

THE STRUGGLE OF HELLENISM OVER MACEDONIA

A SURVEY OF RECENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

The rise of nationalities, European power politics and the impending dissolution of the Ottoman empire had converted the Balkans at the end of last and the beginning of this century into a field of fierce national antagonism. Events, especially in that vast area of the peninsula, geographically from very remote times known by the name of Macedonia, had gone far beyond the Turkish state's boundaries and had become matters of international concern. "The Macedonian Question" drew at one time the attention of public opinion all over Europe and, up to this moment, presents a most interesting subject to the scholar of Balkan history.

From the Greek side, the Macedonian Question has been nothing but the compulsory struggle of Hellenism to keep its position against Bulgarian infiltration strongly agitated by foreign power politics; the outcome of the struggle is primarily due to the overwhelmingly in all respects superiority of the Greek element in the disputed area, its vitality and will for resistance. The assistance given by the Kingdom of Greece at the last stage of the fight (1904 - 1908) would have otherwise been fruitless.

An effort to study this subject from a more general scope has recently been undertaken under the auspices of the Institute for Balkan Studies of the Society for Macedonian Studies in Thessalonike. The effort includes the collection of all published or unpublished material, of manuscripts, handwritten notes, letters, photographs, newspapers of that time, official consular reports, Turkish documents etc. and their examination by a special staff. The intention is to publish everything of interest to help scholars in the study of that part of southeastern European affairs and, up to now, fourteen books have come from the press. The material already collected is immense and the publication of more volumes is envisaged¹. The com-

1. *Reports of Lambros Koromelas*, Greek Consul General in Thessalonike and *The Macedonian struggle* by Alexandros Zannas, are the volumes to be published in the very near future.

pletion of the work undertaken by the Institute will furnish, it is believed, scholars with original sources for further study and research.

A general outline of the books already published is given in the following pages.

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Mr. Christoforos Naltsas in his book "*The treaty of San Stefano and Hellenism*"² deals with the attempts of Russian policy in the period from 1875 until 1878 at an essentially Slav settlement in the Balkan peninsula. In his first chapter³ he discusses the local risings which occurred in Bosnia in June 1875 and in Bulgaria in the spring of 1876, both untimely and badly organised movements stimulated by Russia, and the Serbo-bulgarian war of the same year. These incidents were, as the author states, a mere continuation of the efforts already made in the past by the Russians to extend their influence in southeastern Europe; the revival of Bulgarian national conscience in 1835 and this nation's emancipation from the orbit of the Oecumenical Patriarchate through the establishment of a Bulgarian Exarchate in Constantinople in 1870 had been successful moves of Russian policy⁴. The next step was the formation of a greater Slav state or—in case of failure—the creation of the impression of a huge Slav element existing even in the southern part of the peninsula. Greek national claims had been totally ignored by the British inspired conference of Constantinople in December 1876, which, however, failed to adopt either a French or a Russian plan of settlement suggesting the constitution of two autonomous Bulgarian semi-sovereign regions one of which at least contained large areas predominantly inhabited by Greeks⁵.

The failure of the conference led to the Russo-turkish war of 1877 and the San Stefano treaty, signed at the outskirts of Constantinople⁶. This treaty, while also ignoring the claims of Greece, sought to establish a "Greater Bulgaria", the first Bulgarian state in modern history, extending at an area of 164.000 km² and including a population of 4.580.000 people, of which 3.900.000 were Greeks and Turks and only 600.000 Bulgarians⁷.

2. Published in German "*Der San Stefano Vertrag und das Griechentum*", Thessalonike, 1956, pp. 80, Nr 9 in the series of the Institute's publications. A Greek edition of the same work «*Η συνθήκη του Αγίου Στεφάνου και ο Έλληνισμός*» was published by the Society for Macedonian Studies in 1953.

3. Ibid. pp. 1 - 26.

4. Ibid. p. 4.

5. Ibid. p. 24.

6. Ibid. 2nd Chapter, pp. 27 - 59.

7. Ibid. p. 42.

This ethnologically impossible settlement, although superseded by the treaty of Berlin three months later, has been and ever since remained the greatest event in Bulgarian history; in spite of this treaty's absurdities it has formed the Bulgarian national ideal and has encouraged the Bulgarians to aspire to a position in Macedonia to which neither ethnological nor any other considerations entitle them. It may rightly be called the prelude to the Macedonian struggle.

