IX. National Claims, Conflicts and Developments in Macedonia, 1870-1912
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1. From the Bulgarian Exarchate to Bulgarian independence

The Bulgarian Exarchate church was founded with the first article of a firman dated 27th February (Old Calendar) 1870, issued by the Sultan without the prior knowledge of the Patriarch. Of the 13 church Eparchies that passed into its jurisdiction, only the Metropolitan diocese of Veles could properly be described as Macedonian. Even so, article 10 of the firman stipulated that other dioceses were free to join the Exarchate if two-thirds of their congregation requested this. This firman is therefore often regarded as the ‘birth certificate’ of the Macedonian Question; but it is not. The preconditions for the emergence of conflicting sides and their ‘nationalisation’ had already been created by the Edict of Hatti Humayun of February 1856 and the ensuing political, social and economic realignments. This Edict brought about changes in land ownership that benefited Christians, and officially established the chiflik as inheritable landed property. It also created the preconditions for public works and for changes in the tax collection and credit systems. Finally, as part of the drawing up of a general code of rights, the Patriarchate was asked to draw up the general Regulations for the Orthodox Christian community of the Empire with the participation of the laity. The completion and implementation of these Regulations had a chain reaction effect, starting in the 1860s, leading to the emergence of various dynamics. Among these were the modernisers, whose aspiration was to open schools, but also the separatists, who, now that communal organisation had been somewhat democratised, were able freely to express themselves. Oftentimes, the separatists and the modernisers were one and the same people, who used education as an effective tool to expand and shape the scope of their ‘parties’ - in other words, the Greek, Bulgarian and the Rumanian camps. In this context, the tenth article of the firman of 1870 set the ‘electoral limit’, which officially permitted the full transfer of power, at two-thirds of the Orthodox population.

Whilst the Bulgarian national movement was still developing, defining the ecclesiastical status of the Exarchate could not simply be a procedural detail. The question of the ‘mixed’ provinces, of which there were many in Macedonia, impeded rapprochement between the Patriarch and the Bulgarians in 1871, whilst a separate Bulgarian national council was working on its own General Regulations. In the next year (1872) the ecclesiastical dispute came to a climax as the Bulgarian General Regulations were put into effect with a Turkish decree. Patriarch Anthimos VI excommunicated the Bulgarian clerics behind these moves and, under pressure from the laity, pronounced as schismatics both clerics and lay people who collaborated with those who had been excommunicated. The religious schism and excommunications helped to push the two sides, Patriarchists and Exarchists, even further apart, particularly in geographic terms. Where before there had been no social and economic antagonisms, rural populations suddenly found themselves confronted by higher theoretical dilemmas: the exercising of their religious duties within one church or the other necessitated their ethnic self-definition. With which criteria would they decide?

The Greek educational societies that had been founded in Athens and Constantinople took on the task of helping them out of their dilemma: the Association for the Dissemina-
tion of Greek Letters, now under the presidency of Nikolaos Mavrokordatos, the Greek Philological Association of Constantinople, reconstituted since 1871, and the Macedonian Educational Brotherhood, founded in the same year by the West Macedonians of the Ottoman capital. After the schism, the activities of these central organisations intensified and spread, with the establishment of branches throughout Macedonia: at Serres in 1870, Edessa in 1872, Thessaloniki, Megarovo, Prosotsanti and Krusovo in 1873, Doxato and Siderokastro in 1874, Strumitsa in 1875, Kavala in 1878, and so on. A large educational conference was even held at Serres in 1871 and the first school opened in 1872. From 1873 the Gymnasium school of Thessaloniki was recognised as equal to those of the Greek state. In 1876 the first three-class gymnasium schools were operating in Kastoria, Kavala, Veroia and Drama. By the end of the 1870s, there were already 30 nurseries, over 360 community elementary schools of all types (200 of which also admitted girls), 42 ‘Greek’ and seven three-class gymnasium schools.3 As was to be expected, the number of Greek Macedonians studying at the University of Athens increased dramatically, whilst with the abundance of trained teachers the ‘alliloididaktiko’ system, whereby more able children taught the others, declined everywhere. The printing presses increased and in May 1875 the first Greek newspaper, Hermes, circulated in Thessaloniki, hot off the press of Sophocles Garbola, younger brother of Militiades, founder of the city’s first Greek press.

Despite the impressive numeric results, the Greek educational effort was not free of rivals and impediments. The progress made by the Exarchate at the beginning of the decade was already clear everywhere: in the regions of Ochird and Prespes, and even inside Monastir (1873), at Nevrkopti (1870), Edessa (1870). Even in Central Macedonia, the positive results of the Bulgarian-Uniate movement that had manifested itself in the previous decade in the areas of Kilkis, Doirani, and Evgelis could be seen. In that area in 1870 there were already seventy Bulgarian schools, thanks to the activities of the Metropolitan of Kilkis Parthenios. In 1873 the Uniate Bishop Nilos Izvorof made his first appearance, whilst in 1875 the Uniate Bishop of Constantinople Raphael Popov himself visited Yannitsa and Kilkis.4 In this same period Rumanian schools appeared in the region of Kato Vermio (Xirolivado and Veroia), and there was even an effort to penetrate Naousa.5 Despite the fact that the Macedonians were not indifferent to the revolutionary events that followed, these early successes were a clear indication of anger towards members of the upper clergy rather than of ethnic distinctions. It is also clear that Bulgarian national ideology, which had not quite freed itself completely of Serbian influence, was already suffering from the first manifestations of Macedonian separatism, as this was being promoted by the newly-formed Slavophone elite, educated in Athens, Belgrade and various Russian cities.6

Yet, the greatest obstacle for the Greeks was not the relatively limited spread of Bulgarian, Rumanian or Serbian education, but diplomatic developments themselves. In the summer of 1875 a Christian rebellion broke out near Mostar in Herzegovina, over economic demands. Despite the Porte’s acquiescence to pressure from Austria-Hungary for reforms, the rebellion spread in the summer of 1876 to Bulgaria, thus raising, in addition to the ecclesiastical question, a Bulgarian political question. In May of that year, the slaughter of the French and German consuls at Thessaloniki by the Muslim rabble, in response to their involvement in a case of Islamisation,7 as well as the bloody Turkish reprisals in the Bulgarian village of Batak in Rhodope, escalated European diplomatic interventions. A few days later (30 May) Abdul Aziz, a ‘compliant’ Sultan for the West, was assassinated, and in June the Serbo-Turk war, broke out, with unfavourable consequences for Belgrade.
Greek politics followed these developments, but was unable to react effectively. In the summer of 1876 Leonidas Voulgaris, veteran supporter of the pan-Orthodox movements, encouraged by Greeks and Serbs, organised a network of armed fighters in Thessaly and Macedonia. Even so, a more active Greek involvement in the war was impossible, despite it being an obligation of the 1867 Serbian-Greek treaty. At the Constantinople Conference of December 1876, the representatives of the Great Powers, without consulting the Turks, decided the terms of peace. As for the Bulgarian Question, it was foreseen that two self-governing vilayets, eastern and western, would be set up, with their capitals in Turnovo and Sofia respectively. Thanks to Russian actions, and despite the exceptionally small presence of Exarchists until 1876, they included the areas of Kastoria, Florina and Edessa. Count Ignatieff even proposed during the discussion on the composition of the community councils, that language be used as a criterion for the determination of ethnicity, a proposal disastrous for Greek interests. The announcement in the last days of December that a Constitution would be drawn up, the work of the Young Turks and Midhat Pasha, nullified the terms of the Conference. It had, however, created a serious precedent for the future of Macedonia, which was in danger of nullifying Greek plans for expansion as far as the Balkan Mountains let alone as far as Monastir. The mass protests that the Greek Consuls in Macedonia took care to instigate were not enough to prevent what was to come.

A few months later the danger was re-ignited. In April 1877 the Russian army had started to advance through the territory of the Empire. Macedonian circles in Athens, led by the lawyer from Vogatsiko Stephanos Dragoumis, mobilised with revolution as their clear goal. This would be preceded by disembarkation at Pieria, Halkidiki and East Macedonia with the ultimate aim of coming into contact with the Russian troops in Bulgaria. But, Greece’s hesitance to become fully involved in the war delayed the outbreak of the movement irreparably, whilst in this same period (1877) Macedonia was being preyed upon by wide-scale bandit raids by Albanians and other irregulars. Captain Kosmas Doumbiotis’s band reached Litohoro in February 1878, only a few days before the draft Russian-Turk treaty in the suburb of Constantinople known as San Stefano. The Russians imposed the creation of a Greater Bulgaria, which would include the whole of Macedonia with the exception of Thessaloniki, Halkidiki and the provinces of Kozani and Servia. Hitrovo, the former Consul at Monastir, was appointed political commissioner for Macedonia. The Fourth Army Corps of the Russian army was to be based at Skopje.

During these same days at Litohoro, the ‘Temporary Government of Macedonia’ was being formed, with Evangelos Korovangos as President, whilst the revolution was spreading to Pieria, thanks to the efforts of the Metropolitan of Kitros Nikolaos, the chief pastoralist of Vermio Pavlos Batralexis and the Olympian bandit rebels. Once again, the revolution soon petered out due to a bad strategy and the powers in Pieria withdrew to Greece. Even so, in the region of Vourino, the ‘Temporary Government of the province of Elimeia in Macedonia’ had already been formed on 18 February, building upon the patriotic network that had existed there since the 1860s. The President was Ioannis Goventaros from Kozani, and the Secretary was the teacher Anastasios Pichion from Ochrid, a leading figure in the Kastoria ‘Educational Association’ and representative in that city of the Association for the Dissemination of Greek Letters. The chieftain Iosef Liatis was appointed military governor, at the head of 500 armed men. During the spring and summer months of 1878, this government undertook, with feeble support from Athens, to show that Greek territorial ambitions were not limited to Epirus and Thessaly. Thousands of armed men – reaching perhaps even 15,000 – took part in this effort, from all the region’s mountain complexes, and by the end of the summer a general guerrilla war had broken out in Kozani.
and Monastir. In the winter of 1878 its activities were terminated, or rather suspended. In the meantime, the Congress of Berlin had given Bulgaria a state entity, albeit limited, in the form of two autonomous principalities. The Greek reaction was noted; so was the Bulgarian, which in February 1878 took the form of a dynamic movement in the areas of Kresna and Razlog. The movement was suppressed, and the area of Pirin remained Turkish, as had been decided at Berlin. The next year, forces of the Bulgarian National Guard got as far as Morohivo and Koresitia, to be defeated once again. Greece – and it was official now – was not the only contestant for the Macedonian legacy.\(^\text{10}\)

