

## BALKAN MINORITIES UNDER COMMUNIST REGIMES

This is a research study on the complexities of the minority problem in post-World War II Balkans. It was undertaken for the purpose of stimulating scientific discussion on a subject which has been obscured during the last 15 years by a dearth of documentary material and reliable research. Moreover, communist propaganda has tended to present the world a colorful picture of alleged successful solutions adopted by the communist regimes on their complex minority problems. It is unfortunate that, with a few exceptions, western writers have by-passed or made scant references to the problem of minorities while dealing with post-war developments in the Balkans. It appears that the issue which was the source of constant disturbances in the inter-war period is being discarded today in the West as not worthy of serious research. It is this attitude that has probably allowed the ingenious communist treatment of national minorities in their midst to be accepted as genuine and, indeed, to have won over many admirers among non-communists as well.

Far from aspiring at reaching final conclusions, this article will attempt to analyse the minority issue in the Balkans in the light of communist theory and practice. It will avoid to be involved in the endless arguments over the origin and numerical strength of many of the national groups in the area.

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The retreat of the German armies from the Balkans, in the closing months of 1944 left behind a new order which had very few elements in common with the "Order" envisioned by the Nazis in their triumphant march through Europe. The new revolutionary element on the Balkan scene was the emergence of communist power in almost all Balkan countries.

Before the onrushing Red Army, the pro-Axis Roumanian and Bulgarian leaders were overthrown. Popular front governments, dominated by communists, took over control of the respective countries. Soon the communists established themselves as the undisputed masters of the land and sat down to convert their countries into "people's democracies".

Yugoslavia emerged as the most powerful communist country in the

Balkans thanks to its strong communist partisan movement which enabled the formation of a communist government. In Albania the communists also took the reigns of the government in their hands. However, Albanian communists had mostly their Yugoslav comrades to thank for their success. Without active wartime Yugoslav support, Albanian communism would, in all probability, have remained dormant. Finally, in Greece the communist plans were thwarted by the stern British support to the national Greek elements which successfully opposed the establishment of a communist regime in their country.

Thus, with the exception of Greece, the communist governments of the Balkans set out for themselves to apply a "New Order" throughout the Peninsula on the basis of the teachings of the fathers of international communism and the experience accumulated by the Soviet Union in the course of 30 years of communist rule. Among the problems they were called upon to solve in the light of Soviet experience was the national and minority problem.

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The First World War bequeathed the East European countries with the thorny problem of governing large and frequently utterly irredentist national minority groups<sup>1</sup>. According to official census figures of the various states<sup>2</sup>, the strength of national minorities in Balkan countries during the inter-war period was as follows (to the nearest 10,000; census year in parenthesis): *Roumania* (1930): Hungarians 1,430,000, Germans 740,000, Ukrainians 580,000, Russians 420,000, Bulgarians 360,000, Jews 720,000. *Yugoslavia* (1931): Germans 510,000, Hungarians 470,000, Albanians 440,000. Roumanians 230,000, *Bulgaria* (1934): Turks 620,000<sup>3</sup>.

The rights of the national minorities were safeguarded by a series of treaties signed at the end of the First World War by the Balkan countries

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1. Best account of the minority problem in the inter-war period is C. A. Macartney's, *National States and National Minorities* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934).

2. Far from presenting an accurate picture on the ethnic composition of the states concerned, these statistics help in impressing the reader with the large numbers of ethnically alien elements residing in most of the Balkan countries. Figures are taken from Hugh Seton-Watson's, *The East European Revolution* (3rd ed., New York: F. A. Praeger, 1956), p. 20 ft. 1. The author remarks that Roumanian figures are probably the most reliable, while Yugoslav figures on the Albanian minority possibly do not show more than half the real numbers.

3. Greece falls outside the scope of this study by virtue of her non-communist regime and lack of minorities save for a small Turkish group. Only scant reference may be made whenever required. For Albanian statistics, *infra* p. 32 ft. 2.

of Roumania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Greece and guaranteed by the League of Nations. Albania acceded to the minority clauses upon entering the League of Nations in 1920. Far from being effective, the League's minority system received on the whole only lip-service by the Balkan governments of the inter-war period. In general the minorities suffered serious disadvantages. They had insufficient schools in their own language, were ruled by officials of the majority nation who did not speak their language, had little opportunity of official employment and were exposed to economic discrimination. As Seton-Watson put it: "In part this was due to a deliberate policy of national discrimination by the governments, in part to the more general fact that the regimes were oppressive dictatorships which weighed heavily on the majority nation as well as on the minority"<sup>1</sup>.

This article does not aim at reviewing the treatment of the national minorities during the inter-war period. In considering, however, communist tactics and policies on the minority issue, it will help to comprehend how this treatment affected the attitude of elements of certain minorities in espousing communism. Of course, the behavior of many minority groups was openly hostile, ranging from weak opposition to the state's assimilative efforts to outright seditious "fifth column" activities. Minority issues were accentuated when kin-states interfered for the purpose of supporting their "brethren's" cause in neighboring minority states.

Be that as it may, the most important element in ascertaining the impact of the inter-war minority issues on present-day Balkan developments remains, by far, the deep discontent of the hard-pressed minorities. It was only after the German invasion that it became possible to establish where their dissatisfaction was driving the minority masses. There are numerous examples of national minority groups joining the Axis occupying forces to take revenge against the majority national element. In Yugoslavia alone, Croats, "Slavo-Macedonians", Germans, Russians and Moslems joined the occupying forces in persecuting their former masters<sup>2</sup>.

When the Axis rule appeared to be loosing its grip over the Balkans, many ethnic groups fearing that they might revert to their pre-war status espoused communism which seemed to them, at the time, the only solution to their plight. It was precisely communism's doctrine of national self-determination which acted as magnetism to the hard-pressed minorities of the Balkans. They embraced communism with the fervency which is

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1. Seton - Watson, *The East European Revolution*, op. cit., p. 20.

2. U. S. Department of the Army, *German Antiguerrilla Operations in the Balkans : 1941-1944* No. 20 - 243 (Washington, August 1954) p. 19.

associated with desperation. When the Montenegrins, the Slovenes and the Bosnians were joining hands in Tito's partisan movement, they did so not so much out of their desire to rid the country of the Nazis, as out of a hope that they might not revert to their pre-war status, as subject peoples of an oppressive, dominant nationality. Communism was promising them a sort of national independence which no other system or regime could, or so it seemed to them at the time. It is not without significance that in Roumania, the leaders of the communist movement, belonged to minority groups. In Albania, the highly progressive Greek minority was instrumental in assisting in the ascendance of communism to power.

