

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, FACULTY OF HISTORY

Political parties, irredentism and the Foreign Ministry

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Greece and Macedonia: 1878-1910

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## SHORT ABSTRACT

The Macedonian Question has attracted much attention since the 1990s due to the emergence of the dispute over the name of Macedonia between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia. In Greece there is a prolific literature on this subject, but some basic questions remain unanswered. In particular, the role of the government, and of government institutions – especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – have attracted little or no attention: on the contrary, historians have focused on the ‘heroes’ of the conflict, the fighters themselves, the result being that the Macedonian Question is understood as a military fight of good versus evil. In this D.Phil. thesis, we examine how the government got involved with the Macedonian Question and second, in what ways it was involved, especially given that an official acknowledgement of the government’s involvement with the paramilitary operations was diplomatically impossible. We approached these questions by examining the personal archives of Greek politicians and diplomats (most notably of the Dragoumis family) and the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, especially the Archives of the Greek Embassies in London, Paris and Constantinople, which have only recently become available. The key finding is that the Greek government, despite its declarations to the opposite effect, was involved heavily with the paramilitary fighting in Macedonia, but also that the official involvement with Macedonia was constrained and influenced by electoral concerns and by the powerful Macedonian lobbies in Athens. Decisions were rarely made in a rational, bureaucratic way, but were more often reached after consultations with journalists, military officers and intellectuals and always bearing domestic political realities in mind. These findings suggest that future research should move away from understanding the ‘Macedonian Struggle’ solely as a military issue, and put it into the wider context of early twentieth-century Greek political and diplomatic history.

## LONG ABSTRACT

The Macedonian Question has attracted much attention since the 1990s due to the emergence of the dispute over the name of Macedonia between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia. From a rather neglected aspect of Balkan history, its study acquired new meaning and importance as a means of legitimating each side's diplomatic and political arguments. Despite this attention, a number of fundamental historical questions have remained unanswered: in particular, the actions of the Greek government, and of Greek state institutions, especially of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, have attracted little or no attention. Historians have focused instead on the 'heroes' of the conflict, the Greek fighters – and their enemies – in Macedonia: as a result, the Macedonian Question has been examined primarily as a conflict between good and evil, with different people assigned different roles (freedom fighters, terrorists, liberators and occupiers) depending on the point of view from which the study has been written. This D.Phil. is, to my knowledge, the first serious attempt to place the actions of the Greek government centre stage when examining Greek involvement in the Macedonian Question in the early twentieth century.

More specifically, I examine two questions: to what extent was the government involved with the actions of Greek combatants inside Macedonia, and how did it reach its decisions (military, political or diplomatic) concerning the Macedonian Question? Here we touch on the first difficulty involved in such a project, namely the condition of the Greek state archives. The most intuitive way to answer these questions would of course be to look at the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but here the researcher is faced with three important difficulties.

First, the archival record is incomplete. For instance, the archives of the Greek embassies in Vienna, St Petersburg and Berlin for the period are not available for reasons that are not specified: this could well mean that these archives have been lost forever. Needless to say, this is a serious deficiency: Russia and Austria-Hungary were the two key states behind the international intervention in Macedonia, which provoked so much debate in early twentieth-century Europe. Tsarist Russia was moreover the country that many Greeks regarded (rightly or wrongly) as the key supporter of Bulgaria in the Balkans, and the most implacable enemy of Greek interests, whereas Germany was seen as Turkey's principal – if not only – ally among the Great Powers.

Second, the archives available are incomplete. For instance, the Constantinople Embassy contains a good range of correspondence for the years 1903 and 1909, but for other years, such as 1910, the record is incomplete if available at all;

similarly, the Archives of the Rome embassy are unclassified, and I only had access to one file from 1899. This could easily have a distorting effect on writing the history of the period: there is much more detail available on the diplomatic initiatives in 1903 than, say, those in 1905 or 1906, but the reason could well simply be because the documents telling the story of the 1906 diplomatic activities have been lost for good.

Third, the available record is badly organised: the documents are in no particular order, and this is especially true of the documents of the central offices of the ministry: the task of the researcher is to reconstruct an order or story around whatever documents are available. This is frequently impossible: quite often one has only the reply of the Ministry to a request of an Embassy, or vice versa, one has the request without the reply.

One obvious way of overcoming this difficulty is to corroborate the information found in the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with that which is available in the private archives. This, for instance, worked quite well in the case of 1910: I was able to locate in the Stephanos Dragoumis Archive, dozens of telegrams from Constantinople to Athens, which were missing from the Foreign Office archives.

But there is another reason why looking at private archives is desirable: Greek politicians often made decisions outside the institutional or official framework. Thus, in 1903, the then Prime Minister, Georgios Theotokis, decided on the government's actions in Macedonia after a meeting he had with Stephanos Dragoumis, who had no officially recognised position at the time, but was widely regarded as Greece's foremost expert on the Macedonian Question, as well as being the unofficial leader and spokesperson of Athens Macedonian lobby. Indeed, lobbying groups were often able to impose their preferences on the government, with the consequence that a study that would narrate the Greek involvement with Macedonia only from the government's point of view, would leave out important information; moreover, we would be unable to explain why the government changed its decisions at certain critical points.

All of this has important implications for our initial question, as to what extent was the Greek government involved with the fighting inside Macedonia. All of the information I have found in state and private archives points towards the involvement of the Greek government, especially regarding financial matters: in other words, the money for the Greek fighters in Macedonia came from the state's budget. But, when it comes to examining how the government took its decisions (military or diplomatic), the picture that emerges is more nuanced: Greek officials avoided taking key decisions without first consulting the lobbying groups.

Moreover, the decisions of the government were formed by a variety of other considerations which included electoral concerns, the actions of the other Great Powers (and neighbouring states), the pressure of newspapers and nationalist groups, and financial restraints (especially given the recent bankruptcy of the state in 1893, and the imposition of foreign financial control in 1898).

This means that we can no longer study the Macedonian Struggle as a matter of conventional state policy-making. Indeed, what makes the study of the Macedonian question in Greek politics such an interesting subject is that it brings to the fore a number of wider themes in the history of Greece in this period. I hope that these themes emerge clearly from the thesis, and I have also sought to summarise them in the Conclusion. Briefly stated, the Macedonian Question illustrates what one might describe in summary terms as the incoherence and impotence of the Greek state. Though Greece had firmly emerged on the European map, both political and diplomatic, during the nineteenth century, the institutions and resources of the Greek state remained inadequate to achieve its often grandiose ambitions. As revealed in the vain attempts of the Greek authorities to achieve their goals in Macedonia, the state lacked the financial, military or diplomatic resources to bring their policies to fruition. In part, this weakness was institutional. The Greek state lacked the taxation revenues, the political coherence, or the central bureaucracy capable of carrying out a thoroughgoing modernisation of its own structures. But it was also a reflection of the intense personal and political divisions within the Greek state that made it impossible for it to pursue a consistent policy, or perhaps more exactly to pursue a policy consistently, towards Macedonia. If much of this thesis is necessarily concerned with a rather detailed narrative of the political developments of the 1900s, this is because Greek policy towards Macedonia was at one and the same time determined by those divisions, and a cause of those divisions. In particular, the intense political and personal divisions of the era, such as those between the supporters of Theotokis and those of Deliyiannis, took place against a broader backdrop of divisions between King and government, between army and government, and between the press and government. In that context, the 'space' for Greek officials, ambassadors and politicians to pursue a coherent policy towards Macedonia almost entirely disappeared. The proof of this was the ease and speed with which Greek politicians and functionaries surrendered to army officers following the military intervention of 1909.

This 'surrender' was reinforced by the international diplomatic context. I had initially intended that this thesis would be primarily a study of foreign policy. But, as it advanced, I became aware that issues of foreign policy were subordinate in

Greece to domestic political pressures. Foreign powers too played a role. One of the consequences of the institutional weaknesses of the Greek state was that Greece found it difficult to pursue a policy of consistent diplomatic alliances. Instead, as I hope this thesis makes clear, the Greek governments oscillated between a variety of essentially contradictory attempts to pursue alliances with Britain, with Turkey and with Bulgaria, while also retaining the naïve belief that by some mobilisation of will they might be able to achieve their goals in Macedonia without foreign support. The consequence was most often a policy which seemed to chase after a series of chimeric dreams.

This thesis is therefore, I hope, a serious and substantial analysis of the role of the Greek state in the Macedonian Question. At the same time, however, I hope that it will raise wider questions about the era of state-building in Greece since independence, and the succession of forms of Greek political instability which characterised the Greek state from 1909 to the 1970s. That aspect of the problems of the Greek state has of course also achieved a higher profile because of the contemporary financial and political crisis which occurred while this thesis was being written. It is, however, I believe, a firmly historical question. It is necessary for historians to understand quite why the Greek state did not achieve a ‘take off’ into the autonomy that characterised most other European states of the period, and I believe that the study of the Macedonian question provides an important means of addressing this problem.

This also has a wider and non-Greek dimension. Much of this thesis might be regarded as an exploration of the peculiarity of the Greek polity. At the same time, however, it would be naïve to place Greek exceptionalism against a norm of rational decision-making in other European states. After all, if there has been one benefit of the recent wave of works on the origins of 1914, it has been to demonstrate the extent to which policy-making in all European states at the time depended on court intrigues, parliamentary politics, military initiatives, press campaigns, and popular attitudes. Thus, this thesis is also a study of the wider evolution of European politics in the period. That is particularly so within a Mediterranean context. One of the ambitions of the thesis, though only half-fulfilled, was to highlight the extent to which the case of Greece in the 1900s can be placed alongside the very similar political pressures and forms of political instability which manifested themselves in, notably, Italy, Spain, Turkey and Portugal. Seen in this way, this thesis is also a contribution to the examination of the complex transitions to political modernity in the Mediterranean region.

Of course, I am very much aware that this thesis cannot be regarded as the last word on this subject. Future research will have to pay more attention to the

complexities of Greek policy-making, through the exploration of new archives, if they ever become available within Greece, but also through the more likely possibility of using the archives of other diplomatic actors involved in working with, or opposing, Greek ambitions in Macedonia. There is also a need to pay greater attention to the street and popular politics of the period in Greece and more especially Athens, and to the emergence of a more populist politics, notably through the voice of the nationalist press. In particular, what is needed is more biographies of key contemporary actors placing them in the context of the Greek politics of the time, for instance of Stephanos Dragoumis and of Georgios Theotokis, and also a more thorough analysis of the Greek political system from the 1870s until the Goudi Revolution in 1909. Despite these shortcomings, I hope therefore that this thesis provides a useful demonstration of further research on what remains, to my mind, a crucial moment in the development of the Greek state, as well as the diplomatic and ethnic politics of the Western Balkans.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abb: Abbreviation

AYE: Αρχείο Υπουργείου Εξωτερικών, Κεντρική Υπηρεσία [Archive of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Headquarters]

AYEC: Archive of the Greek Embassy in Constantinople

AYEL: Archive of the Greek Embassy in London

AYEP: Archive of the Greek Embassy in Paris

AEYR: Archive of the Greek Embassy in Rome

BEL: Loukas Bellos Archive at the Gennadius Library (Athens)

BRI: Bridge, F.R., *Austro-Hungarian Documents Relating to the Macedonian Struggle, 1896-1912* (Salonica, 1976)

CUP: Committee of Union and Progress

DRAI: Ion Dragoumis Archive at the Gennadius Library

DRAS: Stephanos Dragoumis Archive at the Gennadius Library

ELIA: The Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive

FRAN: Ambrosios Frantzis Archive at the Gennadius Library

GAV: Vlasis Gavriilidis archive at ELIA

HXIII: Various authors, *History of the Greek nation* [Ιστορία του ελληνικού έθνους] (thirteenth volume, Athens, 1977)

HXIV: The fourteenth volume of the work cited above.

KARA: Giorgos Petsivas (ed.), *Ioannis Karavitis: the Macedonian Struggle: Memoirs* (in Greek) (first volume, Athens)

KARB: Idem, *Ioannis Karavitis: the Macedonian Struggle: Memoirs* (in Greek) (second volume, Athens)

KORD: Andreas Kordellas archive at the Gennadius Library

MAE: Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MAVRO: Kyriakoulis Mavromichalis Archive at ELIA

MDM: *Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (ed.), Macedonia: documents and material* (Sofia, 1978)

MELASE: Archive of Natalia and Pavlos Melas at ELIA

NS: New Style Calendar

NSA: National Society Archive at the Historical Museum

NAM: Natalia Mela (ed.), *Pavlos Melas* [Παύλος Μελάς] (Athens, 1964)

OS: Old Style Calendar

PETRO: Petropoulakis Family Archive at ELIA

SMARO: Secret Macedonian Adrianople Revolutionary Organisation

TID: Giorgos Petsivas (ed.), *The Ilinden Diaries by Ion Dragoumis* (in Greek) (Athens, 2000)

SKOUG: Skouloudis Archive at the Gennadius Library

SKOUZ: Skouzes Archive at ELIA

TMIA: Kunalp, Sinan and Tokay, Gül (eds.), *Ottoman diplomatic documents on the origins of World War I: the Macedonian Issue*, (first volume, Istanbul, 2011)

TMIB: The second volume of the work cited above.

TFSCQ: Sinan Kunalp (ed.), *Ottoman diplomatic documents on the origins of World War I: The Final Stage of the Cretan Question 1899-1913* (Istanbul, 2009)

TRICE: Tricoupis Archive at ELIA

VARGAK: Georgios Tsontos Vardas Archive at the General Archives of the State

Also note that Ion stands for Ion Dragoumis; Stephanos for Stephanos Dragoumis; Melas for Pavlos Melas; Natalia for Natalia Melas; the Ministry for the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs; *The Times* for *The London Times*. Unless otherwise mentioned, months stand for OS months: e.g., April 1904, stands for April (OS) 1904.

Greek names were transliterated according to the rules followed by the United Nations, unless a name already had a latinisation that was accepted by contemporaries. Thus, Καμπύσης was transliterated as Kambysis but Θεοτόκης remained Theotokis, as contemporaries spelled it, and not Theotokis.

## INTRODUCTION

Ottoman Macedonia consisted of three administrative districts (vilayets): Uskub, Salonica and Monastir. These regions were among the first the Ottomans conquered in Europe: Salonica and its hinterland became part of the Ottoman Empire in the early fifteenth century, a couple of decades before Constantinople fell in their hands. But, as the power of the Ottoman Empire declined and its frontiers shrank, the three vilayets became a border zone: to the north of Macedonia there were the Kingdom of Serbia, the Principality of Montenegro and the Principality of Bulgaria. To the South there was the Kingdom of Greece. As in other areas of the Balkans, the majority of the population was Christian, with a significant Muslim minority (40%), and a Jewish presence in the cities, especially Salonica. After 1878, Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and also Romania competed for influence over the Christian Macedonians, hoping that in the event of an Ottoman collapse they could translate influence into territorial gain.

The competition over Macedonia soon became one of the most complex diplomatic questions of the nineteenth century. Part of the reason was that there was no single Macedonia, but Macedonias. Each nation had its own Macedonia and its definition was more than anything else a matter of national interests. For Ottoman diplomats, 'Macedonia' was not a separate administrative or geographic region, just an

abbreviated appellation of the three vilayets – indeed Ottoman officials treated the very name ‘Macedonia’ with suspicion, as the word dated to the pre-Ottoman past of the region. Bulgarians tended to use the term Macedonia to describe the regions where Christians were in majority, often excluding those parts of the Uskub vilayet where Albanian Muslims were a majority. They complicated matters further by including in the discussion the Adrianople vilayet – a region that is today divided between Greece and Turkey. The Greek stance was similarly complex. A statistic funded by the Greek embassy in Paris in 1904 talked of ‘historical’ Macedonia, referring back to the times of Alexander the Great: this ‘historical’ region coincided roughly with the Salonica and Monastir vilayets, leaving out the Uskub vilayet for which Greek nationalists were less interested.<sup>1</sup>

Most contemporary Greeks, however, understood Macedonia in the context of their competition with Bulgaria. As we shall see in ch. I, this antagonism made its appearance in the 1860s and 1870s and reached its climax in the 1900s. Beyond the notion that Macedonia was a historically Greek land that the devious Bulgarians wanted to seize, Greeks were not always sure about the character of the territory. According to a widespread rumour, politician Theodoros Deliyannis asked a merchant from Serres, a large town in the Salonica vilayet, about ‘the commercial

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<sup>1</sup> Tasos Kostopoulos, *The forbidden language: state repression of the Slav dialects in Greek Macedonia* (in Greek) (Athens, 2000), pp. 23-27.

volume of the port' of his city: in reality, Serres had no port, and the offended merchant returned to Macedonia with stories about the ignorant politicians of Athens.<sup>2</sup> But, even if they did not get their geography right, Greek politicians were well aware that 'Macedonia', whatever it stood for, was among the top priorities of the Greek nation.

The main purpose of this thesis will be to examine the history of Greek involvement with the Macedonian Question through a focus on Greek politics. How did different parties approach the Macedonian Question? What did political leaders agree and disagree about on the Macedonian Question? Examination of Greek politics also requires an exploration of the way in which domestic politics impinged on diplomatic policy-making. As we shall see, Greek diplomats did not act in isolation from politics: on the contrary, they always kept domestic political concerns firmly in mind. And for some key figures, such as Ion Dragoumis – whom we shall examine at length – the difference between diplomacy and politics, if such a difference existed at all, was only a superficial one.

Two parties dominated Greek parliamentary life between the 1880s and 1909. The first, the New Party [*Νεωτερικόν Κόμμα*] was founded by Charilaos Tricoupis, who as a young politician made a spectacular appearance in Greek politics in 1874. In

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<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Dhimitris Lithoksou, *Greek anti-Macedonian Struggle: I. From Ilinden to Zagoritsani* (in Greek) (Athens, 1998), p. 104.

that year Tricoupis wrote ‘Who’s to blame?’, a newspaper article that earned him the anger of King George and four days in prison, but also fame as the key political representative of liberalism in Greece. Over the course of the next year, George had already changed his mind about Tricoupis, and the latter undertook his first premiership.

The article by Tricoupis was an answer to an editorial by Alexandros Vyzantios, a leading conservative journalist of nineteenth-century Athens. Vyzantios was dissatisfied with the chaos of Greek politics: governments often lasted no longer than a few months, MPs moved with ease from one party to the other, and the parliament was divided among five parties, of more or less equal power. His article was entitled ‘Who’s to blame, the monarchy or the parties?’ and Vyzantios answered without hesitation that the parties were the culprit. He condemned ‘the corrupting system of universal suffrage’, proclaimed that he could imagine a Greece without party leaders but not without a king, and concluded that ‘the only cause of the evil is the weakness of the monarchy and the omnipotence of the parties’. Vyzantios wanted to set the clock back to the absolute monarchy of Greece’s first king, Otto, who was deposed in 1862.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Alexandros Vyzantios, ‘Who’s to blame: the monarchy or the parties’, *Imera*, May 1874. The article is reproduced in Antonis M. Pantelis, Stephanos I. Koutsoumbinas and Triantafyllos A. Gerozisis (eds.), *Texts of constitutional history I: 1821-1923* (in Greek) (Athens, 1993), pp. 464-66.

For the liberal Tricoupis, this was anachronistic mumbo jumbo. Blame for the instability of Greece laid with the king not the parties. The only role that the king should be allowed to play was that of a constitutional monarch: he should interfere with politics only when it was absolutely necessary and only to protect the stability of the established political system. The substantive business of politics should be left to the parliament.<sup>4</sup>

This should not mislead us into believing that Tricoupis had a high opinion of the existing political parties. Like most liberal reformists he regarded the Greek parties as a disgrace. The parliament had been established to bring Greece closer to the respectable politics of northern Europe but the way in which it worked reminded everyone of Greece's shameful 'Turkish occupation' [*Τουρκοκρατία*]. Most politicians were descendants of Ottoman beys or notables and got votes through centuries-old networks of power. What was worse, most parties had no programme and aims: in the contemporary political language they were personal [*προσωπικά*] parties rather than parties of principles [*κόμματα αρχών*]. To the mind of liberals, the parties saw in power only an end in itself and once they got it, they only used it for selfish motives, especially for appointments in the public sector. The

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<sup>4</sup> Charilaos Tricoupis, 'Who's to blame?', *Kairoi*, 29 June/12 July 1874. The article is reproduced in Pantelis, Koutsoumbinas and Gerozisis, pp. 466-71.

intellectual Emmanuel Rhoides, known for his pithy and bitter remarks, summed up the liberal critique:

Elsewhere, the parties are born because there exist people disagreeing, each wanting different things. In Greece, the exact opposite occurs; the cause of party genesis and struggle is the admirable unity with which all want the same thing: to be fed at public expense.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, if Tricoupis defended the parties in his famous article, it was only because he interpreted their alleged incompetence as an effect rather than as a cause. In the optimism typical of the 1870s, Tricoupis assumed that a parliament would work well unless something stopped it from doing so. If the law and especially the constitution were followed and implemented without obstruction and interference, then Greece would have a stable two-party system, and the parliament would be divided among conservatives and liberals, as happened elsewhere in Europe. For Tricoupis, the answer to the question as to why since independence Greece had not achieved a stable parliamentary politics was clear: the appointment of minority cabinets by the King. Tricoupis offered a simple and appealing explanation: by appointing as prime ministers politicians who did not have a parliament majority, George I undermined the Greek political system. Voters, party leaders and MPs understood that what counted was not votes but the favour of the

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<sup>5</sup> Rhoides in *Asmodaios*, 26 May/8 June 1875, quoted by George Th. Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn republic: social coalitions and party strategies in Greece: 1922-36* (London, 1983), p. 65.

king. Consequently, they cared little about electoral results and party coalitions and more about palace intrigues and what Tricoupis called with disdain ‘personal’ politics: Significantly, Tricoupis’s first party was termed the ‘impersonal [απρόσωπον] party’. Once the King stopped interfering in politics in an extra-constitutional way, the problem would be resolved: parties would be forced to coalesce in order to gain control of the parliament, and the Greek political system would by necessity – or so Tricoupis thought – gravitate towards stable, two-party politics.

Future events partially justified Tricoupis’s optimism. By the early 1880s Greek political life was dominated by two parties. Tricoupis had restyled his party as the New Party [*Νεωτερικόν κόμμα*], and its opponent was the National [*Εθνικόν*] Party, which, in accordance with good conservative practice, spent most of its energy in obstructing Tricoupis’s liberal reforms. But Tricoupists saw in the National Party, and especially its leader, Theodoros Deliyannis, a continuation of the old corrupt practices, rather than a genuine party of principles. For them, Deliyannis was a demagogue, who saw power as its own reward and never set down a clear declaration of his political principles.

In turn, Deliyannists questioned the merit of the Tricoupist quest for parties of principles. At the funeral oration of Deliyannis, in 1905, his political successor,

Kyriakoulis Mavromichalis (himself the descendant of Maniot beys) touched on the issue of parties and ideologies:

It is true that it is often said we lack parties such as they exist elsewhere, and those who say these things are obviously upset at this lack of our country. Indeed, we do not have democrats and radicals, nor socialists and anarchists, nor royalists and imperialists, nor liberals and conservatives, nor supporters and enemies of the royal dynasty, that is parties of principles, which however in the acerbity of their actions shake the very foundations not only of the political institutions but also of the social order. Should we really be so upset that we do not have such parties? Should we consider ourselves unlucky because we have no social divisions, nor dynastic disputes nor religious fights?

Deliyiannists were populists in the sense that they used the people as their principal political value. Of course, when they talked of the ‘people’ what they had in mind was a classless and unified entity: as Margaret Canovan has argued, populist politicians operate under the assumption that the people are one.<sup>6</sup> And, as usually happens with populist parties, they owed their appeal more to the energy and personality of their leader than to party structure and ideology. Deliyiannis was the first Greek politician to make tours of the countryside, and he also was the first to introduce mass politics to Greece: he used slogans, posters and demonstrations more than anyone before him.

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<sup>6</sup> Margaret Canovan, ‘“People”, politicians and populism’, *Government and Opposition*, 19:3 (July, 1984), pp. 312-27, here 318. See also *idem*, ‘Two strategies for the study of populism’, *Political Studies*, 30:4 (December, 1982), pp. 544-52, here 550-51.

People voted for Deliyiannis as the best means to block Tricoupis's reforms, which caused significant economic and social distress in the 1880s, and also because of his charisma. Deliyiannis was undoubtedly a gifted public orator: unlike Tricoupis, who used clear and methodical arguments, Deliyiannis loved pithy remarks that questioned Tricoupis's assumptions. Tricoupis was a favourite of the educated and of the upper middle classes. The son of one Prime Minister (Spyridon Tricoupis), and the nephew of another (Alexandros Mavrocordato), Tricoupis could not pass as one of the common people nor did he try much to do so. His reserved character made people call him 'the Englishman'. Deliyiannis also came from a well-known family, but had the sort of colourful and attractive personality that allowed him to pass as one of the people and to establish a personal bond with his voters.

But it was not all 'personal politics': Deliyiannis did have a political message, which was centred around the 'desire for recognition' that, according to Clifford Geertz, is often found in new states.<sup>7</sup> Contemporary Greeks felt angry that their country was small and weak. Greece possessed the most ancient and respected culture in the region and yet there were millions of 'unredeemed' Greeks inside the Ottoman Empire. If the independent Greece which had emerged in 1830 had ended up as a small and weak state, it was because the intrigues of high diplomacy, and

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<sup>7</sup> Clifford Geertz, 'The integrative revolution: primordial sentiments and civil sentiments in new states', in *idem* (ed.), *Old societies and new states: the quest for modernity in Asia and Africa* (London, 1963), pp. 105-57, here 505-10.

especially the eagerness of the Great Powers (namely Great Britain, France, Italy, Russia, Germany, and Austria-Hungary) to keep alive the sick man of Europe, Turkey, had deprived them of the much larger and stronger kingdom that they believed they deserved. Deliyiannis often gave voice to Greek anger against European diplomacy, and – especially early in his career – he tried to speak truth to power, reminding the European powers of the allegedly just Greek territorial claims in uncompromising language. This reinforced the Tricoupist stereotype that he was little more than a demagogue, but also earned him the adoration of many Greeks, who saw in him a defender of Greek national interests.

Diplomacy, and more especially the frustrated goal of an irredentist Greek nationalism, was therefore inseparable from Greek politics in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. This was well demonstrated by the decision of the Greek Prime Minister Epameinondas Deligiorgis to abolish the Greek embassies in 1873. As Mariana D. Christopoulou has demonstrated, this decision was one that divided the Greek political world:<sup>8</sup> were the embassies necessary for Greek foreign policy? Or were they an unnecessary economic burden? The parliamentary debates on the subject were endless. Those against the embassies questioned the very purpose of their existence: they had not done any good to Greece in the past, and they were

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<sup>8</sup> Marianna D. Christopoulou, ‘Modernising the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs: 1875-77’ (in Greek), *Cleio*, 5 (September, 2009), pp. 219-46, here passim.

unlikely to do any good in the future. The republican and socialist MP Rokkos Choidas made his case with eloquence: ‘Do you want us to send ambassadors so that we, the dwarfs, survey the giants? Do you want to send ambassadors so that the insignificant Greeks keep a friendship with the great of the earth? Or, finally, do you think that this way we will resolve our political problems faster?’<sup>9</sup> For Choidas, the embassies of the Greek state were a symbol of the excessive preoccupation with foreign affairs. According to him, Greece’s irredentist aspirations had distracted attention from more important domestic matters, and in particular social injustice.

Together with this suspicion of diplomacy came an anti-elitism. The employees of the Foreign Ministry came from powerful families with political connections: a diplomatic career was often the first step to success in politics, and many Greek Prime Ministers started off as diplomats. For some, the Ministry was little more than a preserve of elitism. As Gerasimos Zochios put it:

You have to put taxes on the farmer, the shepherd, to crucify them ... in order to send a golden paycheck to these gentlemen [the ambassadors], who dance and jump around in Europe. Then the Ministers tell us ‘we have a deficit’ ... when, however, I visit my village the peasants tell me: we have no school, we have no teacher, I do not consent to paying salaries [to the ambassadors].<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Efimeris sizitiseon tis Voulis, term VII, session LVII, 4/17 December 1875, p. 459.

<sup>10</sup> Efimeris Sizitiseon tis Voulis, term VII, session LIV, 1/14 December 1875, pp. 412–13.

Deliyiannis echoed this critique, albeit with a different purpose. For him, the dominance of powerful families in the Ministry was symbolic of the failure of the elite of the Greek state to defend the legitimate territorial demands of the Greek nation.<sup>11</sup> Thus, in the 1880s anti-elitist attacks on the Foreign Ministry would become a staple theme of the Deliyiannists.

Tricoupis thought otherwise:

I am among those who believe embassies to be useful [...] [Embassies] are necessary for our country due to its obligations to the whole of hellenism [sic], they are necessary for our country because of the obligations of our State to maintain its position, the one it is accustomed to in the Orient, and they are also necessary for reasons of immediate practical value.<sup>12</sup>

Tricoupis's argument evolved around Europe and modernity: Greece should have embassies, because otherwise it would not be taken seriously by the Great Powers. As usual the solution for Tricoupis was reform. The Ministry should be tightly regulated by rules – as happened in other European states – that would hold the employees accountable and make sure that they served state interests rather than personal profit. This would also guarantee a bureaucratic continuity: the Ministry would continue its work irrespective of who was in power. The veteran of the War of Independence, Dimitrios Kallifronas reacted: 'We believe that the Ministers are

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<sup>11</sup> Efimeris Sizitiseon tis Voulis, term V, session LX, pp. 286–88.

<sup>12</sup> Tricoupis quoted by Christopoulou, 'Modernising the...', p. 1.

above the employees, but now the employees will be above the Ministers ... the employees are declared to be the supreme authority'.<sup>13</sup> Antonis Mavromichalis, a second cousin of Kyriakoulis and a future Deliyiannist Minister, expressed similar concerns: 'Greeks suffer from the defects in our way of governing and of the political group [μερίς] to which they belong'. The employees often served their own interests instead of those of the state: only a powerful Minister – not rules – could remedy the evil.<sup>14</sup>

In a similar vein, Zochios retorted that in Western European countries institutional stability was guaranteed through tradition not through legislation. Tricoupis, however, replied that Greece was a new kingdom, which did not have the time to develop traditions; hence 'the lack of custom should be substituted with the law'.<sup>15</sup> Tricoupists remained suspicious of Greek traditions, which they regarded as remnants of the shameful Ottoman past, and turned instead to law, which became their supreme ideological value. Law would allow for the creation of a powerful, centralised state, run by well-educated bureaucratic elites, who would take rational decisions in the name of state interests.

The principal debates about Greek foreign policy concerned relations with Turkey. Greece, it was clear, wanted Turkish territory, but how was it to gain it? Tricoupis,

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<sup>13</sup> Efimeris Sizitiseon tis Voulis, term VII, session XXXI, 25 June/8 July 1877, p. 193.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. Antonis Anastasiou Mavromichalis's paternal grandfather was Petrobey. The paternal grandfather of Kyriakoulis Petrou Mavromichalis was Kyriakoulis. Petrobey and Kyriakoulis were sons of Pierros Mavromichalis.

<sup>15</sup> Efimeris sizitiseon tis Voulis, term VII, session XII, 15/27 November 1877, p. 42.

as usual, followed European models: for him, the tools of foreign policy should be Greek diplomats and the army. His blue-print for the army was predictable: he wanted a professional army, based on a well-educated elite trained at the military academies of Athens. The education, equipment and training of the army had to follow European standards. Of course, no matter how good such an army could be, Greece was simply too small to hope it could defeat the Ottoman Empire at war. But, when the moment for the final collapse of Turkey came, and many believed that this collapse would happen sooner rather than later, the professionalism of Greece's army and diplomacy would convince the Great Powers that Greece was the most reliable inheritor of Turkish territory and power, and the Powers would reward Greece accordingly.

Deliyiannis thought differently. This is how his follower, the writer Chatzigiannakoglous, summed up his views:

...it has to be understood that the Turks have been connected to us historically and socially, it would then be imprudent for Hellenism's sake to demand the separation of the two peoples ... The co-existence, obviously under a compromise, has become an undeniable historical necessity. After all, the free Greek might be able to fight against the Turk, but the enslaved Greek will get in great difficulty if he does this, and it would demand great bravery. ... The Greek has among them [the Turks] friends, protectors, admirers, he loves them and they love him in return. If the Turkish

administration improves, the coexistence [between Greeks and Turks] will be the friendliest in the world.<sup>16</sup>

These views were expressed after the Greek military defeat against Turkey in 1897, therefore they were dominated by the circumstances of the moment. Still, Deliyiannis was quite serious in questioning the primacy of Athens. He did not believe that all the major decisions had to be taken at the capital, nor did he trust much in bureaucratic rationality. Instead, he had a much broader and organic understanding of the Greek people, which encompassed those among the independent state's borders as much as those within it. He therefore often argued against Tricoupis's conviction that the Greek government represented the interests of Hellenism as a whole: he rather thought that the 'unredeemed' Greeks within Turkey had to act as a brake on the actions of the government.

Nevertheless, the most consistent defender of a Greek-Turkish *entente* was not Deliyiannis but Dimitrios Rallis. He believed that an alliance with Turkey would achieve two aims at once: it would ward off the Bulgarian threat in Macedonia and it would also guarantee the protection of Greek subjects and Christians in Turkey. Greeks living in the Empire often had similar views. Wealthy bankers such as the Zarifis family found the cooperation of the two countries far more appealing than war. And the Salonican newspaper *Ermis* spoke for many Ottoman Greeks when it

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<sup>16</sup> Georgios D. Chatzigiannakoglous, *The political life of Th. P. Deliyiannis* (in Greek) (Athens, 1902), pp. 156-57.

claimed that Constantinople rather than Athens was the centre of Hellenism and that Greeks and Turks should co-exist rather than fight.<sup>17</sup>

For many among the Greek elites – and the elites were staunchly Tricoupist until the 1900s – this co-operation made no sense. Typical of such attitudes was the Greek diplomat and author Evgenios Zalokostas. In 1895 he gave a talk on his recent visit to Constantinople. Zalokostas knew Turkey well, and he was convinced that Turks were of a very different nature than Greeks. He said of Turkish women: ‘what are they thinking since they do not talk? What are they doing since they do not move? This is the Turkish life. Speechlessness, stagnation, gaiety’. For educated upper-middle-class Greeks like him, there was no doubt that Greece was superior to Turkey, and the reason was that Turkey (unlike Greece) could never become European. He described the city ‘as a painter representing an image’: the inhabitants were reduced to the details of a picturesque landscape without thoughts and history. For Zalokostas, looking in the direction of Turkey meant betraying Europe.<sup>18</sup>

Despite such prejudices, many Greeks looked repeatedly in the direction of Turkey. Their interests in Macedonia, and their anxiety that Bulgaria would seize

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<sup>17</sup> Mark Mazower, *Salonica: city of ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews, 1430-1950* (London, 2005), p. 245.

<sup>18</sup> Evgenios Zalokostas, *From the upper Bosphorus* (in Greek) (Athens, 1895), the quote on Constantinople is on p. 1, the second quote on p. 12 and the third on p. 1; Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Greek translation) (Athens, 1996 [New York, 1978]), p. 81. For the ‘picturesque’ in Istanbul see Orhan Pamuk, *Istanbul: memories and the city* (London, 2005), ch. 27, ‘The picturesque and the outlying neighbourhoods’, pp. 229-38.

all the benefits from a Turkish collapse, left Greeks with no other choice. The product of Greek preoccupations was the Macedonian Defence, also known as the Macedonian Struggle. Its aim, briefly put, was to stop the Bulgarians without upsetting the Turks. This in the end proved too ambitious an aim, and as the policy of the Macedonian Defence began to fall apart in 1907, so Greek parliamentary politics also fell into crisis. In this thesis we will therefore try to recapture the complicated story of the Macedonian Defence, and its entanglement in Greek domestic politics: its origins in the Greek-Bulgarian antagonism following 1878, its first formulations in the early 1900s, its successes in 1905-06 and its end in 1907-09. This is a difficult story to reconstruct because the Defence itself changed in its aims and content over the course of the years. Some initially imagined it as a tool to bring about a Greek-Turkish understanding, but in the end, if anything, it widened the gap between the two states.

At first sight, an attempt to retell the story of the Defence might appear unnecessary. Already in 1935, Nikolaos V. Vlachos wrote a classic book on the subject. Vlachos's narrative remains convincing, and his detailed account of Greek actions make the study of this book worthwhile, although almost eighty years have passed since its publication. Yet, Vlachos pays disappointingly little attention to the alternatives with which Greek diplomats and politicians were presented: the

Defence, or to be more precise, the entry of Greek bands in Ottoman territory, is proclaimed from the start to be the only possible response to the problems facing Greece. Consequently, the different approaches adopted to the problem of Macedonia, and the ensuing debates among Greek politicians and diplomats, are never seriously considered.

The other great book on this subject is the work of Douglas Dakin, first published in 1966. This remains with good reason the standard work of reference on the Greek involvement with the Macedonian Question. If we leave aside Dakin's evident partisanship for the Greek cause, and his lack of interest in the Turkish and Bulgarian points of view, the main weakness of his work is that he tends to discuss military and political developments separately: what the Greek bands and consuls did inside Macedonia belongs to his mind in a wholly different sphere from the political world of Athens. This view is not entirely mistaken, in that the Greek politicians quite often lost control of what their diplomats and soldiers did in Macedonia. But, for most of the time, politicians and ministers tried to keep some control over the unruly bandits and the consuls. Dakin's separation of Greek policy in two distinct spheres therefore makes him overemphasise the importance of soldiers and underestimate the role of politicians. As he writes in the introduction,

what happened between 1897 and 1912 took place ‘in spite of the traditional scene of stormy party politics’.<sup>19</sup>

This would have been just a secondary weakness of Dakin’s work, had not so many historians followed his example. Greek historiography on the Macedonian Question is a particularly rich one, especially when it comes to academic articles. Hundreds of articles have been published, but the complexity of party politics, if discussed at all, has been seen simply as a hindrance to the Defence. The focus is instead on the actions of Greek bandits and consuls. As it usually happens with this sort of historiography, military leaders and intransigent intellectuals are cast in the role of heroes, whereas politicians are seen as uninspired and lacking in nationalist emotion. The discontinuities, breaks and inconsistencies of the Defence are often ignored, and a straight line is drawn between the Defence and the eventual Greek victory in the Balkan Wars of 1912-13. In reality however, at the beginning of the 1900s no one had predicted a Greek-Bulgarian military cooperation, let alone that such a cooperation would have defeated the Turks without support from a major European power. This unremitting focus on military deeds risks turning an important chapter of Greek diplomatic and political history into a mere prelude to the Balkan Wars and the ‘liberation’ of ‘Greek Macedonia’, overshadowing the

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<sup>19</sup> Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia: 1897-1913* (Salonica, 1993 [1966]), p. 1.

complexity of the actual decision making and the discontinuities of the Defence.<sup>20</sup>

It is that complexity, and more especially the entanglement of the political, the military and the diplomatic, which forms the subject of this thesis.

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<sup>20</sup> Articles on the Macedonian Question are frequently published in journals such *Makedonika* and *Deltion tis istorikis kai ethnologikis etairias tis Ellados*. The title of the otherwise informative article of Erato Zelliou-Mastrokosta [‘Unknown and little known fighters of the region of Gevgeli during the Macedonian Struggle’ (in Greek), *Makedonika*, 31 (1997-98)] is indicative of this historiographical trend.



Figure 1 Ottoman Macedonia as it is divided today. The frontiers of the Ancient Kingdom of Macedonia are also marked.  
From Wikimedia Commons, created by user Eldar73.



Figure 2 From Wikimedia Commons, created by user Christophe cagé



Figure 3 Ethnographic map of the Balkans published by the British cartographer Edward Stanford in 1877, following the suggestions of the Greek diplomat I. Gennadius. After the Russian-Turkish War of 1877-78, Greek hopes would become more restricted.



Figure 4 From Wikimedia Commons. Created by user Todor Bozhinov. Most of the geographic places in Macedonia mentioned in this thesis can be found on this map.

## 1. GREEK FOREIGN POLICY AND THE MACEDONIAN QUESTION: 1878-97

### I. THE EASTERN CRISIS: 1876-78

A Greek journalist, under the nom-de-plume of Democritus, defined Greek irredentism in 1842:

Oh, neighbouring peoples, Bulgarians, Albanians and whoever else. You inhabit a land that has been Greek from an ancient time and you have the same Church as we have. Merge with us into Hellenism... The Greek ethnicity has many roots: language, education, history, church, mountains, sea and the money that comes from it, islands, numbers, commercial colonies all around the world... and also the now existing Greek Kingdom and the philhellenism of the other nations that defend it... And you, brothers, what do you have instead of the above? Not much history, small numbers, little wisdom, modest wealth, much strength and courage, but also ignorance and lack of the necessary money.<sup>21</sup>

Democritus believed that Greeks were superior to other Balkan Christians. Greek education and the creation of a kingdom that followed the European model were what Greeks valued particularly. But this superiority did not have racial undertones: other Balkan peoples were brothers who could be assimilated. As Antonis Liakos has remarked, in their irredentist optimism, Greeks resembled their contemporary Italians. Moreover, Democritus did not distinguish among the other Christian nations: they were all Christians who lived in the Ottoman Empire.

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<sup>21</sup> Democritus, 'The nation', *Aion* 6/18 October 1842, p. 1. The original is in verse.

Mother tongue had no importance, and Ottoman Christians who spoke Greek as a mother tongue were not singled out as more Greek than the rest. The Greek hope was to assimilate Bulgarians, Albanians and Vlachs in the Greek nation through education, the prestige of the Constantinople Patriarchate and the influence of their state.<sup>22</sup>

This Greek feeling of superiority was in line with what liberals thought in Western Europe. For instance, John Stuart Mill claimed that ‘nobody can suppose that it is not more beneficial to a Breton, or a Basque... to be [French] than to sulk on his rocks, the half savage relic of past times, revolving around his own little mental orbit’.<sup>23</sup> Assimilation was the price ‘lower’ cultures had to pay for enjoying the advantages of life in a modern state.

The means by which this assimilation of the Christian populations would be brought about were not exclusively peaceful and cultural. Thus, in the 1840s Greek bandits made many incursions in Ottoman territory: they proclaimed them to be ‘liberating missions’, but their real interest was looting. Their victims were both Christians and Muslims, and the campaigns were short-lived. Greek politicians, especially Ioannis Kolettis between 1844 and 1847, supported these bandits. This outraged the Ottoman Minister in Athens, Kostaki Musurus, who was a Phanariot,

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<sup>22</sup> Antonis Liakos, *The Italian unification and the Great Idea: 1859- 1862* (in Greek) (Athens, 1985), pp. 213-16.

<sup>23</sup> Norman Stone, *Europe transformed: 1878-1919* (Glasgow, 1983), p. 59.

i.e. a Greek who resided in Constantinople and worked for the Ottoman bureaucracy. Bandit incursions became a source of permanent diplomatic problems, but they were of no military significance. They were a sideshow to the broader rhetoric of irredentism.<sup>24</sup>

This changed in 1854. In the Crimean War, Greek sympathies were with the Russians. Greeks always considered Russia as an ally: Catherine II instigated revolution in the Peloponnese in 1770 ; the treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in 1774 granted to Orthodox Ottomans the right to sail under the Russian flag; the Russian-Turkish War of 1828-29 helped Greeks in the war against Turkey; Russia was among the three Powers that guaranteed Greek independence in 1832; the first governor of Greece was Ioannis Capodistria, who had served as Foreign Minister to czar Alexander; and Greece had a ‘Russian’ party [*Ναπαίοι*], which had invested its hopes for territorial expansion in the Czar. Many Greeks saw in Russia their greatest protector.

King Otto and his Government therefore responded to the Crimean War by instigating an uprising in European Turkey. The Greeks were under no illusion that the revolutionaries would succeed. Their hope was that a Christian uprising and the ensuing persecution of Ottoman Christians would instigate the Powers to interfere

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<sup>24</sup> George Michalopoulos, ‘Tensions between Greece and Turkey during the 1840s: an Ottoman diplomat against a Greek Premier’, *Journal of Oriental and African studies*, 12 (2003), pp. 189-96, here 194-96.

in Greece's favour. This was what had happened in the War of Independence of 1821- 28: Greece had little chances on the battlefield but could emerge victorious in diplomacy.

Six thousands Greek irregulars entered Thessaly and thousands of locals joined them. The uprising also spread in Macedonia, albeit with less success; in addition, a volunteer detachment, the Greek Legion, under Panos Koronaios joined the Russians in Sevastopol. A contemporary painting shows the Greeks dressed in fustanellas taking a religious oath in the bombarded city in the presence of a Russian priest and officers; captured French and British soldiers walk by and watch in curiosity; despairing locals look to the Greeks with hope. The banner of the Greek Legion is blue, bears a cross and reads 'Orthodoxy 1853'. Greek hopes were high.

Had the Russians won the Crimean War, the Greek nineteenth century might have been very different. As things turned out, Greeks suffered not only defeat, but also the occupation of the Piraeus by British and French troops. Britain and France treated Greece as a belligerent nation. The occupation forces paraded outside the Royal Palace, arrested the journalists Ioannis Filimonas and Konstantinos Levidis for opposing them, and interfered with the administration of the Kingdom. They also brought with them a cholera epidemic, which killed one tenth of the

population of Athens. 1854 challenged the hopes that the Greeks placed in diplomacy. Far from supporting them as they had done at Navarino in 1827, the British and French forces occupied Greek territory. As for Russia, it was unable to help Greece, and its reputation among Greeks suffered. The Russophile Otto was in a difficult position.<sup>25</sup>

1862 however renewed Greek hopes. A revolution toppled Otto. He was old, had failed to expand Greek territory and had no heir. Moreover, he declined converting to Orthodoxy, which was a permanent cause of friction with religious Greeks. The Declaration of the Provisional government on 1/13 October 1862 read: ‘Greeks! The wishes of the nation were listened to with the help of God. People and Army unanimously abolished the dynasty of Otto’. The cooperation of army and people in the Revolution of 1862 gave birth to the durable concept of the army-people (*στρατολαός*), a concept that would have great importance in the coming decades.<sup>26</sup>

Army officers were indeed against Otto. According to a contemporary observer nine tenths of the army were hostile to the dynasty.<sup>27</sup> But who were the ‘people’? Otto remained to the end popular in the provinces. It was the towns that turned against him: Tripoli, Patras, Nafplion and especially Athens. As was often the case,

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<sup>25</sup> For the last two paragraphs see Stephanos Papadopoulos, HXIII pp. 143-68.

<sup>26</sup> ‘Declaration of the Provisional Government’ signed by its President D.G.Voulgaris. Reproduced in Antonis Pantelis, Stefanos Koutsoumbinas and Triantafyllos Gerozisis (eds.), *Texts of constitutional history I: 1821-1923* (in Greek) (Athens, 1990) p. 260.

<sup>27</sup> Petrakakos quoted by Odysseas Dimitrakopoulos, in HXIII, p. 195.

young middle class people were the most radical: university students were often not just anti-dynastic but republican. In the 1850s, Dimitrios Rallis, a young law student interrupted his studies because of his opposition to the king and moved to Paris to avoid arrest. Rallis will emerge in this thesis as Prime Minister in 1897.

Upon the ascension of the new King, the sixteen year old George Glücksburg, to the throne, Britain ceded the Ionian Islands to Greece. Greeks interpreted this as a sign that the Power that dominated the Mediterranean was on their side. In the eventuality of an Ottoman collapse, it was believed that Greece could count on British support. Russia was still a potential ally too: in 1867, King George got married to Olga, a Russian Princess. Greek belief in the value of diplomacy to achieve territorial gains was therefore renewed after 1862.

The temper of irredentism in the 1870s had not changed much since the 1840s. As Alexandros Contostavlo, Foreign Minister, telegraphed to Ioannis Gennadius, Greek chargé d'affaires in London, in 1876: 'c'est qui lie la Grèce esclave et la Grèce libre, ce n'est pas seulement la communauté de la race et de la langue et des mœurs et des traditions nationales. C'est encore le sentiment d'une dette sacrée contractée par la Grèce libre envers celle qui ne l'est pas'.<sup>28</sup> Alexandros Contostavlo agreed with Democritus: *Grèce esclave* was a unified community,

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<sup>28</sup> AYEL 1877.1, Contostavlo to Gennadius, 31 October/12 November 1876, telegram number 7704.

unquestionably Greek in its entirety, as Alsace and Lorraine were unquestionably French for French nationalists.

The Foreign Ministry had a paternalistic attitude towards the enslaved brethren. Greek diplomatic representatives in Turkey behaved as protectors of the Orthodox population within the Ottoman Empire: they supported Christians in their legal disputes with Muslims, helped them educate their children and cared about their general wellbeing. In 1871, the Greek general-consul in Salonica helped the Christian population of the Salonica vilayet, irrespectively of ethnic background, overcome the difficulties caused by floods that had affected the cultivation of cotton.<sup>29</sup> The Greek hope was that the Christians would in return recognise the Greek kingdom as their true fatherland.

The emergence of Bulgarian nationalism changed this approach. Constantinople felt the impact of Bulgarian nationalism before Athens. In the late 1860s, the Stambuliot Greek Orthodox community became divided. On the one hand, there were the ‘supporters of the West’, who opposed the creation of an independent Bulgarian Church. On the other hand, there were the ‘supporters of Orthodoxy’: their enemies called them ‘bulgarianists’ and Russophiles.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> AYE 1871 36.2, Vatikiotis to Th. Zaimis, Salonica, 15/27 November 1871, number 800.

<sup>30</sup> Paraskevas Matalas, *Greece and Orthodoxy: the adventures of a relationship: from the ‘Helladic’ to the Bulgarian schism* (in Greek) (Herakleion, 2003), pp. 200-10.

The proclamation of the Bulgarian Exarchate, in 1872, weakened the position of the latter. The ‘supporters of the West’ gained the upper hand: in September 1872, the Synod of the Patriarchate decided that ‘everyone participating and agreeing and collaborating’ with the Bulgarian Church was a schismatic.<sup>31</sup> The Patriarchate became an enemy of the Bulgarian Church: it allied with the Greek consuls in European Turkey, and especially in its most contested region, Macedonia in order to restrain the influence of the Exarchate. Greek diplomats and politicians saw great profits in this new alliance: it allowed them to claim with seductive but illusory logic that all the communities that did not join the Exarchate were not simply faithful to the Patriarchate but also members of the Greek nation. Since the 1870s the Ministry started using the term Patriarchist as interchangeable with that of Macedonian Greek. But, beyond rational calculations, both of these parties based their response on an instinctive mistrust for Bulgarians, and in general ‘Slavs’: ‘the gangrened and rotten’ Exarchate, as the Orthodox guilds of Constantinople called it.<sup>32</sup>

The division in Orthodoxy in 1872 worried the Ministry in Athens. The consuls now dedicated much of their time protecting and reclaiming Greek Orthodox communities from the Exarchate. The vision of *la Grèce esclave*, a unity of all

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 335.

<sup>32</sup> Matalas, *ibid.* quotes the Stambuliot newspapers *Neologos* and *Vizantis*. Ibid, p. 302.

Christians of the Balkans, started fading away. The Balkan Orthodox community was fragmented. To make sense of this new world, Greek diplomats introduced new terms – Greco-Slavs, Greco-Bulgarians and Bulgaro-Slavs – and as a consequence the Greek consuls in European Turkey stopped regarding themselves as protectors of the Christians in general.<sup>33</sup>

Bulgarian nationalism was in the consuls' eyes part of a Pan-Slavist plan, the ultimate aim of which was to give Russia control of the Eastern Mediterranean. Therefore, some consuls came to see any Russian involvement in the Balkans as threatening. Logothetis, the consul general in Salonica, claimed that the Russians planned to create a new Russian monastery in Mount Athos. For him, this was an effort 'to create in Macedonia too, a plantation of missions of Pan-Slavist propaganda'. His report did not contain any specific information and his warning turned out to be false. ПАНТЕЛЕЙМОНОВ, founded in eleventh century, is to this day the only Russian monastery in Mount Athos.<sup>34</sup>

Antislavism did not, however, become dominant overnight. In 1875, a booklet, entitled *The Oecumenical Patriarchate and the Bulgarians*, appeared. The author did not reveal his real name, but he was most probably Nikiforos Papadakis, a monk in Mount Athos. He advocated reconciliation among the Orthodox Churches

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<sup>33</sup>AYE 1874.76.1, an unknown employee of the Constantinople Embassy to I.A. Deliyiannis, *Revma*, 18/30 September, 1874, number 3538; for Bulgaro-Slavs and Greco-Slavs see, AYEP 1874 76.1, P. Logothetis to I.A. Deliyiannis, Bitola [Monastir], 25 May/6 June 1874, number 4114; Matalas, *ibid.*, pp. 337-38.

<sup>34</sup> AYE 1874.76.1, Logothetis to Th. Deliyiannis, Salonica, 30 May/11 June 1874, number 4024.

and suggested the move of the Constantinople Patriarchate to Moscow to stop the fragmentation of the Orthodox world. Papadakis was not an irredentist but he was a Greek nationalist: as he said ‘he was a Greek and loved his nation’. As his views indicate, Greek Russophilia existed for a long time and took time to die out.<sup>35</sup>

What killed such Russophilia for good was the Eastern crisis of 1876-78. This protracted series of conflicts divided Greeks on their stance vis-à-vis Turkey but united them in their opposition to Russia and Bulgaria. The trouble began in the summer of 1876 when the Serbians declared war on Turkey. Greece initially remained aloof. The King, as well as many leading politicians and diplomats did not trust the ‘Slavs’ as allies, and they saw little chance of a Great Power supporting the Greek cause. But already by October 1876, a vocal pro-war party had formed. Leading intellectuals such as the historian Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos thought that political and diplomatic discussion led nowhere: Greece had to act.<sup>36</sup>

The policy the gradualists advocated seemed justified. The Serbians were defeated with casualties exceeding ten percent of their troops. Meanwhile the Ottoman army suppressed an uprising in Bulgaria. The revolt of the Balkan Slavs was over.<sup>37</sup> But the ‘party of action’ within Greece started regaining the upper hand when

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<sup>35</sup> Matalas, *Greece and...*, p. 342

<sup>36</sup> Douglas Dakin, *The unification of Greece: 1770-1923* (London, 1972), p. 127.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

Gladstone published his pamphlet *Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East*. There he demanded autonomy for the Balkan Christians: ‘Let the Turks now carry away their abuses in their only possible manner, namely by carrying off themselves’.<sup>38</sup> The virulent anti-Muslim feeling of Gladstone and the support it gained among British public opinion, convinced many Greeks that the collapse of the Ottoman Empire was imminent. When in April 1877 Russia declared war on Turkey, most Greek leaders, including the King, abandoned their restrained stance. Greece mobilised 35,000 men on the frontier with Turkey, and informal Greek forces – Greek bandits – entered Turkish territory.<sup>39</sup>

Turkey complained at the Greek mobilisation. Between 1832 and the ascension of Abdul Hamid to the throne in 1876 Greek-Turkish diplomatic relations in practice did not exist. Turkey communicated its complaints regarding the Greek mobilisation via Lord Derby. Tricoupis resisted the complaints of Turkey and Britain using the language of national rights: if Greece could not decide for itself when to mobilise, this would ‘constituer une diminution d’état de la Grèce comme puissance indépendante’ and it would occupy the ‘office de gendarme du gouvernement ottoman’. As this indicates, Tricoupis knew how to make his voice

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<sup>38</sup> Cited by L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453* (London, 2000 [1958]), p. 404. See also Keith A. P. Sandiford, ‘W.E. Gladstone and Liberal Nationalist movements’, *Albion: A quarterly journal concerned with British Studies*, 13:1 (1981), pp. 27-42, here 27-8.

<sup>39</sup> Dakin, *The unification ...*, pp. 127-29.

heard.<sup>40</sup> His ambitions, however, remained somewhat traditional. In 1877, Tricoupis still thought in terms of *la Grèce esclave*. He talked of *l'Hellénisme*, a concept which included the subjects of the Kingdom and the Christians of the Ottoman Empire. Like Democritus and Contostavlo, he spoke of *Chrétians* in general, not of Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbians and Romanians.<sup>41</sup>

Athenian irredentists were increasingly frustrated at the lack of decisive action. The Kanaris government resigned under public pressure. Between 14/26 and 16/28 of January, mobs gathered in the streets of Athens and threw stones at the houses of gradualists politicians. According to Makridimitris, these events depressed Epameinondas Deligiorgis, a prominent gradualist in the 1860s and 1870s, to the point of causing his death in 1879.<sup>42</sup> Konstantinos Kanaris and Tricoupis believed they could tame irredentism, but they were wrong. Meanwhile, on 19/31 January, Russia and the Ottoman Empire agreed to a truce. When the news reached Athens public anger reached its peak. The new government of the populist Koumoundouros ordered the Greek troops on 21 January/2 February to cross the frontier with Turkey. Theodoros Deliyiannis assumed the diplomatic defence of

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<sup>40</sup> AEYL 1877.1, Tricoupis to Gennadius, Athens 11/23 September 1877, number 794.

<sup>41</sup> AYEL 1877.1, Tricoupis to Gennadius, Athens, 10/22 September 1877, number 811.

<sup>42</sup> Antonis Makridimitris, *The prime ministers of Greece* (in Greek) (Athens, 1997), p. 329.

this decision as Foreign Minister. Greeks launched themselves in a new irredentist adventure. Unlike 1854, this time they did not have Russian support.<sup>43</sup>

Foreign diplomats instantly disliked Deliyiannis. They described him as untrustworthy and unpredictable. The French Minister in Athens, M. Tissot, wrote that ‘M. Deliyiannis ne se recommande, à un très haut degré, ni par le talent ni par le caractère... sa tendance à l’erreur préméditée dépasse les limites de la tolérance admise et nécessaire’.<sup>44</sup>

Deliyiannis’s diplomatic task was a difficult one. Greece had violated international law and went against the wishes of the Powers. For them, the Greek military interference was an unnecessary complication of the Eastern crisis. On 23 January/4 February, Deliyiannis sent a circular telegram to the Great Powers to justify the Greek military engagement. He claimed that ‘[les] troupes Grecques ont franchi [la] frontière avant que signature préliminaires [sic] et armistice fut connue au Gouvernement’. This was almost certainly a lie, albeit a safe one: the Great Powers had no way of proving the falsehood of his statement.<sup>45</sup> The more contentious claims of Deliyiannis came in his effort to explain the aim of the Greek expedition. The Greek military had crossed the frontier to ensure the security of Christians as well as to protect the ‘Greek rights’ in the Ottoman Empire.

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<sup>43</sup> Dakin, *The unification...*, pp. 129-30. Note that Kanaris died of old age before the government resigned on 2/15 November 1877.

<sup>44</sup> Tissot quoted in Evangelos Kofos, *Greece and the Eastern Crisis: 1875-78* (Salonica, 1975), p. 154.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 157-58.

Deliyiannis copied the language that Disraeli had used to restrain the Russian troops in 1877 and combined it with implicit suggestions that, unless Greece acted, a repetition of the Bulgarian Horrors would take place in Thessaly and Epirus. Deliyiannis's text did little more than affirming its author's good intentions. In any case, this Greek military action received little attention: nothing noteworthy was achieved by the Greek army and on 25 January/6 February it withdrew to Greece.<sup>46</sup>

At the time European diplomats had more important affairs in their minds.

On 19 February/3 March 1878 the San Stefano treaty was signed. According to the treaty, the newly founded Bulgaria would take a great part of European Turkey, and most of the contested region of Macedonia, which consisted of the vilayets of Uskub, Salonica and Monastir. For all nationalist-minded Greeks the Treaty was a disaster. The fear that the Eastern crisis would be over before Greece was able to show anything for it, led Greeks to renew their military activity in April (NS). As the Turkish Foreign Minister reported to London, 'Bands are constantly crossing the Greek frontier with the connivance of [the] Greek Government, commanded by officers of the Greek army and furnished with arms supplied by the Greek government and they are laying waste Epirus and Thessaly and driving the

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p. 167.

inhabitants into insurrection'.<sup>47</sup> European eye-witnesses in Thessaly recorded the events and with one main question in their minds: were they observing a repetition of the Bulgarian Horrors?

The British press was on the Greek side. Mr Fitzgerald, correspondent of the *Daily Standard*, telegraphed to the British Minister in Athens that the Turks were 'massacring and violating' in Thessaly.<sup>48</sup> The Times published on 24 March/5 April 1878, an article entitled 'Insurrection in Thessaly'. For the Times correspondent, Mr Ogle, Greeks 'had immeasurably the advantage in the humanity of conduct' over the Turks. Greeks after all were there in order to support their 'unfortunate fellow-countrymen' who were struggling for their liberty. And the Greek government should not be reproached for the insurrection: the Kingdom only observed a 'benevolent neutrality' towards the insurgents and did not give them support. The insurrection was supported materially not by the Government but by the National Defence Committee, a body consisting of wealthy Greeks who 'held aloof from internal politics'.<sup>49</sup> A few days later Ottoman soldiers killed Mr Ogle, and cut his head off as a trophy. Mr Ogle became 'a young martyr to the cause of Greece' and his warnings against Turkish atrocities acquired more

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<sup>47</sup> The Turkish Foreign Minister cited in FO 286/316, Layard to the Foreign Office, Constantinople, 21 March/2 April 1878, deciphered telegram without number. On the same day Salisbury replaced Derby as Foreign Minister.

<sup>48</sup> FO 286/316, Fitzgerald to Corbett, Surpi [Σούρπη], 17/29 March 1878, telegram without number.

<sup>49</sup> Mr. Ogle, 'The Greek insurrection', *The Times*, 23 March/ 4 April 1878, p. 4.

relevance than ever.<sup>50</sup> Mr Ogle, however, was the last of a kind. After 1878, British liberals who took the side of Christians against the Sultan had to choose between Greece and Bulgaria. Most chose Bulgaria.

Mr Ogle's fate alarmed the Foreign Office: would it be confronted with the 'Thessaly Horrors'? But British diplomats had a different view as to who was to blame. A British diplomat who arrived in Thessaly to 'watch whether the promises of the Porte for the pacification of the province are being carried out by the local authorities' found the region in a 'most unsatisfactory condition': 'the surrounding hills [of Armyro] are occupied by insurgents and brigands, the people [are] in great fear, the villages uninhabited, and the ripe harvest [is] ungathered'. The British soon met with the perpetrators of these actions: 'on Saturday, June 1,<sup>51</sup> 7 am, I was stopped in a pass by a band of fourteen brigands under a certain Yanni Candarghi. The brigands seemed 'kind' and lived through robberies: but contrary to what Greeks and their friends claimed the brigands attacked not only Muslims but also Christians. Moreover, they had little faith in their mission, seemed scared, and had no interest in continuing their struggle. They welcomed the suggestion of the British to surrender to the Turks under his personal guarantee. The British described them as robbers who were detrimental to the local Christian peasants:

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<sup>50</sup> The quote is from *The Times* correspondent in Athens, 'The burial of Mr Ogle', 13/25 April 25 1878, p. 8; the information that his head was cut off is from a text of the Consul-General Fawcett included in a sixty-page parliamentary paper on Ogle's death quoted in 'The death of Mr Ogle', *The Times*, 4/16 June 1878, p. 6.

<sup>51</sup> May 19 (OS).

this is something that the locals as well as foreigners who visited Thessaly knew well, but was often ignored by the Greek public. Christian peasants and Greek brigands had anything but a common cause. The conclusion of the British diplomat was that, as long as the Greek insurgents were allowed to withdraw peacefully and left the peasants in peace, there was little to worry about. The Greeks failed to gain the support of Britain.<sup>52</sup>

Greeks were lucky in that the Great Bulgaria of the San Stefano Treaty alarmed Britain and Austro-Hungary. These Powers were originally concerned that Bulgaria would act as a powerful Russian satellite in the Balkans. Between June and July 1878 the European diplomats gathered in Berlin to discuss the amendment of the recent Russo-Turkish treaty. In the end, they removed from Bulgaria all its Macedonian lands and divided what remained in two principalities: Bulgaria proper and Eastern Rumelia both under the suzerainty of the Sultan. This was a relief to the Greeks: Macedonia remained available for their irredentist expeditions. Moreover, in the text of the treaty Turkey was advised to cede Thessaly and Epirus to Greece. This was made after the insistence of the British, who arguably had come to regard Greece as a bulwark against Russian influence.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> FO 286/316, H. Longworth to Corbett, Armyro, 25 May/6 June 1878, no number.

<sup>53</sup> For the British support of Greek territorial claims see William Miller, *The Ottoman Empire and its successors* (London, 1936), p. 394.

The Greeks saw the official 'advice' on Epirus and Thessaly as a vindication of their earlier military campaign. Indeed, the favourable disposition of the British press to the Thessaly events might have contributed to the decision of the Berlin Conference. But the Greeks underestimated the equally unfavourable disposition of European diplomats and politicians towards Greek opportunism. They were fully informed of the excesses and failures of the Greek revolutionary action inside Turkey and, unlike Mr Ogle, were not as forgiving towards the Greek government: the theory that the insurrection was the doing of the National Defence Committee was rejected *a priori* by diplomats, in whose minds Greece was a sovereign country obliged to follow international law under all circumstances. Diplomats did not care about Greek politics, but Greeks failed to grasp the gap that separated journalists, such as Ogle, and the Foreign Office.

The Eastern crisis introduced the concept of 'balance' to Greek diplomatic and political vocabulary. The San Stefano Bulgaria was for Greeks an unfairly strong competitor. In response, Greeks insisted that any new adjustments of Balkan frontiers should take into account the necessary territorial equilibrium between Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria. But for the Great Powers balance was not an end in itself but a means for maintaining peace and stability in the Balkans. Thus, in 1878 the Europeans ignored the Greek calls for a 'fair' territorial adjustment. The cold

reception of Greek arguments made the Athenian irredentists, and occasionally even the Greek diplomats, turn to a conspiratorial interpretation of international relations: the lack of interest demonstrated in the unquestionably just Greek claims must be the result of secret foreign-policy agendas.

Irredentists understood San Stefano as Russian treachery. Greek sympathy for Russia was dead for good. After 1878 every Russian initiative in the Balkans would be regarded by the Greeks with suspicion: Russia was a sworn enemy of Greece and a dedicated friend of Bulgaria. This oversimplified understanding of Russian foreign policy would be adopted even by Greek diplomats. As a result, Greece would lose several opportunities to approach Russia and it would instead turn to Great Britain, as the only country able to stop the tide of Pan-Slavism.

After 1878, Macedonia became the focus of unprecedented Greek interest. Journalists, historians and novelists tried to increase public awareness on Macedonia. Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos, P.S. Delta, the most significant Greek author of books for children, and Ioannis Kalostypis published books, wrote newspaper articles and attended meetings on Macedonia. These publications were characterised by vague and emotional assertions about the Greekness of Macedonia: Macedonia (a Greek word as the authors reminded their readers) was associated with Philip II, Alexander the Great, the Macedonian Dynasty of

Byzantium, Basil II the Bulgar-Slayer, ancient Greek ruins in Macedonia and other figures and traces of (a very broadly conceived) Greek history. What these arguments often amounted to was nothing more than claiming that Macedonia was ‘historically’ Greek, independently of contemporary ethnographic realities.<sup>54</sup>

Paparrigopoulos was the first to include Macedonia in the history of ancient Greece. He saw in Philip II and Alexander the saviours of Athens and the other Greek cities from political decadence. Paparrigopoulos’s interest in Macedonia was not solely historical: he concluded his chapter on Philip II with ‘a comparison of Philip to Vittorio Emmanuele’ remarking that the Macedonian hegemony over Greece was analogous to the unification of Italy, with Macedonia acting as an ancient Piedmont. His implicit hope was that in modern times, Macedonia would save Greece once more not by assuming leadership in its political re-unification, but rather by rallying the otherwise divided forces of Hellenism for Macedonia’s rescue from Bulgaria and by providing the financial means for the survival of the otherwise impoverished modern Greek nation. As Ioannis Kalostypis, a journalist who had worked as a schoolteacher in Kozani and Serres in the 1870s, put it, ‘Macedonia is from an economic point of view of the greatest necessity’ and ‘without Macedonia there is no Greek future’. Arable land in Macedonia was not

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<sup>54</sup> Spyros Karavas, ‘The ethnographical adventures of Hellenism: part II’ (in Greek), *Historica* (June, 2003), pp. 49-112, here *passim*; John Agnew, ‘No borders, no nations: making Greece in Macedonia’, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 97:2 (June, 2007), pp. 398-422, here 411.

impressive by Western European standards. Vlasis Gavriilidis wrote in his notes in 1881 that ‘cereals are barely enough for the nutrition of the inhabitants’.<sup>55</sup> Still Macedonia was fertile by comparison to the lands of the Greek kingdom: it included the valleys of the Vardar and Struma rivers. Moreover, Salonica was the second largest Balkan port after Constantinople and the railway connecting Constantinople and the Middle East with Europe went through Macedonia.<sup>56</sup>

What else united Kalostypis with Paparrigopoulos was their belief that Greece had to adjust its irredentist rhetoric to the times: it had to devise arguments in favour of the Greekness of Macedonian Christians based not on language but on history, religion and culture broadly conceived: the term in vogue was ‘national consciousness’.<sup>57</sup> The era of Basil II ‘the Bulgar-slayer’, an emperor ignored for centuries by Greek authors, became by the late nineteenth century the golden age of Greek nationalism.<sup>58</sup> His Bulgarian enemies were, of course, described as blood-thirsty barbarians. This is how Delta described the soldiers of the medieval Tsar Samuel, Basil’s chief enemy, in a thinly veiled metaphor about the violent events

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<sup>55</sup> GAV 3, number 57, p. 1.

<sup>56</sup> Barbara Jelavitch, *History of the Balkans*, (2 vols. Cambridge, 1983), ii, pp. 89-90.

<sup>57</sup> Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos, *History of the Greek nation* (in Greek) (21 vols., Athens, 1969), vi, pp. 79-80; Ioannis Kalostypis, *Macedonia* (in Greek) (Salonica, 1991 [Athens, 1886]), pp. 16 and 24; Kyriakos N. Demetriou, ‘Historians on Macedonian imperialism and Alexander the Great’, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 19 (2001), pp. 23-60, here 51.

<sup>58</sup> Paul Stephenson, ‘The legend of Basil the Bulgar-slayer’, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 24 (2000), pp. 102-32, here 102 and 130-32.

of her own time: ‘mountaineer barbarians, deprived of any luxury in their poor fatherland, thirsty for booty’.<sup>59</sup>

The brotherly tone of Democritus was gone. In 1899, Neoklis Kazazis visited Bulgaria to see for himself the nation that claimed the hegemony of the Balkans, as he put it. Kazazis was a Professor of Natural Law at the University of Athens. He was born on Lesbos in 1849: like Gavriilidis, Paparrigopoulos, Skouloudis, Kordellas, Papamarkou and others we will examine, he was born an Ottoman subject. He found Bulgarians ‘slow-witted and simple’: Bulgarians did not appear on the national scene thanks to their own efforts, but as ‘the result of imposition of external, artificial factors’. The Bulgarians had failed to create anything of consequence. There was now a hierarchy among the Balkan Christians: Greeks were at the top, followed by the Serbians and the Romanians. The Bulgarians were at the bottom.<sup>60</sup>

As this language indicates, a new, radical irredentism emerged after 1878. This did not happen only in Greece. In Italy too, the considerable bloodshed of the Russian-Turkish War proved to be the impulse behind the emergence of a new more populist and radical nationalism. The formal procedures of diplomats and international conferences seemed to matter less than mass mobilisation, the

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<sup>59</sup> P.S., Delta, *In the time of the Bulgar-slayer* (in Greek) (Athens, 1946 [1911]), p. 28.

<sup>60</sup> Kazazis’s travel book is discussed in Sanya Velkova, “The ‘Slav neighbour’ in the eyes of noted Greek intellectuals from the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century”, *Balkan Studies*, 1 (2000), pp. 128-38, here 129-30.

assertion of the popular will and appeals to past history and future greatness. In the case of Italy, this would culminate in the nationalism of the First World War, and the surge of nationalist movements which accompanied and followed it.<sup>61</sup>

Radical irredentism of this kind took root in Greece too. After 1878, only a few Greeks continued thinking in terms of a *Grèce esclave*. The key opposition was not between Christians and Muslims but between Greeks and Bulgarians. There was little faith in diplomacy, and Greeks saw Russia as their principal enemy. Few Greeks were opposed to monarchy *per se*, but many lost faith in George I: unless he proved successful in combating the Bulgarians he could experience the same fate as had befallen Otto. In Greece there was no strong republican movement, but after 1878 many lost faith in George:

But Greece had none of the resources of Italy. As William Miller put it in 1905, ‘Greece combined the appetite of Russia with the dimensions of Switzerland’.<sup>62</sup>

Despite its imperialist undertones, and the feeling of superiority towards other Balkan nationalisms, Greek irredentism was characterised by a profound insecurity about maintaining Greek influence in the Ottoman Empire, and especially in

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<sup>61</sup> Elizabeth Clegg, “‘Futurists, cubists and the like’: early modernism and late imperialism’, *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 56:2 (1993), pp. 249-77, here 254-55; the quote is from Grove Haines, ‘Italian irredentism during the Eastern Crisis: 1875-78’, 9:1 (March, 1937), pp. 23-47, here 47.

<sup>62</sup> Miller, *Greek life in town and country* (London, 1905), p. 44. See also Basil C. Gounaris, ‘Model nation and caricature state: competing Greek perspectives on the Balkans and Hellas’, in Roderick Beaton and David Ricks (eds.), *The making of modern Greece: nationalism, romanticism, and the uses of the past (1797-1896)* (Farnham, 2009), pp. 137-50, here *passim*.

