

**THE YOUNG TURK REVOLUTION AND  
THE MACEDONIAN QUESTION 1908-1912**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has  
given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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## ABSTRACT

European-imposed reforms in Ottoman-held Macedonia in the period 1904-1908 led to the diminution of Ottoman authority, the encouragement of Christian partisan activities and the consolidation of the Young Turk movement in the region. The Young Turk revolution of 1908 established a Constitutional and Parliamentary regime in the Ottoman Empire pledging institutional reform, equality and liberty for all nationalities.

Between July 1908 and April 1909, it became clear that the Young Turk policies and the Macedonian aspirations of the Christian Balkan countries were incompatible. The Young Turks remained a predominantly Moslem movement committed to safeguard the territorial integrity of the Empire, prevent foreign interference in Ottoman affairs and counteract Christian Macedonian separatism.

By contrast, following the withdrawal of European control from Macedonia, the Balkan Christians attempted to take advantage of the Ottoman Constitutional change to further their own political and national interests in Macedonia. Disillusioned by the Young Turk centralist tendencies and apprehensive of a resurgent Turkish nationalism, Bulgarian, Greek and Serb nationalists resorted -once more- to their original means of Macedonian propaganda: religious, cultural and revolutionary activity.

During 1909-1912, the Committee of Union and Progress (C.U.P.) -the driving force in the Young Turk movement- initiated a policy of enforced denationalization on the non-Moslem ethnic groups. Implemented in a harsh manner in Macedonia, this practice irrevocably undermined any prospect of cooperation between Moslem Young Turks and Christian Macedonians. Its aftermath included the growth of the Albanian nationalist movement and the encouragement of rapprochement between the Christian Balkan states, which was to bring about the establishment of the Balkan Alliance and the collapse of European Turkey in the Balkan wars.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- A.T.V.= Archive of Tsontos-Vardas  
B.A.S.= Bulgarian Academy of Sciences  
B.C.= Balkan Committee  
B.D.= British Documents on the Origins of the War  
B.N.F.P.= Bulgarian National Federal Party  
C.C.= Central Committee  
C.U.P.= Committee of Union and Progress  
E.A.= Εκκλησιαστικη Αληθεια [Ecclesiastical Truth]<sup>1</sup>  
F.O.= Foreign Office  
G.D.D.= German Diplomatic Documents  
G.S.A.= General State Archives  
I.A.Y.E.= Historical Archive of the Greek Foreign Ministry  
M.R.O.= Macedonian Revolutionary Organization  
P.P.A.P.= British Parliamentary Papers. Accounts and Papers  
P.R.O.= Public Record Office  
S.M.C.= Supreme Macedonian Committee

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<sup>1</sup> The journal of the Greek Ecumenical Patriarchate.

## NOTE ON CHRONOLOGY AND TOPONOMY

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the western world was using the Gregorian (new) calendar while the Balkan Orthodox used the Julian (old). Thirteen days separated the two calendars. To facilitate the reader, the Gregorian calendar has been used in this study. A problem might occur however, for the reader who shall attempt to identify Greek archival documents, in which the Julian calendar was used. To avoid such a confusion, I have cited both calendars where reference is made to Greek archival sources. For example:

I.A.Y.E./1908/File 118.1/General Consulate of Salonica/12/25-9-1908/no.550/Consul-General to Foreign Minister.

[note: 12 September applies to Julian calendar while 25 September for Gregorian]

Everything about Macedonia has been subject to controversy. Toponymy is no exception to this general statement. In a region where Slav, Greek, Turkish, Albanian, Vlach and Jewish populations left their mark, different names were used to identify a certain area or city. British documents provide a comprehensible system of identifying Macedonian and other places. Therefore, the toponymy used in British sources - mainly in the British Parliamentary Papers. Accounts and Papers- has been used in this study with a view to standardization. A list is given below to enable the reader to identify places in Macedonia and elsewhere.

### Names used in this study

Constantinople

Salonica

Adrianople

Dedeagatch

Janina

Monastir

Uskub

Scutari

Argirokastro

### Contemporary Names

Istanbul

Thessaloniki

Edirne

Alexandroupolis

Ioannina

Bitolja

Skopje

Skoder

Gjirokaster

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Koritsa	Korce
Diber	Diber
Ipek	Pec
Ishtip	Shtip
Jakova	Djakovica
Smyrna	Ismir
Djumaja	Blagoevgrad
Tepeleni	Tepelene
Valona	Vlore
Vardar	Axios
Struma	Strimonas
Vodena	Edessa
Maritsa	Evros
Novibazar	Novi Pazar
Philippopolis	Plovdiv
Tirnovο	Trnovo



## PREFACE

The Young Turk revolution and the Macedonian Question have been subject to extensive historical research but only as separate topics. Turkish studies on the Young Turk revolution are abundant. However, most of them tend to examine the Young Turk phenomenon within the context of Turkish politics. Balkan historiography has dealt with the Macedonian question extensively but the vast majority of works dealing with Macedonia before the Balkan wars, except for Professor Dakin (1966), set the Ottoman Constitutional change of 1908 as terminus.

As a result, the effect of the Young Turk revolution in the Balkan peninsula and specifically Macedonia -a region inextricably linked with the Young Turk movement and the Committee of Union and Progress- has not become the object of any scholarly study so far. The present study will attempt to fill in this gap. The principal aim of this work is to explore the impact of the Young Turk revolution of 1908 on the Macedonian policies of the Balkan states in the period 1908-1912. The researcher argues that there was a fundamental conflict of political interests between the Young Turks and the Christians in Macedonia.

The study is divided into three parts. Part I deals with the emergence and growth of the Young Turk movement and the escalation of inter-Balkan rivalry in Macedonia, with particular reference to the years of Macedonian reform (1904-1908).

Part II constitutes the focus of the thesis, covering the period between the revolution of July 1908 and the counterrevolution of April 1909. The thesis emphasizes that, apart from Turkey's Balkan entanglements following the Near East crisis of October 1908, it was in these months that the incompatibility between the Young Turk policies and the Christians' Macedonian aspirations became apparent. Part II examines the C.U.P.'s attempts to establish its position in Ottoman politics, the attitude of the Powers most interested in Ottoman affairs and primarily the impact of the Turkish revolution on the policy of Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia in Macedonia.

Finally, Part III investigates the period from the counterrevolution of April 1909 until the outbreak of the Balkan wars in October 1912. It analyzes the mid-term effects of Young Turk policy in Macedonia: the Turkish strivings for the denationalization of the

Macedonian Christians; the aggravation of the Albanian question and the establishment of the Balkan Alliance.

The present work is mainly based on Greek and British archival sources as well as on the extensive use of published British documents. Pieces of information have been also drawn from certain memoirs and selected secondary sources.

This study seeks to provide a well-researched, informative and comprehensive analysis of the Balkan dimension of the Macedonian question within the framework of the Young Turk Constitutional regime.

## **INTRODUCTION**

By the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the term Macedonia referred to the geographical region encompassing the Ottoman-held *vilayets* (provinces) of Kosovo, Monastir and Salonica. The existence of ethnically-mixed, polyglot and culturally-heterogeneous populations -be they of Slav, Turkish, Greek, Albanian, Vlach, Jewish origin and Moslem, Christian or Jewish religion- in this area was one of the main characteristics of Macedonian controversy. Any attempt to identify the national affiliations, let alone identity, of the Macedonian communities in this “no man’s land” had been painfully futile. Nevertheless, Slav, Greek and since 1878 Albanian nationalists laid claim to it.<sup>1</sup>

At its early stage rivalry over Macedonia became visible in the field of religion. Until 1870, taking advantage of its truly privileged position within the *Rum millet*,<sup>2</sup> the Greek Ecumenical Patriarchate had extended its jurisdiction over the administration of Christian Orthodox religious and educational institutions, the collection of certain taxes and the communal justice system.<sup>3</sup> As a result, the Greek Church had obtained virtual control over the Ottoman Macedonian Orthodox communities.

The decision of the Ottoman government to allow the establishment of an independent Bulgarian Church, the Exarchate, on 10 March 1870 however restricted the influence of the Ecumenical Patriarchate upon the Slav peasant communities in Macedonia. More importantly, it furthered the process of national awareness of the Bulgarian people and led to the growth of Bulgarian propaganda activities among the Slav Macedonians through religion and education.

The rise of Bulgarian nationalism in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century contributed to the emergence of the Macedonian question. During the Eastern Crisis of 1875-1878, the Bulgarian national programme for expansion in the southern Balkans and Macedonia came near to its full implementation. On 3 March 1878, following the Ottoman military defeat in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878, the Russians imposed the Treaty of San Stefano on the Sublime Porte. This envisaged the creation of “Greater Bulgaria” whose new borders would stretch from the Danube river and Black Sea to the Morava valley, western Macedonia and the Aegean.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> VLACHOS (1935, pp.28-32). WILKINSON (1951, pp.1-6)

<sup>2</sup> In the Ottoman Empire, all subject peoples belonged to administrative units which had been organized on the basis of religion (*millet*).

<sup>3</sup> KARDARAS (1996, pp.283-4)

<sup>4</sup> SUMNER (1937, p.410)

In the summer of 1878, the dream of the Bulgarian nationalists and their Russian Panslav patrons to create a powerful Slav country in Balkan peninsula was shattered in Berlin. The Berlin Treaty granted political independence to Serbia, Montenegro and Romania. Bulgaria, however, was divided into an autonomous Principality within her pre-war boundaries and the semi-autonomous province Eastern Rumelia. Macedonia and Thrace were to remain under Ottoman rule.<sup>5</sup> By overlooking the “principle of nationalities” the Berlin Treaty compromised the national interests of the small Balkan states and preserved Turkey-in-Europe thereby failing to settle not only the Macedonian but the entire Eastern Question.<sup>6</sup>

The Berlin settlement fostered Bulgaria’s irredentism and expansionism. In the period 1878-1885, the Eastern Rumelian issue took precedence over Macedonia on the agenda of the Bulgarian political leadership. In order to lay the groundwork for the unification of Eastern Rumelia with the Principality, Bulgarian activists organized an underground revolutionary network in the former province, while Sofia was in search of foreign and indeed Balkan support.<sup>7</sup>

The Cabinets of Serbia and Greece were watching these developments with increasing consternation. Serb and Greek officials believed that the questions of Eastern Rumelia and Macedonia were inextricably connected and, if the Balkan power equilibrium was to be preserved, any Bulgarian aggrandizement in Eastern Rumelia should be dependent on sufficient Serb and Greek compensation in Macedonia. In this context, Greece and Serbia embarked on secret negotiations to reach an understanding about Macedonia. So long as the two states were unable to conclude an agreement regarding the delimitation of their respective “zones of influence” in Macedonia, these attempts stood little chance of success.<sup>8</sup>

The growth of a Bulgarian revolutionary movement in Eastern Rumelia and the failure of Greece and Serbia to work out an understanding in Macedonia opened the way for the unification of the two Bulgarian provinces. On 18 September 1885, a successful Bulgarian coup broke out in the major cities of Eastern Rumelia. Britain’s diplomatic support to Sofia and the Serb military defeat at the hands of the Bulgarian

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<sup>5</sup> The text of the Berlin Treaty is to be found in P.P.A.P. LXXXIII 1878, pp.368-381. For the Berlin settlement see: MEDLICOTT (1938)

<sup>6</sup> ANDERSON (1966, p.220)

<sup>7</sup> PERRY (1993, pp.72-4). See also next note

<sup>8</sup> KOFOS (1980, pp.48-52)

armed forces in Slivnitsa in November 1885, secured the formal unification of Eastern Rumelia with metropolitan Bulgaria on 18 April 1886.

The geopolitical enlargement of Bulgaria and her geographical proximity to Ottoman Macedonia gave a great impetus to the Bulgarian nationalist programme. Furthermore, it rendered a future Bulgarian onslaught on Turkey-in-Europe a more clear possibility. In view of the expansionism of Bulgaria and the other Balkan Christian countries' bids to obtain territorial aggrandizement in Macedonia, the Ottoman administration realized that a revision of its traditional tendency to view the Macedonian question in the narrow context of local economic underdevelopment and inefficient provincial administration was necessary.

Henceforth, to defend the territorial integrity of Macedonia -a key precondition for the preservation of Ottoman authority in Europe and the Straits- and protect the compact Macedonian Moslem populations against partisan attacks by the Balkan Christians, Constantinople took steps to strengthen its armies in the region. Ottoman policy-makers also began to examine the introduction of reforms in local Macedonian administration as the most pertinent way to make living conditions tolerable and frustrate any attempt on the part of the European Powers to intervene in the affairs of Macedonia -as they had previously done in 1867 in Crete- for the sake of the Sultan's Christian subjects.<sup>9</sup>

Between 1886-1894, the Bulgarian Premier Stambulov strove to obtain reconciliation with Turkey. Under his leadership, the focus of Bulgaria's Macedonian policy was to promote the "Bulgarisation" of the Orthodox Slavophone populations by means of the religious and cultural propaganda of the Exarchate. Initiating this "evolutionist" practice of peaceful infiltration in Macedonia, the Stambulov Cabinet intended to elicit Ottoman concessions for the establishment of new Exarchist Metropolitan sees and the full implementation of article 23 of the Berlin Treaty in Macedonia providing for local administrative autonomy.<sup>10</sup> Bulgarian officials were convinced that this

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<sup>9</sup> TOKAY (1994, pp.31-8)

<sup>10</sup> VAKALOPOULOS (1999, p.52). According to article 23 of the Berlin Treaty, the Porte undertook to apply in certain Ottoman European provinces the Organic Law of 1856, which had been initially introduced in the island of Crete. The article 23 provided for the autonomous administration of the provinces, appointment of foreign Governors-General (Belgian or Swiss), provincial assemblies, reforms in Ottoman gendarmerie and militia with proportionate representation of the local Christian population in these security forces. The Ottoman administration however, had no desire to fulfill its political pledge to Europe and apply article 23 in its European dominions. For, as had happened in Crete, the implementation of this provision would

would open the way for the autonomy of Macedonia and its future incorporation by the Principality.

Indeed, Stambulov's tendency to pursue a rapprochement with the Sublime Porte gained for Bulgaria three new Metropolitan sees in the Macedonian centers of Uskub, Ohrid and Veles.<sup>11</sup> Unhappily for the Bulgarian Prime Minister and the Exarch Antim I, this discreet yet efficient strategy had failed to satisfy the refractory circles of the numerous Macedonian colony in Bulgaria and the young revolutionary intelligentsia in Macedonia proper. Encouraged by the Eastern Rumelian precedent, these Macedonian activists had embraced the militant concept of liberating Macedonia through clandestine and revolutionary methods.

The breakthrough for the development of the Macedonian revolutionary movement came about on 3 November 1893. In Salonica, the capital of Macedonia, Grouev, Delchev, Tatarchev, Dimitrov and Hacinikolov founded the *Bulgarsko Makedonsko Odrinska Revolutsiona Organisatsija* (Bulgarian Macedonian Adrianople Revolutionary Organization) in order to "obtain full political autonomy for the Macedonia-Adrianople region."<sup>12</sup> Clearly, the liberal manifesto of the Organization for political autonomy and emancipation from the Turkish yoke by means of a pan-Macedonian peasant revolution thrilled the local Macedonians, not least the Slavophone-Exarchists. Yet, it was the Organization's strategy to employ terrorism as a political and nationalist tool that proved instrumental in rallying popular support and disseminating political propaganda among the sedentary Macedonian populations.<sup>13</sup>

Revolutionary tactics also had many ardent supporters in Bulgaria. In Sofia, the local Bulgarian Macedonian societies organized a Congress in December 1895. During its proceedings, the Macedonian representatives decided on the formation of a 12-seat "Advisory Council", which was hence to be known as *Vrhoven Makedonski Komitet* (Supreme Macedonian Committee).<sup>14</sup> The Supremacists envisaged the autonomy of

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amount to the diminution of Ottoman political authority and the establishment of political autonomy in those areas. On the content of the Organic Law of Crete: P.P.A.P. LXXIII 1867-8, pp.394-5

<sup>11</sup> VLACHOS (1935, pp.130-1)

<sup>12</sup> B.A.S. (1978, p.419)

<sup>13</sup> PERRY (1988, p.42). GOUNARIS (1996, p.415)

<sup>14</sup> To avoid confusion between the Macedonia-based Organization and the Bulgaria-based Macedonian Committees, hereafter the former will be cited as Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (M.R.O.) and the latter as Supreme Macedonian Committee (S.M.C.).

Macedonia as an interim stage in its annexation by Bulgaria and claimed superiority over all other Macedonian groups, including the M.R.O.<sup>15</sup> From this point onwards, the Bulgarian Macedonian revolutionary organizations set out to organize armed bands and provoke disturbances in Ottoman Macedonia in order to elicit European intervention.

The growing Macedonian agitation concerned the European Powers as the continuation of this perilous situation could destabilize the region and threaten the Balkan status quo. At the time, among the Powers, Austria-Hungary and Russia had the most vital, though conflicting, stakes in the Balkan peninsula. To avert a clash over their Balkan interests that might jeopardize European peace, in May 1897 Austria-Hungary and Russia concluded an entente. The key element of this understanding was the Austro-Russian commitment to collaborate for the maintenance of the Balkan status quo. In case the regional status quo was disturbed however, the two Great Powers agreed to “secure a redistribution of territory amongst the Balkan states that would maintain the balance of power” rather than to seek aggrandizement for themselves.<sup>16</sup>

In the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the intensification of inter-racial rivalry in Macedonia generated explosive conditions in this Balkan sub-region. In October 1902, a Bulgarian Macedonian rising, organized by the Supremacists, broke out in the areas of Djumaja, Razlog and Petrich in north-eastern Macedonia but it was swiftly suppressed by the Ottoman forces.<sup>17</sup> In an attempt to reestablish order in the region and prevent a future Macedonian rebellion, the Russian Foreign Minister Lamsdorff met with his Austrian counterpart Goluchowski in Vienna in December 1902.

The two Ministers drew up a conservative reform scheme for Macedonia. The *Vienna Scheme* provided for: the appointment of a Moslem Inspector-General in Macedonia with the rank of Grand Vizier for a five-years period; the reorganization of the Ottoman gendarmerie by European experts; provincial budgets regulating the revenues and expenditure of each vilayet under the control of the Imperial Ottoman Bank; the suppression of Albanian irregular activism; the deployment of Christian

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<sup>15</sup> CRAMPTON (1983, pp.236-7)

<sup>16</sup> B.D. vol.1 pp.295-6, 298, B.D. vol.5 pp.100, 102, B.D. vol.9(1) p.39. BRIDGE (1990, pp.225-6)

<sup>17</sup> P.P.A.P. LXXXVII 1903, pp.561-4



rural guards in the Christian-dominated areas; and the reform of the tithe-collection system.<sup>18</sup>

However, the Vienna Scheme was too little too late for the Macedonian revolutionary committees. On 2 August 1903, the day of St. Elias (Ilinden in Slavonic), M.R.O. partisans incited a large-scale uprising in western Macedonia. By attacking Ottoman garrisons and Moslem civilians, the M.R.O. leadership aimed at provoking a massacre of Christians at the hands of Turkish troops and irregulars, thus inviting European political intervention. The end of the Ilinden uprising three months later found Macedonia in a state of utter devastation and anarchy.<sup>19</sup>

It was less the deplorable situation in Macedonia and more the escalating revolutionary attacks on the Balkan status quo that induced Austria-Hungary and Russia to reactivate their diplomacy. On 2 October 1903, Austria and Russia announced a new Macedonian reform project. The main points of the *Murzsteg Program*, as it became known, were: the appointment of two special Civil Agents, a Russian and an Austrian, to assist the Inspector-General<sup>20</sup> on the supervision of reforms and the assessment of the Ottoman authorities' performance; the appointment of a foreign General<sup>21</sup> and European military advisers with a mission to reorganize the Ottoman gendarmerie; the restructuring of the Macedonian vilayets into new administrative districts on the basis of nationality; further judicial, financial and administrative reforms; amnesty for all political prisoners and relief for the Ilinden victims.<sup>22</sup>

Unlike the Vienna Scheme, the Murzsteg Programme injured Ottoman susceptibilities. The articles on the Civil Agents and the projected administrative reorganization placed the Ottoman Macedonian authorities "under strict European surveillance". However, even though the chief intent of the reform project was to secure the status quo by ameliorating the living and regional conditions for the Christian ethnic groups, article 3 added to Macedonian turmoil as it prompted the

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<sup>18</sup> SOWARDS (1989, pp.25-6)

<sup>19</sup> During the uprising, 5,000 peasant Christians had perished. Among the soldiery, 1,000 M.R.O. men and 5,000 Turks had been killed. In addition, 200 Macedonian villages and 12,000 houses had been burnt or destroyed. See: PERRY (1988)

<sup>20</sup> Hussein Hilmi Pasha was appointed Inspector-General of Macedonia.

<sup>21</sup> The responsibility of reorganizing the gendarmerie rested with the Italian officer De Giorgis.

<sup>22</sup> The text of the Murzsteg Program is to be found in P.P.A.P. CXXXV 1908, pp.731-4

Christian Macedonian nationalists to intensify their racial strife with a view to creating ethnically homogeneous zones in Macedonia.<sup>23</sup>

Under strong European pressure, Sultan Abdul Hamid II reluctantly accepted the reform project on 25 November 1903. The period of European reform and condominium in the three Ottoman Macedonian vilayets of Kosovo, Monastir and Salonica had commenced.

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<sup>23</sup> B.D. vol.5 p.108. SOWARDS (1989, p.30), BRIDGE (1972a, p.265)

**PART I**  
**THE EMERGENCE OF THE YOUNG TURK MOVEMENT AND THE**  
**GROWTH OF THE INTER-BALKAN MACEDONIAN STRUGGLE**  
**1839-1908**

## CHAPTER I

### EVOLUTION OF YOUNG TURK THOUGHT AND ACTIVITY

#### 1.1 Ottoman Politics in Transition: The Tanzimat and the Rise of the Young Ottomans 1839-1878

In the Ottoman Empire, the political struggle against the autocratic rule of the Sultans and for administrative modernization and economic reform according to the western European model had commenced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The demand for reform in the ailing country and the need to imitate the west in areas like agriculture, industry, justice, education, the army, science, civil rights and the social and political system was so intense during the third decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that it could no longer be ignored by the Ottoman statesmen, many of whom shared liberal political ideas.

The first serious attempt to introduce western institutions in Turkey was made by the Grand Vizier Reshid Pasha. On his initiative, with the *Hatti-Sheriff* of 1839, collective reform decrees were instituted for the consolidation of elementary civil rights, regular army recruitment and the abolition of tax-farming. The most important element in the *Hatti-Sheriff* was the official abrogation of the discrimination between Moslem and non-Moslem communities, which was henceforth to highlight the reform process in the Ottoman Empire (*Tanzimat*).<sup>1</sup>

The process of internal reform in the Ottoman Empire continued and reached a decisive stage by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1856, under pressure from the Powers to ameliorate the position of his Christian subjects, Sultan Abdul Mecid promulgated the *Hatti-Humayun*. The *Hatti-Humayun* introduced significant reforms in the key fields of administration, taxation, the military, and the judiciary and reaffirmed the bid of 1839 for equality and brotherhood of all Ottoman subjects (*Osmanlilik*). In this framework, the non-Moslem ethnic groups were to acquire the same status as Moslems in military service, the administration of justice, tax-payment and increased representation in the provincial government.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> LEWIS (1968, pp.107-8)

<sup>2</sup> DAVISON (1963, pp.54-7). VAKALOPOULOS (1988, p.179)

In the following decade, the reforming efforts of liberal Ottoman statesmen like the Grand Viziers Ali Pasha and Fuad Pasha intensified. To improve Ottoman provincial administration and discourage the separatist tendencies of the non-Moslem communities Fuad Pasha worked out the Law of vilayets in collaboration with Midhat Pasha, provincial governor (*vali*) of Nish. The Law of vilayets, which was enacted in 1864, defined the subdivision of an Ottoman province to a number of sanjaks, kazas, kariyes, nahiyes and extended the powers of the valis on local economy, financial matters, the execution of judicial decisions and provincial police. Mixed administrative councils were to be established in each Ottoman province to function “as deliberative and advisory bodies” on questions of local politics, economy and finance.<sup>3</sup>

It is certain that the inauguration of the Tanzimat period gravitated the Ottoman Empire towards the west. It is also true that the ‘westerner’ apologists of Tanzimat tended to believe that the future of the predominantly Moslem Empire lay not in Islamic Asia but in Europe. Although the concept of administrative reform and political modernization had a serious impact on the activity of certain forward-looking officials, the Ottoman political and religious establishment as a whole viewed the process of internal reform with reticence and utmost circumspection.

Among the Moslem populations, the conservative Islamic clergy and the Palace, Europe was not popular. It was the irksome tendency of the Western Powers to interfere with Ottoman affairs, in part by means of the capitulatory system<sup>4</sup> and in part by exerting strong pressure on the Ottoman leadership to respect the rights of the Christian ethnic groups, that had led those Ottoman circles to consider everything European a threat to Ottoman sovereignty and political independence.

Slowly but steadily, the Tanzimat managed to moderate somewhat the hostile Ottoman outlook vis-a-vis the west. The constant infusion of European ideas, goods, people and investment in the vast country, more regular during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, encouraged that process. In addition, an increasing number of Young Turks

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<sup>3</sup> DAVISON (1963, pp.146-7)

<sup>4</sup> From 1535 onwards, when a French-Ottoman commercial treaty was signed, the Porte had been constantly granting economic and juridical privileges to foreign residents in the Empire. As the Ottoman Empire declined, the Western Powers, usually following a Turkish military defeat, extended their capitulatory rights in Turkey. By the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Great Powers enjoyed tax-exemption, favorable regulations on custom duties and eventually, they obtained virtual control of Ottoman finance through the “Dette Publice Ottomane”, which was established in 1881. The Ottomans, on their part, saw the capitulatory system as a clear token of foreign interference in their internal affairs and evidence of Turkey’s limited sovereignty. For details see: SOUSA (1933)

traveled to the west, studied in European schools whence they became acquainted with the principles of liberty, parliamentary democracy, constitution and nationalism.

The reform period and communication with Europe nourished the development of a western-educated administrative elite in the Empire. Its leaders, youthful bureaucrats, civil servants, ambitious administrators, students, low-ranking army officers, from the outset detested the autocratic and corrupt regime so carefully built around the sultanate.

Those groups, called *Young Ottomans*, envisioned the institution of a Constitutional regime and the acquisition of a considerable share in Ottoman government. To achieve this there was but one way: a direct collision with the Ottoman political establishment namely the Monarch, his odious entourage (camarilla) and the ruling Ottoman oligarchy that supported him.<sup>5</sup>

Since 1865 enclaves of opposition by secret Young Ottoman societies had been formed in Constantinople, Paris and London with the branches in-exile becoming the most radical in outlook and activity. Their existence and deeds as well as their, often unclear, claims for economic rationalization, administrative reform and Constitution were known to Sultan Abdul Aziz. In the end, the personal-ideological cleavages that divided the leaders of the movement, not least Prince Mustafa Fazil and the prominent theorist Ali Suavi and the shrewd attempts of the Sultan to intimidate, banish or take into his service many of them such as Namik Kemal, Mehmet Reshid, Ziya Pasha had kept the Young Ottoman movement in a state of impotence and stagnation for over a decade.

In December 1876, during the emerging Eastern crisis, the new sultan Abdul Hamid II appointed the 'westerner' Midhat Pasha Grand Vizier. Midhat Pasha succeeded in correlating his brief period in office<sup>6</sup> with the elaboration of the Ottoman Constitution, which was proclaimed on 23 December. The Constitution did not materially affect the dominant position of the sultanate in the Empire. The Sultan had the right to appoint the members of the Ministerial Council, the senators, and to convoke and adjourn the Parliament. In order for a parliamentary bill to become state law, his Imperial *Irade* (Decree) was required.

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<sup>5</sup> LEWIS (1968, p.150)

<sup>6</sup> Midhat Pasha was dismissed and sent to exile on 5 February 1877.

The Sultan remained the supreme ruler but his powers were absolute no more. The Constitution provided the institution of a Ministerial Council, an appointed Senate and a Chamber of Deputies, elected directly by the people. It also secured freedom of religion, press, commercial associations; guaranteed the minority privileges within the millet system; provided for respect on personal property and domicile; conformed the tax-system to state regulations and the individual income; called for an independent judiciary. The fundamental Constitutional provision however was the reaffirmation of the equal status between all Ottoman subjects, irrespective of race and creed.<sup>7</sup>

A product of the Tanzimat, the Midhat Constitution ended the absolutism of the sultanate and transferred powers to the Chamber of Deputies and the Ministerial Council. The concept of Osmanlilik had come again to the forefront of Ottoman political life but its implementation still remained a very complicated and controversial question.

A constitutional-liberal political system however, was incompatible with Sultan Abdul Hamid's program of maintaining the Ottoman executive, legislative and administrative bodies under the absolute authority of the sultanate. For the Monarch, the establishment and function of a Chamber of Deputies constituted a great threat to his personal regime within the Empire.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, the conservative circles within the country viewed those radical changes in political life with genuine consternation. In their eyes, such foreign-inspired reforms reflected the continuation of the derogatory European interference in Ottoman matters. They also believed that those changes, apart from humiliating Moslem popular feeling, ran contrary to Ottoman political tradition and threatened their own dominant status in the state mechanism.

As an outcome, the first Ottoman Parliament proved short-lived. In February 1878, the Sultan dissolved the Chamber of Deputies and de facto nullified the Constitution, though it remained in force on paper. The abrogation of Midhat Pasha Constitution impeded, but did not frustrate, the development of the reform movement in the Ottoman Empire.

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<sup>7</sup> DAVISON (1963, pp.386-90)

## 1.2 Reforming Attempts Under Abdul Hamid II

The Young Ottoman decline and the termination of the Constitutional period appeared to represent a victory of Ottoman absolutism over the rising reform movement. The success of the Hamidian establishment was nevertheless temporary and precarious for it failed to eradicate either the reforming forces in Ottoman society or the demand for modernization and change.

Abdul Hamid II was aware that he had won a crucial battle but not the war. In fact, the young Monarch, who himself was not ignorant of the need for change, did not fail to realize that under the circumstances it would be beneficial for the sultanate to follow to some extent the Tanzimat policy of his predecessors.<sup>9</sup> His main intent was to assuage the opposition inside and outside the Empire and improve the legislative, economic and administrative system without however causing any real damage to his authority.

As an outcome, during the first two decades of his rule, Sultan Abdul Hamid introduced a series of reforms in education, the civil sector, the army, commerce, communications, press and legislation.<sup>10</sup> Certainly, Abdul Hamid II was determined not to sanction any radical change in the legislative or executive system that might imperil his primacy in Ottoman politics. More importantly, these efforts totally disregarded Tanzimat's most critical premise -the equality between Moslem and non-Moslem Ottoman subjects.

From 1878 onwards, the Sultan worked systematically to cement his personal regime in the interior. The key element in this campaign was his initiative to vest the religious institution of caliphate with real political power. In placing emphasis on the Islamic character of his rule, the Sultan as Monarch and Caliph, mustered around his throne the bigoted Moslem masses.<sup>11</sup>

Once he gained Moslem fidelity, Abdul Hamid II faced little difficulty in manipulating their religious fanaticism and numerical strength to counteract his major enemies: the internal constitutional movement, western interference and the nationalist separatism of the various non-Moslem ethnic groups.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> NISTAZOPOULOU-PELEKIDOU (1991, pp.261-2)

<sup>9</sup> LEWIS (1968, p.179)

<sup>10</sup> ZURCHER (1993, pp.78-9)

<sup>11</sup> ZURCHER (1993, p.83)

<sup>12</sup> SHAW and SHAW (1977, p.260), LEE (1941-2, pp.279-80)



### 1.3 Genesis and Development of the Young Turk Movement 1889-1902

The centralization practice of Abdul Hamid notwithstanding the Young Ottoman legacy did not entirely vanish. Far from it. In the Ottoman Military Academies, the only state institution not censored by the Hamidian propaganda, the concepts of liberty, fatherland and Constitution had found many supporters. In these schools Young Turk cadets were initiated in western political thought and secretly deliberated upon the Young Ottoman ideology and activities.<sup>13</sup> As a result, the military colleges developed into laboratories of ideological and political resistance against the supreme ruler and his regime.

In 1889, a small group of students in the Military Medical College in Constantinople set up a clandestine committee with the aim of deposing Sultan Abdul Hamid II. Its leading team consisted of Ibrahim Temo, an Albanian, the Circassian Mehmet Reshid and two Kurds: Abdullah Cevdet and Ibrahim Sukuti. This society, known as *Ittihat Osmanli Cemiyeti* (Ottoman Union Society), was the first *Young Turk Committee* in the history of the Empire.

In a short time, the subterranean organization succeeded in enlisting support and members among the imperial military institutions of the capital. The “Young Turks” initially were able to keep the existence of their group secret but they held no illusions that it was only a matter of time before Sultan’s spies and police would uncover the association. Since Constantinople did not qualify as the ideal revolutionary center, their attention shifted to the Ottoman communities abroad, in which the Young Ottoman movement had found sanctuary a few decades ago.

Indeed, already in 1889, the Constantinople society established regular communication and liaison channels with a section of the remnant Young Ottoman group in Paris. In the same year, members of the Paris Committee recruited Ahmet Riza Bey, a well-known intellectual who was at the time director of education in the vilayet of Bursa. His accession to the Young Turks was a real turning point for the evolution of the movement for it was under his leadership that the Paris society *Ittihat ve Terrakki Cemiyeti* (Committee of Union and Progress - C.U.P.) came into being.

Ahmet Riza was of conservative disposition and ideology. He had no designs to attack the entire Ottoman social-political edifice. Riza was of the opinion that the removal of

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<sup>13</sup> RAMSAUR (1965, p.18)

a certain number of corrupt and incompetent administrators and the introduction of an elaborated reform package into the state machine would suffice to stop the rot in the country.<sup>14</sup>

In the end of 1895, Ahmet Riza published the journal *Meshveret* (Consultation) which became the official organ of the Paris committee. Its most significant contribution to the movement was that it clarified the most essential elements of Young Turk ideology. According to its publisher those were: opposition to foreign interference in Ottoman matters, the reinstatement of Midhat's Constitution of 1876 and the Ottomanization of the Empire.<sup>15</sup>

In the ensuing years, the Young Turk movement became immensely popular amongst the "Ottoman diaspora". New branches were formed in Geneva, London, Naples and Cairo, but all compared unfavorably in authority and political activism with the Paris headquarters. However, it was certainly an irony, if not a tragedy, that the defects which had beset the Young Ottomans seemed to accompany their youthful successors. Once more, offering official high-ranking positions to leaders like Mehmet Murat, the Sultan managed to subvert and eventually divide the Young Turks.

Adding to the gravity of the situation, quarrels among the leaderships of the Young Turk branches broke out. The most important was the dispute between the Geneva League of Sukuti, Reshid, Cevdet and the Paris Committee of Ahmet Riza for the management and leadership of the C.U.P. Understandably, these developments produced a demoralizing effect upon the rank and file of the movement.<sup>16</sup>

In 1899, an unexpected incident helped the movement-in-exile to regain momentum. After having fled Constantinople, Prince Sabaheddin arrived in Paris with his father *Damat* Mahmut Pasha and his brother Lutfullah. In the person of Prince Sabaheddin the Young Turks found a new, charismatic and influential leader whilst Ahmet Riza Bey met his main ideological and political opponent.

Sabaheddin founded a separate society in Paris under the name *Teshebbush Shahsi ve Ademi Merkeziyet Cemiyeti* (Society of Personal Initiative and Administrative Decentralization). The political program of the association consisted of three pivotal points. The first, and most instrumental, referred to the critical provision of Tanzimat:

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<sup>14</sup> SHAW and SHAW (1977, p.257)

<sup>15</sup> RAMSAUR (1965, pp.25, 72-3)

<sup>16</sup> LEWIS (1968, p.201)

the equality between Moslem and non-Moslem communities. According to Sabaheddin, the salvation of the multiethnic Empire lay in the institution of national and political egalitarianism between the various Ottoman ethnic groups: Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Slavs, Albanians, Kurds and Arabs. Second, it defined that the Young Turk struggle for a Constitutional and Parliamentary regime would stand no chance of success unless it was backed by the Ottoman bureaucracy.<sup>17</sup>

Third, the Sabaheddin group envisaged the replacement of the centralized government by a devolved administrative system. Following the French model, it aspired to establish local councils in each province directly elected by the people. Their mission would be to oversee the execution of the provincial budgets, control the administrative cadres and work for the effective settlement of local questions. Within this context, even the most remote Ottoman municipalities, prefects and provinces were to obtain real executive authority, economic strength and political freedom.<sup>18</sup>

This last point nevertheless met with great opposition from many Young Turks. Ahmet Riza Bey and his followers criticized Sabaheddin because they felt that his plan for administrative devolution was essentially paving the way in the non-Moslem populated provinces for their political autonomy and ultimate secession.<sup>19</sup> Unlike Sabaheddin, Ahmet Riza had no intention of conferring political power on peripheral and refractory ethnic groups which had been fostering secessionist aspirations against the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Instead, he advocated the creation of a westernized, reformed and efficient executive center that would safeguard Ottoman territorial integrity and would frustrate any internal separatist movement.<sup>20</sup>

From the outset therefore, the status of the various ethnic minorities and their relations with the ruling ethnic group had created a rift between the two most influential Young Turk groups; the centralist-nationalist of Ahmet Riza Bey and the liberal-Ottoman under Prince Sabaheddin. Such was the situation in the Young Turk movement-in-exile when Sabaheddin took the initiative and organized the First Congress of Ottoman Liberals in Paris between 4 and 9 February 1902.

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<sup>17</sup> RAMSAUR (1965, pp.85-6)

<sup>18</sup> On Sabaheddin's administrative model: I.A.Y.E./1908/File 91.2/Contantinople Legation/4/17-9-1908/no.890/Gryparis to Baltazzis/enclosure no.1

<sup>19</sup> RAMSAUR (1965, pp.89-93)

<sup>20</sup> KARPAT (1959, p.18). LEWIS (1968, pp.204-5)

The Congress was attended by 47 Turkish, Armenian, Arab, Greek, Albanian, Jewish, Kurd and Circassian representatives. During the proceedings of the Congress the ideological disagreement between Ahmet Riza Bey and Prince Sabaheddin came to the forefront.<sup>21</sup> In a series of sessions, after having clashed over the advisability of foreign intervention in Ottoman affairs, the majority of the delegates sided with Sabaheddin. Prince Sabaheddin argued that the Young Turks should invite European, even military, intervention to end the autocratic rule of the sultanate and ameliorate the position of all Ottoman ethnic groups. On the contrary, Ahmet Riza Bey dismissed the idea of foreign interference. For, in all occasions, he asserted, that the Western Powers had meddled with Ottoman matters the result was the encouragement of dissident ethnic nationalism or the extension of European capitulatory rights in the Empire. Finally, the program of Sabaheddin prevailed. However, it was the defeated centralist party of Ahmet Riza Bey that essentially directed and controlled Young Turk movement in Europe whereas Sabaheddin's ideology had found supporters only among the circles of the Ottoman administrative elite and the non-Moslem minority nationalities.<sup>22</sup>

#### **1.4 Young Turk Growth in Macedonia 1895-1908**

Six years after the creation of the Constantinople group the Young Turk movement set foot in European Turkey. Between 1895 and 1896, two civil branches functioned in Adrianople and Rouschouk. The latter, under Temo, had been particularly active in the Bulgarian districts of Phillipopolis, Dobroudja, Varna and Vidin. The former, headed by Talat Bey, a director in the local Post and Telegraph branch, disseminated Young Turk propaganda across Bulgaria and Adrianople and collaborated with the Salonica-Monastir groups enjoying considerable popularity amongst the young officers of the Salonica-based III Macedonian Army corps.<sup>23</sup>

In September 1906, another, more influential, committee was founded in Salonica under the name *Osmanli Hurriyet Cemiyeti* (Ottoman Freedom Society). Its leading group consisted of: Talat Bey, Tahir Bey, Naki Bey, Midhat Sukru, Rahmi Bey, Kazim

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<sup>21</sup> ZURCHER (1984, pp.17-18)

<sup>22</sup> HANIOGLU (1995, pp.190-99)

<sup>23</sup> HANIOGLU (1995, pp.89-90), TOKAY (1994, pp.204-5)

Nami, Omer Naci, Hakki Baha, Edip Servet and Ismail Canbolat.<sup>24</sup> The Young Turk Macedonian organization had set itself two objects: to establish itself in the province and infiltrate the Macedonian army and administration. To achieve its first goal, the Salonica group established links with the Macedonian Freemasonic lodges, the strong Salonica Jewish community<sup>25</sup> and the Bektashi Dervish order.<sup>26</sup>

True, those groups contributed to the growth of the Young Turk Macedonian movement. It is clear that they had assisted the Young Turks to organize themselves by conferring shelter and manpower to those committees under the scrutiny of the local authorities. It is also important to point out that the Young Turk movement in Macedonia developed without external support from the emigre societies. The European headquarters ignored its very existence and it was not until September 1907 that the Macedonian organization and the Paris C.U.P. branch merged.<sup>27</sup>

The Young Turk infiltration of the Macedonian army had been an elusive but efficient process. Poor military and regional conditions, irregular payment and prolonged strife against the Christian Macedonian bands had incurred the wrath of the soldiery and their junior officers against the old regime. The Young Turks were determined to capitalize on this mounting discontent. Under these circumstances, the Committee's main concern was to convert the strong anti-Palace sentiment into active support for its political and revolutionary struggle. In this undertaking, the Young Turks were very successful.

During the period of the Macedonian reforms, Young Turk influence spread amazingly in the provinces of Monastir and Kosovo. New branches were formed in Resna, Ohrid, Uskub, Ferisovic, Prizren, Mitrovitsa, Ghevgeli. In the Albanian-inhabited districts, collaboration between Albanian nationalists and Young Turks had become the norm. In the provincial capitals Monastir and Uskub the Young Turk organs were dealing with local issues: the Macedonian reforms, the band activities and above all with the eroded and incompetent administration.<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile, Moslem dissatisfaction stemming from the inability of the Hamidian regime to reform the civil administration

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<sup>24</sup> TOKAY (1994, p.209)

<sup>25</sup> MACFIE (1998, pp.33-6), KEDOURIE (1971, pp.91-3). In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the total population of Salonica was 150,000. Out of them, 90,000 were ethnic Jews. SHAW (1991, p.205)

<sup>26</sup> RAMSAUR (1942, pp.10-12)

<sup>27</sup> MACFIE (1998, p.22)

<sup>28</sup> TOKAY (1994, pp.217-9), SKENDI (1967, p.338)

and improve living conditions in the region, the increasing partisan activities of the Macedonian Christians and European interference in Ottoman affairs, intensified.

Therefore, Young Turk agents from the Monastir and Kosovo committees had little difficulty in disseminating propaganda and initiating new members among the Moslem civil servants and army cadres.<sup>29</sup> The revolutionary campaign had not been confined in urban centers and army camps alone. Young Turk detachments, whilst being engaged in constant guerrilla warfare against the Christian bandits in Macedonian hinterland, worked indefatigably to instill their sociopolitical ideology in the Moslem, and later Christian, rural populations.<sup>30</sup>

The Young Turk attitude toward the European officers was contradictory and unclear. Understandably, they detested their meddling with Macedonian matters but they were also impressed by their superior military training and education. At the same time, they were aware that the European condominium in Macedonia had been responsible for the original diminution of the Ottoman authority in Macedonia: a development that had offered invaluable services to the growth of their Macedonian movement. As Sowards remarks: "...the Young Turk success was built on a slow but thorough infiltration of the entire government apparatus, a process which could never have gone forward without the protective influence of the Macedonian reform program."<sup>31</sup>

Indicative of the popularity Young Turk ideas enjoyed in the high ranks of Macedonian army and the administrative apparatus between 1906 and 1908, was the stance of two influential Macedonian officials towards the movement: the vali of Kosovo, General Mahmud Shevket Pasha and Hussein Hilmi Pasha, Inspector-General of Macedonia.

The former, a senior German-trained officer, had been far more interested in military matters than politics. He had shouldered the demanding task of organizing the Turkish defense in Macedonia against the Bulgarian army. By 1907, he consented to support the Unionists only after receiving the reassurance that he would not be involved in political affairs. According to Shevket Pasha's views, only under a Constitutional

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<sup>29</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 90.3/Uskub Consulate/19/2-8-1908/no.308/Baraklis to Baltazzis/Political

<sup>30</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 71.2/Serres Consulate/1/14-7-1908/no.276/Sahtouris to Baltazzis/Confidential

<sup>31</sup> Cited in SOWARDS (1989, p.95)

regime could the Ottoman military regain its strength to encounter a Slav aggression and the Empire could retrieve its long-lost position in European power politics.<sup>32</sup>

The case of Hilmi Pasha is even more interesting. Following the old Porte tradition of producing capable high-ranking civil-bureaucrats he had proved himself a competent administrator during his term in Macedonia. His manoeuvrability in keeping equal distances from all Macedonian Christian ethnic groups and balancing the increasing reform demands of the European Commission with the Sultan's intransigence to yield to foreign pressure was truly commendable. Hilmi Pasha was aware of the Young Turk movement, its political ideology and secret activities. British sources suggest that his principal aide-de-camp was one of the most active Unionist members.<sup>33</sup>

The chief contribution of the Macedonian Inspector-General to the Young Turk movement was that he did nothing to prevent, far less frustrate, its growth and eruption. During the dramatic days of the July revolution, he acted as honest broker between the Sultan and the Committee. Having correctly estimated the seriousness of the situation and anxious to avert a catastrophic and useless civil conflict, he admonished the Sultan to give way on Young Turk demands and reinstate the Constitution of 1876.<sup>34</sup> By 1908, the largest section of the Ottoman Macedonian civil and military apparatus had adhered to the Young Turk movement.

### **1.5. Young Turk Feelers to Bulgarians and Greeks**

Unlike the movement in-exile, in the first years of their Balkan saga the Young Turks encountered major problems in setting up committees and establishing communication channels with the European branches and each other. Therefore, in the absence of one coordinating center and recognized leadership, the scattered Balkan Young Turk enclaves often acted on their initiative and, in most cases, without any former communication between themselves.

Young Turk leaders reasoned that the success of their movement was hardly attainable without the active participation or, at least, the benevolent neutrality of the Christian nationalities. Thus, among their primary objectives was the establishment of links with

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<sup>32</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 90.3/Uskub Consulate/25/8-5-1908/no.170/Baraklis to Skouzes/Confidential. I.A.Y.E./1908/File 90.3/Uskub Consulate/24/6-9-1908/no.392/Baraklis to Baltazzis/Political and ZANNAS (1960, p.53)

<sup>33</sup> P.P.A.P. CV 1909, p.1007

<sup>34</sup> P.P.A.P. CV 1909, p.1006

the Christian Balkan groups, especially those possessing vital interests in Macedonia, where the future of Turkey-in-Europe was at stake. Given that a direct understanding between them and the official governments of the Balkan national states was out of the question, the underground Young Turk movement sought first to align itself with the Bulgarian and Greek revolutionary committees.

### **1.6 The Young Turks and the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization 1895-1908**

The Young Turk Committees attached great importance to establishing relations with the Bulgarians in Macedonia predominantly for two reasons: first, because they regarded the Bulgarian-Macedonians as the most militant element and second because they were supported by the most powerful and ambitious Balkan country: the Bulgarian Principality.

The initial contact between the C.U.P. and the Bulgarian revolutionaries of the M.R.O. appears to have taken place in 1895 through a less known Young Turk group *Balkan Teshkilati*. To the satisfaction of Paris headquarters, *Balkan Teshkilati* managed to set up certain connections with the M.R.O. Ahmet Riza Bey seized the opportunity of using that branch as a liaison channel between the C.U.P. and the M.R.O. to influence the Bulgarian-Macedonian leaders to abandon their original aim of gaining Macedonian political autonomy and collaborate with the Young Turks to remedy the situation in Macedonia.<sup>35</sup>

In 1902, Ali Fehmi Bey, one of the leaders of the *Balkan Teshkilati*, became the C.U.P. agent in Bulgaria. However, he also failed to render real services to the movement, for the Ottoman legation in Sofia was successful in obstructing his mission. A third and more significant, attempt to bring the Young Turks and the M.R.O. close took place in 1905. To explore the prospects of mutual cooperation the Young Turks approached the leader of the M.R.O.-Left, Sandanski.<sup>36</sup> Very little evidence is available about the actual conditions accompanying this original tentative contact. Apparently, it did not amount to any understanding but it seems that paved the way for a future collaboration.

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<sup>35</sup> TOKAY (1994, p.206)



The Serres group had constantly maintained that it would not hesitate to work with any revolutionary group in Macedonia with which it shared common ideas and espoused similar tactics. From that perspective, the Young Turk manifesto for political equality between Christians and Moslems, reorganization of the peripheral administration and the institution of a Constitutional regime was not far away from the positions of the M.R.O.-Left.<sup>37</sup>

Besides, the uncompromising rivalry between the Serres Regional Committee and Sofia had increased Sandanski's operational independence in Macedonia. As Macdermott argues, it was during the Bansko Congress of 1907 that the Leftist leaders Sandanski (Serres district) and Tsernopeevev, Delidarev (Strumnitsa branch) decided to work with the Young Turk Committees.<sup>38</sup>

The Young Turks, for their part, had good reasons to desire an understanding with the Serres faction. Since 1904, Sandanski had established "a state within a state" in the northern areas of the Serres sanjak. He controlled the local tobacco trade and industry, the major source of income in the districts of Serres, Drama, and Xanthi; imposed regular taxation on the rural communities; intimidated and not rarely assassinated local Beys, landlords and notables; he had even set up local courts in which the Macedonian Christians ought to settle their legal disputes; finally, he did not hesitate to put to death all traitors, Moslems and Christians.<sup>39</sup> Such was the policy of Sandanski; and the fact that his M.R.O. faction, albeit renegade, had agreed to support the Committee, raised Young Turk influence among the Bulgarian-Macedonians in the Salonica vilayet.

A significant contribution to the development of this awkward cooperation between Christian Bulgarian-Macedonian partisans and Moslem Young Turk revolutionaries was made by the agrarian question: another key aspect of the Macedonian controversy. In Ottoman Macedonia, among the Christian tenants who had been compelled to cultivate the huge domains of the Moslem landlords under extremely harsh conditions, the demand for land had increasingly gained ground even before the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>36</sup> At the time, Sandanski was the leader of the Serres Regional Committee, the Leftist faction of the M.R.O. In 1906, the Serres group seceded from the main organization and followed an independent policy. MACDERMOTT (1988, p.322)

<sup>37</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 21.1/General Consulate of Salonica/30/12-8-1908/no.3915/Kanellopoulos to Baltazzis

<sup>38</sup> MACDERMOTT (1988, p.333)

<sup>39</sup> See for further details: I.A.Y.E./1908/File 85.2/Serres Consulate/6/19-5-1908/no.186/Sahtouris to Skouzes, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 85.2/Serres Consulate/22/4-6-1908/no.214/Sahtouris to Skouzes, F.O. 881/9321 Constantinople Embassy to F.O../24-6-1908/no.354/Barclay to Grey/enclosure no.1

Among the rank and file of the Serres Regional Committee, this trend was even more powerful since the vast majority of its members were poor Macedonian peasants sharing socialist views. Evidently, the Macedonian Young Turks exploited this very sensitive point. Without committing themselves, they allowed Sandanski and his group to believe that if they gained power in Constantinople, they would settle the agrarian question.<sup>40</sup>

This Young Turk tactical manoeuvre paid dividends. Thus, when during the first half of 1908, Sandanski and his lieutenants launched a pro-Young Turk propaganda campaign in the districts of Melnik, Petrich, Nevrokop, Strumnitsa, Serres and Drama it was their promise of agricultural reform and land distribution that thrilled the rural Bulgarian-Macedonian communities. Soon after the revolution of July 1908 however, it became apparent that the Young Turks, who had done little to deter Sandanski from raising the land question, had no intention of colliding with the interests of the influential Moslem landowners to satisfy the claims of the Christian peasantry.<sup>41</sup>

In parallel, the Young Turk Committees had been striving to approach the Right wing of the M.R.O., which at the time represented the largest section of the Organization. In 1907, the Paris C.U.P. headquarters sent an invitation to the M.R.O.-Right to participate in its December Congress. Matov, a prominent M.R.O.-Right leader, who had viewed with increasing suspicion the developing understanding and collaboration between the Serres group of Sandanski and Macedonian Young Turks, declined the invitation.

This cold shower however did not discourage the Young Turk Committee and after the Congress it made new overtures for joint activity. In March and April 1908, the Young Turk approaches were discussed at the Right wing Congress in Kjustendil. Finally, the Congress turned down the C.U.P. proposals on the basis that the Young Turk bid to defend the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire contradicted the principal M.R.O. objective for the establishment of an autonomous Macedonia.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 59.2/Monastir Consulate/25/7-9-1908/no.934/Halkiopoulos to Baltazzis

<sup>41</sup> F.O. 881/9531 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/22-2-1909/no.20/Lamb to Lowther

<sup>42</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 115.7/General Consulate of Salonica/8/21-4-1908/no.321/Alexandropoulos to Skouzes/enclosure no.1/Telegram from Sofia Legation Respecting the Secret Macedonian Congress. F.O. 881/9321 Sofia Legation to F.O./1-4-1908/no.40/Buchanan to Grey and MACDERMOTT (1988, p.322). It is interesting that at the Kjustendil Congress, the M.R.O.-Right leaders decided to suppress their bands in Macedonia, except for certain districts where the Greek and Serb paramilitary activity was intense. At a time that the Powers were discussing a new reform program for Macedonia and

The Kjustendil Congress' resolution to diminish the M.R.O. band activity facilitated the Young Turk struggle for predominance in Macedonia and the Ottoman Empire as it averted the danger of Macedonian agitation at a crucial time for the evolution of the movement.

### 1.7 Greek-Young Turk Relations 1895-1908

From its early stages, the Young Turk movement had set up links with the Greek factor. In 1895, Aristidis Bey participated in the editorial board of Ahmet Riza's *Meshveret*. He was a fervent advocate of the Young Turk ideology and after the revolution of 1908 he was appointed to various administrative positions as a reward for his services to the movement.<sup>43</sup> Apparently, Aristidis Bey was acting on his own initiative and there is no convincing evidence connecting his pro-Committee activism with the Greek state or the Greek emigre communities.

It has been a widespread thesis in Greek historiography that the official inception of Greek-Young Turk contacts was the Paris Congress of the Ottoman Liberals in 1902. Three Greeks participated in the Paris Congress: Sathas, Ghikis and Adossidis. When the ideological rivalry between the Young Turk nationalist and liberal groups emerged the Greeks did not remain neutral. Fearing that a resurgent Turkish chauvinism could threaten the supreme economic position of the Ottoman Greeks and recalling that the centralist wing had not denounced the Armenian massacres of 1895-1896, the Greek delegates joined the minority non-Moslem ethnic groups in upholding the Sabaheddin party.<sup>44</sup> Hence, firm opposition to Unionist nationalist group was to become one of the salient characteristics of the Greek attitude towards the Young Turk movement.

