence part IV, Jun. 1913), p.21 (Bulgarian 4th Army commander General-Major Kovachev, order to commander of the 3rd brigade, Jun. 14, 1913); TsVA Fond 64, opis 2 a.e. 5 (Diary of the 3rd infantry brigade of the 7th Rila division Jun. 14, 1913 – Aug. 18, 1913), Jun. 14 entry from Strumitsa; *Ibid.*, Jun. 16 entry from Strumitsa).

⁷⁷ TsVA Fond 64, opis 2 a.e. 5, Jun. 27 entry from Strumitsa).

civilians did not. “The terror of the Muslims and of the Greeks as well comes from their having read in the newspapers about the savageries and atrocities of the Bulgarians,” the commissioner explained, revealing the effectiveness of national propaganda.⁷⁸

Maria Izmirlieva, a Bulgarian teacher from the town of Kukush, recalled her experience of the Second Balkan War’s onset as one of tragedy and trauma from the start. Entering an abandoned Turkish house where she heard that wounded Bulgarian soldiers from the front were being treated, she “witnessed a horrible scene.” “Only one other woman” (Rusha Delcheva, the sister of slain Macedonian guerilla leader Gotse Delchev) was helping the military doctors there. Although she heard the groans of wounded soldiers begging for help, doctors whispered to Izmirlieva that there was no time for the seriously wounded as the Greeks were approaching; she could only daub light wounds with iodine and send the soldiers on their way. The same afternoon, apprentices from her brother’s patisserie informed her that she must go home because her family was getting ready to flee the town. As she left the ward, one gravely wounded young soldier whom she wanted to help “burst into desperate tears. I burst into tears as well, but I was powerless to help him.” Later during her flight, she cried again over the memory of this soldier “who so hopefully expected my help.”⁷⁹ Even though she personally (and perhaps somewhat exceptionally among civilians in Kukush at that particularly dangerous time) went out of her way to help soldiers, Izmirlieva recalled nothing resembling initial patriotic euphoria locally at the outbreak of hostilities, but rather apprehension and horror.

⁷⁸ IAM, GDM, file 17.4 (Reports of the commissioner of Vodena), pp. 86-89 (commissioner of Vodena to the Governor-General of Macedonia, Jul. 7, 1913).

⁷⁹ DAB, Sp. 33 (Memoirs of Maria Andonova Izmirlieva), 9-11.

After Bulgaria's initial June 30 attack along Greek and Serbian lines, it lost the military momentum immediately. Its armies were pushed almost continuously back towards the old Bulgarian borders by the Serbs from the west and by the Greeks from the south.⁸⁰ Izmirlieva's flight from Kukush occurred four days after the war's outbreak, just before the destruction of her home town in a fierce battle that would end in a major victory for Greek over Bulgarian forces. Her family was part of a tide of refugees who, identifying themselves as Bulgarians or fearing that they would be identified as such, fled mostly on foot in advance of the oncoming Greek and Serbian armies. Yet records of these refugees' stories overwhelmingly suggest they left their homes with great reluctance, not to reach a national promised land, but as a last resort when their situation appeared physically untenable.

Many of those who fled indeed appear not to have understood the imminence of the threat to their lives for quite some time. They put off their preparations and departures until the last minute, causing them to be woefully unprepared for the conditions they would face as refugees. Izmirlieva's family spent a fearful night trying to sleep and "wondering what to bring and what to leave from our full home" before leaving her town the next morning. For her part, Izmirlieva ended up that morning wrapping "one dress and [her] fine suit of English fabric tailored in Solun" in a cloth. Her mother wrapped a few articles of children's clothing in another cloth, while each of them had to carry a child too young to walk. Her brother gathered a few documents. None of them brought food.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Richard Hall, *The Balkan Wars 1912-1913: Prelude to the First World War*, (London: Routledge, 2000), 110-113.

⁸¹ DAB, Sp. 33, 10.

A little girl at the time, Maria Bozhkova remembered the utter dread and confusion of the refugees literally running on foot north along the Struma River valley from Kukush. Her mother gripped her tightly out of fear that the rush of refugees would separate them, while she carried her infant in another arm. Like Izmirlieva's family they took almost nothing with them. Bozhkova's mother had to strip down to her petticoat at night in order to cover her daughter with her skirt. Although it had been hot during the day, it became too cold at night to sleep on the bare earth, and the refugees opted to press on rather than sleep. They reached the town of Gorna Djumaia, a distance of no less than sixty-eight miles from Kukush, the whole group on foot or in wagons having neither eaten nor slept.⁸² The refugees generally said nothing to each other during their flight. Among the few who spoke, one cried, "God, they will butcher us all." Another suggested that "we should all be in a heap at the time we are slaughtered," apparently so that some at the bottom might have a chance of surviving.⁸³ Another memoirist in this stream of fleeing refugees, Ivan Tenchev Gelebeshev, remembers how many women and children became ill during the journey through the difficult mountain terrain. Refugees "cried and cursed both the war and liberty" while in mid-flight.⁸⁴ Retreating Bulgarian soldiers, among them Bozhkova's father, soon caught up with this stream of refugees. Heeding his wife's stern order, Mr. Bozhkov remained with his family for the remainder of the

⁸² Because they walked up the Struma River valley, rather than in a straight line from Kukush, the distance was most likely somewhat longer.

⁸³ DAB, Sp. 601 (Memoirs of Maria Bozhkova), 1-2.

⁸⁴ TsDA, Fond 771k Opis 1 AE 40 (Memoirs of Ivan Tenchev Gelebeshev), 4g.

journey instead of with his unit. As suggested above, this was not an unusual choice for local men drafted by the Bulgarian government in preparation for this war.⁸⁵

The Bulgarian refugees' dismay upon the outbreak of war was not rooted in an expectation of the Bulgarian army's defeat. Quite the contrary, several recall their mistaken assumption, even while in flight for their lives, of an eventual Bulgarian victory. As Bozhkova explains, "the reputation of our army was at that time great, having won many victories," and thus she heard conversations "to the effect that our troops will make the Greeks pay."⁸⁶ In Demir Hisar, the post office master reassured the school headmaster Biliukbashiev, who had been worried, that two Bulgarian brigades coming south from Petrich would soon help to turn the tide against the Greeks. This reassurance indeed played a role in Biliukbashiev's negligible preparation for his own flight from the town. On the morning of July 5, he noticed uneasiness in the streets including Bulgarian troops moving in disarray. Even at that moment he "had a lot of difficulty believing that the Bulgarian army could retreat before the Greek one." Yet when that same morning a cavalry officer told him in no uncertain terms that he must "run if you are Bulgarian," he escaped with his four children after ordering them to dress hastily. Besides the clothes they wore, they took only a rifle, something Biliukbashiev attributes to "having lost my head completely" in the panic. Yet Biliukbashiev "still thought that this flight was temporary, that we would run to some spot outside the town, and we would soon return."⁸⁷

This common delusion among the fleeing refugees that they would soon be able to return home also appears to have been connected to their desperate desire to

⁸⁵ DAB, Sp. 601 (Memoirs of Maria Bozhkova), 1-2.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁸⁷ Sp. 225, p. 193-195.

return and disinclination to countenance the possibility that they might not. The moment Biliukbashiev heard an unfounded rumor that Bulgarian authority was being reestablished in Demir Hisar and it would be safe to return, he and his family along with three other men spun around in mid-flight in order to walk homeward. Several Bulgarian soldiers they met along the way back failed to comprehend how Bulgarian civilians could decide to walk home southward toward Greek lines at this time. They could not believe they were Bulgarians, crying “Greeks – grab them and slaughter them!” When one soldier came to their defense, others responded “These are Greeks, or at the very least spies for the Greeks. The Bulgarians are running to the north, and these people are turning south.”⁸⁸

The incident points to a fundamental gulf in mentalities between long-time citizens of the Balkan states – socialized for at least a generation to believe that people naturally wanted above all else to live with their own kind in a nation-state – and residents of former Ottoman Macedonia, who might have identified with an ethnic or national group but whose attachment to their ancestral home and locality typically came first. Bulgarian soldiers, bound to their national identity, could only conceive of this group of civilians returning home against the tide as either Greeks or traitors.⁸⁹ Despite warnings that it was dangerous from a more friendly group of officers, Biliukbashiev continued stubbornly homeward, if only at that point to try to retrieve some valuables. Only when he reached Demir Hisar and realized that he was very near the front line did he give up and turn back to escape for his life.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Ibid., 196.

⁸⁹ Further along the way back to Demir Hisar, Biliukbashiev again encountered similar suspicions of being a “Greek spy” on the part of Bulgarian military personnel; see *ibid.*, 197.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

Indeed, there was no quick return home. The enemy armies continued to advance swiftly, generally causing the refugees to escape eventually to cities within the old borders of Bulgaria, first to Dupnitsa or Radomir where they could board a train to Sofia further north. The nature of refugees' encounters with other Macedonian Christians along their flight path through Macedonia once again supports the argument of the previous chapter that there was little overarching solidarity – no larger “imagined community” – between people of the same purported ethnicity across long distances in Macedonia. Even now in the grave circumstances of war the sense of shared sacrifice and ethnic brotherhood/sisterhood was at best uneven, as refugees often pointedly revealed in their recollections. As they stopped in Macedonian villages and towns along the way, desperate for shelter, food, or other support, their reception by other local Christians ranged from generously sympathetic (especially when they were lucky enough to find relatives or acquaintances) to indifferent and even unfriendly. Maria Bozhkova's family arrived in Gorna Djumaia, “but there they did not want refugees,” she recalls. The men had to beg at the municipal building for a place to stay, and her family was “crammed like sardines with many other refugees in a dirty house” that had been abandoned by a Greek.⁹¹ Zlata Serafimova, thirteen years old at the time her family fled, recalled that “in one village the women pelted us with stones and shouted, ‘You have left to escape with your men, while our men have been killed on the battlefield.’”⁹² Thus, despite many pro-Bulgarian civilians' expectation of Bulgarian victory, none recalled any euphoria or sense of excitement at the beginning of the war, as took place for example

⁹¹ DAB, Sp. 601, p.2. More instances of cool reception by local Christians of refugees in flight are reported in DAB, Sp. 33, p.10; DAB Sp. 595, p.2; DAB, Sp. 225, p.201.

⁹² TsDA, Fond 771k Opis 2 AE 294 (Memoir of Zlata Serafimova).

throughout Western and Central Europe at the start of the First World War or even among many Macedonian Christians at the start of the First Balkan War.

Because the war went quickly against Bulgaria, the majority of Christian refugees were those who fled in advance of the oncoming Greek and Serbian armies. Yet streams of refugees also moved in the other direction, many under quite different circumstances from those who fled toward Bulgaria. One large influx into Greece was composed of civilians from the vicinities of Strumitsa (in Vardar Macedonia) and Melnik (in Pirin Macedonia.) These districts had constituted part of the Bulgarian administrative zone after the First Balkan War, and were taken by the Greek army during the second war. The civilians left their homes in August 1913 shortly after the signing of the Treaty of Bucharest, which formally ended the Second Balkan War and awarded both Melnik and Strumitsa again to Bulgaria. Actual military combat had already ended weeks before, but at the time of the civilians' exodus the Greek army was still present in the area, preparing to withdraw peacefully to the newly drawn Greek borders under the terms of the Treaty. Later that month, the Greek Bureau of Labor put the number of refugees from those localities at no less than 43,000, out of a total of 133,935 who had fled into the Greek-annexed areas of Macedonia.⁹³ A Greek exposé of abusive Bulgarian conduct during the Balkan Wars explained the departure of these civilians from their homes as follows:

The Greeks and Turks of these regions tremble at the idea of again coming under the Bulgarian yoke.... They are so terrified that many of them have decided to gather the remains of their belongings, burn their homes and churches, and re-establish

⁹³ Report from American consul in Salonika to U.S. State Department headquarters on "Violations of the laws of civilized warfare," Sep. 18, 1913 (CACs, RG 84, NARA). The number 43,000 is undoubtedly an underestimate, as it included only those who arrived in Serres and Demir Hisar. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Report of the International Commission*, 106-107, for example, suggests that 8,000 Muslims from the area were camped outside Salonika and another few hundred Greeks in Kilkis.

themselves in Greece, and not be martyrs to a new tyranny. This clearly shows that these miserable men have suffered much during several months of Bulgarian occupation.⁹⁴

Yet members of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace commission sent to investigate the episode questioned this version of the refugees' motivations. Having interviewed both Muslims and Christians who had taken part in this exodus, the commission reported in 1914 that the Greek military, before its departure, had ordered the Greek and Muslim residents to gather their belongings and leave for Greece, after which their houses (in Strumitsa and neighboring villages) were systematically burned. "The Bulgarian quarter" of Strumitsa "was not burned, since the object of the Greeks was to circulate the legend that the non-Bulgarian inhabitants had themselves burned their own houses." The commission heard from Muslims for whom "the future was a blank. They did not wish to go to Asia, nor did they wish to settle, they knew not how nor where, in Greek territory. They regretted their homes..." The Greek military managed to persuade some of the Greeks of the wisdom of their flight, having warned them that "the Bulgarians would massacre them if they remained." Yet there were "indications" that some Greeks from Melnik, where the houses had not been burned, "will endeavor to return when the pressure is relaxed."⁹⁵ This extraordinary explanation of the departure of civilians from Strumitsa and Melnik is independently confirmed in the contemporaneous reports from the American consul in Salonika, dated several months before the publication of the Carnegie Commission report. "In conversation with several of these

⁹⁴ Quoted in American consul in Salonika to U.S. State Department headquarters on "Violations of the laws of civilized warfare," Sep. 18, 1913 (CACs, RG 84, NARA).

⁹⁵ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Report of the International Commission*, 106-108; see also pp. 73, 202-206, and 324-325 for more on the Commission's assessment of this incident.

unfortunates,” the consul wrote, “a uniform story was told – they had no desire to abandon their village, after passing through two wars, but were forced to do so by the Greeks.” An American missionary also reported to the consulate that “a Strumitsa Greek was weeping to a friend of mine today. He said, ‘We did not want to leave our home and goods, but the soldiers forced us. There we had at least a roof and bread to eat. Here we have nothing.’”⁹⁶

The episode once again illustrates the high priority that civilians in Macedonia placed on their attachment to ancestral homes, and their extreme reluctance to leave them. This group of civilians left either because they were coerced (by an army that purported to be acting on behalf of their welfare) or because they understood their lives to be at grave risk if they stayed. Indeed, evidence suggests that many of the civilians in question in fact did endure significant suffering under Bulgarian occupation after the First Balkan War, to give some credence to the Greek exposé. Charges were lodged during the Bulgarian administration of threats, “outrages,” murders, and persecution committed in the Strumitsa area against Greek civilians by Bulgarian paramilitary forces.⁹⁷ The local Bulgarian constable reportedly arrested two men who had come to complain of abuses, and evicted and “insulted” the wives of a murdered and an injured man.⁹⁸ The Carnegie commission estimated that between 700 and 800 Muslim civilians were rounded up, tortured and executed

⁹⁶ Report from American consul in Salonika to U.S. State Department headquarters on “Violations of the laws of civilized warfare,” Sep. 18, 1913 (CACs, RG 84, NARA).

⁹⁷ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Report of the International Commission*, 108; TsVA, Fond 1647, opis 2 a.e. 24 p. 102 (Counselor of the Political Department of the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion Dimitrov to Macedonian Military Governor Vůlkov, Feb. 27, 1913).

⁹⁸ The local constable denied some of these charges, particularly the ones lodged against him personally, while he commented “that [the local Greeks] nurture hatred against the Bulgarians, this they do not hide.” TsVA, Fond 1647, opis 2 a.e. 24 p. 105 (Strumitsa district constable Ivan Kozarev to county governor of Shtip, Mar. 28, 1913).

mainly by Bulgarian forces in and around Strumitsa after the Ottoman army withdrew in the autumn of 1912.⁹⁹ And yet remarkably, despite these harsh experiences under Bulgarian rule, many civilians from the area stated ruefully that they would have preferred to stay in their homes under Bulgarian sovereignty than be forced to immigrate to Greece by the Greek army, with only vague promises of free land and assistance. A chasm once again appears between the attitudes of Greek officials, who assumed that Greeks should want to live in Greece, and the statements of supposed Greeks (adherents of the Patriarchate) from Macedonia. They showed only sorrow and trepidation at the prospect of leaving their homes to immigrate to Greece.

A clue to understanding the readiness of civilians to cling to their ancestral home and community even after harsh wartime experiences is provided by statements attributed to Muslim survivors of the massacres of the autumn of 1912 who were then forced by the Greek army to move to Greece. “It is true that they had a terrible experience under the mixed Serbo-Bulgarian rule in the early weeks of the first war,” wrote the Carnegie commission. “But this they had survived, and most of them stated that Bulgarian rule, after this first excess, had been at least tolerable.”¹⁰⁰ In other words, the civilians hopefully linked such abuses by authorities of the Balkan states, terrible as they were, to abnormal wartime conditions. One local Greek official noted this assumption among families from a group of “rather suspicious Bulgarian villages” around the town of Karatzova in southwestern Macedonia. During the war while the Greek army was mobilized in the area the villagers fled their homes to the surrounding heights. Now that the fighting had ended, the official commented, “the

⁹⁹ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Report of the International Commission*, 73-74.

¹⁰⁰ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *The Other Balkan Wars*, 107.

families want permission to return home as soon as possible and are obeying the orders of the authorities – having seen the failure of the Bulgarian effort and owing to the coming reaping season, the care of the source of their livelihood beckons them.”¹⁰¹ Minorities thus expected the situation to normalize under peacetime conditions, especially if they did not challenge the legitimacy of the new government and if they showed themselves to be loyal citizens. Perhaps then they could continue to live unmolested where they had for generations. This mentality among minority inhabitants in Macedonia lingered long after the end of the Balkan Wars, as will be demonstrated.

Violence against Civilians during the Second Balkan War

Many of those civilians who stayed put during the Second Balkan War instead of fleeing from the path of unfriendly armies endured far greater horrors than those who became refugees. The grim record of how the Balkan armies and paramilitary forces treated civilians as they traversed Macedonia during the two Balkan Wars would today undoubtedly qualify as war crimes and ethnic cleansing, although the latter term had not yet come into use at the time. Balkan governments attempting to cast their rivals' behavior in a bad light, along with interested Western observers, extensively cataloged and publicized such events. Scattered accounts of some of them also survive in archives. A semi-official 1913 Greek report on Bulgarian ill-conduct during the Balkan Wars cited a British journalist who estimated the number of peasants massacred by the Bulgarian army in the districts of Demir Hisar and

¹⁰¹ IAM, GDM, file 17.4, p. 84 (commissioner of Vodena to the Governor-General of Macedonia, Jul. 11, 1913).

Serres at 50,000. It suggested, according to other reports from French and Italian journalists, a total number of 220,000 to 250,000 civilian victims of Bulgarian “atrocities” in Macedonia and Thrace as a whole.¹⁰² A Bulgarian report written as a rebuttal to the Greek one found that “almost all” of the thirty-seven villages in the district of Gevgeli – home to over 19,000 residents before the war – “have been burned” by the Greek army.¹⁰³ It cited a British journalist and an American professor who put the number of refugees stranded in Bulgaria from the war in Macedonia at between 100,000 and 150,000.¹⁰⁴

Based far outside the Balkans in Washington, D.C., the newly formed Carnegie Endowment for International Peace undertook one of its first major initiatives in 1913 by establishing a commission to study the “causes and conduct” of the Balkan Wars.¹⁰⁵ The commission traveled to Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece in order to gather information for its lengthy 1914 report. As noted in the Introduction, the commission’s findings were highly influential in shaping international understanding at the time of the Balkan Wars and even of the Balkans in general. The commission’s report about both Balkan Wars – clearly more balanced than any of the contemporary exposés emanating from Balkan countries – found that all armies involved committed a large number of abuses against non-combatant populations, including executions, torture, arson, and rape. It documented many such abuses in detail, including how the Greek army put to flight the inhabitants of the town of

¹⁰² *Atrocités Bulgares en Macédoine (Faits et Documents) Exposé soumis par le recteur des Universités d’Athènes aux recteurs des Universités d’Europe et d’Amérique* (Athens: Hestia, 1913), 7-8.

¹⁰³ Professeurs de l’Université de Sophia, *Réponse à la brochure des professeurs des universités d’Athènes, “Atrocités bulgares en Macédoine”* (Sofia: Imprimerie de la cour royale), 1913, 39.

¹⁰⁴ Professeurs de l’Université de Sophia, *Réponse à la brochure*, 92-94.

¹⁰⁵ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars* (Washington: The Endowment, 1914).

Kukush/Kilkis before burning it completely. The Bulgarian army did much the same thing to the town of Serres after Greek paramilitaries had earlier executed scores of local Bulgarian civilian inhabitants.¹⁰⁶ The pre-war population of each of these towns numbered in the tens of thousands.

Evidence from contemporary writings of Balkan military officers reveals strikingly casual attitudes, particularly among those high up in the chain of command, regarding the destructive activity of their armies toward civilians. They only mentioned in passing, when they mentioned them at all, such actions as burning villages, summary executions of civilians, and creation of streams of refugees, as though they were simply a regrettable matter of course in war. While the memoirs of General Hasan Tahsin Pasha – an Ottoman general in the First Balkan War – exhibited Ottoman patriotism and anguish at the Empire’s territorial losses, they are striking for the detachment with which they discuss the Muslim refugees who congregated around Salonika. He matter-of-factly stated that the local authorities “had difficulty with the laborious task of housing and relief, due to the ceaseless influx [of refugees].” Although mentioning that they were forced out by the Bulgarian army, he did not bother to identify them as Muslims, Albanians, or Turks with whom he had religious or ethnic kinship, nor did he dwell on their plight.¹⁰⁷ Greek army corporal Philippos Dragoumis, whose father was Greece’s Governor-General of Macedonia, openly justified some Greek atrocities as a necessity of war in a letter to his friend Ronald Burrows, a British philhellene who had offered to help

¹⁰⁶ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Report of the International Commission*, 83-92, 97-100.

¹⁰⁷ Hasan Tahsin Pasha, trans. Vasileios Nikoitsios and Vasilis Gounaris, *Apo to Sarantaporo sti Thessaloniki*, 64.

him plead Greece's moral case in front of British public opinion. "We never concealed that the Greek Army burnt villages when military reasons necessitated it and also admit having killed comitadjis (armed peasants) on the spot," Dragoumis wrote. "But what is equally true is that the Greek Army never did this as a reprisal to the Bulgarian atrocities but as a measure of security and prudence."¹⁰⁸ As we shall see, a public statement by the Greek King gave the lie to Dragoumis' claim that the army would not act in reprisal. Dragoumis' definition of "comitadjis" as "armed peasants" is itself revealing. Greeks traditionally used this term to refer to organized pro-Bulgarian paramilitary groups. "Armed peasants" represented an unusually broad understanding of the term, suggesting that for Dragoumis, potentially any individual peasant encountered during military operations who appeared to pose a threat might be summarily executed.

Balkan military personnel and civil officials understood atrocities against civilians they considered unfriendly to their cause as legitimate reprisals. The perpetrators saw a spate of them as a response to similar crimes already committed by the enemy. Civilians thus served as a currency in this deadly game of score settling between armies. King Constantine of Greece himself spelled out this justification in a telegram he sent to Greek diplomatic representatives abroad in the middle of the Second Balkan War. In direct response to a reported massacre by Bulgarian soldiers of over a hundred notables in Demir Hisar, Constantine ordered his diplomats to

[p]rotest in my name to the representatives of the powers and to the whole civilized world against these abominations, and declare that to my great regret I shall find myself obliged to proceed to reprisals, in order to inspire their authors with a salutary

¹⁰⁸ Gennadius Library Archive (GLA), American School of Classical Studies, Athens, Greece, Archive of Philippos Dragoumis, 140.1 (Draft letter from Philippos Dragoumis to Ronald Burrows dated Oct. 19, 1914). The underlining is the author's own.

fear, and to cause them to reflect before committing similar atrocities. The Bulgarians have surpassed all the horrors perpetrated by their barbarous hordes in the past, thus proving that they have not the right to be classed among civilized peoples.¹⁰⁹

With that last sentence, the king made clear that he considered the Bulgarian people as a whole inclined to commit such crimes and therefore culpable. Reprisals might be directed against “[t]he Bulgarians,” as opposed to merely particular Bulgarian soldiers who had violated accepted norms of warfare.

Similarly, the massacre at Demir Hisar was itself viewed by Bulgarian army personnel as a reprisal for earlier acts committed by Greek forces, as the resident Bulgarian headmaster of the town, Biliukbashiev, revealed in his memoir. Upon reaching Demir Hisar in his futile attempt to return to his house, he was informed by a Bulgarian sergeant that “in Demir Hisar at the moment Greek notables were being captured and slaughtered, and indeed in response to the slaughter of Bulgarians by the Greeks, especially in the town of Serres, our soldiers also slaughtered the Greeks in Demir Hisar.” Perhaps foreshadowing the burning of Serres that took place three days afterwards, the sergeant also declared to Biliukbashiev that he and his colleagues in the army “will know what to do if we enter Serres one more time.” Moments after the conversation with the sergeant, the train station master advised Biliukbashiev and his comrade against returning home on foot precisely because “in the town at this moment our troops were massacring Greeks and Grecomans, and it is possible that by some misunderstanding we might also be affected.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ The telegram, sent on July 12, 1913, is reproduced in French in the semi-official Greek exposé on Bulgarian ill-conduct, *Atrocités Bulgares en Macedoine*, 4, and in English in Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Report of the International Commission*, 300.

¹¹⁰ DAB, Sp. 225, p. 197. This memory of a pro-Bulgarian civilian may be compared with the account presented in Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Report of the International Commission*, 92-95, 297-299; here the massacre is presented as a direct reprisal for earlier massacres by Greeks in

An intense preoccupation with “honor,” to the exclusion of other concerns, also motivated the military hierarchies of the Balkan states in directing their armies’ conduct in Macedonia. Military commanders worked to impress upon their ranks the importance of maintaining the army’s and the nation’s honor and of its corollary, avoiding “humiliation.” Thus, in the closing days of the Second Balkan War Bulgaria’s King Ferdinand (in his capacity as Commander in Chief) issued a telegram to all Bulgarian military personnel as his country faced catastrophic defeat, reminding them that “Bulgaria wants us today to exert all our efforts so that we may save her honor – and this we must do.”¹¹¹ Besides speaking of saving Bulgaria’s honor, Ferdinand might have attempted to boost the motivation of his fighting forces by referring also to the masses of Bulgarian Macedonian civilians whose lives and livelihoods hinged on Bulgaria’s military efforts, but typically for a high ranking military figure he neglected to do so.

Balkan military personnel also understood the ideal of upholding honor and avoiding their own humiliation as being served by humiliation and dishonor inflicted on the enemy. When formulated in this zero-sum fashion, the preoccupation with honor and dishonor also took on a gendered dimension, according to which the ultimate humiliation for a nation’s men was for them to lose the ability to protect and provide for their women and children. This was illustrated vividly four days before the start of the Second Balkan War in a tense encounter between Bulgarian and Serbian troops over a disputed bridge on the Zletovska River between the towns of

Demir Hisar (not Serres), and is also mitigated by the subsequent Bulgarian official claim that it occurred in the midst of chaotic street fighting between armed opponents – a claim belied by Biliukbashiev’s interlocutors, who suggested the Bulgarian forces were then in control of the town and carrying out deliberate massacres of civilians.

¹¹¹ TsVA Fond 64, opis 2 a.e. 5, Jul. 20 entry from Bania Chuka.

Shtip and Kochani in Vardar Macedonia. A deputation of Serbian troops requested that the Bulgarians withdraw from the bridge and taunted the Bulgarian troops with stories of demoralized and malnourished Bulgarian deserters crossing to Serbian lines where they received food and clothing. Upon this insult, the “indignant” Bulgarians retorted, “in Bulgaria there is so much clothing, footwear, and food that, besides us, it can sate the entire Serb nation together with the dogs and pigs for three years – soon our army will bring it with us to your women and children.” The Bulgarian soldiers added that the Serbs would be “made to pay for the dishonors they inflicted in Macedonia.”¹¹² The Bulgarians’ offer to provide for the Serbian men’s women and children was of course not a friendly overture. In an earlier encounter at the bridge the same Bulgarian unit told the Serbs “we will take all of Macedonia and when we enter Serbia we will not leave a living soul.”¹¹³ The Bulgarian soldier who uttered this last threat was actually promoted for doing so from private to junior officer.¹¹⁴ Indeed, these accounts of Bulgarian soldiers’ verbal defense of Bulgaria’s honor (and threats to humiliate the Serbs, including by supplanting the role of Serb men as providers to Serb women and children) were meant to inspire. The commander of Bulgaria’s fourth army had ordered them to be distributed and read to all soldiers under his command.

The mentality of honoring oneself by dishonoring the enemy, especially through demonstrating men’s impotence to protect and provide for their women,

¹¹² TsVA Fond 64 opis 2 a.e. 19 (Operational Correspondence of the 3rd Brigade of the 7th Division, Part IV, June 1913), p.111 (Division Commander Col. Ovcharov to Brigade Commander, Jun. 26, 1913).

¹¹³ TsVA Fond 64 opis 2 a.e. 19, p. 112 (Division Command Col. Ovcharov to Brigade Commander, received Jul. 3, 1913).

¹¹⁴ TsVA Fond 64 opis 2 a.e. 19, p. 61 (4th Army Commander Kovachev Order No. 35, Jun. 28, 1913).

helps to explain the many documented instances of rape committed by soldiers and paramilitaries in the Balkan Wars. Greek and Bulgarian official documents, whether in the Greek, Bulgarian or French languages often render the act of rape as “dishonoring,” “insulting,” or “outraging” of a woman, although each language had alternative means of expressing the concept of rape. Scholars writing about rape in other violent conflicts of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have also noted the central emphasis on communal or national honor in the respective societies’ understandings of the significance of rape.¹¹⁵

As noted in the Introduction, Maria Todorova and other scholars have identified the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, perhaps more than any other event, as giving the Balkans a reputation in the West of unique inherent propensity for brutal violence against innocent civilians. Furthermore, this genre of Balkan violence was understood to be fratricidal – in other words, not only armies, but local communities were implicated as likely perpetrators of atrocious acts against their neighbors in the name of obscure ethnic hatreds. In the context of the Balkan Wars, the local civilians of the regions where fighting took place – including Macedonia – figured as primary perpetrators as well as victims in the understanding of the outside world. Claiming to have found “the common feature which unites the Balkan nations,” the 1914 report by

¹¹⁵ On German rapes of Belgian women in World War I, see John Horne and Alan Kramer, *The German Atrocities of 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 196-200; on rapes in World War I era Syria, Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); on the Lebanese Civil War, Michael Johnson, *All Honourable Men: The Social Origins of War in Lebanon* (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2001); John K. Campbell’s *Honour, Family and Patronage: A Study of Institutions and Moral Values in a Greek Mountain Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), about communities inhabiting a region adjacent to Macedonia, suggests the importance of the notions of honor and shame in their culture. Although not about rape, Jovana Knežević, “Prostitutes as a Threat to National Honor in Habsburg-Occupied Serbia during the Great War,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 20, no. 2 (May 2011): 312-335 also emphasizes the way in which nationalist discourse in Serbia connected women’s sexuality with national honor during the First World War.

the Carnegie commission expressed this kind of indiscriminate indictment of the civilian populations of the embattled regions:

The local population is divided into as many fragmentary parts as it contains nationalities, and these fight together, each being desirous to substitute itself for the others. This is why these wars are so sanguinary.... We have repeatedly been able to show that the worst atrocities were not due to the excesses of the regular soldiery, nor can they always be laid to the charge of the volunteers, the *bashi-bazouk*. The populations mutually slaughtered and pursued with a ferocity heightened by mutual knowledge and the old hatreds and resentments they cherished.¹¹⁶

And yet the authors in their own report were not in fact “repeatedly... able to show” what they claimed. Analysis of who generally committed the violence against civilians in Macedonia – even in the text of the Carnegie commission report itself – belies the notion that local civilians themselves committed “the worst atrocities” or even took part as perpetrators in significant numbers. The perpetrators were, as in the examples given above, overwhelmingly members of the Balkan armed forces or seasoned paramilitary bands. The latter, as noted in Chapter 1, themselves usually arrived from outside the local communities where they committed violence or from outside Macedonia altogether. That is not to say that political frictions did not exist between groups of civilians in Macedonia. To the contrary, as shown earlier, the volatile geopolitical atmosphere that characterized the period between the two Balkan Wars heightened pre-existing local frictions. The tensions that came to the fore now more than at any other time during the years spanning the Balkan Wars and First World War were those connected with national identity. Groups of civilians frequently took advantage of the unsettled situation and used new configurations of state power to gain the upper hand in local disputes over control of religious buildings

¹¹⁶ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Report of the International Commission*, 148. In a footnote the report makes clear that by *bashi-bazouk* it does not merely mean Muslim irregulars, but irregulars in general.

and schools. Some advocated energetically for the sovereignty of their favored Balkan state over their particular corner of Macedonia. Yet local civilians continued in general to stop short of committing violence against their neighbors who took the other side in disputes over such issues.