Macedonia. As Greece could not afford a large army, radical irredentists tended to support a small, well-equipped and professional army as the answer to Greece's military weakness. In 1882-85, the Tricoupist administration modernised Greece's military academies and reduced army service from three to one year. The revolutionaries of 1854 with their fustanellas and yatagans were for radical irredentists a thing of the past.

Charisios Papamarkou was one of these radical irredentists. He was born in Velvendos, in Western Ottoman Macedonia, in 1844. When he was six, his family moved to the Piraeus. He studied literature in Athens, and then returned to Macedonia and taught in local Greek schools. In 1871 he received a scholarship from Paparrigopoulos's *Σύλλογος προς Διάδοσιν των Ελληνικών γραμμάτων* [= 'The association for the dissemination of the Greek culture']: Göttingen awarded him a PhD in 1875.

Two aspects of Papamarkou are worthy of note. First, he believed that *katharevousa* was inadequate for education. His experience in Macedonia convinced him that teaching should be done in demotic. He got in a heated debate with the 'language-defenders' [*γλωσσαμόντορες*]: Georgios Vionis, superintendent of the Arsakeion school in Athens, called Papamarkou among other things: rude,

insensitive, useless and harmful to Hellenism.<sup>63</sup> Vionis was over seventy years old. For his generation *katharevousa*, an artificial language, was part of *Grèce esclave*: no one spoke *katharevousa* as a mother tongue and everyone could learn it at school. Papamarkou knew that Bulgarians taught in their schools a language close to the mother tongue of the peasants, and wanted Greeks to do the same.<sup>64</sup> He championed a non-elitist education that would be close to the needs of Macedonian peasants. Papamarkou replied to Vionis's offenses in kind.<sup>65</sup> New and old irredentists did not get along well.

Second, Papamarkou was a Tricoupist. He was appointed general inspector of primary schools in 1889 while Tricoupis was in government and he was a close associate of Theotokis, while he was a Minister of Education. Tricoupis's modernising message attracted well-educated middle-class figures such as Papamarkou. The automatic association of irredentism with Deliyiannism is mistaken; its influence was more diffuse.

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<sup>63</sup> Charisios Papamarkou, *Inanities and facts* (in Greek) (Athens, 1893), p. 9.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

## II. THE BALKAN CRISIS: 1886

The next Bulgarian challenge to Greek ambitions in the Balkans occurred in 1885. On 6/18 September 1885, paramilitary troops and Eastern Rumelia's armed forces entered the capital of Rumelia, Philippopolis (Plovdiv), asking for union with Bulgaria. Gavril Krastevich, the Governor of Rumelia, cooperated with the unionists. The next day Prince Alexander of Bulgaria entered Philippopolis. Eastern Rumelia no longer existed.

As a consequence, the rump Bulgaria of the Berlin Treaty nearly doubled its territory. In the eyes of the Greeks, Bulgaria had made a step towards becoming the Great Bulgaria originally envisaged at San Stefano. Greek irredentists were outraged. They believed that Eastern Rumelia had a significant Greek population, whose rights were violated. Greece was the model Balkan kingdom with the only legitimate claim to European Turkey. But, if so, how could Greeks explain Bulgarian successes?

Deliyiannis undertook to answer this question. He was then serving for the first time as prime minister. In an article on 12/24 September, he pointed out that Bulgarian success came out of the blue: the coup 'surprised the whole of Europe'. He also insisted on the importance of 'the foreign sponsors' who had assisted

Bulgaria financially, pointing at Russia, the *bête noire* of Greek irredentists. Deliyiannis reassured the public that the Bulgarian union would not last long. The union was a ‘most serious political and international coup d’etat’, which had ‘reversed from its foundations the work of the Berlin treaty’. His hope was that the Powers would abolish the union.<sup>66</sup>

Three things are worth pointing out. First, Deliyiannis in public, and as we shall see in his diplomacy too, reacted to the Union as a new San Stefano. He believed that the Powers would not allow a violation of the Balkan balance of power. What he missed was that unlike San Stefano, the Union was a localised Balkan event not an Eastern crisis. The Powers were less concerned by the events of 1885-86 than they had been in 1878. Second, Deliyiannis adopted the language of victimhood, presenting Greece as the victim of the evil machinations of other powers. This was to become a characteristic feature of Greek attitudes to Macedonia. Above and beyond the specific territorial ambitions, Greek influence in Macedonia (and simultaneously the exclusion of the Bulgarians from the region) became a test of the aspiration of the newly founded and small Greek kingdom to ‘be someone in the world’. This message resonated well with many Greeks; but, as we shall see throughout this thesis, foreign diplomats and journalists had no real understanding of the emotions that underlay Deliyiannis’s rhetoric, regarding Macedonia as a

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<sup>66</sup> Deliyiannis, untitled article, *Proia*, 12/24 September 1885, p. 1,

complex problem of Balkan multi-ethnicity which should be resolved through diplomacy and external control. Third, Deliyiannis decided during the crisis to play upon the masses. He frequently addressed the people from his newspaper, *Proia*. For him, politicians should talk to the people without formalities and intermediaries, and the crisis of 1885 in effect brought a new language of populist Boulangist nationalism to Greece.

European diplomats had had knowledge of the union plans in Rumelia for some time.<sup>67</sup> Contrary to what Deliyiannis claimed, their lack of reaction was not due to surprise, but acceptance. Although Greeks played a significant economic role in Eastern Rumelia, they were only fifty-five thousand people. For the Powers, they were a small minority of no political importance. Moreover, Bulgaria had made a positive impression on contemporary European politicians: the institutions of the Bulgarian kingdom and economy compared well with those of Greece and Serbia. The Union of East Rumelia with Bulgaria moreover kept with the spirit of the Berlin treaty: it asserted Bulgarian independence from Russia and reduced Russian influence in the Balkans.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Stavrianos, *The Balkans...*, p. 431.

<sup>68</sup> Miller, *The Ottoman Empire...*, pp. 416-17; Benjamin C. Fortna, 'The reign of Abdülhamid II', in Reşat Kasaba (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Turkey volume IV: Turkey in the modern world*, pp. 38-61, here p. 47.

Athenians were angry and surprised at this evolution of events in Rumelia.<sup>69</sup> The Tricoupist newspapers of Athens did not miss the opportunity: they orchestrated an attack on Deliyiannis which combined radical irredentism with a focus on Macedonia, with anti-Bulgarianism. Tricoupis's official organ, *Ora*, wrote that Macedonia and Thrace, both 'just next to the frontiers of Eastern Rumelia', were 'in danger' from the ascendancy of Bulgaria.<sup>70</sup> Deliyiannis had behaved as if under the 'virtuous auspices of a long and undisturbed peace' and had reduced taxes and allegedly diminished the military forces.<sup>71</sup> On 23 September/5 November the newspaper claimed that 'Macedonia was in danger'.<sup>72</sup>

Serbia became the model for the nationalists of *Ora*. Serbia prepared its seventy-thousand strong army for war, and invaded Bulgaria in November 1885. In contrast, *Ora* was exasperated with the popularity of Deliyiannis and his political style. Instead of Deliyiannis, Greece needed Serbian politics: 'the Serbian parliament met, had a session, left, everyone went silent; the King leads the Serbian camp'. In this way, *Ora* flirted with a new authoritarian language, attacking Deliyiannis for having reduced the Greek diplomatic staff. Earlier in 1885, Deliyiannis, who was also Foreign Minister, reduced the staff in the

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<sup>69</sup> George D. Kousoulas, *Modern Greece: profile of a nation* (New York, 1974), p. 208.

<sup>70</sup> *Ora*, 'Macedonia is in danger', 12/24 September 1885, issue number 306, p. 1.

<sup>71</sup> DRAS 7.16, *Ora*, 13/25 September, 1885, issue number 307.

<sup>72</sup> DRAS 7.16, untitled, *Ora*, 23 September/5 October 1885, number 19.

consulates and the Embassies, ‘removing the guardians of the Greek interests’<sup>73</sup> and ‘eliminating the representation of Greece’.<sup>74</sup> Tricoupists attacked this decision on two grounds. First, as we saw in the introduction, the maintenance of embassies abroad and of an efficient diplomatic bureaucracy at home was for them a matter of ideological importance: the alleged sudden changes and the lack of competent staff created chaos in the Ministry shortly before the Union. If Greece had failed to defend Balkan balance in 1885 it was all Deliyiannis’s fault.

Second, for Tricoupists, the staff reduction was a disguised purge. Most of the dismissed diplomats were appointed by the preceding Tricoupis administration. Even diplomats as powerful as Nicolaos Mavrocordato, a son of Otto’s Prime Minister Alexandros, and a first cousin of Tricoupis, could not protect themselves: Mavrocordato found himself unemployed.<sup>75</sup> For Tricoupists, the sudden changes and the lack of competent staff created chaos in the Ministry just a few months before the Balkan crisis. Thus, the purge deepened the cleavage between the leaders of the Tricoupist party and Deliyiannis.

The Tricoupist newspaper *Acropolis* also attacked Deliyiannis. The editor of *Acropolis*, Gavriilidis, was the leading Greek journalist of his generation. He was born and raised in Constantinople, studied literature and political science in

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<sup>73</sup> ‘Macedonia is in danger’, *Ora*, 12/24 September 1885, p. 1.

<sup>74</sup> DRAS 7.16, *Ora*, 13/25 September 1885. See also, DRAS 7.16, *Ora*, 28 September/10 November 1885, number 20.

<sup>75</sup> TRICE 6, Alexandros Mavrocordato to Tricoupis, Hălăucești [Romania], 8/20 July 1886, number 6/33/δ.

Leipzig, and came to Athens from Constantinople at the age of thirty, in 1878. Gavriilidis saw himself as an educator of the public: he explained in plain language what was too difficult for the ‘common man’ to grasp. Gavriilidis remained an elitist at heart, who could not bear the populist and impassioned language of Deliyiannis: he believed that politicians should lead the people rather than give voice to popular demands.<sup>76</sup>

On 1/13 November 1883, Gavriilidis published the first issue of *Acropolis*. It soon became the most popular and prestigious broadsheet of Athens: it was read in all Greek towns, by Ottoman Greeks and the diaspora. Gavriilidis knew Tricoupis personally and supported his politics. They both were liberals and admired Britain. Gavriilidis had visited Britain, respected the House of Commons and its intelligent debates, and enjoyed the writings of Edmund Burke. When he visited Britain he noted Rosebury’s saying: ‘The secret of Burke’s character is this, in my judgement, that he loved reform and hated revolution’. Careful reform was the heart of Tricoupism.<sup>77</sup>

In September 1885, Gavriilidis launched a fully-fledged attack on Deliyiannis. On 10/22 September, he wrote:

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<sup>76</sup> Kostas Sardelis, *Vlasis Gavriilidis: the great reformer of Greek journalism: 1848-1920* (in Greek) (Athens, 2005), pp. 1-5.

<sup>77</sup> GAV 2.8, notebook entitled ‘Visit to London: 1894’.

Down with words! Down with dirty politics! Hellenism is going through the greatest danger! Free Greeks awake! Macedonians, Thracians, Epirots, Cretans, islanders prepare your guns and ready yourselves for any sacrifice! ... Foreign peoples take away our lands and erase our history!...In a few days Macedonia should be turned upside down! Everyone, especially the government, should raise money to send revolutionary troops in Macedonia!<sup>78</sup>

Gavriilidis returned to the same theme the next day: ‘The third Bulgaria is our Macedonia’. He attacked Deliyiannis for using the alleged Greek unpreparedness as a pretext for inactivity. For Gavriilidis, had the 1882-85 Tricoupis cabinet stayed in place Greece would have been excellently prepared for war: Gavriilidis defended Tricoupis’s unpopular economic policies, and his restructuring of the Cadet Academy. Gavriilidis was an irredentist of the new radical sort: he combined a belief in economic modernisation and European institutions with a bombastic rhetoric in plain Greek: as happened in the rest of Europe, in this era nationalist virility was measured by the ability to wage war successfully.

Gavriilidis liked to entitle his articles ‘What should be done?’ [Τι το πρακτέον]. And indeed he had a plan. Greece did not need a large army to realise its Garibaldian dream. Like other radical irredentists, he believed that Greece could cope with a small army as long as it was modern and free from the embarrassing irregulars. Greece should send its fleet to block the Straits and liberate the Aegean

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<sup>78</sup> Gavriilidis, ‘To Macedonia’, *Acropolis*, 10/22 September 1885, p. 1.

islands. The army should disembark twenty-thousand men at Macedonia to ‘put the blue and white flag on Mont Athos, Serres, Salonica, Bitola [Monastir]’. If Greece did that, the ‘rotten and weak establishment of Turkey will collapse within fifty days’.<sup>79</sup>

Gavriilidis also believed in the people of Athens [*ο λαός των Αθηνών*]. For him, the people of Athens immediately saw the danger for Macedonia and turned to Macedonia like a wife who saw her husband attacked by robbers. The Athenians now understood that Rumelia was lost for good and Macedonia took absolute priority: ‘their Great Idea was reduced and limited to Macedonia’.<sup>80</sup>

The Athenians agreed with Gavriilidis and they were indeed the first in the kingdom to embrace the new anti-Bulgarian irredentism. They organised demonstrations similar to those of 1878. The idea of the balance of power came once again to the fore: Greece should compensate for the increase of Bulgarian territory by annexing Crete and the rest of Epirus. Confronted with public pressure, Deliyiannis had to convince Athenians that he was capable of decisive action. On 13/25 September 1885, Deliyiannis mobilised the army.<sup>81</sup>

With or without a mobilisation, there was in fact nothing that Greece could do in 1885. Its diplomatic influence was negligible and a military intervention

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<sup>79</sup> Gavriilidis, ‘What should be done’, *Acropolis*, 29 November/ 11 December 1885, p. 10.

<sup>80</sup> Gavriilidis, ‘What should be done’, *Acropolis*, 11/23 September 1885, p. 1

<sup>81</sup> Dakin, *The unification...*, pp. 138-39.

impossible: Greece did not have frontiers with Bulgaria, let alone the armed forces required to make a successful expedition. Tricoupis attacked the mobilisation. In his parliamentary speech, Tricoupis claimed that the mobilisation was absurd: Greece had mobilised against Turkey to punish Bulgaria. No-one knew ‘what sort of action the mobilisation would support tomorrow or the day after’. Unlike 1878, the mobilisation of 1885 lacked an objective. The mobilisation also diverted the attention of the parliament from legislation towards fantastic nationalist plans and turned it into a powerless ‘club discussing philosophical topics’, an allusion to the vague populist language of the Deliyiannists. What mattered was not Greece’s prestige in Europe or the ‘enslaved brethren’ but the interests and well being of the Greek subjects. The young Greece had to learn to walk before it ran.<sup>82</sup>

The tone of Tricoupis contrasted with *Ora* and the articles of Gavriilidis. Tricoupis was an irredentist in the sense that he wanted the annexation of new territory. But he was also an instinctive diplomat and an elitist: flamboyant irredentist rhetoric repelled him. Nevertheless, many radical irredentists sided with him because of his modernising zeal and his efficient leadership. Tricoupis gave to the New Party a programme and organisation: MP defections were a common feature of nineteenth-century Greek politics but not for the New Party. As long as Tricoupis was alive, radical irredentists stayed within the party. Only after 1896 did they distance

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<sup>82</sup> DRAS 6.1, Tricoupis, *Parliamentary Minutes* [Εφημερίς συζητήσεων της Βουλής], 1885, p. 58.

themselves from the New Party. As we shall see in ch. IV, Tricoupist irredentists such as Stephanos Dragoumis and Gavriilidis supported the Goudi Revolution of 1909 that toppled Theotokis, Tricoupis's successor, from power.

Unlike Tricoupis, Deliyiannis thrived on irredentist rhetoric. But we should not confuse style for action. In reality, Deliyiannis did all he could to avoid war and he truly had to resist great pressure. Junior Greek army officers were all in favour of an invasion of Macedonia, as distinction in the battlefield was their only chance of getting a promotion; and the Ministers of Justice (S. Antonopoulos), Public Instruction (A. Zigomalas) and Marine (R. Romas) also wanted war.

But Deliyiannis resisted their pressure for war. He maintained the peace at the Greek-Turkish frontier; he ignored the calls of the press to invade Macedonia; and he disregarded his belligerent ministers. In October 1885, Deliyiannis forced them to resign, and assumed himself the Ministries of War and Marine.<sup>83</sup> Deliyiannis wanted peace, and he kept the mobilisation going in order to use it for diplomatic not military purposes. This was a very expensive course of action, but since 1878 Greece had access to loans from abroad to subsidise its irredentist adventures.

The Powers initially paid little attention to Greece. Their attention was focused on the advancing Serbian army. The decisive battle took place at Slivnitsa, thirty kilometres from Sofia, on 5/17-7/19 November, where the Bulgarians had a

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<sup>83</sup> Dakin, *The unification...*, pp. 138-39.

decisive victory following which they pursued the Serbians into Serbian territory. Had the Austrians not intervened, Bulgaria would have annihilated the Serbian army. The Serbo-Bulgarian front was now closed and the Bulgarian army gained the reputation of the best in the Balkans.<sup>84</sup>

International attention soon turned to Greece. On 26 November/8 December, *The Times* claimed that the Greek mobilisation was now pointless: Serbia would not interfere again with the Bulgarian union and ‘Greece thus left alone, with an enormous Turkish force on her frontiers, will prefer to remain quiet after all’.<sup>85</sup> On 18/30 December the Powers issued a joint warning to Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria emphasising that they were ‘unanimement résolues à préserver la paix dans la Péninsule Balkanique’ and asking for ‘une démobilisation immédiate et simultanée’.<sup>86</sup> The implicit threat was that, unless Greece conformed, the Powers would repeat the actions of 1854. Deliyiannis, however, believed that he could exchange demobilisation for territorial expansion. Misled by the success of 1878, he ignored the joint warning. Greek sources leaked to *The Times* (false) information according to which ‘the Government declined to give way’ and ‘the Greek fleet [would] put to sea at daybreak with sealed orders’ and with an

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<sup>84</sup> A. Koch, *Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria*, (London, 1997), pp. 30-5.

<sup>85</sup> The correspondent in St. Petersburg, ‘Effect of Bulgarian victory on Russian opinion’, *The Times*, 26 November/8 December 1885, p. 6.

<sup>86</sup> DRAS 6.1, number.21.

unknown destination.<sup>87</sup> The Foreign Office did not think much of Deliyiannis and soon lost patience. On 6/18 January, Salisbury wrote to Rumbold that ‘it would be advisable that you should avoid for the moment any unnecessary communication with Monsieur Delyanni [sic]’. The reason was that ‘grave events were possibly imminent in the East’ and Deliyiannis did not seem to be a reliable interlocutor. Deliyiannis had misunderstood the international context.<sup>88</sup>

Deliyiannis did not have the diplomatic skills of Tricoupis. In his contacts with foreign diplomats he did the same thing as in his public speeches: he gave voice to the ‘common man’ and talked of Greece’s desire for recognition. He soon felt at a loss for arguments and turned the diplomatic discussions into a personal confrontation. He turned against the British Minister in Athens, Rumbold, who pressured for demobilisation. Deliyiannis instructed the Greek chargé d’affaires in London, John [Ioannis] Gennadius, to complain officially about the language of Rumbold: he accused him of “having used with reference to Mr Delyanni the expression ‘allez-vous-en’” and he also maintained that Rumbold had ‘urged him to resign’. In effect, Deliyiannis accused the British of trying to remove him from power.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> From an unaffiliated correspondent in Athens, ‘The Eastern Crisis: English threat to Greece’, *The Times*, 13/ 25 January 1886, p. 5.

<sup>88</sup> FO 286/374, Rosebury to Rumbold, Foreign Office, 6/18 January, 1886, f. 98b.

<sup>89</sup> FO 286/374, Rosebury to Rumbold, Foreign Office, 15/27 January 1886, ff. 93-96. The citation is from f. 93.

The outburst of Deliyiannis did not impress Salisbury. He denied the use 'of any language other than courteous towards Mr Delyanni' and explained to Gennadius that what Rumbold had said to the Greek Premier was not the official position of Britain but 'a private representation or expression of personal opinion'. Britain had no intention of interfering in internal Greek politics, but had a firm position on the demobilisation of Greece. Salisbury in effect warned Deliyiannis he had nothing to gain from prolonging the conflict.

Deliyiannis persisted. He turned to Greece's most respected figure abroad. He advised George to write to his mother, Queen of Denmark, complaining of 'the recent attitude' of Rumbold. The Queen informed Prince John of Glücksburg who in turn visited the British Legation in Denmark to complain about the incident. The British Minister, Edmund Momson, was already informed and similarly to Salisbury insisted that Rumbold 'had to deliver a message unpalatable to the recipient, but he was incapable of anything like discourtesy'. The argument of Monson convinced Prince John that nothing had happened: 'His Majesty was very much impressed by what I said'. After a month of persistence on this matter Deliyiannis achieved nothing.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> FO 286/374, Edmund Momson to Rosebury, Copenhagen, 1/13 February 1886, ff. 145-57. The quotes are from f. 146.

Unfortunately for the Greek Premier, the situation in the Balkans changed rapidly. On 19 February/3 March 1886, Serbia and Bulgaria signed the Treaty of Bucharest. Serbia recognised the Union, the prewar Serbo-Bulgarian frontiers were restored, and the two countries demobilised. Greece was the only Balkan country still under general mobilisation. Deliyiannis thought that this was an opportunity to make demands for territorial concessions: he instructed the Greek Minister in Berlin to ask Bismarck “whether Germany would not help Greece to obtain some small compensation, ‘a little Crete for instance’.”<sup>91</sup> At the same time, the Greek government decided to call up twenty thousand more men of the reserve.<sup>92</sup> Foreign diplomats agreed that Deliyiannis was not to be taken seriously.

The admission of Deliyiannis that he wanted territory in exchange for peace allowed Bismarck to call the bluff of Deliyiannis. He answered to the Greek diplomat that ‘had he been instructed to ask this, he had better tell his government he had not ventured to speak on the subject’. Even if Abdul Hamid was to decide on his own to cede territory to Greece, ‘Germany would abandon the Sultan entirely’. Bismarck was determined to disallow Greece to open the question of the frontier and he thus communicated this interview to the British Foreign Ministry. At the same time, Britain saw a strong Bulgaria as the best means to check alleged

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<sup>91</sup> FO 286/374, Rosebury to Rumbold, Foreign Office, 27 February/11 March 1886, f. 166.

<sup>92</sup> FO 286/374, Rumbold to Rosebury, Athens, 26 February/8 March 1886, deciphered telegram, f. 159.

Russian designs in the Balkans, and British diplomats had little patience for Deliyiannis's arguments. Rumbold, in particular, was exasperated by Deliyiannis's opportunism, declaring that 'Greece remains the only menace to the peace of Europe'.<sup>93</sup> A naval blockade increasingly seemed the only way to call Deliyiannis's diplomatic bluff. The mobilisation had damaged Greece financially. On 8/20 February, the wife of the British Minister in Athens, Louisa Rumbold, wrote to *The Times* that the mobilisation 'has caused an amount of poverty and misery which makes one's heart ache to think of'. The situation was so bad that Mrs Rumbold made an appeal for help for the families of the Greek reservists.<sup>94</sup>

The Prime Minister tried to appease the increasingly worried Greek public. In April 1886, successive editorial articles of the Deliyiannis newspaper, *Proia*, suggested that, although the Powers were indeed preparing for a blockade, 'France is taking care of our issue and with the approval of the other Powers had assumed an initiative as a mediator'. Deliyiannis did not specify any details, but offered the Greeks vague promises that the French help would save them from trouble. France, indeed, was the least inclined of the Powers to participate in a blockade. But, at that stage, the diplomatic tide against Greece from Germany and Britain was such

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid. Regarding British foreign policy, see Eric Midwinter, *Salisbury* (London, 2006), p. 51.

<sup>94</sup> Louisa Rumbold, 'Letters to the editor: Distress in Greece', *The Times*, 16 February/1 March 1886, p.8.

that only a quick demobilisation appeared to offer a face-saving solution for Greece.

George I himself had lost hope of changing the mind of his Prime Minister. He chose instead to inform the British that he was not responsible for the prolongation of the 'Greek Crisis':

His Hellenic Majesty felt no confidence in the loyalty of his government toward himself personally. M. Deliyiannis was so tricky, so given to intrigue, that King George could never be sure that he was being told the truth; nor that the promises and engagements made to him were worth one hours' [sic] purchase.<sup>95</sup>

The King was not alone. Gennadius in London took his distance from Deliyiannis. According to Rosebury, Gennadius 'had gone as far and even further than his position warranted in advising Monsieur Deliyiannis not to proceed with action measures'.<sup>96</sup> Abandoned by his diplomats and the King, attacked by the irredentist press at home and threatened by the Powers, Deliyiannis was isolated but did not concede. Consequently, government became a one-man affair.

Foreign diplomats concluded that Deliyiannis would demobilise only if they applied military force. On the morning of 20 April/3 May, Rosebury informed Gennadius, who still hoped that Deliyiannis would reconsider his position, that it

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<sup>95</sup> FO 286/374, Momson to Rosebury, Copenhagen, 27 March/8 April 1886, ff. 350-51. The citation is from f. 350.

<sup>96</sup> FO 286/374, Rosebury to Rumbold, Foreign Affairs, 16 February/1 March, 1886, ff. 177-80, here, f. 179.

was ‘too late’.<sup>97</sup> Five days later, the Powers imposed a blockade of the Greek coast: the coastline blockaded was ‘from Cape Malia [in Laconia] to the east of Cape Matapan [in Mani], on the south to Cape Colonna [=Sounion], and thence including the Negrepont, to the Turco-Greek frontier’. The allied fleet was small: only ‘twenty-five men-of-war and fifteen torpedo boats’, but there was no option of resistance on the Greek side. Although France abstained, this had no wider diplomatic significance. The French government was keen on showing that it did not support the Greek government and announced on 26 April/8 May that the French military mission at Athens must be withdrawn. The repetition of the 1878 scenario failed: Greece did not have sufficient diplomatic leverage to alter on its own the map of the Balkans.<sup>98</sup> What happened instead was a blockade with the aim of removing Deliyiannis from power.

Faced with defeat on the international front Deliyiannis played the irredentist card. It is important to note that he did this only *after* the blockade. He defended his policy suggesting that Greece was an innocent victim of unprovoked aggression and warned that ‘the blockade having placed Greece at a hopeless disadvantage... there was reason to apprehend that the Turks would take offensive action’. As we shall see, a Greek-Turkish confrontation indeed took place but for very different

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<sup>97</sup> FO 286/374, Rosebury to Rumbold, Foreign Office, 19 April/3 May 1886, f. 331.

<sup>98</sup> The correspondent in Vienna, ‘The Eastern Crisis’, *The Times*, 28 April/10 May 1886, p. 5.

reasons than those suggested by Deliyiannis.<sup>99</sup> Deliyiannis submitted his resignation on 27 April/9 May, leaving the solution of the accumulated financial problems and the negotiations with the Powers to his successor.

The Athens correspondent of *The Times* attacked Deliyiannis: ‘the whole management of the government is simply puerile where not mischievous, and its utterances inconsistent, contradictory or mendacious’. The correspondent warned that the ‘absurd falsehoods’ and ‘the evasive forms of speech’ that Deliyiannis was spreading about the Powers, especially about France, aimed at creating ‘a public opinion in Athens which would support’ the government as ‘tyrannised’ by the foreign Ministers.<sup>100</sup>

Appointing a new prime minister was not an easy task. In a parliament of 245 seats, there were 185 Deliyiannist MPs and 55 Tricoupists. Many were afraid that, instead of compromising, Deliyiannis would dissolve the parliament and ask for elections.<sup>101</sup> For twelve days, Greek politics was in chaos. But financial trouble, diplomatic pressure and the support of George for Tricoupis led to mass defection. On 9/21 May, Tricoupis was elected with a majority of 61 MPs. ‘The enthusiasm was immense’ and Tricoupis was escorted to his home ‘by a crowd of the elite of

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<sup>99</sup> Deliyiannis quoted by *The Times* correspondent in Vienna, ‘The Eastern Crisis’, 28 April/10 May 1886, p. 5.

<sup>100</sup> The correspondent in Athens, ‘The Greek Crisis’, *The Times*, 29 April/11 May 1886, p. 15.

<sup>101</sup> The correspondent in Vienna, ‘The Greek Crisis’, *The Times*, 5/17 May 1886, p. 5.

Athens'.<sup>102</sup> At the same time, the Athens correspondent of *The Times* suggested tongue-in-cheek that Deliyiannis could well be 'demented' and advised the Greeks to 'institute a commission *de lunatico inquirendo*' in order to avoid similar trouble in the future.<sup>103</sup> To this remark the Vienna correspondent of the newspaper replied quite seriously that "in Turkish 'Del' means mad, and 'yannis' John, so that among the Turks M. Deliyiannis has long been known by the sobriquet of 'Mad John'".<sup>104</sup> Diplomats, foreign journalists and the Athenian elites celebrated the downfall of Deliyiannis.

Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that elections had taken place very recently, on 7/19 April 1885. Tricoupis had fared badly. In the countryside, especially the Peloponnese, people simply punished Tricoupis for the current crisis [Σταφιδικά]. Moreover, the rejection of Tricoupism in the cities had deeper causes. Between 1882 and 1884 prices increased by 30%, there was high unemployment, and strikes took place in Hermoupolis, Patras and Piraeus. Those who supported Deliyiannis were public servants and shop-keepers who were hit hard by the crisis. Tricoupis's enemies used posters, cartoons, slogans and demonstrations. Most of these people never returned to Tricoupism. Attica, with the exception of Piraeus, became a

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<sup>102</sup> The correspondent in Athens, 'The Greek Crisis', *The Times*, 9/ 21 May 1886, issue 31765, p. 5.

<sup>103</sup> The correspondent in Athens, 'The Greek Crisis', *The Times* 29 April/11 May 1886, p. 15.

<sup>104</sup> The correspondent in Vienna, 'The Greek Crisis', *The Times*, 3/15 May 1886, issue 31760, p. 7.

Deliyiannist stronghold. Thus, the crisis of the 1880s encouraged the transition to a new form of more populist and nationalist mass politics.

Tricoupis's quick return to power outraged Deliyiannis's voters. In the past, political alliances had been fluid. But the new tone of irredentist nationalism created a more polarised political atmosphere. Deliyiannists and his followers talked of a 'policy of betrayal' on the part of Tricoupis; for them, Tricoupis's power rested on an unauthorised extension of royal power, on the elites and on the British fleet.<sup>105</sup>

The Greek-Turkish conflict that Deliyiannis had predicted soon took place. The Greek and Turkish army entered into skirmishes which resulted in some dozens of casualties. The task of resolving this crisis fell on the shoulders of Stephanos N. Dragoumis, hereafter referred to simply as Stephanos. He was educated in Paris, and according to the Vienna *Neue Freie Presse* he was 'a man of learning, most pleasing in his manners, and very hospitable', who has been on friendly terms with the members of the diplomatic body in Athens.<sup>106</sup> Stephanos put the blame for the skirmishes on the Turks. Moreover, he complained at the treatment that the Greek prisoners of war received in Turkey calling it 'violations d'engagements sacrés

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<sup>105</sup> Konstantinos Vergopoulos, *The agrarian question in Greece* (in Greek) (Athens, 1992), pp. 20-22.

<sup>106</sup> The *Neue Freie Presse* quoted in 'The Greek Crisis: the fighting on the frontier', *The Times*, 10/22 May 1886, p. 9.

sans exemple dans l'histoire des sociétés civilisées'.<sup>107</sup> Stephanos was wrong on both accounts. It was the Greek NCOs, gendarmes and local inhabitants who started the skirmishes already in late September.

George Gavrilis's groundbreaking research on the Greek-Turkish frontier has produced counterintuitive findings. Until the 1870s, when Greek frontier guards were irregulars, often Greek Ottomans, the frontier was a well-managed institution: decisions were made at the local level, Greek and Turkish frontier guards cooperated efficiently, even if this meant bypassing formalities such as unauthorised crossings of the frontier, and contained brigandage. The Kingdom and the Empire interfered little, usually to offer a salaried post to ex-bandits, a practice that experience had showed worked well. Incidents as the ones of 1886 were rare. In the 1870s, the border was militarised, Athens and Constantinople got involved with the minutiae of administrative tasks, and smugglers and bandits found fertile ground. The fortified positions that were built exacerbated the situation as they became points of contestation between the two sides. What used to be a shared institutional zone, became now a line of territorial defence. The Annexation of 1881 wiped out the remnants of the pre-1870s border management. Professional soldiers, born in Greece and educated in military academies, proved

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<sup>107</sup> DRAS 6.4, Stephanos to Coundourioti, Athens, 1/13 June 1886, f. 161.

inferior to the irregulars who often had little emotional attachment to the Kingdom and no formal military training.<sup>108</sup>

The events of 1886 confirm Gavrilis's findings. As mentioned earlier, the only chance of promotion for NCOs was through distinction in battle, and thus they had to act before the demobilisation took effect.<sup>109</sup> In 1886, not only did they attack the Turks first, but they also occupied and fortified the position of Zygos inside Turkish territory.<sup>110</sup> The same story was repeated in 1897, when Greek irregulars invaded Ottoman territory, and again during the Macedonian Defence. Tricoupiasts believed that the concentration of the decision-making in Athens and the creation of a professional officer corps were the royal path to modernity. But in fact that officer corps was often the source of the problem.

Stephanos's second complaint about the treatment of prisoners was similarly ill-founded. The Turks paraded them for propaganda purposes, but that was all. They were not the victims of intentional cruelty, at least as far as Turkish officials were concerned. The complaints had to do more with Stephanos's ideology than reality. Stephanos's uncompromising style surprised Rosebury who remarked on Stephanos's 'strong and almost insolent language'. Stephanos was indeed a radical

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<sup>108</sup> George Gavrilis, 'The Greek Ottoman boundary as institution, locality and process: 1832-82', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 51: 10 (June 2008), pp. 1516-37, here passim.

<sup>109</sup> Dakin, *The unification ...*, p. 139.

<sup>110</sup> DRAS 6.4, Stephanos Dragoumis to Coundourioti, Athens. 1/13 June, 1886, f. 161; The Correspondent to Constantinople, 'The Greek Crisis', *The Times*, 26 May/7 June 1886, p. 5.

irredentist: like Kazazis he saw Greeks as a superior civilisation dealing with barbarians. Stephanos was more hostile to Turkey than Deliyiannis: in general orientalist stereotypes were stronger among Tricoupists than among Deliyiannists.<sup>111</sup>

The Ottomans were startled. For five months they were obliged to maintain a strong army at the frontier because Greece was threatening them with an invasion.

When Greek NCOs started an unprovoked attack, the much stronger Turkish army did not counter-attack, but restricted itself to repulsing the Greeks from their territory. And now they stood accused of the ill-treatment of Greek prisoners.

Greeks were lucky in that 1878 taught the Turks to avoid war at all costs.<sup>112</sup>

The Sultan contacted Stephanos through a Greek merchant in Constantinople. In his letter he asked from the Greek Minister

que les Grecs finissent ce triste état des choses, qu'ils ont provoqué sans aucun motif, qu'ils pensent un peu à leur trésor esquissé et qu'ils ne nous forcent pas leurs folies incompréhensibles à faire aussi des dépenses énormes que nous pouvons employer plus utilement ailleurs.

Abdul Hamid wanted to improve Greek-Turkish relations. He suggested an 'entente cordiale' between the two countries. These were not empty words: the Sultan was not inimical to the Greeks, and some of his close associates such as

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<sup>111</sup> FO 286/375, Rosebury to Rumbold, Foreign Office, 11/23 June 1886, ciphered telegram, f. 68.

<sup>112</sup> DRAS 6.4, Saïd Pasha to an unknown recipient, Constantinople, 18/30 June 1886, f. 163.

Caratheodory Pasha and Aleko Pasha were Ottoman Greeks. Moreover, the Sultan was now worried that the unified Bulgaria would be a permanent military threat for European Turkey and especially Macedonia. A *rapprochement* with Greece and the isolation of Bulgaria would help avoid a new war. Stephanos, however, was convinced that the Turks were unworthy interlocutors. He never responded to the Sultan.<sup>113</sup>

Stephanos made tirades against Turkey but did not confront foreign diplomats. Like Tricoupis, he knew how to deal with the Powers.<sup>114</sup> Major frontier incidents soon ceased. Greece demobilised and internal order was restored. The allied blockade was lifted on 26 May/7 June. The mobilisation of 1885-86 proved expensive: its cost was calculated at 133 million drachmai, without including the damage done to agriculture and business due to the absence of men at the front.<sup>115</sup> *Proia* went silent for some months, and Deliyiannis did not return to power until 1890. Thanks to the quick demobilisation, Tricoupis's leadership and Stephanos's diplomacy Greece avoided further trouble. Between 9/21 May 1886 and 24 October/5 November 1890 Tricoupis headed the longest Greek cabinet of the nineteenth century.

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<sup>113</sup> DRAS 6.3, Mavroyeni to his nephew, Yildiz, 29 May/10 June, 1886, f. 120<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>114</sup> FO 286/375, Rosebury to [probably] Baring. Foreign Office, 11/23 May 1886, f. 26.

<sup>115</sup> Dakin, *The unification...* p. 138.

The fiasco of 1886 demonstrated the combination of state weakness and overheated nationalism that lay at the heart of many of the problems of the foreign policy of the Greek state over subsequent decades. The nature of the crisis of 1885-6, however, also reveals more specific failures of policy. First, Deliyiannis misunderstood the international context. 1885 was not 1878: European peace was not at stake, and the Greek mobilisation was not a credible threat of Balkan security. The Powers would not give anything in exchange for demobilisation. Second, foreign diplomats and journalists did not take well to Deliyiannis's bombastic style and moralising language. Deliyiannis believed that he spoke truth to power but diplomats saw Greece as a Balkan Switzerland pretending to be Russia. The change in international perceptions of Greece proved to be durable. Greece no longer seemed to be a cause worth defending, but a rather dangerous and disruptive minor power. Third, Deliyiannis changed the terms of Greek political debate. He thought in terms of representing 'the people' rather than in terms of national interests, taking Greek foreign policy out of the diplomatic realm and into a new world of nationalist mobilisation on the streets and in the press.

The legacy of 1885-86 therefore lay not in its limited consequences for the Balkans, but in the shift in character of Greek policy, and the relationship between domestic policy and the pursuit of irredentist ambitions. City-dwellers hard hit by

the crisis of 1882-85 came to see Tricoupis as an authoritarian figure backed by the throne, the elites and the British. Despite the hardship, the mobilisation was not unpopular: and for some Greeks, Tricoupis's quick acceptance of the demands of the Powers was a blow to national honour: as Campbell has shown, honour was a central value in the Greek society. Tricoupis's behaviour was seen as unmanly and shameful. In coming years, demands for a more assertive foreign policy would grow stronger. Macedonia, rather than the *Grèce esclave*, became the new rallying call of Greek irredentists. The honourable thing to do was to answer Bulgaria with violence.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> J.K. Campbell, *Honour, family and patronage: a study of institutions and moral values in a Greek mountain community* (Oxford, 1964), pp. 263-321.

### **III. THE GREEK CRISIS: 1897**

In 1886, Greece suffered a blow. But more was to come, this time due to the bad state of Greek finances. Between 1875 and 1893 the national debt per capita more than tripled from 102.75 drachmai to 363.20. As a result, 33 per cent of the Greek budgetary receipts were used to pay for foreign loans. Greece also suffered from a chronic unfavourable balance of trade and its exports were dominated by currants, which surpassed in value all other Greek exports combined. The reason for the dominance of currants was that a phyloxera epidemic in 1860 had destroyed the vineyards of other Mediterranean countries, especially France. This caused a sharp rise in the demand and the price for Greek wine and currants. Between 1850 and 1892 the Greek production of currants multiplied by six; and in 1873-75, currants stood as high as sixty three per cent of Greek exports. Greek farmers abandoned other traditional agricultural products, such as olives, and turned to the then prolific vineyards. But, once the French vineyards started recovering, the French government was quick to impose a protective tariff against Greek imports, in 1892.

Before long, the price of currants fell dramatically. This development, combined with the high indebtedness of Greece, led to financial ravage.<sup>117</sup>

This was a political disaster for the New Party. In December 1893, Tricoupis reduced interest payments on loans by 70 per cent to halt the deterioration of Greek finances. This bankruptcy was also a disaster abroad. Tricoupis was seen as trying to protect Greece from its financial responsibilities. The reduced interest payments caused uproar among foreign bondholders and the diplomatic representatives of the Powers complained officially. The Tricoupis government fell in 1895 and Tricoupis never returned to power. He died instead in Cannes the next year, isolated and embittered. Tricoupism was a spent political force.<sup>118</sup>

Interest payments became a permanent concern of the Greek governments. Financial trouble was damaging Greek irredentism: the population was reduced due to immigration to the USA, there was less money to spend on the armed forces and Greece was losing its appeal among the Ottoman Christians. Greece soon started negotiations with representatives of the bondholders to agree new interest payments, but a compromise was not reached before February 1897(NS). It was

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<sup>117</sup> G.B. Dertilis, *History of the Greek state* (in Greek) (2 vols. Athens, 2006 [2004], i, pp. 355-74; Stavrianos, *The Balkans...*, pp. 472-73.

<sup>118</sup> Vergopoulos, HXIV pp 35-36; Stavrianos, *The Balkans...*, pp. 472-73.

too late: unexpected developments inside Greece would not let the agreement be ratified.<sup>119</sup>

The prospects appeared better for Greece's Balkan adversary. Although the Bulgarian economy also suffered from chronic foreign indebtedness, it was more diversified and avoided bankruptcy. The Union of 1885 and the unexpected victory against Serbia created euphoria among Bulgarian nationalists. From then until 1913, the Bulgarian army would be regarded as the strongest in the Balkans. And Bulgaria maintained strong links with the Macedonian Christians. Bulgarian irredentists had good reasons to be optimistic.

Most contemporary observers agreed that the majority of Christian Macedonians regarded themselves as Bulgarian. Christian Macedonians were affiliated to Bulgaria through geographical proximity, a mutually understandable language, and a genuine belief in Bulgarian irredentism intensified by the San Stefano Treaty. This impression was strengthened by the presence of a strong Macedonian community inside Bulgaria.<sup>120</sup>

In the 1880s, there were about one hundred thousand Christian Macedonian immigrants and refugees in Bulgaria. The Macedonian community was concentrated in Sofia and many of them occupied high positions in public

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<sup>119</sup> Stavrianos, *The Balkans...*, pp. 472-73.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 519.

administration and the army.<sup>121</sup> This was by far the largest Macedonian expatriate community in the Balkans. Bulgarians used the community for propaganda purposes: if Macedonians were not Bulgarians, why did Serbia and Greece not have a Macedonian population of a similar size? Besides, many of the Macedonians living in Bulgaria did turn into fervent Bulgarian nationalists and were active in organising bands and irredentist societies.<sup>122</sup> In 1889, one of them, a young military officer by the name Kosta Panica, tried to assassinate Prince Ferdinand for having betrayed Bulgarian national interests in Macedonia. This was an exhibition of irredentism and anti-monarchism that must have impressed his colleagues in Greece.

The Greek equivalent of Panica appeared in 1894. Sixty lower officers of the army founded the 'National Society', a group reminiscent of the 'National Defence Committee' of 1878,<sup>123</sup> and one of a number of such societies active in Greece in the later nineteenth century.<sup>124</sup> After the failure of diplomatic action to expand Greek territory in 1885-86, irredentists thought it was time to try military action instead. Greece did not need allies and diplomatic agreements but a confident army. The military action of the Society in 1896-97 was therefore different from

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<sup>121</sup> Richard Crampton, *A concise history of Bulgaria* (Cambridge 1997). p. 97.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> Dakin, *The unification...*, p. 150.

<sup>124</sup> Kofos, HXIII pp. 325.

the Uprising of 1854: the bands of the Society were not irregular forces but were led by professional military officers.

Fear of Bulgaria's power fuelled the actions of the Society: 'while our ancient enemy [Turkey] is being decomposed and collapses [...] nations who are enemies of the Greek Race and do not possess even the slightest piece of its great powers, but work united and with great perseverance, are marching towards success'.<sup>125</sup>

The Society believed in a national hierarchy similar to the one of Kazazis: Bulgarians were united, hard-working and successful but at the same time devious and violent. Their success were due to foul means. The vague promises of the Society of triumphs against these cunning enemies caught the attention of nationalist intellectuals and journalists who offered it their support. Like the radical Italian irredentists, the Society wanted to win nationwide support. The Society soon had fifty-six branches in Greek cities and eighty-three among the Greek communities abroad.<sup>126</sup> As for the army, the Society's success in recruiting members was so great that in 1897, Prince Constantine would claim that 'all officers of the army' belonged to it.<sup>127</sup>

Radical irredentists saw in the Society a counterweight to Deliyiannis's increasing power. Tricoupis's retirement, Deliyiannis's dominance, and the resulting political

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<sup>125</sup> Gianoulopoulos, 'Our noble blindness': foreign policy and the 'national questions' from the defeat of 1897 until the Asia Minor Disaster (in Greek) (Athens, 2001), p. 156.

<sup>126</sup> Dakin, *The unification...*, p. 150.

<sup>127</sup> Constantine quoted in FO, 286/440, Egerton to Salisbury, Athens, 7/19 February, 1897, f. 78.

disorientation of Greek upper-middle classes facilitated the work of the Society. The Athenian elites showed a keen interest in the Society, and soon dozens of university professors, journalists and diplomats joined the organisation. Diplomats in particular joined the Society out of spite for Deliyiannis. People like Athos Romanos and Nicolaos Mavrocordato thought little of Deliyiannis's diplomatic abilities and were afraid of a new purge of Greek diplomats. The only vocal opponent of the Society among the elites was Vlasis Gavriilidis. Contrary to what a Greek historian later suggested, Gavriilidis did not oppose the Society because he lacked faith in its irredentism, but rather because he disliked the authoritarian impact that military officers had on Greek politics. A Greek born in Constantinople and who came to Greece out of romantic nationalism, Gavriilidis's irredentist plans could be as fanciful as those of the Society.<sup>128</sup>

Trouble in Crete soon allowed the Society to put its message into practice. Muslim-Christian relations had never been good in nineteenth-century Crete. The issue of contestation had long been the administration of the island: Christians wanted autonomy, which everyone understood would lead to union with Greece along the lines of what had occurred in Eastern Rumelia. In order to achieve their aims the Christians organised blooded rebellions hoping that the Powers would be

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<sup>128</sup> Gianoulopoulos, *Our noble...*, pp. 3-10.

forced by public opinion to intervene in the Christians' favour. Large-scale disturbances between the two religious groups broke out in February 1896.

Popular feeling in Greece favoured open support for the Cretans. Deliyiannis saw the danger of this course; but, as a populist, he had trouble going against the feelings of 'the common man'. Moreover, he suspected the Society as a Tricoupist conspiracy. But it was hard to resist it, and he allowed the Society to provide support to the revolutionaries almost undisturbed: Greek volunteers and ammunition soon reached the island.<sup>129</sup> The Balkans and the Ottoman Empire were at peace and, thus, Deliyiannis believed that there was little risk in supporting the Christian Cretans. But the quiet of 1896 proved as elusive as that of 1885. The Armenian horrors soon came to the fore.

Armenians living in Asia Minor had been persecuted since 1894. But it was only in 1896 that the scale of the massacre became known to Europe: dozens of thousands of Armenians had been killed by then.<sup>130</sup> A barrage of anti-Muslim publications followed the revelations, especially in Britain. A language similar to that of Gladstone in 1876-78 was again to the fore: the British Home Secretary talked of 'monstrous misrule'<sup>131</sup> and the Foreign Minister felt 'haunted by the horrors of

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<sup>129</sup> Ioannis Pikros, HXIV p. 115.

<sup>130</sup> For the number of dead Armenians see Taner Akçam, *A shameful act: the Armenian genocide and the question of Turkish responsibility* (New York, 2006), p. 42.

<sup>131</sup> Matthew White Ridley quoted in 'The Home Secretary and the Armenians', *The Times*, 21 December 1895/2 January 1896, p. 4.

Asia Minor'.<sup>132</sup> Satirical magazines such as *Punch* and *The Clarion* gave voice to popular hatred of Turkey calling Abdul Hamid 'the butcher of Yildiz', a label that accompanied him until his death.<sup>133</sup> Public opinion was similarly agitated in other European countries and the uproar reached the United States, where *The New York Times* talked of an 'Armenian Holocaust'.<sup>134</sup> *The London Times* wrote that anti-Muslim feeling was so intense that it was reminiscent of 1878. A new Eastern crisis seemed to be on the way.<sup>135</sup>

The Society saw in the Horrors an opportunity that could not be missed. Swift military action was required and the Society, which was already active in Crete, quickly planned an invasion of Greek bands into Macedonia and Epirus. The aim of the expedition was to make 'an armed demonstration against the Bulgarian pillagers who were claiming Greek rights as their own'.<sup>136</sup> The Society wanted to recruit into the bands as many Greek Ottomans as possible, with the aim of impressing foreign opinion.

Some of the bands were accordingly composed entirely of Macedonian and Epirot immigrants in Greece. But others were a mixed lot. Many of the three thousand bandits that crossed the frontier were opportunists from all areas of the Balkans,

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<sup>132</sup> Rosebury quoted in Editorial, *The Times*, 21 December 1895/ 2 January 1896, p. 7.

<sup>133</sup> Gianoulopoulos, *Our noble...*, p. 96.

<sup>134</sup> Michael B. Oren, *Power, faith and fantasy: America in the Middle East: 1776 to the Present* (New York, 2007), p. 293.

<sup>135</sup> Editorial, *The Times*, 21 December 1895/ 2 January 1896, p. 7.

<sup>136</sup> Gianoulopoulos, *Our noble...*, p. 64.

even from places as distant as Odessa and Asia Minor.<sup>137</sup> It could not have been otherwise: in contemporary Greece, there was nothing equivalent to the Macedonian community in Bulgaria. A small number of seasonal workers crossed the frontiers every year, and there were about two thousand Macedonian refugees living just inside the Greek frontier.<sup>138</sup> Athens was home to only a handful of Macedonian refugees and was no equivalent to Sofia.<sup>139</sup> This was bad news for the propaganda of the Society. Even worse, the expedition of 1896 did not achieve anything noteworthy and the European press did not pay attention to it.

Instead of admitting its failure, the Society intensified its activities on Crete and accompanied them with intransigent rhetoric. On 26 January/7 February 1897, the Society admonished its ‘Cretan brothers’ to ‘proclaim the Union with the Greek fatherland!’<sup>140</sup> Unlike Deliyiannis, who was careful to restrict his public speeches to vague irredentist rhetoric, the politically inexperienced officers had now given themselves a concrete aim: the union of the island with Greece. Cretan Christians also presented the situation on the island in the darkest colours in the hope of attracting the attention of Greek and European public opinion: they called the Turks ‘opresseurs’, ‘assassins’ and ‘incéndiaires’ who were submitting the

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<sup>137</sup> John S. Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a cause: brigandage and irredentism in modern Greece: 1821-1912*, (Oxford, 1987), pp. 216-17.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 218.

<sup>139</sup> Gounaris, ‘Social gatherings and Macedonian lobbying’, in Philip Carabott (ed.), *Greek society in the making: 1863-1913* (Aldershot, 1997), pp. 99-112, here 102-3.

<sup>140</sup> The Society’s text is attached to FO 286/440, Egerton to Salisbury, Athens, 27 January/ 7 February 1897, f. 69.

Christians to ‘angoisses dantesques’.<sup>141</sup> The promise of the Society and the call for help by the Cretans spread a nationalist fervour. The press as well as public demonstrations were now demanding from the King an open military intervention on Crete. On 3/15 February, a Greek military detachment disembarked on Crete.

The Powers were also alarmed, but for very different reasons. By 1897, the uproar provoked by the Armenian massacres had diminished and the sufferings of the Armenians were seen as secondary to the dangers of a new Russo-Turkish war. Thus, the Powers quickly agreed to introduce reforms in Armenia, and put the Armenian question on ice. This was a development that was entirely missed on the Greek side, where, as late as March 1897, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was still discussing the impact of the Armenian Massacres on European public opinion.<sup>142</sup>

The Powers saw Crete too as an annoying complication that could disturb European peace. But, unlike Armenia, in Crete it was hard to distinguish between victims and perpetrators. The Powers were well informed that, by early 1897 and thanks to the help from Greece, the Christians had changed from victims into aggressors. In the district of Sitia and Spinalonga, ‘all the Moslems are either in the towns or have been exterminated ... A few wretched individuals, half-starved,

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<sup>141</sup> FO 78/4843, untitled text of the ‘central Cretan committee’, Athens, 15/27 March 1897, no number.

<sup>142</sup> AYEC 1897.2.1, Mavrocordato to Skouzes, Constantinople, 2/14 March 1897, number 288.

were found among the hills'. Crete was not Armenia.<sup>143</sup> The Powers started discussing 'active measures against the Greek fleet and army'.<sup>144</sup> The question was how Greece would react.

In private, Deliyiannis turned against the Society. In his interviews with the British Minister, Egerton, Deliyiannis expressed his dislike of the Society. He disapproved intensely of irredentist activities in Crete: he commented that 'it was a political move with the purpose of embarrassing the government'. He thought that the 'composition [of the Society] was in great degree political: of those in opposition to the Government' and he targeted in particular the diplomats involved with the Society; he claimed (falsely) that Romanos was its malevolent Secretary, whereas Konstantinos Manos – a Cretan irredentist, educated at Balliol College – was misled by his very young age.<sup>145</sup> Deliyiannis accusations might have been exaggerated but there was a grain of truth: many if not most of the leading members of the Society were known Tricoupists.

Deliyiannis also gave vague assurances to Egerton that the activities of the Society, especially arms smuggling, were under control. Egerton accepted the assurances at face value. When in February and March 1897 he was presented with

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<sup>143</sup> FO 78/4843, the Admiralty to Salisbury, received on 24 May/April 5 1897, ff. 1-4; the quote is from f. 3; FO 78/4843, Rear admiral Harris to Foreign Office, Suda, 19 March/1 April 1897, telegram no 132. See also AVEC 2.2, Mavrocordato to Skouzes, Constantinople, 4/16 March 1897, number 221.

<sup>144</sup> 'Greece and the Powers', *The Times*, 25 February/9 March 1897, p. 5.

<sup>145</sup> Deliyiannis quoted in FO 286/440, Egerton to Salisbury, Athens, 11/ 23 January 1897, f. 19.

overwhelming evidence that the Greeks were preparing an expedition in Macedonia,<sup>146</sup> he informed the Foreign Office that ‘the Greek Government has certainly nothing to do with it’.<sup>147</sup>

But Deliyiannis never attacked the Society in public. Due to his tolerance of the Society throughout 1896, by early 1897 it had become extremely popular. Opposing the Society at that stage would have required confronting or even attacking public sentiment, something which Deliyiannis avoided as a matter of principle. After the war, a Greek general leaked documents according to which in March 1897 ‘M. Deliyiannis avait donné l’ordre non seulement de ne mettre aucun obstacle à la formation des bandes, mais aussi de favoriser leur entrée dans territoire ottoman’.<sup>148</sup> Although Deliyiannis sincerely wanted to restrain the Society, he wanted even more to please the ‘Greek people’. He thus chose to take concrete action in its favour and only give vague assurances against it. But Greece was getting close to a war with Turkey.

The fragmentation of the political elites exacerbated the situation. Opposition to Deliyiannis was divided into two factions with equally limited support; they each had twenty MPs opposed to Deliyiannis’s 160. The first faction stood for the

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<sup>146</sup> FO 286/440, Egerton to Salisbury, Athens, 13/25 February 1897, f. 167; Egerton to Salisbury, Athens, 29 January/10 February 1897, f. 88; Egerton to Salisbury, Athens, 26 February/10 March 1897, f. 215.

<sup>147</sup> FO 286/440, Egerton to Salisbury, Athens, 9/21 March 1897, f. 241.

<sup>148</sup> Extract of the *Messenger d’Athènes* attached to FO 286/442, Egerton to Salisbury, Athens, 1/13 December 1897, f. 377; see also Charalambis Anninos, *Asty*, 29 November/11 December 1897, p. 1.

remnants of the Tricoupist Party and was led by Georgios Theotokis. Theotokis saw himself not as someone who represented the common man but as someone who restrained the passions of the masses. He disliked both the Society and Deliyiannis, but fearing public anger against him, he remained silent. His lukewarm stance made contemporaries see Theotokis as an opaque man.

It was Dimitrios Rallis, the leader of the Third Party, who became the *de facto* leader of the opposition. He was associated with anti-dynastic and reformist circles, and he naturally joined the Tricoupist party at the beginning of his career. He served as Tricoupis's Minister of Public Instruction in 1875 and as Minister of Justice in 1883. But in 1884, he left the New Party and created his Third Party. Rallis kept to the end of his life the explosive temperament that got him in trouble as a student. His political message combined irredentism, populism and an anti-dynastic stance and made Rallis popular in Attica. He had a conflict with the King in 1892, and since then they had maintained bad relations. After Tricoupis's death, Rallis severed any remaining links with Tricoupism. Instead, he sided with Deliyiannis, and supported him in the violent protests against the TheotokisTheotokis government in 1902 (*Σαυιδικά*). Rallis saw the crisis of 1897 as an opportunity to attract public attention. He soon started delivering fervent speeches against the inactivity of George, and pushing for a war with Turkey.

Rallis 'did not seem to be troubled by any excess of patriotic reticence'<sup>149</sup> and many were convinced that he was the secret leader of the Society.

Nicolaos Mavrocordato followed his own autonomous course. He had recovered from his dismissal in 1885 and he was then Greek Minister in Constantinople. Mavrocordato thought little of Deliyiannis or his Foreign Minister, Alexandros Skouzes. He had no qualms about bypassing their instructions with initiatives of his own. Two such initiatives contributed to the outbreak of the war. As a member of the Society, Mavrocordato advised them to increase their attacks inside Turkey because the Turkish Commander 'has strict orders to adopt a purely defensive stance'.<sup>150</sup> A month later, however, Mavrocordato had a complete change of mind: he concluded that 'the Turks intended to invade Greek territory without a previous declaration of war' and, again bypassing the Foreign Ministry, he advised the Greek Commander-in Chief to step up military preparations. Although his message was factually correct, this initiative undermined a simultaneous effort of the Sultan to restore peace, and ruined Greece's last chance to avoid war. In this way, Mavrocordato's unauthorised actions were critical in starting the war.<sup>151</sup>

According to Mavrocordato Abdul Hamid was an oriental despot. He helped the Young Turks in a plot to remove Abdul Hamid from power, believing that such an

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<sup>149</sup> 'The abandonment of the frontier line' *The Times*, 15/27 April 1897, p. 9.

<sup>150</sup> NSA, Mavrocordato to unknown, [Constantinople], 27 February/ 11 March 1897, number 70624. His underline.

<sup>151</sup> 'The war which all Europe...', *The Times*, 7/19 April 1897, p. 7.

event ‘would bring about an upheaval very favourable for us’.<sup>152</sup> To justify this, Mavrocordato relied on orientalist stereotypes: ‘it is entirely pointless to discuss with the Turks as with the English or the French. C’est tout autre chose... What they do not give away for years, they might abandon in an unexpected moment’.<sup>153</sup> ‘Unexpected moment’ meant for contemporaries a Greek San Stefano and even cool-headed liberals such as Mavrocordato kept searching for it.

Tricoupists accused Deliyiannis of opportunism. In 1886, Gavriilidis had attacked Deliyiannis for ‘spending a hundred million [drachmai], gambling the prestige of Greece, sacrificing its independence’ in search for ‘unexpected events, that is for things that no-one can foresee’.<sup>154</sup> But Mavrocordato and Gavriilidis too kept looking for ‘an unexpected moment’. They had the same aims but different means from Deliyiannis. This search for the ‘unexpected’ collapse of the Ottoman Empire doomed Greek politics to a perennial crisis.

The fragmentation of the political elites isolated George. The accusations of the Society and of Rallis had fomented conspiratorial rumours that he was a pawn of foreign powers. On 7/19 February, the British Minister wrote: ‘King’s position painful and even critical. Popular language against him as check to Hellenism most

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<sup>152</sup> SKOUG 11.6, Mavrocordato to Skouloudis, [Constantinople], 23 April/5 May 1897, no number.

<sup>153</sup> DRAS 12.1, Mavrocordato to Stephanos, [probably Constantinople], 28 March/ 9 April 1890, number 62. My italics.

<sup>154</sup> Gavriilidis, ‘A commander-in-chief turned into a beggard’, *Acropolis*, 6/18 April 1886, p. 1.

violent'.<sup>155</sup> Two weeks later: 'simple compliance with the European demands would mean the King's deportation'.<sup>156</sup> George's isolation meant that he had no alternative but to work with Deliyiannis. George could not risk removing from power a cabinet with a substantial parliamentary majority. Moreover, the King had to alleviate public anger by giving his consent to irredentist expeditions, such as the military expedition to Crete: he chose his aide-de-camp, Timoleon Vassos, to lead the expedition in an attempt to show that he was capable of military action. In private, he recognised that the expedition was both militarily doomed and diplomatically mistaken; but he urged the Powers to understand that he had to endorse it to appease public opinion and to avoid the possibility of a revolution.<sup>157</sup> Such duplicity revealed the frailty of the monarch's power.

The main winner was the Society. It soon filled the political gap that fragmentation had created. In 1896-97, many Athenian newspapers adopted the slogans of the Society. The mystery that surrounded it made it appear strong, but in reality it had many weaknesses. The Society was a rather loose network, which was 'not very well off for funds' and lacked a concrete political message.<sup>158</sup> Its real chairman was not Rallis but Michael Melas. M. Melas was a wealthy merchant, mayor of Athens

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<sup>155</sup> FO, 286/440, Egerton to Salisbury, Athens, 7/19 February 1897, f. 78.

<sup>156</sup> FO, 286/440, Egerton to Salisbury, Athens, 19 February/ 3 March 1897, f. 186.

<sup>157</sup> FO, 286/440, Egerton to Salisbury, Athens, 17/29 March 1897, f. 262; cf. Egerton to Salisbury, Athens, 9/21 February, f. 154.

<sup>158</sup> FO 286/440, Egerton to Salisbury, Athens, 29 January/10 February 1897, f. 84.

between 1891 and 1894, founder of the Athens Club [*Αθηναϊκή Λέσχη*], the most exclusive gentlemen's club of Athens, MP for Attica, member of the founding board of the Hellenic Red Cross and for a year Chairman of the Society for the Promotion of Education and Learning [*Φιλεκπαιδευτική Εταιρεία*], Greece's largest charitable educational society. Although well connected and able, M. Melas lacked the charisma to turn the Society into a political movement.

The Society's plans were crude: in the spring of 1897, a few thousand Greek bandits led by army officers would enter European Turkey *en masse*, instigating a Greek revolution. Already on 26 February/10 March, the British Minister warned that the 'present movement' had entered 'its most dangerous phase, the Macedonian [one]'.<sup>159</sup> Given the chaos of the political forces inside the country, only the Powers could save Greece from a war with Turkey.

But the primary interest of the Powers was European peace not Greece's safety. Greece was unfortunate in 1897 in that there was no Eastern or Balkan Crisis but merely a Greek Crisis: it soon became clear that Serbia and Bulgaria were unlikely to participate in the war. And, unlike in 1878, Russia, under the newly crowned Tsar Nicholas II, followed a policy of pacification. The Powers had no motive to solve the crisis. Moreover, Egerton's reassuring reports about Deliyannis's good will convinced the British government that the crisis would not escalate. Thus, the

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<sup>159</sup> FO 286/440, Egerton to Salisbury, Athens, 26 February/10 March 1897, f. 215.

initial suggestions for the blockade of ‘the Piraeus and the chief ports of Greece’ as well as of Crete were ignored.<sup>160</sup> Nor was public opinion particularly moved by the Greek cause. The Philhellenism that had inspired the battle of Navarino in 1827 was long dead: European public opinion knew by then that Ottoman Orthodox Christians were not necessarily also Greeks, and that Greeks in their habits and traditions resembled more the Turks than the Europeans. Thus, the young Winston Churchill, when deciding which side of the war to join in 1897 – convinced that the Greeks would suffer a defeat – was more interested in practicalities than in the Greek cause. Greece this time would be allowed to test in practice the efficiency of the ‘unexpected moment’.<sup>161</sup>

Sir Edwin Henry Egerton was among the few who protested against the indifference of the Powers. Contrary to his predecessor, Rumbold, Egerton understood the importance of the press and demonstrations in Greece’s foreign policy: ‘I doubt whether the Great Powers are right in ignoring the internal trouble of small Balcanic countries’. His protests had little effect in the Foreign Office, but his insight in Greek politics turned him into the closest associate of George during the 1897 Crisis. Unlike 1886, when the King preferred to remain silent, in 1897 he

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<sup>160</sup> FO 286/440, Egerton to Salisbury, Athens, 23 February/7 March 1897, f. 204.

<sup>161</sup> Robert Holland and Diana Markides, *The British and the Hellenes* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 2-3; see also FO 424/34, Rev. Robert Weakly to the Secretaries of the Church Missionary Society, 13/25 September 1874, ff. 111-12.

bypassed Deliyiannis and preferred to negotiate on his own with the British. For his part, Deliyiannis was much less active and assertive than in 1885-86. The War increased the power of the King despite his growing unpopularity.<sup>162</sup>

After April 1897, the crisis escalated quickly. On 29 March/9 April, 'bands of about 2000 men are publicly stated to have crossed the frontier with Macedonia'.<sup>163</sup>

The Society had even set up its own military uniform: 'fustanellas with a distinguishing cap and a description of a uniform with the letters E.E'.<sup>164</sup> It soon became evident that sections of the state were implicated in the bandit activity: according to an eyewitness from the front, the members of the bands were Greek reservists; the government had supplied them with rifles, bayonets and cartridges; they were commanded by Greek officers 'in the King's name'; and even the uniforms were supplied to the soldiers from the Government. As a Greek prisoner of war said: 'the band crossed the frontier to make war and not as brigands'.<sup>165</sup> The bandit-reservists moved against Turkish towns, but as in 1896 the local population did not participate in the insurrection.<sup>166</sup> Thus, the new Macedonian expedition proved to be a failure.<sup>167</sup> The Turks quickly and successfully repulsed them.

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<sup>162</sup> FO 286/441, Egerton to Salisbury, Athens, 26 March/7 April 1897, f. 287.

<sup>163</sup> FO 286/441, Egerton to Salisbury, Athens, 25 February/9 March 1897, f. 294.

<sup>164</sup> FO 286/441, Egerton to Salisbury, 26 February/10 March 1897, f. 302.

<sup>165</sup> 'Frontier incidents', *The Times*, 5/17 April 1897, p. 5.

<sup>166</sup> 'The abandonment of the frontier line' *The Times*, 15/27 April 1897, p. 9.

<sup>167</sup> The Athens Correspondent, 'Greece and Turkey', *The Times*, 5/17 April 1897, p. 5.

Instead of Greek successes, the expedition exposed the Greek government and provided the Ottomans with a good opportunity for propaganda.<sup>168</sup>

The actions of the Society exposed Ottoman Greeks to dangers. Many of them were middle class and were engaged in commerce.<sup>169</sup> At times of tension with Greece, Turkish embargoes on Ottoman Greek commerce or outright pillages of Greek shops were frequent. Moreover, the Kingdom encouraged Greeks living in the Empire to volunteer for the Greek army. About 1,500 Greek reservists departed from Smyrna to join the Greek army. The atmosphere in the city became tense. Upon departure, Greek volunteers used to wait until their boat departed and then make hostile gestures to the by-standing Turks. Similar incidents took place inside the city. 'Had the Greeks acted towards anyone else but the Turks, as they did, there would have been very serious trouble'. The danger of interreligious conflict was real enough.<sup>170</sup>

Moreover, Greek irredentism reinforced Turkish nationalism. Until the 1850s Ottoman Muslims were little interested in nationalism, and felt somehow mystified by the Greek irredentist *eterya* (=societies), a Greek word that appeared

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<sup>168</sup> See the excerpts of Turkish newspapers translated in *Neologos* in AYEC 1897. 2, Mavrocordato Skouzes, Pera, 2/14 April 1897, number 442.

<sup>169</sup> Elena Frangakis-Syrett, 'The economic activities of the Greek community of Izmir in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries' in Dimitri Gondicas and Charles Issawi (eds.), *Ottoman Greeks in the age of nationalism* (Princeton, 1999), pp. 17-44, here 19-25.

<sup>170</sup> The quote is from FO 78/4845, Captain J.H. Rainier to Admiral R.H. Harris, Smyrna, 25 April/7 May 1897, no number. See also, AYEC 1897.2.2, Iakovos Argyropoulos to Skouzes, Smyrna, 21 March/2 April 1897, number 529.

untranslated in Ottoman documents.<sup>171</sup> But, in 1889, the Young Turks made their appearance. They were mostly military officers and intellectuals, with anti-monarchist and nationalist beliefs. Like their Greek counterparts they were obsessed with ‘action’.<sup>172</sup> One of them, a young officer named Mustafa Kemal, resented the control that ‘a race that was our sworn enemy’ had taken over Ottoman commerce and how in places such as Smyrna, ‘control had slipped away from its true and noble Turkish inhabitants’. The Turks made nationalist experiments similar to those of the Greeks, but their country was not the Balkan Switzerland. Greeks suffered the consequences in 1919-23.<sup>173</sup>

Open war soon erupted. On April 16, the Greek army had a confrontation with the Turks in Analipsis, a demilitarised zone at the frontier. To be sure the Greek sources of Egerton maintained that ‘the Turks endeavoured to take Analipsis’ and the Greeks ‘opposed them and held it all night’.<sup>174</sup> Deliyiannis talked of ‘a series of aggressive acts by the Turks’. But few were convinced. Telegrams from Greece on the frontier skirmishes were seen as unreliable due to government censorship. As we saw in 1885-86 the frontier was badly managed, and Greek NCOs and frontier guards often looked for trouble.

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<sup>171</sup> Ilber Ortaylı, ‘Greeks in the Ottoman administration during the Tanzimat period’ in Dimitri Gondicas and Charles Issawi (eds.), *Ottoman Greeks in the age of nationalism* (Princeton, 1999), pp. 161-68, here 165.

<sup>172</sup> Mehmed Şükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in opposition* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 200-16.

<sup>173</sup> Giles Milton, *Paradise lost: Smyrna 1922* (London, 2008), p. 311.

<sup>174</sup> FO 286/441. Egerton to Salisbury, Athens, 5/17 April, 1897, f. 328; See also, ‘The frontier skirmishes,’ *Acropolis Esperini*, 5/17 April 1897, p. 1.

It was by then impossible to deny the commitment of the Turks to peace. *The Times* wondered of the Ottoman Empire: ‘Would any other Power in Europe with a fine army ... have carried its patience so far!’ As Mehmet Uğur Ekıncı has shown, Greece was in large part responsible for the hostilities. Tevfik even met with the British and Russian ambassadors, Sir Philip Currie and Alexander Nelidov to help *avert* the war. Despite its military superiority, official Turkey hoped to the end that an intervention of the Powers would save them a new crisis: in this respect, 1878 had had a profound impact on Turkish policy. But, even so, the feeling in Europe was, as *The Times* put it, that ‘the Ottomans in no case would be suffered to gather the fruits of victory over a Christian people’. The European bias against Islam kept Greek hopes alive. Historians often talk of the corruption and inefficiency of Ottoman institutions. But the role of European diplomatic intransigence in contributing to the demise of the Ottomans should not be underestimated.<sup>175</sup>

At the beginning of the war the Greeks thought they were doing well. They were ‘repulsing the Turkish attacks’,<sup>176</sup> ‘the Turks are said to be retreating in disorder,’<sup>177</sup> and ‘the Turks ran away ... with heavy casualties’.<sup>178</sup> Nevertheless, six days after the official proclamation of war, the Greeks were in difficulties.

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<sup>175</sup> ‘The war which all Europe...’, *The Times*, 7/19 April 1897, p. 7; Mehmet Uğur Ekıncı , ‘The origins of the 1897 Ottoman-Greek war: a diplomatic history’ (Master thesis, Bilkent University, Ankara, July 2006), p. 27.

<sup>176</sup> FO 286/441. Egerton to Salisbury, Athens, 5/17 April 1897, f. 328.

<sup>177</sup> Reuters quoted in ‘Greek reply to Turkey’, *The Times*, 12/ 20 April, 1897, issue 35182, p. 3.

<sup>178</sup> Vocos, ‘Fire at the frontiers,’ *Acropolis Esperini*, 5/17 April 1897, p. 3

Egerton was informed of a Greek reverse at Mati. Originally the news was that the army had retreated to defend the frontier from a better position: ‘retreat of the Greek army was in great measure orderly’.<sup>179</sup> Likewise, the irredentist *Embros* talked of a ‘predicted’ retreat made with ‘astonishing speed’; ‘final victory is ours’.<sup>180</sup>

But ‘the official news of the defeat at Mati were untrue’. The Greek army was not defeated heroically in the battlefield nor was it retreating in an orderly way. There was even no battle but just an ‘exchange of artillery’. The Greek army started retreating in a ‘disorderly’ manner as soon as the Turkish army appeared at the top of a nearby hill. Moreover, the casualties were not the result of heroism but rather of friendly fire: the Greek cavalry mistook the retreating Greeks for Turks and attacked them.<sup>181</sup> In short, Mati was a military fiasco. *The Times* concluded that ‘the fighting on the Thessalian frontier is over’<sup>182</sup> and the Powers offered their mediation for a ceasefire.<sup>183</sup> Only one week after the start of the war, the Greek attempt to take Macedonia had turned into a disaster.

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<sup>179</sup> FO 286/441, Egerton to Salisbury, Athens, 12/24 April 1897, f. 374.

