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**Population Changes in Eastern Macedonia and in Thrace:  
the Legislative “Initiatives” of the Bulgarian Authorities  
(1941-1944)\***

The occupation of Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace by the Bulgarian forces during the period from 1941-1944 left acute and tragic scars in that region, especially with respect to its demography. Besides every form of political and economic change and the negative material consequences which ensued, it also literally threw the human map of the region into utter disorder, the ethnic character of which the Bulgarian authorities purposefully and systematically attempted to change radically.

This altering of the ethnic synthesis of the population, which was, for all practical purposes, intentional, was characterized by two parallel tendencies: a) the exodus of inhabitants of non-Bulgarian descent from the region, for the most part Greeks and to a smaller degree Muslims and Jews; b) the influx of and settling of colonists of Bulgarian descent from Bulgaria.

We shall here examine these two tendencies in order, describing the process of their development, noting the legislative and administrative measures of the Bulgarian government which we believe caused or intensified these tendencies and, finally, giving in concentrated form statistical information which express the dynamics of these tendencies.

*Exodus*

The alteration of the ethnological composition in Eastern Macedonia and in Thrace was already in process on March of 1941 before the

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invasion of the Bulgarian armed forces there. Faced with the spectre of a prospective Bulgarian invasion many Greeks (perhaps about 60,000) began streaming mainly into the rest of Greece and some from Thrace into Turkey. This wave swelled, as would be expected, after the invasion of the Bulgarian army in the region from 20 April 1941 on.

The Bulgarian authorities of the occupation not only did not impede the Greeks from vacating the area, indeed they encouraged them. Already on 17 May Raphael Banov, the chief of staff of the First Bulgarian Regiment gave the political authorities the following order: "Any Greeks desiring to emigrate from the occupied zone are to be given open emigration visas upon submission of a written guarantee clearly indicating that they voluntarily and on their own initiative wish to emigrate". Officer Loukash, chief of the 1st Regiment gave an even more official character to this strategy ordering on the 21st of the same month that: "All who desire to emigrate to Greece and west of the Strymonas river are not to be hindered, on the contrary, they are to be encouraged. It should be suggested to scientists especially that they depart because from now on they will be unable to make a living here"<sup>1</sup>. This studious attention of the Bulgarians for the definitive departure of the Greeks was manifested in two other measures: a) together with the injunctions bidding that the emigration of the Greeks be facilitated another resolution was passed on to the qualified authorities ordering that they keep to a minimum any possible return of Greeks who had emigrated; b) representatives of the local authorities (the sub-prefect of Serres for example), cognizant of the

1. G. Daskalov, "Demografskite procesi v Iztocna Makedonija i Zapadna Trakija (April-Dekemvri 1941 g.)" (henceforth Daskalov, DP/1), *Voennioistoriceski Sbornik* 1990/6, 15-16. Every emigrant was to fill out a declaration which stated that the emigrant and his family voluntarily are departing for Greece. In the same declaration he was to give a detailed account of personal belongings he was taking along. He had the right to bring only the most necessary of his belongings (livestock and personals) and money not exceeding 300 leva. The transporting of valuable metals was forbidden. The declaration had to be approved and signed by the respective branch of the Bulgarian Peoples' Bank to control which personal belongings could and could not be taken out of the country. A certificate from the local economical authorities and respective departments of the banks certifying that the emigrants had no outstanding economic debts was also required. The identity of the emigrant was to be verified by three witnesses. A note from the mayor of the emigrant's community stating that the emigrant had permission to take his personal belongings and depart for Greece was also a requirement. The final requirement was a permit from the police authorities which allowed the exodus of the emigrants from specific points on the border.

fact that most emigrant Greeks remained in the area of Nigrita or proximate to the frontier line, proposed to the Bulgarian Department of the Interior that the German authorities be requested to send these emigrants to the interior of Greece far removed from the frontier line<sup>2</sup>.

A significant motive for the Greek exodus from the Bulgarian occupied zone, not so much in respect to the absolute number of emigrants as much as for its symbolic value and its role as a catalyst for the development of the emigration movement, was the deportation of those Greeks who were considered by the Bulgarian authorities as dangerous. These were: reserve officers, former policemen, civil and municipal servants, enterprising politicians (communists or nationalists), scientists and high-ranking clergy. Immediately upon the assumption of his post the sub-prefect of Drama Vasil Georgiev deported 60 prominent Greek scientists from local communities. He also ordered that the mayors and community leaders of his region draft catalogues of significant Greeks who were to be expelled. In addition the sub-prefect of Sidirokastron Nikola Evstathiev reported on June 1941 (30.7.1941) to the Bulgarian Ministry of the Interior that: "The authorities must deport the most intelligent elements of the Greek population, those who have declared themselves to be followers of Ioannis Metaxas, public functionaries, clergymen and others". On August of the same year (14.8.1941) he declared that: "We have expelled practically all the Greek scientists". Finally, speaking candidly on the motives for the deportations, the sub-prefect of Serres Stancho Kornetski noted in his report of the summer of 1941: "Recently a great portion of the scientists and the most intelligent Greeks from the city as well as from the villages were expelled and are still being expelled in order that the remaining population be left without leaders and people who could strengthen their morale"<sup>3</sup>. About the same time similar reports were given in essays written by the sub-prefect of Sidirokastron and by the sub-prefect of Drama who themselves were involved in the materialization of extended deportations<sup>4</sup>.

2. On this proposal of the sub-prefect of Serres see Daskalov, DP/1, 18.

3. Daskalov, DP/1, 17-18.

4. For a detailed account of deportations carried out by the sub-prefect of Drama see Xanthippi Kotzageorgi - Georgios A. Kazamias, "The Bulgarian Occupation of the Prefecture of Drama (1941-1944) and its Consequences on the Greek Population", *Balkan Studies* 35.1 (1994), 98-99 and note 58.

As was expected and planned, these deportations upset the remaining population, increased the feeling of insecurity and, as reported by the Bulgarians themselves, hindered their economic activities. These factors naturally increased the wave of emigration.

Thus, on June 1941 the anxiety regarding this unexpected situation of the former Greek refugees from Asia Minor who had settled in Bulgaria on the one hand and the indigenous Greeks' fresh memories from the occupation and actions of the Bulgarian army during World War I on the other caused: a) a sudden throng of petitions for emigration addressed to the qualified Bulgarian committees formed for this purpose and b) a plethora of people jostling towards the villages near the river Strymonas in order to cross over to German-occupied Greece. This wave of emigration intensified upon the formation of military committees which were preparing a draft of the Greek youths into the Bulgarian army. The sub-prefect of Sidirokastron (14.8.1941) reported an increased desire for emigration on the part of families with young men of draft age. For this reason also many youths from the frontier areas of Sidirokastron and of Alexandroupolis secretly crossed the borders, either towards Greece or Turkey<sup>5</sup>. During this same period other Greeks crossed over the border with Turkey illegally in order to join the Greek armed forces serving outside of Greece. It should also be noted that families of Greeks of the region streamed into German-occupied Greece to meet family members there who, for whatever reason, (mainly because they served in the Greek army during the war) were hemmed in there. The Bulgarian authorities refused to allow their return to Eastern Macedonia and to Thrace and characterized them as "absolute undesirables", especially because of the morale and mood these former soldiers would have provoked within the Greek population with their return. For this reason, in co-operation with the German authorities, only the return of certain invalids was allowed<sup>6</sup>.

The German occupation authorities expressed a marked opposition to this sudden Greek emigration from Eastern towards Central Macedonia. The Bulgarian sovereigns considered that this opposition "causes difficulties for Sophia's attempts to restore the Bulgarian demographic

5. Daskalov, DP/1, 17.

6. Daskalov, DP/1, 21.

character of the Aegean region". Despite these reactions, however, the emigration of Greeks continued: only from 23-29 August 2,100 emigrants arrived at Thessaloniki<sup>7</sup>.

The Greek wave of emigration which was observed until the autumn of 1941 was a direct result of various administrative measures and resolutions of the Bulgarian authorities regarding: the prohibition of the use of the Greek language under the penalty of a fine, the banning of Greek schools, the subjection of the Greek Church to the Bulgarian ecclesiastical administration, the celebration of the Divine Liturgy in Bulgarian only, etc<sup>8</sup>. Also the Decisions of the Bulgarian cabinet council regarding past and future tax and other economic obligations of the Greeks, and, finally, the law on the obligatory expropriation of businesses in the regions newly annexed to Bulgaria also contributed to this trend<sup>9</sup>.

