

## THE IMPACT OF THE MACEDONIAN QUESTION ON CIVIL CONFLICT IN GREECE (1943 - 1949)

Hardly one single issue had such diverse and long-standing repercussions on the inception, planning, conduct and perceptions of the Greek Civil War as the Macedonian question. Imbued with the legacy of 19th century conflicting national visions and inter-war destabilizing revisionist schemes, it found itself in the wartime whirlpool of revolutionary change, activating forces — and passions — that were to affect developments in three Balkan states<sup>1</sup>.

An examination of the impact of the Macedonian question on the Greek Civil War can hardly be restricted to the years 1946-1949. Its ramifications in internal Greek conflicts were discernible even in the early phases of the Occupation and throughout the Resistance, continued unabated to December 1944 and, despite the Varkiza settlement, remained active during the interlude of 1945-1946<sup>2</sup>.

Perceptions and realities in Macedonian affairs rarely coincide. Contemporaries suffered much by lack of dependable information on the aims and policies of adversaries and allies alike. Pre-conceived notions frequently substituted for intelligent analyses. As a result, deep-rooted fears and suspicions persisted and created a permanent sense of insecurity, which was further fanned by psychological warfare operatives, tempering with a sensitive national issue for political ends. Meanwhile, dogmatic approaches to rapidly changing situations blurred the vision of leaders and disoriented public opinion. In the end, actors on the Macedonian stage found themselves performing in a theater of the absurd.

During the occupation, civil strife in Greek Macedonia between resistance groups was not limited to a contest for post-war political predominance. In certain cases it grew into a struggle for national survival. Contenders sought to discredit each other less in terms of ideology, and more so by references to real or imagined “antinational”, “treacherous” behavior. Followers of the communist-led EAM/ELAS were labeled “Slavo-communists” (even though most were neither Slavs nor communists), while their opponents were summarily classified as “collaborationists” (even though most opposed the German, Italian and Bulgarian occupiers as they did their ideological foes).

The same tactics continued throughout the Civil War. Slogans and labels of anti-national behavior hardened perceptions of each other, fomented fanaticism and distorted issues. As both contenders turned to foreign ideological relatives to fight their own kin, the respective causes and activities were frequently identified with those of their patrons.

The international aspects of the problem were no less decisive in influencing internal developments. One could easily detect a micro and a macro Macedonian question. While the former referred primarily to the internal social, political, and racial issues in each of the three parts of Macedonia, the latter introduced international elements to the problem. These covered Big Power objectives in the Balkan sub-region,— and their perception of rival policies — as well as the policies of each of the three Balkan states vis-à-vis the Macedonian issue. The recurring crises in Macedonia should more accurately be attributed to the interaction of the macro and the micro elements of the problem .

Decades after the termination of hostilities, confusion over the Macedonian issue persists. Polemic literature, published memoirs of warriors and politicians, and many monographs on the Resistance and the Civil War, perpetuate wartime distortions, if more prudently they do not evade the issue<sup>3</sup>. In recent years, the availability of new documentary sources — though still unbalanced as to their provenance and fragmentary - offers the opportunity for a new attempt at assessing the impact of the Macedonian question during the 1940s<sup>4</sup>.

## II

Wartime and post-war policies and attitudes in Macedonia, trace their origins to factors shaped long before 1940. The legacy of the armed clashes of the first decade of the 20th century — known as *Makedonikos Agonas* — the peace settlements of the second decade, and the mass population movements of the third decade, continued to influence policies (particularly in Bulgaria) and to determine the attitudes of large population groups in Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Greece. Bulgarian-Macedonian organizations, both of the right and the left, had created strong pressure groups mainly in Bulgaria and Southern Yugoslavia, sustaining revolutionary fervency<sup>5</sup>. In Greece, despite a large-scale exodus of the Slavs, during and after World War I, Slav-speakers continued to live in certain border communities of Western Macedonia. By the 1930s, there were two mutually opposed factions: a Greek-oriented slavophone and a Slav-oriented one, (with a pro-Bulgarian tilt), nurturing fratricidal vendettas, going back to the years of the *Makedonikos Agonas*<sup>6</sup>. The juxtaposition among the pre-liberation Greek-, Vlach-, and Slav-speaking indigenous inhabitants of hundreds of thousands of Christian Orthodox refugees from Asia Minor, the Pontus, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, had established a Greek national character in Greek Macedonia. At the same time, however, this population movement gave rise to a whole range of social and economic problems of mutual adjustment.

A second factor, which grew from Bulgaria's revisionist attitude toward the World War I peace settlements, was the Greeks' threat perception from the north. Impressive defense works were constructed almost exclusively along the Greek-Bulgarian frontier. But they proved useless when Bulgaria joined the Axis and took possession of parts of Greek Macedonia and Thrace, without fighting for them.

These threat perceptions were augmented, as a result of the revisionist policy of the Bulgarian Communist Party, endorsed and sanctioned by Comintern, calling for a united and independent Macedonia (and Thrace), within a Balkan Communist Federation. The association of the KKE in 1924 with the Comintern's Macedonian policy raised significant objections even within the Party, but a major split was avoided. Outside the Party, the outcry was general, and KKE's image suffered the onus of "national treachery". In the minds of the Greeks, the status quo in Macedonia was challenged not merely by a single Balkan country, but by a world political alliance, with the Soviet Union at its head. Greek Macedonia, could be severed from the Greek state not necessarily by war, but also through a social revolution. As a result, official legislation was introduced in Parliament, equating communism with sedition<sup>7</sup>.

As pressure from outside and from its ranks mounted, the leadership of the Party finally gathered sufficient courage to bypass Comintern directives, and, in 1935, adopted a new resolution. This resolution changed the slogan for "a united and independent Macedonia" with a new one for "complete equality for the minorities". Moreover, the Marxist principle of "self-determination" of national minorities was reaffirmed and the door was left open for a "definite" brotherly solution of the Macedonian question "after the victory of the Soviet power in the Balkans"<sup>8</sup>. This new Macedonian platform carried the Party into the 1940's (up to 1949). It was a handicap for the Greek communists that the Metaxas dictatorship prevented them from popularizing their new "equality" principle vs. the old "independence" line. Government propaganda continued to associate the Party with sedition, while certain dissatisfied Slavo-Macedonian communist cadres laid more emphasis on the nebulous "self-determination" principle than on the specific "equality" platform<sup>9</sup>. On the eve of the war, the confusion and disorientation among Greek and Slav-speaking groups in Greek Macedonia was complete.

The Greek state, like other Eastern European countries of the inter-war period, had pursued a policy of assimilation of ethnic groups. After World War I, and some hesitation in the early 1920's,

it had decided to treat the remaining Slav-speakers as Slavophone Greeks. These Slavophones, according to Greek statistics, never passed the 100,000 mark<sup>10</sup>. They were concentrated mainly in the prefectures of Kastoria, Florina, Pella, although certain dispersed slavophone or mixed villages could also be found in other Macedonian prefectures. The Metaxas' regime, haunted by the specter of slavism and communism, initiated a policy of accelerated assimilation. Applied by incompetent and short-sighted civil servants, it antagonized even Slavophones of the Greek faction<sup>11</sup>. To peasants of Bulgarian orientation, it served as proof that the Greek state could not offer them a national shelter. In 1941, the occupation of Greece by the Germans and the entrance of Bulgarian troops in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace offered the opportunity for accumulated bitterness to reach maturity.

Meanwhile, in Yugoslav Macedonia a more vigorous serbianization campaign had come against insurmountable difficulties. Local Slavs either remained stubbornly attached to Bulgarian nationalism, or, more prudently, evaded choices, seeking refuge in the regional Macedonian name<sup>12</sup>.

The war and the cession by the Germans to Bulgarian occupation authorities of large parts of Greek and Yugoslav Macedonia, reversed the situation. A part of the slavophone population exhibited their pro-Bulgarian sympathies by taking revenge on their Greek neighbors, particularly those who had settled in Macedonia after their eviction from Turkey. In their zone of occupation, the Bulgarians resorted to genocide-dimension practices, which included the eviction of Greeks and the settlement of Bulgarians<sup>13</sup>.

Among Greeks, opposition to Bulgarian occupation of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace and to efforts of extending Bulgarian influence to Central and Western Macedonia was unanimous. Prior to the development of mass resistance organizations, local community leaders, professionals and intellectuals took it upon themselves to organize Greek opposition to Bulgarian schemes. Even the Athens puppet government found it expedient to ride the popular bandwagon, by dispatching to Macedonian prefectures ex-army officers enjoying a wider political acceptance. The initiative gradually passed, first to the nationalist resistance organizations — Yperaspistai Voreiou Ellados (YVE) renamed Panellinia Apeleftherotiki Organosis (PAO) — and subsequently to ELAS. Nationalists proceeded from the traditional assumption of the dichotomy of the slavophones into Greek and Slav factions, and sought to protect and strengthen the resistance of the Greek faction. Slavophones falling prey to Bulgarian propaganda — frequently in exchange for food rations in famine-stricken Macedonia - or distancing themselves from Hellenism as Slavo-Macedonians, were considered as enemies of the Greek nation<sup>14</sup>.

Meanwhile, a smaller group of Slavophones began to surface within EAM/ELAS as Slavo-Macedonians. The EAM, having endorsed in practice, KKE's post-1935 position on the equality of rights of minorities, accepted in its ranks Slavophones, not only of the Greek faction, but also persons who distanced themselves both from the Greek and the Bulgarian factions<sup>15</sup>. Although this movement had little attraction until the beginning of 1944, it was apparent that the traditional dichotomy of Slavophones gradually grew into a trichotomy.

Thus, on the key issue of the Slavophones, Greek political and resistance groups in Macedonia — particularly prior to the dissolution of the military units of PAO by ELAS in 1943 — differed significantly. In the formative years 1941-1943, crossing fences from one faction to the other was a common exercise. Frequently, this was prompted not by ideology or national inclination, but by sheer opportunism and the need for self-preservation. Such constant movements and shifting allegiances, bewildered spectators and local actors even in the early stages of the internal Greek struggle for post-war predominance. Unable to follow intelligently radically changing situations they found themselves leaning on their traditional perceptions; a misleading yardstick for assessing developments in occupied Macedonia.

In the perception of Greek nationalists, the acceptance of Slavo-Macedonians (by definition non-Greek and possibly anti-Greek Slavophones) signified that EAM/ELAS pursued the pre-war

“anti-national” Macedonian policy of the KKE. On the other hand, the KKE, through EAM/ELAS, considered that its own policy was in accordance with its declared principles and could undermine more effectively Bulgarian proselytism among the Slavophones. Less widely known at the time was the fact that, even within EAM/ELAS, there was considerable opposition to accepting nationalist-minded Slavo-Macedonians into the Greek resistance<sup>16</sup>.

In their part of Macedonia, the Yugoslavs had to cope with an even more acute problem of Bulgarian nationalism. Even the local communist organization had severed its ties with the Yugoslav Communist Party and had joined the still illegal Bulgarian Party. Faced with a dual challenge by pro-Bulgarian nationalists and communists in Macedonia, the Yugoslav partisan leaders decided not only to reassert control in their own region of Macedonia, but also to find a permanent solution to a problem, which, repeatedly had threatened the sovereignty and territorial integrity of their country. Their main thesis was that Slav-speakers, in all three Macedonian provinces, were ethnic “Macedonians”— a Slavic nation different from the Bulgarians and the Serbs — who, consequently, had the right to self-determination and state unification within the Yugoslav federation<sup>17</sup>.

When Tito succeeded, in August 1941, to gain Stalin’s endorsement<sup>18</sup> it became evident that the center of gravity for the Macedonian question had shifted from Bulgaria to Yugoslavia. Greeks of all political shades, engaged in their own internal struggles in Greek Macedonia, had no idea of these developments. They continued to endeavor, and to fight, on pre-war perceptions, having no control to sweeping changes in the Macedonian checkerboard that soon would reach their own terrain.

Svetozar Vukmanovic-Tempo, Tito’s emissary to Kosovo and Macedonia, was the man who, in the summer of 1943, outlined to the leaders of KKE and ELAS the Yugoslav plans for wartime collaboration of Balkan communist-controlled partisan armies in Yugoslavia, Albania, Greece and even Bulgaria. He also briefed them on the post-war settlement of the Macedonian question, as seen by the Yugoslav communists<sup>19</sup>. The essence of his proposals provided for a Balkan General Staff to coordinate the activities of the four partisan organizations, not only against the occupying forces but also against the respective nationalist — “reactionary” in his words — organizations, and thus secure a new post-war social order and possibly a Balkan federation. In Macedonia, cooperation would aim at curtailing Bulgarian nationalist influences among the Macedonian Slavs. Free movement of partisan bands across the borders would be allowed, while Yugoslav Macedonian political instructors would be given a free hand to present to Slavophones in Greece the Yugoslav model for the solution of the Macedonian national question. This would entail complete freedom to propagate apparently among all three factions of Slavophones — the idea of the “Macedonian” nation and language, and assurances that the right of self-determination, including the right of secession, would be extended to the Slavo-Macedonians. Moreover, Slavo-Macedonians would be permitted to form their own political organization and armed units. Tempo avoided any explicit reference to post-war territorial changes in Macedonia. To judge, however, from frequent contemporary Yugoslav Macedonian pronouncements, the Yugoslavs were aiming, as a maximum objective, at a Greater Macedonian state along the Macedonian boundaries of San Stefano Bulgaria, appropriately renamed for the occasion, “Macedonian ethnological boundaries”. As a minimum objective, they sought the annexation of adjacent to Yugoslavia Greek Macedonian districts, including, for strategic reasons, the city port of Thessaloniki<sup>20</sup>. Tempo’s key argument for putting forward his proposals, centered on the need to lure the Bulgarian-oriented Slavophones of all three parts of Macedonia away from the grip of the Bulgarian nationalists and to include them, as Slavo-Macedonians, into the common struggle.