2. After Berlin

The Bulgarian success of 1878, and even more so the gains achieved through the terms set by Russia at San Stefano, did not leave Greece much room for amateur moves in Macedonia. The Bulgarian bands were now almost permanently on Macedonian territory – in particular the eastern and northern kazas – and they took every opportunity to point this out, pushing for the appointment of Exarchist Metropolitans. In 1879 Hitrovo became Russian Consul in Thessaloniki. That year, the Bishop of Nilos Izvorof – appointed since 1876 – became active once again in Central Macedonia, based at Kilkis. In one five-year period, there were 57 Catholic villages, whilst the Bulgarian schools in the vilayet of Thessaloniki reached 64, including the Gymnasium at Thessaloniki.\(^\text{11}\) Bulgarian bands began to appear all the more often, particularly in East Macedonia. Alexander of Battenburg’s visit to Athens in the spring of 1883 was not enough to calm Greek fears. The Athenian newspapers were being bombarded with letters from Greek Macedonians calling attention to the North. Amongst the honourable letter-writers were Athanasios Papalouka Eftaxias, author of the study *To ergon tou ellinismou en Makedonia (The work of Hellenism in Macedonia)* (1880) and Ioannis Kalostypis, who published the treatise *Makedonia, itoi meleti oikonomologiki, geographiki, istoriki kai ethnologiki (Macedonia, being an economic, geographical, historical and ethnological study)* (1886). Pro-Bulgarian feeling following the massacre at Batak was still strong among the public in Western Europe, which had difficulty in identifying Greek rights in the Slavophone area. The pro-Bulgarian line of the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the subsequent mission to Macedonia by Major Henry Trotter, as well as that of the Belgian economist and publicist Emile de Laveley, which led to a flood of protests in the Macedonian cities, are illustrative of the period 1884-85.\(^\text{12}\)

This already difficult situation was made worse by the coup in which the autonomous principality of Eastern Rumelia was annexed by the Bulgarian principality of Sofia, and the systematic engagement of Bulgarian gangs in autumn 1885. The defeat of the Serbs in the brief war that followed and the fruitless Greek mobilisation (the ‘peace war’), lasting several months, increased the importance of the annexation. Macedonia was clearly Sofia’s next target, and the Bulgarians had the boldness and know-how to conquer it. The Greek sources of the period are full of anecdotes and incidents that describe how Bulgarianism, as a flourishing political power in Macedonia, exploited and coloured all communal and social cleavages, in particular in the urban centres. Even small pro-Bulgarian cores or personal interventions were enough to set off catalytic reactions and shape ethno-political alliances. The opening of a Bulgarian school, a common aim both of the Exarchists and the Uniates, was the clearest expression of this differentiation, and also a factor in increasing tensions, given the initial refusal (1883) of the Porte to accept Exarchist Bishops on its territory. In 1888, throughout the whole of European Turkey (Macedonia and Thrace) there were 485
Bulgarian schools with 686 teachers and 23,600 pupils. In 1893 the Porte officially recognised them, and as equal to the Greek schools. The Bulgarians had similar successes in the ecclesiastical field. Sofia, exploiting the fluctuations in Greek-Turkish relations, secured the appointment of Exarchist Bishops at Ochrid and Skopje in 1890, and at Veles and Nevrrokopi in 1894. According to one calculation, in the region of Kastoria in 1891 only 13 Slavophone villages (of a total of 53) had joined the Exarchate, and 24 out of 100 in the region of Monastir. By 1894 the numbers had increased to 26 and 42 respectively.

And it wasn’t just the Bulgarians. The Rumanians were also promoting, with the zeal of their new-found independence, their own propaganda, mainly in the vilayet of Monastir, where the Vlach demographic distribution was more compact. In 1887 the annual funding for their 29 elementary schools and three Gymnasium schools is said to have reached 120,000 francs. Serbia’s southerly descent to Nis, to land that it had been granted at Berlin, and the vision of ‘Old Serbia’, with Austrian encouragement, added yet another visible contestant, who was willing to invest much more in the education of the Macedonians than the Rumanians were. This role was undertaken from 1886 by the ‘St Sava’ educational society, under the watch of the two Serbian Consulates that had been opened in Skopje in 1887 and at Monastir in 1888. Serbia’s 1887 budget included a figure of four million francs to cover a variety of national needs in Macedonia. In 1891 the Serbian government, with Russian encouragement, achieved from the Ecumenical Patriarchate the appointment of Serbian Bishops, the opening of schools, and permission to use the Slav language in the churches and schools of the communities found within the area of Belgrade’s ambitions. The Patriarchate initially refused. As things were, it was obliged to compromise in 1892, in order to keep – at the expense of the Greek language – as many communities within the northern Bishoprics outside of the Exarchate. In 1893-94, 117 Serbian schools with 5,500 pupils were already operating in Kosovo.

What more could Greece do? In 1880 proclamations were signed by a mixed committee (Greek, Slav and Albanian) requesting from the European Consuls that a temporary government be set up for an autonomous Macedonia. This was yet another fruitless and vague plan by Leonidas Voulgaris. But, the time for private initiatives had passed and this was made clear a little later (1886-7) by the easy disbanding and arrest of the members of Anastasios Pichion’s network in West Macedonia. The annexation of Thessaly in 1881 brought Macedonia closer to Athens, and clearly made its supervision easier. Indeed, the number of Greek Consulates soon rose to six, based not only in Thessaloniki and Kavala, but also at Serres, Skopje and Elassona. The active participation of Athens in the educational process was now necessary, as was co-ordination with ecclesiastical bodies and even the Patriarchate. Neither, however, of these two goals was easily achievable. Despite the increase in state funding from 100,000 drachmas in 1879 to 250,000 in 1880 and 440,000 in 1883, the Association for the Dissemination of Greek Letters was unable to cover increased demands. In the vilayet of Monastir in 1883, the average funding for the 16 Rumanian schools was over 120 Turkish lira per school, whilst the 310 Greek (and 74 Bulgarian) schools received only one-third of that figure. Delays in state funding led to delays in paying salaries, often speeding up the painful decision to disband those schools that were not judged to be ‘nationally’ productive. The lack of funds compounded the tension in the relations between associations, communities, and Consuls. The Committee for the Support of the Church and Education, appointed by the Foreign Ministry in 1887, took on the task...
of regulating state funding, but the timing, after the great spending on the mobilisation of 1885-86, was unfortunate. The need to economise grew, and in 1889 the protests of the teachers in Macedonia became generalised. The new cuts led to insufficient funding of small communities, where alternative sources of funding were lacking but the national needs were greater, leading them straight into the Exarchist camp. This was a vicious circle, and a few generous donations from private individuals were not enough to break it.\textsuperscript{18} Despite all this, in the 1894-95 school year, 900 schools were operating throughout the whole of Macedonia, with 53,500 pupils. This period was also marked by serious problems in the relations between ecclesiastical figures and the Greek consular authorities, as seen in the resignation of Patriarch Ioakim III in 1884. In the years 1886-1894 in particular, an increasing number of Metropolitans found themselves caught between the Patriarchal throne’s needs not to compound the split with the Exarchate (only one of the Church’s many problems in the Balkans) with national obligations, which the Greek Consuls were urging - sometimes scornfully - them to conform with.\textsuperscript{19}

3. From the foundation of IMRO to Ilinden

On the afternoon of 3 November 1893, Dame Gruev, Petar Pop Arsov, Anton Dimitrov, Hristo Tatarchev and Ivan Hadzhinikolov gathered at Hristo Batandzhiev’s house in Thessaloniki. The fruit of their meeting was the foundation of a secret revolutionary organisation that was to influence political developments in the Balkans for the next half century. The issue of the name of this organisation was to occupy its members for a fair while, and it was finally decided to call it the ‘Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation’, whilst its central committee was to be the ‘Central Macedonian Revolutionary Committee’. The organisation became widely known, though, as the ‘Bulgarian Revolutionary Committee’, the ‘Secret Revolutionary Committee’ and, more rarely, the ‘Internal Revolutionary Committee’ - internal, that is, to Macedonia.

The conspirators came from Macedonian towns and villages, but, thanks to their studies, had been initiated in Bulgarian revolutionary ideology and socialism at just the right moment. All of them wished for the liberation of Macedonia from the Turkish yoke, but their plans for its future fate were still confused. In early 1894 there was another meeting of the founding members, this time in Dimitrof’s house, at which the precise aim of the organisation was defined. It was suggested during the discussion that Macedonia be annexed immediately to Bulgaria, but this was rejected as it was certain to cause a reaction from Europe as well as from Turkey, which had a direct interest in the matter. They concluded, then, as it appears from the sources, that their goal was the autonomy of Macedonia – a less dangerous slogan – and the continuous strengthening of the Bulgarian element, with the hope either for union with Bulgaria in the long-term or, at least, participation in a federation of Balkan states. The desired strengthening of the Bulgarian element would be secured only through reforms that were to be implemented by the Porte.\textsuperscript{20}

In Sofia, in the meantime, the Bulgarian-Macedonian organisations, formed by the thousands of émigrés either temporarily or permanently working there, had set up their own co-ordinating Supreme Committee (the Vrhovist Committee) in 1894-95 with the help of the Stoilov government and the strategic goal of a more aggressive policy against Turkey. The true leader of the Committee was Ivan Tsonchev, a friend of Prince Ferdinand, whilst its leader for the purpose of outside appearances was professor Stoyan Mihailovski. The Vrhovists’ first armed campaign in Macedonia, which resulted in the capture for a few...
hours of Meleniko in July 1895, was led by Boris Sarafov, a young army officer from Nevrokopi. The two organisations were clearly replicating each other, and it was thus necessary to distinguish them ideologically. The positions of the ‘Internal Organisation’ were to be made even clearer in the summer of 1896, when Gjorce Petrov and Goce Delchev – two younger and more dynamic members – were charged with drawing up a fuller charter for the organisation. In this new charter, the influence of Bulgarian revolutionary literature and, especially, the influence of the charter of the revolutionary organisation active in Bulgaria before 1878, were clear and marked. Yet on an official level, beyond the literary influences, the organisation had a clear Bulgarian character: articles 2 and 3 foresaw that only the ‘Bulgarian people’ of Macedonia and Adrianople (i.e. Thrace) would participate in the struggle. They called upon the revolutionary committees to awaken the Bulgarian consciousness of the population, to spread revolutionary ideas and to prepare for revolution, which they saw as a long-term prospect. Also for the long-term was the full clarification of the position of the Slav-Macedonians towards Bulgarian ideology.

The Greeks chose a similar path for their national revolution. In Athens in the spring of 1894 a group of low-ranking officers founded the Ethnike Etaireia (National Society). Some among them, like Pavlos Melas and even the young Ioannis Metaxas, were soon to reappear and enjoy popularity in the twentieth century. The purpose of the Etaireia, which grew markedly in a couple of years, was to ‘rejuvenate the national sensibility’. In addition to the politicians, its ranks now included distinguished citizens, many of them known for their sensitivity over Macedonia. By the summer of 1896 the Society had formed six armed bands in Thessaly, whose aim was not revolution against the Turks but ‘protests against Bulgarian claims’. The leading figure among the chieftains, veterans of 1878 from Macedonia and elsewhere, who had been enlisted for the occasion was Athanasios Broufas, a builder from Krimini near Mt Voio. In contrast with the other five bands, which could not get beyond the coast of Pieria, Broufas’s band was able to enter Macedonia as far as the Morichovo highlands outside of Monastir. Yet, after a number of skirmishes, Broufas was killed and a number of his men ended up in the Turkish jails. The Society repeated its efforts the next summer, almost at the same time as the outbreak of hostilities in the Greco-Turkish war. Yet, the large band of Kapsalopoulos and Mylonas (2,000 men) from Thessaly failed to enter Macedonia, as did another of 400 men that had disembarked at Kavala to blow up the new, and fatal for the campaign, Thessaloniki-Constantinople railway line.