The international infamy that the Balkans gained from the Balkan Wars related not only to the question discussed above of *who* committed violence, but also to the *kind* of violence committed. As the Carnegie commission put it:

The moralist who seeks to understand the brutality to which these pages bear witness, must reflect that all the Balkan races have grown up amid Turkish models of warfare. Folk-songs, history and oral tradition in the Balkans uniformly speak of war as a process which includes rape and pillage, devastation and massacre.... The extreme barbarity of some episodes was a local circumstance which has its root in Balkan history.¹¹⁷

Yet comparison with other wars also shows that the regular Balkan armies, which indeed committed a large amount of executions, torture, rapes, and arson against the civilian populations of Macedonia, did not thereby exhibit uniquely “Balkan” modes of warfare for their time. Such behavior towards civilians was common enough in European and Western armies of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. John Horne and Alan Kramer have documented in detail the extensive acts of summary execution, torture, beatings, extortion, arson and rape that German soldiers committed against noncombatant civilians in Belgium and northern France during the opening months of the First World War. As in Macedonia during the Balkan Wars, hundreds of thousands of civilians fled their homes in order to escape those acts by German soldiers. Nor were those particular German actions an aberration among Western or Central European armies, as noted in the Introduction. Authors have shown that

¹¹⁷ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Report of the International Commission*, 108.

similar acts against civilians were carried out early in the same war by the Austro-Hungarian army in northwestern Serbia, by the German army against French civilians in 1870, by the Union army in the American Civil War, and by the French and Russian armies during the Napoleonic Wars.¹¹⁸

* * *

The establishment of internationally recognized borders in Macedonia between Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia and the short interval of peace inaugurated by the August 1913 Treaty of Bucharest that ended the Second Balkan War would put whatever unique features might be attributed to “Balkan violence” into clearer relief in Macedonia. As argued above, these unique features had little if anything to do with any sort of abnormal thirst for the blood of their neighbors among local civilians in Macedonia. Rather, they reflected the weakness of the state’s monopoly of the means of violence. This was a structural limitation the Balkan states inherited from Ottoman rule over the area that allowed paramilitaries and corrupt low-level officials to continue to present themselves as alternative proprietors of coercive force. The presence of new internationally recognized borders in Macedonia would also dampen local inhabitants’ inclination (seen at a peak during the period of the Balkan Wars) to raise locally destabilizing issues such as agitation for rule by a different Balkan state. Instead, local civilians – both ethnic majorities and minorities – sought to accommodate themselves to novel experiences of life under a nation-state, and to try

¹¹⁸ Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities of 1914*, 78-86, 420, 422-423; Karma Nabulsi, *Traditions of War: Occupation, Resistance, and the Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 22-37. Gunther Rothenberg, “The Age of Napoleon,” in Howard, Andreopoulos, and Shulman, eds., *The Laws of War*, 97; Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War: the German Invasion of France, 1870-1871* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962), 378-381; and Geoffrey Wawro, *The Franco-Prussian War: the German Conquest of France in 1870-1871* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 279-280.

to maintain social stability in their local communities. State authorities remained suspicious of ethnic minorities, however. As the next two chapters will demonstrate, they began exploring new methods of dealing with minorities as a perceived threat. These new methods made use of the bureaucratic structures of the military and civilian administrations and thus introduced a veneer of order in contrast to the chaotic, crude and sometimes terroristic methods employed during the Balkan Wars.

Chapter 4: Macedonia's "Construction of Life" after Two

Balkan Wars

Nikola Zografov reflected in 1927 on the disasters that had befallen his Bulgarian compatriots and other inhabitants of former Ottoman Macedonia. Zografov was himself a veteran of both the Supremist and Internal factions of the militant Macedonian revolutionary movements and had worked closely with the assassinated revolutionary Gotse Delchev. Yet now he regretted passionately the militant path he had chosen in his younger days:

[H]ow weak in culture are the Bulgarians who use violence, who hurled the people into a terrible mutual destruction, where old and young Bulgarians lost life by the thousands.... The time has finally come for all who use force to voluntarily refrain from it...¹

Zografov repeatedly exhorted his readers to dedicate themselves to what he termed the "construction of life" through peaceful pursuit of economic and educational progress. The Bulgarian majority in Bulgaria should pursue this "construction of life" in harmony with other ethnic groups, whose cultural uniqueness should be respected and even promoted by the state.

This chapter examines the short peacetime interval in geographic Macedonia that began in August 1913, with the signing of the Treaty of Bucharest, and ended in September 1915, when the First World War again turned the region into a theatre of military operations. The Treaty of Bucharest did at least confer international legitimacy on the new borders drawn across former Ottoman Macedonia between

¹ Nikola Zografov, *Stroezha na zhivota* (Construction of Life), (Sofia: Pechatnitsa P. Glushkov, 1927), 125.

Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia. Uncertainty about the region's political status, a central cause of local instability during the period before the Second Balkan War detailed in Chapter 3, now looked as though it had been resolved. Christians living in the newly annexed Greek and Bulgarian territories in former Ottoman Macedonia adjusted pragmatically to this new, calmer, international political environment by acting in ways that anticipated Zografov's "construction of life." When interacting with their new citizens, however, the governing Balkan states often failed to act in the same spirit.

With borders apparently settled, Christian inhabitants of the newly annexed Greek and Bulgarian territories in Macedonia now focused on making the best of their lives under new ruling governments. They turned away from agitating for an autonomous Macedonia or for rule by a rival Balkan claimant to the territory as some of them had during the unstable period of the Balkan Wars. Many proved willing to endure significant hardships in order to make this adjustment. Recent refugees crossed the new borders to return home and rebuild destroyed homes and workplaces. When ethnic minorities were confronted with harsh assimilatory measures, most fell into line rather than defy the state's authority. By showing themselves to be obedient citizens, they tried to negotiate a legitimate space for themselves within the political frameworks of nation-states that advertised themselves as liberal and modern, while continuing to live in their ancestral communities. Priorities such as economic well-being, education, a strong say in local affairs with respect to the central government, and local political stability were more important than asserting or defending national identity.

Again contrary to stereotypes about the endemic nature of Balkan violence that emerged from international observation of the Balkan Wars, long-time residents of the annexed former Ottoman territories continued to refrain from fratricidal ethnic violence. Instead, the short period of peace covered in this chapter reaffirms what was in fact unique about Balkan violence. The Balkan governments' inability to monopolize the use of force allowed paramilitaries and corrupt low-level state functionaries to continue to prey upon local populations, as they had during Ottoman times. Local residents generally responded to the apparent consolidation of new borders and national sovereignty as though the time for fighting had finally passed. Many went out of their way to consolidate social stability within their local communities. They tried to preserve it in cases where they perceived state authorities or others from outside the locality acting in ways that exacerbated potential tensions.

On the other hand, administrators of incoming Balkan governments were still obsessed with the ethnic characteristics of the populations living in the newly annexed territories. Force was now newly legitimized if serving to consolidate the nation-state. Authorities acted all too quickly on any suspicion that heterogeneous elements might prove disloyal. But in place of the relatively chaotic, terroristic acts that characterized the Balkan War operations of their military and paramilitary forces against civilians perceived as unfriendly, administrators in peacetime began to introduce more bureaucratic abuses: deportation and exile.

Local Priorities in Peacetime

The war was over. Whether on the Greek or Bulgarian side of the new border, Orthodox Christian residents saw the rule of a centuries-long Muslim-led empire replaced by Christian-majority Balkan states. Even if their armies had committed abuses against non-combatants during the anomalous and inevitably cruel circumstances of war, these nation-states had been founded as constitutional monarchies and advertised themselves as bearers of European civilization and liberation from tyranny. It was time to rebuild and make the best of the future – to engage in Zografov’s “construction of life.” Typical of this mindset was Ivan Hristov Gramatikov’s and his father’s reaction after the Second Balkan War when they returned to their native village of Marikostinovo in Bulgaria’s newly annexed territory to find it completely burned down by Greek forces. As Gramatikov recounted in this memoir, they wasted no time in rebuilding and restarting their mill, which had processed wheat and cleaned cotton, and indeed even enlisted the aid of Greek soldiers to initiate small-scale trade across the new border with Greece. That they had already rebuilt the mill less than a year before, after it had been burnt by Ottoman forces in the First Balkan War, gives the full measure of the father’s and son’s determination.²

Gorna Djumaia, the largest town in Bulgaria’s new territory of Pirin Macedonia, became a magnet for refugees from the parts of Macedonia annexed by Greece and Serbia. Economic migrants from Bulgarian Macedonian territory and even from within Bulgaria’s old borders also entered the town at this time. Many of

² TsDA, Fond 771k opis 2 [Collection of the national liberation movement of the Bulgarians in Macedonia, 1806-1985] a.e. 165 (Autobiography of Ivan Hristov Gramatikov), 46, 65-68.

those who fled the town of Kukush during the Second Balkan War just before it was destroyed and then annexed by the Greek army congregated in Gorna Djumaia, causing it to become “the largest ‘Kukush-ian’ town in Bulgaria” after Sofia.³ Krum Hristov’s family, coming with this tide of refugees, moved to Gorna Djumaia in 1914 in search of work after having first failed to find any in Sofia or elsewhere. “The motley population quickly breathed new life into the town,” which had “withered” after the 1912 flight of many of the Muslim former inhabitants. “Already by 1914 every kind of activity was in full swing,” Hristov recalled. There was an incessant buzz of conversation “in the homes and in the streets” among the new neighbors. Together they took interest in “all that was new” and pondered “how to organize and arrange this new, yet difficult and complicated refugee life so that it might not be quite so ‘refugee-like.’” Nevertheless, Hristov and his fellow refugees could not push the homes and communities they had left out of their minds:

The anguish over the town of our birth was still very strong. Wherever two people from Kukush might run into each other, inevitably there followed conversation about fellow-acquaintances from the town. At home Kukush and people from Kukush were constantly talked about. Thanks to this, unforgettable memories have piled up in my mind of names and individuals, of customs, events and occurrences, and all of these have left a sharp, indelible interest in the life of those years, in the fate of those who have a personal or family connection to Kukush.⁴

As we shall see, this yearning for the old home among refugees was also powerful enough to entice many to return to locations they had fled under dangerous circumstances and try to rebuild their lives there.

The previous chapter described how the Greek and Bulgarian governments introduced pressures for ethnic assimilation in former Ottoman Macedonia, if

³ DAB, Fond 382 opis 5 [Memoirs of gymnasium alumni sent in connection with the 100 year jubilee], a.e. 29 (memoir of Krum Hristov), 7; the quoted phrase is “nai-golemiat ‘kukushki’ grad v Bûlgariia.”

⁴ Ibid., 4-7.

haltingly, even as the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 were still being waged. The apparent stability afforded by new, internationally recognized borders in Macedonia codified by the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest gave the Balkan states the opportunity to intensify such drives for assimilation through religious conversion, education and propaganda. Pressures for assimilation took various forms, from mortal threats and violence to more subtle, long term incentives to gain economic or social advancement by embracing the dominant national culture. Yet residents of Macedonia in this period quite deliberately put their rights to live productively in their ancestral communities and to participate in the new political systems under which they found themselves first, over their rights to national self-assertion. In order to safeguard these higher priorities, potential ethnic minorities proved willing (if unhappy) to sacrifice their ethnic affiliation by quickly falling into line with measures for assimilation. They did not resist them. Also, while inhabitants resented assimilatory state policies during this period, they did not view the attendant hardships primarily as a process of “denationalization,” but rather as part of a more general experience of imposition and personal humiliation on the part of the state.

Followers of the Bulgarian Orthodox Exarchate who found themselves on the Greek side of the border after the Second Balkan War quickly understood that their lives would become difficult if they did not transfer their allegiance to the Greek Orthodox Church and its Patriarchate. A Bulgarian newspaper reported in March 1914 that in Salonika local Greek authorities were

continually busy compelling the small number of Bulgarian families as soon as possible to submit declarations that they accept Hellenism and pass under the bosom of the true Christian church – the Patriarchate, and that they will send their children to Greek schools. In groups police and other agents roam around the [Salonika]

neighborhoods of Pirgi, Transvaal and Kukushki issuing deadlines for Hellenization, imprisoning, and threatening, “become Greeks or leave within 24 hours.”⁵

Bulgarian consular reports from the period suggest that such Greek actions, rather than being systematically directed from the center, varied depending on the initiative of authorities and militia in each locality. Disorganization and lack of sympathy for minority interests on the part of more central Greek authorities such as the General Administration of Macedonia encouraged the abuses, but only indirectly.⁶

Yet well before those Bulgarian reports, a variety of contemporaneous Greek sources celebrated the “spontaneity” and rapidity with which the vast majority of former followers of the Exarchate “returned to the Mother Church.” Thus Stephanos Grammenopoulos, resident of the village of Zelenits in Greek western Macedonia and a longtime local supporter of the Greek cause, proudly reported how his “Bulgarian” co-villagers converted after the arrival of the Greek army:

Afterwards they spontaneously gathered the Bulgarian books of the church and delivered them to the head of the detachment... , who reportedly took them to His Holiness Bishop Ioakim of Kastoria. [The Bulgarians] who followed along were accepted into the embrace of the Mother Greek Orthodox Church, forgiven for their error which resulted either from fear or from compulsion.⁷

Although Grammenopoulos was a local villager, Greek government officials often remarked on the same phenomenon of willing and “spontaneous” conversion.

According to Stephanos Dragoumis, the Governor-General of Macedonia,

⁵ “Iz Makedoniia”, *Priaporets*, March 28, 1914: 2-3.

⁶ TsDA, Fond 334k [Records of the Bulgarian consulate in Salonika] opis 1 a.e. 380, 1-10, 11-12, 15-17, 21-34, 37-41 (reports from the Bulgarian consul in Salonika to the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, dated Oct. 28 and Nov. 17, 1914 and Jan. 27, Apr. 12, Apr. 22, and Jun. 19, 1915); TsDA, Fond 334k opis 1 a.e. 380, 35 (memorandum from the Bulgarian ambassador in Athens to the Bulgarian prime minister, dated Apr. 23, 1915).

⁷ Gennadius Library Archive (GLA), American School of Classical Studies, Athens, Greece, Archive of Stephanos Dragoumis, 118.1.1 (Letter from Stephanos Grammenopoulos dated Jul. 13, 1913); on Grammenopoulos’ longstanding loyalty to the Greek cause, see Oecumenical Patriarchate, *Official Documents Concerning the Deplorable Condition of Affairs in Macedonia* (Constantinople: printing press of the Patriarchate, 1906), 18.

... in the countryside and the small centers in general... the numbers of schismatics are disappearing as the Exarchists have turned out in multitudes along with the [Exarchist] priests, spontaneously declaring repentance, delivering over churches, schools and Slavic liturgical books and accepting pardons and blessings from the Orthodox Bishops and from the Patriarchate.⁸

Yet later in the same letter, Dragoumis suggested that state coercion remained an option to encourage those inhabitants whose conversion might not be so “spontaneous.” He reported that “in the urban centers majorities have returned in every way to the Greek traditions to which they are unmistakably inclined.” But a minority had failed to do so “only out of timidity, as they await to be convinced that the violence of the dismantled Bulgarian organization would not again bring about an alteration of the existing situation.” Dragoumis proposed that this timid minority would be quickly reassured “if we remand in custody those who subscribe to the wiles of externally lurking politics of intervention.”⁹ The vague language Dragoumis used to denote those who ought to be arrested opened the way for such a policy to be implemented in an indiscriminate and arbitrary fashion.

The Greek military personnel, police, and church notables, who openly welcomed the conversion of former followers of the Exarchate to the Patriarchate, also provided the presence capable of making good on the threat of repression for those who appeared suspicious. This combination of factors sent a strong signal to the local inhabitants. Thus, their conversions, even if rapid, could hardly qualify in general as “spontaneous,” despite this triumphal description in contemporary Greek sources on the episode. Rather, followers of the Exarchate quickly got the message that their relationships with those in power would proceed much more smoothly if

⁸ GLA, Archive of Stephanos Dragoumis, 118.1.1 (Letter from Stephanos Dragoumis dated Sep. 28, 1913).

⁹ Ibid.

they made a show of “returning to the embrace of the Mother Church” – the Patriarchate. Even if not a genuinely spontaneous phenomenon, the fact remains that the vast majority of former followers of the Exarchate did rapidly switch to the Patriarchate, instead of holding out to test the Greek authorities’ tolerance. Their choice demonstrated their priorities. Having to “repent” for the “error” of longstanding attendance at their family parish church and exchange a Slavonic liturgy close to their spoken language for the Greek liturgy would have been painful experiences for many of these inhabitants. Yet most of them rapidly made this sacrifice with a view towards avoiding trouble with their new rulers.

The remaining Greek Orthodox churches in Bulgaria were likewise closed soon after the signing of the Treaty of Bucharest.¹⁰ Their experience mirrored the fate of the Bulgarian Orthodox Exarchate churches in Greek Macedonia. After the reluctant and semi-forced exodus of patriarchists and others from locations such as Strumitsa and Melnik described in the previous chapter, virtually no former followers of the Patriarchate remained in the portion of Macedonia annexed by Bulgaria. Theodora Dragostinova, however, has found that in western Thrace, another former Ottoman territory annexed by Bulgaria in the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest, many Greeks did remain. A number – especially those of lower class background – promptly began to attend Bulgarian Exarchate churches before they would have been forced to do so by the closure of their former Patriarchate churches.¹¹ Again, these inhabitants displayed a clear willingness to sacrifice important cultural traditions for the higher

¹⁰ Theodora Dragostinova, *Between Two Motherlands: Nationality and Emigration among the Greeks of Bulgaria, 1900-1949* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), 89-91.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 96-98.

priority of remaining in their ancestral homes and localities and building their future there.

This commitment to the native home was so powerful that refugees who had fled for their lives from the Greek army during the Second Balkan War quite commonly resolved to return to their homes, now in Greek territory, after the Treaty of Bucharest. Many of Krum Hristov's compatriots who had fled the Kukush area in terror were now petitioning the Greek embassy in Sofia for permission to return, as Greece's assistant commissioner of Kilkis (the Greek name for Kukush) noted at the start of 1915. The Greek assistant commissioner admitted that "Bulgarian-speakers" had fled to Bulgaria "likely out of fear of reprisals from sections of our army" in 1913. But he surmised that they were now "relatively happy" with the current Greek authorities, whose behavior he contrasted with the alleged harshness of Bulgarian authorities towards the same population during their eight months' control of the area in 1912 and 1913.¹²

Ivan Tenchev Gelebeshev was among a group of refugees who had fled before the Greek army but who decided as early as October 1913 to return to their village of Machukovo, now on Greek territory. Gelebeshev's account suggests that the Greek assistant commissioner's cheerful assessment of returnees' experiences was over-optimistic. Machukovo's residents' first brush with Greek authority came during the Second Balkan War, and it could hardly have been less auspicious. In apparent reprisal for Bulgarian paramilitary executions of Greek army prisoners of war taken in Machukovo, the Greek army burned most of the village's houses and executed the

¹² IAM, GDM, file 14.1 [Reports on the political, economic and ethnological situation of the population of Kilkis, Dec. 1914], 32-33 (Assistant commissioner of Kilkis to prefect of Thessaloniki, Jan. 6, 1915).

few remaining elderly inhabitants who had been unable to flee in advance.¹³ Why, then, did Gelebeshev and his fellow-villagers decide to return to Machukovo in October, 1913?

... under the guarantee of the Russian consulate we returned by train through Serbia ... they told us that all is past, there is no danger from anything, we would return to our villages to repair our homes and look after our properties, no one would take them from us.¹⁴

In other words, what drew the villagers back was the apparent assurance that they would be safe, and that they would be able to rebuild their homes and revive their former livelihoods. For Gelebeshev, at the time, the recent cruel behavior of Greek military forces towards civilians in the area appeared as though it might be an anomaly – a by-product of wartime, even instigated by war crimes committed in the area against Greek soldiers. Among the reasons he gave for the return of the residents of Machukovo – the assurance of safety, the opportunity to rebuild ancestral homes and tend property – Gelebeshev did not mention any national goals such as Macedonian autonomy or a revision of borders that would award the village to Bulgaria. On the contrary, Gelebeshev's family understood full well upon their return that “with the apportionment of the border between Serbia and Greece our village Machukovo was left in Greek territory.”

Nonetheless, Greek authorities treated the returnees with contempt and even suspicion, as though they harbored erroneous or even potentially traitorous affinities with Bulgaria. Gelebeshev's family rebuilt their house which had been “burned to the foundations.” The returning villagers were “received very coolly” by the Greeks and

¹³ TsDA, Fond 771k opis 1 [Collection of the national liberation movement of the Bulgarians in Macedonia, 1878-1980] a.e. 40 (Memoirs of Ivan Tenchev Gelebeshev), 7.

¹⁴ Ibid., 9.

subjected immediately to measures that amounted to forced cultural assimilation. In his memoir, Gelebeshev did not describe these measures using terms such as assimilation or denationalization, but complained more directly and bitterly about them as cruel and humiliating. Not only were children required to learn Greek in school: “on the teacher’s desk there was always hot red pepper, and if a child began to speak in Bulgarian they would put red pepper in his mouth.” Gelebeshev even remembered, in broken Greek which he spelled out in Bulgarian Cyrillic letters, the warning these wayward children would receive: “pios umilaii vulgarika kokino biberi isto stoma.”¹⁵ Authorities forced residents to speak only Greek “even in the home” and “in the shops in the village center.” Policemen kept a strict surveillance over adults and “arrested them when they heard them speaking Bulgarian.” Even if they might have considered themselves as ethnically Bulgarian, residents of Machukovo clearly did not return to their native village in order to struggle for Bulgarian national liberation. The repression of villagers for speaking the only language they knew thus came as a shock to them and stuck in Gelebeshev’s mind in particular. As Gelebeshev summed up the Greek authorities’ initial treatment of his fellow villagers after their return home, “they greatly tormented and reviled us.” Gelebeshev clearly resented not only the repression but also the disdain that Greek authorities showed them: “they lectured us to the effect that here it had once been Greek, and that they were cultured while Bulgarians were lowly immigrants. They uttered every epithet possible against the Bulgarians.”¹⁶

¹⁵ Ibid. “Whoever speaks Bulgarian – red pepper in the mouth.”

¹⁶ Ibid.

A 1913 report from the Greek assistant commissioner of the Edessa district in the western part of Greek Macedonia clearly bears out Gelebeshev's understanding of Greek authorities' attitudes and motivations in their dealings with new Christian minority populations. The assistant commissioner began his report by frankly admitting that "[t]he first work of the Greek Administration was the placement of Greek teachers in the one-time Bulgarian communities – Greek teachers were so minimal as to be able to count them on one's fingers." The assistant commissioner complained that even if the current local Greek teachers might know Greek grammar and were "honorable breadwinners," they were not strongly enough imbued with Hellenism – they did not "carry the holy mission." It would be better to send "the best teachers from Old Greece," the assistant commissioner reasoned:

[They] will have the added advantage of not knowing the Bulgaro-Macedonian language, and will be equipped with the necessary qualifications of knowing how to act as Greeks [*ellinoprepeia*], of dominance, and of power of assimilation. Today's teachers are also excellent in their conscience, yet not at all assimilative and completely incapable of the full Hellenization of the soul, of the firm Hellenization of conviction, and of the Hellenization of the minds of the shabby Macedonian youth. Bulgarian-speaking Greek Macedonia does not have need of honorable breadwinners, taking shelter in their secluded settlements in order to win their bread. The supreme national need is for apostles of the Greek idea, bards of Greek beauty, pioneers of Greek thought and especially laborers of the Greek language to be sent.¹⁷

For the assistant commissioner of Edessa, who clearly had a low opinion of the state of "Macedonian youth" under his jurisdiction, a mere passive acceptance of Greek education by "honorable breadwinners" was not enough. There were local teachers whose loyalty was beyond reproach and who could and did teach Greek. But the mere fact that they could also speak the "Bulgaro-Macedonian" language was a liability. The assistant commissioner clearly would not have been satisfied with the

¹⁷ IAM, GDM, file 17.3 [documents relating to Pella province], 54-57 (report by assistant commissioner of Edessa district on education, 1913).

mentality of families such as Gelebeshev's. Even if the latter showed "excellent conscience" and dutifully sent their children to school to acquire a Greek education, their priority was indeed essentially to "tak[e] shelter in their secluded settlements in order to win their bread" honorably – something the assistant commissioner felt was not what "Bulgarian-speaking Greek Macedonia" needed. It is not hard to imagine this civil servant endorsing the demeaning "hot red pepper" punishment employed by the Greek teachers in Machukovo.

Although residents in particular did not complain in abstract terms of their "denationalization," they certainly did resent being singled out and humiliated by Greek authorities for being "Slavic-speakers," or "Bulgarians." That a Greek garrison commander and gendarmerie officer in the village of Zûrnovo near Drama "went around the houses with swords drawn and forcibly compelled the female population to visit the night school opened there" was clearly viewed as an assault upon local masculine honor in particular.¹⁸ Adult residents did not view such night schools, which in fact were not only for females but "for the men, the women and the elderly to learn the Greek language,"¹⁹ as benign educational opportunities, but as forms of humiliation in the context of the contemptuous attitudes of Greek authorities that Gelebeshev perceived.²⁰ Nikola Ivan Shopov thus told the Bulgarian consul in Salonika that "he could not bear the Greeks insulting his compatriots and neighbors"

¹⁸ TsDA, Fond 334k opis 1 a.e. 380, 37 (report by A. Petrov in Bulgarian general consulate in Solun, dated Apr. 22, 1915).

¹⁹ TsDA, Fond 334k opis 1 a.e. 380, 38-39 (report from Bulgarian general consulate in Solun sent to Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Jun. 27, 1915).

²⁰ Anastasia Karakasidou, "Women of the Family, Women of the Nation: National Enculturation Among Slavic Speakers in Northwestern Greece," *Women's Studies International Forum* 19 (January-April 1996): 105 mentions such compulsory night schools as a way in which the Greek government targeted women in Greek Macedonia as agents of (Greek) nationalization in Greek Macedonia during the decades after World War I. The Bulgarian archival sources I discuss here indicate that this practice began immediately after Greece annexed the area in the Balkan Wars.

in his village of Starchishta near Drama.²¹ The insults included not only compulsory night school for adults and especially women, but also beatings meted out to residents. In 1915, members of the Greek garrison stationed in Starchista beat villagers for leaving the village to go shopping in the town of Serres without first obtaining permission, for refusing to commandeer a neighbor's livestock to transport sand for military use, for allowing sons to avoid Greek army conscription, or apparently even "without any reason," as when Greek soldiers searched houses and stole valuable objects from them.²²

Bulgarian state representatives such as the consul in Salonika worried in particular over the "national depersonalization of the Bulgarian element" that such repressive Greek policies portended.²³ Affected local residents, on the other hand, complained in more concrete terms that reflected their own priorities of wanting to sustain their economic livelihoods and dignity in their ancestral lands under the new ruling regime. Some were driven to consider emigrating because, economically and physically, "life in the village of their birth has become unbearable." Authorities confiscated basic goods such as wood for burning, chickens and eggs without giving compensation.²⁴ In Starchishta, after many of the livestock for sale died off due to a disease outbreak, "... the military authorities began to take the only livestock available for subsistence: horses and donkeys.... The unfortunate villagers as a result of this were not able to seed their fields, because there was nothing with which to take

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ TsDA, Fond 334k opis 1 a.e. 380, 1-10 (memorandum from Bulgarian general consul in Solun to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nov. 10, 1914); also TsDA, Fond 334k opis 1 a.e. 380, 21-34 (memorandum from Bulgarian general consul in Solun to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Apr. 25, 1915).

²⁴ TsDA, Fond 334k opis 1 a.e. 380, 37 (report by A. Petrov in Bulgarian general consulate in Solun, dated May 5, 1915).

the seeds to the fields.”²⁵ Many residents were “forced to abandon their ancestral village and depart for Bulgaria,” not because they longed to live in their national motherland and refused to live under a foreign government, but because Greek authorities “embolden and cooperate with [Greek] refugees in the seizure of Bulgarian properties.” In the village of Mezhdursko near Salonika in particular, residents finally left because refugees were installed in their houses without compensation. This was apparently a common complaint that the Bulgarian consul in Salonika was receiving “from everywhere where Greek refugees have settled.”²⁶

While ethnic minority groups in particular resented being targeted for assimilatory measures and humiliated, inhabitants of Macedonia of all ethnic origins struggled with the impositions into their lives and livelihoods introduced by central governments ambitious to extend their reach into newly annexed territories. Hardships were widely felt in the new territories as a result of central government policies affecting both education and commerce. In 1914, the Greek government promulgated detailed decrees extending compulsory primary education to its New Territories and began to enforce them aggressively.²⁷ Each local area was obliged to form one or more three-member school committees, with “ladies” preferred as members of the committees for girls’ schools. It was the job of the committees to aid in the implementation of state directives and to secure local funds for a long list of

²⁵ TsDA, Fond 334k opis 1 a.e. 380, 38-39 (report from Bulgarian general consulate in Solun sent to Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Jun. 27, 1915).

²⁶ TsDA, Fond 334k opis 1 a.e. 380, 21-34 (memorandum from Bulgarian general consul in Solun to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Apr. 25, 1915).

²⁷ IAM, GDM, file 50 [Public education in Nea Zichni district, 1914-1915], 193-194 (reprint from government gazette of legislative decree Concerning the personnel of elementary and middle schools of the New Territories, etc., Sep. 2, 1914), and 20 (reprint from government gazette of Law 452 Concerning the establishment of school committees and school funds, Dec. 22, 1914). The rest of Greece had only recently enacted compulsory universal primary education in its 1911 constitutional revision.

expenditures: heating, cleaning, school property repairs, purchase or rental of a school yard, required furniture, teaching equipment, library books, and aid to needy students for books, writing materials, footwear and clothing. The state also centralized and standardized teachers' ranks, introducing three distinct career levels based on criteria such as prior experience and educational background.

In the wake of those decrees, the Greek Governor General of Macedonia Themistoklis Sofoulis ordered all the prefects, assistant commissioners and police authorities in Greek Macedonia to compile reports showing the detailed breakdown of all funding sources for every school community under their watch.²⁸ Reports submitted to the assistant commissioner of Zichni reveal that many communities were unable or unwilling to shoulder the burden of these requirements because they were too poor, devastated by the recent wars, inundated with refugee children, or recently deprived of traditional sources of funding.²⁹ The last reason is particularly ironic. Many communities had once apparently received substantial funding from the Greek central government through local Greek consulates while still under Ottoman rule.³⁰ Now that they fell under Greek sovereignty, the Greek consulates disappeared. The Greek state in any case lacked the same incentive to fund schools through them in

²⁸ IAM, GDM, file 50, 190-191 (Governor General of Macedonia Sofoulis to the Prefects, Assistant Commissioners and Police Authorities of Macedonia, Oct. 26, 1914).

²⁹ A few examples are IAM, GDM, file 50, 282 (Zichni district school inspector to General Administration of Macedonia Department of Education, Jun. 14, 1914), 274 (telegram from Assistant Commissioner of Zichni to Prefect of Serres, Feb. 2, 1915), 275 (Prefect of Dedousi to Assistant Commissioner of Zichni, Mar. 5, 1915), 106-109 (village Committee of Lakkovikia to Assistant Commissioner of Zichni, Feb. 3, 1915), 142-143 (village Committee of Sfelino to Assistant Commissioner of Zichni, Feb. 3, 1915). IAM, GDM, file 50, 138 (Governor General of Macedonia Sofoulis to the Prefects and Assistant Commissioners of Macedonia and to the General Inspectors of Kozani and Serres, Dec. 15, 1914) makes clear that such problems in funding schools were prevalent throughout Greek Macedonia, and not only in the Zichni district.

³⁰ For example, IAM, GDM, file 50, 256-257 (School Committee of Alistrati to Assistant Commissioner of Zichni, Dec. 7, 1914), 151 (School Committee of Egri Dere to Assistant Commissioner of Zichni, Dec. 4, 1914), 132 (School Committee of Gesilovo to Assistant Commissioner of Zichni, Dec. 26, 1914).

order to compete with Bulgarian and Serbian national ambitions. Communities also often reported crippling reductions in contributions for education traditionally provided by local church income.³¹

Central and regional Greek authorities did not look kindly on local school committees in the new territories when they explained why they could not pay teachers their full salaries or meet other educational expenses. The assistant commissioner of Zichni district, for example, issued a circular warning school committees of all localities within his jurisdiction that if they failed to submit required reports or to pay their teachers what they were owed, their members would be “considered as incompetent to implement the duties entrusted to them and consequently unfit to remain as School Committee members to the detriment of School interests.”³² Soon afterwards, he warned the school committee members of the village of Gornitsa specifically that if they “continue[d] to refuse to comply with the orders” to pay their teachers the required salaries “the lawful compulsory measures [would] be taken” towards them.³³ This warning followed an initial report from the school committee detailing what residents had already paid the village teachers from individual contributions but pleading an inability to secure more funding due to lack of church revenue and loss of former government financial aid.³⁴

³¹ Examples are IAM, GDM, file 50, 148 (School Committee of Provista to Assistant Commissioner of Zichni, Dec. 22, 1914), 258-259 (School Committee of Vitasti to Assistant Commissioner of Zichni, Dec. 11, 1914), 152 (School Committee of Rodoleiva to Assistant Commissioner of Zichni, Dec. 18, 1914).