Tempo’s proposals opened entirely new perspectives not only for the Greek resistance, but also for the future of Greece. The leaders of the KKE sensed, for the first time, that they had an alternative to British tutelage. For political reasons, however, they rejected the idea for a Balkan General Staff, although they accepted transfrontier cooperation of their respective partisan units. An initial order by the ELAS General Headquarters provided for the formation of joint Greek-Yugoslav

partisan detachments to operate on both sides of the frontier in order to attract to their ranks both the Slavo-Macedonians of Greece and the Greeks of Yugoslavia. Similarly, Yugoslav partisan units were given permission to cross into Greek territory, while Yugoslav Macedonian political instructors were allowed to move freely in Greek Macedonian villages to acquaint Slavophones with the idea of the “Macedonian” nation<sup>21</sup>. More important was the decision to allow the formation of an independent political organization of the Slavo-Macedonians — the Slavomakedonski Narodni Osvoboditelen Front (SNOF)— as well as special Slavo-Macedonian armed units. KKE leaders, however, shelved Yugoslav proposals for a post-war renegotiation of the Macedonian question. Pointing to the tremendous cost to their own cause, they appeared determined to remain firm on their 1935 position. They only accepted in rather vague terms, that after the war they would seek solutions to problems between the Balkan peoples, in a spirit of brotherly cooperation and in accordance with the principle of the self-determination of peoples<sup>22</sup>.

In the field some of the decisions (such as the joint Greek-Yugoslav detachments, or the independent Slavo-Macedonian units) were not activated, apparently because of dissenting voices within EAM/ELAS. Certain of the arrangements reached with Tempo, took a swing not initially envisaged. Such was the case of the free-roaming Yugoslav-Macedonian activists within Greece, who did not limit themselves to luring Bulgarian-oriented Slavophones into SNOF, but propagated openly the unification of Macedonia. As a result, for a full year — end of 1943 to the end of 1944 — Greek Western Macedonia became a battle-ground of antagonistic social forces, opposing ideologies and national hatred; it was a confused situation hardly found in any other region of occupied Greece<sup>23</sup>.

This insufficiently researched aspect of the Macedonian “civil war”, bore the cross of all pre-war evils. Certainly, on top of the list were the contest for ideological dominance — generally, but not accurately portrayed as communism vs. anti-communism — and the struggle to fill the political vacuum at the moment of liberation. In Macedonia, this dual contest was fought by the anticommunist forces on the basis of national loyalties.

Slavo-Macedonian seditious propaganda in EAM-controlled regions, gave credence to suspicions that the KKE had once again “sold” Macedonia to the Slavs. Given the prevailing climate, it is no wonder that texts of alleged agreements of the KKE with either the Bulgarian or the Yugoslav communists, were put in circulation. Despite detectable discrepancies, these “agreements” were widely accepted as authentic by nationalist Greeks<sup>24</sup>.

In the military field, EAM/ELAS had, by 1944, gained supremacy over its adversaries, with few notable exceptions in Southern and Central-Eastern Macedonia. As EAM opponents could no more oppose their ideological adversaries, they found themselves leaning more and more heavily for assistance and even guidance either on the Greek government in exile and the British secret agencies, or on the local administrative and security services of the Athens collaborationist government. That such association carried the risk of indirectly — and at times directly — collaborating with the Germans, was dismissed on the ground that the risk for Greece of losing Macedonia to the Slavs, in the event of a communist take-over of the country, was greater than an ephemeral accommodation with the occupier<sup>25</sup>. Perceptions of a Slav and communist menace in Macedonia certainly blurred visions.

Internal dissension over KKE-directed Macedonian policy were detected also in the central organs of EAM and ELAS, but more so on the local level, in Macedonia, where political and military leaders maintained serious reservations. In certain cases, such reservations caused the reversal of Party orders, or the extermination of dissidents. Already, prior to the summer of 1943, ELAS officers in Western Macedonia had led their units against Slavophone partisans and villagers on suspicion of being “Bulgarians”. On the opposite side, Party functionaries stood firm by dogmatic interpretations of the Party’s “equality” policy, to the point of encouraging Slavo-Macedonian nationalism. Frequently, behind such behavior were Slavo-Macedonian communist cadres who argued that a

more liberal attitude toward the Slavophones, including the pro-Bulgarian collaborationists, would bring the slavophone peasants to EAM. As, however, the allegiance of these cadres was contestable — either because of their former Bulgarian sympathies, or because of their more recent Yugoslav Macedonian connections — the KKE leaders found themselves receiving mixed signals from the Macedonian front. Torn between the strategic requirements of collaborating with the Yugoslav partisans and building a patriotic image at home, they frequently reversed decisions, sending contradictory instructions to the field. As a result, confusion and dissension among the rank and file increased. It is interesting to note that late in the spring of 1944, SNOF was dissolved by Party orders, and some of its influential leaders escaped into Yugoslavia. In less than three months, KKE once again reversed its own decisions, allowed the return of irredentist-prone Slavo-Macedonian cadres, with Naum Pejov at their head, and authorized the formation of pure Slavo-Macedonian armed units within ELAS. In the end, faced with open sedition by these units, ELAS military leaders, both locally and at General Headquarters, overcame hesitant or even resisting Party functionaries, attacked these units and forcefully evicted them from Greek Macedonia, in October 1944. The termination of war in Greece probably prevented a major internal crisis within EAM/ELAS on this issue. The fact that a number of ELAS officers and men under their command, who had played a leading role in subduing the Slavo-Macedonian units, found themselves subsequently in the ranks of the National Army, should be seen as a direct consequence of the wartime internal EAM/ELAS dissensions over Macedonian policy<sup>26</sup>.

Meanwhile, the admittance of Slavophones, as “Slavo-Macedonians” into the ranks of the Resistance, had accentuated, in certain areas, traditional antagonism and even “racial” hatred between autochthons (*gigeneis*) and Greek Pontic and Asia Minor refugees (*prosfyges*). Although more research is required into the social aspects of the wartime attitude of turcophone refugee groups which took up arms to resist ELAS, perceptions of a possible Slav-Macedonian revenge in a post-war communist-ruled Greece, are certainly detectable<sup>27</sup>.

Fratricidal conflicts developed also within the trichotomized slavophone community. The Bulgarian-oriented slavophone bands that appeared early on the scene, armed and commanded by Bulgarian officers, concentrated their vengeance primarily on members of the Greek slavophone faction. Carrying on vendettas that went back to the exarchist vs. patriarchist feuds of the *Makedonikos Agonas*, they labeled their opponents “Grecomans” — i.e. maniac Greeks — and set out to exterminate physically their leaders and terrorize into submission the masses<sup>28</sup>. Throughout the occupation, this persecuted section of the population sought either refuge in PAO and ELAS, or the protection of the civil authorities and gendarmerie of the Athens puppet government. Others escaped in the urban centers and in Thessaloniki. In the Kastoria prefecture in the Italian zone of occupation, where the establishment of Greek civil and gendarmerie authorities was delayed, persecution of the Greek slavophone faction became widespread. The pendulum of revenge in Macedonia had swung against the Greeks.

More intricate were the relations (antagonisms, feuds, alliances) between the initially strong Bulgarian faction and the emerging new contender, the Slavo-Macedonian faction. As both drew from the same pool of anti-(or non-) Greek Slavophones, identification was difficult and easily led to erroneous impressions. Certainly, there had been cases of Slavo-Macedonians within the ranks of EAM/ELAS, who clashed openly with the so-called “Bulgarian comitadjis”. Generally, however, these Slavo-Macedonians operated as a lobby within KKE/EAM for the adoption of a lenient attitude toward pro-Bulgarian collaborationists. They were well aware that to secure a popular base for their claims on Greek Macedonian territories, they needed to augment their numbers by the transformation of Bulgarian slavophones into Slavo-Macedonians. Despite occasional concessions by the KKE and mass indoctrination efforts by local Slavo-Macedonian instructors and agents from Yugoslav Macedonia, progress was slow. As late as spring 1944, there was a resurgence of Bulgarian ac-

tivity in the Edessa region, where whole villages were armed by Bulgarian officers. It was only in the closing months of 1944, when the departure of Germans appeared imminent, that most bulgarophiles were eager to exchange the Bulgarian crown for the Slavo-Macedonian red star<sup>29</sup>.

On the other side of the triangle, the disposition of Slavo-Macedonians toward Greek Slavophones was not much better than that of the bulgarophiles, and vice versa. Although both factions could be found in the ranks of EAM/ELAS, it was evident that a collision was unavoidable, as Greek Slavophones could hardly condone the steadily growing orientation of Slavo-Macedonians toward a united Macedonian state within Yugoslavia. Thus, in the closing months of 1944, another fratricidal war was brewing at the local Macedonian level. It exploded immediately after liberation and was carried on during the Civil War.

Trying to maneuver among the Macedonian symblegades, the KKE was once again entangled in the web of the Macedonian question. Contradictory instructions and reversible decisions, as a policy for coping with changing or incomprehensible circumstances, did not advance its cause, nor its short and long-term objectives. KKE leaders appeared extremely conscious of the propaganda cost to the Party for being implicated directly or indirectly in Yugoslav Macedonian aims and activities. They tried to minimize criticism and calm even their own followers in EAM/ELAS, by appealing directly to Tito to restrain the extremist Yugoslav Macedonians. There is also evidence that they even appealed to Dimitrov to restrain Tito<sup>30</sup>. Such frantic efforts could have no lasting effects, as long as the Party demurred from adopting, toward Slavo-Macedonian secessionists, the iron-first policy it had reserved for its ideological foes.

To opponents, both within and outside EAM, it mattered little whether, in the eyes of KKE leaders, concessions on the Macedonian issue had some justification: that adherence to ideological orthodoxy on the nationalists question was mandatory; that drawing the Slavophones away from the grip of the Bulgarian nationalities strengthened the resistance; that appeasing Tito and securing his support as a counterpoise to British intervention, served the long-term interests of the communist revolution in Greece.

Thus, the image of the Party had been tarnished after all. The stain of treason was certainly unfair to the extent that it was caused by allegations of non-existent wartime agreements ceding Greek Macedonia and Thrace to the Slavs. But it was unavoidable once the Party leadership yielded to Yugoslav pressures and let Yugoslav Macedonians meddle in internal Greek Macedonian affairs, particularly since Yugoslav hegemonistic and expansionist designs in the Balkans could hardly be concealed by 1944<sup>31</sup>.

In summing up, KKE's wartime Macedonian policy should be held accountable for turning ideological contest and even civil strife in Macedonia into a struggle for racial and national survival. The immediate and long-term repercussions became apparent during the post-Varkiza interlude and the Civil War.

On October 30th 1944, Thessaloniki was liberated. Four days later, ELAS military commander for Northern Greece Evripidis Bakirtzis issued an order to units under his command to man the Greek-Yugoslav frontier with "loyal" troops, i.e. free of Slavo-Macedonian infiltration<sup>32</sup>. Both developments underlined the fact that Central and Western Macedonia had firmly passed again to Greek hands. Soon, thereafter, in Eastern Macedonia, the elimination of the last vestiges of the nationalist forces of Anton Tsaous established indisputable the authority of EAM from one end of Macedonia to the other. Macedonian Cassandras had failed in their prognostications. Greek Macedonia had not been "sold to the Slavs" by the KKE. As for the Slavo-Macedonian activists they had failed to retain even a strip of Greek Macedonian borderland.

### III

As Macedonian micro-politics appeared to recede into the background, Macedonian macro-politics, involving the Big Powers and Greece's northern neighbors, entered into the picture. A new phase of the Macedonian question was unfolding outside Greece, as the Greeks themselves were moving to position in the south ready to commence their "Second Round".

British traditional global security perceptions had let the British government formulate a geopolitical approach to war and post-war arrangements that aimed at blocking Soviet presence at the Straits and Northern Aegean. Despite the failure to open a Balkan front in 1943, Churchill had succeeded in obtaining Stalin's consent to a free hand in Greece; a tacit understanding that was formalized in the well known "percentages agreement". In the concluding months of 1944, developments in Macedonia posed an indirect, though still a very serious challenge to the British position in Greece, gained after painful bargaining<sup>33</sup>. Despite the ascension to power in Bulgaria of the Fatherland Front (9 September), Bulgarian authorities and troops in Greek Macedonia and Thrace had been reluctant to withdraw. They had even concluded separate agreements with both Anton Tsaous and EAM/ELAS for gradually turning over authority to either one, aspiring, in fact, to gain time. It was a desperate move in the hope that the Allies might consider allowing them to retain possession of lands ceded to them by Hitler<sup>34</sup>. On his part, however, Marshal Tolbukhin upheld, unscrupulously, Big Power understandings. He refused to cross the border into Greece, even though he was invited to do so by local Greek Communist chiefs<sup>35</sup>. In the end, it was British (and United States) demarches to Moscow that compelled the Bulgarians to withdraw. To British eyes, despite the happy conclusion, the incident indicated that the prospect of a Soviet descent, by proxy, to the Aegean shores, was very much alive<sup>36</sup>.

Soon, however, a second, more complicated problem began to emerge, with direct implications for Macedonia. In the Macedonian Pirin district of Bulgaria, Yugoslav Macedonian infiltration had come to the open after the government take-over by the Fatherland Front. For almost three months, until the end of November, "Macedonian" national agitation for the immediate incorporation of the Pirin region to the new Yugoslav Macedonian republic, developed into a grass-roots campaign, aiming at striking a *fait accompli*. To judge by the writings of Yugoslav and Bulgarian authors, the activity of emissaries from Skopje and of their local supporters in Pirin, bears a surprising resemblance to similar activities in Greek slavophone border areas throughout 1944. In Pirin, the local Bulgarian communist cadres appeared to render full support to the idea of unification, whereas in Greek Macedonia, secessionist-prone Slavomacedonians came into open conflict with EAM/ELAS and finally were driven out of the country<sup>37</sup>.