This new Greek failure at an insurgency and the crushing of the army on the field of battle gave the Bulgarian Committees the opportunity they had been waiting for. Membership of the Exarchate increased in the so-called ‘middle zone’, (to the north of Monastir, Strumitsa and Meleniko), which, realistically speaking, was now the northernmost point of territory being contested by the Greeks. The arrival of an Exarchist Metropolitan in Monastir in December 1897 was indicative of Turkish intents, whilst rumours were running wild that similar postings would soon follow in Kastoria and Florina. The Committees, with the opportunity the situation provided, embarked upon a systematic and extensive campaign of executions of the leading members of the Greek camp, the most fanatic, known as Grecomans. The evaluation for the two years 1898-1900 was most encouraging. Accomplished activists, such as Pavel Hristov and Poptraikov, were present in the area and helped to organise core armed bands in the wider Kastoria region. The arming of Exarchist villages proceeded apace, and many of these weapons had in fact been bought in Athens, through a carefully organised network. The murders of a few tax collectors and tax farmers gave the Committee the requisite guise of fighting against the tyrant. Progress would certainly have been quicker if it had not been interrupted by internal discords, caused by the wariness of
the local chieftains. This can be seen most in the refusal of Kotas Christou from Roulia to serve under the command of Markov, just arrived from Bulgaria in 1900, against his Patri-archist compatriots, and his gradual withdrawal from the Internal Organisation. Part of his problem was ideological, and the spread and maturing of the Organisation as a revolution-ary mechanism throughout Macedonia quickly led to a new appraisal of its founding charter. The Organisation attempted – officially, at least – to unite all the oppressed of European Turkey under the banner of autonomy and not simply the Bulgarians, as had been the initial aim. From now on, a member could be ‘any Macedonian and Adrianopolitian [i.e. Thracian]’ who fulfilled the conditions of the charter. Its goal was the full political autonomy of Macedonia and Thrace, in the struggle for which ‘all the dissatisfied’ had to participate and not only the Bulgarian elements of Macedonia and Thrace. The new charter of the Secret Macedonian-Adrianople Revolutionary Organisation, now known as IMRO, was issued in the first six months of 1902, as revised by Delchev and Petrov. 25 In the meantime, the kidnapping in 1901 of the American missionary Ellen Stone by the cheta of the socialist Sandanski had already made the organisation notorious almost the world over. 26

The ‘opening’ of IMRO to all the populations was, of course, a tactical manoeuvre. The strategy for the uprising had already been laid out, the armed bands were being reassembled, and the machinery decentralised so as to make action easier. Clashes between the bands and the Turkish army had intensified already before spring 1902. In the summer of that same year, Colonel Yankov, a leading cadre of the Vrhovists, arrived at his hometown of Zagoritsani (Vasiliada, Kastoria), along with an armed band with the purpose of instigating an uprising, to be supported by Bulgaria and Russia, as soon as possible. The local chieftains - Chakalarov, Kliashev, Mitre the Vlach, etc. - opposed this idea, noting that the region was unprepared and there was a lack of weapons. Moreover, an earthquake that July had caused much destruction, mainly in Central Macedonia. But the Vrhovists were not to be swayed. In autumn 1902 it carried out operations without the help of the local chieftains, whilst General Tzoncheff led a large band in the area of Tzoumagia and Razlog. Although several villages happily joined the movement, it did not end successfully and the intervention of bashi-bazouk irregulars was catastrophic.

The gain for Bulgaria, however, was in the diplomatic sphere. Restraining the Com-mittees, as urgently requested by the Great Powers, was impossible without the reforms that both the Bulgarian government and IMRO were pushing for. At the end of November 1902, the Porte agreed to appoint Hussein Hilmi Pasha as Inspector General of its European possessions, with the goal of normalising conditions. After meeting the next month in Vienna, the Foreign Ministers of Russia and Austria-Hungary, Lambsdorff and Goluchowski, proposed reforms for the Ottoman gendarmerie and rural police, revision of the tithe, the proper use of public revenues and the amnestying of political prisoners. 27 The ‘Vienna Programme’ was accepted, although never applied in practice. Throughout Macedonia in the spring of 1903 there were around 2,700 armed supporters of the Committees (in Turkish, comitadjis), organised into at least 90 gangs. The freed political prisoners had returned directly to their battle positions. The last IMRO conference before the Ilinden uprising took place at Smilovo in April 1903. The decision of the January 1903 conference for revolution was ratified; according to the proceedings this was as much due to the situation within Ma-cedonia as to the difficult situation that the organisation had fallen into after the arrests of its members in 1901. Ratification of this decision was essentially forced through by Ivan Garvanov, president of the central committee of IMRO, and his people who – according to the protagonists – achieved the consent of the conference participants by sending out
threatening letters, despite Petrov’s strong objections that the population was not sufficiently prepared.\textsuperscript{28}

IMRO’s actions in the coming months made its true goals much clearer. The bomb attacks at various places indicated that something serious was afoot. The wave of bombings in the centre of Thessaloniki at the end of April, targeting European interests, only confirmed suspicions, despite the fact that the true perpetrators were a group of young anarchists with only loose ties to IMRO.\textsuperscript{29} Most of the evidence for this tragic phase comes from the diplomatic correspondence of the day. The French Vice-Consul wrote from Monastir: ‘Their committees goad [the villagers] in every way into rebellion and actively continue their scheming, which is finding fertile ground. From the above events it arises that they kill traitors without pity as well as those who refuse to give money’. More analytical was the British Vice-Consul at Skopje, Fontana, who wrote that the Bulgarian community of the city of Shtip was ‘working for a general Bulgarian rising, and are prepared to face massacre in order to attain the end they hold in view viz.: “Macedonia for the Macedonians” meaning, no doubt “Macedonia for the Bulgarians”’. He added: ‘The peasantry of many localities nourish, it is true, but a few aspirations and but a half-hearted desire to rise. They play hero-songs and patriotic skirlings on the Bulgarian bag-pipe, they accept rifles, extend hospitality to roving bands and contribute to committee funds with more or less stoical, if not heroic, patience. But it is doubtful whether their general idea of patriotism or nationality oversteps their fostered hatred of the Turk, and dislike to paying him taxes. In the towns, however, the feeling prevalent among Bulgarian notables, schoolmasters and the majority of the Bulgarian citizens is far deeper, and the education of the pupils in the Bulgarian high-schools is merely a re-echo of that feeling.’\textsuperscript{30}

Given the conditions, even the most optimistic elements within IMRO could not seriously expect that a widespread revolutionary uprising would be successful, especially in the countryside. Their irreversible path towards a general holocaust can be explained through their specific diplomatic aims: Europe had to intervene directly. The events that followed only partially justified the Bulgarian revolutionaries. The July uprising, better known as the Ilinden uprising as it took place on the feast day of the Prophet Elias, as anticipated was smothered, and with heavy losses despite the significant assistance coming out of Bulgaria. Even though the Turkish lodgings on a number of \textit{chiflik}s were set ablaze, the military defeat was wholesale and the short-term diplomatic gains not as expected. In September 1903, on the sidelines of a meeting between the Emperors of Russia and Austria-Hungary at Franz Josef’s hunting lodge in the city of Mürzsteg in Styria, a reform programme was prepared that was deemed acceptable both to the Porte and the other Powers. The plan aimed for the application of the Vienna agreements and the restoration of damages and peace, before Macedonia slipped into a new cycle of rebellions. Specifically, it foresaw the appointment of two Civil Agents (a Russian and an Austrian) as advisors alongside Hilmi, the reorganisation of the gendarmerie by European officers, a rearrangement of administrative areas so that they would include, as much as possible, ethnically homogenous populations, reform of administrative and judicial institutions to benefit the Christians, appointment of an evaluation committee for political crimes, economic support for the suffering populations, disbanding of the irregular military bands and application of the new tax collection methods that had been decided at Vienna. Autonomy had not been achieved, but the destruction of the towns of Krusovo and Kleisoura and of dozens of other villages with a doubtful participation in the uprising, the plundering, the enslavement and the 40,000 homeless refugees succeeded in publicising the propaganda of IMRO and Bulgaria on the Macedonian Ques-
tion throughout the whole of Europe. It was a significant gain that could be put to future use.31

### 4. The Struggle over Macedonia

Whilst the Great Powers were working to establish peace in Macedonia, the Greek government had already seriously begun to consider becoming more actively involved.32 There was nothing surprising in this. Since the beginning of the century there had already been an increase in generous donations for the education of the Greek Macedonians, but also the thought that violence could only be met with violence. There were now over 1,000 Greek educational institutions with around 70,000 pupils.33 Significant changes had taken place in the church, the most important being the invitation to the former Ecumenical PatriarchIoakim III in March 1901 to assume the Patriarchal throne once more, with the support of the Greek government.34 At the same time, new Metropolitans were being placed in strategic positions: Germanos Karavangelis at Kastoria, Chrysostomos Kalafatis at Drama, Ioakim Foropoulos at Monastir, and others. All were now operating openly in favour of the Greek national position, the most aggressive being Germanos of Kastoria, who proceeded immediately with moves to break the Bulgarian Committee’s network and to form armed bands, by winning over Kotas Christou and other disgruntled members of IMRO.35 The diplomat Ion Dragoumis, son of Stephanos, arrived to assist him in this task in November 1902, having successfully requested to be appointed secretary in the Consulate at Monastir. Within this city, the network of which was spreading throughout the whole of Macedonia, organisational cores started to be formed, in other words, the Greek national committees known as Amyna (Defence). They were filled by the most bold and Greek-oriented elements in the city and surrounding towns, who saw that the Bulgarian Committee’s aggressive policy was endangering the whole of the social and economic structure. Weapons began to reach Macedonia through the activities of the old members of the Ethnike Etaireia, who were serving as officers in Thessaly. Dragoumis sent flaming letters in all directions, even requesting his brother-in-law Pavlos Melas to organise a military coup, with General Timoleon Vassos at its head, to save Macedonia.36 The Consulates received orders to strengthen defence. Under Karavangelis’s pressurising, the Dragoumis circle sent the first armed band comprised of eleven Cretans in May 1903. Indeed, this band clashed with the Bulgarians on the very first day of the Ilinden uprising, and escaped to Greece with much difficulty.37