In November of 1941 a new wave of increased emigration was noted which had as its source the horrific slaughters which followed the Revolt of Drama (28.9.1941 to 3.10.1941)<sup>10</sup>, as well as the issue of the

7. Daskalov, DP/1, 19.

8. Orders of the 1st Regiment, 19.5.1941 and 21.5.1941. For a detailed account of these orders see Xanthippi Kotzageorgi - Georgios A. Kazamias, *op.cit.*, 86 and 90. See also in the newspaper *Belomorie*, 28.4.1942, a statement of the Post Office of Kavala: "...all private letters are to be placed in mail boxes only with open envelopes and must be written in one of the following languages: Bulgarian, German, Italian or French". See also the list of legislative and administrative measures which provoked or facilitated the exodus of the Greeks in the Appendix found at the end of this article.

9. 26.5.1941: decision of the Bulgarian cabinet council on the collection by the Bulgarian People's Bank from Greek banks of debts owed by citizens and businesses (article 4).

29.7.1941: Law on the budget... of the municipalities of the newly liberated regions which provided for collection from the municipalities not only of taxes required by Bulgarian but also by the analogous Greek legislation. See the Bulgarian State Newspaper, no. 118, 2.6.1941 and no. 164, 29.7.1941. Also, see Xanthippi Kotzageorgi - Georgios A. Kazamias, *op.cit.*, 92-93.

29.7.1941: Law on the obligatory expropriation of various businesses of public welfare. On the basis of this law municipal and state services could expropriate banks, clinics, pharmacies, mills, mines, electric stations etc. and rent them for the benefit of the Bulgarian public. The choice of which estates were to be expropriated was decided through a committee appointed by the local mayors. See G. Daskalov, *Dramskoto Vastanie 1941* (henceforth, Daskalov, *Dramskoto*), Sofija 1992, 89.

10. Much has been written on the part of the Greeks regarding the Revolt of Drama (28-29.9.1941) — none of these works, however, are monographs. Most publications considered it as a provocative measure of the Bulgarians for the extermination of the Greek population. Of late this subject has interested Bulgarian historians also, who happen to be at an

survival of various categories of the Greek population. These were: a) the civil servants who lost their positions during the replacement of Greek municipal and public services with corresponding Bulgarian ones<sup>11</sup> and b) the various classes of professional Greeks who because of legislative orders were either hindered from or deprived completely of the right to practice their trade. Through certain resolutions of the Bulgarian Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Employment the right to practice the professions of scientist, physician, lawyer and pharmacist was prohibited to Greeks<sup>12</sup>. All who were already involved in commerce or some free-lance trade were obliged to procure special permits which were, in any case, either delayed or not granted at all<sup>13</sup>. The opening of

advantage regarding the description of these events being that they have at their disposal valuable archives and direct information. The most complete work for the time being is that of G. Daskalov, *Dramskoto Vastanie 1941*, Sofija 1992, which upholds the view that the revolt of Drama was the result of a spontaneous but unorganized leftist reaction to the occupation.

11. Already through the order of the head of the 1st Regiment, 10.5.1941 (no. 1) Greek municipal and public services had been abolished and replaced by corresponding Bulgarian ones. The Bulgarian Cabinet Council also issued quite a few resolutions regarding this issue, some of which were no. 4 of the 28th of April and no. 39 of the 3rd of May 1941. See G. Daskalov - I. Koev, "Ustanovjavane i izgrazdane na balgarskata voenna vlast v Belomoriето (april-juli 1941 g.)", *Voenoistoriceski Sbornik* 1990/5 (henceforth Daskalov-Koev, *Ustanovjavane*), 118; G. Daskalov, "Izgrazdane na balgarskata administracija i politiceskata sistema v novoosvobozdenite zemi na Zapadna Trakija i Iztocna Makedonija (1941-1944 g.)" (henceforth Daskalov, *Izgrazdane*), 104-105 and 107.

12. No. 4404 of 31.10.1941 and no. 2288 of 6.6.1941. See Daskalov, *Dramskoto*, 88-89. Also, *The Black Book of Bulgarian Crimes in Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace* (henceforth, *The Black Book*), Athens 1945, 23 (in Greek).

13. See the relevant regulation of the community of Kavala which is published on page no. 2 of the newspaper *Belomorie*, 1.10.1941. Also, see order no. 2234 of the Bulgarian Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Employment, 3.6.1941 and the circular of the same Ministry no. I-18-6150, Bulgarian State Newspaper, no. 140, 30.6.1941. On the basis of this circular those in question had to submit a plethora of certificates and testimonials (which were obtainable only after a marathon of red tape) to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The same circular practically excluded non-Bulgarian citizens, for it determined that applicants should verify with relevant documents that they had served their military service in the army (meaning the Bulgarian army) or that they have been paying their army tax regularly. Finally, the circular determined that all who desired to open a commercial business were to certify that they have the necessary education and specifically: three years of pre-middle school education, two years at a commercial school; one year of middle education; six months of higher education, if available. See also the order of the same Ministry no. 2206 (30.5.1941). In the third article of this order it was ordained that the right to a permit was granted only to those who presented a certificate from their respective community autho-

new businesses and shops was also suspended. The difficult straits of the Greeks, whether professional or not, and the development of the emigrational wave which came with this, intensified their commercial alienation. We shall here refer only to two examples from the local Bulgarian press: a) an indicative advertisement-propaganda from the Bulgarian newspaper *Belomorie* of Kavala: "Travel and entrust your products only on Bulgarian ships"<sup>14</sup> and b) a plethora of articles urging and ultimately convincing the local Bulgarian authorities to open stores which would sell products to Bulgarians only (koito da prodavat samo na balgari)<sup>15</sup>. This new emigrational wave, then —according to Bulgarian sources— was encouraged by the Bulgarian authorities. This exodus, however, was temporarily checked in the winter of 1941-1942 because of rumors of the especially harsh conditions in German-occupied Greece.

Even up until the summer of 1942 this exodus of Greeks continued in lower numbers because of the relatively strict interdictions of the German authorities regarding the population flow from the Bulgarian-occupied to the German-occupied region. However, immediately upon the issuing of the notorious Bulgarian law regarding "Citizenship in Regions Liberated in 1941" (5 June 1942) a new great wave of departure was provoked once again. The fourth article of this law ordained word for word that: "All Yugoslavian and Greek citizens of non-Bulgarian descent who at the time when this law is put into effect happen to be permanent residents of the regions liberated in 1941, shall automatically be considered Bulgarian citizens, except in cases where they declare

rities or from the commercial guilds that they were merchants before as well as another certificate stating that they were registered in the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The fifth article of the order ordained that permits for Greek businesses would be granted only if the owners of the businesses could present a document certifying that the business was legally established before the war. This is in agreement with another related circular —on the application of the order— no. I-18-5773 in the Bulgarian State Newspaper, no. 123, 7.6.1941. Finally, order no. 2290 (6.6.1941), in the Bulgarian State Newspaper, no. 128, 19.6.1941, on the issuing of permits for the practicing of a trade to various categories of professionals (from itinerant tinsmiths and builders to tobacco technicians working in foreign owned businesses and cheese makers). Indicative of the amount of leeway inherent in this order is the fact that these temporary permits were issued by a committee of "three honorable and publicly respectable professions" with the president of the community at its head. On the issue of permits see also Xanthippi Kotzageorgi - Georgios A. Kazamias, *op.cit.*, 95.

14. *Belomorie*, no. 7-8, 17.12.1941.

15. On this see indicatively the newspaper *Belomorie*, no. 2, 1.10.1941.

before 1 April their desire to retain their former citizenship or to obtain another foreign citizenship and within that same time period emigrate from the boundaries of the kingdom”<sup>16</sup>. As stated by a representative of the Ministry of the Interior<sup>17</sup>, this law purported, amongst other things, to “facilitate the departure of Greeks, Serbians and others from the boundaries of the kingdom”. For this reason orders were given that their departure be unhindered and that the necessary documents be issued quickly and easily. This departing trend of the Greeks was also encouraged indirectly by the central Bulgarian government: on July 17, 1942 the Bulgarian Cabinet Council promulgated an official decision on the basis of which outstanding economic debts of Greeks would not be considered an obstacle for their departure<sup>18</sup>. The pace of the Greek exodus was also accelerated by pressure exerted on the Greeks for the submission of declarations assenting to the acceptance of Bulgarian citizenship way before the actual deadline (15 August or December of 1942 were advertised as the deadline)<sup>19</sup>.

An increase in the absolute number of emigration, legal or illegal, was observed also in the beginning of 1943 as the dead-line for the choosing of Bulgarian citizenship (1 April) approached. More and more of the youth especially were abandoning the region, either illegally to escape being drafted in work camps<sup>20</sup>, or officially in order to find work

16. Bulgarian State Newspaper, no. 124, 10 June 1942, 17. See also the circular of the Bulgarian Ministry of Justice, no. 5347 to the peripheral administrators, sub-prefects, mayors and the police precincts of the occupied areas, Bulgarian State Newspaper, no. 161, 24 June 1942, 6-7, regarding the application of the law. In part II of this circular it is stressed that all Greeks who wish to retain Greek citizenship after 1 April of 1943 or choose some other citizenship—except Bulgarian—“will be considered as non-Bulgarians and will be obliged to depart from the boundaries of the Kingdom”.