At the same time the augmentation of Russian influence through the newly created state clashed with the other European powers vital interests in this zone and by the initiative of Germany the Congress of Berlin was convened, which is dealt with in the third and last chapter of Mr. Nahtsas' book⁸. The main features of the final settlement was the creation of a "self-governed" principality of Bulgaria under the sovereignty of the Porte in the area between the Danube and the Balkan mountains and of the administratively autonomous region of Eastern Rumelia in the area between the Balkan and Rhodope mountains. The vast area of Macedonia with her predominant Greek element was left under Turkish rule; thus the Eastern Question was destined to develop into a purely "Macedonian Question"⁹, which the Bulgarians, strongly fostered by Russian policy, sought to solve for themselves and against Hellenism through peaceful means or violent action in the years to come.

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The peaceful infiltration started through the Exarchate perverted by the Bulgarians to political ends; their attempt to convert Greeks into subordinates of the Bulgarian church, an indication of Bulgarian nationality, through churches and schools, priests and teachers, and promises and funds sent from Bulgaria had not been successful due to the numerical superiority¹⁰ of the Greek element, which also was predominant in education¹¹

8. Ibid. pp. 51 - 69.

9. Ibid. pp. 63 - 64.

10. Cf. for the year 1912, Statistics by the League of Nations (Refugees Settlement Commission, Geneva, 1926) Greeks 513.000 (42, 6 %), Moslems 475.000 (39, 4 %), Slav-speaking population 119.000 (9, 9 %), various 98.000 (8, 1 %).

11. In Western Macedonia, i. e., there was one Bulgarian highschool in Monastir and several Greek ones in Monastir, Korytsa, Kozani, Siatista, Tsotylyon, Castoria, (Modhis op. cit. in the text further, pp. 16 - 18); in Eastern Macedonia, district of Drama, 6 Bulgarian public schools, 10 teachers and 90 to 100 students while there were 80 Greek public schools, 120 teachers and 3.750 students (Chrysostomos, bishop of Drama, op. cit. further in the text, p. 23); in Thessalonike (1904) there were two Greek high schools, ten public schools, one school for teachers, two private schools

and in social and commercial life¹². It was eventually decided and put into application the conversion by force through armed bands, known under the name of "comitadjis"¹³, and the use of all sorts of pressure against that part of the population which insisted in preserving their Greek nationality and to the adherence to the Patriarchate¹⁴. Naturally, the main effort was directed against those who spoke a peculiar Slavonic language (including a considerable number of Greek, Turkish and Albanian words) considered by the Bulgarians also as an indication of Bulgarian descent. Whoever was not willing to adhere to the Exarchate drew the rage of the bands, the first and main victims being Greek priests and teachers, prominent villagers and merchants, and heads of the communal life; sometimes the rage went as far as to the destruction of entire villages by fire or otherwise. The Bulgarian infiltration entered the stage of violence.

Against this highly dangerous situation for Hellenism the first violent reaction came out from the Macedonians themselves, who, being tired of the passive resistance system and the Greek government's hesitation to provide material (and even moral in most cases) support, formed the first Greek armed bands determined to meet force by force. It is most interesting to note that the first leaders and fighting units were the Slav-speaking Greeks, exactly those who mostly suffered from the pressure of the comitadjis. A short biography of eighteen local leaders¹⁵ including unknown details of their action together with a historical account of the fight in general, as described above, and in the area of the vilayet of Monastir is contained in the book of Mr. Georgios Modhis "*Macedonian Struggle and Macedonian Leaders*"¹⁶. Mr. Modhis, a Macedonian from Monastir and

of languages and commerce, and one Bulgarian high school and school for teachers and one public school (Souliotis, op. cit. in the text further, pp. 27 - 31).

12. For Thessalonike, extensively Souliotis, *ibid.* p. 30.

13. Members of the "Committee" as the "Interior Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation" or "IMRO", founded in Sofia in 1893, is known.