On 15 August 1903, at the instigation of the Macedonian associations of Athens, a rally was held in response to the dramatic events unravelling in Macedonia. This was followed by a decision to send two exploratory missions to Macedonia: one with the four military officers Kontoulis, Kolokotronis, Papoulas and Melas, and the other with Georgios Tzorbatozglou, interpreter at the Consulate of Constantinople. The missions finished their work in the summer of 1904, but their proposals differed. Even the views of the officers disagreed among themselves. Kotas’s arrest, after having being betrayed by Germanos Karavangelis, increased worries as to whether it really was possible to undermine the superior Bulgarian organisation.38 Yet, in reality, the countdown had started already in the spring. This was when Demetrios Kallergis was appointed Consul at Monastir and Lambros Koromilas Consul at Thessaloniki. A group of officers was also seconded to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to serve as ‘special secretaries’ in the Consulates and Sub-Consulates. In late May, the Macedonian Committee was established by former members of the Ethnike
Etaireia, with Demetrios Kalapothakis, owner of the up-and-coming newspaper *Embros* and former director of Harilaos Trikoupis’s political office, as its president. From its founding charter, it can be seen that the Committee assumed wide responsibilities, extending to the conscription and preparation of the bands. Although the Greek government covered its expenses and appointed half the members of its Administrative Council, it was clear that the parallel activities of private individuals and the state portended complications. Over the next few years, the co-ordination of the campaigns and the distribution of men and materials were anything but smooth.\(^{39}\)

In late July 1904 it was decided to send new bands to Macedonia. By mid-August the bands of Thymios Kaoudis and, a little later, Pavlos Melas, managed to enter the province. The diplomatic services followed their actions from afar, through the usual informants. Doubtless, there was satisfaction at the first Greek successes, focusing, however, more on the surface effects of the psychological battle for the hearts of the villagers rather than on actual armed clashes. The death of Pavlos Melas in October 1904 was in many ways a milestone in the Struggle for Macedonia. A courteous and generous man, a sensitive ideologue who, although ready to adopt the archetypes of the *Klepth* tradition,\(^ {40}\) was in truth unable to adopt the harsh rules and suffer the physical exertion of irregular warfare, ending thus as a tragic hero.\(^ {41}\) More than anything, his loss signified the triumph of romantic nationalism, sealed with his sacrifice for the homeland: a fate which, as we can see in his writings, Melas seemed to have been seeking. A few days after the death of Melas, the band of Georgios Katechakis (Rouvas) crossed the frontier, followed in mid-November by Georgios Tsontos, who soon became the most important army officer in the Struggle.\(^ {42}\) These two bands, along with Kaoudis’s men, struck the first blows against the Bulgarian side and were the first to restore Greek prestige in the eyes of the local population.

Winter suspended military activities. Preparations for the summer 1905 counter-attack began with the arrival of special secretary Second Lieutenant Konstantinos Mazarakis-Ainian from Athens. Mazarakis, reflecting Koromilas’s views, tried to promote the solution of the unified command of the Struggle under the General Consulate of Thessaloniki, pointing to the weaknesses of the Committee. But, the latter already enjoyed enough political support and had the requisite prestige to neutralise any attempts to limit its activities. Despite its healthy morale, the Greek counter-attack was in practice a far more complex and intricate issue. Given how dispersed and fragmented the centres of decision making were, from the offices of the newspaper *Embros* and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Athens to the peaks of Mt Vitsi, the villages of Mt Voio and the national committees of the small towns, with all their idiosyncrasies, the organisation of the infrastructure, the planning by the military staff and its consistent application were far more difficult than the guerrilla war in the mountains was. Lambros Koromilas emerged as the leading figure here, sending out hundreds of forceful and goading letters to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These documents show that Koromilas was aware of his superior skills, but also that his personality sometimes made him difficult to work with. It is beyond doubt, however, that the General Consul was the essential factor in the Greek Struggle for Macedonia.

Indeed, it is clear from Koromilas’s letters that he used the personal prestige that he enjoyed to push the Greek government into participating more actively than it had done in 1903-1904. In January 1905, before even receiving final approval for the necessary expenses, he was already envisioning the spread of operations from Central to Eastern Macedonia as far as Meleniko and Stroumitsa. He had also gone ahead with smuggling
weapons and arming the hinterland through the Consulate, perhaps even on occasion preempting the government itself with his passion and rhetoric. His constant refrain was that thousands of arms and explosives should be ordered. His collaborators were the ‘special secretaries’ who, as section leaders, kept up with every detail of the developments through their entrusted agents. They knew and photographed people and things, compiled reports for the Macedonian Committee and held daily sessions within the building of the General Consulate, all under the watchful eye of the Ottoman authorities. In Monastir around the same time a great deal of thought was being given to the future of the operations. In the absence of orders from above, the diplomats sought to formulate a plan for the rational distribution of the bands and military duties in advance, reserving the co-ordinating role for an officer positioned at the Consulate, just as Koromilas was also proposing for the vilayet of Thessaloniki. Events showed just how right they were. But, the ‘uniform action’, the ‘meticulous groundwork’ and the ‘complete organisation’ that Koromilas and his colleagues were asking for in advance remained an unattainable dream.43

Despite these concerns, in the spring of 1905 at least 565 men had been found and organised into sizeable bands under the command mainly of Greek army officers and the supervision of the Committee. At the same time, there were around 122 men operating in Central Macedonia under the command of non-commissioned officers and local chieftains (seven bands), as well as 109 militiamen (twelve bands). In addition to these, another 178 men were due to arrive imminently. That autumn in the same area there were 13 groups of andartes (215 men) ranged against an approximately equal number of armed Bulgarians and 32 groups of militiamen (183 men). Furthermore, already from November 1905, there were 14 small bands with a total of 85 men in East Macedonia. The simultaneous presence of 1,000 armed Greeks, at the moment that there were indications that the Turkish army was beginning to abandon its passive stance, was bound to result in no end of accidents and great loss of life, the most well-known victims being the officers Marinos Limberopoulos (Krobas), Michail Moraitis (Kodros) and Spyridon Frankopoulos (Zogras). On the other hand, the increase in the number of militias, the advance towards Morichovo and East Macedonia, the extension of control to Kastanohoria and the plains to the north and south of Florina and the securing of the vital arterial routes around Monastir, all within ten months, gave the Greeks a significant military advantage of undoubted importance.

The Struggle had not, however, been finally decided. From early 1906, when the first wave of enthusiasm had died down, the problems that the diplomats had noted in good time began to appear in the vilayet of Monastir: collapse of the bands in the northern zone, an inability to follow operations in the southern zone, irregularities in the use of funds, the absence of officials in the centres and lack of co-ordination of the entry and progress of the bands. The consequences were immediate and tragic: Georgios Skalides was killed in March, Christos Prantounas in April, Antonios Vlachakis in May, Konstantinos Garefis in June, Evangelos Nikoloudis in July and along with them dozens of Makedonomachoi, the victims, in most cases, of senseless clashes with the Turkish army. It is also illustrative that by September 1906 the regular force with operational abilities in this same region did not exceed 200 men - perhaps just a little more than the comitadis - Vitsi had been abandoned, Korestia could not be controlled and the Exarchists had launched murderous counter-attacks with many victims. By contrast, the incidents resulting from the collapse of discipline in the Patriarchist camp had increased greatly. At the same time, however, Lambros Koromilas in Thessaloniki was in the fortunate position of being able to note the continuing improvement of the Greek positions as the bands of Agapinos (Agras) and Demestichas
(Nikephoros) made successful progress in the marsh of Yiannitsa. He was hoping that the many lakeside villages whose economies were dependent upon the flora and fauna of the marsh would in this way come under their control.44

The close of the third year of armed operations found the Greek side holding on to the comparative advantage it had gained throughout Macedonia in 1905. Even so, it was quite clear that in some areas there was a divergence from adherence to the desired aims, or even departures from fundamental positions of interest. The documents from the consulates do not leave any doubt that these problems were especially apparent in Western Macedonia. The crisis that was smouldering in the vilayet of Monastir in 1906 appears to have been the result of a combination of geographical factors. Its adjacency to the Greek state increased the opportunities for a successful infiltration of the bands, in contrast to the always programmed but at the same time problematic and fretful disembarkation by sea at Halkidiki and Roumlouki, south of the marsh of Yiannitsa. In any case, the border between Greece and Turkey was an area traditionally rife with all kinds of Klephts and Armatoloi. It was natural, then, that they were to be found in larger numbers in mountain Macedonia than in the central and eastern plains, where the landings were under the almost complete control of the Greek state. Even Monastir, the administrative centre in the west, was essentially cut off from many of the scenes of operations, in contrast to the luxury of the railway communications with all the centres in his jurisdiction that Koromilas had available to him. The distance from the operations in Grevena, Kastanohoria, Korestia, etc. increased the difficulties of co-ordinating the large numbers of armed men, whilst the inherent communications difficulties made the chaotic picture worse. Finally, the problem of the centralised command of the local committees was incomparably more serious in the west, where parochialism and the traditional form of the economy undermined any interventions from outside. The new class of enthusiastic patriots, supported by the arms of the bands, came into conflict with the establishment of the traditional local notables. By contrast, the pressures from ‘on high’ produced more immediate results from the chiflikis of the plains.

It appears that the all-powerful and highly successful IMRO was considered by the Greek diplomats - who obviously preferred to see their connections among the ‘interior’ Greek organisation in contradistinction to that of the ‘supreme’ Committee in Athens - to be a model for organisation and action. In reality, however, neither was the Bulgarian struggle running so smoothly. In their camp, as in the Greek camp, the causes of the conflicts were anything but ideological. The break-up of the Exarchist base into two parties came, as the evidence indicates, from the villagers’ inability to satisfy IMRO’s longstanding financial demands. During the decline that followed the Ilinden uprising and which intensified after the Greek counter-attack of 1905, the pressures, failures and ambitions of the captains, as well as the unwillingness of the Bulgarian state to intervene with reforms created an explosive mix which not only undermined Bulgarian irredentist policies in Ottoman Macedonia, but in the long-term had an explosive effect on social stability in Bulgaria itself.

The lack of a direction for the Struggle on the part of both Greeks the Bulgarians was even more profound within the context of the adverse conditions created by the interventionist policies of the Great Powers and the equally obstructive policy of the Porte. The presence of the former in Macedonia coincided with the escalation in Greek activities, which were seen as a destabilising factor for peace. Even if the French, British and Italians appeared to be irritated by the initiatives of the Austrians and the Russians in Macedonia, there do not appear to have been serious disagreements with the policy that was being ap-
plied. They all neglected the fact that the Greek bands were simply trying to replace the previous regime, because the European short-term interest was to maintain Bulgarian abilities to the point where they could neutralise Greek abilities without at the same time undermining Ottoman control. The Sublime Porte also fell in with this ‘biased’ policy, and perhaps not as unwillingly as the Inspector General of Macedonia, Hilmi Pasha, in his discussions with Greek diplomats would have had them believe. Once the subversive potential of the Bulgarians had been neutralised, Turkey ended the favourable neutrality that it had shown towards the Greek bands at the beginning of the Macedonian Struggle, and embarked upon ‘relentless persecutions’. Officially, of course, Hilmi played the role of Philhellene with impressive dexterity, whilst caught between European and Sultanic pressure, continuing to ensure the Greeks that his main interest was to suppress the Bulgarian gangs and politely discouraging the formation of new Greek bands, supposedly so that they would not distract the Ottoman army. But to leave the pursuit of the comitadjis exclusively to the Turks, thus excluding the involvement of Greek bands, was not a realistic possibility. The Exarchists’ skill in covert activities was by now well known on the Greek side, as was the potential of the presence of only a few armed men to force people to change their beliefs.45

It was not just, however, the military progress of the Struggle and its international relations that focused the attention of the Greek diplomats. They clearly believed - and with good reason - that any economic steps taken would be as equally productive. These included a series of proposals and plans about which, since they never came sufficiently to fruition, very little is known. Instead, they passed into history as aspects of the economic war that Cavalry Second Lieutenant Athanasios Souliotis pronounced on the Exarchist professionals and workers of Thessaloniki. The situation, however, was far more complex than a simple economic blockade and was primarily linked to rapid changes in the Macedonian economy, which shall be examined below.46 Four aspects of these economic changes were primarily connected to the Struggle: emigration to America, the buying and selling of land, the opening of branches of banks, and the competition between professionals in the urban centres.