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The preceding discussion naturally leads to the question: What constitutes the communist doctrine on the national minority issue? It is important that before we turn to the study of the communist handling of the minority issue in the Balkans we should review the Soviet definition of nationality and minority and then proceed with a short analysis of how this doctrine was first put into test in the Soviet Union during the inter-war period before it was used as a pattern in the Balkan states which fell under communist regimes.

Communism's bible on nationality and minority issues remains to this day Stalin's "Marxism and the National Question". Inspired by Lenin, the principles projected in this book have been incorporated in the 1936 Constitution of the U.S.S.R. and have since been adopted by the constitutions of the people's democracies established in Eastern Europe.

Stalin states that a nation is a historically formed community of people who are bound together by a common language, inhabit a common area, lead a common economic life and have a common national character expressed in a common culture<sup>1</sup>. Every national group thus conceived should, according to communist theorists, enjoy the right of "self-determination". In Lenin's words, this right may be employed "up to the point of separation" of a national group from the state in which it lives<sup>2</sup>.

In analyzing the communist nationality doctrine one is struck by the conflicting objectives it pursues. It appears that its central motivating element is the safeguarding of the "sacred" right of self-determination

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1. Joseph Stalin, *Marxism and the National Question* [Greek translation], (Marxist Library No. 1/10, Athens, March 1933) p. 29.

2. Hugh Seton - Watson, *The Pattern of Communist Revolution: A Historical Analysis* (London: Methuen & Company, Ltd., 1953) p. 20.

which is the ultimate objective of nationalities<sup>1</sup>. Yet Lenin's attitude was essentially opportunistic in that he outlined a nationality theory for the purpose of combating nationalism itself. This may sound absurd, yet it is a well-known fact that Lenin regarded nationalism as a sort of nuisance which diverted the masses' attention from their class struggle against the bourgeoisie and focused instead their interests on issues which brought them in conflict with neighboring nationalities. On national issues, Lenin observed, the workers and the capitalists tend to form a united front against an alien national element in the state in which they live, or against a neighboring nation which oppresses a kin minority. This was both anathema and a hard obstacle to Lenin's road toward a "socialist society". To remove this obstacle Lenin formulated his nationality doctrine. An authority in this field clarified this doctrine when he wrote<sup>2</sup>:

"The proletariat of each nation must oppose the policy of its own bourgeoisie. Thus, since the Russian bourgeoisie had wished to keep the non-Russian peoples in subjection to Russia, the Russian proletariat must insist on the right of these peoples to independence; since the bourgeoisie of the non-Russian peoples had wished to create separate states under their own domination, the proletariat of those peoples must insist on the necessity of union with the Russian proletariat in one socialist state".

Having thus established the rational basis for a new national theory, Lenin proceeded to advocate that nationalism in a capitalist society is a form of oppression of the masses. "Nationalist oppression" cannot be obliterated, Lenin believes, unless production is organized in a socialist manner, the state machine is recast into a "democratic" form and a "democratic" army gets control of the security and defense matters. However, the total eclipse of national oppression becomes synonymous with the final elimination of the state following a delimitation of the state frontiers according to the "wish" of the people who have the right to opt even for cession<sup>3</sup>.

It was only natural that on such theoretical foundations Soviet policy would at the outset denounce both Great Russian and Ukrainian nationalism. Inside the Soviet Union which was organized along federal lines, regions with a predominant distinct ethnic identity were accorded cultural autonomy and nominal political control of their own affairs. Soviet policy

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1. Vladimir Ilich Lenin, *The Right of Nations to Self-determination; Selected Writings* (New York: International Publishers, 1951) pp. 19 and 28.

2. Seton-Watson, *The Pattern of Communist Revolution*, op. cit., p. 85.

3. Lenin, *The Right of Nations to Self-determination*, op. cit., p. 14.

provided for the use of the local language both for official transactions and at the schools. Discrimination on the grounds of nationality was prohibited by law. In short, Soviet policy aimed at developing the national cultural aspirations of the numerous national majority and minority groups which for centuries had been oppressed by Russian chauvinistic practices. At the same time, ironclad controls assured that the political aspirations of all Soviet nationalities adhered to the strict central directions of the new czars in the Kremlin<sup>1</sup>.

Bearing in mind the objectives of Lenin's doctrine on the national issue, it is timely, at this juncture, to examine communism's exploitation of the Balkan minority problems in the inter-war era.

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In previous pages it has been asserted that the German occupation unleashed the boiling discontent of many minority groups against their adopted homelands. The feelings of these groups were well-known to the communists long before the outbreak of the war. Heeding Lenin's pre-revolution dictum that a communist is a bad revolutionary if he does not employ in the proletariat's struggle for socialism any and all popular discontent against imperialism<sup>2</sup>, communists in the 1920's and 1930's did actually try to take advantage of minority discontent to precipitate the crisis which was hoped to overthrow the capitalist regimes of the Balkans.

Following the First World War peace treaties which drew up anew the frontiers of the Balkan states, the communists attempted to take advantage of the irredentist feelings of many ethnic groups which remained under alien majorities. They tried to project the national conflicts as social conflicts fitting into the bourgeoisie-proletariat class struggle. In a message sent to the Communist parties of Bulgaria, Roumania, Serbia and Turkey early in 1920, Zinoviev, President of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, outlined communism's policy on the issue as follows:<sup>3</sup>

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1. Seton - Watson, *The East European Revolution*, op. cit., pp. 339 - 340. For a good account of the Soviet Union's experience with the national minority issue see: Robert Magidoff's *The Kremlin vs. the People; the story of the cold civil war in Stalin's Russia* (Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, N.Y., 1953), chapter on "The National Minorities Front", pp. 105 - 109.

2. Lenin, *The Right of Nations to Self-determination*, op. cit., p. 61.

3. *Kommunismus* [periodical journal], (Vienna, 5 March 1920), quoted in Elizabeth Barker's, *Macedonia; Its Place in Balkan Power Politics* (London, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1950), pp. 48 - 49.

«The new national divisions, created after the defeat of Austria-Hungary and the disruption of Bulgaria and Turkey, have intensified the nationalities problem to an extent greater even than before the war. Many more elements of foreign nationality have come under the rule of the victors. And the policy of national oppression, of insatiable militarism, gives rise to a yet more powerful drive towards freedom. And the struggle for freedom takes on a yet wider scope. Against the rule of the Serbian bureaucratic and landowning oligarchy, there are rising up the Macedonian Bulgarians, the Albanians, the Montenegrins, the Croats, and the Bosnians... A new period of embittered nationalist agitation, national hate, and national-bourgeois wars threatens the Balkan and Danube peoples. Only the proletariat can, through its victory, avert a new catastrophe...».