Meanwhile, on the diplomatic level, Belgrade and Sofia had initiated negotiations for a South Slav federation, featuring a unified Macedonian federative state. Unknown at the time was the fact that Stalin himself had encouraged the federation project<sup>38</sup>, apparently in order to secure his hold on the two Balkan states. Despite disclaimers by Yugoslav and Soviet officials, from November 1944 to February 1945 evidence mounted for an imminent YugoslavBulgarian agreement. As a result, the British had no much difficulty in persuading the Americans to join them in putting pressure on the two Balkan capitals — and the Soviet Union — to annul their federation plans. Apart from "ethical" considerations (Bulgaria being an exenemy state could not undertake any commitments prior to a peace treaty), the proposed federation threatened to upset the meticulously-knit British security planning in the area. The loss of Greek Macedonia — and possibly Thrace — could destroy British strategic aims, much as it could the loss of Greece as a whole<sup>39</sup>.

For Tito, the project certainly fitted his wartime ambitious vision of Yugoslavia's predominant role in the Balkans. For different reasons, Georgi Dimitrov, still in Moscow, was in agreement. He

advised his comrades in Sofia to conclude a military, economic and political alliance with Yugoslavia, as a first step to the unification of the two countries in a federal state of the Southern Slavs. In his view, such an arrangement would certainly place a protective umbrella over Bulgaria, ensure control of the country by the Communist Party, and absolve the Bulgarian people of the wartime alliance with Germany<sup>40</sup>.

Tito, being the recipient of repeated British warnings should have been convinced by now that the British meant to hold on to Greece, their last remaining piece of real estate in the Balkans; and that included Greek Macedonia. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union had given proof of its unwillingness to challenge the British in three important cases involving Greece: on the Bulgarian withdrawal from Macedonia and Thrace; on the December British intervention in Athens; and on the Yugoslav-Bulgarian federation scheme. Being a realist, Tito gave assurances that he would wait for the termination of the war to stake his claims for a united Macedonia, "in an orderly fashion", probably at the peace conference<sup>41</sup>.

Deeply involved in Greek internal developments and having a superficial knowledge of rapidly shaping Balkan alignments, the leaders of the KKE sought to appraise Tito's and Dimitrov's views for an armed bid for power. In the light of only fragmentary data, it is still difficult to assess whether the Macedonian question had any direct or indirect influence in determining Yugoslavia's inconsistent reaction to KKE's decision to meet militarily the dual challenge of the Papandreou government and the British.

Secret correspondence reveals that the KKE had repeatedly requested military equipment from the Yugoslav partisans, during the concluding months of the war. As late as August 28th 1944, Siantos had sent a dispatch to Tzimas, at Tito's headquarters, to ask of the Yugoslav leader weapons in order to equip a new division. He stressed that "now as never before we have need of war supplies"<sup>42</sup>. In October, just a few days after the eviction by ELAS of the armed Slavo-Macedonians, Rankovic ordered Tempo, still in Yugoslav Macedonia, that "*for the time being* you should not send our own units into Greece"<sup>43</sup>. These two separate directives indicate, on the one hand, that the KKE was preparing itself for a confrontation after the withdrawal of the Germans, and on the other hand, that the Yugoslav Macedonian partisans were alerted at the possibility of crossing the border into Greek Macedonia. What cannot be established, on the basis of available documentation, is the connection, if any, between these two incidents. But there are still more pieces of information concerning the fate of Greek Macedonia that require careful scrutiny .

At about the same time (October 1944) Vlado Poptomov, a leading Bulgarian communist leader, a native of Macedonia, returning from Moscow, communicated to the Yugoslavs Georgi Dimitrov's views. The Bulgarian leader was in favor of the unification of Macedonia, but preferred to commence with the South Slav federation, while preparing the ground for public acceptance of the idea. As for the accession of Greek Macedonia to a unified Macedonian state, he believed that was "a little more difficult" to achieve, because the inclusion of Thessaloniki would be viewed by the British as a threat to their Mediterranean routes. Therefore, it was necessary to build a case by collecting economic, geographical and national data which would support the claim to Greek Macedonia at the peace conference. In his view, emphasis should be placed on projecting the unjust expulsion of the Slavs from Greek Macedonia after World War I<sup>44</sup>. Apparently, it mattered little to him what kind of government would be in power in Greece at the time of the peace conference .

Such views coming from Dimitrov, still in Moscow, conveyed the impression that they had the endorsement of the Soviets. The Yugoslav communists certainly were not opposed to the approach proposed. Successive public speeches by leading figures, such as Milovan Djilas, Vukmanovic-Tempo and Dimitar Vlahov, reaffirmed Yugoslav attachment to the idea of the unification of Macedonia, including Greek Macedonia. In the event, the arguments suggested by Dimitrov, were also found in Yugoslav statements<sup>45</sup>.

It was apparent that during the critical weeks between the liberation of Greece and the commencement of the “Second Round”, Yugoslavs and Bulgarians were in agreement for detaching, in one way or another, Greek Macedonia from the Greek state. What was still uncertain was whether the Yugoslavs would try to force a solution. Public pronouncements at the time and subsequent writings by Yugoslav authors indicate that at least certain leaders in Yugoslav Macedonia and in the Central Committee of the CPY, favored some kind of military action<sup>46</sup>.

It will be recalled that after the withdrawal of the armed SlavoMacedonians from Greece, early in October, ELAS had sealed the border in order to prevent their return. Meanwhile, the stream of refugees crossing over to Yugoslav Macedonia grew steadily. Among them were persons associated with the Bulgarian occupiers who judged it safer to emerge as “Macedonians” in the newly-formed Macedonian state. In the enthusiastic atmosphere prevailing at the time in the border towns of Yugoslavia, particularly in Bitola (Monastir), Slavo-Macedonian refugees were inducted into the “1st Aegean Macedonian Brigade”, and began training for eventual duty in Greek Macedonia. Rumors were running wild about the expected entrance to Greece, along with the “Aegean Macedonian Brigade” of two Yugoslav divisions, allegedly to assist ELAS to face the British<sup>47</sup>.

This was the situation when the KKE decided to make its bid to Tito for assistance. Tito was in favor, but there is no concrete evidence to show whether his promise of support entailed anything more than military supplies<sup>48</sup>. Similarly, there are no data to support the idea that the fate or the role of Slavo-Macedonian fighters, then in Yugoslav Macedonia, was discussed. Probably it was not. This is inferred from the refusal of the KKE, early in December, to accept an offer by these Slavo-Macedonians to enter Greece and join in the ELAS operation against EDES. This offer was accompanied by a request for a free indoctrination of Slavophones in the spirit of the “Macedonian nation”<sup>49</sup>. Years later, a Greek partisan leader revealed that ELAS attacked EDES in order to prevent an attack by Yugoslav partisans against Zervas<sup>50</sup>. Although the reasons for Aris Velouhiotis’ action against EDES are certainly broader than the ones hinted above, nevertheless, the incident reveals that the possibility of an entrance of Yugoslav partisans into Greece preoccupied the leaders of the KKE during the critical days prior and during December 1944.

As the shooting in Athens increased, KKE leaders instructed Tzimas to renew the plea for Tito’s support. This time Tito returned a negative reply<sup>51</sup>. Moreover, he sent orders to divert Slavo-Macedonian troops from the Greek border. Thus, instead of liberating Thessaloniki — already in the firm control of EAM/ELAS — Slavo-Macedonian activists found themselves chasing nationalist Albanians in Kossovo<sup>52</sup>.

Tito’s reversal of his earlier promise, which coincides with Dimitrov’s subsequent similar negative response to a KKE inquiry<sup>53</sup>, indicates that the two Balkan leaders were recipients of similar counsels (or directives) from the same central authority. This is corroborated by the fact, that toward the end of December, Tito gave assurances to the British that he did not intend to push forcefully his plans for the annexation of Greek Macedonia, but that he would raise the issue at the peace conference<sup>54</sup>. Thus, after tampering for a short time with the idea of some kind of involvement in Greek Macedonia, the Yugoslav communists quickly backed down when the shooting started in Athens. Safeguarding the revolution at home had first priority. Ambitious plans about Greek Macedonia could wait for a more opportune moment.

For Tito, the rather quick and unexpected capitulation of KKE/ELAS at Varkiza (Feb. 12, 1945) certainly disarrayed his plans for the future of a unified Macedonia. The only-card left for keeping alive the flames of the Macedonian question in Greece, while the war against Germany continued, were the Slavo-Macedonian fugitives, who found refuge in Yugoslav Macedonia .

The first step in that direction was the formation, under the control of the Communist Party of Macedonia (CPM), of a new National Liberation Front (NOF) for Greek Macedonia<sup>55</sup>. Already, as early as December 1944, Slavo-Macedonian agitators had infiltrated back into border regions of

Greek Macedonia. Working clandestinely, they had succeeded in forming, in the Edessa district, a small “Secret Macedonian Liberation Organization” (T.O.M.O.) to work, ostensibly, for the liberation of Macedonia which ironically had just been liberated from German and Bulgarian occupation and was administered by EAM<sup>56</sup>.

When the Varkiza agreement was signed, the Slavo-Macedonians refused to abide by it. NOF proceeded to form armed bands, to dispatch them across the border, and to commence a small-scale local guerilla war. The key objective was to conduct underground agitation throughout Western Macedonia for the eventual “liberation” of Greek Macedonia and its incorporation to Yugoslav Macedonia. Publicly, emphasis was placed on the social and political status of the Slavo-Macedonians within Greece. New data reveal that, at the time, NOF functioned as the “Aegean Macedonian Committee” of the CPM<sup>57</sup>.

Such activity had its victims. The KKE and the whole of EAM/ELAS movement were the first to suffer. Hardly a KKE opponent in Macedonia would accept the sincerity of KKE’s disclaimers of any connivance with former ELAS slavophone fighters attacking in ambushes government and British troops, reaching the border regions in the early months of 1945. Throughout 1945, the KKE stepped up its open condemnation of NOF’s activities, as being “provocatory”, “chauvinistic” and “autonomist”<sup>58</sup>. But to no avail. At the same time, KKE resorted to nationalist rhetorics on Greek national claims, which included Northern Epirus — but no more the rectification of the Greek-Bulgarian frontiers — apparently in an effort to dispel accusations of wartime “anti-national” behavior on the Macedonian question<sup>59</sup>.

The second victim was the slavophone population itself. NOF’s initiatives, which involved armed activity, offered government forces and irregulars an alibi to take revenge on Slavophones suspected for collaborating with the Bulgarian occupation authorities or with the pro-Yugoslav, Slav-Macedonian organizations. Personal vendettas, however, had also their share of the blame. Although there is no evidence of a specific government plan for the eviction of the slavophone population from the country, it is difficult to ascertain the intentions of local officials and nationalist army officers in the field. There was no doubt that the pendulum of revenge had shifted, this time, against the Bulgarian and Slavo-Macedonian factions of the Slavophones. Certainly, the situation in Greek Macedonia in 1945-46 was not dissimilar from cases of countries emerging from foreign occupation where minorities had, for one reason or other, collaborated with the occupiers, only to find themselves, after the war the target of nationalist revenge. Although in Greek Macedonia persecution never reached genocide-like practices, perpetrated, for example, in Yugoslavia against the germanophone minorities<sup>60</sup>, the climate was hardly tolerable for persons associated directly or indirectly with either one of the two “slavic menaces”: Bulgarian and Slavo-Macedonian. As a result, the number of Slavophones crossing into Yugoslavia in 1945-46 increased to 15,000-20,000<sup>61</sup>

## IV

If we accept the pivotal role of Yugoslavia in Zachariadis’ decision to initiate the “Third Round”, it is logical to assume that a normalization of relations between KKE and NOF had top priority. There are now reports available of secret meetings of Zachariadis and other members of the Central Committee of the KKE with NOF leaders in Thessaloniki as early as December 1945. These encounters eventually led to Zachariadis’ complete reversal of KKE’s assessment of NOF’s activities and its future role. In the place of open condemnation of NOF, the Greek communist leader, speaking to Party cadres in Thessaloniki in March 1946, referred to NC)F as a “democratic”, “antifascist” organization working for the common cause<sup>62</sup>. The new position on this crucial issue cleared the road for the late March talks with Tito, who endorsed Zachariadis’ decision to commence the armed

struggle promising his support<sup>63</sup>.

By May 1946, the first Greek communist armed bands began to cooperate with NOF bands, already in the field, while KKE cadres in the border prefectures of Macedonia entered into discussions with local NOF leaders on matters of common interest. Still, however, both organizations maintained their organizational and operational autonomy<sup>64</sup>.

From May to November 1946, high level negotiations were conducted between KKE, on the one hand, and NOF, CPM and CPY on the other. Details are fragmentary but sufficient to draw the picture<sup>65</sup>. Many obstacles had to be surmounted and certain misunderstandings to be cleared out before a final agreement could be reached. It is interesting to note that Lazar Kolishevski head of the CPM, found it necessary to report to Tito, as late as September 7th 1946, that in "Aegean Macedonia", the leaders of the Greek andartes "are not willing to carry out decisions in the spirit of the discussions held with Zachariadis, but they try, with every means at their disposal, to disorganize and dissolve the Macedonian units". He added that in Greek Macedonia there were only 70 Greek compared to over 500 "Macedonian" andartes, operating under the orders of NOF. Again, on September 24th, Kolishevski, reporting on Markos Vafiadis' arrival in Skopje, informed the CC of CPY of Vafiadis' request to Slavo-Macedonian leaders to go to Greece. His instructions however, to NOF — according to Kolishevski — were not in the spirit of a previous meeting attended by Vafiadis, Tito, Djilas and Kolishevski. Therefore, he wished to know whether any changes were made "to the work in Aegean Macedonia"<sup>66</sup>.