17. The head of the Department for the colonization of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace B. Bonchev.

18. G. Daskalov, “Demografskite procesi v Iztocna Macedonija i Zapadna Trakija (1 Januari 1942 - 25 Oktomvri 1944 g.)” (henceforth Daskalov, DP/2), *Voennohistoriceski Sbornik* 1992/1, 31-2 and 34.

19. Greek Philological and Historical Archives (ELIA), Archives of the Bulgarian Occupation and Propaganda (ABK), no. 227, testimony of Emmanuel Hatzipetrou, 29.8.1942. Also, The General Staff of the Greek Army, Department of Military History (DIS), Archive 8, Φ909/E/2d, letter of the Prefect of Drama D. Andreadis to the Governor of the General Administration of Macedonia, Thessaloniki 6.8.1942.

20. For a synoptic account of these work camps see X. Kotzageorgi - G. A. Kazamias, *op.cit.*, 100-101.

in Germany. This wave of emigration was significantly checked around the second half of 1943, and in 1944, as international conditions altered irrevocably the climate which predominated in the region, only 140 visas were issued for emigration. A significant number of Greeks, however, especially the youth, abandoned the region illegally either by way of the ports, or through the Strymon river, whereas the emigration to Germany in search of work also continued<sup>21</sup>.

In conclusion we should note that during the occupation a total of more than 110 thousand Greeks (already by June 1943 111,020 had left) departed the region, 70,000 of them "voluntarily". The exact number of those deported cannot be ascertained, neither can the number of those who abandoned the region illegally; Bulgarian historians estimate them at about 20 thousand (only within 1941 the numbers were 2,609 and 4,672 respectively). About 10 thousand of these emigrants were the Greeks who emigrated to Germany. If we also consider the approximately 60 thousand Greeks who, as we said, departed the region right before the invasion, we easily come up with 170 thousand Greeks. The prefectures which suffered the greatest losses in terms of Greek population, according to data resulting from the numerical comparison of the Greek censuses of 1940 and of 1951, were the prefectures of Drama, Evros and Xanthi: they presented a decline in population of -17.27%, -8.78% and -8.81% respectively<sup>22</sup>.

21. Daskalov, DP/2, 34-35 and 42.

22. Daskalov, DP/2, 45, speaks of a departure of 90-100 thousand Greeks during the occupation and adds to this number 60 thousand who left on the eve of the invasion. However, if we consider the official Bulgarian numerical data presented by the same author in two different articles which present: a) the number of Greeks during the census of 1941, b) their number for August of 1942 and c) their number during the census of 1943, we see that from May 1941 to August of 1943 36,053 Greeks abandoned the region and from August 1942 to June of 1943 74,967 Greeks left, i.e. a total of 111,020 Greeks. See Daskalov, DP/1, 16 and Daskalov, DP/2, 32 and 39-40. Let us note here that during the Greek census of 1940 of the six prefectures of Eastern Macedonia and of Thrace (Serres, Kavala, Drama, Evros, Xanthi and Rhodope) 875,369 people were recorded. The first Bulgarian census of the summer of 1940 estimated the population at 676,000 people which presents a huge loss of 200,000 people who must have abandoned the region within that time period. This number differs from Daskalov's number by 140,000 individuals. The actual number must most probably be somewhere in between. We shall not comment on the number of 816,000 presented by the National Statistical Agency as the result of the census of 1951, for ten years had elapsed since the last Greek census and by then, besides the occupation, the civil war had also occurred. For the relevant data see, National Statistical Agency / Center for Economic

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At a much smaller scale a tendency in Greek Thrace for the Muslims of the region to depart towards Turkey was observed. In March of 1941, still before the invasion of the Greek army, the spectre of a possible Bulgarian occupation drove more than 2,000 Muslims from Greek Thrace into Turkey<sup>23</sup>. During the occupation the Muslims were overcome with “emigration fever”; from June 1941 until August quite a few thousand of them had departed for Turkey. However, already in the beginning of September the Turkish authorities refused to accept any more refugees and the emigration flow was thus squelched. Indeed, after negotiations with the Bulgarian government the Turkish government requested and obtained the return of 2,000 Muslims who entered Turkey in the days before the attack of the Axis. These Muslims were indeed returned but were confined to the neutral zone of Evros<sup>24</sup>. However, the total number of Muslims from Greek Thrace who emigrated to Turkey by the end of September 1941 was —according to Bulgarian data— 12,483 and most of them were from the region of Xanthi (6,664). At the present time we cannot ascertain when and how many of them returned to Greek Thrace, or even if they returned at all.

Two other much smaller ethnic groups also resided in Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace: the Jews and the Armenians<sup>25</sup>. Of these

Research, *The Economic and Social Atlas of Greece*, Athens 1964 (in Greek).

23. Daskalov, DP/1, 12.

24. *Ibidem*, 22.

25. The only ethnic group in the region of Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace which did not suffer the consequences of the legislative and administrative measures of the Bulgarian government were the Armenians. In 1943, according to Bulgarian sources, 5,853 Armenians resided in the whole region; they were settled in urban areas, most of them in Kavala, Komotini and Drama. The Bulgarian authorities maintained a friendly attitude towards them and granted them total freedom because they proved to be valuable co-operators with the Bulgarian authorities. Indeed, the privileges granted them by the Bulgarian authorities gave them the ability to claim easily for themselves the commercial and industrial void left by the expelled Jews in the spring of 1943 (see D. Jonchev, “The Cohabitation of Greeks, Armenians, Bulgarians, Jews and Muslims in the Aegean Region, 1941-1944. Some thoughts”. Paper given at the Greek-Armenian Conference “Greeks and Armenians in South East Europe and in Asia Minor During the 19th and 20th century. Problems in Cohabitation and Survival”, Thessaloniki 31.10-2.11.1994. A copy of this paper was granted me by the author.

two groups the Jews were those who suffered the consequences of the Bulgarian occupation in the region drastically more than the Greeks. In the beginning of 1942 the Jews of the region numbered about 4,640 and the vast majority of them lived in Kavala (3,022). A few of them left the region during the second year of the occupation thus bringing the number down by 400 people (4,250) in the beginning of 1943.

Of the various legislative measures burdening the Jewish population the most significant were the Law "For the Protection of the Nation" of 1941 (21.1.1941), Bulgarian State Newspaper (26.1.1941, no. 16) and the Law "On Bulgarian Citizenship" of 1942 (10.6.1942). Article 21 of the Law "For the Protection of the Nation" refused the Jews the right to obtain Bulgarian citizenship and deprived it from those who formerly enjoyed such status. Article 18 of this law extended its validity also to those regions obtained after April 1941. Despite attempts mainly of Bulgarian historians to mitigate the force and significance of this law, this law per se was quite severe. On the basis of this law the number of Jews allowed to exercise practices in medicine, law, engineering as well as those allowed to matriculate at the University were severely limited. Jews also were prohibited to employ maids, send money outside of Bulgaria, change place of residence or own large real estate. Indeed, they were required to declare specifically all personal property and real estate to the qualified Bulgarian state ministries. These measures, aimed at the economic stifling of the Jews of Bulgaria, were extended in the summer of 1941 also to the Jews of the "new territories". Upon the conclusion of the "Conference of Vanzee" (20.1.1942), when the ultimate solution for the Jewish problem was decided upon, even severer laws were promulgated in Bulgaria also: a law which imposed a special tax of 20% on all real estate owned by Jews; a law which ordered the confiscation of pharmacies, commercial ware houses, mines, insurance agencies and buildings belonging to Jews (not including their personal residence); another law required them to obtain special visas for traveling; another law disbanded all Jewish organizations. Eventually they were even prohibited to own radios and, finally, they were also required to wear the yellow star of David. The yellow star, as well as the special yellow identity card which signified their Jewish descent in Greek and Bulgarian, was also imposed upon the Jews of Eastern Macedonia and of Thrace. These were to be given upon the completion of an obligatory general registration of

all Jews imposed by the state which required them to present themselves to the police and to submit a recent photograph<sup>26</sup>. In addition, the law on “Bulgarian Citizenship” refused to all inhabitants of Jewish descent in the “new territories” the right to become Bulgarian citizens and the right to change residence.