The solution adopted by the communists at that time centered around the formation of a Federation of Socialist Balkan Soviet Republics in the pattern of the Soviet Union. It was a solution designed to further the objectives of the world communist movement, and was actually adopted by the Balkan communists in the March 1924 resolution of the sixth congress of the Balkan Communist Federation. International communism's handling of the nationality issues of the Balkans during the mid-1920's is best shown by the resolution of the Fifth Plenum of the Comintern in 1924 which proclaimed: <sup>1</sup>

«The Communist Party can and must support the various oppressed peoples in their demand for their own local self-administration, their own schools and independent courts, autonomy of provincial administration e.t.c. At the same time the Party must unfailingly emphasize that these are half-measures and try to extend each separate demand. The basic slogan must be the demand for the formation of a Balkan Federation of Workers' and Peasants' Republics».

Until the rise of fascism, international communism aimed at manipulating the various revolutionary elements among the national minorities of the Balkans for the purpose of upsetting the established Balkan order and profiting from the ensuing turbulence. A point in fact is the Macedonian Question. The United IMRO, a revolutionary organization established in 1924 and aiming at forming an «independent Macedonia...fit to become a fully-fledged member of a future Balkan federation» <sup>2</sup> was infiltrated

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1. Barker, *Macedonia*, op. cit., p. 59.

2. Article 1 of United IMRO's Constitution published in *Balkanska federacija*, (December 1, 1926), p. 1046, and quoted in Djoko Slijepcevic, *The Macedonian Question: The Struggle for Southern Serbia* (Chicago, American Institute for Balkan Affairs, 1958), p. 194.

from its early beginning by active communist elements. It so happened that in the years that followed, IMRO's and communist objectives were almost identical. Only when fascism itself adopted a revisionist policy which aimed equally against the Western democracies and the Soviet Union did the communists abandon their grandiose revisionist schemes. Apparently, on orders from the Comintern, the Balkan communist parties were then compelled to denounce their former position on the dismemberment of Balkan states which was proposed to take place—according to communist proclamations—on the basis of the national composition of real or imagined distinct Balkan regions. Accordingly, the Yugoslav Communist Party adopted a resolution in 1936 whereby it blamed the fascists for exploiting the national movements in their “interest of war”, while it declared that their move was a tactical one and did not necessarily mean the abandonment of the principle of the right of all peoples to self-determination, including secession<sup>1</sup>. Similar was the case taken by the Greek communists who, while in 1924 had advocated “a united and indivisible Macedonia and Thrace”, in 1935 they reverted to the slogan of “complete equality of the rights of the national minorities”<sup>2</sup>. Partially this latter change is due to the fact that Greece's minority problem had been almost totally solved by the large-scale exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey, on the one hand, and between Greece and Bulgaria on the other.

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War and occupation changed the setting in the Balkans. Although the hardships of the war tended at first to obscure the minority issue, it soon became apparent that the minorities far from passing into oblivion made a more impressive comeback on the stage of Balkan affairs.

In Roumania communists did not make any spectacular showing until after the Red Army invaded Roumania in 1944. In the meantime war had greatly affected Roumania's minorities. Huge shifts of populations actually took place from 1939 to 1945 resulting in the substantial reduction of Roumania's large ethnic groups. Following the 1940 acquisition of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina by the Soviet Union, 40,000 Roumanians from those areas returned to Roumania proper<sup>3</sup>. In addition, 100,000

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1. *Historical Archives of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. Vol. II. Congresses and National Conferences of the Party 1919 - 1937* (Belgrade, 1950 [In Serbo-Croatian] p. 399, quoted in Slijepcevic, *The Macedonian Question*, op. cit., p. 205.

2. Barker, *Macedonia*, op. cit., pp. 75 - 76.

3. When Germany attacked the Soviet Union, Roumanian troops crossed the



Germans from Bessarabia (Soviet Union), and 77,000 from Southern Bukovina and Northern Dobroudja (Roumania), were removed from their lands, most of them emigrating to Germany. By the Second Vienna Award, Transylvania was partitioned and its northern part was taken over by Hungary. One hundred six thousand Hungarians from Roumania moved into the Hungarian sector of Transylvania. Later, in 1944-1945, when this region was returned to Roumania, many Hungarians sought refuge in Hungary. Another major transfer of populations occurred as a result of the terms of the Craiova Decision of 1940 which ceded Southern Dobrudja to Bulgaria. Sixty-two thousand Bulgarians and 110,000 Roumanians were forcibly exchanged. To conclude the major population shifts of this period it should be remembered that from 1938 to 1945, 8000 ethnic Turks and 6000 ethnic Greeks of Roumania went to their respective national homelands<sup>1</sup>. The result of the population transfers, evictions and exchanges is that post-war communist Roumania was faced with a much improved version of the inter-war acute minority problem.

To Bulgaria, war brought no great ethnological changes. With the exception of the large Turkish minority, Bulgaria was more or less a homogeneous state. During the German reign over the Balkans, the Bulgarians had acquired nominally for administrative purposes, but actually for incorporation to the Bulgarian Fatherland, large parts of Yugoslav and Greek territories with large alien majorities. Germany's defeat forced Bulgaria to abandon the newly-acquired lands, thus remaining with the same pre-war minority problem.

War and occupation in Yugoslavia brought about the most radical innovations on the ethnological issue. The partisan movement under Tito was well-organized and extended an effective control over large portions of the country so that it was assured of post-war monopoly of power. It was natural for the communists, while fighting the Germans, to launch into an ambitious program of social, economic and political reforms. The national question long a controversial issue of Yugoslavia's internal politics, featured prominently on top of the revolutionary reforms. During the Second session of the Anti-Fascist Council of Yugoslav People's Liberation Front at Jajce in November 1943, a decision was passed regarding the

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frontier and "liberated" the territories which were ceded to the U.S.S.R. Half of the 40,000 Roumanians returned while most of the Jews and Ukrainians of the area retreated along with the Red Army.

