

Loukianos Hassiotis

**Greek-Serbian Relations in the Greek Press
The case of the *Efimeris ton Valkanion***

It is only in recent decades that Greek historians have begun to make use of material from the country's newspapers and periodicals. Doubts as to the reliability of this material as a historical source may have been, in theory, the reason why scholars have tended to ignore it¹, but there has also been a practical obstacle to the use of such material in the absence of any proper provision for the safekeeping and classification of the country's newspaper and periodical archives. In recent years, however, historians have shown less of that traditional disdain for the press, while there have been a number of conspicuous attempts by state, municipal and private organizations to safeguard past issues of newspapers and periodicals and to conserve and provide proper archive storage for those circulating today. The *Efimeris ton Valkanion* (Journal of the Balkans), the newspaper I shall be using as my main source in this paper, is a characteristic example of a printed record which can provide valuable documentary evidence for the scholar—in this case evidence from the period between the wars. The Thessaloniki Municipal Library has a substantial number of bound volumes of editions of the newspaper, each volume containing the issues of six months. Although most of the newspaper's history has thus been preserved, there are a number of gaps where editions are missing—either because they were destroyed at some time in the past, or because of some oversight on the part of the archivist, or because some of the editions are currently undergoing conservation.

1. For the issue see G. Anastasiadis, "Ο Τύπος ως πηγή της ιστορίας: Η εμπειρία από την ιστορική έρευνα των εφημερίδων της Θεσσαλονίκης" (Press as a Historical Source; the Experience from a Historical Research of the Newspapers of Thessaloniki), in *Η νεότερη ιστορία της Θεσσαλονίκης και ο Τύπος* (Modern History of Thessaloniki and the Press, ed. B. G. Sabanopoulos), Thessaloniki 1993, pp. 15-16.

Nevertheless, the surviving volumes of the *Efimeris ton Valkanion* contain most of the editions of the newspaper issued during the inter-war period and provide a satisfactory picture of the nature, character and political-ideological identity of the paper over its thirty years of publication. Moreover, they present us with fascinating information, not found in the so-called official —diplomatic or other— sources, about many facets of Greek-Serbian/Greek-Yugoslavian relations during the years 1930-1936, the period covered by this paper. This information has been compared with corresponding evidence from other primary and secondary sources, specifically the archives of the Foreign Office of the United Kingdom and the relevant literature.

The *Efimeris ton Valkanion* was a daily newspaper published in Thessaloniki between 1918 and 1950, although its publication was suspended on a number of occasions either by decision of its proprietors or on the orders of the authorities. It was founded in 1918 by a lawyer, Nikos Bouzianis, who appointed as editor the journalist Nikos Kastrinos. A year later Kastrinos acquired ownership of the paper and it was he who shaped its character and political affiliations².

Nikos Kastrinos was born in 1890 in Eressos, on the island of Lesbos. He studied in Odessa, Russia, and later worked in Constantinople on the newspapers *Proodos*, *Chronos* and *Patris*. Before long, in 1914, he was deported by the Turkish authorities for his political activities. He settled in Thessaloniki, where he first allied himself with the faction supporting Eleftherios Venizelos. When the war ended he joined the party of Alexandros Papanastasiou (initially the Democratic Union and later the Workers-Peasants Party), where he was to remain throughout his career. As a staunch supporter of the democracy and an anti-monarchist we might describe him as representing the centre-left of Greek political life in the inter-war years. In the 1930's he took part in the proceedings of the Balkan Conferences and supported passionately that the Balkan countries should come together to resolve their differences. During the German occupation he closed the newspaper and moved to Athens; the *Efimeris* did not appear again until the German

2. M. Kandylakis, *Εφημεριδογραφία της Θεσσαλονίκης. Συμβολή στην ιστορία του Τύπου, Β. 1912-1923* (Journalism in Thessaloniki's Newspapers. A Contribution to the History of Press, II, 1912-1923), Thessaloniki 2000, pp. 235-240.

troops had left the country³. In the 1946 plebiscite he opposed the return of the king and supported the proclamation of a Republic, while nevertheless distancing himself from the policy of the Greek Communist Party⁴. When not engaged in editing and writing articles for his newspaper, he worked as a translator and published his own pamphlets and books⁵.