During the Greek struggle in Macedonia the Young Turk Committees strove to establish close relations with the Hellenic Internal Organization and its leadership in Athens and Macedonia. Greek memoir material suggests that by 1905 a Young

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Sofia's policy was to elicit Ottoman concession on the projected Sofia-Kjustendil-Kumanovo railway link, the Bulgarian government, which controlled the M.R.O.-Right, did not desire to provoke disturbances in Macedonia. I.A.Y.E./1908/File 91.2/Sofia Legation/19/1-4-1908/no.219/Zalokostas to Skouzes, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 115.6/General Consulate of Salonica/7/20-5-1908/no.413/Alexandropoulos to Skouzes, VLACHOS (1935, p.509)

<sup>43</sup> TOKAY (1994, p.28). Aristidis Bey Yorgandjioglu (later Pasha) was elected deputy for Smyrna in the elections of 1908 and became Minister of Forests, Mines and Agriculture. In January 1911, he was appointed senator. KANSU (1997, pp.264, 310)

<sup>44</sup> PANAYOTOPOULOS (1980a, pp.87-8)

Turkish branch had been set up in Athens and communicated with low-ranking officers of the Greek army.<sup>45</sup>

As the Greek movement in Macedonia was going from strength to strength in the period 1906-1907, the contacts between Greeks and Young Turks became more regular. In the beginning, the Young Turks used the underground Greek-Macedonian organization to facilitate the secret infiltration and activity of their agents in the region. Subsequently, leading members of the Salonica Committee like Talat Bey, Hacı Midhat Bey, Nazim Bey, Cavit Bey, Rahmi Bey held meetings with the Greek Consul-General Koromilas and the leadership of the Salonica community at the house of Dr. Zanas.<sup>46</sup>

Following these first exploratory talks, the Greeks were disillusioned with those Young Turks “who were not so different from the old”. As a consequence, the prospect of cooperation between the two groups diminished significantly.<sup>47</sup> Not that the Young Turks themselves had been particularly keen to pursue the matter. For the time being, they were satisfied in finding sanctuary in the quarters of foreign citizens which offered immunity from the Ottoman authorities’ inquisitorial methods and allowed them to organize their revolutionary activities.<sup>48</sup>

Clearly, the crucial year for the development of Greek-Young Turk relations was 1908. Having established themselves among the Moslem civil servants, bureaucrats and army officers serving in Macedonia, the Young Turk organization attempted to “recruit” the influential Greek-Macedonian element. This time, the Young Turk overtures had a more official connotation and, for the first time, an explicitly anti-Bulgarian character. In late February 1908, the vali of Kosovo Mahmud Shevket Pasha confided to Baraklis, Greek consul in Uskub: “It has been regrettable that the Greek and Turkish people had lost the opportunity of forming a Dual Federation. The establishment of the Exarchate was a great mistake and it was in their common interest that Greeks and Young Turks join hands to repel the Bulgarian threat.”<sup>49</sup>

The Ottoman official expressed his disenchantment over the Greek reluctance to work closely with the C.U.P. so far. The Greek diplomat was apparently startled. Having no instructions to assent to such a proposal he refrained from giving any definite

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<sup>45</sup> KARAVITIS (1994, p.848)

<sup>46</sup> ZANNAS (1960, pp.53-4)

<sup>47</sup> ZANNAS (1960, p.54)

<sup>48</sup> LEWIS (1984, p.179)

<sup>49</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 90.3/Uskub Consulate/25/8-5-1908/no.170/Baraklis to Skouzes/Confidential

answer. When he telegraphed to Athens, the Greek F.O. kept silent.<sup>50</sup> Rumors of a forthcoming Bulgarian-Macedonian insurrection organized by the S.M.C. during the spring<sup>51</sup> and the European intent to introduce reforms in the Macedonian Financial Commission, mobile units and extend the jurisdictional authority of the Inspector-General<sup>52</sup> alarmed the Young Turks and precipitated their activities. In vain in mid-April, renewed and more intense cooperation proposals were put forward to the Greek-Macedonian Committee and the director of the General Consulate of Salonica, Alexandropoulos.<sup>53</sup>

The Greeks were very reticent about the true Unionist intentions. The Young Turks had failed miserably to make an impression, let alone win over, the Greek-Macedonian leadership. The latter inclined to believe that the ultimate Young Turk end was to gain Christian sympathy in an attempt to present this understanding as indisputable evidence to Europe that any foreign interference in Ottoman matters was no longer necessary.<sup>54</sup> It also appears that the Greeks had become increasingly suspicious of the predominantly Moslem nature of the Young Turk movement. Many Greek officials shared the idea that the political activity of the C.U.P. would result in the national awakening of the Moslem populations. As soon as that process was concluded, they believed, the Moslems were likely to organize a strong anti-Christian national movement in order to counteract any infusion of Balkan interference in the Ottoman provinces and reassert their political supremacy over the Macedonian Christians. These were the views of Sahtouris, the Greek consul in Serres, who had served for many years in Macedonia. On 14 June 1908, he wrote to Athens:

“In my opinion, the success of the Young Turk movement is incompatible with Greek interests. The Young Turk ideology is nothing else but the creation of a national consciousness amongst the Moslems. These declarations for liberty, Constitution and equality must be viewed with the most extreme circumspection for those principles are in open conflict with the religious and political institutions of the Moslem conqueror.”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 71.1/Serres Consulate/23/5-6-1908/Sahtouris to Skouzes/Telegraphic

<sup>52</sup> P.P.A.P. CV 1909, p.1002

<sup>53</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 87.1/Elassona Consulate/18/1-5-1908/no.148/Ennyalis to Skouzes and I.A.Y.E./1908/File 87.1/General Consulate of Salonica/12/25-5-1908/no.425/Alexandropoulos to Skouzes

<sup>54</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 90.3/Uskub Consulate/19/1-8-1908/no.308/Baraklis to Baltazzis/Political

<sup>55</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 71.1/Serres Consulate/1/14-6-1908/no.237/Sahtouris to Skouzes

The basic dilemma of the Hellenic administration and the Macedonian committees was apparent: either they would side with one of the two belligerent parties or they would avoid meddling with Turkish affairs and remain neutral. Athens, at the time ignorant of the large scale influence and power of the C.U.P. movement, opted for a cautious wait-and-see policy.

Its chief intent was to avoid jeopardizing the status of the three million Ottoman Greeks by engaging the Greek Macedonian element in a looming Turkish civil conflict with uncertain outcome. In addition, the Greeks, although fostering little sympathy for Abdul Hamid and his palace camarilla, were well aware that it was under the Hamidian rule that the Empire had succeeded in keeping the Slavs out of Macedonia for three decades.

The disclosure of Young Turk power and influence in the III Army corps during June generated second thoughts in the minds of the Greek-Macedonian consular authorities and the Greek-Macedonian Committee. Critical questions now preoccupied the Greek-Macedonian leadership: should the Greek element remain aloof and indifferent to those who after a while were most likely to become the rulers of Turkey; to what extent could the Greek communities in Turkey benefit from such cooperation; and more importantly, in what way could a Greek bid to favor the Unionist movement influence future Greek-Turkish relations to Greece's benefit?<sup>56</sup>

While the Greeks were poised between active participation and passive neutrality the conflict between the Young Turks and the Ottoman administration was about to reach its flash point. As a consequence, it was now the turn of Abdul Hamid II to seek Greek support against the Young Turk opposition. In early June 1908, Hakki Bey, a palace spy, arrived in Salonica in a mission to ascertain the extent of the Macedonian Young Turk movement.

Hakki Bey met with the local Greek Metropolitan Alexandros and tried to persuade the Greeks to remain loyal to the Sultan. Again the Salonica committee refused to commit itself and professed its strict neutrality.<sup>57</sup> In substance, the whole attitude of the Greek-Macedonian leadership pointed to keeping the Greeks away from the forthcoming clash between the C.U.P. and the Palace rather than engaging them in it.

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<sup>56</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 71.1/Serres Consulate/28/10-7-1908/no.275/Sahtouris to Baltazzis

<sup>57</sup> PANAYOTOPOULOS (1980a, p.92)

After the turn things had taken it rested with the Greek government to make the decision. Following a period of painful oscillation and considerable procrastination the Hellenic administration opted for non-interference. On 10 July 1908, the new Greek Foreign Minister Baltazzis (he had replaced Skouzes in mid-June) addressed a circular to the Macedonian consulates elucidating Greek policy concerning the Young Turk movement: "It is evident that with our interference only disasters for the Greek element would ensue and the violent overthrowing of the Turkish regime will evoke implications that will be at our expense. Having taken into consideration our national interests and the personal safety of our fellow-countrymen, it is advisable that the Greek element in Turkey continues to observe its law-abiding stance towards the sovereign, turning a deaf ear to other proposals..."<sup>58</sup>

In sum, the moderate Theotokis Cabinet could ill-afford estranging Constantinople by being implicated in a purely internal Ottoman affair. A good climate between the two neighboring states was a sine qua non not only for the welfare of the numerous Greek populations residing in Turkey but also for the settlement of two bilateral issues with vital importance for Greece: the Cretan question and the construction of the Monastir-Salonica-Larisa-Pireaus railway junction; a geo-strategic project aspiring to connect the isolated Hellenic branch with the Ottoman-Macedonian and European systems.<sup>59</sup>

In the decision of the Greek government to observe neutrality respecting the Young Turk movement, domestic political considerations had made a great impact. Diplomatically isolated, preoccupied with its efforts to accomplish financial stabilization and military reorganization, the Greek kingdom of 1908 was unable to embark upon an adventurous policy against the legitimate administration of the country which for many decades had been an invaluable barrier to Slavic expansion to Macedonia.

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<sup>58</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 88.1.1/Athens to Macedonian Consulates/27/10-7-1908/no.3006/Baltazzis to Consuls

<sup>59</sup> F.O. 881/9316 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./25-3-1908/no.142/Barclay to Grey

## CHAPTER II

### INTER-BALKAN STRUGGLE FOR MACEDONIA 1904-1908

#### 2.1 Bulgaro-Turkish Relations and the Question of Macedonia

After the end of the Ilinden uprising, the Stambulovist Petrov administration, having discerned the dangers of a premature military confrontation with Constantinople over Macedonia, gave precedence to normalizing Turco-Bulgarian relations. To persuade the Porte of its goodwill, Sofia would have to contain the Macedonian nationalists and defuse the Macedonian question.

No matter how unpopular such a policy would be in the interior, the Bulgarian leaders felt that unless they gained some time to recover from the Ilinden tragedy, build an army strong enough to face the Ottomans and secure support from Europe, they could never advance their national program in Macedonia.

In Constantinople meanwhile, following instructions from the Petrov government, the Bulgarian diplomatic agent Nachovich attempted to elucidate the Ottoman disposition respecting a bilateral understanding. To those overtures the Turks had no reason to turn a deaf ear. They knew that even if they defeated the Bulgarian forces and invaded the Principality, the Powers would never allow them to re-conquer Christian regions. The outcome of the Greco-Turkish war of 1897 had been an instructive precedent.<sup>1</sup>

Under the circumstances, for Bulgaria and Turkey an understanding seemed preferable to war. On 8 April 1904, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire signed an agreement. Bulgaria assumed the obligation to suppress the S.M.C., refuse sanctuary to Macedonian activists and close her border to band-crossing and arms-trading. For its part, the Sublime Porte undertook to implement the Murzsteg program, facilitate

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<sup>1</sup> Military observers however believed that in the event of a Turco-Bulgarian war in 1903 the Turks would face serious problems, in particular during the first days owing to the capability of the Bulgarian army to mobilize within a few days; a capability that the Turkish army was lacking. Before reinforcements could arrive from Asia Minor, the Bulgarians could have reached Adrianople. B.D. vol.5 p.36



the repatriation of the Macedonian refugees and grant amnesty to all political prisoners.<sup>2</sup>

The Bulgaro-Ottoman agreement, which followed the secret Serbo-Bulgarian Treaties of Friendship and Alliance<sup>3</sup> served the short-term needs of Bulgarian foreign policy. For some time, an armed conflict between the two countries had been averted. During this period, Bulgaria could promote her enormous program of military reorganization and retrieve her right to claim the implementation of Macedonian reforms.

By the end of the year nevertheless, indications that the short honeymoon period in Bulgaro-Turkish relations was approaching its end were not lacking. In their attempt not to arouse public opinion, the Bulgarian leadership was extremely hesitant to suppress the Macedonian societies in the country as the Sublime Porte demanded. Furthermore, while the agreement was still in force, the huge Bulgarian military expenditure and the leaking out of the secret Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty of Alliance convinced the Ottomans of Bulgaria's warlike designs. As an outcome, it was from 1905 onwards that the Porte began to investigate secretly to what extent the rest of the Balkan states were prepared to join Constantinople in forming an anti-Bulgarian bloc. In the meantime, the Ottoman authorities in Macedonia propped up the local Greek, Serb and Albanian bands against the Bulgarian revolutionaries.<sup>4</sup>

During the years 1906-1907, Bulgaro-Turkish relations grew worse. Ostensibly, the rise of the Stambulovist Gudev to power in 1906 seemed to suggest a Bulgarian intention to improve relations with Turkey. Nevertheless, the Ottomans had sound reasons to be distrustful of Bulgarian national aspirations. In 1906, Bulgarian military officials like General Dimitriev had expressed the opinion that Bulgaria could not be satisfied unless she annexed the regions of Adrianople, Dedeagach and the

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<sup>2</sup> B.D. vol.5 pp.108-109

<sup>3</sup> The two Serbo-Bulgarian Treaties were signed on 30 March 1904 and ratified on 29 April 1904. The Treaty of Friendship dealt with economic and cultural issues, its most interesting point being the creation of a free trade zone between the two states with the abolition of custom duties and the mutual preparation for a Customs Union. The Treaty of Alliance had political importance. It reasserted the interest of the two Balkan states in the implementation of reforms in Macedonia and Adrianople. It also provided for joint military action in case of foreign action against the integrity of the signatory parties. VUCINICH (1954, pp.143-4)

<sup>4</sup> MACDERMOTT (1988, p.293), TOKAY (1994, pp.61-2)

territory located between the Maritsa and Struma rivers. The rest of Macedonia was to become autonomous.<sup>5</sup>

At this juncture, in frequent meetings with the Ottoman Commissioner in Sofia, Prince Ferdinand attempted to assuage Ottoman fears and persuade the Porte of Bulgaria's peaceful disposition. He informed the Ottoman representative that he was ready to make a goodwill move and visit Constantinople if the Ottoman government agreed to execute the Macedonian reforms fully, withdraw its support from the Greek bandits and abandon its discriminatory policies against the Bulgarian-Macedonians.<sup>6</sup>

The efforts of the Exarchate were also in tune with Royal House policy. The Exarch Antim I was an ardent exponent of an "evolutionist" policy in Macedonia. He did his utmost to assure the Grand Vizier Ferid Pasha of his intention to discharge all priests, teachers and schoolmasters who engaged themselves in revolutionary activity and propaganda in Macedonia, provided the Sublime Porte satisfied Bulgarian demands.

The Ottoman Empire, for its part, had realized that it had nothing to gain from a conflict with Bulgaria. On the contrary, in the event of a Turco-Bulgarian conflict, the Sublime Porte would probably sustain significant losses in troops, funds and perhaps territory in the regions of Macedonia and Thrace. The Ottoman policy-makers had steadfastly clung to the perception that the continuation of the politics of appeasement was the best strategy against the Bulgarian threat. In any case, it was this strategy that had allowed Constantinople to head off a Turco-Bulgarian war and had legitimized its demands to Sofia to curb the recalcitrant Macedonian nationalists so far.

In the beginning of 1908, the climate between Sofia and Constantinople improved as the Court of Prince Ferdinand and the new ruling Democratic party of Prime Minister Malinov decided to follow a *détente* policy vis-a-vis the Ottoman Empire. It was foreign policy considerations that had necessitated this course of action. To elicit Ottoman concessions for the construction of a railway link between the Bulgarian and Turkish systems (Sofia-Kjustendil-Kumanovo connection) and facilitate the Anglo-Russian negotiations on the new judicial and administrative reforms in Macedonia,

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<sup>5</sup> F.O. 881/9321 Sofia Legation to F.O./12-5-1908/no.56/Buchanan to Grey

<sup>6</sup> B.D. vol.5 pp.115-116

the Bulgarian administration should observe an “impeccable” attitude toward the Porte.<sup>7</sup>

For once, the Bulgarians were prepared to provide some evidence of good-faith to the Turks. By the end of April 1908, the Bulgarian government had made considerable efforts to contain the Bulgarian-Macedonian committees and had withheld all official allowances to Macedonian partisans.<sup>8</sup> These conciliatory Bulgarian gestures were well received in Constantinople. In an attempt to contribute to the improvement of bilateral relations, the Ferid Pasha Cabinet appointed a new Bulgarian Bishop in Monastir and sent Kiamil Bey to Sofia to replace the anti-Bulgarian High Commissioner Sadit Pasha, whose alarming reports had increased Ottoman suspicions of Bulgarian expansionism.<sup>9</sup>

Eventually, it was to become apparent that the Bulgarian “attack of friendship” was merely a tactical move intended to serve the short-term needs of Bulgaria’s foreign policy and gain European sympathy. In the long-term, the political establishment in Sofia was convinced that a confrontation with the Ottoman Empire was unavoidable. True, for the time being, the Bulgarians sensed that they should remain composed and alert, biding their time until conditions in the Balkans and international scene become favorable for a final solution of the Macedonian question. Even so, that the Bulgarian leadership had no real intention of reaching a viable understanding with the Ottoman Empire became clear in June 1908. Ferdinand ignored the constant feelers of Kiamil Bey to visit Constantinople in order to dwell with the Sultan Abdul Hamid II upon the state in Macedonia and hopefully improve bilateral relations. The Bulgarian ruler excused himself by professing that at a time when the Great Powers were mounting pressure on the Sublime Porte to accept the new Macedonian reform package, his visit in Constantinople could entangle the situation and provoke the uproar of Bulgarian public opinion and press.<sup>10</sup>

In fact, senior Bulgarian politicians held no illusions that if their long-coveted dream of annexing Macedonia and Thrace was to materialize it would ultimately be a matter

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<sup>7</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 115.6/General Consulate of Salonica/7-5-1908/no.413/Alexandropoulos to Skouzes

<sup>8</sup> F.O. 881/9321 Sofia Legation to F.O./28-4-1908/no.50/Buchanan to Grey, F.O. 881/9353 Sofia Legation to F.O./7-7-1908/no.63/Buchanan to Grey, *Bulletin D' Orient* 9-5-1908, p.1

<sup>9</sup> F.O. 881/9321 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./29-4-1908/no.225/Barclay to Grey

<sup>10</sup> F.O. 881/9353 Sofia Legation to F.O./7-7-1908/no.63/Buchanan to Grey

for the Bulgarian and Ottoman armies to decide and certainly not a subject liable to diplomatic negotiation and political disposition.

## **2.2 Seizing the Initiative: the Hellenic Factor in Macedonia**

The 1897 war was a humiliation for the Greek kingdom and a serious blow to its revisionist policy. Following the defeat of its badly-organized army in Thessaly, the Athens Cabinet was forced to yield to the Great Powers' intervention. A European Financial Control was established in Athens and the Greek administration committed itself to refraining from any revolutionary activity in Crete and Macedonia.

As a consequence, the influence of Hellenism in Macedonia suffered a severe setback. With no forthcoming support from the metropolis, the Greek-Macedonian population attempted to defend themselves against the advancing Bulgarian-Exarchist propaganda by assisting the local Ottoman authorities against the comitadjis. After 1903, the revelation of the M.R.O. power during the Ilinden uprising activated the Theotokis Cabinet. So intense was the menace of losing Macedonia to Bulgaria and the demand of Greek public opinion for a militant stance that the Athens Cabinet had to abandon its non-interference policy and engage in Macedonian affairs.

Thus, the concept of establishing a Greek Internal Organization in Macedonia was put into implementation. The main characteristics of the Greek-Macedonian movement differed little from the Bulgarian-Macedonian and the Serb-Macedonian. The central administration cooperated secretly with private associations in its attempt to build an effective revolutionary apparatus in Ottoman territory, although officially it denied any allegation to that effect.

Greek nationalists and militant Macedonian clergymen such as the Bishop of Kastoria Karavangelis and the Metropolitan of Drama Chrisostomos took steps to organize the underground network in the Macedonian vilayets. Furthermore, the vice-consul in Monastir, Dragoumis,<sup>11</sup> succeeded in creating an effective defense network in western Macedonia. During 1904, a private Macedonian Committee (M.C.) was formed in Athens headed by the editor of the newspaper *Εμπρός* (Forward) Kalapothakis. Its principal objective was to subsidize and coordinate the secret mission and military activities of the Greek bands in western Macedonia. Greek army

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<sup>11</sup> Ion Dragoumis. His father, Stefanos, was a leading Greek politician.

officers like Melas, Exadaktilos, Mazarakis, Katexakis, Tsontos-Vardas, Gyparis infiltrated the Ottoman province and began to work for the formation of the first partisan bands in the vilayets of Salonica and Monastir.<sup>12</sup>

The real centers of Hellenic propaganda in Macedonia however, were the diplomatic agencies, predominantly the General Consulate of Salonica under the guidance of Koromilas and the local Metropolitan sees.<sup>13</sup> Funds, agents, army officers and trained personnel were sent from Athens to assist those official institutions in their struggle against the Bulgarian comitadjis, to recruit new members, to consolidate the Greek position and re-gain the lost political ground in Macedonia. In May 1906, in Salonica, a secret Greek terrorist organization came into being under the leadership of Souliotis-Nikolaidis, a lieutenant in the Greek army, to counteract the Bulgarian and Vlach<sup>14</sup> propaganda in the city.<sup>15</sup>

In the period 1904-1906, under the tolerant eye of the Ottoman authorities the Greek movement in Macedonia grew beyond expectation in strength and militancy, evolving into the most influential national organization in the vilayets of Salonica and Monastir where the bulk of the Greek-Macedonian population resided. However, after 1906, the progress of the Greek-Macedonian propaganda altered the passive attitude of the Ottoman government and the Powers towards Greece. This change in Ottoman policy was partly reflected in the frequent complaints and representations of the Ottoman minister in Athens to the Greek F.O. respecting the Greek guerrillas and partly in the practice of Hilmi Pasha to abandon his benevolent neutrality towards the Greeks.<sup>16</sup> From 1907 onwards, the Macedonian Inspector-General began to mount surveillance around the Greek Macedonian consular institutions and the Patriarchist Metropolitan sees. He also began to direct Albanian and Vlach bands against the Greek partisans. Before the end of 1907, Hussein Hilmi Pasha successfully insisted

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<sup>12</sup> DAKIN (1972, pp.163-5)

<sup>13</sup> DAKIN (1966, p.324)

<sup>14</sup> In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century 200,000 Vlachs lived in Macedonia, Epirus and Thessaly. They resided in the Pindus range, Grevena, Kastoria, Moschopolis, Krushevo, Metsovo, Veroia and Thessaly. The Vlachs were divided into two major groups: the pro-Greek and the pro-Romanian. In 1905, the Ottoman Cabinet recognized the Vlachs as a separate nationality. Hence, the Vlachs obtained the right to establish their own schools and participate in provincial administration. The Vlach question, namely the issue of Vlach national allegiance and identity, became the source of tension between Greece and Romania as both countries strove to draw the Vlach communities in their own sphere of influence. WINNIFRITH (1987, pp.132-142)

<sup>15</sup> SOULIOTIS-NIKOLAIDIS (1993, pp.37-43)

<sup>16</sup> SOULIOTIS-NIKOLAIDIS (1993, p.42)

on removing from Salonica and Kavala the militant Greek diplomats Koromilas and Mavroudis.<sup>17</sup>

At the same time, the Great Powers made strong representations to Athens in February and October 1907. In the second instance the Austro-Hungarian, Russian and British representatives demanded the termination of the Greek-Macedonian revolutionary activity from Foreign Minister Skouzes. They went on to warn the kingdom that if it refused to comply with their demand not only would it obstruct the implementation of the ongoing reforms but it would estrange itself from Europe.

Initially, the Greek government could do little more than deny the accusation that it supported the bands, stating that Greece was for pacification and the maintenance of the status quo in Macedonia.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, Athens argued that the monitoring of the Greek-Turkish border for the prevention of band-crossing was also a responsibility of the Ottoman authorities. Questionably, Skouzes added that many Greek bands had been formed by local Macedonians who although being ethnic Greeks were Ottoman subjects over whom the Greek government had no practical jurisdiction. The Greek reasoning concluded with the firm assertion that the Greek-Macedonians had resorted to violence to defend themselves against Bulgarian-Macedonian terrorism. By implication, it was the inability of the Ottoman administration to protect its citizens which should be held responsible for the deterioration of the situation in the Rumelian provinces rather than Greece's Macedonian policy.

In the end the Greeks had to give way. Confronted with the danger of provoking a fatal rupture in its relations with the Porte and alienating the Powers, in the autumn of 1907 the Athens government took additional measures in the borders to prevent the band-formation and band-crossing from Greece to Macedonia. In addition, the Theotokis Cabinet sought to transfer the control and management of the Macedonian struggle from the military Salonica headquarters to the civilian Monastir branch in September 1907. What had urged the government to take that decision was its profound anxiety to assure the Powers that the official Hellenic consular authorities

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<sup>17</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 39.3/Grand Vizierate to General Administration of Salonica/13/26-5-1908/Ferid Pasha to vali of Salonica, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 39.3/Constantinople Legation/4/17-6-1908/no.512/Gryparis to Skouzes, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 39.3/General Consulate of Salonica/26/8-6-1908/no.481/Alexandropoulos to Skouzes

<sup>18</sup> B.D. vol. 5 p.121

in Salonica refrained from any propaganda activity. Therefore, Athens assigned the continuation of the Macedonian struggle to a private committee which was likely to attract minimum European protest.<sup>19</sup>

Implementing such schemes was far more difficult than designing them. The Greek army officers serving in Salonica headquarters, at odds with the Monastir Committee, were unwilling to abandon military leadership and fund management to local chieftains and civilian agents.<sup>20</sup> Personal animosities and reciprocal mistrust between the leaders of the two branches aggravated the situation.<sup>21</sup> Only when on 14 February 1908, the Salonica officers' demand for the appointment of the Colonel of Artillery Danglis as head of the Salonica headquarters was met by the Theotokis government, did they agree to recognize the Monastir Committee as the new center of the Greek- Macedonian campaign.

It was European and Ottoman pressure and the problems of coordination in the Greek-Macedonian movement that led to the diminution of the Greek activity in Macedonia. It is certain, however that by 1908 the Greek armed intervention had managed to alter the political equilibrium between the Macedonian ethnic communities. Summing up the aftermath of the Greek struggle in Macedonia during the period 1904-1908, Dimaras, the consul in Monastir, wrote:

“It was not humanly possible during the few years of our armed struggle in Macedonia to establish a concrete and firm influence in the mainland amidst foreign-speaking populations, devoid of national consciousness, who had been steadily threatened or lured by the Bulgarian revolutionary and not least political propaganda. The bands did all they could across the Macedonian mainland and in a large scale the majority of the communes that returned to us did so on account of the bands' impact.”<sup>22</sup>

Even western observers like Oppenheimer, the Austrian agent in the province and his British colleague Bonham admitted that by 1908 the Greek movement not only was

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<sup>19</sup> GOUNARIS (1984, p.114) in SOCIETY FOR MACEDONIAN STUDIES, ed., (1987)

<sup>20</sup> I.A.Y.E./File 84.3/Athens/16/29-3-1908/Letter from the Athens and Piraeus Macedonian Associations to Prime Minister Theotokis/without classification number

<sup>21</sup> G.S.A./T.V.A./1906-1910/File 3/no.105/16/29-3-1908

<sup>22</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 59.3/Monastir Consulate/26/8-1-1909/no.1400/Dimaras to Baltazzis

the most powerful in southern Macedonian districts, but it was spreading in the northern departments as well as Thrace.<sup>23</sup>

Altogether, by disseminating the Greek cause in the vilayets of Salonica and Monastir the bands did nothing else but to promote in the field the official policy of the Hellenic kingdom for the final resolution of the Macedonian question. This policy, as Skouzes presented it to Elliot, the British minister in Athens, was “the division of Macedonia in zones of influence between the Balkan states rather than the creation of one autonomous province.”<sup>24</sup>

In substance, the implementation of this ambitious policy entailed the dismemberment of Turkey-in-Europe and the division of spoils between the Balkan national states. Within this framework, having secured the Hellenic cultural, economic and political position in Macedonia, the Greek statesmen fancied themselves entitled to claim the incorporation of the Salonica and Monastir provinces in Greece, leaving Kosovo to Bulgaria and Old Serbia to Belgrade.<sup>25</sup> The Young Turk Macedonian revolution was however to postpone, if not countermand, the materialization of Greek nationalist aspirations in Macedonia.

### **2.3 The Serb Struggle in Macedonia**

The remarkable diminution of Bulgarian-Macedonian revolutionary activity after the Ilinden uprising opened the way for the other major Slav-Macedonian revolutionary movement, the Serb, to gain momentum. On 29 September 1903, Sultan Abdul Hamid, in an attempt to thwart the Bulgarian advancement in Macedonia, recognized the Serb nationality in Macedonia with an Imperial Irade.<sup>26</sup>

Heretofore, this lack of recognition had allowed the official Hellenic and Bulgarian institutions to gain considerable ground in the three provinces but the Serb

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<sup>23</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 39.4/General Consulate of Salonica/6/19-7-1908/no.621/Kanellopoulos to Baltazzis, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 20.5/Vice-Consulate of Kavala/12/25-6-1908/no.384/Polixroniadis to Skouze and also F.O. 881/9353 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./30-6-1908/no.360/Barclay to Grey/enclosure no.1. For a detailed account of the Greek movement in Thrace during the first half of 1908 see the report of the Greek consul in Adrianople Gonatas to Greek F.O: I.A.Y.E./1908/File 21.2/Adrianople Consulate/20/3-7-1908/Gonatas to Skouzes/Report on National Activity in Thrace from 1-1-1908 to 15-6-1908/ pp.1-15

<sup>24</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 94.1.1/Rome Legation/7/20-4-1908/no.253/Mitropoulos to Skouzes. See also: F.O. 881/9316 Athens Embassy to F.O./12-3-1908/no.32/Elliot to Grey

<sup>25</sup> F.O. 881/9321 Athens Embassy to F.O./8-5-1908/no.66/Elliot to Grey

<sup>26</sup> DAKIN (1966, p.171)



nationalists were now afforded an opportunity to neutralize this defect. Belgrade, under pressure from nationalist elements at home to assume a more energetic role in Old Serbia and Kosovo, began to intervene more actively in Macedonian affairs.<sup>27</sup>

From the outset, Serb aspirations for Old Serbia and Kosovo, where the Serb element could be found, was bound to collide with the overwhelming Austrian position on the implementation of Macedonian reforms on the one hand, and on the other, with the growing influence of the Bulgarian-Exarchist religious, educational and paramilitary propaganda.

Austria-Hungary, the chief threat to the territorial ambitions of the Serb kingdom at the time, had succeeded, not without irritating Belgrade, in excluding the western districts of the Kosovo vilayet from the reform program. This disposition had isolated the indigenous Serb-Macedonian populations from the rest of the province. Furthermore, in assigning Austrian officers in the eastern districts of Kosovo, Vienna had added insult to Serb injury.<sup>28</sup> To those actions, the Belgrade Cabinet could offer no practical resistance apart from reiterating to the Powers its fixed position that the Serb kingdom opposed Macedonian autonomy and that the question of Macedonia should be settled by a European Congress with the participation of all Balkan countries.

If the Serb efforts to prevent Austrian penetration in Macedonia seemed a lost cause, that was hardly the case in regard to Bulgarian-Macedonian infiltration into the Serb-Macedonian communities in the vilayet of Kosovo. With the M.R.O. in disarray and the Ottoman authorities bolstering up the other ethnic groups against the Bulgarians in Macedonia, conditions seemed favorable for the dissemination of Serb propaganda through the establishment of a Serbo-Macedonian revolutionary organization. Any last reservations the Serbs might have as to the advisability of such practice were dissolved in 1904. In the winter of that year, the M.R.O. leadership turned down the Serb nationalists' proposal to work jointly for the autonomy of Macedonia, refusing to accept the Serb suggestion that the two Slav communities be granted equal status in an autonomous Macedonia.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> VUCINICH (1954, p.126)

<sup>28</sup> VUCINICH (1954, p.127)

<sup>29</sup> VUCINICH (1954, p.131)

It is clear that the Serb revolutionary background in Macedonia compared unfavorably with the Bulgarian-Exarchist and the Greek-Patriarchist organizations. Only as late as 1902, a Serbo-Macedonian Committee was set up by Serb nationalists and members of the prosperous local Macedonian lobby in Belgrade. It was not until 1904, that the first Serb partisan units took the field in the regions of Old Serbia and Kosovo, albeit with very little success.

That development, though, stiffened the Serbs instead of discouraging them and to a certain extent precipitated the active involvement of their government. Since 1904, Belgrade although reassuring the foreign representatives to the contrary, clandestinely supported the cetnik bands by procuring them funds, war material, arms, intelligence services and reservist army officers. The government however, fearful of alienating European sympathies, or worse, provoking a war with Bulgaria, meticulously avoided putting the Serb-Macedonian revolutionary movement under its auspices.

Indeed, certain bands were formed in Serbia proper (mainly in the capital and Vranje) and several Serb army officers were engaged in band operations in Macedonia, but the main strength of the cetnik movement lay away from Belgrade, in the peasant Serb-Macedonian militia which had previously fought alongside the Bulgarian partisans owing to the lack of their own independent Macedonian organization.<sup>30</sup>

Progressively, the Serb bands multiplied their manpower and bases in Macedonia and by the end of 1906 they had arrested the Bulgarians<sup>proy 24</sup> in the regions of Uskub, Prishtina, Prizren, Ishtip and had established their authority in Old Serbia. Apart from the Serb paramilitary build-up and the underground assistance of the government, the growth of the cetnik movement in Kosovo and Old Serbia between 1904-1906 had its roots in two other important factors. On the one hand, in the genuine pro-Serb sentiment shared by many Slav-Macedonians, who resented the growing Exarchist interference in the region and looked towards Serbia as their natural homeland. On the other, in Serb strategy of providing pecuniary assistance to local Macedonian communities,<sup>31</sup> thereby gaining immensely in popularity instead of imposing on them heavy taxes and forcible contributions.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> B.D. vol.5 p.116

<sup>31</sup> It is true that the Serb Macedonian Committee had been very effective in fund-raising. In 1906 it received financial assistance from Serbs of Macedonian origin, from the Serb Intelligence Fund,

In mid-February 1907, the Powers' representations to the rest of the Balkan states to restrain the partisan activity of their fellow-countrymen and contribute to Macedonian pacification were repeated in Serbia. In Belgrade, the British minister Whitehead sought to impress upon the government the need to refrain from sponsoring the cetnik movement by financial and military means. To the counsels of Whitehead, Serb Prime Minister Pashic reiterated the usual reasoning of the Balkan statesmen in analogous occasions. Pashic maintained that the Serb-Macedonian communities were defending themselves against foreign (meaning Bulgarian and Albanian) aggressiveness and the official Serb state had never supported paramilitary activities in Ottoman territory. He went on to emphasize that the government was neither accountable for the actions of certain Serb army officers on "leave of absence or in reserve" nor in any legitimate position to ban private contributions to the Belgrade Macedonian Committee.<sup>33</sup> In the end, the Serb Premier went onto the offensive, arguing with good reason that Serbia had always supported a Serbo-Bulgarian understanding in Kosovo. But it was Sofia's reluctance to accept the arbitration of an impartial Commission respecting the definition of two zones of influence in that Macedonian vilayet, based on linguistic and traditional criteria, which was primarily to blame for the increasing partisan activities and the recent deterioration in Serbo-Bulgarian relations.<sup>34</sup>

In 1908, the Serbo-Bulgarian dispute over Macedonia became truly acute. The growth of Serb national and paramilitary propaganda in Kosovo at the expense of the Bulgarian-Macedonian communities had created a very strong anti-Serb climate in the Principality. In June 1908, under heavy pressure from public opinion and the press, the Malinov administration took an increasingly bellicose attitude toward Serbia. Using menacing language, Bulgaria warned the Serb government to contain its Macedonian propaganda before the recrudescence of Serb band activity led to a Serbo-Bulgarian conflict. The explanations of the Serb Prime Minister Pashic to the Bulgarian representative in Belgrade Toshev, that Serbia did not support the Serb-

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from private associations even from the Skupshtina, which on 3 November passed the "annual credit of 12,000 sterling for assistance to indigent persons in Old Serbia and Macedonia." It is equally true that only a very small portion of those allowances was eventually allotted in Macedonia. B.D. vol.5 p.116

<sup>32</sup> SOWARDS (1989, p.76)

<sup>33</sup> B.D. vol.5 p.118

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

Macedonian bands and was anxious to establish good relations with Sofia did not satisfy the Bulgarians.

If Pashic failed to calm Sofia down, the Russians were more successful. Russia, preoccupied with her process of economic stabilization and military reorganization after the Russo-Japanese war of 1904 and the revolution of 1905, opposed any change of the Balkan status quo. To prevent an armed collision between Serbia and Bulgaria, the Russian Foreign Minister Izvolsky made clear to Belgrade and in particular to Sofia that the Imperial government was determined not to tolerate any attack on the status quo. If one of the two states embarked on an adventurous policy it would face the opposition of Russia.

The Russian intervention made a serious impression in Bulgaria. On 28 June 1908, in the Sobranje, Prince Ferdinand declared that Bulgaria had the most pacific intentions for all her neighboring countries and carefully avoided any reference to the delicate "Serb question." By the time of the Young Turk revolution the tension between Serbia and Bulgaria over Macedonia had subsided.<sup>35</sup>

#### **2.4 The Albanian Movement in Macedonia**

In the years after the Berlin Congress, the Albanian national program was to avoid the partition of the Albanian lands (the Albanian mainland, northern Epirus and the western districts of the Kosovo and Monastir vilayets) between the neighboring Balkan states and to achieve, through European intervention, if not complete political independence at least administrative autonomy within the Ottoman Empire.<sup>36</sup>

That was a very demanding undertaking, the main obstacles being the lack of a separate Albanian church and language. Since religion determined education in the Ottoman Empire, the southern Orthodox Albanians had gradually fallen under the influence of the Greek-Patriarchate, while the Roman Catholic Albanians were linked with the Italian, French and predominantly Austrian cultural propaganda known as

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<sup>35</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 92.2/Belgrade Legation/15/28-6-1908/no.61/Argiropoulos to Baltazzis, F.O. 881/9321 Belgrade Embassy to F.O./28-5-1908/no.33/Whitehead to Grey, F.O. 881/9321 Belgrade Embassy to F.O./8-6-1908/no.35/Whitehead to Grey, F.O. 881/9321 Belgrade Embassy to F.O./23-6-1908/no.39/Whitehead to Grey, F.O. 881/9321 Sofia Legation to F.O./24-6-1908/no.60/Buchanan to Grey, F.O. 881/9321 Sofia Legation to F.O./29-6-1908/no.13/Buchanan to Grey, F.O. 881/9353 Belgrade Embassy to F.O./8-7-1908/no.44/Whitehead to Grey

<sup>36</sup> SKENDI (1953, p.226)

Cultusprotectorat.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, the Albanian Moslems, who fancied themselves Ottomans, had their own religious and educational institutions and had been on good terms with their Christian compatriots. To them, any change in the political status quo was considered a menace to their local political supremacy.

In any case, in their struggle for self-determination the Albanians were not unarmed. For centuries Constantinople had used them in order to police, contain and not rarely oppress its recalcitrant Slav and Greek subjects. In return, the Albanian element had been allowed to obtain and establish a peculiarly privileged position in the Ottoman Empire. The Albanian provinces had become practically semi-autonomous and the Albanian clansmen were excluded from conscription, disarmament and tax-paying regulations.

Albanian paramilitary detachments operating against the Christian partisans in Epirus and Macedonia evolved into the irregular military arm of the Ottoman administration often with ruinous results for the local Christian populations.<sup>38</sup> It is also interesting that for centuries a significant number of Albanian Beys and Agas had been constantly employed by the Ottoman government thereby acquiring an increasing share in the administration of the Empire.<sup>39</sup>

Between 1904 and 1908, the Albanian-Macedonian movement was influenced by two key developments: the Austro-Italian controversy over Albania and the intensification of the Albanian struggle. At a time that the local Ottoman administration displayed symptoms of ineffectiveness, if not thorough paralysis, the European condominium in Macedonia provided the ideal opportunity for Austria-Hungary and Italy to advance energetically their political and commercial interests in Albania and Macedonia.

To Italy, Albanian alignment was essential for maintaining the Otranto Straits and the Adriatic open to her ships whereas Austria-Hungary had been constantly looking upon this backward country as an invaluable bastion against Balkan Slav expansionism and a potential outpost of her influence in the south Balkans. Prompted by these geopolitical considerations, the Adriatic Powers had agreed in their conventions of 1897 and 1900 to respect the Albanian status quo. Yet, if, for

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<sup>37</sup> SKENDI (1982, p.253) in BRAUDE, and LEWIS., eds., (1982). On Austria's Cultusprotectorat tradition and policy in Albania and Macedonia see: BRIDGE (1984, pp.33,35) in KENT, ed., (1984)

<sup>38</sup> P.P.A.P. LXXXVII 1903, pp.356-357. On Albanian irregular activism in Christian Macedonian areas see: B. C. (1914, Leaflet no.13, p.4)

<sup>39</sup> SKENDI (1953, p.231)

any reason, Turkey-in-Europe ceased to exist, they would support the establishment of an autonomous Albanian province.

Between 1904 and 1907, Austro-Italian rivalry focused on the Cultusprotectorat policy whereas from 1908, it drifted to the railway question. In order to establish themselves in Albanian affairs, the two Great Powers sought to win over the powerful Albanian Beys and the Albanian Catholic clergy; namely, the native political and spiritual leadership.<sup>40</sup> In the first place, utilizing the long Cultusprotectorat tradition, Austrian consuls, officers, clergymen and agents in Macedonia were partly successful in obtaining the allegiance of a considerable number of Albanian Catholic priests. In the second half of the reform period though, Austrian political influence diminished due to the increasing Italian propaganda in the province of Kosovo and the Moslem Albanian opposition to Austrian interference in Ottoman Macedonia.<sup>41</sup>

On 27 January 1908, the Austrian Foreign Minister Baron Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal launched his Balkan railway policy. The milestone of this ambitious enterprise was the construction of the Novibazar railway line which would link the European and Ottoman systems. The Nish-Uskub-Salonica system was to become the main line whilst a second link would connect Uskub with Austrian-held Uvac via Mitrovitsa. The railway scheme was seen by the Entente Powers and the Italians as an endeavor on the part of Vienna to advance her political and commercial interests in Albania, Macedonia and the Aegean sea.<sup>42</sup>

In the period of Macedonian reform the Albanian nationalists did not remain inactive. Determined to construct a national identity and unify their tribes in their struggle for autonomy they continued to establish new committees, political clubs, associations and newspapers in Epirus and Macedonia. In 1906, the important initiative of the Albanian nationalist leaders in transferring the central headquarters of their movement from Koritsa to Monastir underscored their intention to assume a more active role in Macedonia.

Under the direction of the Monastir center, societies and influential leaders such as the Topouli brothers, Midhat Frasheri Bey, Fehim Zavalani Bey, Halil Bey, attempted to stir Albanian national sentiment and counterpoise the Greek and Slav propaganda

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<sup>40</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 59.3/Monastir Consulate/12/25-9-1908/no.1015/Dimaras to Baltazzis

<sup>41</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 90.3/Uskub Consulate/15/28-2-1908/no.50/Baraklis to Skouzes/Political

<sup>42</sup> MAY (1938, pp.496, 504-5, 509-10)

in the Albanian-speaking districts of Macedonia and Epirus. Among the southern Orthodox Albanians, Mihail Gramenos, a chief Christian propagandist from Koritsa and George Kyrias, a founding member of the Albanian Monastir Committee, played an active part in the development and proliferation of the Albanian nationalist movement in the period under consideration.<sup>43</sup> Here, it is important to point out that, although the Albanian struggle in Macedonia was mainly directed against Serb and Bulgarian activities in Kosovo and Monastir, the Greco-Albanian dispute focused on the Epirote question.<sup>44</sup>

Notwithstanding their struggle for political emancipation, the Albanians recognized that collaboration with the Sublime Porte was often the best means to further their political claims and fight their racial rivals. During the second half of the reforms, for example, using education and bands, the Albanian nationalist movement attempted to gain ground in the vilayet of Janina and southern Epirus to embarrass the Greeks and divert their attention from northern Epirus.

At the outset, the Ottoman administration was not ill-disposed towards supporting that campaign. Albanian nationalism, it believed, could be useful for the containment of the Greeks. But when in the first months of 1908 the Albanian political activities reached as far as Preveza, near the Greco-Turkish frontier, the Ottomans took alarm.<sup>45</sup> Having no desire to sanction those extravagant Albanian claims, the Porte took steps to thwart the Albanian-Epirote activity but its containment policy was bound to encounter serious problems as “a large portion of the local Ottoman officials were ethnic Albanians themselves.”<sup>46</sup>

Indeed, Ottoman policy on the Albanian question had been steadily unimaginative. Only by 1908, did Constantinople begin to realize the magnitude of the simmering crisis. Having allowed the Albanians to infiltrate the Ottoman administration, man the civil administration and build-up a paramilitary network in the Macedonian, Epirote and Albanian vilayets the Sublime Porte was fostering Albanian nationalism. As early as September 1902, in attempting a comparative analysis of the Bulgarian

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<sup>43</sup> SKENDI (1967, p.207). Refer also to chapters 7 and 9.

<sup>44</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 59.2/Monastir Consulate/26/8-9-1908/no.943/Halkiopoulos to Baltazzis

<sup>45</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2328 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/6-2-1909/Lamb to Lowther/Memorandum on Macedonian Events for 1908 and I.A.Y.E./1908/File 97.3.1/Preveza Consulate/5/18-4-1908/no.257/Karitsis to Skouzes

<sup>46</sup> F.O. 881/9321 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/30-4-1908/no.51/Lamb to Barclay

and Albanian movement in Macedonia, Young, the British agent in Monastir, emphasized that in contrast to the Bulgarian movement, the Albanian political advancement in Macedonia had been the result of the inward infiltration of the Ottoman administration rather than the product of a militant secessionist nationalism: “The two movements (...), though similar in origin and method, are contradictory in their immediate results and ultimate aims. Both originate in an assertion of political independence and of an exclusive title to territory occupied in common with other subject races and the method in both cases is resistance to administrative authority and coercion of the other reayahs. But the immediate result in the case of the Albanians has been the retention of a large measure of autonomy and the acquisition of an increasing share in the government of the Empire; in the case of the Bulgarians, an absolute exclusion from all local administration (...). The reason for this difference lies in the divergence of the ultimate aims of the movements: that of the Bulgarians, from external racial and political attractions, is centrifugal and disruptive of the Ottoman Empire, whereas the Albanians aspire to securing and extending their privileges by means of their peculiar position in the Empire...”<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Cited in P.P.A.P. LXXXVII 1903, p.494



**PART II**  
**YOUNG TURKS AND BALKAN CHRISTIANS IN OTTOMAN**  
**MACEDONIA JULY 1908-APRIL 1909**

## CHAPTER III

### FROM OPPOSITION TO POWER: THE BEGINNING OF THE YOUNG TURK ERA

#### 3.1 Eruption of the Revolution

From the spring of 1908, there were clear indications that the Macedonian army had been in a state of uneasiness. Initially, a number of mutinies among the soldiery of the Monastir camps occurred due to payment in arrears. In addition, at a time that the King of Britain Edward VII and the Russian Tsar Nicholas were meeting in Reval between 9-12 June 1908 to discuss the proposals of the British Foreign Minister Grey for the creation of a new Macedonian mobile force and the new enhanced powers for the Macedonian Inspector-General, the commander of the Salonica military police, Nazim Bey, was attacked and wounded by a Young Turk officer on 11 June.<sup>1</sup>

On 12 June 1908, the Salonica Young Turk Committee addressed a memorandum to the European Consuls. It declared that “the Macedonian question had been allowed to obscure the Ottoman question” and it was high time the Ottomans were left alone to put their house in order. Having made clear that they had no intention of deposing the Sultan the Young Turks pointed out that their movement

“was directed against the Palace camarilla and that the reforming efforts of Europe, although well meant, had failed to eradicate the Macedonian evil.”<sup>2</sup>

Determined to oppose by all means a new round of European interference in the Ottoman Empire the Macedonian Young Turk Committees took action.<sup>3</sup> On 4 July 1908, a military mutiny broke out in Resna. Young Turk detachments under Ahmet

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<sup>1</sup> F.O. 881/9321 General Consulate of Salonica to F.O./12-6-1908/no.165/Lamb to Grey

<sup>2</sup> F.O. 881/9321 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./12-6-1908/no.329/Barclay to Grey, F.O. 881/9353 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/21-7-1908/no.91/Lamb to Barclay and P.P.A.P. CV 1909, p.974

<sup>3</sup> According to the original plan the revolt was to break out simultaneously in all major Macedonian cities on 1 September 1908, the anniversary of Sultan's ascendance to the throne. Unionist army units and initiated Moslem civilians were to occupy the local headquarters in which the Christian and Moslem religious and political leadership and the foreign consuls would assemble to congratulate the Ottoman authorities. Having established control over the local administration the Young Turks would telegraph to the capital for reinstatement of the Constitution. I.A.Y.E./1908/File 71.2/Serres Consulate/24/6-9-1908/no.347/Sahtouris to Baltazzis

Niazi Effendi and Enver Bey fled to the hills where they united with Albanian partisans and Moslem civilians. Soon the mutiny spread over across the Monastir region, the cradle of the revolution being the districts of Ohrid and Resna. It was from the hills of Resna, on 8 July, that Enver Bey issued a declaration demanding the reinstatement of the 1876 Constitution and the dissolution of the palace camarilla.<sup>4</sup>

The revolution escalated rapidly. The insubordination of the III Army corps and the eventual accession of the II Thracian Army corps to the movement, notwithstanding that a large number of its senior officers remained loyal to the Sultan, dealt a severe blow to the Palace. Furthermore, in the Monastir vilayet, the Albanian Macedonians had reached a *besa* (honor) with the Young Turk Committees in an attempt to support the Unionist struggle. In the end, on 10 July 1908, when 8,000 Albanians gathered in Ferisovic threatening to advance against Constantinople unless their demands for Constitution and autonomy were met the Ottoman government realized the gravity of the situation.<sup>5</sup>

In the capital, ignoring the moderate suggestion of Ferid Pasha's Cabinet not to resort to violence, the Sultan initially sought to suppress the revolution by transporting armies from Asia Minor to Macedonia to fight against the Young Turks. However, as soon as the extraordinary military measures failed and the Asiatic contingents, which had been affected by Young Turk ideology, joined the revolution the Hamidian regime came under real military siege.<sup>6</sup>

To make matters worse, fear was rife in the Palace that the Constantinople Moslems might adhere to the Young Turk revolutionary movement and attack the Hamidian regime.<sup>7</sup> Under unbearable pressure from the Cabinet, the army and Moslem public opinion the Sultan's position became truly untenable. Eventually, on 24 July 1908, Abdul Hamid II issued an Imperial Irade proclaiming the implementation of the 1876 Constitution in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>8</sup> The Imperial Irade stated:

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<sup>4</sup> F.O. 881/9353 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./16-7-1908/no.392/Barclay to Grey and P.P.A.P. CV 1909, pp.953-954

<sup>5</sup> F.O. 881/9353 Uskub Consulate to General Consulate of Salonica/11-7-1908/no.40/Satow to Lamb, P.P.A.P. CV 1909, pp.958-959, 964. F.O. 800/50 Paris Embassy to F.O./21-8-1908/Bertie to Grey

<sup>6</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 91.2/Constantinople Legation/11/24-7-1908/no.1778/Gryparis to Baltazzis, BUXTON (1909, p.52)

<sup>7</sup> F.O. 881/9353 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./26-7-1908/no.419/Barclay to Grey

<sup>8</sup> P.P.A.P. CV 1909, pp.969-970

“Every individual subject, irrespective of ethnic origin or religion is entitled to personal freedom and to an equal share in the rights and obligations of the country.”

The proclamation of the Constitution evoked general enthusiasm. All ethnic groups in the country hailed the end of Hamidian absolutism and welcomed the Constitutional and Parliamentary period. In Macedonia, the Young Turk leader Enver Bey declared the abolition of racial, cultural and ethnic divisions between the ‘Ottoman subjects’ and scenes of fraternization between Bulgarians and Greeks added to the atmosphere of optimism and rejoicing. As Miller observed, “Macedonia seemed to have become utopia”.<sup>9</sup>

### **3.2 Facets of Unionist Political Activity in Macedonia**

The period of inter-ethnic enthusiasm and rejoicing in the country was short-lived. In the following few months, the Unionist disregard for the principles of Ottoman equality and Constitutional liberty became visible. First, the new C.U.P. program on education provided for the abolition of separate ethnic secondary schools and the establishment of uniform Ottoman public schools, which would be under the direct control of the state. In this way, the privilege of the non-Moslem nationalities to run their own educational institutions was attacked by the C.U.P.<sup>10</sup> Secondly, by avoiding committing themselves on the proportionate representation of non-Moslems in the administration and refusing even to discuss the thorny agrarian question, the Young Turks exposed a lack of vision and will to introduce far-reaching institutional reforms in the administration and the society.<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, between August and October 1908, a massive wave of strikes broke out in the Empire. It is interesting that although the Committee had initially supported the labor movement, when the strikes assumed disquieting proportions and the central government lost control of the situation, the Committee backed the suppression of the labor movement by legislative measures. According to Zurcher, this suggested that “the Young Turk Committee -the champion par excellence of Constitutional liberty- had sided unequivocally with the capitalists in suppressing the

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<sup>9</sup> For a vivid account of the situation in Macedonia during the early days of the Constitutional change see: MILLER (1966, p.476)

<sup>10</sup> For details on the C.U.P. educational program refer to chapter 6.

<sup>11</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 59.2/Monastir Consulate/25/7-9-1908/no.934/Halkiopoulos to Baltazzis

freedom, such as it was, of organized labor.”<sup>12</sup> From an early stage therefore, indications that the Young Turks were a socially immature and politically conservative movement were not lacking.

Unionist centralizing tendencies were also revealed during the debate within the Young Turk movement on the important questions of administrative reform and provincial decentralization. Shortly after the Constitutional change, the disagreement between the centralist party of Ahmet Riza Bey and the liberal group of Sabaheddin over these issues resurfaced. In late August, the Salonica Committee made clear that it could support the “application of the principle of local government within such limits as are compatible with the administrative interests of the Empire”. But it did not desire to sanction any radical reforms in provincial administration.<sup>13</sup> The C.U.P. seemed to share the belief that the establishment of a parliamentary regime would suffice to secure the peripheral representation and promote the provincial interests in a system which intended to discourage secessionist aspirations and forge Ottoman unity.<sup>14</sup>

On the other hand, upon arriving in Constantinople, Prince Sabaheddin sought to reassure the Committee that the term “administrative devolution” did not provide for provincial independence and separatism from the central government but for the establishment of provincial councils with a mission to deal with local questions in the spirit of unity. On 17 September 1908, Sabaheddin delivered a speech in Pera, which made a positive impression on Unionist officials and European diplomats. The Prince declared:

“Devolution does not mean political autonomy or transformation of the provinces into confederate mini-states. The system of administrative devolution, as we envisage it, aims at eliminating all sources of misrule that devastated the country, provoked the interference of the Powers in our internal affairs and in certain cases resulted in foreign occupation of Ottoman provinces.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Cited in ZURCHER (1993, p.98). On more information on the strikes and the growth of the labor movement: B.D. vol.5 p.289, MOSKOV (1978, pp.170-4)

<sup>13</sup> F.O. 881/9353 Sofia Legation to F.O./24-8-1908/no.73/Buchanan to Grey

<sup>14</sup> KAYALI (1997, p.78)

<sup>15</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 91.2/Constantinople Legation/4/17-9-1908/no.890/Gryparis to Baltazzis/enclosure no.1

Sabaheddin's explanations did not seem to have fully persuaded the C.U.P. Following the issuing of the Unionist political program on 23 September 1908, the Committee began to organize its First Annual Congress. It was held in Salonica between 5 and 25 October 1908 with the participation of delegates from all European and Asiatic provinces. The overriding characteristic of the First Annual Young Turk Congress was the ideological dispute between the Committee and the party of Prince Sabaheddin over the questions of provincial decentralization and the interdependence between the Young Turk Committee and the Ottoman military.

In regard to the first subject, soon it became apparent that the C.U.P. had no intention of subscribing to the main liberal concept of a devolved provincial administrative model. Thoroughly convinced that the establishment of strong provinces with semi-autonomous leaderships, independent economic sources and reformed administration might nourish secessionist tendencies and initiate the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire into a number of federal states, the Unionist delegates passed 'conservative' resolutions on local government.

Although a considerable number of incompetent and corrupt public functionaries were to be dismissed from the civil administration no structural reform was introduced into the state machinery and peripheral government. The system was to remain more or less intact. The Salonica Congress's decision provided only for the motivation of the bureaucrats-cadres and the extension of the valis' authority for the development of local education, commerce and industry.<sup>16</sup>

On the issue of Unionist-army relations, Sabaheddin had demanded that the Committee should sever all connections with the armed forces. Probably to maintain an outward form of unity the Salonica C.U.P. Congress passed a resolution urging its members that "neither the Committee nor individual C.U.P. members should interfere with matters appertaining to the management of the army."<sup>17</sup> This stipulation, important as it may seem, was in fact nominal for the Committee and the Ottoman military were, and continued to be, intimately connected.

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<sup>16</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./18-11-1908/no.787/Lowther to Grey/enclosure no.2

<sup>17</sup> F.O. 881/9492 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/10-11-1908/no.149/Lamb to Lowther

Another significant element of the Young Turk Congress was its resolution to rally all Ottoman subjects around the Committee and its political program for the advancement of education, commerce, agriculture, industry and the improvement of living and regional conditions. Towards this target, the Unionist members assumed the task of setting up political clubs in every village, town and provincial center of the country. In each provincial capital, newspapers were to be published “with the material and moral support of the C.U.P.”<sup>18</sup> Beneath these preparatory steps the C.U.P. intention was clear: the expansion of the Unionist network and its development into an Empire-wide organization.