The immigration flow to the United States, which was manifested primarily after the Ilinden uprising, around 1905, had become particularly serious throughout the whole of the Slavophone zone of the vilayet of Monastir. It had become a strategy planned and rigorously applied by almost every extended family. In that year, 5,500 young men emigrated from the region of Monastir alone, the great majority of them from the villages which were suffering the most at the hands of the armed bands. This strategy had already spread to the western parts of the vilayet of Thessaloniki by the end of 1905. The consequences of this were negative firstly for the Turkish public sector, which despite so wishing was unable to contain this migration. The shortage of men also affected the Committees, who were thus denied manpower and funds, and they even attempted to control the immigration networks. Even so, a far more important development in the long-term was not so much the shortage of men in Macedonia but the migration of various Exarchists and Patriarchists to the American continent. Both Greece and Bulgaria seemed to have understood immediately the importance of this. From the Greek perspective, priority had to be given to the peaceful co-existence of the Patriarchist Macedonians with migrants from the Greek state and to avoid the misguided marginalisation of the Slavophone Patriarchists as Bulgarians. Whenever this did happen, the Slavophone returnees to Macedonia, with all the prestige that their dollars gave them, rushed to avenge those who had jeered at them by siding with the Bulgarian
Committee. This was a process that required a rather delicate handling which, as history has shown, could not be secured just with the presence of one satisfactory prelate or a diplomatic representative, as observers at the time proposed.47

The abandonment of crops, the blow dealt to the chifliks by the lack of manpower and the inflow of foreign currency naturally resulted in a rapid increase in the buying and selling of land. This situation favoured certain measures that would have allowed, through the renting of chifliks, grazing areas and forests, the resettling of Patriarchist populations, thus creating a safe passage for the armed bands and the installation of guards. Particular attention was paid to the lakes, i.e. the shallow marshes of Yiannitsa, Amatovo and Artzan, as they were not only natural bases for the operations of the armed bands but also supported the economies of the neighbouring villages. Even so, the implementation of these proposals, despite the expected benefits, came up against the stated reluctance of the credit agencies - even the Greek ones - to risk their capital in the uncertain environment of the Macedonian hinterland.

In the urban centres the problems faced by the national struggle were not due to lack of capital but to the structure of society itself. The monetisation of the economy, the acceleration of trade patterns, improvements in communications and, primarily, the sense of insecurity drove an ever-increasing number of Slavophone peasants and small business people to the urban centres, either temporarily or permanently. Here, they settled in certain marginalised neighbourhoods, such as Dragor and Exoches near Monastir or Kilkis near Thessaloniki. The unavoidable social differences and economic tensions of the newly-arrived small shop owners, traders and workers with the established class of Greek-and Vlach-speaking merchants, but also among themselves, increased the effectiveness of the financial assistance given by the Bulgarian and Rumanian Committees, which were searching everywhere for ‘social disasters’ whom, in return for money, they would then add to the Committees. Settling of doctors and teachers in the hinterland and maintaining of Macedonomachoi as small traders in the urban centres was beneficial for the needs of the Struggle but it did not help especially in smoothing out the social differences or the fervent national feeling that they fed. Even in the Greek sources, we can easily see the gulf – if not dislike – that separated villagers and city-dwellers, as well as the political passions that were growing even within wholly Greek-speaking communities.48

The most important change during the last two years of the Struggle (1907-1908) was that of the rapid realignments on the diplomatic scene, or rather the feeling - sometimes mistaken - that such realignments were taking place. It was obvious that things were not going well for Bulgaria. The countdown for Sofia’s Macedonian policy had already begun. The Greek government, on the other hand, continued throughout the whole of 1907 to draw the ire of the Porte, all the Great Powers, and in particular Britain, which always appeared to be well informed. Indeed, from the archival material for this period, we can see just how important was the role of the European observers in meting out blame. We can easily ascertain the irritation of the Greek diplomats, who would censure the British and French Consuls and officers for barely veiled pro-Bulgarianism and bias against the Patriarchist population. Although they could be accused of ineptness and an inability to see things from the perspective of the Europeans, i.e. that the main problem to the peace efforts of the Great Powers was indeed the Greek bands, their irritation was not entirely groundless. The impressions of the on-site observers reinforced and hastened the decision of the Powers to put diplomatic pressure on the Balkan states, in particular on Athens, so as to take steps not simply to discourage but also curtail guerrilla actions and, moreover, to support the de-
mands of the Porte for removal of those diplomats and Metropolitans who were implicated – according to the foreign observers – in the Greek armed struggle.\(^49\)

It is not easy to answer the question as to what would have happened in Macedonia if the Young Turk movement had not cut off developments in the summer of 1908. In reality, there was no serious prospect of war between Bulgaria and Turkey. Like Greece, Bulgaria was not in a position to ignore the Great Powers completely, but neither did it have much room for reconciliation with the now decimated Committees. And, despite firing the occasional threat and spreading the odd rumour, neither had Turkey made any substantial preparations for a battle on its northern borders, and indeed at a time when disaffection within the Ottoman armed forces over delayed wages had began to lead to desertions. It seems, however, that the Greeks were justified in criticising the Turks for opportunism: the Bulgarian interest in Macedonia was not going to end soon and the long-term Turkish aims were not being served at all by the selective pressure being put on the Greeks. Indeed, if we are to take the details provided by the Consuls at face value, there is nothing to suggest that the actions of the Bulgarian *comitadjis* had been reduced significantly. The murder of Aeras in June 1907 had electrified the atmosphere. Taxation of the Patriarchists by IMRO continued, wherever and whenever this was possible. Threats and murders were part of the daily agenda. The penetration of bands from Bulgaria into Macedonia had not stopped, and their collaboration with the pro-Romanian Vlachs of Almopia was deepening and drawing on their conflict with the Greek Vlachs of Vermio. Moreover, the Porte had recognised a separate Vlach *millet* in 1905. The activities of renowned *voyvodes*, with their many associates, in the eastern *kazas* still had strong roots, and in February 1908 began to take on worrying dimensions.

Of course, IMRO was not itself in the best possible condition: its network suffered from leaks thanks to the difficulties in handling documents. Dozens of unrepentant Exarchists were leaving Kastanohoria for Bulgaria, obviously in order to regroup as their area had fallen under the control of the Greek bands. The leaders of the Exarchist community in Thessaloniki were clearly not willing to invest in a new movement, and the economic war waged by the Greeks had caused them quite a few difficulties. Desertions of chieftains to the Greek bands were increasing. Fortunately for the Bulgarian committees, however, even the Greek side, for a variety of reasons, was not in a position to eliminate them completely. After two years (1905-1906) of continuous efforts in Central Macedonia the Greeks had not managed to take control of the areas to the east and north of the lake of Yiannitsa, and the *comitadjis’* escape routes to the marshes remained clear. Until Nikiforos began to operate outside the marsh and against Exarchist villages, the results of the efforts that he and Aeras made, under truly adventure-story conditions, were not proportionate to their sacrifices.\(^50\) Even so, the European outcry led to the suspension of operations, and the attacks on pro-Romanian elements led to retaliations against the Greek communities in Rumania. In Macedonia again, a run of bad luck and mistakes led in less than two months (May-June 1907) to the obliteration of the bands of Captains Fiotakis, Foufas, Ziakas, Gouras, Flabouras and Doxoyiannis, and to the arrests of many band members. The death of the extremely popular Andreas Stenimachitis, an able warrior and patriotic orator, in Eastern Macedonia shocked the Patriarchist population, as did the forced departure of Bishop Chrysostomos of Drama a little later.\(^51\)

In early 1908 it appeared that the condition of deliberate inaction had spread from Monastir to the region of Drama. This was not for a lack of enthusiasm; it was simply that efforts at calculated violence were impossible given the very nature of IMRO bands. As
Consul Dimaras wrote, ‘these bands were a rabble made up of necessity by villagers who, after having carried out their pre-planned attack, abandoned their weapons [and] went back to their agricultural duties.’ An attack against their bases meant an attack against villages and such actions only brought problems on the diplomatic level. This was not, however, the only weakness. Tegos Sapountzis, staff member in Florina, observed that the reasons for this ebb in the action were the unsuitability of certain figures, the involvement of the bands in local community issues and the lack of a propaganda campaign. He also noted the vacuum created in some areas by the long-term absence in Athens of individuals with influence and economic clout, who, despite the continuous and convoluted exhortations for their return, were hesitant about going back to their towns and villages. To these we could add a variety of untold squabbles between local notables, clergy and other actors.

The other side of this seeming inactivity was a shift towards non-military options, especially to the economic battle. Athanasios Souliotis and Georgios Modis have left eloquent accounts of such initiatives in Thessaloniki and Monastir respectively, but in the countryside the rules were far harsher. The villagers did not have many options, and so their exclusion from bazaaars, trade fairs and the labour market was catalytic, and far more effective than any national propaganda. As for the rest, however, the notion that one study demonstrating the superior economic status of the Greek element would influence European public commentators and financiers in favour of Greek interests was naive, especially when even Greek banks did not dare, for economic reasons, to break off their transactions with the Bulgarians. A complete economic boycott of Bulgarian economic interests was a highly complex matter, which would never have been carried out unless peace was restored in the country and Greek retailers did not change their credit terms.

Yet, it was too late for a spectacular re-organisation of Greek operations. The organisation of the Greeks in Macedonia had reached its limits. With Koromilas’s definitive removal in September 1907 the road was open for the command operations of the Struggle to be unified. The well-founded suspicion that the vilayet of Thessaloniki would be placed under the responsibility of the Athenian Macedonian Committee, i.e. of the civilians, provoked the reaction of the officers (the special secretaries) in the Consulate of Thessaloniki, who proposed as an alternative solution that Colonel Panayiotis Danglis take over the directorship of the Committee. At the moment that Danglis was making his first contacts and laying down his plans, the situation was already out of control. The murder of Theodoros Askitis, interpreter for the Thessaloniki Consulate, only a few days later mobilised public opinion even more. At a rally in the square of the Varvakeios Lyceum on 16 March 1908, the ‘People of Athens and Piraeus’ - in other words the Macedonian circles and their friends - pronounced to Prime Minister Theotokis and Crown Prince Constantine that the Macedonian Committee no longer enjoyed their trust and that it was responsible for the worsening of the situation in Macedonia. In the second part of their complaint, at least, they were not entirely justified, but the pronouncement was signed by almost 400 chieftains. Despite the pressures, the memoranda and the threats of resignation from the officials at the Consulates and from Danglis himself, the attempt to direct the Committee failed. Danglis did not have the same influence as his opponents and Prime Minister Theotokis was inherently unwilling to push the situation to the limits. Given these conditions, it is striking that, almost out of inertia, the ‘front’ held up, and the relief felt at the news of the Young Turk revolution and of the amnesty for the andartes was entirely understandable. The Young Turk revolution provided the opportunity for replacing the Committee with the Panhellenic Organisation (PO), a creation of Danglis, Ion Dragoumis and a number of other officers. The PO, a vehicle less for battle and more for spying and propaganda, did not really have
much room for action. Greek-Turkish relations were at a low point, and this reality meant that, for the time being, the Makedonomachoi had to remain in their barracks.

