EVANGELOS KOFOS

DILEMMAS AND ORIENTATIONS OF GREEK POLICY IN MACEDONIA: 1878-1886

The period between 1878 and 1886, covers the critical years from the Congress of Berlin to the annexation of Eastern Rumelia by Bulgaria, when Greek policy on the Macedonian Question was undergoing a general reappraisal. Balkan historiography tends to view this policy in terms of its adverse effects on the national movements of the other Balkan nationalities; it is understandable[1]. Now, with the aid of hitherto untapped archival material—mostly from the Archives of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AYE)—this paper will attempt to examine how Greek policy was formulated, what its aims were and how it was carried out.

Prior to the 70's, the Greeks viewed Macedonia as one of the Ottoman regions which would form part of an enlarged Greek state. The realization of this aspiration was rather a remote one as other regions, closer to the Greek Kingdom—such as Thessaly, Epirus, and of course Crete—had first priority.

To support their claim, the Greeks argued on a number of points. Historically, they sought to trace the region's hellenic ties all the way back to antiquity and Alexander the Great. Ethnologically, they identified the nationality of the inhabitants on the basis of their Church affiliation; and this meant the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. Politically, they felt they could move into a vacuum, once the Empire collapsed. Serbia was a small and far away state, while Bulgaria did not even exist on the political map of the Balkans.

With such reasoning in the 40's, 50's, and even the 60's, the Greeks of Athens were betraying an ignorance of basic facts about the situation in Macedonia, and the Balkans as a whole. Their distorted vision, however, prevented them from drawing out a realistic policy in their discussions for an alliance

1. Typical of this approach are certain publications of the Institute of National History in Skopje. For example: Risto Poplazarov, *Grtskata Politika sprema Makedonia vo vtorata polovina na XIX i potsetok na XX vek* [The Greek policy toward Macedonia in the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century], 1973, 324 pp.; and by the same author, *Osloboditelnite Vooruzeni borbi na Makedonskiot Narod vo periodot 1850-1878* (The armed liberation struggles of the Macedonian people in the period 1850-1878), Skopje 1978. A similar, although more soder appraisal, is to be found in Bulgarian works. For example: V. Traikov, *Rakovski i Balkanskite narodi* (Rakovski and the Balkan peoples), Sofia 1971.

with the Serbs in the 60', as well as in the ecclesiastical dispute with the Bulgarians[2].

Their illusions, however, were shattered by the events of the 70's. First came the establishment of a Bulgarian National Church, by Ottoman firman. Then followed the San Stefano treaty, which placed under Bulgarian rule—on paper at least—most of the Macedonian districts. Both these developments, which affected Macedonia, came about as a result of forces which Hellenism could not control. Greek reaction to both occassions was negative. On the San Stefano treaty, they sided with the revisionist Balkan and European Powers. And although, at the Congress of Berlin the voice of the Greek Kingdom was no more than a whisper, the "Greek card" was used by Western diplomats—particularly the British—in order to restore Macedonia and Thrace to Ottoman rule[3].

So the stage had been set at Berlin for a long inter-Balan conflict. The political status of Macedonia had remained unaltered. But the Macedonian Question had taken up new dimensions.

Certainly the Bulgarian challenge was the more serious. Indeed, the Bulgarians had now a state of their own with physical proximity to Macedonia—which the Greeks lacked. They had the active support of a big Power—Russia—which the Greeks did not have. Language was no problem for communicating with the Slav - speaking segment of the Macedonian population—and finally, with the emergence of the Exarchate, Church affiliation could no longer be a monopoly of the Greeks. To these, one should add that shortly after the Congress of Berlin, the Bulgarians of Northeast Macedonia, had raised a short-lived insurrection which gave away to guerrilla warfare during the following two years. This armed manifestation was a clear warning to the Greeks who, hitherto, had tended to view developments in Macedonia as academic argu-

2. For a recent discussion of the Greek - Bulgarian ecclesiastical issue, based on new documentary evidence, see *Ἱστορία τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Ἔθνους* (I.E.E.) (History of the Greek Nation], Vol. XIII, pp. 301-305. Of the Bulgarian works, by far, the most informative is Bulgarian Patriarch Kiril's book, *Bulgarskoto Naselenie v Makedonia v borbata za sasdavane na Exarhiata* [The Bulgarian population in Macedonia in the Struggle for the Establishment of the Exarchate], Sofia 1971. On Greek - Serbian relations concerning Macedonia, see: D. Djordjevic, *Ἱστορία τῆς Σερβίας, 1800-1918* [History of Serbia], Thessaloniki, Institute for Balkan Studies, 1970, pp. 148-155. Σ. Λάσκαρης, *Διπλωματικὴ Ἱστορία τῆς Ἑλλάδος* [Diplomatic History of Greece] 1821-1914, pp. 117-124; Σπ. Μαρκεζίνης, *Πολιτικὴ Ἱστορία τῆς Νεωτέρας Ἑλλάδος* [Political History of Modern Greece], Vol. III, p. 64.