14. Modhis, op. cit., pp. 35 seq.

15. *Ibid.* pp. 144 - 323. They are: Kotas from the village Roulia, Vangelis from Asproghia, Pavlos Kyrou from Antartikon, Dimitrios Dalipis from Sfica, Lakis and Yannis Dailakis from Verniki (now in Albania), Stefos from Monastir (now in Yugoslavia), Antonios Zois from Monastir (he committed suicide in 1941 when he saw the German Wehrmacht entering Greece), Pavlos Rakovitis from Kratero, Tsotsos from Promachoi, Yannis Ramnalis from Ramna, Gonos from Yannitsa, the Dhoyiama brothers from Kastaneri, Pantelis Grekos from Stromnitsa (now in Yugoslavia) and Mitroussis from Homontos.

16. Γ. Χ. Μόδη, *Μακεδονικός αγών και Μακεδόνες άρχηγοί*, Thessalonike, 1950, Macedonian Library of the Society for Macedonian Studies, pp. 323. Mr. Modhis is

a fighter himself of that time, writing mainly from his own personal experience and recollections, reveals most interesting and unknown events of the town and area of Monastir which was the headquarters of a Turkish Army, that of the Greek high command for the fighting forces in Western Macedonia, and a field of acute antagonism between Greeks and Bulgarians.

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The Kingdom of Greece, facing the results of the unhappy Greco-turkish war of 1897, either was hesitant to interfere in the struggle in Macedonia or had not clearly realized the importance of the happenings. It is, however, true that everyone in free Greece had full confidence in the numerical superiority of the Greek element in Macedonia, whose endurance was some times overestimated. At the beginning of this century the Greek consuls in the Turkish occupied Macedonian towns were firm believers of the rightness of free Greece's "correct" policy aiming at the preservation of friendly relations between the Kingdom of Greece and the Ottoman empire. Some of them, overcareful not to expose official Greece, believed in the capability of the Turks to restore order and protect the suffering Greek population ¹⁷.

A change of the situation occurred when, by initiative of private individuals, a "Committee for Macedonia" was established in Athens ¹⁸. Younger diplomats like Ion Dhragoumis, private individuals like Pericles Argyropoulos, or Greek Army officers like Pavlos Melas entered Macedonia disguised as peaceful merchants, toured the country and, when they returned to Athens, gave the signal of alarm. Mr. Pericles Argyropoulos in his book "*The Macedonian struggle*" ¹⁹ gives a thorough and excellent account of affairs and opinions prevailing in 1904 in Thessalonike, Western and Eastern Macedonia. His personal impressions and careful observation of what he had seen and lived in Macedonia did not leave any doubt that Hellenism in that disputed area was firm and determined, but, nevertheless, against the growing Bulgarian aggression serious assistance on the part of free Greece was imperative. This assistance, including arms and ammunition, groups of volunteers or even only leaders of some military experience, should be

well known from his writings on the Macedonian struggle; cf. his eight volumes *Μακεδονικὴς Ἱστορίαις* [Macedonian Stories. ed. 1920, 1929, 1937, 1938, 1955, 1957, 1958 and 1959], *Στὰ Μακεδονικὰ Βουνὰ* [Over the Macedonian mountains] 1930, etc.

17. Argyropoulos, op. cit. in the text, pp. 7 - 10 and 14.

18. Kalapothakis, the editor of the newspaper "Embros", was the first president.

19. Π. Α. Ἀργυροπούλου, *Ὁ Μακεδονικὸς ἀγὼν*, Thessalonike, 1957, pp. 76, Nr. 14 in the series of the Institute's publications.

coupled by an organisation of self-defense units in villages and towns and the establishment of a high command to direct the entire fighting.

The year 1904 marks the turning of the tide; the Greek consulates in Macedonia were manned by personalities like Dimitrios Kallergis in Monastir²⁰, Lambros Koromelas in Thessalonike²¹ and Antonios Saktouris in Serres²²; officers of the Greek Army gave up their positions, entered Macedonia and either were appointed as secretaries of the consulates' staff, while, in reality, they were holding key-posts in the Greek counter-attack scheme, or they became armed group leaders. A rather complicated system of forwarding men and equipment through the Greco-turkish border was set up. In Greek towns recruiting offices, disguised as travel agencies, started their work and a stream of volunteers, mostly from Crete, passed the border. The violent Greek counter-attack had been launched.