<sup>180</sup> ‘After the defeat’, *Embros*, 16/28 April 1897, p. 1.

<sup>181</sup> FO 286/441, Egerton to Salisbury, Athens, 14/26 April 1897, f. 982.

<sup>182</sup> ‘The fighting on the Thessalian...’ *The Times*, 14/ 26 April 1897, p. 9.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*

On 15/27 April Deliyiannis asked for the mediation of the Powers to force the Porte to cease hostilities.<sup>184</sup> But his gesture was without substance: Greek troops, commanded by George's aide-de-camp, remained on Crete in violation of international law – an issue that Deliyiannis did not even mention in his letter. Once again Deliyiannis had as his priority popular feeling rather than diplomatic necessities. Meanwhile the sixty thousand Turkish troops were advancing southwards occupying Greek towns. Thus, the war proved more damaging to Greece than had diplomatic action. The military reputation of Greece did not recover until 1912. Until then, other European states regarded Greece as militarily negligible.

Attention now turned to how the Turks would treat the defeated Christians. Was there to be a repetition of the Bulgarian and Armenian horrors? Greeks and their friends certainly thought – maybe even hoped – so. Greek journalists were searching for signs of ‘Turkish barbarity,’<sup>185</sup> publishing stories on the ill-treatment of Greek prisoners of war reminiscent of 1886,<sup>186</sup> whereas an Englishman in Athens talked of ‘Turkish cruelty and lust’ in a letter to *The Times*.<sup>187</sup> Certainly there was unrest due to the war: many Greeks abandoned Thessaly to avoid the Turkish army and some villages were destroyed. But there was no intentional

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<sup>184</sup> FO 286/441, Egerton to Salisbury, Athens, 15/27 April 1897, f.394.

<sup>185</sup> *Embros*, ‘The liberated Thessalians’ 16/28 August 1897, p. 1.

<sup>186</sup> SKOUG 11.6, Mavrocordato to Skouloudis, no place, 14/26 June 1897, no number.

<sup>187</sup> See for instance the letter of E.F. Benson to *The Times*, ‘The Thessalian refugees’, 14/26 July 1897, p. 6.

cruelty by the Ottomans.<sup>188</sup> The British consul in occupied Volo was surprised: the Sultan arrived in Thessaly and guaranteed in person the well-being of Christians. Moreover, ‘order was up to the present admirably maintained, although at night the town remains unlighted’.<sup>189</sup> As for the prisoners of war, they were well fed and treated.<sup>190</sup> There was insufficient cruelty to mobilise European public opinion. Under the collapse of Greek expectations, the co-operation between George and Deliyiannis dissolved. George was under heavy pressure from Rallis, who attributed the military disasters to ‘the incapacity and cowardice of the Crown Prince’s general staff’.<sup>191</sup> Antimonarchical feeling was on the rise both in Athens and among the soldiers at the front;<sup>192</sup> and ‘warlike enthusiasm is giving way to bitter recrimination’. *The Times* concluded that ‘the war was begun in fear of revolution, yet it may turn out as sure a path to revolution as any other’.<sup>193</sup> After 1885-86, George did not trust Deliyiannis: he was convinced that it would be hard to make his stubborn Premier recall Vassos’s forces from Crete and thought that such an unpopular measure could pass more easily ‘under the novelty of a change

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<sup>188</sup> FO 286/441, Merlin to the British consul in Piraeus, Volo, 29 April/11 May 1897, no number.

<sup>189</sup> FO 286/441, Merlin to unknown, Volo, 13/25 May 1897, attached to Egerton to Salisbury, Athens, 19/31 May, 1897, f. 577. See also FO 286/441, Merlin to H.M.S. ‘Dryad’ at Volo, 30 April/12 May 1897, no number.

<sup>190</sup> SKOUG 11.6, Mavrocordato to Skouloudis, no place, 14/26 June 1897, no number.

<sup>191</sup> ‘The war in the East,’ *The Times*, 15/27 April 1897, p. 9.

<sup>192</sup> SKOUG 11.6, [probably] D. Plevris-Plentizis to Skouloudis, Arta, 22 May /4 June 1897, no number; unknown to Skouloudis, no place, 28 July/9 August 1897, no number; Marinos to Skouloudis, Domokos, 3/15 May 1897, no number.

<sup>193</sup> ‘The war in the East’, *The Times*, 15/27 April 1897, p. 9.

of Ministry'.<sup>194</sup> Despite a majority of 150 seats in a parliament of 207, Deliyiannis fell again from power. Deliyiannist frustration turned to conspiracy theories about secret networks of power.

The new government was formed on 18/30 April, 1897. The new prime minister was Rallis. Given Rallis fervent anti-dynastic rhetoric, the King probably chose him in order to pacify the supporters of the National Society and Athenian irredentists. Once in office, Rallis continued his bellicose outbursts. As late as 9/21 September, he said that 'it is true... it is unmanly to abandon Thessaly to the wolves... It is preferable that the whole of Greece gets enslaved sharing the fate of Thessaly'.<sup>195</sup> But in practice, Rallis did not interfere much with foreign policy nor was he hostile to Turkey. The difficult task of negotiating a peace with Turkey fell on George and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stephanos Skouloudis, a wealthy merchant from Constantinople. A ceasefire duly came into effect on 8/20 May.

The ceasefire came just in time for the Ottoman Greeks. The aforementioned Smyrna incidents increased the suspicions of the Ottoman authorities towards them. Greek commerce suffered great damages. Moreover, the efforts of the Society to proselytise among Ottoman Greeks led to the arrest of many Greeks, especially in Constantinople, on suspicion of treason. The news of the sufferings of

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<sup>194</sup> FO 286/441, Egerton to Salisbury, Athens, 16/28 April 1897, f. 403.

<sup>195</sup> Rallis quoted in *Embros*, 21 September/3 October 1897, p. 1.

the Muslims in Crete created an atmosphere of terror for the Orthodox in the Ottoman Empire: the Muslims, especially those who had been expelled recently from the Balkans as refugees, were preparing a violent revenge.<sup>196</sup> The Ottoman governors genuinely tried to stop interreligious conflicts but, had the war continued for longer, it was likely that large-scale persecutions would have taken place. Leonidas Zarifis, a wealthy Greek banker from Constantinople, was in despair: ‘The prestige of Hellenism is lost and Pan-Slavism shall reign in the future’.<sup>197</sup> Zarifis used his personal acquaintance with the Sultan to end the war. Originally intending to meet Abdul Hamid to complain about his own persecution, the Greek merchant was very surprised by the tone of his encounter with the Sultan. Abdul Hamid told an astonished Zarifis that he was eager to reach an agreement with the Greeks. ‘Greece and Turkey have a common enemy, Slavism; in the past your father had suggested that Greece should become like Hungary and Turkey like Austria. I wish both of us had listened to him’. The Sultan’s wish was for Greece and Turkey to create a ‘close friendship’. Despite the Greek defeat the Sultan was as moderate as in 1886. This was music to Zarifis’s ears.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> AYEC 1897. 2.2, Mavrocordato to Skouzes, Constantinople, 4/16 March 1897, number 221; Aristeidis Metaxas to Skouzes, Chios, 1/13 March, 1897, number 137; Petros Tzanetos [vice-consul in Proussa] to Skouzes, [Proussa], 22 March/3 April 1897, number 88; the Consul general to Skouzes, Salonica, 11/23 February 1897, number 165.

<sup>197</sup> SKOUG 12.6, Zarifis to Eugeniadis [employee at the Greek consulate in Constantinople], 5/17 May 1897, no number.

<sup>198</sup> SKOUG 12.6, Zarifis to Eugeniadis, 5/17 May, 1897, no number.

Zarifis wrote the news to Skouloudis, whom he knew well from his time in Constantinople, and Skouloudis in turn informed the King. George, pleased that Turkey had shown moderation, explained to the Sultan that ‘he never was in favour of the war against Turkey; ...he made every effort to avoid it, but the country was led to war by the *local political parties*’: putting the blame on Deliyannis. The King also promised Abdul Hamid that he would ‘*personally* work for [...] a close entente either open or secret; and if H.M. the Sultan prefers it we could even have an alliance for combating the common enemy’.<sup>199</sup> By that stage, the King had doubts about the ability of the Greek parties to deal with the crisis.

But the letter was never sent. It remained in a closed envelope in the Skouloudis archive. Greece had nothing to gain from bilateral negotiations with Turkey. Greek diplomats did not trust the Ottomans and especially Abdul Hamid.<sup>200</sup> Moreover, it was evident that Greece could obtain better terms by negotiating with the Powers, ‘which would endeavour to obtain for her the best terms’.<sup>201</sup> Despite Ottoman efforts, an adjustment of the frontier was out of the question. Christians should not be administered by Muslims: as far as Greeks were concerned, this removed the

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<sup>199</sup> SKOUG 12.6, letter entitled ‘Under the orders of H.M. the King’. No other data. Italics by me.

<sup>200</sup> SKOUG 12.6, Eugeniadis to Skouloudis, [Constantinople], 23 May/5 June 1897, no number.

<sup>201</sup> ‘The fighting on the Thessalian frontier...’, *The Times*, 14/26 April 1897, p. 9,

key motivation for a diplomatic agreement with Turkey.<sup>202</sup> Greece asked for the mediation of the Powers and soon proved justified in this decision. In the peace treaty of 4/17 December 1897, the Thessalian frontier was altered only slightly and the Cretans gained most of their demands in the form of an autonomous regime. Despite the European disapproval of the breach of international law and repeated warnings to the Greek government, in the end the anti-Muslim bias prevailed and Greece was if anything rewarded for its instigation of the war. This decision allowed the cult of 'action' to continue: 1897 proved to be only a temporary setback for irredentism which continued to expand its appeal within Greek society. Nevertheless, outside of the diplomatic sphere, matters were not going so well for the Greeks. Wars are always expensive enterprises. Greece was also required to pay an indemnity to Turkey; at the end of 1897, Greek finances were in a perilous state. Worse than that, the war prevented Greece's agreement with its creditors from coming into effect and the negotiations restarted once the hostilities ended. The final arrangement was much more disadvantageous to Greece than that of February 1897. But this issue attracted little attention among Greek public opinion. Public reactions only developed as a response of the imposition of an international control on Greek public finances: this foreign intervention was seen as a national

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<sup>202</sup> FO 78/4845, the director of military intelligence, 18 Queen Ann's Gate, 18/30 June, 1897, 'Turco-Greek frontier: strategical rectification', no number. For the Ottoman efforts, see FO 78/4845, P. Currie, 'Vlach petition against Greek rule,' no place, 30 May/11 June 1897, number 377; see also Merlin's reports cited above.

humiliation. In Greek politics, irredentism continued to take precedence over economic realities. *La Commission Internationale Financière de la Grèce* remained in Athens until 1978.

Domestic turmoil taught George and Theotokis Theotokis that, rather than trying to control irredentism, as Tricoupis had earlier attempted to do, they should search for a *modus vivendi* with it. Probably this is why, despite the defeat, hundreds of Greek officers were promoted for their actions on the battlefield.<sup>203</sup> This meant that they would have to act with care vis-à-vis the question that was most likely to cause popular upheavals, the Greek competition with Bulgaria for Macedonia.

1897 came as a shock for the radical irredentists. Diplomacy failed in 1876-78 and in 1885-86. And now the war espoused by the young military officers had failed too. Many of these nationalists had been convinced that Greek voluntarism would prove superior to Turkish numbers. On 12/24 March 1897, Antonis Romanos wrote from the border to his nephew, the military officer Ambrosios Frantzis: ‘fear will occupy the Turks the moment they will realise the kids here at the [border] station are ready any moment to unleash powder and steel in their faces’. The return to reality was painful for the Greeks.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> See ELIA, Archive ‘War of 1897’. This archive is only one file and contains the lists with the promotions of the Greek army.

<sup>204</sup> FRAN 8.2, Antonis Romanos to Ambrosios Frantzis, Tafil-Vrisis, 12/24 March 1897, no number.

For radical irredentists the question was: now what? Two young men attempted to give an answer. The nineteen year old son of Stephanos, Ion Dragoumis, volunteered and entered the engineer corps. His friend Pavlos Melas, son of Michael, was a military officer who joined the paramilitary bands that entered Turkey before the official proclamation of the war.<sup>205</sup>

On April 1/13 1897, Melas sent an enthusiastic telegram to his family: ‘We are crossing the frontier. Keep your wishes for the fatherland alone. We kiss you all. I hope little Michael [his son] will one day experience a similar joy. Hurray!’ Melas was emotionally attached to this telegram to the point that he saved a stained copy until his death: he cherished the circumstances under which the text was written and enjoyed the feeling of fervent irredentism that he and many other young soldiers experienced at the beginning of the 1897 War.<sup>206</sup>

But the intended recipient of the telegram, Pavlos’s father, soon fell seriously ill. According to Ion, Pavlos was beyond consolation.<sup>207</sup> On 14/26 June, Pavlos left rashly from his camp in Lamia to return to Athens to meet his father on his deathbed: he died on 17/29 June.<sup>208</sup> Melas must have felt that he should now continue the political work of his late father. He was well prepared for the task: he

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<sup>205</sup> DRAI 10.1, ‘Biographical note of Ion Stephanou Dragoumis (1878-1920),’ written by Ion’s brother Philippos in 1927, no number.

<sup>206</sup> MELASE 1.1, April 1/13 1897, number 12/1.

<sup>207</sup> MELASE 2, Ion to Natalia Melas, Lamia, 14/26 June 1897, number 10/1.

<sup>208</sup> MELASE 1.9, obituary of Michael Melas (clipping of an unknown newspaper), no number.

was well informed about his father's activities and he had become member of almost every irredentist society available at the time in Athens, such as the Equestrian Union [*Ιππικός Σύνδεσμος*], which in terms of membership was the successor of the National Society, of the Philanthropic Society of Epirots [*Φιλανθρωπική Αδελφότης Ηπειρωτών*], and of Hellenism [*Ελληνισμός*], presided by Kazazis. Melas was also member of the Circle of Music lovers [*Χορός Φιλομούσων*] and of the Greek Small Industry Society [*Ελληνική Βιοτεχνική Εταιρεία*], and he also supported the Amalieio girls' orphanage:<sup>209</sup> this mixture of irredentism, charity, and fascination with modernity and art was typical of upper-class Tricoupists such as P. Melas.

Irredentism is often seen as a backward and peculiarly Balkan phenomenon, but Pavlos and Michael Melas show that irredentism mixed well with modernising zeal. It became the political creed of a new younger generation of modernisers who coupled their espousal of an aggressive foreign policy with a belief in a nationalist transformation of the internal spirit of Greece. Thus, for P. Melas, Stephanos and Ion, 1897 acted like a catalyst that not only did not shake their nationalist convictions but rather reinforced them: we might even talk of a 1897 generation, characterised by an iconoclasm similar to that of the Spanish *jóvenes bárbaros*,

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<sup>209</sup> Pavlos Melas's memberships are contained in MELASE 1.2.

who argued for the removal of all old institutions in Spain after the disastrous defeat of 1898.

This generation was shocked by the defeat of 1897 and searched a plan for the regeneration of Greece. One of the young men whose irredentist illusions collapsed in 1897 was Giannis Kambysis – the ‘standard-bearer of the great charge of the youth after 1897’,<sup>210</sup> according to his biographer. Kambysis found his answer to the Greek trouble in his encounter with Nietzsche in 1898. Nietzsche’s thought impressed him so much that, together with Kotsos and Dimitris Chatzopoulos, he embarked in an ambitious translation project with the aim of acquainting the Greek public with Nietzsche’s thought.<sup>211</sup> But their version of Nietzsche was a peculiarly Greek one. They adapted his thought, and especially his love for ancient Greece, into Greek irredentism and proclaimed that ‘the philosophy of Nietzsche is the one *par excellence* prescribing the Great Idea’. The Chatzopouloses and Kambysis argued that Greek culture had to be freed from Byzantine and Christian influences and return to the true spirit of ancient Greece.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> The phrase *jóvenes bárbaros* is from a speech of Alejandro Lerroux. See Raymond Carr, *España: de la Restauración a la democracia 1875-1980* (Barcelona, 2003 [Oxford, 1980]), pp. 79-80. Giorgos M. Valetas (ed.), *Kambysis: complete works* (in Greek) (Athens, 1972), p. 9.

<sup>212</sup> Dimitris Lambrellis, ‘Nietzsche in Greece: a name for everything and nothing’ (in Greek) in Theresa Pentzopoulou-Valala, *Nietzsche and the Greeks* (in Greek) (Salonica, 1997), pp. 137-56, here 142.

The plans of another literary figure, Andreas Karkavitsas, were different in content, but similarly ambitious. He used one of his literary characters, an old hero of the War of Independence, as a mouthpiece for his own irredentist plans: ‘Greece is free in its geographical entirety, glorious and bright. Its capital is the City of the Seven Hills and its adored temple is Saint Sophia... And its army is the terror of the planet, its fully equipped fleet is the horror of the sea, and its divine people is the glory of the Creation!’<sup>213</sup> Karkavitsas was a member of the National Society, and he certainly did not change his mind about irredentist adventures after the Greek defeat.

The absence of a strong socialist movement in Greece meant that irredentism became the principal language of protest against the government. Issues such as divorce, secular education, equality of the sexes, and welfare services were rarely discussed. Class politics were similarly insignificant, allowing the MP Lombardos to famously claim in 1864 that ‘there are no different classes in Greece’.<sup>214</sup> Moreover, individual socialists were anything but opposed to irredentism. Two of the leading figures of Greek socialism, Stavros Kallergis and Marinos Andypas, fought in Crete in 1897. The latter, upon his return to Athens, organised a

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<sup>213</sup> Andreas Karkavitsas, *The fatherland*, in *Old loves* (in Greek) (Athens, 2000 [1900]), pp. 83-94, here 92.

<sup>214</sup> Lombardos quoted by Mazower in ‘The Messiah and the bourgeoisie: Venizelos and politics in Greece: 1909-12’, *The Historical Journal*, 35:4 (December, 1992), pp. 885-904, here 888. Claims that Greece was classless were indeed widespread, see Viky Karafoulidou, “ ‘For the perpetual and unceasing improvement of man’: ethics, economy and democracy in the socialism of Platon Drakoulis” (in Greek), *Historica*, 54 (June 2011), pp. 123-50, here 130.

demonstration against the Great Powers and the Greek dynasty, which he identified as principally responsible for the Greek defeat. The ideological alignments of fin-de-siècle Athens were therefore very different from those which tended to prevail in much of Western Europe. Ion Dragoumis put his finger on the matter when he said:

I am completely disgusted with government ... and I sympathise with the socialists who disapprove of states as they are now organised, supported by capitalism [κεφαλαιοκρατία] and the anarchists who do not like states in general. And I think of allying myself to them'<sup>215</sup>... 'What am I? A nationalist, a socialist, but above all a man'<sup>216</sup>

Ion was a bit of everything: like other young Athenian radicals he changed positions with dizzying speed. For them, radicalism was its own reward. Yet, there were some constants in their thought. First, 'disgust with the government' after 1897 was a rallying call for most radicals. Many of the dissatisfied admired Tricoupis – 'he was the best: enough said', according to Kambysis – but found Theotokis Theotokis to be an uninspiring leader. This meant they became politically homeless, and, later on, many of them turned against parliamentary politics *per se*. Karkavitsas for instance, actively supported the conspiracy of the Military League in 1909. Second, preoccupation with language was becoming more and more important. Unlike the 1880s, the question of language was not just

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<sup>215</sup> John S. Koliopoulos and Thanos Veremis (eds.), *Ion Dragoumis: diary sheets* (in Greek) (6 vols., Athens 1986), iv, p. 54.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

about the best educational strategy – although as we saw with Papamarkou such issues could generate much passion – but about the best way to bring about Greece’s national regeneration and attain its irredentist aims. Language defined Greece’s relations with the West, modernity and its enslaved brethren – or at least this is what the generation of 1897 thought. Most of them were demoticists: Karkavitsas, Kambysis and Ion published their works in demotic Greek, often going to great lengths to shock the supporters of *katharevousa* with their unusual, phonetic spellings. Nevertheless, *katharevousa* had not lost its force, and many young radicals were still attracted to it: the divinity students who opposed the translation of the Gospels into modern Greek in 1901 used to have their breaks between demonstrations at the ‘Léon Gambetta’ coffee shop, a politician they admired for his opposition to French monarchists. Despite their fragmentation in a multitude of camps, the enthusiasm of the generation of 1897 guaranteed that radical irredentism and its grandiose plans for the annexation of more territory survived the shock of defeat.<sup>217</sup>

Rather than seeing the defeat as a sign that Greece should adopt a more careful and moderate course, like TheotokisTheotokis for instance did, the experience of the war increased their frustration with the failings of the Greek army and state.

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<sup>217</sup> For a contemporary account that is favourable to *katharevousa*, see Louise Marquise de Riencourt, *La prétendue bataille littéraire en Grèce* (2nd edition, [Athens, 1911]), pp. 23-24.

Historians have assumed that after 1897 Greek politics followed a more careful and moderate course due to the shock of the defeat. But this statement cannot be applied to all political actors. Ion was convinced that Greece had to adopt military values: ‘when I walk near the barracks, then I become again myself, and when I look at the city, I say how useless are these houses and these people and what sort of filth [ακαθαρσίες] are these doings’.<sup>218</sup> Moreover, he continued to admire the discredited National Society.<sup>219</sup> For him, the conclusion from 1897 was not that Greece went too far, but rather that Greece did not go far enough.

Stephanos thought similarly: he blamed the defeat of 1897 on the determination of the Europeans not to alter the frontiers in the Balkans, and he wondered, ‘why did then Greece abstain from a landing operation in the coast near Mont Olympus and [why did] the Greek fleet, which was dominant in the waters of the coast of Macedonia let Salonica remain unguarded yet safe?’ Nor was Stephanos alone in expressing such thoughts: as we saw after the debacle of 1885-86, the gradualist Gavriilidis, incidentally an enemy of the National Society’s jingoism, entertained similar ideas about surprise naval attacks in Macedonia.<sup>220</sup>

The success story of Crete in 1897 dominated in the creation of a new, more assertive irredentism at the turn of the century. Whereas Greek military adventures

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<sup>218</sup> Ion’s notes with the date December 10/23 [1902], TID p. 7.

<sup>219</sup> Ion to Pavlos Melas, [no place], February 6/19, 1903, TID pp. 15-17.

<sup>220</sup> Chariton Misailidis, *Vlasis Gavriilidis: the journalist aristocrat* (in Greek) (Athens, 1962), pp. 8-9.

in Macedonia had failed, in Crete they had succeeded. Ion and Melas drew three lessons from the contrast between Crete and Macedonia. First, that the Turkish army was a more worrying enemy than the diplomacy of the Powers: the Powers would in the end give in to Greek demands thanks to the weaknesses of the Ottoman Empire and the prestige of Greek civilisation. Second, the Cretan model of warfare (bands of twenty-thirty men who excelled in hit-and-run tactics) was preferable to the tactics that the National Society chose in Macedonia, where each band had several hundred men and tried to occupy and hold positions. Third, that open war should be avoided: Greece was not ready for it, and Crete showed bandit warfare to be adequate for attaining Greece's aims. Thus, 1897 prepared the ground for the Macedonian Defence.

## 2. 1903: ANNUS MIRABILIS

### I. THE MINISTRY AND THE REFORMS BEFORE ILINDEN

After 1897-98, the Cretan Question looked relatively settled, since Crete was close to becoming a *de facto* part of the Hellenic Kingdom: every year, in the opening session of the Cretan parliament, its Christian majority would vote a resolution in favour of *enosis*. Although the Powers would not agree to the demands of the parliament, they were not discouraging them either. Past revolutions and the tension between the Christian and Muslim communities made the reversal of the trend unlikely. In contrast, the Greek situation in Macedonia was more insecure than ever. Not only were the Bulgarians making advances, but also the Greek defeat in 1897 undermined the support of the local population for the Greek cause. Moreover, the Ottomans became suspicious of Greek irredentism in the years following 1897 and they also became relatively more tolerant towards the Bulgarians as a means of containing Greek nationalism. It is then unsurprising that the Macedonian Question became the primary concern of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the 1898- 1903 period.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Pinar Şenışık, 'Rethinking Muslim and Christian communities in late nineteenth century Ottoman Crete: insights from the Cretan revolt of 1897', *Journal of Modern Greek studies*, 28:1 (2010), pp. 27-47, here 40-43.

In the first years after the defeat of 1897, the radical irredentists kept quiet. Their ambitious programme had receded in popularity: the *Atlantis* noted in 1897 that ‘today the Greek patriot is being mocked’ and Vlasis Gavriilidis wrote in his *Acropolis* in 1900 that ‘the era of the angry Rolands of patriotism is gone’. Ilinden, however, provided a true turning point, and the movement subsequently regained its popularity. As we shall see in ch. IV after Deliyiannis’s assassination in 1905, this violent irredentist language would lay the basis for demands for a radical counter-attack in Macedonia. Between 1898 and 1902, Greek diplomats, however, could do their job in tranquility.<sup>222</sup>

Tranquility notwithstanding, Greece failed in these years to reach an agreement over Macedonia. A Greek-Serbian agreement failed because the two countries could not agree on their zones of influence. Similarly, the agreement of the Greek and Romanian monarchs in Abazzia in May 1901 over Macedonia was vague and little more than a mere assurance of mutually benevolent intentions.<sup>223</sup> A Greek approach to Albanian nationalists failed similarly. In 1899, Abdul Hamid told Mavrocordato that ‘rien ne lui tient tout à coeur comme [une] entente cordiale avec [la] Grèce’<sup>224</sup> and he repeated similar assertions in various occasions. Despite his

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<sup>222</sup> The newspapers are cited by Gianoulopoulos, *Our noble...*, p. 182, footnote 2.

<sup>223</sup> Georgios Aspreas, *Political history of modern Greece: 1821-1960* (in Greek) (2 vols., Athens, no date)ii, pp. 16-17.

<sup>224</sup> AYER 1899.2, Mavrocordato to Romanos, Pera, 7/19 May 1899, ciphered telegram, no number, attached to Romanos to Coundouriotis, Athens, 10/22 May 1899, number 896.

efforts, the talks of a Greek-Turkish alliance came to nothing. Greece remained isolated until entering the Balkan League in May 1912.

The tranquility that followed 1897 ended in June 1902. On 13/26 June 1902, the Greek consul in Monastir telegraphed ‘I am informed from a trustworthy source that Markov has assembled about 150 villagers... and raised the revolutionary flag’.<sup>225</sup> The Bulgarian bands remained active for a few weeks, especially in the *kaza* of Florina, and attacked a few Muslim villages. A more extensive uprising by Bulgarian insurrectionaries followed in October 1902.

Three things are noteworthy about this revolutionary activity in 1902. First, some of the Greek Orthodox in Macedonia sided with the Turks against the Bulgarian insurgents: ‘the [Ottoman] government was informed in time about the revolutionary acts [of Markov] by our teacher in Gornitsovo’. Thus, in contrast to the expectations of contemporary European observers, cooperation between Christians and Muslims remained possible in 1902. Second, the attacks of the revolutionaries on Muslim villages caused Turkish reprisals, and – as the revolutionaries had probably calculated – Europe was shocked. News about violent confrontations in Macedonia attracted the attention of European audiences between 1902 and 1908. Between 1 January 1902 and 31 December 1903 (NS) ‘Macedonia’ appeared in eight hundred eighty seven articles in *The Times*: ninety six of these

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<sup>225</sup> AYE Monastir, 1902, Pezas to Zaimis, Monastir, June 13/26 1902, telegram number 1407, TID pp. 513-4.

were editorials and ‘letters to the editor’: by comparison, ‘Venezuela’ appeared in exactly the same number of articles,<sup>226</sup> ‘Edward VII’ in three hundred and one,<sup>227</sup> ‘Panama’ in four hundred forty eight,<sup>228</sup> Pius XI in forty eight,<sup>229</sup> ‘Alexander of Servia’<sup>230</sup> in eight and ‘Alsace’ in sixty six. Only the Boer War attracted significantly more attention with one thousand eight hundred articles. A similar volume of articles on Macedonia continued until the end of the reforms in 1908.

Third, the Greek consuls in European Turkey, and especially Stamatis Kiouzes Pezas in Monastir, felt that the events of 1902 vindicated them: ‘what is happening bears proof of how correctly I had diagnosed the situation from the beginning, and those of my colleagues who had disagreed with me have to consider what dimensions the rebellion would have indubitably assumed without our timely countermeasures and the ensuing arrests and persecutions from the [Ottoman] government’.<sup>231</sup>

The events of 1902 changed the diplomatic situation. The Powers had been considering for some time the possibility of intervening in Macedonia in order to avoid a new 1878.<sup>232</sup> The violence of 1902 convinced them that events were going

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<sup>226</sup> The Venezuela Crisis and naval blockade of 1902-03.

<sup>227</sup> Edward was crowned on 27 July/9 August 1902.

<sup>228</sup> The Panama War took place in 1903.

<sup>229</sup> He became Pope on 22 July/4 August 1903.

<sup>230</sup> Assassinated in May 1903.

<sup>231</sup> AYE Monastir.1902, Pezas to Zaimis, Monastir, June 18/1 July 1902, number 313, TID pp. 515-17.

<sup>232</sup> Miranta Paximadopoulou-Stavrinou, *The diplomacy of the Great Powers and the reforms in Macedonia: 1903-08* (in Greek), pp.74-7.

the wrong way in European Turkey. In response, Russian and Austro-Hungarian diplomats reached an agreement: Russia would abstain from supporting Bulgarian aspirations in Macedonia, especially autonomy, and deny military support to Bulgaria in the case of a Turkish-Bulgarian war. The two empires would support a reform plan that promised to modernise Macedonia while the region would remain within the Ottoman Empire.<sup>233</sup>

In the 1900s, outsiders had great influence in the Balkans. Due to its debt and its administrative weaknesses, the Powers penetrated the Ottoman Empire: several Ottoman regions became Great Power protectorates. Since 1897 Crete was a *de facto* independent country governed by the Powers (except Austria-Hungary). Bosnia Herzegovina was since 1878 under Austro-Hungarian control, and Germany was gaining influence inside the Empire. In 1896, Vittorio Emanuele III married Elena of Montenegro, and Italy showed interest in the Western Balkans,<sup>234</sup> especially Monastir. Italy soon antagonised Austro-Hungarian influence in the Monastir vilayet: in particular, the question of the creation of an Albanian state – parts of which would be drawn from the Monastir vilayet – gave more grounds for controversy between the two countries.<sup>235</sup> Taken together with the financial controls imposed on Greece in 1898, these events amounted to an

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<sup>233</sup> Paximadopoulou, *The diplomacy...*, pp. 76-77; Sfetas, 'The road to...?', pp. 70-71.

<sup>234</sup> René Ristelhueber, *History of the Balkan peoples* (in Greek translation) (Athens, 1995 [Paris, 1950]) p. 264.

<sup>235</sup> MAE 369, Malaspina (ambassador in Constantinople) to Tittoni, Pera, February 22/6 March 1904, telegram number 574; Tittoni to the Italian Embassy in Petersburg, Rome, 27April /10May 1904 telegram number 495.

informal colonisation of the western territories of the Ottoman Empire. Though the Great Powers remained outwardly respectful of the sovereignty of the Ottoman rulers, the development of the various mini-states dependent on foreign support, and of territorial and commercial privileges in the region, ensured that external influence was a major force in the Balkan politics of the period.

Macedonia was the next region to come under the Powers' control. Already since the Treaty of Berlin in 1878 (article 23) the Powers had been considering reforms in the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire. The events of 1902 revitalised the idea of gradual administrative changes under European supervision – the 'Vienna reforms' as contemporaries called them.<sup>236</sup> Lamsdorff visited Belgrade and Sofia (but tellingly not Athens) in December 1902 and threatened in private that Russia would withdraw its support in educational and church matters, unless they stopped fomenting revolution.<sup>237</sup> His visit had the support of the other Powers. The Powers wanted to bring order to what they saw as the most turbulent region of the Balkans. The Austro-Hungarians and the Russians agreed to reforms that would relieve the Christians: offer them legal equality, security and a fairer taxation system. The reforms could bring order in the Eastern Mediterranean without letting the Ottoman Empire collapse. On 24 May /June 6 1903, Nicholas

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<sup>236</sup> Dakin, *The Greek struggle...*, pp. 86-88.

<sup>237</sup> W.S. Vucinich, *Serbia between East and West: the events of 1903-08* (New York, 1968), p. 37.

O’Conor, the British Ambassador in Constantinople, ‘urged the Sultan not to let the opportunity slip, ...[and] to meet the Bulgarian overtures halfway through by showing greater clemency towards the revolutionary prisoners, greater consideration for the peaceful inhabitants, and greater moderation in the number of prisoners’.<sup>238</sup> Moreover, the Powers, and especially Britain, saw in the reforms a model that could be replicated in other regions of the Empire. If the Macedonian reforms worked then something similar could be done in the parts of Asia Minor with an Armenian population.

For many Greek diplomats the reforms were undesirable. In 1901, the Ministry was vaguely informed about some European reform plans. The Minister, Athos Romanos, commented to Metaxas that in the case that reforms would be introduced ‘the greatest danger... would be the definition of spheres of influence based on untrue data’; but ‘for the time this thing [i.e. the introduction of reforms] looks rather dubious’: Greece would prefer ‘the maintenance of the *status quo*’, in other words, the unqualified sovereignty of the Sultan. Romanos worried that the Bulgarians, who were believed at the time to have a numerical superiority in Macedonia, had much more to gain from the involvement of the Europeans in the domestic affairs of the Empire.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> FO 78/5294, O’Conor quoted by Elliot, in Elliot to Lansdowne, Sofia, 24 May/6 June 1903, f. 124.

<sup>239</sup> AYEL 1907.1.1, Romanos to Metaxas, Athens, 21 April/4 May 1901, number 971.

Despite Romanos's worries, official Greece had no option but to accept the reforms. The Powers did not consult Greece or for that matter any Balkan country and even Turkey on the content of the reforms. The reforms were from the beginning conceived as a peace-making operation that would have to be imposed against the will of regional powers. The question then for the Ministry was what would happen at the unofficial level, inside Macedonia, where, thanks to its consulates, the Greek schools and the Patriarchist Metropolitans, Greece had a powerful network. At this local level the choice between supporting and opposing the reforms was open. In 1902-3, Greek diplomats divided themselves in two different camps and presented their arguments.

On the one hand, there was what we will call the pro-reform camp. Some diplomats argued that Greece should support the reforms in practice. The task of these people was not easy. In October 1902, the Greek Minister in Paris, Nikolaos Petrou Deliyiannis, a nephew of Theodoros, argued in a conversation with Delcassé that Turkey should 'consenter à ... réaliser effectivement les réformes sans lesquelles l'agitation révolutionnaire ne saurait prendre fin.' Given that the Europeans had already decided to introduce reforms to Macedonia, Deliyiannis probably thought that this was a fairly innocuous statement. Nevertheless, when the phrase was inserted in the French 'livre jaune' for 1902, a furious Alexandros

Skouzes, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, telegraphed to Deliyiannis to ask him whether the statement was correctly reproduced. He pointed out that the statement contradicted the policy of Ministry, which was to ensure that, if reforms were ever introduced, they would not favour Bulgarian interests ‘au préjudice des droits des autres nationalités de Macédoine’.

What motivated such a strong reaction from Skouzes? Skouzes’s priority was to oppose Bulgarian influence in Macedonia, and this was the criterion by which he assessed the reforms: he supported the introduction of a *gendarmerie*, since it had the potential of reducing revolutionary activity. Skouzes opposed the amnesty to imprisoned revolutionaries for the same reason. Thus, he believed that the Ministry should not oppose the reforms officially, but should also abstain from any unqualified statement in their favour: favourable statements should be reserved for particular reform measures. Moreover, Stephanos soon attacked Deliyiannis in his journalistic articles. Skouzes must also have been worried that the irredentist *milieux* of Athens would take advantage of what would be perceived to be ‘unpatriotic’ comments.<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> For the last two paragraphs see AYEP 1903.1.1 (Macedonia-Albania), N.P. Deliyiannis to Skouzes, Paris, 29/11 February 1903, telegram number 75; Skouzes to N.P. Deliyiannis, Athens, 19 January /11 February 1903, number 75 (note that the second document is attached to the first one); Stephanos Dragoumis, *Macedonian Crisis III: Greeks awake* (in Greek) (Athens, 1906), p. 12. This is the reprint of an article originally published on 14/27 September 1903.

Stamatis Kiouzes Pezas in Monastir thought similarly to Skouzes. On 28 December 1902/10 January 1903 Pezas wrote that there was on the one hand ‘the official view of the Macedonian Question, which ... appears quite reassuring’ and, on the other hand, ‘the unofficial one, which does not stop worrying me’. Pezas granted that Deliyannis was in a sense justified: in the ‘official’ sphere Greece should follow the reassuring and optimistic trend of European diplomacy, consent to the reforms and act as a status quo power. But to act in such a way in the ‘unofficial’ sphere would be a disaster: inside Macedonia what counted was violence and determination. Greece should oppose the reforms on the ground by setting up its own ‘revolutionary’ networks but without opposing the Powers – both tasks, however, would prove in practice much more difficult than Pezas predicted.<sup>241</sup>

Despite the opposition from Skouzes and the attacks of the nationalist voices in the press some diplomats insisted on supporting the reforms as a whole. One of them was K.M. Svoronos, the Greek consul in Berat, who believed that the reforms were beneficial for the Christian peasants. Berat today is in south-central Albania, but in the 1900s it was part of the vilayet of Janina. There were initially thoughts of including this vilayet in the areas subject to the Vienna reforms, but their application was postponed there due to the opposition of the Albanian Muslims: an

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<sup>241</sup> Pezas to Skouzes, Monastir, 28 December, 1902/ 10 January 1903, TID pp. 521-24.

anti-reform rebellion broke out in 1903. For instance, on 5/18 April, Svoronos reported that Albanian Muslims shot and injured two Christian judges who had arrived at Scutari [Shkodër]. In consequence, Russia and Austria-Hungary decided that in the areas where Albanian Muslims had a strong presence the reforms would be restricted to their judicial aspects. Even so, the discontent among Albanian Muslims continued for years.<sup>242</sup>

Violence did not deter Svoronos. He remained hopeful that the judges would bring real change to the region.<sup>243</sup> Unlike most Greek consuls, he trusted in the resolve of the European diplomacy to force the Ottomans to adopt reforms and also in the ability of the Ottomans to implement them. He was full of praise for Mehmet Celaledin, the local governor, for applying the law equally to Christians and Muslims and for arresting Muslim troublemakers. According to Svoronos, ‘now absolute security prevails in the whole of the area of Berat’.<sup>244</sup> Svoronos was the only Greek diplomat to judge the reforms not on whether they facilitated or not Greek influence in Macedonia, but on whether they would improve the life of the local population: he was among the few who still thought in terms of *la Grèce esclave*. As a result, he believed that the key development in Macedonia was not

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<sup>242</sup> AYE 1903.1.1.2, telegram of Kypraios to Skouzes, Scutari (sic), 5/18 April, attached to Skouzes to N.P. Deliyiannis, Athens, 10/23 April 1903, number 971.

<sup>243</sup> AYE 1903.4.A/2/4.6, Svoronos to Skouzes, Berat, 24 May/6 June 1903, number 102.

<sup>244</sup> AYE 1903.4. A/2/4.6, Svoronos to Theotokis, Berat, 20 June/3 July 1903, number 148. Note that Theotokis was Minister for only two weeks (14/27 June- 28 June/11 July). He probably never read the report.

Greek-Bulgarian antagonism but the intervention of the Powers. If the Powers were going to decide the future of Macedonia, then Greece's best chance was in attempting to ally itself to them. Arguments of this kind were, however, too far removed from the priorities prevailing in the Ministry at the time. Unsurprisingly, unlike the reports of other consuls, those of Svoronos were not circulated to the Greek embassies, and Skouzes most probably ignored Svoronos.

Evgenios Zalokostas knew better how to attract the attention of the headquarters. Zalokostas's position was comparable to that of a Minister, but he could not assume this title because Bulgaria was not officially an independent country. Zalokostas was therefore the Greek consul general and diplomatic agent in Sofia and he used this position to argue that the reforms allowed for the stabilisation of Greek-Bulgarian relations. Zalokostas was able to see the larger picture of European diplomacy beyond the obsessions of Greek irredentism, and he would become Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1916, in the anti-Entente government of King Constantine.

From Sofia, Zalokostas recorded Bulgarian dissatisfaction with the reforms. When their content was publicised in February 1903, there was 'a feeling of complete disappointment among the Bulgarians, especially among the people and the Macedonian circles'. For him, the reason for this disappointment was that the

Bulgarians saw their hopes of ‘a complete and exclusive recognition of their rights over Macedonia and Thrace’ frustrated. Although Zalokostas did not produce any positive evidence in favour of the reforms, he took the disappointment of the Bulgarians as a good sign. According to him, the reforms were a move in the right direction.

Zalokostas was no less patriotic than other members of the Greek diplomatic body. Like Svoronos what distinguished him from his colleagues was a concern about Greece’s isolation from the other Balkan kingdoms and the Powers, a sense that Greece had more chances of influencing the content of the reforms by supporting them, and a belief in gradualism instead of radicalism. But in trying to convey these thoughts, Zalokostas was more careful than Svoronos.

An example is the way in which Zalokostas conveyed Danev’s proposals about a Greek-Bulgarian *rapprochement* in February 1903. With hindsight, we know that the rejection of these proposals was a turning point: Greek-Bulgarian relations subsequently froze until 1910, when the Bulgarians made similar proposals to the Stephanos Dragoumis government, which Stephanos accepted. Zalokostas certainly understood the importance of the 1903 proposals, but he did not want to compromise his position in the Ministry by openly supporting them. He thus reported his conversation with Danev in a careful way. According to Zalokostas’s

account, it was Danev who approached him, asking what the Greeks thought of the reforms. Zalokostas found the question ‘unexpected’ and ‘absurd’ and answered that the reforms ‘would render the life of a part of the enslaved Christians better, and the Greeks, and the Bulgarians, and whoever else, should be satisfied.’ As he added, the Bulgarian Prime Minister felt uneasy with his reply: throughout 1903 Zalokostas would not stop repeating that pushing for the implementation of the reforms in full, rather than for the piecemeal approach of the Ministry, was the best way to stop Bulgarian penetration in Macedonia and that the best evidence in support of this opinion was the Bulgarians’ opposition to the reforms. Zalokostas continued with Danev’s suggestion for an understanding between the two countries: he wanted the reforms to be ‘more extensive’ and ‘more complete’ and the best way to achieve this was the appointment of a Christian Governor. ‘If Europe asked me I would say that even if the General Governor were Greek, one of the Karatheodorys for instance, the Bulgarian government would accept him with pleasure.’ Danev was offering a *quid pro quo*: Greece would support more liberal reforms, which were expected to help the numerically superior Bulgarians, and in exchange Danev would consent to Greek influence on the administration of the three vilayets. As Zalokostas had probably predicted, the Ministry was not ready for such a bargain. The Greek Minister never replied to the Danev proposal.

Zalokostas believed in the amelioration of Greek-Bulgarian relations. Bulgarian policy as presented by him differed significantly from the stereotype disseminated by the Greek press and intellectuals. Zalokostas understood that irredentist questions played in Bulgaria a role similar to the one they played in Greece: ‘trying to take advantage of the situation’ the Bulgarian Opposition called on the government to resign, calling the reforms a ‘national failure.’ The revolutionary committees, while apparently quiet, seemed to turn into ‘secret societies’, which would threaten security and safety inside Bulgaria. The Liberal Stefan Stambolov had been assassinated in 1895; and, as had happened in Greece in 1897, a gradualist government had a difficult time meeting the ambitious aims that the radicals had set. Thus, he argued, the reforms could provide a solution to the problem of intransigent irredentism both countries had by weakening the Bulgarian revolutionaries and allowing the improvement of the relations of the two Christian countries.<sup>245</sup>

Why did Zalokostas think this way? One answer is that it was only normal for the Greek representative in Sofia to present Bulgaria in a positive light and wish the improvement of the relations of the two states, especially given that Zalokostas served there for a long period (1899-1910). It is certainly true that during his

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<sup>245</sup> For the last three paragraphs see AYEΠ 1903.1.1 (‘Macedonia-Albania’), Zalokostas to Skouzes, Sofia, 16 February/1 March 1903, number 249.

prolonged residence Zalokostas developed excellent contacts with Bulgarian officials, having monthly meetings with members of the government; but this does not fully explain his stance. Ioannis Gryparis and Argyropoulos,<sup>246</sup> who served before him, as well as Xydakis, Simopoulos and Dimitrios Panas, who served after him, did not share his point of view: Panas in particular paid little attention to the motives of Bulgarian policy, and had a lukewarm stance towards Bulgarian officials. The strength of anti-Bulgarian feelings in the Ministry should not be underestimated.<sup>247</sup>

It is similarly unlikely that the reason was political affiliation. The issue of Greek-Bulgarian relations was one of the rare points of agreement between Tricoupists and Deliyannists, since they all opposed it. Thus, the answer seems to lie with Zalokostas's personality. He possessed a rare insight to understand and sympathise with the point of view of foreign diplomats, which stopped him from reproducing the stereotypes that prevailed at the time in the Ministry about Bulgarian foreign policy: in particular, that Bulgaria was tied to Russia; that the revolutionary committees were the instruments of the government; and that Bulgarian politicians wished to go at war with Turkey regardless of the consequences.

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<sup>246</sup> Probably Georgios Argyropoulos who later served in Petersburg.

<sup>247</sup> Simopoulos served very briefly in August 1910. The telegrams of Xydakis, Panas and Simopoulos can be found in DRAI 67.2.

Zalokostas was a multi-faceted man: he was a free-mason, a member of the literary Society *Parnassus* (*Παρνασσός*) and he published a few translations and short stories early in his life. He admired particularly Victor Hugo and his politics, and translated into Greek Hugo's *Le roi s'amuse*. This play was an allegorical satire of the July Monarchy, situated in the reign of Louis XII in the fifteenth century: it was subsequently censored for its alleged criticism of Louis-Philippe. Zalokostas's own translation was probably meant as a criticism of George: it could be that Zalokostas was associated with the small republican movement of nineteenth-century Athens. But, more likely, the translation was a criticism of the foreign policy of George, whom many Athenian irredentists saw as excessively careful.<sup>248</sup> Zalokostas believed that diplomacy should be combined with literary skill and wittiness, and saw a model in Alexandros Rizos Rangabé, a romantic poet and Ambassador in Berlin. For Zalokostas, Rangabé was a diplomat, a poet, and a man of 'a sensitive, moderate and intelligent character'.<sup>249</sup> The above description fitted well Zalokostas himself. He wrote in a stylish language that betrayed his passion for literature. He avoided inflammatory statements of the kind that Ion made and he saw diplomacy as the exclusive business of a small class of professionals.

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<sup>248</sup> Victor Hugo, *Le roi s'amuse* (Greek translation) (Athens, 1885[1832]), *passim*. It was originally published in the periodical of Parnassus, vol. VIII. For Zalokostas's views on Hugo see his *Prologue*, in Hugo's play.

<sup>249</sup> Zalokostas, *Lectures on the Greek poets of the nineteenth century: Alexandros Rizos Rangabé* (in Greek) (Athens, 1916), p. 18.

Especially if compared to the 1897 generation, Zalokostas was a nineteenth-century man, and we should bear in mind that in the 1900s he was in his late forties. Zalokostas preferred *katharevousa* over demotic; he was an elitist and a gradualist who had no taste for mass politics and radicalism. He was – like almost all educated Greeks – an irredentist but a decidedly old fashioned one. He saw violence only as a means to a higher end, and his natural environment were diplomatic meetings and literary salons.

Other employees of the Greek embassies were careful not to fall in the same trap as Deliyiannis and abstained from openly endorsing the reforms. Their point of view was that of European diplomacy: they saw the reforms as a way of decreasing Bulgarian influence in Macedonia. As Armand Potten, secretary of the Constantinople Embassy, put it, ‘even if the bands continue to go around Macedonia’ a general revolution would not take place in 1903 ‘as long as Russia honestly wishes peace’ and if the Turkish military preparations were successful in repulsing the invasion of Bulgarian bands. Potten was careful to note that ‘I am not excessively optimistic’ to ward off accusations against his patriotism. Still, the message he was sending to Athens was that the reforms were in the right direction.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> AYEP 1903.1.1.4, Potten to Skouzes, Constantinople, 28 February /13 March 1903, number 196.

In 1903 Bulgaria tried the same trick as had Deliyiannis in 1885-86: they threatened that, unless they received diplomatic concessions, there would be new trouble in the Balkans. Indeed, once the reforms were announced, the Bulgarian government threatened to mobilise – the official excuse was an alleged Turkish mobilisation. But, as Grigorios Manos, the Greek ambassador in Vienna, informed the Greek Ministry, Austria-Hungary took the matter seriously and immediately warned the Bulgarian government that it would be held responsible for any escalation of violence in the Balkans. Similarly, Lamsdorff warned that ‘the Russian government was not willing to sacrifice not one soldier, not one kopek for the Macedonian Question.’<sup>251</sup> Five days later, Kleon Rizos Rangabé (son of Alexandros) from Berlin confirmed to the Ministry that the Austria-Hungarian officers of the reserve in Berlin had received orders to ‘se tenir prêts rejoindre immédiatement drapeaux.’<sup>252</sup> Thus, the Powers quickly ended the affair by adopting a firm stance. This incident renewed the hopes of the pro-reform camps and showed, in their eyes, that the Powers were in complete control of the Balkans. Similarly Dimitrios Metaxas, Ambassador in London, wrote to Athens that ‘the French ambassador here... has no doubts in his reassurances of the peaceful results

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<sup>251</sup> AYEP 1903.1.1.4, Manos to Skouzes, Vienna, 5/18 February 1903, attached to Skouzes to N.P. Deliyiannis, Paris, Athens, 19 February/4 March 1903, number 419.

<sup>252</sup> AYEP 1.1.4, Rangabé to Skouzes, Berlin, 10/23 February 1903, attached to Skouzes to N.P. Deliyiannis, Athens, 19 February/4 March, 1903, number 419.

of the Austro-Russian understanding.<sup>253</sup> Moreover, in the eyes of many diplomats, the reforms were only the beginning: Potten wrote that ‘I regard these measures as a preamble to larger future reforms.’<sup>254</sup> Instead of worrying about the short-term effects of measures such as the amnesty, figures such as Potten focused on the potential of the intervention of the Powers to transform Macedonia. If the reforms failed, this would probably open the door for a more radical intervention and in particular for Macedonian autonomy. Thus, their failure could mean the introduction of more radical reforms that would further strengthen Bulgarian influence. Opposing the reforms was detrimental to Greek interests.

The pro-reform camp consisted mainly of diplomats working in the Greek embassies. In the first half of 1903, while they were careful in their language, they thought that Greece should go along with the reforms. They argued that the Powers were determined to maintain peace in the Balkans and their promises could be trusted. They calculated that, while the reforms would lead Bulgaria in a conflict with the Powers, Greece had a chance to endorse the reforms, gain the favour of the Powers with its peaceful stance and profit from the new *status quo* that was about to be implemented in Macedonia. The attitude of the ambassadors is what Bö Huldt, a Swedish political scientist who has produced theoretical work on the

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<sup>253</sup> AYEP 1903.1.1.4, Metaxas to Skouzes, London, 5/18 March 1903, number 230, attached to Skouzes to N.P. Deliyiannis, Athens, 18/31 March 1903, number 713.

<sup>254</sup> AYEP 1903.1.1.4, Potten to Skouzes, Constantinople, 28 February/13 March 1903, number 196, attached to Skouzes to N.P. Deliyiannis, Athens, 7/20 March 1903, number 593.

foreign policy of small states, would have predicted. Believing that the Powers were the strongest side, they argued that Greece should side with them. They understood the conflict over Macedonia as a security question: the new institutional framework that the Powers promised to set up would reduce the chances of a violent conflict. Avoiding armed conflicts moreover seemed reasonable after the failures of 1897.<sup>255</sup>

But for another group these calculations were naïve and unrealistic. This second group was composed mainly by diplomats working in the Greek consulates in Macedonia. Greek consuls were well positioned to experience at first hand the weaknesses of the Ottoman administration: corruption, the unfair treatment of Christian peasants in the courts, and the violence in the countryside. The consuls argued that, given this background, the reforms could not work. Moreover, they believed that the proclamations of the Powers about improving the welfare of the Macedonian peasants were dishonest. The Powers (with the exception of Germany) defined five regions in June 1904 (British: Drama; Italians: Monastir; Russians: Salonica; Austro-Hungarians: Uskub; French: Serres<sup>256</sup>), where they would provide *gendarmerie* officers and administrative control. For the consuls, the division of Macedonia into zones of influence meant that the reforms were in

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<sup>255</sup> Unfortunately Huldt's article has not been translated in English. For a presentation and discussion of Huldt's approach see John Rogers, 'The foreign policy of small states: Sweden and the Mosul crisis: 1924-25', *Contemporary European history*, 16:3 (2007), pp. 349-69, here 353-55 and 365-69.

<sup>256</sup> AYEL 1904.1.1.1, Theotokis to the Greek Embassies, Athens, 29 June/12 July 1904, number 2334.

essence a colonial enterprise. Thus, instead of supporting the reforms, the consuls proposed a risky course of action, namely the use of violence. Greece should imitate Bulgarian violence: after all, the Bulgarian revolutionary tactic, which culminated in the 1902 events, had triumphed since revolutionary violence and the ensuing Turkish reprisals had convinced most European policy-makers that Macedonia was indeed Bulgarian. The reforms would not work, Bulgaria and especially Russia, the Power whom the consulates feared the most, would use the first instance of failure to push for autonomy, and subsequently for union with Bulgaria. In this way, Macedonia would repeat the story of Eastern Rumelia.

The consuls referred again and again to the administrative weaknesses of the Ottoman Empire. Evgenios Evgeneiadis, consul general in Salonica, made the case of the consulates on 2 April/20 March 1903. This is a noteworthy report not only because it came from the principal Greek diplomatic and information centre in European Turkey, Salonica, but also because it addressed directly the reasons why the consulates had reservations about the reforms. Evgeneiadis warned that the reforms would not to be implemented *en bloc*. On the contrary, the Sublime Porte had evident problems in organising the *gendarmerie*. The only measure that was implemented was the amnesty, which made matters worse, since Bulgarian revolutionaries were being released from the prison. Evgeneiadis's predictions not

only represented the nightmare of the Ministry, depicting the Powers putting all their strength behind the realisation of Bulgarian irredentism, but they were also carefully pitched to attack the arguments advanced by the plenipotentiary ministers favourable to the reforms: a huge gap separated the reforms as presented on paper and the messy and bloody reality which the consuls experienced.

Closing his report, Evgeneiadis depicted a bleak image: the Bulgarians were perpetrating acts of sabotage that both obstructed the co-ordination of the Turkish police forces and blocked the flow of information about the Bulgarian attacks. ‘The Bulgarians’ – as these Greek diplomats indiscriminately called all Christian revolutionaries inside Macedonia – had blown up a bridge near the railway station of Angista, and the nearby telegraph wires had been cut. They now had a free hand in terrorising the nearby villages into submission. Evgeneiadis concluded that, given the incompetence of the Ottoman administration, the efficiency of Bulgarian violence and the self-interest of the Powers, the possibility of a new and even more formidable revolution in Macedonia was high.<sup>257</sup>

A month earlier, on 2/15 February 1903, Evgeneiadis had written a shorter report on the amnesty. He made two claims. Firstly, the effect of the amnesty would outweigh any positive long-term effects that the reforms might have: ‘... the total

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<sup>257</sup> AYEP 1903.1.1.2, Evgeneiadis to Skouzes, Salonica, 20 March/2 April 1903, number 129, attached to Skouzes to N.P. Deliyiannis, Athens, 27 March/9 April 1903, number 803.

number of prisoners to be amnestied in the Salonica vilayet is five hundred eleven. And the massive liberation of so many political convicts and accused would be a real threat for public order, especially since the whole of Macedonia was in turmoil'. The disadvantages that the amnesty posed outweighed the supposed advantages of the *gendarmerie* which had not even started being formed.

Secondly, the local Turkish authorities were equally concerned by the amnesty. The Vali of Salonica and the General Governor of Macedonia did what they could to obstruct the release of hundreds of prisoners, many of whom had taken up arms against the Ottoman Empire just a few months ago. The Vali discussed these worrying developments with Evgeneiadis in a friendly manner and gave him the information he wanted – the threatening prospect of Macedonian autonomy had brought Greeks and Turks closer to each other.

With hindsight, there are two conclusions we can draw. Firstly, in the first months of 1903, the consuls used the powerlessness of the Sublime Porte as an argument against Greece's participation in the reforms: an understanding with official Turkey was useless, and Greece had to act against the decisions and actions of the Sublime Porte in Macedonia. On the other hand, it was at the same time that the staff of the consulates started forming the idea of an unofficial alliance with the local Ottoman authorities to obstruct the reforms and combat the Bulgarians. This

at the time was an obvious, even an irresistible course of action: the interests of the two groups in opposing the revolutionaries and the reforms coincided perfectly. Hindsight, however, allows us to see the irony in the consuls' actions: the consuls joined cause with the same people who in 1908 would reappear in the historical scene as Young Turks and would eventually suppress the Greek network in Macedonia.

In addition, Evgeneiadis warned against the actions of the Russian consul general in Salonica. The Russian complained to the Vali about the delay in the release of the amnestied prisoners. The Vali replied in a fine procrastinating tone 'that time was needed to register the prisoners and to separate them from those who had committed crimes of the common penal code', confirming Evgeneiadis's confidence in him. But this was one of the first instances when the Greek consular authorities suggest that the Russians were using the reforms to support the Bulgarians. This view was not without some foundation: several of the Russian diplomats and officers active in Macedonia between 1903 and 1908 were Pan-Slavists: they saw the 'Slav-speaking' villagers as weaker brethren who had to be defended against the Ottomans. But the actions of Russian consuls were misleading as to the intentions of St Petersburg: official Russia had a different attitude from its Macedonian consuls and if anything, aimed at the successful

implementation of the reforms.<sup>258</sup> The real threat to Greek interests in Macedonia in 1903 and at least until 1908 was British support for autonomy, a proposal that the Foreign Office hoped would pacify the Balkans by adjusting the political map of the region to its ethnographic realities. In this respect, the plenipotentiary ministers, and especially Metaxas in London had a more accurate picture of reality, whereas the consuls often fought against ghosts of their own creation.<sup>259</sup>

Several of the consuls were convinced that a Bulgarian revolution would take place soon. One of the main rumour-mongers was Nikolaou, consul in Adrianople. On 6/19 February 1903, he wrote to the Ministry that ‘in the spring something will take place’.<sup>260</sup> Similarly, Lambros Enyalis wrote from Ellassona four days later that ‘the schismatics [i.e. the Exarchists] work feverously... in preparation for the spring’.<sup>261</sup> Nikolaou reported that the Turks were already making plans for their military retreat from Europe: [in Soufli] officers of the corps of engineers ... were studying the construction ... of a mobile bridge the purpose of which would be the transportation of the army’ in the case of a quick retreat.<sup>262</sup> He also reported that England [sic] had asked for a free passage of the Straits, apparently in preparation

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<sup>258</sup> William L. Langer, ‘Russia, the Straits question and the origins of the Balkan league’, *Political science quarterly*, 43:3 (September, 1928), pp. 321-63, here 322-23; David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, ‘Russian foreign policy: 1815-1917’ in Maureen Perrie, Dominic Lieven, Ronald Gregor Suny (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Russia: volume II, Imperial Russia, 1689-1917*, (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 27-47, here 568-71.

<sup>259</sup> AYEP 1903.1.1 (Macedonia-Albania), Enyalis to Skouzes, Salonica, 17 February/2 March 1903, number 68.

<sup>260</sup> AYE 1903.8.2, Nikolaou to Skouzes, Adrianople, 6/19 February 1903, number 68.

<sup>261</sup> AYEP 1903 (‘Macedonia-Albania’), 1.1, Enyalis to Skouzes, Ellassona, 10/23 February 1903, number 59.

<sup>262</sup> AYE 1903.8.2, Nikolaou to Skouzes, Adrianople, 7/20 February 1903, number 70.

for the coming crisis.<sup>263</sup> For Nikolaou, a Turkish-Bulgarian war was a near certainty.

The consular staff argued that the situation in Macedonia was worsening not in spite of the reforms, but *because* of the reforms. Evgeneiadis in particular argued that the situation was that of a slippery slope. Any concession towards Bulgaria would lead not to peace but to further concessions. This belief was typical of the 1897 generation and more generally of radical irredentists: ‘the committee will not subject to the decisions of Europe... but will try to worsen the situation’ to show that even more reforms, and eventually autonomy are necessary.<sup>264</sup> In response, Greece had to be intransigent and avoid any diplomatic concession.

None of this was entirely mistaken: there were people in Bulgaria who tried to use European sensitivities for the purposes of Bulgarian irredentism. But the consuls tried their best to turn this into a self-fulfilling prophecy. Their suggestion was that, even if official Greece was forced to give assurances that it supported the reforms, inside Macedonia it was too dangerous to allow the reforms to proceed, since they would only hasten the coming of the Bulgarian revolution. Unlike the ambassadors, the consuls paid little attention to the Powers. They argued that the Powers did not have the means to implement their decisions and that in any case

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<sup>263</sup> AYE 1903.8.2, Nikolaou to Skouzes, Adrianople, 6/19 February 1903, number 68.

<sup>264</sup> AYEP 1903.1.1 (Macedonia- Albania), Evgeneiadis to Skouzes, no date, no number, attached to Skouzes to N.P. Deliyiannis, Paris, February 28/January 13, 1903, number 553.

the reforms would favour Bulgaria. In this way, the Macedonian Question was not a diplomatic question about security, but had to be approached as an armed conflict. Moreover, the consuls saw Bulgaria as an irreconcilable but not unbeatable enemy. Greece had to imitate Bulgaria and make itself stronger than Bulgaria. For the consuls irredentism came before diplomacy and security. By early 1903, the consuls thought that the Ministry should turn its attention to combating the Bulgarians, if need be by violent means, instead of trying to follow the mainstream of European diplomacy. This endorsement of violence by the anti-reform camp provides the first appearance of what would become known as the Macedonian Defence; indeed, the Defence made its appearance on the historical scene as a reaction to the European reforms.

The contrast with the pro-reform camp could not have been greater: one group advocated careful reform, whereas the other supported violence. What made this wide divergence of opinion possible? Consuls must have felt remote from the world of the ambassadors: many (but by all means not all) of the diplomats employed in the consulates were less educated and well travelled than the upper-middle class ambassadors. Certainly difference in social background accounts for some of the divergence of opinion: diplomats in the consulates came frequently

from the middle-class urban strata which by the turn of the century were rapidly moving towards radical irredentism.<sup>265</sup>

But to explain the difference of opinion merely on the basis of social background would be an oversimplification. It would firstly underestimate the extent to which the plenipotentiary ministers themselves were irredentists, simply of a different kind. Secondly, it would ignore the importance of local factors in the formation of the radical opinions of the consuls. The consuls were influenced by the agrarian world in which they lived: they mainly acted as intermediaries between the Greek government and the Christian Ottomans, from whom they collected their information. To form a more complete view of the intellectual climate that prevailed in Macedonia in 1903 one would have to look at the people who provided the consuls with their information.

The principal informant of the Greek consulate in Monastir was a priest known by his first name, Stavro [*Παπασταύρος από το Πισοδέρι*]. He was from Pisoderi, a village near Florina. Compared with the consular staff he seems rather naïve and uneducated, and his Greek was clumsy. But knowing to read and write was no little achievement for a villager of that time in Macedonia and Stavro must have regarded himself as someone who represented not only himself, but also the people

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<sup>265</sup> Athanasios Bochothis, *Radical right: antiparliamentarism, conservatism and incomplete fascism in Greece: 1864-1911* (in Greek) (Athens, 2003) pp. 361-97; Spyros Marketos, *How I kissed Mussolini* (in Greek) (Athens, 2006) pp. 61-76.

from his village who, not knowing how to write, had no other means of communicating with the Greek authorities. Stavro saw the events in Macedonia through local lenses. He hated the Bulgarian revolutionaries, not at an abstract, ideological level, but at a personal level: ‘for two years... I have been working for the cancellation of the work of the murdering and dirty Bulgarian committee.’ Unlike the consuls, his opposition to Bulgaria did not stem from considerations of the national interest, but was about personal revenge. ‘The committee’ had killed his cousin and burned down his hostel in Popli. Stavro never named who was responsible for the crimes, but these actions were probably an act of revenge either for Stavro’s counterrevolutionary actions or for him having refused to join the revolution. Stavro used the Greek consuls as arbitrators in these conflicts of the Macedonian villagers.<sup>266</sup>

The information that the consuls offered was a mixed bag. On the one hand, we know with hindsight that the coming of the Ilinden Uprising a few months later confirmed the fears of the consuls for a new Bulgarian revolution. The networks of the consuls were quite efficient in collecting information from the countryside: although they were prone to exaggeration, the large picture was correct. On the other hand, there were two problems with the information coming from the consulates. First, they often speculated about the intentions of Russia, the

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<sup>266</sup> For the last two paragraphs see Stavros to Pavlos Melas, Pisoderi, 12/25 October, 1903, TID, p. 615.

possibilities of a European war and the actions of official Bulgaria. In these fields, the Greek consulates lacked genuine information and what they worked with was mainly rumours. Second, their reports on the violent actions of the Bulgarian revolutionaries were often exaggerated and contained inaccuracies. Since the Ministry used this information in its communication with the Powers, inaccuracies invalidated the Greek claim that the Bulgarians were the main party responsible for violence in Macedonia.

In his effort to attract attention, Stavro exaggerated the potential of local Patriarchists to provide armed support for the Greek cause. He also argued that what kept the villages under Bulgarian control was ruthless violence: Stavro suggested that violence was the only means to changing the allegiance of the villagers, and also that said allegiances could easily change. The consuls welcomed Stavro's message because they could use his reports to support their anti-reform arguments: violence could easily solve the demographic problem of Macedonian Hellenism. Through the consuls, Stavro and the other Macedonian informants had a lasting effect on the Ministry.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> Stavros to Melas, Chrupista, 18/31 October, 1903, TID pp. 615-16; Stavros to Melas, Monastir, 1/14 April 1903, TID pp. 549-51; AYE Monastir.1902, Stavros to Pezas, Pisoderi, 8/21 October 1902, no number. For other informants see the letter of the Greek teacher Andreas Dimitriou to the Ministry, 10/23 September 1903, number 2527, enclosed in AYE AAK/E.1903 ('Monastir Consulate') Kypraios to the Ministry, 24 August/6 September 1903, number 648. See also the letter dictated by Mrs Kyrou to Stavros: Stavros to Melas, 12/25 October 1903, no place, TID p.614.

The Ministry encouraged the consulates to cultivate contacts such as Stavro: they were the best source for information on Bulgarian outrages that the Ministry dispatched to the Embassies for dissemination to the Great Powers.<sup>268</sup> The stakes were high: at a time when few took seriously the claims about Greek numerical superiority in Macedonia and the diplomatic climate seemed supportive of the Bulgarian claims, the last hope of the Ministry was to convince the Powers that the ‘Greek element’ of the population was law abiding and peaceful in contrast to the trouble-making Bulgarians. In short, the Greek line of defence was that the Greeks were a silent majority overshadowed by the noisy Bulgarian revolutionaries.

It is, therefore, unsurprising that the reports of the consuls were full with stories about crimes, vendettas, and administrative incompetence.<sup>269</sup> After collecting such information for months if not years, by 1903 the consuls simply drew the logical conclusion: what worked in Macedonia was violence, and this was the method that Greece should use as well. As Lambros Koromilas would put it in 1905, ‘the prevailing atmosphere in the countryside demands murders; in order to calm down they [= the Christian peasants] have to see victims on the other side’.<sup>270</sup> Pezas put it more bluntly: ‘...I have been shouting for two years that the Turks are idiots and unable to save themselves in Macedonia’: with or without reforms and European

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<sup>268</sup> See for instance, AYEP 1903.1.2, Skouzes to N.P. Delyanni, Athens, 27 March/9 April 1903, number 211.

<sup>269</sup> AYEP 1903.1.1 (‘Macedonia-Albania’), Enyalis (consul in Elassona) to Skouzes, Salonica, 17 February/2 March 1903, number 68.

<sup>270</sup> AYE Salonica.1905, Koromilas to Rallis, Salonica, 4/17 September 1905, number 246.

officers, the Ottoman administration had lost control of Macedonia, and the Bulgarians would make sure it would not regain it.<sup>271</sup>

The emphasis of the consuls on violent stories they collected from the countryside did not go unopposed. In October 1903, the newly appointed Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rallis, wrote to the consuls that ‘sometimes they submitted information that was not exact’ and asked them to verify their reports ‘in a way that would render subsequent doubts impossible.’ Rallis took this initiative after the Greek Embassies pointed out that the information on several ‘Bulgarian outrages’ was inaccurate and exaggerated: ‘it is unnecessary and moreover against our interests to announce inexact news, [because] we will render our information suspicious and it will no longer be trustworthy’.<sup>272</sup> What further complicated the job of the Ministry was the lack of an information agency: the Central Information Service [*Κεντρική Υπηρεσία Πληροφοριών*, ΚΥΠ] was founded in 1953. In theory, it was the responsibility of the Ministry of War to gather and send information on developments in European Turkey to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but it seems that this happened very rarely.

This set of anti-reform ideas, originally formed in the consulates of European Turkey, soon made its way to Athens. It was there that the anti-reform camp found

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<sup>271</sup> AYE 1903.50a, Pezas to Skouzes, Monastir, 21 January/3 February 1903, number 38.

<sup>272</sup> AYE 1903. 8.3, circular of Rallis to the Greek consulates, 2/15 October 1903, number 2925.

its leader in the person of an Athenian politician, Stephanos Dragoumis, who as we saw in the ch. I, was Foreign Minister in 1886. Stephanos must have been delighted with the attention Macedonia was receiving, since this attention could revitalise his political career.

Indeed, the volume of Stephanos's correspondence increased after he published of many articles on Macedonia in 1902-03, as Stephanos was tirelessly producing texts in 1902-03. These publications established for good his reputation among the irredentists. A retired diplomat, Georgios S. Karapanagiotis, wrote to Stephanos to point out that he entirely agreed with his writings, and to remind him of their common Tricoupist past -- men such as Karapanagiotis thought that since Tricoupis left Greece in 1895, Greek politics, and especially foreign policy had stagnated. Anastasios Stamoulis, a merchant and an intellectual, agreed with Stephanos both that the Greek government had to intensify its propaganda abroad and that the reforms were a threat to Greek interests. M. Kepetzy, Professor of International Law in Bern, agreed with Stephanos's irredentist writings, but also drew Stephanos's attention to the possibility of a Greek alliance with the Slavs against Turkey: Stephanos, however paid no attention to this idea -- indeed such an

alliance continued to be regarded as both unrealistic and undesirable for a long time.<sup>273</sup>

Following 1903, the circle of Stephanos assumed the character of an informal Greek diplomatic delegation, with Stephanos as shadow Foreign Minister: Stephanos was in close touch with the aforementioned M. Kepetzy (Bern), Michel G. Koimzoglou and Georgios N. Ghikas (Vienna) and K. Pouptis and G. Sagiatzis (London). Stephanos's circle made concrete plans about what Greek aims should be for Macedonia, wrote newspaper articles and books, and organised activities abroad. Moreover, Stephanos and his friends followed closely Greek diplomatic activity abroad and tried to modify it when they thought it was mistaken. In Vienna, the associates of Stephanos there criticised vehemently Manos, the Greek ambassador, who allegedly caused 'incalculable damage to [Greek] national interests' and proposed the strengthening of the institutional role of the Greek consulate there as a means of reducing the influence of the Ambassador. Needless to say, Pouptis had similar complaints for Ambassador Metaxas in London: Pouptis thought that Metaxas was blocking his attempts to spread Greek propaganda and described his actions as 'disastrous', 'scandalous', and 'motivated by vile causes'. What united these people was that they saw the reforms as a

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<sup>273</sup>DRAS 216.3. Karapanagiotis to Stephanos, Larisa 1/14 October 1903, number 90; Stamoulis to Stephanos, Jena, 23 October/5 November 1903, number 93; Kepetzy to Stephanos, no place, no date, number 96.

failure, that they were Tricoupists who were disappointed with the contemporary political situation, and that they thought that Greece had to abandon the course of action that the diplomats had decided upon and embark on a wholly different one.<sup>274</sup>

As a leading politician Stephanos kept in touch and corresponded frequently with current employees of the Ministry such as Bezos and Dimitrios Panas, who had served as secretary in the Petersburg embassy in the late nineteenth century. His son, Ion, also worked in the Ministry and since autumn 1902 he was the secretary of the explosive Pezas in Monastir. In 1903, the purpose of Panas's letters to Stephanos was to keep the latter updated on Ion's moves in Monastir and to help the private correspondence between father and son through the Ministry's mail.<sup>275</sup>

After the death of his political patron, Tricoupis, in 1896, Stephanos had been marginalised for several years. The New Party – true to its principles – did not dissolve once it found itself without a leader: had it done so, it would have been just like the ‘personal parties’ that Tricoupists detested and which were bonded together only by the presence of a strongman. The New Party was instead the first Greek party to organise a succession process, albeit an informal and messy one.

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<sup>274</sup> DRAS 212.1, Koimzoglou to Stephanos, Vienna, [1907-08], number 12a; Pouptis to Stephanos, London, 8/21 February, 1907, number 34. See also Koimzoglou to Stephanos, Vienna, 26 September/9 October 1907, number 12; Ghikas to Stephanos, Vienna, 10/23 April 1908, number 19; Pouptis to Stephanos, London 5/18 April 1907, number 38; Pouptis to Stephanos, London, 31 May/13 June 1907, number 39. The file 212.1 is entitled ‘Propagandistic correspondence with Greeks abroad’ and contains much relevant material.