3. For a general discussion of Greece's policy during this period: E. Kofos, *Greece and the Eastern Crisis, 1875-1878,* Thessaloniki, Institute for Balkan Studies, 1975, 283 pp.

ments for historians or clergymen[4].

It was understandable, that the Greeks had no time to spare. Already, the International Commission set out by the Congress of Berlin, was deliberating the question of reforms in Macedonia. Despite the outstanding boundary issue with the Turks over Thessaly and Epirus, the Greeks carried out an impressive "research work" which allowed the Athens government to formulate a more comprehensive policy. From 1879 to 1881, a wealth of confidential material reached the Foreign Ministry from the consulates, individual educators and clergymen, the Association for the Propagation of Greek Letters—which had its own network of agents and correspondents in Macedonia—and finally from the Ecumenical Patriarchate. This material helped to clarify certain confusing issues and to set the limits within which Greek policy could develop[5].

The first point was that the extravagant claims, which had been based on historical grounds, were of no political consequence. They had been totally ignored by the Powers during the critical deliberations of 1876-1878.

A second point was that in 1879-1880 not only the Balkan peoples, but two large European Powers as well—Russia and Austria-Hungary— coveted Macedonia and wished to place it under their influence, directly or through proxy.

A third point was that Macedonia could no longer be viewed as a geographical and ethnic entity; and, indeed, it was neither an administrative entity, as its districts had been apportioned among three vilayets.

A final point was that the emergence of the Bulgarian Exarchate, had now

4. Two recent Bulgarian books are worth quoting in this respect: Doino Doinov, *Kresnesko - Razlozkoto vastanie, 1878-1879* [The Kresna - Razlog Uprising], Sofia 1979, 333 pp.; and Elena Statelova, *Diplomatsiata na Kniazestvo Bulgaria, 1879-1886* [The diplomacy of the Bulgarian Principality], Sofia 1979, 251 pp. For an interpretation of these events by Skopje historiography see: R. Poplazarov, *Makedonskoto Kresnesko - Razlosko Vostanie* [The Macedonian Kresna - Razlog Uprising], Skopje 1979, 203 pp. and Ivan Katartsiev, *Kresneskoto Vostanie*, 1878 [The Kresna Uprising], Skopje 1978, 99 pp. Greek documents and Greek apprehensions about the uprising in E. Κωφός, *Ἡ Ἐπανάστασις τῆς Μακεδονίας κατὰ τὸ 1878* [The Revolt in Macedonia in 1878], Thessaloniki, Institute for Balkan Studies, 1969, pp. 160-1, 164-5, 167-171, 175-6, 193-4, 267-275.

5. On Trikoupis' request (AYE, Trikoupis to Consulates, No. 664, 17/29 June 1880), the consuls sent detailed reports on the situation in Macedonia. Worth quoting here are: Vatikiotis (Thessaloniki) No. 684, 24 June/6 July, and Logothetis (Monastir) No. 275, 2/14 July. On Patriarch Joakim's views see Koundouriotis' dispatches from Constantinople (in "Constantinople Embassy" file): Nos. 4115, 13/25 Dec. 1879; 682, 6/18 March 1880; 2095, 11/23 July 1880; 1854, 9/21 Aug. 1883.

introduced a new objective element by which one could determine more safely the national feelings of the inhabitants of Macedonia. And, although in the early 80's, church affiliation coult not be fully identified with nationality, in the years to come, it was bound to develop into a basic determinant of national orientations.

On the basis of these evaluations the Greeks had to reassess their long-range objectives, as well as their immediate tactics. But the government of the Greek Kingdom could hardly dictate alone such a policy, without taking into consideration the views and the interests of the leadership of the Greek millet in Constantinople. But the views of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the leading educators and influencial financiers did not always coincide with those of Athens. Furthermore, in the interior of Macedonia, the local Greeks would take initiatives which differed both with the Athens and Constantinople lines[6].