There are two main reasons for my decision to concentrate on the period 1930-1936. Firstly, because these years saw a growth in Greek-Serbian/Greek-Yugoslavian contacts unprecedented in the history of the two countries, with the Balkan Conferences, the signing of the Balkan Entente and a steep increase in bilateral contacts; in this context a study of the *Efimeris ton Valkanion* is of particular interest, since it was one of the publications which lent its support, from the very beginning, to the initiatives towards rapprochement, in line with the policy of Panastasiou. In addition, the same period was clearly an important transitional phase in political developments in Greece, Yugoslavia and the Balkans, and indeed in Europe as a whole.

In Greece, the recognition of the republic by the anti-Venizelist and monarchist opposition initially raised hopes that some form of calm might be restored to the political life of the country, but these hopes were soon dashed. Fierce political and party disputes continued, leading to frequent violations of the laws and the constitution by the authorities themselves and to a protracted crisis of the parliamentary system. In practice, the continued existence of a "National Schism" between the Venizelists and their opponents, and the increasing degree of aggressive police action against the communists —still weak in terms of political and social support— were bringing the democratic constitution and the parliamentary system itself into disrepute. These developments culminated in the restoration of the monarchy, following the rigged plebiscite of 1935, and —finally— the assumption of dictatorial powers by Metaxas;

3. N. Kokkalidou-Nachmia, *Μια μικρή πόλη στην καρδιά της μεγαλούπολης* (A Small Town in the Heart of the Big City), Thessaloniki 1988, pp. 154-156.

4. Cf. his brochure, *Γιατί θα νικήσει η δημοκρατία* (Why Republic Will Win), Thessaloniki 1946.

5. See for example N. S. Kastrinos, *Η γερμανική "Κουλτούρ" και η παγγερμανιστική ιδέα* (The German 'Kultur' and the Pangermanic Idea), Athens 1947, and *Ένα ταξίδι του Κωστή Παλαμά* (A Kostis Palamas' Trip), Thessaloniki 1971.

with the consent of king and army, in 1936⁶.

The Yugoslavs had already been living under absolute rule since 1929, when King Alexander I proclaimed his personal dictatorship. The King of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes had assumed the title King of Yugoslavia, thereby expressing the new regime's intention to create a new, unified, national Yugoslav consciousness; this enterprise was consigned to history in 1934, when Alexander was assassinated as a result of a conspiracy between Croatians and pro-Bulgarian Macedonian secessionists⁷.

Equally momentous events were unfolding meanwhile in the Balkans and elsewhere in Europe. Under the influence of the Locarno agreements, the initiatives for peace in Europe and hopes of eventual European unity, and the need to tackle the international economic crisis, an initiative was launched to organize the Balkan Conferences. Originally the brainchild of the Greek politician Alexandros Papanastasiou, these conferences gradually evolved into a forum for meetings and communication among important figures in the political, economic and intellectual worlds of the countries of south-eastern Europe. Of course, the ultimate objective of Papanastasiou and those who shared his ideas, namely the creation of a Balkan customs union, the first stage towards a Balkan federation, never came to fruition. Some of the Balkan states did finally adopt the idea of cooperation, signing the Balkan Entente of 1934. This was an alliance, however, which did not include either Bulgaria (the "representative" of the revisionist countries in the Balkans) or Albania (from a desire not to undermine the Italy's prestige), and which was, moreover, basically a diplomatic-military alliance, an arrangement very far removed from the original conception of a wide-ranging cooperation among all the Balkan countries. The rise to power of Hitler in 1933 and the growing revisionist feeling across Europe both had the effect of enfeebling the movement towards closer relations in the Balkans⁸. Thus, the sanguine hopes of establishing peace in south-eastern

6. R. Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, Cambridge 1992, pp. 109-119, and L. S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, London 2000.

7. J. R. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History. Twice there was a Country*, Cambridge 2000, pp. 164-176, and St. K. Pavlowitch, *The Balkans, 1804-1945*, London - New York 1999.