In the end, the centralist current emerged from the First Annual Young Turk Congress as the predominant force. In a secret convention, an eight-member Central Committee (C.C.) was elected. Its members were: Talat Bey, Midhat Shukru, Hussein Kadri, Enver Bey, Hayri, Habib Bey and Ahmet Riza Bey, who had recently returned from Europe. The composition of the C.C. of the C.U.P. proved that the liberals had been thoroughly defeated since all members were supporters of the centralist policy.

In a short period of time, the C.U.P. committed itself to expand its political network. Prominently, the Macedonian committees were very active and apt in initiating new members and founding local clubs. By December 1908, the Salonica Committee had established 14 new associations in the Macedonian capital alone. Their avowed aim was to promote unity between the various ethnic groups.<sup>19</sup> New C.U.P. societies were formed in the major centers of Uskub, Monastir, Serres, Drama, Kavala, Adrianople and Constantinople. Each Unionist club was officially recognized by the authorities, it was directed by the local municipal council and supervised by the C.C. of the C.U.P.

By October 1910, the C.U.P. had established an Empire-wide organization numbering 4,800 branches with 135,000 registered members. The bulk of those societies lay in the European provinces and only a few branches functioned in Syria

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<sup>18</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./18-11-1908/Lowther to Grey/no.787/enclosure no.2

<sup>19</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK-A/General Consulate of Salonica/25/8-12-1908/Kanellopoulos to Baltazzis/General Regulations of the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress/article 94. F.O. 881/9492 Drama to Constantinople Embassy/29-10-1908/no.98/Lieutenant-Colonel Bonham to Lowther

and Asia Minor. It is clear that in Arabia, Mesopotamia, Yemen and Tripoli the C.U.P. organization was more weak and fairly unpopular -an undisputed indication that even after the July revolution the European committees remained the virtual bases of Unionist power.<sup>20</sup>

Following the Near East crisis the clubs gradually assumed a more distinctly Turkish and anti-Christian character. Under the new disposition, the Unionist clubs were manned almost exclusively by Moslems and Christian recruitment was restricted considerably. In their regular gatherings these Moslem associations promoted Turkish traditions and raised regular pecuniary contributions for the C.U.P. headquarters. Among their principal considerations were the counteraction of Christian nationalist trends which, they felt, threatened Ottoman territorial integrity and the Committee's political primacy.<sup>21</sup>

Apart from these first political activities, the Committee gave precedence to securing its political position in the country. To achieve this objective, the Unionists sought to ensure a commanding majority in the Ottoman Parliament and deal with the Ottoman political establishment.

### **3.3 Unionists, Macedonian Christians and the Question of Parliamentary Elections**

The Ottoman Parliamentary elections were a crucial political challenge for the C.U.P. In the electoral battle, the Committee's main objective was to man the Parliament with a large number of deputies sharing the pro-Unionist ideology.

Of the difficulties and peculiarities of this struggle the Young Turks were aware. The Committee recognized that the divided and ill-organized Moslems were more or less unaccustomed to such procedures, whereas, the Balkan Christians were far more experienced owing to their earlier engagement in old local electoral campaigns.<sup>22</sup>

The C.U.P. knew that in order to overcome those deficiencies it would be necessary that the elections be held with a suitable electoral law. Published in September, the

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<sup>20</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2359 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/3-12-1910/Geary to Marling

<sup>21</sup> See for further details: I.A.Y.E./1908/File 118.1/General Consulate of Salonica/2/15-12-1908/no.1141/Papadiamantopoulos to Baltazzis, E.A./1908/KH/13-11-1908/no.45/p.3

<sup>22</sup> AHMAD (1982, pp.407-9) in BRAUDE, B., and LEWIS, B., eds. (1982)



new Ottoman electoral law established a representative system, which was used to favor the Moslem rather than the non-Moslem populations.

It stipulated that the electoral procedure should be conducted on two levels. In the first phase, a variable number of 250-750 voters in the local communes was to elect a second-degree elector: the representative of the kaza. At the second stage, a group of 100-300 second-degree electors would elect a deputy for the Parliament.<sup>23</sup>

Having established themselves in the heavily Moslem-inhabited regions, the Young Turk Committee concentrated their political propaganda in constituencies where non-Moslem ethnic communities formed the bulk of the population. In European Turkey, to avoid being defeated in the Christian-dominated districts, the Committee applied a simple yet instrumental political strategy. Capitalizing upon its political influence, it proceeded to reach local understandings with whichever group or faction was willing to support pro-Unionist candidates. Hence, the C.U.P. not only managed to turn potential opponents into political allies but attempted to play off one Christian group against another with considerable results.

In the predominantly Christian districts of Epirus, Macedonia and Albania, the Young Turk Committee worked closely with the Albanians, the Vlach nationalist wing and the M.R.O. faction of Sandanski. In most of the cases, those local alliances were directed against the most dangerous Christian contenders: the Greeks and the pro-M.R.O.-Right Slavs. In the Macedonian sanjak of Kastoria, for instance, the C.U.P. and the Albanians supported the Vlach community against the strong Greek element.<sup>24</sup> In Salonica vilayet, the Bulgarian candidates were unpleasantly surprised, when they found out that Sandanski, with the tacit consent of the local Young Turk Committee, had interfered with the ballot in an apparent effort to secure the election of Vlahov and Daltchev: two Macedonians who had been nominated by the M.R.O.-Left.<sup>25</sup>

On the other hand, the voting procedure had been anything but normal. Irregularities were common and in many cases the Committee had used the state administration to

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<sup>23</sup> DAKIN (1966, p.391)

<sup>24</sup> The C.U.P. did not hesitate to seek help from foreign quarters. In September 1908, Ismail Kemal Bey secretly informed the Greek consul in Avlona Verenikis that the C.U.P. had concluded a behind-the-scenes agreement with the local Austrian consular authorities to support the election of Moslem and Albanian nominees, at the Greeks' expense. I.A.Y.E./1908/File 99.1.2/Avlona Consulate/22/5-10-1908/no.5338/Verenikis to Baltazzis/Telegraphic

<sup>25</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./17-11-1908/no.783/Lowther to Grey

prevent the Christian populations from participating in the voting. Once more, the Greeks and the Bulgarians had the most complaints, not all unwarranted. In the Epirote vilayet of Janina, for instance, more than 20,000 Greek peasants had been initially obstructed by the authorities from casting their ballot. The Ottomans argued with some reason that the vast majority of those ethnic Greeks had not provided detailed documentation of their Ottoman citizenship and consequently they had not been granted permission to vote. So strained became the relations between Moslems and Christians that the government had to allow them to vote.<sup>26</sup>

In the province of Monastir, the local Bulgarians boycotted the elections in the kazas of Florina and Sorovich. In doing so, they protested against the Ottoman authorities' practice of designating the constituencies in such manner as to divide the local Bulgarian-Macedonian electorate and thwart the proportionate election of Bulgarian deputies.<sup>27</sup>

True, the Unionist attempt to win the parliamentary elections was facilitated by the ethno-political divisions between Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs and Albanians. It was ethnic divisions and inter-racial distrust that did not leave real scope for inter-Balkan understandings on an electoral basis. The poll result in the vilayet of Kosovo was an instructive case. The Moslem Albanian element exploited the failure of the Serb and Bulgarian communities to reach an electoral agreement and gained 15 seats. On the other hand, the Macedonian Serbs elected 3 deputies while the Bulgarians none.<sup>28</sup>

To aggravate the situation, political factionalism was rife in all Christian ethnic groups. In Macedonia, the local Bulgarian population had been divided between the supporters of the pro-Unionist group of Sandanski and the nominees of the M.R.O.-Right. In the Greek camp, the situation was no different. In the Macedonian districts of Veroia and Naoussa, the uncompromising struggle between warring Greek factions weakened the position of Hellenism to the benefit of the local Vlach and Bulgarian communities.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> See: I.A.Y.E./1908/File 99.1.2./General Consulate of Janina/3/16-10-1908/no.584/Agonakis to Baltazzis, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 99.1.2./General Consulate of Janina/11/24-10-1908/no.603/Agonakis to Baltazzis, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 99.1.3/Preveza Consulate/27/9-11-1908/no.6593/Antoniadis to Baltazzis, B.D. vol.5 p.279. ABBOTT (1909, p.108)

<sup>27</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 99.1.1./Monastir Consulate/24/6-11-1908/no.6008/Dimaras to Baltazzis

<sup>28</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 118.1/Uskub Consulate/12/25-12-1908/no.672/Barakis to Baltazzis. KANSU (1997, pp.245-7)

<sup>29</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 85.3/General Consulate of Salonica/Kanellopoulos to Baltazzis/Report on Events and Conditions in Salonica District for the Year 1908/p.14

The bulk of Macedonian Christians had not been pleased with the process, far less with the result, of the Ottoman elections. Objectively, in many cases the electoral procedure did almost exceed the limit of outright misconduct and distorted the real ethnological composition of the local populations to Unionist benefit.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the Committee's tendency to retain for itself the exclusive right to chose the second-round nominees who would elect the deputies became an additional point of friction between Christians and Young Turks.<sup>31</sup>

In the circumstances, Christian remonstrations against the Ottoman administration and the Committee were inevitable, particularly from Greek and Bulgarian quarters. On 22 October 1908, the Greek Patriarch Joachim III addressed a letter of strong protest to Kiamil Pasha against the new Constitutional regime:

“Ces excès commis au cours des élections des Députés prouvent manifestement que la Gouvernement constitutionnel s'est tracé un plan secret en vue de persecuter le Patriarchat et la nation Grecs, plan bien pire que celui qu'on suivait sous la régime de l'absolutisme.”<sup>32</sup>

A month later, Ottoman Greek opposition reached its peak when the influential Greek community of Constantinople organized mass demonstrations in the capital, which were dispersed by Turkish police.<sup>33</sup> The Bulgarians also made strong complaints of their own. On 13 January 1909, during a session of the Ottoman Parliament, in the presence of the Grand Vizier Kiamil Pasha and the Minister of the Interior Hilmi Pasha, the Bulgarian deputy from Monastir Panche Dorev accused the government “of having cheated the Bulgarians in the elections”.<sup>34</sup>

Foreign observers however did not appear to fully sympathize with Christian protests. The British Consul-General in Salonica Lamb, although he accepted that in many cases the Greek and Bulgarian remonstrations were indeed well-founded, reported that in the Ottoman elections “the principle of proportionate representation of all races and creeds has been adhered to.”<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> B.D. vol.5 p.290

<sup>31</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2328 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/6-2-1909/Lamb to Lowther/Memorandum on Macedonian Events for 1908

<sup>32</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./2-11-1908/no.729/Lowther to Grey/enclosure no.2

<sup>33</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./24-11-1908/no.801/Lowther to Grey

<sup>34</sup> F.O. 881/9503 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./25-1-1909/no.49/Lowther to Grey

<sup>35</sup> F.O. 881/9492 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/10-11-1908/no. 149/Lamb to Lowther

The result of the Ottoman elections gave the pro-Unionist parliamentary group a significant majority in the Chamber of Deputies. Out of 288 seats, the Turks gained 147, the Arabs 60, the Albanians 27, the Greeks 26, the Armenians 14, the Slavs 10 and the Jews 4. More significantly, the vast majority of those deputies were elected under the Unionist banner.

The outcome of the Ottoman Parliamentary elections had a dual significance. First, it unveiled the fundamental conflict of political interests between the Committee and the bulk of Macedonian Christians. Second, in the context of internal Ottoman politics, it secured for the Unionists a strong influence on the Chamber thereby enabling the pro-C.U.P. parliamentary party to assume an important role in Ottoman political affairs. On 17 December 1908, the Chamber of Deputies held its opening convention.

### **3.4 From the July 1908 Revolution to the April 1909 Counterrevolution: the Palace, the Porte, the Committee of Union and Progress and the Struggle for Power**

Notwithstanding the magnificent victory of the Young Turk Constitutional forces, the July revolution instead of clarifying the internal situation in Turkey, inaugurated a transitional period of political instability and conflict. Upon prevailing in Macedonia in July 1908 the C.U.P. became the most influential organization in the Empire. However, in order to establish its dominance in Ottoman politics the Committee had to overcome the opposition of two traditionally powerful political centers: the Palace and the Sublime Porte.

### **3.5 The Palace and the Committee**

In Constantinople, the rivalry between the Court and the Unionist Committees was soon to reach its most decisive point. Many Unionists shared the conviction that Sultan Abdul Hamid II was capable of calling Bulgaria or Russia to occupy Turkish territory in order to exploit the absence of the army from the capital and abolish the Constitution.<sup>36</sup> The C.U.P. was right to suspect the Monarch. At the end of July,

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<sup>36</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 91.1.1./Constantinople Legation/20/2-9-1908/no.817/Gryparis to Baltazzis and TEMBERLEY (1934, p.187)

sensing that the age of his absolute hegemony was about to end, the Sultan made a last attempt to maintain his primacy in Ottoman politics. In contravention of Constitutional article 27, Abdul Hamid tried to acquire the right to appoint not only the Seikh-ul-Islam and the Grand Vizier but also the Ministers of War and Navy. In this effort the Monarch was unsuccessful, for the Young Turk Committee and the Sublime Porte formed a united front of opposition to prevent the Sultan violating the Constitution and increasing his powers.<sup>37</sup>

When this last endeavor met with failure, Abdul Hamid II was left with no alternative but to admit defeat. The establishment of a Parliamentary regime a few months later dealt the most serious blow to the Sultan's authority. From this point onwards and up to the counterrevolution of April 1909, the leader of the Palace had to abandon his energetic struggle against the Committee and hope that an internal anti-Constitutional movement or a foreign power would come to his rescue.

Despite his internal embarrassments, the Monarch had not forfeited all his authority and prestige. The Hamidian establishment had ruled the country over the past thirty years. Its influence upon a considerable number of civil functionaries, governmental officials, army cadres, the conservative religious *ulema* class and the Moslem masses could not vanish overnight. The Anatolian Moslems and Kurd tribesmen, for example, could hardly renounce their blind allegiance to the sacred person of Abdul Hamid II who, as Sultan and Caliph, had become the symbol of Ottoman national struggle against the European semi-colonial activities in the Empire.<sup>38</sup>

That the Hamidian establishment remained an important political factor even after the July revolution became visible in October. A mutiny among the pro-Sultan praetorian guard of Yildiz in conjunction with the organization of two large demonstrations on the part of the conservative religionist groups in the capital proved that the Sultan's influence on the armed forces and the Moslem public opinion was far from negligible.

In February 1909, a conservative religionist group under the leadership of Abdoullah Effendi formed the *Ittihat Muhammendi* (Mohammedan Union). Its main objective

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<sup>37</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 91.2/Constantinople Legation/30/12-8-1908/no.741/Gryparis to Baltazzis and P.P.A.P. CV 1909, p.997

<sup>38</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 39.4/Constantinople Legation/19/1-9-1908/no.790/Gryparis to Baltazzis, F.O. 881/9811 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./17-2-1909/Lowther to Grey/General Report on Turkey for 1908 and MANGO (1972, p.108)

was to “establish a regime for the protection and promotion of the Sheriat and Islam.” The Mohammedan supporters embraced the concept that the only revitalizing force in Ottoman society was Islam rather than the westernized institutional reforms of the Committee. The Union was instrumental in rallying the anti-Unionist forces in the country. Its positions found expression in the newspaper *Volkan* of the *Nakshibendi* Dervish order.<sup>39</sup>

Unquestionably, the masterstroke of the Mohammedan Union was the organization of the counterrevolution that erupted in the capital against the Young Turks on 13 April 1909. Dismissed officials and army cadres, anti-Unionist deputies and a number of pro-Sultan Albanian soldiers took an active part in the counterrevolution. By the end of April 1909, these forces, which had temporarily taken over the capital, were utterly defeated when the Macedonian army under General Mahmud Shevket Pasha marched into Constantinople and restored the Young Turk Constitutional regime.

The abortive counterrevolution led to the deposition of the Sultan and his replacement by his brother Mehmet Reshid V: a puppet of the Young Turk Committee.

### 3.6 The Porte Connection

The Young Turks were well aware of their political inability to administer the country. Therefore, they were very hesitant to form a Unionist Cabinet in order to fulfill their fundamental political bids and promote the necessary reforms in central government, administration and society. On the other hand, they had no desire to totally abandon the executive power to the politicians of the Sublime Porte. Such a step would nullify their right and tendency to control the affairs of the Empire. In the end, the Young Turk Committee decided to allow the bureaucrats of the Sublime Porte to hold the executive whilst it maintained the position of a “watchdog” of the Constitutional regime.<sup>40</sup>

Supported by the Committee, Kiamil Pasha was appointed Grand Vizier on 6 August. The new Grand Vizier, liberal and pro-British, had an admirable record of experience in statehood and political struggle against Abdul Hamid II.<sup>41</sup> The rise of Kiamil

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<sup>39</sup> ZURCHER (1993, p.100)

<sup>40</sup> AHMAD (1969, pp.15-8)

<sup>41</sup> FINDLEY (1980, p.300)

Pasha to power was an important development since it meant that, for once in Ottoman history, the traditional class of career politicians, bureaucrats and diplomats assumed control of the country free from the iron hand of the supreme ruler.

The Kiamil Pasha government mainly consisted of well-known Porte politicians.<sup>42</sup> Tewfik Pasha became President of the State Council and Foreign Minister;<sup>43</sup> Rejeb Pasha Minister of War;<sup>44</sup> Ziya Pasha Financial Minister; Hasan Fehmi Pasha Minister of Justice and Cemaluddin Effendi Seikh-ul-Islam. Hakki Bey and Reshid Akif Pasha, who assumed the Ministry of the Interior and Public Instruction respectively, were supporters of Young Turk political positions.

The chief undertaking of the new government was to reform and modernize the Ottoman Empire's civil-bureaucratic institutions. The Kiamil Pasha administration gave precedence to the fields of economy, taxation, army, education, judiciary, communications, railways. Special attention was also given to the reform of the Ottoman administration and public utilities by foreign technocrats. Steps were taken for the abolition of the capitulations: the irksome reminder to the Ottoman Empire of its semi-colonial status on international scene.<sup>45</sup>

From the first month of the new Cabinet's period in office, the incompatibility between the policies of the Kiamil Cabinet and the Young Turk Committee's practice of interfering with the executive authority became discernible.<sup>46</sup> In reality, the only convergence point between the Kiamil Cabinet and the C.U.P. was the mutual desire to prevent the Sultan retrieving its absolute power.

Kiamil Pasha did not hold any illusions that both groups espoused divergent tactics and served conflicting political interests. Hence, he never placed much confidence in the viability of this political collusion with the Committee, which he tended to consider a provisional and painfully unavoidable evil. The new Grand Vizier had a

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<sup>42</sup> Following the Constitutional provisions and spirit, Kiamil included in his Cabinet two Christians: the Greek Mavrogordato Effendi as Minister of Mines and Forests and Gabriel Effendi, an Armenian, for the Ministry of Public Works. P.P.A.P. CV 1909, p.1011

<sup>43</sup> Tewfik Pasha had been holding the Foreign Ministry portfolio since 1895.

<sup>44</sup> Rejeb Pasha died shortly after the composition of the Kiamil Cabinet and was replaced by Ali Riza Pasha.

<sup>45</sup> F.O. 881/9353 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./18-8-1908/no.494/Lowther to Grey, P.P.A.P. CV 1909, pp.1016-1017

<sup>46</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./12-12-1908/no.855/Lowther to Grey, F.O. 881/9858 Memorandum Respecting the New Regime in Turkey/16-5-1911/Foreign Office/Knatchbull-Hugessen to Grey

low opinion of Young Turk ability to run the country. Based on this perception, he failed to take into serious consideration the potential growth of Unionist political influence.<sup>47</sup>

In this latter point Kiamil Pasha erred. Porte officials were soon to understand that they would have a very difficult time in dealing with the C.U.P. In fact, from the outset, the Young Turks had been astute enough not to renounce their right to intervene in Ottoman politics. A few days after the Macedonian revolution, a European correspondent asked Enver Bey why the Ottoman military, instead of confining itself to its conventional tasks, was striving to introduce liberal political institutions in the Empire. "It was the duty of the army to do so for the Turkish officers were the most enlightened and best educated class in the country", the Young Turk official retorted instantly.<sup>48</sup>

Mutual mistrust soon grew further. Between late July and September 1908, the Unionist leaders Talat Bey, Enver Bey, Rahmi Bey, Nazim Bey and Ahmet Riza Bey had taken the initiative in holding negotiations with the Macedonian committees of the local ethnic groups respecting all issues emanating from the Constitutional change. The Committee had also invited the Macedonian Christians to submit memoranda with their political positions and aims.

The Kiamil Pasha government construed the move as an explicit attempt on the part of the Unionist Committee to usurp the official state organs and demonstrate its intention to act independently in Ottoman politics.<sup>49</sup> The period of polarization and political rivalry between the Kiamil Cabinet - the acknowledged Ottoman government - and the Committee - the most powerful body in the country - had commenced.<sup>50</sup>

In his battle against the Unionist bid for political predominance, Kiamil Pasha could count on liberal support. On 14 September 1908, the Liberal Union party was formed (*Ahrar Firkasi*) under the leadership of Sabaheddin and the Albanian Ismail Kemal Bey. It favored administrative devolution and respect for the minority

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<sup>47</sup> AHMAD (1969, pp.27-8, 31)

<sup>48</sup> F.O. 881/9353 St. Petersburg Embassy to F.O./28-7-1908/no.339/O'Beirne to Grey

<sup>49</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 39.4/Constantinople Legation/19/1-9-1908/no.790/Gryparis to Baltazzis and F.O. 881/9353 Sofia Legation to F.O./24-8-1908/no.72/Buchanan to Grey

<sup>50</sup> For a lucid exposition on this system of 'dual leadership' in Ottoman politics see: SKOPETEA (1992, pp.165-6)



nationalities' privileges. The Liberal Union party, despite its modest performance in the elections, became the center of the Unionist opposition and upheld Kiamil Pasha. During the Balkan crisis over the annexation of Bosnia and Bulgarian independence the dispute between the Kiamil Cabinet and the Young Turks was aggravated. The most partisan members of the Committee went as far as to accuse Kiamil Pasha of exploiting the questions of Bosnia and Bulgaria to cement his political position in the interior.<sup>51</sup> In the first two months of 1909, however, the Ottoman Cabinet succeeded in coming to terms with Austria and forced the Bulgarians to give in to Ottoman demands for economic compensation. Encouraged by his success on the diplomatic level, Kiamil Pasha decided to deal with the C.U.P. opposition in the interior.

Internal political conditions, for once, seemed to favor the Kiamil Pasha Cabinet. In early January, when a group of Arab deputies contemplated the formation of an Arab parliamentary party to claim proportionate representation in the administration and the Parliament, a breach occurred between the C.U.P. and the Arab deputies. Hussein Cahit, the influential Unionist editor of the *Tanin*, the Constantinople-based organ of the Committee, denounced this idea as an attempt to establish a monolithic Arab party on national grounds.<sup>52</sup> It appears that this development induced the Grand Vizier to believe that the Arabs would withdraw their support from the Committee and might side with his liberals thereby challenging the C.U.P. supremacy in the Parliament.<sup>53</sup>

The Grand Vizier nevertheless, realized that the C.U.P. power lay not only in the Chamber of Deputies but also in the military and in particular, in the II-III European Army corps. Following its controversy with the Arab party, the Committee's position in the Chamber had considerably weakened. At this juncture, it seemed that if Kiamil Pasha was able to isolate the C.U.P. from the Ottoman European Army corps he could defeat the Committee and suppress its strong opposition.

To this effect, from January 1909, Kiamil Pasha began to remove selected pro-C.U.P. battalions from the Macedonian army. On 10 February 1909, the Grand Vizier made a bolder move. He replaced the pro-Unionist Ministers of War and Navy Ali Riza

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<sup>51</sup> Refer to chapter 5.

<sup>52</sup> KAYALI (1997, pp.70-1)

<sup>53</sup> F.O. 881/9503 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./14-1-1909/no.29/Lowther to Grey

Pasha and Arif Pasha with the commander of the II Thracian army Nazim Pasha and the Vice-Admiral Hussein Husni Pasha.<sup>54</sup>

By underestimating the Committee's influence on the Ottoman Chamber Kiamil Pasha committed a serious mistake. As a protest against Kiamil's 'unconstitutional' move in dismissing his Ministers without submitting the subject to the Ministerial Council, the Minister of the Interior Hussein Hilmi Pasha resigned. Tewfik Pasha, Ziya Pasha, Hasan Fehmi Pasha and Rewfik Bey followed him. On C.U.P. initiative the Cabinet crisis was discussed in the Parliament. During a vote of no confidence Kiamil Pasha was defeated when his parliamentary allies, many of whom had been intimidated by the Committee, abandoned him. Kiamil Pasha resigned on 14 February 1909.

Once again, the C.U.P. did not assume power and appointed Hilmi Pasha, the former Macedonian Inspector-General, new Grand Vizier. The downfall of the Kiamil Pasha Cabinet did not affect the elusive system of 'dual leadership'. As a consequence, the struggle between the legitimate central government and the occult C.U.P. continued to entangle Ottoman politics.

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<sup>54</sup> F.O. 881/9531 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./6-4-1909/no.249/Lowther to Grey/enclosure no.1, F.O. 881/9503 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./15-2-1909/no.102/Lowther to Grey and also F.O. 881/9503 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./19-2-1909/no.110/Lowther to Grey

## CHAPTER IV

### CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND THE ATTITUDE OF BRITAIN, AUSTRIA-HUNGARY , RUSSIA AND GERMANY

The Constitutional change in the Ottoman Empire could not but impress the European peoples and their governments. Abdul Hamid's II autocratic regime had finally fallen after more than three decades in power and the Young Turks had committed themselves to reforming and modernizing Europe's "big sick man".

Within this atmosphere of optimism, European agents confirmed from Macedonia the miraculous dissolution of the Christian bands and the hardly imaginable pacification of the most troublesome region in the Balkans. Under the new conditions and taking into account the Unionists' principal commitment to end foreign interference in Ottoman matters the Powers started to contemplate whether the continuation of European control in Macedonia was still advisable.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4.1 Great Britain

In Great Britain, the Young Turk revolution caused public enthusiasm. Britain and the Ottoman Empire had a long tradition of political friendship and many circles in London believed, rightly, that British support to Constitutional Turkey would be useful for raising English prestige among the Moslem population of India.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, the new conditions in Turkey offered an ideal opportunity to the British government to disengage itself from the irksome Macedonian imbroglio and restore its influence on the Porte. Three months before the July revolution, the British Embassy in Constantinople was concluding that London's practice of propping up the Macedonian reforms had considerably weakened Britain's position in the Ottoman Empire and had damaged English commercial interests.<sup>3</sup> Not less

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<sup>1</sup> P.P.A.P. CV 1909, pp.1012-1013

<sup>2</sup> F.O. 881/9422 Memorandum Respecting Turkish Revolution and Its Consequences/Foreign Office/1-3-1909/Tilley to Grey

<sup>3</sup> In April 1908, Lord Fitzmaurice, the able translator of British Embassy in Constantinople, wrote: "During the last few years our policy, if I may so call it, in Turkey has been, and for some time to

embarrassing for Britain's position, the reform program had failed to ameliorate the Macedonian plight. As Grey admits in his Memoirs:

“the efforts to improve Turkish government in Macedonia had little interest by 1908 and no importance. In fact, they were intolerably wearisome, very disagreeable and painfully futile.”<sup>4</sup>

The British administration was somewhat perplexed when on 17 August the Austro-Hungarian government announced its decision to withdraw the Austrian officers from Macedonia. However, the British F.O. was well aware that, in the long-term, the establishment of a constitutional regime in the Ottoman Empire could encourage the Moslems in India and Egypt, who were under British authority, to claim a constitution for themselves. According to a more ominous scenario, those populations were likely even to attempt to imitate the Ottoman revitalization and pursue their political and national emancipation from British rule.<sup>5</sup>

For the time being though, the British policy-makers sought to retrieve their paramount position in Constantinople, lost to Germany during the period of Macedonian reforms. The developments that gave a significant boost to Anglo-Ottoman relations were the accession of the pro-British Kiamil Pasha to power and the Austrian coup in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Kiamil Pasha, apart from his British sympathies, was totally convinced that the policy of Ferid Pasha's Cabinet to grant large-scale commercial facilities to German firms in the Ottoman Empire was damaging to the interests of the Porte.

In this, the Grand Vizier was correct since the steadfast tendency of Berlin to provide Constantinople with only limited political support in its Balkan problems by no means justified such important concessions on the part of Sublime Porte.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the annexation of Bosnia by Vienna had generated Moslem hostility against the German coalition. As a repercussion, Ottoman public opinion and the Cabinet rallied around the British with the hope that their old friends would not allow Austria to dominate the Balkans and infringe Ottoman sovereign rights in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

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come will be, to attempt the impossible task of furthering our commercial interests while pursuing a cause (in Macedonia, Armenia, the Turco-Persian boundary, etc.) which the Sultan interprets as pre-eminently hostile in aim and tendency...”. Cited in KENT (1984, p.178) in KENT, ed., (1984)

<sup>4</sup> GREY (1925, p.172)

<sup>5</sup> F.O. 881/9422 Memorandum, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 41.2/General Consulate of Alexandria/16/29-9-1908/no.4446/Politis to Baltazzis, B.D. vol.5 p.311

<sup>6</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 91.2/Constantinople Legation/14/27-8-1908/no.741/Gryparis to Baltazzis

British policy during the annexation crisis should be examined in two respects: first, in favoring the formation of a Balkan League with the participation of Turkey in order to prevent Austrian political penetration in the Balkans; second, as regards the Concert of Europe, in reconciling the conflicting interests between the Powers themselves and preserving European peace by maintaining the existing power equilibrium between the two major coalitions: the Entente and the Alliance.<sup>7</sup>

Until the downfall of the Kiamil Pasha Cabinet, London enjoyed a paramount position in Constantinople. Following the April counterrevolution though the involvement of the pro-German military party in Ottoman politics was to detach the Ottoman Empire from the British orbit and progressively drive her close to the German zone of influence.

#### 4.2 Austria-Hungary

Unlike Great Britain, the initial reaction of Austria-Hungary with regard to the Young Turk revolution was one of apparent scepticism and reserve. The cautious attitude taken by the Ballhausplatz, was justifiable on the grounds that Austria was at the time the Power possessing the most vital interests in the Balkan peninsula. For some time, the Dual Monarchy had been busying herself with more than one aspect of the Balkan tangle: Bosnia-Herzegovina, the sanjak, the complicated questions of Macedonia and Albania and since January 1908 the railway project.

As soon as the Constitutional forces assumed power in Constantinople, Aehrenthal attempted to avoid any inopportune European interference with Ottoman affairs. He, therefore, discouraged the Russians and the British from putting forward their new Macedonian reform scheme.<sup>8</sup> The Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister feared that if the Great Powers continued to exercise great pressure on the Sublime Porte to accept the Reval program it was possible that tension might resurface between the Powers themselves on account of their contradictory Macedonian interests. In addition, Vienna seemed to believe that a new round of European intervention could stir up

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<sup>7</sup> HARDINGE (1947, p.169)

<sup>8</sup> P.P.A.P. CV 1909, p.1012. According to Hardinge, the Reval meeting and its political product had worried Austria and Germany. The Central Powers were very apprehensive that the Anglo-Russian understanding "on Asiatic questions might be extended to questions of European continental politics." HARDINGE (1947, p.157)

Moslem fanaticism against the Macedonian Christians and create explosive conditions in the three provinces.<sup>9</sup>

Substantially, by mid-August, the Austrians could not find any perceptible interest and cause in continuing the pursuit of the Macedonian reform policy. On 17 August 1908, Aehrenthal informed the Powers of his decision to grant the Austrian officers in Uskub province "unlimited leave of absence". The other Powers followed the Austrian example and by October 1908, save the Financial Commission, European control had been withdrawn from the three Macedonian provinces.

The potential establishment of a liberal Parliamentary regime in Turkey which could foment Moslem popular agitation in Austrian-held Bosnia-Herzegovina for a similar constitutional disposition on a local basis seriously concerned the Vienna Cabinet. To eliminate the threat of future Moslem disturbances in Bosnia and secure the Austrian position in the province after the apparent Ottoman revival Aehrenthal decided to annex Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, the Ottoman Constitutional change did not seem injurious to Austrian interests. Unarguably, the Austrian policy-makers did not believe that the Unionist-Albanian understanding could endanger Austria's position and interests in Albania. Austria foresaw that this cooperation would be short-lived and unless the Committee was prepared to satisfy the Albanian demand for a greater measure of political autonomy<sup>11</sup> (which Vienna correctly doubted) Austrian influence in the Albanian lands was bound to remain strong.<sup>12</sup> The only issue on which Austria should expect some strenuous Ottoman resistance was the Novibazar railway project;<sup>13</sup> but even there an accommodation was not totally ruled out, particularly in so far as the Ottoman military party supported an understanding with Vienna as the best means to check Balkan Slav expansionism.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 121.2/Vienna Legation/8/21-8-1908/no.390/Manos to Baltazzis

<sup>10</sup> BRIDGE (1972b, pp.106-7)

<sup>11</sup> SKENDI (1967, p.344)

<sup>12</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 121.2/Vienna Legation/15/28-8-1908/no.401/Manos to Baltazzis and I.A.Y.E./1908/File 121.2/Vienna Legation/27/9-9-1908/no.440/Manos to Baltazzis

<sup>13</sup> F.O. 881/9811 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./17-2-1909/Lowther to Grey/General Report on Turkey for 1908

<sup>14</sup> It is important that the Ottoman military party, headed by Mahmud Shevket Pasha and his group of German-trained officers, canvassed the idea that the Ottoman Empire should conclude an understanding with Austria-Hungary to counteract the Slavs providing that Vienna did not lay claim on Ottoman territory. In this context, Shevket Pasha supported the construction of the Novibazar railway on the grounds that it would enable the Austrian armies to intervene in the south Balkans

From this perspective, Aehrenthal's decision to recall his Macedonian officers seems perfectly reasonable, if not imperative. It was not only political considerations that had propelled the Austrian good-will move toward Young Turkey. Marquis de Pallavicini, the Austrian ambassador to the Porte, espoused the opinion that Austria-Hungary could take advantage of the constitutional change in Constantinople to pursue a renewed economic cooperation with the Ottoman Empire. In a few years' time, Austrian commercial firms could expect to acquire at least some of the extensive privileges that the Germans had been enjoying during the Hamidian period.<sup>15</sup>

The decision of Austria-Hungary to annex Bosnia-Herzegovina created a rupture between Vienna and the Sublime Porte. True, it undermined the Ottoman authority in the Balkans whereas it consolidated the Austrian position in the two provinces. The only real damage to Austrian interests accrued from the imposition of the Ottoman embargo on 11 October 1908 which injured Austrian commerce in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>16</sup>

The Austro-Turkish agreement of 26 February 1909 settled the question of Bosnia and brought bilateral relations back to normal standing. Nevertheless, the Sublime Porte never entirely abandoned its attitude of circumspection and fear of Austria's policy in Macedonia and Albania. Yet, as the Ottoman Empire gravitated towards the German coalition Constantinople attempted to correlate its Macedonian struggle against Slavic expansionism with Austria's anti-Slav tendencies.

### 4.3 Russia

In Russia's long history of Balkan entanglements rarely had an important political change in the Ottoman Empire generated good feelings in St. Petersburg. The Young Turk revolution, however, was a different and unique case. Certainly, the Imperial Russian government could be hardly displeased with the C.U.P. commitment to reform Ottoman administration and improve the position of the Christian

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and prevent Slavic expansion in case that Turkey-in-Europe was attacked by the Balkan Slav countries. From these views, the Ottoman military party did not move even after the annexation crisis. I.A.Y.E./1908/File 90.3/Uskub Consulate/24/6-9-1908/no.392/Baraklis to Baltazzis/Political, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 90.3/Uskub Consulate/23/5-1-1909/no.700/Baraklis to Baltazzis/Political

<sup>15</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 121.2/Vienna Legation/15/28-8-1908/no.401/Manos to Baltazzis and BRIDGE (1984, p.37)

<sup>16</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Vienna Embassy to F.O./24-11-1908/no.192/Carnegie to Grey

nationalities in the Empire. Unionist success in pacifying Macedonia had convinced the Russians that the Young Turks deserved at least an opportunity to prove their political merit.

In reality, the Young Turks had saved the Imperial Court from a great deal of trouble. Senior Russian diplomats acknowledged that in taking the reform burden off British and Russian shoulders the Turkish revolution had contributed to preventing the growth of tension among the Powers on account of their juxtaposing Macedonian policies and interests.

Charikov, the assistant Foreign Minister, claimed that the Young Turks were far better qualified to reform Turkey than Europe itself, for they alone were capable of eliciting the cooperation of the Moslem communities in implementing the Macedonian reforms. The Macedonian Moslems were determined to oppose any new reform scheme unless they had tangible guarantees from the capital that such a policy would not affect their privileged position vis-a-vis the local Christians. The only decision-making body in the Ottoman Empire currently possessing the influence and power to provide those guarantees was the Young Turk Committee.<sup>17</sup>

Izvolsky, even though annoyed by Austria's inclination to assume unilateral initiatives in issues of general European interest with a view "to be one step in front of the other Powers and come to terms with the C.U.P."<sup>18</sup> did not raise objections to Aehrenthal's proposal for lifting the Macedonian control. In so far as the C.U.P. was successful in accommodating the interests of the Moslems and Christians in the Balkans Russia would not interfere with Ottoman affairs.

On the other hand, the Russians held no illusions that, in case the Young Turks failed to safeguard Macedonian welfare the Christian ethnic groups and their metropolitan states would resume their attacks against the status quo in the peninsula. Of this danger the Russian government was very apprehensive. Any ominous development in the Balkans could put European peace in jeopardy and hinder Russia's reform efforts for financial recovery and military reorganization. In the end of July 1908, Izvolsky addressed a memorandum to the European Powers suggesting that they

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<sup>17</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 92.1/St. Petersburg Legation/31/13-8-1908/no.335/Argiropoulos to Baltazzis

<sup>18</sup> F.O. 881/9353 Marienbad to F.O./27-8-1908/no.114/Goschen to Grey



should reserve their right to intervene in Macedonia anew, should, for any reason, the position of the Macedonian Christians not improve under the Unionist regime.<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, despite the first encouraging signs of the Young Turk revolution in Macedonia, many Russian officials viewed with overt circumspection Unionist efforts to establish a Constitutional and Parliamentary regime in the Ottoman Empire. Prince Urussov, Russian representative in Vienna, foresaw that “the Constitution would shortly degenerate into a comedy from which very little will be to the benefit of the Christians.”<sup>20</sup>

The decision of the Ottoman government to impose the use of Turkish in all secondary schools and abolish the teaching of Slavic languages exacerbated Russian misgivings. Toward the end of August, *Novoye Vremya* (New Day) published an article under the title “Macedonia and Young Turks”. The semi-official newspaper, which usually reflected the positions of Russian governmental circles, sent a clear message to the C.U.P.: “New Turkey by attempting to harm the Slavic language, a question that even the old regime had not dared to touch, is running the risk of finding among the Slavs no more friends but sworn enemies. The Slavs will never acquiesce to their Turkification.”<sup>21</sup>

In the subsequent months, Russian fears that the Young Turks’ policies would not satisfy Balkan Christian expectations proved well-founded. Between October 1908 and April 1909 nevertheless, Russia lost much of her interest in Young Turk-Balkan Christian relations. In that period, the Imperial government busied itself with the key Bosnian question and strove to frustrate Austrian strivings to dominate the Balkans. Russia’s principal priority was now to bring about the establishment of a powerful anti-Austrian bloc between the Balkan Slav states and the Ottoman Empire to prevent a future Macedonian march on the part of Vienna. As an outcome, during the annexation crisis, the Russian government had to discourage Serb and Montenegrin expansionist aspirations in south Balkans and uphold Turkey-in-Europe.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 92.1/St. Petersburg Legation/26/8-8-1908/no.312/Argiropoulos to Baltazzis, P.P.A.P. CV 1909, p.1003

<sup>20</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 121.2/Vienna Legation/30/12-8-1908/no.364/Manos to Baltazzis

<sup>21</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 91.1.2/Constantinople Legation/28/10-9-1908/no.855/Gryparis to Baltazzis, E.A./1908/KH/5-9-1908/no.35/pp.8-9

<sup>22</sup> JELAVICH (1991, pp.222-3)

#### 4.4 Germany

During the Macedonian reforms, German policy vis-a-vis the Empire resulted in the intimate cooperation between the two countries and the substantial increase of Berlin's influence in Constantinople. Sultan Abdul Hamid II and his Moslem subjects had truly appreciated the fact that whenever the other Powers mounted pressure on the Porte to make further concessions in Macedonia, on most occasions the German government had remained aloof and often had refused to join the chorus of European intervention.

In reality, Germany had no real motive to estrange the Ottomans for she had no material cause to pursue in the Balkans, far less in Macedonia. Besides, the German government of Chancellor von Bulow never placed much faith in the effectiveness of the reform scheme. The Berlin government believed that the sole product of the entire project had been the weakening of Turkey's Balkan authority and the encouragement of Slav aggressiveness.<sup>23</sup>

Acknowledging German understanding for his Macedonian susceptibilities the Sultan had taken steps to promote the growth of German economic and commercial activity in the vast Ottoman market. The construction of the Berlin-Bagdad railway by German firms was the culmination of the Turco-German cooperation. At an extremely low political cost Germany had managed to become Turkey's most important partner in Europe.<sup>24</sup>

Such in brief was German policy in Turkey at the time of the Unionist movement. The Constitutional change was received mildly in Germany and certainly the termination of Macedonian reforms did not disappoint Berlin.<sup>25</sup> That was hardly the case however, when the pro-British Kiamil Pasha was appointed Grand Vizier. The firm tendency of the new Ottoman Cabinet to re-ignite the old understanding with England evoked anxiety in the German embassy in Constantinople. German apprehensions grew further when in mid-August Kiamil Pasha stated to a European

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<sup>23</sup> G.D.D. vol.3 pp.257-258, F.O. 881/9316 Berlin Embassy to F.O./25-3-1908/no.112/Lascelles to Grey

<sup>24</sup> For a general discussion on German influence in Turkey during the 1890s and early 1900s see: MACFIE (1998, pp.99-100)

<sup>25</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 94.3/Berlin Legation/24/6-8-1908/no.654/Rangavis to Baltazzis

correspondent that “Turkish friendship with Germany did not benefit the country in any department”.<sup>26</sup>

In return, the Germans made little effort to conceal their dissatisfaction with Kiamil’s policies. In September 1908, whilst the Ottoman Cabinet was struggling to control the increasing upheaval in the Empire stemming from the mounting wave of strikes and the revived Greek-Bulgarian controversy in Macedonia over the ecclesiastical question, the German embassy was joyous. Commenting on these abnormal conditions in Turkey, Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, the influential German ambassador, argued that this situation indicated that a vacuum of power existed in Constantinople and the Ottoman government possessed neither the strength nor the will to restore order and impose the law.<sup>27</sup>

The Austrian coup in Bosnia-Herzegovina complicated Turco-German relations. The Germans were bent on supporting Austria but at the same time they strove to reconcile the two countries. They were well aware that an irreparable Austro-Turkish breach could drive the Ottoman Empire away from the German sphere of influence. Such a development could only lead to the formation of an anti-German Balkan League under the protection of the Entente Powers. It was equally likely to undermine Germany’s privileged economic position in the Ottoman Empire.

Therefore, the German government advised Austria to reconcile Constantinople, the ongoing Ottoman embargo notwithstanding. On 5 December 1908, Baron Marschall wrote to Berlin: “Aehrenthal would therefore do well not to stick too obstinately to the principle of no negotiation before the boycott is removed; for he is making for an inevitable rupture (with the Porte) with incalculable complications.”<sup>28</sup>

In the first four months of 1909, Germany reestablished its position in the Ottoman Empire. Vienna and Constantinople settled their Bosnian dispute, Kiamil Pasha was no longer Grand Vizier and there were encouraging tokens of the Ottoman Empire moving close to the German coalition. General von den Goltz, a German officer, was entrusted with the reorganization of the Ottoman army and more importantly, since April 1909 the pro-Prussian Ottoman military party led by General Mahmud Shevket Pasha stepped forward to claim a share in Ottoman politics and government.

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<sup>26</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 91.2/Constantinople Legation/14/27-8-1908/no.741/Gryparis to Baltazzis

<sup>27</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 121.1/Constantinople Legation/4/17-9-1908/no.891/Gryparis to Baltazzis

<sup>28</sup> G.D.D. vol.3 pp.316-317

Such was in brief the reaction of the European Powers most interested in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire after the Young Turk revolution.

## CHAPTER V

### THE QUESTION OF BULGARIAN INDEPENDENCE AND THE STRUGGLE FOR MACEDONIA

#### 5.1 Bulgarian Politics and Young Turk Movement

The news that a revolution on the part of the Young Turks had taken place in Macedonia generated great agitation and mixed feelings in Bulgaria. The conjuncture was rather unfortunate for Sofia inasmuch as the Turkish revolution threatened to countermand a vital development for Bulgarian interests in Macedonia: the decision of Russia and Great Britain in Reval to introduce new reforms in the Macedonian judiciary, organize new mobile units and extend the powers of the Inspector-General. Hence, from the beginning of the movement the Bulgarians adopted a reticent stance towards the revolution and its possible aftermath.

Governmental sources continued to discourage cooperation with the Young Turks even at the closing stages of the movement when the defeat of the Hamidian regime seemed inevitable. They rightly feared that a political change in Turkey could motivate the Powers to shelve the new reform project on the ground that the new Ottoman leadership should be given some time to prove its merit.

The Young Turk political manifesto for political freedom, administrative devolution and proportionate participation of the Christians in the state machine had actually failed to make a major impact in Bulgaria. The Bulgarians were exceedingly reluctant to accept that a revolution could transform Turkey and alter the status between the Moslem ruling ethnicity and the Christian nationalities overnight.<sup>1</sup>

Reasonably, Sofia did its utmost to persuade the Powers and especially the British, to continue the Reval policy and execute the new Macedonian reforms. On 22 July 1908, Foreign Minister Paprikov reiterated to Buchanan that his country would avoid taking advantage of Turkish embarrassments out of consideration for the Powers' efforts to persuade the Sultan to accept the Reval program.<sup>2</sup> A few days after the

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<sup>1</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 21.5/Sofia Legation/9/22-7-1908/Zalokostats to Baltazzis

<sup>2</sup> F.O. 881/9353 Sofia Legation to F.O./23-7-1908/no.15/Buchanan to Grey

reinstitution of the Ottoman Constitution, the Bulgarian minister in London Stanciov expressed to Grey his pessimism for the potential of the Constitutional movement in Turkey. After having stressed that “soldiers do not make Constitutions and Turkey would never enter an era of improved administration and free government”, he urged the British Foreign Minister not to abandon the Macedonian reform scheme.<sup>3</sup>

The first official reaction from the administration of Premier Malinov with regard to the Turkish revolution came on 29 July 1908. It was moderate in tone and cautious in content. After a marathon meeting the Bulgarian Cabinet had arrived at the conclusion that the Macedonian question was entering a new phase. Henceforth, the Cabinet predicted, the situation in Macedonia was to be influenced by two critical factors: the course of the Constitutional regime and the position of Christians in new Turkey. The government pledged itself to watch developments in the neighboring country closely, reserving its right to modify its policy, if necessary, until the opening of the Ottoman Chamber.<sup>4</sup>

Not that the entire political system and public opinion in Bulgaria had viewed the revolution in the Ottoman Empire with mistrust. In certain Bulgarian circles, such as the Progressive Liberal party, the idea that the Bulgarian-Macedonian element had an excellent opportunity to “develop politically and materially under an impartial Constitutional regime” had originally gained considerable ground. A numerous and prosperous Bulgarian element in Macedonia could become a bridge between the two states, diminishing the danger of an armed confrontation.<sup>5</sup>

According to Danev, the leader of the Bulgarian Progressive party, at the time, a war with Turkey could be detrimental to Bulgarian national interests. Although he believed that Sofia’s chief preoccupation should be to remain on good terms with the Porte and the Powers, he did not fail to stress that the main threat to peace stemmed from the perpetuation of Macedonian misrule and anarchy. In other words, whether Bulgaria would strike or not was dependent upon the welfare of Macedonia.<sup>6</sup>

In addition, the same circles reckoned that the Ottoman Constitution could revive the role and activity of the Bulgarian Exarchate. Free from Greek and Serb harassment,

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<sup>3</sup> F.O. 881/9353 Foreign Office to Sofia Legation/28-7-1908/no.40/Grey to Buchanan

<sup>4</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 21.5/Sofia Legation/16/29-7-1908/Zalokostas to Baltazzis

<sup>5</sup> F.O. 881/9353 Sofia Legation to F.O./5-8-1908/no.71/Buchanan to Grey/Confidential

<sup>6</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 21.5/Sofia Legation/28/10-8-1908/Zalokostas to Baltazzis/Danev’s Interview to *Mir* (Peace) on Turco-Bulgarian Relations

the Bulgarian Church could now continue and complete its religious and cultural work in Macedonia restoring its authority in many disputed villages which had been lost to Patriarchate due to band inroads during the Macedonian struggle.<sup>7</sup>

Yet, the most radical groups in the Principality took an opposite view on the political change in Turkey. Macedonia, naturally, was the main cause. Unlike the Young Turks, the Bulgarian nationalists scoffed at the idea that the Turkish revolution had solved the Macedonian question. The Macedonian societies and the largest section of public opinion argued that the only satisfactory solution for the Principality was the institution of an autonomous status for Macedonia, similar to that of Crete.

Reflecting this climate, anti-government papers like the *Vecherna Posta* (Evening Post) and the *Rets* (Speech) openly accused the Malinov Cabinet of “inability and inertia for having lost a brilliant opportunity to advance Bulgarian rights in Macedonia for a second time after 1897.” In many cases, certain papers went so far as to assert that the time had come for the army, Bulgaria’s most formidable and expensive weapon, to take the field.<sup>8</sup>

The attitude of the pro-government press, though more sober, did not differ in substance from that of the opposition. In the end of July, *Vreme* (Day), the semi-official organ of the ruling Democratic Party, came out with an editorial on the Constitutional change in Turkey. Its point was unequivocal and direct: “The Bulgarians are going to gain nothing from the Turkish Constitution. Still, our ideal is Macedonian autonomy.”<sup>9</sup>

When, on 27 July 1908, the Young Turks announced their new education program which abolished the use of other languages in Ottoman secondary schools on the basis that it encouraged dissident ethnic nationalism and undermined the internal coherence of the Ottoman Empire,<sup>10</sup> Bulgarian suspicions turned to outright anger. Nachovich, a senior politician with experience in Ottoman affairs, warned the Committee through the columns of the *Rets*:

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<sup>7</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 88.1.3/General Consulate of Salonica/4/17-8-1908/no.790/Kanellopoulos to Baltazzis

<sup>8</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 21.5/Sofia Legation/16/29-7-1908/Zalokostats to Baltazzis

<sup>9</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 21.5/Sofia Legation/18/31-7-1908/Zalokostats to Baltazzis

<sup>10</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 87.1/Constantinople Legation/30-7-1908/no.742/Gryparis to Baltazzis. On the question of education however, Bulgaria had no right to protest. In 1906, the government had made the use of Bulgarian language obligatory in the primary schools of the country. As a result, this act led to the suppression of all Greek schools in the Principality. F.O. 881/9353 Sofia Legation to F.O./24-8-1908/no.73/Buchanan to Grey

“The Young Turks are bound to ascribe the rights not only to citizens but above all to nationalities. They have also to abandon the perception of homogenizing the ethnic groups under Ottoman identity: a notion opposed by Moslems and Christians alike who have repeatedly defended the maintenance of their distinct national consciousness and inheritance.”<sup>11</sup>

Prince Ferdinand and Malinov’s administration had sound reasons to believe that the establishment of the Young Turk regime ran contrary to Bulgarian interests. They were aware that a strong Ottoman rule could bury once and for all the Bulgarian expansionist program towards Salonica and eventually Constantinople. It would also deprive the Principality of its right to defend the interests of the Bulgarian-Macedonians;<sup>12</sup> a right that Sofia had been allowed to acquire and extend in the period of Macedonian reforms.

What was more, many Bulgarian officials and a large segment of public opinion feared that after some years a powerful and modernized Ottoman Empire could attack and destroy the Principality.<sup>13</sup> At a time however, that the Western Powers appeared to have favored or at least not openly opposed the ideas, goals and policy of the Young Turk revolutionaries, it was immensely difficult for Bulgaria to show an overtly hostile attitude towards the new Ottoman leadership without alienating herself from Europe.<sup>14</sup>

## **5.2 Bulgarian Attempts at Re-gaining Momentum in Macedonia. The Macedonian Immigration**

In no position to exert real diplomatic or military pressure on the Porte, Bulgaria sought to exploit the situation in Macedonia politically whilst the Ottoman Empire was still in a state of domestic instability and political transition. Thus, Malinov’s government initiated a propaganda campaign in Macedonia with a two-fold purpose: to strengthen the Bulgarian position in the province and to achieve the largest possible representation of the Bulgarian-Macedonian population in the Ottoman

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<sup>11</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 21.5/Sofia Legation/18/31-7-1908/Zalokostas to Baltazzis

<sup>12</sup> F.O. 881/9353 Sofia Legation to F.O./5-8-1908/no.71/Buchanan to Grey/Confidential

<sup>13</sup> F.O. 881/9422 Memorandum

<sup>14</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 92.1/St. Petersburg Legation/26-7-1908/no.312/Argiropoulos to Baltazzis



Parliament. In this attempt, the Bulgarian F.O. relied on the Bulgarian-Macedonian element.<sup>15</sup>

Between August and September 1908, several thousand native Macedonians who had fled to the Principality before and during the Macedonian struggle gradually began to return to their homes. This repatriation movement was facilitated by the initiative of the Bulgarian government to provide the refugees with leave of absence or allowances and the Turkish decision to supply them with all necessary papers for their unhindered transportation.<sup>16</sup>

Although the majority of the Macedonian population in Bulgaria was fairly unwilling to abandon its safety and go back to Turkey, many doctors, artisans, craftsmen, teachers, journalists, scientists, lawyers and even high-ranking S.M.C. cadres like Ivanov and Nikolov finally traveled to Macedonia. It is also true that in their effort to augment the immigration movement the Bulgarian authorities did not hesitate to use force and threats of imprisonment against those who refused to return to Macedonia.

The product of this campaign was by no means negligible. For the provincial capital of Salonica alone, Greek reports calculated the number of Macedonian settlers to 5,000.<sup>17</sup> Apart from strengthening the ethnological basis and hopefully the political influence of the Bulgarian population in Macedonia, the repatriation movement suggested that the Bulgarian government was determined to retain, defend and even extend its vital interests in the province even after the Ottoman Constitutional change.

### 5.3 Quest for Independence

Undeniably, the most important short-term corollary of the Young Turk revolution in regard to Macedonia had been the termination of the reform period in the three vilayets. In Sofia, that development had stirred up considerable disenchantment and bitterness. It was felt that, in doing so, the Powers not only gave credit and a rare

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<sup>15</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 121.1/Sofia Legation/1/14-8-1908/no.662/Zalokostas to Baltazzis, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 85.3/Monastir Consulate/26/8-9-1908/no.941/Halkiopoulos to Baltazzis, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 59.2/Monastir Consulate/25/7-9-1908/no.934/Halkiopoulos to Baltazzis and F.O. 881/9353 Sofia Legation to F.O./5-8-1908/no.71/Buchanan to Grey

<sup>16</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 21.5/Sofia Legation/31-7-1908/Zalokostas to Baltazzis, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 99.1.2/Constantinople Legation/29-8-1908/no.863/Gryparis to Baltazzis/Confidential

<sup>17</sup> E.A./1908/KH/21-8-1908/no.33/p.8

chance to the new Ottoman leadership to establish itself in Turkey but also de facto nullified the right of Bulgaria to intervene in Macedonian matters, causing irreparable damage to Bulgarian interests in this Balkan sub-region.