1. Most of the figures on wartime Roumania have been taken from: Stephen Fisher - Galati's, *Romania* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1957), pp. 37 - 38.

future organization of Yugoslavia on a federal basis. Featured on the Soviet pattern, the Yugoslav scheme was a bold move aiming primarily at putting to rest the fears and animosity of the various nationalities toward Serb predominance. For two years during the occupation the communists struggled equally hard to indoctrinate the peoples of Yugoslavia to communism and to the new concept of national and cultural autonomy. Yugoslav communist writers have made much of the smooth cooperation between members of nationalities in the partisan units. However, despite official pronouncements to the contrary, Yugoslav nationalities appeared to hate almost equally pre-war Serb hegemony and wartime communist centralism. The Croats with the assistance of the Germans, formed a Croat state with strong armed units. The German and Hungarian minorities, as well as large segments of the Russian and Moslem minorities, formed combat units which actively assisted the Third Reich's war effort<sup>1</sup>. In the Yugoslav part of Macedonia, which for years had been an apple of discord between Yugoslavs and Bulgarians, a large portion of its inhabitants expressed openly its pro-Bulgarian sentiments, despite Bulgarian unwarranted assimilative and oppressive tactics.

In Albania, the national minority issue played a small role in wartime developments<sup>2</sup>. The Greek minority in the south was the only ethnically important alien group in the country. Italian-occupied Albania experienced neither the large-scale population transfers of Roumania, nor the enormity of national clashes of Yugoslavia. In 1943 Yugoslav communists arrived in Albania to set up a partisan movement on Yugoslav lines. Unhappy with their lot and hoping that their nationalist aspirations might be better served under a communist regime, many Greeks, members of the Greek minority, joined with Albanians to promote communism in the country. As elsewhere in the Balkans, theirs was but another example of the desperate struggle of oppressed minority groups to see the realization of their national aspirations in the promises of the communist nationality doctrine.

In short, we may distinguish two patterns in the communist exploitation of the national issue in the Balkans during the German occupation. In the Axis allies, Roumania and Bulgaria, communists failed to impress

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1. U. S. Department of the Army, *German Antiguerrilla Operations in the Balkans*, *op. cit.*, pp. 19 and 73.

2. According to 1942 Italian statistics, Albania's religious breakdown was as follows: Moslem: 779,417, Orthodox 232,320, Catholic 116,259, Others 147. Source: Istituto Centrale di Statistica de Regno d'Italia, *Annuario Statistico Italiano, 1943* (Rome, 1943) p. 203, quoted in Stavro Skendi's, *Albania* (London, Atlantic Press, 1957), p. 58.

the masses with their activities against the Nazis. This lack of communist activity may be partially attributed to the fact that most of the local communist leaders were at the time in the Soviet Union (Georgy Dimitrov, Anna Pauker). Consequently, the national issue did not come to the foreground in those countries until after the establishment of communist regimes.

In Yugoslavia, and in Albania, the communists' apparent primary objective was to harass the occupier. It is a fact that especially in Yugoslavia, Tito's partisans were particularly effective against the Germans. In both countries, however, the communists' true efforts concentrated on strengthening their movements and "fronts" to ensure their ascendance to power following Germany's withdrawal from the region. Consequently, what was more natural than to turn to the dissatisfied masses of the population to recruit loyal members? It is a fact that large numbers of persons belonging to national minorities having sad memories of the pre-war regimes or hoping for improving their position in a "new order", accepted the explicit or implied promises and joined the communist organizations. Where did these promises lead after liberation? This is an interesting point which will be discussed in subsequent pages.

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The national issue among communists received more impetus during and immediately after the war for two primary reasons: one was that during the war the Soviet nationality policy did not function as expected when the old "bourgeois"-type nationalism appeared still to be burning in the hearts of many Ukrainians who sided up with the Germans against the retreating communist armies; the second reason was the expansion of communist hegemony over the entire area of Eastern Europe where national issues during the inter-war period were a source of constant trouble. The result was that despite lip-service paid to Leninist nationality doctrine, Russian and East European communists poured water to their wine and sought in capitalist-like methods to remove the thorny issues of nationalism which sprang amongst them. In the Soviet Union, a non-Russian was guilty of "nationalism" if in any way he stressed the difference that distinguished his ethnic group from the great Russian nation. He was also guilty of "cosmopolitanism" if he stressed any cultural links between his group and any kin nation outside the Soviet Union. As Seton-Watson puts it:<sup>1</sup> "to these two vices corresponded the two virtues of internationalism

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1. For an excellent discussion of this subject turn to Seton-Watson's *The Pattern of Communist Revolution*, *op. cit.*, p. 242.

and patriotism. To be an internationalist is to stress solidarity with, or servility to Russia; to be a patriot is to stress superiority to nations of similar culture living outside the Soviet Union, and when possible to put forward, on behalf of the Soviet Union, territorial claims directed against neighbour states".

One can easily understand where such a policy, if pursued by all newly formed East European satellites, would lead. Instead of internal peace and international solidarity, the communist states of Europe would have been turned apart in endless fratricidal wars. For the satellite states the only way out of this chaotic situation was to follow Moscow's directives on the issue<sup>1</sup>. Now, if these directives had little in common with orthodox Leninist nationality doctrine it mattered little since communism's primary problem at the time was the consolidation of its power in the newly-acquired empire. To follow closely communism's contradicting tactics on the issue it is important to review each individual Balkan case separately.

#### ROUMANIA

According to official Roumanian figures (1948), the number of Roumanian citizens belonging to national minority groups decreased substantially after the war. Classified according to mother tongue there remained 1,499,851 Hungarian-speaking, 343,913 German-speaking and 138,795 Yiddish-speaking inhabitants<sup>2</sup>.

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1. An interesting illustration of this point is the case of Moldavia in Roumania. The communist regime of the country has advanced the fallacious theory that Moldavians and Wallachians are entirely different peoples. With the Soviet Union having established a Moldavian SSR just across the border, the communist campaign to create a specifically "Moldavian" national consciousness appears to play right into Soviet schemes. The suspicion that this is a prelude to its annexation to the Soviet Union, is substantiated by the fact that in their Moldavian SSR the Soviets consider the inhabitants not as Roumanians but as "Moldavians"—clearly implicating a separate nation. A rather similar situation developed in Yugoslavia where the communist regime attempted to create a "nation" of Macedonia, for the clear purpose of pacifying its Bulgarian-oriented inhabitants of the geographical region around Shopje and of incorporating eventually Bulgarian and Greek Macedonia. For the Moldavian experiment see: Robert Lee Wolff, *The Balkans in Our Time* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 458.

2. As customary with Balkan statistics, these figures were immediately questioned especially in reference to the Jews. See: Fisher - Galati, *Romania*, *op. cit.*, p. 55 and Stephen D. Kertesz, *The Fate of East Central Europe: Hopes and Failures of American Foreign Policy* (Norte Dame, Indiana: University of Norte Dame Press, 1956), p. 262.