Without going into details, it is safe to say that on the territorial issue, the concept of the three population zones was now generally recognized[7]. The northern zone contained a population which not only was slavic in speach but had also quickly espoused the Bulgarian Exarchate and had actively manifested its national inclinations during the preceding decade of the 70's. True, there were pockets which still remained loyal to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, but this could not alter the over-all picture. The southern zone, Greek in speech and religious affiliation, did not present a problem of identification. There remained the central—and politically delicate zone. This zone contained a polyglot, mixed Christian population, mostly Slav-speaking in the countryside and Greek—and Vlach—speaking in the urban and semi-urban centers, with pockets of Albanian-speaking Christians. To judge by confidential Greek consular reports of this period—as well as other contemporary sources—the situation in this part of Macedonia was fluid, uncertain and bound to quick changes. The Grecophone, Vlachophone, and Albanophone Christian groups were viewed as having espoused the hellenic national idea (although Roumanian and Albanian national ideas made, about this time, a timid appearance

6. Patriarch Joakim III, being a former Metropolitan of Thessaloniki, was well aware of the prevailing situation in that region, and had his own views on how to counter the Bulgarian ecclesiastical, as well as political challenge in the province. These views, particularly on the question of education, differed substantially with those of the Athens Government. AYE / "Constantinople Embassy" / Koundouriotis to Foreign Minister, No. 4115, 13/25 Dec. 1879; unnumbered, 16/28 Dec. 1881; No. 249, 1/13 Feb. 1882; No. 1271, 24 May/5 June 1883; No. 1258, 21 June/3 July 1883; No. 1963, 6/18 Oct. 1883.

7. For a more detailed analysis of this problem see: *I.E.E.*, Vol. XIII, pp. 379-381.

among the latter groups)[8]. The Slavophones, however, were an open case. There were those who were strongly attached to Hellenism—a fact which gained them the name of "Grecomans"[9]. And there were those who had definitely adhered to the Bulgarian national idea. But among the two elements, there were still the shifting groups, mostly of the peasantry, with yet no concrete national orientation. This central zone of Macedonia, where this ethnic confusion existed, was defined in consular reports as follows: To the north it ran from lake Ohrid to Krousovo, south of Prilep, north of Bitola and then on a line all the way to Nestos (Mesta) river, leaving inside the belt the towns of Strumnitsa, Petrich, Melnik, Nevrokop. To the south it commenced from Grammos, covered half of the Kaza of Kastoria, south of Florina and Edessa, north of Kozani, Thessaloniki, Chalkidiki, all the way to Serres and Drama[10].

As a result of this assessment, the northern tier of Macedonia was crossed off from the national program of the Greek Megali Idea, admittedly with a certain degree of reluctance on the part of the most ardent nationalists. Immediately, Greek historians sought to armour the new line with scholarly evidence, proving that, indeed, the excluded region had, in fact, no historical grounds to be considered as Macedonia, as it had never been part of the ancient Macedonian State[11]. Thus, the northern limits of the central belt had, early in the 80's, formed the *maximum* of Greek claims in Macedonia.

The next step was to secure foreign recognition or support to these claims. Russia and Austria-Hungary were excluded as both were viewed as rivals to Greek interests in Macedonia. Britain was considered a natural ally. But British policy aimed at strengthening, through reforms, Ottoman authority

8. As a substantial segment of the hellenic element in northern Macedonian was Vlachophone, Greek consuls showed particular concern of the Rumanian efforts to proselytize the Vlachs to the Rumanian national idea.

9. "Grecomans" was used by the Bulgarians as a derogatory term to define the Greek Slavophones, i.e. those who remained firm to the Ecumenical Patriarchate and to Hellenism. It is interesting to note that in 1883, despite the growth of the Bulgarian national and ecclessiastical movement, the situation in terms of ecclesiastical affiliation in the northern "border" bishoprics of the contested central zone presented the following picture: Bishopric of Ohrid and Prespa, patriarchist families 3030, exarchist 6003; Bishopric of Pelagonia (Monastir), patriarchist 6459, exarchist 4988; Bishopric of Moglena (Florina), patriarchist 2433, exarchist 699. The majority of these patriarchists were Vlachophone and Slavophone "Grecomans". Data from AYE/"Constantinople Embassy" / 1883, Dokos (Monastir) to Koundouriotis (Con/pole), No. 210, 15/27 Nov. 1883.