The Bulgarians were determined not to give way and accept defeat easily. Not, at least, without taking something in return that would partly offset Young Turk success and secure the future position of their country. From this point onwards, the acquisition of an independent status for the Principality took precedence over the Macedonian question in the hierarchy of political objectives of the Royal House and the Malinov Cabinet. Only if the Principality became a kingdom, the Bulgarians argued and some western diplomats in Sofia agreed, could the balance of power between the two countries be restored; the Macedonian nationalists would be appeased and the possibility of a Turco-Bulgarian conflict would diminish.<sup>18</sup>

In the end of July 1908, the situation in the Principality had become very critical. Soon after the Young Turk revolution, popular agitation had turned to outright wrath against the political leadership for its inexplicable passivity towards Turkey. Yet, it was not the government of Malinov which received the most criticism and venom but the Royal House. Unfortunately for Ferdinand, his absence from the country in the crucial days of the Turkish revolution (His Royal Highness was on holiday in Hungary) had ignited the harsh attacks of the vociferous Bulgarian press.<sup>19</sup>

Adding to Royal embarrassments, during the first weeks of August, the Geshovist nationalists and the refractory Macedonian associations joined the campaign against Ferdinand's Macedonian policy. Assuming that the decision for non-interference with Turkish matters had been taken on Ferdinand's suggestion, those groups held the Prince personally responsible for having squandered a unique chance to annex Macedonia to Bulgaria. Such was the discontent in Sofia and elsewhere that in August the popularity of the Prince reached its lowest point ever.<sup>20</sup>

The Royal House was in an embarrassing position. Clearly, unless in no distant time Sofia received adequate compensation for observing a "correct" attitude towards the

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<sup>18</sup> F.O. 881/9353 Sofia Legation to F.O./5-8-1908/no.71/Buchanan to Grey and F.O. 881/9353 Sofia Legation to F.O./19-8-1908/no.72/Buchanan to Grey

<sup>19</sup> F.O. 881/9353 Sofia Legation to F.O./19-8-1908/no.72/Buchanan to Grey

<sup>20</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 121.1/Sofia Legation/1/14-9-1908/no.667/Zalokostas to Baltazzis and F.O. 881/9422 Memorandum

apparent regeneration of Turkey, Ferdinand's personal regime would most likely collapse under the general outcry. Gaining independence therefore was not any more solely a matter of political rehabilitation and national vindication of the country. For Prince Ferdinand, it had unhappily developed into an inexorable struggle for rule or deposition. As an outcome, even the notoriously indecisive Prince had realized that it was high time Bulgaria abandoned the *détente* policy towards the Porte and resorted to militant measures.

By implication, it was not long before the Bulgarian resolve to provoke a rupture with Constantinople took a more unequivocal and official character. Indeed, the Young Turk decision to impose a uniform education system and suppress the Bulgarian-Macedonian secondary schools offered an ideal opportunity. On 19 August 1908, while briefing the European representatives in Sofia about Bulgaria's attitude on political developments in Turkey, Foreign Minister Paprikov attacked the Young Turks:

"The Young Turks, he declared, are twice Turks, seeking to subdue everything, to assimilate all other ethnic communities. They carry out nationalist Turkish policy. The Bulgarian government has not been deceived by the initial declarations about equality and fraternization between Moslems and Christians. The Turkish educational program indicates that by the term equality the Committee of Union and Progress implies that the Christians should share the same obligations as the Moslems but by no means equal rights..."<sup>21</sup>

Henceforth, bilateral relations were to follow a steadily deteriorating course. That the Bulgarian government had designated the nascent Turkish regime as "assimilatory" and "nationalist" was indicative that the clock had started to tick towards collision time. Convincingly enough, the Malinov government had already turned decision-making into state policy. The M.R.O. and Exarchist agents were instructed to rouse agitation in Macedonia. By activating the M.R.O. militia and inciting the Macedonian population to resistance against the new Young Turkish regime, the Sofia government "reminded" the Ottoman Empire and the Great Powers

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<sup>21</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 39.4/Sofia Legation/20/2-9-1908/no.535/Zalokostas to Baltazzis

that in so far as Bulgaria remained unsatisfied Macedonia could be neither pacific nor secure.<sup>22</sup>

The change in Bulgaria's stance did not pass unnoticed by the Turks. By the end of summer, Ottoman officials reported that large quantities of arms and ammunitions had been distributed to the Bulgarian-Macedonian population in Monastir vilayet and the activity of Bulgarian provocateurs pointed to the instigation of a general Macedonian insurrection: a prelude to more decisive action on the part of Bulgaria.<sup>23</sup>

On 25 August 1908, the vali of Monastir Fahri Bey wrote to General Administration of Salonica: "Bulgarian provocative activity in Macedonia intends to countermand everything the Constitution has achieved so far."<sup>24</sup>

The C.U.P., in no position to enter into a conflict with Bulgaria, was indeed reluctant to take preventive, far less punitive, measures against the Bulgarian Macedonian agitators. The C.U.P. knew that Turkey's economic and military situation compared unfavorably with that of Bulgaria. Furthermore, in a period that the Young Turks needed time to establish their internal position, a Bulgarian-Macedonian insurrection, or even worse, a Bulgarian onslaught could destroy the actual bases of Unionist power: the Macedonian Committees of Salonica, Monastir and Kosovo.<sup>25</sup>

Therefore, notwithstanding Paprikov's outburst and the Bulgarian-Macedonian agitation the Salonica headquarters continued negotiations with the M.R.O., turning a deaf ear to Greek remonstrations in regard to Exarchist strivings to usurp Patriarchist churches and coerce the Greek-Macedonian communities to adhere to the Bulgarian Exarchate.<sup>26</sup>

Where the Young Turks hesitated, the Grand Vizier proved bolder. The provocative attitude of the Bulgarian government had irritated Kiamil Pasha but it was the Young

<sup>22</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 85.3/Monastir Consulate/26/8-9-1908/no.941/Halkiopoulos to Baltazzis, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 85.3/General Consulate of Salonica/5/18-9-1908/no.869/Papdiamantopoulos to Baltazzis, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 122.3/General Consulate of Salonica/11/24-9-1908/no.892/Papdiamantopoulos to Baltazzis, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 85.3/Serres Consulate/30/13-10-1908/Sahtouris to Baltazzis

<sup>23</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 39.5/Monastir Consulate/20/3-10-1908/no.442/Kaimakam of Giannitsa to Ali Danish Bey, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 59.2/Monastir Consulate/23/5-9-1908/no.928/Halkiopoulos to Baltazzis

<sup>24</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 59.2/Monastir Consulate/26/8-9-1908/no.936/Halkiopoulos to Baltazzis/enclosure no.1

<sup>25</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 87.1/Constantinople Legation/17/30-7-1908/no.694/Potten to Baltazzis and I.A.Y.E./1908/File 91.1.1/Constantinople Legation/10/23-8-1908/no.770/Gryparis to Baltazzis

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* and P.P.A.P. CV 1909, pp.1018-1019

Turk passivity that had turned his irritation into real indignation. In all probability, he was thinking of teaching the Bulgarians - and indirectly the Young Turks - a lesson on 14 September 1908, when he declined to invite Geshov, the Bulgarian agent in Constantinople, for a diplomatic dinner on the pretext that Bulgaria was still a vassal entity of the Ottoman Empire and His Majesty the Sultan.

Had Kiamil known what was to follow he would have definitely invited Geshov. This time the Bulgarians meant business. Instantly, Malinov recalled Geshov to Bulgaria and on 15 September 1908 Sofia interrupted her diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire. On 22 September 1908, Bulgarian forces took control over the Rumelian section of the Orient Railway: a property of the Ottoman government. Ottoman fears that Bulgaria had been laying the groundwork to proclaim its full independence grew further between 23-24 September 1908 when Prince Ferdinand was warmly accepted in Budapest by Aehrenthal.

The Ottoman leaders were justifiably suspicious of those Austro-Bulgarian talks. Admittedly, the ambitious Balkan policy of Austria-Hungary seemed to coincide with Bulgarian national aspirations. In her crusade to revise the Treaty of Berlin and consolidate her position in Bosnia-Herzegovina Vienna had been in search of a Balkan ally. With good cause, Austrian policy-makers qualified Bulgaria as the most suitable candidate. It was not only that during the reform period Austria had followed a "policy of sympathetic benevolence" toward Ferdinand and Bulgaria, notably in regard to the Serbo-Bulgarian dispute over Macedonia.<sup>27</sup> The Austrians were almost convinced that given Bulgaria's resolve to become a sovereign state the political establishment in Sofia would find it immensely difficult to turn down the invaluable diplomatic support of Austria-Hungary.

Aehrenthal's designs for Bulgaria were indeed not modest. He was aspiring to use the declaration of Bulgarian independence as a tool for diverting European and Ottoman attention from the Austrian coup in Bosnia to the Bulgarian question. Having succeeded in this, he could then assist Sofia to reconcile with the Porte in order to "drive Bulgaria close to the Austrian sphere of influence."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Sofia Legation to F.O./9-11-1908/no.92/Buchanan to Grey

<sup>28</sup> SCHMITT (1937, p.125)

Therefore, in their meeting, Aehrenthal probably alluded to Ferdinand that it was in the intentions of the Austro-Hungarian government to announce the formal annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. This move the British F.O. at least had been expecting since the Turkish revolution and the Russian Foreign Minister Izvolsky had learnt about it in Buchlau in mid-September. The Bulgarian ruler, reticent about Austria's Macedonian policy, kept his cards close saying nothing about Sofia's plans. There is no convincing evidence that when he left the Hungarian capital an Austro-Bulgarian understanding for joint action had been concluded or even agreed on principle.<sup>29</sup>

That Ferdinand became aware of Austrian plans for the annexation of Bosnia proved instrumental in the question of Bulgarian independence. The key development was that Bulgaria would not struggle alone to countermand the Berlin Congress. Unarguably, the trip to Austria convinced Ferdinand that Vienna would look favorably on a Bulgarian coup thereby precipitating his decision to cross the Rubicon. In any case, he could not take further action without consulting his government.<sup>30</sup> To discuss these developments and decide on a future course of action the Prince summoned the Ministerial Council and a small number of eminent Bulgarian diplomats at Rouschouk on 4 October 1908.

Very little is known about the actual circumstances and content of that crucial conclave. From the Bulgarian perspective, the chief objective was to force the Ottomans to accept independence without war. Tzokov, the Bulgarian representative in St. Petersburg and a participant in that crucial meeting, intimated later to his British counterpart Nicolson his account of events at Rouschouk. According to Bulgarian diplomat, Sofia knew that in the not too distant future the Dual Monarchy would annex Bosnia.

The indecisive Prince still had certain reservations but when his Ministers threatened to resign unless he declared Bulgaria an independent state and himself King Ferdinand I he stipulated.<sup>31</sup> In the end, Ferdinand although aware that the annexation

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<sup>29</sup> That no Austro-Bulgarian agreement for common action was reached in Budapest was corroborated later by Malinov in the Sobranje. F.O. 881/9492 Sofia Legation to F.O./18-11-1908/no.97/Buchanan to Grey, F.O. 881/9492 St. Petersburg Embassy to F.O./29-11-1908/no.551/Nicolson to Grey. BRIDGE (1972b, pp.106-112)

<sup>30</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Sofia Legation to F.O./29-10-1908/no.90/Buchanan to Grey

<sup>31</sup> In Rouschouk, the chief Bulgarian dilemma was whether the declaration of independence should precede or follow the Austrian move. The Bulgarians inclined to believe that if they waited for

of Bosnia-Herzegovina would place Austria-Hungary in a dangerously advantageous position in the Balkans decided that the risk was worth taking.<sup>32</sup>

Another important factor in Bulgaria's decision to align herself with the Austrian policy in Bosnia-Herzegovina was the decline of Russian influence in Sofia. By October 1908, Sofia had finally come to terms with the idea that Russia, the protector of the Slavic race, was for the time being unable to support a Bulgarian attack against the Balkan status quo. It is true that on all occasions that the Bulgarian government had attempted to raise the independence question the Russian Imperial government and Izvolksy had advocated "prudence and moderation" until Russia had put her house in order.<sup>33</sup> Russia's prolonged inability to uphold Bulgarian national aspirations had displeased Ferdinand and had distanced Sofia from the Imperial Court. As a leading member of the Bulgarian government had aptly remarked during the visit of Russian Grand Duke Nicholas in Sofia in summer 1908:

"Sofia's policy would be to sow dissension between Austria-Hungary and Russia and finally side with the power which will pay the largest price to Bulgaria."<sup>34</sup>

On 5 October 1908, Prince Ferdinand declared Bulgarian independence in Turnovo and mobilized the army. One day later, the Austro-Hungarian government proclaimed the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and announced the withdrawal of Austrian garrisons from the sanjak of Novibazar.

#### **5.4 Heading off the War in the Balkans: The First Phase of the Bulgarian Crisis**

On an international level, the proclamation of Bulgarian independence and the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina amounted to a grave diplomatic crisis.

Great Britain and Russia, supported by the French and the Italians, declared their strong opposition to the Austrian annexation of Bosnia whereby the Protocol of 1871

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Aehrenthal to strike first they would give the impression in Constantinople that they had acted spontaneously and on their initiative thus inviting Turkish attack. On the other hand, should Bulgaria moved first and the Austrians followed in all probability Turkey would assume that Vienna had been in collusion with Sofia. In that case, the Porte would certainly think twice before taking the war path against the Principality fearing Austrian military intervention. To those calculations the Bulgarians were to prove right. F.O. 881/9492 St. Petersburg Embassy to F.O./29-11-1908/no.551/Nicholson to Grey. See also F.O. 881/9456 Sofia Legation to F.O./14-10-1908/no.515/Buchanan to Grey

<sup>32</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Sofia Legation to F.O./4-11-1908/no.75/Buchanan to Grey

<sup>33</sup> F.O. 881/9353 Sofia Legation to F.O./12-5-1908/no.56/Buchanan to Grey and F.O. 881/9353 Foreign Office to St. Petersburg Embassy/7-7-1908/no.198/Grey to O'Beime

<sup>34</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Sofia Legation to F.O./ 9-11-1908/no.92/Buchanan to Grey

and the Berlin Congress were countermanded. Russia, in particular, believed that the Austrian coup consolidated Vienna's position in the central Balkans and made Austria the dominant factor in the region at the expense of the small south Slav countries. Izvolsky, therefore, insisted that all aspects of the Balkan crisis should be discussed at a European Conference which would revise the Berlin Treaty, compensate Serbia and Montenegro and re-examine the Straits question.<sup>35</sup>

On a Balkan level, the situation was equally complicated and difficult. The Austrian and Bulgarian blows had seriously undermined the geopolitical position of the Ottoman Empire. Adding to the gravity of the situation, the Cretans declared their union with Greece on 7 October 1908.

As expected, the initial counter-attack from Constantinople was spontaneously hostile. Strong reinforcements were transported to Macedonia and Thrace to strengthen the local armies and within three weeks the Ottoman military build up in the European front produced more than 200,000 men. Moreover, on 11 October 1908, the Ottoman Empire imposed economic war on Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian merchandise.<sup>36</sup>

Nevertheless, Constantinople's two-fold undertaking to deal concurrently with Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria was hardly an easy one. As far as the question of Bosnia was concerned, the Porte was practically unable to prevent their incorporation into the Dual Monarchy. Despite the Ottoman mobilization and the embargo from the early stages of the crisis it had become discernible that the Kiamil Pasha government had neither the power nor the inclination to embark on war with Austria-Hungary over Bosnia-Herzegovina. In fact, these two provinces had been lost to Austria-Hungary since 1878. In Kiamil Pasha's opinion, the best possible solution to the dispute with Austria-Hungary would be the establishment of Bosnia as an independent "buffer" state separating the Dual Monarchy from Turkey-in-Europe. In subsequent months, the Ottoman strategy on Bosnia was to avoid a conflict with

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<sup>35</sup> On Russia's policy on the Straits question see: JELAVICH (1991, pp.157, 205-206, 217)

<sup>36</sup> F.O. 881/9492 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/26-10-1908/no.142/Lamb to Lowther, F.O. 881/9492 Constantinople Embassy/27-10-1908/no.49/Colonel Surtrees to Lowther



Vienna and adopt a wait-and-see policy anticipating the Entente and Italy to vitiate the Austria's Bosnian coup.<sup>37</sup>

If Austria-Hungary represented a mid-term threat for Ottoman rule in the Balkans that was not the case with Bulgaria. Here, the situation had become critical. At the time of the proclamation of independence Bulgaria seemed to have the upper hand. The speedy mobilization of the Bulgarian army and the paramount impression that Vienna had been backing Sofia's coup initially put the Ottoman government in a very difficult position. The Sublime Porte however, using military and political means, managed to overturn this situation in the next three weeks.

The Young Turks played a critical role in this remarkable recovery. The militant and experienced Macedonian Committees were instrumental in rapidly reorganizing the II-III Army corps thereby enabling the Ottoman administration to strengthen its diplomatic position against Bulgaria.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, to create a popular resistance front against a possible Bulgarian attack the Unionist societies distributed large quantities of arms and ammunition to the Macedonian Moslems.

In mid-October, the Salonica headquarters sent Faik Bey and Fethy Bey, two eminent members, on a tentative mission to Sofia. During their negotiations with the Bulgarian leaders the Young Turk deputation agreed that the independence issue should be settled between the two countries without foreign interference. According to Faik Bey, the Unionist mission was successful in ascertaining that, for the time being, the Bulgarian leadership did not seem to harbor warlike tendencies against the Ottoman Empire.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Sofia Legation to F.O./5-11-1908/no.76/Buchanan to Grey/Telegraphic, F.O. 881/9492 Belgrade Embassy to F.O./3-11-1908/no.21/Whitehead to Grey/Telegraphic and F.O. 881/9492 Foreign Office to Vienna Embassy/4-11-1908/no.175/Grey to Goshen/Telegraphic. In fact, in the last days of October Kiamil Pasha insinuated to Lowther that he contemplated a settlement of the Bosnian question after the Conference. If the Entente Powers and Italy supported Turkey, he claimed, in her effort to establish Bosnia-Herzegovina as an independent Constitutional state under a Protestant Prince nominated by Turkey and elected by the Powers, Austria would have no alternative except to give way. F.O. 881/9492 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./26-10-1908/no.710/Lowther to Grey

<sup>38</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 21.2/Adrianople Consulate/20/2-11-1908/no.408/Xydakis to Baltazzis and I.A.Y.E./1908/File 21.3/Dedeagach Vice-Consulate/26/8-11-1908/no.461/Souidas to Baltazzis

<sup>39</sup> On Unionist mission see: I.A.Y.E./1908/File 118.2/General Consulate of Salonica/18/31-10-1908/no.1007/Papdiamantopoulos to Baltazzis, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 118.2/General Consulate of Salonica/14/27-10-1908/no.1053/Papdiamantopoulos to Baltazzis, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 21.1/General Consulate of Salonica/18/31-10-1908/no.1026/Papdiamantopoulos to Baltazzis

By November 1908, the activation of European diplomacy and the situation in Turkey managed to avert the danger of a general Balkan conflagration. Indeed, for the Entente coalition a Turkish-Bulgarian war would be sheer calamity. Russia and Great Britain believed that such a conflict would considerably weaken the most powerful states in the region thereby facilitating Austrian designs for political penetration in the Balkans.

At this juncture, the British decided to intervene and shoulder the onus of restraining the Turks. When shortly after the Bulgarian coup the Ottoman minister in London Rifat Pasha tried to investigate whether England would support the Ottoman Empire in a war against Bulgaria, Grey strongly discouraged such an assumption on the part of the Ottoman administration. However, Grey reminded Rifat Pasha that the Porte still retained the right to claim and obtain economic compensation from Bulgaria.<sup>40</sup>

British policy, supported by the Triple Entente, set as its principal priority not only the prevention of a Turco-Bulgarian armed conflict but also the encouragement of an understanding between the two countries. This development would be the first and most decisive step towards the formation of a Balkan League as a barrier to Austrian advance to the Aegean.<sup>41</sup>

Happily for the Entente, the Ottomans refrained from provoking Bulgarian aggression. Despite the original outburst neither Moslem public opinion nor the Ottoman political leadership was for war against Bulgaria. It is clear that, except for an insignificant number of maltreated immigrants from Bulgaria and certain reactionary militarists, the majority of Macedonian Moslems had no desire to take arms against the Bulgarians.<sup>42</sup>

Even among the militant Unionist Committees of Salonica and Monastir which saw the Bulgarian coup as a severe blow to their commitment to safeguard Ottoman integrity the idea of launching an attack against Bulgaria had been visibly losing ground, if only for reasons of military expediency. Last, but certainly not least, the Kiamil Pasha government, owing to its moderate political disposition and its strong pro-British tendencies was even less warlike.

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<sup>40</sup> GREY (1925, p.177)

<sup>41</sup> BRIDGE (1972b, p.125)

<sup>42</sup> F.O. 800/51 Paris Embassy to F.O./11-1-1909/Bertie to Grey

Ultimately, when the Grand Vizier's last reservations concerning the alleged Austrian-Bulgarian pact were dispersed the way opened for a separate negotiation and eventual settlement with Vienna and Sofia.<sup>43</sup> For the Sublime Porte, only one conceivable alternative was now available: to settle for pecuniary compensation. As developments were to show the Ottomans would be far more successful in this aim.

### **5.5 The Road Toward the Turkish-Bulgarian Settlement**

In the first two weeks of November 1908 therefore the Ottoman Empire had plucked up enough courage to attempt turning some of her Balkan embarrassments into advantages. The chief question for the Turks now was not whether they would fight or negotiate but with which country they should negotiate first and on what basis. In that policy-making process the Unionist factor was to influence Ottoman strategy. Since the outbreak of the Balkan crisis the Kiamil Pasha government had given precedence to the settlement of the Bulgarian question. That was rather a reasonable option, for at the moment Sofia seemed to represent the most perceptible threat to Ottoman authority in the Balkans.

However, the Young Turk Committees questioned the advisability of this strategy. The C.U.P. supported the opinion that Turkey should first come to terms with Austria over Bosnia and afterwards devote all her energy and power to work out an accommodation with Bulgaria favorable to Ottoman interests. In order to compel the Grand Vizier to change his attitude and to conform to their Balkan outlook the Young Turks launched an anti-government propaganda campaign in the interior.<sup>44</sup>

On the other hand, Ottoman policy in regard to the Near East crisis had also to take into serious consideration developments in the other Balkan states. True, Turkey was not the only Balkan power which had suffered from Austria's Balkan coup. Serbia was in a far more perilous position since the incorporation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria posed an indisputable menace to her economic and political independence.

As an outcome, since mid-October 1908, secret negotiations had been carried out with Serbia for the conclusion of a trilateral military alliance between Turkey, Serbia

<sup>43</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./5-11-1908/no.386/Lowther to Grey

<sup>44</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 91.1.1/Constantinople Legation/24/6-11-1908/no.1065/Gryparis to Baltazzis

and Montenegro. The Ottoman Empire had agreed to hold talks with the Serb Cabinet with the sole purpose of checkmating Bulgaria. The Ottoman leadership - here the Porte and the C.U.P. were in complete accord - was fully convinced that in the end Serbia would not be attacked by Austria and a Serbo-Turkish-Montenegrin pact could be utilized as lever pressure against isolated Bulgaria.<sup>45</sup>

The intensity of Young Turk pressure and the prospect of understanding with Serbia-Montenegro altered the priorities and the policy of Kiamil Pasha's Cabinet respecting the management of the Balkan crisis. Notwithstanding the fact that Bulgaria remained the vital issue for Turkey, by November 1908 the Grand Vizier decided to bide his time and not pursue a premature settlement with Bulgaria pending the problem of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the outcome of talks with Serbia-Montenegro.

In the meantime, Bulgaria was experiencing serious internal difficulties. A month after the proclamation of independence, Sofia was aware that the time for military action had lapsed because the Ottomans had strengthened their Macedonian defenses. In addition, following the October talks with the Young Turk deputation in Sofia Prince Ferdinand had put the Bulgarian army on a peace footing.<sup>46</sup> On 26 October 1908, Geshov rebuked Ferdinand and the Malinov Cabinet "for having betrayed Bulgaria by not declaring war twenty days ago."<sup>47</sup>

As soon as things seemed to take a rather unpleasant turn for the Principality political contention and public convulsion reemerged in the interior overshadowing the elation of independence. In the Sobranje, the leaders of the Geshovist and Tsankovist parties, backed by the left-wing Agrarian group, lashed out against the Cabinet. Their criticism focused mainly on two points: the controversial occupation of the Orient railway which had stirred great dissatisfaction in Europe and the "irresponsible" act of the government in interconnecting the independence of Bulgaria with the annexation of Bosnia.

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<sup>45</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./26-10-1908/no.710/Lowther to Grey and F.O. 881/9492 Belgrade Embassy to F.O./13-11-1908/no.24/Whitehead to Grey

<sup>46</sup> The above initiative of the Royal House met with heavy criticism in Bulgaria. However, Ferdinand's decision to comply with the Powers' advice and demobilize the army was correct. First, it did not seriously affect the fighting capability of the armed forces since the nine Bulgarian Army corps could mobilize within a few days and were far better prepared for a winter campaign than the Ottomans. Second, in doing so Sofia gained significant credit in Europe for its peaceful attitude. F.O. 881/9422 Memorandum

<sup>47</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Constantinople Embassy/27-10-1908/no.49/Colonel Surtrees to Lowther

Yet, the main storm came from the usually refractory quarters. Those anticipating that the declaration of independence would appease the Macedonian nationalists erred. The Macedonian societies suspected that Prince Ferdinand had been planning to play down the Macedonian question in order to soothe the Young Turks and safeguard his new title as “King of the Bulgarians”. To dissipate any illusions about their true intentions the Macedonians addressed an open letter of protest to the Court warning the Prince in the most explicit manner that:

“If His Royal Highness wishes to live to enjoy his new dignity, he had better not purchase his crown at the price of our (Macedonian) interests.”<sup>48</sup>

In the first days of November, the political leadership in Sofia had recognized that the continuation of this anomalous situation could undermine the position of the government and destabilize the country. Therefore, the sooner the dispute with Turkey was settled in a peaceful manner the better. On 2 November, Stanciov presented to Grey a Memorandum announcing Bulgaria’s decision to begin negotiations with the Ottoman Empire for pecuniary compensation. In parallel, the Malinov government dispatched Liaptchev, the Macedonian Minister of Commerce, to Constantinople with instructions to investigate the Ottoman economic claims and, if possible, lay the groundwork for an amicable understanding with the Ottoman leadership.<sup>49</sup>

Signs that the indemnity was most likely to evolve into a painfully long-lasting, delicate and thorny question were not however lacking. The Porte argued that the declaration of independence had raised the entire question of Bulgarian obligations and status towards the Ottoman Empire as those defined in the Berlin Treaty. Therefore, they fancied themselves entitled to an enormous compensation: roughly 28 million Turkish pounds. That sum included the capitalized tributes of Eastern

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<sup>48</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 118.1/Sofia Legation/13/24-11-1908/no.878/Zalokostas to Baltazzis and F.O. 881/9492 Sofia Legation to F.O./10-11-1908/no.93/Buchanan to Grey. Indeed, the Bulgarian-Macedonian organizations were right to suspect that Ferdinand had decided to play down the Macedonian question but they were wrong to believe that he did so to protect his new title. In fact, Ferdinand seemed to fear an Austrian advance in Macedonia in spring 1909 and in his anxiety to prevent such a development he planned to reach an understanding, and even alliance, with the Ottoman Empire. Toward this goal, the Bulgarian ruler considered it necessary to avoid alienating the Ottomans by “raising unnecessarily the Macedonian question.” F.O. 881/9492 Sofia Legation to F.O./4-11-1908/no.75/Buchanan to Grey

<sup>49</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Foreign Office to Sofia Legation/2-11-1908/no.67/Grey to Buchanan and F.O. 881/9492 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./13-11-1908/no.768/Lowther to Grey

Rumelia and Bulgaria for the period 1879-1908; the Ottoman debt for Eastern Rumelia; the indemnity for the Orient railway and for the numerous Moslem vakoufs, mosques and lighthouses left in Bulgaria; and the construction of the strategic Sofia-Kjustendil-Kumanovo railway.<sup>50</sup>

Sofia could not afford to pay such a vast indemnity and the Porte knew it. The reasoning of the Ottoman government that Bulgaria's economic position was better than Turkey's and by gaining her independence Sofia could save large sums by reducing her military expenditure does not seem a plausible explanation. The extravagant Ottoman claims should be ascribed to internal political considerations.

Throughout the Balkan crisis, the Kiamil Pasha Cabinet sustained the vitriolic attacks of the Constantinople C.U.P. on the question of independence. Sensibly, Kiamil Pasha felt that if the price for renouncing the Sultan's sovereignty in the Principality was not satisfactorily high the Young Turks would once again exploit the opportunity to accuse his Cabinet of failure in all aspects of the Bulgarian question.<sup>51</sup> In extracting a huge compensation from Sofia the experienced Grand Vizier anticipated to benefit in two respects: first, he could silence the tumultuous Young Turk party and second, he would increase his own political influence amongst the Ottoman public opinion and the Chamber of Deputies.

Bulgaria, naturally, had no intention of negotiating under those onerous terms. The rift was admittedly unbridgeable and Liaptchev had to return to Sofia with empty hands. In the ensuing three months it seemed that the issue had been put in cold storage. The Turks, well aware that time was running in their favor, did not rush to come to terms with Bulgaria in so far as the question of Bosnia remained open. Finally, on 11 January 1909 Austria and Turkey reached an agreement. Vienna would pay 2 ½ million Turkish pounds to the Sublime Porte in exchange for Ottoman recognition of the annexation. A bilateral protocol on 26 February 1909 made the Austrian-Turkish pact official.

Unlike the Turks, the Bulgarians had many reasons to pursue a swift settlement. In the achievement of a honorable and equitable solution to the crisis with

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<sup>50</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./11-11-1908/no.390/Lowther to Grey/Telegraphic and F.O. 881/9492 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./4-12-1908/no.834/Lowther to Grey

<sup>51</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./11-11-1908/Lowther to Grey/no.390/Telegraphic and F.O. 881/9503 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./14-1-1909/no.29/Lowther to Grey

Constantinople, the Malinov Cabinet and the Court of Prince Ferdinand discerned the instrument for neutralizing the intense internal pressure and countering the Sobranje attacks against the independence policy of the Royal House. Furthermore, the exclusion of Bulgaria from the Serbo-Turkish negotiations had put the political and military officials in Sofia on the alert.

The specter of Sofia's Balkan isolation had thus emerged and the likelihood of seeing Austria marching into Macedonia in spring of 1909 forced Prince Ferdinand to turn a more sympathetic eye to the formation of a triple Serbo-Bulgarian-Turkish alliance.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, in the last two months of 1908, the Bulgarian leadership strove to reconcile itself with the Sublime Porte. In November, Malinov and Paprikov repeatedly stressed in the Sobranje the enduring will of Bulgaria to reach a compromise with the Ottoman Empire and Prince Ferdinand, in a personal telegram to the French President Fallieres in early December "committed Bulgaria to compensation".<sup>53</sup>

Developments in Constantinople however frustrated Bulgarian expectations. In the first two months of 1909, the focal issue in Ottoman politics was not the Bulgarian question but the uncompromising rivalry between the Kiamil Pasha Cabinet and the Committee for dominance in internal political affairs. The Kiamil Pasha Cabinet crisis of mid-February in conjunction with the subsequent "introversion" of the Ottoman political leadership deterred the negotiation process with Bulgaria and postponed the settlement of the Turco-Bulgarian dispute.

In the meantime, in early February 1909, the Great Powers apprehensive of the unforeseeable complications that could arise from the continuation of Bulgarian imbroglio intervened to salvage the situation and prevent a general conflagration in the Balkans. Inasmuch as the Porte remained unshakable in its enormous economic demands, the Entente and the Alliance were competing in rendering their services to Sofia to settle its dispute with Constantinople. Each coalition reckoned that if successful in reconciling Turkey with Bulgaria it would maximize its influence on the Bulgarian government thereby laying the groundwork for a political alignment with Bulgaria.

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<sup>52</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Sofia Legation to F.O./4-11-1908/no.75/Buchanan to Grey and F.O. 881/9492 Belgrade Embassy to F.O./25-11-1908/no.91/Whitehead to Grey/enclosure no.1

<sup>53</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Sofia Legation to F.O./9-12-1908/no.102/Buchanan to Grey

In the end, it was Russian diplomacy that achieved the breakthrough. In an attempt to retrieve their privileged position in Bulgarian affairs the Russian government reached an agreement with the Malinov Cabinet on 2 February 1909. Russia shouldered the burden of satisfying Turkish economic claims; in return Bulgaria would compensate St. Petersburg.<sup>54</sup>

The rise of the Hilmi Pasha Cabinet to power in mid-February did not materially alter Ottoman foreign policy on the Bulgarian question. The Russian economic package had satisfied Constantinople and a direct understanding with Sofia seemed more likely than ever. But even when an agreement looked almost certain the new Hilmi Pasha Cabinet was reluctant to close the issue. This time, Ottoman procrastination was not due to the indemnity sum or domestic political feuds but to the Macedonian question.

The Ottoman F.O. contemplated exchanging the recognition of Prince Ferdinand's new royal title with an official commitment on the part of Bulgaria that she would respect the political status quo and the territorial integrity of Ottoman Macedonia. In order to elicit this vital concession Constantinople intended to postpone Ferdinand's recognition at least till its endorsement by the proposed Conference.<sup>55</sup>

Eventually, the April counter-coup in Constantinople and the increasingly threatening attitude of the Bulgarian government forced the Porte to give way.<sup>56</sup> On 19 April 1909, the Ottoman administration, on the instigation of Germany and Austria, informed Sofia of its decision to recognize Bulgarian independence. On 26 May 1909, a Turco-Bulgarian Protocol was signed in Constantinople settling the pending problems between the two countries. Bilateral relations were fully restored shortly after.

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<sup>54</sup> SCHMITT (1937, pp.135-140). On the initial reaction of Bulgaria and Turkey to Russian proposal see F.O. 800/51 Paris Embassy to F.O./ 3-2-1909/Bertie to Grey/Private

<sup>55</sup> F.O. 881/9531 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./22-3-1909/no.94/Lowther to Grey/Telegraphic

<sup>56</sup> For details on Bulgaria's threatening stance see: F.O. 881/9531 Sofia Legation to F.O./13-4-1909/no.52/Buchanan to Grey, F.O. 881/9351 Sofia Legation to F.O./18-4-1909/no.57/Buchanan to Grey



### **5.6 Politicizing the Committees. The M.R.O. and the Bulgarian Constitutional Clubs under the Young Turk Regime**

The Young Turk revolution and the question of Bulgarian independence did not only affect inter-state relations between the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria. It had a major impact on the position of the Bulgarian-Macedonian populations as well as on its revolutionary and religious organizations: the M.R.O. and the Exarchate.

In order to investigate the political outlook of the various Christian Macedonian ethnic groups respecting the Young Turk movement the directorate of the Unionist Committee Talat Bey, Enver Bey, Rahmi Bey, Nazim Bey called their leaderships into negotiations a few days after the proclamation of the Constitution. In the discussions, the Bulgarian-Macedonian population was represented by the M.R.O.-Right leaders Matov, Panchev, Christev, Chuskov and by the Left wing of the Organization under Sandanski, Panitsa, Tsernopeevev, Delidarev.

Discussions between the M.R.O. Right and the Salonica Committee lasted till the end of August and were carried out without agenda in the capital of Macedonia. From the outset, it seemed that the likelihood of a bilateral understanding was exceedingly slim. Since the early stages of the negotiations the president of the M.R.O. Matov informed the Young Turks that the Organization had no intention of abandoning its firm objective: the establishment of political autonomy in Macedonia.

Equally radical were the M.R.O. proposals on the question of administrative reform and devolution of executive power to the periphery. The C.C. of the M.R.O. supported the establishment of provincial Councils (Diets) in each commune, sanjak and vilayet in order to deal directly with local matters. In these bodies, which would be based on the Swiss and American patterns, all nationalities should have proportionate representation and equal rights.

The M.R.O. political program provided for the creation of a national militia on the model of the French National Guard; the admission of ethnically-formed Christian units to the army; freedom of press, association, education, religion; and the convention of a pan-Ottoman Congress with delegates from all revolutionary committees to elaborate a common parliamentary program. It is interesting that in case the Young Turks failed to establish a liberal and modern regime in the country the organization threatened to re-activate its militia and resume the armed struggle.

These were the positions of the M.R.O. as officially communicated by Panchev to the Salonica C.U.P. in the form of a Memorandum in the end of August 1908.<sup>57</sup>

The Unionists, for their part, were far from willing to satisfy the far-reaching political and administrative demands of the M.R.O.-Right. On the key question of Macedonia, the Young Turks believed that if an autonomous status was established in the province the latter would either become independent or would unite with Bulgaria. Nor were the Macedonian officials more favorably disposed towards the decentralization politics of the M.R.O. Granting provincial autonomy to Macedonia was unthinkable for the C.U.P. and ran contrary to its fundamental bid to defend Ottoman integrity.<sup>58</sup>

The M.R.O.-C.U.P. disagreement over the status and the administration of Macedonia did not discourage the Bulgarian-Macedonians. Following the spirit and trend of the Constitution they took steps to establish Bulgarian-Macedonian "Constitutional" clubs based on article 108 respecting free association. That decision was taken by the C.C. of the M.R.O., with encouragement from Sofia, during a lengthy and heated convention held in Salonica in the second week of August.

According to the secret program of the conference which was issued on 12 August 1908 and leaked out to the local press after considerable delay, the M.R.O. instructed each Provincial Committee to set up a local political society, following the example of the Salonica headquarters. The new branches would have a two-fold mission: to carry out the political struggle of the M.R.O. with the aim of gaining local self-government for each province, and to support the M.R.O. underground revolutionary work.<sup>59</sup> Having received assistance from Bulgaria in cadres, funds and material support in September the M.R.O. managed to establish Constitutional associations in Uskub, Monastir, Kavala, Serres, Adrianople and Constantinople.

In addition, the M.R.O. convention resolved to discontinue its armed activities till the opening of the Ottoman Chamber but the Macedonian militia and the local leaders were ordered to remain in their positions ready to take the field. In doing so, the M.R.O. leadership reaffirmed its determination not to terminate the revolutionary-

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<sup>57</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 85.3/General Consulate of Salonica/12/25-9-1908/Papdiamantopoulos to Baltazzis/Panchev Memorandum

<sup>58</sup> F.O. 881/9353 Sofia Legation to F.O./19-8-1908/no.72/Buchanan to Grey

<sup>59</sup> E.A./1908/KH/no.37/17-9-1908/p.7 and DAKIN (1966, p.388)

paramilitary struggle in so far as the Young Turks refused to sanction the autonomy of Macedonia.<sup>60</sup>

The Bulgarian-Macedonian Constitutional clubs held their first Congress between 20 and 26 September 1908 under the presidency of Dimitrov to elect their leadership, outline their political platform and coordinate their activities under the new regime. It was attended by 84 delegates from 70 Macedonian and Thracian societies. During the preliminaries three commissions with distinct tasks were elected: the first commission would organize the proceedings; the second would set up the statutes and regulations of the clubs and the third would work out a program with economic, social, political, and cultural proposals regarding the position of the Bulgarian communities in Turkey.<sup>61</sup>

Altogether, the recommendations of the three commissions were keenly accepted by the delegates. The statutes and rules of the clubs provided that for the creation of a new association a minimum enrollment of 10 members was required. The new district and provincial clubs were to be directed by the Salonica branch and were obliged to grant 1/3 of their revenues to the central club. In return, the Salonica headquarters would be responsible for the normal operation of the peripheral clubs and their representation to the Ottoman authorities.<sup>62</sup>

The political program of the Congress recognized the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire providing that the provinces obtained a status of local self-government in accordance with their national composition. The Bulgarian Congress however, did not diverge from the fixed M.R.O. positions. It put forward the demands for the creation of provincial Diets; appointment of 1/3 of the Senate by the Sultan and 2/3 to be elected directly from the people; freedom of religion, education, press, association and trade; conscription of non-Moslems; universal and secret suffrage; respect for the privileges of the Christian religious and educational institutions; obligatory elementary instruction and official recognition of the language of the minority nationalities in education.

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<sup>60</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 59.4/Monastir Consulate/17/30-8-1908/Halkiopoulos to Baltazzis/Report on the Status of the Provincial and Regional Committees of the M.R.O. and E.A./1908/KH/no.34/29-8-1908/pp.8-9

<sup>61</sup> P.P.A.P. CV 1909, p.1047 and I.A.Y.E./1908/File 118.2/General Consulate of Salonica/10/23-9-1908/no.893/Papadiamantopoulos to Baltazzis

<sup>62</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 118.2/General Consulate of Salonica/11/24-9-1908/Papadiamantopoulos to Baltazzis/without classification number

Although the political outlook of the Congress was rather moderate, its social proposals were remarkably radical and progressive. For example, the Union of Bulgarian clubs requested the institution of a general tax proportionate to the revenue and property of each citizen. Furthermore, as far as the important agrarian question was concerned, the program provided that the Macedonian tenants should obtain the ownership of the lands they cultivated and be eligible for agricultural loans at very low interest. Finally, the government was called on to enact a law for the protection of labor rights.<sup>63</sup>

The Congress concluded its proceedings with the establishment of a Salonica-based permanent Central Bureau: the supreme executive body of the Bulgarian-Macedonian Union. Karayovov, an ex-official of the Bulgarian F.O., became president. The first task of the Bureau was to communicate the program of the Congress to the C.U.P. and prevent the closing of the disputed Bulgarian churches and schools in Macedonia.<sup>64</sup>

In contrast to Panchev's Memorandum, the omission of any explicit reference to Macedonian autonomy from the Congress resolutions and the Bulgarian-Macedonian commitment to conduce toward the cultural advancement of the Ottoman people irrespective of ethnicity and religion had pleased the Ottomans. On 26 September 1908, Kiamil Pasha wrote to the General Administration of Macedonia that with the exception of the articles referring to local governments the political program of the Constitutional clubs was not far away from the original positions of the C.U.P. representing a good basis for a Bulgaro-Young Turk understanding.<sup>65</sup>

Ottoman elation was fairly short-lived. The declaration of Bulgarian independence ten days after the conference and the ensuing Bulgarian-Turkish crisis rendered any kind of cooperation between the Constitutional associations and the Young Turks impossible. From this point onwards the C.U.P. was to turn an increasingly hostile eye towards the Union of Constitutional clubs, regarding them as plot centers of Bulgarian nationalist propaganda in Macedonia.

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<sup>63</sup> P.P.A.P. CV 1909, pp.1048-1049, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 118.2/General Consulate of Salonica/3/16-10-1908/no.914/Papadiamantopoulos to Baltazzis

<sup>64</sup> P.P.A.P. CV 1909, p.1048

<sup>65</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 118.2/Grand Vizierate to General Administration of Salonica/13/26-9-1908/Kiamil Pasha to Danish Bey/enclosure no.1

To what extent Young Turk suspicions concerning the relations between the Bulgarian government and the Constitutional clubs were justifiable is a moot point. There is little doubt that the League of clubs had been connected with Bulgaria and the Sofia-based M.R.O. External Delegation. It is almost certain that a significant part of the clubs' expenditure was covered by Bulgarian allowances and cadres of the new organization received their payments from Sofia.<sup>66</sup> Greek sources suggest that on 19 March 1909, the Bulgarian administration assigned Rizov, a former secretary of the Bulgarian Legation in Athens, to organize the Bulgarian societies in Monastir vilayet while Karayovov was to act accordingly in the province of Salonica.<sup>67</sup>

On the other hand, the firm tendency of the Bulgarian government to assert its control over the new apparatus did not seem to entirely coincide with the political aspirations of the Bulgarian-Macedonian associations or at least their current leadership. In fact, under Karayovov, the clubs managed to maintain a significant degree of independence from Sofia. The leading group of the Macedonian Constitutional societies was far from willing to allow the Organization to degenerate into a mere political instrument of Sofia. That became apparent for the first time during the Congress when the Union decided to ignore the behind-the-scenes advice of the Bulgarian government to sever its relations with the Young Turks.<sup>68</sup>

On the contrary, the Central Bureau sought to establish certain links with the C.U.P. It believed that the interests of the Bulgarian people in Macedonia were better served by the meticulous execution of the Constitutional principles of liberty, equality, justice and the promotion of inter-ethnic unity and brotherhood in Ottoman Empire.

Nevertheless, Karayovov's consecutive overtures to the Young Turk Committees of Macedonia and Constantinople for cooperation in the elections found no willing ears.<sup>69</sup> In the autumn of 1908, at a time that a Turco-Bulgarian armed conflict looked unavoidable and the anti-Bulgarian sentiment of the Macedonian-Moslems was about to reach its peak it was unthinkable for the Young Turks to consent to a rapprochement with the Bulgarian-Macedonian associations.

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<sup>66</sup> F.O. 881/9717 Sofia Embassy to F.O./14-1-1910/no.6/Findlay to Grey

<sup>67</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK/Sofia Legation/6/19-3-1909/no.157/Zalokostas to Baltazzis

<sup>68</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 118.2/General Consulate of Salonica/11/24-9-1908/Papdiamantopoulos to Baltazzis/without classification number

<sup>69</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK-A/General Consulate of Salonica/19/1-9-1909/Papdiamantopoulos to Kallergis/Second Congress of Macedonian and Thracian Constitutional Clubs-Annual Report of Central Bureau/pp.19-20 (Hereafter cited as Second Congress)

Nor did the situation in the Macedonian mainland leave any room for more sanguine thoughts. There, the Young Turk Committees were faced with the growing agitation of Macedonian activists on whom the influence of Bulgaria remained as strong as ever. By November, a considerable amount of arms and ammunition had been distributed in Monastir, Kilkis, Krushevo, Serres, Salonica whilst certain M.R.O. and S.M.C. bands were re-activated in the vilayets of Salonica and Monastir.<sup>70</sup>

It was not only the Young Turks who suspected that the League of Bulgarian clubs had been implicated in the underground activities of the M.R.O. Western observers seemed to espouse similar views. On 9 February 1909, Satow, the British agent in Uskub, reported that in view of the crisis with the Porte the Bulgarians had apparently taken steps to establish a 'war organization' in Macedonia:

"According to my information, there is a secret Bulgarian organization active in Macedonia aiming at creating a diversion in case a Bulgarian-Turkish war break out. Three classes of leaders existed: voevodas, sergeants and corporals. Arms had already been distributed to the members of the organization and it is alleged that this movement was directed through the Bulgarian political clubs. The clubs are the ideal places for meeting between those members, while it is also true that quantities of arms concealed in surrounding villages were brought in on market-days and concentrated in Uskub."<sup>71</sup>

However, there is no concrete evidence that Karayovov's group had taken an energetic part in the Bulgarian armed struggle in Macedonia. It is far from certain, however, that the same assertion can apply to the rank and file of the League as well. British archival sources concur that during its period in office the Central Bureau had maintained a responsible and "correct" attitude towards the C.U.P. Karayovov and other Macedonian cadres, for example, had frequently visited Constantinople in order to come to terms with the local C.U.P. whilst the leadership of the Clubs had taken

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<sup>70</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 39.5/Ministry of the Interior to General Administration of Salonica/10/23-10-1908/no.999/Hakki Pasha to Danish Bey, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 59.4/Monastir Consulate/1/14-11-1908/no.1210/Dimaras to Baltazzis, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 21.1/General Consulate of Salonica/6/19-11-1908/no.1072/Papdiamantopoulos to Baltazzis. See also: F.O. 881/9492 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/24-10-1908/no.60/Acting-Consul Edmonds to Lowther

<sup>71</sup> F.O. 881/9503 Uskub Vice-Consulate to General Consulate of Salonica/9-2-1909/no.11/Satow to Lamb

energetic steps to prevent its members from re-organizing new Bulgarian-Macedonian bands.<sup>72</sup>

In addition, when the counterrevolution broke out in the Ottoman capital on 13 April 1909 against the Young Turk regime, the Bulgarian Constitutional clubs rebuked the “reactionary” movement and supported the Committee. In the first place, the Central Bureau sent telegrams to all Macedonian branches instructing them to remain pacific. Subsequently, responding to a Unionist request, it appointed Roumenev to negotiate with Carasso, a high-ranking Jew of the Salonica Committee, the participation of Bulgarian-Macedonian volunteers in the army of Mahmud Shevket Pasha.<sup>73</sup>

In any case, a year after the revolution the Unionist failure to settle the acute agrarian-ecclesiastical questions, promote inter-racial unity and ameliorate the living conditions in Macedonia stirred significant discontent within the League of clubs. It was not long before this popular dissatisfaction developed into an influential political current within the local Bulgarian branches. Its leaders, outstanding members like Christev, Guerov, Mirtchev, Domev, Risov, Filippev rebuked the futile persistence of the Central Bureau in working with the Committee for the political and cultural development of Macedonia. Disillusioned with the Unionist practice, this nationalist group envisaged establishing underneath the club mechanism a “powerful Bulgarian national organization” in order to promote more energetically the Bulgarian national aspirations in Macedonia.<sup>74</sup>

Such was the situation in the Bulgarian-Macedonian clubs in the period under review.

### **5.7 The Serres Faction and the Creation of the Bulgarian National Federal Party (B.N.F.P.).**

The proclamation of general political amnesty in Macedonia afforded the opportunity to the leaders of the M.R.O.-Left factions Sandanski, Panitsa, Katardjiev (Serres) and

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<sup>72</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2329 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/26-5-1909/Lamb to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2330 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/24-11-1909/Lamb to Lowther, I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK/Sofia Legation/19/1-11-1909/no.820/Simopoulos to Mavromihalis

<sup>73</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK-A/General Consulate of Salonica/19/1-9-1909/Papdiamantopoulos to Kallergis/Second Congress-Annual Report of Central Bureau/p.19 and P.R.O. F.O. 195/2328 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/24-4-1909/Lamb to Lowther

<sup>74</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK-A/General Consulate of Salonica/19/1-9-1909/Papdiamantopoulos to Kallergis/Second Congress/pp.1-25

Tsernopeevev, Delidarev (Strumnitsa) to visit Salonica.<sup>75</sup> Whilst in the capital of Macedonia, they busied themselves with the elaboration and laying out of their political positions respecting the future function of Ottoman administration and society. Following a short negotiation period with the Salonica Unionist Committee the M.R.O.-Left published its political program in the Bulgarian newspaper *Kambana* (Bell) on 19 August 1908. It is significant that in the introduction of the program the Serres Regional Committee expressed its opposition to the “secession of Macedonia and Adrianople” from the Ottoman Empire.

The bulk of the M.R.O.-Left program consisted of a considerable number of political and social-economic proposals. The political part demanded: the Ottoman Parliament to become the supreme legislative body in the Empire with authority to control the Ministerial Council; establishment of self-government in communes, provinces and prefectures based on the principle of national freedom while the central administration was to control all key civil sectors: defense, foreign policy, economy, army, railways, communications, customs and posts; in particular, with regard to Macedonia, the Serres group suggested the division of the three vilayets into small administrative regions with self-government according to the system of Swiss cantons.

Furthermore, the institution of universal and secret ballot and proportional electoral system; respect for personal rights and freedom for the press and unions; general conscription and gradual replacement of the conventional armed forces by a people’s militia; abolition of ethnic, religious and class privileges; full political amnesty and termination of foreign interference in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire.

Not less important were the social-economic provisions of the M.R.O.-Left. Here, the influence of socialist ideology was more than obvious. Their principal objective was to ameliorate the position and living conditions of the lower social strata in the Empire. Thus, the Leftists called for the immediate abolition of the out-of-date feudal system, the confiscation of the Sultan’s domains and Christian or Moslem

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<sup>75</sup> It should be noted that at the time of the Young Turk revolution Sandanski’s authority extended through the northern Serres sanjak (Melnik, Nevrokop, Petrich) whereas Tsernopeevev’s group preponderated in the central regions of the sanjak (Strumnitsa, Tikves, Veles). According to Lamb, this breach was not due to a conflicting ideological-political outlook but it was rather a question of personal and local rivalry between the two Macedonian leaders. F.O. 881/9351 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/16-2-1909/no.18/Lamb to Lowther



vakoufs, the immediate expropriation of the large private estates (*chiftliks*) and their distribution to the peasantry.

Moreover, the state should take steps to protect workers' rights by law, abolish the numerous direct-indirect taxes and decree one 'progressive tax' on individual income and property. The social proposals of the M.R.O.-Left attached great importance to the obligation on the government to set up uniform education for all nationalities and "create the best conditions for the cultural advancement of the country."<sup>76</sup>

Taking advantage of its presence in Salonica the Left leadership tried to disseminate its positions respecting the Young Turk revolution and Macedonian politics to the people. Sandanski reiterated to Young Turk officials his commitment to uphold and defend the Constitutional regime against any internal or external enemy, including Bulgaria. The Macedonian leader advised the Bulgarian-Macedonians to turn a deaf ear to insidious counsels from the Principality to continue the armed struggle, urging them to counteract the influence of the Sofia-sponsored Constitutional associations. Though opposed to the continuation of armed struggle the Serres Committee had little desire to suppress its peasant militia.

The decision of the M.R.O. Left to support the C.U.P. was to no small measure due to its inherent antipathy towards the Bulgarian government and its Macedonian policy. In its program, the M.R.O.-Left went so far as to demand from the Young Turks the abolition of the Exarchate's secular privileges and called for the ending of Bulgaria's interference in Macedonian matters. Delidarev, a prominent theorist of the M.R.O.- Left, did not hesitate to assert that "all the problems of the Bulgarian population in Macedonia are products of the chauvinist and warlike policy of Bulgaria." In a similar tone, during a speech in Veles in early August, Tsernopeevo openly accused the Bulgarian government and the Exarchate "of having become the cause of Macedonian bloodshed."<sup>77</sup>

In the opinion of those M.R.O. socialist visionaries, the Macedonian struggle instead of being a conscious campaign for the economic, social and spiritual development of the people had degenerated into a bitter inter-ethnic strife between the various

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<sup>76</sup> See: I.A.Y.E./1908/File 85.3/General Consulate of Salonica/12/25-9-1908/Papadiamantopoulos to Baltazzis/Sandanski Memorandum and MACDERMOTT (1988, pp.353-4)

<sup>77</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 21.5/Sofia Legation/10/23-8-1908/Zalokostats to Baltazzis. I.A.Y.E./1908/File 71.2/Uskub Consulate/16/29-8-1908/Baraklis to Baltazzis/Telegraphic/17.00 and E.A./1908/KH/14-8-1908/no.32/pp.2-3

nationalities resulting in the economic and physical destruction of the Macedonian communities. For this deplorable situation, capitalist and nationalist Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece were to blame.

For its part, in the long-run, the Left-wing of the M.R.O. envisioned the transformation of the Ottoman dominions in Europe and Asia Minor into a united Eastern Federation. The advocates of this political project believed that once free from Moslem and Christian bourgeois dominance and Balkan nationalist aspirations the Federation could reconcile the internal social forces to bring about the eventual solution of the national question in the Ottoman Empire and lead the nationalities to economic and cultural development.<sup>78</sup>

Following the lapse of the first months of the Constitutional regime, the M.R.O.-Left had lost much of its faith in Young Turk political ability and potential. Indeed, till the Bulgarian crisis the policy of the new Ottoman administration seemed to follow the old Porte tradition. Even worse, the Unionist failure to deal with important questions like agrarian reform, provincial decentralization and local government showed overt symptoms of social immaturity and political conservatism.

By the end of the autumn, the disenchantment of the M.R.O.-Left with C.U.P. political practice was reflected in the Macedonian press. On 26 November 1908, Sandanski's Salonica-based organ *Konstitutsiona Zarya* (Constitutional Dawn) published an article on Ottoman attitude toward the Bulgarian-Macedonian element. It stated: "The Ottoman Bulgarians, as Turkish actions show, are regarded with peculiar distrust and contempt by the higher ruling spheres. The Turks treat the Bulgarians even worse than they treat the other nationalities in Macedonia."<sup>79</sup>

The Ottomans, whose apprehensions about the destabilizing role of the Macedonian revolutionary organizations had revived after Bulgarian independence, accepted the challenge. In the second week of December, the editor of the Turkish journal *Yeni Asr* (New Times) Fezli Necib Effendi<sup>80</sup> referred to a speech that Sandanski had allegedly delivered in the Bulgarian village of Melnik in mid-November.

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<sup>78</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 71.2/Uskub Consulate/16/29-8-1908/Baraklis to Baltazzis/Telegraphic/17.00 and *Narodna Volia*, 17-1-1909 cited in B.A.S. (1978, pp.591-2)

<sup>79</sup> *Konstitutsiona Zarya*, 26-11-1908 cited in B.A.S. (1978, p.566)

<sup>80</sup> Fezli Necib Effendi was also second secretary of the Salonica vilayet and political supporter of Hussein Hilmi Pasha.

According to Necib Effendi, the Macedonian leader declared that the establishment of a free government was impossible in the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman official also maintained that Sandanski had urged the local people to renounce its allegiance to the Young Turk regime and rally around the Bulgarian Macedonian committees, “the real representative and administrative bodies of the Bulgarian population in Macedonia.”<sup>81</sup> In the first months of 1909 it was evident that the understanding between the C.U.P. and the M.R.O.-Left did not seem workable, although both groups were ill-disposed to burn all bridges between them. The gradual alienation between the Left-wing of the M.R.O. and the Young Turks had however a very important repercussion. It brought about the reconciliation of the rival factions of Sandanski and Tsernopeevev. In January 1909, the two leaders, who shared the principles of socialism and provincial self-administration, decided to work for the establishment of a Bulgarian National Federal Party (B.N.F.P.).