The latest Roumanian figures of the population on the basis of the 1956 census are as follows:

<i>According to mother tongue</i> <sup>1</sup>		<i>According to nationality</i> <sup>2</sup>	
Roumanian	15,080,686	Roumanians	14,996,114
Hungarian	1,653,700	Hungarians	1,587,675
German	395,374	Germans	384,708
Ukrainian	68,252	Jews	146,264
Russian	45,029	Ukrainians	60,479
Serbo-Croatian		Serbs, Croats,	
and Slovene :	43,057	Slovenes	46,517
Yiddish	34,337	Russians	38,731
Tataric	20,574	Tatars	20,469
Turkish	14,228	Turks	14,329
Bulgarian	13,189	Bulgarians	12,040
Others	121,024	Others	182,124

Roumanian policy toward the minorities has passed through many stages since the end of the war<sup>3</sup>. Until the latter part of the 1940's, the treatment of minorities ranged from oppression to tolerance.

The Germans were made to understand that they were unwelcome. At first it was thought expedient to expel the entire minority from the country. Actually a number of Germans was deported to Soviet labor camps<sup>4</sup>. On the other hand, large groups of Swabian Germans from the Roumanian Banat near the Yugoslav frontier were transferred to the Danubian Plain, a move which was marked with immense human suffering. Naturally such measures lead to the liquidation of large numbers of Germans so that by 1956 the number of Germans was placed at 385,000. Only in late 1948 did the Roumanian Government reversed its oppressive measures. Outright persecution was replaced by a policy aiming at spreading communism within the ranks of the minority. Denunciation of the German minority gave away to denunciation of the "capitalists" within the

1. *Anuarul Statistic al R.P.R. pe anul 1959* (Bucharest, 1959) p. 72. Figures are from the census taken on February 21, 1956.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

3. For an official version of the history of the legislation on nationalities in Roumania see: *Statut juridique des nationalités en Roumanie* (Bucarest: Ministère de l'Information, 1945), p. 16.

4. Wolff, *The Balkans in our Time*, *op. cit.*, p. 456.

minority. Most observers of Balkan affairs agree that recent Roumanian policy in respect to the German minority tends to encourage the class struggle rather than the national issue<sup>1</sup>. In the past ten years, Roumanian policy has followed closely Soviet national doctrine<sup>2</sup>. According to Communist accounts, by 1957, there were 329 German language schools accommodating 38,000 German pupils. There are German organizations of all sorts, which naturally fall in line with central governmental directives, and a German-language newspaper serves the needs of the minority as well as those of the Party.

The Tatars, Armenians and Bulgarians have been accorded a fairly liberal treatment. All three of them have schools in their own language and, in the case of the Bulgarians, teachers have been allowed to come from Sofia to teach in the schools of the minority. Similarly, specialists from the Soviet Tatar Republic arrived in Roumania to organize the minority. There are indications that the regime's policies *vis-à-vis* these groups are looked upon with suspicion by the Roumanian people. They fear that once the minorities are organized and grow in importance the Soviet Union may use them as a pretext for a more active interference in Roumanian internal affairs.

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1. Seton-Watson, *The East European Revolution*, op. cit., p. 341. Fisher-Galati, *Romania*, op. cit., p. 55. *East Europe: A Monthly Review of East European Affairs* (published by the Free Europe Press, Free Europe Committee, Inc.), Vol. 8 No 3, March 1959, p. 5.

2. A good illustration in this direction are the articles of the Roumanian Constitution which refer to the nationalities and minorities of the country:

*Art. 81.* ...Toute restriction directe ou indirecte des droits, des travailleurs, citoyens de la République Populaire Roumaine, tout établissement de privilèges directs ou indirects en faveur des citoyens selon la race ou la nationalité à laquelle ils appartiennent, toute manifestation de chauvinisme, de haine raciale ou nationale, de même que toute propagande nationale chauvine, sont punis par la loi.

*Art. 82.* Dans la République Populaire Roumaine on assure aux minorités nationales le droit de se servir en toute liberté de leur langue maternelle, de droit à l'enseignement de tous degrés dans leur langue maternelle, aux livres, aux journaux, aux théâtres dans leur langue maternelle. Dans les rayons habités également par les populations d'une autre nationalité que la nationalité roumaine, tous les organes et institutions se serviront aussi, verbalement et par écrit de la langue des nationalités respectives et choisiront des employés dans les rangs de la nationalité respective ou parmi les autres habitants connaissant la langue et le mode de vie de la population locale.

*Constitution de la République Populaire Roumaine; comprenant les dernières modifications jusqu'au 10 mars 1958* (Bucarest: Editions en langues étrangères, 1958).

While this is the attitude of the regime toward ethnic groups akin to fellow communist nations, a different picture is presented by the small Greek minority which numbers today only a few thousands. Prior to the Second World War, the Greeks in Roumania maintained flourishing communities in the major urban centers with schools, churches and cultural institutions in their own language. Since Greece belongs to the opposite camp today, the minority has been subjected to all kinds of pressure to leave the country. A large part actually emigrated and the communities lost their schools and churches. Now the state runs a few schools for the minority, but only geography, a so-called "people's language" and history are been taught in Greek. Needless to say that the latter has been completely rewritten to fall in step with communist theory.

The Hungarian minority presents a far more interesting insight into the workings of the communist minority system. Many of the 1,600,000 Hungarians living in Roumania today occupy Transylvania. Succumbing to Soviet pressure, Roumania, *nolens volens*, carried out the communist doctrine on the minorities to its bitter end by creating in 1952 the Autonomous Region of Transylvania which is ruled by the Hungarians who far exceed in numbers the Roumanian residents of the region. It was a bold decision and a great concession which in its initial drafting stage in the 1940's was met by opposition by non-communist and some communist leaders alike<sup>1</sup>. Great strides have been made toward introducing political autonomy along with measures for the cultural development of the minority. In the Autonomous Region, where the Hungarians outnumber the Roumanians 565,000 to 147,000<sup>2</sup>, both languages are considered official. In the schools children are taught in Hungarian and for the first time a Hungarian University has been founded on Roumanian soil. More important, Hungarians—communists of course who pay allegiance and strictly adhere to Party directives emanating from Bucharest—are in charge of the administrative and cultural institutions. Also, in the country at large, many Hungarians occupy leading positions in the government, the Party, the armed forces and the state security<sup>3</sup>.

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1. Even Premier Patrascanu's removal from office and his political disgrace are partially attributed to his failure to support without reservations the application of Soviet nationality doctrine in Roumania. Seton-Watson, *The East European Revolution*, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

2. *Annuarul statistic al RPR pe anul 1959 op. cit.*, p. 72.