<sup>275</sup> Panas to Stephanos, [no place], 15/28 August 1903, TID p. 231; 18/31 August 1903, TID p. 235; 13/26 September 1903, TID, p. 281.

Stephanos showed interest in the leadership, and probably so did Mavrocordato, but they both lost to the better connected Georgios TheotokisTheotokis, a politician known for his moderate views. The decision was announced in an informal way: in 1898 the Tricoupist MPs gathered in a house and declared unanimously they had chosen TheotokisTheotokis as their new leader – clearly much negotiation had happened beforehand behind closed doors, but for political reasons, Tricoupists preferred to keep their disagreements away from public attention. Stephanos subsequently retired from the New Party and would re-join his former colleagues only after 1916, when the popularity of Venizelos forced them to form again common cause.

The Macedonian reforms offered him a chance to restart his political career: Stephanos probably was Greece's foremost expert on Macedonia. He could moreover claim Macedonian descent: the Dragoumis family originated from the town of Vogatsiko in Western Macedonia. Given the miniscule size of the Macedonian community in Athens, and the urge of Greeks to show to foreigners that after all there were some Macedonians who felt Greek, Stephanos's distant Macedonian ancestry acquired symbolic power: Stephanos signed his articles with the pseudonym the True Macedonian (*Γνάσιος Μακεδνός*). In 1903, Stephanos published a series of newspaper articles, shortly afterwards published as books too,

entitled *Macedonian Crisis*. He discussed in these the importance of the European reforms for Macedonia and, especially, for the Greek claims over Macedonia. Stephanos was the perfect person to bring the two intellectual currents on Macedonia (i.e. the thought of intellectuals and the anti-reform position of the consuls) together, because he knew the Ministry very well and was also inclined to write for newspapers.

Stephanos's judgement was pessimistic. The reform plans of the Powers were favouring Bulgarian ambitions by singling out for special treatment the very territories that Bulgaria regarded as its *terra irredenta*. He poured scorn on the claims of the Powers that they were motivated by liberalism and humanism, and insinuated that their real motivation was self-interest. Stephanos never explained exactly the nature of this self-interest: he only alluded to the support of the Powers for Bulgaria. Like other populist nationalists, Stephanos resorted to conspiracy theories to fill in the gaps in his narrative: Bulgarian irredentists, Russian Pan-Slavists and British Liberals were anti-Greeks (*ανθέλληνοι*), intrinsically interested in undermining Greece.<sup>276</sup>

Like the consular staff, Stephanos had no doubt that the introduction of liberal reforms was only going to facilitate the work of the Bulgarian revolutionaries: the

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<sup>276</sup> Stephanos Dragoumis, *Macedonian Crisis II: Reform: Macedonia and Greece* (in Greek) (Athens, 1903), pp. 3-15.

reform plan was encouraging the revolutionaries to ask for more and more until finally the union with Bulgaria was realised: the introduction of the reforms would make the Bulgarians more violent than ever. Between 28 April/11 May and 1/14 May, events in Macedonia confirmed Stephanos's warnings: a group of anarchist high-school graduates blew up the French ship 'Guadalquivir' as well as the building of an Ottoman Bank office, and shut off the electricity and water supply systems of Salonica. According to contemporary observers, dozens of Christians were killed in reprisals that extended outside Salonica to include many towns in the vilayets of Salonica and Monastir.<sup>277</sup> Stephanos concluded that 'the fanatic supporters of the committees' attacked with dynamite 'the *Europeans* on land and sea' [his underlining]: the presence of European officers did not deter the Bulgarians in Salonica, how would these officers make a difference in the Macedonian countryside as the reforms anticipated?<sup>278</sup> As the subsequent notes of Stephanos on the margins of his copy show, he thought that the Revolution of Ilinden in 1903 had vindicated his warnings.<sup>279</sup>

Stephanos presented the arguments of the consuls for a wider audience. To achieve this end, his text kept a fine line between sophistication and accessibility. Written in *katharevousa* and its typically long phrases (often exceeding ten lines) the text

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<sup>277</sup> Giannis Megas, *The 'boatmen' of Salonica: the anarchist Bulgarian group and the bombings of 1903* (Athens, 1994), pp. 114-22.

<sup>278</sup> Stephanos Dragoumis, *Macedonian Crisis II...*, pp. 22-23 and 25.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

had authoritative confidence. Stephanos also cited at length phrases of European statesmen from the British ‘blue book’ to make his arguments more convincing. Nevertheless, he was careful to use the language of radical irredentism depicting Greece’s enemies in a vivid language (‘pestilent bacteria’, *πανωλικά βακτήρια*)<sup>280</sup> and employing the black-and-white irredentist language with which the average reader was accustomed. This was the case especially with the third booklet he published. Its first chapter was written in a less strict *katharevousa* and revolve around national awakening: ‘Greeks wake up...it is time to remember that our great national question is exposed to dangers’.<sup>281</sup> The writings of Stephanos achieved his aims: they both attracted a specialist audience and gained him a reputation as Greece’s ‘Macedonian’ politician. The boastings of the True Macedonian about his origin and his idiosyncratic writing style left no doubt as to the authorship of the text. Congratulatory messages poured into Stephanos’s home address, and newspapers published favourable reviews of the books.<sup>282</sup> Thanks to the Macedonian question, by 1903, Stephanos was once again to the fore in Greek political life.

There is much to recommend in Stephanos’s text. He was well informed not only on the actions of the Greek government but also on those of the Powers. With

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<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

<sup>281</sup> Stephanos Dragoumis, *Macedonian Crisis III...*, p. 1.

<sup>282</sup> See DRAS 212.

hindsight, one can add that Stephanos was vindicated in warning about the weaknesses of the planning of the Powers: their disagreements stopped the reforms from having a lasting effect on European Turkey. But hindsight also helps us to identify the key weakness in Stephanos's text: in the midst of Stephanos's continual exhortations that Greece should act, if need be on its own, one can see that his central assumption was that Greece could dictate the pace of events in the Balkans in the 1900s. Stephanos wanted Greece to imitate Bulgaria's aggressive style not only by following the Bulgarian example and sending armed bands into Macedonia but also by making bold demands to the Powers about the Greekness of European Turkey. Unlike Theotokis and Deliyiannis, Stephanos was undeterred by the disaster of 1897 and argued that, if need be, Greece should resort to military violence against Turkey.<sup>283</sup> Stephanos insisted that, had its politicians been more decisive, Greece could have won in 1897. This might have been good politics in the irredentist atmosphere of Athens in the 1900s, but in its assessment of diplomatic and military realities it was voluntarism. Stephanos and contemporary irredentists were silent on the control of the Powers on Balkan affairs between 1902 and 1908: this control meant that unilateral military or diplomatic action by Greece had no chance of success. Whether Stephanos understood this and preferred to play the card of populism, or whether he thought

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<sup>283</sup> Stephanos Dragoumis, *Macedonian Crisis III...*, pp. 8-11.

that unilateralism was indeed the best course of action for Greece is a question that requires research beyond the scope of this thesis. But what matters for the purpose of the present story is that Stephanos's writings raised the stakes in Greek politics: for the first time after 1897 a leading politician talked about aggressive military and diplomatic action against Bulgaria in Macedonia. The question for other Greek politicians, and especially TheotokisTheotokis, as we shall see in ch. IV, was whether they would follow suit and adopt a similarly radical rhetoric or whether they would adopt a more careful stance and fall prey to accusations about lack of patriotism. Radicalism or silence remained TheotokisTheotokis's dilemma until the end of his career as a political leader in 1909.

## II. ILINDEN

Stephanos, the plenipotentiary ministers, the consulates in Macedonia and their informants, all had their ideas about the Macedonian Question. But everything was to change on the day on Saint Elijah [Ilinden], 20 July/2 August: during the Ilinden Uprising thousands of Bulgarian revolutionaries confronted the Ottoman army in battle until mid-September (OS). The revolutionaries were particularly successful in the Monastir vilayet, but the Uprising also spread to the vilayet of Salonica and – through the Transfiguration Uprising on 19/31 August –the vilayet of Adrianople (usually called Thrace by Greeks) too: in other words, the Uprising comprised a large part of European Turkey and exceeded a narrowly defined Macedonia. Still, contemporary Greeks ignored this, talking solely of Macedonia – what this suggests is not that they did not have irredentist aspirations for Thrace too (though they certainly did), but rather that Macedonia had come by then to mean simply any territories of European Turkey on which Greece and Bulgaria had conflicting ambitions. Boris Sarafov, the most well-known revolutionary leader, intended that the uprising would provoke Ottoman outrages against the Christians and thus increase the chances of a European intervention.<sup>284</sup> But this became mingled with

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<sup>284</sup> Keith Brown, *The past in question: modern Macedonia and the realities of nation* (Princeton, 2003), p. 192.

more millennial, and vengeful, aspirations. For example, the proclamation of the General Staff of the Revolution called for redemption through violence:

At last the long-expected day of settling our accounts with our age old enemy has come. The blood of our innocent brothers who have fallen victim to Turkish tyranny cries aloud for vengeance! The violated honour of our mothers and sisters demands restitution! Enough of misery, enough of shame... Down with Turkey! Down with the tyrants! Death to the enemy!<sup>285</sup>

It is, therefore, understandable that the Bulgarian agent in Monastir noted that ‘considerable panic has seized the Turkish population in the vilayet’.<sup>286</sup> The revolutionaries spoke the language of agrarian millenarianism. The life of Macedonian peasants was vulnerable to natural disasters, violence, and the weaknesses of the Ottoman administration and poverty. As Michael Barkun and K.S. Singh have shown, insecurity, danger and the isolation of agrarian life create fertile ground for radicals who promise a quick transformation of the world and the return to an idealised golden era.<sup>287</sup>

Nikola Karev was such a radical. Karev was a schoolteacher born in Krushevo in 1877. He was a member of both SMARO and of the Bulgarian Workers’ Social Democratic Party. He said to a Greek journalist: ‘[we shall have autonomy] like in

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<sup>285</sup> ‘The Proclamation of the General Staff of the Bitolya [Monastir] Revolutionary District announcing the Ilinden Uprising’, 15/28 July 1903, MDM number 82.

<sup>286</sup> The head of the Bulgarian agency in Monastir to Petrov, Monastir, 23 July/5 August 1903, MDM number 85.

<sup>287</sup> Michael Barkun, ‘Millenarianism in the modern world’, *Theory and Society*, 1:2 (summer 1974), pp. 117-46, here p. 117; K. S. Singh, ‘Tribal peasantry, millenarianism, anarchism and socialism: a case study of the Tanabhagats in Chotanapur: 1914-25’, *Social Scientist*, 16:11 (November 1988), pp. 36-50, here pp. 39-40.

Switzerland where three different races live in the utmost harmony and love'. He continued:

if we get incorporated into Greece, it will become a big state and consequently, a monarchy. In this situation there would be many evils, first the monarchy and its attendant evils, and then Greece would force us to fight against Bulgaria, which is something we do not wish.

When the Greek journalist asked him what the revolutionaries wanted for Macedonia, Karev showed his trilby hat and said 'we want *this*'. In Greek a trilby hat is called 'republic'.<sup>288</sup> The ironic tone of the Greek journalist betrayed his anxiety: Greece was losing the battle of ideas. The socialist and republican Bulgarians had gained the support of British liberals and of the continental Left. In contrast, Greek irredentism failed to inspire. Moreover, Greeks could not convince many peasants either: the Bulgarians promised social justice and land redistribution, while Greeks defended the *status quo*. Greeks needed a new and radical message.

Despite Greek anxieties, Macedonia was not lost in 1903. Tsilio (Vasil) Chekalarov, a revolutionary leader, wrote in his diary on the day that the Uprising broke out that he found out the news with 'great surprise'. He added that 'the time

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<sup>288</sup> G.G. Stam., 'Interview with a member of the Committee', *Athinai*, 8/21 May 1903, p. 1.

we had for the necessary actions was minimal’.<sup>289</sup> According to Liubomir Panaiotov, the revolutionaries had only 26,408 men.<sup>290</sup> By late August Chekalarov and his band were desperate. According to his associate, Panto Kliasev, on October 17/30 Chekalarov and what remained of his band crossed the frontier into Greece to escape the Turkish army.<sup>291</sup> Kottas Christou, a Macedonian bandit active in both Greek and SMARO circles, had similar concerns.<sup>292</sup> In Kottas’s case, his disappointment with the Bulgarians was such that he eventually abandoned them and joined the Greeks.<sup>293</sup>

Nevertheless, the initial successes of the Bulgarians led contemporary observers to exaggerate their strength. On 15/28 August 1903, O’Conor, the British ambassador in Constantinople, described the ‘exasperation’ of the Muslims of the Ottoman Empire and claimed that, given their belief that Bulgaria was ‘the cause and fountain-source of all their present trials’, the only thing that stopped them from going to war was the fear of Russia. Even so, O’Conor feared that the Uprising would lead to a Turkish-Bulgarian war. A war would be a disaster: it ‘would invite,

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<sup>289</sup> Petsivas (ed.), *Vasil Chekalarov: the diary of Ilinden: 1901-03* (Greek translation from the Bulgarian) (Athens, 2010), entry for 20 July/2 August 1903, p. 325.

<sup>290</sup> Liubomir Panaiotov, ‘The national liberation movement at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries’, *Southeastern Europe*, 8:1-2 (1981), pp. 151-70, here p. 166.

<sup>291</sup> Petsivas (ed.), *Vasil Chekalarov...*, entries for August 17/30- September 5/18, 1903, pp. 350-62; Kliasev is quoted by Petsivas on p. 362

<sup>292</sup> AYE AAK/E.Monastir.1903, Kottas Christou to the Metropolitan of Kastoria, [no place] 22 August/4 September 1903, no number.

<sup>293</sup> Andreas P. Andreou, *Kottas: 1863-1905* (in Greek) (Athens, 2002), pp. 114-26.

and probably entail, Russian intervention at very short notice'. Avoiding such an outcome was among the highest priorities of the Foreign Office in the 1900s.<sup>294</sup>

The best opportunity to escalate the conflict came on 26 July/8 August. An Albanian Muslim *gendarme* assassinated the Russian consul in Monastir: 'le consul ... n'ayant pas été salué par le Gendarme Halim... descendit de voiture pour l'interpeller et au cours de l'altercation qui s'en est suivie le dit gendarme tua Mr. Rostkovsky'.<sup>295</sup> European diplomats in Macedonia were understandably alarmed. Ion wrote in his diary that the Russian interpreter in Monastir walked with a weapon in hand, his fear for his life having reached paranoid levels.<sup>296</sup> The French consul had received a threat of assassination from local Muslims.<sup>297</sup> Diplomats feared that the Rostkovsky incident was the beginning of Muslim revenge against European officials and Ottoman administration in Macedonia seemed to be descending in chaos. The question was what Russia would do.

Lamsdorff, the Russian Foreign Minister, communicated to Husny Pasha four conditions:

1. Châtiment le plus rigoureux pour le gendarme...; 2 Arrestation et punition exemplaire pour les individus qui ont tirés sur l'équipage du Consul; exil effectif du Vali de Bitola; 4. Punition sévère et

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<sup>294</sup> FO 78/5268, O'Connor to Lansdowne, Therapia, 15/28 August 1903, number 521, confidential.

<sup>295</sup> Tevfik Pasha to the Ottoman ambassadors and to the imperial legation in Athens, Belgrade and Cettigne, Constantinople, July 27/9 August, 1903 ciphered telegram number 53748/160, TMIA number 806.

<sup>296</sup> Entry in Ion's diary for 30 July/12 August, 1903, TID p. 206.

<sup>297</sup> Naby to Tevfik, Paris, 4/17 August 1903, ciphered telegram number 372, TMIA number 827.

immédiate de tous les fonctionnaires civils et militaires responsables de l'assassinat du Consul de Russie.

And that was not all. Among other things Lamsdorff demanded the removal of dozens of state functionaries and the release of arrested peasants. If the Ottomans failed to comply, the situation 'pourrait avoir les conséquences les plus graves'. The Russian Black Sea Fleet sailed into Turkish waters in mid-August and stayed there until late October (NS).

The Russian threat was a blunder. The Russians wanted to relax the suppression of the revolutionaries and restore their prestige in the Balkans. But, in the eyes of other Powers, acceptance of the demands meant an increase of Russia's influence in the Empire, the encouragement of Bulgarian irredentism, and the strengthening of the ties between Bulgaria and Russia. For the more suspicious foreign observers, such as O'Connor, Russia appeared to be looking for a pretext to go to war.

It soon became evident that there was no Turkish conspiracy. Like many of the Russian consular staff in Macedonia, Rostkovsky had been a Pan-Slavist who regarded Macedonian Muslims with contempt.<sup>298</sup> He had acted against protocol: he had demanded a salute from Halim although he was not in full dress

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<sup>298</sup> Sadreddin Bey to Tevfik Pasha, Athens, July 27/9 August 1903, ciphered telegram number 333, TMIA number 809; Husny to Tevfik, Petersburg, 31 July/13 August 1903, number 18388/819, TMIA number 820.

uniform.<sup>299</sup> Halim's crime was an expression of Muslim resentment but it was spontaneous.

The Powers now pressed Turkey to suppress the Uprising. The Ottoman ambassador in Paris wrote to his government that 'Quai d' Orsay aurait un grand intérêt pour le Gouvernement Imperial à réprimer les troubles en adoptant mesures efficaces',<sup>300</sup> and Germany and Austria adopted a similar tone.<sup>301</sup> Britain abandoned humanitarian language and urged the Ottomans to repress the Uprising with efficiency.<sup>302</sup> The Ottomans burned down villages suspicious of supporting the Uprising. There were dozens of thousands refugees but the Uprising was suppressed in two months.

Iinden brought to light the internal dissensions in the Bulgarian camp. On the one hand, official Bulgaria had to keep a distance from the Uprising, otherwise it could be accused of undermining the reforms. This inevitably brought the government in conflict with socialists such as Karev: as the Bulgarian Prime Minister told Zalokostas 'si la Turquie commence la répression, je ne pourrai contenir l'armée et le peuple'.<sup>303</sup> Moreover, Bulgarian public opinion was worried that the

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<sup>299</sup> Duncan M. Perry, 'Death of a Russian Consul: Macedonia 1903', *Russian History*, 7:1-2 (1980), pp. 201-12, here p. 209.

<sup>300</sup> Naby to Tevfik, Paris, 4/17 August 1903, number 17942/379, TMIA number 828.

<sup>301</sup> Ahmed Tevfik to Tevfik, Berlin, 3/16 August 1903, number 3288/155, TMIA number 826; for Austria see AVEC 1903.1.4 (telegrams), Rallis to Gryparis, Athens, 1/14 August 1903, telegram number 834.

<sup>302</sup> Musurus to Tevfik, London, 2/15 August 1903, number 423, TMIA number 825; Musurus to Tevfik, London, 31 July /12 August 1903, telegram number 416, TMIA number 817.

<sup>303</sup> Sadreddin to Tevfik, Athens 27 July/9 August 1903, ciphered telegram number 334, TMIA 810.

Macedonian refugees were getting increasingly numerous and powerful: the refugees appeared to be receiving a privileged treatment from the state and to guide it towards an aggressive policy in Macedonia. In short, Bulgarians had concerns about the implications of the revolutionary movement for their own country.

Furthermore, there were dissensions among the revolutionaries. Several revolutionary leaders, such as Chekalarov, started doubting a leadership that proclaimed a revolution that was doomed to fail: their suspicion was that their leaders put the interests of the Bulgarian state before those of the Macedonian people. The most prominent among these sceptics was Gotse Deltsev – today a national hero in both Bulgaria and Macedonia: Deltsev was born in Kukush [Kilkis] in Macedonia, and then became an officer of the Bulgarian army only to resign quickly after his graduation from the cadet force due to his republican and revolutionary ideas. He became a key member of SMARO and in particular of its left wing: he believed the right tactic was not a massive uprising but hit-and-run guerrilla tactics and terrorist attacks. His death a few months before the revolution in a confrontation with the Turkish army meant that the left wing of SMARO, which had reservations both about the Uprising and Bulgaria's involvement with it, lost its leadership at a critical moment.

These people thought that a revolution should take place only if it had genuine chances of success and they were surprised and angered by the decision of SMARO. Yane Sandanski believed that this revolution put his fatherland in peril for nothing. He argued that the revolutionary movement had become a pawn of the Bulgarian government and created a new movement that wanted autonomy but not union with Bulgaria: a Macedonian rather than a Bulgarian movement.<sup>304</sup> Thus, Ilinden marked the decline of the revolutionary movement, contributing in many respects to its weakening.

Ilinden became one of the primary concerns of the Greek press. Greek newspapers paid no attention to the complicated realities of a revolutionary movement that contained both Bulgarian officials and Macedonian nationalists; for them, the revolutionary movement was simply a puppet of Sofia. As the Greek journalist put it in the aforementioned interview of Karev ‘Bulgaria waters [the tree of Macedonian freedom] with mishellenic poison’.<sup>305</sup> Similarly, a newly-founded newspaper, with the telling title ‘Macedonia’, had as its motto the phrase: ‘the sickness [ψώρα] of Bulgarianism does not contaminate the Macedonians nor does it alienate them from Hellenism’.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>304</sup> MacDermott, *For freedom and perfection: the life of Yané Sandanski* (London, 1988), p. 149.

<sup>305</sup> G.G.Stam., ‘Interview with a member of the Committee’, *Acropolis*, 8/21 May 1903, p. 1.

<sup>306</sup> *Macedonia*, 29 June /12 July 1903, p. 1. This is the first issue of *Macedonia*.

The real turning point for the Greek press was the capture of Krushevo by the Ottomans. The revolutionaries drove out the Turks, in the night of 20 to 21 July (OS). They issued a manifesto urging the collaboration of all ethnicities against Ottoman ‘tyranny’ and established a republic. Its president was Karev; his work was supplemented by a sixty-member council with the participation of twenty Patriarchists – much as the Greeks would later resent and even deny this fact, many Patriarchists participated in the Uprising.<sup>307</sup> On 29 July/12 August the Ottomans returned with a strong army. They attacked with artillery and re-conquered the town while the revolutionaries were routed. This brief encounter proved that the revolutionaries were unable to hold a position against the army, and the revolutionaries would never again attempt to capture a town. Initial plans to attack Monastir and other major cities never materialised.<sup>308</sup>

The Greeks were angry, disappointed and humiliated by the Ilinden revolt. They wanted a target and the ready-made answers of conspiracy theories offered it to them.<sup>309</sup> Greeks believed that the revolutionaries aimed at ‘liberating’ Greek communities by force and then abandoning them to the Ottoman troops to be

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<sup>307</sup> The declaration of Krushevo can be found in Brown, *The past ...*, pp. 16-17; see also the magazine *Zora* which cites a different version: ‘The Krushevo Declaration’, *Zora*, vol. VIII, [Florina], July 1995, p. 23. *Zora* is a magazine unofficially affiliated with the Macedonian minority of Greece.

<sup>308</sup> DRAI 216, news notebook, Ion Dragoumis citing a member of SAMRO, [Monastir], 30 July/12 August 1903, TID p. 206.

<sup>309</sup> For a discussion of the emotional causes of conspiracy theories see Ted Goertzel, ‘Belief in conspiracy theories’, *Political Psychology*, 15:4 (December 1994), pp. 731-42, here 739-41.

destroyed. This Bulgarian tactic, the Greeks argued, punished Patriarchists who refused to join the revolutionary ranks and reduced the numerical and economic strength of the Greek communities. As Ion wrote in his diary: ‘the immediate aim of the Bulgarians is: a) to kill all the Orthodox notables, who are an obstacle to the Committee, b) to recruit all the villagers to their bands by force, so as to expose the villages to the authorities.’<sup>310</sup>

There was little truth in these assertions. The revolutionaries did not target the Greek communities in particular. Moreover, if Krushevo with its eight thousand inhabitants was the largest town the revolutionaries ever captured, this was the result of military failure not of any deliberate ploy. As we mentioned earlier, there were indeed plans to attack Lerin [Florina], Prilep and Kostour [Kastoria], which did not materialise, due to the successes of the Ottoman army.<sup>311</sup> And what is more important, the revolutionaries did not try to exterminate the Greek communities; rather, their real aim was European diplomacy: the leaders of the revolutionaries were convinced, much as were the Greek ambassadors, that the future of Macedonia would be decided in a new European conference. Ilinden was an attempt to influence European diplomacy, not to conquer Macedonia and

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<sup>310</sup> Georgios Ditsias, *The disaster of Krushevo: outrages of Bulgarians and Ottomans against the Greeks* (in Greek) (Athens, 1904), *passim*; unknown, ‘The events in Monastir’, *Athinai*, 30 July/12 August 1903, p. 1; entry in Ion’s notebook for 6/19 July 1903, TID p. 172.

<sup>311</sup> DRAI 216, news notebook, Ion Dragoumis citing a member of SAMRO, [Monastir], July 30/August 12, 1903, TID p. 206; the head of the Bulgarian agency in Monastir to Petrov, Monastir, 23 July/5 August 1903, MDM number 85.

exterminate its Greek population. But in 1903, most Greeks would have dismissed such claims as details.<sup>312</sup>

Moreover, the Greek press and an increasing number of politicians felt resentment at the diplomacy of the Great Powers. When revolutionary violence in Krushevo and elsewhere became known, many in Greece had hoped that the Powers would give 'a free hand' to Turkey to suppress the Uprising and if necessary they would even encourage Turkey to go to war with Bulgaria for the sake of European peace. But, as the Uprising went on for the whole duration of August, many Greeks became exasperated. As the British Minister in Athens reported, 'comparisons were drawn...in regard to the difference in the attitude of the Powers towards Bulgaria in 1903 and that adopted by them towards Greece in 1897'. Such comparisons made the position of Rallis in 1903 delicate: he had to manage not only an international crisis with unforeseen consequences, but also an increasingly aggressive and impatient public opinion in the main cities.<sup>313</sup>

The claims of the Athenian press in the summer of 1903 was close to what the consular staff had been advocating the last couple of years: the conflict was a military not a diplomatic one and, if Greece did not act, Macedonian Hellenism would soon become a thing of the past. With hindsight, one of most important

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<sup>312</sup> AYES 1903.1.4 ('telegrams'), Rallis to Gryparis, Athens, 1/14 August 1903, telegram number 814.

<sup>313</sup> FO 286/476, Elliot to Lansdowne, Athens, 16/29 August 1903, no. 99, very confidential.

developments in the summer of 1903 was the forging of an alliance between the press and the more radical diplomats inside the Ministry: it is hardly a coincidence that the founder of the Greek Macedonian Committee in 1904, Dimitrios Kalapothakis, was a journalist and editor of the nationalist newspaper *Embros*. Koromilas, who became famous as consul general in Salonica between 1904 and 1907, was also a journalist. 1903 marked the end of the quiet tone that had followed 1897. Radical irredentism and secret societies once again became dominant.

Greek newspapers responded in a disproportionate manner to Ilinden. As often happens with military conflicts, Greeks exaggerated their casualties and the strength of their enemies. Thus, for several years after Ilinden, the Greeks continued to act on the basis that they needed to prevent a new and more formidable Bulgarian uprising. In fact, Ilinden marked the apex of revolutionary activity in Macedonia, and the Bulgarians never again staged a revolution. There are several reasons for this. First, the Ottomans used effective counterinsurgency tactics, in line with the military orthodoxy of their time: they burned down villages which supported the revolutionaries, and forced their inhabitants to seek refuge in Bulgaria. This reduced the Bulgarian population of Macedonia and removed the support bases of the revolutionaries. Second, many of the Macedonian villagers

abandoned the Exarchate and ‘returned’ to Orthodoxy: Metropolitans like Karavangelis could offer them shelter and food. Moreover, loyalty to the Exarchate turned peasants into a target for the Turkish irregulars. The revolutionaries had heavy casualties in men and materiel. Following Ilinden they came under constant pressure from the Turks, the Serbs and the Greeks, and never had the time to rebuild their strength. After 1903, Greece fought against a threat the real size of which they overestimated. The head of the French railway told a Bulgarian journalist: ‘The Turks wanted me to dismiss all the Bulgarian workers under my authority, and replace them with supporters of the Patriarchate. Well, I gave my Bulgarians friendly advice to pretend to support the Patriarchate.’<sup>314</sup>

For the consular staff, however, Ilinden proved they were right. The reforms would not work and Greece had to adopt more radical measures. The Monastir consulate insisted the most in the need for a change of policy. There were several reasons for this: the vilayet of Monastir was the centre of the Bulgarian revolutionary activity and it was also the area where the bandits of Karavangelis were active. Some of the local Metropolitans also joined the anti-reform cause: Ioannikios, Metropolitan of Moglena, was worried about the renewed activity of the revolutionaries in the spring of 1903, and especially the Salonica bombings that Stephanos commented on in his books. Ioannikios saw in ‘the Imperial Army’ the only guarantee of

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<sup>314</sup> *Novoye Vremya*, 27 July/9 August 1903, MDM number 86.

security against ‘the Bulgarian thieves’ and ‘the murderers’.<sup>315</sup> Initially, Ioannikios turned to the Ottoman authorities: ‘I had an interview with the political and military authorities in order to protect the life, honour and property of the Orthodox’.<sup>316</sup> Unlike the consuls, Ioannikios did not question Ottoman sovereignty. But, as Macedonia was descending into chaos, he understood that loyalty to the Ottoman Empire was not sufficient to protect him and his flock: conservative and loyalist Greeks, who had until then resisted supporting radical irredentism, were convinced from revolutionary violence in the Monastir vilayet to seek protection from the Greek consulates and abandon hope in the liberal reforms. The increased support of the local population strengthened the position of the consulates.

It was not only their warnings about the military preparations of the Bulgarians that the consular staff believed were vindicated by the Uprising. Their worst fears about the amnesty policy were confirmed too. On July 24/7 August Kypraios wrote that ‘when a month and a half ago due to the actions of the Austrian and Russian consul they [the members of the local ‘Bulgarian committee’] were released, the actions of the Bulgarians were renewed with greater activity than previously...murders were doubled’. What Kypraios reported vindicated the warnings of Evgeneiadis from Salonica that the amnesty would only lead to more violence. Like

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<sup>315</sup> AYE Monastir.1903.1.2, Ioannikios to Kypraios, Florina, 21 April/3 May 1903, number 186, TID, p. 551.

<sup>316</sup> AYE 1903.50.γ, Ioannikios to Karavangelis, Florina, 22 July/4 September 1903, number 309.

Evgeneiadis, Kypraios regarded the reforms with suspicion and he developed contacts with the local Turkish authorities to obstruct the reforms when possible. The ‘official’ policy of complying with the Powers was not enough: ‘The moral means which we are using, not being materially supported by the authorities against the pressure of the Committee and the machinations of Austria, Russia and Romania, are powerless... our people are desperate’.<sup>317</sup>

The question was, however, what exactly would this ‘unofficial’ policy consist of? On 26 July/8 August, Kypraios sent a telegram to the Ministry, which was almost certainly edited by Ion Dragoumis. Ion objected to the plans Rallis had made for Macedonia (which we will examine shortly). For Ion, the motives of the villagers were not nationalist but ideological: ‘The rebelled populations are now convinced that they fight for their freedom, and it is not possible to control their revolutionary convictions.’ The Ministry’s policy would be disastrous, since ‘a definite separation of the Greek element from the Bulgarian one is practically impossible and would be most damaging to our influence’ because it would give the impression that most villagers were indeed Bulgarians.

Ion then presented his alternative policy:

When we can, we help the Turkish Authorities to suppress the movement, but this is not appropriate, nor do I think that sending agents would help more. So we are left with two options: either to

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<sup>317</sup> AYE Monastir.1903.1, Kypraios to Rallis, Monastir, 24 July/6 August 1903, number 554, TID p. 584.

join the Turks in persecuting our [sic] populations that have rebelled against them, which I consider a dangerous option, since by doing it we would lose the little influence we still have on the Bulgarian-speaking Orthodox, or to adopt the movement and, by giving it a Greek character, to turn it into a general movement in the whole of the country.’

It is difficult to overemphasise how daring this suggestion was. By supporting the revolution, Greece would almost certainly lose its influence over the conservative Macedonians, and especially the Vlach merchants and the Patriarchist clergy;<sup>318</sup> moreover, Greece at the time barely had the means to start a revolutionary movement. All that the Ministry could use was a few dozen men around Karavangelis. It is no wonder that the Ministry completely ignored the suggestion of Ion.<sup>319</sup>

Three days after sending Ion’s telegram, Kypraios again depicted the situation in his area with the darkest colours: ‘The committee continues to request money, weapons, clothes, and other things from villagers and city-dwellers both Ottoman [sic] and Christian. It even had the audacity to request pigs from Ottomans.’ As Kypraios was stepping up his rhetoric in favour of action, the Ministry found itself

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<sup>318</sup> For the Vlach merchants and Greek nationalism see Gounaris, *On the shores of the Dragor river: family, economy and urban society in Monastir, 1897-1911* (in Greek) (Athens, 1998), pp. 274-82.

<sup>319</sup> AYE Monastir.1903.1, Kypraios to Rallis, Monastir, 26 July/8 August 1903, telegram number 1996, TID pp. 586-87.

in a difficult situation, Rallis's efforts failed to bear fruit and it looked as if the policy of the Ministry was leading the Greek Macedonians to destruction.<sup>320</sup>

Once the Uprising ended in early September 1903, the position of the consuls was stronger than ever. Their predictions about the shortcomings of the reforms and the coming Uprising were vindicated; the deaths of dozens if not hundreds of Greeks during Ilinden made Macedonia look like a military rather than a diplomatic question; what was more, the consular staff's position was supported by local Macedonians who were radicalised by the violence of the Uprising. Priest Stavro, already before Ilinden, on 11/24 May, had accused Melas for his inactivity: 'you and the Society 'Hellenism' have promised me a lot, but you have done nothing'.<sup>321</sup> When the Uprising came, Stavro joined the tide of violence:

The [Metropolitans] of Pelagonia and of Prespes and the consul [Kypraios] too tell me that what I did with the army is inappropriate to the cloth and that I misled many souls. But I told him [sic] that I avenged the blood of my cousin and may God send me to Hell. I did what I did for the sake of the nation.<sup>322</sup>

Many Macedonians thought like Stavro in late 1903. What they wanted from the Ministry was the means to take revenge on the Bulgarians and make sure Ilinden would not be repeated. The traditional means of influence that diplomats such as

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<sup>320</sup> AYE Monastir.1903.1, Kypraios to Rallis, Monastir, 29 July /11 August 1903, number 325, TID p. 587.

<sup>321</sup> Stavros to Melas, [no place], 11/24 May 1903, number 5, TID p. 565.

<sup>322</sup> Stavros to Melas, Athens, 18/31 October 1903, number 109, TID p. 615.

Svoronos used, such as supporting the villagers vis-à-vis the Ottoman authorities and offering them financial support, now seemed irrelevant.

The British also now thought that the reforms were not enough. As Andrei Pantev has showed, the public and the diplomats in Britain were sympathetic to Ilinden. On 15/28 August, O'Connor in Constantinople wrote a memorandum setting a new course of action for British policy: 'it is evident that the Austro-Russian reform scheme is dead, and even if it could be revived, it would no longer answer to the requirements of the situation, or have the faintest chance of pacifying the Macedonians'. The solution that O'Connor had in mind was nothing short of accepting the proposals of the delegates of SMARO: the nomination of a Christian Governor General for Macedonia and 'the institution of an international, permanent, collective Board of Control with full penal powers'. In short, O'Connor proposed the creation of an autonomous Macedonia. Had the revolutionaries managed to protract the conflict for a few more months, Britain would probably have supported autonomy.<sup>323</sup>

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<sup>323</sup> FO 78/5268, O'Connor to Lansdowne, Therapia, 15/28 August, 1903, number 521, confidential; Pantev, 'Britain and Bulbaria: 1879-1915', *Southeastern Europe*, 7:2 (1980), pp. 191-204, here 196.

### III. THE RHALLYS INITIATIVE

Ilinden was not the only concern of the Ministry. During the summer of 1903, Greek diplomats realised that Britain supported Bulgaria in the Macedonian Question. The Ministry was not informed of the British proposals for autonomy until 21 September /4 October,<sup>324</sup> but it was aware that, if the Uprising lasted long enough, Bulgaria would get away with a favourable settlement in Macedonia. The diplomatic situation looked desperate.

Metaxas in London hoped that Britain would see Greece as a bulwark against Pan-Slavism. He had been bombarding for months the Foreign Office with suggestions that Russia was behind Bulgaria in Macedonia, with statistics by Pezas arguing for the demographic superiority of the Patriarchists in the vilayet of Monastir, and with the consulates' stories about Bulgarian crimes.<sup>325</sup> On 11/24 August, he had an interview with Villiers, the deputy Foreign Secretary. Metaxas told him that 'the official world of Greece' aspired to British protection due to 'Britain's traditional policy' and 'to its general political interests'. Villiers answered coldly with assurances about Britain's interest for the wellbeing of all the Balkan peoples. For Villiers, Ilinden was a Christian uprising against the Ottomans: he had no interest

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<sup>324</sup> AYEC 1903.1, Rallis to Gryparis, Athens, 21 September/10 October 1903, number 1116.

<sup>325</sup> AYEL 1903.1.1.1, Skouzes to Mizzopulo, Athens, 6/19 May 1903, number 1322; Skouzes to Metaxas, 9/22 January 1903, number 43.

in supporting the Patriarchists against the Exarchists.<sup>326</sup> Greece could expect no help from Britain.

The stance of Britain weakened the position of the ambassadors vis-à-vis the consuls in the struggle over Greek policy. Their argument had been that Greece was too weak to resist the reforms, but now it seemed that supporting the reforms had nothing to offer: Greece was on its own against Bulgaria. For the consuls, this Greek isolation meant that Greece had to act unilaterally. Rallis, however, thought differently: for him, Turkey could become Greece's ally and provide the solution to Greece's isolation. In late July, Rallis started negotiations with the Porte, which lasted until mid-August. The content and even the existence of such negotiations have until now been unknown.

The main interlocutor of Rallis was Ioannis Gryparis, ambassador in Constantinople. His predecessor, Mavrocordato, died in February 1903. As we saw in the previous chapter, Mavrocordato was a Tricoupist and an irredentist and he believed that Greece's future prospects depended on good relations with Britain. Mavrocordato disapproved of diplomatic cooperation with Turkey. Moreover, he was powerful and well connected even by the standards of the elites who staffed the Ministry. Mavrocordato was for a long time the second most important figure in the Tricoupist party. On Mavrocordato's death, George I confided to Elliot that

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<sup>326</sup> AYEL 1903.1.1.2, Metaxas to Rallis, London, 11/ 24 August 1903, number 763.

‘he had much regard for him’ and ‘many assertions [sic] for the future’.<sup>327</sup> Had Mavrocordato survived a few more months, he would have stopped Rallis’s plans for a cooperation with Turkey on its tracks. His death, however, was a blessing for Rallis’s plans.

Rallis and Gryparis were aware of the gravity of the situation. To facilitate quick and confidential communication they mainly used ciphered telegrams. They often went beyond the usual length of one or two pages to reach five or six. Rallis sent the first telegram to Gryparis on 25 July/7 August. He informed Gryparis that he had undertaken a significant change of policy: after years of resisting the suggestions of the consuls, the Ministry had finally embraced the policy of ‘Macedonian Defence’ [hereafter simply the Defence]. The consuls should guide the Macedonian Greeks into organising an armed Defence against the revolutionaries: ‘in the critical circumstances that Macedonia is going through, the Greek element must appear completely distanced from the Bulgarians’. The consuls could also request from Rallis to send them agents to help them in the organisation. Rallis appeared to give the consuls everything they wanted.

There were, however, two issues. First, as we saw earlier, radicals such as Ion disapproved of Rallis’s plan. They thought that ‘defence’ was not enough:

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<sup>327</sup> FO 286/475, Elliot to Lansdowne, Athens, 31 January/13 February 1903, f. 27, draft document. The second phrase was erased by Elliot and replaced with the first.

Macedonian Greeks had to counter-attack. Second, Rallis had plans that he did not reveal to the consuls. Ion in particular, wanted to go as far as a Greek revolution and was convinced that passivity would lead Macedonian Hellenism to destruction. But, if there was to be an effective recovery of the Greek situation in Macedonia, Rallis recognised that it would depend on the support of the Ottoman authorities. Rallis therefore asked his ambassador to transmit his telegram to the Grand Vizier (except from the information on the agents) and to find out whether the Ottomans would be interested in small-scale *military* co-operation in Macedonia. Unlike the consuls, Rallis did not want to use the Defence as an act of defiance against the Sultan. He hoped instead that the Defence would help forge a Greek-Turkish alliance against Bulgaria. For Rallis the Defence was the solution not only to Ilinden but also to Britain's abandonment of Greece and Greek diplomatic isolation.<sup>328</sup>

Rallis's actions suggest that he reacted to what he perceived as the errors of 1897. Firstly, he combined in his person the posts of Foreign Minister and of Prime Minister: this gave him greater power and independence than either he or his Minister Skouloudis had in 1897. Second, he decided to keep the King away from the minutiae of his initiative. The archives of the King remain closed for

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<sup>328</sup> AYEC 1903.1.4, Rallis to Gryparis, Athens, 25 July/7 August 1903, ciphered telegram number 772.

researchers, but from the available evidence it appears that the King was informed about the negotiations only at an advanced stage.<sup>329</sup>

Unlike Skouloudis, Rallis did not attempt an official alliance between Greece and Turkey; instead, he attempted a regional understanding in Macedonia. He probably anticipated that a focus on Macedonia maximised his flexibility in negotiations and minimised the danger of a leak to the press. As was the case in 1885-86 with Deliyiannis and in 1897 with Skouloudis, in the crisis of 1903, Rallis concentrated decision making in his hands. He saw diplomats as instruments who implemented the Ministry's policy not as decision-makers. This had also something to do with Rallis's uncompromising political style: unlike Theotokis subsequently (see pp. 230ff. and 269ff.), he took little advice from his associates and did not negotiate his views.

Rallis also controlled information. He was the only one fully informed about what was going on. The consuls were only informed that they should prepare a defence against the revolutionaries and that the Ministry was considering sending agents to Macedonia. They knew nothing about the negotiations with Turkey. The well-connected and well-informed Ion Dragoumis was kept in darkness about this initiative: his correspondence suggests that he knew about the sending of agents but not the Greek-Turkish *rapprochement*. Similarly, Gryparis was at times informed about Rallis's initiatives after the fact.

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<sup>329</sup> AYEC, 1903.1.4, Rallis to Gryparis, Athens, 10/23 August 1903, number 890.

Although Rallis was secretive about the details of the negotiations, he never made a secret of his desire for an alliance with Turkey. He admitted publicly that he wanted Greece to ‘cooperate [συμπράξει] with Turkey’ and that his aim was to pacify Macedonia not to claim Macedonia for Greece. Radical irredentists attacked him. Stephanos remarked that the same politician who wanted war to the end in 1897, now wanted to cooperate with the Sultan: ‘sometimes his frenzy [θερμούργια] takes him to the frontiers shotgun in hand to chase the Turks, and some other times a momentary political inspiration [takes him] to Constantinople to enchant the Sultan’.<sup>330</sup> Moreover, for radical irredentists – especially if they had a Tricoupist past – an alliance with Turkey was intrinsically dishonourable. According to the conspiracy theories we saw earlier, Turks collaborated with the Bulgarians to murder the Greeks: as Stephanos put it, ‘the Turks put on fire and burned to the ground the Greek Krushevo and murdered the Greeks by the dozen on the instigation of a Bulgarian priest’.<sup>331</sup> For many, collaboration with the Turks was out of the question.

Gryparis never answered Rallis’s first telegram. At midnight on the night of July 29 to July 30 (OS) Rallis sent a new telegram to Constantinople, where he explained to his ambassador that he had bypassed him. Rallis had contacted

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<sup>330</sup> Stephanos Dragoumis, *Macedonian Crisis III ...*, p. 15. Originally published in the *Acropolis* on 15/28 September 1903.

<sup>331</sup> Stephanos Dragoumis, *Macedonian Crisis III ...*, p. 16.

Sadreddin Bey, the Ottoman chargé d'affaires in Athens, and he had requested that the Ottomans gave weapons to the Patriarchists.<sup>332</sup>

Rallis gave three reasons to Gryparis (and Sadreddin Bey) for arming the Greeks. That he went to such length suggests that he expected his ambassador to try and put obstacles in the way of this policy. First, in line with what the newspapers and the consuls argued, Rallis thought that the revolutionaries had deliberately attacked the Greeks in Macedonia. Second, the Greeks were located far away from the main centres of the Turkish military operations and thus were more vulnerable to surprise attacks by the Bulgarians. Third, based on information he had received from Evgeneiadis, Rallis believed that the Ottoman administration in Macedonia was collapsing and was at any rate unable to protect the local Greeks: here again it is useful to bear in mind that in the first weeks, the Uprising seemed unstoppable. Rallis feared that unless the Greeks were armed, Bulgarians would take the whole of Macedonia.

Rallis believed that the main obstacle to his plans was the Turkish prejudice against arming Christians. But he thought he could overcome this difficulty for two reasons. The Uprising looked unstoppable, and the Turks would be willing to try anything that might improve their military situation. Second, he asked Gryparis to transmit to the Grand Vizier that, if the Patriarchist villages were left defenceless,

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<sup>332</sup> Rifaat Pasha, was out of office between 21 June/4 July and 25 September/8 October: the reason is unknown.

they would be forced to join the revolutionaries. Rallis was convinced that arming the Christian peasants was the only means the Turks had to contain the revolution.<sup>333</sup>

Gryparis answered him on 1/14 August. Rallis had asked him to contact the Grand Vizier, Mehmed Ferid Pasha, but Gryparis contacted instead the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tevfik Pasha. Tevfik cared little for regional alliances and disapproved of Rallis's proposals: distributing weapons to Christian peasants was out of the question. According to Tevfik, the Ottomans had not armed the Muslim peasants due to European pressure for the maintenance of order and avoidance of excesses; arming the Christians could cause diplomatic trouble and was certain to upset the Muslim peasants. Tevfik also showed no interest in a military understanding in Macedonia. He maintained the same stance, opposing any plans for a Greek-Turkish cooperation, until the Young Turks had him removed.

Tevfik believed that there was no reason for worry. He told Gryparis that 'vingt cinq bataillons des troupes ... se concentrent dans le vilayet de Monastir' and that the revolutionary chetas were no match for the Ottoman army. But, since the reports the consuls were sending to Rallis were much more alarming. Rallis continued his efforts to save Greek Macedonians.<sup>334</sup> He probably paid little

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<sup>333</sup> AYEC 1903.1.4, Rallis to Gryparis, Athens, 29 July/11 August 1903, number 798.

<sup>334</sup> AYEC 1.4, Gryparis to Rallis, Constantinople, 1/14 August 1903, number 810.

attention to the assurances of the Ambassador of the Ottoman Empire, Rifaat Pasha, assuming that the Ottoman was just covering up how desperate the situation really was. Nevertheless, it is clear that Rallis, just like O'Conor, had miscalculated and overestimated the strength of the revolutionaries.

After Tevfik's reply, Rallis focused on his communication with Sadreddin. Ottoman documents confirm Tevfik's indifference. The Ottoman Minister was opposed to Rallis's plans. Sadreddin avoided mentioning anything to Tevfik about a military cooperation of Greece and Turkey, and in general there is nothing in the Ottoman archives suggesting that such cooperation was ever considered by the Ottoman Foreign Ministry. Sadreddin transmitted to Tevfik Rallis's urges to strike hard against the revolutionaries ('il est le moment de frapper fort'), and also his suspicions about Russia<sup>335</sup> and Britain.<sup>336</sup> As it happens, it was he who saved Rallis's plans from an early failure: as in 1897, the Sultan proved more receptive to Greek-Turkish cooperation than was his Foreign Minister. It is therefore possible that Rallis and Sadreddin chose from the start to send their most controversial proposals directly to Abdul Hamid bypassing Tevfik – this conjecture explains the lack of any substantive reference to the policy of cooperation in the Turkish archives.

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<sup>335</sup> Sadreddin to Tevfik, Athens, 27 July/9 August 1903, ciphered telegram number 303, TMIA 809.

<sup>336</sup> Sadreddin to Tevfik, Athens, 5/18 September 1903, ciphered telegram number 403, TMIA 871.

By early August, Rallis and Sadreddin had reached a *quid pro quo*. Rallis informed Gryparis that if Turkey allowed for the creation of a ‘garde civique’ in the villages and occupied the crossing points on the frontier line with Bulgaria, he was willing to send a squadron of the Greek fleet to Salonica to support Turkey.<sup>337</sup> On 9/22 August, Rallis’s efforts bore fruit. Sadreddin informed him that Abdul Hamid had accepted his proposals. Rallis telegraphed to his ambassadors:

Chargé d’affaires Turquie ... m’a annoncé que S.M. le Sultan ayant décidé création deux bataillons composés exclusivement de Grecs et de Valaques [,] serait heureux si officiers Hellènes à partir de grade capitaine étaient autorisés à les commander...Il est bien entendu qu’officiers Hellènes soumettront leur démissions ou ils seraient envoyés en congé illimité.<sup>338</sup>

Rallis had also informed George: ‘S.M. le Roi désire savoir quand et comment mesure création deux bataillons Greek-Valaques se effectuera et quel est nombre officiers que S.M. le Sultan désire avoir’. George, it is clear, was in favour of the proposal.<sup>339</sup> Moreover, the fact that the Anglophile George agreed to such a plan shows the exasperation which Ilinden and the British support for the Bulgarian cause had caused to Athens.

Unlike the King, Gryparis was outraged with Rallis. On 10/23 August he sent a long telegram, which started with a tirade of orientalist stereotypes: ‘à mon avis la

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<sup>337</sup> AYEC 1903.1.4, Rallis to Gryparis, Athens, 3/16 August 1903, telegram number 834.

<sup>338</sup> AYEL 1903.1.1.2, Rallis to Metaxas, 9/22 August 1903, no number.

<sup>339</sup> AYEC 1903.1.4, Rallis to Gryparis, Athens, 10/23 August 1903, ciphered telegram number 890.

proposition est loin d'être sérieuse et je pense que le Sultan n'a aucune intention sincère de créer les régiments en question'. The promises for the battalions were 'dans l'esprit soupçonneux du Sultan à garantir la Turquie contre un retirement éventuel de la politique de la Grèce à son regard'. Turkey was trying to gain time in suppressing the Uprising and to guarantee that there would be no trouble on its southern frontier in the case of a war with Bulgaria. Ottomans, he asserted, could not be trusted. What was more, an alliance with an oriental despot – as many Europeans saw Abdul Hamid – would have destroyed any Greek pretensions to Europeanness and modernity.

Gryparis also questioned the value of an alliance with Turkey. Turkey was 'vaincue toujours même en vainquant' and the formation of battalions risked alienating Greece from the only allies who really mattered, the Powers. Despite all the disappointments, Gryparis saw no other option for Greece but to keep up the search for British friendship. In this way, Ilinden had brought to light deep divisions about the direction of foreign policy.<sup>340</sup>

This reply of Gryparis to Rallis is the last document relating to the Greek-Turkish *rapprochement*. Although Greek relations with the Ottoman Empire remained cordial while Rallis stayed in power, the formation of battalions was abandoned. Despite this failure, the idea of arming the villagers exercised a long-term

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<sup>340</sup> AYEC 1903.1.4, Gryparis to Rallis, Prinkipo, 10/23 August 1903, number 889, confidential.

fascination to the Ministry. If Greece was going to use violence in Macedonia, everyone agreed the most attractive option was not what the National Society did in 1897, but to arm the local population. Different people were attracted for different reasons to this idea: as we shall examine in ch. III, Ion planned fomenting Greek nationalism in Macedonia through a racial struggle against the Bulgarians; locals, such as priest Stavro, wanted weapons for personal security and for revenge against their enemies; diplomats preferred letting the locals do the dirty work since it would be easier to deny responsibility in case they were caught red handed. Moreover, using the locals is what SMARO did, and Ilinden now appeared to have demonstrated how successful this strategy was.

With regard to understanding the genesis of the policy of Macedonian Defence, it is however important to understand that what finally happened, i.e. the sending into Macedonia of hundreds of Cretans and Maniots led by Greek army officers, was at best a 'plan B'. 'Plan A' was the creation of local militia, and as we shall see in ch. IV, this plan was revitalised after the Young Turk Revolution. On the other hand, Rallis's attempted rapprochement with Turkey met with less approval. Deliyiannis entertained from time to time similar ideas but he never went as far as negotiating with the Sultan. And Theotokis, as a successor of the modernist Tricoupis, who prioritised good relations with Britain, never even considered such a cooperation.

This meant that despite the clash of Greek and British interests in Macedonia, Greece was unable to find an alternative to British influence.

Rallis had more serious trouble to face than the pressure from the consular staff: he was the head of a minority government that stayed in power only thanks to the support of the Deliyiannist MPs. But, by the end of 1903, Deliyiannis started thinking he would win the coming elections and so decided to speed them up by withdrawing his support from Rallis. Rallis indeed fell from power on 6/19 December, 1903, but he was replaced by Theotokis who thanks to concessions to his political enemies and the support of the King, managed to stay in power for a year.<sup>341</sup> As we shall see in the next chapter, the Theotokis administration opened a window of opportunity for the anti-reform camp, and they did not miss it. By April 1904 the preparations for the sending of more bands into Macedonia were under way.

Why did the Rallis initiative fail? First, Tevfik was better informed about what was going on in Macedonia; he understood that the revolutionaries were having a hard time, and thus, saw little point in accepting Rallis's helping hand. Greece's recent defeat reinforced the perception that it was not a useful ally. Second, diplomats on both sides worried that the Powers, and especially Britain, would oppose Greek-Turkish cooperation. Greeks knew that European liberals and socialists saw the

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<sup>341</sup> Aspreas, *Political history...*, ii, p. 34.

Ottoman Empire as a moral abomination and already had more sympathy for the Bulgarian revolutionaries than the conservative Greeks.<sup>342</sup> Third, Greek diplomats such as Gryparis saw the Sultan as untrustworthy and mischievous: an alliance with Turkey was in principle undesirable.

Still the negotiations were so advanced that it is surprising that nothing came of them. Moreover, we saw the same pattern repeat itself as had been the case in 1897: the two sides agreed on a *quid pro quo* but when everything seemed ready communication broke down, and negotiations stopped. We must look for an explanation at a deeper level. What Rallis and the Sultan wanted was a cooperation that would bring benefits to both countries: Greece would defend Macedonian Greeks, and Turkey would make sure that in a war with Bulgaria, Greece would not attack from the South. This way both countries would make gains. Nevertheless, for this optimal solution to materialise one of the two countries had to make the first step. The country which moved first risked the other's defection. Thus, if Rallis sent a squadron to Salonica, the Sultan could choose to stay inactive and make Rallis look like a fool. Similarly, if the Sultan signed the *iradé* for the formation of the two regiments, Rallis could stay inactive and make the Sultan look like a fool. Although no country would make material gains, the country that

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<sup>342</sup> Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: a modern history* [Greek translation: Σύγχρονη ιστορία της Τουρκίας] (Athens, 2004), pp. 128-29.

defected would have the satisfaction of making the other lose face without losing anything itself. Past experience between the two countries, especially the war of 1897 meant that trust between them was low. The perception that one would have to be desperate to make the first towards a traditional enemy reinforced the problem.

In conclusion, revolutionary violence in Macedonia led to the formation of a pro- and an anti-reform camp in the Ministry. Three factors were critical to the success of the latter: the initial successes of Ilinden, the favourable stance of Britain towards Bulgaria, and the emergence of radical irredentism after 1897. The victory of the consuls silenced the ambassadors: after the summer of 1903, the ambassadors had no say in the decisions about Macedonia. The consuls, however, did not get everything they wanted from Rallis: Rallis started the Defence but he wanted it to take place at the local level, with little participation of Greece, and in cooperation with Turkey.

Rallis had a unique approach to Greek-Turkish relations, unlike any other politician in the 1900s. Had he succeeded, he would have squared the circle of Greek foreign policy: Greece would have protected its interests inside Turkey against Bulgaria without being forced to become the satellite of a Great Power. As we shall see in ch. IV, Rallis did not give up trying. Nevertheless, despite his

continuous efforts, his approach was unlikely to succeed: without control of the parliament and on bad terms with the King, Rallis could not force Greece to make the show of good will towards Turkey that would have been necessary to convince Turkey that Greece was a credible ally.

With hindsight, we know that the idea with the most lasting effect was the distinction between official and unofficial policy. Following Ilinden Greek foreign policy was cut in two halves: at the official level, the ambassadors tried to modify the reforms in Greece's favour and to gain support for its plea regarding Macedonia. At the unofficial level, the consuls would undermine the reforms using violence largely following the dictates of radical irredentism. The two levels rarely overlapped: the ambassadors would never be fully informed about the extent of Greek activity in Macedonia and the consuls paid little attention to Greek diplomatic activity in Europe. As we will examine in the next chapter, whereas SMARO operated independently of and, at times, in opposition to the Bulgarian Government, in Greece the revolutionary committees would be set up from the start with Government involvement and money – this, however did not mean that the radical irredentists who manned the Greek committees had the same aims and motivations as the Theotokisist government. Their cooperation with the government was rather the outcome of Theotokis's willingness to negotiate with

them and also of their weakness, at least in comparison with their powerful and successful Bulgarian counterparts: Greek irredentists lacked the large support base that the Bulgarians had both in their home country and inside Macedonia. After Ilinden, this division of labour between official and unofficial (which also to an extent defined the zones of influence of the government and of the irredentists) was appealing, but soon enough it ran into trouble of its own.

### **3. THE MACEDONIAN DEFENCE: 1903-07**

#### **I. THE DRAGOUMISES AND THE MACEDONIAN DEFENCE**

In this chapter, we turn to the impact that a small group of friends (Ion and Stephanos Dragoumis, and Pavlos Melas) had on government policy. As we shall see, they did impact significantly on the actions of the government— many key decisions regarding the Macedonian Question would have been different without them. As we mentioned earlier, Stephanos virtually retired from mainstream Greek politics in the late nineteenth century, but came back with a series of newspaper articles in 1903. Despite his lengthy leave from centre stage Greek politics, Stephanos remained an influential figure: he was much respected among the irredentist circles of Athens, and he was also famous for his excellent knowledge of the Macedonian Question. This meant that the government, as well as his old rival for the leadership of the Tricoupists, Theotokis, could hardly ignore his opinion before taking action in Macedonia.

Whereas Stephanos was already a famous figure, Ion only rose to prominence during this period. Paradoxically for someone who became notorious for his spite against the Greek state and its functionaries, Ion gained fame thanks to his placement as secretary in the consulate of Monastir. He travelled widely in the

Monastir vilayet and developed a good network of informants there: he used his activities in Monastir to establish himself in Athens as someone who –unlike Greek politicians– knew Macedonia first hand. As we shall see, Ion had no inhibitions about opposing the official policy of the Ministry, and taking his own, often daring initiatives. But to do that, he needed the help of someone other than his father: it was Pavlos Melas, the husband of Ion's sister Natalia, who helped Ion more than anyone else with his conspiratorial plots. Melas is today remembered primarily as an army officer who was killed in Macedonia, but as we shall examine, he also excelled in lobbying and political intrigue.

What allowed the Dragoumises and Melas to have a significant influence on Greek foreign policy were the weaknesses of Greek state structure. Although Stephanos had no official role in the conduct of Greek policy he maintained excellent contacts inside the Ministry. It also appears that, despite their political disagreements, Theotokis was afraid of openly antagonising him as this could mean he would also have to confront the press and the irredentist milieu. Ion, on the other hand, used his position as secretary in Monastir to put obstacles on the implementation of government policy and to promote instead his own plans for Greek actions in Macedonia. Ion promoted a very partisan understanding of what went on in Macedonia, which openly clashed with the official version of the events.

Moreover, Ion dedicated as much energy in informing his father and his friends in Athens as he did in his official bureaucratic duties: this was only possible in a context where personal politics were stronger than bureaucratic discipline. Everything that Ion did in Monastir was with an eye to domestic politics— and he had indeed a keen eye for domestic politics: he often wrote articles on Macedonia for the press, and was in touch with many influential political and literary figures. Whereas Stephanos was seen as an expert, Ion gained reputation as a passionate intellectual.

In 1903, Ion read the articles of his father and he enthusiastically supported them. In particular, Ion agreed with his father's suspicion of the reforms: on 29 May/11 June 1903, he wrote to his aunt: 'je lis la brochure de papa; il y a des jugements très justes'.<sup>343</sup> He also agreed with his father that Turkey was weak and unable to defend itself, Bulgaria used violence in an efficient way, and Greece should imitate it.

His father's association with Tricoupis and his upper middle-class background made Ion part of the Tricoupist political world. But his mistrust of the state and his commitment to a broadly understood Greek nation added a Deliyannist aura in his writings – like Deliyannis, Ion thought that the nation came before the

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<sup>343</sup> Ion to his aunt Maria, May 29/11 June 1903, TID pp. 125-29. See also Ion to Stephanos, [Serres], October [1903], TID pp. 311-21.

government: ‘I do not work for the government, I work for Hellenism. I do not love the government, I love Hellenism’.<sup>344</sup> Thus Ion’s ideology combined a belief in modernity with a suspicion of the Greek state and its functionaries.

Ion presented himself as a solitary maverick who combined apparently irreconcilable opinions. In reality, however, he was not alone. Ion was the most striking spokesperson of the radical irredentists and the most well-known representative of their ideas. His provocative ideas caught public attention and later in his life Ion became a leading Greek intellectual. His charisma is testified by his lasting fame: whereas Theotokis and Zalokostas are now forgotten figures, Ion’s personality continues to attract scholarly and popular attention and his books remain in circulation.

Like most employees of the consulates, Ion studied law. In 1899, he passed the examinations for the Greek diplomatic service,<sup>345</sup> almost certainly at the suggestion of his father. Stephanos believed that Ion was destined for great things: ‘you are different from all the young people I have got to know during my long service.’<sup>346</sup>

Ion, however, was less pleased with his diplomatic career and often complained: ‘I often wish to abandon the consulates and the Ministries’; ‘had I had money, I

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<sup>344</sup> Notes entitled *My Hellenism: 1903-04*, written in March 1903, TID pp. 39-53, here 53.

<sup>345</sup> DRAI 10.1, curriculum vitae of Ion Dragoumis edited by his brother Filippos, 1927, no number.

<sup>346</sup> Stephanos to Yanni [Ion], Athens, 5/18 January 1904, TID, pp. 423-5.

would never have become a consular secretary'.<sup>347</sup> His talent lay more in writing, especially on irredentism and politics. In 1902-03, the young Ion decided to combine his career with his talents. He would use the secure employment and the experience in Macedonia that the Ministry offered him as a means to promote Greek irredentism.

Much of what he wrote was in line with the thought of other consular staff. His consular reports referred to Bulgarian violence and the failings of the Ottoman administration: 'the authorities ... sometimes allow the Bulgarian bands to escape and do not persecute those initiated in the committees, thus ridiculing the Turkish administration'.<sup>348</sup> But in his more personal writings – and Ion kept dozens of notebooks and diaries – he imagined himself leading an armed fight against the Bulgarians.

What business is it [= Macedonia] of foreigners? Turkey is not a state like the others in Europe (north), it is not well ordered, and any nation that wishes can make raids, and pillage and do inside it whatever it likes. It looks like the regions of the Roman state [κράτος] that were inhabited by barbarians. The barbarians there did whatever they liked. The Bulgarians are right to occupy [κατέχουν] Turkey with their bands, we shall also be right to make raids, and to try to fight the Bulgarians inside Turkey. I shall become *Roi des Montagnes* and settle there. Thus, the Greeks of these areas will get used to feeding and hiding me and considering me as something necessary, like it is necessary to pay taxes to

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<sup>347</sup> Ion to Stephanos, Athens, 9/22 May 1903, TID pp. 105-07.

<sup>348</sup> AYE 1903.50, Ion to Skouzes, Monastir, 17/30 April 1903, number 283.

Turkey. Racism [φυλετισμός] inside Turkey should not disappear. [...] What responsibility does Bulgaria and Greece have for what is going on inside Turkey? A great irony!<sup>349</sup>

For Ion, nothing less than a full-blown racial struggle could decide the Macedonian Question. In passages like the one cited above he used the stereotypes about barbarous Bulgarians, tricky Turks and honest Greeks to legitimate violence.

In the 1900s, Greeks were convinced of their superiority: stereotypes of this kind abounded. But Ion gave a new racist twist to Greek stereotypes, which reflected developments elsewhere in Europe. As a radical bourgeois who grew up in Athens and had little contact with the countryside, Ion found peasants to be dirty and primitive. He described the ‘Slav speakers’ as an inferior kind: ‘les autres paysans Slaves [i.e. the ones who are not actively supporting the revolution] sont des bêtes que les comités exploitent’.<sup>350</sup> In 1906, he wrote: ‘the Slav speakers shall be exploited by the strongest races, which are more political [πολιτικές] and smart [σβέλτες] than them, the Greeks, the Bulgarians, the Serbians’.<sup>351</sup> Racism for Ion was a vehicle for action and voluntarism: Greeks would prove that they were superior to the Bulgarians only if they outperformed them in the use of violence. He did not think better of the Turks. Ion saw the conflict in Macedonia in apocalyptic terms as a struggle that would decide the future of Greece: would

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<sup>349</sup> DRAI 3.2, notebook entitled *Macedonia-Thrace: 1902-1908*.

<sup>350</sup> Notes by Ion under the title ‘une insurrection de commande’, probably written in March 1903, TID pp. 33-7.

<sup>351</sup> Notes by Ion entitled ‘Slav-speaking villagers’, written in 1906, TID pp. 447.

Greece remain a small Balkan country or could it rise up to the occasion and become the dominant force in the Balkans?<sup>352</sup> Moreover, Dragoumis thought that Macedonia, far from being an issue for diplomats and military officers, was something that should preoccupy all of the Greek people: Macedonia was about the identity of the nation, and about Greeks proving their self-worth. Greek irredentism was abandoning its earlier liberal tone and was becoming anti-elitist and violent.

Language was another vehicle through which Ion expressed his radical irredentism. True, his consular reports were written in impeccable *katharevousa*. But in his private correspondence and in his newspaper articles Ion used the demotic. Language assumed so much significance that it became a matter of dispute between Ion and his circle. Ion wrote to Melas in February 1903 that ‘I am sorry that you dislike the demotic and you are annoyed when you see it written.’ In the same letter, Ion explained that ‘to my family I rarely write in any language other than French, and I do this precisely because they are bothered by my language.’<sup>353</sup>

It was especially between father and son that language became a bone of contention. In June, Ion returned to the same topic with irony: ‘after having

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<sup>352</sup> See also Karavas, *Blessed those who possess the land: landowning plans for the expropriation of consciences in Macedonia* (in Greek) (Athens, 2010), pp. 158-71.

<sup>353</sup> Ion to Melas, [Monastir], 27 February/12 March [1903], TID pp. 27-9.

translated my letter into ancient Greek you might as well hand it to dad to read it'.<sup>354</sup>

It is difficult today to understand the passionate debates over language in the 1900s. In the Gospel Riots of November 1901 there were wild protests by the students of the University of Athens in defence of *katharevousa*: eleven people gave their lives to stop the Bible from being translated into Modern Greek. For many contemporary Greeks, the demotic was a denigration of the status of Greek culture, a surrender to the enemies of Hellenism, especially the Orthodox others, the Russians, who apart from supporting Bulgaria in Macedonia, were also trying to undermine the connection between Orthodoxy and Greek culture. We saw in ch. I that many among the intellectuals of the generation of 1897 embraced the demotic as the means to national regeneration, but we should also bear in mind that many young students still believed that *katharevousa* constituted the cornerstone of Greek culture.

Ion scorned such claims. He saw *katharevousa* as an artificial, affected and poor language. He thought that it made Greeks worship the past rather than being proud for their present identity and culture. Macedonia was the catalyst to Ion's thought: Ion suggested that it made no sense to try to convert to Greek nationalism the poor and uneducated peasants of Macedonia through the means of a rigid and archaic

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<sup>354</sup> Ion to Melas, no place, 24 June/7 July 1903, TID p. 163.

language. On 28 October/10 November 1903, Ion received a letter from a young girl from Serres, who called him her protector and asked for financial support. The girl claimed that otherwise she would be forced to attend the ‘Vlach’, i.e. Romanian, school. For a twenty-first century reader, the request of the young student to receive money in order to maintain her Greek national identity highlights how intertwined nationality was with practical issues such as money and education in early twentieth-century Macedonia. But what attracted the attention of Ion was something different: the young girl wrote in a straightforward and powerful demotic which however contained many spelling errors. Ion was delighted, and he noted on the letter that ‘my young protégée is the smartest girl and does not attend the Vlach school (*δεν πηγένει εις το Βλάχηκον Σχολίον*, i.e. he highlighted her spelling errors). Was there a better proof that national identity was not a matter of form and rules but of the heart?<sup>355</sup> Ion’s comments confirm Theodoros Papakonstantinou’s observation that social and linguistic radicalism in Greece was a development on the fringes of radical irredentism. Early socialist ideas and the demotic were both seen as means for modernising the nation and

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<sup>355</sup> Ion’s annotation to Thaleia Konstantinou’s letter written in Monastir, 28 October/10 November 1903, see Thaleia Konstantinou to Ion, Serres (no date), TID p. 363.

preparing for its territorial expansion.<sup>356</sup> In the 1900s, religion, language, and irredentism with a focus on Macedonia created an explosive mixture.<sup>357</sup>

Ion was worried that Greece was losing the war of ideas. Socialists such as Karev had a clear programme: land redistribution, equality before the law, and a less burdensome taxation system, whereas the Greek nationalists promised vaguely a more prosperous life in a Greater Greece. Despite his dislike of peasants Ion was attracted to what Canovan calls peasant populism: he dreamt of a grassroots peasant movement which would favour small property. As Chairman of the irredentist society Hellenism, Kazazis, conveyed a similar anxiety when he said in 1905 ‘the great latifundia always bring great moral and economic damage. Land and freedom. This is what the villager asks for’. This egalitarian rhetoric is often ignored when discussing the development of Greek nationalism and the alleged lack of socialist thought in early twentieth century Greece. But Macedonia played an important role in inserting quasi-socialist elements into Greek irredentist rhetoric. In language and in social reform, the need to appeal to the peasants of Macedonia prompted ideological change.<sup>358</sup>

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<sup>356</sup> Unfortunately Papakonstantinou makes only a passing remark. Theodoros G. Papakonstantinou, *Contributions to the educational history of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries* (in Greek) (Athens, 2001 [1994]), pp. 214-18.

<sup>357</sup> Efi Gazi, *Fatherland, religion, family: the history of a slogan: 1880-1930* (in Greek) (Athens, 2011), pp. 78-100.

<sup>358</sup> ‘Arrangement of the future activity of the (Centralist) Committee, 1903’ (in Greek) document originally from AYE, TID pp. 524-31, here 529; Fikret Adanir, ‘The national question and the genesis and development of socialism in the Ottoman Empire: the case of Macedonia’, in Mete Tunkay and Eric Zürcher (eds.), *Socialism and Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire* (London, 1994), pp. 27- 48, here *passim*; Nikos Potamianos, ‘Radical right and the agrarian

The Dragoumises, both father and son, had closer contacts with the government than their inflammatory denunciations of its foreign policy might suggest. We saw in ch. II Ion's efforts to influence the Ministry, and Stephanos's suggestions of a new foreign policy in the pages of *Macedonian Crisis*. Nevertheless, such efforts formed only part of their policy. Through an examination of Ion's private correspondence, and especially his correspondence with Melas on the Macedonian Question, which started in January 1903, we can see how there was no clear distinction between official and unofficial policies towards Macedonia. Ion and Melas discussed at length in their correspondence how to get the government's support, and especially its money, for the purpose of using violence to fight back Bulgaria in Macedonia. As we shall see, the underground efforts of the Dragoumises and Melas culminated in an agreement with the government which involved the participation of the Ministry in the policy of Macedonian Defence. What this suggests is that the emergence of the Macedonian Defence was a complex phenomenon involving lobbying within and outside the Foreign Ministry as well as the influence of the irredentist *milieux* of Athens.

Ion's correspondence can be divided into two parts. In the first period between January and June 1903, he corresponded principally with Melas. He sent Melas

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question in the early twentieth century', *Mnemon*, 26 (2004), pp. 135-56, here 143-48; Georgios B. Leontaritis, *The Greek socialist movement in the First World War* (Greek translation) (Athens, 1978 [1976]), pp. 17-31; Kazazis quoted from his article 'Greece and Hellenism', *Hellenism*, February 1905, p. 90.

eighteen letters, whereas he sent his father only two. Indeed, from time to time the relations between Ion and Stephanos experienced tension. Then followed an interim period in the summer of 1903, when everybody's thought was dominated by Ilinden. Ion, Stephanos and Melas returned to their conspiratorial plans only in October 1903. In this second period (October 1903-April 1904) Ion wrote fifteen letters to Melas and thirteen to his father. As we shall see, Ion had by then disagreements with Melas over the aims of their conspiracy.