In the beginning of the summer of 1942 the Bulgarian government sought ways to correlate directly with the policies of Tzar Boris and indirectly with the policies of the 3rd Reich in order to solve the Jewish problem. In the end of January 1943 Theodore Dannecker, the head of the Storm Group—one of Adolf Eichmann’s men—arrived in Sophia as Adolph’s special emissary. The purpose of his visit was to aid the Bulgarian government (which requested this help) as a specialist on the Jewish problem. His previous mission was the extermination of the Jews of France and the experiences gained there were now to be applied to Bulgaria. On 2 February Dannecker and Gabrovski (the Bulgarian Minister of Internal Affairs) agreed to deport all Jews from united Bulgaria, but this deportation project was to commence with the Jews from the provinces of the Aegean and of Skopije, Monastirion and Pirot. This agreement was relayed for ratification to the Bulgarian Cabinet Council which, after a long meeting on 12 February, fully approved the proposal of the Bulgarian Commissary for Jewish Affairs A. Belev for the expelling of the Jews<sup>27</sup>. A reference from Dannecker makes it clear that, even before this endeavour was approved by the Cabinet Council, Belev on his own initiative sent agents to the newly annexed regions in order to study the way in which the Jews could be transported to the military camps. In order to avoid possible commotion these Jews were to be

26. On the Bulgarian policies regarding the Jews of Bulgaria and of Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace see D. Jonchev, “The Jews from the New Lands in the Policy of Tzar Boris III (October 1940 - March 1943)”, *Annual of the Institute for Jewish Studies XXVII/1994*, 20-21 and 24-25. Marshall Lee Miller, *Bulgaria During the Second World War*, Stanford 1975, 22, 95-100. Hans-Joachim Hoppe, “Germany, Bulgaria, Greece: Their Relations and Bulgarian Policy in Occupied Greece”, *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora XI/3* (1984), 41-54. P. K. Enepekides, *The Persecution of the Jews in Greece 1941-1944*, Athens 1969, 170 and 177-183 (in Greek). See also Daskalov, DP/2, 36.

27. The Committee for Jewish Affairs was convened on August 1942 subsequent to a decision of the Bulgarian Cabinet Council of the same month. Alexander Belev, a former department chief of the Ministry of the Interior, was appointed deputy in the beginning of September.

transported first within Bulgaria and then by train to their final destination. On 22 February the Commissary for Jewish Affairs A. Belov and the head of the German Storm Group T. Dannecker signed an official treaty for the deportation of 20 thousand Jews to the East German countries. Subsequent to this agreement, on 2.3.1943 the Bulgarian Cabinet Council issued a battery of orders directly and indirectly dealing with the deportation or with the preparation for the deportation of the Jews. The charter of these orders gives a step by step description of the preparation for the deportation which was clothed with an air of legality. These orders dealt in detail with the deprivation of Bulgarian citizenship from the Jews and the expropriation of their property. Order no. 113 dealt with the transferal of all civilian employees of the Committee for Jewish Affairs by 31 May 1943, when the Jewish issue was to have been finally resolved. Order no. 114 ordained that the Bulgarian State Railroad Company grant free transportation to all people of Jewish descent who lived in the provinces of the Aegean, Skopje, Monastirion and Pirot or in old Bulgaria. Order no. 115 ordained that the requisitory committees of the nation would commandeer and employ the necessary buildings and real-estate for the organization of military camps for the Jews. Even more significant on this subject was order no. 116 which deprived all inhabitants of non-Bulgarian descent of Bulgarian citizenship and ordered that they be expelled from the country. Article 15 of the law regarding Bulgarian citizenship had already given the Bulgarian Cabinet Council the legal competence deal with the Jews of Bulgaria in this way as it foresaw that all individuals deprived of Bulgarian citizenship be required to leave the country. Three other orders also dealt with the Jewish issue: order no. 117 provided for the transportation of people responsible for the maintaining of the personal property and real estate of the deported Jews until the final decision on their ultimate fate be made. Order no. 126 expropriated the real estate of all people of Jewish descent who were to be deported from the country and converted them to state property. Finally, order no. 127 ordered the deportation of 20,000 Jews who had established residence in the "newly liberated regions".

Subsequent to the issuing of the aforementioned order, representatives from the Committee for Jewish Affairs were sent to the regions where Jews lived. They were charged directly with the gathering of the Jews, their transferal to temporary camps and their subsequent deporta-

tion from Bulgaria to death camps where these representatives would have the full support of the local police and other authorities. This Jewish extermination mission commenced on the morning of 4th March in Eastern Macedonia and Greek Thrace and led directly to the deportation or extermination of 4,000-4,200 Jews<sup>28</sup>.

Bulgarian historians today support the view that the extermination of the Jews of Eastern Macedonia and of Thrace was exclusively the work of Tzar Boris III and of the government of Bogdan Filof who managed to keep their plans for the "solution" of the Jewish issue a secret not only from Bulgarian common opinion but also from the Bulgarian parliament. These historians also claim that neither the personnel who took on the mission nor the administrative authorities of the region knew the true reasons for the deportation of the Jews. These plans were known only to the representatives of the Committee for Jewish Affairs and to Yaroslav Kalitsin, the head of the administrative department of the Committee. Nevertheless, we think that total ignorance either of the Bulgarian parliament or of Bulgarian common opinion cannot be assu-

28. The historical description of this mission falls outside the context of this specific article. A full picture of this endeavor may be acquired through the combining of information given by the authors already referred to in footnote no. 26. Regarding the number of deported Jews we must note that four sources have presented four different versions. The first is from a Jewish source and mentions 3,587 deported Jews (Michael Molcho - Joseph Nechama, *In Memoriam*, Thessaloniki 1974, p. 19). Bulgarian sources present three different numbers; the first two come from the Committee for Jewish Affairs and from the citation of the general administrator of the Aegean Region S. Klechkov: 4,256 individuals were cited by the Commissary for Jewish Affairs and 4,025 by the general administrator. The third number is cited by the head of the deportation mission Yaroslav Kalitsin as 4,224. We must here note that the conclusive number given by the committee member from the Committee for Jewish Affairs is 4,215 individuals because from the total number of Jews gathered 37 were rejected as foreign citizens and 4 died during the journey to the Danube river. Also, the Jews from Kavala were not all removed during the deportation mission because many of them (more than 100) were already sent to the so-called work camps and were working on various projects in old Bulgaria. An order of the Bulgarian Cabinet Council provided for their dismissal from the work camps and their transferal to the concentration camps; many of them, however, were not dismissed with the justification that they were needed where they were. Others escaped and some joined their women and children to share in their fate. Finally, six Jews with Greek citizenship requested asylum in the Turkish consulate in Komotini and were saved. If we compare these figures with the figures given by the Central Israeli Co-operative and Consultative Council right after the occupation regarding the Jews who survived (K. P. Enepekides, *op.cit.*, 170), the actual number of Jews of the region who were exterminated comes closest to that given by the peripheral administrator: 4,025 individuals.

med although we may perhaps speak of apathy or the inability to react, at least regarding the transporting of the Jews to the temporary military concentration camps and from there to the Danube river for their final deportation. The Bulgarian parliament especially was unofficially fully informed on the plans of the Bulgarian government already from June of 1942, when some of her prominent members reacted against the voting for the motion in favor of the "Protection of the Nation". The application of the plans of the Bulgarian government was brought to bear not within a climate of absolute secrecy, which was impossible, rather it occurred within a climate of silent complicity.

### *Colonization*

The settling of people of Bulgarian descent in Eastern Macedonia and in Thrace began simultaneously with the invasion and is notable for its character, motives and phases as well as for its nature and the status of the people settled in the area. Economical as well as social motives presented by the official Bulgarian government and the press of the Axis perhaps played a certain role. However, the main purpose of the Bulgarian colonization of the area had a political-ethnic character: it consisted in the filling of the demographic void (which was created in the area by the Bulgarians themselves) with Bulgarian population.

The settling of Bulgarian state agents, in most cases along with their families, following the obvious prompting of the official Bulgarian state, began almost simultaneously with the entrance of the Bulgarian troops in the region. According to descriptions of the European press from that era, the Bulgarian government encouraged the settling of Bulgarian officials with their families in these newly acquired regions in order to solve quickly and easily a serious social problem, that of the overpopulation and underpayment of civil servants (130,000 not including their families, totally 650,000)<sup>29</sup>. This assumption is strengthened by information from local newspapers describing the insuitability of most of these civil servants and the complaint that they had arrived in the region in order to "profit from their official and social status" (da targuvat s

29. Eugene Kulischer, *Displacement of Population in Europe*, Montreal (International Labour Office), 1943, p. 82. This book was brought to my attention by my colleague G. A. Kazamias.

sluzebnoto si i obstestveno polozenie)<sup>30</sup>. Nevertheless, we believe that the gravity given to the settling of a multitude of Bulgarian public and communal employees served the obvious political purpose of the creation of a stable Bulgarian state structure with the ultimate prospect to remain in the occupied regions. Needless to say, the central Bulgarian authorities used these settlers as bastions and promulgators of the Bulgarian ethnic ideal<sup>31</sup>.

Another group which gradually but spasmodically colonized the region during this first phase were the Bulgarian merchants and professionals. According to information gleaned from articles in local Bulgarian newspapers, most of them were reserve officers and soldiers who participated in Bulgarian wars of liberation and their settling in these regions was encouraged by the government authorities for they were also seen as bastions of the Bulgarian ethnic ideal. Many of them had already been settled by September 1941 in various places in Macedonia and Thrace, coming as they did with the prospect of quick and easy wealth. They were dubbed by the Bulgarians themselves as usurers (*kozoder*) and profiteers (*spekulant*)<sup>32</sup>.