Tito's reply, cabled on October 7th, sets out, in a clear way, the ground rules of cooperation between the CPY and KKE, in reference to the role and position of the Slavo-Macedonians in the Greek armed struggle. In the first place, Tito pleads ignorance, (no doubt to Kolishevski's shocked surprise) asking the CPM to explain what units in Aegean Macedonia "you consider as ours". He then delineates Yugoslav policy as follows: "We consider that in this situation all units in the territory of Greece should be under the unified direction of Greek commands, with which you should now be in touch. Your people should not be mixed now with the organization and direction of the armed struggle in Greece. You should limit your activity in Aegean Macedonia only to offering specific assistance, as with the press e.t.c...."<sup>67</sup>.

This document reflects the spirit of the KKE-NOF agreement, finally reached in November 1946. NOF undertook to sever its organizational links with CPM, to dissolve its political organization and its armed bands, and to fuse into the KKE and the Democratic Army of Greece (DAG). It must be inferred that NOF assumed the obligation to desist from conducting any irredentist activity inside Greece<sup>68</sup>. The decision of the leadership of the KKE to put aside its reservations about NOF — despite the latter's behavior during 1945, its irredentist pronouncements and its direct dependence on CPM — was apparently influenced by the following assessments: A great number of Slavo-Macedonians had taken refuge in Yugoslavia, thus offering a convenient reservoir of manpower. NOF's clandestine network in the urban and rural districts of Kastoria, Florina and Edessa, could be turned to the benefit of the struggle and facilitate a quick take over of the important border triangle, adjacent to Yugoslavia and Albania. Furthermore, cooperation with the local CPM and the agencies of the S.R. of Macedonia would be rendered smoother, particularly for the flow of men and supplies across the border. On the contrary, failure to reach an understanding with NOF, could raise a series of problems with S.R. Macedonia authorities and make extremely difficult a meaningful cooperation with, and support from, Yugoslavia. No one could possibly deny that a full-scale uprising in Greece without Yugoslav support would have been problematic, to say the least<sup>69</sup>.

There were of course two major drawbacks in reaching an agreement with NOF. On the one hand, the KKE exposed itself, for a third time, to its adversaries on the sensitive issue of collaboration with the Slavs. On the other hand, it ran the risk of a recurrence of Slavo-Macedonian secessionist activity along the lines of 1944. To counter the first, the KKE launched its own campaign against

“monarchofascism” and “Anglo-American imperialism”. To meet the second, it endeavored to maintain a firm grip on Slavo-Macedonian activists without, however, causing rupture or defections.

On the basis of recently released data from the Yugoslav side<sup>70</sup>, KKE proceeded, at least on paper, to accord the Slavo-Macedonians full equality within the Party, with proportional representation in KKE organs and DAG units of various echelons. In prefectures with a sizeable proportion of slavophone population, NOF cadres would have a leading role in regional Party organizations, while dissemination of the “Macedonian” national idea — but not secessionism — would not be obstructed. Although not identified as such, these concessions appeared to lead to a form of self-rule in the three border prefectures, under the aegis of KKE. However, no special Slavo-Macedonian armed units, or a separate Slavo-Macedonian party organization, would be allowed to function inside Greece.

It is difficult to ascertain the role of the Slavo-Macedonians within DAG. NOF sources tend to classify — erroneously — all Slavophones as Slavo-Macedonians, and, thus, exaggerate their participation and importance in the armed struggle. There have been claims that 50 percent of the DAG fighters, of its casualties and of the refugees were Slavo-Macedonians. Slavo-Macedonian andartes by July 1947 numbered about 6000, and by the end of 1948, 14,000, compared to the total DAG force of approximately 40,000<sup>71</sup>. Even if these figures are probably inflated, it is a fact that from the end of 1946 to the end of 1948, Slavophones furnished the KKE with much-needed manpower, disproportionate to their numbers. Inhabiting border regions frequently passing under DAG control, they were more easily exposed to voluntary or compulsory subscription. Their importance, however, increased during the last year of the Civil War, when most large-scale military operations took place in Western Macedonia and adjacent Epirus<sup>72</sup>.

Nevertheless, the induction of Slavo-Macedonians into DAG units was also a cause of internal friction, arising from mutual suspicions. When battle-ready Slavo-Macedonian bands (estimated at approximately 1000 men) joined, in December 1946, the newly-formed KKE-sponsored units, they were immediately sent for duty to Central Greece. There, they were disbanded and the men were allocated to new mixed units under trusted KKE commanders. Most of the Slavo-Macedonian cadres found themselves demoted or given secondary posts<sup>73</sup>. Such treatment became a major irritant during the next two years. NOF complained that despite the original agreement, no Slavo-Macedonian cadres reached top positions. Moreover, Slavo-Macedonians of all ranks, who had either been associated in wartime with NOF and the pro-Bulgarian nationalist bands (and later apparently repented), or had taken refuge in Yugoslav Macedonia after 1944, had become suspect of “Macedonian” nationalism. Following KKE’s split with the CPY, pro-Tito Slavo-Macedonians, who deserted DAG and KKE, accused KKE for promoting within the Party and DAG commands Slavophones who had no connection with NOF, simply because their “Macedonian” national orientation was “dormant” or worse, yet, they were “Grecomans”. In his long letter to the CC KKE, on June 2nd 1949, NOF leader Keramidziev complained that, “we had to struggle against the Great Idea chauvinism of many Greek cadres... who were united *with the most fanatic anti-Macedonian elements, i.e. Macedonians from villages who said they were Greeks*<sup>74</sup>.

On its part, the KKE leadership, in its tirades against the pro-Tito faction of NOF, revealed that throughout the two-year struggle, 1947- 1948, Slavo-Macedonian activists continued to conduct propaganda within Greece for the unification of Greek Macedonia to the P.R. of Macedonia, to undermine the in the P. R. of Macedonia, unity of Greeks and Slavo-Macedonian fugitives and, even, to organize defections from DAG<sup>75</sup>.

In assessing the Slavo-Macedonian factor in KKE’s armed struggle, it becomes apparent that until the Tito-Stalin split in mid-1948 the KKE leadership had successfully exploited the Slavo-Macedonians to its own benefit. Contrary to what had happened in 1943-1946 — when the Slavo-Macedonians of Greece were under the guidance and patronage of the Yugoslav Macedonian parti-

sans — after 1946, the KKE-CPY agreement allowed the KKE to exercise its authority over the Slavo-Macedonians free of irritating interventions by Skopje emissaries or commissars. What the KKE apparently underestimated was the extent of NOF's ability to spread Slavo-Macedonian nationalism among the slavophone villagers, taking advantage of opportunities offered by controlling the administration in certain villages, teaching the language and printing Slavo-Macedonian publications. NOF's efforts were similarly aided by KKE's classification as "Slavo-Macedonians" — and later as "Makedones" — of all Slavophones, a fact that automatically ignored the Greek faction of the Slavophones. What mattered to the Party at the time was the classification of Slavophones as either loyal to KKE, or suspect of Yugoslav Macedonian orientation.

Undoubtedly, this situation could not pass unnoticed by the Greek faction of Slavophones who had found themselves on the other side of the fence in the Greek civil strife. Armed by the National Army, they fought their own "national" war. In certain cases, entire slavophone villages — which have been appropriately called "village-fortresses of Macedonia"<sup>76</sup> — organized their own defense units and, for the duration of the war, stood firm against their national as well as their ideological foes. In those regions fratricidal conflict meant exactly that: brother was fighting brother, as by choice or coercion members of the same family found themselves frequently in opposite camps.

To the other side — which for the sake of convenience is more appropriately identified as the government camp — much of what has only recently been revealed was unknown at the time, or fragmentary and distorted. Government agencies had to depend on public pronouncements by Yugoslavs, NOF and KKE, as well as on information of risky trustworthiness, provided by captured andartes. Led by its own perceptions, and ignorant of nuances in the Macedonian aims of the protagonists of the other side, the government camp tended to lump the aims of KKE, Slavo-Macedonians, Yugoslavs, Bulgarians and the Soviet Union into a carefully-orchestrated conspiracy for the detachment of Macedonia from Greece<sup>77</sup>. Although such a simplistic view ignored the intricacies of the problem, there was ample justification to substantiate the government's threat perception. The wartime experiences with Yugoslav-supported secessionist activities of the Slavo-Macedonians, which continued in the post-Varkiza interlude, were fresh in the minds of the policymakers and the public. Repeated Yugoslav references, throughout 1945- 1947, for the unification of the three parts of Macedonia, kept alive and gave a sense of imminence to the threat from the north. Claims to Greek Thrace presented by Bulgaria at the Paris peace conference and supported by the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia added insult to injury, but also increased apprehensions. And, on top of these, came the Tito-Dimitrov Bled agreement, in the summer of 1947 which revealed only a thinly-veiled plan for a unified Macedonian federative state within a South Slav Federation.

Internally, the perception for the detachment of Macedonia as a direct consequence of a communist victory in the Civil War was more or less shared by the entire political spectrum of the government camp<sup>78</sup>. Much as it happened in Macedonia during the war years, confrontation with the KKE was removed from the ideological platform of "a bourgeois democracy vs. a proletariat communist state", and developed along the lines of "the nation vs. its enemies"<sup>79</sup>. The KKE was identified with Soviet expansionism and, consequently, it was argued, a struggle against it was mandatory for all good patriots who ought to rally to the government camp to stem off the Slavic menace. In short, the fate of Macedonia became the rallying point for government supporters. It matters little whether this policy was the product of a cool assessment of all the parameters of the question (a rather difficult exercise), or the result of the government's own psychological warfare techniques. What counted at that moment was that, in the government vs. KKE propaganda contest, the government was scoring points and the KKE was only too conscious of its consequences, but unable to react<sup>80</sup>.

Apart from propaganda strategy, legal measures for the suppression of the rebellion, focused also on the threat perception to the northern provinces. Thus the *Gamma Psifisma*, enacted in June 1946, provided for court martials, initially, only in Northern Greece. Even when these judicial pro-

ceedings were extended to the whole of Greece, persons were persecuted and sentenced to life imprisonment or death, on two major counts: the violent overthrow of the existing political system, and the detachment of part or the whole of the state (Compulsory Law 509)<sup>81</sup>. The KKE was held by the government camp guilty of secessionist (“autonomist”) activities in Macedonia. Prior, however, to 1949 no convincing legal proof could be brought against it to justify direct implication in the annexationist schemes of Greece’s northern neighbors — KKE’s allies and supporters.

On the international level, the Macedonian question became once again the focal point of the Greek government’s case. Greece, it was argued, was faced not with an internal civil war, but with an international conspiracy aiming at turning Greece into a communist state, or a movement aspiring at detaching Macedonia. Both the earlier U.N. Commission of Investigation Concerning Greek Frontier Incidents and its successor, the U.N. Special Committee on the Balkans, were provided with whatever evidence was available on the subject: even wartime alleged, but in fact forged KKE agreements with neighboring communist parties for the cession of Macedonia to a Balkan communist federation. There was, of course, ample documentation for the material support offered to the Greek communist insurgents by Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, and for statements by these states on the future unification of Macedonia. But until the latter part of 1947, when the Bled agreement was concluded, it was difficult to build a thoroughly convincing case, particularly for inquisitive third parties<sup>82</sup>.

What counted most, however, was whether the Greek government’s threat perceptions were shared in London and Washington<sup>83</sup>. The British government, having already committed itself in retaining Greece to the Western fold, needed little convincing. In the event, it frequently spear-headed anti-Soviet bloc polemics, utilizing the argument of the threat posed to Greece’s territorial integrity by Yugoslav aspirations on Macedonia. Similarly, the United States, being more and more involved in Greek affairs, found the Macedonian question a valid argument to justify its policy<sup>84</sup>. Yet, at times, more reserved assessments were voiced. Such was the case of Labor Foreign Minister Bevin, in late 1946, who held the view that Yugoslav public statements for the unification of Macedonia were for internal consumption, and in no way could constitute an imminent threat to Greece’s territorial integrity. Later, however, when a Soviet threat in the direction of the Straits began to develop, the Foreign Office and subsequently the State Department, assumed that the case of Macedonia and Thrace, along with the Straits, constituted a well-designed Soviet objective aimed at controlling the Aegean. What appeared to be in doubt was the timing for a Soviet initiative. Thus, the Macedonian question gradually emerged as a peon in the global context of East-West relations<sup>85</sup>.

It is interesting to note that for the same reasons, the Turks also expressed deep concern about rumors for the establishment of a unified Macedonian state that would include Greek Macedonia. In the view of a Turkish diplomat, a Slavo-Macedonian state, with Thessaloniki included, would reduce Greece to impotence and cut off Turkey from Europe. In such a case, he concluded, “if there were no Greece, there would be no Turkey”<sup>86</sup>.

Under the circumstances, the State Department took the view that the crux of the Macedonian problem was the maintenance of the territorial integrity of Greece itself. And although the United States could have no saying over a possible unification of the Bulgarian and Yugoslav parts of Macedonia, the preservation of Greece’s frontiers against irredentist claims by the northern neighbors, justified “all possible and appropriate steps” by the U.S. Government<sup>87</sup>.