3. Recently, on December 12, 1960, the Grand National Assembly of Romania passed a law which seriously affected the Autonomous Region. According to this law a part of the Region was taken away and another, with a predominant

The story of the Jewish minority<sup>1</sup> portrays a policy marked with many fluctuations. It should be remembered that many Jews in Roumania espoused Zionism which, by virtue of its international objectives, clashed head on with communism. Throughout the greatest part of the post-war era, it became a standard policy of communists in Roumania to combat the nationalist aspirations of the Jews because the international features of their movement could not be compromised with communist nationality doctrine. For many years, the People's Republic of Roumania openly persecuted the Jews<sup>2</sup>. It is estimated that by 1952, 200,000 out of the approximately 400,000 Jews had left Roumania for Israel<sup>3</sup>. However, since 1953 emigration to Israel was brought to a virtual halt. In September 1958 the policy was reversed and the monthly rate of Jews emigrating abroad—mostly to Israel—reached 8,000. Estimates place the total of Jews who left the country at this time at 30,000 to 40,000. Again, by the end of 1958, free emigration to Israel stopped, probably on account of Arab protestations. Now, although the Foreign Ministry does not openly object, the State Security forbids emigration. Many applicants for exit permits have been arrested and visits to the Embassy of Israel are hazardous. It should not escape the attention of the reader that loyal communist Jews not only were not persecuted but on the contrary they rose to prominence in Roumanian politics, as was the case of Anna Pauker. Reports from inside Roumania indicate that until recently, 25 per cent of government employees were of Jewish origin. Now, it appears that there is a tendency to substitute the Jews by the young educated Roumanian elite. According to data collected by the staff of *East Europe*, there are only three Yiddish language schools, as compared with 329 German-language schools serving a minority of 385,000. There are two Yiddish theaters and one monthly publication in the same language<sup>4</sup>. In short, the treatment of the

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Roumanian population was attached to it. Simoultaneously, Hungarian primary and secondary schools were substituted by Hungarian sections in Roumanian schools. These developments may well point to a reversal of Roumanian policy which will now aim at bringing the Hungarians increasingly under Roumanian control. *Wissenschaftlicher Dienst Südosteuropas* (Südost - Institut, München, December 1960), pp. 150 - 151.

1. Jews are treated in this article as a national rather than a religious minority because large numbers of the minority became after the war strongly Zionist.

2. Wolff, *The Balkans in our Time*, op. cit., pp. 459 - 461.

3. Alexandre Cretzianu, *Captive Rumania* (New York: Praeger, 1956), p. 349; also, *East Europe* (March 1959), op. cit., p. 12.

4. Many of the data in this article referring to contemporary developments



Jewish minority in communist Roumania has very few common characteristics with communist minority doctrine. With the exception of certain face-saving concessions, the government's attitude appears to have centered around the point of either converting the Jews to communism through pressure and the raising of obstacles to their emigration, or, failing to do that, to allow them to emigrate from the country *en masse*. The fact that the Roumanian government has in recent years reverted to a policy permitting large-scale emigration serves as an illustration of the regime's failure to win over most of the Jews.

The case of Yugoslavs residing in Roumania throws even more light on the functioning of the communist minority system. In 1948 the Serb-Croatian population of Roumania was estimated at 45,447<sup>1</sup>. Situated near the Yugoslav border, this minority was well-treated until the Tito-Cominform schism of 1948. At that time Roumania vehemently attacked Tito as "heretic". What is interesting to the present study is the fact that Roumania's bitter attacks against Tito also affected the Yugoslav minority in the country<sup>2</sup>. During the period 1950-1951, thousands of Yugoslavs were forcibly removed from their homes and sent to occupy the arid regions of the Danubian plain without any compensation. A large number of them was dumped into concentration camps<sup>3</sup>. The Moscow-Belgrade rapprochement, following Stalin's death in 1953, halted the maltreatment of the Yugoslav minority. There are no reports of a recurrence of oppressive measures against the minority. Be that as it may, the fact remains that a communist regime did not hesitate to resort to the most cruel tactics against a minority group when it found itself in open conflict with the minority's kin state. It is precisely such tactics which test the communist minority system's genuine effectiveness. For, it appears, notwithstanding official statements to the contrary, whenever the situation warrants it, the communists do not hesitate to revert to "old", "discredited",

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in Balkan communist states have been collected by the staff of the Free Europe Committee and have been published in a series of two articles in *East Europe* (March and April 1959), *op. cit.*, Other sources and a number of unpublished reports have been consulted in connection with this section.

1. *Populatia Republicii Populare Romane la 25 Ianuarie 1948* p. 17.

2. *East Europe* (April 1959), *op. cit.*, p. 10.

3. Kertesz, *The Fate of East Central Europe*, *op. cit.*, p. 262. See also, Wolff, *The Balkans in our Time*, *op. cit.*, p. 459, quoting two Roumanian professors of high standing in the communist regime of the country, who explained this move by accusing Tito for having tried since 1944 to "fan Yugoslav chauvinism" among the Serbian and Croatian minorities in Roumania.

"capitalist" methods in pursuing ultimate party objectives. The 1956 Hungarian revolt has provided ample credance to these findings.

Despite communist attempts to minimize the impact of the Hungarian revolt on other statellites, Hungarian communist papers reported that there were "incidents" in neighboring countries—including Roumania—between the local Hungarian minorities and the state authorities. It was acknowledged that these incidents were motivated by the old pre-war nationalistic aspirations of the minorities<sup>1</sup>. Officially the communists discarded these events as disturbances provoked by elements of the minority which still retained their "bourgeois nationalism" and "chauvinist aspirations". That such events—irrespective of the fact that they never reached the stage of open revolt against the central authorities—did take place among the Hungarians of Transylvania, who were supposed to have received the most benevolent treatment a national minority had ever been accorded in the Balkans, was a jolt of major importance to the alleged effectiveness of communist minority policies.

#### BULGARIA

Recent official Bulgarian censuses make no distinction on the basis of nationality. However, it is known that after the war there were approximately 45,000 Jews and 750,000 Turks in the country. Other minority groups of the inter-war era had either been scattered away or emigrated to their respective national homelands.

The post-war Bulgarian governments raised no objections to Jewish emigration to Israel. Thus, according to the 1956 census, the Jewish minority did not number more than 6000. Reports from Bulgaria point to good treatment of the Jewish element of the population. Many Jew communists hold major positions in the field of education and finance.

As customary with all minority groups in the satellite countries the efforts of the state concentrate in making good communists out of people belonging to minority groups. To attract their loyalty the state makes certain concessions mostly in the field of ethnic culture and language. However, this attitude is far from consistent when it is applied to more numerous and more ethnically conscious groups. This is particularly the case of the Turkish minority, which before the war enjoyed fair treatment at the hands of the non-communist regime of the country.