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The first signs of relief for the Macedonian Greeks were forthcoming when an incident accelerated the fighting spirit to a degree never before achieved. Pavlos Melas, a young Greek artillery officer, descendant of one of the most prominent Greek families, left Athens, formed a group of his own and entered Macedonia in August 1904 where, after an action of a few months during which his name became a legend for the Greeks, was killed in a skirmish with the Turks. Before this entry mentioned above, Pavlos Melas and three other officers twice entered secretly Macedonia to get a first hand picture of the existing state of affairs. The story of this noble man, who, while not able to kill an unarmed foe, was a brave and enduring fighter, is told by Mr. Ioannis Notaris in his book "*Pavlos Melas*"²³.

It is not too much to say that his death constituted the biggest event of that time for the Greek cause and he spontaneously was hailed by folksongs as a national hero.

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The clergy had in the long period of Turkish domination been the centre for the preservation of national conscience. At the struggle we

20. Greek Foreign Minister in 1909; cf. enlightening conversation between Kallergis and the writer, *ibid.* pp. 22-26.

21. *Ibid.* pp. 29-30.

22. His reports have been published, see below n. 37.

23. 'Ι. Σ. Νόταρη, *Παῦλος Μελάς* (βιογραφία), Thessalonike, 1955, pp. 78, Nr. 6 in the series of the Institute's publications. An excellent book containing Melas' letters is published by his wife, *Ὁ Παῦλος Μελάς* (βιογραφία), Alexandria, 1926, pp. 458.

are now revising, the bishoprics in Macedonia had played a most important role, continuing the tradition started immediately after the fall of the Byzantine empire^{23a}. Led by high quality bishops, such as Germanos Karavangelis in Castoria, Chrysostomos in Drama and Fotios in Korytsa, the clergy took an active part in the Hellenic effort to repulse the Bulgarian assault. "*The memoirs*" of Germanos Karavangelis²⁴, which he himself dictated, is the most thrilling book about that time describing his action from the year 1900, when he was appointed bishop of Kastoria, until 1907, when he was, upon the persistent demand of the Turks, recalled to Constantinople²⁵. In the sixty pages of the memoirs the titanic effort of the bishop to preserve his people's adherence to the Patriarchate and to the Hellenic ideals, and his stormy life for seven consecutive years in Castoria is dramatically narrated. He not only gave relief and condolence to his parishers in a period of a ruthless struggle for life or death, but he also did not hesitate to take the initiative and assume the command of fighting forces when this seemed unavoidable. He used to stroll all over the vast area of his bishopric, armed and escorted by his faithful servant, avoiding enemy ambushes by skillful riding in the most impossible paths throughout the rocky area of Korestia mountains; under a pseudonym he wrote articles for newspapers and letters to leaders of armed groups and the Greek high command of Monastir and Thessalonike. He would transport arms under his black robe, meet Greek fighting units in the frozen country in mid-winter or hide wounded fighters in his seat in Castoria. His preachment in villages inhabited by mixed populations and in the presence of Bulgarian bands seeking his murder have remained historical; he would keep the Gospel by one hand and the pistol in the other and he would turn his look once at the holy book and the next at his potential killers; he would disregard any danger in order to preach according to the Greek orthodox dogma. He

23a. A point of interest is to note that the clergy aimed more at the preservation or restoration of the (already entirely Greek) Patriarchate's authority over the disputed area than at the expansion of the boundaries of the Kingdom of Greece, cf. Argyropoulos, op. cit. in the text, pp. 7 and 19 - 20.

24. Ἀρχεῖον Μακεδονικοῦ Ἀγῶνος Πηγελόπης Δέλτα, 1. Γερμανοῦ Καραβαγγέλη, Ὁ Μακεδονικὸς ἀγὼν (Ἀπομνημονεύματα), 2nd edition by Mr. Bas. Laourdas, Thessalonike, 1959, pp. 142, Nr. 26 in the series of the Institute's publications.