³² IAM, GDM, file 50, 154 (Assistant Commissioner of Zichni to the School Committees of the towns and villages in Zichni District, Dec. 15, 1914).

³³ IAM, GDM, file 50, 76 (Assistant Commissioner of Zichni to the School Committee members of the village of Gornitsa, Mar. 2, 1915).

³⁴ IAM, GDM, file 50, 80 (school committee members of Gornitsa to Prefect [sic] of Zichni, Dec. 25, 1914); other stern government warnings to school committees in the area appear in IAM, GDM, file 50, 24 (Assistant Commissioner of Zichni to representative of Banitsa, Jan. 9, 1915), and 144

It is tempting to see the failure of many communities in Greek Macedonia to fulfill the educational mandates of the Greek state primarily as a subtle form of “passive resistance” to the assimilation pressures inherent in required Greek education. However, a large number of the newly delinquent school communities who failed to meet the funding requirements were Christian refugee communities who had fled to Greece from persecution elsewhere or communities that had long supported Greek schools with the help of financing from a nearby Greek consulate or from the Greek Orthodox Church. It is unlikely that these groups were strongly motivated by a desire to resist assimilation into Greek culture. Especially after a destructive war and disruption in traditional funding sources, the blanket requirements to finance school infrastructure and teaching were heavy burdens for a large number of communities, as well as unprecedented ones. The number of schools expanded greatly during the last decades of the Ottoman Empire and came under increasing regulation by the state. Yet schooling had never been made universal or mandatory.³⁵ Modern nation-states operating on the principle of territoriality and “saturation of space inside the frontier,”³⁶ especially states such as Greece and Bulgaria that claimed to be bearers of civilization and modernity to formerly “backward” Turkish-ruled lands, could not be seen to brook exceptions on education. Every child in every corner of the governed territory would have to receive schooling (even if the quality of education might have been questionable in practice.)

(Assistant Commissioner of Zichni to School Committee members of Egri-Dere, Kioup-Kioï, Provista, and Karlikovo, Jan. 30, 1915).

³⁵ Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1908: Islamization, Autocracy and Discipline*, (Leiden: Brill), 2001. The Regulation of Public Education document of 1869 theoretically made elementary education compulsory for Muslim children, yet its implementation remained far from complete; see *ibid.*, 109-11, 243, 253.

³⁶ Maier, “Consigning the Twentieth Century to History.”

The national governments of Bulgaria and Greece also valued education to a significant degree because of its potential for shaping a culturally homogeneous nation. We see this motivation in the aforementioned opinion of the Greek assistant commissioner of Edessa district. He had little use for mere “honorable breadwinners” and clearly viewed “Hellenization” of the local youth as the primary purpose of education in “Bulgarian-speaking Greek Macedonia.” By contrast, as demonstrated below, residents of former Ottoman Macedonia promoted and welcomed education primarily as the key to economic, social and cultural advancement for their children and their communities as a whole. For them the goal of strengthening (or even resisting) national acculturation was at most an afterthought. Despite the postwar hardships that caused shortages in school funding, local communities themselves acted in ways that suggested education was among their own highest priorities. The above reports relating to the Greek district of Zichni reveal that many rural village communities voluntarily derived a significant percentage of their school funding from sources other than government aid or church revenues, such as household contributions and proceeds from sales of the tobacco crop.

Not surprisingly, the local commitment to provide for educational needs was stronger in wealthier communities and in larger communities with a critical mass of well-off residents whose resources could underwrite education for the community as a whole. In December 1913, scores of residents from in and around the market town of Razlog in the Bulgarian-annexed part of Macedonia declared their support for the reestablishment of the local *chitalishte* (literally “reading room,” or “cultural institute,” as the Razlog residents alternatively called it.) Their declaration recounted

a version of the recent history of the *chitalishte* and its rationale not in terms of national struggle (although such a rationale was there to draw on in Bulgarian history), but in terms of its role in bringing culture and education to the town. Indeed, instead of casting the stillborn 1909 founding of the *chitalishte* as an act of national struggle against Ottoman rule, the declaration explained that the *chitalishte* had been forced to close because of the “draconian censorship” of the Ottoman state, which incorrectly harbored “strong suspicions of the founders of ill intentions toward the state.” In other words, authorities suspected the founders of intending to undermine the Ottoman state (perhaps of struggling for national liberation), but they were apparently mistaken in those suspicions. The writers of the declaration described the “noble goal” of reestablishing the *chitalishte* simply as “the cultural and educational elevation of the townspeople.” They noted that without the institution “an emptiness is felt in the life of the town.” In fact, variants of the words “Bulgarian” or “nation” (*narod* or *natsiia*) appear nowhere in the declaration.³⁷

Indeed, a year later, the president of Razlog’s town council registered the apparent indifference of the local residents toward the concept of the nation, as he suggested to his fellow-council members that action be taken to encourage residents to show more enthusiasm for a patriotic celebration:

It is well-known to you that the 11th of October has already been established as a holiday for our town, on the occasion of the liberation of the town of Mehomiiia [Razlog]. In order to create a larger significance for this great holiday for our town in the eyes of the local residents, who up until now have hardly paid any attention to its significance, and in order to encourage whatever kind of festivities to be celebrated with more heart in the future by the townspeople, it would be good to set up at least one modest reception of the townspeople and the officials.

³⁷ DAB, Fond 103k opis 1 [*Chitalishte* “Zora”, village of Belitsa, Razlog area], a.e. 2 (Invitation and list of villagers and townspeople for founding a *chitalishte*, Dec. 20, 1913), 1-2.

To make this reception more attractive, the council president proposed that guests should be entertained by musicians and plied with free *lukum* (Turkish delight) and cognac, while those coming from the surrounding villages should also be fed lunch. Yet, even after detailing his plan for food, drink and festivities, the council president still apparently doubted that it would all be enough to entice the local residents to show more enthusiasm for the patriotic holiday. Tellingly, he felt the council ought to appeal also to the residents' stronger concern for the community's educational well-being:

In order for these festivities to be celebrated with greater enthusiasm by the population and by the students, it would be very humane if a certain amount of aid were to be released by the municipality also for some charitable purposes such as for the local town *chitalishte*, for needy students, etc.³⁸

As already noted, residents of Razlog and its surroundings attached great importance to their *chitalishte* as a local, not necessarily national, institution that promised "cultural and educational elevation of the townspeople." The Bulgarian state elites in charge of the municipality were chagrined at the apparent local indifference to a holiday of national significance. Only by linking the national holiday to the important local priority of education, through visible financial contributions to the *chitalishte* and to needy students, could they hope to draw attention to it.

While celebrating the nation and consolidating national identity were not among the local Christian population's top priorities, a distinction should still be made between such priorities and the desire to secure the benefits of representation within the structure of the nation-state. Residents of former Ottoman Macedonia

³⁸ DAB, Fond 31k [Razlog town municipal government, 1914-1949], opis 1 a.e. 1 (minutes-book of the town council, 1914-1915), 55-56 (meeting on Oct. 22, 1914). The council members unanimously approved the council president's proposal in its entirety.

clearly valued the latter priority, which went together with a desire to preserve a robust level of local autonomy as a counterweight to central government power. The town council of Razlog thus found itself in a struggle with the central government in 1915 over reasserting traditional local prerogatives to exploit the forests around their town. In preparing to draft a petition to the Bulgarian parliament on the matter, the council president noted that the “townspeople are impoverished” not only because of plunder by Greek and Turkish soldiers during the recent wars. Their petition bluntly stated that “our town was burned upon the entry of the Bulgarian army.” As it could not expect to collect taxes in the near future from the impoverished inhabitants, the municipality would not be able to function unless it could regain its traditional control over the proceeds from the local forests. “Since the Turkish time,” the council president asserted, “the municipality made use of the forests, which are now taken by the state authorities. Other than the income from the forests the municipality cannot have any other income, because they are the only source of natural wealth.”³⁹ The Razlog council president’s words strongly suggest local disquiet over the reduced local autonomy that accompanied the residents’ recent liberation from “Turkish” rule.

A similar local-central power struggle over forest resources occurred on the Greek side of the border in a dispute involving the village of Emporion near Kailaria in southwestern Macedonia. Emporion’s residents petitioned their district assistant commissioner for permission to appoint a man from their village as the local forest ranger. The forest surrounding the village was a private one, the residents claimed, and they therefore needed a forest ranger to guard it. The state authorities, however, did not recognize the villagers’ claim to jurisdiction over the forest. As the district’s

³⁹ DAB, Fond 31k opis 1 a.e. 1, 70-71 (Razlog town council, minutes of meeting on Mar. 3, 1915).

chief forester advised the assistant commissioner, the forests in question were “neither private, nor indeed community owned.” Regional police authorities were in charge of patrolling the forests and the thus villagers could not appoint their own forest ranger.⁴⁰

The above request on the part of villagers in Greek-annexed Macedonian territory to appoint one of their own as forest ranger involved an (unsuccessful) challenge to state jurisdiction over a valuable local resource by the local community. On the other hand, petitions from local communities to central authorities to appoint men whom they elected as rural constables – or indeed even to replace those they did not want – were routine occurrences in Greek Macedonia in the months following the Treaty of Bucharest.⁴¹ Such requests were usually approved, and on the whole they did not reflect an oppositional relationship per se between the locality and the center. On the contrary, they represented initiatives on the part of residents of former Ottoman Macedonia to integrate themselves into the framework of the new ruling state in order to have maximum say in decisions affecting their own communities. Residents also viewed their central governments as potential sources of funding for local priorities. Communities on both sides of the Bulgarian-Greek border tried to

⁴⁰ Državen Arhiv na Republika Makedonija [State Archive of the Republic of Macedonia] (DARM), Skopje, Macedonia, Fond 994 [Archival Materials on the Macedonians of Aegean Macedonia Between the Two World Wars] kutija 1, 36 (petition from the residents of Emporion to Kailaria district assistant commissioner, Nov. 18, 1914) and 37 (memorandum from Kailaria district chief forester to assistant commissioner, Nov. 29, 1914.)

⁴¹ Typical cases are DARM, Fond 994 Box 1, 12-14 (petition from Dimitris Nikolaou, Tzafer Ahmet and Rakio to Kailaria district assistant commissioner for removal of Konstantinos Athanasiou as constable in Demvri, Jun. 19, 1914; Kailaria district police chief to assistant commissioner, Jul. 5, 1914); 21 (petition from residents of Frakgotsi to Kailaria district assistant commissioner to appoint Anastasios Dimitriou Karatsas as constable, Sep. 20, 1914); and 40 (petition from residents of Emporion to Kailaria district assistant commissioner to appoint Konstantinos Georgiou, Simeon Matsigar and Paschalis Panagiotou as constables, Dec. 3, 1914.)

enlist the aid of their respective education ministries in procuring state financial support for their local schools.⁴²

Beyond even education, economic revival and progress usually ranked as the most important priority for residents of former Ottoman Macedonia after the Balkan Wars. This has already been suggested in the determination of inhabitants, refugees, and returnees to rebuild homes and workplaces, to be first and foremost “honorable breadwinners” to the frustration of at least one Greek civil servant, and to maintain control over valuable local resources. Discussions at town and village council meetings typically resembled the one that occurred in the town of Bansko in Bulgarian Macedonia on April 28, 1914. Items discussed included the question of raising revenue for the municipality given the impoverishment of most of the inhabitants, the installation of streetlights in the most frequented areas, raising revenue to pay rural constables to guard local fields and meadows, and setting aside property for school use.⁴³

The hard tasks of economic rebuilding understandably preoccupied residents of areas that suffered extensive material damage from the wars. A number of merchant and craft associations in Serres, much of which was destroyed by fire during the Second Balkan War, made a concerted effort to convince the Greek government to decree temporary limits on rents charged by departed Muslim property-owners to residents whose own homes were destroyed. They also attempted to extend to five years a moratorium on commercial debt repayment for businesses in

⁴² DAB, Fond 31k opis 1 a.e. 1, 24-26 (Razlog town council, minutes of meeting on Jul. 27, 1914); IAM, GDM, file 50, 252 (Representative and school committee chair of village of Anastasia to assistant commissioner of Zichni district, Dec. 18, 1914).

⁴³ DAB, Fond 26k [Bansko municipal government, 1912-1946], opis 1 a.e. 12 (minutes-book of the town council), 20-22 (meeting on Apr. 28, 1914).

their town. The petitioners first noted that Serres had once been “a thoroughfare in Macedonia for her prosperity and the acme of her commerce.” They then warned that creditors’ aggressive attempts to collect on debts in Serres would result in “our full extermination and our economic death.” They also drew a pointed comparison between their town’s post-war situation and that of Salonika, where their creditors “in their entirety” were based. Whereas Serres merchants suffered “the general catastrophe of their houses” and the “depredation and arson of their commercial shops,” “not one” of Salonika’s commercial houses “got a taste of the calamity of war.” On the contrary, the petitioners argued, Salonika’s commerce had “multiplied” due to the influx to that “large capital of the country of Macedonia” of military and others from Old Greece who increased the local demand for commercial services.⁴⁴

Although local inhabitants often tried to enlist the central government in furthering their economic recovery, the process of state-building – in particular, the imposition and policing of new political borders dividing what had once been a large, integrated economic region – also posed serious challenges to the residents’ priority of reviving economic activity. During the course of the Balkan Wars, as seen in Chapter 3, residents had complained about how tariffs levied by the Bulgarian and Serbian governments had discouraged trade with areas inside the Greek-occupied part of former Ottoman Macedonia. Now, the new international borders established by the Treaty of Bucharest threatened to permanently disrupt long-established networks and even lifestyles that relied on the previously undivided economic space.

⁴⁴ IAM, GDM, file 18 [Province of Serres and Sintiki], 91-93 (Political Society of Serres and presidents of thirty-four guilds to Greek Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos, Sep., 1914) and 100-103 (Merchants of Serres to General Administration of Macedonia “concerning the extension of debt payments exclusively for the town of Serres,” Oct. 23, 1914).

Many residents of Macedonia had a hard time adjusting to these new limits, and some tried to circumvent them. Three hundred Vlach-speaking pastoralist families who wintered on the Greek side of the border in the villages of Lapovo and Siatrovo appealed to the General Administration of Macedonia in March 1914 when initially denied permission by prefectural authorities to make the annual journey along with their roughly 44,000 sheep and 1,000 horses to their summer pastures in the Pirin mountains, now in Bulgaria.⁴⁵ Their elders explained that “throughout the Turkish rule and consistently until now” their families and livestock traveled annually between the same summer and winter pastures. Like others discussed above, they attempted to shame their new governments into action by referring to the relative permissiveness of previous Ottoman authorities. The shepherds emphasized that “[f]or this yearly movement ... the Turkish Administration of the time afforded us without question the pertinent permission.” The head of the local Greek army corps in charge of policing the new border with Bulgaria now advised against granting permission, “for reasons of security,” to the shepherds to migrate to their summer pastures.⁴⁶ The prefect of Serres also expressed his uneasiness with allowing this cross-border seasonal migration, for both nationalist and economic reasons:

Having in mind that the shepherds in question and their roughly three hundred accompanying families during the period of the Turkish and Bulgarian occupation of these places were among the first to renounce their nation [*ethnismos*] – as recently as two years ago, abiding in Lapovo and Siatrovo, they accepted a Romanophile priest and teacher – there is thus a danger that in going to Bulgaria they would Bulgarize and stay for good in Bulgarian territory. It is to be wished that we manage to find summer pasturage for them inside Greek territory, in order that local stockbreeding does not suffer damage.

⁴⁵ IAM, GDM, file 18, 78 (telegram from General Administration of Macedonia to Prefect of Serres, received on Apr. 14, 1914); 81 (Petition from chief shepherds who come from Melenikon and spend the winter in the vicinity of Serres province to the prefect of Serres, March 1914).

⁴⁶ IAM, GDM, file 18, 76 (Fourth Army Corps, Kavalla, to Governor-General of Macedonia, Apr. 25, 1914).

The prefect made this last pronouncement despite having himself acknowledged that “in Greek territory in this vicinity there does not exist adequate pasture for maintenance of their flocks, that which exists already having been occupied by other shepherd chiefs.”⁴⁷ The Greek official thus worried about what he correctly saw as the relative national indifference of these shepherd families, whose clear goal was literally to cross national borders in order to be able to maintain their traditional lifestyle and livelihood. Ironically, it took the shepherds’ enlistment on their behalf of none other than the Romanian Consulate in Salonika finally to induce the Governor-General to order permission to be given for the Vlachs to cross the border to their summer pastures.⁴⁸

Residents involved in commerce on both sides of the border did have some limited success in their efforts to pressure the new governments to help revive long-established trade networks that were now threatened by the new border. Ivan Hristov Gramatikov’s flour and cotton mill had been burned by Greek forces in 1913 and its location now fell on the Bulgarian side of the border. Yet later that very same year, “after the situation had normalized,” he contacted Greek soldiers patrolling on the other side and managed to gain permission to engage in small-scale trade across the border in order to supplement his income from the mill. A *çiftlik* (large agricultural estate) owner on the Greek side needed a large quantity of charcoal, and Gramatikov’s area on the Bulgarian side was the cheapest source for it. And

⁴⁷ IAM, GDM, file 18, 80 (Prefect of Serres to General Administration of Macedonia, Apr. 2, 1914).

⁴⁸ IAM, GDM, file 18, 74 (General Administration of Macedonia Director of Internal Affairs to 4th Army Corps, Apr. 30, 1914). Romania had long cultivated claims of ethnic kinship with Vlach-speakers and thus prerogatives to act as their protector. Its government had no serious pretensions to Macedonian territory, but it used such claims to gain influence in the region.

customers in Gramatikov's area wanted manufactured goods such as cigarette paper and clothes from Greece. Quite simply, as Gramatikov put it, "[t]here they were cheaper; here they were expensive."⁴⁹ This basic market incentive was strong enough to drive people who had recently suffered so grievously from the wartime abuses of Greek soldiers to enlist Greek soldiers' help in reestablishing trade networks across the new border. And here at least, new tariff regimes and customs officials did not intervene.

Indeed, for the Pirin region of former Ottoman Macedonia now annexed by Bulgaria, long established trade routes still pointed mostly southward toward what was now Greek Macedonia, rather than northward toward the territory of pre-1912 Bulgaria. Producers of silk cocoons around the Pirin town of Strumitsa thus had difficulty finding merchants elsewhere in Bulgaria to buy their products because of "the remoteness of the town of Strumitsa from the commercial centers of the *Tsarstvo* [i.e. Bulgaria] and because of the lack of rapid communication links to them." As a result, the provincial governor of Strumitsa pushed the Bulgarian central government to initiate contacts with merchants in Salonika and with Greek authorities in order to revive silk cocoon exports to Greek Macedonia, which had better connections to Strumitsa.⁵⁰ Demand for the revival of this trade also came from the Greek side of the border. Merchants in Salonika inquired about the possibility of importing opium from Bulgaria in order to re-export it to Western Europe, where demand for the

⁴⁹ TsDA, Fond 771k opis 2 a.e. 165, 67-68.

⁵⁰ TsDA, Fond 334k a.e. 363, 30 (Minister Plenipotentiary of Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion Consular Department to Bulgarian General Consulate in Solun, Jun. 30, 1915).

product was outstripping Salonika's current export capacity.⁵¹ The response to that specific query does not survive in the archival record, but at around the same time Bulgaria's foreign ministry did convey to its consulate in Salonika a request from the Bulgarian Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Labor for information about foreign importers who might be interested in Bulgarian agricultural products.⁵² Economic considerations trumped national rivalry with Bulgaria again in the proposal (unsuccessful, as it happened) by the Salonika branch of The American-Hellenic Army and Navy Contracting Agency "to supply a certain quantity of uniforms, fabric, etc., for the Bulgarian army."⁵³

Balkan Violence and the Weak State

Although Balkan armies and paramilitary groups caused immense destruction and often acted with brutality towards noncombatant populations during the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, this record had not, as argued in Chapter 3, set the Balkans apart from the Western world. What was, however, unique about "Balkan violence" in this era does become clearer when analyzing the period of international peace following the Treaty of Bucharest. The relative weakness of states in the region allowed armed

⁵¹ TsDA, Fond 334k a.e. 384, 2 (Bulgarian general consul in Solun to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Feb. 2, 1915).

⁵² TsDA, Fond 334k a.e. 384, 4 (Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion to Bulgarian General Consulates and Consulates abroad, May 5, 1915).

⁵³ TsDA, Fond 334k a.e. 363, 27 (Bulgarian general consul in Solun T. Nedkov to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, May 11, 1915) and 28 (Minister Plenipotentiary of Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion Consular Department to Bulgarian General Consulate in Solun, May 16, 1915).

men or groups, not fully under government control, sometimes to supplant governments' authority to wield coercive force within their sovereign borders.⁵⁴

The paramilitary groups that sowed terror among noncombatants during the Balkan Wars simply continued to do so, albeit on a smaller scale, after wartime military operations ceased. And they typically did so in communities from which they did not themselves originate. Yet the important role of corrupt low-level state employees also becomes apparent when we examine this interlude between the Balkan Wars and the First World War. In November 1913, assistant commissioner Kyriazis of the freshly annexed Greek province of Sari-Saban (near the city of Kavalla) complained openly to his superior that militia in and around the village of Moutzinos were “wreaking havoc and terrorizing” local inhabitants by abusing a government order to disarm the population. The militia accused residents (mainly Muslims) of hiding weapons and threatened to report them to a regional tribunal in Kavalla. In the next breath the militia offered the inhabitants immunity if they paid a certain amount of Ottoman lira. Kyriazis noted the “curious” coincidence that those who came under this suspicion of harboring arms always happened to be the wealthiest residents, calling it a “paradox” that this all somehow happened right under the eyes of police and the *andartis* Kapetan Antonis and his men.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Max Weber's classic conception of the state as “the form of human community that (successfully) lays claim to the *monopoly of legitimate physical violence* within a particular territory” provides a useful gauge of state strength or weakness here. See Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” in *The Vocation Lectures*, ed. David Owen and Tracy B. Strong, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2004), 33. John S. Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause: Brigandage and Irredentism in Modern Greece 1821-1912* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) provides an extended analysis of this aspect of armed force in the early history of the modern Greek state.

⁵⁵ IAM, GDM, file 78.1 [Reports on weekly events by the Agricultural Department of Macedonia], 3 (Report of assistant commissioner D. Ch. Kyriazis to the prefect of Drama, dated Nov. 25, 1913).

During 1914, the first full year of peace after the Balkan Wars, the Greek High Command of the Macedonian Gendarmerie compiled weekly reports summarizing all crimes reported in Greece's newly annexed territory in Macedonia.⁵⁶ The large majority of incidents appear to have been conventional crimes (theft, trespassing, fires started through negligence.) Among the violent incidents, ethnic conflicts do not stand out, as far as is possible to tell from names and other recorded information. The majority of violent incidents occurred between members of the same ethno-religious group, or else placed members of different ethno-religious groups on the same side as either perpetrators or victims. In other words, an inhabitant of Greek Macedonia in 1914 would have had far more reason to be concerned about getting robbed by a common thief than about being targeted violently because of his or her ethnicity. Even among crimes with apparent political cause, other factors besides ethnicity were often the most important. When two tobacco workers (one Greek, one Muslim) beat and robbed a Muslim co-worker who refused to join a strike, socio-economic, not ethnic, tensions predominated.⁵⁷ When a Christian man murdered his wife reportedly "for reasons of honor," the motive was apparently gender-based.⁵⁸

What does stand out among the recorded crimes is the strikingly common incidence (among violent events) of aggravated robbery, murder, rape, and other violence committed by low-ranking Greek state employees, such as soldiers,

⁵⁶ See IAM, GDM, file 78.2 [Reports of the High Command of the Macedonian Gendarmerie to the Governor-General of Macedonia].

⁵⁷ IAM, GDM, file 78.2, 11 (High Command of the Macedonian Gendarmerie, report on the past week's events, Apr. 22, 1914).

⁵⁸ IAM, GDM, file 78.2, 30 (High Command of the Macedonian Gendarmerie, report on the past week's events, Jun. 12, 1914).

gendarmes and constables. In one unexceptional week in June, 1914, for example, crimes allegedly committed by state employees in Greek Macedonia accounted for over 14 percent of total crimes reported. Among violent crimes, the percentage was higher: soldiers and gendarmes allegedly perpetrated three (a sexual assault of a twelve-year-old girl and two aggravated robberies) out of the twelve reported. The actual percentage of these crimes committed by state employees might in fact have been higher, since suspects were not identified for all reported crimes.⁵⁹ While ethnic motives might have been involved in some of these crimes committed by state functionaries, being considered a Greek certainly did not necessarily shield one from such assaults. For instance, the twelve-year-old girl who was assaulted by the Greek gendarme was a Christian refugee, thus likely understood to be an ethnic Greek. The peacetime abuses carried out by state employees, whose duties were ostensibly to protect inhabitants of the newly incorporated territories, did not reflect any deliberate central state policy to terrorize certain segments of that population. Instead, this was a weak state that had trouble in limiting its poorly paid employees' frequent abuses of armed power. Hence the large number of reports by the central command of the gendarmerie in Greek Macedonia that regularly recorded the crimes committed by its own members as well as by Greek soldiers, only sometimes succeeding in apprehending and punishing the offenders.

Remarkably, the Bulgarian ambassador in Athens, Georgi Pasarov, made the same point a year later in a memorandum written in response to a report on Greek state abuses of ethnic Bulgarians by the Bulgarian consul in Salonika. Pasarov

⁵⁹ IAM, GDM, file 78.2, 31-34 (High Command of the Macedonian Gendarmerie, report on the past week's events, Jun. 17, 1914).

asserted that the situation in Greek Macedonia that his colleague in Salonika had described “cannot be attributed exclusively to some kind of special regime set up by the central state government in Athens in their new province, because even within the confines of Old Greece the same kind of brigandage and pillage occurs, due to the disorder of the Greek state and deeper causes related to the Greek national way of life.” Pasarov condescendingly compared the backwardness of Greek state “control over security and lawfulness” to that which obtained in Bulgaria just after its liberation in 1878. He also predicted that, due to the ravages of the recent war, it would take years for normal life to resume in the region, “regardless of the regime in place.”⁶⁰ To prove his point, Pasarov subsequently submitted a report of abuses committed contemporaneously by soldiers and gendarmes against residents of Greece’s capital, Athens.⁶¹

Contrary to Pasarov’s optimistic assumptions about Bulgaria, his own state apparently had serious problems reigning in the actions of its low-level army and police, and not just paramilitaries. The 1914 Greek gendarmerie reports discussed above mention eleven incidents of either Bulgarian soldiers or paramilitaries (“*komitadjidhes*” in the Greek parlance that specifically designated Bulgarian paramilitary members) crossing the border into Greece and committing violence or theft, often of livestock. Of those eleven incidents, at least seven of them were committed against Muslims who lived on the Greek side of the border.⁶²

⁶⁰ TsDA, Fond 334k, opis 1 [Records of the Bulgarian consulate in Salonika], a.e. 380 (reports to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and letters from the Bulgarian Legation in Athens), 35 (memorandum from the Bulgarian ambassador in Athens to the Bulgarian prime minister, May 6, 1915).

⁶¹ TsDA, Fond 334k, opis 1, a.e. 380, 36 (memorandum from the Bulgarian ambassador in Athens to the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 22, 1915).

⁶² IAM, GDM, file 78.2: 22, 27, 33, 37, 41, 46, 48, 91-92, 116, 142.

Antagonizing Muslim minorities in Greece would hardly have furthered the official Bulgarian interests in reclaiming some of Greek Macedonia. In a couple of cases, Bulgarian authorities managed to apprehend the suspects or return livestock, further suggesting that the cross-border pillage was probably not policy but instead an indication of the Bulgarian government's "lack of control over security and lawfulness," to reuse the words of the its ambassador in Athens. Further illustrating the tenuousness of Bulgarian state control were the ongoing factional struggles among VMRO paramilitaries within the confines of Bulgaria's new Pirin Macedonian territory. These resulted in the April 1915 assassination of Jane Sandanski, leader of the movement's leftist faction.⁶³

Yet even civilians' harrowing experiences in the two Balkan Wars failed, as we saw in Chapter 3, to polarize most inhabitants of former Ottoman Macedonia enough to cause them to begin taking ethnically motivated violence into their own hands or against their own neighbors. Contemporary local sources reveal that residents of Macedonia typically continued to stop short of resorting to violence in resolving local political tensions. When it appeared that state borders had been fixed after the signing of the Treaty of Bucharest, many locals now took measures to preserve stability in their communities where they perceived the new state authorities or other non-local agents acting in ways that exacerbated potential tensions.

⁶³ Historians have yet to reach full consensus on the causes of this assassination. As James Frusetta, "Bulgaria's Macedonia," 157 notes, communist-era Macedonian and Bulgarian historians had both been inclined to find a clandestine link to the Bulgarian government behind it. If the government indeed had a hand in the assassination, the incident nevertheless illustrates the Bulgarian state's concern with the challenge to its authority posed by the continued existence of irregular armed groups in its territory.

The actions of Stephanos Grammenopoulos, the aforementioned pro-Greek villager from Zelenits, provide an example. After the cessation of hostilities from the Second Balkan War, Grammenopoulos wrote a letter to the Greek Governor-General of Macedonia to report that “during the entire period of the war the Bulgarians of our village did not engage in plunder or pillage.” Indeed, Grammenopoulos added, all residents displayed their utmost willingness to help the Greek forces. He implored the Governor-General in advance to order his authorities not to arrest anyone in his village. “If any arrests should occur they will have occurred unjustly,” he insisted.⁶⁴ Not long afterwards, Grammenopoulos traveled to Salonika and tried to meet with the Governor-General. Unable to secure a meeting, he wrote him a letter from his hotel to ask the release from prison of a group of men from his neighboring village, Aetozion. Grammenopoulos began by reminding the Governor-General of his family’s long service in the struggle for Hellenism.⁶⁵ On this basis of trust he presumed to establish with the Governor-General, he insisted that he could tell quite well who the “bad Bulgarians” in his area were. Of the sixteen residents of Aetozion arrested as “suspect Bulgarians” by Greek authorities three months before (including a priest named Papa Ilias), Grammenopoulos asserted that eight had been detained completely in error. They had been “Greeks all along”; indeed the father of one of them “was hacked to pieces long ago by a Bulgarian Committee [*Komitatou*],” while the others had also long suffered from abuses by Bulgarian armed bands.

⁶⁴ GLA, Archive of Stephanos Dragoumis, 118.1.1 (Letter from Stephanos Grammenopoulos dated Jul. 13, 1913.)

⁶⁵ Grammenopoulos’ assertion of his family’s record of Greek patriotism and persecution by pro-Bulgarian groups can be independently confirmed. See Oecumenical Patriarchate, *Official Documents Concerning the Deplorable Condition of Affairs in Macedonia* (Constantinople: printing press of the Patriarchate, 1906), 18.

Grammenopoulos pleaded for the eight “Greeks” to be released, but he then went a step further: “The others remaining had always been Bulgarians, but now the entire village [including those formerly adhering to the Bulgarian Exarchate] has come around and the Holy bishop of Kastoria celebrated the liturgy and blessed them and forgave them,” he noted. He named only the Exarchate priest, Papa Ilias, as “worthy of the gallows; he is the one who has committed all the crimes and was the key to Bulgarianism in Aetozion.”⁶⁶

Once the danger of Bulgarian rule appeared vanquished after the Second Balkan War, longstanding Hellenic patriot Grammenopoulos risked his own reputation to protect all the Bulgarians in his village as well as all but one of the Bulgarians imprisoned from a neighboring village. To explain this kind of post-war overture toward putative ethnic rivals, it is not necessary to invoke unrealistic notions of a lack of national identity or extreme local solidarity. Instead, as has been argued above, economic and cultural development were now the most important priorities for residents of the towns and villages of former Ottoman Macedonia. Local residents – including those who actively supported the new national government (Grammenopoulos was a Greek teacher) – therefore had a strong interest in maintaining the social stability of their communities. Widespread acts of violent retribution would generally serve to undermine such stability. By fingering only the Exarchate priest as “the key to Bulgarianism in Aetozion,” Grammenopoulos would eliminate the one person he saw as the most important agent of past instability - and potential cause of future instability – in his local area.

⁶⁶ GLA, Archive of Stephanos Dragoumis, 118.1.1 (Letter from Stephanos Grammenopoulos dated Aug. 21, 1913.)