The psychological gap after almost four years of campaigns in Macedonia was great and the reactions many. The complaints about the lack of sufficient moral and material rewards were being heard from as early as spring 1908. The non-commissioned officers who hoped to be promoted to warrant officer rank and had believed that their gallant bravery on the field of the guerrilla battle would pave the way for their joining the officer ranks were belied. They were just the tip of the iceberg, but their complaints varied, from transfers and financial claims to issues of moral conduct. Favourable promotions became competitive and the agitation was obvious. Conspiratorial groupings started to form, memoranda and recommendations be submitted by Danglis to the King and the Crown Prince. The inability to satisfy the veterans was breeding danger in Macedonia, and Dragoumis’s old ideas were finding fertile ground.

In February 1909, amidst all this confusion, Kalapothakis found the opportunity to publish a series of slanderous articles in Embros openly charging the Theotokis government with having abandoned action in Macedonia and attacking the leadership of PO by calling it ‘an official terrorist centre.’ A few weeks later, a number of lower-ranked officers began preparing conspiratorially for what was eventually to become the Goudi Rebellion. The Makedonomachoi, either as members of the PO or as veterans of the Committee and irrespective of rank, took a leading role, giving the Rebellion its requisite credibility. The motives of the national fighters were incontrovertible and their concern for national interests genuine. Kalapothakis, satisfied by Theotokis’s resignation, himself proposed Kyriakoulis Mavromichalis as Prime Minister. His brother-in-law, parliamentary deputy and former minister Alexandros Romas, was a governing member of the Committee. Until Venizelos came to power, in particular during the brief government of Stephanos Dragoumis, a number of associates and friends of the Macedonian Committee found themselves in various administrative positions. The Makedonomachoi officers had become so powerful that, despite the objections of Stephanos Dragoumis, they were able, with the assistance of Perikles Argyropoulos, to have their old acquaintance from the Monastir Consulate, the diplomat Dimitrios Kallergis, appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs. In 1909, the living legends of the Struggle for Macedonia, transferred the living of the mountain andartes to the political arena of Athens. The effect was splendid, although the reason for this went deeper than the displeasure of the Makedonomachoi. Kalapothakis did not live long enough to see the results. But, the generation of the officers of the Struggle for Macedonia were to enjoy many distinctions both in the military and in politics, and in both political camps during the inter-war period. Their entry into politics had another important consequence. The patrician officers and other now victorious army commanders were led for one more time to collaborate with the villagers of Macedonia, their old fellow fighters, this time to set up not national but political networks and alliances, which would last longer than any of them hoped. 53

In the meantime, since the start of the 1908 election campaign, the situation in Macedonia was getting worse. From the moment that the newly-founded political clubs were nothing more than a front for the national parties and committees, it was to be expected that the election campaign would turn into a new Macedonian Struggle, in which the local armed groups again played a decisive role. The Greeks sided with the Liberal Party, which supported decentralisation and the right of self-government for religious and national minorities. It seemed initially that these moderate views would win. Indeed, both the more
conservative members of IMRO as well as the Federalist wing supported decentralisation and self-government, joining forces with the notorious voyvodes Sandanski and Chernopeev. After the disappointment of the elections, which failed to demonstrate the political (and therefore national) strength of the Greeks to the degree that was desired, and also the subsequent pro-Sultan counter-coup of March 1909, things changed. Whilst the Greek officers were turning to the political arena, their Turkish colleagues had started to apply a hard-line Turkish nationalist interior policy, which also had adverse effects on the socialist movement.  

54 Nationalism brought more nationalism, and the reappearance of the Cretan Question complicated matters further. IMRO mobilised once more and the Greek villages were again armed. The legal reform to the ownership status of churches and schools in Macedonia, which essentially closed them whenever they could not be shared, led to fierce Greek protests.  

55 Order was maintained only through the use of state terrorism, which continued the work of the committees through pre-emptive murders of Patriarchist and Exarchist elements under the mantle of the ‘counter-revolutionary’ laws that had been passed in late summer 1909.  

56 At the same that the contacts for the formation of a Balkan alliance were progressing, Young Turk pressure led to the alliance of the Greeks and Bulgarians with the opposition Liberal Union, which had been founded in November 1911. The collaboration did not produce any tangible results as the Liberals were crushed in the elections of April 1912, within the climate of violence created by the Young Turk committee, which since the successful counter-revolution of 1909, had now evolved into a political party.  

57 Over the next few months there followed a few isolated instances of collaborations between Greek and Bulgarian bands, whilst Athens and Sofia aided all the more openly the penetration of armed fighters into Macedonia without, of course, having fully secured that there would be no attacks on each other’s bands. It was impossible for both the blood that had been shed and divided the two sides and the great symbolic value with which the Struggle for Macedonia had been invested to be neutralised through either guidelines or the military alliance of the first Balkan War.  

5. Economy and society of Macedonia  

The social divide that grew after 1870 and ultimately led the Christians of Macedonia into a ‘civil’ war cannot be fully interpreted without referring to the equally turbulent and difficult broader context of the social and economic changes that were taking place. The Sublime Porte took out 14 loans between 1854 and 1874. Even though the Ottoman Empire’s foreign debt reached 242 million Turkish lira, the vast majority of the population was not aware of any economic progress. In 1875 servicing the debt took up three-quarters of the state’s income, and the tactic of short-term, high-interest internal loans made the problem even worse. Increasing the population’s tax-paying ability continued to be the preferred solution, but the practice of tax farming was far from being considered a secure method by which to fill the Sultan’s coffers. Comprehensive modernisation was by definition impossible for the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century, since almost all its potential institutions and their goals were associated with centrifugal policies and national powers. Even so, the modernisation of various aspects was a process that was already underway. In Macedonia – its southern regions in particular - the rural economy, albeit fragmentedly, had been integrated into the global economy. The existence of natural sources of energy in semi-mountainous areas and the availability of labour had already led – again, with a myriad problems in certain areas – to the opening of a number of industrial cotton thread produc-
tion units for local consumption. The problem, however, of the general development of Macedonia still remained.

Since the Empire’s industrial experiment had failed and improvement of the road transport system was faltering, it was time to try out the era’s latest technological innovation, which had even garnered the support of Sultan Abdul Aziz and his Grand Viziers Ali and Fuad - the railway. For many, the railways were a magical solution since they would attract European capital, spur industry and agriculture, raise living, administration and security standards and, as such, increase state revenues. It was too good a scenario to be true. The grandiose plan for Turkey’s Balkan railway network was undertaken by the company of Baron de Hirsch. The agreement foresaw the construction of 2,550 km of railway track along the length and breadth of the peninsula. Included in the plan was the Thessaloniki-Skopje-Mitrovitsa line, construction of which began in February 1871 and was completed in December 1874. After intense diplomatic manoeuvring and under the constant pressure exercised by various business interests, construction began in the autumn of 1886 on the highly promising connecting Skopje-Vranje line, which opened in 1888 to connect Thessaloniki with Belgrade and Vienna, via Nis, and as such with the European railway network. The guaranteed kilometre compensation for the Thessaloniki-Nis line from 1885 onwards was set at 7,000 French francs. Construction on the Thessaloniki-Monastir line began only in June 1891, and was completed three years later. The construction terms were exceptionally onerous for the Ottoman public purse and included, in addition to infinite forms of assistance for important materials and the provision of resources in the surrounding area, an annual guarantee of kilometre profit of 14,300 francs to be paid out of public funds to the construction company, which was funded by the Deutsche Bank. In September 1892 the final contract was signed between the Porte and René Baudouy, a French banker at Constantinople who also represented a French firm of which the Banque Impériale Ottomane was a shareholder. The terms of the project again favoured the foreign company. The guarantee for a 510-km line that would unite Thessaloniki with Alexandroupolis and the Sofia-Constantinople line rose to 15,500 francs a kilometre, even though its commercial prospects were by definition limited. Construction took place between June 1893 and March 1896, the worst moment for Greek strategic interests; hence the desperate disembarkation of National Society men at Kavala.

Work on the construction of the lines made apparent the communications problem in constructing and maintaining the road network that connected the centres of production and distribution with the railways stations, which on the whole were located far from the cities they were supposed to be serving. Each new construction, therefore, involved an attempt at improvement, which, however, fizzled out fairly quickly. Alongside the construction of the first railway lines, an effort at upgrading the port of Thessaloniki was initiated. Demolition of the seafront walls allowed for a dock to be built, but this was finished a decade later. The routes of the ferry companies also increased. Within ten years (1872-1882) the maritime traffic of Thessaloniki increased threefold. The work for the railway connection (1886-88) with Central Europe initiated a new cycle of maritime activity on the part of various countries, which connected the city on a regular basis with Volos, Piraeus, Kavala, Trieste, Liverpool, London and Marseilles. The sharp rise in traffic in the port of Thessaloniki revived the question of its complete overhaul, but, despite the studies that had begun in 1888, the greater part of the works was not completed before 1903 and the port was not connected with the railway station until 1909. Even so, the complaints of the business world over the
slowness of the works and the high mooring dues did not prevent a sharp rise in commercial traffic, in particular after the political developments of 1908.

The growth in Thessaloniki trade and the direct communication established between importing and exporting firms improved the situation in the credit sector significantly. From around 1890, the European firms began to give credit to the merchants of Macedonia for between three to eight months. This benefit passed from the wholesale to the retail side, and even affected small consumers in the villages. With the foundation of the Commercial Club in Thessaloniki in 1895, commercial exchanges became even more standardised. Prior to this, the Banque de Salonique had been founded in 1888, with capital provided by the Austrian Länderbank, the French Comptoir d’Escompte and Allatini Bros of Thessaloniki. The Bank attempted to open a branch in Monastir in 1893, but this proved unpopular thanks to its high interest rates. In 1899 the Bank of Mytilene opened a branch in Thessaloniki. This was followed in 1905 by the Bank of Industrial Credit of Athens, in 1906 by the Orient Bank and in 1908 by a Serbian bank. By the beginning of the 20th century, bank credit had come to play a catalytic role in Macedonian trade. Even so, despite the best efforts of the Consuls, almost all the banks remained concentrated in Thessaloniki. Only the Banque Impériale Ottomane had other branches, in Monastir, Skopje, Drama and Serres, and the Orient Bank opened branches at Monastir and Skopje in 1906 and at Serres in 1910. In the rest of Macedonia, credit was in the hands of local merchants, who on occasion were also authorised representatives of the banks.60

The gradual connection of Thessaloniki to the hinterland by railway and the favourable changes to the credit and lending system resulted in the stable and quick supply of large amounts of goods at low prices to the internal market. It was thus necessary to renew stocks according to the needs of the local markets. In other words, shops started to become viable commercial enterprises. From the moment that the merchants acquired stable bases, the future of the trade fairs had been decided. The competition between travelling peddlers and settled shop owners was one-sided. A reduction in the status of trade fairs was unavoidable, although they did not disappear altogether, whilst shops began to flood the cities and, in the form of grocers, arrived also in the villages. The caravans had a similar fate. The new borders limited their movements, whilst the decline of the trade fairs and the coming of the railways limited their volume. Those muleteers who remained faithful to their profession found a profitable occupation in transferring goods from the railway stations to the cities that they served. The trade network in general also underwent important changes. Construction of the Thessaloniki-Mitrovitsa-Nis line distanced a significant number of villages from the market of Monastir and several northern cities (Skopje, Stip, Pirot) from that of Thessaloniki. The Thessaloniki-Monastir line, on the other hand, led to the commercial independence of Florina, Kastoria and Kozani and the rise of Amyntaion. Rail connection with Constantinople isolated Kavala and channelled a section of the trade of Serres to Thessaloniki, which, in any case, bore most of the fruits of the changes to the trade network.