On 17 January 1909, the new party issued its organ: the *Narodna Volia* (Popular Will) which emerged after the merging of *Konstitutsiona Zarya* with the paper of Tsernopeevev *Edinstvo* (Union). Through *Narodna Volia*, the new party made clear that it rejected the policies of the Unionist Committee and the Bulgarian Constitutional clubs as serving the interests of the Turkish and Bulgarian capitalists. It declared that the main aim of the B.N.F.P. would be to “rally all democratic forces, irrespective of national allegiance or class-rivalry, into a wide, popular movement for the institution of far-reaching social reforms in the country.”

On an organizational level, the founders of the party held that its nucleus should be formed by nationally-based sections in every communal and urban Macedonian center. Each local association was to undertake to elect an executive bureau of no less than three members and set up links with the Salonica B.N.F.P. central branch. The Party statutes and regulations would be outlined in the B.N.F.P. founding Congress. At a subsequent stage, after having established themselves among the entire Macedonian people, those dispersed political components were to unite and form a federal party.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 118.1/General Consulate of Salonica/14/27-12-1908/Papadiamantopoulos to Baltazis/without classification number, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2328 Vice-Consulate of Serres to Constantinople Embassy/18-1-1909/Greig to Lowther

<sup>82</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2328 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/16-2-1909/Lamb to Lowther

Recognizing that at present its aim to enlist support from all Macedonian nationalities stood very little chance of success the M.R.O.-Left set as its primary objective the organization of the Bulgarian-Macedonian section of the party. The first move towards that direction took place on 6 February 1909 when 1,000-1,500 B.N.F.P. supporters met in Melnik. In Melnik, the B.N.F.P. passed its Resolutions which were communicated to the Grand Vizier, the Serres deputies and the Macedonian press. The B.N.F.P. Resolutions called the Ottoman Parliament to deal with the granting of lands to the peasants and ameliorate living conditions through the improvement of the Macedonian infrastructure: the establishment of communications, roads, railways, schools and regional hospitals. Additional provisions referred to the need for reform in the tax-collecting system, the abolition of the heavy military tax *bedel-i-askeri* and requested the dismissal and punishment of corrupt and incompetent local officials.<sup>83</sup>

Two tendencies were apparent in the party leadership regarding the B.N.F.P. relations with the Young Turks. The first, favored by Sandanski, stood against the continuation of the cooperation with the Young Turks. Sandanski had been disappointed by the conservative and pro-bourgeois policies of the C.U.P. Therefore, he had embraced the concept that the only perceptible way for the final resolution of the Macedonian question in consonance with the interests of the peasant population was by means of a pan-Macedonian revolution and the establishment of an independent Macedonian state.<sup>84</sup>

The second current was represented by Dr. Vlahov, a well-known intellectual socialist from Kilkis who had initially sided with the Young Turks and was elected deputy in the Ottoman Parliament. Vlahov, even though in the original stages of his political career he had attempted to take advantage of Sandanski's influence in the northern areas of the Serres sanjak for his own ends, now repudiated the revolutionary practice of Sandanski. In his opinion it would be in the best interest of the B.N.F.P. to remain law-abiding and work closely with the Young Turks.

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<sup>83</sup> F.O. 881/9531 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./26-2-1909/no.128/Lowther to Grey/enclosure no.2

<sup>84</sup> Already, since early March 1909, the Ottoman authorities were in possession of revolutionary letters and proclamations issued by Sandanski and addressed to the people of Serres sanjak. Those documents called the local population to place no more confidence in the Young Turks and prepare itself for a general Macedonian insurrection. In retaliation, the Ottomans had proceeded to banish in Bulgaria three of Sandanski's chiefs: Vladov, Stojanov and Kotsarev. See: I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK-A/Serres Consulate/6/19-3-1909/Sahtouris to Baltazis/Telegraphic, F.O. 881/9717 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./28-12-1909/no.998/Marling to Grey. See also next note

Eventually, the majority sided with Vlahov, who became President of the party triumvirate and remained the indisputable leader of the B.N.F.P. until its dissolution in 1910.<sup>85</sup>

### **5.8 Bulgarian Exarchate and Young Turks**

After the Turkish revolution, the Bulgarian Church pursued three main goals: to challenge the ecclesiastical status quo in Macedonia, to gain an equal position with the Greek Ecumenical Patriarchate and to reform itself to meet the demands of the Constitutional era.

Based on the perception that the ecclesiastical disposition of 1903<sup>86</sup> was insufficient to meet the current demands of the Macedonian people the Exarchate sought to impress on the Ottoman administration the need to allow every Macedonian commune to choose whether it would be under Patriarchist or Exarchist authority. To influence the Porte to reconsider the issue, the Exarchate did not hesitate to resort to extreme measures. In the first weeks of August 1908, Exarchist agents, supported by M.R.O. partisans and Macedonian immigrants, traversed the areas of Monastir and Salonica.

Using forceful means they attempted to encroach on Patriarchist churches and schools and present them as institutions of “undefined” jurisdiction. In creating contested zones of religious and educational authority in Macedonia the Bulgarian Exarchate intended to re-open the church question and undermine the position of the Patriarchate in the central Macedonian districts.<sup>87</sup>

The Exarchist campaign provoked the strong opposition of the Greek-Patriarchate. The Ecumenical Patriarch and the Greeks complained to the Ottoman government but with no practical result. In the ensuing months and after having failed to

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<sup>85</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/10-2-1910/Lamb to Lowther. DINGAS, and APOSTOLIDIS., (1989, pp.64-6, 74)

<sup>86</sup> Trying to avoid the confusion created by the frequent conversion of the Macedonian communities from Exarchate to Patriarchate and vice-versa, in August 1903, the Inspector-General and the Civil Agents had decided to accept as a fixed point the ecclesiastical status quo that existed in the beginning of 1903. Any transfers from one creed to other occurring after that terminus were not recognized by the Ottoman authorities. P.P.A.P. CV 1909, p.1018

<sup>87</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 20.4/Elassona Consulate/19/1-9-1908/no.464/Ennyalis to Baltazzis, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 39.4/Monastir Consulate to General Consulate of Salonica/28/10-9-1908/no.946/Halkiopoulos to Alexandropoulos, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 59.2/Monastir Consulate/14/27-8-1908/no.906/Halkiopoulos to Baltazzis and P.P.A.P. CV 1909, p.1019

reconcile the two camps the Ottoman regime decided to close down the disputed ecclesiastical and educational institutions in Macedonia. The question was referred to the Parliament and it was not settled until the summer of 1910.<sup>88</sup>

In July 1910, the Ottoman Cabinet passed a bill on the issue of Macedonian churches. According to it, out of 256 churches the Bulgarians were to take possession of 150 and the Greeks 106. However, this law never really applied in Macedonia for by that time Greeks and Bulgarians had come to terms and had begun to settle local disputes between themselves.<sup>89</sup>

As far as the second aspect of the Exarchist program was concerned, after the Turkish revolution the Bulgarian Exarchate exploited the opportunity to reiterate its old claim for acquisition of an equal status with the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Specifically, on 15 August 1908, the Bulgarian Church through its organ *Tserkoven Vestnik* requested the new Young Turk regime to sanction the institution of a Bulgarian Holy Synod and National Council.<sup>90</sup> The Bulgarian demand was in full accord with article 11 of the Constitution wherein the religious rights of each ethnic group were secured. It was also in tune with the Unionist bid to grant complete freedom of religious beliefs.

In any case, soon after the revolution the Exarch Joseph I took the initiative to form a Bulgarian Synod composed of 4 Suffragans, anticipating official recognition by the Porte. Although from the Constitutional point of view the Exarchist claim was sound, the criteria that were to influence and determine the Ottoman decision were political rather than ecclesiastical.

It was no secret that the Sublime Porte had constantly viewed the Exarchate as a tool of Bulgarian national propaganda in Turkey-in-Europe. From this standpoint, the Ottoman political leadership viewed any measure that could increase the Exarchate's Macedonian authority with profound suspicion. The declaration of Bulgarian independence did little to dissipate Ottoman fears and disentangle the situation. On the contrary, it provided the Kiamil Pasha government with an excellent pretext to

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<sup>88</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 59.2/Monastir Consulate/18/31-8-1908/no.911/Halkiopoulos to Baltazzis, I.A.Y.E./1909/File Consular Reports-5/Salonica Special Office to Foreign Office/Report on Events and Situation in Salonica Region during the First Four Months of 1909/p.1, VAKALOPOULOS (1988, pp.321-2)

<sup>89</sup> F.O. 881/9811 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./14-2-1911/Lowther to Grey/Annual Report on Turkey for the Year 1910/enclosure no.1

<sup>90</sup> E.A./1908/KH/10-10-1908/no.40/pp.4-5

put the Exarchist request on ice. The Porte now went onto the offensive contending that in the light of the new political situation in Bulgaria the Exarch should transfer his see to Sofia. The sole concession the Ottomans were prepared to make was to permit a subordinate Exarchist representative to remain in Constantinople to serve the religious needs of the Ottoman Bulgarians.

The Kiamil Pasha Cabinet was disposed to allow the continuation of the Exarchist see in the Ottoman capital only on the condition that the Exarch would be an Ottoman subject and he would undertake to sever all his links with Bulgaria.<sup>91</sup> In the end, the Bulgarian Exarch Joseph was forced to abandon the demand for equality with the Patriarchate and retain his see in Constantinople.

In its last objective, the 1908-1909 strivings for reform, the Bulgarian Exarchate was no more successful. Here, it is important to remember that to a great extent the prestigious position that the Exarchate enjoyed among the Bulgarian-Macedonian rural populations lay in its intimate cooperation with the local communal Macedonian leaderships. In the period of Macedonian struggle this understanding was further developed. It was within this context that the Exarchate had allowed the communal leaderships to participate in the administration of the local Bulgarian-Macedonian educational institutions.

However, the Young Turk revolution and the apparent termination of the Macedonian struggle had induced the Exarchist leadership to change its Regulations and attempt to reform its organizational structure to adjust to the new conditions. The new Regulations provided for mustering power and jurisdiction around the local Exarchist bureaus in the Macedonian urban centers, thereby stripping the peasant societies of their educational privileges. Furthermore, the Exarchate retained for itself the exclusive right to appoint schoolmasters in Macedonia. Most of the new teachers came now from Bulgaria with little or even no knowledge of Macedonian affairs. Adding insult to Macedonian injury, the Exarchate promoted cadres from Bulgaria, instead of Macedonia, to the high-ranking positions of its administrative bodies, alienating the local communities from their natural leadership.

Even more unpopular had been the nascent Exarchist tendency to set up Macedonian schools based on the Bulgarian educational pattern. It was partly due to this

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<sup>91</sup> F.O. 881/9503 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./11-1-1909/no.18/Lowther to Grey

innovation that a large number of educated Macedonians left their homeland and went to Bulgaria. The new centralist policy of the Exarchist leadership found expression in its decision to establish the Theological School in Constantinople rather than Macedonia. This move increased the Faculty's annual expenditure from 40,000 francs to 300,000 but failed to increase its membership.

In sum, the organizational experiment of the Exarchate met with relative failure. While the Macedonian struggle seemed to enter a new phase, the strong bonds between the Exarchist hierarchy and the Bulgarian-Macedonian communities, forged in the common battle against the Turks and their Macedonian rivals, began to weaken and evidence of mutual disappointment came to the forefront.

In all probability, a section of the indigenous Macedonian intelligentsia feared that the Exarchist program for structural reform was the cloak for the 'Bulgarization' of the Macedonian religious and communal institutions: a strategy that ran contrary to its own aspirations for emancipation and political self-determination.



## CHAPTER VI

### GREECE'S MACEDONIAN POLICY

#### 6.1 Greece's Political Considerations After the Unionist Revolution

It has been already pointed out that the entire Hellenic national program had been dependent on the future of the Ottoman Empire and therefore, the Young Turk coup was bound to exert an important influence on Greek affairs and foreign policy. In the Greek kingdom, the majority of the people warmly welcomed the revolution. Initially, public opinion had been confident that political developments in the neighboring country served the interests of Hellenism.

The prevalent concept was that within a liberal and progressive Young Turk regime the inter-racial struggle over control and power in the Ottoman Empire would necessarily drift to the fields of economic competition and political development. It was precisely in those departments that the three million Greeks in Turkey had been traditionally superior to all their racial contenders. At the time of the Turkish revolution, had it not been for the Armenians and the Jews the whole of the economic and commercial activity of the Ottoman Empire would have been exclusively controlled by Hellenes.<sup>1</sup>

In the circumstances, many Greeks shared the opinion that the kingdom should attempt to "Hellenize" the Ottoman Empire by means of economy, culture and religion. To this end, Athens should proceed to form an alliance with the Constantinople Cabinet and contribute to the political preservation of European Turkey. Souliotis-Nikolaidis, a prominent Greek, who had served in Macedonia and was currently the leader of the Greek organization in Constantinople, was an exponent of this theory.

He argued that Greece's primary objective should not be territorial expansion at the expense of Turkey-in-Europe but the evolution of Ottoman Hellenism into the dominant element in the neighboring country by means of infiltrating Ottoman

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<sup>1</sup> F.O. 881/9353 Athens Embassy to F.O./12-8-1908/no.117/Young to Grey, DAKIN (1966, p.400). AHMAD (1982, pp.405-6) in BRAUDE, B., and LEWIS, B., eds., (1982)

administration and society. The driving force in this elusive process of “Hellenizing” the Ottoman Empire could be neither the Ecumenical Patriarchate nor the Greek consular institutions but the numerous and prosperous Ottoman Greek communities.<sup>2</sup> Pan-Hellenism, however, had thus far failed to rally the sympathy of the entire nation. Among a section of Greek public opinion, the political community and the military there were many advocates of an aggressive policy towards the Porte. The apologists of this nationalist group stood for Greece's aggrandizement in the Ottoman provinces of Epirus, Macedonia, Thrace, Aegean and Asia Minor. Their ultimate intent was to bring about the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire and the unification of the entire Hellenic nation within the ethnic boundaries of a robust Greek kingdom.

During the initial joyous stages of the Turkish revolution, the forward-looking idea of Hellenization could not but gain considerable momentum. This current was illustrated in the Greek press. Athenian papers with large-scale circulation like *Ακροπολις* (Acropolis) and even the nationalist *Πατρις* (Fatherland) and *Εμπρος* (Forward) adopted a benevolent attitude toward the Young Turk revolution. The *Χρονικα* (Annals) maintained a mild stance respecting Macedonian events. This Greek newspaper however, did not fail to point out that ultimately the key determinant of Hellenic policy toward the Young Turk regime would be the position and welfare of the Greek element in the neighboring state.<sup>3</sup>

Young Turk sympathizers were not to be found among public opinion and the press alone. The Unionist manifesto had even succeeded in influencing a part of the Greek political community. The Turkish Constitution had been only a few days old when the Opposition Liberal party rushed to declare its support to the C.U.P. Rallis, the party leader, was initially of the opinion that the establishment of a free Parliamentary system in the Ottoman Empire would immensely benefit the economical-political development of the numerous Hellenic element.

On 1 September 1908, he embarked on a tour in Macedonia and Constantinople. While meeting the Young Turk officials in Salonica, Rallis without having consulted

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<sup>2</sup> PANAYOTOPOULOS (1980b, pp.337-43)

<sup>3</sup> The only Greek journal that openly rebuked the pro-Unionist trend was the *Αθηνα* (Athens). Yet, its different attitude must be primarily ascribed to its tendency to combat the present Greek Cabinet rather to an original opposition against the C.U.P. PAPAPOULOS (1986, pp.131-2)

the Athens government or the local Greek organization announced the withdrawal of the secret Greek officers from Macedonia and spoke fervently in favor of a long-term Greek-Turkish political understanding and cooperation.<sup>4</sup>

Contrary to the initial pro-Unionist stance of the Parliamentary Opposition - Rallis was to change his mind after his Macedonian tour and uphold the continuation of the armed struggle<sup>5</sup> - the Greek Patriarch Joachim III stood firm in his conviction that the Turkish revolution was in conflict with the interests of Hellenism. In His Holiness's opinion, in a new Ottoman Empire in which all nationalities would enjoy the same religious rights and political status the millet system would be jeopardized.

Here, it is important to remember that the foundations of the Patriarchate's religious, educational and communal authority lay in the autonomous existence of the millet. The Ecumenical Patriarch and the supreme ecclesiastical bodies Great Council and Holy Synod, therefore, were determined to strenuously oppose any attempt on the part of the new political leadership to introduce structural changes in the millet system which would threaten their privileged position in Orthodox religious and educational affairs.<sup>6</sup>

The Greek government on the other hand believed that the best way to promote the interests of Hellenism was by reaching an understanding with the new regime. Unlike the Bulgarian administration, the moderate Theotokis Cabinet did not seem to fear a revived Ottoman Empire. The establishment of an entente between the governments of Athens and Constantinople could avail Greece in two respects. First it would be the best political guarantee for the protection of the Greek populations and their interests in the Ottoman Empire. Second, it could lay the groundwork for the conclusion of an amicable agreement for the settlement of the Cretan question and the railway junction in accord with the desires of Greece.

The Theotokis government was well aware of the divergent national approaches in Greek society and leadership respecting the new Ottoman regime. As an outcome, the Ministerial Council embraced a sober and rather circumspect view of the situation in the neighboring country. Greek policy-makers knew that for the time being the

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<sup>4</sup> ZANNAS (1960, p.56)

<sup>5</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 88.1.3/General Consulate of Salonica/8/21-9-1908/no.887/Kanellopoulos to Baltazzis

<sup>6</sup> ZANNAS (1960, p.56). CLOGG (1982, p.199) in BRAUDE, and LEWIS., eds., (1982)

political situation in Constantinople was, and for the foreseeable future would continue to be, unstable.

The Greek leadership inclined to believe that if the Young Turks were truly committed to strengthening their relations with the Greek kingdom and the Hellenic populations of the Empire they should first officially recognize and respect the educational and religious privileges of the Greek Patriarchate. Furthermore, the new Ottoman regime should also take steps to safeguard the position of the Greek populations in Turkey and secure their welfare by elevating them from the level of reaya to the status of Ottoman subjects and grant them an equal share in the fields of civil administration, politics and culture.

It was within this context, that many Greek officials tended to consider the question of parliamentary elections as a political "test case" for the Young Turks. According to their reasoning, whether or not the minority Christian ethnicities were proportionately represented in the Ottoman Parliament would indicate whether the C.U.P. commitment for equality between Moslems and Christians was to be implemented or remain a dead letter.<sup>7</sup>

## **6.2 The End of the Hellenic Armed Intervention in Macedonia and the Beginning of the "Peaceful Propaganda" Activity**

In the first days after the Turkish revolution the Greek political leadership had failed to decide whether the revolution served Greek interests in Macedonia or not. From the Greek standpoint, the situation in the three provinces seemed very complicated. Admittedly, the C.U.P. commitment to prevent the implementation of the Reval program and the eventual suspension of the new British-Russian reform scheme for the alleged appointment of a Christian General Governor had caused relief in Athens. Ignoring the real content of the Reval discussions, the Greek administration was led to believe that the Young Turk intervention had frustrated the appointment of a Bulgarian Governor General in Macedonia and had prevented the three provinces from suffering the fate of Eastern Rumelia.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 39.4/Athens to General Consulate of Salonica/1/14-8-1908/no.3917/Baltazzis to Papadiamantopoulos, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 122.2/Athens to General Consulate of Salonica/2/15-8-1908/no.735/Baltazzis to Kanellopoulos, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 39.4/General Consulate of Salonica/15/28-7-1908/no.718/Kanellopoulos to Baltazzis

<sup>8</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 91.1.2/Constantinople Legation/30/12-8-1908/no.742/Gryparis to Baltazzis

On the other hand, the Macedonian developments after the July revolution resembled a political avalanche from which the Greek-Macedonian movement was unlikely to escape. The Albanian, Serb, Vlach and above all Bulgarian-Macedonian bands had already begun to dissolve.<sup>9</sup> The Great Powers had also initiated the withdrawal process of European control from the three provinces. As for the peasant Macedonian population, exhausted as it was from the prolonged inter-racial strife, it vehemently opposed any idea for the continuation of the armed Macedonian struggle.<sup>10</sup>

In these conditions, the moderate Greek government could do little but comply with the Unionist demand calling for the end of the Christian armed intervention in Macedonia. By the end of July, upon receiving orders from the Greek F.O. the Greek-Macedonian bands operating in Salonica and Monastir vilayets retired across the Greek border while only a small number withdrew to local resorts. The vast majority of the military and civilian agents, who had been employed in the "special" Macedonian Offices, were also recalled to Athens.<sup>11</sup>

The decision of the Hellenic government to suspend its revolutionary activities in Macedonia was interconnected with Greece's foreign policy considerations. Since the beginning of the year, it had become clear that the Macedonian question had ceased to dominate Greek politics. The Cretan question and the construction of the Salonica-Larisa railway link were now on the top of the Greek Ministerial Council's agenda. In addition, in case the Greek revolutionary bands remained in Macedonia it is certain that Moslem hostility would descend upon the local Hellenic populations. By withdrawing its partisans from Macedonia Athens sought to avoid stirring up Moslem animosity and display its support to the nascent Unionist regime with a view to attaining a favorable settlement in Crete or, alternatively, the railway connection.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> In fact, the dissolution of the M.R.O. bands was to a certain extent devoid of particular significance, for the M.R.O. militia was composed by the local Macedonian peasantry and always maintained its operational capability to take the field, whenever required. That was not the case with the Greek-Macedonian bands. Most of them had been formed in Greece and a possible re-activation after their dissolution was bound to encounter far more serious difficulties. I.A.Y.E./1908/File 59.2/Monastir Consulate/1/14-8-1908/no.770/Halkiopoulos to Baltazzis

<sup>10</sup> F.O. 881/9353 Berlin Embassy to F.O./18-10-1908/no.335/Lascelles to Grey/enclosure no.1

<sup>11</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 39.4/Athens to General Consulate of Salonica/19/1-9-1908/no.825/Baltazzis to Kanellopoulos

<sup>12</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 88.1.3/General Consulate of Salonica/4/17-8-1908/no.790/Kanellopoulos to Baltazzis/Report for July/pp.1. 3-4

On the other hand, those Greeks with long experience in Macedonian affairs were particularly hesitant to embrace the belief that the end of armed intervention and the return to the methods of "peaceful propaganda" could benefit Macedonian Hellenism. Those circles felt that during a period in which the Greek movement enjoyed undisputed supremacy in Macedonia any change in the local affairs could only imperil its position.

The Greek-Macedonian consular authorities had in time advised the government to take into serious consideration the possible implications stemming from the abrupt discontinuation of the revolutionary "national work". Their main argument was that the abandonment of the major reinforcement tool (i.e. the band activity) far from conferring any perceptible advantage upon the Hellenic cause in the three vilayets, could deprive the Greek-Macedonian communities of the profits of their national struggle. Kanellopoulos, secretary of the General Consulate of Salonica and perhaps the most active Greek diplomatic agent in Macedonia, wrote to Athens on 4 August 1908: "Following the dismantling of the bands there was no essential guarantee that the Macedonian ground and the Macedonian populations gained all these years by force, blood and funds were to remain loyal to Greece."<sup>13</sup>

Those fears were not totally ill-founded. In August, as soon as the bulk of the Greek partisans evacuated the three provinces, Bulgarian-Macedonian and Vlach nationalists launched a series of attacks against the Greek-Macedonian populations under the often indifferent eye of the Young Turk Committees. The short-term effects of this renewed inter-racial violence were the emergence of the Greek-Bulgarian Macedonian dispute over the ecclesiastical question and the growth of the Kutzo-Vlach influence in the southern districts of the Salonica vilayet.<sup>14</sup>

The new social-economic conditions were also likely to create additional problems for the Greek-Macedonian organization. The withdrawal of the Greek-Macedonian bands, for example, had allowed the backward mountainous Bulgarian populations of the north to move unhindered into the southern Macedonian districts in quest of

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p.13. The Greek consuls in Kavala, Dedeagatch and Monastir held similar views. See I.A.Y.E./1908/File 20.5/Kavala Consulate/21/3-8-1908/no.498/Polihroniadis to Baltazzis/Political, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 21.3/Dedeagatch Vice-Consulate/25/7-8-1908/no.248/Souidas to Baltazzis and I.A.Y.E./1908/File 59.2/Monastir Consulate/2/15-8-1908/no.770/Halkiopoulos to Baltazzis

<sup>14</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 85.3/General Consulate of Salonica/Kanellopoulos to Baltazzis/ Report on Events and Situation in Salonica District for 1908/p.9

work and better living conditions. Bulgarian settlements were thus established in the main cities across the Macedonian coastline such as Salonica, Kavala, Serres, Dedeagach challenging for the first time ever the indigenous Hellenic ethnic and political dominance.<sup>15</sup>

On the political level, in order to satisfy the Unionist request for the presentation of the political platform of the various Macedonian communities, the Greek F.O. instructed the General Consulate in Salonica to form a civilian commission whose main mission was to analyze the C.U.P. program and elaborate the Macedonian Greek Memorandum. A second commission undertook to establish links with the Young Turk Committee and work for the advancement of Greek political claims in Macedonia.<sup>16</sup>

Nevertheless, apart from such preparatory steps, it was on the establishment of Greek political associations in the urban centers of the Macedonian mainland that the Greek government had heavily relied for the advancement of its new Macedonian policy. These societies were to replace the special Macedonian offices and develop into the principal centers of the Hellenic political struggle in Macedonia. In the ensuing two months, utilizing the well-organized network of the Internal Organization and the pecuniary assistance from the local Greek consular authorities, a significant number of political clubs was formed in the vilayets of Salonica, Monastir, Kosovo and in the Orthodox districts of Albania and Epirus.

The clubs' fundamental aim was to defend the gains of the Macedonian struggle and contribute to the dissemination of the Hellenic propaganda in the three provinces. Their most urgent assignment had been to act as electoral propaganda lobbies, around which the Greek-Macedonian agents anticipated enlisting support and members for the electoral battle. Unhappily for the Greek nationalist aspirations, the new organization failed to spread in the three vilayets. The formation of a Greek National Association in Uskub under Goudos and Kommatis and the attempts to set

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<sup>15</sup> Among the class of the local Greek merchants and businessmen there were many who did not see the Bulgarian immigrants as racial rivals but as cheap labor force from which they anticipated to profiteer on economic terms. That is why, when the Greek-Macedonian Committee called the local Hellenic communities to thwart at any cost the Bulgarian immigration, its appeal fell on deaf ears. I.A.Y.E./1908/File 88.1.3/General Consulate of Salonica/4/17-8-1908/no.790/Kanellopoulos to Baltazzis/Report for July/p.14

<sup>16</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 91.1.1/Athens to Constantinople Legation/26/8-8-1908/no.3655/Baltazzis to Gryparis, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 39.4/General Consulate of Salonica/1/14-8-1908/no.717/Kanellopoulos to Baltazzis

up branches in the remote districts of Diber and Veles for the promotion of the material and cultural interests of the local Greek population were bound to meet with little success. For in the vilayet of Kosovo, the scattered ethnic Greek enclaves were incapable of forming an assertive ethnic majority even in a single district.<sup>17</sup>

In the provinces of Salonica and Monastir the Greeks were likely to find more scope for the development of their new political current. Prominent amongst the Macedonian Greek societies was the Monastir political club under the leadership of Valavanidis. Since mid-August, the local Greek organization, supported actively by the Greek consul Dimaras and the Metropolitan of Monastir, Stephanos, had busied itself with the designation of the club's internal structure, the drawing of political statutes and the recruitment of new members. The ostensible goal of the Monastir society was to strive for the political advancement and cultural development of the Macedonian people in conformity with the spirit of the new Ottoman regime. Its secret objective though was to replace the local special office in its underground activities and carry out the Hellenic national propaganda "by all means available".

The club's statutes provided the establishment of Educational, Press and Commercial departments.<sup>18</sup> The Educational section undertook to secure the normal function of the Greek schools in the province and oversee the needs of the local schoolmasters, while the Press department assumed the mission of "enlightening" the local population about Greek political theses in Macedonia. Unarguably, the most important division of the association was the Commercial. Its cadres, many of whom had served in the Greek-Macedonian revolutionary organization, were instructed to establish an information-communication network throughout the hinterland. Recruitment of professionals such as merchants, civil agents, businessmen was to take place as an instrument for influencing local public opinion and retaining the majority of the Macedonian peasant communities in the Greek-Patriarchist camp.

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<sup>17</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 118.2/Uskub Consulate/18/31-10-1908/no.570/Baraklis to Baltazzis and I.A.Y.E./1908/File 118.2/General Consulate of Salonica to Uskub Consulate/14/27-10-1908/no.56/National League to Baraklis, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 39.4/Athens to Uskub Consulate/18/31-8-1908/Baltazzis to Baraklis/Telegraphic. NIKOLAIDOU (1996, pp.117-20) in SOCIETY FOR MACEDONIAN STUDIES, ed., (1996)

<sup>18</sup> The Monastir club had its own premises in the city, its services, its library, its reading-room and administrative council.



Furthermore, independent groups of armed men, initially 40, would traverse the countryside on the pretext of hunting; the club's secret paramilitary force.<sup>19</sup>

The legacy of the Greek struggle in Macedonia however became an onerous burden for those political associations. Soon, it became evident that the Greek political clubs in the Macedonian and Epirote centers of Salonica, Monastir, Kavala, Serres, Uskub, Janina and Koritsa were unable to compete in numerical strength and political activity with the thoroughly-organized and sophisticated Bulgarian-Macedonian Constitutional League. Their political isolation and modest performance in the Ottoman elections disillusioned the policy-makers in Athens and their local Hellenic agents as to their capability to operate as the political wing of Macedonian Greek organization.

It is indisputable that, at the time of their formation, the Macedonian Greek clubs had to survive and develop under extremely unfavorable conditions. The local Macedonians, including the ethnic Greeks, could not overlook the fact that the ruthless Macedonian struggle had impaired their economic resources and had devastated a large part of their communal infrastructure. After the pacification of the region, the Macedonian Greeks were much more interested in working for their economic rehabilitation and individual prosperity rather than engage themselves in the new political structures of the Greek nationalist centers.<sup>20</sup> The Greek community of Salonica, for instance, instead of striving for the growth of the local National Association sought to outdo its Jewish commercial rivals and cement its commanding position in the Macedonian economic affairs. To this aim, it did not hesitate to take advantage of the cheap Bulgarian labor availability and even set up joint ventures with Bulgarian-Macedonian businessmen notwithstanding the strong opposition on the part of the Macedonian Greek civilian authorities.<sup>21</sup>

Another deterrent to the development of the Greek political clubs in Macedonia was the internal divisions of the Greek-Macedonian leadership. Since the second half of the Macedonian struggle, the Greek nationalist agents and a group of ultra-conservative Macedonian Patriarchist officials headed by the Metropolitan of

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<sup>19</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 59.2/Monastir Consulate/18/31-8-1908/no.909/Halkiopoulos to Baltazzis

<sup>20</sup> G.S.A./A.T.V./1909/File 3/Monastir Consulate/2/15-4-1909/no.173/Modis to Tsontos-Vardas

<sup>21</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File D-4.1/General Consulate of Salonica/May 1909/Special Office to General Consulate/Report on Macedonia/p.4. See also note 15

Salonica Alexandros and his colleague of Veroia Apostolos had been at odds. Apart from the existence of conflicting personal strategies and their implication in local party feuds, the main point of dispute between the two rival groups lay in their tendency to control the educational and communal institutions of the Macedonian Greek populations. As a consequence of this anomalous situation, certain Patriarchist clergymen like the Metropolitan of Veroia Apostolos were instructing the Macedonian Greek communities to avoid participating in the new political associations and distance themselves from the Hellenic nationalist propaganda activities.<sup>22</sup> Such was the discontent of the Greek Macedonian consular authorities that, in August 1908, Kanellopoulos requested Athens to intervene with the Ecumenical Patriarch to replace the Metropolitan of Salonica for he had failed to provide even elementary assistance to the Hellenistic movement in Macedonia.<sup>23</sup> Last, but not least, the Theotokis Cabinet recently-formulated policy to concentrate its efforts on the settlement of the Cretan and railway questions impeded the growth of the Greek Macedonian political societies and undermined Greece's position in Macedonia.

Altogether, the Young Turk revolution had materially altered the entire context of the Macedonian conflict as the dismantling of Christian revolutionary bands put an end to the "politics of terror" in the region. The Greek leadership in Macedonia and Athens rightfully estimated that from this point onwards the racial struggle for the acquisition of national ground and the advancement of political claims in Macedonia was to shift to the fields of economy, religion and politics. What the Greek leadership had failed to understand was that the transition from revolutionary activities to the novel practice of peaceful propaganda could endanger the supreme position of the Greek-Macedonian movement in the provinces of Salonica and Monastir.

The Greek authorities' failure to establish an influential organization of Macedonian political clubs indicated that the economic and political conditions in the region had undergone profound changes. Developments in the region and the accentuation of

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<sup>22</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File D-4.1/General Consulate of Salonica/May 1909/Special Office to General Consulate/Report on Macedonia/pp.9-12. See also: I.A.Y.E./1908/File 39.4/General Consulate of Salonica/23/5-9-1908/no.751/Kanellopoulos to Baltazzis

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

political factionalism within the Greek-Macedonian movement had also undermined the Greek decision-making centers' capability to formulate and put into implementation a new and effective Macedonian policy. Furthermore, taking into consideration that the focus of Greek policy shifted from Macedonia to Crete and the railway connection, one has a clear picture as to what led to the inability of the Greek administration to meet the new Macedonian challenge of the Young Turk era.

By the end of summer 1908, there was indisputable evidence that the Turkish revolution had injured the Greek national movement in Macedonia. Gone entirely was the concept of a Hellenic offensive policy for the further dissemination of the Greek national and political program in the Macedonian provinces of Salonica and Monastir. Hence, the official Hellenic administration and the Macedonian Greeks would strive to defend the gains that they had obtained during the armed Macedonian struggle against the resurgent attacks of their rival Macedonian ethnic groups under a new and unknown Young Turk regime.

### **6.3 The Negotiations Between the Unionist Headquarters of Salonica and the Greek-Macedonian Commission. Early Tokens of Bilateral Suspicion and Disenchantment.**

The Greek political leadership was indeed anxious about the outcome of the political discussions with the Committee. The Theotokis government held that the negotiation process afforded an excellent opportunity for an in-depth investigation and analysis of Unionist political intentions on two important subjects: the future status of the Greek communities in the Ottoman Empire and the attitude of the Ottoman leaders respecting the "national question" in the country.

The Greek-Unionist discussions began in early August 1908 and lasted until the end of September. A four-member commission, composed by Hatzilazaros, Dr. Zannas, Dingas, Theodoridis was appointed to represent the Greek-Macedonian population. Rahmi Bey, Cemal Bey, Nazim Bey, Enver Bey were the representatives of Salonica C.U.P. headquarters. In theory, the entire Young Turk political program was on the agenda but soon the discussions focused on the most controversial questions. These were the educational independence and privileges of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the

admission of non-Moslems to the Ottoman armed forces and the parliamentary elections.

From the outset, it became discernible that the two delegations held divergent opinions on the first two subjects. On the question of education, the new Young Turk program accepted the maintenance of nationally-formed schools but subject to private and not public status. The article 18 of the new Unionist educational program stated that all public schools were to receive obligatory instruction in the Turkish language and accommodate Moslem as well as non-Moslem pupils. The key element of the Unionist project though was to be found in its provision to transfer the control and administration of the entire Christian educational network from the national Churches to the Ottoman state.<sup>24</sup>

In the minds of the Unionist leaders the segregated ethnic Bulgarian, Greek, Serb and Albanian schools functioned as hotbeds of dissident ethnic nationalism. Consequently, the Unionist argument went on, in their current status the Christian schools constituted an elusive threat to the internal coherence of the Ottoman Empire. The chief objective of the Committee's new educational policy was to win over the Christian schools from foreign nationalist attractions and establish homogeneous Ottoman primary-secondary schools in conformity with the constitutional spirit of national and political unity of the Ottoman people.<sup>25</sup>

In vain Enver Bey and Nazim Bey tried to dissipate Greek apprehensions that the Young Turk Committee was striving to put an end to the educational jurisdiction and independence of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. By the end of the bilateral discussions, the Greek-Macedonian commission was convinced that underneath their liberal declarations the Young Turks had been consistently working for the advancement of a new Turkish nationalist outlook respecting Ottoman educational matters. The substance of this policy was absolute control of the public educational institutions by the central Ottoman administration and the abolition of the Ecumenical Patriarch's privileges.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> E.A./1908/KH/no.34/29-8-1908/p.5

<sup>25</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 87.1/Constantinople Legation/30/12-8-1908/no.742/Gryparis to Baltazzis, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 87.1/General Consulate of Salonica/20/2-9-1908/no.799/Kanellopoulos to Baltazzis and E.A./1908/KH/no.34/29-8-1908/p.5

<sup>26</sup> VLACHOS (1954, pp.113-4, 117), ZANNAS (1960, p.55)

Nor were the positions of the two commissions on Christian conscription any closer. In fact, both bodies had found the issue painfully subtle and disagreeable. The Unionist perspective on non-Moslem military service had been influenced by political rather than purely military considerations. The C.U.P. proposals stipulated that the Christian detachments should have mixed ethnic composition and serve in the same barracks with the Moslems

The Young Turks held that in doing their military service in the army the Christians would provide evidence that they were law-abiding Ottoman subjects conscious enough not only to claim their Constitutional rights but also to shoulder the responsibilities stemming from their Ottoman "citizenship".<sup>27</sup> It is interesting however, that among the Moslems there were many who reacted with alarm to the idea of Christian enrollment in the army. These Moslems were apprehensive that the well-educated Christian recruits were likely to occupy the high-ranking positions in the armed forces and dislocate the backward Moslem veterans.<sup>28</sup>

The ideas of the Young Turk representatives were in open conflict with those of their Greek-Macedonian counterparts. It is unquestionable that the entire subject had caused serious embarrassment to the Hellenic commission. Certainly, the Greeks had no desire to see their recruits being consumed within the predominantly Moslem army. Having been obliged to comply with the Constitutional provisions nevertheless, they finally agreed "in principle" with Christian participation in the Ottoman armed forces. The Greek delegates, following instructions from the Greek government and the Patriarch, did not fail to raise certain objections on the project. Like the Bulgarians, they supported the opinion that the Christian military units should be formed on a purely national basis, avoid any interaction with Moslem troops and serve in their native province.<sup>29</sup> The Young Turk inability to sanction the

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<sup>27</sup> The system of enrolling recruits from various ethnic communities in a multi-national army was not novel. For example, in the Austro-Hungarian army many independent Hungarian, French, Polish and in cases even Slavo-Hungarian battalions were in service for years. In the Ottoman Empire, this military practice was also familiar. During the first centuries of Ottoman expansion in Europe, separate Serb, Albanian and Greek contingents served in the Ottoman army. See I.A.Y.E./1908/File 88.1.2/General Consulate of Salonica/17/30-8-1908/Kanellopoulos to Baltazzis/without classification number, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 88.1.2/Constantinople Legation/29/11-9-1908/no.475/Kontogiannis to Gryparis, ABBOTT (1909, p.93)

<sup>28</sup> Refer to chapter 8.

<sup>29</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 39.4/Athens to General Consulate of Salonica/1/14-8-1908/no.3917/Baltazzis to Kanellopoulos. See for additional information: I.A.Y.E./1908/File 88.1.2/Constantinople Legation/8/21-9-1908/no.481/Kontogiannis to Gryparis, VLACHOS (1954, pp.205-6)

first two Greek amendments affirmed the existence of a cleavage between the two bodies. As an outcome, the bilateral discussions resulted in deadlock. Both sides decided to shelve the matter and entrust Parliament with its settlement.

In the negotiation process, certain tentative attempts were made for electoral cooperation between the C.U.P. and the Greek-Macedonian element. During their August meetings, Dingas, Theodoridis, Dr. Zannas and Hatzilazaros discussed the issue with Rahmi Bey and Cemal Bey in the Unionist headquarters in Salonica. It was in these meetings that the Greek representatives formulated the idea that the Young Turks were pretending to be indifferent in the parliamentary elections. Rahmi Bey and Cemal Bey attempted to assure the Greeks that, from their point of view, the pivotal issue was not the electoral battle itself but the common activity of the numerous Turkish and Hellenic element for the strengthening and unity of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>30</sup>

The Greeks, for their part, had good reasons to question the sincerity of the Young Turk declarations. The Athens administration was aware that a few days after the revolution the Unionists had proceeded to form joint committees with the Albanians in Epirus and the nationalist Vlachs in Macedonia in order to counterpoise the Hellenic organization. Furthermore, allowing the Bulgarians to appropriate the Patriarchist churches in Macedonia and failing to settle the Greek-Bulgarian dispute, the Unionists had damaged Greece's interests in Macedonia.

The Greek authorities had no perceptible alternative but to denounce the Committee's lack of administrative competence and political will in dealing with these important questions. In the end, the Greeks began to suspect that the Unionist factor seemed to add to the accentuation of the perennial Macedonian controversy rather contribute to its eventual resolution.<sup>31</sup>

The conclusion of the negotiation process left a deep-rooted feeling of disenchantment and bitterness to the Unionist and Greek commission alike. On the one hand, the Young Turk Committee realized that any Ottoman action destined to

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<sup>30</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 88.1.1/General Consulate of Salonica/15/28-8-1908/Kanellopoulos to Baltazzis/without classification number

<sup>31</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 91.1.1/Athens to Constantinople Legation/26/8-8-1908/no.3655/Baltazzis to Gryparis, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 99.1.2/Avlona Consulate/22/5-10-1908/no.5338/Verenikis to Baltazzis, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 90.3/Uskub Consulate/24/6-9-1908/no.392/Baraklis to Baltazzis/Political. See also previous note.

result in the restriction of the Patriarchate privileges or any scheme aspiring to force the Greek communities to embrace a collective Ottoman identity would face the adamant opposition of Hellenism.

On the other hand, underneath the liberal C.U.P. manifestations, the Greeks began to discern the initial illustrations of Turkish chauvinism. The new Young Turk political practice of establishing homogeneous educational and military institutions with a view to "Ottomanize" the non-Moslem nationalities, put the Greek leadership on the alert. In the following months the Athens government was to come to terms with the idea that not only the current status and traditional rights of Hellenism but the ethnic identity of its "unredeemed brethren" residing in the Ottoman Empire were at stake under the new Ottoman regime.

#### **6.4 Attempts at Reaching a Greco-Turkish Understanding**

The negotiations between the Unionist and Greek representatives in Salonica had not been concluded when on 15 September 1908 the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria broke off diplomatic relations. For the ensuing six weeks a Turco-Bulgarian armed conflict seemed almost inevitable. In the Hellenic kingdom, the mounting crisis between Sofia and Constantinople had revived the Slavic nightmare. The age-old scenario that one day a powerful Christian Slav country, presumably Bulgaria or Serbia, would dislodge the Ottomans from Europe and occupy Macedonia was anathema to the Hellenic nation and its leadership.

From the Eastern crisis of 1878 onwards, successive Greek governments and the Court of King George I had religiously clung to the perception that so long as Greece had not completed her economic development and military reorganization she had no real alternative but to prop up Ottoman rule in the southern Balkans as a formidable bulwark to the Slavic menace. Only when the Hellenic kingdom would be adequately strong to claim and obtain its Macedonian stakes through military might should it abandon its "impeccable" attitude and embark upon a "forward" policy against the decaying Ottoman Empire.

Sensibly, almost overnight, the idea of a Greek-Ottoman understanding on the Balkans gained considerable momentum in the Cabinets of Athens and Constantinople. As soon as Turco-Bulgarian relations deteriorated in mid-September

1908 the Theotokis Cabinet took the initiative to sound out the Ottoman leaders over a rapprochement between Greece and Turkey. Estimating, correctly, that an understanding with the Ottoman Empire was an impossibility without the support of the Committee, the Greek government assigned Petropoulakis (deputy in National Assembly and member of the Macedonian Committee)<sup>32</sup> with the delicate task of exploring the Ottoman disposition on the subject of Greco-Turkish entente.

On 16 September 1908, the Greek representative started his mission from Salonica. The Unionist Committee received the Greek emissary warmly. The Young Turk leaders assured Petropoulakis of their honest will to collaborate with Greece against Bulgarian expansionism. They went on to add that in the event of a Turco-Bulgarian conflict, the C.U.P. had plans to distribute arms and ammunition to the Macedonian Greeks and allow the influx of 20,000 Greek irregulars and reservist officers into Macedonia.<sup>33</sup>

Following this first sanguine contact the Greek emissary proceeded to Constantinople. In the Ottoman capital, he met with the Young Turk leadership and the Grand Vizier Kiamil Pasha. These talks however had not made much progress when the Cretans declared their union with Greece on 7 October 1908. The complicated situation in the island and the October crisis was to develop in an insurmountable impediment to the attempted Greco-Turkish understanding.

The Ottoman political leadership and Moslem public opinion were strongly against any Greek fait accompli in the island that would infringe the rights of the local Moslem community and result in Cretan annexation by the Greek kingdom.<sup>34</sup> Although furious with the Cretans and their patrons in the Greek capital the Ottomans were exceedingly hesitant to withdraw from the negotiation process. The mandarins of the Sublime Porte believed that, at this juncture, the question of Bulgaria was far more important to their Balkan geopolitical interests than semi-independent Crete.

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<sup>32</sup> Apart from the official Ottoman administration, Petropoulakis was to hold discussions with the C.U.P. Since the Young Turk Committee still remained a non-political body, the Hellenic overtures should have a semi-official instead of a purely official character.

<sup>33</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 39.5/General Consulate of Salonica/2/15-10-1908/Petropoulakis's Report to F.O. The Greek representative inclined to believe though that, for the time being, the chief concern of the Committee was to reconcile with Sofia rather than work for a Greek-Ottoman understanding. I.A.Y.E./1908/File 118.2/General Consulate of Salonica/17/30-9-1908/no.1023/Petropoulakis to Baltazzis

<sup>34</sup> F.O. 881/9398 Memorandum on the Affairs of Crete/Foreign Office/1-1-1909/Kilmarnock to Grey



In fact, during the crucial first half of October, the Ottoman leadership strove to investigate on what basis Greece would enter into a military alliance with the Sublime Porte. To this effect, on 2 October 1908, the leading member of the Salonica Committee Haci Adil Bey went to Athens. In his meeting with the Greek Prime Minister Theotokis the Unionist official was informed that Greece would support the establishment of a Greco-Turkish alliance "on the basis of a general agreement with the Porte and the cession of Crete."

The Greek Prime Minister assured the Young Turk envoy that within the framework of a honest Greco-Ottoman understanding the kingdom would immediately extend political and military support to the Ottoman government should Turkey-in-Europe be attacked by the Bulgarian army. Theotokis confided to Haci Adil Bey that in the event of war Greece could assist the Ottoman armies with a force of 30,000 men. The Greek Prime Minister promised to augment this contingent with 60,000 men next year and if Crete was granted to Greece with an extra force of 10,000 men.<sup>35</sup>

On 11 October 1908, the Ottoman minister in Athens Naby Bey sounded the Greek government anew and this time officially about the conclusion of a Greek-Turkish military alliance eliciting the same answer that was given to Haci Adil Bey.<sup>36</sup>

Meanwhile in Constantinople, the negotiations between the Ottoman leadership and the envoy of the Greek administration seemed to take a new turn. Stiffened by the mission of Faik Bey and Fethy Bey in Sofia and the demobilization of the Bulgarian army since mid-October the Young Turks had embraced a different view respecting the question of entente with Greece. On 16 October 1908, Petropoulakis held a meeting with Ahmet Riza Bey, Talat Bey, Enver Bey and Rahmi Bey in which the Unionist leaders inquired the Greek emissary whether the Hellenic government would conclude an alliance with the Ottoman Empire on an "unconditional basis".

The Greek deputy replied that the Athens government was fully prepared to form a political and military alliance with the Porte providing that the questions of Crete and the Macedonian railway junction were solved in consonance with the Greek desiderata. The Young Turks, for their part, professed that the Committee did not raise substantial objections to the final settlement of the Cretan question but being a

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<sup>35</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Athens Embassy to F.O./22-10-1908/no.137/Elliot to Grey/Most Confidential

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

non-governmental body it was unable to assume any kind of political responsibility towards Greece.<sup>37</sup>

The Greek deputy's communication with Kiamil Pasha was equally counter-productive. The Grand Vizier was indeed very anxious to secure Greek military aid. He canvassed the idea that even though the negotiations between Athens and Constantinople failed to come to fruition the Macedonian Committee should exert its influence upon the Greek government to extend military support to the Ottoman forces in Macedonia, if needed.

Nevertheless, when the Greek emissary made an effort to raise the question of Greece's compensation in Crete Kiamil Pasha avoided to bind his government. The experienced Ottoman statesman was well aware that, under the circumstances, it was unthinkable for his Cabinet to commence negotiations on the thorny Cretan problem without running the risk of resignation due to the hostile reaction on the part of the Moslem population and the nationalist Young Turks.<sup>38</sup> Kiamil Pasha shared the opinion that only after the end of the Balkan crisis and the European conference could the Hellenic and Ottoman government, through direct negotiations, reach an agreement over the island.<sup>39</sup>

In late October 1908 the Greek representative left the Ottoman capital re infecta. From his point of view, it was the visible Bulgarian threat and the need of strengthening its military position in Macedonia that had forced the Ottoman political establishment to seek an understanding with Greece. On the other hand, the Kiamil Pasha Cabinet and the Young Turk Committee were disinclined to enter into serious talks on the questions of Crete and the railway connection, at least before the end of the Balkan crisis. In this conjuncture, both Ottoman decision-making bodies were reluctant to shoulder the heavy political cost of losing Crete to Greece.

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<sup>37</sup> Commenting on the Unionist reply that the C.U.P. would not oppose the Greek claims on Crete and the railways, the Greek Consul-General in Salonica Papadiamantopoulos wrote to Athens: "The Young Turk bid is most suspect, not honest and unreliable." I.A.Y.E./1908/File 118.1/General Consulate of Salonica/11/24-10-1908/no.991/Papadiamantopoulos to Baltazzis, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 39.5/General Consulate of Salonica/17/30-10-1908/no.1026/Papadiamantopoulos to Baltazzis, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 39.5/General Consulate of Salonica/10/23-10-1908/Papadiamantopoulos to Baltazzis/without classification number.

<sup>38</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 39.5/General Consulate of Salonica/2/15-10-1908/Petropoulakis's Report to F.O.

<sup>39</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./26-10-1908/no.710/Lowther to Grey and F.O. 881/9492 Foreign Office to Paris Embassy/20-11-1908/no.264/Grey to Bertie

For its part, the Ottoman administration tended to consider that Greece's attitude to its alliance feelers was "ambiguous".<sup>40</sup> British and Greek sources however do not appear to support this perception. It is almost certain that, had Crete been ceded to Greece, the Theotokis Cabinet would have reached an understanding with the Sublime Porte even in opposition to the Greek public sentiment which resented a collusion with the hereditary enemy. In fact, so intense was the resolve of the Greek Cabinet to facilitate the process of rapprochement between the two countries that the Greek Foreign Minister Baltazzis intimated to Elliot, the British minister in Athens, that Greece was willing to make a goodwill gesture toward Constantinople by abandoning her expansionist aspirations on Epirus.<sup>41</sup>

It is true that an element of ambiguity had been present throughout the course of the Greco-Turkish negotiations. It is equally clear that it featured far less in Greece's foreign policy and much more in Ottoman practice. Apart from the removal of the Bulgarian threat since mid-October and reasons of strategy it was the uncompromising rivalry between the Unionist Committee and the Kiamil Pasha Cabinet and their open disagreement on the Cretan issue that undermined the negotiation process with the Athens government.

Notwithstanding their verbal assurances to the Greek officials to the opposite effect the C.U.P. had no intention of granting Crete to Greece in exchange for an alliance. Such a concession would constitute a violation of the Committee's fundamental political commitment: the protection of the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, the stance of Grand Vizier Kiamil Pasha was more moderate and realistic. The Kiamil Pasha government believed that Slav aggressiveness and the presence of numerous Greek populations in the Ottoman Empire were sound reasons for working out a political understanding between Athens and Constantinople. As we shall see below, the Grand Vizier Kiamil Pasha had certain ideas about the resolution of the Cretan imbroglio.<sup>42</sup> But as soon as the Cretan crisis broke out the Ottoman administration was trapped between growing Moslem agitation and the Unionist opposition to any territorial concession to Greece

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<sup>40</sup> AHMAD (1969, p.24)

<sup>41</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Athens Embassy to F.O./22-10-1908/no.137/Elliot to Grey/Most Confidential and F.O. 881/9492 Athens Embassy to F.O./19-11-1908/no.152/Elliot to Grey

<sup>42</sup> Refer to "Accentuation of Cretan Question".

on the one hand and the urgent need for foreign military support to strengthen its Macedonian defense on the other.

The gradual diminution of the Bulgarian danger since mid-October allowed the Porte to revise its attitude on the issue of a pact with Greece; a pact that, had it been implemented, would have stirred great turmoil in Ottoman politics and could have made the position of the Kiamil Pasha Cabinet untenable.<sup>43</sup>

### **6.5 The Politics of Estrangement**

The unsuccessful outcome of the Greek-Ottoman negotiations and the de-escalation in the strained relations between Sofia and Constantinople since November 1908 diminished the likelihood of a Greek-Ottoman agreement; but these new developments did not entirely discourage the Theotokis administration. Greek officials espoused the idea that even though at present the prospect of an Ottoman-Bulgarian conflict seemed more remote, a Greek-Ottoman entente was bound to maintain its political value. The Greek Prime Minister Theotokis was of the opinion that in so far as three million Greeks continued to reside in the Ottoman Empire the establishment of friendly relations between the two countries served their mutual interests. According to his reasoning, the reforming efforts of the new Young Turk regime would stand greater chances of success if they were supported by the Ottoman Greek communities. On the other hand, there was no better official guarantee for the protection of the Hellenic economic-political stakes in the Ottoman Empire than the building of an amicable understanding between the Cabinets of Constantinople and Athens.<sup>44</sup>

The Greek administration was truly determined to come to terms with the Porte. On 1 November 1908, in his meeting with the Grand Vizier Kiamil Pasha the Greek agent in Constantinople Gryparis renewed the Greek feelers for an understanding between the two countries. Meanwhile, providing evidence of its good-faith the Hellenic government mounted surveillance on the Epirote border to prevent arms-traffic and band-crossing in the province of Janina. Athens, moreover, gave instructions to its consular authorities in Epirus to retain "the closest relations with

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<sup>43</sup> F.O. 881/9398 Memorandum on the Affairs of Crete/Foreign Office/1-1-1909/Kilmarnock to Grey

<sup>44</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Athens Embassy to F.O./2-11-1908/no.151/Elliot to Grey

the local Ottoman authorities, to restrain radical elements and encourage the people to work for the success of the C.U.P.”<sup>45</sup>

In Constantinople, the trend for alignment with Greece had lost its momentum. The gradual removal of the Bulgarian threat had unveiled how little faith the Ottoman political leaders had in the advisability of establishing an entente with Greece. They inclined to view a rapprochement between the two countries exclusively in the context of maintaining the existing Balkan power equilibrium and containing the expansionism of Bulgaria.

In one of his November reports to Athens, Gryparis estimated that although Greek-Ottoman relations had gone through a very friendly period during the initial stages of the Near East crisis, later, owing to the implications of the Cretan question and the British tendency to work out a Turco-Bulgarian understanding, Greece's political position in the negotiations with the Ottoman leadership had considerably weakened.<sup>46</sup> Understandably, the Sublime Porte chose not to bind itself to the renewed cooperation overtures of the Hellenic government. Kiamil Pasha informed Gryparis that before the final settlement of the outstanding Cretan question the Ottoman administration could not take the matter into consideration.

It was however among the Unionist circles that Greece's conciliatory attempts were to meet with the most determined opposition. Anxious to reassert its fundamental role as the sole undisputed guarantor of Ottoman integrity and Sultan's suzerainty, a role which had been strongly challenged during the Balkan crisis, the Committee decided to pursue an aggressive policy against the Greek kingdom.