From the beginning the Dragoumises and Melas received government help. When Ion arrived to Monastir in 1902, the government started sending money to help him recruit people to the Greek cause. He and his friends were allowed to use the Ministry's mail service for their private correspondence and for this reason they invented their secret code. But Ion wanted much more. Between January and February 1903, Ion tried to recruit Melas to his cause. In his first letter, on 23 January/5 February 1903 Ion praised Melas, 'I turn to you because you are the best patriot I have ever seen in Greece'. They would work at two levels: 'work here', in Monastir, and 'work in Greece'. They would need weapons and as much money as they could get: Ion asked from Melas to get in touch with Kazazis's 'Hellenism', 'The association for the dissemination of the Greek culture', an irredentist society founded by the historian Paparrigopoulos in the 1880s, and the

National Society. He also mentioned the name of Louise Riencourt, a wealthy French countess, who lived in Athens and frequented its irredentist *milieux*.

Ion suggested that a 'journalistic war' should start in Europe. He said that among others Ion's sister and Melas's wife, Natalia, Demetrios Vikelas, the first Chairman of the International Olympic Committee, and the French nationalist writer and political figure Maurice Barrès, could partake in it. He also attacked *The Times* correspondent B. [=James Bouchier]: 'tell him that he is a rascal and does not defend our interests in *The Times*'. This journalistic war continued to preoccupy Ion and his father for several years, but lies outside the scope of this thesis. Two points are, however, worth making. First, Ion thought that the French press was more fertile for Greek propaganda than the British one. The disappointment of Greek irredentists with *The Times*, in particular, would continue at least until 1908. We shall see later that Kaklamanos, Chairman of the Press Office, likewise praised the French news agency Havas. Second, Ion, despite his distrust of Athenian politics, often thought on lines similar to the Ministry, which, as we have examined, had also launched its own journalistic war.

Melas did not reply to this first letter, and Ion wrote again to him on 1/14 February. Money was by then a pressing concern: 'I hope you will send me money, as I requested, because I have almost ran out. And no one can survive in this world

without money'. Ion left no traces in his archives and notes of how he spent the money. He persistently asked for money, but rarely explained to Melas for what purpose. This would later become a cause of friction between the two friends.<sup>359</sup>

Melas sent some money, but did not break his silence. On 6/19 February, Ion sent a new letter. He vaguely explained that 'l'argent que tu m'as envoyé a servi pour continuer provisoirement la défense des villages de Kastoria', i.e. the bands of Karavangelis. In the same letter, Ion expressed his anxiety to get in touch with the National Society. Ion knew that the National Society had been formally dissolved; but he also knew that its members kept in touch and planned to continue their activities. Many members of the Society soon entered the Marksman Club [Σκοπευτικός Σύνδεσμος], together with the Society's financial reserves, and continued from there their activities.<sup>360</sup> He hoped that by contacting them he could get the money to continue his plans without depending on the government: 'si la E.E. [=National Society] existe, quelqu'un devrait venir ici pour s'entendre avec nous'. But in case the society proved not to be interested, Ion was ready to set up a new one. Such a society would 'elect MPs who would think differently...; connect domestic activities with external ones [i.e. activities in Macedonia]; come in touch... with all the Christians [in Turkey]; elevate the army; raise children who

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<sup>359</sup> Ion to Melas, Monastir, 1/14 February 1903, p. 15.

<sup>360</sup> Gianouloupoulos, *Our noble ...*, pp. 176-79.

love Greece'.<sup>361</sup> Ion was not alone in thinking this way: the concept of a union between army and people [*στρατολαός*], which would combine its forces against the King and the corrupt politicians, was quite common in nineteenth-century Athens, and it was such an alliance that terminated the reign of Otto in October 1862.<sup>362</sup>

This time Melas did answer, but his letter does not survive in the archival record. We know, however, that Ion preferred not to discuss with his father his radical plans, and hoped to initiate Melas into more controversial intellectual ventures. Ion felt encouraged that at last there was someone in Athens he could rely on.

Ion wrote again to Melas on 27 February/13 January. He gave further details as to how he imagined the two levels of irredentist activity he had mentioned in his first letter. There should be two centres directing irredentist action: one in Athens and another in Monastir. The Society would hopefully provide the former, whereas Ion would set up the latter. The Monastir centre would be by far the most important. As he put it in his notes: 'why should they [=the Macedonian Greeks] only expect freedom with Greece's help? They too should work, as if Greece did not exist'.<sup>363</sup>

This bottom-up nationalism was also in accordance with Ion's belief that nations are living organisms fighting for survival: Ion compared the nation to a living

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<sup>361</sup> Notes entitled 'My Hellenism 1903-1904' from Ion's diary, TID pp. 39-53, here 49.

<sup>362</sup> Dimitris Fotiadis, *Otto: the dethronement* (in Greek) (Athens, 1982), pp. 398-99.

<sup>363</sup> Notes entitled 'My Hellenism 1903-1904' from Ion's diary, TID pp. 39-53, here 43.

plant, which, despite growing in a hostile environment, continues to grow thanks to the guidance provided by its healthy inner instincts.<sup>364</sup> The Athenian state was corrupt and if it assumed control of the operations it would also corrupt the purer Macedonian Greeks: in Ion's mind, Macedonian Greeks were purer precisely because they were not under the influence of the Greek state.

Indeed, Ion was increasingly worried that Athens would overshadow Monastir, transplanting its weaknesses and corruption to Macedonia, the place that would prepare the rebirth of Hellenism. For Ion, however, it was not the Greeks of the Kingdom who would save their 'enslaved brethren' by liberating their land; it was rather the 'enslaved' Greeks who would save the supposedly free ones by liberating their souls from the pettiness of the Greek state and show them how to be *real* Greeks.

For Ion Macedonian Greeks were pure because they were free from the petty interests of the Greek state and its bureaucracy. Like his father who tried to set up an alternative Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ion attempted to set up an alternative Greece inside Macedonia, or in his words 'a river of Hellenism'.<sup>365</sup> As Ion put it in

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<sup>364</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>365</sup> Notes entitled 'My Hellenism 1903-1904' from Ion's diary, TID pp. 39-53, here 47.

a letter to Melas of 29 April/12 May 1903, '[our effort must appear] as much as possible indigenous and as little Greek [i.e. of the Greek kingdom]'.<sup>366</sup>

Ion's thought was in line with what Elli Skopetea has termed the 'endemic self-flagellation' of Greek irredentists of the early twentieth century. Greek nationalists saw themselves as a 'chosen people', a unique nation with a mission assigned by God or – for agnostics such as Ion – Fate to liberate a community of enslaved brethren. In the end, despite all its mistakes, Greece would vindicate its mission. Thus, the failings of the irredentists were part of a providential design, in which Greece played the central role. Greek nationalists were not unique in this mixture of a *terra irredenta*, religion and a historical mission. Such ideas of a particular historical destiny were of course common to many nationalisms in Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century. But in Greece they acquired a particular strength from the sense that the rebirth of the Greek nation in the nineteenth century had not fulfilled its historical mission: Greece needed to be re-born again. Such ideas were of course a familiar trope of subsequent fascist rhetoric in Europe.<sup>367</sup>

Ion was fascinated by the prospects he perceived for nationalism in Macedonia: if Monastir became the centre of Greek action in Macedonia, then he would be very

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<sup>366</sup> Ion to Melas, [no place], 29 April/12 May 1903, TID p. 89.

<sup>367</sup> Roger Griffin, *The nature of fascism* (London, 1991), pp. 26-55.

well placed to direct its activity. He wanted a close co-operation with Greek paramilitary organisations and irredentist networks, but Macedonia and Macedonians should retain a primacy in the decision-making process. The model would be provided by the Kastoria band that already existed: funded with Greek money but manned by Macedonian Greeks and acting according to local priorities. And finally, Ion like his father, criticised Greek foreign policy for being too friendly towards the Turks and too subservient towards the Powers. These would remain the main axes of Ion's thought about Macedonia until the death of Melas in October 1904.

By February 1903, a shadow had appeared in the relation of the two friends. Ion saw in Melas his confidant, to whom he would reveal the radical plans that he kept hidden from his father. But this would never happen. The first recipient of Ion's letter was not Melas, but his wife and Ion's sister, Natalia, who circulated the letter not only to Stephanos, but to the whole family, in spite of Ion's explicit warnings to the contrary. Ion was exasperated: 'why did she show my letter? I did not want her to do so. I will never again write freely if she circulates my letters to everybody'. But his complaints were to no avail. From this point on Ion wrote knowing that Natalia showed his letters to the family, and on occasions to wider irredentist circles. As we shall see, this did not moderate the radical tone of his

letters, and his father, although he probably disapproved of many of Ion's ideas, was in the end pleased with the course of action that his son had chosen.<sup>368</sup> But Natalia's initiative did cool Ion's friendship with Melas.

Ion's actions brought results in the two following months. Melas investigated how to purchase weapons, despite an official ban on such purchases,<sup>369</sup> and came up with the idea of a secret arsenal near the frontier.<sup>370</sup> He also contacted some Cretans willing to cross the frontier and form a new band,<sup>371</sup> and Riencourt promised him a generous financial support of three thousand francs in addition to a monthly stipend for Ion.<sup>372</sup> Following March 1903, the Greek Orthodox Bishop of Kastoria, Karavangelis, became one of their frequent correspondents, and he was recruited to the conspiracy.<sup>373</sup> But Melas did not hide his hope of forging an understanding between their group and the Greek state: Melas through his father's role in the National Society must have understood how important government support is for irredentist ventures. Ion and Melas, therefore, reacted very differently to the question of government involvement to their plans.<sup>374</sup>

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<sup>368</sup> For the last three paragraphs, see DRAI AI, Ion Dragoumis to Pavlos Melas, [Monastir], 27 February/13 January [1903], number 2.

<sup>369</sup> Melas to Ion, [Athens], 23 March/5 April 1903, TID p. 61.

<sup>370</sup> Melas to Ion, [Athens], 29 March/11 April 1903, TID p. 67.

<sup>371</sup> Ibid.

<sup>372</sup> Melas to Ion, [Athens], 23 March/5 April 1903, TID p. 61.

<sup>373</sup> Melas to Ion, [Athens], 29 March/11 April 1903, TID p. 67.

<sup>374</sup> Melas to Ion, [Athens], 23 March/5 April 1903, TID p. 61.

Ion wanted his cooperation with the government to take place on *his* terms. Moreover, had the cooperation failed, he was prepared to work on his own. Thus, Ion continued being bitter about the Ministry and its policies. As he wrote ironically on 24 June/7 July 1903, ‘the intellectuals of the Ministry cannot understand’ such ideas. Ion thought that official foreign policy ‘did not help the Greeks at all’: the Turks continued persecuting the Greek Macedonians, whereas the peasants turned to the more decisive Bulgarians. It is important to remember here that these accusations were addressed not against Rallis, who only came to power four days after Ion wrote the words cited above, but against the Theotokis administration, which was anything but pro-Ottoman. Ion mistrusted equally the Great Powers: ‘from no country in Europe should we expect help’. Unlike consul general in Sofia, Zalokostas, Ion felt proud of isolation: ‘I am excited by the idea that everyone hates us in the East. This means we are a great nation [γένος]’.<sup>375</sup>

By 23 May/8 June 1903 Ion wanted to stop any further involvement of Athens with Macedonia. But Melas had already arranged for a number of Cretans to cross the frontier and reinforce Karavangelis’s bands. Ion was not impressed: ‘do not form more bands’. Firstly, he was worried that it would be difficult to support the bands financially: ‘we do not have infinite amounts of money’. Secondly, Ion was also

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<sup>375</sup> For Greece’s isolation see Konstantinos Svolopoulos, *Greek foreign policy: 1900-45* (in Greek) (Athens, 1992), pp. 15-37; Eleni Chourmouzi, HXIV pp. 171-74. Ion’s quote is from Ion to Melas, [no place], 24 June/7 July 1903, TID pp. 159-63.

concerned that the Bulgarians would put an end to his plans: ‘do not provoke the Bulgarians too much’. Ion was also displeased that the bands were formed of Cretans and not of local Macedonians, and were organised in Athens not in Monastir.

Ion did not voice openly this last objection. In his letters in January and February he had promised to set up quickly a powerful network inside Macedonia, but three months had passed and Ion could show little progress. He remained silent on the matter. The only account we have of his ‘Comité Macédonien’ comes from Turkish sources. It is thanks to the Ottoman Ambassador in Athens, Rifaat that we know that indeed the remnants of the Society refused to participate to Ion’s plans: ‘je connais plusieurs personnages marquants qui faisaient partie de la défunte “Ethniki Etéria” et qui ont refusé catégoriquement d’accorder leur concours à ce “Comité Macédonien”’. According to Rifaat, Ion’s network ‘n’est point dangereux n’ayant ni l’intention d’aller troubler la tranquillité de nos provinces ni les moyens de le faire’. He concluded that the network was the product of ‘gens oisifs ou ambitieux qui se lancent dans la politique militante’ and it would soon disappear.

In retrospect, Rifaat appears to have been complacent and overoptimistic. One year after he wrote this report, Melas would make his first trip in Macedonia with the support of Ion’s network. Indeed, until the death of Melas in October 1904,

Ottoman diplomats paid far too little attention to preparations for the Defence. But Rifaat's opinion was not unfounded: although Theotokis – and Tevfik – were against a Greek-Turkish alliance, Ilinden and fear of Bulgaria had brought Greek diplomats close to their Ottoman colleagues. Moreover, his negative assessment of Ion's network was close to reality: it was only in late 1904, when – despite Ion's protests – the Government and the Ministry started using their resources, that Ion's efforts bore fruit.<sup>376</sup>

Ion was indeed in difficulty. His early appraisals that local Macedonians were ready and eager to join the Greek cause, even without the involvement of the Government, were over-optimistic. Moreover, he remained cryptic about the use of the money he was getting. He explained vaguely that they were used for the bands, but never gave details. Ion had received large sums of money but showed no tangible results. Around May 1903, Melas got fed up and started claiming the leading role from Ion and making plans for further involvement of the government.<sup>377</sup>

In the meantime, however, Melas was faced with more practical problems: Ion kept writing to him to tell him that he had to collect money, smuggle weapons, and organise support for the cause. Melas complained that Ion's directions were too

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<sup>376</sup> Rifaat to Tevfik, Athens, 21 February/6 March 1903, number 5589/86, TMIA number 563.

<sup>377</sup> DRAI AI, [Monastir], May 23, 1903, Ion Dragoumis to Pavlos Melas, number 16. Also reproduced in TID pp. 111-13.

vague. On April 12/ 25 Melas complained to Ion: ‘when you write you have to be clearer; you say for instance that you need men, but you do not say how many and for what kind of work’.<sup>378</sup> Similarly, on 26 April/ 9 May, Melas asked ‘if you may and if it is possible, explain to me briefly what are you and Karavangelis doing, and also what are your plans and hopes’. Ion set ambitious targets, but was rarely specific about how he would acquire the means of achieving them.<sup>379</sup>

The misunderstandings soon led to mistakes. In April 1903, Melas sent to Macedonia a Maniot named Giorgos Papadeas, ‘a very loyal and intelligent man’. When Melas informed him, Ion answered coldly on 29 April/12 May that ‘Papadeas arrived..., although I did not ask for him... I will send him back since he cannot be useful here. Do not send anybody else’. Melas noted on the letter he received from Ion: ‘Yannis [=Ion] does not need him. There was a terrible misunderstanding... I am desperate’. Ion similarly rejected Melas’s suggestions to smuggle two hundred weapons to Karavangelis. This was the first serious disagreement between the two friends.<sup>380</sup>

In reading the letters of Melas, it is hard not to feel sympathy for him. He sincerely tried to follow the instructions of his brother in law, and indeed, Ion had clearly told him in earlier letters that he wanted men and weapons. Melas took an initiative

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<sup>378</sup> Melas to Ion, Athens, 12/25 April 1903, TID p. 79.

<sup>379</sup> Melas to Ion, [Athens], 26 April/ 9 May 1903, TID p. 87.

<sup>380</sup> Ion to Melas, [no place], 29 April/12 May 1903, TID p. 89.

in sending Papadeas only after he had exhausted all other alternatives. If Melas failed at something, it was at understanding the ideological motivations of his friend. Ion wanted to foment a revolution in Macedonia, and not to set up a defensive network of the kind that Melas, Rallis, and many other contemporaries were planning. Misunderstanding made the two friends drift apart. By late April 1903, Melas, despite his admiration for his intellectually gifted friend, concluded that at times he would have to ignore Ion's suggestions and make his own decisions.<sup>381</sup>

Ion's achievements were important for future Greek activities. He helped Karavangelis and his bands, gained the favour of elements of the local population, and set up a support and information network in the Monastir vilayet. But all this mattered little during Ilinden. When the Uprising broke out, Ion feared that it would mark the end of his plans. His concern was now *quickly* to convince the Ministry to follow his ideas, and to record as much information as possible about the events. He had little time for anything else. Between late June and October 1903 Ion wrote rarely to Stephanos and Melas.

As the revolutionaries were stepping up their activities, Ion started recruiting dissatisfied villagers to the Greek cause: 'the inhabitants...wish for a quick solution of the Macedonian Question, because the condition of the Ottoman state is

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<sup>381</sup> Melas to Ion, [Athens], 26 April/9 May 1903, TID p. 87; Ion to Melas, 30 April/13 May 1903, p. 91.

a burden for them, and the effects of the Bulgarian movements ... are hurting them too. They complained that no one from Greece ever visits them...'.<sup>382</sup> In early 1903, Pezas, consul in Monastir, was physically exhausted and asked to be recalled to Athens. He was replaced by Konstantinos Kypraios. Kypraios worried that Ion's trips in the turbulent countryside could lead to Ion's death or kidnapping and tried to restrain him. Ion was outraged. On 9/22 May Ion wrote to his father: 'Mr Kypraios has put me under police surveillance; until now I was hiding only from the Turks, the Bulgarians, the Austrians, and the other strangers; now I also have to hide from the Greeks'.<sup>383</sup> On 21 August/3 September, he complained again: 'the consul is a petty man, and of course he does not rise up to the occasion, despicable, weak, insignificant, dishonest'.<sup>384</sup> An intervention by Dimitrios Panas, an employee of the Ministry, to calm down Ion was to no avail: to Panas's comment that 'only some hotheads complain about Kypraios', Ion replied: 'I think the situation complains louder than the hotheads'.<sup>385</sup> Ion had already been moved to the consulate of Serres at his own request. His continued complaints would contribute to Kypraios's removal in 1904.<sup>386</sup>

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<sup>382</sup> Ion to Kypraios, Monastir, 19 August/1 September 1903, TID pp. 235-51, here 235-37.

<sup>383</sup> Ion to Stephanos, [Monastir], 9/22 May 1903, TID pp. 105-07.

<sup>384</sup> Ion to Stephanos, Monastir, 21 August/3 September 1903, TID pp. 249-51. The last phrase is from Matthew 23:27. 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.'

<sup>385</sup> Ion to Stephanos, Serres, 9/22 November 1903, TID pp. 377-78.

<sup>386</sup> Ion to Stephanos, [no place], 18/31 December 1903, TID pp. 397-405.

The relations of Ion with the Ministry would remain difficult, but by July 1903 Ion had reached a first formulation of Greece's 'unofficial policy' in Macedonia. Any idea that the Ottoman Empire was a sovereign state protected by international law was dismissed. Greece, he believed, should set up networks inside Macedonia for information and military purposes; these would serve to create a movement parallel but hostile to the Bulgarian one. As for the operation of the Greek bands, a template had already been set in the vilayet of Monastir: local Macedonians provided information and men; the Metropolitan of Kastoria used the institutions and prestige of the Church to influence his flock and to negotiate with the Turkish officials; and the consulate provided money, guidance, and increasingly since 1903 experienced soldiers from Greece – especially Mani – and Crete. This tripartite cooperation, albeit with local variations, would later spread to the vilayets of remaining regions of Macedonia.

In October, the announcement of reforms and his father's articles rekindled his correspondence with his family in Athens. On 19 September/2 October the Powers presented a new reform plan that would replace the Vienna plan we examined briefly in ch. II. The Muerzsteg plan, as it would be called, was similar to the Vienna reforms: both reform schemes aimed in pacifying the region and improving the social condition of the Christians. The main difference was that the Muerzsteg

scheme stipulated the attachment of an Austrian and Russian civil agent to the Ottoman ‘Inspector General’<sup>387</sup>: the Powers wanted to be as involved as possible with the minutiae of the administration of Macedonia. On 11/24 November 1903 the Sultan accepted the plan and its implementation began.<sup>388</sup> Ion influenced by his father, had no optimism regarding these reforms, and focused instead on the continued violence in the region.<sup>389</sup> The prospect of further European involvement certainly worried him, because as a radical irredentist, Ion suspected the Powers promoted Bulgaria.

In response to the shock of Ilinden and the renewed initiative of the Powers, Ion resumed his conspiratorial plans. In this second period, Ion’s letters to Melas were less cordial. The early laudatory references to Melas’s patriotism were gone, and Ion was more insistent than ever about money: ‘you did not tell me whether I shall have money or not. For many petty tasks I must (how many times have I told you!) *always* have money’.<sup>390</sup> The first letter of the second period, on 20 October/3 November, was more radical than ever: ‘vous devez être prêts pour faire le πραξικόπημα [=coup d’état] qui doit se faire’. Ion returned to the idea of *στρατολαός*: an alliance of the ‘intelligent’ among the Greek – meaning the radical

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<sup>387</sup> Dakin, *The Greek Struggle...*, p. 114.

<sup>388</sup> Paximadopoulou, *The diplomacy ...*, pp. 120-21 and 140-42.

<sup>389</sup> See Ion’s diary entries for 8/21 October 1903, TID p. 318, 9/22 October 1903, TID p. 322 11/24 October 1903, TID p. 326.

<sup>390</sup> Melas to Ion, 6/19 December 1903, TID 391. See also Ion to Melas, 11/24 March 1904, TID pp. 451-53.

irredentists – with the army against the Government and the King. As we shall see in ch. IV, an alliance was indeed forged after 1907 between dissatisfied Tricoupists, the urban poor and the army. Ion rejected all political parties: ‘nous sommes enfoncés dans une bourbe dégoûtante de parlementarisme. On n’en sort pas par des demi-mesures’.<sup>391</sup>

His radical suggestions were of little practical value. Ion’s talk about a *coup d’état* came out of the blue. He had on many occasions expressed his dislike of parliamentary politics, but he had never talked of violence against the Greek government. And of course, neither he nor the other conspirators had made the necessary preparations. Ion must have known that their team did not have the connections in the army and the political world that would have made a *coup d’état* possible. Ion himself did not have anything concrete to suggest: the only explicit suggestion he made to Melas was to inform General Timoleon Vassos, who by any measure was loyal to the existing political system. Ion must have known that most probably Melas and certainly his father would have disapproved of such a plan. Despite his criticisms of Greek politics, Stephanos respected Greek political institutions, had served as a judge, and emphasised in public statements his respect

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<sup>391</sup> Ion to Melas, [no place], 20 October/3 November 1903, TID pp. 333-37.

for the law. Stephanos wanted to reform the Greek state not to topple the government with violence.<sup>392</sup>

Therefore, Ion's talk of a *coup d'état* should not be taken literally. He hinted that his letter had an exaggerated tone due to his bad temper: 'le temps est gris, humide et je suis comme lui'. He also sensed that Melas would not welcome his suggestions: 'Est-ce que tu répondras à toutes mes lettres? Ou à quelques unes au moins? Et à celle-ci?'

What did Ion then try to achieve through his aggressive language? The tone of the letter was probably related to his shock from Ilinden and the disappointment with his projects. By October 1903, Ion must have come to grips with the fact that Athens would have the upper hand over his weak Monastir network. If he insisted on working alone with the support of a few friends and irredentist societies in Athens, he would get nowhere. So, we should not think of the Macedonian Defence as a project that a group of individuals imposed on an unwilling and inactive government. Irredentists like Ion, despite their enthusiasm, social connections and the financial backing they got from individuals such as Riencourt, would have been unable to coordinate the movement of hundreds of paramilitaries in the European provinces of Turkey. They tried it and they failed, or, to be more

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<sup>392</sup> Stephanos Dragoumis, *Macedonian Crisis II...*, p. 48.

precise, they failed even to *begin* realising their projects.<sup>393</sup> As Ion wrote melancholically to Melas on 5/18 October ‘in order to have regular agents inside the country [=Macedonia] we must have in our service men who will be paid regularly to do this job and have no other job’. This kind of professional dedication was impossible within the confines of informal groups and irredentist societies.<sup>394</sup>

As Ion realised that he was trapped and he had no other option than to turn to the government, he made one last if vain attempt to escape from becoming a pawn in the hands of the Ministry. The talk of a *coup d'état* was the expression of his frustration over the failures of the last year and of his anger against the government. But it was not devoid of ideological content. Ion had indeed by this time become a committed enemy not only of the Ministry but also of the parliament, which he held responsible for the lack of an assertive foreign policy. Like other irredentists, he accused Athenian politicians of being more interested in collecting votes than in caring for the interests of Greece. Despite not being a Christian or a believer in a traditional morality of any sort, Ion was moving towards the ideology that Markku Ruotsila calls ‘paternalist conservatism’: a combination of a sense of duty and of an idealisation of the community with

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<sup>393</sup> Cf. Konstantinos Vakalopoulos, *The Macedonian Question: genesis, formation, evolution, solution*, (2 vols., Salonica, 1989), i, pp. 213-15.

<sup>394</sup> Ion to Melas, Serres, 5/19 October 1903, TID pp. 305-11.

nationalism.<sup>395</sup> Of course Ion's conservatism had a strong idiosyncratic element in that his idealised community was not the contemporary Greek society, or a 'golden era' of the Greek past, but rather a province of the Ottoman Empire. This mixture of anti-parliamentarism with a nationalism centred around Macedonia would later on become a powerful ideological current. In the following years many more would join the tide, eventually helping to topple Theotokis from power, and making Stephanos Prime Minister for almost a year in 1910. In this sense, Ion's *prima facie* quixotic ideas prefigured the Goudi *coup d'état* of 1909.

Nor was Ion entirely alone in his thinking. His views may in a sense have been ahead of their time, but clearly figures within Athens were thinking of the need to move outside of the conventional political realm. Yanni Kallergi, a military officer to whom his sister Natalia entrusted the delivery of the letter to Melas, must have also been fully informed about Ion's conspiratorial network. Indeed, dozens if not hundreds of people must have known at this stage of Ion's activities in Macedonia.<sup>396</sup> Together with Ion's passionate newspaper articles, his activities created for him a good reputation in the irredentist circles of Athens.

Melas answered to Ion as soon as he got his letter, on 28 October/10 November 1903. While Ion's letter was several pages long, Melas' reply was only two

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<sup>395</sup> Markku Ruotsila, *British and American anticommunism before the Cold War* (London, 2001), pp. 9-14.

<sup>396</sup> Natalia to Melas, no date, TID pp. 339-41.

paragraphs. Melas did three things. First, he let it be understood that he did not speak with Vassos. Melas did not explain the reason but he probably knew that the chances of making him join an anti-government action were low. Melas did, however, speak with some officers including a certain Politis as well as the head of the newly founded Macedonian Committee, Kalapothakis. Second, Melas stated that the letter made a strong impression on him, surprising him with its content: '[la lettre] m'a électrisé'. He hinted that he respected and valued Ion's ideas, but he was unwilling to go as far as Ion. Third, he warned Ion that they were only at the beginning: their group still had lots of things to do and they had to start acting faster. The most important point was, however, what Melas omitted saying. He included no political comment whatsoever in his letter. Indeed, from this point forward Melas and Stephanos would initiate a series of meetings with government officials, and try to get official sanction for their plans, thereby ignoring Ion's warnings to the contrary.<sup>397</sup>

Political events prevented them from immediate action. On 6/19 December 1903 Rallis fell from power and was replaced by Georgios Theotokis. The group adopted a waiting stance until March 1904 when Stephanos had a series of meetings with the new Prime Minister. Although Theotokis and Stephanos were

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<sup>397</sup> Melas to Ion, 28 October/10 November 1903, TID pp. 363-65.

political enemies with conflicting opinions on foreign policy,<sup>398</sup> they were on good enough terms to discuss at length their plans on Macedonia and decide on common action. Stephanos could not have done this with Rallis or Zaimis as Prime Ministers, who did not share with Stephanos a common past in the Tricoupiist party. In fact, in the summer of 1903, Rallis had suspended Melas from service because of his activities near the frontier. Zaimis thought that a military involvement in Macedonia would not serve Greek interests and, as we shall see in the next chapter, he was the only politician publicly to attack the Defence as detrimental to national interests.

Theotokis's resumption of conversations with Stephanos, who had often attacked him in public speeches for lack of patriotism, required magnanimity and flexibility, qualities that Theotokis did not lack.<sup>399</sup> It is telling that Stephanos did not meet with the King: their personal relations were not good. But we should not think that the King was uninformed about what was going on. A likely supposition is that Theotokis kept the King informed to save the monarch the trouble of an unpleasant meeting with Stephanos. In any case, the discussions of March 1904 proved to be a

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<sup>398</sup> Gianouloupoulos, 'Foreign Policy' (in Greek) in Christos Chatziiosif (ed.), *History of twentieth century Greece: 1900-22* (in Greek), vol. A2 (Athens, 1999), pp. 107-47 here 115; Niki Maroniti, *Political power and national question in Greece: 1880- 1910* (in Greek) (Athens, 2009), pp. 279-81 and 354-55; Gunnar Hering, *Political parties in Greece:1821-1936* (in Greek) (2 vols., Athens, 2004), ii, p. 736.

<sup>399</sup> Chourmouzi, HXIV pp. 166-67.

turning point: the decision to send paramilitary bands in European Turkey determined the course of Greek foreign policy until 1907.

Unfortunately the only surviving record of the meetings is the short draft notes that Stephanos composed in August 1904 or later. According to these notes, the two men had a series of meetings between March and August 1904. Stephanos was almost certainly the first to inform Theotokis of the intentions of Melas. Theotokis was positive towards the plans of the group, and helped them financially. He promised Stephanos support for the Greek bandits, in exchange for being informed about the actions of the group: the government should be in control of what happened. Therefore, as Ion had predicted, government support came with strings attached.<sup>400</sup>

At the same time that Stephanos initiated his conversations, in March 1904, Melas and three other army officers entered Macedonia, with money and support from ‘the Society’, probably a precursor of the Macedonian Committee. Their objective was to establish ‘whether its Greek inhabitants are willing to receive weapons and ammunition in order to defend against a potential repetition of the raids of the Bulgarian hordes’. As it happened in 1897, Melas was shortly recalled. According to Dakin and Greek archival evidence, the Ottoman Embassy in Athens made

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<sup>400</sup> For Stephanos’s discussions with other politicians see DRAS 216.4, ‘note on the actions of St[e]phanos N[icolaou] D[ragoumis]’, no place or date, f. 114.

complaints though this cannot be corroborated from the available Ottoman documents.<sup>401</sup> This incident confirmed that Melas was unsuited to the role of the bandit: he was a well-known irredentist and member of a distinguished Athenian family, and as such his moves attracted much unwanted attention. The remaining three officers met with Karavangelis, Kottas, 'local notables', and members of Ion's 'Society', all of whom gave them an 'excellent impression'. The four officers concluded in a report they submitted to the Society that 'if the villages were provided with the necessary arms and ammunition, a raid against them would be impossible'.<sup>402</sup> Shortly afterwards it was revealed that two of them, Papoulas and Kolokotronis disagreed with the other two, namely Kontoulis and especially Melas: they believed that it would be necessary to send men and officers from Greece. But they avoided expressing their view in the report, such was the appeal of the view that Greek Macedonians could take care of themselves.

This view was widely shared in 1903-04. Contemporaries grossly overestimated the number of Macedonians willing to fight for Greece. The Ministry, Ion and the four officers made the same mistake: they believed that all they had to do was to send weapons and a few agents, and the Greek Macedonian bands would take care of themselves. The officers misunderstood the assurances the locals offered them:

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<sup>401</sup> Dakin, *The Greek struggle...*, p. 177.

<sup>402</sup> 'Society' is probably how the addressed the Macedonian Committee. In any case, we know their report was circulated among members of the Government.

‘they accepted our proposals with relief and happiness, and they are grateful to their free Greek brethren’. In reality, the local population had been receiving one group of armed men after another to their villages: experience taught them to say what their visitors wanted to hear. This does not mean that some might not have been honest supporters of the Greek cause; but even so, in late 1904 and 1905 it would become clear that there were far fewer Macedonian men willing to take up arms than was originally assumed. The Greek expeditions in 1904 would start on the false premise that the mere presence of armed ‘free Greeks’ would be sufficient to build a defensive network.<sup>403</sup>

Immediately after his early return from Macedonia, on 3/16 April 1904, Melas got in touch with Theotokis. This was the single most important event since the three conspirators began their efforts: it sealed the co-operation of the government with their group and decided the form of the Defence until 1908. The Defence had been debated for years inside the Ministry, and now a decision on its content was finally made. Tellingly, it was politicians, and especially Theotokis, who made the final decision, not diplomats. From this point on, the government committed itself to the sending of Greek bands inside Macedonia. But, unlike in 1897, the bands would be accountable to the government.

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<sup>403</sup> For the last two paragraphs see the report of Melas, Alexandros Kontoulis, Anastasios Papoulas and Georgios Kolokotronis submitted to the ‘Society’, Vogatsiko, 16/29 April 1904, TID pp. 636-47.

Melas wrote on the same day an enthusiastic letter to Ion in which he explained that Theotokis had accepted all the terms that he and Ion had discussed in a previous meeting: four more officers apart from Melas would enter Macedonia to examine the situation on the ground; fifteen more Greeks from the kingdom would be included in the nucleus of the action; a hundred to a hundred fifty weapons would be delivered immediately; and the allegedly unpatriotic Bishop of Florina would be removed from his post. Theotokis also explained to a jubilant Melas that he was against his suspension and that he would have it revoked. Melas added enthusiastically that not only Theotokis, but also the King and the Crown Prince were fully supportive of his plans and promised him money and weapons. The only person who had reservations was Romanos, the Foreign Minister, but the reason was not that Romanos was against irredentist ventures. After all Romanos was a member of the National Society in 1897. It appears that Romanos had simply not been informed on time about Theotokis's approval and thus he did not know what to say when he met Melas. Romanos and the Ministry in general never opposed the policy.

Melas wrote to Ion 'I hope you are happy now', but quite predictably Ion was not. He never answered Melas. In April 1904 the idea that dominated his mind was to keep Athens away from Macedonia. On 6/19 April, he wrote in his diary 'people in

Greece should stop being excited [about Macedonia]’.<sup>404</sup> Similarly, on the same day he wrote to Melas’s brother, Kokos: ‘I think it is not necessary to awake people’s interest about Macedonia’.<sup>405</sup> The only comment Ion ever made about the agreement Stephanos and Melas reached with the government was in a letter to his father:

I was pleased to read about your meeting with the Prime Minister. Although you are not in the government, you contributed in the past and you are still contributing to the guidance and excitement of the zeal of the ignorant people in charge, and you are almost educating them.<sup>406</sup>

Other than that, Ion never commented on Melas’s mission to Macedonia. On 8/21 April, just a few days before the four officers would write laudatory comments on his ‘Society’, Ion announced to his father that ‘the Society that existed here has been dissolved’ without explaining his reasons. This dissolution probably did not mean much: what Ion had created lacked the hierarchical structure of other Greek irredentist societies. It was rather a support and information network in the Macedonian countryside and as such it continued to cooperate with the Monastir consulate – and in case, Ion had already left for the Serres consulate. The ‘dissolution’ was an index of Ion’s growing dissatisfaction. In the months that followed, Ion detached himself from Stephanos and Melas.

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<sup>404</sup> TID, p. 473.

<sup>405</sup> Ion to Kokos, Monastir, 6/19 April 1904, TID p. 473

<sup>406</sup> Ion to Stephanos, [Monastir], 6/19 April 1904, TID pp. 477-78.

Melas departed a second time for Macedonia in July 1904. He spent most of his time in Salonica with Koromilas. After his return to Athens, he quickly started preparations for what would be his third and final trip. Ioannis Karavitis, a twenty four year old Cretan who had arrived in Athens with the purpose of fighting in Macedonia, soon found out about the trip from his compatriots: he waited for Melas outside his home in Kifissia and despite the latter's hesitations, managed to join the band. As usual, Melas intended to keep his actions secret but in practice it proved impossible. This particular mishap of Melas turned out well for historians since Karavitis wrote a colourful and detailed account of his time in Macedonia.

Melas and his men departed on 17/30 August 1904. The exact number of the band members is not known and in any case it varied, since new recruits joined them on the way. Probably twenty five men left Athens, and they must have numbered thirty five by the time they entered Macedonia. Of these, eight were Cretans. It was one of the unintended consequences of the Cretan Revolution of 1896-97 that it created a large recruitment pool of young, unemployed men with military experience eager to fight for Greek paramilitary bands. There were also two 'klephts', brigands who lived from looting across the frontier, Athanasios Katsamakos and his son Georgios. Melas as a professional soldier had qualms about collaborating with the brigands, but still valued their experience and

excellent shooting skills. Finally, there were quite a few Macedonians, such as Karagiorgos from Statista.<sup>407</sup>

Two weeks after crossing the frontier, in the village of Prekopana, the local Greek party asked them to punish a teacher and a priest. Melas obeyed and ordered his men to murder the two unfortunates, but he was soon overwhelmed by remorse:

All the time I was walking like a drunk man, I was crying continuously... I used to think that the beautiful and noble task I had undertaken would be realised through beautiful and noble deeds, without having thought the hard realities I would face and their terrible details. Twenty four hours have passed, and I am still crying.<sup>408</sup>

The shock of Melas testifies that he had accepted the arguments of his friend Ion about the nobility of Macedonian Greeks at face value: he was a true believer in the Greek cause. Karavitis wondered: ‘Melas would quiver with fear if he killed a chicken, how would this man conduct the struggle?’;<sup>409</sup> ‘Melas had the heart of a little child’,<sup>410</sup> and the war-hardened Karavitis and his colleagues started thinking that the urbanite Melas was unsuited for his mission.

Melas’s band was confronted with several difficulties. First, this was for most of them their first time in Macedonia. The men were surprised by what they found

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<sup>407</sup> KARA, p. 32; Petsivas has compiled a list of Melas’s men in KARB, pp. 971-72; Melas to Natalia, Larissa, 19 August/1 September, 1904, NAM, p. 316; Melas to Natalia, Larissa, 21 August/3 September 1904, NAM p. 317; Melas to Natalia, Chasaboliotiko, 23 August/5 September 1904, NAM, p. 324.

<sup>408</sup> NAM p. 376.

<sup>409</sup> KARA p. 79.

<sup>410</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

there: a strange land, with a foreign, incomprehensible tongue and peculiar customs and traditions. Understanding what was going on and distinguishing between friend and foe was difficult for Melas's men. As an exasperated Karavitis yelled at a local shepherd: 'tell me you bastard, what [sic] are you? Are there any Greeks at all in this place?'<sup>411</sup>

Second, the bandits and their leader were divided. The men, and especially the Cretans, regarded Melas as inexperienced, unaccustomed to the difficulties of guerrilla warfare, and naïve. Instead of hiding at the sight of soldiers, he would stand his ground: for Karavitis, this was a sign of Melas's conviction that the Ottomans would not attack his band. He remarked that Melas 'thought that the Sultan would welcome a dozen Cretans... to impose order in Macedonia'.<sup>412</sup> Although it is true that Melas, like many of his contemporary Greeks, overestimated Turkish tolerance, Karavitis failed to understand Melas's true motives. As a professional soldier, he abhorred the habit of the Cretans of hiding every time they encountered the army:

Then we saw in the entrance of the village [Lehovo] ninety to a hundred nizams [Turkish infantry soldiers] and thirty to forty cavalymen. Before I had the time to stop them, five or six inexperienced cowards from my corps opened the back door and

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<sup>411</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>412</sup> Ibid., p. 97.

started running to the nearby mountain; everybody else followed them.<sup>413</sup>

Melas reproached Barba-Andrea, a fifty year old Cretan, for initiating this run to the mountain, but Barba-Andrea ignored him. Barba-Andrea told Karavitis: ‘You go this way... to watch over; I go that way. Otherwise the Turks might suddenly encircle us, and we will all die, because he [=Melas] has no idea what he is doing’. Melas wanted to lead his ‘corps’ as a proper military officer: before engaging in battle, he would stand up and observe carefully the enemy with his binoculars; he expected no one to move unless he ordered him to; and he generally valued discipline more than security. Melas got dressed like a bandit but retained the values of an army officer. Cretans could not understand formal military behaviours when guerrilla fighting made more sense.<sup>414</sup>

On 12/25 October Melas entered Statista. On the next day, news arrived that a Turkish force was approaching the village. Melas was not worried: he knew that the army passed regularly from Statista on its regular route from Zelovo to Konomlati. Melas ordered his men to hide in the higher part of the village in different houses. This was a mistake: the army had been informed about the Greek bandits and was after them. The army discovered the hiding place of the Volanis group and a skirmish began. Melas’s hiding place was, however, not discovered.

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<sup>413</sup> NAM p. 396.

<sup>414</sup> KARA p. 99.

Late in the evening Melas attempted a sortie. What followed has never been clarified. According to Dakin, he was shot by a Turkish soldier.<sup>415</sup> The contemporary Kyrou claimed that one of Melas's men, Lakis Pyrzas, fired at Melas by mistake.<sup>416</sup> According to Kaoudis, Melas was only injured and his colleagues – as often happens in guerrilla warfare – had to kill him on the spot for him not to be captured by the Turks.<sup>417</sup> The Cretans believed that their warnings proved right. They felt sorry for his death but he had behaved as a fool: 'he suffered from the fixation that the Turks had a friendly disposition towards us'.<sup>418</sup>

In Macedonia, his death was a disaster. Kontogouris wrote to Romanos that 'I do not want to announce the death of Melas to anyone... it could quickly demoralise our people'. Shortly before his departure, Melas had been appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Greek bands in Western Macedonia, i.e. roughly the Monastir vilayet. His death disorganised Greek efforts for months.<sup>419</sup> In Athens, Melas's death caused a sensation. According to a popular story, Melas's last words were 'let no Bulgarian live', which in the contemporary context really meant 'no Macedonian Exarchist'. Periklis Argyropoulos closed his memorandum for the

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<sup>415</sup> Dakin, *The Greek struggle...*, pp. 190-91.

<sup>416</sup> Takis Kyrou (ed.), *Pavlos Kyrou.*, (Florina, 1978), p. 58.

<sup>417</sup> Angelos Chotzidis (ed.), *Efthymios Kaoudis: a Cretan fights for Macedonia: Memoirs (1903-07)* (in Greek) (Salonica, 1996), pp. 130-31. The newspaper *Eleftheros Anthropos* recorded the existence of such rumours in 'Pavlos Melas and the Macedonian Struggle', 4 August 1931, p. 4.

<sup>418</sup> KARA p. 127.

<sup>419</sup> AYE 1904 AAK/H 'Monastir consulate', Kontogouris to Romanos, Monastir, 17/30 October 1904, telegram without number,

formation of the Macedonian committee with these forged last words: in the autumn of 1904 they became an omnipresent slogan in the irredentist circles of Athens. No one cared that he was killed during a conflict with the Ottoman army. Public rage was directed against Bulgaria.<sup>420</sup>

Nevertheless, we should not exaggerate the importance of his death. It is often said that his death ‘awakened public opinion’ and forced the government to start the Defence. Both propositions are false. Athenian irredentists had been for decades fiercely anti-Bulgarian. Moreover, by the summer of 1904, the Government had committed itself to the Defence. The Defence would have taken place regardless of Melas’s fate.<sup>421</sup> Indeed, Melas’s expedition was the outcome of a long process that included his correspondence with Ion, negotiations with irredentist groups and individuals as well as Melas’s and Stephanos’s meetings with Theotokis, let alone the debate inside the Ministry since the summer of 1902.

It was regarding the relations between the conspirators and the government that his death had its profoundest impact. Melas was the only person that both sides trusted. Unlike Stephanos, Melas was on good terms with George I. His death left Stephanos and Ion in isolation, without the excellent contacts that Melas had in the army and the irredentist societies, and with less leverage on what would happen

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<sup>420</sup> DRAS 213, Argyropoulos to Stephanos, [no place], 11/24 November 1904, number 9a.

<sup>421</sup> Cf. Dakin, *The Greek struggle...*, p. 191-92; I.K. Mazarakis, HXIV p. 241.

inside Macedonia. The Dragoumises now had less influence on Government policy. Two other people would overshadow them: Kalapothakis, the Chairman of the Macedonian Committee, whose membership increased significantly as a result of the nationalist fervour after Melas's death, and Lambros Koromilas, consul general in Salonica.

In summary, the efforts of the three conspirators met with difficulties but they were not in vain. Stephanos strengthened his reputation as the Greek expert in Macedonian affairs, which was further enhanced by the death of his son-in-law in Macedonia. The compromise he reached with the government meant that his role as a shadow Foreign Minister was *de facto* recognised. All this facilitated his re-emergence in Greek politics in 1906, as head of the group of the so-called 'Japanese' MPs, which we will examine in the next chapter. But more importantly, the Macedonian Struggle turned out to be similar to what Stephanos had proposed in the *Macedonian Crisis*: a co-operation of the government with the committees favouring military action over diplomacy. Greeks imitated what they *imagined* the Bulgarians did.

As for Ion, he aimed too high. He failed to create a network of support that could maintain Macedonian bands that would operate independently from Athens, and to give to the movement the revolutionary and radical character he wished. Athens

ended by having the upper hand over Monastir. Expeditions organised after the death of Melas would be undertaken by the Macedonian Committee in collaboration with the government and without the consultation of the Dragoumises. Macedonian Greeks could not fight the revolutionaries on their own, let alone antagonise Athens.

But Ion's actions were more effective than his melodramatic letters suggested. Firstly, he turned Monastir into the centre of Greek activity in Western Macedonia. Secondly, although the resurrection of the National Society proved impossible, the Macedonian Committee that Kalapothakis set up was similar in its aims and organisation to what Ion had in mind. Thirdly, although Ion's expectation that the Macedonian 'centre' would have the upper hand over Athens was frustrated, still the Greek consulates in Macedonia ended up enjoying a degree of autonomy between 1904 and 1907 and this was at least in part due to Ion's efforts. With time, Theotokis accepted that the government should on occasions offer money and weapons without being fully informed about their intended use. Greek bandits enjoyed significant independence of action. Fourthly, Ion created a powerful mix of irredentism, the Macedonian Question and anti-intellectualism. His arguments for Macedonia were simple and straightforward and written in demotic. The only author whose influence on the Macedonian Question could be compared with that

of Ion was the contemporary author P.S. Delta, whom we briefly examined in ch. I: tellingly she wrote children's books about Byzantine soldiers fighting the Bulgarian hordes in tenth century Macedonia. Anti-intellectualism allowed Ion and Delta to connect with the public, in spite of their very privileged backgrounds.<sup>422</sup>

As Basil C. Gounaris has argued, the role of the Greek intellectual vis-à-vis the Macedonian Question was that of the educator.<sup>423</sup> Intellectuals progressively abandoned the nuanced writing style of nineteenth-century irredentist writings – a typical example of which would be Zalokostas – and focused instead on addressing the wider public. Nuanced arguments were interpreted as obfuscating, and unpatriotic. Finally, like his father, Ion had the privilege of being a relative and associate of the dead hero. When he visited Alexandria, he met Delta, who was mesmerised by the 'man in black' who knew the exact place where Melas's remains were buried. Their romance began over a map of Macedonia marking the spot with a red cross.<sup>424</sup>

It might be argued that the actions of these bandit groups served Greek interests. The Greek bands killed Bulgarian revolutionaries, increased the number of people willing to declare themselves Greeks, and prepared a defence in the case of a new

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<sup>422</sup> Marianna Spanaki, *Byzantium and Macedonia in the work of P.S. Delta* (in Greek) (Athens, 2004), pp. 9-10.

<sup>423</sup> Gounaris, 'The Macedonia of the Greeks: from the Enlightenment to World War I' in Ioannis Stefanidis, Vlasidis Vlasidis, Evaggelos Kofos (eds.), *Macedonian identities in time: interdisciplinary approaches* (in Greek) (Athens, 2008), pp. 185-210, here 205-6.

<sup>424</sup> Delta, *Memories 1921* (in Greek) (Athens, 1996), p. 14.

Bulgarian uprising. But they also compromised Greece's diplomatic position. When a member of the Melas group, Philippos Kapetanopoulos, was shot by Ottoman soldiers they discovered on him a note from the Monastir consul, Kallergis, which implicated the consul with the Melas band. After this the Greek government had no option but to have Kallergis recalled.<sup>425</sup> This pattern would be repeated many times between 1904 and 1907. Unlike the Bulgarians and the Macedonian revolutionaries, who kept the consulates out of their revolutionary business, the Greek bandits relied from the beginning on the information, guidance and money they got from the consuls. But this came at a certain cost.

At last, Greek activity caused concern among Ottoman diplomats. The Ottoman Foreign Minister, Tevfik Pasha, was anxious since September at the prospect of a repeat of 1897. On 5/18 September he wrote to Sadreddin in Athens that 'une bande de près de 600 brigands... s'apprêterait à faire irruption par voie de mer sur territoire ottoman'. Similarly on 8/21 September, he reported that 'une nouvelle bande de 397 personnes ... a passé sur notre territoire... une autre bande de 900 brigands serait organisée en ce moment en Grèce'. Although the numbers were exaggerated the Turkish authorities in European Turkey had correctly informed Tevfik that something was taking place in Greece.

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<sup>425</sup> KARA, p. 102; Kostas E. Kleidis, *With the shining in the eyes* (in Greek) (Athens, 1984), p. 127, gives a slightly different version.

Nevertheless, Sadreddin in Athens remained optimistic. On 6/19 September, he reported on a meeting he had with Romanos. The Greek confided that ‘il y a une surexcitation en Grèce par suite des crimes commis par les Bulgares’ but he reassured Sadreddin that the government would do everything possible to calm things down.<sup>426</sup> On 17/30 September, Sadreddin wrote that ‘le cabinet hellénique fait le possible’. Sadreddin was full of praise for Theotokis who he said had forbidden the passage of any armed group or individual into Ottoman territory. ‘La sage politique de Monsieur Théotokis n’aura pas une approbation générale dans le pays’, but Sadreddin hoped that the parliament would in the end follow Theotokis and impose prudence on the agitated people. His attitude was similar to the reassuring report of Rifaat on Ion’s society.<sup>427</sup>

There were good reasons for Sadreddin’s optimism. First, he was unaware of Theotokis’s discussions with Stephanos. In public, Theotokis presented himself as a European statesman who valued law and progress above the irredentist instincts that motivated the Deliyiannists. Second, Sadreddin saw in Greece a potential ally. In the second half of 1904, the European press discussed the possibility of an alliance among Serbia, Montenegro and Bulgaria, and Sadreddin calculated that if the ‘Slavs’ of the Balkans formed an alliance, Greece was likely to move closer to

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<sup>426</sup> Sadreddin to Tevfik, Athens, 6/19 September 1904, ciphered telegram number 327, TMIA number 1081. See also Sadreddin to Tevfik, Athens 10/23 September 1904, ciphered telegram number 329, TMIA number 1085.

<sup>427</sup> Sadreddin to Tevfik, Athens, 17/30 September 1904, number 7300/337, TMIA number 1089.

Turkey.<sup>428</sup> Finally, when the news of Melas's death arrived, Romanos reassuringly informed Sadreddin that had Melas returned alive he would have gone through a military court for disobedience of orders.<sup>429</sup> The division of labour between official and unofficial policy paid off. Sadreddin was unaware of the secret support of Theotokis for the Defence and he consequently underestimated the willingness of the Government to fight Bulgarian revolutionaries.

The truth was revealed in the days following Melas's death. Sadreddin at last realised that the government was involved in what was happening in Macedonia. On 20 October/2 November, Sadreddin noted 'l'effervescence est grande en Grèce': Melas was becoming a national hero. 'Sa Majesté le Roi vient d'envoyer un télégramme de condoléances à la famille. De sorte qu'il est probable qu'une nouvelle irruption de bandes se fasse bientôt sur le territoire ottoman'. Even Romanos, who until then had taken a firm stance against the bands in his interviews with Tevfik, 'ne m'a pas paru trop désireux d'arrêter le mouvement'. This alienation from Turkey was the first price the government had to pay for the Macedonian Defence. Greek consuls would continue until the Young Turk revolution to collaborate with Ottoman officials in Macedonia, but Constantinople

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<sup>428</sup> Sadreddin to Tevfik, Athens, 1/14 October 1904 number 7346/357, TMIA number 1099.; See also 'Servia [sic] and Bulgaria', *The Times*, 3/16 May 1904, p. 6.

<sup>429</sup> Sadreddin to Tevfik, Athens 19 October/1 November 1904, ciphered telegram number 388, TMIA number 1119.

lost faith in Theotokis and the sincerity of his pronouncements. Thus, the death of Melas proved to be a turning point in Greek-Turkish relations.<sup>430</sup>

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<sup>430</sup>Sadreddin Bey to Tefvik Pasha, Athens, 20 October/2 November 1904, ciphered telegram number 389, TMIA number 1121.

## II. THE MINISTRY AFTER ILINDEN: 1903-04

After March 1904 the decisions about Macedonia were taken outside the Ministry. As we shall examine in section III of this chapter, the key decisions were taken by Theotokis in consultation with a circle of close associates. Nevertheless, serious debate continued within the Ministry for at least half a year more as to whether the Greek government should support the policies of the Powers or develop its own more radical stance. The best example of these debates was Zalokostas. Following Ilinden he started exchanging information about Bulgarian revolutionary activities with Ottoman officials; something that he had not done before. He originally believed that the revolutionary activities were a red herring that diverted activity from diplomacy and especially the reforms and Greek-Bulgarian relations. But Ilinden brushed aside such concerns and brought Greek and Ottoman officials closer to each other.

On 4/17 December 1903, Zalokostas reported on an interview he had with Ali Ferroul. The Ottoman feared that a new revolution would take place in the spring and that the Bulgarian government was hiding its true intentions on the Macedonian Question. Moreover, he was worried about the Serbo-Bulgarian *rapprochement* that was rumoured at the time. He was also disappointed with the

British stance in the Balkans, and Britain's preference for autonomy for Macedonia. Zalokostas shared his worries.

A conversation of Zalokostas with the Bulgarian Prime Minister, Petrov, was similarly pessimistic. According to the Bulgarian, Turkey did not respect its commitments under the agreement with the Powers, and especially the amnesty. Many of the refugees were killed or arrested upon returning to their homes in Macedonia. The fighting continued, and Petrov was afraid that the revolutionary committees would turn him into a scapegoat for their failures.

But, although he did report the pessimistic opinions he had received, Zalokostas did not give up his hopes regarding the reforms: 'the representatives of the Great Powers judge the worries of the Ottoman Commissioner and of the Bulgarian Prime Minister as exaggerated'. To Zalokostas's mind although the situation in the Balkans was unpredictable and complicated, the reforms were an adequate response: if they were realised on time, 'the coming, widely discussed revolution, shall not find as fertile grounds as it did in the current year [1903]'.<sup>431</sup>

On 7/20 February 1904, Zalokostas, in a similarly optimistic tone, reported on a further interview he had had with Petrov. Official Bulgaria was not trying to foment revolution as many other Greek diplomats suggested; on the contrary

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<sup>431</sup> For the last three paragraphs, AYEL 1904.1.1.2, Zalokostas to Rallis, Sofia, December 4/17 1903, number 1632, attached to Rallis to Metaxas, 31 December/13 January 1903, number 4170. For the refugees see also 'The Balkan situation', *The Times*, 22 April/5 May 1904, p. 1.

Petrov was worried about the potential failure of the reforms since this, to Petrov's mind, would have meant the unilateral involvement of Austria-Hungary in the Balkans, a Power which Petrov regarded as hostile to Bulgarian interests.<sup>432</sup> Still, Zalokostas was obliged to acknowledge that the reforms had brought little progress. On 17/30 June, Zalokostas confirmed that 'Bulgaria predicted the failure of the reforms'. On 27 July/9 August, the Balkan Committee, a British liberal committee that favoured autonomy, talked of 'the breakdown of the so-called reforms'. By the summer of 1904, most observers were convinced that the reforms were a failure.

Zalokostas, however, kept his cool. He insisted that Petrov did not see revolution as the solution to the failure of the European intervention. Zalokostas reiterated his belief that Petrov would rather see the reforms succeed because of his fear of Austria-Hungary and he also suggested that Bulgaria was in search of regional alliances, commenting at length on a *rapprochement* between Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro that was taking place at the time, and to which Zalokostas would probably have been delighted to see Greece included. The aim of the

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<sup>432</sup> AYEL 1904.1.1.2, Zalokostas to Romanos, Sofia, 7/20 February 1904, number 147.

*rapprochement* was to promote the success of the reforms, and in case they failed, to forestall a unilateral Austro-Hungarian intervention in the Balkans.<sup>433</sup>

For Zalokostas the solution was a Greek *rapprochement* with Bulgaria. At a time when Melas was preparing his third trip to Macedonia, these thoughts were far removed from the government's course of action. This was not Zalokostas's fault. As we shall examine, the government systematically misinformed its ambassadors. Moreover, a *rapprochement* with Bulgaria was in line with Zalokostas's general pro-Western attitude, as a Greek alliance with Bulgaria would have been much more acceptable to the Powers than one with Turkey. In 1903-04, Zalokostas was the only Greek diplomat who thought in this way. Most diplomats thought that, given that Greece was weaker than Bulgaria in military and diplomatic terms and Britain's support for the Bulgarian claims in Macedonia, any agreement with Bulgaria would have been detrimental to Greek interests.

Unfortunately, the archives of the Paris and Rome embassies are not available for 1904 and so, we know little about other Greek ambassadors abroad. The general impression is that after Ilinden Greek ambassadors assumed a quieter stance and came to terms with the rejection of their arguments by the Ministry. Their interviews with foreign diplomats and politicians focused on technical matters

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<sup>433</sup> AYEL 1904.1.1.1, Zalokostas to Theotokis, Sofia, 17/30 June 1904, number 760, attached to Theotokis to Metaxas, Athens, 1/14 July 1904, number 2311. For the quote of the Balkan Committee see its letter entitled 'The Balkan danger', *The Times*, 27 July/9 August 1904, p. 9.

regarding the implementation of the reforms and they must also have spent a significant amount of time distributing to foreign journalists and newspapers the news that the Ministry was sending them.<sup>434</sup> They were cut off from the decision-making processes in the Ministry and they focused instead on sending and receiving information.

Fortunately, the archives of London were preserved. The case of Metaxas in London confirms the above comments about the ambassadors. Metaxas sent few reports in 1904, in comparison with 1903 (see p. 181ff.) In one of his rare reports on the Macedonian Question, on 7/20 May 1904, Metaxas dryly reported to the Ministry the views of the British Deputy Foreign Secretary, Mr Villiers, who insisted that Britain would continue supporting the reforms. Metaxas avoided giving his personal view or comment on the credibility of what Villiers told him. As we shall examine later (see p. 336), Metaxas was increasingly acquiring a bad reputation among the Athenian press, something that might explain his careful stance. Moreover, although Theotokis had only recently come to power, it was understood that elections would soon come, and that Deliyiannis had better chances of winning them. Metaxas might have been afraid that after a government

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<sup>434</sup> AYEL 1904 1.1.2, Mizzopulo to Romanos, Rome, 12/25 December 1903, number 778, attached to Romanos to Metaxas, Athens, 31 December 1903/13 January 1904, number 4170.

change, his views on the sensitive issue of Macedonia and the reforms could be politically exploited.<sup>435</sup>

Gryparis best exemplifies the change of attitude among the ambassadors. Until Ilinden he was in favour of Greece accepting the suggestions of European diplomacy, and opposed Rallis's plans of cooperation with Turkey and of sending Greek officers in Macedonia. Nevertheless, by late 1903 he assumed a moderate anti-reform stance. It is possible that the initial Bulgarian successes during Ilinden made him change his mind; or maybe Gryparis had had his doubts about the reforms from the beginning but preferred not to express them immediately after assuming the post of the Plenipotentiary Minister in Constantinople in February 1903. It is possible that the fall of Rallis from power had an effect too: Gryparis probably did not want to reveal all his thoughts and plans to a politician with whom he was on bad terms, and who was widely speculated to fall quickly from power. The ambassadors knew that the ministers changed every few months, and this at times led them not to take them seriously. In any case, between December 1903 and the first half of 1904 there was a change in Gryparis's thinking about Macedonia.

Gryparis was well informed about European Turkey: not only did he receive the reports of the Greek consulates but he also had conversations with the ambassadors

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<sup>435</sup> AYEL 1904.1.1.1, Metaxas to Romanos, London, 7/20 May 1904, number 485 (draft).

of the Powers. He also received information from the Turkish government. Already on 17/30 December 1903, Gryparis warned that ‘the situation in Macedonia is explosive and could lead to new upheavals’; that autonomy looked like an increasingly likely outcome, especially given the ‘protection of England for Bulgaria’; and that ‘*the Macedonian question [is becoming] a Bulgarian affair*’. Gryparis concluded that ‘Bulgaria is preparing surprises for us in Macedonia’. Greece’s diplomatic position was impossible given Britain’s support for Bulgaria. By December 1903, Gryparis was convinced that Greece had to seek for solutions outside of diplomacy, at the unofficial level: ‘there is an inescapable need to rally the military powers of the country’.<sup>436</sup>

Gryparis sent another pessimistic report on 2/15 January 1904. In this, he argued that almost all of the representatives of the Powers in Constantinople were convinced that the reforms were doomed. Reporting on a joint interview that he had with the Ambassadors of Germany and Austria-Hungary, Gryparis wrote that

they appeared pessimistic regarding the effectiveness of the Macedonian reforms, fearful that, despite all the warnings to Bulgaria, once the winter is gone, around March or April, it is very probable that the committees would assume action in a scale greater than before.<sup>437</sup>

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<sup>436</sup> AYEL 1904.1.1.2, Gryparis to Romanos, Constantinople, 17/30 December 1903, number 440 attached to Gryparis to Metaxas, Athens, 26 December 1903/8 January 1904, number 4649. Gryparis’s italics.

<sup>437</sup> AYEL 1904.1.1.2, Gryparis to Romanos, Constantinople, 2/15 January 1904, number 1 (sic), attached to Romanos to Metaxas, Athens, 31 January/13 February 1904, number 382.

Similarly, Nicholas O'Connor told Gryparis that 'nous ferons ce que nous devons faire mais...'. Demeric, the Russian Ambassador, thought likewise that the reforms had little chances of success.<sup>438</sup> Similarly, the Italian Ambassador in Constantinople, Malaspina, complained to Gryparis about the 'contegno dilatorio solidale... evidentemente concentrato degli ufficiali austro-ungarici, russi e tedeschi'.<sup>439</sup> By the winter of 1903-04 it was common knowledge that the *gendarmerie* would not be ready in time for the new Bulgarian revolution that everyone expected to start between March and June 1904. A new Ilinden would have plunged the Balkans into chaos.

The conviction that a new Macedonian revolution would be disastrous, the mistrust of Britain and its favouring of Macedonian autonomy, and the belief that the reforms were simply not sufficient to stop the tide of revolution, all these beliefs united Greek diplomats with the Ottoman ones. Gryparis started having frequent meetings with Ottoman officials which soon assumed a friendly character. Soon enough, Gryparis was considered a *persona grata* by the *Porte*. In his report of 17 February/1 March 1904 Gryparis wrote of his conversation with the Ottoman Ambassador in Paris, Munir Pasha, who was on a visit to Constantinople. They talked about 'our common enemies', and their shared opposition to autonomy and

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<sup>438</sup> Ibid.

<sup>439</sup> MAE 369 ('Gendarmerie'), Malaspina to Tittoni, Pera, 8/21 February, 1904, ciphered telegram number 444.

to British policy in Macedonia.<sup>440</sup> For Gryparis, the diplomatic environment was excessively favourable to Bulgaria: a Turkish-Bulgarian agreement signed in late March, confirmed his fears. According to Gryparis, Turkey committed itself to undertaking the reforms and especially the amnesty, and received nothing in exchange from Bulgaria, which only made vague promises and gave reassurances about its intentions.<sup>441</sup> As we saw earlier (p. 190ff.), Gryparis thought little of the Ottoman Empire and its value as an ally. But Ilinden and the reforms convinced even him that some understanding with Turkey was in the end unavoidable in order to resist Bulgarian influence in Macedonia.

Gryparis summarised his pessimist assessment of the reforms on 4/17 July 1904.

Among the political and military authorities responsible for the enactment of the reforms prevails complete alienation and disagreement in their thoughts and opinions... [the disagreement] assumed lately greater dimensions which affect the realisation [of the reforms] and the situation in general... The reforming task thus is confronted, as was predicted, with thousands of difficulties in its realisation... and the danger is that not only will it fail but also that it would cause further complications in Macedonia.<sup>442</sup>

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<sup>440</sup> AYEL 1.1.2, Gryparis to Romanos, Constantinople, 17 February/1 March 1904, number 154, attached to Romanos to Metaxas, Athens, 11/24 March 1904, number 832.

<sup>441</sup> AYEL 1.1.1, Gryparis to Romanos, Constantinople, 9/22 April 1904, number 300, attached to Romanos to Metaxas, Athens, 20 April/ 3 May 1904, number 1432.

<sup>442</sup> AYEL 1904.1.1.1 Gryparis to Romanos, Constantinople, 4/17 July 1904, number 698, attached to Romanos to Metaxas, Athens, 15/28 July 1904, number 2483.

Thus, in 1904, Gryparis advised against any commitment of Greece to the reforms. The solution had to be found at the unofficial level. This was a suggestion that was very close to the position held by the consuls in 1903.

The consuls continued in the same alarmist style as in the summer of 1903. This was the case especially with Monastir. Kypraios wrote on 28 November/11 December 1903, that ‘despite the information about the annihilation of the Bulgarian bands...the members of the bands that are attacking this region two or three years now are still alive’. Kallergis, the new consul in Monastir, warned on 20 February/4 March 1904 that ‘the main activity of the Bulgarians, as is made obvious from all of the recent reports of the R[oyal] Consulate, is to force the Orthodox Bulgarian-speaking villages to recognise the Exarchate’. He added that Bulgarian bands were forcing the villagers to sign declarations in favour of Bulgaria. Similarly, on 28 August/10 September, Kallergis wrote that ‘the... relatively quiet department of Prespes started now being mightily pressed by the bands to enter the schism’. Kallergis’s report on 25 September/8 October had a similarly warning tone: ‘the Committee sent Bulgaro-teachers

[βουλγαροδιδασκάλους] to the villages in Prespes and Kastoria that have joined the Exarchate'.<sup>443</sup>

The language of Kallergis and Kypraios contrasted with that of Zalokostas. The latter was careful to differentiate between different parties in the Bulgarian government, and to insist that the aims of the government and of the committees were often conflicting. The former used the terms 'Bulgaria' and 'the Committee' (usually in singular) interchangeably. The inventive neologism 'Bulgaro-teachers' underlined Kallergis's strong feelings against Bulgarian influence in Macedonia. Moreover, Kallergis and Kypraios called all revolutionaries 'Bulgarians' although by the time they wrote the above reports it was clear that a large group of revolutionaries around Sandanski saw themselves not as Bulgarian irredentists but as Macedonian socialists.<sup>444</sup> The result was that the otherwise well-informed Ministry missed the opportunity to exploit this conflict between revolutionaries for its own purposes.

Kallergis did not trust the reforms. He was especially suspicious of the third and fourth articles of the Murzsteg Agreement which stipulated a new administrative arrangement for Macedonia. In a report on 20 February/4 March 1904, Kallergis

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<sup>443</sup> AYEL 1904 1.1.2, Kypraios to Rallis, Monastir 28 November/11 December 1903, number 997 attached to Romanos to Metaxas; AYE 1904 AAK/H', Kallergis to Romanos, Monastir, February 20/4 March 1904, number 196; 28 August/10 September 1904, number 835; 25 September/8 October 1904, number 925.

<sup>444</sup> Albert Sonnischen, *Confessions of a Macedonian bandit*, (Greek translation) (Athens, 2004 [New York, 1909]), ch. XXIV, 'Confessions of a melancholic partisan', pp. 227-40.

expressed his fear that the new administrative territorial units that the Europeans were planning would be designed on the basis of the mother tongue of the majority of the inhabitants instead of taking into account the religious distinction between Exarchists and Patriarchists. Kallergis acknowledged in his report that Ion had influenced him, and cited information he had received from him. He had similarly mentioned Ion on another report on 2/15 March 1904. This shows both Kallergis's positive inclination towards the Dragoumises (something which Stephanos reciprocated in 1910 by making him Foreign Minister), but also that Ion had by 1904 acquired a high reputation among the consular staff of European Turkey, who saw him as an authority on the Macedonian Question; Kallergis, in particular, was certainly informed of Ion's conspiratorial activities and of his network.<sup>445</sup>

Although the consular staff was suspicious of the amnesty and of the third and fourth articles of Murzsteg, by 1904 they started appreciating the positive aspects of the reforms, especially the *gendarmérie*, which had the potential of bringing the 'Bulgarians' into an actual conflict with European military officers: would the revolutionaries risk killing European officers in action? Moreover, as the spring went by in relative calm, the fear of a new revolution evaporated, and the consular staff started again thinking about things other than security. Thus, Kallergis wrote

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<sup>445</sup> AYL 1904.1.1.2, Kallergis to Romanos, Monastir, February 20/March 4 1904, number 197; AYE 1904 AAK/H', 2/15 March 1904, number 205.

approvingly on 28 June/11 July 1904 that De Giers, the Austro-Hungarian consul in Monastir, told him that ‘the authorities will suppress violently every movement that could threaten public authority’. By that time, the consular staff believed that if after all they were implemented at all, certain aspects of the reforms could work in favour of Greek interests.

Instead of arguing that the reforms were doomed to fail, Kallergis in 1904 conceded that the reforms, and especially the formation of a *gendarmerie*, could be beneficial for the Greek cause. At the same time, as we examined, many ambassadors stopped their advocacy in favour of the reforms, either because they were afraid of the consequences for their careers or because they were convinced by their early failures that they would not work anyway. A consensus emerged between consuls and ambassadors based on the distinction between the official and unofficial levels: despite its many reservations, the Ministry would accept, officially, the reforms. The radical suggestions of Stephanos about abandoning the usual Greek diplomatic orientation towards Britain and assuming open military action against Bulgaria in Macedonia would have to wait. Once it became evident that there would be no new revolution in 1904, almost everyone in the Ministry agreed that there was no reason to antagonise the Powers openly. But, at the unofficial level, everyone, with the exception of Zalokostas, also accepted that

measures more radical than diplomacy had to be taken to protect Greek interests inside Macedonia. The result of this consensus would be the implementation of the Defence along the lines presented in section I: the insertion of Greek bands with the simultaneous disclaim of responsibility by the Government. This had two consequences. First it imposed upon the bands restrictions that they did not have in 1897: they had to respect secrecy, to avoid conflicts with the army and the *gendarmérie*, and to keep away from inflammatory irredentist rhetoric when speaking to the villagers. Second, as we shall see in section III, it meant the marginalisation of the Ambassadors inside the Ministry.

In the meantime, Theotokis and Romanos took turns as Ministers of Foreign Affairs. They both maintained a low profile. Romanos abstained from requesting specific tasks from diplomats. He asked the Embassies to ‘enlighten the foreigners’ about Greek rights in Macedonia, and in particular to publicise news about crimes committed by revolutionaries. As part of this ‘enlightening’ effort, Kazazis gave lectures abroad imitating the European tours of the Bulgarian revolutionary Sarafov, who had become the living symbol of the Macedonian revolution to the point that allegedly in January 1904 ‘il avait demandé une audience au Pape’.<sup>446</sup> Theotokis preferred writing short reports informing his diplomats about the latest

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<sup>446</sup> AYEL 1904 1.1.1, Metaxas to Theotokis, London, 17/30 June 1904, number 607; Gallian to Tevfik, Rome 2/15 January 1904, TMIA number 966.

diplomatic developments rather than reflecting on what Greek policy should be. This could easily mislead us into thinking that the Dragoumises were right, and that the Theotokis administration indeed remained inactive vis-à-vis the Macedonian Question. Ion spoke for many of his contemporaries when he described Theotokis as a lazy and mediocre man: ‘he is interested in dealing with the circumstances, to avoid trouble, to have as much quiet as possible, play cards, and sometimes have some women too’, wrote Ion in his diary in May 1906.<sup>447</sup> The above assessment was an honest expression of the anger of the generation of 1897 over their disappointment and anger with Theotokis’s foreign policy. But it greatly underestimated Theotokis’s involvement with the Defence.

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<sup>447</sup> DRAI 1.7, diary for 1905-06, pp. 73-4.

### III. THE MINISTRY AND THE MACEDONIAN DEFENCE

By the summer of 1904 most of the ingredients of the Macedonian Defence were in place: the Macedonian Committee was set up in Athens, ready to work with the government; the first bands had already crossed the frontier; Ion had set up a support network in the vilayet of Monastir; and the irredentist Athenian press was prepared to glorify new martyrs of Greek nationalism. There were two organisational centres: the first was the consulate of Salonica, which supervised operations in the Salonica vilayet, and the other was the Macedonian Committee, which in cooperation with the consulates and the government, supervised operations in the vilayet of Monastir. Unlike the original plans in 1903 (see p.181ff.) , the bands did not have a mere defensive role. They actively sought to confront the ‘Bulgarians’ – as they indiscriminately called all Exarchists, even those opposed to union with Bulgaria.

It has been known since Vlachos wrote his work in the 1930s that the consulates, and especially the consulates of Monastir and Salonica, discussed frequently with the Minister the content of the Defence: organisational matters, battles between Greek bands and their enemies, casualties and military routes, as well as the need

for more men and ammunition often appeared in consular reports.<sup>448</sup> Nevertheless, a new finding that emerges from our research is that the Embassy in Constantinople was bypassed in these discussions. Gryparis received little information, although until 1904 the consuls sent most of their reports to Constantinople, and the ambassador subsequently decided which ones would be forwarded to Athens.<sup>449</sup> The ambassadors to the Powers were similarly uninformed. While the consuls gained greater administrative independence, the Ministry instructed the ambassadors on correct language and kept them away from the decision-making.