8. L. S. Stavrianos, *Balkan Federation. A History of the Movement Towards Balkan Unity in Modern Times*, Hamden, Connecticut 1964, pp. 228-244.

Europe and across Europe as a whole were succeeded by disillusionment and anxiety over the approaching war. The occupation of the demilitarized Rhineland by German troops marked a shift towards concrete action to overturn the *status quo*, and represented the first great victory in the geopolitical revision of Europe⁹.

Until the 1930's Greek-Serbian/Greek-Yugoslavian contacts had been confined to the sphere of diplomacy and, less frequently, military cooperation; there had never been any systematic development of cultural and economic relations. Bilateral cooperation was largely grounded in a shared desire to curb the revisionist foreign policy of Bulgaria. This was, moreover, the main reason for the drawing up of the Greek-Serbian treaty of alliance in 1913, which theoretically remained in force after the war had ended and the first Yugoslavian state been established. In the economic field cooperation was confined, essentially, to the founding of the "Serbian Free Zone" in Thessaloniki, envisaged in the 1913 treaty and intended to facilitate the movement of Serbian goods. In reality, what had now been renamed as Yugoslavian Free Zone did not begin to operate until 1929. During the same period the two countries signed a friendship agreement, reaffirming their intention to continue their diplomatic cooperation. From this point on there was an increase in the frequency of bilateral contacts, a trend reinforced by the initiative towards better communication in the Balkans in general¹⁰.

There is evidence of this trend in the Greek press. In the *Efimeris ton Valkanion*, in particular, we see an increase in the quantity and frequency of articles on Yugoslavia and on Greek-Yugoslavian contacts. Over the period 1930-1936 there are regular references to these subjects—in certain instances they are found on a daily basis—which fall into the following categories: i) mainly political news items, i.e. internal Yugoslavian affairs, Greek-Serbian diplomatic and political contacts, Yugo-

9. J. Joll, *Europe Since 1870*, London - New York 1990, p. 361, and M. Mazower, *The Dark Continent. Europe's Twentieth Century*, London - New York 1998, p. 60.

10. L. Hassiotis, *Οι ελληνοσερβικές σχέσεις, 1913-1918. Συμμαχικές προτεραιότητες και πολιτικές αντιπαλότητες* (Greek-Serbian Relations. Allied Priorities and Political Rivalries), Thessaloniki 2004, pp. 381-391. In the beginning of 1930, the then Greek minister for Foreign Affairs gave a relative picture of the strengthening of Greek-Yugoslav relations in an interview to the Belgrade's journal *Yugoslavië*, see FO 371/14389/Greece 1930: P. Ramsay to A. Henderson, Athens, 10-2-1930.

slavia's foreign relations with other European or Balkan states, the Balkan Conferences and the Balkan Entente (some 56% of the relevant articles)¹¹; ii) economic news, with reports on Greek-Yugoslavian economic contacts and the utilization of the Port of Thessaloniki (10.5%); iii) bilateral cultural contacts (5%); iv) the Yugoslavian image of Greece (2%); v) organized excursions to Yugoslavia, articles on Yugoslavia by Greek travellers, and comments on Greece by visiting Yugoslavs (15.5%); vi) articles on ordinary life or tourism in Yugoslavia (2%); vii) special features —usually of a historical nature— with references to Yugoslavia (7%), and viii) photographs of Yugoslavian personalities or events, accompanied by the appropriate explanatory captions (2%).