10. AYE, Logothetis (Monastir) to For. Ministry, No. 275, 1/13 July 1880.

11. Cléanthès Nicolaidès, *La Macédoine. La Question Macédonienne dans l'antiquité, au moyen âge et dans la politique actuelle*, Berlin 1899.

over its regions, not at encouraging Greek nationalist aspirations. To get out of the impasse, Greek leaders, in Athens as well as Constantinople, sought to develop friendly relations with the Turks[12]. But even this policy was carried half-heartedly. It is characteristic that when in 1884, the Sultan invited King George, to visit him in Constantinople, the Greek Government sought to take advantage by setting out a number of terms mostly of a commercial and legal nature. Of course, the visit did not take place[13]. On the local level, similar attempts to induce local Ottoman authorities to take up Greek grievances—particularly on issues referring to the return of a school or a church from the Exarchists to the Patriarchists—proved of ephemeral value. Decisions were easily reversed, sometimes within the same day. Soon, the Greek consuls reported that Ottoman administrators meant to assist the weaker side, and to punish the least obedient one, thus maintaining the necessary balance which ensured their rule over all the Christians[14].

With the failure of the policy of rapprochement with the Turks, another option to Greek diplomacy was to try to reach an understanding with the Balkan neighbours. This had been a popular idea in the past, both with the masses and the leaders. But, now the ranks of the dedicated followers of the dogma "the East to the Easterners", had shrunk. Yet, opportunities did not cease to present themselves.

Such an opportunity to open a Greco-Bulgarian dialogue appeared in 1883, with Prince Alexander's visit to Athens. The Greek government, however, realizing that the Prince remained firm on his view for an extension of Bulgaria all the way to Thessaloniki, advised that no meaningful discussions could be held on such a basis. If, however, he would be willing to sharply curtail Bulgarian claims in Macedonia, the Greek government would not

12. Trikoupis sought to "force" a Greek-Turkish understanding by hinting to the Porte that if the Turks were unwilling to cooperate, Greece would turn to other directions, meaning a rapprochement with the Bulgarians. About this time, Prince Battenberg was visiting Athens. AYE/"Con/pole Embassy"/ Trikoupis to Koundouriotis, No. 511, 4/16 May 1883, and No. 611, 27 May/8 June 1883.

13. AYE/"Con/pole Embassy"/1883, Kontostavlos to Koundouriotis, No. 658, 27 Apr./9 May 1883.

14. Among the various ideas discussed in Athens at that time, some thought was given to the formation of mixed Greek-Turkish committees in Macedonia to curtail Bulgarian advances in the region. Consul Dokos from Monastir, however, with a better knowledge of the prevailing situation, advised against the scheme, arguing that the Turks would only support the weaker element, and would change their attitude according to the exigencies of the moment. AYE/"Macedonian Consulates"/1883, No. 381, 24 May/6 June 1883, replying to Ministry's inquire No. 471, 25 Apr./7 May.

raise any objections to a future union of Eastern Rumelia with the Bulgarian Principality. Naturally, the visit did not bring any fruits[15].

About the same time, another opportunity was lost, when the Russian government conveyed to Patriarch Joakim III proposals for amending the schism. And although the Patriarch was inclined to discuss them, the Greek government strongly advised against it. It was by now apparent, that unless the Exarchate was excluded from the dioceses of the central zone of Macedonia, the Greeks would prefer the retention of the schism to a compromise which would endanger their positions in the region[16].

With the Serbs the omens appeared more favourable. But the initiatives again did not come from the Greek side. It is well known, that following the Congress of Berlin, the Serbs had turned their attention in the direction of Macedonia. Repeatedly, they tried to come to an understanding with the Greeks, in order to curtail excessive Bulgarian aspirations. The Greeks, however, showed some concern with publicised Serbian claims, which cut deep into the central zone of Macedonia. For this reason, as a prerequisite to a meaningful discussion, they were requesting a clear statement of Serbian territorial claims, which naturally was not forthcoming. As a result, the Greeks, through the Patriarchate, were temporizing in naming Serbian bishops to certain northern dioceses[17]. Only in 1885, when the Bulgarians proclaimed the union of Eastern