A circular message of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Skouzes, on 12/25 September 1906 is characteristic of the Ministry-approved language on the Defence.<sup>450</sup> First, ambassadors were instructed to claim that the Defence was compatible with the Murzsteg reforms: ‘we offer full support to the work of the Great Powers in Macedonia’ and Greek military activity was not antagonistic but complimentary to the work of the Powers. Second, the task of the Greek ambassadors was to ‘restore matters in their true appearance’: the aims of the

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<sup>448</sup> See Vlachos, *The Macedonian...*, ch.VI ‘From the armed intervention of Greeks and Serbians in Macedonia and the Kossovo vilayet until the end of the year 1905’, pp. 353-413.

<sup>449</sup> For the absence of any discussion of the content of the Defence see the files of AYEC related to the Macedonian Question for 1904-07: 1905.2, 1906.2, 1907.1.

<sup>450</sup> AYEP 1907 unclassified file number 5, Skouzes to the ambassadors, the 12/25 September 1906 document is quoted in Skouzes to Deliyiannis, 10/23 October 1907, number 4246. For Skouzes’s reports see also AYEP 1906 unclassified file 2.

Greeks in Macedonia were defensive, Greek Macedonians were ‘law-abiding’ (*νομοταγείς*), and the Greek military activity was the result of prior Bulgarian aggression. Or, as he put it to the Greek ambassador in Vienna, ‘the Greek population is forced [by the Bulgarians] to take defensive measures’.<sup>451</sup> This language is in line with similar cases where smaller states engaged in conflicts resort to moralistic language. Thus, Greece continued during 1904-07 to complain that in Macedonia ‘might made right’ and that the inactivity of the Powers gave Bulgaria a free hand. In its official policy, the Ministry claimed that all it wanted was the respect of law and order.

As we shall examine in this section, his peaceful and reassuring language was far removed from the violent reality of Macedonia. It must have appeared unconvincing to anyone who knew anything about contemporary Balkan events, especially after 1905, when news about Greek outrages appeared often in the European, especially the British, press. Nevertheless, Skouzes’s language aimed at gaining time for the bands, and not at convincing foreign audiences. Other than that, the ambassadors never received information on the Defence. This was a strategy that paid off in the context of the armed conflicts in Macedonia, but augured trouble for Greece’s diplomatic relations.

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<sup>451</sup> AYEP 1906 unclassified file number 2, Skouzes to Manos, Athens, 2/15 June 1906, number 1997.

It would be naïve however to assume that ambassadors such as Gryparis, Metaxas and N.P. Deliyiannis did not know that the Greek bands undertook aggressive operations against the revolutionaries, especially when the press in Greece and Europe discussed Greek actions at length. For instance, on 15/28 December 1906, *The Times* reported: ‘Massacres of Bulgarian peasants on a large scale such as those of Vrania, Karadjovo and elsewhere, have marked this period... the honours of the campaigns have mainly rested with the Greeks’. But, even so, the ambassadors never received inside information. This complicated their position vis-à-vis European ambassadors who were fully informed about events in Macedonia from their ministries.<sup>452</sup>

The ambassadors appeared irrelevant to the work of the Ministry in Macedonia. Between 1904 and 1907 they did little more than contacting journalists asking them to publicise the Greek cause and forwarding back to Athens excerpts of the European press. Their interviews with European politicians and diplomats were uneasy since the Greek ambassadors had the impossible task of pretending they knew nothing about Greek operations in Macedonia, and especially of the involvement of the Greek state, which was obvious to contemporary observers. They were condemned to repeat *ad infinitum* the dilatory language of Skouzes and were cut off from any serious involvement with the discussions inside the Ministry.

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<sup>452</sup> ‘The state of Macedonia’, *The Times*, 15/28 December 1906, p. 4.

Silence was not limited to the Ministry. Theotokis himself was silent on Macedonia. When he had the post of Foreign Minister, Theotokis only wrote at length when transmitting important information about the content of the reforms; otherwise his messages were short and consisted of circulating information sent to him by the consuls. Unlike Romanos and Rallis, Theotokis avoided giving his opinion on the defence of Patriarchists against the revolutionaries. When discussing Macedonia with foreign diplomats he focused on the reforms and European diplomacy. Only if pressed hard about the activities of the Greek bands, Theotokis would allude to the excitement of public opinion from Bulgarian violence and suggest that government prohibitions against the bands would only make things worse. He was similarly careful in his public statements. He preferred to arrange the dirty business of the Defence (money, weapons and recruitment) through private conversations.<sup>453</sup>

Should we conclude from the above that Theotokis was indifferent to Macedonia? His political opponents certainly accused him of being unpatriotic. Nevertheless, two important developments during his premiership suggest otherwise. First, the Defence was under the control of the government, and especially of the Ministry: the consulates became the organisational centres of the Greek bands in European

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<sup>453</sup> FO 286/476, Elliot to Lansdowne, Athens, 6/19 December 1903, number 160; AYEL 1904.1.1.1, circular message of Theotokis to the Greek embassies, Athens, 21 June/ 4 July 1904, number 2232.

Turkey, the places where the bandits got directions, money and information. Second, the Macedonian Committee became the intermediary between the government and the consulates, on the one hand, and the bandits, on the other. The Committee recruited the bandits, and assigned them leaders and missions. It is extremely unlikely that either of these developments would have happened without the consent of the Prime Minister.<sup>454</sup> Moreover, Theotokis's silence can be readily explained: as Philip Carabott and Eleni Chourmouzi have demonstrated, the elitist and reserved Theotokis was vulnerable to public discontent. The Gospel Riots of 1901 [*Ευαγγελικά*] were the most traumatic experience of his political life: the irredentist press of Athens and the university students accused him of favouring the interests of the dynasty over the nation and its traditions. Demonstrators threw stones and fired their guns in his direction. Eleven people were killed and Theotokis resigned from the post of Prime Minister. After the Gospel Riots, Theotokis avoided antagonising openly the irredentists.<sup>455</sup>

Theotokis was silent, but he was not secretive. The foreign policy of the government was often debated in newspapers. Moreover, Theotokis and his party made a conscious effort to include their opponents in the decision making: thus

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<sup>454</sup> Cf. Georgios Epitropakis, Iraklis Zareifis, Efi Paschalidou, *The Macedonian Struggle and the events in Thrace* (in Greek) (Athens, 1998), ch. 'The doubts and preliminary decisions of the Greek government', pp. 147-55.

<sup>455</sup> Philip Carabott, 'Politics, orthodoxy and the language question in Greece: the Gospel riots of November 1901', *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, 3:1 (1993), pp. 117-38, here 131; Chourmouzi, HXIV pp. 174-77. See also Bochos, 'Domestic politics' (in Greek), in Christos Chatziiosif (ed.), *The history of twentieth century Greece*, vol. A2 (Athens, 1999), pp. 37-105, here 43-4.

Ioannis Rallis, son of the party leader Dimitris, as well as the Deliyiannist Alexandros Romas, were members of the governing body of the Macedonian Committee. The number of the people who participated in the decision making for the Defence (the Macedonian Committee, the consulates, the government, military officers, and the Dragoumises and their circle) was several hundred. This creates an interesting contrast with Rallis, a politician called ‘archon of Attica’ due to his populism, and who, in 1897, 1903 and 1905, was far more secretive about his plans on Macedonia. Deliyiannis, the populist politician *par excellence* of this period, mistrusted secret societies and their decision-making bodies. He preferred to resolve diplomatic matters through private conversations. Stephanos similarly castigated the tendency of the government to discuss openly the Macedonian Question claiming that these matters should be dealt with secrecy. Populist politicians, then, were paradoxically more inclined to secrecy than was the elitist Theotokis.

Although it is naïve to accept at face value contemporary political accusations against Theotokis’s patriotism, it would be equally naïve to assume that the *only* motive of the Theotokisists was irredentism. The real question is how the Macedonian Defence fitted with the ideology and political priorities of the Theotokisist party. Luckily, not all Theotokisists were as silent as their leader.

Three months after the death of Melas, on 3/16 January 1905, Emmanouil Repoulis published an article in *Asty*. Repoulis was the director of the newspaper, and a long-time associate and disciple of *Acropolis's* Gavriilidis. Repoulis was also a politician: he was elected with the Theotokisist party in 1899, and attempted but failed to get re-elected in 1903. In the approaching elections of February, Repoulis knew that the prospects of his party were slim. The article was an attempt to improve the electoral prospects of the New Party.<sup>456</sup>

Repoulis praised the progress made by the government: his language was characteristic of Theotokisist moderation and he avoided the bombastic rhetoric of Kalapothakis's *Embros*. He also warned that a Deliyiannis government would undermine these successes: the title of the article 'Method in everything' was an attack to the alleged spontaneity and disorganisation of Deliyiannists in international affairs. As he put it in the text: 'of course we mean *never* to return to the days of National Societies in Greece'.<sup>457</sup> According to Repoulis, the Defence was an alternative to the allegedly reckless irredentism of Deliyiannis. This was a common trope of Theotokisist politics: Theotokisists saw themselves as responsible and careful, whereas Deliyiannists were ready to follow the lowest instincts of the populace. Repoulis omitted any reference to territorial expansion or

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<sup>456</sup> Nanako Sawayanagi, 'The team of the Japanese: a concept and politics of reform in Greece: 1906-08' (New York University PhD thesis, 2009), p. 30.

<sup>457</sup> Repoulis, 'Method on everything', *Asty*, 8/21 January 1905, p. 1. His italics.

change of the *status quo* and talked only of ‘recognition’ of the Greek rights in Macedonia. The involvement of the government in Macedonia had a defensive character, the formation of a civilian guard (*πολιτοφυλακή*) against Bulgarian aggression. Unlike 1897, no large bands would cross the frontier: the Government would merely help the Macedonians organise themselves. Repoulis advertised the Defence as a policy that combined responsibility with action.

The above depiction of Deliyiannis was a political artifact and not reality. After 1897, Deliyiannis was conciliatory and careful in his public speeches on irredentism, and in any case he was less implicated with the Society in 1897 than the Theotokisists accused him of being. Unfortunately, we know much less than we would like about Deliyiannis’s opinion of the Defence. According to a letter of Koromilas to the Ministry shortly after Deliyiannis’s electoral triumph in 1905, the new Prime Minister had agreed to continue the policy of the previous government on the Macedonian Question. But we also know that he and his supporters saw in the National Society an attempt to overthrow him from power. For Chatzigiannakoglous, ‘the National Society was under the direct control of the Tricoupist opposition’. Deliyiannis did not trust the methods of the Theotokisists, especially when they implied more government involvement. Moreover, he almost certainly viewed the Macedonian Committee, which was very close in terms of

membership and ideology to the Society, as well as the ‘method’ of the government with suspicion. Had he not been assassinated shortly after his re-election, he would probably have taken more of the decision-making into his own hands.<sup>458</sup>

But, even when inaccurate, Repoulis’s text was a good depiction of Theotokisist thought. Although Melas and the Dragoumises had a key role in the early stages of the Defence, once their plans were adopted by the government, Theotokis and his associates vested them with their own political and ideological priorities. It was in accordance with these priorities that the Theotokis administration affected a series of changes in the Ministry between 1904 and 1907. The most important of these changes led to the foundation of a Press Office in 1907. Regarding this new institution there are only two documents: the first is a letter that ambassador Deliyiannis sent from Paris to the Ministry in January 1904, and the second a report that the director of the Press Office sent to Skouzes in April 1908 summarising the progress and achievements of the Office in its first year of existence (1907). Dimitrios Kaklamanos, the Chairman of the Office, was a Tricoupist who disliked Theotokis. He left *Asty* in 1901 because he disagreed with its Theotokisist owner, Themis Anninos, and founded his own newspaper *Neon*

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<sup>458</sup>Chatzigiannakoglous, *The political...*, p. 126; Deliyiannis quoted in *ibid*, p. 149. See also Gianouloupoulos’s chapter in *Our noble ...*, ‘The political management of the defeat [of 1897]’, pp. 171-83; and Nikolaos Oikonomou, pp. 180-2.

*Asty*. His recruitment in 1907 by the government exemplifies the political advantages of the Defence: the Defence had the potential of bringing back to the party the upper middle-class Athenians, who had left the party after Theotokis's election.<sup>459</sup>

That the Tricoupist/Theotokisist party had wanted for some time to restructure the Ministry is evidenced by the correspondence of Mavrocordato. As Ambassador in Constantinople, Mavrocordato had repeatedly pushed for a more efficient distribution of information by the Ministry. As early as 24 January/5 February 1890 he wrote to Stephanos, then Foreign Minister in the Tricoupis Cabinet: 'it is preposterous that White [the British Ambassador] and Stelidoff [the Russian Ambassador] learn before me what happens in Athens instead of me informing them'. He suggested that the reports of the other Embassies be forwarded to Constantinople and that the main news about Greek politics be sent to the embassies through telegraph. On 15/27 January 1890, Mavrocordato complained that the clerks of the Ministry did not work long or hard enough ('only the Minister is truly working'), and asked for greater efficiency. Mavrocordato, in accordance

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<sup>459</sup> Kostas Loulos, *History and press: Athenian newspapers and the case of the armament scandal of 1907* (in Greek) (Athens, 2006), p. 68. Cf. Valentini Tselika, 'The organisation of the Press Office by the Venizelos government (1930-32)' (in Greek), in Odysseas Dimitrakopoulos and Thanos Veremis (eds.), *Studies around Venizelos and his era*, pp. 589-601, here 591-92, which mistakenly places the foundation of the Press Office in 1910.

with contemporary European practices, wanted a professionalised Ministry manned by experts and independent of political control.

But the Ministry worked differently. Politicians had the upper hand over bureaucrats both in the decision making and in appointments. The ambassadors were almost always either the *protégés* of an important politician (Metaxas, Gryparis and Zalokostas were all under the protection of Mavrocordato) or connected with an important political family: such was for instance the case of Deliyiannis in Paris. This should not be seen automatically as a problem. The politicisation of the Foreign Ministry and of the diplomatic corps was in line with what happened in many other states of the period. Most immediately, in Serbia and Bulgaria too, it was politicians rather than diplomats that ran the show. Balkan countries had weak institutions and bureaucracies, and this often translated into more power for politicians. Mavrocordato's own insistence, although it stemmed from his honest conviction that he worked for the best interest of the country, was also part of Mavrocordato's Tricoupist belief that the kingdom and its administration had to be close to northern European models. His conviction had ideological origins.<sup>460</sup> Stephanos indeed sympathised with Mavrocordato's complaints but such reforms would have been both expensive and unpopular. Only

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<sup>460</sup> Dexter Perkins, 'Diplomacy and popular government', *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 70 (1953), pp. 184-202, here 184-86; William E. Lingelbach, 'Democracy and the control of Foreign Affairs', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 66 (1927), pp. 655-79, here 655-57.

the Macedonian Defence turned the Ministry into a major political priority, and allowed the Government to increase expenditure for foreign policy.<sup>461</sup>

The new Press Office had begun to operate in 1905. The main aim of the Office was to edit and distribute a bulletin that contained information on Macedonia. The consuls sent reports to the Minister who read them and then forwarded them to the Embassies to have them publicised in European newspapers: by 1903 the volume of information was so large that this system became slow and inefficient. As Repoulis's *Asty* noted: 'the most important thing is not the transmission of European news to Greece, but the transmission from Greece of everything that should be widely known in Europe'.<sup>462</sup> The motivations behind the Office and the Telegraphic Agency were of a Tricoupist nature: increase efficiency, facilitate the flow of information, and move towards 'Europe'. As Mavrocordato had put it to Tricoupis: to avert the possibility that 'the newly created Greece is doomed to become like one of the low class, miniscule republics of South America'.<sup>463</sup> Mavrocordato in fact misrepresented the size of South American Republics: most of them were several times larger than Greece. But this mistake gives us an insight into contemporary Tricoupist thinking: if Greece was not big or strong enough, then its only hope to realise its irredentist mission was to keep close to the northern

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<sup>461</sup> DRAS 12.1, Mavrocordato to Stephanos, Pera, 24 January/6 February [1890], number 49 and January 15/27 1890, number 51; TRICE 6, Mavrocordato to Tricoupis, [probably Hălăucești], 13/25 June 1886, number 6/34/a.

<sup>462</sup> 'The new telegraphic agency', *Asty*, 1/14 January 1905, p. 2.

<sup>463</sup> TRICE 6, Mavrocordato to Tricoupis, Hălăucești, 12/24 May 1886, 6/41/a. His italics.

European model and become a ‘model kingdom’ [*πρότυπον βασίλειο*]. Tricoupists hoped to realise this project with the help of professionalised diplomats and army officers – coming almost exclusively from the upper middle classes – and of a ‘Europeanised’ political class, liberated from the legacy of the Ottoman past. But as we shall see in ch. IV, this project met with significant opposition from less privileged people who resented its elitist nature.

In his 1908 summary, Kaklamanos claimed that the Office had succeeded in publishing a good number of articles in the foreign press. His enthusiasm, however, seems exaggerated if we bear in mind Ion’s complaints about *The Times*: this newspaper agreed with British Liberals that Bulgarians were a majority in Macedonia. On the continent, the French news agency Havas collaborated best with the Office. Reuter and the Italian Stefani also distributed the news from the Office. Wolffs Telegraphisches Bureau was Kaklamanos’s main concern: in Germany and Austria Hungary, news from a Greek perspective rarely made it to the newspapers.<sup>464</sup> The Office also maintained contacts with individual newspapers: *Le Gaulois* was seen as hostile to Greek interests, and the Office tried to approach its staff. The Office also maintained contacts with foreign journalists such as Allen Upward and M. Paillarès.<sup>465</sup> The Ministry communicated directly

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<sup>464</sup> SKOUZ 2, Kaklamanos to Skouzes, Athens, 20 April/3 May 1908, no number.

<sup>465</sup> For Paillarès see Vlachos, pp. 268-69.

with Greek journalists who lived abroad, such as Chaimis, Alexandros Diomidis and Kl. Nikolaidis who used their positions to promote Greek interests.

Finally, the Ministry and the Office were particularly worried about the Balkan Committee in London and the alleged favour French socialists showed towards Bulgarians. It was as a reaction to the above that *La Ligue pour la défense de l'Hellenisme* was founded. In its manifesto, probably written in 1905, the *Ligue* included in the enemies of Hellenism, together with Ottoman tyranny, 'la mollesse de la diplomatie européenne' and 'la froideur de l'opinion publique'. The *Ligue* included several important members of the French political class, the most famous among whom was Georges Clemenceau.<sup>466</sup>

Nevertheless, the Greek successes with foreign newspapers and news agencies had no tangible effect on foreign diplomacy. Despite all its efforts, the British continued to regard autonomy as the most preferable solution to the Macedonian Question. In 1906, Skouzes would again warn against the danger of Macedonian autonomy established with British support and in 1907 Greece came close to a direct clash with Britain. Despite continuous Greek efforts, the British stance did

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<sup>466</sup> AYEP 1907: unclassified file number 5, 'Manifesto (sic) de la Ligue française pour la défense des droits de l'Hellénisme'.

not change. By the time Kaklamanos wrote his report, the Defence was in a serious crisis.<sup>467</sup>

The organisation of the consulates in European Turkey also underwent changes. For instance, in 1905 a new Greek consulate was founded in Xanthi to protect Greek interests. Moreover, the period 1903-06 saw the appointment of many new officials in Macedonia. Army officers were appointed as military attachés to the consulates: they collected military information about the Greek bandits; they observed the reforms and especially the gendarmerie; and they acted as military experts giving advice and expert analysis. This post was a novelty: before 1904, military attachés were used for embassies only.<sup>468</sup>

The consulates were pressing the Ministry for more staff. Kontogouris wrote on 9/22 April 1905 that ‘the workload is continuously increasing and the staff of the consulate is unable to fulfill its duties’. The employment of more staff was a ‘great urgency’. One year later, Xydakis returned to this issue asking for more staff and particularly for army officers for the ‘special office’ [*ειδικόν γραφείον*] that was set up to overview the Defence. Among other tasks the consulate had ‘continuous correspondence with all the bands, to all the national centres [*κέντρα*] in the cities

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<sup>467</sup> Vlachos, *The Macedonian Question...*, pp. 470-72; AYEP 1906: unclassified file number 2, Skouzes to Deliyiannis, Athens, 23 May/5 June 1906, number 1707.

<sup>468</sup> AYEL 1904.1.1.1, Theotokis to the ambassadors, Athens, 29 June/12 July 1904, number 2334.

and the national committees in the cities, towns, and villages...the maintenance of a scale of salaries... a record of the money sent to... the national centres.’<sup>469</sup>

Monastir was similarly renewed. Pezas had been there since 1897, but, as mentioned earlier, on 11/24 March 1903 he returned to Athens due to overwork.<sup>470</sup>

He was replaced by Kypraios, who following the complaints of the Dragoumises about his unpatriotic stance, was in turn replaced by a man who had the trust of Stephanos, Kallergis. As we saw earlier, Kallergis was one of the ‘casualties’ of the Melas expedition and was removed from his post. Levidis,<sup>471</sup> Philippos Kontogouris and Nikolaos Xydakis followed him as consuls in Monastir but none stayed for a long time. Stability was restored only with the appointment of Konstantinos Dimaras, who stayed in Monastir between March 1907 and July 1910.

The staff was increased. In 1901, Pezas was alone. But Dimaras in 1907 had two associates: the secretary St. Polichroniadis was appointed on 15/28 November 1906 and the interpreter Georgios Chonaïos on 14/27 January 1904. Dimaras himself was removed by Kallergis, by then Foreign Minister in the Stephanos

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<sup>469</sup> AYE 1905 AAK/KA ‘(Monastir consulate’), Kontogouris to Skouzes, Monastir, 9/22 April 1905, telegram without number [1905-06 doc. 24]; AYE 1906.AAK.A, ‘(Monastir consular affairs’), Xydakis to Skouzes, Monastir 10/23 March 1906, number 157.

<sup>470</sup> Epitropakis et al, *The Macedonian ...*, (in Greek) (Athens, 1998) p. 148, footnote 1.

<sup>471</sup> Probably Spyridon.

Cabinet. The Dragoumises played a role in who was going to be consul in Monastir and this had the disadvantage of leading to constant changes of personnel.

Discontinuity helps explain why Greek bands performed worse in the vilayet of Monastir than in the vilayet of Salonica. In Salonica, Koromilas stayed for three full years (1904-07) and took under his control the activities of the bands. In Monastir, however, the consul had to share power with Kalapothakis and his Committee in Athens. The Ministry failed in taking operations under its control: Kalapothakis at least offered a measure of continuity and stability, while the consulate was in turmoil. Dual leadership did not work out well for the Greek bandits and in 1905 they suffered reverses. Among others, Marinos Limberatos, Michail Moraitis and Spyridon Frangopoulos, all officers of the Greek army, died in action.

Similar changes took place between 1904 and 1906 in the vilayet of Janina. In Avlona (Vlora), Berat and Elbassan the staff was increased and new consuls were appointed. Changes in the general consulate of Janina were similar. I. Alexandropoulos was appointed on 14/27 November 1906. His secretary, Emmanouil Rikakis was appointed on 15/28 July 1906. The number of employees had similarly increased from two in 1901 to three in 1906. It appears that in

November 1906 a wave of new appointments took place, which included the Greek vice-consul in Kavalla, N. Mavroudis, appointed on 15/28 November 1906.

In Salonica too changes took place albeit in a more orderly fashion. The number of employees increased from five in 1901 to six in 1906. Of these six, only two were appointed before the coming of Theotokis to power: the first interpreter Theodoros Askitis (appointed on December 4/17, 1901) and the scribe St. Asteriadis (appointed on October 9/21 1882). The other positions were filled by people newly appointed in the 1904-06 period. The first secretary Efth. Kanellopoulos and the second secretary Ath. Chalkiopoulos were both appointed on November 15/28 1906. Koromilas was appointed on 9/22 September 1904. The newly appointed people were closer to Stephanos's anti-reform way of thinking. Any thoughts of improving Christian welfare through education and justice for all Christians would have to wait. The 'struggle' against the Bulgarians was given an absolute priority. We do not know much about the new staff's political affiliations, but, to judge from the cases we know something about, such as Koromilas and Kallergis, they were not necessarily Theotokisist but they did belong to a broadly defined Tricoupist camp. The language of the consular reports, in its advocacy of violence and the stereotypical depiction of the Bulgarians, was the language of radical irredentism.

Increased interest of the Greek government in the Defence also meant increased expense. From 1903 onwards, a large flow of money started going from the government to the hands of Greek bandits, Macedonian peasants and European journalists. These expenses were inserted in the annual budget of the Ministry, under the title *απρόβλεπτα*, i.e. unforeseen [expenses]. Until 1903, these expenses were insignificant, but from that year they became a large part of the Minister's budget. Unfortunately, there are no surviving documents in the Ministry's archive relating to these expenses nor is there any mention to them in the secondary literature. There are good reasons why the available information is scarce: firstly, the Ministry preferred to maintain secrecy about its unofficial policy: not only was the exact use of this fund a secret, but even inside the Ministry, few apart from the Minister had knowledge of how the 'unforeseen' were spent: Theotokis in particular, did not want to compromise Greece's diplomatic position by embracing publicly the use of violence in Macedonia, as Stephanos had done. Secondly, the discussions about these matters did not take place through the official correspondence of the Ministry but rather through private correspondence and especially private conversations. But the scarcity of documentation does not mean that the Ministry did not participate in the Defence and gave a free hand to private associations like the Macedonian Committee; on the contrary, the size of the sums

spent (ca. 3,100,000 francs in 1907) suggests how important the involvement of the Ministry was. The sum was actually double the one and a half million francs that Koromilas had requested in January 1905.<sup>472</sup> Without this money – and the ensuing government involvement – the Defence would have been impossible.

The document entitled ‘1907 budget unforeseen’ gives a good idea how the money was spent. The total sum of the ‘unforeseen’ was 3,087,854 francs. With the exception of 76,000 francs that went towards what Skouzes cryptically called ‘Albania A’ and ‘Albania B’, the rest went for the most part towards expenses related with Macedonia. Some of the expenses were related to the Office: in particular 100,000 francs were spent for ‘the press’, probably suggesting that this sum was given to Greek and foreign journalists who could influence public opinion abroad. The Ministry also spent 36,000 francs on Havas probably indicating the expenses for the special correspondence that the Office had with this news agency. About 80,000 francs were paid for ‘scholarship holders’. These holders could be either Greeks studying abroad and who had secured a scholarship through the mediation of someone in the Ministry, or more frequently, Macedonians studying in Greece, especially in Athens, or in a Greek school in Macedonia. The former were often the children of Macedonians who had aligned with the Greek cause in Macedonia. One of the most well-known examples is the two children of Kottas, a

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<sup>472</sup> AYE 1905.AAK/B, ‘Salonica consulate’, Koromilas to Skouzes, Salonica, 6/19 January 1905, number 60.

brigand we examined in ch. II. His children studied in Dellios's boarding school in Athens and eventually became officers of the Greek army. In 1893, Napoleon Betsos, then consul of Monastir, had requested and probably succeeded the reduction of the number of scholarship holders, on the basis that they were an inefficient way of strengthening the Greek community. However, after 1903 the number of the scholarship holders increased, as the government saw in scholarships a way of securing and increasing Greek influence in Macedonia.<sup>473</sup>

But by far most of the money was spent for the bands and other military expenses. The Greek government deployed around two thousand bandits in Macedonia:<sup>474</sup> as the document entitled 'P. Argyropoulos calculations' indicates the government provided for their clothing, armament, transportation to the frontier and also for a stipend. Bandits also needed money for bribes and rewards to the supporters of the Greeks cause. Kottas received ten pounds and each of his men got two pounds. We know that during their first trip, Melas and the three officers distributed money to people who helped them or whose relatives were killed by the revolutionaries. That the Greeks could give a couple of pounds without much thought must have made an impression. As Melas remarked to Natalia, 'imagine that no one here has

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<sup>473</sup> Julian Allan Brookes, "'Shoot the teacher": education and the roots of the Macedonian Struggle' (MA dissertation, Simon Fraser University, 2005), p. 109; AYE 1883.B, 'Documents to the Constantinople Embassy', Georgios Dokos to the Chairman of *The association for the propagation of the Greek culture* (Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos), Monastir, 8/20 December 1883, number 851.

<sup>474</sup> I.K. Mazarakis, HXIV p. 254.

change for a pound'.<sup>475</sup> All villagers that accepted to work for the Greek cause either by entering a band, or by helping one, were also expected to receive a salary. Indeed, this is what Vardas did in Kirtsitsa: he left a small garrison and authorised them to pay any villager willing to work for them.<sup>476</sup>

Unlike what Dimitris Livanios has argued, violence was not the only means to gain favour in Macedonian villages.<sup>477</sup> If violence was the stick, then money was the carrot. This policy had its disadvantages. It created resentment among Macedonian Muslims who saw in Greek money a dishonourable way of buying off consciences.<sup>478</sup> Money also attracted opportunists such as Zarkadas, whom we will examine shortly. We know very little about what made young Greek men cross the frontier and risk their lives with the bands, but it is obvious that we should not accept the Ministry's rhetoric about defending Macedonia at face value. The same goes for the bandits and their talk of 'liberating' Macedonia and helping their fellow Greeks. Although irredentism was part of the motivation, money and other less idealistic motivations must also have played their role. Like violence, money had the disadvantage that its effects on villagers were only temporary: people could well take the money and then betray the people who gave it to them. This

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<sup>475</sup> NAM p. 246.

<sup>476</sup> VARGAK, *The Macedonian Struggle: the 1906 diary*, entry for 24 September/7 October 1906, f 97<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>477</sup> Dimitris Livanios, "'Conquering the souls": nationalism and Greek guerrilla warfare in Ottoman Macedonia: 1904-08', *Byzantine and Modern Greek studies*, 23 (1999), pp. 195-221, here *passim*.

<sup>478</sup> Hanioglu, *Preparation for a revolution: the Young Turks: 1902-1908* (Oxford, 2001), chapter 'My friend Ali please form a band', pp. 221-27.

again was one of the key problems of the Macedonian Defence: the Ministry was paying much money at a time of severe austerity: was it put to good use?

In some cases, like that of Melas in 1903, the government, maybe even Theotokis himself, handed the money to the head of the band, who then distributed it to his men. But, as the number of the bands increased, and since the government and the Ministry wanted to maintain as much secrecy as possible, the money tended to take two different routes. On the one hand, some of the money was sent to the Greek consuls in Macedonia, as had happened earlier with Ion: this made sense, because the consuls had more information on the situation on the ground and could use the money as a stick and carrot, i.e. rewarding the bandits who conformed with the directions of the government and threatening to stop providing money to those who disobeyed. Unfortunately, we know next to nothing about how this financial network operated: in what way and how often the money was sent from the Ministry and under what conditions. But even with the little information available, it is evident that money increased the power and autonomy of the consuls: they had large sums of money at their disposal and they could decide how it should be spent.

Secondly, much of the money ended in the hands of the Macedonian Committee. Skouzes wrote that 70,000 francs were paid directly to the Committee for

armament, but it must also be the case that much of the money that the Ministry spent for the armament and clothing of the bands went into the hands of the Committee's head, Kalapothakis, since it was the Committee rather than the government that usually took care of the bands until they crossed the frontier. Moreover, we know that unlike the Bulgarian committees, their Greek counterpart extracted little money from the Macedonian Christians: fearing the unpopularity of requesting money, the Greek bands did not ask for frequent monetary contributions to the 'cause' and Greek schools were less expensive than the Bulgarian ones.<sup>479</sup> This means that the Greek Macedonian Committee was much more dependent on the Government for its financial survival, and helps explain why there was less friction between government and committees in the Greek case: the first indices of friction would appear only in 1908, when the Theotokis government decided to reduce significantly its financial help to the Committee. Overall, the dependence of the Committee went much deeper than the influence the government had on the Executive Board of the Committee, as described by Vlachos.<sup>480</sup> The Committee would have been unable to survive without the support of the Government.

This flow of money did not go unnoticed by foreigners. The Italian Ambassador in Athens wrote in 1905 that the money the Ministry spent on unforeseen expenses

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<sup>479</sup> AYE 1883.B: 'Consulates in Macedonia/The association for the propagation of Greek letters', the Chairman (Paparrigopoulos) and the Secretary (G.I. Zolotas) of the Society for the dissemination of the Greek letters to Alexandros Contostavlo (Minister of Foreign Affairs), Athens, 13/25 October 1883, number 1399.

<sup>480</sup> Vlachos, *The Macedonian Question...*, pp. 348-49.

was 600,000 drachmas in 1903, whereas in previous years it had been a much smaller sum. In 1904 it was 1,200,000 and in 1905 around one million drachmas. But interestingly enough, the Ambassador did not consider the possibility that this money was spent for the Defence. On the contrary, he believed that it was 'destinato a scopi politici'. Elliot similarly underestimated the involvement of the government in his annual report in 1906: 'That the Greek government is directly responsible for any of the outrages cannot be maintained, although the connivance of Greek officials with the bands is tolerably certain'. So, the results of the increased expenditure were mixed. The increase of the expenses did draw attention to it and foreign diplomats had become increasingly suspicious of the Government's actions, but even as late as 1906 it was not understood how deeply the Ministry was implicated in the bandit warfare: it was not until 1907 that the Powers decided to take action against the Greek military involvement in Macedonia. The distinction between official and unofficial policy worked.

In conclusion, we can say three things about the Defence. First, it decreased the influence of the ambassadors on the Macedonian Question. Their work was reduced to providing information for the Bulletin, and distributing it. Second, the consuls gained greater power inside the Ministry: they became the main focus of attention, and significant sums of money were directed to the consulates in

Macedonia, but also in the vilayet of Adrianople (Thrace) and of Janina (Epirus).

Third, the Defence assumed a complicated structure: it involved the Minister, the Prime Minister, the consuls, the Macedonian Committee and their respective responsibilities and spheres of actions were at best very loosely defined.

But what of the bandits? The power of the Ministry, as well as the limits of its control over the bands are exemplified by the story of Zarkadas and his band. In the fall of 1907 his band entered the vilayet of Janina, which contemporary Greeks called Epirus. In particular, the band started an excursion in what is today the north of the prefecture of Janina, right to the south of the Greek-Albanian border. The most common mother tongue was Albanian, but many, especially educated males, spoke Greek as a second language. Most inhabitants were Christian Orthodox, but there were also sizeable Muslim and Jewish communities.<sup>481</sup>

The way the band was organised was a mixture of the nineteenth-century incursions of bandits and of the Defence. The leader of the band was probably a common-law criminal, in the tradition of the ‘klephts’. His name too is a suggestion of his participation in the klepht tradition, as he chose an alias indicating his abilities. *Zarkádi* means roe deer: there were plenty of them in the area that Zarkadas was active and they were well known for their speed. Since this

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<sup>481</sup> M.V., Sakellariou, *Epirus: four thousand years of Greek history and civilisation* (in Greek) (Athens, 1997), p. 480.

band was not active in Macedonia, its actions might seem irrelevant. But it is of interest to the extent that it motivated the consul of Janina to write lengthy reports. These reports give us a description of how bands were organised and also they show that under certain conditions they were dismantled by the Ministry. As we shall see that the bandits expected a salary from the consul meant that at least indirectly the Ministry could exercise some control over them – this is quite evident if we compare the bandits of the Macedonian Struggle with the nineteenth century klephts who acted in a completely independent manner. But the effectiveness of this control should not be overestimated: reading most of the reports of the Ministry leaves one with the impression that the bands acted as ordered military units that closely followed a plan. The Zarkadas case actually shows that in case of disobedience the only means of control the consulate had was to entirely withdraw its support, which was obviously a measure to be used only under extreme circumstances: beyond that there was little the consulate or the Ministry could do to impact on the behaviour and plans of the bands.

In his reports, the consul gave rich information on the participants in the bands. He knew their names, origin and military rank: they certainly were not afraid of getting arrested once back to Greece. This means that the participants in the band had no qualms about spreading information about their military rank. The consul

also suggested that the band was formed in Athens by a certain priest Thomaidis. They were told that they would have the support of the Greek consul in Janina and that the consul would give them a monthly stipend, both of which must have been necessary conditions for people to join a band. Three other people were recruited at the frontier: they were frontier guards, who were given similar promises by the band leader. Zarkadas had announced to his men that he wanted to ‘liberate Epirus’: Zarkadas’s style was reminiscent of the Greek bandits in the Crimean War mentioned briefly in ch. I. What we have here is a reversal of Melas’s story: regular soldiers led by a klepht. We find here the mixture of religion, church, army and nationalism which was typical of Greece in the 1900s. The church in particular provided not only the ideological grounds for the Defence – in the distinction between Patriarchists and Exarchists – but also an institutional framework for the bands to operate: bandits often sought refuge in monasteries and they always were in touch with the local bishop, who had the potential of acting as an intermediary between the Ottoman authorities and the band.

The first mention of Zarkadas is in a ciphered telegram of 14/27 October 1907. Zarkadas arrived at a monastery ‘three hours away from Janina’ and sent a letter to the Metropolitan of Janina ‘announcing that he was sent by the priest Thomaidis and asking for directions’. The Metropolitan communicated with the consul, and

subsequently informed Zarkadas that he knew nothing of him and that he should depart quickly and quietly from Epirus.<sup>482</sup>

Zarkadas soon made his first blunder. He sent a letter to Dobra [*Ασπράγγελοι*], one of the wealthiest villages of the area, announcing that he would soon arrive, and ordering the villagers to make the necessary preparations. The villagers suspected he wanted to plunder, informed the authorities, and fifty soldiers soon arrived to defend the village. Zarkadas, who the consul suspected was Sotirios Liolios, a notorious thief, left the monastery where he was staying for ‘an unknown destination’.<sup>483</sup>

On 24 October/8 November, N. Angonakis described at some length the speech that Zarkadas made to the village of Krestounitsa.

Zarkadas invited all the inhabitants to the church and made them give an oath. He told them that he was sent by priest Thomaidis, and showed them a sealed document. He was there to protect them and they must indicate who are their oppressors and traitors so that he can punish them in an exemplary way. He added that they should not fear, but they should trust him and now in the winter, when the nights are long and no one stays in the countryside, he will provide them with weapons. He forbade them from denouncing him to the authorities, warning that he murders informers.

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<sup>482</sup> AYE 1907.10γ [previous classification: 8 AAK], Angonakis (consul-general of Janina), to Skouzes, Janina, 14/27 October 1907, ciphered telegram number 4654.

<sup>483</sup> AYE 1907. 10γ, Angonakis to Skouzes, Janina, 18/31 October 1907, number 591.

Angonakis added that the band was disciplined and behaved well, and that Zarkadas seemed to know the place.<sup>484</sup>

Angonakis soon sent information about some members of the band. Three of them were soldiers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> company of the 4<sup>th</sup> evzone [i.e. elite light infantry] battalion: Nikolaos Zachos from the village Trikeri, near Volos, Petros Anthinakis from Kerasia, near Karditsa, and Taxiarchis Moschos from Pappa, also near Karditsa. Zarkadas met these men at the border station of Oxia-Despoti (something which confirms what Gavrilis says about the institutional collapse of the Turkish-Greek frontier, see p. 75): he told them that they would liberate Epirus and promised them a stipend. Zarkadas's error was that he entered the Ottoman Turkey without having a guaranteed source of income for his men – had he hoped to do it through blackmailing the villagers, the Dobra incident must have showed him that it would not always be easy.<sup>485</sup>

In the meantime, Zarkadas, whose real name now according to the consul was Kokkinos, continued his activities in Epirus. In early November, Zarkadas had reached the villages around Ergiri (Gjirokastër). The Ottomans, fearful of new trouble, took hostages from two of the villages, Bostini [renamed to *Πωγωνιανή* after 1913] and Krestounitsa [*Δεσποτικό*]. This made Angonakis change his mind:

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<sup>484</sup> AYE 1907.10γ, Angonakis to Skouzes, Janina, 24 October/8 November 1907, number 596.

<sup>485</sup> AYE 1907.10γ, Angonakis to Skouzes, Janina, 16/29 November 1907, number 675.

he now claimed that Zarkadas was ‘completely misguided and ignored this place’. Zarkadas had probably got into serious financial trouble and – ignorant of the consul’s anger – he hoped that the consulate would take care of him. He sent a messenger with a letter asking for ‘some clothes, a dagger, a watch, a telescope, and ten pounds’. Angonakis at last had the opportunity to communicate with Zarkadas and his men: he told the messenger that he could not do anything for Zarkadas since he had received no instructions from Athens. His presence in Epirus was ‘completely harmful’ and he should depart at the earliest possible time for Greece.<sup>486</sup>

This action brought immediate results. On 21 November/4 December, Angonakis wrote that three men of Zarkadas, among whom the aforementioned Moschos, had deserted him and sought help from the consulate. Once the three men realised that the consulate disavowed Zarkadas and their leader was on his own, they visited Angonakis, agreed to return to Athens, and indeed Angonakis helped them escape to Greece. He probably also arranged for Moschos to avoid disciplinary punishment for having abandoned his post. This was almost certainly the end of Zarkadas’s band: the consul never returned to this subject. Zarkadas acted on his own initiative, risking to provoke serious counter-measures by the Turks in Epirus, and the consul quickly decided and effected the dismantling of the band. But the

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<sup>486</sup> AYE 1907.10γ, Angonakis to Skouzes, Janina, 16/29 November 1907, number 677.

quick dismantling was also a sign of the limits of the consul's and the Ministry's power: other than withdrawing money and support they had no other means of controlling bandits, and this meant that the plans they made on paper would often be frustrated in action.<sup>487</sup>

Zarkadas's speech, described above, is the only case we know of when the informants of the consul, i.e. the villagers themselves, describe the bands and not vice versa. It is also quite similar to a description by Vardas, the successor of Melas to the command of Western Macedonia, of a speech he gave in the village Kirtsitsa on 24 September/7 October 1906.

In the evening, following my invitation, the villagers arrived. I talk to them for a long time, giving advice and teachings and threats. I then make them give an oath, although they are Bulgarian-speakers, they all speak excellent Greek since they often immigrate there [=to Greece]. I made strong reproaches to some young men who were singing songs of the komitadjis, Karsakov [=a Bulgarian revolutionary] etc, they deny it and I tell them I forgive them for the first and last time. I set up a committee...<sup>488</sup>

There was therefore a pattern, which suggests how the relation of the bandits with the peasants was structured. The villagers were summoned and gave an oath. There always were threats that betrayal would be severely punished, obviously because recourse to the Ottomans or the revolutionaries for protection was a common

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<sup>487</sup> AYE 1907.10γ, Angonakis to Skouzes, Janina, 21 November/4 December 1907, number 695.

<sup>488</sup> VARGAK, *The Macedonian Struggle: the 1906 diary*, entry for 24 September/7 October 1906, f 97<sup>a</sup>.

phenomenon, as we saw with Zarkadas in Dobra. And the villagers had to prove that they would continue their activities for the Greek cause: in the case of Zarkadas they had to consent to receive and hide weapons and in the case of Vardas they set up a committee. This not only made them useful to the bandits, but it also reduced the chances of a betrayal, since the villagers too would stand accused. Villagers both admired and feared the strength of the bandits. The villagers did not shy away from using the strength of the bandits for their purposes: we saw this with Melas, and Vardas too reported that ‘they all advise me “to restore order” and this because they have their usual passions’. Similarly some Patriarchist women of Stromnitza asked for help from the local Metropolitan in the ‘revenge and exemplary punishment’ of the revolutionaries who had murdered their relatives and friends.<sup>489</sup> The reason that the villagers did not make similar demands to Zarkadas probably is that the Christians of the vilayet of Janina had not experienced the bitter conflicts that separated Patriarchists and Exarchists, Greeks and Bulgarians in Macedonia.

The pattern of the speeches seems to be more in accordance with the klepht tradition rather than with anything that would be expected from the officers of a regular army such as Melas and Vardas. If there was any difference between

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<sup>489</sup> AYE 1905 AAK/Z ‘Church affairs’, Elissavet Hatzidimitriou, Zoi Papamoseos, Panagiota N. Antoniadou, Kalliopi G. Moulka, Kalliopi D. Koliouka, Ifigeneia Ch. Lioti and Aikaterina G. Panagiotou to the Metropolitan of Stromnitza, Stromnitza, 24 March/6 April 1905, no number.

Zarkadas and the more educated and disciplined Vardas it was that the latter avoided impressing villagers by putting them in a church, alluding to Athenian priests, and showing them sealed documents – illiterate villagers probably were likely to be mystified by apparently official documents. Officers of the regular army were less acquainted with the symbolic world of the villagers, and Vardas in particular preferred using a matter-of-fact tone and the constant threat of violence. In short, the relations of the bandits with the peasants as described above confirm that the support of the peasants for the bands was much less than what most people in Athens hoped for in 1903 and 1904 – and hence people like Vardas or Zarkadas had to resort to various tricks to gain their favour. The peasants, indeed, mostly cooperated with the bandits out of fear or calculation, and instances of an ideological commitment to the Greek cause were rare.<sup>490</sup>

Tellingly when the band of Kalomenopoulos was destroyed in action in the spring of 1905, Koromilas asked from Athens that ‘the newspapers should not write anything, [they should] not mourn the dead’ because ‘the danger for me is great’:<sup>491</sup> the articles of the Athenian newspapers often attracted unwanted attention on the consuls. Worse still, the Chairman of the Committee, Kalapothakis, encouraged bandits to keep detailed diaries for later publication in

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<sup>490</sup> VARGAK, *The Macedonian Struggle: the 1906 diary*, entry for 24 September/7 October 1906, f 97<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>491</sup> AYE 1905 AAK/B ‘Salonica consulate’, Koromilas to Skouzes, Salonica, 24 April/7 May 1905, number 126.

his newspaper, *Embros*. Greek bandits were happy to oblige: Vardas, for instance, kept not only diaries and maps but also carried with him copies of the letters he sent and received from Athens and the consulates. When Greek bandits got killed or captured, all the valuable information ended in enemy hands. Xydakis wrote with exasperation in 1906:

The very Vardas, the most prudent of the leaders, carries with him a whole suitcase with documents, registers, deciphering codes, books, account books, and whatever else, [this is] most absurd and dangerous...Some people from Athens have told me that they order [the band leaders] to keep diaries to be used for the writing of a history of the Macedonian Struggle, but I hesitate to accept this story as true, so childish it appears to me.<sup>492</sup>

The story of Zarkadas should make us reconsider the role of consulates in European Turkey. Gounaris has correctly warned against the ‘consulo-centric’ [*προξενοκεντρική*] approach to the Defence. He is certainly right in that historians, especially non-academics, were carried away by the rich archival record that the consulates have left and overemphasised their role to the detriment of other actors whose actions were less well documented: the Committee, the Government and the Ministry itself.<sup>493</sup>

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<sup>492</sup> AYE Monastir.1906.AAK/A, Xydakis to Skouzes, Monastir, 25 November/8 December 1906, number 820.

<sup>493</sup> Gounaris, ‘Introduction’, in *The beginning of the Macedonian Struggle: 1903-04: a hundred documents from the archives of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs* (in Greek), Salonica, 1996, pp. 19-20; *Idem*, ‘Introduction’, in *The Greek counterattack in Macedonia: 1905-06: a hundred documents from the archives of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs* (in Greek), Salonica, 1997.

Having said this, there is little doubt that, once a band crossed the frontier, it was cut off from all immediate contact with Athens: letters from Macedonia took a week to arrive to Athens, and in any case, the bands were constantly on the move: sending and receiving letters could only happen at specific places and times. For the bandits, the consulates had replaced the Government: consulates gave them money, information and ammunition. Similarly, villagers saw in consulates the places where they could seek help and protection. When Zarkadas appeared in the villages of Gjirokastër, the locals turned to the consul for help: he could tell them whether Zarkadas had support from Athens and what sort of man he was. Of course, there is no reason to accept at face value the statements of the villagers to the consul about their commitment to the Greek cause. But the fact remains that they needed his help. Even the Metropolitan of Janina had sought Angonakis's advice before replying to Zarkadas's retorts. The consul was recognised as the unofficial head of the Greek community. Thus, in 1904-07 consuls played many roles: diplomatic representatives, information gatherers, leaders of the Greek community, coordinators of the bands. As we shall see in ch. IV, it was indeed more than they could handle.

Even so, the bandits were in many respects independent actors. There are three reasons for this. Firstly, the bandits were by necessity acting with a certain degree

of independence once inside Macedonia: correspondence with Athens was scarce and communication with the consuls and other representatives of the Kingdom was difficult. Secondly, the lack of concrete targets and plans also meant that the bands were often entrusted with a vague mission such as to eradicate Bulgarian support in a given area. The means by which the goal was to be attained were usually left to them. Thirdly, there was the question of security: the bandits lived in a world where they were surrounded by foes, and betrayal was a frequent phenomenon. Their main protection was secrecy as well as credible threats of violence to the peasants (which of course at times had to be accompanied by actual violence to be believed). The Ministry would have disapproved of both: secrecy meant that the bands often cut off themselves from the rest of the Greek network and acted independently of the instructions they had received, whereas violence against the peasants exposed the Ministry to criticisms from European diplomats.

Athens was losing control of what was going on inside Macedonia. The bands did not work according to the expectation of the government. The Ministry and the Committee gave from Athens general guidelines, but the bandits did not always obey. What should happen to bandits who disobeyed orders? Vardas was quite clear on the matter: 'if the Centre believed that they [i.e. a group of Greek bandits] disobey its orders, it should withdraw their salary and also declare to them and to

the other centres that for this reason they [i.e. the bandits] are no longer recognised'.<sup>494</sup> This tactic, as we saw, worked perfectly well with Zarkadas. But in Macedonia, this tactic had dangers which explain the reservations of Athens in adopting it. There were indeed numerous bandits who entered Macedonia for money and loot just like Zarkadas did in Epirus: Vardas himself mentions a certain Goudas active in 1906. To leave such men on their own and without money and ammunition was dangerous: some of the men of Goudas deserted, and, under the leadership of Athanasios Zervas, started looting villages. As Vardas informed Athens: 'they went through the Turkish village Gratsa... and stole some mules. They [i.e. the Muslim villagers] recognised them [as Greek bandits] and are now outraged with us'.

There was a fundamental conflict between the consuls, the Committee and the government on the one hand, and the bandits on the other. People such as Koromilas and Theotokis wanted violence to serve state interests: this meant the maximum efficiency that could be attained in fighting the Bulgarians without exposing the government to criticism from the Powers. The bandits had more on their mind. Personal revenge was also important in Macedonia. As Michael Broers has shown for early nineteenth-century Piedmont, political factions took revenge upon one another based on rules and values defined by vendetta. Most of the

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<sup>494</sup> VARGAK, *The Macedonian Struggle: the 1906 diary*, 29 July/11 August 1906, 48<sup>a</sup>.

‘Macedonian fighters’ came from Greece’s two paradigmatic honour societies, Crete and Mani. The death of Seimenis will provide us with a good example of how vendetta worked in the Defence.<sup>495</sup>

Georgios P. Seimenis was a twenty four year old Cretan from Anopolis. He fought with Karavangelis’s band during Ilinden. His death remains a mystery. According to one version the Bulgarians caught him while he was ill and killed him cruelly. A group of bandits wrote to Vardas that ‘Seimenis stayed in Lehovo because he caught a cold, the Bulgarians killed him’.<sup>496</sup> Karavitis wrote in his memoirs ‘a certain Stergios Bimbis betrayed the unfortunate Seimenis. The *komitadjis* arrested him, dragged him senseless and delirious due to his fever, and executed him with their bayonets’.<sup>497</sup> According to Makris, ‘the Bulgarians caught him and burned him alive on the crest of Lehovo’.<sup>498</sup>

But there are doubts about this story. Georgios Modis, one of the Greek bandits, wrote in 1967 that ‘One day Ger. [sic] Seimenis disappeared. As Kaoudis told me, he joined secretly the *komitadjis* to fight against the Turks. And they [namely, the *komitadjis*] butchered him’.<sup>499</sup> Georgios Perakis explained to Vardas that Seimenis

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<sup>495</sup> Michael Broers, ‘Revolution as vendetta: patriotism in Piedmont: 1794-1821’, *The Historical Journal*, 33:3 (September 1990), pp. 573-597, here *passim*.

<sup>496</sup> Peros, Dikonimos, Kaoudis, Vranas, Zouridis, Bonatos, Kandounatos, Stratinakis and Loukakis to Vardas, Volos, 25 August/7 September 1903, quoted by Petsivas in KARA p. 12, footnote 11β.

<sup>497</sup> KARA, p. 10.

<sup>498</sup> Georgios Makris-Dikonimos, *Memoirs* (in Greek) (Salonica, 1959), p. 2.

<sup>499</sup> Georgios Modis, *The Macedonian Struggle and the modern Macedonian history* (in Greek) (Salonica, 1967), p. 179.

had recovered from his illness and died in the battle of Kleisoura between Turks and Bulgarians a few days later, but he was silent on which side Seimenis fought and on the circumstances of his death.<sup>500</sup> It is probable that Seimenis found it more honourable to kill Muslims on the side of the Christians than defend Greece on the side of Turks. According to Lithoksou, the story about his violent murder was invented to save the face of the other Cretans, and to mobilise his compatriots.<sup>501</sup>

Indeed, the death of Seimenis mobilised the people of Anopolis to engage in a vendetta. Ioannis, Manousos, Michalis and Spyros Seimenis went to Macedonia to avenge their relative. Many other young men from Anopolis joined them. Karavitis was from Anopolis too, and called Seimenis the ‘first martyr of the Macedonian Struggle’. In ‘the battle of Zagoritsani’, a force of nearly two hundred Greek bandits murdered dozens of civilians in the village of Zagoritsani. The operation was designed by Vardas who probably wanted to impress on the villagers that he punished cooperation with Bulgarians: Zagoritsani had in the past served as an operational centre for Bulgarian bands.

In practice things worked very differently. The massacre of Zagoritsani had nothing to do with restricting Bulgarian influence: many of the victims were Patriarchists, and one was a Jew. At least two of the dead were robbed – a common

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<sup>500</sup> Perakis quoted by Petsivas, KARA page 12, footnote 11γ.

<sup>501</sup> Lithoksou, *Greek anti-Macedonian...*, pp. 98-99.

occurrence in guerrilla warfare. According to Ilias Kapetanakis, in every street of the village there were eight to ten dead bodies and women and children lamenting.<sup>502</sup> For the *Anopolites* the operation had a very different meaning from the one Vardas assigned to it. They captured eighteen civilians, and carried them with them for a long distance to murder them with knives on the spot where Seimenis was allegedly murdered with bayonets. Pavlos Patros said: ‘I wanted them to water the grave of my cousin with blood’. For the *Anopolites*, the Defence was a personal affair between them and the killers of a relative.

The news about Zagoritsani quickly reached Europe. The Austro-Hungarian consul described what had happened:

Die griechische Bande umzingelte das Dorf in der Nacht auf den 7 d.M. und drang in der Morgendämmerung von mehreren Seiten zugleich ein. Die drei Führer trugen griechische Uniformkappen, 15 Mann waren uniformiert... Als die Einwohner Trompeten hörten, glaubten sie, daß eine Abteilung Soldaten ins Dorf gekommen sei und mehrere kamen aus den Häusern hinaus, wurden aber sofort niedergeschossen. Die Griechen zogen nunmehr von Haus zu Haus, wo sie eindringen konnten, töteten sie die Männer, aber auch Frauen und Kinder in barbarischer Weise.<sup>503</sup>

The position of Theotokis was difficult. After damaging Greek-Turkish relations, the Defence now compromised Greek relations with the Powers. But this

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<sup>502</sup> Kapetanakis quoted in Stamatis Raptis, *History of the Macedonian Struggle* (in Greek) (second edition, Athens, no year), p. 343.

<sup>503</sup> Monastir, 30 March/12 April 1905, BRI number 136.

diplomatic alienation was an unintended yet unavoidable consequence of the Defence: the bandits often took their own initiatives which were in accordance with their own priorities in the dangerous countryside of Macedonia rather than with the diplomatic and political priorities of the Theotokisists.

In conclusion, Ion provided the first network inside Macedonia, and even if his plans did not work as he intended they did have an impact on what followed. Moreover, his plans had political undertones: a quest for Macedonia was the answer to the failure of parliamentary politics. Ion, Stephanos and Melas made radical irredentism and anti-reform ideas fashionable and accessible to a wider public.

This however, should not make us underestimate the importance of the government. It is often argued that the Defence happened almost against the will of the government: a few individuals such as Melas and Kalapothakis allegedly imposed their will on an unwilling government.<sup>504</sup> The government indeed did what it could to disavow responsibility for the Defence: the Zagoritsani incident we just described shows why. In reality, however, the Defence would have been impossible without the heavy involvement of the government. Theotokisists also gave something of their ideology to the Defence: they wanted the big decisions to be made in Athens and the Government to be fully informed.

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<sup>504</sup> See, I.K. Mazarakis, HXIV p. 234; Dakin, *The Greek struggle...*, pp. 1-2.

The Defence from the beginning created two problems for the government. The first was that Greek bandits, under the influence of journalists, carried with them documents and diaries. When a bandit got killed or captured there was a distinct possibility that information would end in the wrong hands. The second was that, quite predictably, the bandits denied playing the role of the executioners of the Government's will. They brought with them their own agenda and priorities which were those of the agrarian societies they came from and often conflicted with those of the government. As a consequence, the Macedonian Defence did not work to reinforce the authority of the government; instead it served to reinforce the limited control that the government exercised over events which would have considerable repercussions for Greek foreign policy.

## **4. THE DEFENCE AND GREEK POLITICS**

### **I. 1904-1907: OBSTACLES TO THE DEFENCE**

1904-07 was the period during which the Defence was consolidated. The Defence was a project of the Greek government with the aim of reinforcing the ‘Greek element’ – which by necessity remained a vague term, so as to conceal the numerical weakness of the Greek claims – in Macedonia, while not endangering Greece’s official support for the European reform programme; Theotokisists saw themselves as the successors of Tricoupis’s ‘responsible’ foreign policy which meant maintaining good relations with the Great Powers and avoiding friction and revisionism without, however, abandoning an irredentist rhetoric at home. Thus, the Defence combined political with diplomatic aims; this was something that often put Greek policy-makers in a difficult position: should domestic politics or international diplomacy come first?

The Defence was attached to one political party in particular, namely the Theotokisists. This is an aspect of the Defence that has attracted less attention than it deserves: Theotokis and his supporters brought to the Defence their political values, priorities and ambitions, and it is hardly a coincidence that, as we will examine at the end of this chapter, the end of the Theotokisist party coincided with

the end of their foreign policy, which was replaced by a much more personal style in foreign affairs by Venizelos.

The Defence was rarely discussed in the parliament: parliamentary debates were normally about fiscal issues and public administration. An exception occurred on 10/23 December 1904 in a parliamentary speech of Alexandros Zaimis. Zaimis started his career as a Deliyiannist in the 1890s; then, after the 1897 War, he formed his own party and became prime minister for two years after the failure of Rallis to achieve Greek-Turkish cooperation. By 1904, Zaimis had become an ally of the Tricoupists and supported the minority government of Theotokis. Nevertheless, on 8/21 December 1904, Theotokis suggested an ambitious financial and potentially unpopular programme: although the Kingdom was experiencing austerity, Theotokis proposed that expenses for the Army and the Defence should be increased; to fund this, he suggested increasing the tax on the salary of public servants from 3 to 5%.

Zaimis sensed that supporting Theotokis's measures would be politically detrimental: he denounced the new taxes and questioned the purpose of the Defence/the Greek military strengthening which (although not explicitly stated) was widely understood to be a way of strengthening Greek presence in Macedonia. He said in parliament: 'we [=Greece] have no risk of complications in Macedonia';

Greece should behave ‘responsibly’ and – an astonishing public statement for a Greek politician of the time – respect the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire; Moreover, Greece should avoid adventures, maintain good relations with Turkey, prohibit the entrance of Greek bands in Macedonia, and let the Powers decide the future of Macedonia. These suggestions went hand in hand with opposition to higher taxation. Zaimis concluded that ‘without first asking the Greek people, it was incorrect to impose new taxes’ for military expenditures and the Defence. His suggestion was cheered by the left wing of the parliament, i.e. the Deliyannists.

Zaimis’s rejection of the proposed bill was a disaster for the New Party. Theotokis depended on Zaimis and his thirty supporters to stay in power. Once the bill was rejected, Zaimis withdrew his party’s support for the government, and Theotokis fell from power. New elections were announced for February 1905, and in the meantime Deliyannis formed an interim government. Theotokis, however, did not answer Zaimis’s criticism of the Defence; nor did he try to stop the fall of his government. Other Theotokisist MPs who commented on Zaimis’s speech focused on taxation instead of the Defence – given the high political stakes, the debate was surprisingly cool. Why did the Theotokisists give up power without a fight?

Theotokis explained what had happened in a letter to his son Nikolaos:

What even the youngest *attachés* of the Foreign Ministry know, is ignored by a political leader who has served twice as Prime Minister. We know what the Bulgarians plan against us in Macedonia. And while we are trying to encourage our brothers who suffer the attacks of the Bulgarian bands [*συμμορίες*] and to support them, without provoking the reaction of Turkey and the Powers, Zaimis reassures the Parliament that he sees no reason to proceed with the reorganisation of the army. Listening to him the blood rushed to my head and I restrained myself with much effort. I remained silent, because if I answered it was possible that I would have damaged the whole affair.<sup>505</sup>

Theotokis regarded the Defence as the exclusive preoccupation of specialists. Publicity could expose the government to Turkey and the Powers; therefore, the less it was discussed in parliament the better. Deliyiannis and Rallis – despite their different views on the Defence – agreed it should not be discussed in public. In line with the elitist views that prevailed at the time (and also out of consideration for Greece’s delicate diplomatic position), politicians wanted their role in the Defence to remain a secret. As we saw, this was a policy that paid off: it misled Turks and other foreign diplomats, who came to accept at face value Theotokis’s declarations of respect for peace.

Secrecy however came at a cost in that Theotokis could not derive electoral benefits from his involvement with the Defence. Moreover, his fiscal proposals were not as innocuous as he presented them to his son: true, he tried to restrict the

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<sup>505</sup> Georgios Rallis, *Georgios Theotokis: the moderate politician* (in Greek) (Athens, 1986), pp. 263-64.

actions of Bulgarian revolutionaries – and this was a universally accepted aim – but he also intended to spend vast amounts of money on two areas that had for a long time been priorities of the Tricoupist party: the training and equipment of the army, as well as the budget of the Foreign Ministry. It was only natural for his political enemies to oppose his attempt to give a Tricoupist form to the Defence.

In the elections of February 1905, nothing could stop Deliyannis: he won one hundred forty-four out of two hundred thirty-five seats, and therefore his temporary government continued triumphantly in office. By comparison, the number of Zaimist MPs was halved and Theotokis won only fifty-three seats. Greeks – both in the countryside and the cities – were tired with Theotokis's austerity and taxation, and Deliyannis's fiasco in 1897 was by now forgiven and forgotten. Moreover, at the same time that Zaimis abandoned Theotokis, Deliyannis found new political allies in two former Tricoupists: Rallis and Stephanos allied themselves with the eighty year-old populist. Both of them were hostile to Theotokis but – as former Tricoupists – had until then avoided antagonising openly their ex-colleagues. What made them change their mind and switch political sides?

Rallis and Stephanos had their support base in Attica and the atmosphere there was decidedly against Theotokis: already since the 1880s the urban poor were against

the New Party due to its preference for indirect taxation; the middle classes were against the reduction of the number of public servants and Theotokis's proposals for cutting their salary. What was new in the 1900s was that the upper middle classes, for instance, wealthy merchants, professionals and intellectuals, who were for a long time the key supporters of Tricoupism in Attica turned against it too. The case of Loukas Bellos will help us illustrate this point. Bellos was a candidate with Stephanos's party in the 1905 elections: he was a doctor, educated in London, Munich and Paris, and a liberal. In the nineteenth century, his upper middle-class background, modernising zeal and education would have turned Bellos to Tricoupism. But the 1900s were different: what now mattered for the educated upper middle classes was not so much liberalism and the fight against the old elites which had survived the 'Turkish occupation' but the Greek confrontation with Bulgaria: despite Theotokis's efforts, his style in public appearances was too careful and moderate to convince voters that he could lead the nation against Bulgaria. Bellos wrote on his electoral pamphlet that he had served as doctor in Krushevo; in his public appearances he lectured at length on 'the sacred ground' of Macedonia; and he was also 'a supporter of the Greek-Turkish *entente*', by which he meant he was happy to see Turkish soldiers kill Bulgarian peasants. His preoccupation with Macedonia and his demand for violent action was a sign that

Bellos was one of the new, radical irredentists. For them Theotokis's silence on Macedonia was not prudent but shameful. In the 1900s, these people abandoned the New Party *en masse* and followed Stephanos.<sup>506</sup>

Thus, in early 1905, Tricoupism was in trouble. The populist message of Deliyiannis and Rallis about lower taxation captivated the countryside and the poor of the cities. Stephanos appealed to the radical irredentists and, through his education and Tricoupist past, to those among the upper middle classes who were dissatisfied with Theotokis but would not vote for Deliyiannis. The Theotokisist Repoulis decried the formation of an 'irresistible coalition': 'the greatness and strength [*πανίσχυρον*] of this coalition is indisputable'. Theotokisists worried it would take them a long time before returning to power.<sup>507</sup>

After his victory, Deliyiannis maintained a low profile on foreign affairs. The King's speech to parliament of 14/27 May focused instead on taxation: 'the primary legal means for the recovery towards healthy state economics is the reduction of all the expenses in the Budget of the State... and the reinforcement of the trust of the people that their tax burden... will be spent exclusively for needs of the government and the nation'. Indeed, Deliyiannis avoided touching on irredentism in the speech. Moreover, to please the middle-class Athenians who

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<sup>506</sup> BEL 5.1, see Bellos's political pamphlet and his 'Oration on the Macedonian Question' probably from 1904. Both documents are without number. See also BEL 8.1, unknown to Bellos, 12 June 1904 (probably NS), number 21.

<sup>507</sup> Repoulis, 'The coalition of Attica', *Asty*, 5/18 January 1905, p. 1.

had voted for him, Deliyiannis symbolically ordered the police to survey more carefully the gambling houses of Athens – these places scandalised the middle classes with their crime, drugs and alcohol. Since most gambling houses were illegal anyway, in practice Deliyiannis's order made the police close down most of them. As we shall see, this proved a fateful decision.<sup>508</sup>

Deliyiannis stance on the Defence was ambivalent. We know he had a meeting with Stephanos on 30 May/12 June 1904. Although the exact content is unknown, Deliyiannis probably gave Stephanos his support. Shortly after initially becoming prime minister on 16/29 December 1904, Deliyiannis reassured Koromilas that he would continue the flow of money from the Ministry to the consulates of European Turkey.<sup>509</sup> The focus of the Defence on Greeks beyond the frontiers of the country, and the popular appeal of the Macedonian Question, must have attracted Deliyiannis. But he was hostile to the National Society and any attempt to revive it. Moreover, his resolve to reduce taxes would have made impossible maintaining the flow of money at the level that Theotokis did. Had he lived long enough, Deliyiannis would probably have continued the Defence in a modified, less

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<sup>508</sup> Oikonomou, HXIV pp. 180-82.

<sup>509</sup> See AYE 1904/ΣΤ 'Salonica consulate', Koromilas to Skouzes, Salonica, 17/30 December 1904, number 48; AYE 1905 AAK/B, 'Salonica consulate', Koromilas to Skouzes, Salonica 6/19 January 1905, number 60.

expensive form, concentrate more of the decision making on his hands and reduce the power of the Macedonian Committee.<sup>510</sup>

31 May/13 June changed everything. On that day, the Maniot Antonios Kostogerakaris approached Deliyiannis outside the parliament holding a piece of paper. An elitist such as Theotokis or Tricoupis would have ignored the shabbily dressed man. Deliyiannis, however, was proud of his contact with ‘ordinary people’: he thought Kostogerakaris wanted to hand him a petition. Deliyiannis bowed his head to salute Kostogerakaris. Kostogerakaris did the same and approached Deliyiannis. Nevertheless, when he got close enough, Kostogerakaris stabbed Deliyiannis in the stomach. He tried to strike again but onlookers ran to save the Prime Minister. Kostogerakaris’s ‘petition’ was just a trick to exact revenge: he used to work as a bouncer in the gambling houses and Deliyiannis’s recent decision had left him unemployed. According to a (false) rumour, Kostogerakaris’s last words were ‘he closed the gambling house and I was famished [ψόφησα της πείνας]’. Deliyiannis died from his injury on the same day.<sup>511</sup>

Kostogerakaris’s murder followed the three rules that Thomas W. Gallant suggests for vendetta – or *gdikiomos*, as it is known in Mani: he used treachery and surprise;

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<sup>510</sup> See AYE 1904/ΣΤ ‘Salonica consulate’, Koromilas to Skouzes, Salonica, 17/30 December 1904, number 48; AYE 1905 AAK/B, ‘Salonica consulate’, Koromilas to Skouzes, Salonica 6/19 January 1905, number 60.

<sup>511</sup> Unknown, ‘The assassination of the Premier Theodoros Deliyiannis’, *Acropolis*, 1/14 June 1905, p. 1.

second, it is dishonourable to let an enemy escape injured – indeed Kostogerakaris tried to stab Deliyiannis twice to make sure he killed him; third, vendetta is never directed against random victims, and thus Kostogerakaris made it clear he retaliated for an act for which his enemy was allegedly responsible, i.e. for losing his job. Still, no newspaper uttered the ‘v’ word. This, however, was not out of repulsion for violence *per se*: Athenian newspapers were often full of explicit details about the violence in Macedonia. In a contemporary lithograph, Kostogerakaris is dressed as a trouble-maker [μάγκας] and stabs Deliyiannis with a sudden blow – a sign of his deviousness. Kostogerakaris is surrounded by officers, who are dressed in uniform and hold their swords high up. Greeks wanted European onlookers to associate them with the organised violence of the officers and European military values, not with the violent traditions of Mani. As we shall see, this deep-seated wish of the Athenians to conform to European models of violence – as well as the Greek fear that Europeans saw them as savages – was among the factors that opened the way to power for Venizelos after 1909.<sup>512</sup>

Rumours spread about who profited the most from the murder of Greece’s most popular politician:

-Kyriakoulis [Mavromichalis], someone said.

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<sup>512</sup> Thomas W. Gallant, ‘Honor, masculinity, and ritual knife fighting in nineteenth century Greece’, *The American Historical Review*, 105:2 (April 2000), pp. 359-82, here 367-69.

- And what about Rallis? Do not forget *him*, another said.
- Gentlemen, we should not forget his ally, a third one whispered, insinuating Mr. [Stephanos] Dragoumis.
- Wait until [the Ambassador, N.P.] Deliyiannis returns from Paris. It will change everything.
- I think that in the present situation, the one who will profit the least is Theotokis.<sup>513</sup>

In the immediate aftermath of Deliyiannis's death, the last comment must have appeared exaggerated to contemporaries. The Deliyiannist party was in tatters. Tricoupism was resurrected from electoral disaster and Theotokis would win with ease the elections of 1906. But, after Deliyiannis's assassination, the stable two-party system that prevailed since the 1880s disappeared. The opposition to Theotokis broke down into several groups. This left both Deliyiannis's supporters and the radical irredentists without an alternative to Tricoupism. Greek parliamentary politics soon became the affair of one party and for many the parliament no longer represented society; as a result, in the longer term Theotokis found his position to be weakened. With hindsight, we can therefore appreciate that the warning of the last interlocutor was wise: Deliyiannism had acted as a safety valve to the resentment caused by Tricoupism's modernising policies.

Mavromichalis, Romas and Karapanos competed for the leadership of the Deliyiannist Party. There were two options: new elections or the appointment of a new Deliyiannist leader – and Prime Minister – from among the MPs. The latter

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<sup>513</sup> Unknown, 'The murder of the Premier', *Asty*, 3/16 June 1905, p. 1.

option could take months, if not years. Greek MPs spent most of the year in their hometowns and rarely came to Athens. Moreover, there were no party regulations to determine how the nomination of a leader should proceed. The monarch was afraid of the political instability of a protracted election process: he wanted to avoid new elections *and* have a new Deliyannist leader quickly. Thus, he encouraged the quick formation of a government without new elections. This, however, did not give Deliyannists sufficient time to reach a unanimous decision. Eighty-three Deliyannists supported Mavromichalis, who was for a long time the party's second most prominent figure, but the remainder denounced the result as 'the product of corruption' [*προϊόν συναλλαγής*]. Deliyannists came to blows. Given his meagre parliamentary support, Mavromichalis was forced to reach an agreement with Rallis: Rallis would become Prime Minister but would follow the economic programme of the Deliyannist Party. From then on, Deliyannism was split in two, as some MPs followed Mavromichalis and others Rallis.

Forcing Deliyannists to reach a quick decision about a successor proved to be a serious error. As in 1886, many Deliyannists blamed the King for excluding them for denying them power despite their electoral victory. Moreover, the King appeared weak as in the end he appointed prime minister his sworn enemy, Rallis: a contemporary cartoon depicted the crown caught in a spider's web while a spider

with the face of Rallis approached slowly and threateningly.<sup>514</sup> Therefore, the King's decision contributed to the fragmentation of Greek politics, discredited the parliament and helped the Goudi Revolution come about.