The changes in the market and in communications corresponded to analogous demographic changes. The Turkish census that commenced in 1881 and was completed in 1893 gave the population of the two vilayets of Thessaloniki and Monastir as 989,844 and 664,399 inhabitants respectively, a total of 1,654,243 as opposed to 1,378,000 in the middle of the century and around 1,000,000 in 1830. Muslims made up 45% of the vilayet of Monastir and 35% of the vilayet of Thessaloniki. According to the same census, Exarchists already constituted 46% of the Christian population of the two vilayets, but the data for
such estimates is far from considered precise. More accurate, at least in terms of proportion, were the data for urbanisation. From 24,700 inhabitants in 1870, the population of Serres reached 32,000 in 1900; from 7,000 inhabitants in 1870, Kavala had a population of 22,000 in 1898 and 24,000 in 1908. Kilikis doubled its population between 1870 and 1898, as did Kastoria between 1850 and 1888. From a population of 10,000 in 1850 Edessa reached 25,000 in 1900; Florina rose from 10,000 in 1888 to 12,000 in 1908, and Prilep from 13,000 to 17,000. A similar population rise could be observed in many towns and large villages lying on the path of the railway tracks, whilst simple railway stations grew into flourishing transit centres. A typical example of rapid growth is that of Gevgeli. Of course, the largest section of the urbanised population was concentrated in the capitals of the vilayets. Skopje had 20,000 inhabitants in 1870 and remained an agricultural town until at least 1880. In 1886 its population was 26,000, in 1900 32,000 and in 1910 40,000. From 45,000 in 1850 Monastir reached a population of 60,000 in 1912. Thessaloniki, which already had 80,000 inhabitants in 1870, reached 100,000 in 1880 and perhaps 120,000 before 1890. In 1905 the British Consul estimated its population at 150,000 and in 1912 at 180,000, an inflated estimate since the 1913 census gave it less than 160,000 inhabitants. Despite the population leap, the proportion of Muslims in the town was steadily declining and tending to fall to below 30%, a proportion that the Christians could not exceed. The trains and the ships did not transport people only to the cities. The volume of immigration, which greatly surpassed traditional levels, was particularly significant. As has already been mentioned, the principality of Bulgaria, initially absorbed a significant number of immigrants, which may even have surpassed 200,000 in the period 1880-1900. In the meantime, emigration to the United States of America had taken off, but from 1895 until 1902 it did not exceed a total of 1,700 people. The destruction caused by the earthquake of 1902, the uprising of 1903 and the outbreak of the Struggle for Macedonia led to a mass exodus of the Christian male rural population. Emigration to the USA, Canada and South America alone in the period 1900-1912 surpassed 50,000 and possibly reached 75,000 Slavophone, mainly young, men.

The mass exodus from the rural areas was most definitely connected to political developments: the 1903 uprising and the horrific events that followed. Yet, the socialist proclamations of IMRO, the civil conflict among the Christians and the exodus to the cities and the New World cannot be fully understood without examining certain economic developments. Already in 1860 the ratio of small cultivators to farm tenants and agricultural labourers was one to five. The high cost of land in comparison with the depreciated wages denied the landless the opportunity to provide for themselves. In addition, as a result of mounting debts and the boom in usury exercised by the landowners, a sizeable number of tenant farmers found themselves in a position that differed little from slavery. This desperate situation encouraged IMRO, in its preparations for the Ilinden uprising, to adopt the slogans of the dissolution of the chifliks and the writing off of debts. Bankruptcy, however, was not just the preserve of the landless and smallholders. Many Muslim landowners were also being forced to give over their chifliks to their Christian and Jewish creditors. At the beginning of the 1880s this phenomenon had begun to take on disturbing dimensions, and was already the norm for Muslim landowners.

The reasons for the bankruptcies were complex. The opening of the railway lines in the 1870s and the increased demand for cereals during the Eastern Crisis (1876-78) expanded the zone of commercialised farming and led to the accumulation of further quantities of exportable cereals in the port of Thessaloniki. After 1881, however, as a result
of the departure of Muslims from Thessaly, the annual flow of agricultural labourers to the Greek state increased, thus leading to an increase in wages in Macedonia at a time when railway duties were still high and the roads non-existent. An increase in the price of cereals was therefore unavoidable. During the same period, however, i.e. the 1880s and 1890s, imports of cheap cereals into Europe from the United States, India and Russia jumped. This reduced competitiveness led to the collapse of agricultural prices in Macedonia, with the price of wheat falling by 40% in the period 1881-1889. The importing of agricultural machinery with reduced tariffs failed as a result of the problematic mechanism for distributing the machinery, the ignorance of the landowners and the fierce resistance of the agricultural labourers to any innovation that would endanger their wages. A characteristic illustration of this is that in the area of Edessa in 1912 there were only 12 iron ploughs as opposed to 1,600 wooden ones. The state attempted to amend the problem of Muslim debt through the proper operation of the agricultural banks, which had officially been in existence since 1868. The results, however, were not as expected since the granting of low-interest loans was not decided upon in an impartial manner, whilst much capital was squandered each year on the state loans. Neither did the agricultural schools (1888) immediately yield the results. The shortage of men, in particular with mass migration and the outbreak of armed conflict, left little room for survival from cereal cultivation. Contradicting all hopes, wheat exports from Thessaloniki rarely exceeded 100,000 tonnes until the end of the 19th century, even though at best Macedonia’s wheat exports could reach 450,000 tonnes. In the period 1906-12 there was even an annual import of wheat of around 17,000 tonnes a year. Insolvency was therefore unavoidable for the Muslim landowners. And it was to be expected that their replacement by Greeks would burden the already strained relations of the latter with the Slavophone Exarchist tenant farmers even further.

For all those willing to be flexible, the shift to other crops was imperative. The most serious alternatives were cotton and tobacco. Cultivation of both crops had already begun to gain ground in Macedonia in the mid 1890s. The demand for Ottoman tobaccos by American firms in the early 20th century led to a sharp rise in the prices offered (200-300% in two years). Tobacco exports from the port of Thessaloniki, which in the past rarely exceeded 500 tonnes annually, were over 1,000 tonnes in 1899, remained over 2,000 tonnes annually during 1904-1909, reached 2,500 in 1910, were almost 3,000 in 1911 and achieved a record 5,795 tonnes in 1912. From 1904 until 1912 tobacco cultivations in the sanjak of Thessaloniki increased by 125%, whilst production tripled. During the same period, annual tobacco exports from Kavala exceeded 10,000 tonnes; they were, that is, almost twice that of the previous decade. There was also an interest in cotton crops, the production of which was secured by the local cotton mills, whilst alternative solutions were poppies (the price for unprocessed poppies rose significantly) and silkworm farming, since the Council for the Ottoman Public Debt Administration had in 1888 assumed responsibility for collection of the silk tax. Such cultivations could reap cash profits without their being such a great need for male labour. They were, however, also more vulnerable within the context of a generalised war being conducted by irregular armed bands.

In the industrial sector, the situation was not amazing but some progress had been achieved. The city of Thessaloniki, with all its geographical and communications advantages and in particular the advantage of cheap working-class Jewish labour, acquired its first industrial base in the form of a few steam-powered flourmills, soap manufacturers, a distillery and a cotton mill before the end of the 1870s. After the end of the Eastern Crisis, the number of factories rose rapidly - as did the population - and new units made their appearance: the Torres-Mizrahi cotton mill and the Regie cigarette manufacturers. With the
exception of the cotton mill at Naousa, the only noteworthy facilities in the hinterland were a number of steam-powered flourmills, which made their appearance at Monastir, Prilep, Edessa, Kilkis and some other small towns. Industrialisation speeded up especially after 1888, although the choices made by entrepreneurs were more or less the same. New flourmills, soap factories and distilleries, as well as icemakers, breweries, macaroni makers, tanners, and tile makers offering cheap goods made their appearance in most towns and cities. There was also some expansion in chrome and antimony mining, but competition with the production at New Caledonia was particularly fierce, despite protectionist legislation in 1906. However, the most important specialisation in Macedonian industry during this period was in cotton. On the eve of the Balkan Wars, Thessaloniki and Naousa had three cotton mills each, whilst Veroia and Edessa had two each. They employed 2,920 male and female workers, and production reached 4,500 tonnes of thread, most of which was sold locally in Macedonia. This was also the most impressive fact: despite the rise in local industry, imports of industrial goods, raw materials and foodstuffs were continuously and impressively rising. They fluctuated between around a value of 1,500,000 pounds sterling in the twenty-year period 1880-1900, and 2-2,500,000 from 1900 to 1908. Even more impressive was the transformation in the mentality of the local population. Numerous charming contemporary accounts as well as statistical data show that the people who were filling the urban centres quickly changed their views on dress, food, entertainment and consumption in general. Their example was followed by the rural population, slowly but still surely.

6. Evolution or development?

Could this evolution be anything other than economic growth? Let us take a closer look at which direction the money was really flowing and how much of it ended up in the public coffers. First of all, we should understand a few technical details about the railways. The railway lines, as stated, were built with European capital – before the century was out, the greatest part was under the control of the Deutsche Bank – and with the system of annual kilometric guarantee. In order to appreciate the size of the guarantee fully, it should be noted that the profits of the first Thessaloniki-Nis line only after 1900, and with difficulty, exceeded the compensation, the line to Monastir only four times by 1912 and the connecting line with Constantinople never. The worst thing was, however, that for the latter two lines the Ottoman government had, as usual, promised the tithe from the sanjaks of Monastir, Thessaloniki, Serres, Drama and Komotini as the guarantee. The right to collect the tithe from these regions was sold at auction, and the tax farmer deposited the tax with the Council for the Ottoman Public Debt Administration, which had assumed running of the economy in 1882. The Council paid the guarantee to the companies, and deposited the remainder, if there was any, in the Treasury. The Ottoman public purse never saw a penny of profit from the railways.