15. On Prince Alexander Battenberg's visit, the available correspondence in AYE is not complete, but gives some idea on the failure of his mission on account of differences over Macedonia: AYE/"Sofia Legation"/1883, Kontostavlos to Cl. Rangavis (Sofia), No. 191, 192, 15/27 Feb. 1883, and Kontostavlos to Missions, No. 468, 26 Apr./8 May; Cl. Rangavis to Trikoupis, No. 195, 24 March/5 Apr., No. 217, 31 March/12 Apr., and to Kontostavlos, No. 478, 12/24 Aug. 1883. AYE/"Con/pole Embassy"/1883, Koundouriotis to Trikoupis, No. 585, 15/27 March 1883. Driault - Lhéritier, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 180-182. For a Bulgarian view see E. Statelova, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-132.

16. AYE/ "Con/pole Embassy" / 1883, Trikoupis to Koundouriotis, No. 310, Apr. 1883, and Trikoupis to Missions, No. 368, 7/19 March 1884 (File "Circulars"/1884). Patriarch Joakim III was in agreement. Koundouriotis to Trikoupis No. 615, 22 March/3 Apr. 1883.

17. AYE/"Belgrade"/1884-85, Foreign Ministry to Ministry of Education, No. 1819, 8/20 Dec. 1884 (for closer relations between the Greek and Serbian churches), and Nos. 433 and 435, 9/21 Apr. 1885, to Belgrade, objecting to southward Serbian claims which included the northern parts of the kazas of Monastir and Serres. The Greek Consul at Monastir Panourgias, considered these claims as "utterly illusionary, because nowhere in Macedonia exist Serbs by descend, language or consciousness". AYE/"Macedonian Consulates"/ No. 563, 27 Sept./9 Oct. 1885. And, indeed, the Greek Government asked the Ecumenical Patriarch to delay a decision on the appointment of Serbian bishops to certain northern Macedonian dioceses, pending a clarification of Serbian claims on Macedonia (AYE/"Con/pole Embassy"/1885, Kontostavlos to Koundouriotis, No. 618, 9/21 Apr. 1885).

Rumelia with the Bulgarian Principality, did the Greek and Serbian governments sought to come to an understanding for an alliance and a settlement in Macedonia[18]. The active intervention, however, of the Powers restrained Greece from entering into a war, as the Serbs did. Greek mobilization was to prove a heavy burden on Greek economy, which, alongside with the deterioration of relations with Turkey, was to affect adversally Greek positions in Macedonia.

The failure of Greek diplomacy to find foreign support for its aims in Macedonia, compelled the Greeks to shift their efforts into the interior of Macedonia. Resting solely on their own means, they set out to hold the lines of Hellenism as far to the north as possible[19].

Briefly, the Greek work in Macedonia, during this period, was focussed on the following directions:

a. Strengthening Greek education throughout the region[20]. Emphasis was given to building new schools from the primary level to teacher colleges. Special care was given to the education of girls. Scholarships to Athens University increased. Hitherto, the coordination of the educational work was carried out by a private society called "Association for the Advancement of Greek Letters", while a similar organization existed in Constantinople[21]. But

18. Responding to Serbian feelers, the Greek Government instructed its legation at Belgrade to obtain the Serbian views which could serve as a basis for a Greek-Serbian entente. AYE/"Belgrade"/1885, Deligeorgis to Nasos, No. 1681, 7/19 Sept., No. 1630, 19 Sept./1 Oct., and No. 1763, 3/15 Oct. 1885.

19. It is interesting to note that in April 1885, the Greek Foreign Ministry instructed the consuls in Macedonia to collect ethnological data supporting Greek claims as far north as Ohrid-Krussovo-Prilep-Stobi-north of Stumnitsa, Meleniko, Nevrokop. AYE, Kontostavlos to consulates, No. 394, 9/21 Apr. 1885.

20. Consular reports from Macedonia contain much information about various schemes for spreading Greek education in Macedonia. Useful material also exists in correspondence between the Foreign Ministry and the Association for the Advancement of Greek Letters (AAGL), which can be found in AYE, or the archives of AAGL in Athens (not yet catalogued). A basic document is the Foreign Ministry's recommendations to the Cabinet for an overall policy in Macedonia: AYE/"Macedonian Consulates"/1883, Kontostavlos to Cabinet, No. 1412, 24 Oct./5 Nov. 1883. Greek educational policy in Macedonia is discussed briefly in *I.E.E.*, XIV, p. 216. Detailed information in: Στέφανος Παπαδόπουλος, *Ἐκπαιδευτικὴ καὶ Κοινωνικὴ Δραστηριότητα τοῦ Ἑλληνισμοῦ τῆς Μακεδονίας κατὰ τὸν τελευταῖο αἰώνα τῆς Τουρκοκρατίας* [Educational and Social Activities of Macedonian Hellenism during the last century of Turkish Rule], Thessaloniki, Society for Macedonian Studies, 1970, 287 pp.