Initially, the communist regime tried to discourage emigration to

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1. *East Europe* (March 1959), *op. cit.*, p. 9.

Turkey in the hope that when the Leninist minority theories were put into effect in Bulgaria they would win over the Turks' loyalty to both communism and Bulgaria. Thus, they were given representation in Bulgaria's Grand National Assembly and in local government. Turkish schools were allowed to function and newspapers were published in Turkish. Even the radio carried programs in Turkish. However, the Sofia government did not seem to be satisfied with the results of its policy. By 1948 the government changed its tactics and took over the Turkish schools. A few months later, in 1949, all mosques and Moslem religious institutions came under direct governmental control. Finally, in 1950, the Bulgarian authorities announced that 250,000 Turks would emigrate to Turkey<sup>1</sup>. At the same time, they tried to implicate the Turkish government for allegedly trying to create sentiments hostile to the People's Republic of Bulgaria among the Turkish minority. Soon this new policy took the form of mass and forcible expulsion inasmuch as Turkish villagers were uprooted by the thousands from their homes and were driven across the frontier against their will. Turkey refused to accept the destitute thousands of refugees, rightly suspecting that communist elements disguised as refugees might infiltrate into the country. For months the unfortunate peasants were crowding the border villages without any hope of being admitted to Turkey or taken back to their homes in Bulgaria. Only when Turkey threatened to appeal to the United Nations did the Soviet Union and Bulgaria realize that their much-propagated minority system was bound to be exposed as fraudulent before the international forum of nations. Bulgaria accepted Turkey's demands that no exit visas would be issued to members of the minority unless Turkey would issue entry permits. Gradually, 220,000 Turks were accepted by Turkey.

The Bulgarian policy has since followed the usual pattern of communist minority tactics by making concessions in the field of cultural relations in exchange for the abandonment of nationalist aspirations and loyalty to the communist regime. The children of the Turkish minority are being taught today in their own language, but the curriculum centers around the primary objective of the state, namely the indoctrination of the youth to the ideals of communism which in Bulgaria appear to coincide with the ideals of the Bulgarian fatherland. However, reports from Bulgaria indicate that should the communist regime permitted the free emigration of the Turks, most of them would have opted to leave the country.

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1. A detailed account of this major incident appears in Wolff, *The Balkans in our Time*, *op. cit.*, pp. 476 - 480.

Another group, distinct from the Bulgarians, which is not, however, considered by the regime as a separate national minority, are the 120,000 Pomacs living mostly along the Greco-Bulgarian frontier. Speaking Bulgarian and Turkish, but closely attached to Mohammedanism, they do not feel themselves as Bulgarians. Remnants of an old islamized Thracian tribe, they are, nevertheless, classified as Bulgarians in the official census. As recently as November 1959, the government increased its anti-religious measures against the Pomacs, apparently in an effort to set them apart from their religion, the most important element which distinguishes them from the Bulgarians. Since no Pomac schools exist the children are compelled to attend Bulgarian schools and be educated as young Bulgarians.

#### ALBANIA

The smallest of the Balkan countries has by far the less minority problem of all the communist-ruled countries of the Peninsula. The only important group is the Greek element whose numerical strength is hotly disputed by the interested parties. According to a 1942 Italian census, there were 232,320 Orthodox in the country, a great portion of which belonged to the Greek national minority. Following the end of the war and the installation of a communist government at Tirana, Greeks who refused to abandon their nationalist aspirations—namely the restoration of Northern Epirus (Southern Albania) to Greece—were subjected to intolerable oppressive measures resulting in secret emigration to Greece<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, Greeks who helped the Albanian communists overthrow their political rivals were accorded liberal treatment in line with Leninist minority doctrine. By Albanian accounts<sup>2</sup>, there are 30,000 Greeks, mostly residing in the southern part of the country while Greek estimates place the number of Greeks in Albania at 130,000. Schools and weekly newspapers in Greek constantly pound the communist policies among the minority element. However, the Greeks were never accorded the semi-autonomous status enjoyed by compact minority groups in other communist countries.

#### YUGOSLAVIA

Of all communist countries which emerged out of the turmoil of the closing days of the war, Yugoslavia has more closely adopted the

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1. Interesting data on the subject are contained in Th. E. Panormos' *The Persecution of Religion in Communist Albania* [in Greek] (Athens, 1960), pp. 16.

2. Skendi, *Albania*, *op. cit.*, p. 57; also, *East Europe* (April 1959), *op. cit.*, p. 10.

Soviet nationality and minority system. Besides the six federal republics of Yugoslavia there are the Autonomous Region of Voivodina, home of a strong Hungarian minority, and the Autonomous Province of Kossovo-Metohia which is inhabited by an Albanian majority. Albanians and Hungarians are recognized today as the two main minority groups in the country. The 1953 census which classified the national minorities according to their language, gives the following breakdown<sup>1</sup>:

Skypetars (Albanians):	754,000 <sup>2</sup>
Hungarians	: 502,000
Turks	: 260,000
Slovacs	: 85,000
Bulgarians	62,000
Germans	61,000
Rumanians	60,000
Ruthenians	37,000
Italians	36,000
Czechs	35,000
Russians	12,000
Others	16,000

In *toto*, there are 2,000,000 persons, or 12 per cent of the entire population, who belong to national minorities. Ethnic groups which prior the Second World War were generally considered as minorities (for example, a large part of the inhabitants of Yugoslav Macedonia were thought of as Bulgarians), are now accorded the status of a distinct nationality along with the Serbs, Croats, Slovenes *e.t.c.* Yugoslav communists proudly point to their federal system, which accords extensive minority rights to lesser ethnic groups, as the ideal solution which has brought an end to the inter-war disruptive friction between the peoples of Yugoslavia<sup>3</sup>. As a

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1. Aleš Bebler, 'Les Minorités Nationales en Yougoslavie' *Revue de la politique internationale* (Belgrade, No. 255, 20 November 1960), p. 12.

2. Skendi, *Albania, op. cit.*, p. 50, writes that according to Albanian estimates the minority numbers approximately 900,000.

3. As an illustration we quote from a recent article published in the *Revue de la politique internationale*, an official publication of the Union of Journalists of Yugoslavia:

Grâce à cette politique, nos minorités n'ont pas été et ne sont pas des 'corps étrangers' dans l'organisme populaire. Leur existence et leur propre vie culturelle n'ont pas désuni et ne désunissent pas la Yougoslavie... Cette politique qui est absolument le contraire d'une politique d'oppression et d'assimilation,

matter of fact, the cultural activities and the language of individual minority groups receive state assistance in an effort to promote the individual characteristics of each group<sup>1</sup>. The political ambitions of the young intelligenzia in the various nationalities find expression in the various administrative and executive organs of the individual republics and in certain federal agencies open to representatives from the nationalities.