Such concern was not without some basis. The Macedonian unification scheme that had emerged in the last months of 1944, in the abortive Yugoslav Bulgarian negotiations for a South-Slav Federation, resurfaced with the conclusion of the Tito-Dimitrov agreements at Bled and Evxinograd (August and November 1947, respectively)<sup>88</sup>. Despite certain nuances as to the timing and the sequence of the steps necessary to implement the agreements, the fact was that the leader of Bulgaria committed his country to the cession of Pirin Macedonia to Yugoslavia. Along with the last portion of Macedonian land, Dimitrov’s Bulgaria was relinquishing all future interest in Macedonian affairs

in exchange for a federation arrangement with Yugoslavia and the return of the “Western Bulgarian regions”, annexed by Yugoslavia after World War I.

There is no doubt that an agreement was reached at Bled on the fate of Greek Macedonia as well. No concrete details were revealed at the time, nor have they become known since. Two years, later, however, in 1949, Tito publicly revealed that the case of Greek Macedonia had been examined and that the two leaders had decided to “definitely solve the Macedonian question *as a whole*; the Macedonian people not only in the Vardar, but in Pirin, *and Aegean Macedonia*, would receive their rights and they alone will decide on their future”<sup>89</sup>.

Despite the fate of the South Slav federation, the signing of the agreement was a turning point for the Macedonian question. Yugoslavia had finally secured a contractual agreement from Bulgaria to be the master of the coveted land. But what had been the position of the KKE leaders on this triangular question? There was an inexplicable silence at the time, that has been maintained to this day. Was Zachariadis aware of the Yugoslav-Bulgarian deliberations throughout 1947? Was he consulted by Tito and / or Dimitrov? And if so, what were his reactions, if not his commitments? Opponents suspected the worse: possibly a tacit consent. But they have produced no proof to support their suspicions. The question resurfaced after the publication in 1979 of certain documents from the KKE archives<sup>90</sup>.

On April 14th 1947, Zachariadis, then in Yugoslavia along with part of the Polit Bureau of the KKE, sent to Vafiadis his instructions outlining the strategic objective of the struggle. He wrote<sup>91</sup>:

Events show that the region that constitutes the weakest and the most important point for the enemy, which offers the people’s democratic movement the most favorable politico-social prerequisites, is Macedonia and Thrace, with Thessaloniki at the center. Thus, under these conditions, a basic objective for DAG today is the occupation of Thessaloniki, which would bring a decisive change in the situation and would solve our entire problem.

Zachariadis presented the same views in his memorandum to Tito, following their talks on April 22nd. He added that Northern Greece for “monarchofascism” was its weakest — and the most important — point from a social economic, political, *national*, military and geographical viewpoint”. Consequently, DAG was planning to concentrate its main strike in this region. The final objective was to secure a territorial base for the establishment of a nucleus for a “Free Greece”<sup>92</sup>.

The plan was approved by Tito and subsequently by the Soviet leadership. It was endorsed by the Third Plenum of the CC of KKE in October 1947. Whether this plan, discussed extensively with the leadership of the CPY — which would bear most of the burden for its logistical support — fitted Tito’s perception for a South Slav federation and a unified Macedonian state is still a matter for speculation. The timing, however, coincides with the Yugoslav-Bulgarian negotiations, which led to the Bled agreement. Furthermore, reference in Zachariadis’ memorandum to Tito, to the *national* factor, as one of the points of weakness of the Greek government for keeping Northern Greece — a reference missing in the instructions sent to Vafiadis — should be interpreted as referring to the question of national minorities. To venture further in speculation without more concrete evidence, is precarious. Nevertheless, the time coincidence of the discussion of the two projects — the establishment of a “free Greek state” in Northern Greece, and the unified Macedonian state in the context of a South Slav federation — leaves Zachariadis exposed to the assumption that he might have had at least some knowledge of the aims of the two Balkan leaders.

Putting aside the military aspects of the Civil War, it appears that the aid furnished to the KKE was not up to the requirements of the initial, grandiose plan for capturing Northern Greece, including Thessaloniki. Meanwhile, the rapid deterioration of Soviet-Yugoslav relations did not augur well for the revolution in Greece. The crisis that came into the open, late in June 1948, left no choice to Zachariadis but to side with the Soviet Union.

This time, the spotlight of the Macedonian question shifted in the direction of Yugoslav Mace-

donia. Initial statements by Bulgarian leaders denied neither the existence of “Macedonians”, nor the ideal of a “united Macedonian state”. But, as it has frequently happened in the history of Macedonia, names assumed different meanings in the service of different and, at times, contradictory political ends. The “Macedonians” — in Bulgarian propaganda literature — were now linked to the Bulgarians, while reference to a “united Macedonian state” in a South Slav federation, certainly was not the concept envisaged at Bled; it rather brought recollections of the 1924 Comintern prototype. In the late months of 1948, however, a long-term solution to the Macedonian question was not the major preoccupation of the Bulgarian leaders, who were now hard at work to eradicate four years of “Macedonian” infiltration in Bulgarian Macedonia, before turning their attention to reintroducing Bulgarian nationalism among the population of the P.R. of Macedonia<sup>93</sup>.

Such was the situation in his immediate vicinity when Zachariadis sought to seize full control of NOF and the Slavo-Macedonians at home. New documents reveal that in the second half of 1948, KKE, having already sided with Cominform, lost no time to remove the pro-Tito Slavo-Macedonians from the leadership of NOF and from important posts in regional KKE organizations. By one stroke, the KKE leadership freed itself not only of avowed Titoists, but also of extremist nationalists, maintaining close relations with the P.R. of Macedonia. Nevertheless, instead of attempting to stamp out ‘Macedonian’ nationalism and consolidate the slavophone element within the Greek revolutionary movement, Zachariadis revealed his weakness by going in the other direction. Having placed trusted Slavophones at the head of NOF, he initiated a series of measures aiming at raising the level of indoctrination and education of slavophone peasants and andartes in the concept of the “Macedonian” nation<sup>94</sup>. That was, no doubt, a policy full of contradictions, dictated by international developments and the specific requirements of the armed struggle. Imitating the Bulgarian communists, Zachariadis tried to profit — or at least not to lose — from the turn of Macedonian politics. His own gamble — if it were not dictated from abroad — came late in January 1949.

The announcement of the Fifth Plenum resolution (31.1.1949), particularly its reference to the Macedonia question, created reverberations around the world’s chanceries, reappraisal of attitudes towards the KKE of the fence-standing segment of Greek public opinion and politicians, and eventually the hardening of Greek government policy towards the KKE that survived the end of the Civil War for decades. Worse yet, it made collaboration with Tito’s Yugoslavia almost impossible. In-Party criticism came into the open immediately after the defeat, and continued until Zachariadis’ expulsion from the leadership of the Party<sup>95</sup>.

Briefly stated, the new Party line, as presented in a series of documents and public statements, was the re-introduction of the 1924 platform for an independent Macedonian state, probably within a Balkan communist federation. The difference was that, whereas the 1924 decision was merely a statement of intent, its 1949 reproduction appeared as an action program of a revolution in full swing. Certainly, the full extent of this major policy shift, is not and could not be reflected in a carefully worded Central Committee resolution. To understand the policy behind it, the historian needs to see all official statements made at the time (including those of KKE-controlled NOF) the measures taken by the KKE leadership to implement the decision, and the criticism voiced from within the Party hierarchy after the defeat, while Zachariadis was still at the helm. Undoubtedly, detailed accounts and documents released in recent years by pro-Tito Slavo-Macedonians give a better perspective, although caution is needed for points of omission.

The basic, much-quoted texts are the Resolution of the Fifth Plenum of the CC of KKE (January 31st), the Decision of the Executive Council of NOF (February 4th), KKE and NOF “disclaimers” (broadcast by Radio Free Greece on March 8th and 9th) and the Resolution of the 2nd Congress of NOF (end of March)<sup>96</sup>. These texts clearly indicate that after the successful conclusion of the revolution, the Slavo-Macedonians would be able to establish their own Macedonian state within a Balkan communist federation. The fact that the 2nd Plenum of the Executive Council of NOF, in Zacha-

riadis' presence, stated that the 2nd NOF Congress would announce "the union of Macedonia into a complete, independent and equal Macedonian state within the People's Democratic Federation of the Balkan Peoples", gave the Fifth Plenum's Resolution a sense of immediacy. It was this expectation of an immediate declaration for the establishment of a Macedonian state that caused anxiety in Western capitals and alarm in Athens. Once again, the interaction of perceptions and realities came into play and baffled contemporaries.

Western diplomats saw the KKE resolution in terms of a wider Soviet move aiming primarily at undermining Tito. The reference by the KKE to a Balkan federation, hitherto a popular theme only among Bulgarian and Yugoslav leaders, could mean, in the perception of Western diplomats, that there was a tendency to encircle Tito's Yugoslavia from the south and to drive an edge in the direction of the P.R. of Macedonia. What was difficult to ascertain was whether this scheme, to which more or less Western observers agreed, was not merely a theoretical policy objective, but was meant for immediate application. If that was the case, there was an imminent threat of a direct involvement of the Soviet Union in Balkan affairs<sup>97</sup>. Certainly, there were also more sober appraisals. The international situation offered no indication to justify such Soviet initiative. More probable was the psychological impact on internal Yugoslav politics which the Soviets apparently believed would be sufficient to cause Tito's overthrow.

The Greek government and the Greek media resorted to alarmist assessments. There were reasons for this. To them, the KKE announcement signified, in fact, the public acknowledgement of what the government camp had all the time been suspecting, namely the cession by the KKE of Greek Macedonia to a Slav-dominated Macedonian state. To reach that decision, Zachariadis must have secured solid assurances of increased support from the Soviet Union (which was not the case). Faced with an imminent threat to Macedonia, it was no wonder that Greek media interpreted government anxieties in a sensational way, which, in fact, served two government objectives: the projection of KKE's image as anti-national, and the petition for increased economic and military aid from the allies<sup>98</sup>.

On the Yugoslav side, understandably, there was deep concern about KKE's pronounced intentions. The Yugoslav communists had been aware, as early as July 1948, of the KKE's decision to place under its firm control the Slavo-Macedonians. But they kept quiet. Even when the pro-Tito leadership of NOF was removed, there were no public recriminations. Moreover, the decision of the Fifth Plenum was commented favorably for acknowledging the right of self-determination to the Slavo-Macedonians. The only criticism was that it was untimely, since it was linked to the Cominform-inspired Balkan federation. Thus, although the Yugoslavs restrained themselves from publicly condemning KKE's position on the Macedonian question, they too saw it as part of the orchestrated Cominform drive against their Party leadership<sup>99</sup>.

Meanwhile, the Bulgarian government-controlled media gave limited coverage to KKE's decision. There was, however, considerable self-restraint in identifying Greek and Bulgarian views with the context of a more general Soviet plan. Certainly, the Bulgarians viewed in a positive way KKE's position so far as it offered support to their own interpretation of a solution to the Macedonian question<sup>100</sup>.

Of the Soviet involvement in the formulation of KKE's new Macedonian policy, there was little doubt in the West — and certainly in Yugoslavia — that Moscow had been the real instigator of the decision. What was not known at the time, was an important encounter in Bucharest, in March 1949, between Baranov, Cominform's liaison officer with the KKE, and the KKE troika, Ioannidis, Rousos and Partsalidis. Baranov expressed surprise and questioned the wisdom of the KKE in raising the Macedonian question at such an inopportune moment. Partsalidis confronted Zachariadis with Baranov's remarks, during the Seventh Plenum of the Central Committee of the KKE, meeting in exile in 1950. Zachariadis did not dispute Partsalidis' revelations, but sought to defend *his* deci-

sion, as a tactical move to keep the Slavo-Macedonians on his side. This debate between the two KKE leaders, certainly placed under a different light the alleged Soviet implication in the decisions of the Fifth Plenum. But it was not made public, and remained a privileged communication for members of the Central Committee only<sup>100a</sup>.

The world-wide interest in the KKE/NOF declarations, created a climate that the Party leaders had probably underestimated. To judge by subsequent statements, it appears that there was a consensus among KKE leaders that Zachariadis had overextended himself in his public pronouncement of his policy. Probably for this reason the 2nd NOF Congress avoided any specific reference to an independent Macedonian state, but reverted to traditional declarations of principle which, with a stress of imagination, could be interpreted either way<sup>101</sup>.

The “retraction” did not mislead anybody at the time. The KKE continued to popularize among Party cadres and the Slavo-Macedonians at large the idea for the eventual self-determination of the Slavo-Macedonians. To inquisitive Greek party cadres the explanation given centered around the meaning of self-determination (including the right of cessation) as a Marxist-Leninist principle, with the addition that the final form and extend of an independent Macedonian state would depend on circumstances and the outcome of a plebiscite<sup>102</sup>.

Meanwhile, a series of specific measures were introduced. Slavo-Macedonians, loyal to the KKE leadership, assumed high posts including a Ministry in the Provisional Government and commanding posts in DAG and the regional Macedonian organizations. More important however, was the fact that by the spring of 1949 a Communist Organization for Aegean Macedonia was formed to operate within KKE, but, in fact, to function as a separate party organization for the Slavo-Macedonians. There was no explanation for this decision other than that it was a first step toward an autonomous Slavo-Macedonian party organization<sup>103</sup>.

The British and Americans, on their part, felt relieved by KKE disclaimers, which removed the immediacy of the crisis. To them this was an indication that the Soviet Union was not contemplating a major new initiative in the Balkans, which would require a reappraisal of their own strategic requirements. Freed from the anguish of February-March, they shifted their attention to creating, carefully, the necessary climate for a rapprochement with Tito. If successful, it could, in an indirect way, relieve the pressure from the Greek Government’s efforts to crush the revolution<sup>104</sup>.

This was not the case, however, with the Greek Governments KKE’s verbal “whitewashing” of the initial KKE/NOF declaration was hardly taken into consideration. The incident had created both anguish and exultation. Both, if properly exploited, could be beneficial to the Government’s aims.