Let us now turn our attention to the main features of the articles on Greek-Yugoslavian relations. First of all we should note a certain confusion between the terms “Serbian” and “Yugoslavian”; this confusion was apparent as early as the time of the foundation of the first Yugoslavian state, in late 1918¹², and continued throughout the inter-war period. It may have been due in part to the dominance of the Serbian element in the government machinery of the first Yugoslavia¹³, but its fundamental cause was the familiarity —for historical reasons— of the Greek reading public with the old Serbia, from which the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was seen to have evolved. Although from 1929 onwards the official title “Yugoslavia” —with its derivative forms— was widely used, newspaper articles continue to speak of “Serbia”, “Greek-Serbian” or “Serbian-Bulgarian relations”, “Greek-Serbian frontier questions” and “Greek-Serbian understandings”¹⁴. When the writers of the articles wish

11. Estimation is based on a sample of a total of 300 articles, traced in the newspaper's issues of the period 1930-1936. The resulting data are of a suggestive rather than absolute significance, since survey does not include part of the year 1932, and the whole of 1935, a year that saw the temporary suspension of the newspaper's circulation due to the pro-venizelist coup and the consequent exile of Kastrinos.

12. L. Hassiotis, *Οι ελληνοσερβικές σχέσεις*, *op.cit.*, p. 246.

13. See L. S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453*, *op.cit.*, p. 625, and St. K. Pavlowitch, *The Balkans*, *op.cit.*, p. 258.

14. See for example *Efimeris ton Valkanion*, 4589, 29-3-1930: “Αι σερβοβουλγαρικοί σχέσεις οξύνονται” (The Serbo-Bulgarian Relations are Frayed); 4804, 13-11-1930, “Τα ελληνοσερβικά μεθοριακά ζητήματα” (Greek-Serbian Border Issues), and 6085, 17-6-1934: “Αι ελληνοσερβικάι συνεννοήσεις διά την εμπορικήν συμφωνίαν” (Greek-Serbian Understandings on the Commercial Treaty).

to distinguish the Serbs from the other Yugoslavian peoples they speak of the “Old Serbs”, referring to the inhabitants of pre-war Serbia¹⁵.

The principal feature of the articles on Greek-Yugoslavian relations is that in general they adopt a positive attitude, reflecting hopes of a broader Balkan understanding. References to Yugoslavia and bilateral relations are rarely negative—it is even unusual to find reservations expressed—and there is a general sense that everything is going well¹⁶. It was by no means a policy confined only in the articles of the specific paper. The Greek press, in general, avoided negative references to Yugoslavia during the period¹⁷. The few exceptions concerned issues of minor importance, like the status of the Serbian Monastery of Hilandar in Holy Mountain and differences in the commercial treaties between the two countries¹⁸. The newspaper even goes so far as to caution that closer relations should not be confined to Yugoslavia and Greece alone, lest the rapprochement be misunderstood by the other Balkan states¹⁹.

Another interesting aspect of these articles is the way references to bilateral economic and cultural contacts are linked with the special role that might be played by the city of Thessaloniki and its port²⁰. We

15. *Efimeris*, 6202, 12-10-1934: “Εξ αφορμής της δολοφονίας. Παλαιοσέρβοι και Κροάται” (By Reason of the Murder [of King Alexander]. Old-Serbs and Croats).

16. *Efimeris*, 4830, 10-12-1930: “Ο κ. Μαρίνκοβιτς διήλθε σήμεραν εκ της πόλεώς μας” (Today Mr. Marinković passed through our town): According to his comments there were no differences between the two countries; 5668, 16-4-1933: “Η ελληνογιουγκοσλαβική εμπορική σύμβασις” (Greek-Serbian Commercial Treaty).

17. At least this is what the British ambassador in Athens believed. Cf. FO 371/16774/Greece, 1933: Annual Report for 1932, P. Ramsey to J. Simon.

18. The issue of the Hilandar Monastery is mentioned in *Efimeris*, 5689, 8-5-1933: “Οι Σέρβοι διά την μονήν Χιλανδαρίου. Έκκλησις προς τους Έλληνας” (The Serbs on the issue of Hilandar Monastery. Appeal to the Greeks), where there is reference of the Serbian claim that the renewal of the monastery is prevented by Greek authorities. The British diplomatic archives confirm the article, as well as the minor disputes between Greek and Serbian authorities regarding the revisionism of their custom duties in their railway communication, see FO 371/16774/Greece 1933: Annual Report for 1932; FO 371/15971/Greece, 1932: C. Bentinck to J. Simon, Athens, 26-9-1932, and FO 371/15971/ Greece, 1932: N. Henderson to J. Simon Belgrade, Belgrade, 27-9-1932.