Rallis came to power on 9/22 June 1905: thanks to an entirely unexpected turn of events – and despite his poor electoral performance – he was given one more opportunity to achieve a Greek-Turkish cooperation. As in 1903, Rallis assumed personally the post of Foreign Minister; soon enough he expressed his reservations for the Defence in a letter addressed to Koromilas on 17/30 August, 1905. He warned Koromilas that, to his mind, the Defence made the Powers hostile to Greece. Thus, 'the task has to be carried out in a noiseless and attentive way'. Fewer bands were to enter Macedonia, and the bandits had to be more careful. He added that he wanted more information on what the bands were doing in Macedonia. Unlike Deliyiannis, who wanted to slow down the Defence but in a concealed way, Rallis wanted to put an end to it almost immediately.<sup>515</sup>

The bandits immediately understood that the political realities had changed, and that their actions were closely tied to the shifting tides of Athenian politics. A certain Kalmas wrote to Georgios Vardas, head of the Greek bands in Western Macedonia, that 'the death of Deliyiannis and the extension of the political crisis

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<sup>514</sup> Oikonomou, HXIV pp. 183-84.

<sup>515</sup> AYE 1905 AAK/IA, Rallis to Koromilas, Athens, 17/30 August 1905, number 3293.

brought complete stagnation to the [Macedonian] question'; according to Natalia Melas: 'the situation has reached its worst point due to the lasting political crisis, the resulting inertia of the Committee, the lack of money'. The situation worsened in July, when another bandit, Efthimios Kaoudis, announced to Vardas that 'Rallis will not support the cause, the Society was dissolved, no-one seems to care, they will probably have you [=Vardas] recalled'. Less than a year after it began, the Defence was close to coming to an end.

Karavitis gave a similar account. When he returned to Athens in the autumn of 1905, Kalapothakis, chairman of the Macedonian Committee, informed him that the Defence 'had been almost abandoned due to the continued misfortunes [of the Greek bands]... and the assassination of Deliyiannis, because due to the confusion...many tried to get rid of this annoying affair'. Kalapothakis's language insinuated that opposition to the Defence, unlike taxation and military expenses, should not be treated as mere political disagreement, but as an act of treachery: by 1905, the radical irredentists felt sufficiently confident to toughen their stance against their political opponents.

Although the irredentists and the bandits understood that something had gone wrong while Rallis was in power, they were unaware of the details.<sup>516</sup> Archival evidence is similarly scarce, because after his failed initiative in the summer of 1903, Rallis conducted negotiations in private rather than through the Ministry. Indeed, as the Defence went on, the Ministry was cut-off from decision-making regarding Macedonia. It is with the help of Ottoman documents, published in 2011, that we can tell the story of Rallis's third failed approach to Turkey. In July 1905 Rallis initiated conversations with the Ottoman chargé d'affaires in Athens, Sadreddin, with whom he had maintained cordial relations since his premiership in 1903 ('mon cher Sadreddin Bey').<sup>517</sup> In his reports to Tevfik, Sadreddin emphasised Rallis's honesty and good-will: 'Monsieur Rallis m'a dit qu'il fait tout son possible pour arrêter le mouvement des bandes, qui est contraire à ses principes. Il paraît qu'il a donné des ordres très sévères...'; 'le cabinet de Monsieur Rallis est très désireux de contribuer à la disparition des bandes et il travaille sans doute à y réussir'.<sup>518</sup> There is a multitude of similarly praiseful references to Rallis throughout his premiership.<sup>519</sup>

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<sup>516</sup> Kalmas quoted by Vardas in VARGAK *The Macedonian Struggle: the 1904-5 diary*, entry for 24 June/7 July 1905, f.55; Natalia quoted in *ibid*, 4/17 July 1905, f. 59<sup>a</sup>; Kaoudis in *ibid*, entry for 5/18 July 1905, f.60; KARA p. 376.

<sup>517</sup> Rallis to Sadreddin, Athens, 3/16 October 1905, no number, attached to Sadreddin Bey to Tevfik Pasha, Athens 5/18 October 1905, number 8461/410, TMIB number 1290.

<sup>518</sup> Sadreddin to Tevfik, Athens, 20 August/2 September 1905, number 8299/322, TMIB number 1268.

<sup>519</sup> Sadreddin to Tevfik, Athens, 10/23 September 1905, number 8373/366, TMIB number 1274; Sadreddin to Tevfik, Athens, 24 September/7 October 1905, TMIB 1284; Sadreddin to Tevfik, Athens, 28 September/11 October

Rallis indeed reversed the negative attitude of the Ottoman Embassy towards the Greek government. A few days before Deliyiannis's assassination, the ambassador Rifaat Pasha wrote about the former prime minister that he was 'incapable et non désireux d'agir contre les agissements des bandes de peur de désobliger des amis intéressés. Le désir de conserver le pouvoir à tout prix paralyse ses actions'. The contrast with Rallis's ostensibly friendly attitude towards Turkey could not have been greater.<sup>520</sup>

Rallis promised to the Ottomans that he would restrict the passage of bands from the frontier, and in general terms that band activity would be reduced. As he did with Melas in 1903, Rallis took measures against Manos and Spiromilio, two army officers who attempted to cross the frontier against the prohibition. This is the only case we know in the 1904-07 period when army officers were actually punished for their actions in Macedonia. Rallis wanted to show to Turkish diplomats, especially to the suspicious Tevfik, that he took his part of the deal seriously. In exchange for his good services he asked for Turkish military action against the Bulgarian revolutionaries.<sup>521</sup>

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1905, TMIB number 1287; Sadreddin to Tevfik, Athens, 28 September/11 October 1905, TMIB number 1288; Sadreddin to Tevfik, Athens, 1/14 October 1905, TMIB number 1289; Sadreddin Bey to Tevfik Pasha, Athens, 5/18 October 1905, TMIB number 1290.

<sup>520</sup> Rifaat to Tevfik, Athens, 6/19 May, 1905, ciphered telegram number 162, TMIB number 1247.

<sup>521</sup> Sadreddin to Tevfik, Athens, 5/18 October 1905, TMIB number 1290.

Tevfik however showed less zeal. Unlike the Sultan, Tevfik's priority was good relations with the Powers rather than with the Balkan states. Moreover, he probably thought little of Rallis since their failed understanding in 1903 and did not believe that this new attempt at a Greek-Turkish understanding could work. He wrote to Sadreddin three times, all of them to indicate that Greeks continued to perpetrate bandit activity inside Macedonia. To Tevfik's mind, Rallis had to minimise Greek violence before requesting compensation from the Ottomans.<sup>522</sup>

By autumn 1905 Rallis's diplomatic effort was falling apart. First, on 18/31 October, Vardas received news from Athens that 'after many and various ridiculous decisions by Rallis, and many near disasters', Stylianos Kleidis, Evangelos Nikoloudis and Pavlos Gyparis would be allowed to cross the frontier with their men. Rallis could no longer resist the pressure of the irredentist lobby – indeed, by that time there was a powerful nexus of journalists, academics and military officers who pressured for greater government involvement in Macedonia. Second, Theotokis calculated that elections would work in his favour and withdrew his support from the government. As had happened in 1903, Rallis was a victim of

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<sup>522</sup> Tevfik to Sadreddin , Constantinople, 10/23 August 1905, number 62324/184, TMIB number 1265; Tevfik to Sadreddin , Constantinople, 29 August/11 September 1905, TMIB number 1270; Tevfik to Sadreddin, Constantinople, 27 September/10 October 1905, ciphred telegram number 62915/229, TMIB number 1285.

his party's weak representation in the parliament. Rallis fell from power a few weeks later, and Theotokis became prime minister.<sup>523</sup>

After 1905, cynical, short-term calculations such as these actions of Theotokis prevailed in Greek politics: staying in power became an end in itself. But it is good to remember that this was not the result of personal vice, but rather of Deliyiannis's assassination and of the ensuing fragmentation of the Greek political world. In his search for the origins of the Goudi Revolution, George Andreopoulos has famously argued that the years between 1897 and 1909 were characterised by a 'power vacuum', in the sense that 'there was no political force which could articulate a credible hegemonic vision'; this interpretation might be applicable to the 1905-09 period, when Theotokis indeed had great difficulty in his dealings with the radical irredentists, but is inaccurate for the years before 1905. Prior to Deliyiannis's assassination, the two-party system worked sufficiently well and its messages and values were in tune with the general feelings of the Greek society. Had Deliyiannis not been assassinated, it is probable that Goudi would not have taken place.<sup>524</sup>

Rallis's six-month period of office therefore matters for two reasons. Firstly, it shows the extent to which bandit activity depended on the government: without

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<sup>523</sup> VARGAK, *The Macedonian Struggle: the 1904-5 diary*, entry for 18/31 October 1905, f. 17; Aspreas, *Political history...*, ii, pp. 81-2.

<sup>524</sup> George J. Andreopoulos, 'Liberalism and the formation of the nation-state', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 7:2 (October 1989), pp. 193-224, here 198.

government support, bandits found themselves in a difficult position. Instead of attempting to cross the border on their own initiative the bandits chose to apply political pressure through their patrons in Athens and negotiate a new deal with the government. Unlike nineteenth-century klephts, who typically acted on their own initiative, the ‘Macedonian fighters’ depended on the Government for money and organisation. Moreover, unlike their Bulgarian counterparts, Greek bandits chose not to antagonise the government: after all they lacked both the wide social base that the Bulgarian irredentists had, and their financial means: Bulgarians were quite good at exerting money from the Macedonian Christians (for instance, in the form of school fees or of a subscription to the various revolutionary committees). The strength of the Greek irredentists was that they took advantage of the weaknesses of Greek institutions and that they built a powerful alliance with the press and the army officers which could effectively influence government decisions on Macedonia.

Secondly, Rallis’s failure shows that by mid-1905 to oppose the Defence was dangerous. The irredentist *milieux* of Athens had embraced it as their cause. Moreover, the Defence involved many young officers of the army, who had an interest in its continuation. When Greek bandits met with trouble in Macedonia, the irredentist lobby questioned the patriotism of the government: their numbers

were small, but they could exercise significant influence.<sup>525</sup> For irredentists the Defence was the barometer of the government's overall performance. Following 1905, opposition to the Defence could only be done behind closed doors: anything else risked political trouble. Indeed, it would not be long before the officers would turn against their political benefactors: tellingly, the leader of the Goudi conspirators was Nikolaos Zormbas, who had been a Tricoupist in the late 1880s and had served as superintendent of the Military Academy – for whose improvement Tricoupists spent much public money – in the 1900s.

The group that gave voice to the irredentist *milieux* of Athens was the so-called 'group of the Japanese', founded in 1906 by seven MPs. What gave the Japanese their name was their zeal, which contemporaries compared to the qualities shown by the Japanese armed forces in their recent war with Russia, and more generally the nationalism of the rapidly modernising Japanese state. Historians have looked at this group as a liberal and bourgeois opposition to the Theotokisists, primarily interested in economic reforms.<sup>526</sup> Nevertheless, the first detailed analysis of the group in Nanako Sawayanagi's PhD shows that they were keenly interested in the

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<sup>525</sup> Mild criticism appear already in 1905. 'And again', *Asty*, 29 April/12 May 1905, p. 1.

<sup>526</sup> Georgios Ventiris, *Greece in 1910-20: a historical research* (in Greek) (2 vols., Athens, 1931), ii, pp. 30-32; Grigorios Daphnis, *The Greek political parties* (in Greek) (Athens, 1961), p. 91; Hariton Korisis, *Die politischen Parteien Griechenlands: Ein neuer Staat auf dem Weg zur Demokratie: 1821–1910* (Nürnberg, 1966), p. 161; Dertilis, *Social Transformation and Military Intervention: 1880–1909* (in Greek) (Athens, 1977) p. 169.

Defence and irredentism too. This is hardly surprising since their leader was Stephanos.

The data that Sawayanagi has brought to light imply two things. Firstly, the party was founded shortly after the violent incidents against the Greek minority in the Bulgarian town of Anchialos, which Stephanos regarded as a symbol of the failures of Greek state to protect its interests;<sup>527</sup> he and Alexandris, another member of the Japanese, made elaborate plans for the resettlement of Greek refugees in Thessaly.<sup>528</sup> The concept of a modern state that would provide for the welfare of its evicted co-nationals combined the two key values of the Japanese, modernity and irredentism, and also suggested that Macedonia was from the beginning a major concern of the Japanese. Secondly, the Japanese espoused Theotokis's reformist programme albeit in a more aggressive form. Like Theotokis, the Japanese, and Stephanos in particular, did not see the Defence merely as a matter of foreign policy but also as a means of domestic modernisation. They differed, however, from Theotokis in that they used a more aggressive rhetoric and they were less worried about defying the Powers. This new political style convinced quite a few

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<sup>527</sup> Nanako Sawayanagi, 'A concept and...', pp. 35-7.

<sup>528</sup> Ibid, pp. 123-74.

people in Athens; for instance, Repoulis abandoned Theotokis and became one of the Japanese MPs.<sup>529</sup> Many more upper middle-class Tricoupists would follow.

Thus, the Japanese were essentially a splinter party of Tricoupism rather than an entirely new phenomenon. They were known for their eloquent attacks of government policy, but their rhetoric should not detract us from the fact that their agenda – a more aggressive Defence, an efficient and centralised state, and a professional army – was essentially a radical version of Tricoupism: indeed, Gounaris and Repoulis were elected with the New Party and defected in June 1906, whereas Stephanos was a veteran Tricoupist.

Unlike Deliyiannis and Mavromichalis who spoke for the people, and Theotokis who saw himself as a protector of state interests alone, the Japanese saw themselves as speaking in the name of state interests *and* the nation. On 31 October/13 November 1906 Stephanos gave to *Acropolis* the front-page interview which marked the foundation of the Japanese: according to Stephanos, their aim was not to overthrow the government but rather to reform it through the power of ideas.<sup>530</sup> Tellingly, the party that was seen at the time as the greatest threat to Theotokis, did not challenge the *status quo* on social grounds, but proposed an

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<sup>529</sup> Ibid, p. 36.

<sup>530</sup> Ibid, pp. 35-7.

ambitious and aggressive irredentist plan. In early twentieth-century Greece, irredentism was a political artifact and a tool for modernisation.

Nevertheless, the Japanese did not manage to extend their support to the countryside. Their support was limited to Attica and Patras. Stephanos never considered an agreement with Mavromichalis similar to the one he had with Deliyiannis: this meant that his party could never become something more than a minor political force. Despite the efforts of the Japanese, the dominant position that Theotokis acquired in 1905 remained unchallenged in electoral terms. This suggests that although probably many radical irredentists voted for the Japanese, they understood that the Japanese would never enter government. As Andreopoulos has showed, after 1905 the dissatisfied irredentists and especially the army officers started thinking that in order to realise their political dreams they would have to look outside parliamentary politics; although talking of a ‘power vacuum’, as Andreopoulos does, might be excessive, it is true that the fragmentation of Greek politics made difficult a timely reaction against the enemies of parliamentarism.<sup>531</sup>

After 1905, disappointed officers became more prominent within the irredentist lobby that people like Koromilas, Stephanos and Gavriilidis had built. For example, in a pamphlet with the date 21 May/3 June 1906 and signed by ‘the

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<sup>531</sup> Andreopoulos, ‘Liberalism and ...’, pp. 198-99.

army’, the authors did two things: firstly, they exalted the importance of the sacrifice of the officers who died in Macedonia: tellingly, they called them ‘demigods’. They avoided any mention that these officers had received assistance from the government: the dead officers were presented as romantic heroes who had acted on their own initiative. Secondly, the authors talked of the regeneration of ‘Great Greece’ and of a new War of Independence: ‘a new era of golden hopes’. Like Karkavitsas, they were fascinated by the revolutionary villagers of 1821: their guerrilla war, which in 1897 appeared hopelessly old-fashioned, looked now thanks to the Defence again relevant and even modern: people were excited that a new 1821 could save Macedonia from Bulgaria and attract the interest of the Powers. Given that since the 1870s they were locked in a bitter conflict with the government over military expenses and – especially the NCOs – promotions, the new irredentism offered them a patriotic language that also served their personal and professional interests. For the officers, the Defence raised their prestige and offered them political influence.

The authors argued for the annexation of Ottoman territory through violent and unilateral action by Greece. Whether they were sincere in their assertions that such methods could bring success or they simply used a violent irredentist rhetoric to attract public attention is an open question – in any case, they were far from an

exception: for instance, in Spain after the losses of 1898 a military lobby argued with similarly implausible arguments that a new empire in Africa would compensate for the loss of Cuba and the Philippines.<sup>532</sup> What is important for our present purposes is that this rhetoric was similar to the rhetoric of the National Society and also to that of the Military League of 1909 and of the Reservists of 1916, as analyzed by Thanos Veremis and by Georgios Th. Mavrogordatos respectively. Its ingredients were irredentism, voluntarism, an unbounded optimism, and a megalomaniac belief in the future prospects of the Greek nation: ‘a new era of triumphs and of triumphing heroisms of the Nation is already emerging in favour of the Great Idea’. The spread of this rhetoric suggests that some among the officers were already in 1906 dissatisfied with Greek foreign policy to the point of rejecting Greek politics as a whole. The support that this rhetoric enjoyed from the public of Athens as well as the prestige the officers gained from their paramilitary activities in Macedonia allowed their lobby to exercise political influence.<sup>533</sup>

The Defence allowed the officers to oppose the government using the language of radical irredentism and to engage in action independent of politicians. The

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<sup>532</sup> Sebastian Balfour, ‘Spain and the Great Powers in the aftermath of the Disaster of 1898’, in Sebastian Balfour and Paul Preston (eds.), *Spain and the Great Powers in the twentieth century* (London, 1999), pp. 13-31, here 22.

<sup>533</sup> Mavrogordatos, *National Schism and mass organisation: the Epistratoi of 1916* (in Greek) (Athens, 1996), pp. 49-56; AYEP 1906.2, pamphlet to from ‘The Army’ to ‘The Army of the Fatherland’, Athens, 21 May/3 June 1906, attached to Skouzes to Paris Embassy, number 729, Athens, 30 June /13 July 1906.

prevalent historical opinion – that it was only in the period between 1916 and 1922 that the army started to intervene systematically in Greek politics and that until then it accepted the leadership of politicians – has to be qualified in view of the Defence and its political impact after 1905: radical irredentists saw in army officers competent leadership even in political matters. Tellingly, the authors of the pamphlet made no reference to the government. It was a pamphlet from the army to the army, an institution that represented the nation as a whole: the officers trusted no one else with the mission of defending and promoting Greek irredentism and they saw this mission as opposed to the moderation of parliamentary politics.<sup>534</sup>

Other radical irredentists followed an autonomous course similar to that of the army, and exploited the vulnerable position of the government for their profit. The journalist and Chairman of the Macedonian Committee, Kalapothakis, did two things. Firstly, he used his newspaper *Embros* as a vehicle of intransigent irredentism: *Embros* was among the most popular newspapers with a circulation of 15,000-20,000. Despite his partnership with Theotokis, in his journalistic articles he attacked Theotokis's policies regarding military preparations using the unrealistic standards of Greek irredentists. Moreover, he glorified the actions of the

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<sup>534</sup> Cf. Veremis, *The Military in Greek politics from independence to democracy*, (Athens, 2000 (London, 1997)), p. 81.

bands and attacked the government for its ‘impeccable stance’: ‘the government has the right to take under consideration the Turkish representations and to be intimidated by the threats and the pressure. But it should learn that such a policy would be opposed by the whole of Hellenism’.<sup>535</sup> Secondly, Kalapothakis used his position as Chairman of the Committee to do favours for the military officers: he acted as an intermediary between the government and officers and he also distributed to the officers the money that he received from the government and other sources. As Periklis Argyropoulos wrote in the memorandum for the foundation of the Committee, ‘... the government cannot act officially for the Macedonian question. Therefore there should be a Macedonian Committee that would act in place of the government’.<sup>536</sup> Thus, although in reality Kalapothakis acted on behalf of the government to do things that the Government could not officially admit, Kalapothakis established a reputation as a maverick, who acted in defiance of Theotokis, and built his personal support base.<sup>537</sup>

The attacks of the irredentist lobby took an anti-elitist character. Until 1905 patriotic anti-elitism was associated with Deliyiannism – Chatziyiannakoglous, for instance, accused in 1902 Nikolaos Tsamados (a military officer who acted as Defence Minister of Tricoupis and later became a close associate of Theotokis)

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<sup>535</sup> Kalapothakis, editorial in *Embros*, 17/30 September 1904, p. 1.

<sup>536</sup> DRAS 213, ‘Memorandum by Periklis Argyropoulos, 11/24 November [1904], f.9a.

<sup>537</sup> Loulos, *History and press...*, p. 70; Vlachos, *The Macedonian Question...*, pp. 348-49; I.K.Mazarakis, ‘Macedonia on...’ p. 244.

that while young people sacrificed their lives in 1897, he ‘enjoyed his ice lolly at Syntagma square’.<sup>538</sup> But after 1905, radical irredentists too appropriated this rhetoric. On 4/17 May 1907, *Asty* published an article entitled ‘our merchant tailors are up in arms: they accuse two noted Athenians Mr Romanos and Mr N. Simopoulos that they make their clothes abroad and destroy them’. Romanos was the brother of Athos, Theotokis’s Foreign Minister; Simopoulos was the son of Anargyros Simopoulos, Theotokis’s Finance Minister. The accusation was trivial: a tailor from London had allegedly arrived to *Grande Bretagne*, a luxurious hotel in the centre of Athens, and members of the leading Athenian families visited him there and made orders without paying license tax. What is however, of interest is that Theotokis’s austerity measures and his dishonourable foreign policy made people attack him combining anti-elitism, nationalism, anti-monarchism and economic complaints. Dissatisfied Athenians now started turning to anti-parliamentarism.<sup>539</sup>

Metaxas was one of their most popular targets: as Ambassador in London he became a scapegoat for the bad relations between Greece and Britain. On 12/25 January 1906, *Acropolis* described Metaxas as the ‘man who received from Mr I. Gennadius and A. Romanos an English opinion most friendly to us, and managed

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<sup>538</sup> Chatziannakoglous, *The political ...*, p. 104.

<sup>539</sup> *Asty*, 4/17 September 1907, p. 3.

to make it most hostile'.<sup>540</sup> Indeed, Gavriilidis abandoned the Tricoupist party: he was tired of the old politics, and wanted something radical. He first sponsored the Japanese, then the Military League – he also was among the main supporters of Stephanos during his 1910 premiership. In 1909 he would support Goudi. Theotokis was attacked from everywhere; but we should remember that he still did well electorally: the clientelist networks of the New Party got him sufficient votes in the countryside to secure an easy victory in 1906. What he lacked was influence (or a 'credible hegemonic vision' as Andreopoulos has put it), especially among the numerically tiny educated elites of the urban centres.

Like the newspaper articles, the memorial services for Macedonian bandits served to express the anger of the irredentists with the government. One of the best documented memorial services is that of Ioannis Skordakos. Skordakos was a nineteen year-old pharmaceutical student from Gytheion, in Mani. He was killed on 2/15 January 1906 in a skirmish with the Turkish army. According to *Asty*, Skordakos and his four colleagues preferred death to surrender to 'two hundred Turks' who had surrounded them – this fantastically unrealistic language was the staple of radical irredentists.<sup>541</sup> *Acropolis* described the preparations for his memorial service: 'offices and shops shall remain closed, street lamps shall be

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<sup>540</sup> Probably Gavriilidis, 'The great diplomatic scandal', *Acropolis*, 12/25 January 1906, p. 1.

<sup>541</sup> 'Heroic death of Greek students', *Asty*, 3/16 January 1906, p. 3.

covered with a piece of cloth'. At nine in the morning, the university and school students, the guilds, and the associations would lay wreaths. They would walk to the Cathedral for the religious service and then start a 'Macedonian demonstration' asking from the Government to abandon the deadly lethargy that has occupied them and to rush to create a navy and army because the time is nigh'.<sup>542</sup> Macedonia had entered Greek politics, not as a geographical region, but as a concept and a mobilising theme: there were 'Macedonian' demonstrations, memorials, associations and committees, and for the most part 'Macedonia' stood for opposition to conventional politics.

On the same day, a second memorial service took place at Gytheion. It was customary to perform two memorial services: one in the birthplace of the deceased, and another, of more openly political character, in Athens. The service at Gytheion was attended by trade and lawyers associations, school teachers and their students. According to the local newspaper *Laconia* 'the era of our great struggle... due to its colossal grandiosity appears decorated with the "veil" of a mythical legend'.<sup>543</sup> The rhetoric of radical irredentism replaced Repoulis's 'method'. Instead of method and moderation, the values now associated with the Defence were heroism, honour and the glory of the nation. Theotokis was unsuited for this intellectual

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<sup>542</sup> Unknown, 'Today's Macedonian Memorial Service', *Acropolis*, 15/28 January 1906, p. 1.

<sup>543</sup> The article of *Laconia* is reproduced in PETRO 1.3, number 1/49.

climate. Ion, however, was fitted to the situation: his writings were an inspiration for the radical irredentists, especially younger ones. The title of his 1907 book *Blood of heroes and martyrs* speaks for itself.

In 1907, however, the plans of Theotokis for the Defence were in trouble. First, it had worsened Greek relations with the Powers since Greece ignored their warnings against the entrance of bands. Despite the numerous newspaper articles in the European press in favour of Greek interests, European diplomats had not changed their mind about the numerical superiority of Bulgarians. Greek relations with Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey were also worse than before the beginning of the Defence and Greek minorities there were persecuted: thousands of Greeks were forced to leave and settle in Greece: to this day, this aspect of the Defence has not been researched. Second, the original hopes of the Ministry, especially of the consuls, about the Defence were frustrated. Some Greek Macedonians joined the Defence, but not as many as it was hoped in 1903-04; moreover, local Turkish authorities proved less tolerant than the consuls hoped. Following 1906, the Turkish army inflicted heavy casualties on the Greek bands. Third, coordination suffered. Theotokis had for political reasons incorporated as many people as possible in the decision-making of the Defence: consuls, ambassadors, army officers, bandits, nationalist lawyers, they all took part in the Defence with

conflicting aims and expectations. Operations suffered, especially in the vilayet of Monastir, where the Greek bands lacked a unified command. The Defence was falling apart.<sup>544</sup>

In April 1907, Toshev described Theotokis's dead-end. The Bulgarian agent explained to his Austro-Hungarian colleague that Theotokis, *der einzige griechische Staatsman*, wanted to dissolve the Macedonian Committee. It was however impossible to antagonise openly the Committee: the irredentists would not permit it. Consequently, Theotokis tried to restrain the Defence in indirect ways. With hindsight, we know that Toshev underestimated Theotokis's role in bringing about and directing the Defence: in this respect Theotokis's silence paid off as it misled most contemporary diplomats as to the extent of his involvement with it. But Toshev was correct that, by 1907, Theotokis was convinced the Defence was going the wrong way. Theotokis was searching for a new policy for Macedonia.<sup>545</sup>

He had to find a diplomatic way out: in the pages that follow we will look in detail his attempts to get the support of a Power in the Macedonian Question; he hoped that in this way, he could end the Defence in an honourable way and thus he started

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<sup>544</sup> D.K. Vozaglis, *Racial and national minorities in Greece and Bulgaria* (in Greek) (Athens, 1954), pp. 33-36.

<sup>545</sup> Toshev [spelled To Chew] quoted by the German Minister in Athens to Berlin, Athens, 22 April/5 May 1907, number 15A, BRI number 251.

a series of interviews. He kept complete secrecy on this matter: the only person informed was the King. A leak to the press would have been politically disastrous. In June 1907, Theotokis met with the French Ambassador, M. de la Bouliniere. He told him he wanted a Greek-French *rapprochement* on the Macedonian Question and that he was ready to accept the suggestions of the French for the reorganisation of the Greek army. The French Foreign Minister, Stéphen Pichon, asked the opinion of his ambassadors. They were against the Theotokis proposals for three reasons. First, an agreement with Greece would worsen the foreign relations of France with the other Powers, as well as with the other Balkan countries, especially Bulgaria. Second, Turkey would protest if France reached an agreement with Greece, while Greek bands were active on Ottoman territory. Third, Greece had little value as an ally.<sup>546</sup>

In July, Theotokis turned instead to Britain. He approached Elliot in Athens with a proposal of a formal and secret alliance between Greece, France and Britain. The deal that he offered to Elliot was that Greece would reorganise its fleet according to lines suggested by its allies and would do whatever necessary to make itself a useful military ally. Greece was 'ready to adopt the suggestions of its allies' when it came to modernising and strengthening its fleet'. In exchange, Theotokis asked that 'when the break-up of the Ottoman Empire at last came to pass', 'it might be

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<sup>546</sup> Rallis, *Georgios Theotokis ...*, pp. 299-30.

in two years or it might be in fifty', France and Britain would support the Greek claims over Epirus, i.e. the vilayet of Janina, and that 'the road to Constantinople should not be barred', meaning that Bulgaria would not be allowed to take Macedonia. Crucially Theotokis did not go so far as to suggest that Greece should be awarded Macedonia: he was probably convinced by 1907 that this was impossible. He did not hide his despair and told Elliot: 'if Bulgaria were allowed to gain a footing in the Aegean, it would be the death-blow of Greece, which would have nothing to look forward to but to become sooner or later a dependency of Russia'.<sup>547</sup> Elliot transmitted his proposals to Sir Edward Grey adding that 'an allied Greek navy may be thought a source of embarrassment rather than an accession of strength'. He did, however, suggest that the proposal be handled in a delicate manner: the Anglophile Theotokis might otherwise be forced to turn to Germany.<sup>548</sup>

Grey did not listen to Elliot's advice and what followed was a smack in the eye for Theotokis. Grey's priority was to avoid a new crisis, and, in his eyes, Greece's irredentist ambitions threatened the *status quo*. Like Pichon, he also did not want to antagonise Bulgaria by allying with Greece. He replied that the only thing Greece could do to improve its diplomatic position was to stop the incursions of bands: the

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<sup>547</sup> FO 371/264, Elliot to Grey, Athens, 2/15 July 1907, f. 356.

<sup>548</sup> FO 371/264, Elliot to Grey, Athens, 2/15 July 1907, f. 369.

bands were an obstacle to the reforms and harmed Greece's diplomatic position. Grey also warned that Greek bands committed the 'very large proportion' of outrages in Macedonia and if this continued it could have an impact on 'the political relations of the two countries' [i.e. Greece and Britain]. There was no prospect for a treaty: Grey claimed that Britain was in principle against secret treaties. In short, he suggested that Greece should limit its aspirations to Crete and forget Macedonia.<sup>549</sup>

In the autumn of 1907, Greece and its leader, Theotokis, were more isolated than ever. The failed Theotokis initiative increased the distance between Greece and Britain. The intensified Greek activity in Macedonia in 1906 and the first half of 1907 also brought unwanted international attention on Greece. In the summer of 1907, Patriarchist priests and Greek consular staff who had been implicated with the Defence came under scrutiny from the Turkish authorities and the Powers. The result was that several of them, including Koromilas, had to be revoked, making the government appear weak in the eyes of radical irredentists.<sup>550</sup>

More trouble was on the way. On 28 September /11 October, Austria-Hungary and Russia submitted a communication to Athens, Belgrade and Sofia: the two Powers warned that the paramilitary fight in Macedonia was in vain: the future of

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<sup>549</sup> FO 371/264, Grey to Elliot, London, 26 July/8 August 1907, f. 357.

<sup>550</sup> Dakin, *The Greek struggle...*, pp. 314-20.

Macedonia would be decided by European diplomats alone. The Austro-Russian note asked the Ottomans to annihilate the bands, and called on the Balkan states to renounce their subversive policies in the region. They claimed that the Balkan kingdoms would have no say in the future settlement of the Macedonian Question.<sup>551</sup>

Grey wanted to single out the Greek government for special treatment. In his communications with the other Powers he described Greece as the key responsible for the continuation of violence. Already in January (NS) 1907 he had expressed his displeasure over two issues: first the Greeks insisted on calling all Patriarchist peasants, 'Macedonian Greeks'. For Grey, as for most contemporary British figures, the distinction between Patriarchists and Exarchists was bogus: Greeks had exploited for political reasons an irrelevant altercation in Church administration between Sofia and Constantinople. What mattered was the mother tongue, and the British were convinced that most Christian Macedonians spoke Bulgarian – or a dialect of it – and were therefore Bulgarians. By ignoring the obvious numerical superiority of the Bulgarians, the Greeks were obstructing the reforms and threatening the wider European peace. Second, the Greek government despite its numerous affirmations of good will, did nothing to suppress the

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<sup>551</sup> The communication is attached to Mahmoud Nédim Pasha to Tevfik, Vienna, 18 September/1 October 1907, number 30211/216, TMIB 1530; and 1530 and FO 371/381, Goschen to Grey, Vienna, 24 September/7 October 1907, f. 20; see also Sadreddin to Tevfik, Athens, 4/17 October 1907, number 10278/264, TMIB number 1534; and Paximadopolou-, *The diplomacy...*, pp. 344-47.

bands.<sup>552</sup> A month after Theotokis's initiative, Greece was again singled out by Grey.<sup>553</sup> When the Austro-Russian note was submitted to the Greek government, it was accompanied by a verbal warning from the British that 'the Greek government would be incurring a serious responsibility if they did not take steps to give effect to terms of joint Austro-Russian communication'.<sup>554</sup> The British were ready to go as far as imposing a naval blockade.

The Greek government understood the British threat could lead to a political disaster but was at a loss of a reply. Skouzes and Theotokis repeated their usual claims that Greece had merely undertaken a defensive task and that the true aggressors were the Bulgarians. Skouzes argued on 24 September/7 October that, 'since the Greek bands have been quiet, the Bulgarian bands have showed great activity, and he instanced serious outrages...'.<sup>555</sup> In the words of Theotokis's biographer and grandson: 'Theotokis was under so much pressure from the contradictory needs that he had, that the poor man was desperate'.<sup>556</sup>

The Maroudas incident well illustrates the impossibility of Theotokis's situation. Elliot complained to Theotokis that Maroudas, a lieutenant of the gendarmerie, helped the bandits cross the frontier. Theotokis reassured the British that he had

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<sup>552</sup> FO 371/264, Grey to Sofia, Constantinople and Athens, London, 23 December/5 January 1907, no number.

<sup>553</sup> Paximadopoulou, *The diplomacy...*, p. 343.

<sup>554</sup> FO 371/381, Nicolson to Grey, St Petersburg, 17 September/1 October 1907, f. 4.

<sup>555</sup> FO 371/381, Elliot to Grey, Athens, 24 September/7 October 1907, f. 12.

<sup>556</sup> Rallis, *Georgios Theotokis* ..., p. 290.

already punished Maroudas and transferred him to another post. In reality, although Maroudas was recalled back to Athens, he soon enough returned to Volos to facilitate the bands in a private capacity and in full knowledge of Theotokis. The Maroudas incident shows that regulars proved as difficult to control as the irregulars: Theotokis was afraid that, if he punished Maroudas, the army officers would turn against him.<sup>557</sup>

The radical irredentist influence in press also restrained Theotokis's freedom of action. After 1905, they became more intransigent than ever. Gavriilidis, the leading journalist of the 1900s, called the *Defence*, 'the wonderful rebellion of our race': 'we still move and resist [the Bulgarians] and we demonstrate that we shall not sacrifice easily for the interests of third parties'.<sup>558</sup> Most Athenian journalists adopted a similarly intransigent stance: exacting violent revenge on the Bulgarians was a matter of national honour, whereas Theotokis's silence was shameful. *Asty* wished Greece had a leader like the Portuguese João Franco, an army officer who set up an authoritarian regime in 1907: according to *Asty*, he cut down public expenses, fought corruption, respected law and helped the economy.<sup>559</sup>

Modernising intellectuals now saw in the parliament and in state bureaucracy an enemy. Moreover, the King was as unpopular as the parliament and Theotokis. On

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<sup>557</sup> Ibid. See also Dakin, *The Greek Struggle...*, p. 315, footnote 30.

<sup>558</sup> Gavriilidis, 'The wonderful rebellion of our race', *Acropolis*, 16/29 October 1906, p. 1.

<sup>559</sup> Probably G. Voutsinas or Zacharias Papantoniou, who had replaced Repoulis as editors, 'The Prime Minister is nuts! Both his parents are degenerates!', *Asty*, 19 July/1 August 1907, p. 1. The title is sarcastic.

14/27 January, *Asty* started publishing in serialised form a novel that glorified Thodorakis Grivas – ‘the dashing man of Rumeli’ [αρχιλεβέντης της Ρούμελης] – a fighter of the War of Independence, who in the 1850s made plans for the removal of Otto. *Asty* implicitly compared Otto and George, and suggested that unless the latter assumed a more assertive policy he might end up in exile like his predecessor.<sup>560</sup>

Given all this political pressure, there was little that Theotokis and his Ministers could do to appease Grey: the Defence, a balancing act between the demands of the Powers and the wishes of Athenian irredentists, had reached a point of irreconcilable tension. As the Crown Prince Constantine put it in August 1907, to stop the bands ‘would mean a revolution and possibly the overthrow of the Greek dynasty’.<sup>561</sup> Theotokis believed this could be the end of his political career. He told Elliot: ‘I am responsible before public opinion’ and if Greek influence were reduced in Macedonia, ‘I would be made to pay the price’: by 1907, ‘Macedonia’ had become a key concept of the Greek political vocabulary and the government’s performance there could decide its fate. Theotokis was aware that he was stretching his abilities to control the situation to their limits. The British, however,

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<sup>560</sup> Unknown, ‘The campaign of Thodorakis Grivas against Athens’, *Asty*, 14/27 January 1907, p. 1.

<sup>561</sup> Constantine quoted by Dakin, *The Greek ...*, p. 319.

were unsympathetic to his plight. Elliot simply claimed, with a remarkable lack of realism, that the Greek Government should 'direct public opinion'.<sup>562</sup>

Nevertheless, the gloomy outlook changed rapidly. In mid-November, the Powers decided not to go further with their threats, and discussions for a blockade stopped. It has been suggested that the data Skouzes presented made the British realise that the Bulgarians had committed more crimes than the Greeks in 1907; and moreover that Theotokis's and Skouzes's promises of good will and compliance with the demands of the Powers were allegedly accepted at face value by Grey.<sup>563</sup> In reality, it is unlikely that much had changed in the Foreign Office. The information that Skouzes sent to Grey were the same that Metaxas had been sending for years without results. Moreover, in these reports all Patriarchists were counted as Greeks, and we know that Grey disagreed with this view. As late as December 1907, O'Connor wrote to Grey that there is 'striking evidence of the deliberate methods by which the Greek element in Macedonia is striving to exterminate the Bulgarian wherever possible' and of 'equally striking evidence of the criminality of the Greek consul at Serres [i.e. Antonios Saktouris]'. British views on Greek responsibility for the violence in Macedonia had stayed the same.<sup>564</sup>

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<sup>562</sup> FO 371/264, Elliot to Grey, 17 September/1 October 1907, number 33850.

<sup>563</sup> Dakin, 'The Greek proposals for an alliance with France and Great Britain: June-July 1907, *Balkan Studies*, 3:1 (1962), pp. 43-60, here *passim*.

<sup>564</sup> FO 371/381, O'Connor to Grey, 21 November/4 December 1907, f. 459.

Instead, it seems that the Russians saved Theotokis from a naval blockade. On 1/14 October, the Russians clarified that they would not consent to any action against the Greeks. The Russians argued that the Bulgarians were equally responsible with the Greeks and the Turks should not be allowed to take further measures against the revolutionaries, because this could lead to outrages. The British Ambassador in Petersburg, A. Nicolson, was 'a little surprised': indeed, the Foreign Office had not anticipated the Russian veto.

How can we explain this Russian attitude? In 1907, a solution to the Macedonian Question meant a solution on terms dictated by Grey, probably autonomy. Nevertheless, the Russians preferred to keep the Macedonian Question open: they understood that autonomy would only increase British influence in the Balkans. Stephanos was then right in claiming already in 1903 that the antagonisms among the Powers would not allow them to manage efficiently the Macedonian Question. But he underestimated the effects that the conflicts of the Powers could have on domestic Greek politics. As the 1907 crisis demonstrated, the course that Stephanos proposed in Macedonia brought Greece close to a major political crisis. The Russian veto also suggests that the Greek Foreign Ministry was wrong about the Russians supporting Bulgaria: indeed, reports warning of Russian and

Bulgarian alliances arrived frequently at the Ministry.<sup>565</sup> The pro-Bulgarian zeal of Russian officials in Macedonia and the Rostkowsky incident had convinced the Ministry that Russia promoted Bulgaria. The Ministry was unaware that St. Petersburg was not ill-disposed towards Athens, and was much more worried about the prospect of an Anglo-Bulgarian *rapprochement* than about the Greek bandits. Theotokis made a last effort to reach a diplomatic settlement on Macedonia in 1908. As Elliot had warned Grey, Theotokis approached Germany. In April, Wilhelm II visited Corfu, Theotokis's birthplace, and Theotokis offered him in person an alliance of the two countries over the Macedonian Question. According to Kostas Loulos, Theotokis confided to Wilhelm that he preferred Macedonia to remain Turkish. He suggested to Wilhelm what he had previously offered to Britain and France: the Greek participation in the Triple Alliance, and the reorganisation of the fleet according to German wishes. In exchange he asked for the connection of the Greek and Ottoman railways and a German loan. Wilhelm approved of Theotokis's suggestions and informed accordingly the German Ambassador in Constantinople.<sup>566</sup>

It was the German Foreign Minister who blocked the *rapprochement*. Wilhelm von Schoen pointed out that Greece had a bad reputation in banking circles, and issuing

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<sup>565</sup> For instance see AYEL 1907.4.1, Zalokostas to Skouzes, 19 October/1 November 1907, number 983.

<sup>566</sup> Loulos, *German policy in Greece: 1896-1914* (in Greek) (Athens, 1991), pp. 116-17.

a loan would be difficult. Moreover, as had happened with Pichon and Grey, Schoen saw a problem in Greek bandit activity. Turkey, the territorial integrity of which Greece violated, would be offended by any Greek-German agreement. For Schoen it was foolish to risk good relations with Turkey for the sake of a small country such as Greece.<sup>567</sup>

Theotokis understood that something had gone wrong. He wrote to his wife that

while the Emperor was very warm during our conversations in Corfu, now that he is back in Berlin, he has not sent me a single message. This is very worrying and means that his political advisers suggested he should not continue the negotiations and conversations we had in Corfu.<sup>568</sup>

This attempt of Theotokis gave rise to a false interpretation of his foreign policy.

Loulos has exaggerated the significance of the *rapprochement* which he has called ‘the Greek-Turkish agreements of 1908-09’.<sup>569</sup> He has argued that these agreements were an instance of ‘the leading group of a peripheral country that collaborated with power centres in the metropolis, promoting in this way the penetration of German imperialism’.<sup>570</sup> Other historians followed his example and argued that Theotokis and Crown Prince Constantine reoriented Greek foreign

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<sup>567</sup> Ibid, pp. 117-19.

<sup>568</sup> Rallis, *Georgios Theotokis ...*, pp. 302-03.

<sup>569</sup> This is the title of ch. III, pp. 114-32.

<sup>570</sup> Loulos, *German policy...*, p. 258.

policy towards Germany prefiguring Constantine's neutrality policy in the First World War and the ensuing National Schism.<sup>571</sup>

If correct, Loulos's account would show that there was a powerful interest group that already since the 1900s worked to detach Greece from British influence and ally Greece to Germany in the coming European war. Nevertheless, it misses three things: first, as the above passage suggests, Theotokis himself saw the *rapprochement* as a failure: after this incident, Theotokis abandoned for good any idea of a Greek-German alliance.

Second, Constantine was not involved with the initiative in question and in any case he had little involvement with foreign policy in this period. And third, Theotokis was a Tricoupist and therefore an Anglophile. He moved towards Germany not for ideological reasons but only after Grey categorically rejected his proposals. He described his negotiations with Wilhelm as 'as my attempt to ally ourselves even with the devil to avoid isolation'.<sup>572</sup>

In short, in 1905, with the Deliyiannist Party broken in two, Theotokis could hope that in future the New Party would dominate Greek politics. Deliyiannis was dead and his party fragmented; Theotokis had the support of the King; and Greek finances were improving. By 1907, however, he was facing a formidable coalition:

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<sup>571</sup> John S. Koliopoulos and Thanos Veremis, *Greece the modern sequel: from 1831 to the present* (London, 2002), pp. 281-82.

<sup>572</sup> Theotokis to his wife, quoted in Rallis, *Georgios Theotokis ...*, pp. 302-03.

radical irredentists, the press and army officers had formed a lobby and used Theotokis's silence on the Macedonian Question to present him as a dishonourable politician who was abandoning Macedonia to the Bulgarians. He turned to diplomacy but his hopes were frustrated by Greece's military and financial weakness and by the violent outrages of the Defence, which Germany, France and Britain agreed made Greece an undesirable ally. Events in Turkey would soon help this anti-establishment coalition gather further momentum.

## II. 1908-09: THE YOUNG TURK AND GOUDI REVOLUTIONS

In July 1908 the Young Turk Revolution broke out, bringing about a substantial change in power relations in the Balkans. ‘Revolution’ might be a misnomer: it really was a well-planned military insurrection organised by the CUP (Committee of Union and Progress), with a focus on Macedonia – the territory of the Empire that was most directly threatened by foreign intervention. Their slogan was ‘liberty, equality, fraternity and justice’. The Empire, the CUP stated, had to follow the example of ‘Europe’: they demanded a constitution, the restraint of the Sultan’s powers and a parliament. The conspirators had frequent meetings and exchanged information over the preceding years with the Greek and Bulgarian bands. They saw in the Christian bandits an organisational model; moreover, both sides soon found out they had a common enemy in the Sultan. Greeks, Bulgarians and Young Turks conspired in Macedonia with the hope that better times would come once Abdul Hamid was out of the way.<sup>573</sup>

The Young Turk Revolution created a new international environment for the Macedonian Question. The Young Turks wanted to forestall further reforms and especially autonomy – unlike the Sultan they were ready to oppose openly the demands of the Powers for greater intervention. Moreover, at least in the first

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<sup>573</sup> Hanioglu, ‘The second constitutional period’ in Reşat Kasaba (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Turkey, volume four: Turkey in the modern world* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 62-111, here 62-7.

months of their government, the Young Turks could credibly claim they were liberals interested in the welfare of all Ottoman subjects regardless of religion and ethnicity – they could claim that, now that *they* were in power instead of the oriental despot that Abdul Hamid allegedly was, there was no reason for Europeans to worry about the treatment of Macedonian Christians. Grey certainly had high hopes for them:

In Macedonia crimes of violence on any large scale ceased almost immediately...Hatred, strife and oppression have been swept away, and they have been replaced by fair play, peace, and good will... Well never in history, I think, has there been a change so sudden and so beneficent.<sup>574</sup>

Moreover, the seizure of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary, in October 1908, further changed the diplomatic context. The Austro-Russian cooperation, which had served until then as the motor of the reforms, was now at an end. The two empires drifted apart and, in any case, following 1908 Europe increasingly polarised between two different diplomatic camps. But Russians were not the only ones outraged by the Austro-Hungarian *fait accompli*: the Young Turks too, pointed out that the Austria-Hungary could not dictate domestic reforms upon Turkey at the moment it seized territory that was still officially under the suzerainty of the Sultan.<sup>575</sup> In the words of the Vizier to Gryparis on 14/27

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<sup>574</sup> ‘The Ministers and the Balkans’. *The Times*, 25 September/8 October 1908, p. 10.

<sup>575</sup> AYEL 1908.1.4.2, Baltazzi to Romanos, Athens 14/27 November 1908, number 7106.

November 1908, the occupation was void (*μη γενόμενη*).<sup>576</sup> The reforms froze and soon afterwards they were abandoned.

The end of the reforms meant that a Bulgarian-Turkish war now looked more probable than ever: the diplomatic environment was unpredictable, and many expected that, once the European officers departed, Macedonia would lapse into a state of anarchy. Indeed, after a brief armistice in the summer of 1908, Bulgarian activity was rekindled inside Macedonia. As Dakin has showed, after October 1908 fighting restarted: in that month alone twenty-five people were killed.<sup>577</sup>

The Greek consuls were concerned that this would result in a new Ilinden. For example, on 13/26 October 1908, Saktouris reported a border incident: a Turkish soldier entered Bulgarian territory for water – a common occurrence in the early twentieth-century Balkans – and was murdered by the Bulgarian army. A skirmish between the Turkish and Bulgarian armies followed and according to rumours fifty Bulgarians and twenty Ottomans got killed. It appeared that Bulgarians wanted to push matters to extremes: now that the Europeans were gone, it seemed the right time to provoke the Turks and hope a war would start. Russia, freed from its previous agreements with Austria-Hungary, would come to the aid of Bulgaria – or so Bulgarian irredentists hoped. Saktouris spoke for many in the Ministry when he

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<sup>576</sup> AYEL 1908.1.4.1.2, Gryparis to Baltazzi, Pera, 7/20 November 1908, number 1120; Baltazzi to Romanos, Athens, 27 November/10 October 1908, number 7360.

<sup>577</sup> Dakin, *The Greek struggle...*, pp. 385-86.

argued that a Turkish-Bulgarian war and the Bulgarian annexation of Macedonia was just a question of time – unless that is, Greece was ready to undertake decisive action.<sup>578</sup>

Alexandros Papadiamantopoulos in Salonica was similarly worried. On 15/28 September 1908, he reported on ‘a conference of Bulgarian revolutionaries’ and noted that the revolutionaries intended to reintroduce the question of Macedonian autonomy. His deputy secretary, Chalkiopoulos, noted on 23 August/5 September, that ‘the Bulgarians are on their way to re-arm the schismatic [i.e. Exarchist] villages’. Dimaras in Monastir wrote about Bulgarian attacks on Greek schools and churches.<sup>579</sup> Similarly worrisome reports were widespread among Greek consuls: Ilinden had convinced them that Bulgarian preparation for war was synonymous with aggression against the Greeks in Macedonia.<sup>580</sup>

For the consuls, Greece had to fight back. They had developed links with the CUP and believed that its coming to power offered Greece an opportunity to strike hard on the Bulgarians. Their hope was that the Young Turks would let the Greeks do the dirty business of fighting Bulgarian bands and terrorising Bulgarians peasants, especially since the Powers had detached themselves from the Macedonian

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<sup>578</sup> AYEL 1908 1.4.1.2, Saktouris to Baltazzi, Serres, 13/26 October 1908.

<sup>579</sup> AYEL 1908.1.4.1.2, Dimaras to Saktouris, Monastir, 22 October/4 November 1908, number 1166.

<sup>580</sup> AYEL 1908 1.4.1.2, Papadiamantopoulos to Baltazzi, Salonica, 15/28 September 1908, number 899; Chalkiopoulos to Baltazzi, Monastir, 23 August/ September 5 1908, number 929; several reports are also included in Baltazzi to London, Athens, 7/20 September 1908, number 4896.

Question. So, the answer of the consuls to the crisis was the same one they gave in 1902-04: more involvement, money, and weapons. If we leave apart self-serving professional interests, two reasons explain this stance. First, there was the pressure from the local population we examined in ch. II: many of the Christians of European Turkey did not see the consuls as diplomatic representatives, but as leaders of their community, from whom they expected material support: weapons to fight their enemies, scholarships for their children, and money as a reward for supporting the Greek cause. Second, during the Defence the consuls were progressively cut off from the wider diplomatic context: they came to neglect the international importance of the Macedonian Question and focused exclusively on its local aspects.

On 27 November/10 December 1908, the Foreign Minister agreed with the consuls that Bulgarian aggression was a cause for concern. Georgios Baltazzi noted that the Bulgarians ‘tended to restart the aggression against the Greek element’ and that in general Bulgarian ‘terrorism’ in Macedonia was reappearing. He concluded that ‘the situation is getting worse’.<sup>581</sup> Baltazzi, however, disagreed with the consuls on what was to be done. More involvement was risky in diplomatic terms. As a Theotokisist, Baltazzi hoped that the Powers would get again become interested in Macedonia: he therefore informed the representatives of the Powers in Athens

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<sup>581</sup> AYEL 1908.1.4.1.2, Baltazzi to Romanos, Athens, 27 November/10 December 1908, number 1328.

about Bulgarian crimes, and he asked from Greek diplomatic representatives to inform the governments and the press. In return, he believed that the consuls should keep quiet and stop asking for greater involvement from the Greek state.<sup>582</sup>

In particular, Baltazzi was concerned to avoid the emergence of bands that would be out of the government's control, and especially the recurrence of outrages such as those committed in Zagoritsani and Zelenits.<sup>583</sup>

Zalokostas from Sofia agreed with Baltazzi that the consuls overestimated the Bulgarian threat. First, on 20 August/2 September, he noted that the Bulgarian government was now less likely to engage into revolutionary activities.<sup>584</sup> The chances were that in a Turkish-Bulgarian war the Bulgarians would have to fight without Russian support, which would mean a quick Bulgarian defeat. Second, he highlighted Bulgarian disappointment with the Young Turks: Zalokostas wrote that according to Natchevitsch 'the Young Turks were upset with the Bulgarian government'. He added that Natchevitsch predicted that the outcome for Bulgarian interests in the Ottoman Empire would be 'disastrous'.<sup>585</sup> Moreover, in a telegram on 5/18 September Zalokostas mentioned that the Bulgarians were angered over the continued oppression of their co-nationals in Macedonia and the end of

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<sup>582</sup> AYEL 1908.1.4.1.2, Baltazzi to London, Athens, 27 November/10 December 1908, number 1327; see also Papadiamantopoulos to Baltazzi, Salonica, 13/26 December 1908, no number.

<sup>583</sup> AYEL 1908.1.4.1.2, Baltazzi to Romanos, 6/19 November 1908, number 6789.

<sup>584</sup> AYEL 1908.1.4.2.2, Zalokostas to Skouzes, Sofia, 20 August/2 September 1908, number 596.

<sup>585</sup> Ibid.

diplomatic relations with Turkey – the latter being a side-effect of the Bulgarian proclamation of independence from the Sultan after the Young Turk Revolution. For Zalokostas, tension was certain to arise in Bulgarian-Turkish relations, but Bulgaria could hardly move on its own against Turkey. Zalokostas implicitly suggested that Greeks and Bulgarians had common grievances against the Ottomans and hoped for an understanding between the two countries.<sup>586</sup>

Thus, Baltazzi, Theotokis and Zalokostas tried to apply the brake on the consuls' demand for more involvement by the Greek state. Saktouris, consul in Serres, subsequently provided a vivid description of the difference of opinion between government and consuls. Writing in 1951, he claimed he had predicted months in advance the coming of the Young Turk Revolution: while Gryparis, Theotokis and Baltazzi were sure that the Sultan's power was secure, and allegedly stayed on the Sultan's side to the very end, Saktouris had warned that Greece had to switch sides and ally itself as quickly as possible with the conspirators who would soon be the new masters of Turkey. Saktouris felt so exasperated that Athens ignored his warnings that he submitted his resignation a few days before the Revolution broke out. He claims that after the Revolution took place, Baltazzi understood his mistake, rejected his resignation, and called him to Athens for consultation.<sup>587</sup>

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<sup>586</sup> AYEL 1908. 1.4.1.2, Zalokostas to Baltazzi, Sofia, 5/18 September 1908, no number.

<sup>587</sup> Antonios Saktouris, *Memoirs from my diplomatic career* (in Greek) (Cairo, 1951), pp. 74-6.

Once in Athens, Saktouris found out that Theotokis was ‘too busy’ to meet him upon his arrival – according to Saktouris, Theotokis had still not grasped the gravity of the situation. When they finally met, Theotokis struck Saktouris as a vain man who cared only about clothes, protocol and formalities: ‘I was surprised by the apathy with which he listened to the tragic events of the Turkish Revolution’. Saktouris was anxious to tell him everything he knew about the Young Turks and Theotokis worried about being late for his dinner at the French Embassy. Saktouris got in a long monologue, and the Prime Minister interrupted him: ‘... your enthusiasm moves me. I do not have your faith. I fear that all we can hope for is Crete. Nothing more!’ Theotokis had allegedly abandoned Macedonia.<sup>588</sup>

This story is evidently self-serving. It was easy for Saktouris to claim everybody else was wrong: at the time of writing they were all long dead. With the benefit of hindsight we also know that Grey’s stance gave Theotokis good grounds for pessimism. Moreover, unlike what Saktouris claimed, Theotokis had no intention of opposing the Young Turks. Greece maintained a cautious stance for a few months, but by December 1908 Baltazzi cooperated well with the newly appointed Turkish Ambassador in Athens, Naby Bey. Saktouris described Theotokis according to the stereotype of his irredentist enemies, as an effete aristocrat

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<sup>588</sup> Saktouris, *Memoirs ...*, pp. 76-77.

without nationalist convictions: Theotokis was too careful and moderate for the circumstances. For Saktouris Theotokis's caution was an unnecessary waste of time. Theotokis's mistrust of the Young Turks confirmed the view of the irredentists that he was a hesitant and tired man unsuited to the nationalist politics of the Balkans.

On one thing Saktouris was certainly right: Theotokis felt desperate in the summer of 1908. His diplomatic initiatives had failed, the Young Turks frustrated his hopes on Macedonia and the irredentists criticised him for inactivity. Criticisms against him focused on the missed opportunity of 1908. As Venizelos put it to Theotokis several years later, when Venizelos was Prime Minister and Theotokis an opposition MP: 'in 1908 you didn't move'.<sup>589</sup> The irredentists argued that Greece could have annexed Ottoman territory through a brazen *fait accompli* like Austria-Hungary did with Bosnia Herzegovina: the government should have claimed Crete and the vilayet of Janina, and maybe Macedonia too. That Greece stood by, doing nothing was an insult to the honour of the nation: on 22 September/8 October Bulgaria became independent – Greek irredentists interpreted this as national humiliation. Irredentists saw Greek prestige evaporating while other Balkan nations were making gains.<sup>590</sup>

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<sup>589</sup> S. Stefanou (ed.), *The texts of Eleftherios Venizelos* (in Greek), (vol. I: 1909-14, Athens, 1981), p. 417.

<sup>590</sup> Mazower, *The Messiah and...*, pp. 896-97.

Theotokis saw things very differently. Baltazzi advised him that, if tension arose in Greek-Turkish relations, the Turks would turn against the Greeks of Asia Minor and the Aegean islands. Moreover, Gryparis suggested that Turkey was ready to declare war on Greece: for instance, General Mahmud Shevket Pasha threatened publicly that in case of Greek aggression, he would drink his coffee at the Acropolis – a phrase that circulated widely among Athenian irredentists adding fuel to the fire that threatened Theotokis. A war would have given a domestic boost to the Young Turks, and after 1897, the Turks were confident about the outcome. To the mind of Theotokis, the unilateral annexation of Turkish territory would have been a disaster.<sup>591</sup>

This does not mean that Theotokis remained inactive. In August 1908, the government replaced the Macedonian Committee with the Panhellenic Organisation [*Πανελλήνιος Οργάνωσις*]. This took the Defence in the direction that Rallis had in mind in 1903. The Organisation set up secret offices inside Turkey, manned by Greek officers who collaborated with the consuls. They also sent agents inside Turkey to collect information. But the key change was about the means of the Defence. Some Greek bands remained active after 1908, but the scale of operations was greatly reduced. The focus was on arming the local population. In September, the Ministry of Defence gave to the Organisation 4,800 gras rifles and

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<sup>591</sup> Rallis, *Georgios Theotokis* ..., p. 295.

a hundred cartridges for every rifle. According to Gounaris, until the fall of Theotokis from power in 1909, 10,657 gras rifles and 1,076,300 cartridges had arrived to Macedonia. Between 1903 and 1908, the Defence had created the networks that made possible what in 1903-04 was mere fantasy: the self-defence of Greek Macedonians. There was now an efficient network of the sort that Ion had envisaged in 1903.<sup>592</sup>

Two things are worth pointing out. First, this massive project in the last year of his premiership shows that Theotokis was not necessarily against supporting irredentist adventures: he simply was against advertising his involvement with them – as we shall see in section III, in this respect he was very different from Venizelos. In his actions, Theotokis was not as far from the irredentist circles as their denunciations in the press would make us believe. Second, the government was at last free of the burden of the bandits: there was no longer a need to apologise about their actions. But, as we shall see, arming the Greek Macedonians was risky, especially with the CUP in power.<sup>593</sup>

The military lobby, however, were displeased with Theotokis and saw in the Young Turks a model. The Greek CUP was called the Military League and was formed in October 1908. By the time of its revolution it had 1,300 army officers as

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<sup>592</sup> Rallis, *Georgios Theotokis* ..., p. 291; Gounaris, 'From Macedonia to...', pp. 198-99. Cf. I.K.Mazarakis, 'From the Young Turk movement to the Balkan Wars' (in Greek), *Δελτίον της Ιστορικής και Εθνολογικής Εταιρείας της Ελλάδος*, 29 (1986), pp. 157-74, here 162-3.

<sup>593</sup> Naby to Rifaat, Athens, 4/17 June 1909, number 1406/268, TMIB number 1754.

members and all of the NCOs – Theotokis’s austerity meant professional stagnation for them. The League used irredentism as a vehicle to attack the Greek political institutions: they put into practice Ion’s suggestion to Melas in 1904 for a coup d’état against the political establishment. Why did the officers decide to do so? As radical irredentists, they had been upset for years with the ‘impeccable stance’ of Theotokis, but they were reluctant to move against the government. The CUP convinced them that officers could legitimately claim a role in politics. Moreover, the parliament was by then discredited. As happened in Europe, the parliament spent most of its time debating the annual budget, financial reforms and institutional reforms, but the officers thought all this did little to advance Greek irredentism. Moreover, the parliament operated only for a few months every year, and even then filibustering was common practice: the slow rates of Greek politics appeared unfit for the Balkans after 1908 when the times demanded quick and decisive action. In the opinion of the officers, MPs were lost in details about state finances and forgot about national regeneration, the necessary prerequisite to the accomplishment of the Great Idea. Apart from the *bête noire* of Greek irredentists, Theotokis, the officers also had complaints about the royal family: they saw George as unable to advance Greek national interests, both because he cared more about not upsetting the Powers than supporting Greek national interests, and

because he was getting old and tired. Crown prince Constantine too had become a scapegoat for the defeat of 1897: the officers resented his continued involvement with the army. In irredentism, the officers found a cause that legitimated their political ambitions.<sup>594</sup>

I. Konstantinidis summed up the feelings of the officers in a letter to his nephew Ambrosios Frantzis on the day of the Revolution: ‘Offering the High Command to a foreigner [the Crown Prince] was a mistake...Naturally of course ‘foreigners belong with foreigners’... Foreigners communicate more easily with the court of Athens and they like them [i.e. the court] more.’ Konstantinidis also wanted to have the associates of Constantine removed from the army and said that the government had to be toppled in order to facilitate the ‘military work’. Xenophobia, anti-monarchism and self-serving professional interests created an explosive mixture.<sup>595</sup>

In terms of their aims, the officers never had a very clear goal. They certainly wanted to increase the military budget – but they did not take into account that it was already quite high by comparison to Greece’s meagre means. They also were upset at the slow rate of promotions in the army, but here too, despite their

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<sup>594</sup> Veremis, ‘Testimonies for the military coup of 1909 and its effects on the political life of Greece’, *Δελτίον της Ιστορικής και Εθνολογικής Εταιρείας της Ελλάδος*, 25 (1982), pp. 395-426, here. 395; Victor S. Papacosma, *The military in Greek politics: the 1909 coup d’ état* (Greek translation) (Athens, 1981 [Kent, 1977]), p. 80; Maroniti, *A hundred years after the Goudi movement* (in Greek) (Athens, 2010)

<sup>595</sup> FRAN 6.4, I. Konstantinidis to Frantzis, Nafplio, 14/27 August 1909, no number.

complaints, they had no concrete solutions to offer. Changes in Greece's policy towards the Macedonian Question played a role too: the transition from Kalapothakis's Macedonian Committee to the Panhellenic Organisation was a painful one for the officers. Macedonia had offered them prestige, adventure and extra money. They certainly were upset to see it all disappear after the Young Turk Revolution. What was more, the officers who had participated in the Macedonian Defence had by 1908 become experts in conspiratorial activities and the entry of a large group of Macedonian fighters into the League in April 1909 helped it step up its preparations.<sup>596</sup>

Despite the secrecy of the conspirators, Theotokis was aware that something was being prepared against him. On 4/17 July, he had a meeting with George and they discussed three issues. First, they knew the officers were up to something and discussed whether the government should take measures against them. Second, the Powers had submitted a new Note on the Cretan Question that had displeased the irredentists, adding fuel to the fire. Third, on the next day the guilds would have a demonstration against the government. The economic agenda of the guilds merged with the irredentist demands of the officers and created a powerful message against the Government. Theotokis was losing control of Athens.

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<sup>596</sup> Gounaris, 'From Macedonia to Goudi: activities of the Makedonomachoi officers' (in Greek), *Δελτίον της Ιστορικής και Εθνολογικής εταιρίας της Ελλάδος*, 29 (1986), pp. 175-256, here 230.

He told the King that to his mind the situation was hopeless. The only thing that could save face for the government was to defy openly the warnings of the Powers and antagonise Turkey on the Cretan Question. To Theotokis's mind support for Cretan unionists meant a new 1897, and he did not wish to follow the steps of Deliyiannis. Under normal circumstances, elections would have been the way out, but in 1909 they were not on the cards: if Greece held elections, Cretan unionists would probably follow suit, and then send their elected representatives to the Greek parliament – in short, they planned to use elections to prepare a *fait accompli* for union. Theotokis feared that Turkey would use this as a *casus belli*. He preferred not to take the risk and hoped that if he got out of the way things would calm down. Theotokis resigned. This proved to be his last premiership.<sup>597</sup>

Rallis replaced Theotokis on 7/20 July 1909. Rallis followed the advice that Elliot gave to Theotokis in 1907, to 'direct public opinion' and oppose the radical irredentists. Indeed, he assumed a daring foreign policy. Despite the irredentist fever that prevailed in Athens, he followed his usual placatory policy towards Turkey: he adopted a conciliatory stance on Crete and he had announced his intention to recall Greek officers from Macedonia already in July 1908 in a visit to Constantinople – indeed this was what he did once he came to power.<sup>598</sup> Rallis also

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<sup>597</sup> For the last three paragraphs see Rallis, *Georgios Theotokis ...*, pp. 328-30.

<sup>598</sup> Dakin, *The Greek struggle...*, p. 383.

took action against the League and arrested several of its members. Foreign observers, such as the French Ambassador in Athens were optimistic about his prospects: for a brief moment it appeared that diplomacy and the *status quo* would prevail against the irredentist passion of the conspirators.

Rallis was unlucky, in that, although he was popular among the lower middle classes in Athens, the army officers and the elites mistrusted him. For instance, Andreas Kordellas, a professor of mineralogy from Smyrna, called Rallis upon his assumption of power ‘useless and boisterous’; similarly *Embros* called him ‘deranged’ (*ανισόρροπος*) – many never forgave Rallis the warmongering populism he exhibited in 1897 and his effort to stop the Defence in 1905.<sup>599</sup> Rallis knew trouble was coming, and according to Spyros V. Markezines, tried to arm peasants to protect the Government from the officers, the guilds and the radical irredentists.<sup>600</sup> Nevertheless, he did not have the time: in the evening of 14/27 August, one month after his assumption of power, the League made its Revolution. A young Spyros Melas (b. 1882) – later to become Chairman of the National Academy and Greece’s leading anti-communist journalist – described the revolution:

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<sup>599</sup> KORD 2.20, ‘1907-09 diary’, p. 288; *Embros* on 17/30 August 1909, quoted by Vasileios S. E. Tsihchlis, *The movement of Goudi and Eleftherios Venizelos* (in Greek) (Athens, 2007), p. 90.

<sup>600</sup> Spyros V. Markezines, *Political history of modern Greece* (in Greek) (4 vols., Athens, 1966), iii, p. 83.

The Athenian night owls observed – together with the rest of us, who were obliged by our profession – in the evening of 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> of August a revolution unlike any other in Greece or in any other place on Earth. Something like this will never be repeated! ... open conspirators whose cause, aims, programme, the time and place of meeting were known to all – with the exception of the ‘officials’ – had set out in an almost massive way. And Kifissias avenue, on the direction to Ambelokipi, had quite a few ‘informed’ people who expected to ‘watch’ the revolution as they would do with a parade.<sup>601</sup>

This description amply demonstrates the feebleness of the government vis-à-vis the revolutionaries: although they were well informed – Melas’s remark that the night owls knew better than the ‘officials’ is not meant seriously – they were unable to oppose them. As Theotokis had predicted for 1907, ‘directing public opinion’ might appear as a rational thing to do but could not possibly work against the opposition of the radical irredentists.

In the following days, Macedonia played a symbolic role. Army officers, such as sub-lieutenant Demestichas, put on their uniforms as Macedonian fighters and walked through the streets of Athens. Instead of arresting them, the gendarmes treated them with respect. In the massive rally in favour of the League, on 14/27 September the priest who administered the oath for the ‘regeneration’ of Greece was Chrysostomos Chrysomallidis, who was famous for his participation in the

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<sup>601</sup> Spyros Melas, *The Revolution of 1909* (in Greek) (Athens, 1972 [1957]), pp. 271-72.

Defence in the band of Vardas.<sup>602</sup> Having fought in Macedonia had moral capital and the revolutionaries used it.

The political domination of the Theotokisists that began in 1905 was soon over. Kordellas wrote in his diary on 28 August/10 September that ‘all the newspapers are full with information on the conduct of the Crown Prince and the Theotokisist party... [depicting them] as reactionaries’.<sup>603</sup> After Rallis’s brief premiership came the Deliyiannist Mavromichalis: unlike Rallis and Theotokis he was seen as favourably inclined to the League. Given that he had never before been prime minister, Mavromichalis assumed the premiership in the context of a power transition, from the old elites to the ‘Greek people’, as the League claimed in its propaganda – indeed, his actions were closely supervised by the League.

In foreign affairs, Mavromichalis wanted a peaceful policy. What was to be done with Macedonia? Mavromichalis probably disliked the Panhellenic Organisation: he preferred to restrict decision-making to himself and the consuls. He intended to follow a policy of building powerful pro-Greek networks inside Macedonia, and therefore he planned to increase the consular staff in Salonica and Monastir. He

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<sup>602</sup> Tsihliis, *The Goudi...*, pp. 123-24.

<sup>603</sup> KORD, 2.20, ‘Diary of 1907-09’, pp. 296-97.

wanted to use this network not for violence but for a *rapprochement* with Turkey.<sup>604</sup>

Mavromichalis presented his priorities on 24 October/7 November 1909, in a report to the Monastir and Salonica consuls. First, attention should be paid to the countryside rather than the towns, with the aim of collecting information and of guiding the Macedonian Greeks according to the wishes of the Government. Second, he advised the consuls to set up registers with information about ‘important people’ and to take special care of ‘organisation’. Mavromichalis wanted a written register to which he could have access. Third, the consuls should establish links not merely with ‘persons’ but with entire communities. Fourth, Mavromichalis wished to offer significant autonomy to the consuls in comparison with what was the case under Theotokis. But he warned against using their autonomy for violent enterprises.<sup>605</sup>

Mavromichalis’s effort to bypass committees was typical of Deliyiannism: the important decisions had to be taken by the party leader himself. Moreover, the committees were usually manned by the upper middle classes who disliked Deliyiannist populism. But Mavromichalis’s emphasis on information on specific people requires some explanation: before 1908 such concerns did not appear in the

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<sup>604</sup> AYEC 1909:4.1.1, Mavromichalis to Dimaras and Papadiamantopoulos, Athens, 24 October/6 November 1909, number 1281.

<sup>605</sup> Ibid.

Ministry. What had changed? After the Young Turk Revolution many nationalists switched sides. Some ex-supporters of the Greek cause joined the Young Turks and denounced their ex-allies to the authorities. The remaining Greek network was penetrated and flustered. The Greek network in Macedonia fought back by assassinating those who collaborated with the Turks.<sup>606</sup>

Mavromichalis wanted to improve relations with Turkey. On 16/29 October, he told Naby that Mavromichalis 'et ses amis politiques feraient tout ce qui est dans leur pouvoir pour éliminer tout danger de conflit avec nous et l'on espérait même qu'une entente durable pourrait s'établir';<sup>607</sup> On 26 November /9 December, Mavromichalis reassured Naby that he did not have any intention of approaching Bulgaria or Serbia;<sup>608</sup> on 11/24 December 1909, Naby wrote that Mavromichalis had taken 'mesures rigoureuses' to stop bandits from entering Turkish territory.<sup>609</sup>

When in power, Deliyiannists confined decision making to a small number of people centred around the party's leader. Mavromichalis's inclination was to follow an old style of careful and elitist diplomacy, taking little account of irredentist opinion. Had Mavromichalis come to power in 1907 or earlier, he might have been successful in changing the direction of Greece's foreign policy away from Tricoupist central planning. But this policy required a high degree of

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<sup>606</sup> Dakin, *The unification....*, p. 268.

<sup>607</sup> Naby to Rifaat, Athens 4/16 October 1909, number 2020/603, TFSCQ number 613.

<sup>608</sup> Naby to Rifaat, Athens, 26 November/9 December 1909, ciphered telegram number 773, TMIB number 1776.

<sup>609</sup> Naby to Rifaat, Athens, 11/24 December 1909, number 2387/815, TMIB number 1777.

autonomy for politicians, and the League was determined not to allow them to have it: the League was impatient with slow parliamentary politics and its officers wanted to see results as soon as possible. Moreover, important changes inside Turkey frustrated Mavromichalis's hopes: 1909 saw a turn of the Young Turks towards nationalism motivated by domestic challenges.