On the internal front the condemnation of the KKE policy by former supporters or sympathizers of the KKE’s cause — such as Professor Svolos — gave justification to the government’s appeal to all Greeks to rally around the Government to safeguard not the social system but the country’s territorial integrity. It was a call for a pan-Hellenic *jihad*. As such, even the most severe measures against the opponents could be justified. In practice, the Government made it a capital offense for any person to even identify himself with the KKE. Such an identification was assumed to carry approval of the Fifth Plenum resolution and consequently the death penalty would mandatory<sup>105</sup>.

On the international level, the Greek Government sought to present, in a rather magnified way, the potential threat developing not only to its own territory, but to the entire Balkan area. Early in April, the Coordinating Council of Ministers, presided by King Paul, and in the presence of C-in-C Alexander Papagos drew up a detailed memorandum that contained the Government’s assessments. According to this scenario, the avowed intention of the Soviet Union was to step up support for Greek and Slavo-Macedonian guerrillas in Greece and in Yugoslav Macedonia, in order to place the two Balkan countries under its control. With the Balkans under Soviet influence, the threat potential to Turkey and Italy would increase manifold. As a response, the Greek Government proposed that in the event of a Soviet attack on Yugoslavia the West should consider occupying Albania in order to

hold it as a hostage for exchange; encourage Turkey to contribute more actively in averting the potential threat; finally, provide overwhelming aid to Greece not only for military purposes, but also for facilitating its rapid reconstruction<sup>106</sup>.

It should be added that similar assessments were made at the time by British and American officials, who reached the conclusion that the Greek Government and Army should be bolstered materially, in order to face a growing and potentially grave threat. As it proved, this increased threat did not materialize. But the augmented aid came in time to the Greek National Army for its final drive against DAG in the summer of 1949<sup>107</sup>.

A last word for Yugoslavia. Much as Tito tried to keep the bridges open KKE's handling of the Macedonian question and, more so, its efforts to turn the Slavo-Macedonians in an anti-Tito course, finally raised for the Yugoslavs a clear security problem in their southern province. A problem that had to be met drastically, even against ideological principles and comradely *solidarnost*. How difficult was for the Yugoslavs to stop supporting the Greek communists is evidenced by the fact that for almost a year, despite certain feelers from Western capitals, and even Athens, the Yugoslavs had refrained from reaching any understanding with the Greek government<sup>108</sup>. In July the border was closed to the andartes. But whatever has been said about the *pisoplato chtypima* of the Yugoslavs against DAG units in July 1949, it has by now been established that it was entirely inaccurate and unfair<sup>109</sup>.

The armed Civil War ended on the tops of mountains Vitsi and Grammos in August 1949. From its inception, the Macedonian question, both in its macro and micro aspects, had influenced the course of the communist revolution in Greece, at times in a positive way for the communist side. In the end however, it proved catalytic to its doom.

## V

Four decades after the critical 1940's, there are still significant blank spots to our knowledge of events connected with the Macedonian question to permit us an all-round assessment of this important question on Civil War developments. In recent years, certain confused situations have been sufficiently clarified. Among them are: the wartime Yugoslav policy objectives toward Greek Macedonia, the role of the Slavo-Macedonians, and the true extent of KKE attitudes and policies toward both. Some progress has been made in understanding Tito's behavior prior and during the Dekemvriana. But our information is still inconclusive on Yugoslav policy-making concerning a possible military intervention in Greek Macedonia during October-November 1944, ostensibly in support of ELAS, but more probably for creating conditions favorable to a future Yugoslav claim on the region.

New data have now revealed, beyond reasonable doubt, NOF's relationship as an appendage to the Communist Party of Macedonia for nearly two years, 1945-1946. Fairly well-established are now the terms which regulated the collaboration of the Slavo-Macedonians with the KKE and DAG, until the split between KKE and CPY. What, however, remains uncertain is Zachariadis' obligations to Tito, at the time of the KKE-NOF agreement, on the future settlement of the Macedonian question.

Similarly, there is uncertainty in connection with the Tito-Dimitrov Bled agreement. There is no doubt that Greek Macedonia had been a subject of the arrangement reached between the two leaders. But no information has been revealed concerning the steps toward its eventual inclusion to a unified Macedonian state. And, more important, it still remains uncertain whether Zachariadis had been consulted, or was aware of, the plans of the two Balkan leaders. There was a strange silence by the KKE on the subject at the time of the conclusion of the agreement. This silence continued even after the split with Tito and has been kept by all sides. Little though it matters for general assessments,

this particular moment in the history of the Macedonian question remains a tantalizing blank.

The most criticized turning point of KKE's Macedonian policy — the decision of the Fifth Plenum of the CC in January 1949 — has been reviewed and anathematized by all, including in subsequent years by KKE itself. Opponents saw in it the *diktat* of the Kremlin in the context of its efforts to undermine Tito. Supporters, with Zachariadis in the lead, tried to explain it in terms of the armed struggle (attract the Slavo-Macedonians and stamp off Tito's subversion), presenting it, in other words, as their own initiative. Hardly a serious analyst of that period put much credence to these weak arguments for such a major decision. Here again, there is no documentation on the actual Soviet role. Strangely enough, Greek communist leaders, critical of Stalin, have given no convincing evidence either. On the contrary, there is now sufficient evidence that the importance of the Slavo-Macedonians within DAG had grown during the last year to the point that their continued association and loyalty to KKE's cause were *sine qua non* for its future course. Was it possible that Zachariadis, assessing the overall anti-Tito attitude of the Soviet bloc, the reversal of the Macedonian policy of the CP of Bulgaria and the fact that his Party was anyhow condemned by its adversaries for "treason" on this sensitive issue, miscalculated the psychological reverberation and took it upon himself — not at the request of the Kremlin — to introduce the new policy in the Central Committee Plenum? This is still an assumption that negates the *diktat* theory. But the attitude of the Soviet Union and Bulgaria during those two critical months — February and March — tends to support the view that Zachariadis was not coerced to align his Party with a general Soviet scheme on Macedonia. Unless further evidence is produced, the responsibility for the decision must fall squarely on the KKE leaders who signed the Fifth Plenum resolution .

Even with such gaps, we have reached a point that our vision is clearer. Our perceptions have come closer to the realities of this intricate and elusive problem, thanks to new available data, and to more sober appraisals of the events of the 1940's. What, then is our present assessment of the Macedonian question as a factor influencing developments of the Civil War?

Throughout the 1940's the Macedonian question was basically shaped by forces and interests outside Greece. None of the two protagonists of the Greek Civil War — the KKE and the government camp — had any interest in the change of the status quo of the land of Macedonia or of its people. But the dynamics of the Macedonian question pursued an erratic course which the Greek duellists sought to utilize to their own ends. It was unavoidable that the two issues — the fate of Macedonia and the course of the revolution in Greece — converged, interacted, and shaped the destinies of both. When that happened, both sides tried to benefit from it, as best or as suitably they could; militarily politically, psychologically.

The foreign aspects of the problem were no less intriguing and conducive to Big Power manipulations. Given the fluidity of the situation in the Balkans during the last two years of the war against Germany, the uncertain developments at the time of the liberation and the transitory period until the concretization of spheres of influence, it is no wonder that the Macedonian question seriously affected strategic conceptions and tactical options of the Big Powers.

The real protagonist of the Macedonian question was Yugoslavia. The policies, the power and security perceptions of its leaders and the requirements of that new nation — which was christened, in 1944, "Macedonian"— had a profound effect in wartime and post-war developments in the Balkans. It is an intriguing coincidence that Yugoslavia's Macedonian interests and needs were constantly behind Yugoslav political options vis-à-vis the communist movement in Greece.

Or was it not a coincidence?

## FOOTNOTES

1. In the heat of the Civil War, William McNeill (*The Greek Dilemma. War and Aftermath, Philadelphia, 1947*, p. 261), reflected a commonly-shared perception at the time, when he wrote that, “the future history of the Greek state and people may depend in a large part on the development of the Macedonian issue”.

2. The war years and related bibliography are covered in the author’s study, “I Valkaniki Diastasi tou Makedonikou Zitimatou sta Chronia tis Katochis kai tis Antistasis” (The Balkan Dimension of the Macedonian Question during the Occupation Years and the Resistance) in H. Fleischer and N. Svoronos (ed.). *I Ellada 1936-1944: Diktatoria, Katochi, Antistasi, Praktika, A Diethnes Synedrio. Synchronis Istorias* [Greece 1936-1944: Dictatorship, Occupation, Resistance; Annals of the First International Congress of Contemporary History], Athens 1989, pp. 418-471 (Hereafter cited as Valkaniki Diastasi. Also, the author’s earlier book, *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia*, Thessaloniki, 1964.

3. Notable exception: Philippos Iliou’s serialization of KKE documents in *Avgi* (December 1979 to Jan. 1980), “*Ta Archeia tou KKE*” (The Archives of the KKE). Useful references to the Macedonian question in memoirs or works by KKE protagonists: Petros Rousos, *I Megali Pentaetia, 1940-1945* (The Great Five Years), Athens, 1982, 3rd ed.; Giannis Ioannidis, *Anamniseis* (Memoirs), ed. by Alekos Papapanagiotou, Athens, 1979; Thanasis Chatzis, *I Nikifora Epanastasi pou Chathike* (The Victorious Revolution that was Lost), 3 vols, Athens, 1977-1979 (the latter with questionable interpretation of documentary KKE sources, published in Skopje). Typical of distorted phraseology and systematic omissions on the Macedonian question are the more recent *Apomnimonevmata* (Memoirs) by Markos Vafeiadis, 3 vols, Athens, 1984-1985. Compare his oral (taped) reminiscences to Yugoslav authors: Jovan Popovski, *Zasto me Staljin Nije Streljao?* (Why Stalin did not Shoot me?), Ljubljana, 1982, and Dragan Kljakic, *Cenera/ Markos*, Zagreb, 1979. From the pro-government side, the more recent books by journalist Nikos Mertzos, *Svarnout; To Prodomeno Antartiko* (Svarnut; The Betrayed Rebellion), 5th edition, Thessaloniki, 1983, and *Emeis oi Makedones* (We, the Macedonians), Thessaloniki, 1986, offer critical appraisal of KKE Macedonian policy through pro-KKE publications. More critical of KKE historiography on the Macedonian issue, are Yugoslav Macedonian authors. Petar Galabov, “Inforbirovski Diskriminacii i Frankolevantinski Insinuacii”, (Cominform’s Discriminations and Francolevantistic Insinuations), *Iselenicki Kalendar*, Skopje, 1982, pp. 79-85, writes: “As defeated ‘generals’ they have come to realize that they believed one thing as ‘romantic revolutionaries’, and now in their old age, after losing two revolutions, they believe in another. What is more tragic with these people is that they think they are passing exams as ‘more loyal’ Greeks, (to prove) that they have always struggled for the national fulfillment of their country (which no one has questioned), and that the Macedonian national question was a cancer caused by others. Vlandas and Gousias, Roussos and Katsoulis, Bartzotas and Blanas, P. Nefeloudis and many others, distort facts in their books in a pharisaic, greater-Greek and anti-Marxist way, and struggle to give an entirely different direction and dimension to the political situation in Greece blaming each other for errors committed. But when the question refers to the Macedonian national question, as in a chorus, they reject or ignore anything Macedonian. There is not a single word in their books about the Macedonians... from the viewpoint of “greater-Greek chauvinists and nationalist”. For particularly Giorgis Katsoulis (*Istoria tou KKE*, vol. V. 1940-1945, Athens (1977), comes under sharp attack for treating the Macedonian question from the best bibliographical guide consult: H. Fleischer and S. Bowman, *I Ellada sti Dekaeitia 1940-1950*, Athens, 1984,

a revised Greek edition from the collective work *Greece in the 1940 s: A Bibliographic Companion*, ed. John Iatrides, Hanover and London, 1981.

4. Archiv na Makedonija, *Egejska Makedonija vo NOB* (Aegean Macedonia in the National Liberation War), 7 vols 1941-1949, Skopje, 1971-1985 (Hereafter *Eg.M*). Also, *KPC i Makedonskoto Prasanje, 1918-1974*. Skopje, 1982 (Hereafter KPG). Both contain selected documents of EAM/ELAS, KKE and NOE, in possession of Archiv na Makedonija, Skopje. More documents in: Institute for National History, *Izvori na Osloboditelnata Vodna i Revolucijata vo Makedonija, 1941-1945* (Sources of the Liberation War and the Revolution in Macedonia). vol. 1, 6 books. Skopje, 1968-1979. Two books by Svetozar Vukmanovic-Tempo, *Revolucija koda tecfeMemoari* (The Running Revolution; Memoirs), Zagreb 1981, and *Borba za 13alkan* (Struggle for the Balkans), Zagreb 1981. Skopje, 1975, Risto Kirjazovski, *Narodno Osloboditelniot Front i Drugite Organizacii na Makedoncite od Egejska Makedonija, 1945-1949* (The National Liberation Front and the Other Organizations of the Macedonians of Aegean Macedonia), Skopje, 1985. Also to be used with care, on account of frequent distortions and inaccuracies, Vangel Ajanovski, *Egejski Buri* (Aegean Storms) Skopje, 1975.

5. Elisabeth Barker, *Macedonia; Its Place in Balkan Power Politics*, London, 1950, pp. 21-29. Kofos, *op.cit.*, pp. 50-54.

6. Understandably Yugoslav Macedonian writers tend to exaggerate inter-war Slavomacedonian activity in Greek Macedonia. For example, Tozso Popovski, *Makedonskoto Nacionalno Malcinstvo vo Bugarija, Grcija i Albanija* (The Macedonian National Minority in Bulgaria, Greece and Albania), Skopje, 1981, pp. 64-80. Ajanovski, *op.cit.*, pp. 11-75.