At this juncture we should note the following: even before the annexation to Bulgaria of these regions Thracian and Macedonian Bulgarian refugee organizations were put into action and led demonstrations demanding the return of the “fatherlands”<sup>33</sup>. Also, on June 1941 many communities of South Bulgaria requested of the government that they be allowed to emigrate to the “fertile and beautiful Bulgarian land of the Aegean”, while many refugees who were exchanged on the basis of the treaty of Neuilly (27.11.1919) visited the region and ultimately re-

30. Newspaper *Belomorie*, no. 4, 27.10.1941.

31. On this subject see the indicative article on the first page of *Belomorie*, Kavala 24.9.1941 with the title: “The Duty of Civil Servants of the Region of the Aegean” and subtitle “Every Civil Servant who is appointed to the region of the Aegean... must immediately pose the question: Why am I here? This is a question of utmost significance for our internal, ethnic and intellectual stability”. The text which follows answers the question by urging the Bulgarian civil servants to work for a great Bulgaria.

32. Newspaper *Belomorie*, no. 13, 16.3.1942, article entitled “The Merchants of Kavala” and no. 2, 1.10.1941.

33. On 13 and 14 of April in Sophia. On this see the newspaper *Utro*, no. 9512 and 9513, 13 and 14.4.1941.

mained<sup>34</sup>. Local Bulgarian authorities also were especially favorable to and encouraged the idea of a systematic Bulgarian colonization of the region mainly for national and political purposes: in the winter of 1941-1942 the sub-prefect of Sidirokastron declared that for this reason "the Greek element absolutely must be displaced" from the region, while the sub-prefect of Serres proposed that the former Greek-Bulgarian borders be colonized for a width of 20-30 kilometers with educated good Bulgarian patriots as a counterbalance to Hellenism there (!). Gradually, however, this colonization was urged for economic reasons also for the direct and indirect displacement of the Greek inhabitants of the region left vast expanses of uncultivated land which needed the necessary labor force for its utilization<sup>35</sup>.

Based on the above three parameters in the autumn of 1941 (7.10. 1941) the Bulgarian government availed itself of the opportunity to legalize its political designs for the region through an organized, agricultural-economic colonization which was directed not only to former refugees but also to other Bulgarians from productive and heavily populated regions of Bulgaria (art. 1). A noteworthy fact regarding the political plans concealed behind this colonization is that priority for the submission of applications for emigration was given to people of Bulgarian descent and reserve officers of the Bulgarian army. Also, through this aforementioned law Bulgarians who were already settled in the area could benefit by legalizing and stabilizing their establishment in the region (article 2)<sup>36</sup>.

The terms of this law were exceedingly luring and favorable. Its third article secured the free transporting of the colonists with their livestock and personal belongings to the place of colonization. It also promised free room and board during the journey. It provided for the granting of

34. Local Bulgarian authorities encouraged their settling and directed them towards the province of Sidirokastron and Komotini where they were given land once owned by the Greeks who had fled. See Daskalov, DP/1, 1, 12 and 25. Regarding the Treaty of Neuilly, see *Traité de Paix entre les puissances alliées et associées et la Bulgarie et Protocole signés à Neuilly-sur-Seine le 27 Novembre 1919* (published minutes).

35. Daskalov, DP/1, 25-26.

36. There exists the still unverifiable information that the Bulgarian government discussed the possibility of settling approximately 50 thousand Ukrainian Bulgarians from the region of Zaporozhe in Eastern Macedonia and in Thrace. Their representatives visited Sophia in order to negotiate their "repatriation" (!). On this see Kulishcer, *op.cit.*

necessary capital, loans with long-term acquittance to aid their economic settlement and exemption from property tax and from land tax for two years, a time period which commenced from the beginning of the year after the colonist acquired ownership of his real estate. The colonists were required to pay only 65% of the value of their land, residence and personal property which was to be granted them. They were to begin paying off this sum from 1944 on with a period of 15 years without interest. For refugees who had not liquidated their wealth as stipulated by the provisions of the Kafantaris-Mollof Pact (9.12.1927)<sup>37</sup>, their house, land and personal property was granted them free of charge; if the new property given them was bigger than that which they left behind they merely paid the difference in value. In addition, article 4 provided that the property of all Bulgarian refugees (of the Treaty of Neuilly), whether liquidated or not, would be included under State Property and would be used for the agricultural establishment of these colonists<sup>38</sup>. Indicative of the favorable terms of this law is the fact that already during the first submission period for applications 18,925 Bulgarian families submitted applications. The vast majority of them requested to settle in Serres (4,553), Komotini (4,144) and Sidirokastron (2,467)<sup>39</sup>.

It seems that the Bulgarian government aimed for a well organized and smooth colonization of Bulgarian families fit for agricultural work in Eastern Macedonia and in Thrace. The law on agricultural colonization provided for (art. 6): a) the locating, planning and allocation of available arable land by the Department of State Land; the creation of viable autonomous agricultural households and the evaluation of the land; b) the formation of colonization teams and their sending by the Ministry of the Interior and Agriculture to E. Macedonia and Thrace; c) the settling of colonists and the allocation of deeds of ownership for the land to the settlers from the respective mayors; d) the transporting of colonists, livestock and property by train to be charged to the Public Debt; e) that the

37. The Kafantaris-Mollof Pact was signed by Bulgaria and Greece on 9 December 1927 and provided for the arrangement of economic issues and obligations of both governments resulting from the population exchanges (stipulated by the Treaty of Neuilly). For more information regarding this pact and its application, see Stephen Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities. Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey*, New York 1932, 309-319.

38. This law is published in the Bulgarian State Newspaper, no. 237, 24.10.1941, 3-4.

39. Daskalov, DP/1, 29-30.

nearest army bases and work forces provide the colonists with food during their journey to and arrival in Eastern Macedonia and in Thrace; f) that all means of transportation managed by state, communal and other services be put at the disposal of the Ministry of the Interior. Thus, the Bulgarian government ordered the formation of local committees for the registering of real estate and, subsequent to their own suggestion, ordered the extension of the deadline for the submission of applications for colonization until conditions be deemed right. Simultaneously, the Bulgarian Ministry of the Interior literally bombarded the presidents of the prefectures of Bulgaria with circulars which outlined the presuppositions which had to be fulfilled by those who were to be chosen for colonization (who should be chosen for colonization, when they should be sent to Eastern Macedonia and to Thrace, and what they should be supplied with). Despite all this the Bulgarian government was confronted with four factors which operated in the opposite direction: a) the local Bulgarian authorities in Eastern Macedonia and in Thrace who inundated the Ministry of the Interior with requests for the acceleration of the colonization process and who even went as far as to propose in a meeting in the beginning of 1942 the displacement of 5,900 Greek families into the interior of Bulgaria in order to free land and buildings for the colonists<sup>40</sup>; b) the Bulgarian press, that of the refugee organizations of the capitol (Sophia) as well as those of the occupied regions, which accused the local authorities of filibustering in the granting of "state property" and of undermining the colonization process and pressured for a quick solution to the problem "in order that land be colonized by good Bulgarians at the first opportunity so that its desired ethnic character be attained"<sup>41</sup>; c) the various paramilitary organizations, which must have been quite a few in number and in power in the whole region, which pressured the local authorities and officers of the central government for

40. Daskalov, DP/2, 21 and 22. That meeting also proposed to take 72,500 acres of land in order to colonize 6,970 Bulgarian families on that land. It also proposed that each Bulgarian be granted 25 acres for traditional cultivation and 75 for modern cultivation, while Greeks and Armenians were to be given at the most 5 acres per family. The Bulgarian Cabinet Council replied to these proposals that "because of possible problems in foreign policy this should not come to bear" (!) and the construction of new buildings was decided upon.

41. Newspaper *Belomorie*, no. 14, 21.3.1942. Also, the newspaper *Trakija*, no. 21, 21.10.1942, main article with the title "Te idat!" and the newspaper *Trakija*, no. 28, 16.12.1942, main article with the title "Ste bade greska".

the settling of colonists<sup>42</sup>; d) finally, the uncontrollable human factor. The first colonists began to trickle into the region before the law was put into effect and the wave increased in volume in 1942 and the Bulgarian government was unable to control its flow and even though it attempted to muzzle this colonization process with various legislative resolutions. In September, November and December especially the uncontrollable wave of Bulgarians who did not fulfill any of the requirements set forth by the Ministry of the Interior inundated the region causing enormous problems regarding their settlement. Many of these families, who immediately upon arrival requested special aid from the local authorities, were either impoverished families or were wandering Gypsies of Bulgaria or were unfit for agricultural work. Most of them did not even have a colonization permit and exhibited a totally thievish attitude<sup>43</sup>.