21. *I.E.E.*, XIII, pp. 316, 385-387. On the question of juridiction between the Patriarchical "Educational Brotherhood of Constantinople" and the Athens-based "Association for

by the mid 80's, the program was reaching proportions which could not be controlled by a private organization. In its place a Committee was established in 1887 which, in substance, was a government agency[22]. Immediately, however, problems were created with the Patriarchate and the bishops who objested to the direct involvement of the Athens government and its consuls with the education of the subject Greeks. The conflict raised many obstacles to the Greek educational program and, in the end, it brought in the Ottoman Government, who sought to keep a closer eye on the education of the subject Christians[23].

b. Strengthening the Church institutions. Although on a number of issues, the nationalist policy of the Greek state, and the ecclesiastical views of the higher clergy did not coinside, the Greek government sought to support, even financially, some vulnerable dioceses. Generally, however, Athens failed to achieve perfect coordination with the bishops. In the event, consuls and bishops were more frequently than not, at loggerheads[24].

the Advancement of Greek Letters" see AYE/"File AAGL"/1884, Foreign Ministry to AAGL, No. 83, 9/21 Feb. 1884.

22. AYE/"File 29/3" / 1887, S. Dragoumis to Missions, No. 850, 30 Jan./11 Feb. 1887.

23. AYE/"File AAGL"/1884, For. Ministry to AAGL, No. 83, 9/21 Feb. 1884. On the great debate whether the Patriarchate, through the bishops, or the Greek Government, through the consuls, should control educational activities in Macedonia, there are numerous dispatches from the Greek consulates and the Greek Embassy of Constantinople. In the files of the Constantinople Embassy in AYE (years 1880-1883) there are interesting handwritten—though unsigned—memoranda by Patriarch Joakim III. On Ottoman interference: AYE/"Macedonian Consulates"/1883, Dokos (Monastir) to AAGL, No. 8, 6/18 Jan. 1883.

24. The consular reports of this period, particularly from Monastir and Serres, contain revealing material on the frequent feuds between bishops and consuls concerning the mission of the Church vis-à-vis education, and its role in the advancement of national claims. Frequently, very strong language was used. See for example N. Betsos' dispatch from Serres (AYE/"Macedonian Consulates"/1883, to Paparigopoulos (President of AAGL), No. 145, 31 March/12 Apr. 1883), accusing the local priests of insufficient national zeal—compared to that of the Bulgarian priests—and for emphasizing ecumenicity rather that nationalism. This, in the consul's view, was a basic reason why Greek peasants lacked in national spirit. On the other hand, Consul Dokos from Monastir (No. 280, 30 May/11 June, 1884) went a step further: "The Bishop of Kastoria" he wrote, "treats well [only] those [peasants] who pay him their dues, whether they are Greek-inclined or Bulgarian-inclined; but he equally assails both when they refuse to pay, and threatens them to shut off their churches... and secure payment through the local [Ottoman] authorities". Speaking of the bishop's predecessors, Dokos adds that "their only concern was to strip the peasants, oppress them in various ways, and use them as animals destined only to fill their own purses and those of their patrons at Constantinople... Such bishops, and their patrons at Constantinople... wor-

c. Strengthening the economic potential of the Greeks. Many proposals of such a nature were advanced during this period, but very little was achieved in the form of a coordinating program. What was achieved in that direction was basically the result of private initiative. Suffices only to mention the Greek government's efforts to increase commercial communication between the Kingdom and Macedonia, by the linkage of Greek and Ottoman railways (which the Turks refused), as well as by operating regular lines between Volos and the Macedonian ports[25]. Another interesting project, which did not materialize during this period, was the establishment in Macedonian towns of branches of a Greek - controlled agricultural bank, to assist, through credits, the Greek element of the population. Due to the Ottomans' reservations to capital investment from the Kingdom, an alternative was discussed with Ottoman Greek financial circles, particularly those connected with the Ottoman Bank[26]. Probably it is no coincidence that years later, a branch of this bank was opened in Thessaloniki.