Yugoslavs appear not only proud of the solution they have adopted, but confident as well that their policy has pacified the age-old antagonisms of their ethnic groups. Yugoslav representatives have openly discussed minority problems in the United Nations and other international agencies. The State Press publishes pamphlets and books in foreign languages on the subject of minorities in an attempt to enlighten opinion abroad on the novel and allegedly successful solutions initiated by the communist regime.

A bare comparison between the inter-war and post-war internal situation indicates that the old nationalistic fervency among Croats, Hungarians and other groups has considerably calmed down. Complaints, however, do continue against the central government. Although they are not directed against a "Serb hegemony" as was customary before the war, it is difficult for one who knows the mentality of Balkan peasants to believe that such complaints are not connected, in the mind of the Yugoslav peasant, with pre-war national discriminatory practices of the central government.

Yugoslavia's treatment of the national issue has been further imperiled by vehement attacks of some of its neighbors in the wake of the Tito-Cominform split and during recent ideological clashes between Yugoslavia and Soviet bloc communists. Bulgaria, on the one hand, has openly accused the Yugoslaves for attempting to destroy the "Bulgarian consciousness" of the "Slavo-Macedonians" by propagating false and artificial theories to

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a lié la minorité à la majorité si solidement qu'aux heures les plus difficiles de la Yougoslavie nouvelle, dans les années 1948-1953, les minorités n'ont pas hésité et se sont tenues aux côtés des dirigeants du pays...

Bebler, *"Les Minorités nationales en Yougoslavie"*, op. cit., p. 14.

1. In May 1960 the Executive Council of the People's Republic of Serbia passed a law concerning education in minority schools whose main provisions were as follows: a) instruction in the native tongue of the minority is allowed in such courses as the minority language, literature and history; b) Serbo-Croatian is compulsory for all levels of education; c) in the event the number of students belonging to a minority does not suffice to form a minority school or even special classes, the people's committees may establish special classes for students coming from other districts; d) the minority languages are also to be taught in trade and secondary schools.

the effect that the "Slavo-Macedonians" constitute a distinct nationality of their own<sup>1</sup>. It appears that Bulgarian accusations have much foundation inasmuch as the "Slavo-Macedonians" have never formed a national group of their own<sup>2</sup>. Not only their literary language is an entirely modern invention whose development had not yet been completed as recently as a few years ago<sup>3</sup>, but most of the inhabitants of the region, prior to Yugoslav effective indoctrination, thought of themselves as Bulgarians rather than "Macedonians" or Serbs<sup>4</sup>. Even Yugoslav officials recognized the fact that the anti-Yugoslav campaign of the Soviet bloc (1948 - 1953), unleashed a wave of anti-Yugoslav feelings on the part of a segment of the population<sup>5</sup>.

In recent years another minority inside Yugoslavia appears not to be entirely happy with conditions under the communist regime. From 1953 to 1959, approximately 100,000 members of the Turkish minority emigrated to Turkey. Turkish press reports attribute it to economic pressure exercised by the regime on an unassimilative ethnic group. On their part the Yugoslavs do not deny the emigration. They acknowledge that the government tried to stop the tendency of the Turks to leave the country, but when all efforts failed they no more placed obstacles to emigration<sup>6</sup>. Inasmuch

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1. For official Bulgarian pronouncements on the subject and Bulgarian and Yugoslav press charges and counter-charges, as recently as 1958, see: Evangelos Kofos, *National Minorities in Post-war Greece and their Impact on the Relations between Greece and her Neighbors* [Unpublished dissertation] (Georgetown University, Washington, DC., 1959), pp. 175 - 176.

2. N. P. Andriotis, *The Confederate State of Skopje and Its Language* (Athens, 1957), p. 6.

3. Dimitar I. Vlahov, *Makedonija: Momenti od Istorijata na Makedonskiot Narod* [Macedonia: Moments in the History of the Macedonian People] (Skopje: Drzavno Knigoizdatelstvo na N. R. Makedonija, 1950), p. 410.

4. R. H. Markham, *Tito's Imperial Communism* (Chapel Hill, N. C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1947), pp. 223 - 224. The term "Slavo-Macedonian" or "Macedonian" refers to inhabitants of the geographical region of Macedonia and any ethnological connotation is totally devoid of historical foundation. By employing adroitly the principles of Soviet nationality doctrine in the case of the "Slavo-Macedonians", the Yugoslav communists have attempted to sever the ties of these people from Bulgaria and to win their loyalty to Yugoslavia.

5. In a strongly-worded speech at Titov Veles, V. Georgov, member of the Executive Council of the People's Republic of Macedonia labeled the dissident elements of the population of Macedonia as "racists, opportunists, nationalist-chauvinists, defeatists and criminals", *Nova Makedonija* (Skopje, Nov. 2, 1958). Elizabeth Barker also agrees that a large portion of the inhabitants have shown pro-Bulgarian sentiments, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

6. *Nova Makedonija* (December 6, 1959).

as it would have been completely unrealistic to expect that the regime would allow the departure of loyal communists, the mass exodus of the Turks further underlines the thesis that the communist minority policies, somehow, did not function as expected.

However, the accusations of fellow communist countries Bulgaria and Albania that Yugoslavia has oppressed discontent Albanian and "Slavo-Macedonian" groups in times of disputes with her neighbors, still remain as the most damaging factor to Yugoslav prestige on the national issue. On her part, Yugoslavia has branded these charges as untrue, a fact which is partially supported by the lack of outspoken opposition on the part of the minorities. However, one should bear in mind that no public discussion of the existing system is allowed, for it is considered a major offense to maintain that the national and minority question has not been satisfactorily handled by the regime.

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Along with Roumania, Albania and Bulgaria, Yugoslavia has also publicly advocated that she has followed a most benevolent and humane policy toward her ethnic groups. All four, indeed, have included in their national constitutions liberal provisions, strictly adhering to Soviet theory. However, when their policy is viewed in cold appreciation of the facts, it appears that it is totally devoid of the humanitarian features on which it is advocated to be based. Experience has taught that most of the time a policy is introduced in favor of a national group simply on grounds of political expediency. Consequently, one may, indeed, wonder with justification whether such a system based precisely on political expediency can survive the test of turbulent Balkan politics.