7 George Mavrocordatos, *Stillborn Republic: Social Coalitions and Party Strategies in Greece, 1922-1936*, Berkeley, 1983. Nicos Alivizatos, *Les institutions politiques de la Grèce à travers les crises, 1922-1974*, Paris, 1979. Eleftherios Stavridis, *Ta Paraskinia tou KKE* (The Backstage of the KKE), Athens, 1953, pp. 285-291, 300-302, 432-447, 459-462.

8. Alekos Papapanagiotou interview in *Anti*, Athens, 19.6.1981, p. 35. Pavlos Nefeloudis, *Stis Piges tis Kakodaimonias* (In the Sources of Misfortune), 2nd ed. Athens, 1974, pp. 93-97. Texts in: KKE, *Deka Chronia Agones, 1935-1945* (Ten Years of Struggles), Athens, 1945, pp. 45, 75-76. Kofos, *op.cit.*, pp.90-92.

9. This is, at least, alleged, *a posteriori*, by Slavomacedonian writers, Ajanovski, *op.cit.*, p. 55.

10. Barker, *op.cit.*, p. 31. Kofos, *op.cit.*, pp. 47-48.

11. Kofos, *op.cit.*, p. 50. Similar conclusions are reached in a secret service report dated 17.12.1949 submitted to Commander-in-Chief Al. Papagos. Text in AYE A/ 59179/Aut. Mac./G5Ba/1949.

12. Stephen Palmer and Robert King, *Yugoslav Communism and the Macedonian Question*, Hamden, Conn., 1971, pp. 14-15, 56. Evangelos Kofos, *I Makedonia sti Giougoslaviki Istoriografia* (Macedonia in Yugoslav Historiography), Thessaloniki, 1974, p. 6, ft. 2.

13. Kofos, *op.cit.*, pp. 100-102. Hagen Fleischer, *Im Kreuzschatten der Mächte: Griechenland 1941-1944*, Frankfurt, 1986, pp. 69-72.

14. Details in Kofos, *I Valkaniki Diastasi... op.cit.*

15. *Ibid.*, quoting EAM and KKE sources published in *Eg.M., 1, op.cit.*

16. *Ibid.*

17. Palmer and King, *op.cit.*, pp. 54-55. For a recent detailed review by a Bulgarian author of the cPuts policy on the Macedonian question, Konstantin Palesutski *Jugoslavskata Komunisticeska Partija i Makedonskijat VJpros, 1919-1945*. (The Yugoslav Communist Party and the Macedonian Question), Sofia, 1985.

18. Comintern's radiogram in August 1941, directed the Bulgarian and Yugoslav communists that "Macedonia should be attached to Yugoslavia for practical reasons and for the sake of expediency... The two parties should take up the stand of the selfdetermination of the Macedonian people". Quoted by Tsola Dragoycheva, *Macedonia: Not a Cause of Discord but a Factor of Good Neighbourliness and Cooperation*, Sofia, 1979, pp. 57-58, a rather euphemistic title to a divisive issue.

19. Tempo, *Borba...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 79-138, and *Revolucija... III*, *op.cit.*, pp. 7106. Dragoycheva, *op.cit.*, pp. 77-79. Ioannidis, *op.cit.*, pp.131-135, and particularly comments by Papapanagiotou in pp. 516-520. General appraisal of the above sources: *Kofos, Valkaniki Diastasi, op.cit.*

20. Quoted in *Kofos, Valkaniki Diastasi op.cit.*

21. The order, dated 9 July 1943, was signed by Sarafis, Velouchiotis and Tzimas, Published in KPG, *op.cit.*, pp. 177-178.

22. Yugoslav writers, and Tempo in particular, have claimed after the war that EAM/ ELAS had consented in 1943-1944 to the ultimate right of self-determination of the Slavo-Macedonians, including the right of secession, but they subsequently did not honor their commitment. See Fitzroy MacLean's report, circ. D 217, 5.2.1945 in FO. Contemporary KKE documents, now in the possession of the Yugoslavs, do not support the allegation about secession. Particularly revealing is Siantos' telegram to Tzimas (14.7.1944), then in Belgrade, which outlines KKE's policy as follows: The Macedonian question is raising problems with the Yugoslavs. KKE's position is that after victory all peoples would have the right to determine by themselves their position. The brotherly parties (Yugoslav and Bulgarian) pursue an ambiguous line, but KKE's position is correct on the basis of the present ethnological composition of Greek Macedonia. And concludes: "Beware of this delicate issue. Lack of understanding will help Greek reaction in its struggle against the Party and the liberation movement". Copy in the Archives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, Belgrade (hereafter A/CC/CPY), File "Yugoslav-Greek relations".

23. Numerous documents of KKE, EAM/ELAS provenance in *EG.M., op.cit.*

24. *Kofos, op.cit.*, pp. 128-134.

25. A view expounded in Athanasios Chrysochoou's six volumes under the general heading, *I Katochi en Makedonia* (Occupation in Macedonia), Thessaloniki, 1949-1952. A sociological approach in Giorgos Margaritis, "Oi Emfyliies diamaches stin Katochi (1941-1944)" (Civil conflicts during Occupation), *Dekapenthimeros Politis*, Athens, 5.10.1984, pp. 30-33. Also, Fleicher, *op.cit.*, pp. 285-294.

26. Documents from *EG.M., I, op.cit.*, and *KPG, op.cit.*, cited in *Kofos, Valkaniki Diastasi, op.cit.* Renos Michaleas in Kastoria and "Panos" Evripidis in Edessa are two cases of KKE cadres pursuing pro-Yugoslav line on the question of Slavophones.

27. Margaritis, *op.cit.*

28. Documents in *EC.M. I. op.cit.* pp. 388-390, 350, reveal that Slavo-Macedonian activists, within the ranks of EAM/ELAS, sought to exterminate the leaders of the pro-Greek faction of the Slavophones. Cited also in Kofos, *Valkaniki Diastasi, op.cit.*

29. *Eg.M., I, op.cit.*, pp. 477, 488, 491-4; *KPC, op.cit.*, pp. 243-5, 255-263, 268, 276-280. Also, Kofos, *op.cit.*, pp. 125-126.

30. A/CC/CPY, "Greece IX-29-IV/2", Kiro Milievski (Sofia) to Tempo and Kolishevski, Oct. 1944.

31. Tempo, *Revolucija...*, *op.cit.*, p. 71, his report to the <C CPY, 8.8.1943; also, *Borba za Balkan, op.cit.*, pp. 88, 98, 133. Ioannidis, *op.cit.*, p. 127.

32. *Eg.M., I, op.cit.*, pp. 520-521.

33. The Greek Government in exile, unaware of British-Soviet agreements, showed increased nervousness at British-Yugoslav contacts, fearing possible concessions in Macedonia detrimental to Greek interests. Canadian Archives (CA), UK Dominions Secretary to Canadian For. Affairs, D 55, 12.4.1944. A study, however, of the British Foreign Office Research Department, in Oct. 1944, rejected as "not practical" proposed plans for independence, autonomy or federation of Macedonia. It favoured the prewar status, with a proposal for free port facilities in Thessaloniki and Kavala for Yugoslav and Bulgarian Macedonia respectively, FO 371/43649/97481, 26.8.1944.

34. Details in Kofos, *Valkaniki Diastasi, op.cit.*

35. On the initiatives of the Eastern Macedonia KKE leaders to invite the Soviet Army and allow the Bulgarian army to remain, see G. Erythriadis report: Central Committee KKE, *7 Olomeleia tis KE tou KKE, 14-16 Mai 1950* (The Seventh Plenum of the CC of KKE), Sept. 1950, p. 73. Also his report to the Macedonian Bureau, KKE, 15.10.1944 published in *KPC, op.cit.*, pp. 263-264.

36. It should be recalled that the Churchill-Stalin "percentages agreement" was concluded in Moscow on 9.10.1944. For British pressures on the Bulgarians to withdraw Stoyan Rachev, *Anglo-Bulgarian Relations during the Second World War tI 9a919441. Sofia, 1981, pp. 189-204.*

37. *Dragoycheva, op.cit.* pp. 84-85. This is also supported by Yugoslav writers such as Kolishevski, Tempo and Apostolski.

38. CA, Canadian Belgrade Embassy report No. 210, 13.5.1950, quoting Tito's speech to the National Assembly, 27.4.1950. Also US/NA 760H. 74/3.2.1945, State Dept to Moscow Embassy, No 473, 2.5.1945.

39. The British Legation in Sofia had learned "from a most reliable source" that the inclusion of Thessaloniki in the proposed federation "would enjoy Soviet support" FO 371/48181/8533, No. 108, 21.1.1945.

40. Letter by Georgi Dimitrov to Trajko Kostov, Dec. 1, 1944, *Dragoycheva, op.cit.*, p. 86.

41. CA, Secretary of Dominion Affairs (London) to Secretary for External Affairs (Ottawa), No. 1, 1.1.1945.

42. Polychronis Enepekidis, *I Elliniki Antistasis, 1941-1944* (The Greek Resistance) Athens,

1964, p. 90, quoting German sources for the dispatch of military equipment from Yugoslav partisans to ELAS.

43. Siantos to Tzimas, (Radiogram), 28.8.1944, A/CC/CPY, File, "Greek-Yugoslav Relations 1941-1945".

44. Rankovic to Tempo, No. 3, 5.10.1944, A/(C/CPY, File "Greek-Yugoslav Relations, 1941-1945" (emphasis added).

45. Kiro Mitrovski to Tempo and Kolishevski, *op.cit.*

46. Kofos, *op.cit.*, p. 136. Also *Valkaniki Diastasi op.cit.*

47. FO 371/48181, Brigadier Maclean to FO, 1.2.1945. Ajanovski, *op.cit.*, pp. 139-145.

48. The author has it from a reliable source that in November 1944, two KKE emissaries, Stergios Anastasiadis and Barbalexis sought to appraise Tito's views for an armed bid for power, and that the Yugoslav leader returned a favourable answer promising all round support. When the shooting started, however, Tito went back on his earlier promise. In an interview with author Mathiopoulos, Yugoslav historian Vojmir Kljakovic confirmed that the KKE had appraised Tito's views prior to the December events, but evaded a reply on Tito's response. He added, however, that when the shooting started, Tito decided to keep his distance, not wishing to offer the British a pretext for intervention in Yugoslavia. Vasos Mathiopoulos, *I Elliniki Antistasi (1941-1944) kai oi Symmachoi* (The Greek Resistance and the "Allies"), Athens 1976, pp. xvi. Zachariadis revealed later that KKE asked Tito for military aid for the December events, but Tito turned it down and instead prepared partisan units to invade Greek Macedonia. His report, CC KKE. 7 *Olomeleia*, *op.cit.*, pp. 182, 275. Also speech by Ioannidis, p. 124. Also Stringos to Tzimas (Belgrade), 14.11.1944, in *KPG*, *op.cit.*, p. 317.

49. Ajanovski, *op.cit.*, pp. 140-145.

50. Andreas Mountrichas "Orestis" told Kousoulas that it was Siantos himself who gave him this explanation. George Kousoulas, *Revolution and Defeat; the Story of the Greek Communist Party*, New York, 1969, p. 211.

51. See footnote 48.

52. Ajanovski, *op.cit.*, p. 145, speaks of 4000 Slavo-Macedonians from Greek Macedonia, who were inducted into the Yugoslav army to take part in operations in Kosovo and other parts of Yugoslavia.

53. V. Kontis, *I Angloamerikaniki Politiki kai to Elliniko Proviima. 1945-1949* (The Anglo-American Policy and the Greek Problem), Thessaloniki, 1984, pp. 44-46.

54. *Ibid*, pp. 44-45, 107-108.

55. Ajanovski, *op.cit.*, pp. 118-132. Risto Poplazarov, "The National Liberation Movement of Macedonians in Southern Macedonia". reprinted in *Makedonija* (Melbourne), 9.11.1982. Kole Mangov M' Pred 35 godini: Otporot na Makedoncite od Solunske" (35 Years Ago. The Resistance of the Macedonians from the Thessaloniki region"), *Makedonija*, Skopje, Oct. 1981, p. 14. Risto Kirjazovski, *op.cit.*, pp. 106-145. Also US/NA 760H.68/7.2445, report by MacNeil, Athens 24.7.1945.

56. Ajanovski, *op.cit.*, pp. 159-160 Kirjazovski, *op.cit.*, pp. 101-105.

57. Keramitziev and Gotse to CC KKE, 2.6.1949, (published in Slavomacedonian), in *EC.A1., VI* (1949), *op.cit.*, pp. 311-331 (hereafter *Keramitziev-Gotse letter*). This was known to KKE. Zachariadis report, *7 Olomeleia, op.cit., p. 275*, stating that the NOFites did not belong to the KKE but to “Kolishevski’s Party of Skopje”.

58. The pro-KKE Florina newspaper *Agonas* (5.10.1945), following official line, attacked NOF followers as traitors, to which NOF responded by threatening to slaughter pro-EAM/KKE villagers. US/NA 760H.68/12.1845, Athens report 2019, 18.12.1945. Details in Kirjazovski, *op.cit.*, pp. 147-155.

59. On the North Epirus question: CC KKE, *Apofasi tis 12is Olomeleias tis KE. tou KKE* (Decision of the 12th Plenum of the CC of KKE), Athens, 1945, p. 48. After the end of the Civil War, that decision came under sharp criticism by all KKE leaders. Details in Kofos, *op.cit.*, pp. 165-166.