25. He was later appointed Bishop of Amassia, Asia Minor, and in 1920 sentenced to death by the Turks. He escaped and was appointed Greek Bishop in Vienna, where he died in 1935. The transfer and burial of his relics last year in Castoria was an opportunity for a remarkable manifestation of the population's deep feelings to his memory.

was the first who persuaded Capetan Kotas, one of the noblest figures of band leaders, to fight against Bulgarians by reminding him of his Greek descent in spite of his Slav language; the conversation he had with Kotas, as he himself describes it, shows his faith in the cause he served²⁶. He pledged fighters on the holy Gospel, enlisted men in the ranks of the Greek Committee and released priests from their oaths whenever they had to take part in action. Disregarding the Turkish wrath he buried the beheaded body of Pavlos Melas and forwarded Kotas' children to Athens.

The book is supplemented by letters of that period written by him or addressed to him by leaders and other friends.

Another book by a bishop of the same outstanding abilities, Chrysostomos, bishop of Drama²⁷, "*Reports on the Macedonian struggle*"²⁸ contains his reports and letters to the Patriarch and the Greek consuls, a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury²⁹, British reports on him and his action, and extracts of newspapers of that period. Amidst a state of terror initiated by the comitadjis in an area inhabited almost exclusively by Greeks and Turks the heroic figure of this bishop is brilliantly illustrated. Severely attacked by the Turkish authorities, who persistently demanded his removal, as well as by the British officers stationed in his area according to Mürzteg Agreement³⁰, he courageously stayed in his position guiding his parishers and directing the Greek resistance. The Turks eventually seized his personal correspondence and succeeded in persuading the Patriarchate to recall Chrysostomos; the news of his transfer caused a riot among the population, which, silently and in huge masses surrounded his home in Drama not disposed to let the bishop go. Chrysostomos also refused to leave his seat upon only Turkish command unless by the use of force; a dramatic exchange

26. Ibid. p. 9: "We sat down all night and talked. I was telling him: You are Greeks from the time of Alexander the Great, the Slavs have passed and have slavised you. Your faces are Greek, the earth we are stepping on is Greek, the statues which are hidden in it are Greek, the coins we find are Greek, the inscriptions are Greek. Our Church and the Patriarchate have always fought for liberty while Bulgaria has not been able even to liberate herself and has been liberated by Russia; can you now expect the Bulgarians to liberate Macedonia? Then I talked about the murders and I told him if the Bulgarian Committee was fighting for liberty, for so holy a cause, could it possibly commit so many crimes, plunder poor villages and kill innocent people?"

27. He was massacred by the Turkish mob of Smyrna in 1922.

28. Χρυσοστόμον Δράμας, *Ἐκθέσεις περὶ τοῦ Μακεδονικοῦ ἀγῶνος*, edited under the care of Mr. Bas. Laourdas, Thessalonike, 1960, Nr. 39 in the series of the Institute's publications, pp. 112.

29. Ibid. pp. 40-47.

30. See below, note 39.

of telegrams took place until the Patriarch sent the order and the bishop left accompanied by the entire population up to the boundaries of his region³¹. They all felt they had lost a war.

Memoirs of actual fighting are contained in the book of the Cretan volunteer Georgios Dhiconymos Makris, a distinguished group leader³². He tells of his action in the area of Western Macedonia from 1903 till the proclamation of the Young Turkish constitution in 1908, when he triumphantly entered the town of Monastir. Extremely courageous he dared to penetrate the most fanatic Bulgarian strongholds in the region of his action despite the belief of Bulgarians, Greeks and Turks this was impossible. In an appendix, letters of Makris to Tsontos-Vardas and letters of other fighters addressed to the writer, as well as other texts of the same period, are included.

An exclusive sort of warfare in marshes is described by group leader Panayotis Papatzaneteas in his *Memoirs* from the Macedonian struggle³³. A large area in central Macedonia, almost in and around ancient Pella, the birthplace and capital of Alexander the Great, flooded by the rivers Axios, Loudhias and Aliakmon and containing lakes and marshes, commonly known at the beginning of this century as "the swamp", was a field of an especially pitiless fighting between Bulgarians and Greeks. Fighting almost sea-battles in lake-boats and rafts, severely hit by mosquitos and bloodsucking leeches, inhabiting in huts hidden amongst canebrakes and walking most of the time in water the Greek fighters lived a dreadful life compared only with that of the Burma warfare in World-War II.