The Bulgarian government's settlement plan initially included the colonists' settlement in houses and farms abandoned by Greeks who previously were either owners or renters of the land<sup>44</sup>. Indeed, at a subsequent second phase, a decision was made by the Bulgarian Cabinet Council to construct new residences because of the fact that those available were either not enough or unsuitable. Indicative of the Bulgarian colonization policy and parallel displacement of the Greeks was also the Bulgarian law for the "obligatory expropriation of private property for the construction of residences for the colonists". On the basis of this law all private property considered necessary for the construction of residences for the colonists were expropriated through an order of the General Administration of the region (article 1). The seizing of these properties commenced immediately subsequent to the issuing of this order (article 2), while the compensation through money or through the granting of state property of analogous value was to be ordered by a committee (consisting of the sub-prefect, the provincial engineer, the provincial agriculturist and the president of the community from which the expropriated property was taken). On the method of payment, which

42. One of these, the "Brotherhood of the Warriors of the Battle-front" exercised analogous pressures on the director of the Department of State Property Lambrinov. See the newspaper *Belomorie*, no. 21, 8.7.1942.

43. Daskalov, DP/2, 28, 29 and 37. See also the newspaper *Trakija*, 21.10.1942, main article with the title "Te idat!" (They are coming!).

44. Daskalov, DP/2, 25.

expressed the uncertainty of future developments, a separate law was to be issued after the ascertainment of the total debt...(!) (article 3)<sup>45</sup>.

Nevertheless, the insufficiency of land and residences in the region for the settling of colonists had as a result the expulsion of the Greek population. Bulgarian colonists were settled in houses and land which belonged to Greeks. This internal displacement took on an official character subsequent to a decision of the Bulgarian Cabinet Council in the summer of 1942. The decision gave the General Administrator of the Aegean authority to commence the obligatory displacement of the Greek population. In addition, local committees for the housing of the colonists—made up of the mayor or his deputy in every community and a representative from each local police, economic and technical service and the Department of State Lands—were to study which land could be used to settle the colonists as renters and were to determine which apartments would be used, which would remain in the hands of the Greek owners or former renters and also the rent which would be paid by the Bulgarian colonists. If need be, the decisions of the committee also provided for the enforcement of these decisions through the police for-

45. On 9.9.1942 the Bulgarian Cabinet Council ratified a decision of the Ministry of the Interior with architects and engineers of the Ministry of Public Works for the construction of residences for the Bulgarian colonists in Eastern Macedonia and in Thrace. See the Bulgarian State Newspaper, no. 207, 16 September 1942, 1-2. There is no information to prove that these residences were actually built. G. Daskalov refers vaguely in his articles to the fact that the Bulgarian government wanted to complete the construction works already started by the Greek government and that only a few new buildings were actually started from scratch. The newspaper *Belomorska Balgarija* of June 1943 also has an article on the completing of the first group of residences for the colonists (in the region between the Nestos and Strymon rivers), which were to be given to the colonists by September 1943. However, there is not enough convincing evidence to prove that these residences were actually given to the colonists in a time period when they probably began returning to their former homes. In any case, on 29.6.1943 the Bulgarian Cabinet Council advanced with its decision (no. 71) to the ratification of the agreement for the construction of the second group of residences for the colonists which were to be built in Greek Thrace (Bulgarian State Newspaper, no. 146, 3.7.1943).

Regarding the law on the obligatory expropriation of private property see the Bulgarian State Newspaper, no. 207, 16 September 1942. A translation of this law which is incorrect on certain points is also to be found in A. Chrysochoou, *The Occupation in Macedonia, Book IV, The Bulgarians in Eastern Macedonia and in Thrace*, vol. I, 1941 and 1942, Thessaloniki 1951, 271 (in Greek).

ce (!)<sup>46</sup>. On the basis of this decision the service committee for colonization organized by the local authorities in Xanthi together with the Ministry of the Interior decided amongst other things the following indicative resolutions: “The displacement should take place in such a way that Greek families be united and not mixed with Bulgarian ones. The buildings freed through the expelling of the Greeks should be as close to each other as possible (in a block), for they shall serve as cores for settlement”<sup>47</sup>. The settling of colonists on land owned by Greeks, as is evident from a report by the sub-prefect of Komotini, did not always occur in an orderly fashion under the supervision of the authorities, rather, numerous cases of seizure and forced settlement were observed<sup>48</sup>.

The significance the Bulgarian government gave to the extensive colonization of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace is clearly seen in the number and nature of the legislative resolutions which dealt with this theme. The various laws and resolutions of the Bulgarian cabinet council literally showered the colonists with a plethora of allowances and privileges. From June 1942 to June 1943 the Bulgarian government issued: a resolution on the free distribution of land and houses to the municipal servants of the region of the Aegean (9.10.1942)<sup>49</sup>; a resolution for the

46. 19.8.1942, decision n. 94 of the Bulgarian Cabinet Council. See G. Daskalov, DP/2, 26. Also, A. Chrysochoou, *op.cit.*, 263 (newspaper *Zora*, 11.7.1942).

47. Daskalov, DP/2, 27. This was probably the conference which occurred on 2.3.1943 in Xanthi with the participation of B. Bonchev and which is mentioned in the newspaper *Belomorska Balgarija*, no. 510, 27.2.1943 and no. 512. From the testimony of Greeks in the region regarding the requisition of houses and property it turns out that the following process was followed: all houses were registered and their inhabitants were informed that they should limit themselves to one or two rooms of the house; the remaining rooms were destined for the colonists. All who had lost their deeds of ownership or their titles were incomplete or had not finished paying off their mortgage were evicted from their homes, which were from then on considered state property to be used for the colonists (A. Chrysochoou, *op.cit.*, 264-265).

48. Daskalov, DP/2, 30. The requisition of their real-estate was not the only negative result of the colonization process for the Greeks. According to sufficiently legitimate sources they were also forced to contribute money for the collection and distribution of 5,000 leva to every colonist family. Also in many villages of the provinces of Sidirokastron and Drama the inhabitants were obliged to perform statute labour for the sake of the needs of the colonists: wood-cutting, transporting, cultivation of fields, the building of new buildings on their own (ELIA, ABK, no. 254, 2nd deposit, Nik. Daskalou, Mikropoli of Drama, 8.11.1942; also *The Black Book*, 36 and 62; A. Chrysochoou, *op.cit.*, 268).

49. Bulgarian State Newspaper, no. 232, 1942, 2. The free distribution of land was for

free medical-pharmaceutical care of the colonists of the Aegean<sup>50</sup>; for their conversion from renters to full owners of the land and personal property taken from occupied land and given to them (27.6.1942)<sup>51</sup>; for ploughing paid by the state “of specific pieces of land and communal estates” for the use of the farmer colonists<sup>52</sup>; innumerable decisions on the granting of first or supplementary loans under very favorable terms for their economic establishment (9.9.1942, 10.2.1942, 4.6.1943)<sup>53</sup>;

the mayors of the villages, the municipal police, the rural police, the lodge-keepers of the municipality and the schools, supervisors of reproduction stations, and, specifically, all who were married and lived with their family at the location of their occupation (articles 1 and 2). See also the Bulgarian State Newspaper, no. 146, 3.7.1943, 2-3 for the extension of these allowances to other lower categories of civil servants: forest rangers, reforestation supervisors, supervisors of forest trails, supervisors of forest telephone lines, hunting wardens, forest sentinels, guards responsible for hunting, even drivers for forest services.

50. Daskalov, DP/2, 30 (decision of the Bulgarian Cabinet Council no. 7, 29.7.1942).

51. Law for the settlement and supplying of the colonists of the area of the Aegean with land and buildings, Bulgarian State Newspaper, no. 138, 27.6.1942, 13-14. The law changed the legal status of any Bulgarian farmer colonists who had already settled in the area and defined the status of any Bulgarians who were to settle there (article 1). This law converted them from renters to full owners upon the finalization of their settlement and handled their economical issues (article 9). Presupposition for this was that they personally work the land which was granted them, that they live in a house in the community to which the land belonged and that they do not change residence (article 5). Every colonist received a residence, a yard with farm appurtenances (stable, storehouses, etc.). This law was valid for settlement in Eastern Macedonia and in Thrace, not only for farmers, but also for craftsmen and professionals who also could be granted a small amount of land (article 6).

52. Bulgarian State Newspaper, no. 234, 19.10.1942.

53. Bulgarian State Newspaper, no. 207, 16 September 1942: 9.9.1942, decision of the Bulgarian Cabinet Council (no. 28) for the granting of loans to colonists and their supplying with personal property which eventually became a law: it provided for the granting of a state guaranteed loan of 50,000 leva at an interest rate of 4% which could be paid off within 8 years; the first payment had to be paid two years after the date at which the loan was granted (article 1). Also indicative is article 3 of the law which provided: in cases where the colonists did not manage to be granted personal property and livestock at an advantageous price during their transferal to Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, the committee responsible for them would advance to an obligatory purchase of necessities for the colonists from the native inhabitants and would also determine the price of these purchased goods.