As for the contribution of the railways to the development of the rural economy, this can be calculated in three ways. Firstly by estimating the expansion of cultivated land, secondly by the increase in public revenues, and thirdly by the effect on exports. From what we know, the railways led to an increase in cultivated land in some areas; in the long term, however, all evidence points to a decrease in cultivations as a result of immigration and insecurity. From the little data that we have for the period 1893-1900, it appears that public revenues increased in the vilayets of Thessaloniki and Monastir, but it is difficult to attrib-
ute this solely to the opening of the Thessaloniki-Monastir line. More enlightening is the criterion of exported products. Cereals exports jumped for a while in the 1870s, but then fell again to levels lower than before. If we compare the quantities of cereals transported to Thessaloniki on the railways, it can easily be seen that, rather than equaling out the trade balance, wheat supported urban growth. As for other products, exports of unprocessed silk increased, but, again, the largest proportion was used locally, and this seems also to be the case for cotton. The case of tobacco, the jump in exports of which could be used as evidence of the direct benefit of the railways, was more related to the shortage of men and the high market prices offered. Moreover, most tobacco exports were from the port of Kavala, which did not have a railway link with the hinterland. The final conclusion is that, to the extent to which agriculture contributed to the rise in public revenues, this had little to do with improvements in infrastructure.

After agriculture came industry. It goes without saying that the gains in this sector should not be sought in the heavy industrial materials used in building the railways. Only a few European countries had such gains over the globe during the 19th century: Britain, Belgium, Germany and France. The question here is not whether the railways helped provenly in the industrial development of Macedonia and Thessaloniki, as a means of transport for either raw materials or industrial products. With the exception of the mining of metal ores, the answer is positive in all sectors. The improvement in communications did indeed bring capital into regular contact with natural resources, sellers and buyers, cheap labour with cheap money, the coasts with the hinterland, machinery with raw materials, and there is a plethora of figures to support this. This flourishing is clearly connected with urbanisation, the shift to industrial cultivations and the great financial flow that invisible resources secured. But these new factors were also driving even greater imports of industrial products, suitable for the new consumer models, that were in no case being balanced out by exports; products that, through the railways, had easier and cheaper access to the hinterland. The gains brought by industry, then, were cashed in on only by the entrepreneurs and merchants of the industrial products.

It is clear that if we want to shine light on the situation we must return to an analysis of the correlation between administrative measures and economic growth. In 1889 the Belgian Consul in Thessaloniki remarked that if customs duties were increased the Thessaloniki market would be a lost cause for European commerce. He was implying that local production was developing in quantity and quality, but was not competitive because of prices. The industrial boom which followed the 3% increase in customs duties in 1906 and the total exemption from customs of all industrial goods in 1908 shows that, in conjunction with the necessary administrative reforms, such a policy could have had impressive results. But, the political costs for Turkey were too onerous. Quite simply, and understandably, her creditors were not willing themselves indirectly to cover the country’s public debt through customs duties.

On the other hand, there was also the question of the price of train fares, reduction of which could have contributed to spurring agricultural exports. And here the problem was also political. The lack of a road network, either in a feeder role or as competition, and the firms’ monopoly led to high fares. Even so, Macedonia’s agricultural economy was exceptionally fragile as a result of the local difficulties and global competition. As such, the firms’ profit margins were, as it turned out, small and the pressures made them even smaller. For the Monastir and Constantinople lines in particular, the completion of which coincided with a political and economic slump, any reduction in fares would have had un-
welcome results. If the firms’ profits were curbed, then the amount paid from the public purse would increase. Since the guarantee paid was one tenth, taxation would have to have increased in order to save money and other public spending be reduced. Otherwise, the high fares would have curtailed an increase in productivity and reduced cash flow would have again made tax collection problematic. It was a vicious cycle, from which neither the state, or the landowners or the farmers could escape.

This problem becomes particularly noticeable if we examine it on the level of the budget of the vilayets, using the available data. In 1899 the Vali of Thessaloniki admitted that he was not in a position to cover the expenses of the public services because of the railway guarantees. Indeed, the public expenses for the vilayet of Thessaloniki in the financial year 1900-01 were 940,000 Turkish lira. 250,000 lira went to the railway compensation. The local budget deficit was 240,000 lira. In the financial year 1902-03, public expenses were 424,000 lira and railway compensation was 192,000 lira. Even after the remarkable economic growth, the heavier tariffs and other economic measures, expenses for the 1909-10 financial year were 3,165,000 whilst the compensation was 414,000. The issue of the vilayet’s budget is, of course, much broader. But what matters is that each year one line burdened the budget to the tune of 36,000 lira and the other to the tune of 200,000 lira, without factoring in that a great part of the income was derived from the transport of army materials and units, which ultimately still came out of the Ottoman public purse.

The public deficit had one other interesting dimension. As a means for normalising the ethnic discords in Macedonia, which had climaxed at the beginning of the century, the Great Powers pushed for economic reforms in agriculture, before there erupted an undesired, from the perspective of international diplomacy, Bulgarian-Turkish conflict, which, if nothing else, would have suspended payments of Turkey’s public debt. These reform programmes strictly forbade tax farming, and the level of the tax owed was to be calculated per resident not per village. In order to avoid perpetual abuse, the level of the tithe was set at the average of the figures for the previous five years. The weather and fertility of the land would be taken into account and, perhaps most importantly, the Albanian rural guards, notoriously inclined to corruption, were replaced by local guards. The reform was introduced on an experimental basis in 1904 in 30 villages of the kaza of Monastir, and was expanded in 1905 to 494 and in 1906 to a total of 937 villages in different provinces of Macedonia. Yet the programme was abandoned in 1906. The area was in the grip of the Bulgarian gangs, and thus a necessary precondition for the programme’s success was the maintenance of strong military forces in the area, as well as gendarmerie units, the reorganisation of which, as mentioned, was the responsibility of an international group of officers. For all this money was needed. Moreover, it was precisely during the years of this reform (1904-1905) that the Greek counter-attack intensified, delivering the final blow to public safety. Insecurity soon led to mass emigration. During the period 1910-1912 immigrant remittances reached 1,000,000 pounds sterling a year. All those who stayed behind shifted maniacally to tobacco production, which was in demand as never before. Overproduction of this crop almost became the currant question of Macedonia.

Remittances most of all, tobacco second, and the secret national funds of every form, calculated at 200,000 pounds sterling a year, supported the trade balance of Macedonia, in a period when imports had rocketed sky-high. The goods that entered the hinterland changed living conditions and, most significantly, they undermined to a great degree – although, of course, not completely – the feeling of self-sufficiency and self-consumption that character-
ises traditional peasant societies. A significant, yet unknown, part of the commercial profits were invested in the land, which was now obviously passing into the hands not only of the leading merchants, but also of the Christian smallholders. Even more was invested in the urban centres, in particular Thessaloniki, which acquired its well-known cosmopolitan air, as testified to in the remaining grand villas of today’s Vasilisis Olga Street - Queen Olga Street, formerly known as the Street of the Towers (Pyrgos Street) or Countryside Street (Exochon Street). Was this a quantitative shift in economic sizes, or an important step at modernisation, and whom did it benefit in the end? Development, as a product of modernisation, contains the element of a scientific and technological revolution. Was this element sufficiently present in Macedonia? If we were to study the specific impediments to modernisation, we would see that many of them disappeared, or at least were reduced, thanks to the railways and all the infrastructure changes to the economy that they brought about. But, as we saw, modernisation in Macedonia was not only disconnected from state policy, it ultimately undermined it socially and economically. Whilst the state was paying compensation, it was struggling to find taxable peasants and was moving troops about here and there; the profits from trade and immigrant remittances were being used to build imposing schools, set up nationalist associations, pay teachers and feverishly buy up Muslim properties. The framework of social co-existence was being knocked down from inside. In short: modernisation in Macedonia was a self-defeating process, from the moment that it coincided with the surge in Balkan nationalisms. This can be ascertained in the ominous estimates of the Greek economists in 1912 for the future of a divided Macedonia and the serious problems facing Thessaloniki. The villagers of China were afraid that the railways would interrupt the peaceful sleep of their ancestors. In the case of Macedonia, it looks as though these fears were real. The whistles of the trains, the clanging of the factory machines and the school bells woke Alexander the Great, Tsar Samuel and Stephen Dushan, who now sought, through the mouths of the teachers and the columns of the newspapers, the retrospective justification of their struggles from yesterday’s illiterate peasants.

Notes


3. For a brief survey, see Evangelos Kofos, ‘Macedonia’ Istorya tou Ellinikou Ethnous [History of the Hellenic Nation], vol. 13, Athens 1977, pp. 386-87. The main monograph on the subject is Stephanos Papadopoulos, Ekpaideftiki kai koinonikoi drastiriota tou Ellinismou tis Makedonias kata ton teleiaio aiona tis tournakhias [Educational and social activities of the Hellenism of Macedonia in the last century of Turkish rule], Thessaloniki 1970.

7. The fullest account is given by Apostolos Vakalopoulos, ‘Ta dramatika gegonota tis Thessalonikis kata to Maio 1876 kai oi epidrasisis tous sto Anatoliko Zitima’ [‘The dramatic events in Thessaloniki during May 1876 and their effects on the Eastern Question’], *Makedonika*, 2 (1941-52), 193-262, where the inquiry into the events is published.

20. For a brief discussion, including the most important Bulgarian sources, see the unpublished dissertation by Anna Panayiotopoulou, ‘Apo ti Thessaloniki sto Krusovo: Ideologija, organosi kai drasi tis EMÊO’ [‘From Thessaloniki to Krusovo: the ideology, organisation and activities of IMRO’], University of Thessaloniki, 1993.


24. See the catalogue of victims attached to FO 195/2089, Thessaloniki, 20 April 1900, ff. 128-133.


29. The most complete account in Greek is that of Yiannis Megas, *Oi ‘Varkarides’ tis Thessalonikis. I anarchiki voulgariki omada kai oi vomvistikes energies tou 1903 [The ‘Varkarides’ of Thessaloniki. The Bulgarian anarchist group and the bomb attacks of 1903]*, Thessaloniki 1994.


32. For a multi-dimensional approach to the period, see the recent study by Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia, 1870-1913*, Boulder 2003, which does not, however, attempt to interpret the events.


44. See the documents in Karabati et al (eds), I elliniki antepithesi sti Makedonia 1905-1906: 100 engrapha apo Archeio tou Ypourgeio ton Exoterikon tis Ellados [The Greek counter-attack in Macedonia 1905-1906: 100 documents from the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs], Thessaloniki 1997.
49. See the documents in Karabati et al (eds), I teleftaia phasi tou Makedonikou Agona: 100 engrapha apo Archeio tou Ypourgeiou ton Exoterikon tis Ellados [The last phase of the Macedonian Struggle: 100 documents from the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs], Thessaloniki 1998.
50. For activities in the marsh area and throughout the whole of Central Macedonia as far as Vermio, see the revealing collection of documents edited by the Naousa Cultural Society ‘Anastasios Michail o Logios’, *Archeia Makedonikou Agonas periochis Vermiou [Archives of the Macedonian Struggle, Vermio region]*, Naousa 2002.