In confronting a Christian Balkan country and maintaining an unyielding attitude on the irksome Cretan question the Young Turks sought to prove that they were still capable of defending Ottoman national interests against Christian encroachment. In doing so, the Unionist committees anticipated retrieving at least a part of their lost popularity among the Moslem public opinion and the consolidation of their internal political position vis-a-vis the moderate Kiamil Pasha Cabinet.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 87.1/Athens to Constantinople Legation/25/8-12-1908/no.7949/Baltazzis to Gryparis, F.O. 881/9492 Athens Embassy to F.O./19-11-1908/no.152/Elliot to Grey

<sup>46</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 88.1.3/Constantinople Legation/12/25-11-1908/no.1091/Gryparis to Baltazzis

<sup>47</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 88.1.3/Athens to Constantinople Legation/26/9-11-1908/no.6544/Baltazzis to Gryparis, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 88.1.3/Constantinople Legation/30/12-11-1908/no.1099/Gryparis to Baltazzis, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 87.1/General Consulate of Janina/10/23-11-1908/no.680/Agonakis to Baltazzis and F.O. 881/9492 Athens Embassy to F.O./19-11-1908/no.152/Elliot to Grey

## 6.6 Deterioration in the Macedonian vilayets

The Unionist tendency to alienate both the Athens government and the Ottoman Greeks was visible from the second half of November 1908. To the Young Turk Committee, Greece was the perfect opponent. Unlike the Slavic countries, Greece was totally incapable of threatening the Ottoman Empire by military means and lacked diplomatic support from Europe. As a pretext, the Unionists could easily justify their decision to sever their relations with Greece by pointing to Greek disturbances in Crete and Epirus.

The carelessness of certain Greek politicians further stimulated Ottoman aggression. Undermining the efforts of the Athens government to create and maintain a good climate in Greco-Turkish relations, the leader of the Opposition party Rallis, whilst touring in Epirus during November, made certain anti-Albanian statements with a view to inciting the local Greek communities. This unfortunate move was deemed by the Ottomans as an official Greek encouragement to the Epirote partisans. Finally, Rallis's Epirote tour ended up in failure. Its only product was estrangement between the local Moslem and Greek populations.<sup>48</sup>

When the Greek-Ottoman controversy drifted from the Epirote convulsions to the acute Macedonian question the situation became infinitely worse. Since the outbreak of the Cretan crisis it had been rumored in the Rumelian provinces that the Greek element was countenancing the organization of a local Macedonian insurrection against the Ottoman administration as a diversion for Crete. On 14 December 1908, the Monastir Unionist Committee made representations to the Greek Consulate to take preventive measures to avert the imminent, according to the Young Turks, outburst of Greek-Macedonian agitation.<sup>49</sup>

Furthermore, throughout the last month of 1908, the publication in the Turkish press of several articles referring to the revolutionary activity of the Macedonian Greek Metropolitans inflamed Moslem public opinion.<sup>50</sup> As expected, the Greek papers in Turkey defended the Patriarchist officials and in the subsequent weeks a "press war"

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<sup>48</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2328 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/8-3-1909/Lamb to Lowther, F.O. 881/9503 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./31-12-1908/no.962/Lowther to Grey

<sup>49</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 88.1.3/Monastir Consulate/3/17-12-1908/no.1326/Dimaras to Baltazzis and I.A.Y.E./1908/File 87.1/Serres Consulate/5/18-12-1908/no.614/Sahtouris to Baltazzis

<sup>50</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 122.3/Ministry of the Interior to General Administration of Salonica/13/26-12-1908/Hilmi Pasha to Danish Bey

broke out between the Turkish and Greek newspapers. As usually happens on such occasions, the press recriminations did not confine themselves to the Macedonian attitude of the Greek Metropolitans but spilled over into more controversial issues like the Cretan dispute.<sup>51</sup>

In late December 1908, the Unionist organ of Salonica *Ittihat ve Terrakki* published an article concerning the Macedonian policy of the Hellenic clergy. The Young Turk journal attacked the Patriarchist hierarchy arguing that:

“The Bishoprics have been centers of anarchy and turmoil. The religious authorities, in acting as instruments of the Greek consuls and the army officers sent by the Greek General Staff had the largest share of responsibility for the disasters in the Macedonian provinces.”<sup>52</sup>

Since the reciprocal press attacks were likely to arouse Moslem hostility and add to the escalation of the Hellenic-Ottoman tension the Theotokis Cabinet deplored them. The attempt of the Greek government to put a restraining hand on the Greek papers in Turkey came too late however.<sup>53</sup> The Ottoman government had been determined to capitalize on the mounting tension by attacking the bases of the Greek movement in Macedonia: the Patriarchist Metropolitan sees and the Greek consular institutions. In mid-December 1908, the Minister of the Interior Hussein Hilmi Pasha threatened the Ecumenical Patriarch Joachim III that if the collaboration between the Macedonian Metropolitans and the Greek consulates continued the Sublime Porte would have to resort to punitive measures to terminate this unacceptable situation.<sup>54</sup>

At the turn of the year, the Ottoman administration went from words to actions. The first move of the Sublime Porte was to banish the militant Metropolitan of Drama Chrisostomos from Macedonia before the end of January. Second, having received new instructions from Constantinople since mid-January, the vali of Salonica Ali Danish Bey increased the military measures on the frontier with Greece in an effort to

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<sup>51</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 122.3/Ministry of the Interior to General Administration of Salonica/25/7-1-1909/Hilmi Pasha to Danish Bey and also I.A.Y.E./1908/File 88.1.3/Constantinople Legation/20/2-1-1909/no.1311/Gryparis to Baltazzis

<sup>52</sup> *Αληθεια*, 16/29-12-1908, p.1, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 88.1.2/General Consulate of Salonica/15/28-12-1908/no.1159/Papadiamantopoulos to Baltazzis/enclosure no.1

<sup>53</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 118.1/Athens to General Consulate of Salonica/22/4-1-1909/no.1189/Baltazzis to Papadiamantopoulos

<sup>54</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 118.1/Constantinople Legation/4/17-12-1908/no.1251/Gryparis to Baltazzis. I.A.Y.E./1908/File 88.1.2/Constantinople Legation/12/25-12-1908/no.1281/Gryparis to Baltazzis

obstruct the transportation of arms and war material from the Greek kingdom to Macedonia via commercial routes, railways and steamers.

Third, the Macedonian General Administration put the Greek-Macedonian activists and the Hellenic consular authorities under strict surveillance. The Greek consuls were prevented from communicating with the Macedonian Metropolitans, notables or schoolmasters in case those individuals were Ottoman and not Greek subjects. The Ottoman gendarmerie and the army were ordered to carry out extensive searches in the Greek-Macedonian villages with the task of uncovering hidden arms or potential plot centers.<sup>55</sup>

In the first two months of 1909, relations between the Moslem communities and the Greek element in Macedonia became strained as both ethnic groups seemed to prepare for a new round of racial confrontation. Adding to the seriousness of the situation by February 1909 the Ottoman provincial administration organized a Macedonian Moslem militia and it distributed roughly 20,000 rifles to civilian Moslems in the two provinces of Monastir and Salonica.

The Ottoman authorities argued that the mission of the Moslem militia was to operate as an auxiliary military force for the protection of governmental buildings, bridges, roads and other strategic points in case of war. In fact, the original undertaking of these Moslem armed groups was to frustrate the resurgence of Christian Macedonian revolutionary activity.<sup>56</sup>

If the Ottoman authorities' ultimate intent underneath these administrative and military precautions was to prevent Christian agitation and defuse tension in the region they failed miserably. Although in December 1908, the Ottoman III Army Headquarters reassured the Macedonians through the columns of the *Yeni Asr* that there were no Greek bandits in Macedonian territory,<sup>57</sup> by the beginning of 1909, a number of Greek bands were resuming their revolutionary activities in the departments of Salonica, Kassandra, Monastir, Florina, Morihovo, Kastoria and

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<sup>55</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK-A/Ministry of the Interior to General Administration of Salonica/13/26-1-1909/Hilmi Pasha to Danish Bey and I.A.Y.E./1908/File 118.2/General Consulate of Salonica/14/27-1-1909/no.1194/Papadiamantopoulos to Baltazzis

<sup>56</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2328 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/8-2-1909/Acting-Consul Edmonds to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2328 Vice-Consulate of Serres to Constantinople Embassy/14-2-1909/Greig to Lowther and P.R.O. F.O. 195/2328 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/15-2-1909/Lamb to Lowther

<sup>57</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 121.3/General Consulate of Salonica/no.7800/Papadiamantopoulos to Baltazzis/



Grevena under Volanis, a lieutenant of Pavlos Melas, captain Jannis, Manos and Karapanos. It is clear that the practice of the Greek partisans was not to engage in guerrilla warfare against the superior Ottoman detachments but to disseminate political propaganda by intimidation and coercion. Owing to their small numerical strength and mild partisan activity the Greek bands did not represent any real threat to the Ottoman position in Macedonia. Nonetheless, their mere presence produced an intimidating effect upon the Moslem Macedonians. The partial reactivation of the Macedonian Greek bands, reminiscent of the terrible period 1903-1908, was seen by the local Moslems and many Unionists as a prelude to a second Christian partisan struggle amounting possibly to another round of European interference.<sup>58</sup>

In particular, fears were running high among the Macedonian Moslems living close to the borders with Greece. In early February 1909, a deputation of ulemas and leading Turks from the vicinity of Kassandra requested the vali of Salonica Danish Bey to take precautionary measures to prevent the impending Greek revolt and Moslem massacre.<sup>59</sup>

Unarguably, the situation in the Macedonian provinces during the first months of 1909 bore little resemblance to that of the previous July, the Greek-Ottoman tension being only one aspect, not the least apparent, of the simmering crisis. Reporting to the F.O., on 29 January 1909, the British Consul-General in Salonica Lamb noted:

“The state of feeling that unfortunately again exists throughout Macedonia is one of extreme anxiety; the general effect produced upon impartial observers is that all parties anticipate a speedy return to the old internecine strife and are now each doing their best to propagate the belief that the others are the aggressors and themselves the justly provoked.”<sup>60</sup>

<sup>58</sup> G.S.A./A.T.V./1909/File 3/24/9-3-1909/no.167/Modis to Vardas, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2328 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/8-2-1909/Acting-Consul Edmonds to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2328 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/8-3-1909/Lamb to Lowther, F.O. 881/9503 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/26-12-1908/no.169/Lamb to Lowther, F.O. 881/9503 Athens Embassy to F.O./8-1-1909/no.8/Elliott to Grey, F.O. 881/9531 Athens Embassy to F.O./27-2-1909/no.28/Elliott to Grey, I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK-A/General Consulate of Salonica/26/11-3-1909/no.140/Papadiamantopoulos to Baltazzis

<sup>59</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2328 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/15-2-1909/Lamb to Lowther

<sup>60</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2328 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/29-1-1909/Lamb to Lowther. See also: F.O. 881/9531 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./20-2-1909/no.114/Lowther to Grey

### 6.7 Accentuation of the Cretan Question<sup>61</sup>

Another decisive factor in the Greco-Ottoman estrangement was the complicated Cretan question. On 7 October 1908, a serious political crisis broke out on the island when the Greek Cretan majority declared the union of Crete with Greece. Five days later, the Cretan Assembly, without the participation of the Moslem deputies, ratified the Cretan union with the kingdom. On 14 October 1908, whilst the Greek High Commissioner Zaimis was in Athens, the Greek Cretans formed an Executive Committee to assume the administration of the island until its formal union with Greece.

The impact of the Cretan coup in Athens was immediate. Although the Ottomans were convinced that the Cretan action could have never taken place without the secret encouragement of the Greek government, the fact is that the declaration of union took the Theotokis Cabinet completely by surprise. Indeed, there is no substantial evidence in Greek sources that Athens had been aware, much less supportive, of the Cretan plan for achieving unification with Greece by provoking a *fait accompli* on the island amidst the escalating Balkan crisis. At a time when Athens had been striving to come to terms with Constantinople and diplomatic initiatives from both quarters were in progress to that effect,<sup>62</sup> the Greek administration knew that any premature attempt to raise the Cretan question would

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<sup>61</sup> The Cretan question had emerged as a Balkan problem long before the Macedonian controversy. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the history of Crete was one of periodical revolts of the Greek majority against the Ottoman authorities which were followed by reprisals on the part of the Cretan Moslems. The Cretan revolts of 1841, 1857 and 1867 led to European intervention. The Western Powers forced the Sultan to institute the Organic Law of 1868 in the island. Under the Organic Law, the executive authority in Crete was transferred to a Governor-General (Moslem or Christian), who was appointed by the Porte. A General Assembly, in which Greeks and Moslems were to participate, would assist the work of the Governor General in areas such as provincial administration, tax-collection and local finances. Yet, inter-communal violence and hostility did not cease even after 1878, when, as a result of the Eastern Crisis, new reforms were introduced in Crete in the form of the Haleppo pact. It provided for the appointment of a Christian Governor-General for the island and the deployment of foreign officers to reorganize the Ottoman gendarmerie. Conditions in the island, however, did not improve and the Greco-Turkish war of 1897 over Crete brought the Powers on the stage again. Europe forced the Ottomans to withdraw their forces from the island and establish an autonomous government in Crete. The Sultan lost his political and financial hold over Crete which now came under the protection of the four Powers (Austria and Germany withdrew their contingents in 1898). The Governor-General, a Greek, and the mixed Cretan Assembly would take over the administration, finance and internal affairs whilst European troops assumed to restore peace and order in the island. Therefore, since 1898, the island of Crete, except for its nominal allegiance to the Porte, had become practically independent. On the content of the Organic Law: P.P.A.P. LXXIII 1867-8, pp.394-395. See also: F.O. 881/9398 Memorandum on the Affairs of Crete/Foreign Office/1-1-1909/Kilmarnock to Grey and *Ελευθερο Βήμα*, 14-2-1909

<sup>62</sup> Refer above to "Attempts at Reaching a Greco-Turkish Understanding".

only alienate the Ottoman Cabinet and undermine the prospect of a Greek-Turkish rapprochement.

Moreover, the eruption of the Cretan crisis placed the Theotokis government in an extremely difficult position internally. Athens feared, with good reason, that if the political turmoil in the island continued to run high public opinion in Greece would increase pressure on the government to take under its auspices the Cretans and ratify the declaration of union in the National Assembly. Greek political circles believed that a possible failure on the part of the Cabinet to comply with the public demand for a more forward Cretan policy would direct the Greek public against the Theotokis Cabinet. In such a possibility, it was questionable whether the Hellenic government would manage to remain in power.<sup>63</sup>

In these critical circumstances and with the Bulgarians ready to embark upon their legendary Macedonian campaign the Greek administration decided to avoid a rupture with Constantinople over Crete and conclude an alliance with the Ottoman Empire to repel the Slav threat. It is clear that the Greeks desired to see the Cretan issue settled within the framework of a Greek-Ottoman understanding, not confrontation.<sup>64</sup>

In mid-October 1908, Athens advised the Cretans to refrain from further disturbances in Canea. At the same time, the Greek legation in Constantinople sought to persuade the Sublime Porte that Greece had no connection with the Cretan coup. When the Greek government realized that the October negotiations were unlikely to produce a bilateral agreement on the fate of the island it decided to allow the Protecting Powers to deal with the issue.

The Greek leaders anticipated that if the question of Crete, which had developed into an expensive nuisance for the four protecting Powers, was discussed in the European conference, Greece would stand very good chances of gaining the island by virtue of a European resolution. Toward this end, the Greek government began to concentrate its activities and press the Powers for the inclusion of Crete on the European agenda.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> F.O. 881/9398 Memorandum on the Affairs of Crete/Foreign Office/1-1-1909/Kilmarnock to Grey

<sup>64</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Athens Embassy to F.O./22-10-1908/no.137/Elliot to Grey/Most Confidential. I.A.Y.E./1908/File 118.2/Foreign Office to General Consulate of Salonica/11/24-10-1908/no.1010/Baltazzis to Papadiamantopoulos

<sup>65</sup> F.O. 881/9398 Memorandum on the Affairs of Crete/Foreign Office/1-1-1909/Kilmarnock to Grey and *Morning Post*, 24-5-1909

On the other hand, the Ottoman attitude on the Cretan issue had been very complicated. Notwithstanding the first hostile reaction of the C.U.P. and Moslem public opinion as a response to the Greek Cretan coup, the idea of reaching a direct understanding with Athens over Crete was beginning to gain ground within the Kiamil Pasha Cabinet. The Grand Vizier held no illusions that Ottoman authority in the island was bound to wither day by day and that, in the end, the Empire would lose Crete to Greece. After the end of the Balkan crisis, Kiamil Pasha seemed willing to negotiate with the Athens government the cession of Crete to Greece on the grounds of securing fiscal compensation and a possible rectification of the Ottoman border in Thessaly.<sup>66</sup>

The C.U.P. was in open disagreement with Kiamil Pasha's conciliatory tendencies. For the Unionist Committee the preservation of Crete within the Ottoman Empire had become a question of national pride and political credibility. The Committee, which had risen to power with the bid and mandate to guarantee the territorial integrity of the Empire and defend Ottoman sovereign rights against any foreign encroachment, had no intention of undermining its own political position by sanctioning Cretan union with Greece.<sup>67</sup>

At the beginning of the Cretan crisis the only reason that had forced the Unionists to adopt a somewhat mild attitude towards Athens was Greece's strategic importance as Turkey's most likely ally in the event of a Bulgarian attack. When, since mid-October, it became conspicuous that Bulgaria would not move against Macedonia and therefore the Greek factor was no more indispensable to Ottoman security the C.U.P. felt free to embrace an uncompromising stance on Crete.<sup>68</sup>

In December, seeking to repudiate the "accommodating" Balkan policy of Kiamil Pasha and present itself as the champion of Ottoman integrity against Christian aggression, the Constantinople C.U.P., through the *Tanin*, "warned the Cabinet that it dare not let Crete be annexed to Greece."<sup>69</sup> On the other hand, it also seems that the Committee's Cretan policy had been influenced by Ottoman strategic

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<sup>66</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./26-10-1908/no.710/Lowther to Grey

<sup>67</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 88.1.3/Constantinople Legation/30/12-11-1908/no.1099/Gryparis to Baltazzis and F.O. 881/9624 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./31-1-1910/Lowther to Grey/Annual Report on Turkey for the Year 1909/enclosure no.1

<sup>68</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 118.1/General Consulate of Salonica/11/24-10-1908/Papadiamantopoulos to Baltazzis/without classification number

<sup>69</sup> F.O. 881/9398 Memorandum on the Affairs of Crete/Foreign Office/1-1-1909/Kilmarnock to Grey

considerations in north Africa. The Unionists were well aware that the Ottoman control of the key port of Suda Bay was an essential precondition for the defense and maintenance of the Ottoman possessions in Libya. Consequently, if Young Turkey lost Crete she would be unable to defend and maintain her African dominions.<sup>70</sup>

In the following months and until the fall of Kiamil Pasha on 14 February 1909, the Cretan question fomented political rivalry between the official government and the Committee. The Unionists stood firm in their thesis for a hard-line policy in Crete and repeatedly emphasized their resolve to uphold the Sultan's sovereign rights in the island. Kiamil Pasha's views on the Cretan question were more pragmatic. Aspiring to avoid an unnecessary complication in Turkey's relations with the four protecting Powers over an essentially semi-independent island and secure economic and indeed territorial advances from Greece, the Grand Vizier contemplated suggesting "une solution de l' affaire de l' île de Crète qui correspondait aux droits des habitants de cette île at aux desirs des quatre Puissances."<sup>71</sup>

The resignation of the Kiamil Pasha Cabinet in mid-February and the consolidation of the Unionist power in Ottoman affairs prevented the Grand Vizier from promoting his ideas and led to the indefinite postponement of the Cretan settlement.<sup>72</sup> The new Hilmi Pasha government espoused the Young Turk thesis placing the Cretan problem on another basis. The new Ottoman position provided that the status quo in the island should be maintained at any cost and the Sultan's suzerainty be respected.

On 2 April 1909, having recently returned from a tour in Europe the Ottoman Foreign Minister Rifat Pasha stated to *Tanin* that "for Turkey there was no Cretan question. Turkey had made clear the importance she attached to the island and the Powers had shown by the non-withdrawal of their troops that they meant to uphold Turkish rights."<sup>73</sup>

The Ottoman aim underneath the new position on Crete was clear. In designating Crete a "question of national importance" for Turkey, the Ottoman administration warned the four Powers that any European intervention which could compromise the status quo on the island would have negative repercussions on relations between the

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<sup>70</sup> F.O. 881/9624 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./31-1-1910/Lowther to Grey/Annual Report on Turkey for the Year 1909/enclosure no.1

<sup>71</sup> F.O. 881/9531 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./6-4-1909/no.249/Lowther to Grey/enclosure no.1

<sup>72</sup> B.D. vol.9 p.11

<sup>73</sup> F.O. 881/9531 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./6-4-1909/no.246/Lowther to Grey

Protecting Powers and the Ottoman Empire. In this way, Constantinople challenged the Powers to align themselves with either Greece or Turkey. The new Ottoman leadership reckoned that, finally, when faced with that dilemma the Powers would favor the Ottoman Empire as the country with the greater geo-strategic and economic importance for Europe.<sup>74</sup>

To understand the Cretan imbroglio better one has to examine the European connection with the island. It is interesting that during the Cretan crisis all the European Powers, save Great Britain, seemed to agree that the question of Crete was ripe for a final solution.<sup>75</sup> Such a settlement could take place after the proposed European conference on the basis of a Powers' resolution whereupon the nominal Ottoman suzerainty would be abolished and Cretan union with Greece would be sanctioned as Greece's reward for her responsible stance toward Young Turkey during the Bulgarian and Bosnian crises.

However, the stumbling block for the resolution of the Cretan problem was the attitude of the British government. Here, it is significant to remember that London had seen its influence increasing in Constantinople after the Young Turk revolution. Prompted by economic and geopolitical considerations, Great Britain was determined to maintain the best possible relations with the new Ottoman administration and keep, wherever possible, the Ottoman Empire away from the German zone of influence. The British government, therefore, was very hesitant to concur in the resolution of the Cretan question. Grey had no desire to alienate the Young Turks and put Britain's recently-retrieved paramount position in Ottoman affairs in jeopardy just to satisfy Cretan and Greek nationalist aspirations.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> G.D.D. vol.3 p.395

<sup>75</sup> Italy and Russia supported Cretan union with Greece as the only final solution to a "wearisome and expensive problem". The French government was the most fervent advocate of this disposition, for Paris saw in the settlement of the Cretan question a medium for pleasing the Greek government and thus securing privileged French position in the economic and military affairs of Greece. As far as the Central Powers were concerned, according to a report from the British embassy in Athens dated 23 October 1908, their agents in Greece had already assured the Hellenic government that Vienna and Berlin would raise no obstacles to Cretan union with Greece. On the Italian and Russian stance see F.O. 881/9492 Rome Embassy to F.O./21-11-1908/no.71/Egerton to Grey, *Morning Post*, 24-5-1909. On the French attitude: F.O. 800/50 Paris Embassy to F.O./31-10-1908/Bertie to Grey/Private and F.O. 800/50 Paris Embassy to F.O./5-12-1908/Bertie to Grey/Private. On the German and Austrian thesis: F.O. 881/9398 Memorandum on the Affairs of Crete/Foreign Office/1-1-1909/Kilmarnock to Grey and *Morning Post*, 24-5-1909

<sup>76</sup> Such was the pro-Ottoman disposition of the British administration, that Grey contemplated the ceding of Cyprus to Turkey in case he concluded a good understanding with Constantinople. Grey was convinced that the Cyprus Convention of 1878 was an "anachronism" that had caused many

It had been really unfortunate for Crete that the accentuation of the political crisis on the island had coincided with growing naval antagonism between England and Germany and their conflicting strategic interests in the region. Crete's strategic importance for the control of Eastern Mediterranean and the Suez Canal was thus to become a serious impediment to its emancipation. As expected, London and Berlin had shown a special interest in the key Cretan port of Suda Bay; one of the most vital naval bases in the Mediterranean.

The British estimated that by prolonging the stay of the European (and British) troops and upholding Ottoman rights in Crete they would be able to maintain a valuable asset in the island and consolidate the Anglo-Turkish friendship. On the contrary, Germany, a non-Protecting Power, supported the military evacuation of Crete and its annexation by Greece as the best medium to prevent Suda Bay becoming a British base with Ottoman approval.<sup>77</sup>

Eventually, on 26 July 1909, the four Protecting Powers decided to withdraw their troops from the island. Having assured the Porte that the Sultan's sovereign rights in Crete would be respected, the Powers announced that European vessels would remain in Cretan waters to protect the Turkish flag and the local Moslem population from the Cretan nationalists. This development, followed by the attempted hoisting of the Greek flag in Canea, increased the tension between Greece and Turkey and resulted in a C.U.P. boycott against Greek goods as well as to the deterioration of the position of the Ottoman Greek communities.

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problems to Britain. F.O. 800/50 Foreign Office to Paris Embassy/29-10-1908/Grey to Bertie and F.O. 800/50 Paris Embassy to F.O./24-11-1908/Bertie to Grey/Confidential

<sup>77</sup> F.O. 800/51 Foreign Office/8-6-1909/Grey to Cambon/Private, G.D.D. vol.3 pp.393-394 and *Ελευθερο Βήμα*, 14-2-1909

### 6.8 The Second Phase of the Greek Struggle in Macedonia. The Πανελληνιος Οργανωση and Its Activities<sup>78</sup>

Although Greece desired an improvement in her relations with the Ottoman Empire, by the end of the summer of 1908 the Hellenic political establishment began to understand that the likelihood of reaching an understanding with the new Ottoman regime appeared more remote than it had been initially anticipated.<sup>79</sup>

The growing disappointment of the Greek administration respecting the new political situation in Turkey came to coincide with the conviction of certain Greek circles that the kingdom should not totally abandon its revolutionary activities in the neighboring country. Experienced political and military figures such as Dragoumis, Souliotis-Nikolaidis and the leader of the Macedonian Committee Colonel of Artillery Danglis, constantly urged the Theotokis government to set up a new, wider and more efficient, national organization upon the old Greek underground network in Turkey.<sup>80</sup>

It was the intensification of Bulgarian-Macedonian activity and the first unequivocal indications of the Unionist nationalist tendencies that finally forced the moderate Greek government to give way to that pressure. By September, the Greek F.O. had authorized Colonel Danglis to design and establish the new revolutionary structure under the name *Πανελληνιος Οργανωση* (Pan-Hellenic Organization-P.O.).

Its principal concern was to unify under an articulated leadership all patriotic forces inside and outside the country for the implementation of the Hellenic national program in all sections of the "unredeemed brethren" in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>81</sup>

There were two key considerations that influenced the shaping of the new P.O. strategy: first, the desire of the P.O. leadership to establish its revolutionary apparatus across Epirus, Macedonia, Thrace, Aegean sea and Asia Minor; second, the urgent need to prepare the Greek communities for the contingency of Greek-

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<sup>78</sup> Greek underground activities in European Turkey after the July revolution have regrettably attracted limited historical attention. Gounaris has conducted the only well-researched study on this question so far. GOUNARIS (1984, pp.113-124) in SOCIETY FOR MACEDONIAN STUDIES, ed., (1987)

<sup>79</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 88.1.3/General Consulate of Salonica/4/17-8-1908/no.790/Kanellopoulos to Baltazzis

<sup>80</sup> GOUNARIS (1987, p.118)

<sup>81</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK-P.O./Athens/Regulations of the P.O./Article 1/undated document without classification number, F.O. 881/9531 Athens Embassy to F.O./1-4-1909/no.46/Elliot to Grey



Turkish armed conflict and the counteraction of the Bulgarian-Macedonian activities.<sup>82</sup>

The operational center of this organization was the Athenian General Headquarters under the supervision of Colonel Danglis and his leading group -Kafandaris, Benakis, Sklavounos, Triantafilidis, Spiliotis, Vardas, Volanis, Karavitis and Zymvrakakis. On a structural level, the P.O. had been divided into regional, district and local branches. In a short time, the General Headquarters sent military officers, civilian agents and administrative staff to Monastir, Salonica, Serres, Kavala, Smyrna and Constantinople. Their mission was to reorganize and utilize the "special offices" of the Greek consular authorities to become the real bases of P.O. propaganda.<sup>83</sup>

It is clear that without the secret support of the Greek government the ambitious plans of the P.O. leadership could have never been put into practice. The supreme command and the various P.O. branches relied on state assistance for funds, men, war material and military experts. Furthermore, even though Athens officially rejected any accusation correlating the Greek authorities with any revolutionary organization, in secret the Greek F.O. had instructed its diplomatic agencies in the Ottoman Empire to facilitate the P.O. activities.

The Greek legation in Constantinople, in particular, had established close links with the P.O. Greek archival sources state that the legation and Souliotis's Constantinople Organization were constantly engaged in the purchase, transportation and distribution of large quantities of arms and ammunition for the armament of the Greek populations in the Aegean and Asia Minor.<sup>84</sup>

By early 1909, despite the striking lack of specialized military personnel and the strict Ottoman surveillance, the P.O. had succeeded in creating an elementary revolutionary infrastructure in the major centers of Epirus, Macedonia, Thrace and Asia Minor.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK-P.O./Athens/28/10-6-1909/General Headquarters to F.O./Danglis to Mavromihalis. See also note 80

<sup>83</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File Consular Reports-P.O. Activities/Athens/1/14-7-1909/General Headquarters to Amissos Branch, I.A.Y.E./1909/File D-4.2.2/Kavala Consulate/16/29-3-1909/no.4/Epaminondas to Danglis

<sup>84</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File Consular Reports-P.O. Activities/Constantinople Legation/24/7-5-1909/no.205/Special Office to General Headquarters, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 91.2/Constantinople Legation/24/6-11-1908/Gryparis to Baltazis/Telegraphic/without classification number

<sup>85</sup> G.S.A./A.T.V./1909/File 3/Monastir Consulate/20/2-4-1909/no.226/Special Office to General Headquarters and I.A.Y.E./1909/File D-4.2.2/Kavala Consulate/16/29-3-1909/no.4/Epaminondas to Danglis

Between January and June 1909, the P.O. organized and carried out a range of underground regional activities: armament of the Greek populations; dissemination of national propaganda among the local communities; the formation of small band units; establishment of intelligence network; the collection of information respecting Ottoman military installations and strategic targets.<sup>86</sup>

However, the General Headquarters were far from content with the creation of a basic revolutionary apparatus. Colonel Danglis was convinced that in so far as the Greek government continued to view the P.O. as an "underground organization" to which the official state should extend limited financial and material aid only, it was impossible for the P.O. to evolve into a pan-Hellenic revolutionary movement. He was truly convinced that this inherent P.O. deficiency could not be overcome unless the private P.O. became more "official" and was attached to the Greek F.O. Danglis did not appear to envisage the P.O. as a political or civilian association which functioned independently from the Greek government but as a clandestine "official" organization with mission to serve Greek foreign policy where the conventional departments of the Greek F.O. were unable to take action.

In May 1909, Danglis submitted to the Greek government his scheme for the formation of a Special Department within the Greek F.O. This Department would undertake to satisfy P.O. demands for personnel, funds, arms, intelligence and operate as a secret liaison channel between the organization and the Athens administration. Danglis's project, in addition, envisaged the division of the Special Department in two separate offices: the Office of unredeemed Hellenism and the Office of Hellenic diaspora. The Office of unredeemed Hellenism was the most important as it would shoulder the responsibility of outlining, directing and promoting the Hellenic national program in Turkey. It would be so organized as to incorporate four sub-sections: the division of Ottoman Hellenism, the division of

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<sup>86</sup> The P.O. operational plan provided the disruption and destruction of the Ottoman communication system in the event of a Greek-Turkish war. To this end, the General Headquarters sent instructions to its military agents in all major Macedonian cities to take all necessary steps in order to be ready to attack and sabotage key Ottoman targets like railway connections, tunnels, roads and bridges. I.A.Y.E./1909/File Consulates-3/Athens/25/7-6-1909/no.364/General Headquarters to Macedonian Departments and I.A.Y.E./1909/File Consular Reports-P.O. Activities/Athens/1/14-7-1909/General Headquarters to Amissos Branch

Church and Education, the Press division and the division for the study of Economic issues and developments.<sup>87</sup>

Danglis's proposals, however, fell on deaf ears. The Greek government was ready to procure underground assistance to a private revolutionary mechanism but it was unable and unwilling to put its relations with the Ottoman Empire at stake for the sake of an extremist and highly-opportunistic policy. Indeed, Athens feared that a possible disclosure of the interconnection between the Greek F.O. and the P.O. could lead Greek-Ottoman relations to a rapid deterioration or worse armed conflict, from which Greece, being the weak side, had for the time being much to lose and nothing to gain.

For its part, the Ottoman administration had been aware of the increasing Hellenic propaganda activity in Turkey-in-Europe since the first months of the new year. The failure of the local authorities to uncover the existence of the P.O. network, however, had led the Ottoman officials to draw erroneous conclusions as regards the real Greek intentions underlying the apparent revival of their underground activity.

The Ottoman political leadership felt that the resumption of Hellenic propaganda was dependent on the Cretan question. Halil Bey, the Minister of the Interior in the Hilmi Pasha Cabinet, shared the opinion that the Greek government was determined to incite a general insurrection in Macedonia in order to divert Ottoman attention from Crete, in the event that the Greek army was deterred from occupying the island after the withdrawal of European troops.<sup>88</sup>

Only on 1 July 1909, when the Ottoman authorities in Monastir accidentally found in the possession of the secretary of the local Greek Consulate Merentitos and his associate Manousos classified documents about the P.O. underground network and its revolutionary activity in Macedonia, did Constantinople realize the magnitude of the issue.<sup>89</sup> The disclosure of the P.O. put the Hellenic administration in an extremely embarrassing position. Athens' first reaction was to profess its absolute ignorance of

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<sup>87</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK-P.O./Athens/28/10-6-1909/no.260/General Headquarters to Foreign Office/Danglis to Mavromihalis

<sup>88</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK-A/Ministry of the Interior to General Administration of Salonica/4/17-5-1909/Halil Bey to Danish Bey and I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK-A/Committee of General Inspection to General Administration of Salonica/7/20-2-1909/Mahmud Shevket Pasha to Danish Bey

<sup>89</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File Consulates-2/Monastir Consulate to General Hedaquarters/1/14-7-1909/Manousos to Zymvrakakis, I.A.Y.E./1909/File Consulates-2/General Consulate of Salonica/4/17-7-1909/no.530/Papadiamantopoulos to Baltazzis and I.A.Y.E./1909/File Consulates-2/General Consulate of Salonica/13/26-7-1909/no.564/Papadiamantopoulos to Baltazzis

the existence of the organization and rebuke these “irresponsible” activities stemming from private quarters which contravened Greece’s official foreign policy of friendship with the neighboring country. Hence, in an attempt to avoid a premature conflict with the Ottoman Empire over the P.O. question, on 13 July 1909, the Greek F.O. recalled to Greece all military and civilian agents serving in Turkey-in-Europe and severed every connection with the P.O.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File Consulates-2/Athens to Macedonian Consulates/5/18-7-1909/no.549/Baltazzis to Consuls, I.A.Y.E./1909/File Consulates-2/Athens to General Consulate of Salonica/13/26-7-1909/no.468/Baltazzis to Papdiamantopoulos and I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK-A/Athens/26/9-10-1909/General Headquarters to Military Officers of Macedonia, Epirus and Thrace

## CHAPTER VII

### THE SERBO-ALBANIAN CONNECTION IN MACEDONIA

#### 7.1 The Serbs and the Constitutional Movement in Macedonia

The Turkish revolution produced a general feeling of optimism in the Serb kingdom. On the outset, the people and the press, regardless of political affiliation, hailed the C.U.P. undertaking to work for the establishment of a liberal regime in the Empire for all Ottoman subjects, Moslems and Christians. Soon however, the initial euphoria gave way to more composed and realistic positions. Since the Berlin Congress, the key question in Serbia's Ottoman strategy had been the protection of the interests and welfare of the Serb populations in Macedonia and the inducement of a Serb nationalist program in Old Serbia, Kosovo and Monastir. The Serb political leadership was convinced that the overwhelming developments in Turkey should not change those fundamental principles of Serbia's Macedonian policy.

On the other hand, the Velimirovic Cabinet had decided to follow a moderate policy toward the C.U.P. and the new regime, at least until Ottoman intentions for Macedonia took a clearer shape. To advance Serb political aspirations in Macedonia, to strengthen the local Serbo-Macedonian element and to elect as many Serb deputies as possible in the Ottoman elections, the Velimirovic government reasoned that the most propitious way was to remain on good terms with Constantinople and the Young Turk Committee.<sup>1</sup>

As a consequence, the Serb government did its utmost to convince the Ottomans that Belgrade desired honest cooperation with Young Turkey. The immediate dissolution and withdrawal of the Serb revolutionary bands from Macedonia was the first goodwill gesture in that direction on the part of Belgrade. Within this process of building confidence between the two countries, a week after the Turkish revolution, 15 Serbo-Macedonian band leaders visited the Ottoman minister Fethy Pasha in Belgrade.

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<sup>1</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 92.2/Belgrade Legation/9/22-9-1908/no.126/Argiropoulos to Baltazzis and I.A.Y.E./1908/File 92.2/Belgrade Legation/2/15-8-1908/no.105/Delyannis to Baltazzis

The Serbo-Macedonian leaders reassured the Ottoman official that they were planning to return to Macedonia and work toward the success of the new Young Turk regime. Furthermore, in the second half of August, nearly 500 Serb officials, deputies, scientists and journalists traveled to the provincial Macedonian capitals of Uskub and Salonica where they fraternized with local C.U.P. supporters.<sup>2</sup>

In the first week of August, the Serb government stated in Skupstina its official point of view in regard to the new political situation in the Ottoman Empire. The new Foreign Minister Milovanovic, although he underscored that the main criterion for the assessment of the Young Turk movement would be its future political activity and stance, expressed the thorough satisfaction of the Belgrade government with the pacification of Macedonia. The Serb official nevertheless, did not fail to point out that Belgrade would welcome any attempt on the part of the Ottoman authorities to reform the Macedonian administration and introduce certain measures which might ameliorate the position of the Serbo-Macedonian population. In raising this latter point, Milovanovic essentially affirmed that Serbia had not lost her profound interest in Macedonian matters and the Young Turk attitude toward the Serbo-Macedonian populations was bound to influence Serbo-Ottoman relations.

Objectively, the consolidation of the Young Turk movement in Ottoman politics and the professed commitment of the Committee to respect the rights of all nationalities and reform the country from within did not seem to endanger Serb policy in Macedonia. Far from it. The Serb political leadership was aware that on the eve of the Young Turk movement the situation in Macedonia had been explosive. Serbia rightly suspected that the visible inability of the Ottoman administration to deal with the Macedonian question and the growing intervention of the Powers in the province laid the groundwork for the political secession of Macedonia from the Ottoman Empire. In that case, Macedonia would either become autonomous or would be partitioned between the Balkan national states.

Yet, for the time being, both alternatives seemed extremely pernicious to Serb interests. Belgrade held no illusions that an autonomous Macedonia would most likely have the fate of Eastern Rumelia and on these grounds it strongly opposed that

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<sup>2</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 92.2/Belgrade Legation/7/20-8-1908/no.4133/Delyannis to Baltazzis and I.A.Y.E./1908/File 39.4/General Consulate of Salonica//13/26-8-1908/no.777/Kanellopoulos to Baltazzis

scenario. On the other hand, if partition came about overnight, Serbia, still not powerful enough to claim and acquire her long-coveted stakes in the provinces of Kosovo and Monastir, would inevitably lose the largest part of these sub-regions to Bulgaria and Greece.<sup>3</sup>

The Serb government espoused the opinion that before the kingdom was strong enough to embark on a more “aggressive” Macedonian policy any alteration in the local status quo could ruin its Macedonian aspirations. In suspending the immediate resolution of the Macedonian question the Young Turk movement had made an unexpected gift to Serbia: it gave her invaluable time for economic recovery and military reorganization. When, after few years, the Macedonian question would be ripe for a thorough solution, the Serbs could seek and gain aggrandizement in Kosovo and Monastir under far better conditions.

From this perspective, it seems clear that to the extent that the Unionist revolution had prevented Ottoman authority in Macedonia from collapsing and had preserved the unstable status quo in the region it served Serbia’s Macedonian strategy. The dramatic Balkan developments during the first week of October 1908 nonetheless forced Serbia to temporarily put the question of Macedonia in the background and concentrate all her efforts in dealing with the far more important annexation crisis.

## **7.2 The Annexation Crisis and Its Impact on Serbo-Ottoman Relations**

Vienna’s decision to annex Bosnia-Herzegovina dealt a major blow to Serbia. Indeed, not only it ruined Serb national aspirations for aggrandizement in those provinces but it placed the territorial integrity, economic development and political independence of the landlocked Serb kingdom at the mercy of Austria.

Understandably, the Serb government felt that the annexation of Bosnia and the rumored Austro-Bulgarian collusion had introduced a new order in Balkan affairs. According to the Serb point of view, Austria-Hungary had now become the key power in the Balkans while the Serb kingdom was condemned to exist uneasily between the Dual Monarchy and ambitious Bulgaria. It was under these extremely

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<sup>3</sup> F.O. 881/9353 Belgrade Embassy to F.O./6-8-1908/no.57/O’ Reilly to Grey and I.A.Y.E./1908/File 92.2/Belgrade Legation/9/22-9-1908/no.126/Argiropoulos to Baltazzis

difficult circumstances that the Velimirovic government had undertaken to oppose the Austrian fait accompli in Bosnia and defend Serb political interests in the region. Shortly after the annexation, the Serb political establishment declared that the kingdom would never accept the Austrian coup in Bosnia unless it received sufficient territorial compensation on the Serbo-Austrian border, economic concessions and an outlet to the Adriatic sea. In opposite case, Belgrade was threatening war. Whatever illusions the Serbs might foster that they could obtain territorial concessions from Austria-Hungary were dissolved a week before the end of October. On 22 October 1908, the Austrian minister in Serbia Count Forgach declared that although Vienna did not nourish warlike tendencies against Serbia it was determined to make no territorial advances to Belgrade and in the end if "Serbia continued to cry out for war she would certainly have it."<sup>4</sup>

The unyielding Austrian stance led the Velimirovic Cabinet to realize that without foreign diplomatic and military support Serbia would have either to capitulate to Austrian demands and stipulate to mere financial compensation or resort to hostilities. It was at this juncture that the kingdom sought to reshape its strategy with regard to the annexation crisis. To end diplomatic isolation, the Serb administration had decided to approach the Entente. Meanwhile, it had already entered into secret negotiations with the Porte in order to conclude a Serbo-Turkish-Montenegrin military convention against the Austro-Hungarian threat.

In late October, in an attempt to secure British and Russian backing, Milovanovic and Pashic paid a visit to London and St. Petersburg respectively. Although the British and Russian officials acknowledged that Austria's policy in Bosnia had injured Serb stakes in the region and had violated the international conventions of 1871 and 1878, they were very reluctant to pledge their support to any kind of Serb territorial aggrandizement. In particular, when Milovanovic informed Grey of his government's intention to pursue the acquisition of a territorial strip through Bosnia-Herzegovina - the plan being to form with Montenegro a strong barrier to Austrian aggressiveness - he was told that there was little Britain could do to uphold Serb aspirations.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Belgrade Embassy to F.O./27-10-1908/no.78/Whitehead to Grey

<sup>5</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 92.2/Belgrade Legation/20/2-11-1908/no.167/Argiropoulos to Baltazzis. See also: DJORDJEVIC (1970, p.347)



By the first week of November, even the traditionally pro-Slav Russian government had sent specific instructions to its agent in Belgrade Sergejev to warn the Serbs that they should remain at any rate pacific. Indeed, Sergejev made clear to the Serb leadership that no continental Power was disposed to engage itself in an armed conflict with Austria-Hungary merely to defend Serb territorial claims in Bosnia. The only initiative that the Entente was contemplating to undertake over the Serb question was to attempt to persuade Austria-Hungary to adopt a more conciliatory attitude towards Belgrade and settle the dispute peacefully even without a conference.<sup>6</sup>

The second aspect of Serbia's Balkan strategy (the military alliance with the Ottoman Empire) was by no means less important. Serbo-Ottoman talks, which had started in mid-October, continued for the ensuing two months, not however without significant difficulties. In the beginning of the negotiations both countries seemed keen to form a pact in order to counter the alleged Balkan understanding between Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, in the first three weeks, the talks between the high-ranking Serb envoy Novakovic and the Ottoman leadership in Constantinople had reached a satisfactory stage. By the end of the first week of November 1908, the Novakovic-Nouradoughian Effendi talks had produced certain tangible results. A few days later, the secretary of the Serb F.O. Spalaikovic revealed to the British minister Whitehead a draft Serbo-Turkish military convention with the Serb positions.

The Serb draft made reference to "all issues of a complete military agreement", in case one of the signatory parts was attacked. Specifically, it arranged: the number of troops that each part would undertake to put in the battle field; the obligation of the

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<sup>6</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Belgrade Embassy to F.O./10-11-1908/no.82/Whitehead to Grey. It was hardly a coincidence that the Sergejev warning came shortly after the visit of the Serb special envoy Pashic in St. Petersburg. The Serb ex-Premier had communicated to Izvolsky that so long the Powers did not sanction the annexation of Bosnia Serbia would do nothing; but, if they did, Serbia and Montenegro would declare war on Vienna. This St. Petersburg could not allow to take place. Russia, who owing to her bad economic and military situation had been seriously perturbed by the prospect of going to war with Austria-Hungary over Serbia, was determined to restrain the bellicose Serbs by all means. F.O. 881/9492 St. Petersburg Embassy to F.O./29-10-1908/no.482/Nicolson to Grey. See also F.O. 881/9492 Foreign Office to St. Petersburg Embassy/10-11-1908/no.360/Grey to Nicolson

<sup>7</sup> Unofficially, since mid-October, the two leading members of the Serbo-Macedonian Committee Nousic and Stanojevic had held discussions with the Young Turk Committees of Salonica and Constantinople to work out a Serbo-Turkish understanding over the annexation crisis. In the end, however, this initiative did not produce any concrete agreement. I.A.Y.E./1908/File 118.2/General Consulate of Salonica/24/6-11-1908/no.1044/Papadiamantopoulos to Baltazzis

two parts to reaching a common understanding before launching an offensive campaign or making peace; the equal division of spoils, territorial and monetary, following an allied victory [articles 1-6]; finally, it stipulated that the five-year military convention, which would be put in force after ten days, should be kept secret [article 8].

These articles provided a plausible basis for a Serbo-Turkish understanding but it was the controversial article 7 which delineated the Serb claims on the questions of Bosnia and Macedonia that was to incur the most controversy. The article 7 stated that: “the two signatory parts bind themselves not to accept any solution of the question of Bosnia-Herzegovina without having come to a mutual understanding on the issue and that the Ottoman Empire engaged to grant facilities to Serb religious and educational institutions in its dominions and to Serb commerce and means of communication to Ottoman seaports.”<sup>8</sup>

The content of this article indicated that the Serb government had no intention of signing any convention that would not secure the Serb positions on the question of Bosnia. It is also important that the Velimirovic Cabinet, though preoccupied with the annexation crisis, had not abandoned Macedonia. On the contrary, the Serbs sought to interrelate their participation in the military alliance with the concession on the part of the Porte of Serb commercial facilities in Ottoman seaports and preferential treatment for Serbo-Macedonian spiritual and secular institutions.

These Serb suggestions concerned the Ottoman political community.<sup>9</sup> Understandably, Constantinople could never accept a stipulation that would make any future arrangement between Austria and the Ottoman Empire in Bosnia dependent upon Serbia's consent. To make matters worse, the Ottoman administration had also come up with an important amendment. The Kiamil Pasha government had decided to introduce a new clause hostile to Bulgaria into the military convention. The Ottoman amendment stated:

“Any territory conquered by the allies after a victorious campaign against Bulgaria shall be divided in such manner that Turkey shall obtain the eastern and Serbia the

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<sup>8</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Belgrade Embassy to F.O./10-11-1908/no.25/Whitehead to Grey/Telegraphic and F.O. 881/9492 Belgrade Embassy to F.O./25-11-1908/no.90/Whitehead to Grey

<sup>9</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./12-11-1908/no.362/Lowther to Grey

western portion. In case a war indemnity is obtained, it shall be equally divided between the two countries.”<sup>10</sup>

It is not difficult to understand one of the motives underlying this Ottoman diplomatic manoeuvre. In the minds of the Ottoman officials the pact with Serbia and Montenegro was closely connected with the Bulgarian question. By the first week of November, the Sublime Porte had been convinced that Vienna did not intend to attack Turkey-in-Europe and, more importantly, that there was no political agreement between Austria and Bulgaria over the Balkans.<sup>11</sup> As a result, the Kiamil Pasha Cabinet believed that a tripartite Serbo-Turkish-Montenegrin alliance would complete Sofia's Balkan isolation and force the Bulgarian government to comply with Ottoman economic demands.<sup>12</sup>

While the Serbo-Turkish negotiations had reached a critical point, the Serb provision for Bosnia and indeed the Ottoman amendment complicated the situation. The Serbs, whose chief object had been to use the pact with the Ottoman Empire against Austria,<sup>13</sup> were far from willing to accept a provision that essentially transformed the convention into a prominently anti-Bulgarian alliance. Furthermore, since the Serb Cabinet knew that the Western Powers would never allow the dismemberment of Bulgaria and the re-subjugation of Christian populations to Ottoman rule, it had no real intention of joining a coalition that aimed exclusively at the submission of Bulgaria.

The Serb political leadership envisaged a tripartite convention with the Turks and Montenegrins as the first step toward the establishment of a Balkan coalition against Austria-Hungary. In this coalition, Bulgarian participation was an essential component. Sensibly, Belgrade felt that if it agreed with the Ottoman amendment it would destroy the dream of forming a powerful anti-Austrian Balkan League:<sup>14</sup> an ambitious political project that had found many advocates even within the Ottoman Empire and the Young Turk Committee itself.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Belgrade Embassy to F.O./13-11-1908/no.24/Whitehead to Grey/Telegraphic

<sup>11</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./5-11-1908/no.386/Lowther to Grey/Telegraphic

<sup>12</sup> Refer to chapter 5.

<sup>13</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 92.2/Belgrade Legation/4/17-11-1908/no.188/Argiropoulos to Baltazzis

<sup>14</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Belgrade Embassy to F.O./13-11-1908/no.24/Whitehead to Grey/Telegraphic

<sup>15</sup> The C.U.P. supported the establishment of a Balkan Federation with the participation of all Balkan states under the leadership of the Ottoman Empire. This idea was probably discussed between the Unionist delegation under Ahmet Riza Bey and the Serb political leadership during the brief stop of the Young Turk leader in Serbia (the delegation was on a tour in European capitals) on

The Ottoman policy of directing the tripartite military pact against Bulgaria did not stir opposition in Serbia only. Great Britain and Russia, the Entente Powers most directly engaged in the annexation crisis, strongly objected to a Balkan understanding between the south Slav states and the Ottoman Empire that would not include Bulgaria. The two Powers had good reasons to suspect that in case Bulgaria was alienated in that manner she would most likely turn for support to Austria-Hungary and the Central Powers camp. Such a development was bound to undermine the effectiveness and usefulness of the anti-Austrian Balkan bloc and place Vienna in a commanding position in the Near East.

Throughout November therefore the British and Russian governments had been striving to persuade the Ottomans to abandon their anti-Bulgarian designs and come to terms with the Malinov administration. In particular, the British spared no effort in urging the Kiamil Pasha Cabinet to work out an understanding with Sofia.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, when on 5 November 1908 the Grand Vizier asked Zinoviev, the Russian ambassador in Constantinople, if Russia would support a military alliance between Serbia, Montenegro and the Ottoman Empire, Zinoviev replied that "Russia would do nothing in that direction".<sup>17</sup>

By the end of November 1908 the Serbo-Turkish-Montenegrin military pact had made very little progress, the Serb provision for Bosnia and the Ottoman amendment were the main impediments in the negotiation process. Indeed, the prospect of a Serbo-Turkish understanding seemed to water down when two events rekindled the entire affair: the mission of Balkan Committee<sup>18</sup> in Constantinople in the first week of

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31 October 1908. I.A.Y.E./1908/File 92.2/Belgrade Legation/4/17-11-1908/no.188/Argiropoulos to Baltazzis

<sup>16</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Foreign Office to St. Petersburg Embassy/9-11-1908/no.587/Grey to Nicolson. British sources suggest that Germany also favored a direct Turco-Bulgarian understanding. Berlin seemed to prefer a reconciliation between Sofia and Constantinople than leave the settlement of the Bulgarian question to a European Conference. F.O. 881/9492 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./9-11-1908/no.389/Lowther to Grey

<sup>17</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./6-11-1908/no.751/Lowther to Grey

<sup>18</sup> Formed in 1903, the Balkan Committee was a well-known British lobby with special interest and knowledge of Balkan affairs. Being pro-Bulgarian and rather Turcophobic, it consisted of influential British personalities like the Buxton brothers, Westlake, Boyle, Bouchier, the Archbishop of Canterbury and its opinions were carefully considered by the Foreign Office and the British press. Since its foundation, it had supported the belief that the best way to resolve the Macedonian question was by granting political autonomy to the provinces of Salonica, Monastir and Kosovo.

December 1908 and the second stop of the Young Turk delegation under Ahmet Riza Bey in Serbia.

The mission of Balkan Committee attracted great attention in Ottoman capital for it was seen as evidence of the revived Anglo-Turkish political friendship. During the few days of its stay in Constantinople the directorate of the Balkan Committee did its utmost to impress on the Ottoman leadership the urgent need for the formation of a united front between the Ottoman Empire and the south Slav countries (including Bulgaria) against Austria-Hungary and Germany.

Buxton, its president, seeking to obliterate the potential sources of dispute between Turkey and the Balkan Slav states came forward with a radical plan for the peaceful and simultaneous settlement of the two most important and vexed Balkan questions: Bosnia and Macedonia. Buxton argued that, under these conditions, the most prudent policy for the Ottomans would be to reach an understanding with the Balkan Slav countries. In this context, the Ottoman administration should proclaim Macedonian autonomy under a Moslem Governor General and try, with the support of the Balkan Slavs, to establish an autonomous Bosnia-Herzegovina in which Ottoman suzerainty would be respected.<sup>19</sup>

The Ottoman administration was partly receptive to Buxton's plan. From the Ottoman standpoint, naturally, the idea of granting political autonomy to Macedonia was out of the question. The Grand Vizier Kiamil Pasha nevertheless, did not raise any objection to Bosnia becoming autonomous under a Moslem Governor.<sup>20</sup> On this point, Ottoman and Serb policies in Bosnia coincided. During bilateral talks, the Velimirovic Cabinet had informed the Ottoman government that Serbia would uphold a similar disposition in the political status of Bosnia in case her efforts to acquire territorial compensation in that province met with failure.<sup>21</sup>

At the same time, the Unionist delegation, returning from its European mission, made a second stop in Serbia.<sup>22</sup> After having exchanged views with the Serb Foreign Minister on the Bosnian crisis, Ahmet Riza Bey gave an interview to the Russian

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<sup>19</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 118.1/Constantinople Legation/20/3-12-1908/no.1189/Gryparis to Baltazzis

<sup>20</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./26-10-1908/no.710/Lowther to Grey

<sup>21</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 118.1/Constantinople Legation/20/3-12-1908/no.1189/Gryparis to Baltazzis

<sup>22</sup> Here, it should be stressed that the European diplomatic mission of the C.U.P. deputation had neither the approval nor the authorization of Kiamil Pasha Cabinet. The Grand Vizier viewed this mission as a further attempt of the Committee to assert its peculiarly independent role in Ottoman politics.

newspaper *Slovo* (Speech), which was reprinted in Serb paper *Politika*. The Young Turk leader stated that the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, apart from being a tremendous blow to the Slavs, had placed Austria in such advantageous position in the peninsula that Turkey could hardly imagine. He further claimed that only if Bosnia-Herzegovina was granted autonomous status and the Serb kingdom was given access to the Adriatic sea through some territorial aggrandizement in the two provinces could the regional balance of power be restored. "Young Turkey, concluded Ahmet Riza, turns a sympathetic eye to the Slavs and not the Austrians (proof of this was the Ottoman embargo), who have imperialistic designs for the south Balkans."<sup>23</sup>

In the end, neither the Balkan Committee's intervention nor the Unionist diplomatic strivings sufficed to salvage the negotiation process and bring about a Serbo-Turkish alignment. By mid-December, Austria had decided to commence negotiations with the Kiamil Pasha Cabinet over the pecuniary compensation that she would pay to the Porte in return for abolishing Ottoman rights in Bosnia. The Austrian initiative satisfied the Ottoman administration and in conjunction with the leaking out of the projected Serbo-Ottoman pact compelled the Porte to discontinue the secret talks with Serbia.