19. *Efimeris*, 4633, 23-5-1930: “Προς την Βαλκανικήν Ένωσιν” (Towards Balkan Union), and 4640, 30-5-1930: “Ψυχική προσέγγισιν” (Spiritual approach).

20. The idea that Thessaloniki could play a special role in the development of the economic cooperation between Balkans and Eastern European countries was much discussed during the —unofficial— Balkan Conferences. Cf. FO 371/15203 Central General 1931: J. Waterlow to A. Henderson, Sofia, 16-3-1931.

should remember that the *Efimeris* was a Thessaloniki newspaper; it urged the opening up of economic contacts with the regions to the north of the city and with its former hinterland, while criticizing the central government in Athens for its failure to delegate powers to the country's regions²¹. The newspaper's arguments were based on the obvious importance of the geographical position of Thessaloniki, the views of Yugoslavian politicians and economic leaders²², and the city's potential to play the role of "capital" to a future Balkan federation:

When the spirit of cooperation has prevailed and the minor differences have been dispelled, a Balkan union centred on Thessaloniki will play a vital role in the evolution of the international situation; it will pave the way for a federation of European states, perhaps even a United Europe²³.

This reference to a United Europe, or "Pan-Europe", indicates the paper's support for the movement led by Koudenhoven-Kallergis, a movement whose impact on Greece of the inter-war years has not yet been the subject of adequate study²⁴.

The articles also reflect the more frequent travelling between the two countries —and especially the cities of Thessaloniki and Belgrade— by journalists and representatives of the commercial, industrial and intellectual communities, as well as the impact of the new means of transport and communication (telephone, aeroplane). The frequent organized trips by Greeks to Yugoslavia were usually arranged by the Greek-Yugoslavian associations based in Thessaloniki and Belgrade, by the director —in the early 1930's— of the Yugoslavian Commercial

21. Cf. *Efimeris*, 5685, 4-5-1933: "Η Θεσσαλονίκη τρίτος λιμάνη" (Thessaloniki as the Third Port), and 6035, 26-4-1934: "Διατί πεθαίνει η Θεσσαλονίκη. Θέλομεν αποκέντρωσιν και αυτοδιοίκησιν και θα φθάσωμεν μέχρι επαναστάσεως" (Why Thessaloniki is Dying. We Want Decentralization and Self-administration, and We Will Even Go to Revolution).

22. *Efimeris*, 4633, 23-5-1930: "Προς την Βαλκανικήν Ένωσιν" (Towards Balkan Union), and 4880, 1-2-1931: "Οι ωραίοι λόγοι των βαλκανικών αντιπροσώπων" (The Beautiful Speeches by Balkan Representatives).

23. *Efimeris*, 5043, 27-4-1931: "Η Θεσσαλονίκη και η Βαλκανική ένωσις" (Thessaloniki and the Balkan Union).

24. With the exception of a contemporary study by N. Chatzivasilou, *Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωσις* (European Union), Athens 1932.

Chamber in Thessaloniki, Mr. Mihailović, by the General Secretary of the Yugoslavian Free Zone, Mr. Nihović, and by the Yugoslavian travel agency *Putnik*, which had a branch office in Thessaloniki during this period²⁵. Exchange visits by Greeks and Yugoslavs were seen as an important step towards closer acquaintance between the two countries. As Kastrinos himself put it in a leading article:

These frequent visits allow the two peoples to communicate and understand one another's attitudes, to become better acquainted and forge much stronger ties than those largely artificial bonds formed through diplomacy²⁶.