Petitions submitted for permission to appoint civil officials in villages in the Kailaria district of Greek Macedonia also suggest efforts among local notables to reinforce social stability across ethno-religious lines within their localities. In these petitions, groups of signatories were in general ethnically mixed. When more than one position was to be filled, the proposed appointees were also typically of different ethno-religious backgrounds.⁶⁷ It was not unusual for groups of petitioners to draw explicit attention to their diversity, as in the request by “the undersigned Christian and Ottoman residents of the community of Devri” to appoint Dimitrios Lazarou, Kostantinos Efthimiou, and Anastas Ioannou (Christian names) and Demirali Iseïn and Souleman Osman (Muslim names) as local constables.⁶⁸ Such instances reinforce the impression that village notables had made a conscious effort to ensure representation across ethno-religious lines in making these decisions. Three Christian and Muslim rural constables of the village of Devri collaborated on a petition to have a fourth constable, Konstantinos Athanasiou, removed from his position because of abuses he allegedly committed against the local population which were causing some of them to leave the village. The petitioners noted that they themselves were from Devri, and emphasized that the residents of Devri had lived in that location “from old

⁶⁷ See DARM, Fond 994 Box 1, 6-8 (petition from the residents of Trepisti to Kailaria district assistant commissioner to appoint Kosmas Christou and Ahim Suleiman as rural constables, Feb. 26, 1914); 21 (petition from residents of Fragkotsi to Kailaria district assistant commissioner to appoint Anastasios Dimitriou Karatas as rural constable, Sep. 20, 1914); 26 (petition from residents of Almakoi to Kailaria district assistant commissioner, Oct. 1, 1914); 32 (protocol of assembly of the Greek and Ottoman residents of Palaiochorion electing Georgios D. Peitsinis, Markos V. Chaïtas, and Mehmet Zenin as rural constables, Nov. 14, 1914); 38-39 (petition by residents of Devri to Kailaria district assistant commissioner, Nov. 27, 1914); 40 (petition by residents of Emporion to Kailaria district assistant commissioner to appoint Paschalis Panagiotou as rural constable, Dec. 1, 1914).

⁶⁸ DARM, Fond 994 Box 1, 38-39.

times.”⁶⁹ The petitioners – Muslim and Christian – clearly felt collectively that their own and their co-villagers’ longstanding roots in that community, whose stability they saw to be under threat because of the actions of the abusive state employee, gave them particular legitimacy in their request to remove him. The regional authorities, for their part, approved the request. The approval again suggests that the violence perpetrated by low-level armed state employees was not the result of a deliberate state policy, but on the contrary a reflection of the tenuous control that regional and state institutions had over the use of armed force in their territory.

A telling exception to the general lack of violence among residents of former Ottoman Macedonia after the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 was its frequency between newly arrived refugees and residents of long standing in the region. Scholars have already noted the sharp distinction that residents of Greek Macedonia began to make, and even today continue, between “refugees” (*prosfiges*) and “locals” (*dopioi*) as waves of refugees settled in the region between 1912 and 1925.⁷⁰ As we saw in Chapter 3, over 100,000 mostly Greek Orthodox Christian refugees from the two Balkan Wars initially settled in the portion of Macedonia annexed by Greece before the end of 1913. Both Greek and Bulgarian archival sources contain numerous reports about violence between refugees and local inhabitants. In the large majority of these cases, refugees were attacking locals.⁷¹ Both the Bulgarian consul in

⁶⁹ DARM, Fond 994 Box 1, 12-14 (petition from Dimitris Nikolaou, Tzafer Ahmet and Rakio to Kailaria district assistant commissioner for removal of Konstantinos Athanasiou as constable in Demvri, Jun. 19, 1914; Kailaria district police chief to assistant commissioner, Jul. 5, 1914)

⁷⁰ The local/refugee distinction is explored in Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat*; Mackridge and Yannakakis (eds.), *Ourselves and Others*; and George Th. Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn Republic: Social Coalitions and Party Strategies in Greece, 1922-1936*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press), 1983.

⁷¹ A few examples are IAM, GDM, file 78.1, 3; IAM, GDM, file 78.2, 13 (High Command of the Macedonian Gendarmerie, report on the past week’s events, Apr. 29, 1914); IAM, GDM, file 87.2,

Salonika and a Greek administrative official, for example, lamented (unbeknownst to each other) a pattern of attacks by refugees that was causing Bulgarian or Bulgarian-speaking residents from the Kukush/Kilkis area to abandon their homes and emigrate in fear of their lives.⁷² The frequency of such aggressive behavior on the part of refugees of course reflected in part their often desperate situation, needing housing, land and other resources to survive. Nonetheless, accompanying this economic motive was a clear political antagonism toward inhabitants of Greek Macedonia whom refugees considered non-Greek, including Muslims and former members of Bulgarian Exarchate churches. Most, though not all, attacks by refugees on local inhabitants targeted members of these two major groups.⁷³

A reciprocal pattern could also be seen on the other side of the Greek-Bulgarian border. As Theodora Dragostinova notes, refugees from Greek Macedonia and Ottoman Thrace often settled in areas of Bulgaria with Greek-speaking populations. The refugees often assaulted the latter, seizing their houses and inducing many to migrate to Greece.⁷⁴ Social distinctions between refugees and locals were also apparent in Bulgaria for decades afterwards. Meanwhile, Bulgarians who had

125-127 (High Command of the Macedonian Gendarmerie, report on the past week's events, Nov. 29, 1914); TsDA, Fond 334k, opis 1, a.e. 380, 1-10 (report from the Bulgarian consul in Salonika to the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nov. 10, 1914); TsDA, Fond 334k opis 1, a.e. 380, 21-34 (report from the Bulgarian consul in Salonika to the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Apr. 25, 1915).

⁷² TsDA, Fond 334k, opis 1, a.e. 379 (reports to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, etc., regarding immigration to Bulgaria of Bulgarian residents of Leliovo, Selovo, Strezovo and Kodzha-Kadûr), 1 (memorandum from Bulgarian consul in Salonika, Nedkov, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Sep. 16, 1914); IAM, GDM, file 14.1, 34-37 (Administrative representative of Kato-Thodoraki to assistant commissioner of Kilkis, Dec. 27, 1914).

⁷³ The ethno-religious aspect of such refugee/local tensions should not be overdrawn at the expense of the socio-economic. As documented by Isa Blumi, *Reinstating the Ottomans: Alternative Balkan Modernities, 1800-1912*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 101, violence broke out in 1878 between mostly Muslim refugees desperate for resources and mostly Muslim local inhabitants of the Ottoman *vilayet* of Kosovo where the refugees initially settled after they were expelled from Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

⁷⁴ Dragostinova, *Between Two Motherlands*, 96, 103, 144, 148-152, 157-160.

long lived as neighbors with the same Greek-speaking communities were more likely than the newly arrived refugees to refrain from and even protect their neighbors against such violence. The exceptional phenomenon of frequent violence observed between refugees and locals in former Ottoman Macedonia in the period following the conclusion of the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 (with refugees usually the aggressors) only serves to highlight the lack of such politically charged violence among the diverse, longtime residents of the region. In the preceding years, local cleavages along ethno-religious lines did often emerge as external governments had openly competed for influence and eventual sovereignty over Ottoman Macedonia. Even then it was rare for such cleavages to end in outright violence between members of local communities. Now that the question of sovereignty appeared resolved for better or for worse, long-time residents focused on goals such as economic recovery and education, which required basic local stability and not a resort to violence. They even took measures to consolidate stability across potential fault lines. The appearance of outsiders (refugees, paramilitaries from places as far away as Crete, and armed state agents) indeed threatened that stability.

New Forms of Political Violence: International Agreements and Administrative Deportations

Authorities in the Balkan states that conquered Macedonia in 1912 and 1913 often did not trust this tendency within local communities to let bygones be bygones. During the Balkan Wars, the new authorities imprisoned or assaulted dignitaries of minority ethnic groups such as clergy and teachers and intimidated inhabitants lest

they fail to declare themselves members of the correct nation. Now, between the Balkan Wars and the First World War, the Balkan governments also contemplated new, distinctly bureaucratic ways of preventing the threat they perceived from newly incorporated minorities. The attacks during the Balkan Wars by armies against civilians had generated large waves of fearful refugees who fled spontaneously to countries they hoped would provide safety. Governments now saw the apparent benefits of those population movements, increasing the ethnic homogeneity of their respective nations, and looked for ways to confirm the facts on the ground by law. At the end of 1913 the Ottoman and Bulgarian governments signed a landmark convention on exchange of populations and properties. Rather than directing new emigration, however, this convention effectively codified the movement of Muslims to Ottoman territory and of Christians to Bulgarian territory that had already taken place. Following this precedent, the Ottoman and Greek governments in 1914 began talks that envisioned a voluntary exchange of Greeks and Muslims between the two states. These talks, however, took place even as Ottoman paramilitary forces terrorized Orthodox populations in Thrace and Anatolia, causing many to flee to Greece. As Yannis Mourellos has argued, it is likely that the real goal of the talks was not an orderly exchange of populations: rather, through them the Ottoman government sought a way to confirm retroactively new facts on the ground. The Greek government, meanwhile, was stalling for time in order to stop further persecution and to avoid the burden of housing a new wave of refugees.⁷⁵ The

⁷⁵ Yannis G. Mourellos, "The 1914 Persecutions and the First Attempt at an Exchange of Minorities between Greece and Turkey," *Balkan Studies* 26: 2 (1985): 389-431. On this and the Bulgarian-Ottoman agreement of 1913, see also Stephen P. Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities: Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1932): 20-23.

discussions broke down in any event at the end of 1914 without any agreement being concluded.

After having observed their armed forces massacring and putting to flight masses of terrorized non-combatants, Balkan state functionaries clearly began to contemplate a more radical possibility: the pre-planned, comprehensive and compulsory removal of an entire ethnic group or ethnic identity from a defined territory. Such ideas, without exception, occur in documents concerned about enemy designs, rather than in actual plans or orders of authorities, and so caution must be taken in the conclusions to be drawn from them. Nonetheless, those documents indicate at the very least that fears of deliberate and systematic “extermination” and “annihilation” of one’s ethnic own group were in circulation. Thus, on the eve of the Second Balkan War the Greek legation in Sofia lodged a disturbing complaint with the Bulgarian government, still formally its ally for the moment:

The Deputy Mayor of Kavalla declared to a prominent Greek notable that a Greek village was destroyed at Pravi because its inhabitants have helped the Greeks during the Greco-Bulgarian incident of Pravi and at the slightest movement of the Greeks of Kavalla the same fate was reserved for them. Upon this threat, a commission composed of four notables and of His Eminence the Metropolitan came to the Military Governor Doucuff and the latter declared that the threat of the deputy mayor on the extermination of the Greek element was serious, since the Greek element of Kavalla was planning some movement. As the metropolitan protested, saying that the Greek element was unjustly suspected, the military governor replied: “you know, and this is regrettable, that Kavalla is participating in its own extermination.”⁷⁶

The previous month another Greek official in the vicinity of Kavalla and Pravi charged that Bulgarian irregular units together with regular soldiers “have decided to annihilate” the “Greek element” in all the “Greek towns.”⁷⁷

⁷⁶ TsVA, Fond 1647 opis 2, a.e. 24, 213, 220 (Notice from Greek Legation in Sofia to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May, 1913).

⁷⁷ TsVA, Fond 1647 opis 2 a.e. 24, 124 (Statement of the Greek Military Governor in Rodolivo, Apr. 22, 1913).

The following year, the Bulgarian consul in Salonika imputed analogous designs of “extermination” to Greek authorities in the part of geographic Macedonia annexed by Greece after the Treaty of Bucharest. He reported that “[t]he Greek government, supported by the terrorist committees in Macedonia, are waging a systematic struggle for the decisive depersonalization of the Bulgarian population here” and were “leading this struggle for Bulgarian extermination... to bring about the exit of the last Bulgarians in this area.”⁷⁸ While the preceding communications were internal government and inter-governmental ones, at least one charge of designs for ethnic “extermination” was made publically. Shortly after the Second Balkan War, a group of Bulgarian professors at the University of Sofia published their own catalog of Greek and Serb atrocities to refute public Greek charges of Bulgarian atrocities. In it they charged that both the Greeks and the Serbs separately had a “plan for the extermination of the Bulgarian population” in their occupation zones.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, despite the inferences drawn by some state functionaries and political elites occasioned by the grim events of the Balkan Wars, there is no direct evidence of any overarching plan on the part of a Balkan government or state institution to remove an entire ethnic group from a territory in 1912 or 1913.

During and after the Balkan Wars governing authorities nonetheless began to act concretely on their suspicions and deported selected minority inhabitants, either across the new border or to a distant internal location away from the Macedonian

⁷⁸ TsDA, Fond 334k opis 1 a.e. 380, 1-10 (Bulgarian consul general in Salonika to Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Nov. 10, 1914).

⁷⁹ Professeurs de l’Université de Sophia, *Réponse à la brochure des professeurs des universités d’Athènes, “Atrocités bulgares en Macédoine”* (Response to the Brochure of the Professors of the Universities of Athens, “Bulgarian Atrocities in Macedonia”), (Sofia: Imprimerie de la cour royale), 1913: 11-12, 22, 72-74.

borderland. During the period between the two Balkan Wars, Bulgarian officials initially targeted prominent individuals whom they considered to be subverting authority within their occupation zone in Macedonia. A complaint by the Greek Bishop in Doiran alleging abuses committed by Bulgarian military authorities sparked a Bulgarian general's decision "to exile him from Doiran to the interior of the Kingdom – Vratsa or Dobrich." The Bulgarian general suspected the bishop of acting as a spy for the Greeks, and being "in secret contact with Greek military and civil authorities outside of the lands occupied by our soldiers." In fact, the contact was no secret, since the bishop had filed his complaint specifically with Greece's Prince Nicholas, who brought the allegations of abuse to the attention of Bulgarian officials.⁸⁰

Greece initially made more frequent use in Macedonia of deportations of ethnic minority individuals to protect "the national interest of the state."⁸¹ Deportation in Greece dates back to the state's establishment in the 1830s, though the practice was limited for several decades to punishing individuals suspected of brigandage and sometimes their families.⁸² However, a law promulgated in December 1913 broadened the scope of possible reasons for "administrative deportation" to include political criteria.⁸³ This occurred, of course, just after Greece had incorporated a sizable territory with an ethnically diverse population. Deportees from Greek Macedonia deemed "dangers to public security" were sometimes expelled

⁸⁰ TsVA, Fond 1647 opis 2 a.e. 24, 192-193 (Commanding major-general of the 3rd Infantry Division to commander of 2nd Army, Jun. 14, 1913; Prince Nicholas of Greece to General Hessaptchieff, May 6, 1913).

⁸¹ IAM, GDM, file 79, 1-3 (Case of Aggelos Pavlov, Mar., 1914).

⁸² Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause*, 113-114.

⁸³ Polymeris Voglis, *Becoming a Subject: Political Prisoners during the Greek Civil War* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002): 33-34. Voglis renders the word *ektopsis* as "banishment," but its more straightforward meaning is "deportation."

from the country, and other times sent to interior locations away from the Macedonian borderland, such as Crete and Larissa.⁸⁴

In some cases, Greek officials in Macedonia ordered deportations out of the country for violent criminals such as Spase Aggelou and Ilias Stephanou, two convicted murderers who would otherwise have been released from prison as part of an amnesty order.⁸⁵ But the stated grounds for deportation could also be remarkably flimsy. Aggelos Pavlov found himself deported essentially for being a Bulgarian who had once worked at a Bulgarian-owned hotel and was now “an unemployed vagabond who wanders the streets.” These circumstances apparently sufficed to convince officials that Pavlov was “indisputably working on behalf of the Bulgarians.”⁸⁶ Authorities decided to deport Ioannis Velits as a “Bulgarian dangerous to public security” because of an article he submitted to a Sofia newspaper that criticized abuses of ethnic Bulgarians in Greek Macedonia. Interestingly, the Greek authorities deliberating internally on the case did not even take pains to deny the accusations Velits made in his article.⁸⁷

The confounding case of Haralambi Georgi Tudjarov highlights how easily a single native of former Ottoman Macedonia could trigger heightened ethnic the suspicions of both Greek and Bulgarian authorities. Tudjarov, a native of Strumitsa, a town annexed by Bulgaria under the Treaty of Bucharest, had been living recently in

⁸⁴ IAM, GDM, file 79, 48 (summary regarding deportation of Asan Karampazakis, Apr. 20, 1914); IAM, GDM, file 79, 1-3.

⁸⁵ IAM, GDM, file 79, 31 (magistrate of Serres to Serres prefecture, Mar. 12, 1914).

⁸⁶ IAM, GDM, file 79, 1-3.

⁸⁷ IAM, GDM, file 79, 44 (Prefect of Thessaloniki to Governor-General of Macedonia, Apr. 21, 1914); 45 (Prefect of Thessaloniki to district attorney, Apr. 16, 1914).

Switzerland with his wife and daughter.⁸⁸ As his elderly father was living in poverty in Salonika and Tudjarov himself had recently spent time in Salonika and carried a Greek passport, it is likely that the family had been among the wave of Strumitsa residents whom the Greek army had goaded into abandoning their homes and coming to Greece in 1913 before Bulgarian authorities moved in (see Chapter 3.) In 1914, Tudjarov boarded a ship bound for Constantinople entrusted with four young girls, fellow-natives of Strumitsa, to accompany them back to their home town. Upon arriving in Bulgaria, Tudjarov declared, he had intended to find employment and then bring his wife and daughter from Switzerland. Yet on the voyage to Constantinople two of the girls' passports and a large sum of money were stolen during the ship's stopover in Greece. At Constantinople the Bulgarian consul issued new Bulgarian passports to Tudjarov and the four girls. Tudjarov later admitted that he had neglected to inform the consul that he still had his own Greek passport, resulting in his possessing two different passports. After delays, Tudjarov arrived in Bulgaria and sent the girls home to Strumitsa while he stayed in Sofia to find employment. As Tudjarov waited one day in a park with all of his baggage for an acquaintance who had agreed to help him find work, a policeman eyed him "with suspicion" and ordered him to what Tudjarov called a "secret police" [*taina politsiia*] station.⁸⁹ There, agents questioned him harshly and beat him repeatedly. Fixing on the fact that

⁸⁸ The information on the case comes from the following Bulgarian archival documents: TsDA, Fond 334k a.e. 360a, 1 (Bulgarian consul-general in Salonika to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sep. 14, 1914); 2-5 (petition from Haralambi Georgi Tudjarov to Bulgarian Consulate in Salonika, Sep. 19, 1914); 6 (Bulgarian consul-general in Salonika Nedkov to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sep. 29, 1914); 10-11 (petition from Haralambi Georgi Tudjarov to Bulgarian Consulate in Salonika, Nov. 1914); 12 (Bulgarian consul-general in Salonika Nedkov to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nov. 7, 1914); 9 (Legation counselor of the Political Department of the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion to Bulgarian General Consulate in Salonika, Nov. 19, 1914).

⁸⁹ TsDA, Fond 334k a.e. 360a, 2-5.

he carried both Greek and Bulgarian passports (“Where are your 300 passports?”), they accused him of being “an agent, probably for the Greeks” and “a spy, a thief, a pimp.” After more questioning, accusations of spying and beatings, the Bulgarian agents deported Tudjarov across the Serbian border after confiscating all of his money and most of his belongings. In Serbia he spent more days in prison, before managing to make his way to Salonika (in Greece). There, Tudjarov noted ironically in his petition to the Bulgarian consulate, “after a short questioning [the Greek authorities] released me like I was already a Hellene,” despite his not knowing the Greek language well. Yet after his initially positive reception in Greece, while Tudjarov waited in vain to be compensated for his losses, he encountered further troubles in Salonika. He and his father were driven out of their home and could not find employment; they had no money, and nothing to eat. In a second petition, Tudjarov complained that the Bulgarian consulate had ignored his first petition and again “accused me of being a Greek spy.” Yet now the Greek authorities suspected him of the opposite.

The Greeks don't want me because I am Bulgarian, I have supposedly come as a spy – the Bulgarians the same. And what will happen now, who will accept me? And to whom should I go? I won't be getting any more money. Whatever I had I sold for us to eat. Now look me up and down. I am surely a spy. Just come and see what kind of situation I am in.⁹⁰

Perhaps Tudjarov's sardonic emphasis on his abject situation in Greece eased the Bulgarian authorities' suspicions of his being a Greek spy. In the end, the Bulgarian authorities allowed Tudjarov to return to Strumitsa, but only for a period of two months, “in order for him to settle some of his affairs at home.”⁹¹ It seems that

⁹⁰ TsDA, Fond 334k a.e. 360a, 10-11.

⁹¹ TsDA, Fond 334k a.e. 360a, 9.

Tudjarov's lack of enough vigilance in displaying a consistent national affiliation rendered him a candidate for deportation by both Bulgarian and Greek authorities, who each suspected him as a spy of the other country. Tudjarov's experience epitomizes the gulf in mentalities between two groups: the inhabitants of former Ottoman Macedonia who sought to revive their livelihoods but had trouble adjusting to the new order of nation-building and state-building, and on the other hand Balkan state functionaries who were quick to see such individuals as subversive ethnic minorities to be targeted for surveillance and deportation.

In the short period of peace following the Balkan Wars, deportations of ethnically suspect residents of former Ottoman Macedonia still typically occurred on an individual, case-by-case basis – not on a mass scale. In Greece, which practiced deportation more frequently than did Bulgaria at this stage, individual recommendations for deportation traveled high up the bureaucratic chain of command for approval, sometimes by the Minister of Interior himself.⁹² Still, such initiatives – including the halting exploration of agreements to exchange populations between the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria and Greece respectively – indicate that the idea of using bureaucratically planned coercion to sculpt the contours of population groups had at least occurred to Balkan government officials before the outbreak of the First World War.

* * *

As this chapter has argued, such ideas and policies of molding the population through bureaucratic coercion should not be considered measured responses to

⁹² See IAM, GDM, file 79, 34 (telegram from Greek Minister of Interior Repoulis to General Administration of Macedonia Interior Department, Apr. 1, 1914).

justifiable fears of subversion by significant ethnically disloyal elements, but rather overanxious reactions. Rather than hatch plans to destabilize the new authorities or even attempt to resist pressures for national assimilation, the vast majority of Orthodox Christian inhabitants of former Ottoman Macedonia focused on their own “construction of life” in peacetime. Their priorities were to stay in or even return to the lands of their ancestors if physically possible, to rebuild and grow economically, to educate their children, and to negotiate a measure of local autonomy over their own affairs while also reaping what benefits could be gotten from the central government. Rather than come to blows with their neighbors over ethno-religious disputes which would undermine those priorities, residents made efforts to consolidate local stability – especially now that the issue of the decades-long “Macedonian struggle” appeared settled by military fiat. Challenges to that community stability were posed by what we might consider to be truly unique about “Balkan violence” in this period: the high incidence of abuse from low-level state employees, paramilitaries and refugees, all armed, who could take advantage of local residents with relative impunity due to the weak grasp of central state institutions. Yet, as argued in the next chapter, the imminent onset of the First World War would cut short residents’ “construction of life.” Balkan governments (along with other European governments) would make further innovations in dealing with unwanted or burdensome populations. The bureaucratically directed deportations and detentions introduced in the period after the Balkan Wars would occur on a mass scale, one more closely approaching the pre-planned, forced removal of entire groups that some Balkan political elites had only begun to imagine before 1914.

Chapter 5: Macedonia's Civilians and the "European War,"

1915-1918

The First World War thrust the population of geographic Macedonia into a new and different set of wartime difficulties barely a year after the Second Balkan War ended in 1913. The Vardar region of Macedonia, annexed by Serbia in 1913, initially became a Serbian "home front" as early as 1914 as tens of thousands of males were mobilized and sent north to help repel the Austro-Hungarian invasion. But Macedonia itself soon became a battle front again. Bulgaria, Germany, and Austria-Hungary invaded Serbian Macedonia in 1915 while British and French troops tried to come to Serbia's defense by landing in Greek (Aegean) Macedonia and trying to push north from there. Bulgarian troops also advanced well into Greek Macedonia in 1916 against the Entente forces there. By July 1917, Greece had officially joined the Entente.

In military or diplomatic terms, the First World War can be considered a sequel to the two Balkan Wars in the region of Macedonia. Bulgaria went to war against Serbia and Greece again to regain the territories it had lost to them in the Second Balkan War. Yet the First World War introduced the civilian population in Macedonia to strikingly different conditions. The Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 were short wars featuring rapidly moving fronts. The First World War in Macedonia, as on the Western Front, settled into immobile front lines and trench warfare for long periods of time. As was the case elsewhere in Europe, these conditions of stalemate

produced a war of attrition and economic mobilization behind the lines and indeed between both rear areas of the same fixed front line. Military authorities and governments came to treat everything in Macedonia –agricultural land and crops, minerals, and the local population itself – as strategic resources to be assessed and exploited for their ability to contribute to the larger war effort. The resulting requisitions and economic restrictions led to severe material deprivation. These burdens were generally far more protracted and onerous for the civilian population than in the preceding wars.

The prolonged conditions of stalemate also changed the sort of war crimes and abuses suffered by civilians in Macedonia. As seen in Chapters 2 and 3, armies and paramilitary groups during the Balkan Wars had often used tactics of terror against civilians perceived to be unfriendly to their causes. During World War I, armed forces operating in Macedonia adopted a new, more systematic approach to dealing with ostensibly untrustworthy or burdensome populations, one that came to mark broader European wartime violence in the twentieth century. The limited deportations of local residents discussed in the previous chapter now took place on a mass scale. Greece and its ally, France, continued to carry out internments and deportations on a case-by-case basis, but the criteria for suspicion became so broad that thousands were eventually swept up in them. Bulgaria and its allies organized mass deportations for entire categories of civilians whose national loyalties were deemed suspect, as well as large-scale evacuations of civilians from frontline areas. A large number of deportees were sent to labor camps where they faced harsh living conditions and suffered high mortality rates.

Such policies also caused economic disruption and even mass starvation in Macedonia, disproportionately affecting the female population. State authorities were less likely to consider women as political actors and hence political threats. Thus they often avoided targeting women for deportation. When males in a family were deported or fled their homes, wives usually stayed put. They assumed the role of maintaining the family's stake in the household in expectation that the husband would come back once circumstances allowed. Yet conditions for women and others who stayed home were as arduous as those for deportees. Women struggled to cope with conditions of wartime scarcity and requisitions, exacerbated by the absence of the male "pair of hands" and his experience in cultivation and selling produce. Such wartime conditions in many cases made survival at home untenable. Some women as a last resort eventually tried to follow their husbands to exile.

Contemporary Bulgarian sources evocatively referred to the First World War as "the General European War" or simply "the European War," which implied a distinction from the "Balkan War" (by which they meant the First Balkan War).¹ And indeed, the new presence of Western and Central European (primarily German, French, and British) military personnel seemed pervasive to locals and had far-reaching effects on them. The armies of the Great Powers requisitioned supplies from civilian populations, committed atrocities against them, and exercised various forms of surveillance and control over them. German personnel in Vardar Macedonia engaged locals in ambitious economic development projects of agricultural

¹ This terminology is most pervasive in Bulgarian sources of the period, but also appears at times in contemporary Greek sources. See for example Gennadius Library Archive (GLA), American School of Classical Studies, Athens, Greece, Archive of Philippos Dragoumis, 140.1 (Letter from Philippos Dragoumis to an unnamed friend, Jan. 5, 1916).

modernization, while at least some French personnel considered their presence in Macedonia as part of their “civilizing” role in the world. French and German military personnel were, however, intimately involved in the policies of civilian internment on each side, a fact that was reflected in accounts and complaints of affected civilians.

Residents throughout Macedonia, whose “construction of life” was cut short by the events of the First World War, generally regarded its onset not with the patriotic euphoria famously observed in much of the rest of Europe. They displayed instead reluctance and trepidation informed by the hardships occasioned by the recent Balkan Wars. War weariness only increased among Macedonia’s inhabitants as the war progressed and as fresh hardships accumulated. But locals continued to refrain from violence against each other. Nor did they violently resist occupying forces even from a different ethnic group. Indeed, quite a few engaged with the presumed ethnic enemy occupier in a manner that would later come to be characterized pejoratively as “collaboration.” Such behavior is better seen at this time as a continuation of the inhabitants’ previous inclinations to secure their most important priorities: economic well-being and local stability, rather than struggling for national ideals.

While the mobilization for a wider war and support from one Great Power alliance against the other seem to suggest a strengthening in the Balkan states’ monopoly over the means of violence, the picture is actually mixed. As was the case before, state-building ambitions were not always realized. Most factions of the paramilitary Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO) were integrated more deeply into Bulgaria’s military structure. But this integration also gave the organization a greater ability to contest the central state’s control over the

use of force. Meanwhile, a portion of the Greek soldiers stationed in central and western Macedonia, mostly from southern Greece and eager to join the Entente, staged a mutiny in 1916 against their (still neutral) central government in Athens. By the end of the war, the Bulgarian army faced widespread mutinies and the military command lost control over a large portion of its soldiers, many of them from Macedonia.

War Weariness from the Outset

The outbreak of war in the summer of 1914 had an immediate impact on inhabitants of Vardar Macedonia – the area annexed by Serbia under the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest. The Serbian army had already begun to draft males from its newly won Macedonian territory in April of 1914, before the crisis precipitated by the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. During the initial defense of Serbia in 1914 and 1915, the number of men mobilized from Serbian Macedonia reached roughly 53,000. About 45,000 of these were Orthodox Christian but generally not Serb, the rest mostly Muslim. Although these troops typically possessed the least military experience among the otherwise fairly battle-hardened Serbian army, they were often placed in the first line of defense in northwestern Serbia where they bore the brunt of Austro-Hungarian attacks. They incurred high casualties, while many others wound up as prisoners in Austria-Hungary.²

² Petar Stojanov, *Makedonija vo vremeto na Balkanskite i Prvata svetska vojna (1912-1918)* (Skopje: Institut za nacionalna istorija, 1969), 237-238; Jasmina Najdovska, ed., *Otpretani svedoštva: Vojnički pisma od golemata vojna: 1914-1918* (Skopje: Fondacija Institut Otvoreno Opštество - Makedonija, 2008), 25-28. These two works give almost the same number of soldiers from Vardar Macedonia mobilized into the Serbian army in 1914 and 1915, though citing apparently different sources.

Desertions plagued several European armies later in the war. Yet according to recent scholarship in the Republic of Macedonia, Serbian army soldiers from Vardar Macedonia deserted at a remarkably high rate – almost 28,000 of the 53,000 conscripts – over the first year of the war. Most of these deserters escaped across borders to Greece or Bulgaria, both of which had not yet entered the war.³ Others gave themselves up easily to Austro-Hungarian forces.⁴ When Bulgaria entered the war on the side of the Central Powers in 1915, prisoners in Austria-Hungary who originated from Vardar Macedonia were assumed to be pro-Bulgarian and transferred to be mobilized into the Bulgarian army. But the Bulgarian army itself then proceeded to suffer from a high number of deserters from geographic Macedonia. Serbian military authorities attributed the high rate of desertion among the conscripts from their Macedonian territory primarily to treacherous pro-Bulgarian loyalties among this population, to which they referred at times by the epithet *bugarashi*.⁵ This impression among Serbian authorities was surely strengthened by a very public prewar incident in the Serbian city of Kragujevac on April 14, 1914, when up to 1,000 conscripts from Macedonia publically refused to take an oath of loyalty to Serbia's King Peter on the grounds that they were Bulgarian.⁶ Believing that even more would desert to the enemy once Bulgaria joined the war against Serbia, the

³ Ramiz Šabanović, "Učestvoto na Makedoncite vo Prvata svetska vojna vo sostavot na srpskata vojska" (unpublished Masters thesis, Philosophy faculty and Institute for History, 1993), 233, 308, cited in Najdovska, ed., *Otpretani svedoštva*, 28. An earlier study by Bulgarian historian Dimităr G. Gotsev, *Natsionalno-osvoboditelna borba v Makedonija 1912-1915* (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Bŭlgarskata Akademiia na Naukite, 1981), 151-154, also discusses these incidents of desertion, focusing mostly on the desertions to Bulgaria and considering it primarily a phenomenon of Bulgarian patriotism. He puts the number of deserters, "according to unspecified data," at roughly 30,000.

⁴ Ibid. See also Stojanov, *Makedonija vo vremeto*, 238.

⁵ Šabanović, "Učestvoto", 308, 393, cited in Najdovska, ed., *Otpretani svedoštva*, 28, 31.

⁶ Dimităr G. Gotsev, *Natsionalno-osvoboditelna borba v Makedonija 1912-1915* (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Bŭlgarskata Akademiia na Naukite, 1981), 138-140.

Serbian command began in 1915 to assign recruits from their Macedonian territories to the northern front against Germany and Austria-Hungary, rather than assigning them to fight closer to their homes against the Bulgarian army that was invading from the east.⁷

But the lack of enthusiasm early in the First World War among conscripts from Vardar Macedonia may be attributed more directly to a reluctance to perform military service in general, rather than to loyalty to Bulgaria or Greece. This continues the pattern, seen in Chapter 3, of desertions before and during the Second Balkan War of soldiers from geographic Macedonia mobilized into Bulgarian and Greek army units. These official impositions were still a novel and unwelcome phenomenon especially to Christian residents, who had been exempt in practice from military duties when under Ottoman rule. Put simply, military conscription imposed a heavy economic burden and, in war time, it was dangerous. These were in fact the concerns voiced from Vardar Macedonia by both conscripts and their family members.