Daskalov, DP/2, 37: 10.2.1943, decision of the Bulgarian Cabinet Council (no. 40) for the granting of a loan of 10,000 leva to each colonist to enable them to acquire household goods.

Bulgarian State Newspaper, no. 127, 10 June 1943: 4.6.1943, decision of the Bulgarian Cabinet Council (no. 44) for the granting of supplementary loans up to 40,000 leva to the colonists, once they had used at least 60% of the mixed amount of the previous loan for their economic accommodation in the region and for their supplying with livestock and personal

also numerous decisions for the free transporting of the colonists from and to Bulgaria, but also within the administrative division of the Aegean (9.9.1942 and 1.2.1943)<sup>54</sup>; decisions on the extension of economic privileges (for the most part the granting of loans) to other categories of colonists other than farmers: merchants, free-lance professionals, even fishermen (4 and 26.6.1943)<sup>55</sup>. Finally, a decision for the granting of urban real estate in the cities of Sidirokastron, Zichni, Eleftheroupolis, Alexandroupolis, Chrysoupolis, Limena and Limenaria (10.3.1943)<sup>56</sup>. In order to wipe out feelings of insecurity in the colonists and to facilitate and definitize their settlement in Eastern Macedonia and in Thrace, the Bulgarian government decided through a law that the colonists would retain ownership of the real-estate they left behind in old Bulgaria until their new situation be finalized (25.11.1942)<sup>57</sup>. It should be noted here that, besides the aid granted by the central Bulgarian government direct-

property.

54. Bulgarian State Newspaper, no. 207, 16 September 1942 and no. 27, 6 February 1943. The first decision (9.9.1942, decision of the Bulgarian Cabinet Council no. 29 also provided for their free transporting back to Bulgaria. In this case, however, a special permit from the General Administrator of the region was required most probably in order to avoid as much as possible the return of colonists to their original homes. The second (1.2.1943, decision of the Bulgarian Cabinet Council no. 3) provided for the free transporting of the colonists and their personal belongings even after their emigration to the region.

55. Bulgarian State Newspaper, no. 127, 10 June 1943: 4.6.1943, decision of the Bulgarian Cabinet Council (no. 43) for the equalization of the status of the Bulgarian fishermen who live in Eastern Macedonia and in Thrace with the farmers and the extension of economic privileges (loans mostly, but also supplying of personal property) to them also. Daskalov, DP/2, 37: 29.6.1943, decision of the Bulgarian Cabinet Council (no. 23), for the granting of loans of 50,000 leva also to merchants and professional colonists for the acquisition of the necessary means and personal property.

56. Newspaper *Belomorska Balgarija*, no. 545, 10 April 1942. See also *The Black Book*, 122. This is article 6 of the decision of the Bulgarian Cabinet Council (10.3.1943, no. 49) for the *sale of urban state real estate to the colonists in the newly liberated regions*. The same decision provided for the sale (not the granting of) of state property to civil servants only of Bulgarian descent in the cities of Serres, Drama, Kavala, Xanthi and Komotini under extremely favorable terms (they were to pay initially only 10% of the property value and the rest of the value in 12 yearly installments with a 4% interest rate) (articles 1, 2 and 3).

57. Bulgarian State Newspaper, no. 275, 5.12.1942. On the basis of this law the real estate of the colonists on the borders of old Bulgaria was transferred temporarily to the care of the Department of State Land and their ultimate liquidation was to be arranged subsequent to the definitive settlement of the colonists in Eastern Macedonia and in Thrace; until then the Department of State Lands assumed the economic exploitation and ownership of this real estate (article 1).

ly to the colonists, supplementary aid in the form of cash, livestock and personal property was also given by the local authorities. The Bulgarian cabinet council had even officially decided in favor of the support of the community fund of the region with 500,000 leva for that purpose<sup>58</sup>.

Despite all this and because of the fact that most of the colonists were impoverished Bulgarians lured by economic and other grants, a climate of discontent and dissatisfaction prevailed during the whole duration of the occupation; a mood which reached its apogee in the 2nd half of 1943 and provoked a wave of return for many colonists who withdrew to their original homesteads (by the end of the year 655 families returned, about 10% of the total number of colonists)<sup>59</sup>. This wave continued on until the beginning of 1944 when in September 1944 the complete and definitive exodus of colonists and the end of the unsuccessful Bulgarian attempt to colonize Eastern Macedonia and Thrace was recorded.

We cannot pinpoint with precision the number of Bulgarian colonists who under either the one or the other regime settled in Eastern Macedonia and in Thrace. The figures presented by the Bulgarians are sporadic and sometimes refer to families and other times to individuals. In any case, by the end of 1942 we know that 58,770 Bulgarian colonists settled in the region, while in 1943 another 6,416 families settled there. Data is lacking for 1944; colonization, however, at that time already presented sporadic figures, while, on the other hand, the return flow to Bulgaria was quite great. Bulgarian historians generally estimate that 100,000 colonists, including Bulgarian civil servants and professionals, settled in the region. We would tend, although with reservation, to accept this number for in the census of May 1943 128,696 Bulgarian inhabitants were recorded in the region, 27,552 out of whom, however, were indigenous Pomakoi, which were classified on purpose by the Bulgarian authorities as Bulgarians. Most of the Bulgarian inhabitants were to be found in the administrative areas of Serres (18,775), Sidirokastron (18,547), Drama (15,033) and Komotini (12,953). It seems that most

58. Daskalov, DP/2, 30. Mistakenly Daskalov cites the date 29.9.1942 as the date of the issuing of the decision. The correct date is 9.9.1942, when decision no. 28 and 29, which are published in the Bulgarian State Newspaper no. 207, 16.9.1942, were also issued.

59. Daskalov, DP/2, 38.

of the colonists were refugees who either abandoned the area somewhere between 1900-1919 or had been exchanged based on the Treaty of Neuilly. According to valid sources, many of the inhabitants who emigrated from Eastern Macedonia and from Thrace to Bulgaria came from these specific regions<sup>60</sup>. Finally, it should be noted that, as far as the cities go, most of the colonists were settled in Xanthi (7,289), Serres (6,344), Drama (5,056) and Kavala (4,624). The motive for the settling in Serres and Drama is obvious, as for Xanthi, it was the administrative center of the region and, consequently, an evident magnet, while Kavala was and remained the most important port in the whole region.

From all that was outlined above it becomes evident that the Bulgarian authorities succeeded to a certain degree to alienate, directly or indirectly, a significant portion of the Greek population from Eastern Macedonia and from Thrace (about a quarter of the Greek population). It is also evident that they exploited to the utmost their powers to attempt a mass settling of Bulgarians in the region, and that they desired to invest this settling with a legal and permanent character. In both cases, however, the results of their actions proved to have a completely ephemeral character. Their political designs were proved to be utopian as a concept and unrealizable in application. In one sector only were the Bulgarian authorities "successful": they successfully uprooted, albeit temporarily, people who were seen as their enemies, but also their own compatriots as well.

60. The following figures concerning these former refugees were granted by Mr. Iakovos Michaelides, doctoral candidate of the Department of History and Archaeology of the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki, who is working on a dissertation with the theme: "Emigration of Slavophones from Macedonia and Western Thrace, 1913-1930". The numerical figures reveal that of the 66,126 inhabitants within the whole of Greek Macedonia who emigrated to Bulgaria in the years between 1900-1930, 55% of them were from Eastern Macedonia. Specifically, from the region of Serres 10,400 inhabitants, from Sidirokastron 9,640 and from Drama 16,050. Again, from Thrace 7,311 families emigrated to Bulgaria, 2,529 of which were from the region of Komotini (34.59%).

APPENDIX

*Legislative and Administrative Measures of the Bulgarian Authorities  
Which Provoked or Facilitated the Exodus of the Greeks*

(in thematic order)

Decisions: a) of the Bulgarian cabinet council or b) of the local Bulgarian authorities stating that Greek emigration be facilitated and not hindered even in cases of pending economic obligations: a) 21.5.1941 and b) 17.7.1942.

Order of the First Bulgarian Regiment, 10.5.1941: the abolition of Greek municipal and public services and their replacement with corresponding Bulgarian ones as well as related decisions of the Bulgarian Cabinet Council of which the first were: no. 4, 28.4.1941 and no. 39, 3.5.1941.

Orders and resolutions of the local and central authorities on the Greek language, Greek Church, etc.:

Orders of the 1st Regiment, 19.5. and 21.5.1941: the prohibition of the spoken Greek language under the penalty of fine; Greek Churches and sermons given by Greek priests were to be kept under control and observation; the prohibition of Greek printing presses, typesetting machines and the use of Greek typewriters and polygraphs; the confiscation of all radios; libraries and bookstores to be put under the control of the authorities; the prohibition of the ownership and use of books on Greek history.