It was a conclusion apparently shared by other, independent observers, like the British ambassador in Greece²⁷. At the same time the involvement in these visits of press representatives from both countries made it possible to inform the general public of political, economic and cultural developments on each side of the border²⁸. Moreover, improved transport and communication between the two countries also helped to increase the level of contacts; the improvements in this area were publicized by the *Efimeris* and other Greek and Yugoslavian papers, precisely because journalists were among the first to make use of the air and telephone links now connecting Thessaloniki with Skopje, Belgrade and Zagreb²⁹. We must not forget, of course, that these exchange visits were

25. *Efimeris*, 5073, 28-5-1931: "Επί τη αφίξει των Γιουγκοσλάβων" (On the Arrival of Yugoslavs), and 4612, 2-5-1930: "Η χθεσινή άφιξις του πρώτου αεροπλάνου της τακτικής συγκοινωνίας Βιέννης, Βελιγραδίου, Θεσσαλονίκης" (Yesterday's Arrival of the First Aeroplane of the Vienna, Belgrade, Thessaloniki Regular Line).

26. *Efimeris*, 4755, 25-9-1930: "Οι αυριανοί επισκέπτες μας" (Our Tomorrow's Guests).

27. FO 371/15237/Greece, 1931: Annual Report for 1930: P. Ramsey to J. Balfour.

28. Cf. 4643, 3-6-1930: "Μία επίσημος εκδρομή. Το ταξείδι των Θεσσαλονικέων έως το Βελιγράδι" (An Official Expedition. Thessalonians' Trip to Belgrade), and in the same issue: "Οι εκδρομείς εις τα ανώτερα τραπεζικά ιδρύματα" (The Travellers to the Supreme Bank Institutes): The article refers to "Serbia's" [sic] participation in the next International Exhibition of Thessaloniki; there are also rambling reports on Yugoslavia.

29. *Efimeris*, 4630, 20-5-1930: "Το αλησμόνητο ταξείδι μας διά των αιθέρων" (Our Unforgettable Trip Through the Skies); 4641, 1-6-1930: "Το αεροπλάνο εξηπυτέλισε το σιδηρόδρομο" (Aeroplane has Humiliated Railway), and 5018, 1-4-1931: "Ήρchiσε σήμερα η τηλεφωνική συγκοινωνία Θεσσαλονίκης-Σκοπίων και Βελιγραδίου. Ο ελληνικός τύπος εχαιρέτισε το σερβικό" (Today Started the Telephone Communication Between Thessaloniki-Skopje and Belgrade. The Greek Press Greeted the Serbian one).

organized by official agencies and were therefore constructed around a specific programme, usually with a strict timetable, which did not always allow the visitors much opportunity to form a comprehensive idea of the true state of affairs in the country they were visiting. This was a drawback of these visits pointed out by Kastrinos, who participated in many of them. Greek visitors to Yugoslavia came into contact with those individuals approved by the regime, and not, for example, with dissidents. The favourable impressions they formed of the Yugoslavia of the inter-war years were based on their visits to people and locations selected by the Yugoslavian officials, who omitted the less attractive features of the country from the itineraries they prepared. We should, therefore, regard with some scepticism the invidious comparisons between Yugoslavia and Greece which eventually made their way into print. This did nothing, however, to alleviate the melancholy felt by Kastrinos when he compared Greece with its forward-looking neighbour, remarking scornfully in his travel articles that “the Yugoslavs have not been infected by our own vices of time-wasting and waffling”, and complaining that his fellow countrymen “have no real idea of how to lead or utilize our land or our people”, and that “every effort must be made to overcome the weaknesses and errors which hinder our progress”³⁰. He also appears to have been so enchanted by the reconstruction and embellishment of Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana that on his return to Thessaloniki he felt ashamed at what he saw and repeatedly demanded that measures be taken,

for unfortunately nothing we have to show can compare with what we see elsewhere: no roads, no fine municipal buildings, no piazzas or parks or gardens, nothing to attract any attention or make any impression³¹.

Finally, another important aspect of the coverage of Yugoslavia and Greek-Yugoslavian relations is the regular publication of special historical or commemorative features. These focus sometimes on events in

30. *Efimeris*, 4657, 18-6-1930: “Διδάγματα και διαπιστώσεις από την εκδρομήν εις την Γιουγκοσλαβίαν (Lessons and Findings from the Excursion to Yugoslavia).