60. Following the annihilation, persecution and eviction of the Germanophone minorities, the new Yugoslav government made it absolutely clear to the British and Americans, that it had no intention of receiving back those formerly Yugoslav citizens. See Yugoslav note No. 2183, 27.7.1945, to U.S. Embassy, stating that the German minorities, after cooperating with the occupation authorities, left the country “of their own will” and that “through their option, renounced on their Yugoslav citizenship”, quoted in U.S. Embassy dispatch from Belgrade A-105, 3.8.1945 in US/NA 740.60H.114/8-345. And a further Yugoslav request, of 17.5.1946 to the Allies to help Yugoslavia to transfer to Germany the remaining 110,000 members of the German minority. 840.4016/5-2346, Belgrade No. 361, 23.5.1946.

61. US/NA 800.4016DP/11-1445, Belgrade Embassy report No. 165, 14.11.1945. As a permanent solution, the British considered, late in 1944, the transfer of approximately 120,000 Macedonian Slavs north of the Greek frontiers. FO 371/43649/97481, Leeper to Eden No.57, 24.11.1944.

62. Ajanovski, *op.cit.*, pp. 198-200. Kirjazovski, *op.cit.* pp. 151-2.

63. Late in March 1946, Zachariadis went to Eastern Europe, he secured Gotwald’s and subsequently Tito’s promise for military assistance, and traveled to Crimea where he met with Stalin and Molotov, most probably between 3-5 April. The decision for the armed insurrection was taken there and then, and the Greek leader was sent back to Tito to arrange the details. And so he did. These, in the author’s privileged knowledge, have been intimated by Zachariadis himself to close colleagues.

64. Kirjazovski, *op.cit.*, pp. 155-169, offers details from Yugoslav and KKE archives.

65. Details in *Keramitziev-Gotse letter, Op.Cif., Kirjazovski, op.cit.. Eg.M., 111, op.cit., KPG, op.cit.*

66. AZCCXCPY, File “Relations with Greece”, Kolishevski to CC CPY, 7.9.1946. For October, same sources put the figure of antartes to 2000 Slavo-Macedonians and 700 (ireeks).

67. *Ibid.*, Tito to Kolishevski, 7.10.1946.

68. Apart from documents cited by Kirjazovski, *op.cit.*, pp. 155-169, Keramitziev and Gotse, in their letter to the CC of KKE of June 2, 1949 give sufficient details of an agreement, signed on 24.11.1946. Zachariadis denied, in June 1949, the existence of a written agreement, but, in

A/CC/CPY, File "Greek-Yugoslav relations 1941-1945" there is the text of an agreement, between Ioannidis and Karaivanov (on behalf of the KKE and the C.P of Macedonia respectively), dated 15.10.1946. This text contains most, but not all of the terms quoted by Keramitziev and Gotse, indicating that it was an earlier text. Its substance, however, remains the same. Its most important points are:

- a. NOF will be incorporated into KKE, and, more particularly, into its Regional Committee for Macedonia and Thrace, severing its links with the CPM.
- b. NOF will set up a central organ under Keramidziev and Mitrovski which will report to the Regional Committee of the KKE for Macedonia and Thrace. NOF will have its own youth organization and press.
- c. The *andartes* in Aegean Macedonia and Greece (sic) will have complete organizational and political unity and action. No special "Macedonian" units will function.
- d. Dzodze Urdarov, member of the Aegean Committee of the CPM, will be assigned the task to supervise compliance with the (Yugoslav) Party line in the partisan movement in "Aegean Macedonia".

69. After the end of the hostilities, Zachariadis revealed that in his initial agreement with Tito, he had settled also the issue of the Slavo-Macedonians, and the CPY agreed that the "Slavo-Macedonians will struggle alongside with us", and that the "erosion of the Macedonian people (apparently from Skopje) would cease". Zachariadis speech, 7 *Olomeleia*, *op. cit.*, p. 181 - 182.

70. Mainly in *Eg.M. op.cit.*, vol. III-VI; *KPG, op.cit.*, and Kirjazovski, *op.cit.*

71. *Keramitziev-Gotse letter, op. cit.*

72. In assessing the causes of defeat, and answering the criticism leveled at him for the change of the Macedonian line of the Party, Zachariadis defended his policy mainly on the need to keep the loyalties of the Slavo-Macedonians to the KKE, because, in the concluding months of the struggle, they provided the main source of reserves. Although he admitted that the new slogan did not correspond to the wider interests of the Party, in the particular moment, what counted was a victory in the battle of Vitsi. Zachariadis reports, 6 *Olomeleia*, pp. 82, 92 and 7 *Olomeleia, op.cit.*, p. 175.

73. *Keramitziev-Cotse letter, op. cit.*

74. *Ibid.* Similar complaints by Slavo-Macedonian protagonists-turned-authors: A<sup>^</sup> anovski, *op.cit.*, pp. 191-231; Naum Pejov, *Makedocite i Gradjanskata Voyna vo Grclya (The Macedonians and the Civil War in Greece)*, Skopje, 1968, pp. 145-151, and Hnsto Antonovski in *Clas na Egeyskite*, Skopje, 10.2.1952.

75. CC KKE, 6 *Olomeleia tis KE tou KKE (9 Ochtovri 1949)* (6th Plenum of CC KKE (9.10.1949)) April 1951, pp. 42, 86, 92. Also 7 *Olomeleia, op. cit.*, p. 125.

76. Georgios Modis, *Choria Frouria tis Makedonias (Villages Fortresses of Macedonia)*. Athens, 1964.

77. Bibliography quoted in Kofos, *op.cit.* In this respect consult two books by Dimitrios Zafelropoulos, *To KKE kai i Makedonia (The KKE and Macedonia)*, Athens 1948, and *O Antisymmoriakos Agon (The Antibandit War)*, Athens, 1956.

78. Prior to the 5th Plenum decision (1949) on the Macedonian question, there were certain dissenting voices (Sofianopoulos, Tsirimokos, Svolos). Plastiras appeared to believe that the rebellion did not endanger Greece's territorial integrity, which could be threatened only by war. Letter of "friends" of Plastiras to King Paul, reported by the Athens U.S. Embassy, report No. 1096, 9.11.1948, US/NA 868.00/11-948.

79. K. Tsoukalas, "I Ideologiki Epidrasi tou Emfyliou Polemou" (The Ideological Impact of the Civil War), *I Ellada sti Dekaeitia 1940 1950, op.cit., p. 575.*

80. In its memorandum to the CPSU, in October 1946, requesting assistance to its armed struggle, the KKE referred to the Macedonian question as "one of the most deScate Issues which stirs the masses of Greece" . Text in *A vgi, 5.12.1979.* This concern wltH the psychological impact of the problem, is reflected in memoirs by KKE leaders such as Petros Rousos and Giannis Ioannidis.

81. Nikos Alivizatos, "Kathestos Ektaktis Anagkis". ("State of Emergency"), *I Ellada sti Dekaeitia 1940-1950, op.cit., pp. 397, 388-389, 391.*

82. Harry Howard, "The UN Commission of Investigation Concerning Greek Frontier Incidents", *The Department of State Bulletin, Vol. XVII, No. 418, July 6, 1947 pp. 1425.* The UN Ethridge Report, in May 1947, found little evidence to support Greek allegatlons. US/NA 501,BC-Greece/4-847. Also, U.S. intelligence agent in Greece Karamesinis reported, late in 1946, that "proofs" gathered that far by the Greek Government could not be regarded as "conclusive". US/NA 868.00/8-1046, Athens Embassy report No. 3010, 8.10.1946.

83. G. A. Alexander, *The Prelude to the Truman Doctnne*, pp. 200, 216, 223-224,

84. US/NA 868.00/10-1546, State and War Departments memorandum forwarded to the President, 10.10.1946, stressed the need to safeguard Greece's *territorial* and political integrity. A State Department assesment, on 6.12.1946, of Soviet objectives vis-a-vis Greece included, overthrow of Greek Government *and* detachment of Greek Nlacedonia, a theme that recurs in many State Department assessments throughout 19471948. 760H.68/12-646.

85. Bevin to Marshall, aide memoire, 21.7.1946, US/NA 868.00/7-2147. FO 371/ 72241 X/PO2621, Athens Embassy, No 139/11/48, 12.3.1948 FO371/72241/ X/P ()2621, Belgrade Embassy, No. 217/2/48, 15.3.1948 and No. 195/28.8.1948.

86. Turkish Ambassador to Paris Menemencioglu, in conversation with his British colleague Duff. British aide memoire G58/47, 21.7.1947, US/NA 868.00/7-2147. For Turkish apprehensions: 1223/29.11.1946.

87. US/NA FW 868.00/7-2147, memo, 28.7.1947.

88. Kofos, *op.cit.*, pp. 161-163. Texts of the Yugoslav-Bulgarian agreements, signed at Bled and Evxinograd, were published by Slobodan Netsovic, *Bledski Sporazumi: Tito-Dimitrov* (1947), (The Bled Agreements) Ljubljana, 1979. NeSsovic claims to have published "all" the agreements, although this author has privileged information, of Bulgarian provenance, about a secret protocol concerning Greek Macedonia.

89. *Borba*, 3.8.1949. Two months prior to the agreements, Dimitrov had told two Western journalists that all three parts of Macedonia would, in due time, be united within the framework of Yugoslavia. FO 371/72192/ X/PO2727, Belgrade Embassy No. 217/ 22/48, 28.8.1948. During the 10th Plenum of the CC of CPB in August 1946, Dimitrov declared that "it is not right to use the phrases 'Vardarska Makedonija', 'Pirinska Makedonija' and 'Egejska Makedonija'. There are no three Macedonias. There is only one Macedonia". Quoted by Nestovic, *op.cit. p. 55.*

90. *Avgi*, Dec. 1979-Jan. 1980.

91. Avgi, 11.12.1979.

92. Avgi, 9.12.1979.

93. Kofos, *op.cit.*, pp. 188-191.

94. *Keramitziev-Cotse letter, op. cit.*

95. Strong criticism during the 6th and 7th Plenums, *op.cit.*

96. Kofos, *op.cit.*, pp. 177-184. Text of the 5th Plenum and relevant discussion in CC KKE' 5 *Olomeleia tis KE tou ssE, 30-31 Genari 1949* (Fifth Plenum of the CC of KKE, 1() 31 January 1949), June 1949, text p. 16. Zachariadis report pp. 29-31, 37-38, Porfyrogenis' qualified approval, pp. 58-59. Most texts and extensive commentary published in newspaper *Pros ti Niki* (from March to August 1949).

97. Typical of British concern was a FO minute: "The creation of an autonomous / independent Macedonian state would solve Soviet problems. Salonica would be offered to Tito's successors and Bulgaria would get E. Macedonia and W. Thrace. It is clear therefore that we must do all possible to prevent Macedonian autonomy", FO 371/ 78396/18, 17.3.1949.

98. This is clearly depicted in the report of the Chief of the Imperial Staff William Slim after his visit to Greece (9-10 March). To quote: "...it may be part of the 1949 Cominform policy in Greece to resurrect the idea of an 'Independent Macedonia' comprising... a large part of Northern Greece including Salonica". That would result in "an increased movement of Communist trained forces across the frontier from Bulgaria". Thus the need to offer additional aid to the Greek National Army was the logical conclusion. FO 371/7834/26, "Report on Greece", 16.3.1949.

99. Moje Pijade, "On the Question of a Balkan Federation", quoted by Kofos *op.cit.*, pp. 180-181. The article was originally published in *Borba*, 6.3.1949.

100. The Bulgarians were extremely reserved in their commentary of KKE's Macedonian decision. Kofos, *op.cit.*, p. 180.

100a. Statement by Partsalidis, 7 *Olomeleia, op.cit.*, p. 38. 101. Kofos, *op.cit.*, p. 182.

102. Popularization of the Party policy through the pages of *Cia ti Niki* (March to August 1949). In his strong criticism of Zachariadis Macedonia policy, Partsalidis revealed that, following the 5th Plenum, the Slavo-Macedonians disseminated rumors that "the borders of the independent Macedonian state would start from Mount Olympus, with Thessaloniki as capital, while we remained silent, thus increasing confusion". 7 *Olomeleia, p. 38*.

103. Kofos, *op.cit.*, p. 182. Ajanovski, *op. cit.*, pp. 378-389. Kirjazovski, *op.cit.*, pp. 303-312, Barker, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

104. Elisabeth Barker, "Yugoslav Policy towards Greece 1947-1949", *Studies in the History of the Greek Civil War, 1945-1949*, Copenhagen, 1987, pp. 286-294; and Jovze PlrJevc, "The Tito-Stalin Split and the End of the Civil War in Greece", *ibid*, pp.

105. FO 371/7834/35. Report, "Brighter prospects for Greece", 29.3.1949. US/NA 868.00/3.3049, Athens Embassy report 30.3.1949. On the reaction of Northern Greeks FO 371/78366/36, Thessaloniki Consulate report, March-April 1949. Greek press reaction: FO

371/78396/10. Rendis' statement: FO 371/78398/4, 3.4.1949.

106. Full text published by Kontis, *op.cit.*, pp. 465-472.

107. *Ibid*, pp. 389-390.

108. On initial Yugoslav reaction: Moje Pijade, *op.cit.*, quoted in Kofos, *op.cit.*, pp. 180-181.

109. Decision of *6th Olomeleia*, *op.cit.*, p. 92, adopted Zachariadis' contention that Yugoslav troops, along with Greek army units attacked DAG units during the Kaimaktsalan operations, early in August 1949: All available sources have refuted these allegations. N. Zachariadis, "To Stileto tou Tito Chtya Pisoplata ti LaikoDimokratiki Ellada" (Tito's Dagger Stabs on the Back People's Democratic Greece"), *Syllogi Ergon*, April 1953, reprinted from Cominform's *For a Lasting Peace for the People's Democracy*, 1. 8.1949.