Decisions of the Synod of the Bulgarian Church, 29.4.1941: the subjection of the Greek Churches to the Bulgarian Metropolis of Nevrokopion and Philippoupolis.

Decision of the Bulgarian Synod, 20.6.1941: allowance of only occasional co-existence of the Greek and the Bulgarian language in the Divine Liturgy.

Decisions of the Bulgarian Cabinet Council and orders of the ministries on economic issues:

26.5.1941: Debts accrued by citizens and businesses towards Greek banks before the occupation were transferred to the Bulgarian People's

Bank.

29.7.1941: Law for the estimation... of taxes of the municipalities of the newly liberated regions: collection from the municipalities not only of taxes required by Bulgarian legislation but also of the corresponding Greek tax legislation as well.

Orders no. 2206 (30.5.1941) and no. 2234 (3.6.1941) of the Bulgarian Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Employment for the obligatory issuing of special work permits for merchants and private businesses.

Orders no. 2206 (30.5.1941) and no. 2234 (3.6.1941) of the same ministry and decisions of the Bulgarian Cabinet Council no. 4404 (31.10.1941) for the barring of Greeks from certain professions.

29.7.1941: Law on the obligatory expropriation of businesses of common interest in the newly liberated lands.

Law on citizenship in the lands liberated in 1941: 5.6.1942.

*Legislative Orders Which Dealt Directly or Indirectly  
With Bulgarian Colonization*

(arranged by chronological order)

24.10.1941: Law ordering the economic and agricultural colonization of the region of the Aegean.

27.6.1942: Law ordering the settling and supplying of colonists in the region of the Aegean with land and houses.

29.7.1942: Decision of the Bulgarian Cabinet Council (no. 7) ordering free medical-pharmaceutical care for the colonists of the Aegean region.

9.9.1942: Decision of the Bulgarian Cabinet Council (no. 94) which sanctions agreement of the Ministry of the Interior by the utilization of architects and engineers from the Ministry of Public Works for the construction of residences in the Aegean region for the colonists.

– Law ordering the obligatory expropriation of private property for the construction of residences for the colonists of the Aegean region.

– Decision of the Bulgarian Cabinet Council (no. 27) ordering the donation of 50,000 leva to the community registrars for the aid of the colonists.

– Law ordering the granting of loans and private property to the colonists of the Aegean region.

– Decision of the Bulgarian Cabinet Council (no. 29) ordering the free transporting of colonists towards the Aegean region, their free transporting within the boundaries of the region as well as their free trans-

- porting towards Bulgaria.
- 9.10.1942: Law ordering the free granting of land to the municipal servants of the Aegean region.
- 14.10.1942: Decision of the Bulgarian Cabinet Council ordering that farm-lands of the Aegean region be ploughed at the expense of the State so that they can be utilized by the farming colonists.
- 25.11.1942: Law ordering the temporary economic utilization of colonists real-estate which was left within the boundaries of old Bulgaria.
- 1.2.1943: A new decision of the Bulgarian Cabinet Council (no. 3) ordering the free transporting of colonists in the Aegean region along with their personal belongings even after their immigration to the region.
- 10.2.1943: Decision of the Bulgarian Cabinet Council (no. 40) ordering the support of every colonist with a loan of 10,000 leva in order that they obtain household goods.
- 10.3.1943: Decision of the Bulgarian Cabinet Council (no. 49) ordering the sale of urban state property to the colonists in the newly liberated regions.
- 4.6.1943: Decision of the Bulgarian Cabinet Council (no. 43) ordering the equalization of the status of Bulgarian fishermen (who immigrated to the Aegean region) with the farmer colonists and the extension of economic privileges (mostly loans) to them as well.
- New decision (no. 44) ordering the granting of supplementary loans up to 40,000 leva to the colonists of the Aegean region.
- 29.6.1943: – Decision of the Bulgarian Cabinet Council (no. 23) ordering the granting of a loan of 50,000 leva also to merchant colonists and professionals for the acquirement of necessary personal belongings.
- Decision (no. 70) ordering the extension of the validity of the orders of the Law for the free distribution of land to lower civil servants also (specific categories).

*Greek exodus from Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (1940-1944)*

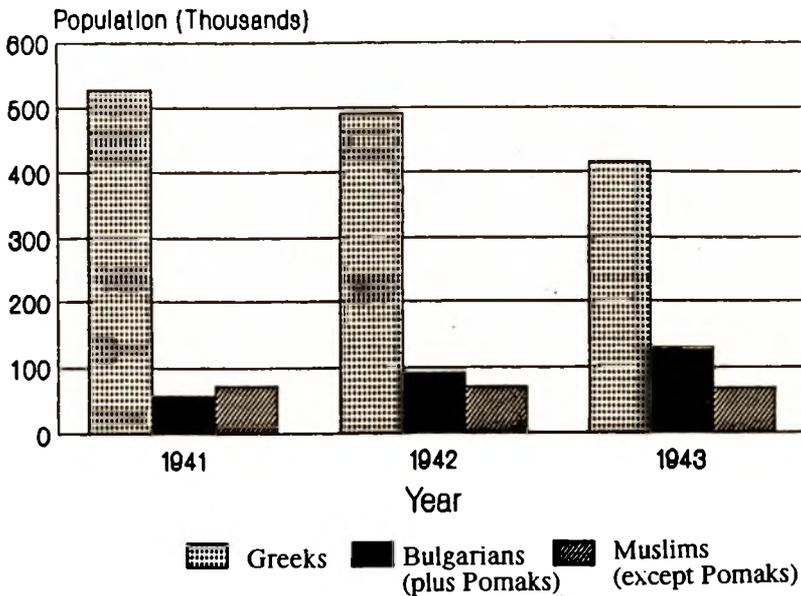
<i>Time period</i>	<i>Data</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Before the Bulgarian invasion	60,000 (appr.)	To Greece (continental, the islands) and Turkey
During 1941	41,218	Until the end of November 33,074
During 1942	12,956	According to certain Bulgarian sources from the beginning of the occupation until the end of 1942 39,640 Greeks abandoned the area
During 1943	14,476	Also a great number of illegal emigrants that even the Bulgarian authorities cannot estimate
During 1944	140 (legal permits only)	Incomplete data. A great number of illegal emigrants. Data regarding the Greek labor migration to Germany is also lacking
Total (based only on existing data)	138,790	The Bulgarians estimate the Greeks who left from the region before and during the occupation at 160,000

*The characteristics of the Greek exodus during the Bulgarian occupation*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Migration by official permit to the German occupied territories</i>	<i>Illegal Exodus</i>	<i>Laborers to Germany</i>	<i>Expulsions</i>
1941	33,074	4,670	–	2,474
1942	2,225	5,700	5,000 appr.	31
1943	12,453	Unknown	2,023 (only during three months)	Unknown
1944	140	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Total (based only on existing data)	47,892	10,370	7,023 (according to information from Bulgarian authorities around 10,000 Greek workers left for Germany)	2,505

*Development of the Greek, Bulgarian and muslim population  
in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace during the Bulgarian occupation  
according to Bulgarian sources and censuses*

Year	Total	Greeks	Bulgarian (+ Pomaks)	Muslims (Turks in the censuses)
1941 (census)	676,000	526,464	58,749	73,462
1942	668,873	490,411	90,925 (Pomaks: 24,338)	70,279
1943 (census)	637,686	415,444 (+ 7,282 Sarakatsani)	128,696 (Pomaks: 27,552)	69,145



*Greek Jews deported from Eastern Macedonia and Thrace  
in March 1943*

<i>Region</i>	<i>Numbers given by the Bulgarian Committee for Jewish Affairs</i>	<i>Numbers given by the Bulgarian Governor-General of Macedonia and Thrace Region</i>	<i>Numbers given by the Bulgarian head of the deportation mission</i>	<i>Numbers given by the Jewish Committee of Greece</i>
Komotini	909	865	878	
Alexandroupoli	44	48	42	150
Drama	592	592	589	780
Xanthi	537	534	536	261
Kavala	1,657	1,471	1,484	1,800
Serres	471	471	471	596
Zihni	19	19	18	
Thassos		16		
-----	32	-----	-----	
Elephtheroupoli		5	19	
Hrissoupoli			12	
Total	4,256	4,025	4,224	3,587

*Bulgarian Population\* in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace Mid 1943*

<i>Administrative Division</i>	<i>Data</i>
Serres	18,775
Sidirokastro	18,547
Drama	15,033
Komotini	12,953
Kavala	5,161
Alexandroupoli	4,919
Zihni	4,058
Hrissoupoli	1,041
Eleuphtheroupoli	704
Thassos	367
Villages annexed to the Bulgarian prefectures of Plovdiv (former Philippopolis) and Stara-Zagora	10,830 135
Total	92,523

\* Not including the Pomaks.