31. *Efimeris*, 4667, 28-6-1930: “Κύριοι αρμόδιοι απαλλάξατε την πόλιν μας από τας ασχήμιας και τας αθλιότητας” (Officials, Relieve our City from the Ugliness and the Miseries).

the distant past, sometimes on events from the more recent period of the Great War, and are often used to reinforce or reaffirm the newspaper's political stance. For example, an account written in the style of a novel of the Serb coup d'état of 1903 ("A throne imbued in blood. The Obrenović and Karadjorgević dynasty. The drama of Alexander and Draga. A prophecy fulfilled")³² appeared in the paper shortly after the assassination of Alexander Karadjorgević in Marseilles. The fact that he shared the same name as the last of the Obrenović dynasty, assassinated in the coup of 1903, is used to endow the recent crime with greater dramatic effect and, at the same time, to imply the paper's opposition to all forms of monarchy. Likewise, the decision to reprint articles by Venizelos covering the events of the First World War and the "National Schism" ("How Constantine continually deceived and betrayed both Serbia and Greece. The 10th revealing article by Mr. Venizelos")³³ was made during a period of fierce political conflict in Greece between supporters and opponents of Venizelos, the intention being to disparage the enemies of the Cretan statesman and, at the same time, to denounce the "sinister" role of the Greek throne and its hostility to Greek interests and the Greek-Serb alliance.

In conclusion, I should like to return to a question I touched on at the beginning of this paper, namely the use of the newspaper as a historical source. It is unlikely that the material used here will have altered greatly our view of Greek-Yugoslavian relations at this time, but it does convey in a very direct —although not always equally convincing— fashion the picture of Yugoslavia and Greek-Yugoslavian relations available to the paper's readers. There are in fact a number of articles —albeit at first sight of only secondary importance— which help us to form a clearer idea of the way ordinary Greeks saw their Yugoslavian neighbours. For example, the brief reference to the speech delivered by the President of the Thessaloniki Commercial Association on a visit to Belgrade provides a characteristic insight into the attitude of the Greek élite, if not the public at large, to Greek-Serbian friendship:

32. *Efimeris*, 6201, 11-10-1934. The story of King Alexander and Draga was first published in Greece in 1906, see Aristidis Kyriakos, *Η Δράγα* (Draga), Athens 1906.

33. *Efimeris*, 6221, 31-10-1934.

The reciprocal respect and affection thus generated will radiate out from the élite to the popular masses, greatly to the advantage of both nations. This is a truth even more applicable to our own peoples, between whom Geography, History and Economics have already forged the most powerful and robust of bonds over the course of the centuries ...³⁴.

By way of contrast, the reports carried in the paper from the Balkan Games of 1934 demonstrate how easily the above attitude can change, offering an irresistible reminder of comparable events in more recent times³⁵:

All the Greek correspondents in Zagreb ... have painted in the blackest hues the conduct of the public and the official representatives of the Yugoslavian federation, who seek the victory of their own team at any cost. Entrenched in an attitude of unbridled nationalist fervour, our Yugoslavian friends are unable to judge the events in the proper spirit of fair play, a spirit which requires that we approach the arena of noble and peaceful rivalry with absolute impartiality [...] forcing us to ask ourselves regretfully whether our national team should continue to compete on this ungracious and inhospitable field, or should depart from Zagreb without further delay ...³⁶.

34. *Efimeris*, 4646, 6-6-1930: "Ο λόγος του κ. Στ. Γρηγοριάδη εις το γεύμαν του Τόπτσιδεγ" (Mr St. Grigoriades's Speech During the Meal in Topčider).

35. The comparison refers to the events during and after a basketball match in Athens, in 1998, that for a while threatened the rupture of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Cf. L. Hassiotis, *Οι ελληνοσερβικές σχέσεις*, *op.cit.*, pp. 390-391.

36. *Efimeris*, 6160, 31-8-1934: "Αι αγριότητες των Γιουγκοσλάβων εις τους αγώνας του Ζάγκρεμπ" (The Yugoslavian Brutalities in the Games of Zagreb), and 6163, 3-9-1934: "Η Ελλάς πολυνίκης. Ο θρίαμβός μας εις το Ζάγκρεμπ" (Greece polynices. Our Triumph in Zagreb).