From this point onwards and until the eventual solution of the Bosnian question in the spring of following year, the Serb kingdom vainly struggled to vitiate the Austrian coup in Bosnia-Herzegovina and obtain territorial compensation. In the end of March, when Vienna exerted unbearable pressure on Belgrade to abandon its territorial ambitions for Bosnia and settle for mere economic concessions or face the Austrian armies in the battle field, Serbia, abandoned by Great Britain and Russia, had no conceivable alternative but to give way.<sup>24</sup>

The annexation of Bosnia consolidated the Austro-Hungarian geopolitical supremacy in central Balkans and buried Serb aspirations for territorial aggrandizement in Bosnia-Herzegovina. As an outcome, the Serbs realized that the only real scope for potential territorial expansion lay in the Ottoman-Macedonian vilayets of Kosovo and

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<sup>23</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 92.2/Belgrade Legation/30/13-12-1908/no.212/Argiropoulos to Baltazzis, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 90.3/Uskub Consulate/23/5-1-1909/no.700/Baraklis to Baltazzis/Political

<sup>24</sup> BRIDGE (1972b, pp.128-34)

Monastir. From this point onwards the Macedonian question was to return to the forefront of Serb political strategy and foreign policy.

### **7.3 The Formation of Serbo-Macedonian Political Organizations and the Question of Ipek Patriarchate**

It is true that the Serbo-Macedonians saw in the termination of the paramilitary strife and the dissolution of the Macedonian bands in July 1908 a positive development for their future position in the region. The Serb nationalists had come to terms with the idea that they were still far from securing a dominant position in the highly-disputed districts of Old Serbia, Kosovo and Monastir, by means of paramilitary activism and ecclesiastical-educational propaganda.

When the Young Turk Macedonian movement broke out, the entire Serbo-Macedonian militia numbered only 160 men. More importantly, Serb efforts for the establishment of an Independent National Church in Macedonia had borne no results due to the stubborn opposition from the Porte and the Greek Patriarch. Consequently, since the Serbo-Macedonian clerical class did not enjoy the same status and privileges with the Patriarchist officials a considerable part of the Serbo-Macedonian communities continued to remain within the spiritual zone of influence of the Greek Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Under these unfavorable conditions, the Serbo-Macedonian leaders and the Belgrade government were rather content to see the Unionist revolution arresting the Bulgarian and Greek activities and postponing a premature - at least for Serbia - resolution of the Macedonian question.<sup>25</sup> Following the establishment of the Constitutional regime in Turkey, Serbia's Macedonian policy was to focus on two vital issues: the formation of Serbo-Macedonian political associations and the re-institution of the medieval Serb Patriarchate of Ipek.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> F.O. 881/9353 Belgrade Embassy to F.O./6-8-1908/no.57/O' Reilly to Grey

<sup>26</sup> The origins of the Serb Patriarchate of Ipek date back to 1219. Until 1346 it had the status of an Archbishopric when, at the Conference of Uskub, the Serb Emperor Stefan Dusan, the Bulgarian Patriarch of Turnovo and the Archbishop of Ochrid resolved to elevate the Archbishopric of Ipek to the status of a Patriarchate. The Patriarchate of Ipek was officially recognized by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1375, when relations between Serbia and the Byzantine Empire became very friendly. The Ottomans had abrogated the Ipek Patriarchate in 1459. Nearly a century later, in 1557, the Grand Vizier Sokolovic, a Serb, re-instated the Ipek Patriarchate including the bishoprics of Nish, Uskub, Geni-Pazar, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Kjustendil, Samokovo, Prizren and Ouzitsa. In

As far as the Serbo-Macedonian political clubs were concerned, these were founded with the encouragement and material support of the Serb government in an attempt to compete with the Bulgarian, Greek and Albanian clubs and further the economic and political interests of the local Serbo-Macedonian communities. The most well-known Serbo-Macedonian Constitutional association was the Organization of Ottoman Serbs.

It was established in the capital of the Kosovo vilayet Uskub in October 1908 under the leadership of the ex-voevoda Radenkovic. Based mainly on the support of the Kosovar Serbs, the society succeeded in setting up branches across the Macedonian provinces and publishing the newspaper *Vardar*. Among its undertakings was to counteract the emerging Albanian nationalist movement in Kosovo. In reality, the Serb Constitutional association espoused a moderate attitude toward the new Ottoman regime and strove to remain on good terms with the Young Turk Committee.

During the annexation crisis, the Organization of Ottoman Serbs, as Malcolm argues, had set up links with the Serb nationalist society *Narodna Odbrana* (National Defense).<sup>27</sup> Formed on 21 October 1908, the Narodna Odbara aspired to unite all national forces in the country against Austrian aggressiveness and form revolutionary bands which would be sent to disturb Bosnia and Macedonia.<sup>28</sup>

Meanwhile, in an apparent effort to put the Serbo-Macedonian communities on an equal ecclesiastical status with the Greek-Patriarchists and the Bulgarian-Exarchists, the Velimirovic government sought to raise the issue of the Ipek Patriarchate. During the Serbo-Ottoman negotiations over the military pact, the Serb administration found the opportunity to set forward its ecclesiastical claims. By mid-December 1908, the Greek legation in Belgrade had ascertained that among the basic aims of Novakovic's mission in Constantinople was to elicit Ottoman consent to the restoration of the ancient Ipek Patriarchate.<sup>29</sup>

At the same time, papers in Serbia proper and Macedonia devoted a series of articles to the same question. In the first week of December, an article appeared in the

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1766, the Ipek Patriarchate merged with the Ecumenical Patriarchate and hence fell under the spiritual authority of the Phanar. E.A./1908/KH/11-12-1908/no.49/pp.1-2

<sup>27</sup> MALCOLM (1998, p.243)

<sup>28</sup> DJORDJEVIC (1970, pp.352-3), BRIDGE (1972a, pp.312, 321)

<sup>29</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 92.2/Belgrade Legation/3/16-12-1908/no.215/Argiropoulos to Baltazzis



Serbo-Macedonian organ *Vardar* setting out the Serb positions on the re-establishment of the Ipek Patriarchate. The author argued that for many centuries the Serbo-Macedonian populations, owing to the lack of their own independent ecclesiastical institution, had been compelled to remain under the spiritual tutelage of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Exploiting their influential position in Macedonian religious and cultural affairs, the Greek Patriarchist officials, as well as their recent Bulgarian Exarchist colleagues, had tried to suppress the pro-Serb national sentiment of the Serbo-Macedonian populations in order to draw them into the Hellenic or Bulgarian camp. Under a free Constitutional regime, the author concluded, the Ottoman administration should re-institute the Ipek Patriarchate thereby extending to Serb communities in Macedonia the same ecclesiastical privileges enjoyed by Greeks and Bulgarians.<sup>30</sup>

The determination of the Serbo-Macedonians to struggle against their unfavorable ecclesiastical status in Macedonia and reaffirm their pro-Serb national tendencies became clear in the first convention of the Organization of Ottoman Serbs. It took place in Uskub during the last week of February 1909. The representation of the provincial Macedonian capitals Uskub, Monastir, Salonica was fairly poor (three schoolmasters). Most of the delegates came from other towns and districts.

The Serbo-Macedonian convention passed 16 political, ecclesiastical and economic resolutions. The content of the political resolutions was moderate and did not harm Ottoman susceptibilities. The third political resolution was very important. It called the C.U.P. to use the term 'Serb' when referring to Ottoman Serbs instead of 'Rum', in an implicit manifestation of Serb claim for recognition of a separate Serb nationality in the Ottoman Empire. The fourth resolution condemned Austria's annexation of Bosnia and Bulgarian appropriation of Eastern Rumelia as acts violating international treaties and mutilating the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. The fifth provided for "the consolidation of friendly relations between the Balkan peoples and the preparation by this means of a solid basis for their free development."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> E.A./1908/KH/11-12-1908/no.49/pp.1-2

<sup>31</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2328 Uskub Vice-Consulate to General Consulate of Salonica/2-3-1909/Satow to Lamb/enclosure no.1

Among the ecclesiastical resolutions, the sixth requested the “unrestricted extension to the Serb Metropolitans of the ecclesiastical privileges enjoyed by the Greek Metropolitans”, whilst the ninth reiterated the old Serbo-Macedonian demand for the appointment of a Serb Metropolitan in the district of Diber-Veles. The last resolution appertaining religious matters, the tenth, called the Ottoman authorities to abrogate the Macedonian ecclesiastical settlement of 1903 and leave the local Macedonians free to chose whether they would have Serb, Bulgarian or Greek schoolmasters and priests.<sup>32</sup> Indicative of the Serbo-Macedonian representatives’ intent to maintain a good climate with the Young Turk regime was the exclusion of any reference to the subtle question of the Ipek Patriarchate.

Since poor economic conditions in Macedonia had the same negative effect upon all its inhabitants, regardless of their national, religious or political affiliations, the economic program of the Serbo-Macedonian associations was not much different from that of the Bulgarian Constitutional clubs. As expected, the widespread demand for distribution of lands and agricultural reform in Macedonia dominated the economic agenda as well as the resolutions of the Uskub convention. The twelfth resolution demanded that the Ottoman government put an end to the Albanian practice of appropriating Serbo-Macedonian properties and lands and appoint a Commission to remedy this situation and restore estates and lands to their legitimate owners.

The thirteenth resolution impressed upon the Ottoman administration the urgent need to facilitate the strivings of the Macedonian peasantry for purchasing lands and properties from the powerful land-owners. In doing so, the civil authorities would contribute to the improvement of economic and living conditions in Macedonia and the establishment of “an independent peasant class in conformity with the Constitutional principles.” Resolutions fourteen and fifteen laid emphasis on the peasants’ claim to access the funds of the Agricultural Bank to avoid money-lending under onerous terms and the implementation of the ‘Sefer Law’, which regulated the labor relationship between the powerful landowners and their peasants (*chiftjis*) to diminish the growing exploitation of the peasants by their wealthy employers.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

In brief, in purely political terms, the attitude of the Serbo-Macedonian communities and leadership in regard to the Unionist regime was moderate and cautious. On the other hand however, following the Bulgarian and Greek pattern, the Serbs even amidst the Bosnian crisis were more than reluctant to narrow down their new Macedonian struggle to mere political methods and entirely abandon their paramilitary activities in the vilayets of Kosovo and Monastir.

#### **7.4 The Re-activation of the Serbo-Macedonian Revolutionary Bands**

It is true that in the early stages of the Constitutional regime the official Serb government and the Serbo-Macedonian leadership refrained from any actions that might be considered hostile to the Young Turks. Nevertheless, despite the dismantling of the Serbo-Macedonian bands and the attempted alignment between Serbia and the Ottoman Empire during the annexation crisis, the Serbo-Macedonian communities were hesitant to support the Unionist efforts for the internal rehabilitation of Turkey. Like the Bulgarians, the Serbo-Macedonians believed that a revived Ottoman Empire could frustrate the implementation of the Serb nationalist program for expansion in Old Serbia, Kosovo and Monastir.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, apart from the brief interval during the Turkish revolution, Serbo-Macedonian irregular activism had not been entirely vanished. Since September 1908, certain Serbo-Macedonian bands had resumed their activities in Kosovo vilayet, and in particular, in the districts of Palanka, Perlepe and Kiuprulu.

Those departments had always been at the center of the Serbo-Bulgarian controversy over Macedonia due to their disputed ethnic composition and the inability of the local communities to designate their national affiliation. The primary objective of the Serbo-Macedonian revolutionary bands was to intimidate the Bulgarian communes in Kosovo and force them to accept their incorporation into the Serb political sphere of influence. Toward this end, Serb band activity did not confine itself to the traditional methods of terrorism, coercion, inroads and imposed contributions. Using material resources from Serbia proper the Serb cetniks sought, in many cases successfully, to

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<sup>34</sup> MALCOLM (1998, pp.239-40), DAKIN (1966, p.389)

rally the sympathies of the poor Macedonian populations by means of bribery and pecuniary allowances.<sup>35</sup>

Serb revolutionary activity in the province of Kosovo, though mild and sporadic when compared with the period 1906-1908, did not cease in 1909. Far from it. At the time of the April counterrevolution under the leadership of Sokolov, Skopliantse, Markov and Dovisevski, Serb paramilitary and political propaganda had spread across the northern parts of Kosovo, including the provincial capital Uskub, and had made its presence felt even in the province of Monastir.<sup>36</sup>

While the Serbs concentrated their efforts against the Kosovar Bulgarians, the Albanian nationalist movement in the Macedonian vilayets of Kosovo and Monastir was steadily growing.

### **7.5 Early Albanian Political Activities in Unionist Macedonia**

Among all Macedonian ethnic groups, it was the Albanians who participated most actively in the Young Turk movement. To secure the collaboration of the Albanian element before the revolution, the Committee had undertaken certain commitments towards the Albanian leaders from the provinces of Janina and Kosovo. The C.U.P. promised to respect traditional Albanian privileges, allow the establishment of Albanian educational institutions, recognize an independent Albanian language and maintain the traditional state practice of recruiting ethnic Albanians to the Ottoman gendarmerie.<sup>37</sup>

The Ottoman Albanians hailed the Constitutional change with enthusiasm, the sole exception being the Moslems of Scutari and Kosovo, who tended to see in the Young Turk bid for Ottoman unity and equality a threat to their privileged position in local Albanian affairs. It is important to stress however, that although the Albanian nationalists had pledged to back the Constitution they made abundantly clear to the

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<sup>35</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK/Sofia Legation/22/4-2-1909/no.73/Zalokostas to Baltazzis, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2328 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/8-2-1909/Edmonds to Lowther, F.O. 881/9503 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/26-12-1908/no.169/Lamb to Lowther and P.R.O. F.O. 195/2328 Uskub Vice-Consulate to General Consulate of Salonica/20-4-1909/Satow to Lamb

<sup>36</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2328 Uskub Consulate to General Consulate of Salonica/20-4-1909/Satow to Lamb and I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK/Sofia Legation/22/4-8-1909/no.562/Zalokostas to Zografos

<sup>37</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 97.3.1/General Consulate of Janina/15/28-7-1908/no.391/Agonakis to Baltazzis/pp.2-3, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 97.3.1/Argirokastro Consulate/29/11-8-1908/no.161/Malekos to Baltazzis

new rulers of Turkey that they were still determined to continue their struggle for political autonomy within the Ottoman Empire.<sup>38</sup> According to Agonakis, the Greek Consul-General in Janina, a large number of Epirote Albanians officials had vowed to uphold the Albanian national idea above their vows to the Ottoman Constitution.<sup>39</sup>

As the Young Turks busied themselves with more practical and urgent issues such as the establishment of the Committee in the Albanian districts and the pacification of the region they did not seem, for the time being, to take into serious consideration the significance of the Albanian commitment to political autonomy. During the initial stages of the post-revolution era, the Unionist Committee strove to disseminate its political propaganda by organizing branches in the Albanian-dominated regions of Macedonia and Epirus. Furthermore, on 11 August 1908, the Committee began talks with the Albanian notables in Argirokastro respecting the suppression of Albanian brigandage activity and the termination of the state of lawlessness and anarchy in the region.<sup>40</sup>

In the meantime, the Albanian leaders took steps to establish political clubs and issue Albanian journals in the major cities of the country. Among these associations the most influential were the clubs of Monastir, Uskub, Salonica and Constantinople. By the end of the year, a large number of Albanian clubs had been set up in Macedonia but it was the Monastir society, under the leadership of Fehim Bey Zavalani, that emerged as the recognized center of Albanian political activism. Certainly, the Albanian Macedonian societies did not have a "uniform program" as each of them had sought to adjust its positions in local conditions and necessities. However, the leading clubs' principal intention was to work for "Albanian cultural development" and the advancement of Albanian political aspirations.<sup>41</sup>

In October, the annexation crisis and the declaration of Bulgarian independence drove the Albanian element to support Young Turkey and uphold the Ottoman

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<sup>38</sup> SKENDI (1967, p.344)

<sup>39</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 97.3.1/General Consulate of Janina/15/28-7-1908/no.391/Agonakis to Baltazzis/pp.3-5

<sup>40</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 97.3.1/Argirokastro Consulate/29/11-8-1908/no.161/Malekos to Baltazzis, I.A.Y.E./1908/File 97.3.1/Argirokastro Consulate/5/18-8-1908/no.164/Malekos to Baltazzis

<sup>41</sup> For details on the formation, membership and activity of Albanian clubs in Macedonia and Epirus: I.A.Y.E./1910/File AAK-IΘ/Argirokastro Consulate/20/2-8-1910/no.247/Halkiopoulos to Zografos, I.A.Y.E./1910/File AAK-IΘ/General Consulate of Janina/18/31-8-1910/no.793/Agonakis to Zografos, I.A.Y.E./1910/File AAK-IΘ/Monastir Consulate/15/28-10-1910/no.940/Mavroudis to Kallergis, SKENDI (1967, pp.346-50)

embargo against Austria. The Albanian leadership feared that the strengthening of Bulgaria might incite Serbia, Montenegro and Greece to seek territorial compensation in the Macedonian vilayets of Kosovo and Monastir as well as in Epirus. The Albanian nationalists had also laid claim to these areas, considering them to be part of Albania.

In the second week of October, the Albanian club of Constantinople made clear to the Porte and the British embassy that it vehemently opposed the disintegration of Turkey-in-Europe and Slav or Greek territorial enlargement. To soothe those fears, the Grand Vizier Kiamil Pasha assured the Albanian Constantinople leadership that the Ottoman administration was resolved to make no territorial concessions either to the Slavs or the Greeks.<sup>42</sup>

Until October 1908, the incompatibility of Unionist policies with the Albanian national program, though conspicuous, had not irretrievably damaged Turco-Albanian relations. In the following months however, new developments were to create a rift between the two ethnic groups and add to Macedonian controversy.

### **7.6 The Monastir Congress and the Convention of Tepeleni**

The construction of a separate Albanian identity was of crucial importance to the Albanian nation-building process. Cultural affirmation therefore, became the main priority for the Albanian leadership. Seeking to unify the Albanian tribes by means of detaching the Orthodox Christian and Moslem Albanian communities from their pro-Greek and pro-Turkish affiliations respectively and to stir the national awareness of the Albanian people, the Albanian nationalists raised the demand for the recognition of an Albanian language.

On the initiative of the Monastir association, a pan-Albanian Congress was held in that city between 14 and 22 November 1908. In the Congress, 50 delegates from the Albanian provinces participated representing all different creeds: Moslems, Christian Orthodox and Catholics. Leading figures of the Albanian national movement such as the president of Salonica club Midhat Frasheri Bey, Fehim Bey Zavalani and Sotir Peci, the editor of the American-Albanian newspaper *Kombi* (Nation), were present.

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<sup>42</sup> I.A.Y.E./1908/File 97.3.2/General Consulate of Janina/7/20-10-1908/no.5925/Agonakis to Baltazzis, F.O. 881/9492 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./14-11-1908/no.777/Lowther to Grey

Since the principal preoccupation of the Congress was to “adopt a common alphabet” for all Albanians, the Congress became known as the “alphabet Congress”. Other issues like the leadership of Albanian clubs and the translation of the Koran into Albanian were also discussed. C.U.P. members participated in the Congress but few addressed it.

On the focal alphabet question, a Committee was elected with the task of presenting its suggestions to the delegates. The Committee put forward two alternatives: one based on the Constantinople alphabet, including mixed Latin and Greek characters and another Latin-based alphabet. The Congress resolved that both be adopted and introduced in Albanian educational institutions. Regarding the issue of the supremacy among the Albanian political societies, the delegates opted for Monastir. Their main intention was to keep the center of the Albanian struggle away from the influence of the Salonica C.U.P. and secure its proximity to the Albanian-inhabited areas.<sup>43</sup>

The Monastir Congress’s resolution to adopt an alphabet with Latin characters evoked anxiety to Greek Orthodox and Moslem Albanian clergy. The Orthodox clergy opposed the substitution of Greek language by a purely Albanian language in Albanian Orthodox churches and schools as it would result in the diminution of its spiritual influence on the Albanian Orthodox communities.<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, in the Kosovar Albanian districts of Diber and Prishtina, the conservative Moslem clergy dismissed the new alphabet as “infidel”, propagating the introduction of the Arabic, the alphabet of the Koran.<sup>45</sup>

At the time, the Young Turk Committee did not seem to pose any obstacles to the use of an independent Albanian language in the Albanian-populated areas. Following the October crisis, the Committee’s Albanian policy was to secure Albanian support for the Unionist regime and pacify the troublesome Albanian-Macedonian departments. However, this strategy underestimated the most important parameter in the Albanian question: Albanian nationalism and the Albanian bid for autonomy.

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<sup>43</sup> F.O. 881/9492 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./4-12-1908/no.827/Lowther to Grey/enclosure no.1, SKENDI (1982, p.255)

<sup>44</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK-A/Koritsa to Constantinople/17/30-3-1909/no.1325/Metropolitan Gervasios to Ecumenical Patriarch

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. MALCOLM (1998, p.239)

On 4 February 1909, on a C.U.P. initiative, an Albanian convention was organized in Tepeleni with the participation of representatives from the vilayet of Janina. In an attempt to gain Albanian sympathy and backing, the C.U.P. raised the question of the Hellenic expansionist program in Epirus. The Committee guaranteed the territorial integrity of Albania and called the Albanian leaders to collaborate against the Greek threat.

The Tepeleni gathering however seemed to take an unpleasant turn for the Unionists when, according to Italian Consul-General in Janina, Stranieri, a number of Albanian notables "put forward a demand for the autonomy of the Albanian provinces." This initiative was seen favorably by many Albanian Bektashis but failing to obtain the support of the Christian Orthodox delegates and the representatives of Berat, Elbassan and Loushnia, it yielded no practical result.<sup>46</sup>

In the end, the Tepeleni convention approved the formation of Albanian Epirote bands to face the Greek Epirote revolutionary movement and prevent the Albanian Orthodox communities from falling under the influence of Hellenic propaganda. But its most salient characteristic was that the claim for Albanian autonomy had been raised once again.

### **7.7 The Emergence of Albanian Revolutionary Movement in Macedonia**

No sooner had the Constitutional forces established their power in Macedonia than an Albanian "reactionary" movement emerged in northern Macedonia. The Unionist bid to introduce western institutions in the Empire and promote equality and unity among the various Ottoman ethnicities had concerned the Moslem Albanians, many of whom had a traditional, and in certain cases personal, attachment to the Hamidian regime.

In the first half of August 1908, the Albanian Moslems of Jakova, led by Hasan Slako, rose against the new Young Turk regime. At the first stage of their rising, the rebels forced the local Ottoman administrative, judicial and police authorities out of the district declaring that henceforth "they would be governed by the Religious Law." Another Albanian anti-Young Turk movement broke out in Ipek during the same

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<sup>46</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2328 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/22-2-1909/Lamb to Lowther



month and despite the C.U.P. initiative to dispatch a Commission to quiet local grievances, the Albanian element manifested its opposition to Young Turkey.

In November 1908, the situation became more serious when the powerful Albanian chieftain Izza Boletini, to whom Sultan Abdul Hamid had given the title of Bey and the leadership of his Albanian guard since 1902, incited a new round of disturbances in the district of Mitrovitsa. His success in rallying around him notorious Albanian brigands like Hasan Hussein of Budakovo and Rustem Kabash was of little practical importance so long as a strong Ottoman force marched into Mitrovitsa and suppressed the anti-Constitutional movement.<sup>47</sup>

In the meantime, Albanian nationalists began to distance themselves from the policies of the Young Turk Committee. Following the July revolution, the C.U.P. had shown no tendency to support provincial decentralization and strengthen local governments, much less to grant political autonomy to peripheral ethnic groups. Unionist strategy therefore, ran contrary to the political aspirations of the Albanian nationalist centers. Since the end of summer, the Albanian nationalists set up underground revolutionary committees in order to bring about the unification of the Albanian people and built an independent Albanian identity. According to Skendi, the secret committees were formed in Uskub, Jakova, Diber, Monastir and Constantinople and usually operated under the cloak of the Albanian clubs.<sup>48</sup>

Initially, the clandestine Albanian societies confined their national struggle to spreading cultural propaganda by establishing schools, newspapers, clubs, raising the language question and cooperating with Vlach and Bulgarian-Macedonian activists against the Greeks in the regions of Monastir and Epirus. Therefore, until the counter-revolution of April 1909, the Albanian disturbances, predominantly in northern Macedonia, occurred on the instigation and with the active participation of local chieftains and band-leaders like Izza Boletini and his followers.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2328 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/6-2-1909/Lamb to Lowther/Memorandum on Macedonian Events in 1908

<sup>48</sup> SKENDI (1967, p.353)

<sup>49</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK-A/Monastir Consulate/5/18-3-1909/no.213/Dimaras to Baltazzis, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2328 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/5-2-1909/Heathcote to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2328 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/30-3-1909/Lamb to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2328 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/3-4-1909/Geary to Lowther

Such was the case in the second half of March 1909, when three Ottoman battalions were sent to Kosovo vilayet with a mission to suppress the irregulars of Izza Boletini and Hussein Dats of Diber and restore Ottoman administrative and military control over the districts of Ipek and Jakova.<sup>50</sup>

These Albanian activities, apart from keeping the region in turmoil, were only the tip of the iceberg. It was during the April of 1909, that the first major Albanian insurrection broke out in northern Macedonia; the prelude to a series of Albanian revolts destined to bring about the collapse of Ottoman Macedonian authority in the summer of 1912.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2328 Uskub Vice-Consulate to General Consulate of Salonica/19-3-1909/Satow to Lamb/enclosure no.1

<sup>51</sup> Refer to chapter 9.

**PART III**  
**THE MID-TERM EFFECTS OF THE YOUNG TURK REVOLUTION IN**  
**MACEDONIA APRIL 1909-OCTOBER 1912**

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE POLITICS OF 'OTTOMANIZATION' IN MACEDONIA 1909-1911

#### 8.1 The Politicization of Ottoman Army and the Committee of Union and Progress

The suppression of the counter-revolution in April 1909 by the Macedonian Army was a turning-point in Ottoman political history. The utter defeat of the anti-Unionist forces consolidated the Young Turk Committee as the most influential political body in the country and legitimized the establishment of a Unionist parliamentary party (C.U.P.). The decision of the Committee and the Chamber to restore the Hilmi Pasha Cabinet to office had nevertheless failed to clear the picture in Ottoman politics, for the arrival of the Macedonian Army in the capital had complicated the situation. The most important corollary of the April counter-revolution was that it brought the Ottoman military into the political arena.

Although the military party allowed the civil bureaucrats of the Porte and the Young Turk Committee to control the government, Mahmud Shevket Pasha's first actions indicated the tendency of the Army to engage itself actively in political affairs. Shevket Pasha, by appointing himself Inspector-General of the three European army corps (I,II,III Ordus) became the most powerful figure in the Empire. What was more, in order to secure public order and prevent future internal convulsions the military put the country under martial law which was administered by Shevket Pasha and his Staff. In establishing martial law and excluding the Cabinet and the Chamber from its administration, the Army managed to restrain the civilian authorities' power and "veto any measures it disapproved".<sup>1</sup>

The Young Turk Committee was visibly concerned with the growing interference of the Ottoman Army in politics. For the time being though the Committee had no plans to precipitate a clash with the Army. Following the April coup, C.U.P. policy was to

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<sup>1</sup> AHMAD (1969, pp.47-9, 55), ZURCHER (1993, p.104)

strengthen its position in the Hilmi Pasha Cabinet and the Parliament and at the same time attempt to contain the political activism of Shevket Pasha and his militarists. To this end, the C.U.P. sought to pack the administration and the government apparatus with its members and supporters. Unionist intentions became more clear in July 1909 when the Committee forced Ferid Pasha to resign from the Ministry of the Interior. Talat Bey succeeded him and with Cavit Bey, the Minister of Finance, increased the Committee's representation and influence in the Cabinet.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, the Unionists tried to vest the Chamber, their political stronghold, with more powers at the expense of the Monarch and the Cabinet. By revising certain Constitutional articles the new C.U.P. parliamentary party deprived the Sultan of his right to control the composition of the entire Cabinet, restricting his jurisdiction to the appointment of the Grand Vizier and Sheih-ul-Islam.<sup>3</sup> Under the new Constitutional disposition the appointment or dismissal of the Ministerial Council became contingent upon Parliamentary ratification. In case the Cabinet and the Parliament held different positions in questions of domestic or foreign policy the latter was to prevail. As an outcome, owing to Unionist efforts, the Chamber managed to extend its political role and authority in Ottoman matters vis-a-vis traditional policy-making centers such as the Palace and the Cabinet.<sup>4</sup>

There is little doubt that during the second period of the Hilmi Pasha Cabinet in office (May-December 1909), the C.U.P. had been powerful enough to restrain the executive authority of the Palace and the Cabinet. However, in dealing with the military party of Mahmud Shevket, which had rallied the support of many Young Turk officers, the Committee's civilian branch was to have a far more difficult time. The C.U.P. was aware that so long as the responsibility for the working of martial law continued to lie in the hands of the Army and not the civilian authorities (Cabinet or Parliament), the military was to remain the *ultima ratio* in the country and Mahmud Shevket Pasha military dictator.<sup>5</sup>

Despite their resentment at the political activism of the military the Unionists did not oppose the establishment of martial regime. On the contrary, in these extraordinary

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<sup>2</sup> AHMAD (1969, pp.50-3)

<sup>3</sup> ZURCHER (1993, p.105)

<sup>4</sup> F.O. 881/9858 Memorandum Respecting the New Regime in Turkey/Foreign Office/16-5-1911/Knatchbull-Hugessen to Grey, AHMAD (1969, pp.59-60)

<sup>5</sup> F.O. 881/9717 Constantinople Embassy/3-1-1910/no.3/Major Tyrrell to Lowther

conditions, the Young Turk Committee recognized its value as the only effective preventive measure against a future anti-Unionist counterrevolution. Furthermore, the C.U.P. aspired to utilize the martial regime to promote its centralizing and nationalist policy. This policy had two distinct poles: the suppression of liberal opposition in the Chamber of Deputies, the administration, the press and the country as a whole; second, the implementation of the Unionist nationalist program of 'Ottomanizing' all non-Moslem ethnic groups in the Empire. It was a state-sponsored policy intending to attack the constitutionally established political and spiritual rights of the non-Moslem ethnic groups and enforce on them a collective Ottoman identity. Although part of the Unionist centralizing and nationalist tendencies had been revealed in the period between the July revolution and the April counterrevolution, the actual commencement of the 'Ottomanization' politics should be placed after April 1909 reaching its peak in the next two years.

In Ottoman-held Macedonia, the implementation of this political experiment was based on three key factors. First, in the employment on the part of the Constantinople government and the Young Turk Committee of strict legislative, administrative and military measures. Second, in the settlement of Moslem immigrants from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Eastern Rumelia in the Christian-dominated Macedonian districts. Third, in the organization of Moslem-Macedonian bands and the emergence of a revolutionary movement among the Moslem population.

## **8.2 Legislative, Administrative and Military Measures**

In summer 1909, the Committee embarked on laying the legislative foundations for the promotion of its 'Ottomanization' experiment. Its paramount position in the Chamber facilitated the passing of a large number of important bills. In the second half of 1909, the Parliament voted, among others, the Law concerning the Conscription of non-Moslems and the Association Law. The Law for the prevention of Brigandage and Sedition was put in force by the Hilmi Pasha Cabinet without being sanctioned by the Chamber.

On 5 November 1909, the Hilmi Pasha government issued a firman enacting the enrollment of non-Moslems in the army. The Conscription Law, in essence, provided

for the homogenization of the non-Moslem recruits in the Moslem-dominated Ottoman armed forces. Therefore it was vehemently opposed by the Greek, Slav, Armenian and Jewish ethnic communities. It was not long before the Committee and the leaders of the non-Moslem communities clashed over the conscription issue.

Retorting to the C.U.P. accusations that the Greeks obstructed the non-Moslem army recruitment and undermined the Conscription Law, the Greek Patriarch Joachim III, supported by the Chief Rabbi Haim Nahum Effendi, argued that the Greeks would not oppose that measure providing that all ethnic groups acquired the same status in the Ottoman army. To this effect, the Greek Patriarch requested that the non-Moslem recruits should be allowed to have their own priests, perform their religious tasks, serve in separate units in their native districts and register in the Ottoman military academies to become officers.<sup>6</sup>

For many reasons the Ottoman administration refused to satisfy those demands. The Ottomans feared that the presence of independent non-Moslem military units in the army could develop in a threat for the internal security of the country. Besides, the Moslem recruits objected to the participation of non-Moslems in the Ottoman armed forces on religious grounds. The likelihood that this problematic coexistence between Moslem and non-Moslem troops might undermine the fighting spirit and capability of the army had seriously perturbed the Ottoman political and military establishment.<sup>7</sup>

As for the non-Moslem recruits themselves they had no real desire to join the army and serve among numerous Moslems whilst the few thousands who finally enrolled did so to avoid paying the heavy exemption military tax *bedel-i-askeri*. According to Ottoman Macedonian military authorities, the III Army corps was expected to recruit for 1910 8,000 non-Moslems, of whom 1,800 would serve in Constantinople.<sup>8</sup> For the vilayet of Salonica, in particular, 1617 Christians and 1444 Jews were selected to join the *Tertib-I-Evvel* (service with colors) and 119 Christians and 166 Jews were to join the *Tertib-I-Sani* (active reserve).<sup>9</sup> In sum, owing to the limited Christian

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<sup>6</sup> F.O. 881/9717 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./14-1-1910/no.14/Lowther to Grey

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/5-3-1910/Lamb to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/14-3-1910/Lamb to Lowther

<sup>9</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/5-3-1910/Lamb to Lowther

enrollment in the Ottoman army the application of the Conscription Law did not make a serious impact on the situation in Macedonia.<sup>10</sup> This was not however the case with the Association and Brigandage Laws.

The Association Law forbade the various nationalities to set up political societies or clubs with an ethnic character. Clearly, its execution stirred a great amount of discontent among the Macedonian Christians. In their eyes, the Ottoman authorities' resolution to outlaw the operation of the ethnic political associations and close down the existing Christian clubs was an unequivocal attempt to restrict their constitutional freedom and strip them of their right to oppose the Young Turk regime by political means.<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, by the time that the Association Law was put in force on 16 August 1909, the anti-Committee trends within the Christian Macedonian clubs had increased substantially in any case. In the most powerful Christian Macedonian organization, the Bulgarian Constitutional League,<sup>12</sup> the Unionist failure to initiate agrarian reform, settle the ecclesiastical question and improve living and regional conditions in Macedonia had increased the influence of the most nationalist elements.<sup>13</sup>

In the outset, it seemed that the Ottoman authorities would not face serious problems in implementing the Association Law in the three Macedonian provinces. In Monastir, for example, when in mid-November the vali Halil Bey announced to the leaders of the local Greek, Albanian and Serb political clubs that their associations were to close down, the latter, although frustrated, complied without causing trouble. The only non-political clubs that continued to function in the city of Monastir were

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<sup>10</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/22-1-1910/Geary to Lowther. It is indicative that the maximum enrollment, which took place in Adrianople, resulted in the conscription of 2,169 Christians only. F.O. 881/9717 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./14-1-1910/no.14/Lowther to Grey

<sup>11</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2330 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/22-11-1909/Matthews to Lowther

<sup>12</sup> In November 1909, the Bulgarian-Macedonian Constitutional Union numbered roughly 10,000 members. P.R.O. F.O. 195/2330 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/24-11-1909/Lamb to Lowther

<sup>13</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK-A/General Consulate of Salonica/19/1-9-1909/Papadiamantopoulos to Callergis/Second Congress/pp.3-7 and P.R.O. F.O. 195/2329 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/14-9-1909/Acting General Consul Satow to Lowther



the International and the Military, those associations being predominantly Turkish and all their members C.U.P. supporters.<sup>14</sup>

Unlike the Greek, Serb and Albanian clubs, the Bulgarian Constitutional associations did not seem very keen to follow the trend and meet the Unionist demand for immediate dissolution. The Ottoman authorities' decision to suppress the Bulgarian-Macedonian branches of Monastir and Perlepe in the end of November 1909 activated the League. Instantly, Karayovov traveled to Constantinople and sought to reach a compromise with the C.U.P. The Macedonian leader made an attempt to persuade the Unionists to adopt a more conciliatory attitude towards the Constitutional League, which "had worked consistently and sincerely for the maintenance of order and the establishment of a better administration."<sup>15</sup>

But no such concession was forthcoming on the part of the Unionist Committee. The Unionists had been always inclined to believe that the Constitutional associations were connected with Sofia and that it was through the Constitutional League that the Bulgarian government had been advancing its national propaganda and expansionist aspirations in Macedonia.<sup>16</sup> No wonder that the C.U.P. viewed Karayovov's mission with real mistrust and wished to see him and his group "severing all connections with Macedonian politics."<sup>17</sup>

In the first week of December, the Salonica Central Headquarters of the Bulgarian Constitutional clubs, following a tumultuous convention, sent a circular to the remaining Macedonian clubs instructing them to discontinue their operations.<sup>18</sup> The Bulgarian-Macedonian nationalist faction, however, had no intention of capitulating easily. In December 1909, during Karayovov's absence in Constantinople, it

<sup>14</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2330 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/22-11-1909/Matthews to Lowther. It is true that the Greek association of Monastir and its leader Valavanidis requested from the vali to permit the operation of the club under the name *Πολιτικός Σύνδεσμος* (Political League), but, as expected, the Ottomans refused to satisfy the Greek request. P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/2-3-1910/Geary to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/22-1-1910/Geary to Lowther

<sup>15</sup> F.O. 881/9717 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./28-12-1909/no.998/Marling to Grey

<sup>16</sup> Sandanski, prompted by his incessant rivalry with the Bulgarian clubs and Sofia, had also exerted his influence on the Young Turks in order to convince them that the clubs were mere instruments of King Ferdinand "working for Macedonian annexation to Bulgaria." F.O. 881/9624 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./31-1-1910/Lowther to Grey/Annual Report on Turkey for the Year 1909/enclosure no.1

<sup>17</sup> F.O. 881/9717 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./28-12-1909/no.998/Marling to Grey

<sup>18</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2330 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/6-12-1909/Lamb to Marling

gathered momentum in the League. Guerov, editor of the clubs' official publication *Otechestvo* (Fatherland)<sup>19</sup> launched through this journal a campaign against the Committee's Macedonian policy.

Karayovov's decision to return from Constantinople, dismiss Guerov and postpone the publication of the *Otechestvo* came too late to prevent the Ottoman authorities from outlawing the Bulgarian political associations, suppressing their offices and banning the *Otechestvo*. Indeed, using the Press Law, they indicted Karayovov and Guerov for "publishing villainous and seditious statements against the government and the nation." On 31 January 1910, the two Bulgarian-Macedonian leaders were sentenced in absentia to two months imprisonment and a fine of thirty Turkish pounds. Their flight to Bulgaria before their trial marked the dissolution of the Bulgarian-Macedonian Constitutional Union.<sup>20</sup>

If the Association Law had sharpened the discontent of the Macedonian Christians toward Young Turkey, the implementation of the Band Law in Macedonia was to lead the local nationalities and the Unionists into thorough estrangement and confrontation. On 27 September 1909, the Hilmi Pasha Cabinet put in force the Band Law based on the Constitutional article 36 'as a measure of urgency for the safeguard of the state.' The Band Law, which having not been sanctioned by the Chamber was an essentially unconstitutional law,<sup>21</sup> aimed at the repression of brigand activism and the liquidation of the Macedonian bands.

The Band Law stated that local authorities and the population of a locality were to be hold responsible for the emergence of band activity in their district. Participation in a band incurred the death penalty and in case one member of a family joined a band, the authorities had the right to confiscate the family's property and exile its members. The Band Law provided for the formation of special Investigation Commissions (*Istilat Commissionou*) and the establishment of courts martial in the provincial Macedonian centers.

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<sup>19</sup> This biweekly journal was published in Salonica and enjoyed a circulation of 3,000-6,000 papers.

<sup>20</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/1-2-1910/Lamb to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/8-2-1910/Lamb to Lowther, F.O. 881/9717 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./15-2-1910/no.88/Lowther to Grey

<sup>21</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2330 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/3-12-1909/Lamb to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2330 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/24-11-1909/Lamb to Lowther

The five-member Investigation Commissions were composed of local judicial, military, gendarmerie and police officials. Having at their disposal strong military detachments and almost unrestricted freedom of action, the Commissions did not hesitate to employ exceedingly harsh measures in their struggle against the Christian bands. Stringent police surveillance, intensive espionage activity, persecution, extortion and, often, deportation of the comitadjis' relatives, forcible disarmament, assassinations of former-band leaders by Moslem irregulars,<sup>22</sup> intimidation of local populations were the most formidable weapons of the Investigations Commissions in their campaign to eliminate Christian Macedonian opposition and implement the 'Ottomanization' policy.<sup>23</sup>

Apparently, the most successful Macedonian Commission was that of Monastir under Adjutant-Major Fuad Bey, gendarmerie commandant of Koritsa. During November and December 1909, it had forced three strong Christian bands, which had been active in the districts of Servia, Grevena and Kirtchevo, to surrender to the local authorities.<sup>24</sup>

Christian resentment against the Band Law stemmed predominantly from the question of Christian disarmament. Aided by old spies of the Hamidian regime, the Investigation Commissions proclaimed martial law in the Macedonian towns demanding the instant disarmament of the Christian populations -a procedure from which the local Moslem communities and the immigrants from Bosnia and Bulgaria were exempted. It is certain that the Investigation Commissions and their military

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<sup>22</sup> By the end of January 1910, well-known Bulgarian and Greek ex-band leaders like Mitsko, Vassil and Papazoglou had been killed by Moslems in Kirtchevo, Uskub and Salonica respectively. The most spectacular assassination however occurred on 13 January 1910 in a Florina café, when two Moslems killed the notorious Bulgarian *voevoda* Tzole of Banitsa in day-light. It was the unwillingness of the Ottoman authorities to identify and arrest the assassins that led the local Bulgarians justifiably to believe that the incident had been instigated by the Young Turk Committee. P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/16-1-1910/Geary to Marling. See also note no.21

<sup>23</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2330 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/17-12-1909/Matthews to Marling, F.O. 881/9717 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/18-1-1910/no.11/Lamb to Lowther, F.O. 881/9717 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./4-1-1910/no.6/Lowther to Grey, I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK-A/General Consulate of Salonica/24/7-12-1909/no.872/Papdiamantopoulos to Mavromihalis

<sup>24</sup> The other members of the Monastir Investigation Commission were: Major Niazi Bey, Fakri Bey (former police inspector and kaimakam of Resna), Saadeddin Bey (gendarmerie commandant of Monastir) and Assim Bey (police director of Monastir). P.R.O. F.O. 195/2330 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/29-11-1909/Matthews to Lowther and P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/18-1-1910/Lamb to Lowther

detachments tended to accompany Christian disarmament with the use of excessive violence, tortures, intimidation and ruthless inquisitorial methods.

In the southern parts of Kosovo vilayet, in Monastir vilayet and in the kazas of Yenidje-Vardar and Ghevgeli of Salonica vilayet Turkish repression reached the proportions of unspeakable cruelty. In a protest against this unbearable situation, Father Lade, a Bulgarian vicar from the district of Ishtip, committed suicide. Such was the Ottoman authorities' misconduct in the disarmament question that the Christian ethnic groups began to contemplate the formation of a united anti-Turkish front and the full reactivation of their Macedonian revolutionary committees.<sup>25</sup>

Yet, it was the institution of courts martial that made the implementation of the Band Law tantamount to the establishment of martial law in the three Macedonian provinces. These bodies, manned by high-ranking judicial and military officials and vested with extraordinary jurisdiction and powers, soon developed in the supreme authorities in the vilayets of Salonica, Monastir and Kosovo. According to the new Ottoman penal code, a Macedonian court martial had the power to inflict heavy sentences and even capital punishment on those defendants who had been found guilty of being implicated in band activities.

Theoretically, this measure was equally directed against Moslem as well as Christian bandits, but, in fact, the vast majority of the individuals standing trial were Christians. Procedure-wise, the function of these judicial bodies was very suspect. Contrary to the reassurances of the Ottoman officials, the courts martial convened in secrecy and the defendants were neither allowed to engage legal support nor to communicate with their next-of-kin.

It should be stressed that the Macedonian courts martial proceedings did not always result in convictions. In fact, a large number of accused Christians were finally acquitted. By the end of 1909, 108 Christians stood trial before the Salonica court martial. Out of them, 89 were exonerated, 9 were sentenced to three years' hard labor, 3 to four years, 4 to five years and three to life imprisonment.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2358 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/12-6-1910/Lamb to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2358 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/20-8-1910/Lamb to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2359 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/9-10-1910/Geary to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2359 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/11-11-1910/Lamb to Lowther

<sup>26</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/18-1-1910/Lamb to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2330 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/24-11-

The execution of Band Law produced a two-fold effect in Macedonia. First, due to the severity in its application it temporarily led to the diminution of Christian Macedonian band activity. Second, it helped to enhance the irreconcilable racial differences between the Christian and Moslem communities and added to Christian hostility against the Ottoman government and the Young Turk Committee.

To the vast majority of Macedonian Christians it seemed as if the repugnant rule of the old Hamidian establishment had suddenly revived in the form of an arbitrary and nationalist Unionist regime. In the end of 1909, a state of intimidation and complete terror reigned over the Christian-populated districts of Macedonia and the relations between Young Turks and Macedonian Christians reached their worst point ever.<sup>27</sup>

### **8.3 The C.U.P., Moslem Immigration to Macedonia and the Formation of Moslem Macedonian bands**

If the year 1910 witnessed an unprecedented deterioration in the position of the Ottoman Christians, this was primarily the result of the C.U.P. nationalist commitment to suppress any opposition to its regime and forcefully 'Ottomanize' the non-Moslem ethnic groups.

On 28 December 1909, the Hussein Hilmi Pasha Cabinet was forced by the Unionists to resign. The new Grand Vizier Ibrahim Hakki Pasha, a senior Porte official and ambassador in Italy, sought from the start to reduce the Committee's meddling with

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1909/Lamb to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2330 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/3-12-1909/Lamb to Lowther, F.O. 881/9717 Sofia Embassy to F.O./16-2-1910/no.18/Findlay to Grey. By the end of January 1910, the only case resulting in the imposition of death sentence by the Salonica court martial was that of the Bulgarian-Macedonian *voevoda* Dinka. The Dinka affair however had an explicit political connotation. The Bulgarian-Macedonian *voevoda*, even after the Young Turk revolution, had been operating with his band in the northern districts of the Salonica vilayet as a counterpoise to Sandanski's local influence. Dinka's band had been manned by sympathizers of the Bulgarian Union of Constitutional clubs and for that reason Sandanski assisted the Ottoman authorities to eliminate the band and arrest Dinka and his followers. On 26 January 1910, the Salonica court martial convicted Dinka to death, whilst 5 of his men received life sentence and 2 fifteen-years imprisonment. Despite the statement of the Ottoman Foreign Minister Rifat Pasha that the authorities intended "to make an example of Dinka", Dinka's conviction was a Young Turk concession to Sandanski, whose personal regime in the northern departments of the Salonica vilayet was threatened by the presence of a rival political band. P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/27-1-1910/Lamb to Lowther, F.O. 881/9717 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./28-1-1910/no.9/Lowther to Grey, F.O. 881/9717 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./30-1-1910/no.11/Lowther to Grey

<sup>27</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2330 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/29-11-1909/Matthews to Lowther, F.O. 881/9717 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/18-1-1910/no.11/Lamb to Lowther

the government and bring the administration of the martial law under the control of central government. His decision to appoint Shevket Pasha Minister of War was the most significant element in the composition of the new Cabinet.

This important development conferred the nominal control of the martial law upon the Hakki Pasha government but its original administration was never removed from the hands of Shevket Pasha and his military party. The principal characteristic of the new Ottoman administration was not any more the rivalry between the Hakki Cabinet and the C.U.P. for political predominance but the consistent efforts of the military party<sup>28</sup> to establish its position as a major decision-making body in Ottoman affairs.<sup>29</sup>

In the meantime, during the same period, C.U.P. popularity among the Moslem as well as the non-Moslem populations declined. The C.U.P. had failed to promote inter-ethnic unity and introduce radical reforms in the Ottoman administration as well as the socio-political institutions. It was however the C.U.P. decision to uphold the martial regime that had alienated a large section of Ottoman society from the Committee. In April 1910, during a parliamentary debate concerning the Unionist attitude on the question of the martial law Lutfi Fikri Bey, a prominent liberal deputy, accused the Committee of having used the stage of siege "to override all the laws and set up an arbitrary form of Government."<sup>30</sup>

At a time that the anti-Unionist movement was steadily growing in the Ottoman Empire, the emergence of factionalism among the Monastir, Salonica and Adrianople Committees further undermined the internal position of the C.U.P. Quarrels over supremacy in the organization or the management and allocation of funds seriously threatened the unity of the movement and strained relations between the European Committees. It was in this difficult situation, that the Unionist leaders Halil Bey,

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<sup>28</sup> In the Hakki Cabinet, equaling the civilian Unionist party of Talat Bey and Cavit Bey, the military group had also two representatives: Shevket Pasha and the Minister of Navy Real-Admiral Halil Pasha.

<sup>29</sup> F.O. 881/9717 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./16-1-1910/no.27/Lowther to Grey, F.O. 881/9858 Memorandum Respecting the New Regime in Turkey/Foreign Office/16-5-1911/Knatchbull-Hugessen to Grey

<sup>30</sup> F.O. 881/9811 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./14-2-1911/Lowther to Grey/Annual Report on Turkey for the Year 1910/enclosure no.1, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/3-3-1910/Lamb to Lowther. In May 1910, in a conversation with the British ambassador Lowther, Mahmud Shevket Pasha commented on the C.U.P. connection in the Ottoman administration: "The Committee is a body of irresponsible and inexperienced young men styling themselves the Committee of Union and Progress who thwarted as much as they assisted the government." F.O. 881/9858 Memorandum Respecting the New Regime in Turkey/Foreign Office/16-5-1911/Knatchbull-Hugessen to Grey

Talat Bey and Cavit Bey traveled to Macedonia in August 1910. Attempting to reconcile the feuding Young Turk branches and forge Unionist solidarity Talat Bey sought to reassure the Salonica C.U.P. that:

“We have a majority in the House of Representatives and all attempts to oppose us in the Parliament have miserably failed. The Cabinet is essentially in the hands of the Committee and will continue to be controlled by us. The army is solidly ranged in our support and any talk of danger on the part of our friends entirely lacks foundation.”

The mission of the three Unionist political leaders however failed to restore the unity between the European branches and reaffirmed the deadlock.<sup>31</sup> Adding to the gravity of the situation, a considerable number of Young Turk officers of the Uskub, Monastir and Salonica branches started to withdraw their support from the Talat-Cavit civilian group and align themselves with the military party of Mahmud Shevket. In November, the growing frustration within the Macedonian army over Unionist policies moved the Military club of Uskub to address a proposal to the Salonica Military club for a “joint secession” from the Young Turk Committee. The chief cause for this conversion lay in the officers’ disappointment over the practice of the civilian cadres of occupying many privileged positions in the civil administration and the central government thus “reaping the fruits of a victory (i.e. restoration of Constitution) which the Army alone secured.”<sup>32</sup>

Such was the complicated situation in the movement when in November 1910 the Third Annual Young Turk Congress convened in Salonica -the center of the C.U.P.

<sup>31</sup> F.O. 881/9860 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/28-8-1910/no.38/Geary to Lowther, F.O. 881/9860 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./6-9-1910/no.635/Lowther to Grey. It appears that the question of Ottoman policy with regard to Bulgaria had become an additional point of dispute between the European Unionist Committees. Two months after the Talat-Cavit mission, in the Third Young Turk Congress Ikhsan Bey held that the Salonica C.C. of the C.U.P. had been profoundly convinced that a diminution of the repressive measures against the Bulgarian-Macedonian element was necessary to avoid, at this stage at least, a premature armed confrontation with Bulgaria. On the other hand, the Monastir and Adrianople C.U.P. strongly objected to the suggestion of the Salonica Committee. Due to their geographical proximity with Bulgaria, the Monastir and Adrianople C.U.P. had grown increasingly apprehensive of Bulgarian expansionism and not only continued to treat the local Bulgarian populations very badly but spurred the Salonica C.U.P. to practice a more aggressive policy vis-a-vis the Bulgarians. P.R.O. F.O. 195/2359 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/3-12-1910/Geary to Marling.

<sup>32</sup> F.O. 881/9860 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/25-10-1910/no.36/Geary to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2359 Uskub Vice-Consulate to General Consulate of Salonica/15-11-1910/Hough to Lamb, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2381 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/30-4-1911/Geary to Lowther

power- to discuss developments in the country and the movement as well as to outline the future Committee political course of action. The Congress busied itself with the election of a new C.C. and the elaboration of its political resolutions.

First, the delegates elected the Central Bureau of the C.U.P. It consisted of: Kiasim Nami Bey, Fadil Bey, Kerim-Effendi-Zade Tewfik Bey, Celal Bey, Sami Bey, Said Bey, Tewfik Rushdi Bey, Hifzi Bey. Three eminent Unionist cadres, Dr. Nazim Bey, Eumer Naci Bey and Ayub Sabri, were appointed representatives of the Salonica C.C. to Constantinople.

Afterwards, the proceedings of the Congress focused on the elaboration of the new resolutions. These called for: the disarmament of the Macedonian Christians, save the frontier Albanian clans; the suppression of Bulgarian agitators, teachers and priests; the settlement of Moslem immigrants in Macedonia; the pursuit and punishment of Christian comitadjis; the strengthening and development of Ottoman armed forces to stifle the Christian propaganda in Macedonia and Albania and 'crush the Bulgarian and Greek aspirations'; the 'suppression of all new parties and liberal ideas'; the introduction of the Turkish language in all Ottoman educational institutions; the dissemination of pan-Islamism across the country, the new motto being 'the caliph was the head of the nation, other nationalities were a negligible quantity'; the continuation of Turkey's friendship with the Alliance without however alienating the Entente; finally, the eventual abrogation of the capitulatory system in the country.<sup>33</sup>

The Third Young Turk Congress was one of the most important in the period under review on the grounds that its political resolutions embodied and exposed the most extreme nationalist and chauvinistic Unionist tendencies. Internally, on the one hand, to secure the Committee's commanding political position in the Parliament and the central government, the Salonica Congress resolved to wipe out the growing liberal movement in the interior and pursue more intensely the "Ottomanization" policy. The introduction of Turkish in all Ottoman schools and the politicization of Islam intended to serve this very policy. On an international level, the nationalist Unionists would attempt to avoid a premature armed confrontation with the Balkan Christian

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<sup>33</sup> F.O. 881/9811 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./14-2-1911/Lowther to Grey/Annual Report on Turkey for the Year 1910/enclosure no.1. P.R.O. F.O. 195/2359 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/3-12-1910/Geary to Marling



states, in particular Bulgaria and Greece, before the country completed the reorganization of its armed forces. As regards the relations with the European Powers, the Committee although treasuring Ottoman friendship with the Triple Alliance would observe a non-alignment policy and work for the abolition of the capitulations.

As the Unionist regime steadily assumed a more distinctly nationalist and military character during 1910, its 'Ottomanization' policy was most likely to intensify. In Macedonia, apart from the legislative, administrative and military measures, the C.U.P. had already set out to favor Moslem settlement in Christian-dominated areas and instigate the emergence of a revolutionary movement among the Macedonian Moslems.

The Unionist immigration project provided for the transportation of compact Moslem populations from Bosnia, Eastern Rumelia, Serbia and Russia (*muhajirs*) and their swift settlement in the "sensitive" Macedonian districts bordering on Bulgaria and Greece.<sup>34</sup> The main attempt in that direction had begun on 17 March 1909, when on the initiative of Dr. Nazim Bey an Association had been set up in Salonica for "the purpose of encouraging and assisting the Moslem immigration from Bosnia and Eastern Rumelia to Macedonia." Leading Ottoman officials like Ismail Bey, president of the Salonica municipality, Hasan Riza Pasha, commander of Artillery of the III Army corps, Ahmet Effendi Kapanci, a wealthy *Donme*,<sup>35</sup> actively supported this demanding effort.<sup>36</sup>

The main responsibility for directing and implementing the immigration project rested with the Salonica-based Central Immigration Commission, which was presided over by the vali and the District Commissions which had been formed in each Macedonian kaza. To encourage the immigration movement, the Ottoman Chamber voted a sum of 200,000 Turkish pounds and the Ottoman administration undertook to satisfy promptly the urgent needs of the settlers for farms, corn-seed, oxen and agricultural equipment.

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<sup>34</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK-A/General Consulate of Salonica/no.238/Papadiamantopoulos to Baltazzis/undated

<sup>35</sup> Jew who had converted to Islam.

<sup>36</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK-A/General Consulate of Salonica/no.238/Papadiamantopoulos to Baltazzis/undated. F.O. 881/9531 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./30-3-1909/no.224/Lowther to Grey, F.O. 881/9351 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/24-3-1909/no.38/Lamb to Lowther

Serious difficulties impeded the smooth materialization of this ambitious immigration scheme. Among the main reasons for its eventual failure was the incompetence and ineffectiveness of the Ottoman administration. In theory, the Ottoman government was expected to allocate properties, supplies and pecuniary assistance to the Moslem settlers immediately after their arrival in Macedonia but on many occasions it had failed to fulfill its commitments.