The *Memoirs* from the Macedonian struggle by the Macedonian fighter Naoum Spanos³⁴, already from 1896 in action as a band leader

31. The life of those bishops is well illustrated in a passage of a letter written in 1906 by Chrysostomos when he learnt that Fotios, bishop of Korytsa, had been assassinated, *ibid.* p. 21: "I cried, I cried like a little child for the horrible death of brother Fotios. May his memory be eternal. Who knows how many other brothers and, perhaps, the writer of these lines, are expecting the same fate?". When he was recalled he wrote to the Patriarch, *ibid.* p. 49: "I am happy that I have fallen while performing the duty Mother Church has entrusted to me".

32. 'Αρχεῖον Μακεδονικοῦ Ἀγῶνος Πηνελόπης Δέλτα, 2. Γεωργίου Δικωνίμου Μακρῆ, 'Ο Μακεδονικὸς ἀγὼν ('Απομνημονεύματα), edited by care of B. Laourdas, Thessalonike, 1959, pp. 149, Nr. 29 in the series of the Institute's publications.

33. 'Αρχεῖον Μακεδονικοῦ Ἀγῶνος Πηνελόπης Δέλτα, 3. Παναγιώτη Παπατζανετέα, 'Ο Μακεδονικὸς ἀγὼν ('Απομνημονεύματα) introduction by Al. Zanas, edited under the care of Mrs. Louisa Syndicas - Laourdas, Thessalonike, 1960, pp. 80, Nr. 39 in the series of the Institute's publications.

34. Ν. Σπανοῦ, 'Αναμνήσεις ἐκ τοῦ Μακεδονικοῦ Ἀγῶνος, Thessalonike, 1957, pp. 52, Nr. 13 in the series of the Institute's publications.

against the Turks, are published in a separate book. An interesting point of his action is the discovery in Athens itself of Bulgarian Committee agents trying to recruit Macedonian refugees under the pretext of a fight against the Turks. Another characteristic subject is his personal impressions of the so-called revolution of Ilinden (1903) in Macedonia and his description of how he forwarded Capetan Kotas' children to Athens by order of the bishop of Castoria³⁵. Spanos, being a very obstinate man and unwilling to be subordinate to anyone, retired to Athens in 1904 due to differences arisen between him and his chief Tsontos-Vardas.

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The armed fight in the country was coupled by an underground movement in the bigger towns, which, as already stated, required a strong organisation and a high commanding authority. This job had been undertaken and carried out by Greek officers and local prominent Greeks; an officer of those having had an active part, Athanassios Souliotis, disguised in Thessalonike under the name of Mr. Nikolaidhis, writes his personal impressions and memories in his book *"The Organisation of Thessalonike"*³⁶. The Greek underground movement and the struggle against Bulgarian infiltration in the capital of Macedonia was directed by an organised unit known under that name and in which the writer was an active member from March 1905 until September 1907. Having settled in the town as a peaceful merchant and keeping a shop during the entire period of his action he occupied himself with the "Organisation"; the main objects were the collection of information with regard to the moves of the Turkish army and the Bulgarian forces, the relief and housing of Greek refugees, the care for Greek war-orphans, the foundation of schools, nurseries and orphanages as well as the imposition of all sorts of obstacles against any Bulgarian effort of settlement in Thessalonike, including the skillfully planned and performed task of prohibiting the erection of Bulgarian churches and schools. In order to keep secrecy neither the writer nor any other member of the "Organisation" had access to the Greek consulate in the town.

35. Ibid. p. 34: After they had crossed the Greek border, the 15-year old son of Kotas turned to the Turkish guards and shouted in his Slav language: "When I grow I shall return armed, join my father's men and kill Turks and Bulgars".

36. 'Α. Σουλιώτη - Νικολαΐδη, *"Ο Μακεδονικός Αγών, 'Η «'Οργάνωσις Θεσσαλονίκης» 1906 - 1908, ('Απομνημονεύματα)*, Thessalonike 1959, pp. 102, Nr. 28 in the series of the Institute's publications.