Lazar Mitrovich, a conscript from Vardar Macedonia stationed with the Serbian army but writing in Bulgarian, complained to his relative in September 1914 that he and his comrades were living in an “overrated pigsty” where “in one house there are 2,000 people one on top of the other.” Compounding the rough conditions were shortages in clothing and food. Finally, rain and fog were causing all the men to become ill. Mitrovich told his relative not to bother to write anytime soon, because “we already hear clearly how those cannons rumble – and it is said that after 5 days they will attack us from the north!!” As an indication of the impact that his

⁷ Šabanović, “Učestvoto”, 308, 393, cited in Najdovska, ed., *Otpretani svedoštva*, 28, 31.

conscription was having back home, Mitrovich wrote, “you asked about grandpa, his eyes had been well, but from the constant crying over me [before leaving for the front] ... his eyes got terribly much worse.”⁸

Alekso Martulkov – originally a teacher in Bulgarian church schools – proved willing to be retrained as a Serbian teacher after his hometown of Veles was annexed by Serbia in 1913.⁹ In 1914 a couple of wounded soldiers from his town who did not want to face returning to the front approached him for help to escape across the Bulgarian border. He organized an underground network that helped 2,500 deserters from Vardar Macedonia escape to Bulgaria by the end of 1914.¹⁰ As Martulkov assessed the attitude of his compatriots from Serbian Macedonia toward combat service, “[m]aybe the war was popular and legitimate for the Serbian people, but for our people it was a burden. For foreign interests we were becoming meat for the Austrian guns.”¹¹ Indeed, residents of Vardar Macedonia seemed reluctant to take up arms for any national cause, whether pro- or anti-Serbian. Martulkov and some fellow former members of VMRO at this point considered trying to organize an armed struggle of the deserters against the Serbian authorities, but thought better of it. The underground escape channel was “supported by our entire people” precisely because they were “vitaly interested in saving their loved ones.” By extension, Martulkov judged that “support of the people was doubtful in an armed struggle, due to the great risks to them.”¹²

⁸ TsDA, Fond 771k opis 1 a.e. 128, 1-5 (letter from Lazar Mitrovich to Dimităr Yanev, Sep. 1914.

⁹ Alekso Martulkov, *Moeto učestvo vo revolucionernite borbi na Makedonija* (Skopje: Institut za Nacionalna Istorija, 1954), 283-284.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 291-298.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 291.

¹² *Ibid.*, 293-294.

A collection of over two hundred letters and postcards written back and forth between conscripts in both the Serbian and Bulgarian armies and members of their families from the region of Kratovo in the northeastern part of Serbian Macedonia provides a revealing picture of the attitudes of conscripts and their family members towards the wartime military service. Copies of the handwritten originals appear along with typed transcriptions in a 2008 volume published by the Foundation Open Society Institute Macedonia. As the volume's editors rightly note, many of the letters and postcards were written using a mixture of Bulgarian and Serbian Cyrillic letters in a distinctive local dialect that more closely resembles the later standardized Macedonian language than either Serbian or Bulgarian.¹³ Letters and postcards overwhelmingly confirm the sense that residents of Serbian Macedonia had little enthusiasm for their participation in the war on behalf of either Serbia or Bulgaria. Not a single patriotic statement for their respective armies' national cause or war effort can be found in the correspondence, although military censors would presumably have had no reason to censor such statements. Even one woman's letter to her husband serving with the Serbian army that refers to the German or Austrian troops who had taken his relative prisoner as "Schwabs" was no more than the established Serbian word for Vojvodina Germans.¹⁴

Instead, the letters and postcards dwelled on the often difficult material consequences of the conscription. Women repeatedly implored their husbands in the army to request leave to come home in order to help with the harvest or other chores

¹³ Najdovska, ed., *Otpretani svedoštva*, 17.

¹⁴ Najdovska, ed., *Otpretani svedoštva*, 76, D.P. 260, letter from Mladena Đičović to Đičo Traichević, dated Jun. 30, 1915.

with which they were struggling alone.¹⁵ “We have no kind of life,” wrote Tasika Miialković: “until now work has been torture and from now on I cannot look after it, alone I cannot work.”¹⁶ Yet many women like Miialković had little choice but to attempt to take on the work previously done by their male relatives, in addition to the duties they already had. For some, this entailed a difficult learning process. Magdalena Miialković informed her husband in the army that she was in the process of reaping the harvest with the help of a Mrs. Badeva, but she needed advice. “There still remain barley and oats to harvest, so tell us how to do it, should we hire someone? But the daily rate is expensive, 15 pennies, and we don’t have the money... you tell us to beg at the municipality here, we went and asked for the mayor and they did not receive us.”¹⁷ Ianinka Ignatiević wanted directions from her husband in the army about what to do now that their crop had been harvested. “We want to sell it, but we wonder what to do, there is no one to sell it – and about the ox, should we sell the black ox... what should we do, should we sell it, write me.” Ignatiević also closed her letter, as did so many other wives, by urging her husband to ask his commander for leave to visit home.¹⁸ For their part, men at the front almost invariably inquired intently in their letters back home as to details about the health of their crops and livestock, in addition to that of their loved ones.¹⁹

¹⁵ See for example Najdovska, ed., *Otpretani svedoštva*, 161, D.P. 164, letter from Tasika Miialković to Miialko (Krstev), Jul. 19, 1915; 60, D.P. 53, letter from Ianinka Ignatiević to Ignat S. Nikolić, dated Jul. 26, 1915; 112, D.P. 259, letter from Magdalena Miialković to Miialko Mitević, dated Aug., 1915; 61, D.P. 229, letter from Ianinka Ignatiević to Ignat S. Nikolić, dated Aug. 16, 1915.

¹⁶ Najdovska, ed., *Otpretani svedoštva*, 161, D.P. 164.

¹⁷ Najdovska, ed., *Otpretani svedoštva*, 112, D.P. 259.

¹⁸ Najdovska, ed., *Otpretani svedoštva*, 61, D.P. 229.

¹⁹ For example, Najdovska, ed., *Otpretani svedoštva*, 63, D.P. 205, letter from Ignat Lazarević to his uncle Mito, Apr. 20, 1915; 146-147, D.K. 110, postcard from Ignat D. Spasev (taken prisoner in Austria-Hunary) to Vasil Bidikov, Jun. 25, 1916; 52-53, D.K. 113, postcard from Vikenti Hari Miladinov to Vasil Bidikov, Aug. 8, 1917.

In 1914 and early 1915, the governments of both the Entente and the Central Powers each attempted to woo still-neutral Greece and Bulgaria to join their respective alliances in the war, or at the very least to maintain a policy of benevolent neutrality. Both Bulgaria and Greece were then still recovering from military and material exhaustion from the preceding Balkan Wars. Yet the new war also presented each with tempting possibilities for expansion into coveted territories if they could enter on the side of the eventual victor. Bulgaria might finally achieve a longstanding goal that had eluded her in 1912 and 1913: the unification of all of geographic Macedonia with Bulgaria, including the territories just annexed by Serbia and Greece. Greece eyed irredenta in Northern Epirus (southern Albania) and Asia Minor. The combination of these territorial ambitions with the obvious risks of entering another war unprepared induced both Greek and Bulgarian political leaders to sit on the sidelines in 1914, rather than plunge into the war immediately. Leaders weighed their options and (especially Bulgaria) played the Entente and the Central Powers against each other as each alliance offered territorial rewards in exchange for cooperation. Also contributing to the hesitation of Greece and Bulgaria were serious internal divisions within each country, as different factions leaned towards cooperation with the Entente or with the Central Powers.²⁰

Although war thus came later to the Bulgarian and Greek parts of geographic Macedonia than to Serbia, residents of these areas also regarded the prospect of another war with unease. John Reed, the noted American journalist later drawn into

²⁰ For details on Bulgarian and Greek national politics as they related to the onset of the First World War, see Richard C. Hall, *Bulgaria's Road to the First World War* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1996) and Alexandre S. Mitrakos, *France in Greece during World War I: A Study in the Politics of Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

the Bolshevik Revolution, interviewed people in Salonika (in Greek Macedonia) early in 1915 before war came to that area. The residents of Salonika already followed Greek national politics closely enough to have opinions on the deep split developing between the followers of Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos, who favored entering the war on the side of the Entente, and King Constantine, who wanted to preserve Greek neutrality. Constantine Chakiris, a Salonika café owner's son who had come back from America in 1912 to fight in the Balkan Wars, told Reed he did not want to extend his time in the army. He and his compatriots were already through with war:

“Do you want Greece to go to war?” we [Reed and his American companion] asked. “No.” He shook his head. “Macedonia don't [*sic*] want war; we want peace in Greece.”

“What do you think of Venezelos?”

He laughed: “Venezelos wants war. If I was for Venezelos, I would be killed now. We love Venezelos; he made us free. But we don't want war. The King? Oh, we don't mind him, he is nothing.... In America I am just like brothers with all my friends; here there is no life for a man – he can win no money.” He paused for a moment. “We are Macedonians,” he finished; “we are children of Alexander the Great.”²¹

While Chakiris' banter flitted from subject to subject, it expressed the typical priorities and outlook of Christian residents of geographic Macedonia after the Balkan Wars. His praise of Venizelos for “making us free” suggests he approved of the initial goal of overthrowing Ottoman rule because it had become repressive by 1912. Chakiris also clearly presented his views as representing those of Macedonians in particular. While it is far from clear that he meant this in an ethnic sense (Reed in particular understood him to be ethnically Greek), he certainly claimed that Macedonians (in contrast to those Greeks who supported Venizelos' policies) now wanted peace and not war. Finally, after the Balkan Wars ended, locals were

²¹ John Reed, *The War in Eastern Europe, described by John Reed, picture by Boardman Robinson* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1916), 12-14.

preoccupied with economic matters; because Chakiris found he could “win no money” in Greece, he was planning to go back to America.

Reed and his companion found the same sentiments among seven carpenters they interviewed in Salonika, six of whom were refugees from the Balkan Wars:

“Do you want Greece to go to war?” we asked.

“No!” cried some; others moodily shook their heads.

“It is like this,” the English-speaking Greek said slowly: “This war has driven us from our homes and our work. Now there is no work for a carpenter. War is a tearing down and not a building up. A carpenter is for building up –” He translated to the silent audience, and they growled applause.

“But how about Constantinople?”

“Constantinople for Greece! Greek Constantinople!” shouted two of the carpenters. But the others broke into violent argument.²²

The English-speaking Greek carpenter’s contrast between his profession, which was for “building up” and war, which was a “tearing down,” closely resembled Nikola Zografov’s advocacy a decade later, noted in Chapter 4, of the “construction of life” instead of war and violence. Although a minority of the carpenters was aroused enough to trumpet the Greekness of Constantinople, none apparently would have wanted to risk another war to achieve that ideal of expansionist Greek nationalism.

Despite John Reed’s clear anti-war inclinations, he did not avoid giving people with pro-war sentiments in Salonika their say. When he queried a pair of soldiers about the prospect of war, they answered

“Sure we want Greece to go to war! We conquer Constantinople. Our King – he is named Constantine, and once Constantinople was Greek! You remember? We will go back to Constantinople with Constantine. Fight! Sure we like to fight – fight Serbia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Italy – all!”

“Where are you from?”

“We are from Sparta!”²³

²² Reed, *The War in Eastern Europe*, 21.

²³ Reed, *The War in Eastern Europe*, 14.

Tellingly, these two soldiers were neither refugees nor natives of Greek Macedonia, but hailed from Sparta, in the southern part of pre-1912 Greece. They had presumably been socialized into the prevailing expansionist ideology of the Greek nation-state since childhood. While they might themselves have seen combat in the Balkan Wars, their homes in Sparta were otherwise unaffected by war. These circumstances may account for the contrast in mentalities between them and the other respondents, whose life under a nation-state was new and whose homes and livelihoods had suffered directly from the recent Balkan Wars.

Bulgaria finally cast its lot with the Central Powers in September 1915. It assisted Germany and Austria-Hungary in the latter's third (and successful) attempt to overrun Serbia. Bulgaria was promised territorial rewards in Macedonia, part of Thrace belonging to the Ottoman Empire, and the Romanian-ruled region of Dobrudja if Romania entered the war on the side of the Entente.²⁴ The annals of the secondary school [*realno uchilishte*] in Razlog (in Bulgarian Macedonia) record a scene on September 23, 1915 that appears to recall the popular outbursts of patriotism observed at the start of the war in Germany, Austria-Hungary, France and Britain. "A general military mobilization is declared and the afternoon activities are cut short, as the students have demonstrated around the town, singing patriotic songs," it reads.²⁵ Yet other entries in the annals suggest that such demonstrations (in any case infrequent) and the attendant interruptions of class instruction, far from being spontaneous, were largely organized by the authorities. Roughly two months later, on news of the Bulgaro-German conquest of Bitolia (a town in geographic Macedonia

²⁴ Hall, *Bulgaria's Road*, 305-306.

²⁵ DAB, Fond 134k [Brothers Petăr and Ivan Kanazirev Secondary School, Razlog, 1912-1944] opis 1 a.e. 1 (annals book, 1913-1930), 12.

belonging to Serbia since 1913), the chronicle reported that “students were brought to a Te Deum to mark the occasion of the liberation of Bitolia and the unification of the Bulgarian people.”²⁶ When the Central Powers captured Bucharest towards the end of 1916, the regional school inspector decreed that afternoon classes again be cancelled so that “appropriate speeches” could be delivered to the students by school principles and teachers on the Bulgarian heritage in Dobrudja, the region Bulgaria expected to annex from Romania.²⁷

Despite authorities’ prodding to demonstrate and listen to patriotic speeches, civilians in Bulgarian (Pirin) Macedonia did not typically regard Bulgaria’s entry into another war as an event to celebrate. For Krum Hristov and his neighbors in the town of Gorna Djumaia, a new war meant a devastating interruption of their attempts to “create a healthy foundation for their new life” that came just as the “wounds... began to heal” from the Balkan Wars.

Unfortunately, this period [of healing] did not last for long. For most of those already settled in the town and for refugees recovering from the blow [of war], it continued for one and a half to two years. Bulgaria’s intervention in the First World War came at a moment when they still had not gotten back up on their feet [*oshte ne biala stûpili zdravo na krakata si*]. The men were mobilized, so only the aged, women, and children remained at home. Without [the men] the town and the unproductive surrounding region for obvious reasons were left poor economically, and we were brought to a terrible scarcity. There was not enough of anything. We didn’t have bread, we didn’t have salt, we resorted to using wood kindling to provide light. On top of everything malaria ran rife. In the little town as far as I remember there was only one doctor and in the first years only one pharmacy ... there was no quinine, and the mothers were giving the children a potion of wormwood.²⁸

Hristov’s account of the period makes no mention of enthusiasm among the residents for the war, even at Bulgaria’s initial victories. The men are not said to have volunteered or even to have answered the call of duty – they simply “were

²⁶ DAB, Fond 134k opis 1 a.e. 1, 13.

²⁷ DAB, Fond 134k opis 1 a.e. 1, 17.

²⁸ DAB, Fond 382 opis 5, a.e. 29, 10.

mobilized,” a fact that Hristov connects only with negative consequences. Hristov’s family in particular was among the refugees who had fled from Greek Macedonia during the Second Balkan War. Yet he does not allude to any kind of hope on their part for the prospect of the reunification of all of geographic Macedonia under Bulgarian rule. Like women in Serbian Macedonia whose men were mobilized into combat service in 1914, women in Bulgarian Macedonia also struggled to take on added burdens under the most adverse conditions:

Under these circumstances lasting memories were deposited of indescribable poverty, of hungry days, of cold winters – when we, the women and children, denuded the woods on the hillocks surrounding the town in order to keep warm. And if there was anything that still sustained life and helped to make a living, this was the admirable courage of the wives, mothers, and sisters and their resourcefulness in the struggle with hunger, disease, and poverty and the continual readiness of people to help each other, which brought together people who had not known each other until then in the general efforts to withstand the misery.²⁹

As the Bulgarian, German and Austro-Hungarian armies overran Serbia in the autumn of 1915, France and Britain diverted troops from their failing expedition at Gallipoli to Greek Macedonia in order to move northward and come to the aid of the beleaguered Serbian army. These troops arrived too late to make a difference in the Serbian campaign. They retreated back into Greece, where they established encampments in and around Salonika and soon thereafter in western Greek Macedonia around the town of Florina.³⁰ All of this occurred over the formal public protest of the Greek government, whose King Constantine hoped to preserve Greece’s neutrality in the war. The political split in Greece between the supporters of King Constantine and those of Prime Minister Venizelos, who favored joining the Entente,

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Richard Hall, *Balkan Breakthrough: The Battle of Dobro Pole 1918* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 48-50; Mitrakos, *France in Greece*, 40; Andrej Mitrović, *Serbia’s Great War 1914-1918* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2007), 164.

now intensified. As the king continued to insist on neutrality, Venizelos resigned in protest.³¹

Wanting to tread carefully in order to avoid provoking Greece into joining the Entente, Germany initially restrained its army and that of its Bulgarian ally from crossing the Greek border in pursuit of the Entente troops who had retreated behind it. However, Bulgaria's leaders had not given up on their ambitions for Greece's portion of Macedonia. They also worried about the threat to Bulgaria's security of a growing Anglo-French military presence directly to their south.³² Over the summer of 1916, Bulgaria's government persuaded its German ally to join it in putting military pressure on the Entente forces across the Greek border.³³ On August 17 they attacked Greek western Macedonia around Florina – effectively controlled by the French and only nominally under Greek sovereignty at this point. They were soon repulsed and lost ground to the French and reorganized Serbian forces there. The Central Powers meanwhile obtained tacit permission from Greece's King Constantine to occupy the eastern part of Greek Macedonia, until then still under effective Greek government control, while they assured Greece of its continued formal sovereignty over the area.³⁴ The vast majority of Greek troops then stationed in eastern Macedonia duly surrendered without resistance to the Bulgarian and German forces who entered. Constantine considered the permission he gave the logical extension of his neutrality policy – after all, he had effectively allowed the Entente to occupy central and

³¹ Thanos Veremis and Helen Gardikas-Katsiadakis, "Protagonist in Politics, 1912-1920," in *Eleftherios Venizelos: The Trials of Statesmanship*, ed. Paschalis M. Kitromilides (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 121.

³² Hall, *Balkan Breakthrough*, 50-52.

³³ Hall, *Balkan Breakthrough*, 59-71.

³⁴ Hall, *Balkan Breakthrough*, 53-54, 59, 65, 69; Mitrakos, *France in Greece*, 80-81.

western Greek Macedonia a year earlier.³⁵ Yet to some, Constantine's policy amounted to a capitulation to Bulgaria, Greece's rival. The king's concession prompted Venizelos, who had resigned as prime minister twice since the beginning of the war in protest at the king's refusal, to act. He set up a breakaway government based in central and western Greek Macedonia under the sponsorship of the Entente forces stationed there.³⁶

Both of these incursions by the Central Powers into western and eastern Greek Macedonia coincided with a rash of further attempts by men hailing from geographic Macedonia to escape conscription into the Bulgarian army or to desert, continuing the pattern observed earlier for the Serbian army. One German foreign ministry official felt that the demoralization within the Bulgarian infantry accounted for the Central Powers' setback against French forces in western Greek Macedonia in November 1916. He singled out "almost an entire Bulgaro-Macedonian brigade" as the worst offender, as it "just defected to the enemy in the attack."³⁷ In January 1917, the Bulgarian commander in chief wondered what to do about the growing problem of deserters who "pretend that they are Greek citizens." Should they be prosecuted? The most recent case, 29 deserters from around the town of Nevrokop in Bulgarian Macedonia, prompted him to raise the question. By claiming that they were Greek

³⁵ Mitrakos, *France in Greece*, 61-62.

³⁶ Veremis and Gardikas-Katsiadakis, "Protagonist in Politics," in Kitromilides, ed., *Eleftherios Venizelos*, 119-125.

³⁷ Document No. 116, telegram from Captain Baron von Grünau, German Foreign Ministry representative at Supreme Headquarters in Pless to German Foreign Ministry, Berlin, Nov. 24, 1916, in Tsvetana Georgieva Todorova, ed. and trans., *Bŭlgariia v Pŭrvata svetovna vojna: Germanski diplomaticheski dokumenti 1913-1918g.: Sbornik dokumenti T. 2. 1916-1918g.* (Sofia: Glavno upravlenie na arhivite pri Ministerski sŭvet, 2005), 190. A contemporary French army source, Jacques Ancel, *Les Travaux et les Jours de l'Armée d'Orient 1915-1918* (Paris: Éditions Bossard, 1921), 106, also remarks upon the high number of desertions among Macedonians serving in the Bulgarian army during the same engagement.

citizens, the deserters hoped they could be exempt from Bulgarian army conscription. Their hopes, for the time being, were well-founded. The Greek government had already lodged protests on behalf of some of them.³⁸ Wanting Greece to stay neutral rather than join the war against them, the Bulgarian government decided for the moment to halt the punishment of anyone refusing conscription on these grounds.³⁹ An Ottoman officer was sent the following April to the part of Greek eastern Macedonia occupied by his Bulgarian allies to recruit local Muslims into the Ottoman army. To his dismay, he found that “many” of the Muslims also “refused to serve on the grounds that they are Greek citizens,” a fact that the local Bulgarian commander relayed back to Bulgarian headquarters.⁴⁰ Bulgaria’s military leadership again felt powerless to force the issue lest they provoke Greece. Its headquarters in Kiustendil ordered that “only willing Turks are to be sent to service in the Turkish army.”⁴¹ As direct Greek involvement in the war looked increasingly likely, draft evasion from Greek Macedonia also became a problem for the Greek army. The Greek prefect of Kozani in western Greek Macedonia reported in February 1916 in a coded letter to the Foreign Ministry in Athens that 930 new conscripts from his area had paid men (likely workers) in the Athenian port of Piraeus to help them escape by ship to America.⁴²

³⁸ TsVA Fond 1545 opis 2 a.e. 1, 94-94g (Bulgarian Army Commander in Chief General Zhekov to the Commander of the 2nd Army, Jan. 29, 1917).

³⁹ TsVA Fond 1545 opis 2 a.e. 1, 93 (Order by Chief of Staff of Bulgarian 2nd Army, Jan. 30, 1917).

⁴⁰ TsVA Fond 1545 opis 2 a.e. 1, 70 (Bulgarian Chief of Drama Regional Military Inspectorate General-Major Tanev to Army Headquarters in Kiustendil, Apr. 10, 1917).

⁴¹ TsVA Fond 1545 opis 2 a.e. 1, 69 (Bulgarian Headquarters Field Office Chief Colonel Chervenianov to Chief of Drama Regional Military Inspectorate General-Major Tanev, Apr. 12, 1917).

⁴² Državen Arhiv na Republika Makedonija [State Archive of the Republic of Macedonia] (DARM), Skopje, Macedonia, Fond 994 [Archival Materials on the Macedonians of Aegean Macedonia Between the Two World Wars] kutija 1, 175 (coded letter from prefect of Kozani to Foreign Ministry, Feb. 2, 1916).

A Different Kind of War

As already noted, the First World War in Macedonia involved lengthy periods of static warfare similar to those seen on the Western Front.⁴³ Also in contrast to the Balkan Wars, Western and Central European troops (Germans on the Bulgarian side and French and British on the Greek and Serbian side) affected locals' everyday experiences at least as markedly as did the Bulgarian, Serbian and Greek military forces. For civilians in the vicinity of the fighting, their experiences resembled those on other European fronts in important ways. The length of the conflict and the prolonged preparations on each side for a decisive breakthrough encouraged a war of attrition that mobilized all resources behind the lines. Military forces and their governments viewed the local infrastructure and agricultural or mineral production, as well as the local population itself, as resources to be controlled and harnessed as much as possible for the war effort. Characteristic of the armies' imposition of control not only over the area of the immediate frontlines but also the vast hinterlands around them was an order given by Bulgaria's commander in chief, General Nikola Zhekov soon after his country's 1915 invasion of Serbian Macedonia: "the entire territory of the state [i.e., Bulgaria], together with the newly-occupied lands, is considered a theater of war and military activities."⁴⁴ A civil servant installed by Bulgaria in newly-conquered Serbian Macedonian territory understood the

⁴³ Richard Hall, *Balkan Breakthrough: The Battle of Dobro Pole 1918* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 57.

⁴⁴ TsVA Fond 1546 (Macedonian Military Inspection Region) opis 2 a.e. 24 (correspondence on the deportation and return of exiles in Moravsko and Old Bulgaria), 73 (Order of Bulgarian Army Commander in Chief General Zhekov, Nov. 30, 1915).

responsibility entrusted to him as “order, peace and everything focused on one goal: to win the war.”⁴⁵

The armies’ determination to mobilize local resources in Macedonia imposed itself on the civilian population there in several ways. Locals’ efforts to advance education, discussed in the previous chapter, were disrupted as military units often commandeered school buildings in the vicinity of the front. Outside of the large towns of geographic Macedonia, school buildings were often the only sizable or modern buildings – again, a reflection of the high priority accorded to them historically in local public investment. This made them the natural locations of local headquarters, soldiers’ quarters, and occasionally prisons. Interruptions and sometimes cancellations of the school year ensued on both sides of the front lines.⁴⁶

Local civilians were also frequently pressed into labor in the service of the occupying armies. According to a man from Kavalla in eastern Greek Macedonia, “the forced labor began immediately” after the Central Powers occupied his city in 1916. “Every day they indiscriminately rounded up a large number of men,” he recalled in 1918, “and they forced them to carry weapons and materials which were used to fortify various parts of Kavalla.”⁴⁷ One group of villagers from around the town of Doxato in the same occupied region, signing their names in Greek, asked

⁴⁵ Pop Antov, *Spomeni*, 187-188.

⁴⁶ Examples of Central Powers commandeering school property are recorded in DAB, Fond 134k opis 1 a.e. 1, 12g (entry dated Oct. 2-3, 1915) and in GLA, Archive of Konstantinos Karavidas, 1, (Narratives of Prisoners from the Balkan War 1918), narrative of a child 17 years of age, which relates how the occupying army converted the gymnasium of Drama into a prison. On the other side of the front, the Greek school inspector for the Florina region reported in the spring of 1918 that the majority of the schools in his inspection region had been commandeered by Allied Serbian, French, Russian, or Greek troops. See Genika Archeia tou Kratous, Archeia Nomou Florinas (ANF), Florina, Greece, A.V.E. 112, A.E.E. 29 (School Inspection Reports, 1918-1923), 1-21 (Report of inspector of schools in Florina region, Ioannidis, to supervisory council of Florina school inspection region, Apr. 20, 1918).

⁴⁷ GLA, Archive of Konstantinos Karavidas, file 1 (Narratives of Prisoners from the Balkan War 1918), second narrative.

Bulgarian military authorities to intervene against abuses by “Turkish” (Ottoman) soldiers stationed nearby. They complained that the Ottoman soldiers were making them perform forced labor, which they should not have to do “since we are already performing labor for the Bulgarian army.”⁴⁸ According to an old man from the village Kioup Kioi, the Central Powers occupying forces considered the males a political threat because of their Greek identity and thus deported most of them to the interior of Bulgaria. But they also took the opportunity to use the remaining residents – old men, women, and girls – for forced labor.⁴⁹

Great Power and Balkan governments also took control of local agricultural production in Macedonia. They viewed the local crops and livestock as crucial for the large armies they had to sustain on the Macedonian front and as useful for alleviating food and other shortages at home. The initial orders issued by the Bulgarian army command for its 1916 advance (with permission of then-neutral Greece) into Greek eastern Macedonia specified that local products needed by the troops “must be bought with cash; nothing should be requisitioned.”⁵⁰ However, the Bulgarian command later contrived partially to circumvent this restraint by decreeing the depreciated Bulgarian lev to be equal in value to the stronger Greek drachma.⁵¹

⁴⁸ TsDA Fond 176k opis 4a (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, 1912-1918), a.e. 27, 304-305 (petition from villagers in Doxato vicinity to Bulgarian military command, Jan. 3, 1917).

⁴⁹ GLA, Archive of Konstantinos Karavidas, file 1 (Narratives of Prisoners from the Balkan War 1918), narrative of Nikolaos Nikolaidis.

⁵⁰ TsVA Fond 64, opis 2 a.e. 33 (Diary of military activities of the 3rd infantry brigade of the 7th Rila division Nov. 24, 1915 – May 9, 1917), 141g (from entry on Aug. 17, 1916).

⁵¹ The Bulgarian lev and the Greek drachma had been equal in value to the French franc and other European currencies through their membership in the Latin Monetary Union. However, the monetary union fell apart at the outbreak of World War I as belligerent countries effectively abandoned convertibility with precious metals. Bulgaria had already abandoned convertibility in 1912 and during World War I its currency was among the most depreciated. The Greek drachma on the other hand remained stronger than most European currencies including the franc through the beginning of 1917. See Luca Einaudi, *Money and Politics: European Monetary Unification and the International Gold Standard (1865-1873)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 117-118 and Ljuben Berov, “The

Purchases by the military were to follow this new regulation, and all those (including civilians) who violated it were subject to indictment and trial for “enemy activities.”⁵² As suggested by the specific threat of punishment that went along with the decree, this policy amounted in practice to a forced overvaluation of Bulgarian currency to facilitate requisitioning. Five days after the decree’s issuance, the Bulgarian authorities dismissed members of a village committee from their positions for attempting to defy it and duly put them on trial for “enemy activities.” The committee members, who had refused to take Bulgarian leva from army purchasers, reportedly threw the leva back in their faces and cried, “not even corn can we eat with such money.”⁵³ Meanwhile, the German military representative in Sofia criticized the Bulgarian Central Committee for Social Welfare for its restraint in procuring resources from the population in occupied areas, urging “radical measures” and hinting that generals in the field were already beginning to ignore such restraints.⁵⁴ Another German military representative welcomed the change, two months later, when that civilian-led committee was replaced by a Directorate of Social and Economic Welfare under the Ministry of War because its “more military character” would allow it to take more decisive action and because it was empowered to set prices for goods needed by the military. He did acknowledge, however, that this rationing and the envisioned export of grain to the Central Powers would strike the

Bulgarian Economy during World War I,” in *East Central European Society in World War I*, ed. Béla K. Király and Nándor F. Dreisziger (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 1985), 172, 180-181.

⁵² TsVA Fond 1545 opis 1 a.e. 1 (Order book of the Drama Regional Military Inspectorate), 18g (order from Jan. 30, 1917).

⁵³ TsVA Fond 1545 opis 1 a.e. 1, 19g, 20 (Drama Regional Military Inspectorate order from Feb. 4, 1917).

⁵⁴ Document No. 153, report from German Imperial military representative in Sofia, Colonel Edward von Masow, to Supreme General Headquarters, Pless, Feb. 25, 1917, in Ts. Todorova, ed. and trans., *Bŭlgariia v Pŭrvata svetovna voina*, 246.

population (in Bulgaria-proper as well as the occupied areas) as unjust. He warned that the head of the new Directorate would need to navigate carefully “to steer clear of this dangerous reef” of potential popular discontent.⁵⁵

Although the impact of food rationing and requisitions caused hardship throughout Bulgaria, it struck the civilian population of the newly-occupied regions earlier and more severely. Only seven months after Central Powers forces occupied eastern Greek Macedonia with the permission of the king of Greece, Bulgaria’s commander in chief received reports that the population in that region, “especially the Greek [population] in Kavalla, is dying of hunger.” The cause of this starvation, according to the reports, was the refusal of the Bulgarian commander in the area, General Burnov, to allow the distribution of food to the hungry population.⁵⁶

The French military authorities occupying central and western Greek Macedonia appear to have been more scrupulous than their Central Powers counterparts in seeking to compensate local residents monetarily for requisitioned products. In 1917, the French commander in the Prefecture of Kozani provided to the provisional Greek authority there a list of villages whose mayors should present themselves as soon as possible in order to accept compensation for animals taken from their municipalities for use by the military.⁵⁷ A month later, the French commander followed up with a second such list, as mayors of some towns and

⁵⁵ Document No. 172, report from representative of the Royal Prussian Ministry of War to Bulgarian Ministry of War in Sofia, von Beller, to German Foreign Ministry, Apr. 15, 1917, in Ts. Todorova, ed. and trans., *Bûlgariia v Pûrvata svetovna vojna*, 270.

⁵⁶ TsVA, Fond 1545 opis 2 a.e. 1, 68 (Army Chief of Staff General Nikola Zhekov to Chief of Drama Regional Inspectorate, May 9, 1917).

⁵⁷ DARM, Fond 994, kutija 1, 191 (French Commandant of Kozani, Simon, to Prefect of Kozani, May 2, 1917).

villages whose livestock had been requisitioned had yet to come forward.⁵⁸ The French army's intentions to pay residents for requisitioned livestock were thus apparently sincere. Nonetheless, the extent of requisitions and the preemptive manner in which they were carried out (with compensation promised rather than delivered at the time) would have disrupted affected civilian livelihoods significantly. The French army, according to its own count, still owed compensation to residents of the prefecture for over 12,000 requisitioned cows and buffalo, 2,200 horses and mules, and 2,700 sheep. Residents in the village of Emporion (a little over 1,000 residents) awaited compensation for over 1,700 cows or buffalo. The French owed compensation for almost 3,900 cows or buffalo taken from Kailaria, a small town of around 4,000 residents.⁵⁹ Promising reimbursement for requisitions, even when payments belatedly were made, could not provide adequate compensation for the losses. If enough of a stockbreeder's animals were taken, he would have trouble replenishing his stock and thus continuing his trade. Farmers also depended on animals to plow and fertilize their fields. Sums of cash provided as compensation, in an economy of scarcity, would be inflationary. Some of these problems were registered in a Greek government complaint at the end of the war about the effects of Bulgarian requisitioning activities.⁶⁰

The armies' involvement with local agriculture included not only widespread requisitioning of crops, but also efforts to control the choice of crops and even to

⁵⁸ DARM, Fond 994, kutija 1, 192-193 (French Commandant of Kozani to Prefect of Kozani, Jun. 5, 1917).