d. To counteract similar tacticts on the Bulgarian side, the Greek consulates sought to establish networks of agents for collecting and dispersing information, outside the regular channels of teachers and clergy. It is interesting to note that a significant number of these agents were medical doctors, graduates of the University of Athens[27].

ked, in this unfortunate country, for the advancement of the [Bulgarian] Schism more than our national opponents". Naturally such statements, carrying much truth in individual cases, could not be taken as a general assesement of the role of the Greek clergy in Macedonia. In fact, there are cases when the Greek Government supported, even financially, certain bishops who served adroitly the cause of the Church as well as Hellenism in Macedonia. The following views contained in a confidential letter by Patriarch Joakim III to Ambassador Koundouriotis (AYE/"Con/pole Embassy"/1882, Koundouriotis to Ministry, No. 249, 1/13 Feb. 1882) are revealing: Rejecting as unfounded the consular views that the bishops are neglecting their duties, he explains that the consuls start from a wrong assumption when they expect the bishops to come out strongly and publicly in favour of the nationalist schemes. The consuls can do this because they have no responsibility toward the state, while the bishops are responsible to their Church and the Ottoman Government. "They must arrange things in such a way as not to expose themselves to accusations by non-Greek orthodox Christians for being [Greek] nationalists, or by the authorities for being rebels". The consuls are also frequently carried by local intrigues in which the bishops find themselves in crossfire. "We do not wish to say that the bishops are blameless, but we are unable to accept that intentionally... act against the national interests".

25. AYE, Kontostavlos' recommendation to the Cabinet No. 1412, 24 Oct./5 Nov. 1883, *op. cit.*

26. *Ibid.*, and S. Dragoumis to Koundouriotis, No. 2615, 10/22 Oct. 1886. (File, Con/pole Embassy/1886).

27. AYE/"Macedonian Consulates"/1885, Kontostavlos to Tsibourakis (Kavala), No.

e. Armed activity, as proposed on a number of occasions by Macedonian Greeks in the field, was categorically turned down by the Greek governments of this period[28]. Nevertheless, violence did errupt on many occasions in various communities, but no evidence exists to suggest that the government in Athens, or its official representatives in the field, had a direct or indirect implication in such occurrences.

Such, very briefly, were the means employed by the Greeks to carry through their program in Macedonia. A program which required if not the support of the local Ottoman authorities, at least their favourable disposition. This was not the case. The three years of conflict over the Thessaly-Epirus territorial issue, and Greek mobilization in 1886, had a direct adverse impact on Turkish attitude toward the Greeks in Macedonia[29].

As an epiloque, one could add, that in the years following 1886, Greek efforts in Macedonia were weakened. Renewed disturbances in Crete shifted the attention of the successive governments of the Greek Kingdom to the south, while the Turks adopted an even more negative attitude, toward Greek operations in Macedonia. An economic crisis in the Kingdom, sharply reduced financial aid to Greek institutions in Macedonia and elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire. Under these circumstances, strongly nationalist elements began to show impatience and to form secret societies with the aim of imposing a "dynamic" policy. This coincided with similar activities of the Bulgarians, following the annexation of Eastern Rumelia.

It was, therefore, clear that during the first decade following the Congress of Berlin, the Greeks had come to realize the importance of developments in Macedonia and to seek to formulate a policy based on existing realities rather than sentimental prejudices and wishful thinking. Although internal difficulties and pressures from other regions of the Ottoman Empire mounted, it was evident that the Macedonian Question was assuming a pivotal role in the Eastern Question and, indeed, in the process for the liberation and unification of Greeks in one national state.

1506, 23 Oct. /4 Nov. 1884, and to Nikolaou (Thessaloniki), No. 2, 23 Jan./4 Feb. 1885.

28. Proposals for armed retaliation against the Bulgarians, made by Greeks of the "front line" towns of Nevrokop and Meleniko, the Greek Government refused even to discuss. AYE/"Macedonian Consulates"/Foreign Minister to Logothetis (Thessaloniki), No. 259, 26 Feb./10 March 1883.

29. Repeatedly, during the Greek-Turkish diplomatic crisis over Thessaly and Epirus, the consuls at Monastir and Thessaloniki advised the Greek Government of the negative attitude of the local authorities and the beys toward the Greek element in its disputes with the Bulgarians.