The book is supplemented by an appendix containing articles published by the author, including a booklet under the title "Prophecies of Alexander the Great", which implied the liberation of Macedonia by the Greeks and had a strong influence on the enslaved population. A record of the personnel of the Greek consulate and members of fighting units are also included. Worth mentioning is an excellent description of the life in Thessalonike in 1904 accompanied by photographs and a town's plan³⁷.

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A picture of the situation in the area of Serres during 1907 is given in the book "*The Macedonian struggle in the area of Serres in the year 1907*"³⁸ containing reports from the then Greek consul in the town Antonios Saktouris to the Greek Foreign Office. The problems the consul had to face are well focused and the pro-Bulgarian attitude of the French officers in the area strongly emphasized³⁹. This book is not a publication of the Institute but one of the "Historical Society for Serres and Melenikon"; the edition, however, of the text is made under the care of, and the notes are written by, Mr. Bas. Laourdas, Director of the Institute.

A short but most comprehensive history of the fight in Western Macedonia in general is a lecture delivered by Mr. Christoforos Naltsas and published by the Institute under the title "*The Macedonian struggle in Western Macedonia*"⁴⁰. The lecture is one of the series organised by the Institute in the winter 1957-58 on various subjects concerning that particular area.

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It has been previously stated that the Turks had tolerated, if not encouraged, the nationalities' antagonism in Macedonia hoping that their Christian subjects, being busy in settling their differences, would leave them undisturbed. Their attitude had never been pro-Greek, nor actually pro

37. Ibid. pp. 21 seq.

38. 'Ο Μακεδονικός αγών εις την περιοχὴν τῶν Σερρῶν κατὰ τὸ 1907 (ἐκδόσεις τοῦ Προξένου Σακτούρη), Athens, 1958, pp. 143, extract from «Σερραϊκά Χρονικά», 3rd vol.

39. The so-called "Mürzteg Programme" or "Mürzteg Agreement" (Sept. 1903) provided the establishment of international gendarmerie in Macedonia to supervise the reforms proposed; Thessalonike was assigned to the Russians, Monastir to the Italians, Serres to the British and Drama to the French. Their attitude had never been impartial. Cf. also note 30.

40. Χρ. Νάλτσα, 'Ο Μακεδονικός αγών εις τὴν Δυτικὴν Μακεδονίαν, Thessalonike, 1958, pp. 34, Nr. 25 in the series of the Institute's publications.

any Christian nationality; it is a fact, however, that their interference to keep order in that troubled area of their empire never had any results nor did they really aim at the protection of the Christian population. It is also a fact that, while Bulgarians carefully avoided any encounter with Greek groups, Greek fighting forces clashed always with Turkish army units, especially in the period 1905 - 1908. Turkish bullets have killed more leaders and men of the Greek forces than of any other fighting nationality in Macedonia⁴¹.

The only collection of Turkish official papers found with regard to the fighting in Macedonia has been published by care of Mr. Ioannis Vasdravellis under the title "*Turkish Documents on the Macedonian struggle*"⁴². A sum of 128 telegrams, sent by the then Governor of Thessalonike and the then inspector general Houssein Hilmi Pasha to the political governor of Edhessa during the period from 4th August 1907 till 28th February 1909 and concerning directives and orders, are contained.

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The last book of this series is Mr. Basil Laourdas' essay "*Penelope Dhelta and Macedonia*"⁴³. A well known Greek writer, Penelope Dhelta, wrote some of her most marvelous books for children, inspired by the struggle in Macedonia⁴⁴. From the historical point of view she extends the era of the struggle to the remoter times of 10th century, when, again, Greeks and Bulgarians were, almost in the same areas, fighting another deadly fight against each other. This historical extension has also been made by the great contemporary Greek poet Costis Palamas⁴⁵, by Ion Dhragoumis⁴⁶

41. Cf. Souliotis, op. cit. p. 17: Out of 15 Greek group leaders killed in action, 10 were killed at clashes with Turkish units. The same proportion for men.