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ TsDA, Fond 176k opis 22 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs – materials of the Political Directorate) a.e. 31 (French inquiry into damages from requisitioned livestock), 14, 14g (Greek Governor-General of Thessaloniki, Adossidis, to Commander of Army of the Orient General Franchet D'Espèrey, Dec. 3, 1918).

modernize their cultivation in order to make agriculture more productive. Some apparently idealistic German and French officials serving on the Macedonian front fancied themselves agents of modernization and civilization, though their immediate mission was to extract agricultural produce for the war effort. One of these figures was German Captain L. Engelhardt. In June 1916, Engelhardt sent back to the Prussian Ministry of Agriculture, State Property and Forestry a sweeping assessment of agriculture and prospects for its modernization in the part of Macedonia his army jointly occupied with the Bulgarians. On the one hand, he praised the recent Ottoman legacy of large *çiftlik* landholdings there, which “bear comparison with German noble estates.” He pointed out that these had encouraged early adoption of industrial agricultural machinery, continuing with large purchases from England made on the eve of the outbreak of the Balkan Wars. By comparison, the decentralized land distribution of the pre-1912 Bulgarian state had hindered its agricultural development from the time of its autonomy from the Ottoman Empire in 1878.⁶¹ Because large Muslim landowners had fled in the wake of the Balkan Wars, however, “this land, which undoubtedly belongs to the most fertile in Europe, lies today absolutely devastated.”

Nevertheless, due to its more progressive recent legacy of agricultural development, Engelhardt had “come to believe that Macedonia is the land from which to start my current task. First and foremost Macedonia must be opened for modern

⁶¹ Document No. 26, report from Captain L. Engelhardt to the Agricultural Information Service for Military Industry in the Royal Prussian Ministry of Agriculture, State Property, and Forestry, Jun. 6, 1916, in Ts. Todorova, ed. and trans., *Bûlgariia v Pûrvata svetovna voina*, 81-82. This aspect of Captain Engelhardt’s analysis – namely, that post-independence Balkan states’ agricultural productivity stagnated compared to productivity under the Ottoman Empire – echoes the economic analysis of Michael Palaret in *The Balkan Economies c. 1800-1914: Evolution without Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

agricultural machinery and for rational care and exploitation of the land.” From there, he believed, “a purely Bulgarian propaganda for increasing agricultural production could spread to the rest of the country [Bulgaria].” Again because of the apparently more promising history of openness to foreign technology in Macedonia, Engelhardt believed that such “purely Bulgarian propaganda” could take root if “Germans, working in the background,” could harness the leadership of local organizations such as the “Macedonian Committee” to this purpose. Such a strategy would work to win over the “suspicious nature” of most residents of pre-1912 Bulgaria, who distrusted improvements introduced by foreigners.⁶²

The German and Bulgarian governments began to put elements of Engelhardt’s vision into practice almost immediately. The Prussian Ministry of Agriculture sponsored an Agricultural Society in Berlin whose goal was “the development of uncultivated lands in our allies Bulgaria and Turkey.” This organization worked in turn through a subsidiary it established in Bulgaria called the Bulgarian Joint Stock Company for Agricultural Development in the Kingdom of Bulgaria. Working “in agreement with the Bulgarian government,” the joint stock company had the “task to lease large areas mainly in Macedonia and to sow them with cereals, barley and oilseed crops,” with a view toward generating the eventual capacity to export. By October, 1916, 3,000 hectares in different locations within

⁶² Document No. 26, report from Captain L. Engelhardt to the Agricultural Information Service for Military Industry in the Royal Prussian Ministry of Agriculture, State Property and Forestry, Jun. 6, 1916, in Ts. Todorova, ed. and trans., *Bûlgariia v Pûrvata svetovna voina*, 85-86; emphasis in the original.

Macedonia were under lease and cultivation through this scheme, “which should create a basis for all subsequent work.”⁶³

Yet Engelhardt revealed that he also had postwar German interests at heart in opening Macedonia’s land to “rational care and exploitation.” He acknowledged the objection of a local agronomist that it would be difficult to implement such sweeping changes while “the true leaders of agriculture [i.e. adult men] are at the front.” Nevertheless, Engelhardt explained to his superior in Berlin, it was “worth taking the preparatory steps” now before the war ended. “[T]he richness and potential of the Macedonian soil is known throughout the world and our current enemies surely are only awaiting the moment” when they could re-enter and exploit this potential themselves, he warned. The Italians and Belgians, he pointed out, “had erected large facilities a little before the war in order to exploit the rich fishing resources in the Macedonian lakes.” Germany thus needed to seize the moment for herself. “Today only we are in the country... and [we are] without an enemy in the press, as at the moment the strict newspaper censorship summarily suppresses any criticism against us; this, however, will not remain so forever!” Engelhardt’s sanguine embrace of the opportunity provided by censorship policies hinted that there indeed existed some incipient opposition in Vardar Macedonia to the German domination of Macedonia’s resources he clearly envisioned.⁶⁴ As noted earlier, another German official also believed that the local population would object to the export of grain to Germany

⁶³ Document No. 93, letter from government advisors Dr. Ram and H.P. Newman, members of the Supervisory Board of Agricultural Enterprise for Military Industry in the Royal Prussian Ministry of Agriculture, State Property, and Forestry to German Foreign Ministry, Oct. 6, 1916, in Ts. Todorova, ed. and trans., *Bûlgariia v Pûrvata svetovna voina*, 167.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

while it was strictly rationed at home.⁶⁵ Wartime censorship would also have suppressed public expressions of such discontent. But the German minister plenipotentiary in Sofia did register explicit objections on the part of Macedonians serving in the Bulgarian administration to the planned German takeover of mines located in western Bulgaria. “At the last moment the Macedonians suddenly protested” the transfer of the mines to German control. They warned that the agreement between the Bulgarian and German governments to transfer the mines “would be seen among wide sections of the people as a fraudulent transaction and as economic exploitation,” according to the German official.⁶⁶

A French representative based in Salonika saw the Entente presence in the region of Macedonia in broadly analogous terms. His pamphlet of 1918 entitled *L'œuvre civilisatrice de l'armée française en Macédoine* (The Civilizing Work of the French Army in Macedonia) nonetheless made the association of Macedonia with a potentially colonial territory more explicit:

A few years ago, the impression of all travelers who ventured into the interior of Macedonia – almost as little known in the West as some African regions – could be summed up in one word: insecurity. Insecurity of the person and insecurity of property. A system of ownership that resulted in innumerable vexations, that dried up any activity on the part of the worker, that succeeded in making a country which had been and will again become very rich one of the most desolate of Europe.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Document No. 172, report from representative of the Royal Prussian Ministry of War to Bulgarian Ministry of War in Sofia, von Beller, to German Foreign Ministry, Apr. 15, 1917, in Ts. Todorova, ed. and trans., *Bûlgariia v Pûrvata svetovna voïna*, 270.

⁶⁶ Document No. 119, coded telegram from German minister plenipotentiary in Sofia, Graf Alfred von Obendorf, to German Foreign Ministry, Dec. 3, 1916, in Ts. Todorova, ed. and trans., *Bûlgariia v Pûrvata svetovna voïna*, 194.

⁶⁷ E. Thomas, *L'œuvre civilisatrice de l'armée française en Macédoine* (Thessaloniki: L'Indépendant, 1918), 4. Jacob Mikanowski, “Dr Hirszfeld’s War: Tropical Medicine and the Invention of Sero-Anthropology on the Macedonian Front,” *Social History of Medicine* 25, no. 1 (February 2012): 103-121 argues that members of the British and French armies serving on the Macedonian front, including members of medical corps who had previous experience in their countries’ colonies, viewed Macedonia as another “colonial space” because of the conditions they encountered.

And although war inevitably brought “harsh necessities” and “terrible scourges,” it also could be a force of creativity and renewal when placed “in the hands of some peoples” (namely, the French). As evidence of the French army’s civilizing work in Macedonia, the writer discussed the extensive road-building project undertaken by the Allies. The road network built under the French and British, he reported, totaled 1,300 kilometers and would finally “permit the complete exploitation of [the region’s] resources.”⁶⁸ Similarly, he proudly described projects that dramatically increased the supply of potable drinking water (canals and an entire aqueduct were built), increased the productivity of local salt and lignite mines, eliminated malarial mosquitoes and swamps, and increased agricultural production to the benefit of producers in addition to the armies whom they supplied.

Mark Mazower, in his study of Salonika, has also noted the sense among the French and British stationed in and around the city that they were engaged in a project of “civilizing Macedonia.”⁶⁹ Many of its residents did indeed profit from the increased business generated by the large influx of soldiers who used the city and its environs as their base. But Salonika and its immediate surroundings were exceptional. Mazower does not mention the heavy toll taken on many other civilians elsewhere by the armies’ interventions. Whatever their beneficial or “civilizing” side-effects, after all, the primary purpose of such interventions was the successful prosecution of the war. Local residents on both sides of the Entente-Central Powers front resented the heavy requisitions and restrictions imposed on them by the armies in particular. Roughly six months after Central Powers forces entered Serbian

⁶⁸ Thomas, *L’œuvre civilisatrice*, 7, 8.

⁶⁹ Mazower, *Salonica*, 295-297.

Macedonia, the commander of a combined Bulgarian-German division stationed in the district of Gevgeli issued a set of regulations for the area “in order for strict control to be exercised over the inhabitants of the region at the disposal of the soldiers.” The first of the orders required that “every resident who wants to go from one place to another must, before he departs, present himself to the local command in order to be given a permit, which permit he must present as certification to the command at the point where he is going; if there is no command there, then to the mayor of the village.” The next rule required those who wanted to go to work in their fields to pick up another kind of permit at four o’clock each morning from the local commander or mayor and return it at eight in the evening. Permission to travel to the nearby market town of Strumitsa was only given on Mondays, and only if accompanied by a person trusted by the command.⁷⁰ A stricter follow-up regulation forbade residents outright from circulating outside their villages after eight in the evening, and forbade all travel outside a certain region (including to Strumitsa) unless a special application was delivered to and approved by the reserve corps stationed there.⁷¹ The hardships these particular regulations caused were registered not even two weeks later in an urgently worded complaint submitted by several residents of the village of Bogdantsi:

The situation in which we have been placed is beyond deplorable. In the last twenty days or so, without distinction we here the Bulgarians, whom the Germans regard equally with the Grecoman families, are not allowed to go to Strumitsa or to other villages in the area. As a consequence, we are left to sustain our lives only with corn flour, which is issued to us by the district committee of public foresight [*okoliiskiia*

⁷⁰ TsVA Fond 1546 opis 2 a.e. 24, 24 (Order from Chief of Staff of the Combined Division, Lieutenant-Colonel Mustafov, Jun. 25, 1916).

⁷¹ TsVA Fond 1546 opis 2 a.e. 24, 25 (Order from commander of the 4th Pleven Infantry Regiment, Jun. 30, 1916).

komitet na obshtestvenata predvidlivost]⁷² in Smokvitsa, on which alone and with nothing else it is not possible to live. We are simply starving at present. If, going forward, the Germans do not permit us to go to Strumitsa and elsewhere, we will no doubt simply have to starve and die.... To what should we attribute this arresting of us, letting us circulate only in the village and in the field?! Our sons, brothers, and fathers are soldiers in our Army, and they await from us suitable financial help. For now, we are beyond even slaves! The state forgets us in its release of aid to the military families; the local authorities – the command in the village – do not give us travel permits for Strumitsa or elsewhere; there is not a thing in the village to be eaten, other than bitter corn bread; thus it remains for us to die. If Divine Providence has ordained it thus and our state does not look upon us as its children and as a part of the whole, then that’s another question. As we here are born Bulgarians and as such we die for the interests [*interesite*] of the Kingdom of Bulgaria, we beg your intercession, Commander Sir, for us to be permitted to go to the centers where we can supply ourselves with food and products.⁷³

In typical fashion, these local civilians did not draw a meaningful distinction between the “Central European” and “Balkan” causes of their maltreatment. They implicated both Germans (through their enforcement of oppressive measures) and Bulgarians (through the state’s callous neglect). Their expressions of Bulgarian identity served primarily to shame the Bulgarian “state.” They expressed no hostility toward the “Grecoman” families in their community, but referred to them merely in order to point out that their own Bulgarian loyalty did not seem to count for much. They expressed their bond to the Bulgarian state not as an unquestioning devotion, but as a kind of bargain that the state was violating. They would die for what they rather cynically called the “interests” of the state, as indeed their male relatives at the front were doing, but the state must also meet its obligations towards its people.

⁷² This may refer to district requisition commissions composed of civil officials that were set up under Bulgarian-German military supervision, or possibly to a wartime Bulgarian law establishing the *Tsentrallen komitet na stopanski grizhi i obshtestvena predvidlivost*, which historian Richard Crampton renders less literally but more smoothly as the Central Committee for Economic and Social Welfare in R.J. Crampton, *A Short History of Modern Bulgaria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 68. For details on the related 1915-1917 laws and their convoluted coexistence with requisitioning commissions, see Ljuben Berov, “The Bulgarian Economy during World War I,” in *East Central European Society in World War I*, ed. Béla K. Király and Nándor F. Dreisziger (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 1985), 172-174.

⁷³ TsVA Fond 1546 opis 2 a.e. 24, 26-27 (Petition from residents of Bogdantsi, Jul. 6, 1916).

Though dramatically worded, the fears expressed in the villagers' petition were not unfounded. Their district governor sent a note in support of the petitioners, reporting that farm work had "come to a standstill," as farmers had to wait until nine or ten o'clock each morning to get the daily permits to go to their fields. Worse still, "rarely does one find a family that at lunch or dinner can put enough food on the table." Because of the monotonous diet of cornbread, "mortality, most of all among the children, is increasing by the day."⁷⁴ Correspondence higher up the military bureaucracy indicated that the matter remained unresolved over a month after the initial orders were issued.⁷⁵ The threat of hunger also appeared on the other side of the front, controlled by Entente forces. A 1916 French-language telegram from the Greek mayor of Kastoria to the Greek prefect of Kozani (the chief Greek liaison with French forces in that area) expressed "pure and heartfelt thanks" on behalf of the population in his town and its environs for "being saved from death forced by famine" and "relieved of pain" by a delivery of supplies. The mayor flattered the Greek prefect by "recogniz[ing] you as [the population's] savior and protector in imploring you not to cease caring for it."⁷⁶ But the area had been under continuous Entente control led by the French, of course raising the question of why its population had been in danger of "death forced by famine" in the first place.

As before, this new set of trying wartime conditions generally did not induce ordinary residents of geographic Macedonia to commit violence, either against authorities or against their own neighbors of different ethnicities. Doing so would

⁷⁴ TsVA Fond 1546 opis 2 a.e. 24, 29-30 (County governor of Gevgeli to county governor of Kavadarsti, Jul. 6, 1916).

⁷⁵ TsVA Fond 1546 opis 2 a.e. 24, 33 (Chief of Headquarters of the Macedonian Military Inspection Region to procurement officer at Army Headquarters, Colonel Stanchev, Jul. 31, 1916).

⁷⁶ DARM, Fond 994, kutija 1, 181 (Mayor of Kastoria to Prefect of Kozani, Iliakis, Nov. 14, 1916).

have further jeopardized their priorities of communal and economic stability, which were already threatened by the war. To the extent that residents dared resist authorities, the mostly passive defiance was usually confined to their efforts, discussed above, to evade military conscription and thus avoid risk to their lives. Also acting to preserve their lives and livelihoods to the extent possible, ethnic Greeks living in eastern Greek Macedonia quickly fell into line after the Bulgarian army once again occupied their localities in the First World War.

When the Bulgarian army entered eastern Greek Macedonia in the autumn of 1916 along with troops in lesser numbers from its allies among the Central Powers, it did so with permission from the then-neutral Greek government. The Central Powers guaranteed Greece's continued formal sovereignty over the area. They claimed temporary control only because of the military need to contain the threat posed by the Entente in central and western Greek Macedonia. In eastern Greek Macedonia, the Bulgarian military leadership set up an authority called the Drama Regional Military Inspectorate, "which consists of the territory in the friendly Greek state to the east of the River Struma occupied by our army and those of our allies."⁷⁷ The regulations establishing the Inspectorate specified that its chief administrator would be a Bulgarian general. Two assistants, a German officer and a Greek government civil servant respectively, were to serve as "advisory voices." Local Greek police were ordered to continue to perform their duties alongside the Bulgarian military police, but were made subordinate to the latter. In fact, although local Greek civil authorities would "continue to function," they were to be "subordinate to the head of the

⁷⁷ TsVA Fond 1545 opis 1 a.e. 1, 5-6 (Drama Regional Military Inspectorate order from Oct. 26, 1916). Drama was an important urban settlement in the region and was designated as the seat of the Inspectorate.

Inspectorate in every respect. He has the right, as appropriate, to dismiss officials and to appoint others in their place.” The civil servants were obligated to implement all orders in support of the occupying army’s provisioning and activities. Finally, they did “not have the right to communicate with other Greek authorities, which are outside of the area of the Inspectorate. In cases of need, this will occur through the head of the Inspectorate.”⁷⁸ The Bulgarian army and its allies thus established a collaborationist local officialdom whose role was simply to carry out the orders of the occupying authority in eastern Greek Macedonia. Many local Greeks in fact proved willing to fill positions in the civil service throughout the duration of the occupation under these restrictive conditions.⁷⁹ This remained the case even after Greece ended its neutrality and declared war on Bulgaria and the rest of the Central Powers in July 1917. Nevertheless, as Germany’s foreign secretary observed, Bulgarian leaders now resolved more systematically to “replace Greek officials in Eastern Macedonia with Bulgarian ones.”⁸⁰

While many of these Greek civil servants probably considered themselves lucky simply to keep their jobs and continue to earn salaries under the circumstances, at least some attempted to use their circumscribed roles to alleviate the impact of the

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ IAM, GDM, file 82.1 [Reports of the Chief of the Greek Military mission to Sofia to the General Administration of Macedonia, 1918-1919], 29-37 (Report by Col. Mazarakis-Ainian, Chief of Greek Military mission to Sofia, Nov. 23, 1918, pp. 35-36); TsVA Fond 1545 opis 1 a.e. 1, 30 (Drama Regional Military Inspectorate order from Mar. 31, 1917); TsVA Fond 1545 opis 1 a.e. 1, 31 (Drama Regional Military Inspectorate order from Apr. 11, 1917); TsVA Fond 1545 opis 1 a.e. 1, 49-50 (Drama Regional Military Inspectorate order from Jul. 6, 1917); TsVA Fond 1545 opis 1 a.e. 1, 115-116 (Drama Regional Military Inspectorate order from Jun. 2, 1918); TsDA Fond 176k opis 4a a.e. 27, 310 (Mayor of Drama Nikolaos Bakopoulos to Drama Regional Military Inspectorate, Apr. 18, 1917).

⁸⁰ Document No. 192, telegram from German Foreign Secretary A. Zimmerman to German foreign ministry representative at Supreme General Headquarters Captain Baron von Grünau, Jul. 4, 1917, in Ts. Todorova, ed. and trans., *Bǎlgariia v Pǎrvata svetovna voina*, 312.

occupation on other local residents.⁸¹ Such efforts were more likely to succeed in cases that implicated non-Bulgarian military personnel in abuses, as when the Greek Mayor of Drama interceded successfully with the Inspectorate on behalf of a Greek monastery whose abbot complained of harassment by Ottoman soldiers.⁸² Nor did other, more ordinary, ethnic Greek civilians try to resist the Bulgarian-led Central Powers occupying regime at risk to their lives or livelihoods. As with the case of the monastery, when a group of petitioning villagers who signed their names in Greek begged Bulgarian authorities to put a stop to abuses by Muslim irregulars, they sought on the contrary to come to better terms with the occupying forces. Here they asked for Bulgarian units to be stationed near their villages in order to provide security.⁸³ Ethnic Greek merchants and craftsmen in Drama were also quite willing to do business with the incoming Central Powers forces, including the Bulgarian army. Soon after the establishment of the Inspectorate, one Greek firm even sold commemorative portraits of the Bulgarian Tsar and Bulgarian and German generals to the occupying forces, along with glasses onto which they were to be affixed. A partnership between a Bulgarian and a Greek also sold Bulgarian, German, and Austro-Hungarian flags.⁸⁴

⁸¹ See again IAM, GDM, file 82.1, 35-36.

⁸² TsDA Fond 176k opis 4a a.e. 27, 310 (Mayor of Drama Nikolaos Bakopoulos to Drama Regional Military Inspectorate, Apr. 18, 1917).

⁸³ TsDA Fond 176k opis 4a a.e. 27, 302-303 (petition from villagers in Dramsko to Drama Regional Military Inspectorate, Dec. 25, 1916).

⁸⁴ TsVA Fond 1545 opis 1 a.e. 1, 10g-12 (Drama Regional Military Inspectorate order from Dec. 23, 1916).

The Bureaucratic Turn in Wartime Violence

The conditions of prolonged, static warfare that arose on the Macedonian Front (better known as the Salonika Front) resulted in one other major difference in local experiences from the Balkan Wars and from the interlude of peace that followed. Just as the belligerent governments and armies harnessed local production and infrastructure, they also came to treat the population in the vicinity of the hostilities as assets (and often liabilities) to be managed in support of their war effort and possibly their post-war aims. The previous chapter showed how, during the period between the Balkan Wars and the First World War, Balkan state leaders began to contemplate a bureaucratic framework for the forced deportation en masse of ethnic groups they viewed as potentially disloyal. They did not carry out such schemes at that time, but they did begin to intern or deport selected individuals whose loyalty they considered questionable. The Great War allowed this bureaucratic violence directed at noncombatants to go ahead on a more comprehensive basis in the vicinity of the Macedonian front lines (and, as will be noted later, in other European theaters as well.) These measures proceeded despite the aforementioned lack of civilian resistance against the occupation authorities even if they represented a rival ethnic group.

The turning point came with the transition shortly after the onset of hostilities from a war of mobility to one of static frontlines and a war of attrition. An episode recalled by Ivan Tenchev Gelebeshev illustrates a moment in this transition between the earlier, terroristic sort of violence and the more systematic, bureaucratically administered kind. It also illustrates the fact that Western and Central European

forces readily practiced both kinds of violence alongside their Balkan counterparts. In March 1916, Gelebeshev's village found itself between the front lines of opposing French and Bulgarian forces and was taking artillery, machine gun, and rifle fire from both sides. One day two French cavalymen fell dead outside the village – an event Gelebeshev implies was the result of military fire, not from the villagers. At two the next morning a large group of French troops entered the village and began to burn the houses. Those villagers who were able to escape, including Gelebeshev, went north to a village just behind Central Powers lines. The French fired on the fleeing villagers, wounding several of them. When Gelebeshev and his fellow villagers arrived behind the Central Powers lines, German soldiers apprehended them and immediately tried to confiscate the livestock they brought with them. Only the timely intervention of a nearby Bulgarian officer stopped them. As Gelebeshev later found out, the French took those villagers who could not escape behind their own lines to the south. They court-marshaled three of his acquaintances and sent them to exile in Morocco. One died in Morocco from hunger and torture. The other two eventually returned, but not until 1921.⁸⁵

Also recalling the actions of Balkan armies from the Balkan Wars, British and French forces put to flight tens of thousands of local inhabitants in the autumn of 1915 through on-the-spot violence and intimidation while the frontlines were still mobile. They pushed north into Serbian (Vardar) Macedonia from their new base in Greece in attempting to help the Serbian army repel the Bulgarian-German-Austro-Hungarian invasion. After Bulgarian forces quickly regained the ground they had temporarily lost to the Entente and the front stabilized, these refugees streamed back

⁸⁵ TsDA, Fond 771k opis 1 a.e. 40 (memoirs of Ivan Tenchev Gelebeshev), 5.

into their now-devastated home villages and towns. They lacked clothes, shelter, and food supplies. This created a serious dilemma for General Todorov, the Bulgarian commander in the area. He observed that the dire conditions of the population were “[g]ood soil for the spread of diseases.” It would be “impossible to prevent contact between this population and the army units. The state, in order to save the army, will be forced to supply the starving population with food, but this is almost impossible under the current conditions,” the general warned headquarters. “This is why it would be good to consider whether it would not be more advantageous, more useful, and more practical for all of this population to be evacuated temporarily to the interior,” he suggested. There it could be fed more easily and “would not pose a constant hazard to the army.”⁸⁶ Bulgaria’s Army Chief of Staff, General Zhostov, endorsed General Todorov’s recommendation. He ordered General Todorov to send the “[f]amilies who lack food supplies” to Veles, a town located further away from the front, where they could be supplied with food.⁸⁷ Zhostov did not specify how many of the families he imagined “lack[ed] food supplies.” General Todorov had made it clear, however, that they amounted to “some tens of thousands” of people.⁸⁸

Yet the Army Chief of Staff was weighing more than how to provide for this hapless population. Simultaneously he envisaged how they could be put to use for the war effort. “The men from these families who are capable of work are to be

⁸⁶ TsVA Fond 1546 opis 2 a.e. 24, 69 (Telegram from General-Lieutenant Todorov to Bulgarian Army Headquarters, Jan. 8, 1916).

⁸⁷ TsVA Fond 1546 opis 2 a.e. 24, 70 (Telegram from Bulgarian Army Chief of Staff Major-General Zhostov to General-Lieutenant Todorov, Jan. 11, 1916).

⁸⁸ TsVA Fond 1546 opis 2 a.e. 24, 69.

organized in commands and sent to work on the Shtip-Radovish road,” he ordered.⁸⁹ As later correspondence makes clear, the order was carried out, but the civilians could not be supported in Veles, even with their adult men working on the Shtip-Radovish road. They were then sent on to Skopje, which could not support them either. They were moved en masse yet again to Sofia, where they were put to work in factories. Yet Army Headquarters in Bulgaria did not want them there and raised the possibility of returning them back to Vardar Macedonia (Bulgarian-occupied Serbian Macedonia). The chief Bulgarian official in Skopje insisted that there was no way to support them there either.⁹⁰ Again, this episode relatively soon after the formation of the Macedonian Front of the First World War illustrates a transition to a more bureaucratic approach by armies in dealing with local civilians. In practice, as in the above case, this approach could produce its own sort of chaos and violence. But the decisions were discussed, made, and implemented by different levels of the military bureaucracy. By this bureaucratization of violence, the Bulgarian army officials purposefully planned (and clearly mishandled) the mass removal of tens of thousands of people from their local communities.

In the aforementioned case, concern about civilians’ national identities played no role in General Todorov’s idea to remove the local population in question. He viewed them simply as a burden that would hamper the effectiveness of his army’s campaign. This more benign motivation for “evacuation” of populations near frontline areas was not uncommon, especially on the part of the Central Powers forces

⁸⁹ TsVA Fond 1546 opis 2 a.e. 24, 70. The strip of land connecting the towns of Štip and Radoviš is at least twenty miles from Veles, which suggests that these men were to live at the site of their labor rather than with their families.

⁹⁰ TsVA Fond 1546 opis 2 a.e. 24, 81 (Telegram from General-Lieutenant Petrov, Chief of the Macedonian Military Inspection Region, Skopje, to Ministry of War, Sofia, Feb., 1916).

on the Macedonian Front. Nevertheless, bureaucratically organized mass removals of noncombatants from their homes even on this more practical basis often caused harsh consequences for the affected groups to which the authorities were not especially sensitive. Resentment could be seen in a petition to authorities by residents of the frontline town of Gevgeli who were evacuated to the village of Smokvitsa (as noted above, a place where even the local residents were facing acute hardships):

Deported to the village Smokvitsa by the military authorities, without any kind of work, we spent the summer making do with that food which was given to us by the Committee of Public Foresight with the hope that soon we would return to our homes – however, we remained deceived in our hope [*obache ostanahme izlûgani v nadezhdata si*]. After a short time the autumn will set in, with its cold spells, and we with our children will have to put up with its rigors among the corridors and haylofts of the village houses. In this situation with the shortage of food that we have, lacking the possibility to improve it as we do not have any kind of income, we will be fated to suffer and be invaded by various diseases.⁹¹

The petitioners, town dwellers who were in any case not accustomed to village life, requested to be allowed to move to the town of Skopje where they hoped to find employment. They went straight to the point, detailing the sufferings they were forced to endure by the war and “the military authorities.” Nowhere in the petition did they attempt to flatter those authorities by alluding to the nobility of the cause for which their well-being was being sacrificed.

Noncombatant residents evacuated from front line areas by the Bulgarian military were generally given little reason for confidence in the attentiveness of Bulgarian authorities or of their Central Power allies to meeting their daily needs. Time and again the evacuees faced similar conditions of inadequate food and shelter, disease, repeated forced relocation, and lack of employment in the locations to which

⁹¹ TsVA Fond 1546 opis 2 a.e. 24, 189 (petition from a group of residents of Gevgeli deported to the village Smokvitsa, Aug. 1, 1916).

they were moved.⁹² Meanwhile, Bulgarian and German forces that set up encampments in and around the evacuated home municipalities frequently scavenged properties there for army needs. They dismantled houses and other buildings for material to use in defensive works, plundered livestock and furniture, and denuded trees and vineyards.⁹³ One Bulgarian district governor asked in vain to get the head of the military occupation authority to stop German forces from using evacuated houses “because the villagers will find only ashes when they return.”⁹⁴

But reasons of expediency were not the only factors motivating the Central Powers and Entente forces in their behavior toward civilians in geographic Macedonia. The largely unjustified suspicions on the part of Balkan state authorities that large segments of the population in Macedonia were potentially disloyal, discussed in Chapter 4, intensified during the war. The European allies on each side shared in these suspicions. When Bulgaria entered the war against Serbia, soldiers in

⁹² Further examples are documented in TsDA, Fond 771k opis 1 a.e. 40 (memoirs of Ivan Tenchev Gelebeshev), 5; TsVA Fond 1546 opis 2 a.e. 24, 118 (petition from 32 families of the village of Bogoroditsa to head of Macedonian Military Inspection Region in Skopje, Jun. 3, 1916); TsVA Fond 1546 opis 2 a.e. 24, 29-30 (County governor of Gevgeli to county governor of Kavardartsi, Jul. 6, 1916), which reports that people evacuated to the village of Bogdantsi were suffering even more than the locals there; TsVA Fond 1546 opis 2 a.e. 24, 99-100 (petition from villagers of Gornichet to commander of Veles, May 8, 1916); and TsVA Fond 1546 opis 2 a.e. 24, 4 (telegram from secretary of military inspection region to county governor of Kavardartsi, Aug. 10, 1916).

⁹³ IAM, GDM, file 82.1, 3-4 (petition from residents of village Lehovo to General Administration of Thessaloniki, Pella, Dec. 25, 1918) presents a case where all of this occurred in one place. Dimitŭr Bozhikov Biliukbashiev recalls a similar fate for his village of Savek in *Dŭrzhaven Arhiv – Blagoevgrad* [State Archive – Blagoevgrad] (DAB), Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria, *Spomeni (Sp.)* 225 [Dimitŭr Bozhikov Biliukbashiev], 212-213. GLA, Archive of Konstantinos Karavidas, file 1 (Narratives of Prisoners from the Balkan War 1918), second narrative reports the occupying armies’ use of Catholic and Jewish tombstones in fortifying Kavalla. Entente forces on the other side of the front also frequently stripped materials from forests and from buildings, including schools, as seen in ANF, A.V.E. 112, A.E.E. 29, 1-21 (Report from inspector of schools in Florina region, Ioannidis, to supervisory council of Florina school inspection region, Apr. 20, 1918) and 22-36 (Report from Ioannidis to supervisory council of Florina school inspection region, May 1, 1918).

⁹⁴ TsVA Fond 1546 opis 2 a.e. 24, 83 (telegram from district governor of Kavardartsi to head of Macedonian Military Inspection Region, Apr. 18, 1916); TsVA Fond 1546 opis 2 a.e. 24, 84 (telegram from Macedonian Military Inspection Region to district governor of Kavardartsi, Apr. 20, 1916) contains the head of the Inspection Region’s dismissive reply.

still-neutral Greece reportedly rounded up eight “Bulgarian” men from two villages in Greek Macedonia and took them to the town of Drama with the apparent intention of killing them, according to a relative of two of the captives. The relative attributed the incident to “the general persecution which the Greek authorities have visited on the defenseless Bulgarian population in Greek Macedonia since mobilization was declared in Bulgaria.”⁹⁵ The French army controlling western Greek Macedonia in March 1917 ordered the disarmament of the local population.⁹⁶ French army investigations revealed the following August that “a number of individuals in the region are still keeping weapons.” The local French chief of security issued a new order. After a three-day deadline for residents to turn over any weapons they still held, “any person found in possession of weapons, regardless of whether or not he is the owner, [would] immediately be executed by firing squad.” The French official also ordered the Greek prefect in the region to distribute the statement widely “so that no one can now plead ignorance of the regulations in force.” His statement also emphasized that “extremely stringent sanctions have been taken recently against gun owners.”⁹⁷ These new, stricter French orders were issued after Greece had abandoned its neutrality and officially become France’s ally.