The key event took place in April 1909 when supporters of the Sultan staged a military uprising in Constantinople. The CUP came close to losing power, but was saved thanks to the loyalty of the second and third Ottoman Armies, which marched to Constantinople and cracked down the uprising. Abdul Hamid was arrested and confined in a villa in Salonica, the power of the newly formed Ottoman parliament was reduced and the role of the CUP was now close to a military dictatorship. As in July 1908, the CUP drew most of its support from the armies stationed in the European provinces: the constant threat of foreign intervention and the violence of the Christian bands had created among Muslims in European Turkey a determination to transform the Ottoman Empire and to make it more assertive towards domestic and external threats.<sup>610</sup>

But even before April 1909, the CUP had reasons to worry. Instead of reducing national demands and calming down ethnic conflict, the CUP's liberal policies had actually encouraged the minorities to ask for more. As a consequence various

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<sup>610</sup> Hanioglu, 'The second...', pp. 70-71.

national and social protests began to be voiced. In Salonica, for instance, workers' associations made their first appearance and strikes – an until then unknown practice – broke out. The *Federacion* of the Jewish Avraam Benaroya, the Balkan equivalent of the *Bund*, organised large meetings of Salonican workers and set up cooperatives. At the same time, Greek and Jewish commercial interests clashed and the Greek community boycotted Jewish shops, an event which helped the emergence of Zionism among the Jews, and led to the fragmentation of Salonica and other Ottoman cities into hostile Greek, Jewish, Turkish and Bulgarian communities.<sup>611</sup>

As the CUP abandoned its original liberal intentions, some of its members moved as far as the extreme right: for instance, the first anti-Semitic article in the Stambouliot press appeared on 20 June/3 July 1909 by the Young Turk journalist Ebüzziya Tevfik. As one might have expected, he soon turned against freemasons too. In 1908, the CUP had compared its revolution to the American Declaration of Independence and the French Revolution, calling them collectively the three great 'July events'. Only a year later, however, some Young Turks found

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<sup>611</sup> Paul Dumont, 'A propos de la classe ouvrière, a la veille de la révolution jeune turque', *Turcica*, IX/1 (1977), pp. 229-51, here 229-30; Rena Molho, *The Jews of Salonica, 1856-1919: a particular community* (in Greek) (Athens, 2006), pp. 234-40; Mazower, *Salonica ...*, pp. 282-90.

counterrevolutionary thought more appealing. The contrast between 1908 and 1909 could not have been greater.<sup>612</sup>

Ibrahim Hakky Bey expressed this new nationalist and intolerant spirit in a conversation with Tommaso Tittoni, on 18/31 October, 1909. ‘Nous étions jusqu’ici dans le cas du personnage de Shakespeare à qui il est permis de couper sa livre de viande sans pourtant verser une goutte de sang...’ European expectations were unrealistic and damaging: ‘que l’Europe nous avait toujours demandé de mettre de l’ordre dans ces provinces [=Macedonia] sans molester un seul paysan, sans molester un seul innocent, sans prendre une seule mesure de nature vexatoire; choses impossibles!’ For Hakky the problem was not so much the bands but the peasants:

si les bandes peuvent échapper aux poursuites, c’est grâce à la complicité volontaire ou forcée des paysans...Que parfois c’est des villageois apparemment innocents qui forment les bandes et qui à l’approche des troupes, recèlent leurs armes et se mettent à s’occuper de travaux agricoles. C’est une maladie sociale ... dont

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<sup>612</sup> Özgür Türesay, ‘Antisionisme et antisémitisme dans la presse ottomane d’ Istanbul a l’ époque Jeune Turquie: l’exemple de Ebüzziya Tevfik’, *Turcica*, 41 (2009), pp. 147-78, here 152-54.

la disparition totale demande l'application de mesures parfois d'apparence draconiennes.<sup>613</sup>

As mentioned earlier, originally the CUP and the Christian bands collaborated. They thought and acted alike: they both were nationalists and believed in violence and modernity; Greek and Turkish officers did not trust their monarchs and the political institutions of their countries. The CUP learned from its Christian colleagues that bandit warfare, inflammatory rhetoric and violence paid off. But, as soon as their interests clashed, their previously good relations proved to be a sham friendship. The Christians were to find out that, unlike the Sultan whose powers they helped curtail, the Young Turks were eager to mobilise the superior resources of the Empire for nationalist purposes. It was the Christian peasants who were to suffer the consequences.

The equation between peasants and bandits that Hakky made was not unique to early twentieth-century Macedonia: regular armies when confronted with guerrilla warfare often resort to a dogma of collective guilt, and punish the villagers for the actions of the fighters. For instance, Mark Mazower documented similar attitudes in the Wehrmacht during its occupation of Greece. The frequency of this way of thinking helps us ward off against stereotypes about the allegedly widespread use of violence for political purposes by the Ottomans – stereotypes which the consuls

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<sup>613</sup> Ibrahim Hakky to Rifaat, Rome, 18/31 October 1909, number 5932/514, TMIB number 1773.

and Greek officials in general, manipulated for their own purposes. Although the punishments in Macedonia were often harsh and included exile and severe beatings, executions did not take place – hence, despite their exaggerated tone, the complaints of Ibrahim Hakky were not unfounded. This compares favourably with similar contemporary cases – let alone Nazi Germany: for example, the Russian army killed a thousand Poles and injured many more during the suppression of the 1905 revolution in its part of Poland.<sup>614</sup>

Having said this, the experience was terrifying enough for those who went through it. The consuls in Monastir (Dimaras), Salonica (Papadiamantopoulos) and Serres (Saktouris) wrote alarming reports to Athens. Papadiamantopoulos switched from a language of ethnic conflict to one of Christianity against Islam. On 13/26 March, he wrote about ‘the intensification of the crimes against the Greeks... by Turkish bands’. Papadiamantopoulos was sure that the crimes of the bands were committed with the encouragement of the CUP. The reason was that in the chaotic months that followed the Young Turk Revolution, an informant of the consulate (‘a known to me trustworthy person’) got access to the correspondence of the Turkish General Government of Macedonia.

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<sup>614</sup> Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece: the experience of occupation* (Greek translation) (Athens, 1994 [New Haven, 1993]), p. 188; Norman Davies, *God's playground* (2 vols., Oxford, 2005), ii, pp. 272-78; cf. Bayly, *The Birth of the modern world: 1780-1914* (Oxford, 2004), p. 221.

This was a disaster for Turkish diplomacy: hundreds of reports of the Ottoman authorities ended in Greek hands. The Greeks knew first-hand about the Ottoman complaints that a Greek opened fire against the police (8/21 March); that weapons were distributed among the Greeks and Bulgarians of Macedonia (10/23 March); that the Turks believed that the Bulgarians were preparing a new rebellion (2/15 March); the Turkish suspicions that, despite Greek assurances, new bands were being formed (5/18 March); that the Ottomans were making military preparations to crush Christian nationalisms (4/17 March); that the Ottomans were convinced that the National Society was still in operation and was sending bands in European Turkey (3/16 March). Two things stood out from these documents: that the Ottomans saw both Greeks and Bulgarians as dangerous and that they were preparing countermeasures against them.<sup>615</sup>

Dimaras in Monastir was initially as suspicious of the Slavs as were the other Greek consuls. On 12/25 August 1909, he talked of the ‘anti-Greek persecution’ of the Bulgarian bandits. But, although he still used the language of the Macedonian

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<sup>615</sup>AYEC.1.2.1 Papadiamantopoulos to the Minister, Salonica, 13/26 March 1909, number 202; AYEC 1909.1:2:2, Papadiamantopoulos to Gryparis, Salonica, 13/26 March, 1909, number 201; Caimacam of Zihni to the General Government, no place, 8/21 March 1909, no number, attached to the previous document of Papadiamantopoulos; Caimacam of Vodena to the General Government, no place, 10/23 March 1909, no number, attached to the same document as the previous; Hilmi to the General Government, 2/15 March 1909, attached to Papadiamantopoulos to Baltazzi, Salonica, 22/9 March 1909, number 183; Mahmut Sefket to the General Government, March 5, 1909, attached to the same as previous; Mahmut Sefket to the General Government, 4/17 March 1909, attached to the same; the General Governor to all the subdivisions of the General Government, [no place], 3/16 March 1909, attached to Papadiamantopoulos to Gryparis, Salonica, 13/26 March 1909, number 181; FO 195/2363, ‘Turkey: annual report: 1910’, Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, 1/14 February 1911, pp. 32-3.

Defence, the realities he was dealing with were unpleasantly different. In the autumn of 1909, he was at last disenchanted with the CUP: he started arguing that the Young Turks were tolerating if not encouraging violence against the Greeks. Thus, on 12/25 November, he wrote that the perpetrators of the crimes against the Christians were not the usual suspects, namely Muslim Albanian bandits, but ‘the Turks’, i.e. the authorities.<sup>616</sup> Albanian bandits were receiving support from the Ottoman authorities. Although Dimaras did not doubt ‘the *bona fide* of the Vali’, the future looked bleak for Greek interests in Macedonia.

The feeling among Turkish officials was that they had enough with Christian radicalism. Rifaat believed that in Athens, the irredentist Saktouris had become a member of the new Macedonian Committee allegedly founded by Ion. In fact, Saktouris upon his return from Macedonia to Athens became the head of the Political Department of the Foreign Ministry.<sup>617</sup> This does not mean that from this position Saktouris was not involved in activities inside Macedonia: the Ministry cooperated closely with the Panhellenic Organisation. But Rifaat’s mistake shows that it was not only extremists, but moderates like Rifaat too, who had become exasperated with the Macedonian Defence and no longer trusted the Greeks and

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<sup>616</sup> AVEC 1909: 4.1.1, Dimaras to Zografos, Monastir, 12/25 August 1909, number 1009; Dimaras to Baltazzi, Monastir, 12/25 November 1909, number 1004.

<sup>617</sup> Saktouris, *Memoirs ...*, p. 80.

their assurances that they only wanted to stop the Bulgarian bands. Once again the Defence had come at a cost for Greek diplomacy.<sup>618</sup>

Apart from the *rapprochement* with Turkey, Mavromichalis did not take initiatives regarding the Macedonian Question. Although Greek-Bulgarian relations were going through a less strained period, thanks to the reduction of violence inside Macedonia, the relations between the two countries remained cold. Like his predecessors, Mavromichalis regarded the Bulgarians as Greece's main enemies in the Balkans. Nevertheless, urgent domestic politics would not allow Mavromichalis to advance his policy.<sup>619</sup>

The political style of the Deliyiannists was closer to what Greece needed in 1909. The officers' populism – despite their fascination with modernity – was similar in tone to Deliyannis's melodramatic emotional outbursts, and indeed the officers preferred Mavromichalis to Theotokis. But, although Mavromichalis managed the situation better than Rallis and Theotokis, he too failed in the end. Many contemporaries saw in Mavromichalis a representative of the *ancien régime*: he came from a family of magnates from Mani, in the southern Peloponnese, and had

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<sup>618</sup> AYEC 1909.1.2.1, Saktouris to Baltazzi, Serres, 19 March/1 April 1909, number 185; AYEC 4.1.1, Saktouris to Gryparis, Serres, 18 November/1 December 1909, number 1394; AYEC 1909.1.2.2, Saktouris to Baltazzi, Serres, 6/19 March 1909, number 144; Rifaat to the Ottoman representatives abroad, Constantinople, 22 July/4 August 1910, number 3236/135, TMIB number 1814.

<sup>619</sup> He kept some of the reports he got on Bulgarian activity in his personal archive: see MAVRO file 'reports', Papadiamantopoulos to Mavromichalis, Salonica, 9/22 September 1909, number 716; Dimaras to Mavromichalis, Monastir, 6/19 September 1909, number 719.

served the allegedly corrupt political system (*συναλλαγή*). In the revolutionary context of 1909, the differences between Tricoupists and Deliyannists looked insignificant: both sides were interested in preserving the old elites and protecting the power of the parliament from the revolutionary zeal of the officers. Above all, the officers doubted that Mavromichalis was the right man for a national regeneration (*ανόρθωσις*). The officer Chatzopoulos wrote in his private correspondence:

The Mavromichalis administration came as a revolutionary government. But only in appearances. All the ministers were ultra-conservative and they knew that the Theotokis government could not have done more than what it did for the army because it lacked the money.<sup>620</sup>

Mavromichalis found himself in an impossible middle position between the officers, who used threats of violence to make him pass the legislation they wanted, and Theotokis, who still controlled the parliamentary majority and disapproved of the reforms. As Kordellas put it, ‘everything gets voted [by the parliament] without discussion’.<sup>621</sup> Theotokis was angry and tried to resist. In an uncharacteristic use of irony and emotional outburst, he said:

I know of revolutions that abolished the Parliament. But I do not know of revolutions that preserve it and force it to work. The existence of a parliamentary regime requires everybody’s trust

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<sup>620</sup> Chatzopoulos to Karolus Diterich, 21 February /6 March, 1910 reprinted in *Noumas*, number 32, vol. XVIII, pp. 118-123, here 119.

<sup>621</sup> KORD 2.20, ‘1907-09 diary’, pp. 296-97, entry for 28 August/10 September 1909.

and respect. A Parliament whose prestige is obviously reduced, which works hard in difficult situations and with personal sacrifices from the MPs, and is yet insulted, is not worthy of a free People.<sup>622</sup>

Theotokis had two problems. First, legality was a core value for Tricoupists and it was hard for them to tolerate the League and its political interventions. What was the point of parliamentary procedures if their outcome was predetermined by the decisions of the officers? When asked in an interview by G. Pop about whether he would support a stratocracy (*στρατοκρατία*, from the French *stratocratie*), he answered: ‘And what do you think we have now?’<sup>623</sup> Second, it was the first time in Greek politics that a Tricoupist majority supported a Deliyiannist government. Tricoupists saw Deliyiannists as irresponsible demagogues and had trouble justifying their support. Indeed, parliamentary debates were fierce and Theotokis’s MPs often threatened to abandon him. As a result, Theotokis’s support for the Mavromichalis government was tentative and he kept asking for new elections. Few were surprised when Mavromichalis resigned in January 1910.<sup>624</sup>

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<sup>622</sup> Theotokis quoted by Veremis, ‘The military movement of 1909’, p. 263. Veremis claims that the quote is from an interview to *The Times*. Nevertheless, the passage is in *katharevousa* and my search in *The Times* returned no results. The quote is most probably from a Greek newspaper.

<sup>623</sup> The interview is quoted in full by Tsihliis, *The movement...*, pp. 339-41.

<sup>624</sup> *The Times* correspondent in Athens, 6/19 November 1909, p. 7; *idem*, ‘The charges against the Greek government’, 20 February/5 March 1909, p. 5.

### III. GOUDI'S FAVOURITES: STEPHANOS AND VENIZELOS

After Mavromichalis lost power it was Stephanos's time. Stephanos was a radical irredentist, who thanks to his interest in Macedonia had the support of the military lobby, as well as – thanks to his Tricoupist past – of the Athenian upper classes. Still, Stephanos must have felt uncomfortable in 1910. He was dissatisfied with old-style parliamentary politics and preferred Athenian middle-class officers, such as Nikolaos Zormbas, the leader of the League, to the old notables such as Theotokis and Mavromichalis. Stephanos was also a Tricoupist and between 1861 and 1875, he had worked for the judiciary: Stephanos saw law as the cornerstone of modernity. Nevertheless, unlike Venizelos, he had no political message that could bring together his belief in legality with his radical irredentism. As a result, people respected him for his erudition and political experience, but few saw him as a promising leader. Yet, far from being a quiet break between Theotokis's Defence and Greece's entrance to the Balkan League under Venizelos, Stephanos's period was one of significant decisions.<sup>625</sup> In particular, Stephanos's had two lasting effects on the Ministry: he introduced the two General Directories and he was responsible for the professional marginalisation of Greece's leading diplomats.

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<sup>625</sup> Cf. Dakin, *The Greek Struggle...*, p. 419; footnote 64 and p. 420; Aspreas, *Political history...*, ii, pp. 151-67; Gianouloupoulos, *Our noble...*, pp. 207-10; Svolopoulos, HXIV pp. 268-71; Helen Gardikas-Katsiadakis, 'Venizelos' advent in Greek politics', in Paschalis M. Kitromilides (ed.), *Eleftherios Venizelos, The trials of statesmanship* (Edinburgh, 2006), pp. 87-114, here 110.

Stephanos's choice of Foreign Minister was Dimitris Kallergis. At the time of his appointment, Kallergis was serving as Head of the Political Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Kallergis had previously served in Petersburg, Sofia, Constantinople, and Serres. It was, however, as consul in Monastir in 1904, that Kallergis got recognition thanks to his well-informed reports. Apart from objective qualifications, Kallergis was someone the Dragoumises knew well: he worked with Ion in Macedonia, and we saw in ch. III that he supported Ion's ideas. According to the Italian Minister in Athens, Mavromichalis too regarded Kallergis highly and wanted to have him appointed Minister in Rome: Kallergis's skills were widely recognised.<sup>626</sup> Kallergis's appointment was a departure from Skouzes's style. The latter was a professional politician, whereas Kallergis was a specialist who had served for a long time in the Ministry. Moreover, Kallergis's relatively young age (b. 1868) and lack of political affiliation was in line with the League's promises of political renewal.<sup>627</sup>

On 25 February/10 March, Stephanos and Kallergis submitted for voting to the parliament a law that restructured the Ministry along Tricoupist lines. The Central Service [*Κεντρική Υπηρεσία*] was divided in two General Directories: political

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<sup>626</sup> MAE 458, sub-file 'prestito ellenico', A. Carlotti to Guicciardini, Athens, 18 January/1 February 1910, number 7827.

<sup>627</sup> AYEL 1904.1.1.1, Kallergis to Theotokis, Monastir, 28 June/11 July 1904, number 661; Kallergis to Theotokis, Monastir, 26 June/9 July 1904, number 643; AYEL 1904:1.1.2, Kallergis to Romanos, Monastir, 20 February/4 March 1904, number 197; MAE 458: prestito ellenico, A. Carlotti to the Guicciardini, Athens, 18 January/ 1 February 1910, number 7827.

affairs and conventional and consular affairs; there was now a General Director, who supervised the bureaucracy and day-to-day tasks of the Ministry, duties that were in the past often undertaken by the Minister himself. Finally the law intended to fight nepotism by setting clear criteria for retirement and promotion.<sup>628</sup>

Stephanos also aimed at having all the Greek ambassadors abroad recalled. Their secretaries were going to undertake the task of Greek diplomatic representation. The removal was a breach with Tricoupist tradition, but Stephanos had several reasons for it. Some of the ministers had been appointed by Deliyiannis in his purge in 1885 and were thus Stephanos's political enemies. Moreover, between 1903 and 1908, when Stephanos and Ion were raising the alarm about Macedonia, most ambassadors had followed a different course, supporting the reforms: Stephanos attributed this attitude to their extended stay abroad, which had allegedly alienated them from Greek realities, but also to the ambassadors' elitism and lack of patriotism; the ambassadors were also figures with very strong ties to the established political elites of Athens and this made them politically suspicious after 1909.

Finally, Stephanos's official reason for the removal of the ambassadors was the reduction of public expenditure – exactly as Deligiorgis had argued in 1873. This was a somewhat unconvincing explanation, especially when compared with

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<sup>628</sup> DRAS 69.1, f.1 and f.2.

Greece's high military expenditures. Nevertheless, this argument was in line with Stephanos's overall thinking: the removal of the Ambassadors' would show to the people that the elites too were prepared to accept financial hardship in the interest of the fatherland. What Stephanos wanted was a Ministry of experts: a foreign policy directed by experts with limited interference by the government and the king.

The King, however, stopped Stephanos plans. For George, the removal would have made a negative impression abroad. He argued that the expenses for the embassies were small and justified, and that the removal of the ambassadors 'was not an act of political prudence'. The King accepted purges in other Ministries, the judiciary and the university but not in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. George wanted to retain his influence on foreign policy.<sup>629</sup> Still, Stephanos got most of what he wanted: many ambassadors were removed, and the only difference was that they were replaced by new ones. Zalokostas and Mizzopulo lost their posts, Gryparis was repeatedly threatened with removal, and N.P. Deliyiannis was not removed only because he died in 1910. The newcomers often had less powerful political connections, owed their appointment personally to Stephanos and had irredentist views closer to Stephanos's own.<sup>630</sup>

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<sup>629</sup> Bochos, *Radical right* . . . ., p. 507.

<sup>630</sup> DRAS 69.1, George I to Stephanos Dragoumis, Athens, 22 January/4 February 1910, f. 1.

Mizzopulo, the chargé d'affaires in Rome, wrote a twelve-page letter of protest: he was initially promised to become General Director of the Ministry but in the end he was appointed consul general in Alexandria. To prove his irredentist credentials, Mizzopulo reminded Stephanos that he had served in Macedonia:

Did I not serve as secretary of the general consulate of Salonica? Did I not have to stay in the mountains ...of the very North of Macedonia, in the middle of the winter, in a terrible snow-covered hut, surrounded for many days by Turks, destroying in this way my health to serve the State? The cold was making me almost blind, and I could not feel my legs. I consequently had to spend four years of my life walking on crutches for the sake of Macedonia.<sup>631</sup>

Despite his efforts to portray himself as a radical irredentist who put Macedonia above everything, Stephanos did not change his mind, and Mizzopulo was sent to Alexandria. Once there, Mizzopulo started 'seminare zizzania... facendosi il centro degli elementi popolari contro i plutocratici'. Kallergis was forced to have him revoked and in the 1910 elections Mizzopulo was an independent candidate who antagonised Stephanos.<sup>632</sup>

Another 'Macedonian' diplomat was displeased. Koromilas was well acquainted with the Dragoumis family and wanted to be appointed in Paris, and 'if this was not possible' in Rome or Vienna. In July, as he was hearing rumours that the above posts were being filled, he wrote to Stephanos: 'non-egoistic reasons make me

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<sup>631</sup> DRAS 69.1, Mizzopulo to Stephanos Dragoumis, Athens, 6/19 July 1910, f. 10.

<sup>632</sup> MAE 458, sub-file 'prestito greco', Carlotti to the Guicciardini, Athens, 30 April/13 May 1910, number 563/272.

insist on my demand'; 'I do not suppose it is possible you will not announce to me what you plan to do'. Yet, Stephanos did not satisfy his demands. The purge in the diplomatic service cost Stephanos many friends and the weakening of the network he was building for years. Paradoxically, once in power, the irredentist lobby saw its influence diminishing due to internal disagreements.

It was not only issues of personnel which cause problems; so did difficulties of policy-making, especially as regards the new regime in Turkey. The Turkish Minister in Athens complained to his Italian colleague: 'mi ha comunicato i suoi sfaverevoli apprezzamenti dal punto di vista della politica internazionale sull'avvenimento al potere di uomini notoriamente ostili a la Turchia come i signori Dragumis e Calerghis'. Stephanos had the reputation of someone with an intransigent stance towards Turkey and the Ottomans hoped that his Minister would have a placatory stance towards them.<sup>633</sup> Greek-Turkish relations entered a crisis.

The Ottoman Foreign Minister, Rifaat, was worried. As we have seen, he had been Ambassador in Athens between 1897 and 1908. Moreover, Rifaat was married to a Russian Orthodox and, according to Elliot, 'he has made himself personally popular by his tactful, straightforward, and honourable character, to which the maintenance of good relations through a succession of periods of difficulty is

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<sup>633</sup> MAE 458: prestito ellenico, A. Carlotti to Guicciardini, Athens, 18 January/1 February 1910, number 7827.

greatly due'. According to Lowther, he 'acted as a drag on [the CUP's] advanced sections':<sup>634</sup> Rifaat knew Stephanos personally and disliked his politics. He was not alone: for instance, the Italian Ambassador to Greece called Stephanos a defender 'del più fanatico ellenismo':<sup>635</sup> Due to his public irredentist outbursts, foreign diplomats regarded Stephanos as an intransigent politician; consequently, throughout 1910 Rifaat suspected that Stephanos was trying to revive the Defence or even attempt a new 1897.

The archives of the Constantinople Embassy for 1910 have been lost, but luckily the telegrams that Kallergis exchanged with Gryparis were saved in Stephanos's personal archive at the Gennadius Library. Based on these telegrams, Greek-Turkish relations can be divided in two phases: January-May, when relations were cold, but not necessarily hostile; and June-October when they deteriorated: the Ottoman government declared an embargo against Ottoman Greeks; both sides built up their military forces near the frontier; and for the first time since 1897, contemporary observers considered a Greek-Turkish war a likely outcome.

By the spring of 1910 the relations of the two countries had reached a stalemate. Stephanos erased all plans that Mavromichalis had made about a *rapprochement*.

On 23 February/8 March, the Ottomans tried to rekindle the prospects of a Greek-

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<sup>634</sup> FO 371/464, Elliot to Grey, Athens, 5/18 January 1908, f. 1; FO 195/2363, *Annual Report on Turkey: 1910*, Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, 1/14 February 1911, p. 6.

<sup>635</sup> MAE 456, the Minister in Athens to San Giuliano, Athens, 22 February/7 March 1905, number 16003.

Turkish alliance but Stephanos ignored them;<sup>636</sup> Gryparis had fewer conversations with Ottoman officials than between 1903 and 1907. Thus, on 9/22 April the Constantinople Embassy recommended to the Ministry to avoid official celebrations of King George's name day, given that Ottoman officials 'did not appear in a good mood'.<sup>637</sup>

Turks complained about Greek activities in Macedonia already in the January-May period. On 30 January/12 February, Rifaat informed Naby Bey in Athens that according to the Vali of Monastir two bands in Kalabaka were ready to cross the frontier to Turkey. The leaders of the bands were Capandas Louca and Erghir (Argyri) Lava. On 17/30 March, Rifaat wrote again to Naby, this time informing him a Greek band took a certain Papagani (probably Παπαγιάννης) from a village in the Greek kingdom as hostage and led him into Macedonia.<sup>638</sup> On 22 July/4 August, Rifaat notified the Ottoman ambassadors that Yanaki (=Ion) Dragoumis, had founded 'un nouveau comité macédonien' in Athens.

These incidents were for the Ottomans the tip of the iceberg. *Tanin*, 'easily... the most influential Turkish paper', according to Lowther, published two letters found on an arrested Greek. The letters were about Greek revolutionary activity in

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<sup>636</sup> DRAS 67.1, Gryparis to Kallergis, Peran, 23/8 February 1910, number 28.

<sup>637</sup> DRAS 67.1, Gryparis to Kallergis, Peran, 15/28 February 1910, number 54.

<sup>638</sup> Rifaat to Naby, Constantinople, 12/25 February 1910, number 602/33, TMIB number 1788; Naby to Rifaat, Athens, 24 February/9 March 1910, number 2671/152, TMIB number 1793; Rifaat to Naby, Constantinople, 26 February/11 March 1910, number 781/42, TMIB number 1796.

European Turkey including the departure for Epirus of two famous Cretan bandits; the spread of Greek propaganda by Greek Orthodox priests; and the recruitment in Greece of three hundred and sixty bandits to invade Epirus. On 13/26 February, Rifaat informed Naby that letters with a similar content were found on a dead Greek bandit: ‘[ces pièces] prouvent d’une façon indiscutable que le gouvernement hellénique leur prête son appui moral et matériel’ to Greek actions within Macedonia.<sup>639</sup>

In the June-October period, Turkish complaints intensified. On 27 June/10 July, Naby informed Rifaat that the consuls of Volo and Larissa noticed the formation of bands near the frontier. On 1/18 July, Naby reported that according to the Triccala consul ‘cinquante brigands avec munitions sont partis... Avec train spécial cent evzones et trois wagons munitions [sont partis] pour Kalabaka et un autre wagon pour ici’. On 7/20 August, Ibrahim Halil wrote that the Larissa consul noticed the recruitment of bandits by army officers. On 11/24 August, Rifaat informed Ibrahim Halil that the Department of War noticed a new band near the frontier. On 21 September/4 October, Ibrahim Halil informed Rifaat that the Triccala consul believed the Greek army was ready to repeat 1897: ‘deux mille brigands, habillés en soldats, envoyés postes frontières’. On 23 October/5 November Rifaat was

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<sup>639</sup> DRAS 67.1, telegram from Gryparis to Kallergis, number 18, Pera, 17/2 February 1910; 195/2363, ‘Turkey: annual report: 1910’, Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, 1/14 February 1911, p. 65; Rifaat Pacha to Naby Bey, Constantinople, 26 February/11 March 1910, number 781/42, TMIB number 1796.

concerned that Greeks and Bulgarians were preparing a cooperation of their bands in Macedonia: as we shall see later, he was right.<sup>640</sup>

Not all of Rifaat's analysis was correct, and it is hard even today to say what Stephanos plans were. Yet it is certain that Stephanos quickly ended the attempts that George and Mavromichalis initiated in 1909 for a Greek-Turkish *rapprochement*. It also appears that Macedonian fighters were encouraged by his coming to power, which explains the increased activity at the frontier. Therefore, Rifaat's concerns were at least partially justified.

From their side, Stephanos and Kallergis had their reasons for alarm. On 15/29 June, Gryparis wrote that at the closing session of the Ottoman parliament, the Grand Vizier talked of Turkey's friendly relations with Bulgaria, Serbia and the Powers, ominously excluding Greece. Moreover, he talked at length on the Cretan Question, on which he made it clear that the government was unwilling to make concessions. Turkey was tightening its stance on the Cretan Question. In the same month, a boycott of Greek commerce started in Turkey, with an emphasis on Macedonia. There were boycotts of Greek shops earlier, for instance in 1903, but

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<sup>640</sup> Naby to Rifaat, Athens, 27 June/10 July 1910, TMIB number 1811 , number 529; Naby to Rifaat, Athens, 5/18 July 1910, number 4000/542, TMIB number 1812; Ibrahim Halil to Rifaat, Athens, 7/20 August 1910, number 3528/616, TMIB number 1823; Rifaat to Ibrahim Halil, Constantinople, 11/24 August 1910, number 3585/177, TMIB number 1826; Ibrahim Halil to Rifaat, Athens, 11/24 September 1910, number 3685/705, TMIB number 1833; Ibrahim Halil Bey to Rifaat Pasha, Athens, 21 September/4 October 1910, number 730, TMIB number 1834; Rifaat to Ibrahim Halil, Constantinople, 23 October/5 November 1910, number 4505/220, TMIB number 1843.

they never reached the intensity of 1910.<sup>641</sup> This was the culmination of a series of a persecution of Greeks in Turkey that had started earlier in 1910. In sum, by June 1910, Greek-Turkish relations had entered a serious crisis and Greece now seemed to have replaced Bulgaria as Turkey's greatest enemy in the Balkans.<sup>642</sup>

There is however a big difference with the Mavromichalis period. The fear that Bulgaria would seize Macedonia became secondary: the Ministry was instead dominated by concerns about the welfare of Christians in Turkey. In this respect, Saktouris and the optimistic early assessments of the consuls proved wrong: after April 1909, the Ministry started seeing the Young Turks as the greatest threat for Greece.

This was for a number of reasons. First, a boycott of Greek businesses began in 1910. Boycotts had taken place before 1910, but they were spontaneous rather than organised by the state and usually less severe. According to Lowther, the boycott of 1910 included vessels, merchandise, merchants, shopkeepers and professions of all kinds. Moreover, it was 'very complete and definite'. According to Edouard Driault, guardians were positioned outside Greek shops to stop people from buying

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<sup>641</sup> AYEC 1903.1.4 ('October telegrams'), Gryparis to Rallis, Constantinople, 23 October/5 November, number 2137.

<sup>642</sup> DRAS 67.1, Gryparis to Kallergis, Peran, 15/29 June, 1910, number 138.

there. Hundreds if not thousands of Greeks were driven out of Turkey due to direct threats of violence or to their economic trouble.<sup>643</sup>

Second, there was the issue of Greek subjects inside Turkey. This was a long-standing problem in the relations of the two countries: the consuls conferred Greek nationality to Christian Ottomans with an ease that the Turks found disquieting. As a result, the Ottomans often simply denied recognising Greek subjects as such. The issue assumed new importance when the Young Turks extended obligatory army service to the Christians. Many Greek Ottomans used their nationality as a pretext to avoid military service. This, however, caused friction with the Ottoman authorities and several Greek Ottomans began to feel persecuted. Gryparis made an attempt to conciliate with the Turks: he suggested that the issue of nationality be examined together with extradition, another long-standing problem. Stephanos rejected Gryparis's suggestion of a *quid pro quo*. He wrote in the margins of Gryparis's report 'never' (*ουδέποτε*). For the orientalist Stephanos, opposition to Turkey was a matter of principle: it was a lower civilisation, and the 'model kingdom' of the Balkans and he could not enter in serious negotiations with it.

Third, there was Macedonia. The Young Turks promoted a new Macedonian Churches Law, which would give to the Bulgarians an advantage over the Greeks:

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<sup>643</sup> FO 195/2363, *Annual Report on Turkey: 1910*, Lowther to Grey, Constantinople, February 14, 1911, pp. 6-7; Edouard Druault, *La question d'Orient depuis ses origines jusqu' à la paix de Sèvres* [Greek translation] (Athens, 1997 [Paris, 1920]), pp. 55-57; Aspreas, *Political history...*, ii, pp. 266-79.

150 out of 256 churches in Macedonia would go to the Bulgarians. The Greeks combated this law, with the participation not only of the Patriarch and Gryparis, but also of the Greek MPs in the Ottoman parliament. Nevertheless, by May 1910, it became clear that the Ottoman parliament would vote the law without the amendments for which the Greeks were hoping. Gryparis wrote to Kallergis on 10/23 May: ‘...our hopes in the church question are being falsified. Thus, in the coming voting of the modified law, our MPs are going to complain... by abandoning the session’.

Violence in the Macedonian countryside continued and the Greek policy of arming the peasants proved to be counter-productive: the Turks found out about the weapons shipped by the Panhellenic Organisation and took measures. Kallergis in 1910 wrote at length on the trouble of Christians. On 30 July/12 August, he wrote a long report to London about the disarmament of Christian villagers and the violent reprisals against them by the authorities; on 6/19 September, he reported to London a series of violent events against the Christians. ‘At the same time... Turks [i.e. Muslim villagers] were walking around armed’; Turkish terrorism led the assistant of the Bulgarian metropolitan of Uskub to commit suicide; on 19 June/2 July, Kallergis telegraphed to Athens that Ottoman officials ‘se sont rendus village

Panitza<sup>644</sup> [Moryahovo in modern day Bulgaria], empêchent villageois moissonner champ qui leur appartient'. By 1910, Greek consuls drew little distinction between Greek and Bulgarian peasants: their problem was Turkish violence against the Christians in general.<sup>645</sup>

Stephanos took little interest in the economic boycott in Turkey. The middle-class Greeks of Smyrna, Constantinople and Salonica suffered greatly during the boycott, yet no help came from the Greek kingdom. Stephanos's priority was Macedonia, where the population was primarily rural: and for Macedonian peasants the boycott was not an issue.

Given Greek fears at the hardening of the Young Turks' attitude, approaching Bulgaria looked like the logical thing to do. Bulgaria made a new proposal for a *rapprochement* with Greece in 1910. Unlike the Danev proposals in February 1903, this time the Bulgarian suggestions did not fall on deaf ears. Stephanos had his doubts and wanted only a regional agreement. Still, he agreed with the Bulgarians on three things: that the consuls of the two countries would closely cooperate and coordinate their actions; the exarch and the patriarch would come to an agreement to bridge their religious differences; and Greeks and Bulgarians

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<sup>644</sup> A Macedonian socialist revolutionary. He assassinated Sarafov in Sofia in 1907.

<sup>645</sup> AYEL 1910.2.4, Kallergis to Romanos, Athens, 30 July/12 August 1910, number 3003; Kallergis to the London Embassy (circular); Athens, 6/19 September 1910, number 3657; DRAS 67.1, Gryparis to Kallergis, 19 June/2 July 1910, number 140.

would coordinate their guerilla action against the Turkish authorities.<sup>646</sup> By September 1910, it was rumoured that Greece and Turkey would rupture their diplomatic relations.<sup>647</sup>

The Dragoumis government resigned in October 1910 and the next Prime Minister was Venizelos. Stephanos had wanted to turn his interim government into a permanent one: he hoped that his reformist zeal and the popular support it would generate would be sufficient to secure the prolongation of his government. Nevertheless, this assumption was mistaken on two points: first, although some people were genuinely enthusiastic about the changes Stephanos introduced, this was a small circle of Athenians, too small to generate mass electoral support. Moreover, by 1910 it was Venizelos rather than the Military League which made the major political decisions: the personal appeal of Venizelos (as manifested in his public appearances, and the great attention he received in the press) was such that it would have been impossible to stop him from becoming prime minister.

With the advent of Venizelos the political system that Tricoupis inaugurated in 1874 was effectively over. A new political class came to the fore: in the elections of November 1910, of the three hundred and sixty-two candidates elected, only one

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<sup>646</sup> DRAS 67.2, Xydakis to Kallergis, Sofia, 19 June/11 July, number 247; Simopoulos to Kallergis, Sofia, 30 August/12 September 1910, number 255; Panas to Kallergis, Sofia, 1/14 September 1910, number 256;

<sup>647</sup> DRAS 67.1, Gryparis to Kallergis, Constantinople, 3/16 September 1910, number 214.

hundred and seventeen had been previously elected; 87% of the MPs had not been elected before August 1910. The constitutional reforms of Venizelos reinforced individual rights, the protection of property, and the freedom of press; made primary education free and compulsory; and provided for the compulsory expropriation of lands for the rehabilitation of landless peasantry. Few wanted to defend the *ancien régime* and in 1910 the Goudi Revolution appeared to be triumphant: Theotokis had disappeared from the political scene; George I had given in to their demands and replaced Rallis with Mavromichalis, and now Venizelos, their favourite, made a triumphant entry to Greek politics.

Despite its sudden demise, Tricoupism had had its attractions. Tricoupism was in line with the elitist style of politics that prevailed at the time in Europe. Tricoupis and Theotokis had proposed the modernisation of the kingdom following European standards and a liberal political agenda: a centralised state, a professional body of bureaucrats, an educative army and careful reform through legislation. Despite the constant turmoil and demonstrations, actual political violence was very low by European standards: even during the revolution that forced Otto to leave Greece in 1862 there were only a few casualties.

A major accomplishment of the *ancien régime* was that Greek peasants, at the time the vast majority of the population, fared well by comparison to other European

countries: they had more land and less taxation than their colleagues in Spain, let alone extreme cases of oppression such as Russia. Tricoupists protected the peasants' economic interests through legislation: for instance, in 1880 Tricoupis abolished the tithe; moreover, Tricoupis's preference for indirect taxation hurt almost exclusively the urban poor as the peasants could easily evade taxes. Tricoupis also favoured the peasants by selectively forgetting to apply the law, for instance when peasants trespassed upon Church or state-owned estates.<sup>648</sup> Of course such a system of favours was mediated through informal local networks – in other words, it was a form of clientelism or, as contemporaries would have called it, corruption (*συναλλαγή*). This, however, does not change the fact that this system, despite its well-known side effects and a degree of political coercion that came along with it, improved significantly the life of Greek peasants. In recognition of the benefits they received, the peasants gave their vote to the 'system' by voting for Tricoupism and Deliyiannism and remaining quiescent: there was in Greece nothing comparable to Spanish anarchists or the Russian Narodniki. This was not for lack of trying: as Panagiotis Noutsos has shown, in the Ionian islands and the Western Peloponnese there was a rich socialist and radical tradition with important figures such as the republican anti-elitist Choidas and Platon Drakoulis, an admirer of Kropotkin who taught Greek at Oxford and was

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<sup>648</sup> Dertilis, *History of...*, ii, pp. 698-703 and 710-24.

candidate for parliament in Achaëa in the late nineteenth century.<sup>649</sup> But, despite their abilities and energy, these intellectuals never met with the necessary social conditions – an urban proletariat or a landless and impoverished peasantry – to build a mass movement.

Finally, George's reign was the longest period of parliamentary politics that Greece experienced until the republic that followed the end of the military dictatorship in 1974. Before and after the 1863-1912 period, Greek parliamentary politics rarely worked well, and authoritarianism – through legal means or through open dictatorship – was the rule rather than the exception. Why did then the achievements of Tricoupism end in failure and military conspiracy in 1909-10?

The benefits of the established political system allowed Theotokis to retain some support in 1909. Even in the army there were officers who resisted Goudi: men, such as Andreas Kallinskis-Roidis, Leandros Metaxas and Z. Zafeiropoulos, who either for ideological reasons or because they had received personal favours – the two motivations were usually hard to distinguish – felt loyal to the dynasty, and opposed the revolutionaries often at some personal risk.<sup>650</sup> Moreover, the supporters of Goudi were city-dwellers, and especially Athenians, but the majority

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<sup>649</sup> Panagiotis Noutsos, *The socialist thought in Greece* (in Greek) (5 vols., Athens, 1995 [1990]), i, pp. 46-58. For Drakoulis's candidature see p. 42. See also Karafoulidou, 'Socialism and Christianity in the first decades of the Greek kingdom: the cases of F. Pylarinos and P. Sofianopoulos' (in Greek), *Historica*, 49 (December 2008), pp. 295-308, here 295-96.

<sup>650</sup> Tsihchlis, *The movement ...*, pp. 94 and 99-100.

of the Greek population lived in villages, untouched by mass politics. As the King confided to Naby in October 1909:

les officiers formant la ligue ... voulaient tirer de profits personnels de l'anomalie de la situation qui existerait seulement à Athènes. D'après sa Majesté les idées qui prédominent au sein de la Ligue militaire ne seraient nullement partagées par la population en province.<sup>651</sup>

As we saw earlier, Rallis attempted to arm peasants because they were more loyal to the *ancien régime*; indeed, in Aigio and Patras, the crowds met the visiting Crown Prince shouting 'do not abandon us'.<sup>652</sup> The question then is why the peasantry abandoned Tricoupism in the elections of 1910.

Greek historians have largely ignored the political attitudes of Greek peasants and therefore we can only attempt a tentative answer here. Three factors, however, seem to have contributed to the downfall of the *ancien régime* in the countryside. First, Theotokis had little *personal* appeal there; nor was Tricoupism *per se* popular in the provinces. The New Party retained its power in the countryside through networks of patronage and political favours. Once Tricoupism lost control of state resources in 1909 it was impossible to keep the old system of favouritism going: without control of the national budget, and with its prestige diminished, the system collapsed overnight. Once he came to power, Venizelos took advantage of

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<sup>651</sup> Naby to Rifaat, Athens 29 October/11 November 1909, number 2153/680, TMIB number 1774.

<sup>652</sup> Tsihchlis, *The movement ...*, pp. 117-18.

his window of opportunity, and quickly passed legislation that favoured the peasants; in other words, he signaled to the peasants he was willing to continue the policies of his predecessors, and even to intensify them. As a result, Theotokis, retained significant appeal only in Corfu through the Nationalist Party [*Εθνικιστικόν κόμμα*] he founded shortly afterwards: in most of the country the appeal of old politics quickly collapsed. Second, Theotokis was unfortunate in that Orthodoxy could not play the political role that Catholicism did in western and northern Europe. There was no ‘Orthodox vote’: religion was rarely part of the political debate nor did the Orthodox Church have the institutional power of the Vatican. Because the church was subservient to the state – Greek bishops received their salary from the state –the church usually stayed out of political debates. Despite their involvement in the Defence and its interest in irredentist politics, Greek priests avoided involvement in everyday politics. An alliance between the clergy and the politically conservative was impossible in Greece, and this facilitated the advent of Venizelos.

Third, Theotokis’s downfall happened rapidly. Between Deliyiannis’s assassination in 1905 and early 1907, Theotokis reached the peak of his power. His political enemies disintegrated, he had a comfortable electoral victory in 1906, and passed his legal reforms with little opposition: Rallis, the leader of the Opposition,

constantly complained but it was understood there was little he could do to stop Tricoupism. Financial problems notwithstanding, Theotokis did pretty well until the summer of 1907. The crisis that brought about his downfall had of course much to do with domestic factors but was also accelerated by unpredictable international factors: the end of the Defence in 1907, the British threats for a blockade in the same year and the Young Turk Revolution and its appeal to Greek officers in 1908. As was so often the case in Greece in this period, domestic politics were sensitive to international changes that were outside the control of the government. The quick succession of these three events made a timely reaction from Theotokis impossible; as a result, in 1909-10, Greece experienced its own version of ‘end of the notables’. Politics ceased to be the business of a few big families, and mass politics established itself as the dominant political force. Greek socialism too, improved its electoral performance: Drakoulis was finally elected MP in 1910, and a political agenda more oriented towards ‘social justice’ made its appearance in mainstream politics – the Venizelist Alexandros Papanastasiou became the main representative of revisionist socialism in Greece.<sup>653</sup>

Nevertheless, these accounts miss the wider context in which Venizelos’s triumphant arrival in Piraeus – after an invitation of the League – took place in 1909. Far from trying to save the *ancien régime*, Theotokis initially denied

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<sup>653</sup> Stone, *Europe transformed ...*, chapter I.4, “‘Transformism’: the politics of the 1880s”, pp. 42-73.

supporting the Mavromichalis government – he had underestimated the threat that Venizelos represented to the old political world: for many months he continued to understand Greek politics as a fight between Tricoupists and Deliyiannists. Indeed, Theotokis warned George that he preferred retiring to his country house in Corfu to tolerating Goudi and the ensuing support to the Deliyiannists. He threatened to withdraw his party from the parliament– where it still held the majority– and to force in this way the League to choose either to close down the parliament for good, and to establish an open dictatorship or – more likely– to proclaim new elections. George, however, was greatly worried about such a course of action – not least because it would have forced him to make a clear choice between the politicians and the revolutionaries– and in the end he convinced Theotokis to support the Deliyiannis government. Still, Theotokis never hid his disgust for the disrespect the officers showed to legality, and he acted as if Goudi had never taken place, and old politics continued as usual. This was a crucial mistake by Theotokis, who – much to the delight of the revolutionaries – appeared more and more irrelevant to the post-1909 political realities.<sup>654</sup>

Another advantage of the revolutionaries was that –unlike in the countryside– in Athens, the supporters of the *ancien régime* were few. Conservatives were restricted to the elites. Still, the elites were not without influence – this was

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<sup>654</sup> Rallis, *Georgios Theotokis...*, p. 331.

particularly true of one group of people which remained loyal to the end to Tricoupism: the graduates of the Law School of Athens. This was indeed an elitist institution: Stephanos, Ion, Rallis, Tricoupis, Koumoundouros, Zaimis, Deliyiannis, Theotokis, Gounaris and Mavrocordato were all law graduates. Studying law was in practice a prerequisite for a career in public administration and the diplomatic service. The elections of the Bar Association of Athens were the only elections in 1909-10 in which the old parties did well: their candidates got two hundred and forty two votes against fifty eight for the supporters of the Revolution. Most officers and journalists joined the guilds, the merchants and the urban poor in attacking the old, ‘personal’ [προσωπικά] parties. Contemporaries, indeed, noticed that a segment of the upper classes, in particular ‘lawyers, doctors and scientists’, resisted the tide of revolution in Athens.<sup>655</sup>

The cooperation of the elites with Goudi was short-lived. On 15/28 October 1910, a group of ‘Theotokisists’ announced their abstention from the coming elections. They gave two reasons. First, they warned that the revisionary assembly that would result from the elections could easily turn into a constituent assembly, in violation of article 107 of the 1864 Constitution. Second, new elections threatened the collapse of the two-party system that Tricoupis, as we examined in the Introduction, pronounced to be the cornerstone of parliamentary politics in ‘Who is

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<sup>655</sup> Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn republic...*, pp. 126-27.

to blame'. The Theotokisists published their protest in *Kairoi*, the newspaper in which Tricoupis had published his 1874 article. Such details of constitutional law might seem an irrelevance at a time of major political change. Yet, such details were essential for Tricoupists since attention to correct legal procedure was what separated them from Deliyiannists, and also – to their minds – the very foundation of a modern and efficient state. Legality remained a staple of Tricoupism to the end.<sup>656</sup>

The key weakness of Tricoupism and of the *ancien régime* in general was its lack of flexibility. Theotokis and Tricoupis believed in old-fashioned politics: politicians should guide 'the people' by the hand towards what was 'obviously' right. As 'public opinion', newspapers and societies – irredentist or of general political interest – gained influence in the 1900s, the old political generation felt uneasy. In March 1909, Theotokis characteristically confided to Gounaris: 'I believe in the saying that equates people's anger with God's anger.<sup>657</sup> I am unwilling to oppose it [=the anger], for as long as I can postpone my opposition, with the hope that by way of time, it will in the end be cancelled'.<sup>658</sup> For Theotokis

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<sup>656</sup> 'The protest of the Theotokisists', *Kairoi*, 15/28 October 1910, reproduced in Pantelis, Koutsoumbinas and Gerozisis, pp. 539-42.

<sup>657</sup> Theotokis alludes to the proverbial expression 'the voice of the people is the anger of God' [φωνή λαού οργή θεού] which is the Greek equivalent of the proverbial phrase of Alcuin to Charlemagne *vox populi, vox dei*. He does however say 'anger [οργή] of people' instead of 'voice' [φωνή]. Maybe Theotokis made a play on words to emphasise the difficulty of his political situation. A more pedestrian explanation is that Rallis misquoted Theotokis or that Theotokis referred to a no longer surviving version of the proverb.

<sup>658</sup> Rallis, *Georgios Theotokis* ..., p. 323.

there were only two options: opposing or ignoring the people. Unlike Deliyiannis and Venizelos, who made frequent trips to the countryside, gave public speeches and had an emotionally charged political message, Theotokis remained to the end a nineteenth-century politician. It was not just that he could not adapt to the times: he did not want to do so. Theotokis consciously avoided being emotional and ‘popular’ in his public appearances and newspaper interviews. He believed that politicians should be left alone to do their job as they knew best: preoccupations such as gaining the favour of public opinion and popularity were a distraction from real politics – and real politics took place in the parliament and in private conversations behind closed doors, not in electoral campaigns and public speeches.

As a result, contemporaries saw Tricoupis’s successor, Theotokis, as the right hand of King George, a politician more interested in back-stage political manipulation than in real politics. By 1909, Tricoupism was seen as the personification of corruption and its opponents saw this political movement as being closer to the factional politics of Voulgaris and Deligiorgis in the 1870s than to its northern European model. In this respect, in spite of his many qualities, Theotokis was an unfortunate choice of a party leader.

The elitist and gradualist Theotokis was not an isolated case in the context of contemporary Europe. Liberals throughout Europe had trouble adjusting to mass politics from the 1890s onwards. Norman Stone describes how the extension of

suffrage, urbanisation, increased literacy, and the emergence of class consciousness pushed liberals into an alliance with the conservatives. Tricoupism went through a similar transformation. In the 1870s, Tricoupis's Fifth Party – a precursor to the New Party – challenged the authority of George, the corrupt establishment and minority governments. Tricoupis was held in jail for four days for insulting royal authority with his 1874 article. Indeed, in the elitist politics of the 1870s his message appeared radical. But, as we saw in ch. I, by 1886 Tricoupis formed his own minority government with the auspices of the King: in order to survive in the harsh world of politics, Tricoupis was forced to use the same manoeuvres as the older political generation. Soon enough Greek socialists and radicals, who initially viewed him favourably, came to regard Tricoupis as double-faced and came to dislike him more than Deliyiannis. The event that, in the opinion of socialists, compressed Tricoupist hypocrisy was the imprisonment of Choidas in 1889. Choidas published two articles in *Rambagas* which, just like Tricoupis's articles in 1874, questioned the authority of the king: he was subsequently sentenced to three years in prison – a heavy sentence that was interpreted as punishment for Choidas's anti-royalist activism – and died there due to an infection. The death of Choidas took place during Tricoupis's premiership, and it was a blow to the New Party's claim that it stood for liberalism, law and progress:

socialist intellectuals used this incident to argue that Tricoupists were as cynical as the old guard they had replaced. Many wondered if there really was a difference between the old, ‘personal’ politics and Tricoupis’s ‘party of principles’. As the socialist newspaper *Phanos* wrote that ‘the grave [of Choidas] opens a wide gap between his executioners and honest people’.<sup>659</sup>

Gavriilidis exemplifies the distance that Tricoupism had travelled. In the 1880s he was an admirer of Garibaldi and of revolutionary, progressive politics: irredentism and progress were for him the two sides of the same coin, and Gavriilidis could still hope – albeit with the help of a bit of self-deception – that Greece could satisfy its territorial ambitions through largely peaceful means and without a major war: maybe a liberal revolution in European Turkey would have been sufficient. Nevertheless, by the 1890s he had realised the dead-end at which Greek irredentism had arrived after the foundation of Bulgaria. A sense of resignation made him pay less attention to irredentism and worry more about the weak domestic condition of Greece: Tricoupism ended in financial trouble and political instability and its followers became greatly embittered by the 1890s. Gavriilidis consequently turned to the emotional security of conservatism and in particular to Burke, whose writings he came to appreciate. During a visit to Britain in 1894, he

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<sup>659</sup> Spyros D. Loukatos, *Rokkos Choidas: the preacher of Greek socialism* (in Greek) (Athens, 1982), pp. 1-5; the quote is from *Phanos*, 6/18 May 1890, p. 2.

wrote down the saying of Rosebury we mentioned in the Introduction: ‘The secret of Burke’s character is this, in my judgement, that he loved reform and hated revolution’. That Gavriilidis was attracted by this saying suggests that careful reform remained to the end the core of Tricoupism. Nevertheless, in the 1870s the emphasis was on ‘reform’, whereas by the mid-1890s it was on ‘careful’– on avoiding clashes with the established order.<sup>660</sup>

But with the coming of mass politics this sense of emotional distance became a disadvantage. Politicians had to be able at least to pretend that they were like their voters – the Dreyfus Affair demonstrated that in the 1890s a new symbolic world had emerged with the help of mass media: differences in ideology, religion and language could be exploited by the press with previously unheard of efficiency.<sup>661</sup>

Unlike Theotokis – a notable whose mother tongue was Italian – Venizelos was the son of a merchant, the paradigmatic occupation of the Greek middle class, and impeccably Greek: he was well fitted for this new world where appearances and public image were quickly becoming of paramount importance.

The difference between Venizelos and his predecessors was therefore in many respects more one of style than of ideological belief. Indeed, in some respects, Venizelos was very similar to Theotokis. Both men claimed to be liberal and

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<sup>660</sup> GAV 2.8, notebook entitled ‘Visit to London, 1894’.

<sup>661</sup> Nancy Fitch, ‘Mass Culture, parliamentary politics, and modern anti-Semitism: the Dreyfus affair in rural France’, *The American historical review*, 97:1 (February, 1992), pp. 55-95, here 91-94.

worshiped progress and ‘Europe’. Second, they believed in reforms and economic modernity. Between 1910 and 1912, Venizelos passed an impressive number of laws which changed the Greek state from the top down. Third, Venizelos had learned the lesson of the blockades of 1854-57 and 1886. Like Tricoupis, he understood that the only realistic policy for Greece was an alignment with Britain. Venizelos’s pragmatism contrasted with Deliyiannis’s quixotic resistance to the ‘lure [δόλωμα] of Britain’.<sup>662</sup>

Issues of ideology were, however, not necessarily the most important element. Venizelos built his Liberal Party on the ruins of Deliyiannis’s party. Theotokisists and some of the Japanese formed the core of the United Opposition [*Ηνωμένη Αντιπολίτευσις*], which defeated Venizelos in the elections of November 1920: Gounaris, Ion, Stephanos, Theotokis, Rallis and Baltazzi formed an alliance of the dissatisfied against Venizelos. Most of the Deliyiannist MPs who remained politically active sided with the Liberal Party, and Venizelos also inherited Attica, Deliyiannis’s stronghold.<sup>663</sup>

Moreover, many if not most of Venizelos’s voters came from Deliyiannism. There were several reasons for this. First, there was a similarity in their political style. Like Deliyiannis, Venizelos communicated well with the masses. He wrote in a

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<sup>662</sup> Chatziannakoglous, *The political...*, p. 28.

<sup>663</sup> Oikonomou, HXIV pp. 180-82.

simple and passionate language without jargon. Unlike Theotokis, he toured Greece to spread his political message and wrote frequently in newspapers: in other words, he knew well how to operate in a world of mass politics. We saw earlier that when Zaimis criticised the Defence in the parliament, Theotoky avoided commenting in public and only expressed his anger in his private correspondence. Venizelos would not have missed such an opportunity to question an opponent's patriotism; he would rather have forced Zaimis to enter into a parliamentary debate with him.

Second, the Liberal party was built on the prestige of its leader. Like Deliyiannis's party, the Liberals fragmented when their leader died. What brought together socialists such as Papanastasiou and liberals such as Repoulis was belief in Venizelos. Mavrogordatos has collected some of the terms Venizelos's supporters used: 'hero, revolutionary, father of the nation, saviour, liberator, protector, prophet, messiah, wizard, creator, great governor and chief in peace and war'. Liberal ideology might also have played a role, but what connected these people above all was personal commitment to their leader.<sup>664</sup>

Venizelos was an Athens Law School graduate too. The League invited Venizelos to come to Athens and assume power, but he expressed reservations: 'It is impossible to me to declare that I am in principle ready to assume power'.

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<sup>664</sup> Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn Republic...*, p. 55.

Venizelos denied leading an unelected and illegal government in 1909. But the core of his reservation was not about legality: 'I have to be convinced that [the assumption of power] is my bounden duty in the interests of my Nation'. Honour and patriotic duty were more important than law. Unlike Theotokis, Venizelos was ready to break the law in the name of the nation. As Mazower has argued, Venizelos built his success on a new political message rather than, as Georgios Ventiris famously claimed, on social changes that allegedly made the collapse of old politics unavoidable.<sup>665</sup>

These political changes inevitably had an impact on Greek foreign policy. Macedonia formed part of the overall political transformation of Tricoupism. Like Crispi who dreamed of an Italian empire, and Maura who got Spain involved in colonial adventures in Morocco, Theotokis hoped that some success (or at least the lack of outright failure) in Macedonia would help him survive politically and also give an impetus to his project of domestic reform. The concerns that drove the Defence were therefore primarily domestic: to appease the radical irredentists, appeal to conservative and nationalist voters, and modernise the Ministry and the army. Theotokis hoped that in this way he could burn off the political tension and especially the virulent attacks of the press and the boisterous demonstrations in the

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<sup>665</sup>Venizelos to the League, Chalepa, 22 December 1909/4 January 1909, reproduced in Pantelis, Koutsoumbinas and Gerozisis, p. 507; Mazower, 'The Messiah...', pp. 890-95; Ventiris, *Greece in...*, i, pp. 18-29; see also Andreopoulos, 'Liberalism and ...', pp. 950-53.

capital. Of course he and his associates understood that giving money to the Defence from the state budget did not *automatically* improve their electoral prospects or help build a more efficient state. Yet, it is clear that Tricoupism wanted to use territorial expansion as a tool of domestic state building. This is not to deny that the Tricoupists shared with many of their compatriots a hostility to Bulgaria and that their hatred for ‘Slavs’ motivated many of their irredentist actions; but it explains why this issue was so important for them: if Greece failed to compete with Bulgaria this would not only mean that allegedly Greek lands would pass into Bulgarian hands, but it would also suggest that the Greek state, its politics and its institutions, were unsuited to become members of the European club.<sup>666</sup>

The trouble for Theotokis was that his enemies could apply the same way of thinking against him: as long as circumstances were not improving in Macedonia – and given the vagueness and megalomania of Greek hopes and aspirations, one could *always* claim that things were going the wrong way – then the government was to blame. Behind every reform initiative of the Powers, every failure of Turkish soldiers to defeat a Bulgarian band and every success – however insignificant – of the Bulgarians in Macedonia, there was a failure of the Greek government: not just of its foreign policy but a failure of the government – and

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<sup>666</sup> A similar argument is made for colonialism and Western Europe by Bayly, *The Birth ...*, pp. 228-34.

even of the state – as a whole. What made matters worse for Theotokis was that in the process of modernising Greece, he also strengthened the army; but, instead of the loyal and grateful officers he hoped to produce, he ended up with fervent irredentists who thought that they knew better than the government and used the help the government had generously given them, notably the prestige they gained through the Defence, and their improved education at the academies and their increased social status, to oppose their very benefactors.

When it came to foreign policy, Venizelos redefined tradition in a way that appealed to well-off urbanites. As we saw in the case of Kostogerakaris (pp. 312-13), these urban dwellers saw traditional forms of violence as a relic of the past and as representing the vices of the poor: violence, irrationality and bad manners. This is part of the reason why Theotokis had trouble discussing the Defence in public: praising Cretan peasants for murdering Bulgarians with knives was unstatesmanlike. Venizelos instead could use his revolutionary past in Crete to legitimise his domestic policies. When in 1909, a group of Macedonian fighters from Crete started a deadly brawl in Athens, Venizelos publicly addressed them a letter writing that ‘I am related to some of you through real friendship [*προσωπική φιλία*]’: as a Cretan revolutionary he could claim to be one of the bandits. If he castigated them, it was only because they used violence in the wrong way, not

because violence of this kind was intrinsically wrong. Thus, he retained honour as a value but detached it from dueling and other traditional aspects of Greek society: what was honourable was to fight for your nation as one of the many, that is as a soldier, not to defend the honour of a dead colleague in a one-to-one fight. Honour became impersonal, collective and abstract, a process that paralleled similar developments in the other Balkan states.<sup>667</sup> Theotokis had set the Defence in operation, but Venizelos – who had a revolutionary past in Crete and was much more efficient in using mass politics – was able to take advantage of the boost that the Defence gave to irredentism.

Although Venizelos praised violence, he was no warmonger; at least not in 1910. In the summer of 1908, together with Rallis, he was the only Greek politician to praise publicly the Young Turks and to advocate Greek-Turkish cooperation.<sup>668</sup> On 20 January/2 February 1909 Venizelos returned to the subject: ‘the success of the Young Turk movement saved not only the Turks but also Hellenism from mutilation and disaster’.<sup>669</sup> Rallis and Venizelos agreed with each other on this issue, and Rallis was the first Greek politician to offer him participation in his ticket.

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<sup>667</sup> Mazower, *The Balkans: from the end of Byzantium to the present day* (London, 2001 [2000]), ch. ‘Epilogue: On violence’, pp. 145-67, especially 150-52.

<sup>668</sup> Svolopoulos, HXIV p. 284.

<sup>669</sup> Venizelos quoted in Michael Llwellyn Smith, ‘Venizelos’s diplomacy: 1910-23: from the Balkan alliance to the Greek-Turkish settlement’, in Paschalis Kitromilides (ed.) *Eleftherios Venizelos: the trials of statesmanship* (Edinburgh, 2006), pp. 134-92, here 134.

Unlike Stephanos, Venizelos was interested in the welfare of middle-class Ottoman Greeks, and he appointed Gryparis as his Foreign Minister. Gryparis was seen as a *persona grata* in Constantinople and indeed he took steps to ameliorate relations.

Ibrahim Halil from Athens reported to Rifaat on 6/19 November 1910:

M. Gryparis m'a donné les assurances les plus formelles qu'aucune bande n'existait sur le territoire du Royaume, que le Gouvernement Hellénique était fermement décidé à s'opposer à leur formation et que, d'ailleurs, il avait déjà muni d'ordres sévères aux autorités des provinces près de la frontière...<sup>670</sup>

Ottoman reports about violent incidents and the formation and entrance of bands disappeared. On 29 July/11 August 1911 he confirmed to Ghalib Kémaly that he had removed trouble-makers from the frontier and he concluded that, if Macedonian fighters appeared again, 'on les traitera de simples brigands et, au besoin, chaque fois qu'on mettra la main sur eux on les exterminera.'<sup>671</sup> In exchange, Gryparis wanted 'relations de sincère amitié' and the end of the embargo against Greek merchants in Turkey.

Lowther, British Ambassador in Constantinople, concluded in his annual report for 1910 that 'the advent to power of Mr Venizelos ... appears to have been heralded as an era of more peaceful relations'. If however the Young Turks had the intention

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<sup>670</sup> Ibrahim Halil to Rifaat, Athens, 6/19 November 1910, number 3930/850, TMIB number 1845.

<sup>671</sup> Gryparis quoted in Ghalyb Kémaly to Rifaat, Athens, 29 August/11 September 1911, number 5076/551, TMIB number 1873.

of co-operating with Greece, they never had the time to bring that to fruition. The Italian-Turkish War that began on 16/29 September 1911 changed everything. Turkey was no longer seen as the strongest side in the regional Balkan context: instead, its defeat revealed military weaknesses. Unlike what was expected at the time, the other Powers not only did not interfere, but they also allowed Italy to annex Turkish territory. The Greeks 'lost' the Dodecanese an area they regarded as their own, and this made them anxious to protect their interests in Macedonia. Venizelos and his new Minister, Koromilas, started thinking that adopting a friendly stance towards Turkey was betting on the wrong horse. The decision of Greece to enter the Balkan League was therefore not a long awaited solution to the Eastern Question. It was a response to the perceived failure both of their own efforts in Macedonia and of the ambition of an alliance with an apparently collapsing Turkey. Bulgarian socialists and some Balkan politicians and intellectuals had prefigured some form of understanding of the Balkan countries against Turkey, but in Greece the idea of an alliance with Bulgaria met to the end with great opposition. Thus, Greece was the last country to enter the Balkan League on 29 May/11 June 1912. In the ensuing conflict, the Turkish troops were outnumbered and disorganised. Greece got Salonica and Janina from Turkey, whereas its allies made similarly spectacular territorial gains; shortly afterwards, in

a new war where Greece, Serbia, Turkey and Romania united against Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia essentially divided Macedonia among themselves and – something that would have been considered unthinkable a few months earlier – Bulgaria received only a miniscule portion of Macedonian lands.<sup>672</sup>

As this chapter has attempted to show, domestic politics and policy towards Macedonia (as well as wider relations with the Great Powers) were intertwined in mutually dependent ways. Theotokis had built the Defence on a balance between domestic and foreign factors. He wanted to keep the radical irredentists at bay *and* maintain good relations with the Powers. After 1907, maintaining this balance was very difficult and after July 1908 impossible. He could show no results for his good gestures towards the Powers and appeared weak in Athens. With the populist Deliyannis dead, there was no credible parliamentary alternative: the Japanese were energetic but too bourgeois to gain support in the countryside. Economic grievances, allegations of corruption, populist anti-elitism and irredentist demands, all combined in a powerful political message that challenged the parliament, the political parties and the King.

It was at that time that Macedonia became a byword for daring irredentist action. Theotokis wanted to maintain the Ottoman *status quo* and used Macedonia as a

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<sup>672</sup> Cf. Stavrianos, 'The Balkan federation movement: a neglected aspect', *The American Historical Review*, 48:1 (October 1942), pp. 30-51, here 30-33.

colonial project that would improve Greek institutions, above all the army and the Ministry; but radical irredentists saw in Macedonia a quest for honour, where the use of violence was not an undesirable side effect but something to be proud of. Irredentists knew little of the rural Slav-speakers but took it for granted that Macedonian peasants would consent to becoming modern urbanite Greeks and leave their past behind. For the sake of Macedonia, Greece had to become modern, fight corruption, and put an end to endless parliamentary debates and party conflicts.

Unlike in other areas of Europe opposition to liberalism came not from socialism but from irredentism. From the end of the nineteenth century onwards, the development of a radical nationalism, based especially in the urban populations of Athens, destabilised the conventional structures of party politics. Though a number of political leaders sought to contain and to channel this sentiment to their own advantage, the failure to achieve a tangible victory in Macedonia created the nationalist mood that contributed to the Goudi Revolution of 1909.

By the time that that revolution occurred, the model for the dissatisfied irredentists was however no longer Bulgarian bandit warfare but Turkish politics. Like the Young Turks, the radical irredentists wanted to transform themselves into Northern Europeans overnight. They wanted to get rid of their monarch, assert their

independence from the Powers and above all use violence for political purposes. As we saw, traditional forms of violence like Maniot *gdikiomos* were frowned upon by these new nationalists: they served to remind Greeks that their model kingdom was built with Balkan materials. In contrast, for irredentists, the violence of a regular army was the threshold of modernity.

Venizelos caught the *Zeitgeist*. He gave shape and clarity to the angry shouts of the irredentists and turned them into a credible political message. Violence, of a regular and modern kind, should become part of Greek politics. The institutions should be reformed – and their personnel purged – but should not be allowed to collapse. The atomistic values of the countryside had no place in the modern state Venizelos promised to his followers. Consequently, the regime of the old notables was swept away, and a new political order came into existence based on an alliance of army officers, irredentist groups and the new social coalition built around the charismatic figure of Venizelos. This reaped the benefits of the Balkan Wars but did not address the more fundamental weaknesses of the Greek state.

## CONCLUSION

Greek policy towards Macedonia serves as a means of illuminating the wider evolutions in Greek politics from 1878 to 1912. Most obviously, it demonstrates the limited power of the post-independence Greek state. The Greek state had assumed the mission of succeeding the Ottoman Empire, but lacked the resources to do so. As we argued, it lacked the financial resources to build an army that would defeat the Ottoman Empire in a conventional war – as a matter of fact, the experience of 1885-6 and especially of 1897 showed that the Greek economy could not bear the burden of war for more than a few months. This forced Greek policy-makers to turn to guerrilla warfare in Macedonia, which was indeed a tactic better suited to Greece's limited means, and did bring good results against the Bulgarian bands. But guerrilla warfare exposed Greece to diplomatic dangers, especially isolation. European countries understood that an alliance with Greece would worsen their relations with the two countries that most resented the Greek involvement in Macedonia, Bulgaria and Turkey. Greek politicians endlessly discussed the possibilities of improving relations with Britain, and of approaching Turkey; but given its limited appeal as an ally, and its perceived involvement in the guerilla campaigns, Greece continued to be burdened with isolation. Thus, although Greek military activity in Macedonia satisfied the irredentists who were

eager for successes against the Bulgarian foe, it did little to advance Greek claims over Ottoman territory.

But Greece also had institutional weaknesses linked to the very way in which the Greek state was set up. In particular, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the staff of the Greek embassies and consulates were divided along partisan lines, as most of them were openly affiliated with one or another party; purges where one faction removed the supporters of the other were usual. The purges conducted by Stephanos in 1910, following the Goudi revolution, are the more well-known ones, but Deliyiannis had made another purge several decades earlier, in 1885, whereas Theotokisists were keen on promoting their own people in key positions. What was more, lobby groups, journalists and irredentist circles had significant influence on the government. Greek politics, especially on the streets (and clubs) of Athens, was an over-heated place, and the way in which such personal and nationalist campaigns impinged on the conduct of policy made it very difficult for Greece to develop a coherent policy towards Macedonia. Opponents of a certain policy could always hope that sooner or later the government would be toppled and an entirely different policy would be pursued. This was especially true in the case of Rallis's efforts at forging a Greek-Turkish alliance in 1897, 1903 and 1909: his enemies in the Ministry procrastinated waiting for the fall of the government. Another

consequence of factionalism was that the same people gyrated endlessly in positions of power: successful journalists and lobbyists often became politicians and vice versa. The result was the collapse of institutional roles and the strengthening of the factions.

Thirdly, however, the issue of Macedonia reveals the division between the often unrealistic nationalist ambitions voiced by many of the Greek political elite and the realities in Macedonia. Greek insistence on obtaining sovereignty over Macedonia was to a large extent based on fantasy. True, Greek nationalists could claim that there was a powerful Greek network, composed mainly of Greek schools and Patriarchist churches, but in reality Greece failed to pass the test in what was the most crucial element for contemporary Europeans, namely that of mother tongue. Very few peasants were native speakers of Greek, and they were in any case concentrated in the South. Moreover, Bulgaria had developed strong links with Macedonians, and most of them came to be identified with Bulgaria. But the debate inside Greece was largely independent of the realities on the ground; instead, Greek intellectuals turned to arguments based on the distant historical reference-points of Basil II the Bulgar-slayer and of Alexander the Great.

For Greek irredentists, however, Macedonia was more than a policy; it was above all a project that would allow Greece to claim its place among Europe's modern

nations. Irredentism was a powerful force in Greece following the state's creation. In common with a number of other states, many Greek nationalists believed, and not without reason, that the frontiers defined for the state by the Great Powers at independence did not reflect the historical and ethnic reality of the Greek population. Expanding the frontiers was therefore above all a means of uniting the Greek people, admittedly a concept that was rather vague in its definition and scope. This emotional ambition went alongside, and was supported by, the logic of more practical rewards. First, by acquiring control of Macedonia, Greece would solve the problem of the fundamental weakness of the post-independence Greek state by expanding its territory and resources, as well as increasing its population. Second, by conquering and integrating this new territory, Greece would prove to the European powers, and indeed their populations, that it had an efficient army and bureaucracy and could act as an inheritor to other territories of the visibly weakening Ottoman Empire. In that sense, the issue of Macedonia was a litmus test of the credentials of the Greek state to assume its role as part of the future structure of power in the Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean.

The study of Greek policy towards Macedonia is therefore primarily a study in diplomatic and military impotence. Greece lacked the resources to make its own history, and was dependent on the actions of others, in Macedonia and in the

neighbouring states, as well as on the wider attitudes of the Great Powers. The realisation of this impotence left the field open for radical irredentists: for them, everything that Greece did, from domestic reforms to the reorganisation of the army, had to focus on the Greek political and cultural competition with Bulgaria. Unlike Theotokis and Deliyiannis, they had few reservations about a war against Turkey, no matter the cost. Their message did not meet with success in the countryside, where people were less attracted to irredentist adventures, but in Athens – which had more political influence than its population of 150,000 would suggest – irredentists captured the press, organised demonstrations and gathered significant public support, as well as destabilising the structures of parliamentary rule. Their efforts helped the new violent irredentism acquire a hegemonic position in Greek politics during the first decade of the twentieth century. This position, together with the leadership provided by Venizelos and the coming of the wider European conflict of the First World War led Greece into a decade of wars between 1912 and 1922. These wars both enlarged Greece's territory, and brought an end to Greek irredentism via the Great Catastrophe of 1922.

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