42. *Τουρκικά έγγραφα περί τοῦ Μακεδονικοῦ ἀγώνος*, Ἐπιμελεία Ἰ. Κ. Βασδραβέλλη, translated from the original by Mr. G. Pantelidis, Thessalonike, 1958, pp. 93, Nr. 19 in the series of the Institute's publications.

43. Β. Λαοῦρδα, *Ἡ Πηνελόπη Δέλτα καὶ ἡ Μακεδονία*, Thessalonike, 1958, pp. 44 Nr. 20 in the series of the Institute's publications.

44. The most known among them *Στὰ μυστικά τοῦ Βάλτου* [*The Secrets of the Swamp*], 1st ed., 1937, Athens, a tale of the fight in the district of the lakes in Central Macedonia, which also Papatzaneteas' memoirs are referred to, see above n. 33, and *Στὸν καιρὸ τοῦ Βουλγαροκτόνου* [*At the time of the Bulgarian-slayer*], ed 1911, London, which is the story of the wars the Byzantine emperor Basil the II carried out against the Bulgarians.

45. Κ. Παλαμᾶ, *Ἡ Φλογέρα τοῦ Βασιλιᾶ* [*The King's flute*], 1st ed. 3rd part, 1913, Athens.

46. Ἰωάννης Δραγοῦμη, *Μαρτύρων καὶ Ἡρώων αἷμα* [*Martyrs' and Heroes' blood*], 2nd ed. 1914, Athens.

and others⁴⁷ and shows, as Mr. Laourdas puts it⁴⁸, in which way the historical memory of the Greek nation has interpreted the fight of Hellenism over Macedonia. The basic features of the Macedonian struggle can also be traced in that remote era: there are located the most fanatic Greeks among the Slav-speaking population of Macedonia, there are again the priests and monks who were massacred by the flood of the Bulgarians in order to preserve their faith to the Byzantine empire, there are individual and mass heroisms, Bulgarians disguised as Greeks and Greeks who pretended they were Bulgarians, officers from the capital organising their own fighting groups and skirmishing the same foes, everything, really, which, ten centuries later, had been repeated in the Macedonian struggle.

Further, one can not disregard the connection which the Greeks have spontaneously made between the Macedonian struggle and the times and history of the ancient Macedonian kings, especially Philip and his son Alexander the Great⁴⁹. An enemy infiltration in the area and places where the most important figures of Greek history lived and glorified Hellenism went beyond any limits for the national sentiment; it was thought as the heaviest possible insult against the most sacred ideals Greeks cherish. This explains the alarm which the Bulgarian assault had caused among the entire population of free Greece and Crete and the stream of volunteers who rushed to join their Macedonian brothers. For Hellenism there has always been a clear line connecting the events of the time of Alexander the Great, those of the Byzantine emperors engaged in a fight against Slavs and Bulgarians and of the Macedonian struggle at the beginning of this century.

Dhelta had carefully and with enormous patience collected, from 1915 to 1935, material in order to be in a position to write her books; biographies of fighters, handwritten notes, letters and photographs, copies of official records, copies of consular letters and memoirs dictated to her secretaries by some of the most distinguished personalities of that period. This invaluable material is now, by courtesy of the writer's heirs, in the possession of the Institute for Balkan Studies; the above mentioned memoirs of the

47. Laourdas, *op. cit.* pp. 15 and 35-37.

48. *Ibid.* p. 15.

49. Cf. above, p. 139, "Prophecies of Alexander the Great", the booklet written by A. Souliotis and printed in Greek and Bulgarian; also above, p. 136, n. 26, the bishop of Castoria's conversation with Capetan Kotas: "You are Greek from the time of Alexander the Great etc."; also Laourdas, *op. cit.* p. 27.

bishop of Castoria and those of Georgios Dhiconymos Makris and Panayotis Papatzaneteas are a part of Dhelta's Archives of the Macedonian struggle.

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As the reader may well see, the publications mentioned above present a more general interest to everyone regardless of his special subject of study or his nationality. Besides their significance in the history of Hellenism and that of the rise of nationalities in Europe, most of them are really fascinating books telling the story of a heroic generation inspired by ideals and faith in the cause it had been fighting for.

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