French commanders feared subversion by local supporters of the Greek king who had favored continued neutrality and resented the Entente presence on Greek soil. The French naval attaché and chief of French intelligence in Greece,

⁹⁵ TsDA Fond 334k opis 1 a.e. 399, 23 (memorandum from Political Department of the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion to Bulgarian General Consulate in Salonika, Oct. 8, 1915).

⁹⁶ DARM, Fond 994, kutija 1, 188 (deputy governor of Grevena to governing committee of Kozani-Florina, Mar. 15, 1917).

⁹⁷ DARM, Fond 994, kutija 1, 218 (statement by French chief of territorial security in Kozani, Aug. 30, 1917); DARM, Fond 994, kutija 1, 217 (French chief of territorial security to Greek prefect of Kozani, Aug. 30, 1917).

Commandant Maximilien Henri de Roquefeuil, suspected the existence of a network of Greek spies and wanted them arrested and interned on an island.⁹⁸ But acts of outright sabotage were rare. Instead, something as simple as a local complaint about the Entente presence could trigger suspicions on the part of the French. A French general ordered the abbot of a Greek monastery imprisoned for complaining that French forces had allegedly stolen livestock but also for expressing views in favor of the king and critical of the pro-Entente politician, Venizelos.⁹⁹ On the other side of the front lines, where in August 1916 Central Powers forces occupied eastern Greek Macedonia, they anticipated sabotage from the local population and authorities despite proceeding with the permission of the Greek government. The initial orders accompanying the operation commanded troops “to forbid movement of people around our location as well as any kind of correspondence from the local authorities and population [and] to take measures to protect against spies.”¹⁰⁰ When the Central Powers forces suffered a defeat at Monastir at the hands of French, Serbian, and Russian forces later that year, a German general at the scene blamed Bulgarian military leadership for “occupying itself primarily with accusing Greek nationals of espionage and arresting them instead of directing its troops.”¹⁰¹

This climate of pervasive distrust, along with the high wartime stakes, encouraged both Central Powers and Entente forces to expand to a mass scale the deportations of civilians suspected of questionable loyalty begun by Greece and

⁹⁸ Mitrakos, *France in Greece*, 90.

⁹⁹ DARM, Fond 994, kutija 1, 196 (governor of Verria to chief executive of interior for the prefecture of Thessaloniki, May 7, 1917)

¹⁰⁰ TsVA Fond 64, opis 2 a.e. 33 (Diary of military activities of the 3rd infantry brigade of the 7th Rila division Nov. 24, 1915 – May 9, 1917), 141g (from entry on Aug. 17, 1916).

¹⁰¹ Document No. 116, telegram from Captain Baron von Grünau, German Foreign Ministry representative at Supreme Headquarters in Pless to German Foreign Ministry, Berlin, Nov. 24, 1916, in Ts. Todorova, ed. and trans., *Bălgaria v Părvata svetovna voina*, 190.

Bulgaria during the interlude after the Balkan Wars. Greek deportations of suspect civilians continued to occur on an individual basis. However, wartime encouraged the broadening of criteria for suspicion and saw more frequent deportations. By the end of 1918, Greece's Minister of Interior was telegraphing orders for the transfer from Crete to the island of Skopelos of 8,500 internees from Greek Macedonia.¹⁰² The French military now joined Greek authorities in Macedonia and initiated its own share of internments and exiles of suspect local civilians both before and after Greece's entrance into the war on the Entente side. Those affected criticized such French activities in contemporary complaints and subsequent memoirs.¹⁰³ A group of concentration camp inmates in France from Greek Macedonia emphasized not only the perceived injustice of their deportation but also its apparently extra-legal nature in their complaint to the French ministry of interior:

We have been deported from Macedonia, exiled from our native land, far away from our homes by order of the Commanding General of the Armies of the East as dangerous to the safety of these armies. Our guests made us leave our country for reasons more or less trivial.... None us of has undergone during the course of [the war's] existence a conviction of any kind, no one has appeared before a court martial despite the accusation that hung over us.¹⁰⁴

The French commander of all of the Entente armies on the Macedonian front, General Maurice Sarrail, described the central role he played in the deportations in his memoir. He also revealed how he contrived to dodge the complications arising from

¹⁰² DARM, Fond 994, kutija 1, 330-331 (Telegram on internees from Greek Minister of Interior Raktivan to the Governor-General of Macedonia, dated Dec. 31, 1918).

¹⁰³ DARM, Fond 994, kutija 1, 196 (memo from deputy prefect of Verroia to prefect of Thessaloniki, May 20, 1917); and TsDA, Fond 771k [Collection of memoirs, photos, etc. of Macedonian figures in the Macedonian revolutionary movement] opis 1 a.e. 40 (memoirs of Ivan Tenchev Gelebeshev), 5.

¹⁰⁴ Letter from Greek internees in Sarthe concentration camp to French Ministry of Interior, Apr. 30, 1917, cited in Jean-Claude Farcy, *Les camps de concentration français de la première guerre mondiale (1914-1920)* (Paris: Anthropos, 1995), 47.

what he considered to be overly legalistic criticisms of the internments similar to the ones expressed in the complaint cited above:

Since operations began [in Macedonia] I had sent to France a series of suspects, convicts, and undesirables. Greeks from Athens, from Salonika, and from France sought to have them return to Greece without worrying about their past, arguing sometimes about the illegality of the arrests, sometimes about the facts of the alleged crime, etc. I could not remain helpless before such proceedings, before the appeals to all the nationalities, before all the laws... with the perilous conditions in which the army found itself, it was not possible to let myself go to these discussions from a bygone era. I could not monitor the individual cases that were raised in Paris. I did not want the coercive methods so dear to the Greeks, Turks, or Germans; still less did I want executions for offenses not legally proven. I decided therefore upon the creation in Mytilene of a concentration camp to which inmates would be sent by administrative action.¹⁰⁵

Bulgaria and her German allies no longer confined themselves to operating on a case-by-case basis when deporting civilians once Greece formally entered the war on the Entente side. They began to intern large numbers of people at once based on their membership in a suspect ethnic category. In 1919, an Inter-Allied Commission composed of representatives of victorious Entente countries surveyed the eastern section of Greek Macedonia that Central Powers forces had occupied. It concluded that Bulgarian authorities had deported no less than 42,000 civilian inhabitants from their homes in eastern Greek Macedonia to exile in various locations within the old borders of Bulgaria.¹⁰⁶ The commission reported that 12,000 out of those 42,000 perished in exile, indicating a death rate of between a quarter and a third. Relief workers of the American Red Cross independently estimated the same high death rate

¹⁰⁵ Sarrail, Général Maurice P.E., *Mon commandement en Orient (1916-1918)* (Paris: Ernest Flammarion, 1920), 234-235. Mytilene is a Greek island in the northern Aegean Sea.

¹⁰⁶ Commission Interalliée, *Rapports et enquêtes de la Commission Interalliée sur les violations du droit des gens, commises en Macédoine orientale par les armées Bulgares* (Paris: 1919), 20. Because the commission was only able to travel to 339 out of 494 towns and villages in the region, the implication was that the total figure for Greek eastern Macedonia was significantly higher.

among deportees, although they estimated much higher absolute numbers of roughly 200,000 total deportees.¹⁰⁷

The summary of a typical deportation process given in the 1919 Inter-Allied Commission report reads like an eerie harbinger of abuses in the Second World War. Deportees were assembled at train stations and “crammed in groups of fifty or sixty into cattle or merchandise wagons” to be taken first to the town of Shumen in northeastern Bulgaria. The train journey lasted five to six days in an “asphyxiating atmosphere.” At Shumen, deportees were taken to a “‘lager’, a concentration camp” outside the town. There they were made to labor twelve to fifteen hours a day laying railroad track. At night, the deportees were “crammed into huts hollowed out from mud,” and “slept on the beaten earth without the least bit of bedding.” The huts flooded when it rained.¹⁰⁸

German supervisors often staffed these forced labor camps alongside their Bulgarian comrades in arms. Internees did not meaningfully distinguish local Balkan brutality from German brutality in their recollections. As one resident of Kavalla, Athanasios Kaïrezis, summed it up, “Because we did not know the language the boss, German or Bulgarian, made his demands more or less with one simple message: do the work this way or the other – if you could not comprehend immediately, kicking and beating followed.”¹⁰⁹ Another internee even remarked that more than the

¹⁰⁷ Horace Oakley et al, *Relief Work in Eastern Macedonia* (Athens: The American Red Cross, 1919), 37; G.C. Barry, *Relief Work among the Villages of Mount Pangaeon* (Athens: The American Red Cross, 1919), 30-31.

¹⁰⁸ Commission Interalliée, *Rapports et enquêtes*, 16-17.

¹⁰⁹ GLA, Archive of Konstantinos Karavidas, 1 (Narratives of Prisoners from the Balkan War 1918), narrative of Athanasios Kaïrezis.

Bulgarians and Turks, “the German officers most of all showed unimaginable cruelty.”¹¹⁰

That Western and Central European military personnel were involved in mass deportations in the Balkans should come as no surprise in light of the similar actions they undertook in other theaters once the front stabilized. The pattern could be observed first in German army actions in Belgium. As Larry Zuckerman has shown, once the Western front became a stalemate in the autumn of 1914, most of Belgium became an occupation zone whose inhabitants German authorities perceived both as untrustworthy potential resistors and as a valuable pool of labor for a lengthy war of attrition. German authorities forcibly deported tens of thousands of Belgians by train to prison and forced labor camps inside Germany, from which many did not return alive.¹¹¹ The French army’s deportations of civilians from the Macedonian front likewise formed only a part of a wider wartime French policy identified by Jean-Claude Farcy of interning civilians broadly considered “undesirables,” “suspects,” and in particular “suspects on the national level.”¹¹² The latter category referred to people who came under suspicion because of their nationality or presumed national identity. Concentration camps set up in France itself housed not only enemy aliens but also nationals of neutral and allied countries and even at times French citizens. More scholarship has begun to consider the First World War as a watershed event in Europe for the use of bureaucratically conducted violence targeting entire categories of noncombatants (in addition to the traditional conception of the conflict as a modern

¹¹⁰ GLA, Archive of Konstantinos Karavidas, 1, (Narratives of Prisoners from the Balkan War 1918), narrative of a child 17 years of age.

¹¹¹ Larry Zuckerman, *The Rape of Belgium: The Untold Story of World War I* (New York: New York University Press, 2004).

¹¹² Farcy, *Les Camps de concentration français*.

total war that mobilized civilians on a large scale.)¹¹³ War-torn Macedonia was simultaneously involved in that landmark shift in forms of violence that would mark the rest of the twentieth century.

As seen in Chapter 1, women in prewar Ottoman Macedonia generally avoided the suspicions of authorities because of their presumed political inactivity. This circumscribed understanding of women's roles among authorities persisted through the First World War. A Bulgarian officer's reaction to the efforts by Elli Adosidou (wife of Greece's governor-general in Salonika) to call attention to the dire conditions of returning internees at the end of the war was typical. In his report to Bulgaria's army headquarters, the officer dismissed Adosidou's complaints as "nothing more or less than a female commotion [*edna zhenska alarma*]" and "female ruckus [*zhenski giuriultii*]."¹¹⁴ On the other hand, the assumption among officials of female political passivity also meant that deportations of women on the basis of their suspected disloyalty were rare. An important exception was Bulgaria's wartime policy of deporting or interning those considered enemy aliens (citizens of pre-1912 Serbia and of Romania) living in Vardar Macedonia, which generally included

¹¹³ See Norman M. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Eric Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign against Enemy Aliens during World War I* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Annette Becker, *Oubliés de la Grande Guerre : humanitaire et culture de guerre 1914-1948. Populations occupées, déportés civils, prisonniers de guerre* (Paris: Hachette Littératures, 1998); Jonathan E. Gumz, *The Resurrection and Collapse of Empire in Habsburg Serbia, 1914-1918* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009); and Matthew Stibbe, "The Internment of Civilians by Belligerent States during the First World War and the Response of the International Committee of the Red Cross," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 41:1 (2006), 5-19.

¹¹⁴ TsDA Fond 176k opis 22 a.e. 44, 13-14 (report of Lieutenant-Colonel Petrov to Army Headquarters, Nov. 23, 1918). Correspondence related to Adosidou's initiative is preserved in both Bulgarian and Greek archives. See also TsDA Fond 176k opis 22 a.e. 44, 5 (Assistant Chief of Staff of the Army at the Bulgarian Ministry of War to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Nov. 28, 1918) and IAM, GDM, file 82.1, 49 (letter from Zoe D. Konstantinou to Mrs. Adosidou, Nov. 9, 1918).

members of both sexes.¹¹⁵ Still, women generally found it easy to stay in their homes if they petitioned the authorities and had not specifically been found to be engaging in suspicious activities. In one such petition, a Serbian woman highlighted her harmlessness in “beg[ging] ... from the lips of my two little children” to be allowed to stay in Skopje. Upon the Bulgarian invasion in 1915 she and her children had initially escaped to her home town of Mitrovica before returning to Skopje. Her husband, a Serbian civil servant, had gone south with Entente forces and not returned.¹¹⁶ Despite the woman’s earlier flight and her husband’s position on the other side of the front lines, the Chief of Staff of Bulgaria’s Macedonian Military Inspection Region gave his permission for the woman and her children to stay in Skopje.¹¹⁷

Nonetheless, the mass deportations of adult males to work camps also brought misery to the portion of the civilian population allowed to stay in their homes, disproportionately women and children. Their hardships generally surpassed even those of people in Vardar and Pirin Macedonia, noted earlier, whose male relatives had been conscripted into the Serbian and Bulgarian armies. In the summer of 1917, Bulgarian Chief of General Staff Zhekov frantically ordered his subordinate in the

¹¹⁵ Reference to a Bulgarian regulation ordering the “return” of Serbian nationals to their places of origin in Serbia is made in TsVA Fond 1546 opis 2 a.e. 24, 134-135 (petition on behalf of Avram Albala and two of his employees to Governor of the Macedonian Military Inspection Region, Feb. 1, 1916). For official correspondence showing the systematic internment of Romanian nationals after Romania’s entry into the war, TsVA Fond 1546 opis 1 a.e. 12 (correspondence on ensuring order in the occupied areas; prisoners of war and internees, Mar.-Dec., 1916), 9 (order from Chief of Staff of the Macedonian Military Inspection Region to prefects of Ohrid, Bitolia, and Kavadarsti, Nov. 11, 1916); 13 (order from Chief of Staff of the Macedonian Military Inspection Region to prefects of Ohrid, Bitolia, and Kavadarsti, Nov. 14, 1916); 12 (prefect of Kavadarsti to Chief of Staff of the Macedonian Military Inspection Region, Nov. 17, 1916); 22-23 (telegram from prefect of Bitolia to Chief of Staff, Dec. 20, 1916).

¹¹⁶ TsVA Fond 1546 opis 2 a.e. 24, 124 (petition from Leposava Jakimović to Chief of Staff of the Macedonian Military Inspection Region, Feb. 5, 1916).

¹¹⁷ TsVA Fond 1546 opis 2 a.e. 24, 126 (Chief of Staff of the Macedonian Military Inspection Region, Colonel Morfov, to the mayor of Skopje, Jun. 5, 1916).

Drama region to “rein in the internments to a significant degree, so that the male population is no longer sent to Bulgaria indiscriminately.” The mass internments were compounding the problem of food shortages in the area, as “many families have been left without working hands or support because of the internment of the male population.” Zhekov now wanted “an account to be given of the untrustworthiness of the person [to be deported] and his past.”¹¹⁸ Nonetheless, deportations continued on a mass scale, at times if only ostensibly to remove populations from areas near the combat zones. In May, 1918, the Bulgarian Chief of Staff ordered all of the 11,658 residents of the town of Serres to be “moved” elsewhere in occupied eastern Macedonia, as the town was being shelled by enemy artillery.¹¹⁹ As his subordinate in charge of carrying out the order complained, the fact that the populations both in Serres and in the areas designated to receive the evacuees were already starving spelled terrible consequences for the operation.¹²⁰

In a limited number of cases in 1918, women heard that their male relatives were actually faring better in their exile in Bulgaria. A few of the men appear to have avoided assignment to one of the harsh concentration camps and wrote gratefully about being allowed to live relatively comfortably in Bulgarian cities. One internee wrote about working in a German factory in Plevna and asked the Bulgarian foreign ministry to allow his wife and children to join him from their home in Kavalla,

¹¹⁸ TsVA, Fond 1545 opis 2 a.e. 1, 50 (Army Chief of Staff Zhekov to the Commander of the 2nd Army, Aug. 18, 1917).

¹¹⁹ TsVA, Fond 1545 opis 2 a.e. 1, 16 (Commander of 2nd Army General Lukov relaying order of Army Chief of Staff to Chief of Drama Provincial Military Inspectorate, May 23, 1918).

¹²⁰ TsVA, Fond 1545 opis 2 a.e. 1, 13 (Chief of Drama Provincial Military Inspectorate to headquarters, May 28, 1918). Commission Interalliée, *Rapports et enquêtes*, 433, indicates that 5,000 residents of Serres (almost half of the population) were deported in 1918.

“where they have no one to take care of them.”¹²¹ Female relatives of such men also petitioned the Bulgarian authorities to join their kin in Bulgaria in order to save their own lives. Bulgarian authorities assiduously assembled correspondence related to these clearly exceptional cases later on and underlined passages especially flattering to them in red pencil, perhaps in order to furnish as evidence to mitigate Entente charges of maltreatment of internees in Bulgaria.¹²² At the same time, the correspondence revealed the desperate situation of civilians remaining in Bulgarian-occupied eastern Macedonia. In a typical petition, a woman from the Aegean Macedonian city of Drama requested permission to join her husband in exile in the northern Bulgarian city of Ruse. “[A]t first we were able to support ourselves with what we had left,” she explained, “but now it has all run out and all we have is misery and hunger.”¹²³

The Persisting Weakness of Balkan States

Their increasingly bureaucratic measures to repress or relocate noncombatants during the First World War might seem to suggest that the Balkan armies and states had overcome their previously weak control over the means of violence. In the case of the Bulgarian state, that impression appears to be supported at first glance by the fact that paramilitaries of VMRO were now formally integrated into both the ranks

¹²¹ TsDA Fond 176k opis 4a a.e. 27, 277 (petition from Georgi Pandremenos to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mar. 5, 1918).

¹²² The 2002 archival finding aid to the opis in which this correspondence is located, TsDA Fond 176k opis 4a, notes that it consists of documents that were collected by the decision of a commission in 1955 “because of their extremely valuable historical and national importance.”

¹²³ TsDA Fond 176k opis 4a a.e. 27, 293 (petition from woman in Drama to Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Apr. 19, 1918).

and officer corps of the Bulgarian army during the First World War.¹²⁴ The loosely organized “partisan detachments” and even the Macedonian-Adrianopolitan Volunteer Corps that had been formed during the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 as extensions of Bulgaria’s regular army structure were gone. In their place was now simply another Bulgarian army division, the 11th Macedonian-Adrianopolitan Infantry Division, one of several divisions recruited according to region and trained and organized in a uniform manner. Macedonian revolutionary leaders such as Todor Aleksandrov and Aleksandûr Protogerov served as Bulgarian generals, the latter eventually named as head of Bulgaria’s Central Committee on Economic Welfare and Public Foresight. Still, Germany’s naval attaché in Sofia, Captain Hans-Jürgen von Arnim, remained unconvinced of the seamlessness with which formerly unruly paramilitaries had been integrated into the legitimate functions of the Bulgarian state. He found a meeting of VMRO luminaries now serving in the 11th Infantry Division with Kaiser Wilhelm in the Bulgarian-occupied Serbian city of Niš particularly incongruous:

The somewhat adventurous nature of this kind of army, composed primarily of bandits [*banditi*], quite naturally aroused the interest of His Majesty the Kaiser and caused him to conduct a conversation with its leaders and individuals; a truly bizarre event in this war so rich with paradoxes – to see the German Kaiser in amicable conversation with people like Aleksandrov and Protogerov, whose patriotism as Macedonians really stands beyond doubt, but who as men of action and propaganda have not refrained either in this war, still less in the previous wars, from actions that European sensibilities have generally avoided.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ For an overview, see James Frusetta, “Bulgaria’s Macedonia: Nation-Building and State-Building, Centralization and Autonomy in Pirin Macedonia, 1903-1952” (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 2006), 154-157.

¹²⁵ Document No. 4, report from German naval attaché in Sofia, Captain Hans-Jürgen von Arnim, to secretary of state of the German Imperial Naval Office Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz, Berlin, Jan. 23, 1916, in Ts. Todorova, ed. and trans., *Bûlgariia v Pûrvata svetovna voina*, 50. The Bulgarian translator of this document advises that the term *banditi* should be understood to mean *chetnitsi*, which conveys the more straightforward sense of irregular fighters. The context, however, suggests that von Arnim intended also the more pejorative connotations of the word bandits.

Von Arnim's skepticism was justified. The fuller integration of men with paramilitary background into Bulgarian state structures did not translate overall into stronger state control over their actions. In many respects, the opposite was the case, as the increased formal role now accorded to former leaders of VMRO gave them greater institutional power to undermine the central state's direct control when it suited their purposes. A frustrated Bulgarian government police inspector, for example, complained in the spring of 1916 about the *de facto* stranglehold the "organization" (VMRO) and its allies in parts of the Bulgarian military had on the administration in Vardar Macedonia. The inspector considered this a particular problem "because whatever crimes may be committed, their discovery and punishment, which is the job of the state's judicial-police organs, is frustrated by the bosses in the area and the influence of Aleksandrov and Protogerov among the military authorities, for whom their word is law." Under those conditions murders were occurring, the inspector complained, of whomever the "organization" wanted to clean out, but under the false pretext that the victims were *sûrbomani* and in order to intimidate the rest of the population.¹²⁶

A veteran of VMRO, Todor Pop Antov, agreed that former members of his paramilitary organization wielded enormous influence in the 1915-1918 Bulgarian administration of Vardar Macedonia: "Such official positions, like mine, in many towns in Macedonia were given to former revolutionary activists, such as Argir Manasiev in Gevgelija, Petar Acev in Prilep, and others," he explained. Antov

¹²⁶ TsDA, Fond 313k opis 1 a.e. 2193, 10-11 (report of police inspector L. Svinarov to Ministry of Interior and National Health, dated May 13, 1916), cited in Velichko Georgiev and Staiko Trifonov, *Istoriia na Bûlgarite 1878-1944 v dokumenti* (Sofia: Izdatelstvo "Prosveta", 1996), 490-491. *Sûrbomani* is the Bulgarian pejorative term for Bulgarians with false Serbian consciousness.

revealed that his own installation as district chief and chairman of the district requisition commission in the town of Kavadarci came at the “invitation of representatives of the VMRO emigration.” His informal VMRO network, rather than the Bulgarian official state hierarchy, was responsible for his appointment.¹²⁷ A German officer in Sofia similarly observed that “[t]oday, almost all employees in Macedonia have been appointed in accordance with the proposals of the [Macedonian] organization, and only the governor and district prefects are chosen by the government from the ranks of officialdom in Old Bulgaria.”¹²⁸

As had long been the case, central state authorities also typically continued to lack sufficient power to rein in the corrupt activity of more conventional low-level armed functionaries. Ordinary soldiers, no doubt themselves dealing with meager supplies at the front, added to civilians’ already heavy burden of formal requisitioning by engaging in opportunistic plunder. In what Antov called “a typical case of requisitioning, or better to say robbery,” three Bulgarian soldiers took livestock from an illiterate peasant from the village of Galishta near Kavadarci and handed him a piece of paper, presumably a receipt. Antov, the local requisitioning official, discovered that the paper, missing any legible name or date, simply contained the hastily scribbled words “I took two oxen.”¹²⁹

Far from consolidating state power, then, the political tensions and economic scarcity unleashed by the First World War only exacerbated the tenuousness of

¹²⁷ Pop Antov, *Spomeni*, 187.

¹²⁸ Document No. 26, report from Captain L. Engelhardt, Sofia, to the Agricultural Information Service for Military Industry in the Royal Prussian Ministry of Agriculture, State Property, and Forestry, Jun. 6, 1916, in Ts. Todorova, ed. and trans., *Bûlgariia v Pûrvata svetovna vojna*, 81-82.

¹²⁹ Pop Antov, *Spomeni*, 202-203, and 204-205, where Antov recalls similar examples of theft masquerading as requisitioning.

Balkan states' monopoly over the means of legitimate violence in a region where such control had traditionally been weak. Both the Greek state and Entente forces felt insecure throughout the war about their monopoly over armed force in Greek territory. As noted earlier, the French command in particular registered acute concern about the failure of residents of western and southern Greek Macedonia to relinquish weapons when ordered to do so in 1917. Throughout Greece, the bitter rift (known as the "national schism") between King Constantine and the Liberal politician Eleftherios Venizelos over whether Greece should stay neutral or enter on the side of the Entente led to the effective division of the state between October 1916 and June 1917 into two entities. Venizelos led a Provisional Government from Salonika, while the king remained in power in Athens until forced to abdicate by the Entente, allowing Venizelos once again to become prime minister of the whole country.¹³⁰ Venizelos's 1916 revolt was initiated by a mutiny among elements of the Greek army stationed in Salonika who had become disgusted by the king's refusal to join the war against Bulgaria.¹³¹ Jacques Ancel, who served in French army headquarters in Salonika, observed that the roughly 1,400 Greek men who joined the mutiny and volunteered to fight for the Entente were overwhelmingly not from the area; they were instead either refugees from Asia Minor, Balkan Wars veterans from pre-1912 Greece, or gendarmes from Crete.¹³² When Venizelos took control in Salonika with the sponsorship of the Entente, his supporter Colonel Emmanuel Zymbrakakis undertook to recruit more soldiers locally to fight alongside the Entente, but found his new quasi-state authority challenged as well. The French commander of Entente

¹³⁰ See Mitrakos, *France in Greece during World War I*.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 88.

¹³² Ancel, *Les Travaux et les Jours de l'Armée d'Orient*, 89-90.

forces, General Sarrail, took note of Zymbrakakis' limited success. "One must not hope too much," he wrote. "The mobilization is downright unpopular. I quote one of my telegrams on the district of Soubotsko, where 39 men out of 1,439 responded to the call." Sarrail noted that "royalist propaganda" was strong among Greek officers in the area and "obstruct[ed] any mobilization operation."¹³³ Many local Greek and Jewish young men from Salonika attempted to flee the city on boats rather than be subject to the draft, although they were apprehended.¹³⁴

The general breakdown of Bulgarian military authority on the other side of the Macedonian front became even more acute towards the end of the war. As noted earlier, lack of enthusiasm about the war and active attempts to evade military service were common among inhabitants throughout geographic Macedonia from the start of the war. Increasingly, this war weariness affected soldiers from throughout Bulgaria.¹³⁵ Inadequate food and clothing, compounded by awareness of even more serious shortages affecting families at home, aroused soldiers' discontent. Awareness of the Russian upheaval in 1917 also served to radicalize soldiers. A Bulgarian army commander in occupied eastern Greek Macedonia reported in July of that year that "certain extremist groups are arriving or have already arrived in order to promote among the soldiers the idea of forming soldiers' committees in the units similar to those in Russia with the goal of sooner imposing the conclusion of peace." The commander ordered the arrest of any such agitators, but also ordered other

¹³³ Sarrail, *Mon commandement en Orient*, 287.

¹³⁴ L.S. Amery, *My Political Life, Volume Two: War and Peace 1914-1929* (London: Hutchinson, 1953), 84.

¹³⁵ See Hall, *Balkan Breakthrough*, 100-119; Boyan Kastelov, *Bûlgariya – ot Voïna kûm Vûstanie: Antivoenno Dvizhenie v Stranata i na Fronta i Voïnishkoto Vûstanie 1914-1918* (Sofia: Voïno Izdatelstvo, 1988); Stojanov, *Makedonija vo vremeto*, 319-338.

commanders under him to raise their soldiers' morale "through speeches, lectures, and all means that can reinforce the feeling among the soldiers of duty to the fatherland and prevent them from deviating from the correct path."¹³⁶

Such efforts to reinstate authority in the army had little effect. By August 1918, the German general commanding the mostly Bulgarian-staffed 11th German Army and 1st Bulgarian Army in Vardar Macedonia reported that "[c]ases are increasing where soldiers – partly with weapons and even in groups led by sergeants – desert to the rear." In two days, fifty soldiers had deserted from a single regiment, the general noted by way of example. "I cannot get away from the impression that the officers are not in control," the general concluded.¹³⁷ The flood of mutinies and armed desertions as the Bulgarian army suffered its final defeat in September 1918 culminated in a full-scale soldiers' rebellion led by Agrarian and other leftist political leaders. The government only managed to quell the rebellion, known as the Radomir Uprising, just before its participants reached the capital and at the expense of King Ferdinand's flight and abdication in favor of his son, Boris III.¹³⁸

* * *

For residents throughout geographic Macedonia, the First World War was thus a disastrous experience. Unlike in much of the rest of Europe, where the public initially regarded the prospect of war with enthusiasm, the catastrophic nature of the war had actually been broadly anticipated by Macedonia's residents, who had so

¹³⁶ TsVA Fond 1545 opis 2 a.e. 1, 55 (Drama field office commander, Colonel Cherveniakov, circular telegram to commanders in the Drama Inspection Region, Jul. 9, 1917).

¹³⁷ Document No. 429, letter from Commander in Chief of the allied armies of the South Balkan Front, General Friedrich von Scholtz, to Bulgarian army Commander in Chief Lieutenant General Nikola Zhekov, Aug. 11, 1918, in Ts. Todorova, ed. and trans., *Bŭlgariia v Pŭrvata svetovna voina*, 624.

¹³⁸ John D. Bell, *Peasants in Power: Alexander Stamboliski and the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union, 1899-1923* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 131-140.

recently felt the harsh consequences of the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913. They thus displayed little enthusiasm for the war at its outset, and even less by its close. Whereas desertions and mutinies began to plague armies on most fronts of the war by its end, these were common from the beginning among men throughout the region of Macedonia when Balkan governments attempted to recruit them into their armies. The desertions reflected the persistent tendency of most inhabitants of Macedonia to prioritize economic well-being and security over national objectives. The First World War also exposed the continuing limitations in the ability of Balkan governments to monopolize the means of violence in their territories as a Weberian credential for a modern state, while otherwise legitimizing violence in defense of the modern nation. The tighter integration of veterans of paramilitary organizations into conventional state structures, especially into the Bulgarian army and administration where former paramilitary chiefs took on prominent leadership roles, only gave them greater know-how and means to contest central state control. Thus a major consequence of the war for the civilian population of geographic Macedonia was to weaken rather than strengthen their confidence in the capacity to provide local security of any state claiming to serve their national identity.

Because of recent experiences from the Balkan Wars, local noncombatants now understood that governments of the Balkan states were prepared to plan and organize their mass removal from their ancestral communities if such a course of action seemed expedient for military or political goals. Upon the stabilization of the Macedonian front, Balkan armies in conjunction with their European allies proceeded to do just that through their military and administrative bureaucracies, after an initial

period of comparatively spontaneous violence that more closely resembled that of the Balkan Wars. This shift occurred in parallel with similar developments elsewhere in Europe, which also turned on the stabilization of the front and the transition from the expectation of a mobile, short-lived conflict to one of attrition involving the strategic management of material resources and human populations. Locals' often intimate interactions with Central and Western European military personnel during the First World War, though in some cases prompting benefits such as the draining of malarial swamps, usually only added palpably to their troubles. They saw few differences between villages burned by Balkan or other European forces, between administrative deportations ordered by Balkan or other European authorities, or between beatings administered by Balkan or other European labor camp guards.

Conclusion: Postwar Case Studies and Wider Consequences

The Balkan Peninsula is well known for its ethnic diversity. But as this primarily social history of the war years of 1912-1918 has argued, ethnic diversity and even local disagreements over national identity that existed in the embattled Balkan region of Macedonia did not result in fratricidal violence there. Rather than turn on one another, geographic Macedonia's inhabitants concerned themselves primarily with priorities that they considered more important than their national identities. And this was the case even during a set of wars that seemed to be driven by national rivalries. The large amount of brutal violence that occurred, much of which targeted civilian populations, was instead largely the work of national armies and paramilitary forces closely associated with them. Nor were the changing forms of abuses carried out by Balkan armed forces from the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 through the First World War phenomena that can be ascribed uniquely to the Balkans. They were on the contrary practices that Balkan armed forces shared with their contemporaries in Western and Central Europe and even practiced in concert with them during the warfare of 1915 to 1918 on the Macedonian front. These violent wartime measures bequeathed immediate and longer-term consequences on those who had lived between the frequently shifting military lines and national borders in geographic Macedonia. These consequences are vividly illustrated in the postwar dilemmas faced by inhabitants of the two villages of Banitsa and Dutli seen below.

Macedonia in Miniature: Banitsa and Dutli, 1919

In January 1919, inhabitants of two Bulgarian-speaking villages in Greek Macedonia, Banitsa and Dutli, sent an impassioned petition to the Greek government which they prepared with the aid of a Greek lawyer. In it they protested an order for them to “abandon our hearths and depart for Bulgaria because in 1913 we supposedly abandoned our land and therefore are dangerous to public security.” Their petition presents a vivid example of how Orthodox Christians throughout the region of Macedonia had responded to the travails of living amid the shifting front lines during the wars of the previous six years. The villagers tried to make the case that the Greek order for their deportation fundamentally misread their intentions. “Whoever wanted to detect an inherent danger to the security of the State in the fact that we speak under the sky of our Fatherland a foreign language [Bulgarian],” the petitioners insisted, “we could only be permitted to describe him as ignorant of the history of nations and as detrimental to this very security and this state of Greece.” The order for the villagers’ deportation would place in question the “just boast” that Greece’s rulers were at that moment making to the peace conference in Paris “that the Greek race is the torchbearer of civilization in the east.” The petitioners conceded that they had temporarily left their homes during the wars and had since returned – a common phenomenon, as the preceding chapters have shown. But they objected to the Greek authorities’ claim that they represented any kind of danger to Greece. “We have returned to our homeland not as spies or troublemakers or bandits,” but “to work and to live by our honest perspiration.” “Clear proof of this,” they wrote, “is that all of us have by our industriousness acquired and kept flocks, fruit trees, vineyards, beasts for

plowing and transportation and other agricultural riches and we think of these as factors in the economic prosperity of our Prefecture.”

The villagers’ petition also reveals their awareness that their peaceful, law-abiding intentions simply stated would not by themselves convince the authorities to let them stay in their homes. As far as the Greek state was concerned, the inhabitants of Banitsa and Dutli had much to account for. Most conspicuously, they spoke primarily Bulgarian, not Greek, and they had in 1913 left Greece and lived in Bulgaria. The villagers’ petition was punctuated with sub-headings designed to explain these facts: “Why we speak Bulgarian”; “Why did we abandon our villages?”; “Why did we return to our homes?”; “Are we dangerous?” Their explanations, some of them implausible, expressed two things clearly: the desperate desire of the villagers to remain in their homes and their willingness to do whatever it took to convince the authorities that, despite their past, they were in fact authentic Greeks and would be loyal members of the Greek nation.

The petitioners indeed embraced an ethnic conception of the Greek nation that stressed its primordial, enduring, and immutable nature:

We cannot but declare with all of the strength of our lungs that we are Hellenes both by descent and nationality. We have Greek conscience and proclaim that we do not descend from the barbarian hordes of the Volga, but are born of Greek ancestors dwelling in these villages of ours from ages immemorial.... Our churches, our tombs, our fountains, and their inscribed marble carved stones are as authentic witnesses, and the ruins from them were adorned for all time by the art of Pheidias and the language of Pericles and the Olympic Gods.¹

¹ Gennadius Library Archive (GLA), American School of Classical Studies, Athens, Greece, Archive of Philippos Dragoumis, 11.3 (petition from the residents of Banitsa and Dutli, Serres region, to the Governor-General of Eastern Macedonia at the Ministry of Interior and the Military Governor and Divisional Commander of Serres, Jan. 25, 1919). The so-called Proto-Bulgars who established the Medieval First Bulgarian Empire came originally from the area around the Volga River. See R.J. Crampton, *A Short History of Modern Bulgaria* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 2.

Having implicitly cast the Bulgarian nation as descending from “barbarian hordes,” the petitioners then offered a patently far-fetched account of why they spoke

Bulgarian:

It is known to all how the Bulgarian Propaganda acting in Macedonia to Bulgarianize it from 1851 and afterward with the schism of the Exarchate, the handbook of the *Komitadzides* and other means succeeded through fire and blood to instill the voice of Krum in the lands of our fathers.² Yet the historical background of this and of the annals of those black pages written of Macedonia which the Volumes of a Library cannot suffice to contain escape the narrow confines of the present petition; we confine ourselves merely to say that if we lost our mother language [Greek], the rulers of the old regime in Greece are at fault as well as the paralyzing Turkish domination and all others responsible for protecting it.

“Bulgarian Propaganda” notwithstanding, the notion that the villagers “lost” their mother language in the space of a few decades and were forced to speak Bulgarian, all the while living under Ottoman rule, was fanciful. But in fact this story replicated commonly circulating Greek and Serb nationalist explanations of the existence of so many Bulgarian-speakers in Macedonia, which inhabitants of Macedonia frequently heard from Greek and Serbian officers who tried to force locals to stop speaking Bulgarian when they occupied the region after the First Balkan War.³ By repeating this dubious historical explanation in their petition, the inhabitants of Banitsa and Dutli signaled their fluency with Greek national ideology and their willingness to conform to it.⁴

² Khan Krum of the First Bulgarian Empire ruled during the ninth century and successfully fought off a Byzantine invasion, killing Byzantine Emperor Nicephorus in the process. See again Crampton, *Short History of Modern Bulgaria*, 2.

³ See for example Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars* (Washington, D.C.: 1914), 50-56.

⁴ Theodora Dragostinova, *Between Two Motherlands: Nationality and Emigration among the Greeks of Bulgaria, 1900-1949* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011) coins the phrase “speaking national” to describe the way in which Greek communities in Bulgaria similarly gained fluency in the language of Bulgarian nationalism and used it in dealings with the Bulgarian state to signify their loyalty to the Bulgarian nation.

The petitioners also suppressed or altered aspects of their recent past that would not have reflected well upon their Greek national credentials. For example, they did not mention their longstanding status as members of the Bulgarian-oriented Exarchate church in an area where other villages had mixed populations of exarchists and patriarchists, a fact that is confirmed both by Bulgarian consular sources from the late Ottoman period and by Greek administrative sources dating from after the Balkan Wars.⁵ Banitsa also had the distinction of being the location where Gotse Delchev, founder of VMRO, was temporarily taking shelter when Ottoman troops surrounded him and his armed band soon before the Ilinden insurrection in 1903. Two days before Delchev had picked up a gun and a uniform he had hidden in Dutli. Ottoman forces set fire to Banitsa after finding and killing him there.⁶ The past presence of this prominent paramilitary figure of VMRO with its Bulgarian ties would have been viewed by the Greek government as marks against the two villages. But it is likely that the armed bands active in the area exerted intimidation more than winning acceptance among the villagers.⁷ The residents of Banitsa and Dutli in any case made no mention of Delchev in their 1919 petition, but highlighted their suffering and enduring “under the bloodthirsty sword of Taska and Sandanski,” two other

⁵ TsDA, Fond 332k [Records of the Bulgarian commercial agency in Serres] opis 1 a.e. 19, 53-59 (List compiled by Bulgarian commercial agency in Serres of villages and municipalities who support priests and teachers from village expenditures, 1906); TsDA, Fond 176k opis 4a [Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religion, 1912-1918] a.e. 27, 312-313 (report by Greek deputy governor of Serres Prefecture on Bulgarian-speaking villages in the region, Jul. 26, 1915, captured by Bulgarian army); Istoriko Archeio Makedonias, Geniki Dioikisi Makedonias (IAM, GDM), Thessaloniki, Greece, file 55 (Statistics on education in the Serres-Nigrita area, 1913-1915), 36, 38 (Serres province school inspector, reports on Banitsa and Dutli for school year 1913-1914).

⁶ Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death: The Life of Gotse Delchev* (London: Journeyman Press, 1978), 359-362.

⁷ A close VMRO associate of Delchev's and well-known Bulgarian poet, among others, indeed suggested that local villagers believed that one of their own had tipped off Ottoman authorities to Delchev's presence. See Peio Kracholov Iavorov, *Sûbrani sûchineniia v pet toma: T.2: Gotse Delchev; Haidushki kopneniia* (Sofia: Bûlgarski pisatel, 1977), 69.

prominent VMRO leaders.⁸ Although the Greek army most likely drove the villagers to flee for their lives to Bulgaria during or after the Balkan Wars as it had done with so many others in that area, the petitioners told a story calculated to appease the Greek government.⁹ In explaining “[w]hy ... we abandoned our villages[,]” the petitioners claimed that during the war “the Bulgarian army violently carried us away to Nevrokopion.” Then, in an account now familiar from others described in the preceding chapters, they complained of the suspicion they encountered on both sides when they attempted to return to their homes:

Just as the Bulgarian authorities did, so did the Greek [authorities] forbid our repatriation, and those of us who attempted to return either were killed at the border posts or were arrested and characterized as spies and interned and imprisoned. It is not true that we consented to stay far from our homes, our hearths, our former properties and the tombs of our ancestors or to lead the life of tramps and beggars in the tents of the homeless.

The petitioners also charged the Bulgarian army with “plunder[ing] and despoil[ing]” their properties both in their villages and in the city of Serres during the World War I occupation.¹⁰ Indeed, the Bulgarian commanding general in the area, in a 1918 report to his war ministry, had acknowledged having received complaints from inhabitants of Dutli of looting carried out by his forces.¹¹ In highlighting these facts, the villagers tried to put further distance between themselves and any perceived allegiance to Bulgaria.

⁸ GLA, Archive of Philippos Dragoumis, 11.3 (petition from the residents of Banitsa and Dutli, Serres region, to the Governor-General of Eastern Macedonia at the Ministry of Interior and the Military Governor and Divisional Commander of Serres, Jan. 25, 1919).

⁹ A Greek administrative report from soon after the Second Balkan War indeed notes laconically that Banitsa and Dutli “were burned and the inhabitants have left”; IAM, GDM, file 55, 36, 38 (Serres province school inspector, reports on Banitsa and Dutli for school year 1913-1914).

¹⁰ GLA, Archive of Philippos Dragoumis, 11.3 (petition from the residents of Banitsa and Dutli, Serres region, to the Governor-General of Eastern Macedonia at the Ministry of Interior and the Military Governor and Divisional Commander of Serres, Jan. 25, 1919).

¹¹ TsDA, Fond 176k opis 22 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs – materials of the Political Directorate) a.e. 31 (French inquiry into damages from requisitioned livestock), 5 (Commander of 8th Tundja Division Major-General Bogdanov to Ministry of War at Army Headquarters, Dec. 22, 1918).

Finally, the inhabitants of Banitsa and Dutli declared their willingness to pay the ultimate price in order to be given the chance to stay in their homes. “Let us be tried,” they implored:

If it is found that we fell into error, we would acquiesce to be tried and give word before the authorities of our Country.... No criminal acts, nor political offenses nor racial conflicts can be charged to any of us... but even if this were true it would not justify the displacement of all with their families, inasmuch as this decision would resemble the arbitrary order to uproot the vines of all the land because some drunkards are to be found in our society. We firmly implore, if you render an unjust guilty verdict against us we bow our head and prefer death or our expatriation to Bulgaria, but do not execute our children, do not become guilty of the deaths of innocent beings before God because we would forgive you but God judges the works of each and the History of our Country will always remember onto the ages this injustice against us and this Nation.

Placing their fate in the hands of Greek courts, they framed a prospective verdict against them as an injustice to the Greek nation. The petitioners hoped to reach a kind of bargain with the state that so many others throughout Macedonia had attempted to achieve since 1913 when the nation-states of Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece replaced Ottoman rule. In order to continue living in their ancestral homes, the inhabitants of Banitsa and Dutli accepted the necessity of signaling their complete identification with the Greek nation, even if in fact they had affiliated themselves with Bulgarian institutions in the past. After having fled their homes (or having been kidnapped by the Bulgarian army as they claimed), they had returned “as patriotic Greeks to give our children to Greece, to the Greek teacher, to the Greek Army, and in order to die by the graves of our ancestors and so that we can be memorialized by priests of our Orthodox Church whose holy books to this day we never stopped caring for and reading even under the harshest persecutions of the [Bulgarian] *Komitadjis*, nor did we stop venerating the icons and inscriptions in our churches with their Greek

inscriptions and their Greek words and letters, to which a simple visit to our churches can bear witness.”

No record survives to indicate whether the villagers got the day in court that they asked for. Although the specific reasons are unknown, the inhabitants of Banitsa all subsequently left for Bulgaria, while most of those in Dutli remained.¹² The villagers of Banitsa and Dutli appeared to have fabricated some of their past in hopes of appeasing the Greek authorities, but the priority of their native village and their lack of sympathy for paramilitary and state-led violence in the region seemed genuine. It represented in miniature the outlook of inhabitants of geographic Macedonia as war engulfed their region from 1912 to 1918.

Wider Consequences of Living between the Lines

Anastasia Karakasidou has argued that a nation-state’s persistent repression of ethnic minority culture in the Macedonian territories it incorporated between 1912-1918 helped, however harshly, to forge “passages to nationhood” for its polyglot Orthodox Christian inhabitants.¹³ The preceding study of wartime Macedonia partially confirms her model of national enculturation, but only by a war-weary, roundabout route. Inhabitants of former Ottoman Macedonia, whether they ended up in Bulgaria, Greece, or Serbia, generally proved willing to travel along such state-led “passages to nationhood” precisely because clinging to any national identity they may have developed before the Balkan Wars was for them a lower priority in comparison

¹² Tasos Kostopoulos, *Polemos kai ethnokatharsi: i xechasmeni plevra mias dekaetous ethniki exormisis (1912-1922)* (Athens: Vivliorama, 2007), 87.

¹³ Anastasia Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood: Passages to Nationhood in Greek Macedonia, 1870-1990* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997).

to remaining and prospering in their ancestral local communities. Furthermore, they were generally keen to avoid violent confrontations with either their neighbors or state authorities despite the brutal but changing forms of violence they encountered during the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 and the First World War.

Although it is of course perilous to generalize about the priorities of whole societies, certain common tendencies do emerge out of this study of Orthodox Christians in wartime Macedonia. Communities in Macedonia typically exhibited a strong desire to maintain and if possible improve their economic standards of living through the political changes portended by the wars. They sought to protect and expand their holdings of land and property, to revive its productivity when damaged by war, and to look for new economic opportunities occasioned by the results of the wars. In connection with these priorities, communities typically saw the education of their children as a crucial vehicle for the improvement of their economic and social status. This motivation led communities to embrace outside financial support for local education. The outside funders in question were usually nationalist organizations or nationalizing governments who viewed education in large part as a way to instill national allegiance in the younger generations. But these outsiders were often frustrated by the indifference of pupils and their families to the national goals of the education that they furnished.

Although inhabitants of Macedonia faced rapid and fluctuating changes in which government ruled them between 1912 and 1918, they were drawn politically to promises that these governments made of ending tyranny, providing security, and upholding ideals such as liberty and equality. Even if many of them possessed

limited specific understanding of those ideals, they hoped for the best in a series of governments that all advertised their governing principles using optimistic language. More concretely, diverse groups of Orthodox Christians, whatever imperial or national polity ruled them, typically aimed to tip the balance of political power in favor of their locality or region over the central government.¹⁴

On the most basic level, inhabitants of Macedonia exhibited remarkably strong attachments to their homes and local places of origin, attachments that were put to the most severe tests between 1912 and 1918. Time and again this conclusion is confirmed in the behavior and statements of people from the region. Emigration to join supposed ethnic kin under a united national state in which they had never set foot usually appeared as the worst possible option, one to be taken only in desperation or by force.¹⁵ When civilians fled during wars in fear for their lives from conquering armed forces who considered them ethnic enemies, many attempted to return and rebuild burned and looted properties, hoping that repression would cease along with formal wartime hostilities. When repression of ethnic minorities continued during peacetime in the form of harsh pressures to assimilate into the dominant national community, residents of newly conquered territories usually proved willing to do what it took to assimilate. This could include learning new languages, switching

¹⁴ James Frusetta's study, "Bulgaria's Macedonia: Nation-Building and State-Building, Centralization and Autonomy in Pirin Macedonia, 1903-1952" (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 2006), highlights this typical preference for decentralized government in the Pirin region of Macedonia that was permanently incorporated into Bulgaria after the Second Balkan War.

¹⁵ This kind of strong attachment to the homeland and extreme reluctance to leave it is also seen in the cases of Greek Orthodox populations of pre-1912 Bulgaria and post-World War I Greco-Turkish population exchanges. The point is made forcefully in Dragostinova, *Between Two Motherlands*, and in Bruce Clark, *Twice a Stranger: The Mass Expulsions that Forged Modern Greece and Turkey* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

church affiliation, temporarily splitting the family as other members were forcibly deported, even refuting accusations of treason in court, in order to stay in their homes.

But staying in one's home was simply not an option for many inhabitants of Macedonia even after hostilities had come to a close. The practice of deporting large numbers of people because of their status as national minorities did not stop with the First World War's end in 1918, either in Macedonia or elsewhere. Instead, such activities only gained momentum and increased international acceptance as a legitimate and even relatively humane alternative to potential future national conflicts, especially if transfers could be carried out according to an agreement between governments to carry out a "population exchange." Hence the 1919 Convention for Voluntary Emigration of Minorities signed by Greece and Bulgaria and the 1923 Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations signed by Greece and Turkey, both sponsored by the League of Nations, were hailed as models by political leaders and diplomats in the Balkans and in the West, their considerable human costs all but ignored.¹⁶ The 1919 petition from the villagers of Banitsa and Dutli to the Greek government testifies eloquently to local inhabitants' implicit rejection of the logic of international agreements facilitating population exchange even after six years of forced population movements. What mattered most to inhabitants of the region of Macedonia during wartime thus puts the question of national identity in qualified proportion. Although people had come to identify in varying degrees with national communities and sometimes viewed national ideologies

¹⁶ On the context of the Bulgarian-Greek agreement and its context, see Dragostinova, *Between Two Motherlands*, 117-156. On the Greco-Turkish agreement, see Renée Hirschon, ed., *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003).

with indifference, they were in any case typically more preoccupied with their higher priorities of economic well-being, education, and political representation in the communities where they had always lived.

Even as various armies fought wars in Macedonia driven in large part by the competing national claims of Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia over the territory, residents of Macedonia themselves typically refrained from violence against their neighbors, despite local disputes that existed among them. On the contrary, the violence of incoming national armies, paramilitary groups, and national administrations threatened to destabilize ethnically diverse local communities by targeting unwanted minorities. Members of those communities could often be seen making pragmatic efforts to preserve stability and trust and at times even challenging the locally destabilizing policies. The region's various groups of Orthodox Christians did generally look with hope in 1912 at the Christian-majority armies of Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia, who promised them liberation from the Ottoman rule that at the time appeared increasingly undesirable for Ottoman Christians. But afterwards, war-weary residents of what had once been Ottoman Macedonia evinced little if any enthusiasm upon the subsequent outbreak of the Second Balkan War in 1913 or during the First World War.

Like their Muslim counterparts before them, many Orthodox Christian residents of geographic Macedonia now became the victims of war crimes. Who, after all, committed all those acts of extortion, torture, murder, rape, arson, internment, and forced expulsion seen in the preceding chapters? As this study has shown, the most active perpetrators were members of the armed forces from the

belligerent states of Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, and the Ottoman Empire, joined in World War I by Central and West European armies, most prominently from France and Germany. Culprits included not only members of armies but also especially during intermittent periods of international peace lower-level state authorities, the gendarmerie and police forces of the Balkan countries.

Also prominent in committing wartime abuses were irregular fighters. Although these paramilitary organizations relied crucially on funding, arms, leadership, and men from Bulgaria, Greece, or Serbia, they also recruited inhabitants of Macedonia itself into their memberships over time. One group in particular, VMRO, even based its ethos upon organizing “internally,” that is within Macedonia, though it too relied on crucial support in leadership, men, and material from émigrés and others living in Bulgaria. Men from all of these paramilitary organizations took part in operations alongside the national armies of Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia and in abuses against noncombatants. To the extent that residents of Macedonia participated in the wartime violence as members of paramilitary groups, their involvement stemmed from a combination of stimuli. The paramilitaries’ typically higher-than-average levels of education and urban experience worked to alienate them socially from the peasant communities where they usually committed their crimes (rarely if ever their own native localities.) Such a social profile also facilitated their exchange of ideas with nationalist volunteers from the neighboring Ottoman successor states, whose own socialization had led them to accept as given the necessity of violent “struggle” and even sacrifice of the innocent for a greater national ideal.

This dissertation has focused on the social dimensions of the fateful war years in Macedonia, while bearing in mind the military and diplomatic background. Its findings suggest that the First World War in Macedonia was indeed not merely a sequel to the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913. The Balkan Wars, with their rapidly shifting front lines, had witnessed relatively spontaneous tactics of terror against civilians perceived to be unfriendly. Individual military and paramilitary units made snap decisions to burn houses, murder, and rape. Although no statistics are available on the incidence of rape during the Balkan Wars, accounts of them in contemporary sources are common enough, even if not ubiquitous. No direct testimony has surfaced from the perpetrators that gives an account of their motives in raping women during these conflicts. But the indirect evidence adduced in Chapter 3 suggests that, as in other cases when rapes occurred as a form of wartime violence, perpetrators perceived rape as a way of humiliating the other side by highlighting the inability of enemy societies' men to protect their female members. The general understanding of women as politically passive objects undoubtedly contributed to their victimization in rapes during the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913. The terror-inducing methods that armed forces used against civilians during the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 resembled those of nineteenth century wars in the area, but they were not exclusively Balkan. As noted earlier, they also occurred elsewhere in Europe from the Napoleonic Wars to the early campaigns of the First World War, which were also marked by mobile front lines.

By contrast with the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, military abuses in Macedonia during the course of the First World War shifted towards a novel, more distinctly bureaucratic, method of dealing with burdensome or ostensibly untrustworthy

populations that came to mark broader European wartime violence in the twentieth century. Alongside taking control of agricultural produce and raw materials, governments began to treat groups of people as possible resources or as potential liabilities whose strategic management would be crucial to the successful prosecution of the war. Authorities operating in Macedonia – not only Balkan but also German and French – organized mass deportations of categories of civilians deemed suspect, as well as large-scale evacuations of civilians from frontline areas. Tens of thousands of deportees were sent to forced labor camps where they faced harsh living conditions and high mortality rates. Testimonies and memoirs of people who endured these policies quite rightly did not distinguish in any meaningful way between the Balkan, Western, or Central European origins or styles of their mistreatment. Women’s exclusion from the sphere of politics actually helped them to some extent in avoiding deportations and mass internments. Deportations and internments driven by ethno-political agenda almost always exempted women during this period, apparently because to authorities women were not potential political actors and by extension were unlikely to pose a political problem even if they were ethnic minorities.¹⁷

The Balkans were therefore matching the modern forms of violence practiced in the rest of Europe as they evolved. Armies from throughout the Continent committed violence against civilians. They also generally underwent the same kind of transformation during the First World War. The cases of German abuses in

¹⁷ A loose parallel can be seen in the differential treatment accorded to German women and men in Britain during World War I. Whereas the enemy alien men were typically interned in camps, women were exempt but sometimes “repatriated” by force, presumably via neutral countries. See Panikos Panayi, “An Intolerant Act by an Intolerant Society: The Internment of Germans in Britain During the First World War,” in *The Internment of Aliens in Twentieth Century Britain*, ed. David Cesarani and Tony Kushner (London: Frank Cass, 1993), 57-60.

Belgium and Austro-Hungarian abuses in Serbia again provide examples by way of comparison. The beginning of the war in both cases featured spontaneous acts of violence against civilians perceived to be unfriendly that among other things sent many of them fleeing in terror from the armies, a situation not unlike that seen in Macedonia during the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 and during the initial days of the First World War campaigns in Macedonia. But after Germany and Austria-Hungary established more stable occupation zones in Belgium and in Serbia respectively, they began also to organize deportations of tens of thousands of civilians they deemed suspect to camps in the interior of their countries, as happened after the stabilization of the Macedonian front.¹⁸ Despite such parallels, most authors commenting on the novelty in Europe of First World War forms of violence against civilians have not noted that the important shift generally occurred sometime into the course of the war and not immediately at its outset. They have thus missed identifying a central cause of that shift, namely the transformation from a war of mobility to a war of long-term attrition.¹⁹ The rapidly changing forms of military abuse bespeak a dark side to the modern integration of the Balkans with the rest of Europe, while also calling into question persistent notions of a uniquely “Balkan” brand of violence.

¹⁸ On German actions in Belgium, see Larry Zuckerman, *The Rape of Belgium: The Untold Story of World War I* (New York: New York University Press, 2004). On Austro-Hungarian actions in Serbia, see Gumz, *Resurrection and Collapse of Empire*. Dragan Živojinović, “Serbia and Montenegro: the Home Front, 1914-1918,” in *East Central European Society in World War I*, ed. Béla K. Király and Nándor F. Dreisziger (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 1985), 252, cites a total of 180,000 Serb civilians interned in Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Bulgaria during the war.

¹⁹ Gumz, *Resurrection and Collapse of Empire*, 89-104, does at least implicitly recognize that this shift to mass internment of civilians in Habsburg-occupied Serbia occurred well after the start of the war once the Austro-Hungarian forces could implement an occupation regime. He explains the policies primarily as flowing from the “bureaucratic-absolutist” outlook of the Habsburg army leadership, but in doing so seems to downplay the importance of the more general situation, faced by several other armies during World War I, of occupying a territory behind immobile front lines during a war of attrition in encouraging the formulation of those policies.

If there was anything about wartime violence in geographic Macedonia that marked it out as distinctly “Balkan,” it was the prominence of paramilitary forces that flourished in chronically weak states, rather than the forms of abuses committed by either regular or irregular forces. As the period following the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 showed, this problem continued when similarly weak successor states replaced Ottoman rule in Macedonia and paramilitary forces and low-level state employees continued to prey upon civilians. The First World War did witness the tighter integration of men who had been members of irregular armed organizations, VMRO and the Supreme Committee, into the regular Bulgarian army. This development, along with the more bureaucratic regulation of army actions towards civilians and the know-how introduced into the region by close collaboration with more advanced states such as France, Britain, and Germany might at first glance appear to have augured greater consolidation of authority by Balkan central governments. On the contrary, these developments exacerbated the the state’s inability to monopolize violence, as men from paramilitary backgrounds acquired more formal training, experience in military leadership and in local government, and thus ability to contest the central government’s control.

Inhabitants on all sides of the redrawn international borders between Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia within geographic Macedonia in 1919 thus entered what became known as the interwar decades with profound ambivalence regarding the capabilities of any nation-state with centralizing pretensions either to exercise a monopoly of the use of force or to serve the needs of its citizens. The end of the First World War and Bulgaria’s defeat brought renewed calls by former members of VMRO and the

Supreme Committee for the autonomy of geographic Macedonia, rather than its partition or incorporation into Greece, Bulgaria, or the newly formed Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. These included memoranda and even unsuccessful attempts to secure separate Macedonian representation at the Paris Peace Conference and later the League of Nations. For its part, the Greek government at the time continued to view calls for autonomy as a façade behind which lay the revisionist agenda of the Bulgarian government.²⁰ Historians from today's Republic of Macedonia and from Bulgaria have tended to see these appeals as straightforwardly Macedonian or Bulgarian national manifestations.²¹

Yet the autonomist demands after 1918 also undoubtedly reflected broader popular sentiments across geographic Macedonia of longstanding distrust of centralized national authority, a distrust intensified by the fact that harsh military occupations had constituted their most direct experiences of that authority. Not long before the Bulgarian army was forced to withdraw from Serbian (Vardar) Macedonia in 1918, for example, a Bulgarian officer of Macedonian background, Angel Petrov, faced a court martial by his military command. The investigation found that he had “agitated among the population in the towns of Kavadartsi and Negotin in Vardar for them to enter the ranks of the existing Macedonian party which has as its goal to detach Macedonia from Bulgaria and make Macedonia a separate, autonomous state.”

²⁰ IAM, GDM, file 82.1, 54-56 (Memorandum from Col. Mazarakis-Ainian, Chief of Greek Military mission to Sofia, to President of the Greek Ministerial Council and Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs, Army General Headquarters, and General Government of Macedonia, Dec. 23, 1918).

²¹ A Macedonian example is Petar Stojanov, *Makedonija vo vremeto na Balkanskite i Prvata svetska vojna (1912-1918)* (Skopje: Institut za nacionalna istorija, 1969), 403-410. A Bulgarian one is Dimitûr Tiulekov, *Obrecheno rodoliubie: VMRO v Pirinsko 1919-1934* (Blagoevgrad: Universitetsko izdatelstvo “Neofit Rilski”, 2001); the Bulgarian government did endorse some of these appeals as a second-best option for the unification of the “Macedonian Bulgarians,” having understood that their defeat in the war would preclude the possibility of annexing all of Macedonia.

The investigator reported that Petrov had indeed succeeded in “turning the local population against the Bulgarian officers and soldiers by telling them that Bulgarian officers were robbing and torturing them and that he, as a Macedonian, was the only defender of the population from Bulgarian officers and soldiers.” Petrov was convicted and imprisoned for his actions.²²

On the Greek side of the border, the state also continued to undermine the fragile trust of its new citizens after the war, as attested by Ilias Vasiliadis, a teacher from pre-1912 Greece working in the village of Zagoritsani near Kastoria. Vasiliadis reported in January 1919 to his superior in the education ministry that the internment of seven villagers “as suspicious for the security of our country” was completely unfounded. The seven men had had the misfortune of living in Bulgaria, the Ottoman Empire, and Romania before the outbreak of the Balkan Wars and were mobilized into the Bulgarian army against their will. Vasiliadis warned that “as a teacher preparing future generations, if the truth is obscured and instead injustice triumphs, it will make my work here very difficult.”²³ Such heightened distrust between states and their newly incorporated citizens in geographic Macedonia strongly suggests that citizens traveling along any “passages to nationhood” as identified by Karakasidou were not making a straightforward journey. On the contrary, the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 and the First World War created detours and even setbacks, deepening the population’s wariness of national projects defined by central governments even as

²² TsDA, Fond 1k opis 3 (records of the Union of the Macedonian-Adrianopolitan volunteer associations, 1912-1952) a.e. 39 , 1 (Decree of the field investigator for the 3rd brigade of the 3rd Balkan Division on the indictment of Angel Petrov, head of security at the rear of the 11th army, for agitating people in Kavadaritsi and Negotin in favor of autonomy of Macedonia, May 30, 1918).

²³ Državen Arhiv na Republika Makedonija [State Archive of the Republic of Macedonia] (DARM), Skopje, Macedonia, Fond 994 [Archival Materials on the Macedonians of Aegean Macedonia Between the Two World Wars] kutija 1, 243-244 (Ilias Vassiliadis, teacher in Zagoritsani, to school inspector in Kastoria, Jan. 13, 1919).

they tried to find a practical accommodation with them. This legacy of the wars helps to put into context subsequent events in geographic Macedonia in which the reach of the central state was challenged. The VMRO reconstituted itself during the interwar period to cause problems for the Yugoslav state and more serious ones for the Bulgarian state. In Pirin Macedonia, its Bulgarian organization became a law unto itself.²⁴ Greek Macedonia later became the scene of Greece's most persistent conflict and breakdown of central state authority during the country's Civil War from 1946 to 1949.²⁵

The Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 and the First World War were of course far from the last time that Macedonia and the wider region of the Balkans became the scene of mass violence. Although the wars of 1912-1918 would not have qualified as civil wars, at least some of the subsequent Balkan conflicts undoubtedly would.²⁶ In showing that inhabitants of geographic Macedonia by and large refrained from taking part in nationally motivated violence against other members of their local communities even in the midst of wars with distinct national significance, this study also raises a further question. To what extent and why did neighbor then turn against neighbor with more frequency in subsequent conflicts such as the Second World War, the Greek Civil War, and the wars surrounding Yugoslavia's dissolution?²⁷ Perhaps

²⁴ On interwar Yugoslavia, see Vladan Jovanović, *Jugoslovenska država i Južna Srbija 1918-1929. Makedonija, Sandžak, Kosovo i Metohija u Kraljevini SHS* (Belgrade: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2002). On the Pirin Macedonia region of Bulgaria, see Frusetta, "Bulgaria's Macedonia."

²⁵ See John S. Koliopoulos, *Plundered Loyalties: World War II and Civil War in Greek West Macedonia* (New York: New York University Press, 1999).

²⁶ Stanley G. Payne, *Civil War in Europe, 1905-1949* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011) provides a useful analysis of the phenomenon of modern civil wars, as distinct from "foreign war between two different polities." He justifiably omits the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 and the First World War from his discussions of cases of civil war. See *ibid.*, 1, 23-24.

²⁷ A recent survey by Mark Biondich, *The Balkans: Revolution, War, and Political Violence since 1878* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) examines the question of political violence and suggests

in the intervening years national governments made more progress in convincing the inhabitants of their Macedonian territories of the supreme importance of the nation and of the threat posed by rival nations. Those inhabitants might then have become more willing to accept the necessity of fratricidal violence. But during the second decade of the twentieth century, Macedonia's inhabitants, whether nationally affiliated or nationally indifferent, generally acted as though they had more important priorities when they found themselves caught between the shifting military lines.

that intimate violence between members of local communities did occur with more frequency in the later conflicts, but was still far from an overwhelming phenomenon.

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