As a result, many thousands of Moslem settlers, demoralized and exhausted, were crowded into Macedonian inns, mosques and other impromptu reception centers in the provincial capitals of Uskub and Salonica, remaining there for a considerable period of time before they were finally settled. To make matters worse, poor living conditions and non-existent sanitary provisions in these large concentration centers caused mass-spreading diseases raising the death rate of the settlers to 20% in the province of Kosovo. At the end of May 1910, the overall number of Moslem settlers in Kosovo province did not exceed 3,000 whilst 120 had requested the assistance of the Austrian vice-consulate in Uskub to return to Bosnia.<sup>37</sup> At the same time, the Moslem immigrants, in particular those of Bosnian descent, had their own share of responsibility for this lamentable situation. The majority of Bosnian Moslems was finally settled on Macedonian farms but being "a pastoral race and not agriculturists" they found it difficult to adjust themselves in new living and working conditions.<sup>38</sup>

True, during the Third Young Turk Congress the leader of the Unionist parliamentary party Halil Bey claimed that 12,000 Bosnian Moslems had settled in Macedonia,<sup>39</sup> the bulk of them in the kazas of Uskub, Kiuprulu, Osmanie, Kumanovo, Ishtip (Kosovo vilayet) and the kazas of Djumaja, Kirtchevo, Yenidje-Vardar, Petritch, Ghevgevi and Katerini (Salonica vilayet).<sup>40</sup> Even so, the outcome of the Moslem immigration project was a huge disappointment for the Young Turk

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<sup>37</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2358 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/27-5-1910/Lamb to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2359 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/10-12-1910/Lamb to Marling

<sup>38</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2359 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/3-12-1910/Geary to Marling, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2359 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/10-12-1910/Lamb to Marling, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2359 Uskub Vice-Consulate to General Consulate of Salonica/14-1-1911/Hough to Lamb

<sup>39</sup> In the end of 1910, British consular reports from Uskub and Salonica raised that figure to 17,000.

<sup>40</sup> The largest Moslem settlement in Macedonia was established in Lefterohori, Katerini kaza, near the Greek frontier, numbering 5,000 people. P.R.O. F.O. 195/2358 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/12-6-1910/Lamb to Lowther

Macedonian Committees. The final number of Macedonian settlers did not suffice to change the ethnic map in the Christian-dominated areas in favor of the Moslem element and certainly did not justify the large sums the central government had invested in the scheme.

Another important aspect of the Unionist Ottomanization policy was the formation of Moslem Macedonian bands. The Macedonian Young Turk Committees encouraged and supported the armament of the local Moslem population (while the forcible disarmament of the Christians continued) and the formation of armed Moslem partisan groups became more obvious in the summer of 1910, when the Christian revolutionary organizations resumed their activities in Macedonia. The explicit directive of the Third Young Turk Salonica Congress for the prompt suppression of the Macedonian bands and Christian propaganda in Macedonia and Albania gave a new boost to this current. As a result, during the last three months of the year a considerable number of Moslem bands were formed in the vilayets of Salonica, Monastir and Kosovo.

The Unionist Committees did not confine themselves to extending financial and material support to these Moslem partisan units. They, facilitated and coordinated cooperation between the Moslem comitadjis, Albanian or Turkish, and the Ottoman security forces- gendarmerie and police. This key practice raised the operational capability of the Moslem bands dramatically as they possessed invaluable information about the virtual location and forces of their targets. These targets were basically Bulgarian and Greek former-band leaders or, alternatively, members of the Christian revolutionary committees. In many cases, Moslem partisans were engaged in terrorist raids against Christian Macedonian villages on which they levied taxes and monetary contributions.

In mid-November 1910, under the supervision of Merkez, kaimakam of Uskub, and the Captains of gendarmes Cemal Effendi and Aziz Effendi six Moslem Albanian bands were formed in Kosovo. In addition, in the first months of 1911, Moslem bands made their presence felt in Florina kaza of the Monastir vilayet.

The real center of the Moslem Macedonian band activity however was the province of Salonica, especially the kaza of Langada. The Young Turk kaimakam of Langada kaza Celal Bey backed by the local chief of police Salih Effendi had organized by the

end of 1910 a strong force of 200 Moslem partisans. This large detachment, led by brigands such as Hasan Tsaouch, Kadi Moustafa, Veli Ferhad, Hussein Pehlivan and Mehmet Pardo, carried out inroads on Bulgarian and Greek villages, intimidated the local populations and assassinated Greek and Bulgarian former-band leaders.<sup>41</sup>

By completing the armament of the Moslem Macedonian population and supporting the underground activities of the Moslem bandits the Ottoman administration and the C.U.P. intended to thwart the resumption of Christian Macedonian revolutionary practice, stir the national sentiment of the Moslem Macedonians and either eliminate the Bulgarian and Greek political agitators or force them to leave Macedonia.<sup>42</sup>

All in all, the formation of Moslem bands was not only an implicit manifestation on the part of the Unionist Committee of its evident inability to contain the recrudescence of Christian Macedonian revolutionary action. More importantly, it was an indisputable indication of the C.U.P. being transformed into a nationalist organization never hesitant to use lawless means to achieve its political ends and implement its 'Ottomanization' policy. The new Unionist practice had far-reaching consequences for the Macedonian question. It led to the aggravation of the Albanian question and the encouragement of the inter-Balkan rapprochement. Its most immediate aftermath, though, was the recrudescence of Christian-Macedonian revolutionary activity.

#### **8.4 Resumption of Christian-Macedonian Revolutionary Activity**

The worsening conditions in Macedonia and the Ottoman attempts to denationalize and intimidate the Christian populations led to the reactivation of the Macedonian bands. By mid-summer 1910, Bulgarian partisan units had resumed their propaganda activities in the Rumelian provinces. Headed by the well-known Bulgarian voevodas Alexandrov, Tsausov, Apostol and Tsernopeevev the Bulgarian comitadjis were active

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<sup>41</sup> During October and November 1910, 8 Macedonian Greeks had been killed by Moslem bands. P.R.O. F.O. 195/2359 Uskub Vice-Consulate to General Consulate of Salonica/20-11-1910/Hough to Lamb, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2359 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/27-12-1910/Lamb to Marling/enclosure no.1, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2381 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/26-5-1911/Geary to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2381 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/31-5-1911/Geary to Lowther

<sup>42</sup> F.O. 881/9717 Sofia Embassy to F.O./16-2-1910/no.18/Findlay to Grey, F.O. 881/9860 Sofia Embassy to F.O./31-8-1910/no.111/Findlay to Grey, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2381 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/26-5-1911/Geary to Lowther

in the districts of Ishtip, Monastir, Yenidje-Vardar and Strumnitsa.<sup>43</sup> The Bulgarian-Macedonian bands exerted pressure on the Macedonians to retain their arms, attacked Moslem Macedonian immigrants and carried out bomb outrages against key Turkish railways and governmental buildings. As far as the Committee was concerned, the recrudescence of paramilitary propaganda had been instigated by Bulgaria. In late August 1910, in the *Tanin*, Hussein Cahit openly accused the Bulgarian government of extending financial and material assistance to the M.R.O. bands through the Bulgarian consular establishments in Macedonia.<sup>44</sup> To make matters worse for the Ottoman Macedonian authorities, Sandanski had refused to comply with the Ottoman orders and disarm his Serres militia. According to Sofia, the Macedonian leader controlled a small army of 2,000-3,000 well-trained men, who were fully capable of provoking serious disturbances in the northern districts of the Serres sanjak.<sup>45</sup> In mid-March 1911, the British agent in Monastir, Geary, reported that the clandestine armament of the local Bulgarian population continued and according to his information, in the province of Monastir alone "there were 20,000 rifles in Bulgarian hands." By the summer of 1911, 20 Bulgarian bands were active in the three Macedonian vilayets. Meanwhile, Greek bands resumed paramilitary operations in the province of Salonica and southern Epirus, under Xanthopoulos, Tsekouras, Bellos, Tsoudodimos (Salonica vilayet), captain Firtinas and Potetsis (Epirus).<sup>46</sup>

The most important characteristic of the Christian revolutionary activity nevertheless was that the bands, particularly the Bulgarian and Greek, refrained from attacking each other. In certain cases, they agreed to coordinate operations against the Ottoman regime.<sup>47</sup> Throughout the autumn the situation became more grave. In the first week of December 1911, a series of bomb explosions disturbed Macedonia. On 3 December 1911, a M.R.O. bomb exploded in a Moslem mosque in Ishtip killing 4

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<sup>43</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2358 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/10-8-1910/Lamb to Lowther

<sup>44</sup> F.O. 881/9860 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./3-9-1910/no.622/Lowther to Grey

<sup>45</sup> F.O. 881/9860 Sofia Embassy to F.O./31-8-1910/no.111/Findlay to Grey

<sup>46</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2382 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/20-7-1911/Lamb to Marling

<sup>47</sup> Refer to chapter 10.

Moslems and wounding 4 others. During Moslem reprisals, 28 Bulgarians were killed and more than 100 were injured.<sup>48</sup>

The "politics of terror", which was intended to bring about European intervention, was practiced once more at a full scale level, pushing Macedonia into chaos.

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<sup>48</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2382 Uskub Vice-Consulate to General Consulate of Salonica/5-12-1911/Hough to Lamb, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2382 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/4-12-1911/Lamb to Lowther

## CHAPTER IX

### THE ALBANIAN-TURKISH RIFT. FROM THE DISTURBANCES OF 1909 TO THE REVOLTS OF 1911-1912

#### 9.1 From Diber to Elbassan. Deepening the Turco-Albanian Rift

The spring of 1909 found the Albanian Macedonian districts in a state of insurrection and political turmoil. The Albanian Kosovars refusing to abandon their traditional privileges and conform to the Constitutional provisions for general tax-payment and conscription had risen against the Ottoman authorities in Jakova, Mitrovitsa, Ipek and Diber. In April 1909, the Ottoman government sent a strong force under Lt.-General Cavit Pasha to put down the Albanian insubordination and restore order in the region.<sup>1</sup>

While the army of Cavit Pasha marched into northern Macedonia to face the rebels events in Constantinople complicated the Albanian problem. Although a number of Constantinople Albanians had supported the liberals of Ismail Kemal Bey in their anti-Young Turk movement the Macedonian Albanians remained perfectly passive.

On 22 April 1909, when it became evident that the Unionist forces would emerge victorious a delegation of Uskub Albanians, who had been concerned about the future of the Sultan and their compatriots in the capital, met with the Young Turk Committee in Salonica. Having received assurances on the part of the C.U.P. that neither the Sultan's life nor the personal safety of those Albanians who did not participate in the movement was in danger the Uskub Albanians and the Committee agreed to include in the Salonica C.C. cadres from the provinces of Monastir and Kosovo.<sup>2</sup>

If the Young Turks were inclined to avoid taking preventive measures against those liberal Albanians who had abstained from the counterrevolution that was not the case

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<sup>1</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2328 Uskub Vice-Consulate to General Consulate of Salonica/8-4-1909/Satow to Lamb. For information on Cavit Pasha's military operations see: I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK-A/General Consulate of Salonica/10/23-5-1909/no.370/Papadiamantopoulos to Baltazzis

<sup>2</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2328 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/25-4-1909/Lamb to Lowther

for those who had been actively engaged in it. The C.U.P. suspected that the leading figure of the Liberals Ismail Kemal Bey, who had fled to Greece to save his life, might try to incite an Albanian movement against the Committee in the province of Janina whence his political influence remained strong. To avert a second Albanian insurrection, this time in Epirus, the Salonica Committee apparently induced the president of the Salonica Albanian club Midhat Frasheri Bey to address a telegram to the Albanian political societies in Berat (Ismail Kemal Bey's constituency), Elbassan, Avlona and Argirokastro discouraging them from giving their support to local or foreign agitators.<sup>3</sup>

In the meantime, Cavit Pasha's troops were unable to overcome the strong opposition of the Albanian insurgents in the mountainous districts of Jakova, Ipek and Diber. The unsuccessful outcome of Cavit's military operations in Macedonia in conjunction with the conciliatory policy of the vali of Monastir Fahri Bey and many Albanian deputies (in particular the influential Hasan Bey Prishtina) forced the Ottoman administration to moderate its attitude toward the Albanian insurgents. In mid-May 1909, the Ottoman Cabinet withdrew Cavit Pasha's army to southern Macedonia and entered in talks with the Albanian leaders.

Constantinople authorized the vali of Monastir Fahri Bey to conduct these negotiations and he succeeded in concluding a *besa* with the Albanian Kosovar tribes persuading them to remain peaceful for the next three months. Fahri Bey estimated that in this period he could either reach a thorough understanding with the Albanians putting an end to their grievances or, if diplomacy failed, reorganize the Ottoman forces as to undertake more effectively a second campaign in northern Macedonia.<sup>4</sup>

The Albanians of Kosovo, on the other hand, had plans of their own. The punitive military expedition of Cavit Pasha and his repressive methods against the insurgents had aroused the Albanian population and stiffened its opposition to the Ottoman regime. On 10 July 1909, the leaders of the Albanian Kosovar tribes met in the district of Jakova and affirmed that Turkey's Albanian policy was most unsatisfactory. More significantly, the Albanian tribesmen declared that the Ottoman

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<sup>3</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2328 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/26-4-1909/Lamb to Lowther

<sup>4</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2329 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/22-5-1909/Geary to Lowther



administration's practice of dealing with the Albanian question by military means had alienated Albanian sympathies from the Young Turk Committee and had added to the gravity of the situation. Denouncing the chiefs who had yielded to the army of Cavit Pasha the Kosovar leadership agreed to resist, even by force, any attempt on the part of the central government to resume its Macedonian military operations.<sup>5</sup>

To diminish the anti-Unionist movement in the Albanian districts of Macedonia and further its political program in the region, the Young Turk Committee organized an Ottoman Albanian Constitutional Congress in Diber on 23 July 1909. Representing all Albanian races, 315 delegates from the vilayets of Salonica, Monastir, Kosovo, Janina, Scutari attended its proceedings. The critical point of the Diber Congress was the formation of a Commission that supported the Unionist political positions and, despite firm opposition from Albanian nationalists, passed 'primary' and 'secondary' resolutions favorable to the C.U.P. regime and its Albanian strategy.<sup>6</sup>

The 'primary' resolutions referred to: a reassurance on the part of the Albanians that they would avoid working for the establishment of an autonomous Albanian province; the Albanian national bid to uphold the Constitutional regime; Albanian concurrence that the Ottoman Constitution was totally compatible with the Islamic religion; Albanian recognition of the Ottoman right to put the Albanian military contingents under the control of the Ministry of War and sent them to serve whenever required, in case the Ottoman Empire faced a foreign military menace; the Albanian undertaking to supply the necessary military forces for the suppression of any internal secessionist movement; the pledge of the Albanian tribesmen to conform with the institution and implementation of the Conscription Law in their lands.

The 'secondary' resolutions called for: the construction of railways in the Albanian regions to end their geographical isolation and contribute to the improvement of local economic and living conditions; the establishment of Moslem educational institutions in Albania with the task of developing the Moslem religious consciousness and traditions; the use of Latin or Turkish alphabet in Albanian schools; the establishment

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<sup>5</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2329 Uskub Vice-Consulate to General Consulate of Salonica/16-7-1909/Satow to Lamb

<sup>6</sup> Exploiting the large number of Albanian delegates, the C.U.P. set about the nomination of a small number of delegates in the Commission (8 from each vilayet). This disposition facilitated immensely the strivings of the Young Turk Committee to ensure that the delegates who had been finally elected shared the Unionist political views. P.R.O. F.O. 195/2329 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/6-8-1909/Lamb to Lowther

of a Moslem University in Albania; the obligation of the Ottoman military authorities to designate in time the specific number and classes of the Albanian recruits as to ensure regular conscription; the appointment of public functionaries in Albanian provinces with good knowledge of Albanian traditions and culture; the settlement of the frontier dispute between the Ottoman Empire and Montenegro; the extraction of the Albanian and Vlach Orthodox Christians from the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and their subordination to the Ministry of Education; the formation of "mixed commissions" in the main Albanian and Macedonian provincial centers similar to the Salonica *Ligue de Paix et d' Entente* (League of Peace and Entente).<sup>7</sup>

In Diber, the Unionist Committee won an undisputed political victory. It is clear that the Committee managed to obtain this manifestation of unity between Young Turks and Albanians at a price of a few promises on the subject of Albanian education. Among them, the most significant was the Young Turk pledge to set up educational institutions in the Albanian regions and allow the use of Latin alphabet in the Albanian schools. On the other hand, the Albanian tribesmen had made far more important concessions. They consented not to raise the question of Albanian autonomy and support the Constitutional regime. Stressing the threat from Slavic and Greek expansionism the Committee had also persuaded the Albanians to comply with the new conscription regulations. In sum, in Diber the C.U.P. had shown that the fundamental element in its Albanian policy was to prevent Albanian self-government, maintain the Albanian provinces within European Turkey and extract from the Albanian people taxes and troops to combat the Slavic and Greek irredentism in southern Balkans.

Yet, Young Turk satisfaction at the success in Diber was short-lived. Within less than a month after the Diber Congress, the tension between the northern Albanian tribes and the local Ottoman Macedonian authorities resurfaced, when 8,000 Albanians gathered in Ferisovic to demand the release of Izza Boletini and other

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<sup>7</sup> The *Ligue de Paix et d' Entente* was set up in Salonica by Faik Bey, a Young Turk supporter, with the aim to work for the unity and welfare of the various nationalities in Macedonia. On Diber resolutions: I.A.Y.E./1910/File AAK-I@/Monastir Consulate/29/11-8-1909/no.596/Dimaras to Kallergis/General Resolutions of the Ottoman Albanian Constitutional Congress in Diber, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2329 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/30-7-1909/Geary to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2329 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/4-8-1909/Geary to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2329 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/6-8-1909/Lamb to Lowther

Albanian chieftains, who had been arrested during the Kosovar uprising. Certain conciliatory attempts made by the mutessarif of Prishtina met with failure and the continuous Albanian upheaval brought the region back to the state of unrest and disorder. In mid-August, therefore, the army of Cavit Pasha was again ordered to advance into northern Macedonia. Determined to pacify the region and gain for himself the title of 'conqueror of Albania' Cavit Pasha launched ferocious attacks in Kosovo destroying many villages and repressing the Albanian population.<sup>8</sup> The incessant Albanian Macedonian disturbances and the second military campaign of Cavit Pasha in Kosovo indicated that the alleged Turco-Albanian solidarity, so keenly declared by the C.U.P. in Diber, had been shattered.

It was under these conditions that the Albanian nationalists held a Congress in Elbassan between 2 and 8 September 1909. In the Elbassan Congress, Christian representatives from Albania, Epirus and Macedonia participated while the Albanian Moslems refused to attend. The chief purpose of the Congress was to promote unity between the different Albanian tribes and creeds, primarily between the Christian Orthodox and the Roman Catholics, and work for the cultural and educational development of the Albanian people.

Since in the minds of the Albanian leadership the cultural affirmation of the Albanian people was pivotal in its struggle for national emancipation, the Congress busied itself with the questions of the Albanian language and education. In regard to the first issue, the delegates selected the Elbassan dialect as the most suitable basis for the elaboration of a "common Albanian language". This was to some extent a symbol of Albanian unity, since the district of Elbassan was located in the middle of the Albanian lands and its dialect was equally known to the Christian Orthodox and Catholics. On the issue of education, the Congress resolved to establish a Teachers Academy in Elbassan. The Academy would educate and produce Albanian teachers, who would be employed in Albanian schools. A Koritsa-based Commission (*Perparimi*) was also appointed to raise funds for the operation of the Elbassan Academy. The Albanian political association of Monastir, which was recognized by the delegates as the central headquarters of the Albanian associations, undertook to

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<sup>8</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2329 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/24-8-1909/Lamb to Lowther

“introduce the Albanian language in all Albanian schools”.<sup>9</sup> The Elbassan Congress revealed certain key features of the Albanian national struggle. First, the Albanian movement suffered from a striking lack of unity and the process of national awareness had not made the same progress among the various Albanian tribes and creeds. The refusal of the Albanian Moslems even to attend the Congress and the anxiety of the Albanian leadership to mend the rift between the Christian Orthodox and Catholics provided enough evidence to that effect. In addition, during the Congress it became visible that although the Orthodox Albanians, the educated Mirdites and the Roman Catholics of Scutari in the southern and central Albanian regions had come to terms with the concept of Albanian nationalism, this did not seem to be the case with the isolated Albanian clans and the fanatical Moslems of the northern Albanian lands.<sup>10</sup> Secondly, the Albanian nationalists began to estrange themselves from the Unionist Committees and their ‘Ottomanization’ policies. Encouraging the development of an independent Albanian language and inducing the gradual ‘Albanization’ of the educational system in the Albanian provinces, the Albanian nationalists demonstrated their opposition to their forcible ‘Ottomanization’ and at the same time reaffirmed their enduring resolve to construct a separate Albanian national identity.

## **9.2 Radicalizing the Albanian question. The Insurrection of April 1910 and the Military Expedition of Turgut Pasha**

The decision of the Albanian patriotic leadership in Elbassan to work for the cultural affirmation of the Albanian people and the prolonged state of turmoil in the Albanian Macedonian districts concerned the Ottoman government. While the long-term aim of the Ottoman administration and the Unionist Committee on Albanian affairs remained the suppression of Albanian autonomist trends and the gradual “Ottomanization” of the Albanian provinces, their more immediate target was to prevent another Albanian insurrection and restore tranquillity and order in the region.

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<sup>9</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File D-4.3/Foreign Office to Avlona Consulate/18/1-10-1909/no.6701/Kallergis to Nikakis, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2330 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/23-9-1909/Acting vice-consul Matthews to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2330 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/6-10-1909/Matthews to Lowther, SKENDI (1967, p.382)

<sup>10</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2330 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/6-10-1909/Matthews to Lowther, I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK-A/Monastir Consulate/5-12-1909/no.1071/Dimaras to Kallergis

To this end, the Ottoman Cabinet took energetic measures in the following months. By the end of 1909, in virtue of the laws on Association, Press and Bands, the Ottoman Macedonian authorities abolished the Albanian political clubs (the Monastir society continued to function under Unionist surveillance but it was precluded from becoming active in political affairs), suppressed the Albanian newspapers and, more importantly, initiated the disarmament of all Albanian tribes, save the Albanian clansmen bordering on Montenegro.

The initiative of the Ottoman administration and the Unionist Committee in depriving the Albanian tribesmen of their ancient prerogative to carry arms stirred up great discontent among the entire Albanian people. They saw this act as an attempt of the Ottoman regime to attack their traditional rights and customary way of living. In February 1910, when the Unionists, supported by some Moslem Albanians, decided to introduce the Arabic rather than the Latin alphabet in all Albanian schools, Albanian indignation spilled over.<sup>11</sup> In protest against the Unionist policy in Albania and, in particular, on the alphabet question two impressive Albanian demonstrations were held in the strongly nationalist centers of Koritsa and Elbassan during the last week of February 1910.<sup>12</sup> It is important that, for once, in the Koritsa and Elbassan rallies all Albanian races participated, including Moslem Albanians. This unusual display of unanimity between the different Albanian tribes and creeds indicated that C.U.P. influence on the Albanians had declined and the Albanian nation began to envisage the formation of a "united front of opposition" to Ottoman authority.<sup>13</sup>

The growth of anti-Turkish Albanian sentiment and the threat to the implementation of 'Ottomanization' in the Albanian provinces caused the Ottoman authorities to take alarm. In the second half of March 1910, the pro-Unionist vali of Kosovo Mazhar Bey submitted to the central Ottoman administration a project with his views and proposals on the Albanian problem.

In order to restore order and pacify the Albanian districts, Mazhar Bey suggested that the Ottoman authorities should undertake to collect the taxes in arrears, register the

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<sup>11</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/18-2-1910/Geary to Lowther, I.A.Y.E./1910/AAK-I@/Monastir Consulate/16/1-3-1910/no.150/Dimaras to Kallergis

<sup>12</sup> Albanian attendance reached 12,000 in Koritsa and 7,000 in Elbassan. The C.U.P. tried to organize a counter-demonstration in Elbassan supportive of the Arabic alphabet, but this venture boiled down to an insignificant gathering of 300 Unionist sympathizers.

<sup>13</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/2-3-1910/Geary to Lowther and I.A.Y.E./1910/File AAK-I@/Monastir Consulate/20/5-3-1910/no.503/Dimaras to Kallergis

Albanian population, nullify the military use of kules (fortified towers) and proceed to the conscription of Albanian recruits. To ensure the effective implementation of these measures and overcome any armed Albanian resistance, the civil authorities should be accompanied by a strong military force. In the end, Mazhar's project was accepted by the Ottoman State Council but disquieting news from Kosovo about a second Albanian insurrection moved Constantinople to precipitate its activities.<sup>14</sup>

By the end of March 1910, the situation in Kosovo had become very serious as the Albanian districts of Prishtina, Ipek and Prizren had revolted against Ottoman rule. The Albanian activists had also resumed their attacks on the local civil authorities and security forces. On 1 April, the mutessarif of Ipek Ismail Hakki Bey and the military commandant Major Rushdi Bey were ambushed and fired on by Albanian nationalists in Ipek. The attack, which resulted in the death of Rushdi Bey and the slight wounding of Hakki Bey, was only the prelude to the ensuing crisis. In the following three weeks, the Kosovar Albanians raised an army of several thousand men and marched towards the urban center of Prishtina to declare their forceful opposition to the state regulations on general tax-payment, conscription, general Albanian disarmament and the language question.<sup>15</sup> The inability of the local Ottoman garrisons to face the Albanian insurgents forced the provincial administration of the Kosovo vilayet to put the districts of Ipek, Prishtina, and Prizren under martial law. In mid-April 1910, the Albanian insurrection spread across the Kosovo vilayet and it was evident that the Ottoman authorities had lost control of the situation.

As the Hakki Pasha Cabinet, under pressure from the Unionist Committee, organized another campaign in Kosovo, on 14 April 1910, the Albanian notables assembled in Prishtina to coordinate their movement and designate their future activities. The product of the Prishtina convention was admittedly moderate. The Kosovars decided to appeal to His Majesty the Sultan stating that if the Ottoman government abolished martial law in the region, re-examined the question of Albanian taxation and pardoned the insurgents, they would lay down their arms and end the insurrection.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 Uskub Vice-Consulate to General Consulate of Salonica/19-4-1910/Hough to Lamb

<sup>15</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 Uskub Vice-Consulate to General Consulate of Salonica/4-4-1910/Hough to Lamb, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 Uskub Vice-Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/9-4-1910/Hough to Lowther

<sup>16</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 Uskub Vice-Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/15-4-1910/Hough to Lowther

To these Albanian proposals the Ottoman administration turned a deaf ear. Resolute to stifle the Albanian armed resistance and promote the 'Ottomanization' of the Albanian people, the Ottoman political leadership had already transferred to Shevket Pasha's Ministry of War the authority and responsibility to solve the Albanian tangle. This development was a turning point in Turkey's Albanian strategy. By abandoning its traditional practice of understanding and collaboration with the Albanian element and fully militarizing the Albanian question, the Ottoman administration ruined the prospect of a Turco-Albanian collusion in Balkan affairs thereby paving the way for much more serious disturbances in the Albanian provinces in the near future.<sup>17</sup>

The Ottoman Ministry of War appointed General Tourgut Pasha commander-in-chief of the new Albanian military campaign with the mission to collect overdue taxes, carry out a census, impose military service, disarm the Albanian tribesmen and arrest all outlaws.<sup>18</sup> In the meantime, the Albanian Kosovars, who had been mobilizing the male population of Prizren and Jakova, mounted a force of 8,000 men, led by Idris Seferi Bey Ghilan, to face the superior "army of reforms" of Tourgut Pasha in the vital Prizren-Ferisovic highroad.

On 22 April 1910, the first major Turco-Albanian armed collision took place along the Prizren-Ferisovic highroad. After a 24-hour fight, having failed to overcome the strenuous Albanian resistance, the Turkish troops withdrew with severe losses whilst a second Albanian contingent attacked the rear of the Turkish army in the Katsanik defile impairing its railway communication and supplies.<sup>19</sup>

Despite these initial successes, the future of the Albanian Kosovar movement looked bleak so long as the insurrection did not spread to the Monastir vilayet and Albania proper. The powerful Monastir Albanians considered the April rising as an attempt on the part of the Kosovars to retaliate against the Turks for the punitive expeditions of Cavit Pasha in 1909. In any case, they were convinced that until the Great Powers

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<sup>17</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/17-4-1910/Lamb to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 Uskub Vice-Consulate to General Consulate of Salonica/28-4-1910/Hough to Lamb, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/10-5-1910/Lamb to Lowther. See also note 16

<sup>18</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 Uskub Vice-Consulate to General Consulate of Salonica/17-4-1910/Hough to Lamb. The army of Tourgut Pasha consisted of 36 infantry battalions, 12 artillery battalions and 1 cavalry regiment: an unusually large force of 17,000 men. P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/17-4-1910/Lamb to Lowther

<sup>19</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/25-4-1910/Lamb to Lowther

recognized the C.U.P. misrule in Albania and Macedonia no Albanian revolutionary movement could succeed.<sup>20</sup> In the Albanian mainland, the influential class of Beys, the only administrative and political authority capable of organizing an Albanian uprising, was still reluctant to endanger its privileged position in local affairs for a premature armed struggle against the Ottoman authorities with uncertain results.<sup>21</sup>

The failure of Tourgut's army to dislodge the Kosovars from their defensive positions and strike a decisive blow against the Albanian insurrection compelled the Minister of War Shevket Pasha to assume control of the situation. To supervise the conduct of military operations and deal with the Albanian insurgents Shevket Pasha went to Uskub on 9 May 1910.<sup>22</sup>

In mid-May, Mahmud Shevket Pasha met with the Albanian notables of Prizren in the government building of that town. Surprisingly, in an attempt to compromise with the Albanians, Mahmud Shevket stressed that the state policy in Albania did not intend to attack the Albanian population but to terminate the state of lawlessness and pacify the region. Although no final agreement was reached in Prizren, the Albanian notables gave way on the questions of census, the surrender of outlaws like Izza Boletini and disarmament (in case of emergency the Ottomans were to return the arms to their Albanian owners). For his part, Shevket Pasha assured the Albanian delegation that the government would not increase Albanian taxation and -so the Prizren chiefs were led to believe- that he would conduct "an official, impartial enquiry respecting the state of Albanian affairs and the Albanian positions."<sup>23</sup>

In parallel with the intervention of Shevket Pasha the Young Turks sought to exploit the aggravation of the Cretan question in order to divert the attention of Albanian public opinion and leadership from the Kosovar uprising to the Cretan convulsions.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/20-4-1910/Geary to Lowther

<sup>21</sup> I.A.Y.E./1910/File AAK-IH/Duress Consulate/24/7-5-1910/no.136/Apostolopoulos to Kallergis

<sup>22</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 Uskub Vice-Consulate to General Consulate of Salonica/10-5-1910/Hough to Lamb

<sup>23</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/18-5-1910/Lamb to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2358 Uskub Vice-Consulate to General Consulate of Salonica/18-5-1910/Hough to Lamb, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2358 Uskub Vice-Consulate to General Consulate of Salonica/8-6-1910/Hough to Lamb

<sup>24</sup> Following the Cretan elections of March 1910, a new Cretan Assembly was formed on 9 May. However, another political crisis erupted in the island when the Moslem deputies refused to follow the example of the Greek deputies and take the oath of allegiance to the Greek King. On 19 May, the Cretan Assembly excluded the Moslem deputies and adjourned for forty days, bringing about a new rupture not only between the two communities but also between Greece and Ottoman Empire.



On 14 May 1910, the Salonica Committee organized a local open-air demonstration to protest for Greece's policy in Crete and the infringement of Ottoman sovereign rights in the island. On this occasion, the Salonica C.U.P. sent a telegram to the "mayors and ulema of Ipek, Prishtina, Jakova, Ghilan and Prizren." The Macedonian Unionists urged the "heroic and noble Albanian brethren not to occupy at this juncture the attention of the Government and the Army (...), to incline their heads to the fit and proper demands of the Government (...) and protect the sacred rights of the Fatherland."<sup>25</sup>

The apparently conciliatory attitude of Shevket Pasha and the Unionist manoeuvre to stir the patriotic sentiment of the Albanian people by pointing to the Cretan crisis appeased the Albanian Kosovars. Thus, even though an Albanian contingent remained in the district of Drenitza the Albanians from Ferisovic and Ljuma laid down their arms. The Albanian insurrection seemed to end as suddenly as it had started seven weeks before.<sup>26</sup>

### 9.3 Turkish Repression in Albania

At the end of May 1910, the Albanian insurrection had been practically terminated. On 1 June, the army of Tourgut Pasha occupied the Albanian stronghold of Jakova, forcing those tribes that had not given up the struggle to retire in the mountainous districts of western Jakova. As soon as the uprising ended and the Turkish troops re-established Ottoman military and civil authority in the rebellious districts, the Albanians began to fear that they had been deceived by Shevket Pasha's promises and the Unionist manifestations of Turco-Albanian racial solidarity.

In fact, the Ottoman regime had little sympathy for Albanian claims on the questions of education, language, taxation, conscription, the construction of railways, improvement of communal infrastructure and amelioration of living conditions in the Albanian provinces. On the contrary, aspiring to crush the last enclaves of Albanian armed resistance and eliminate the menace of another Albanian revolt next spring, the

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<sup>25</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/15-5-1910/Lamb to Lowther

<sup>26</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2357 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/18-5-1910/Lamb to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2358 Uskub Vice-Conclulate to General Consulate of Salonica/18-5-1910/Hough to Lowther

Ottoman administration went on to practice a repressive and nationalist anti-Albanian policy.

During the first week of June, Tourgut Pasha initiated the full-scale disarmament of the Albanian tribes and launched a real pogrom against the Albanian notables and Beys. Proclaiming martial law in the rebellious districts and using brutal measures the troops of Tourgut Pasha took possession of 20,000 rifles and arrested a considerable number of Albanian leaders. The most prominent amongst them, Hacı Musa Mustaphitch, the bairaktar of Orahovitsa, (he had a reputation of being a close associate of Izza Boletini) and the president of the Uskub Albanian club Bekir Suleiman Effendi, were sent to the Ferisovic court-martial.<sup>27</sup> In July and August, the Ottoman administration radicalized its Albanian attitude. Whilst a strong force under Shevki Pasha and Osman Pasha continued military operations in the districts of Ljuma and Diber to liquidate the last Albanian insurgents, the Ottoman Cabinet suppressed the remaining Albanian journals and educational institutions. In the first half of July, the Ottoman authorities, on account of the initiative of the Monastir Albanian journal *Baskim I Kombit* (Union and Nation) to publish a strongly anti-Unionist article, outlawed the *Baskim* and sent the influential ex-president of the local Albanian club Fehim Bey Zavalani to the court-martial of Uskub, inflaming Albanian public opinion in Monastir and Elbassan.<sup>28</sup>

To make matters worse, the Ottoman government banned the teaching of the Albanian language in public schools. But the anti-Turkish sentiment of the Albanian population culminated in August, when the Monastir provincial administrative council ordered the closing of Albanian educational institutions in Koritsa and Elbassan, including the Teachers' Academy and the Perparimi.

Outlining the Albanian approach respecting the Unionist policy in Albania a Catholic Albanian wrote in *Kortsa*, an Albanian nationalist organ, in the first week of August:

“The Young Turk government, instigated by chauvinist and nationalist ideas, has embarked upon a repressive policy against those ethnic groups which are not

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<sup>27</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2358 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/4-6-1910/Lamb to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2358 Uskub Vice-Consulate to General Consulate of Salonica/8-6-1910/Hough to Lamb

<sup>28</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2358 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/6-7-1910/Geary to Lowther and P.R.O. F.O. 195/2358 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/13-7-1910/Geary to Lowther

Turkish. Inasmuch as the Albanians are included in that category, the Ottoman administration decided to wipe out the Albanian nation and name. The new ideas and policy of the Turkish Cabinet became clear as soon as its members demonstrated in the Ottoman Chamber their hostile tendencies on questions such as the Albanian alphabet, the Albanian education and language, the prohibition of Albanian societies and the removal of Albanian civil servants and administrative cadres from Albania. Lately, in order to totally subdue the Albanian people and promote Turkish chauvinism the Ottoman administration has attempted to denationalize southern and destroy northern Albania.”<sup>29</sup>

In the autumn, in order to strike the last decisive blow to the Albanian movement, the Ottoman government ordered Tourgut Pasha’s army to march towards Scutari vilayet. During its advance across the Albanian hinterland the Ottoman expeditionary force devastated a considerable number of Albanian villages and relentlessly persecuted the Albanian leadership, forcing the peasant Albanian population to seek refuge in the hills. In an explicit effort to humiliate the class of Albanian Beys the troops arrested thirty Beys in Tirana and drove them in chains to Elbassan. By mid-October, Tourgut Pasha’s “army of reforms” entered the provincial capital of Scutari terminating its military operations in Albania.<sup>30</sup>

Although a success from the military point of view, on political grounds, the Albanian campaign of Tourgut Pasha amounted to a complete failure. Young Turk policy of militarizing the Albanian question, repressing the Albanian population, persecuting its natural leadership and “devastating instead of developing a part of their own Empire”, poisoned Turco-Albanian relations and created an irreconcilable racial and political schism between the Ottoman regime and the Albanian people.

Indeed, if Cavit Pasha’s campaigns in 1909 had undermined the basis of the Turco-Albanian collaboration, the punitive expedition of Tourgut Pasha put the last nail in the coffin of the traditional understanding between the two ethnic groups. Henceforth, the Albanians would attempt to coordinate their struggle for national

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<sup>29</sup> Cited in I.A.Y.E./1910/File AAK-I@/Monastir Consulate/27/9-8-1910/no.674/Dimaras to Kallergis/enclosure no.2. See for details I.A.Y.E./1910/File AAK-K/Monastir Consulate/12/25-8-1910/no.727/Dimaras to Kallergis, F.O. 881/9860 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/3-9-1910/no.41/Geary to Lowther, SKENDI (1967, pp.388-9)

<sup>30</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2359 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/11-10-1910/Geary to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2359 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/12-10-1910/Lamb to Lowther

assertiveness with the anti-Turkish policies of the Balkan Christian countries. As Edith Durham, a British journalist with experience in Albanian affairs, remarked “since September 1910, the Albanians vowed to give neither men nor money to help keep the Turks in Europe.”<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, the Ottoman military operations in Albania convinced the Moslem Albanians, who so far had regarded the Albanian national movement with reticence, if not antipathy, that the Turco-Albanian coexistence was an impossibility. The only way for the preservation of the Albanian race now lay in an understanding between the Albanian Moslems and Christians. From this standpoint, paradoxically, the campaign of Tourgout Pasha contributed to the unification of the Albanian people and propelled the process of Albanian nation-building.<sup>32</sup>

#### **9.4 Albanian Exodus to Montenegro and the Revolutionary Activity of the Albanian Central Committee**

The conclusion of Tourgout Pasha’s military campaign in October 1910 left the Albanian lands in a state of devastation and terror. The cattle, homes and properties of the local Albanian tribes had been destroyed by the troops or confiscated by the authorities. Since mid-October, to escape Turkish oppression and demonstrate their hostility to the Ottoman regime, the Albanian Malissor tribes<sup>33</sup> Hotti, Gruda, Skreli, Retsi, Ura Streit Shiala, Klementi, Kastrati began to flee to neighboring Montenegro.<sup>34</sup>

Montenegro, which had been fostering expansionist designs on the vilayet of Scutari, did not refuse to provide sanctuary to the Malissor refugees. The Montenegrin King Nicholas discerned in the flight of the Albanian tribes, which were used by the Ottoman government as frontier guardians against Montenegrin aggressiveness, a

<sup>31</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 371/1228/03467 Cairo to General Consulate of Trieste/3-3-1911/Durham to Spence

<sup>32</sup> I.A.Y.E./1910/File AAK-K/Argirokastro Consulate/2/15-9-1910/no.390/Halkiopoulos to Kallergis, I.A.Y.E./1910/File AAK-I@/Argirokastro Consulate/20/2-8-1910/no.247/Halkiopoulos to Kallergis, F.O. 881/9860 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/3-9-1910/no.41/Geary to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2359 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/11-10-1910/Geary to Lowther

<sup>33</sup> The Catholic Malissor tribes resided between lake Skodra and the frontier with Montenegro.

<sup>34</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2359 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/12-10-1910/Lamb to Lowther. It is interesting that the Albanian Malissors, when they were told that “if they fled to Montenegro they would have to pay taxes and give military service there replied that they would pay taxes to anyone who is against the Turks.” P.R.O. F.O. 371/1228/03467 Cairo to General Consulate of Trieste/3-3-1911/Durham to Spence

clear chance to reconcile with the Albanians and weaken Ottoman defense in the region. Reasonably, the presence of many thousand Albanian tribesmen in Montenegrin territory aggravated the climate between Cettigne and Constantinople. During the last two months of 1910, the Ottoman government, supported by the Austrian legation in Cettigne, exerted pressure on the Montenegrin Cabinet to support Albanian repatriation. Moreover, in an attempt to lure the Malissors to return in their homes, the Ottoman authorities pledged to reduce Albanian taxation on military service, appoint non-Moslem officials in the Catholic Albanian departments and compensate the Albanian clansmen for their damaged and confiscated properties.<sup>35</sup>

It was the combined Ottoman and Austrian diplomatic pressure and the inability of the Montenegrin Cabinet to assume the heavy economic cost of maintaining such a large number of refugees in the country that induced Montenegro to force the Albanian tribes to return in their lands. As a consequence, in mid-December 1910, the tribes of Hotti, Gruda, Kastrati had been repatriated but the powerful Klementi clansmen remained in Montenegro dismissing the Ottoman assurances.<sup>36</sup> From Montenegrin territory, those recalcitrant Albanians communicated to the Ottoman government a memorandum with their demands, stressing that before Constantinople met them they would not return to Albania. Having expressed their profound dissatisfaction with Turkey's Albanian policy, the Albanian mountaineers demanded: general amnesty for all Albanian political convicts; freedom for Albanian education, press, language and alphabet; re-opening of Albanian schools; all state officials appointed in Albania to be ethnic Albanians; public revenues from Albanian taxation to be invested in Albania for construction of roads, railways, etc.; encouragement to foreign investments in Albania and establishment of commercial, agricultural institutions and Agricultural Bank.<sup>37</sup>

The situation in the southern Albanian lands was equally explosive. The campaign of Tourgut Pasha and the massive Albanian exodus to Montenegro had roused the local Albanian communities affording the Albanian C.C. the opportunity to accelerate its

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<sup>35</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2359 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/28-12-1910/Lamb to Marling

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2359 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/18-12-1910/Geary to Marling

underground activities from its revolutionary strongholds of Koritsa and Elbassan. Indeed, following the suppression of the Kosovar uprising, the Albanian C.C., while consistently working for the unification of the Albanian Moslem and Christian tribes, started to lay the groundwork for a general Albanian revolt against Ottoman rule.

Aspiring to mobilize the entire Albanian people for the forthcoming national struggle, by January 1911, the Albanian C.C. had elaborated the "Regulations for the formation of branches of the Committee throughout Albania". The Albanian nationalists seemed however hesitant to commence a new revolt immediately. Precedence should be given to the armament of the Albanian tribesmen from Austrian-held Bosnia and the sanjak as well as to the establishment of a thorough revolutionary network across the Albanian lands. At the same time, in an attempt to mount pressure on Young Turkey to meet its demands, the Albanian C.C. held secret negotiations with the Bulgarians and Greeks to coordinate their course of action against the Ottoman regime.<sup>38</sup>

### **9.5 The Malissors' Rising of March 1911**

Albanian plans for military reorganization and internal preparation were nevertheless to be annulled by the eruption of the Malissors insurrection in March 1911. On 25 March, the Albanian Malissor tribes Hotti, Gruda, Kastrati, Klementi and Shiala, supported by Kosovars and a small number of Bulgarian partisans, organized a revolt in the province of Scutari. During the first skirmishes with the relatively small and badly-organized local Turkish garrisons, the Malissors were successful. Unable to offer any military resistance to the advancing insurgents the vali of Scutari Bedri Pasha mobilized the local Moslem population by circulating false rumors that a Montenegrin contingent had attacked the Turkish garrisons. Although this inept move on the part of Bedri Pasha almost provoked an armed collision between the Scutari Moslems and the Malissors it rendered the position of the vali untenable as soon as the Moslems found out that they had been sent to fight not Montenegrin invaders but Albanian rebels.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2381 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople Embassy/6-5-1911/Geary to Lowther

<sup>39</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 371/1228/03467 Podgorica to General Consulate of Trieste/4-5-1911/Durham to Spence, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2381 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/17-4-1911/Lamb to Lowther

The Ottoman government, aware of the gravity of the Malissor movement, appointed Tourgut Pasha vali of Scutari and began to concentrate strong forces in the region. On 11 May 1911, Mahmud Tourgut Pasha called the Malissors to “lay down their arms in five days and obtain pardon” but the Malissor notables turned down the offer. It seems that the Malissor leadership still hoped that their rising might provoke an Albanian catholic revolt which would receive support from the neighboring Balkan states and Austria-Hungary.

It is true that the Albanian C.C. had been working toward this direction. As soon as the Malissors rose, the Albanian nationalists urged the Moslem and Christian tribesmen to participate in the armed struggle and encouraged the Albanian Monastir Committee to organize revolutionary bands in the province. In the first week of May, the Albanian C.C. issued a declaration to “Public Opinion and the Young Turk Government” demanding the unification of the provinces of Scutari, Janina, Monastir, Kosovo in a single Albanian vilayet.<sup>40</sup>

Furthermore, since the beginning of May, the southern Albanian leaders Dr. Hakki Shemseddin Effendi of Koritza, Ibrahim Dervish Bey, Kiamil Bey and George Vissou had been disseminating the idea of an Albanian national movement among the Beys of Koritsa, Kolonia, Lesovic and the local Albanian officials.<sup>41</sup> In mid-June 1911, a strong southern Albanian band was formed under the leadership of Hakki Bordja and Vangelis Gjika and began its propaganda activity around the district of Koritsa. Soon, Albanian nationalist leaders like Themistoklis Germenji, a Christian from Koritsa and Spiros Bellkamani from Florina, organized new Albanian partisan units in the south.

Meanwhile, the Albanian C.C. sought to obtain material and political support from Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia. Despite the favorable disposition of the Balkan states towards the anti-Turkish Albanian struggle no concrete agreement derived from these negotiations.<sup>42</sup>

It was less the accentuation of the Albanian question and more the visible threat of an Ottoman onslaught against Montenegro that caused Russian diplomatic intervention.

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<sup>40</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2381 Monastir Consulate to Constantinople/6-5-1911/Geary to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 371/1229/03467 Podgorica to General Consulate of Trieste/26-5-1911/Durham to Spence

<sup>41</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2382 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/1-7-1911/Lamb to Marling

<sup>42</sup> Refer to chapter 10.

On 25 May 1911 the Russian government, perturbed by the transportation of unusually large Ottoman forces in the borders with Montenegro, threatened the Porte that if it attacked on Montenegro, it would have to face Russia. The Russian warning, coupled by the initiative of Austria-Hungary to advise the Ottoman Cabinet that “cooperation with Albania and not constant warfare should be the aim of a sensible Turkish policy”, forced the Hakki Pasha Cabinet to adopt a more conciliatory attitude toward the Albanian insurgents.<sup>43</sup>

In June, the Ottoman administration and the Unionist Committee made a dual attempt to come to terms with the Albanians. Between 11 and 15 June, the Ottoman regime tried to use the Sultan’s visit in Kosovo in order to stir the religious fanaticism of the Albanian people to the sacred person of the Sultan and demonstrate the indivisibility between the Turkish and Albanian element. To avoid Albanian convulsions during the Sultan’s Macedonian visit the Grand Vizier Hakki Pasha informed the influential Albanian deputy Hasan Bey Prishtina that the Ottoman government “had resolved to reconcile the Albanians and take into consideration the great pending questions: language, taxation, conscription and the development of the country.”<sup>44</sup>

On 24 June 1911, the Ottoman minister in Montenegro Saadreddin Bey commenced negotiations with the Albanian Malissor leadership. In this first round of discussions, it became clear that the Ottoman Cabinet was disposed to grant important concessions to the insurgents, providing that they would terminate the rebellion and return to their lands. Initially, the Malissors faced the Ottoman peace offer with profound suspicion but they did not refuse to examine the Ottoman proposals.

Finally, on 2 August 1911, under pressure from the Montenegrin Cabinet (Cettigne had been alarmed by the massive number of Albanian refugees),<sup>45</sup> the Albanian Malissors concluded an agreement with Saadreddin Bey. The Ottoman concessions,

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<sup>43</sup> KONDIS (1976, pp.52-3). By mid-June 1911, 40,000 Turkish soldiers had been transported in the province of Scutari driving thousand Albanians to seek again refuge in Montenegro. P.R.O. F.O. 371/1229/03467 Podgorica to General Consulate of Trieste/4-6-1911/Durham to Spence

<sup>44</sup> I.A.Y.E./1910/File AAK-I@/Uskub Consulate/29/11-6-1911/no.179/Tzounis to Gryparis. I.A.Y.E./1910/File AAK-I@/Uskub Consulate/7/20-6-1911/no.192/Tzounis to Gryparis. P.R.O. F.O. 195/2381 Uskub Vice-Consulate to General Consulate of Salonica/19-6-1911/Hough to Lamb. P.R.O. F.O. 195/2381 Uskub Vice-Consulate to General Consulate of Salonica/26-6-1911/Hough to Lamb

<sup>45</sup> By the end of July according to Durham, 125,000-130,000 Albanians had fled to Montenegro. P.R.O. F.O. 371/1231/03474 Podgorica to General Consulate of Trieste/29-7-1911/Durham to Spence



which it is important to remember were restricted to the Malissor tribes only, were: amnesty; re-opening of Albanian schools with permission to use the Albanian language and the Latin alphabet; reduced taxation; exemption from disarmament; military service in Albania; economic reforms.<sup>46</sup>

The August agreement between the Ottoman government and the Albanians marked the end of the Malissors' insurrection but it did not settle the Albanian question. On the contrary, intensive preparations were being made by the Albanian C.C. and the Albanian tribesmen for a new armed confrontation with the Ottoman regime. On 28 August, the Italian and Austrian agents in Avlona, Facentis and Kraous, expressed the opinion that a much more serious revolt would break out in Albania next spring.<sup>47</sup>

### 9.6 The Albanian Revolt of 1912

On 29 September 1911, Italy declared war on Ottoman Empire over Libya. Upon the commencement of hostilities in northern Africa, the Hakki Pasha Cabinet resigned. The new Said Pasha administration strove to cope with the crisis but this was a very demanding undertaking. The African war also rendered the position of the Committee more precarious. As a consequence of the establishment of the military regime and the implementation of the 'Ottomanization' policy, the C.U.P. had lost a considerable part of its influence on the military, the central government and the country as a whole. Adding to Unionist embarrassments, the Italian attack and invasion in Ottoman-held Libya exposed -for a second time since the Near East crisis of 1908- the Unionists' inability to fulfill their chief commitment: the protection of the territorial integrity of the Empire.

To make matters worse, the Liberals strengthened their position in the interior. On 21 November 1911, the party of Liberty and Entente was established (*Hurriyet ve Ittilaf Firkasi*). It was led by ex-Colonel Sadik, Damat Ferid, Riza Tewfik and Ismail Hakki Pasha. The Liberty and Entente lacked a clear political platform but, as it was successful in rallying all those discontented elements which opposed the Unionist

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<sup>46</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 371/1230/03467 Podgorica to General Consulate of Trieste/26-6-1911/Durham to Spence,, P.R.O. F.O. 371/1231/03474 Podgorica to General Consulate of Trieste/2-8-1911/Durham to Spence, I.A.Y.E./1911/File 21.8.1/Sofia Legation/27/9-8-1911/no.979/Panas to Gryparis/enclosure: Bulletin of Bulgarian Telegraphic Agency from Cettigne 2-8-1911

<sup>47</sup> I.A.Y.E./1911/File 34.1.1/Avlona Consulate/11/24-8-1911/no.399/Vasiliou to Gryparis. I.A.Y.E./1911/File 34.1.1/Avlona Consulate/29/11-9-1911/no.430/Vasiliou to Gryparis/Political

regime, it had assumed a predominantly anti-C.U.P. character. Its principal goal was to overthrow the C.U.P. regime and gain power.<sup>48</sup>

A liberal victory at a by-election in Constantinople in December and the continuation of the African crisis forced the Unionists to resort to the ballot. In the electoral battle, the C.U.P. campaign was based on its predominance in the state apparatus as well as on intimidation, fraud and violence. As a result, Unionist representation in the Chamber managed to exceed 95%. On 18 April 1912, the new Chamber of Deputies began its proceedings.<sup>49</sup>

In Albania, meanwhile, things seemed to take an ominous turn for Constantinople as the Turco-Italian war had encouraged the Albanian nationalists. They felt that an Italian attack on Turkey-in-Europe could force the Ottoman administration to grant concessions to the entire Albanian people and further Albanian political aspirations. In particular, the Moslem Albanians of Kosovo demanded that the Said Pasha Cabinet extend to them all the prerogatives that had been conceded to the Malissors in August 1911.

On 18 February 1912, to inspect regional conditions, to quiet Albanian grievances and elicit Albanian support for the C.U.P. in the elections, the Unionist Minister of the Interior Haci Adil Bey traveled to northern Macedonia and thence to the province of Scutari, heading a Reform Commission. This initiative coincided with governmental efforts to improve the communal infrastructure in certain Albanian-inhabited districts.

However, the mission of Haci Adil Bey yielded no practical results. Unable to come to terms with the local Malissor notables and refusing to meet the leader of the Mirdites Prenk Doda Pasha,<sup>50</sup> the Unionist Minister failed to reach an understanding with local Albanians and “grasp the meaning of the Albanian question”. In fact, while

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<sup>48</sup> AHMAD (1969, pp.97-9)

<sup>49</sup> F.O. 881/10280 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./17-4-1913/Lowther to Grey/Annual Report on Turkey for the Year 1912/enclosure no.1. KAYALI (1995, pp.265-286)

<sup>50</sup> The Ottoman government suspected that Prenk Pasha nourished revolutionary tendencies and therefore Haci Adil Bay declined to meet him. As a protest against the reluctance of the Ottoman Minister to see him, Prenk Pasha resigned from his position as the leading representative of the Mirdites, rousing the anti-Ottoman sentiment of his fellow clansmen. Consequently, the Mirdites stated that they -and all other Christian tribes- “desired to sever all connections with the Turkish Parliament.” See: P.R.O. F.O. 371/1481/03474 Scutari to General Consulate of Trieste/3-4-1912/Durham to Devinson

he was on his way back to Constantinople, a major Albanian revolt broke out in the Macedonian province of Kosovo.<sup>51</sup>

On 3 May 1912, 3,000 armed Moslem Albanians from the areas of Jakova and Ipek attacked local Ottoman troops demanding equal rights with the Malissor tribes. Three weeks later, the movement had spread in Mitrovitsa and Uskub. But worse was yet to come for the Ottoman Cabinet and the Committee. As the Albanian attacks on the Ottoman authorities escalated in Macedonia, an underground organization, the "Savior Officers", was coming into being in Constantinople. Their aim was to end military interference in Ottoman political affairs and restore a legitimate form of government. In essence, this group operated as the military wing of the liberal opposition and had sympathizers in the Macedonian army.<sup>52</sup>

Apparently, it was this secret group that instigated a series of military mutinies in the Macedonian army. On 29 May, military desertions occurred at Ferisovic and by the end of June 1912, a large contingent of the 49<sup>th</sup> Monastir Regiment, headed by Tayar Bey, abandoned its barracks and united with the Albanian insurgents. This series of mutinies caused great disarray in the Macedonian army, undermining the Ottoman authorities' attempts to deal with the Kosovar rising, which, in the meantime, had spilled over into the southern and western regions of Albania. In mid-June 1912, Mirdites and Malissor tribesmen joined the Albanian movement. On 21 June, these forces trapped an entire Turkish division in north-western Albania and marched toward Scutari.

These serious developments in Macedonia and Albania rendered the position of the Said Pasha Cabinet untenable. On 17 July 1912, Said Pasha resigned and four days later a new, pro-liberal Cabinet was formed under Gazi Ahmet Muhtar Pasha. The Ottoman attempt to mollify Albanian public opinion by sending a Commission to the region to explore the Albanian demands was too little and too late.

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<sup>51</sup> F.O. 881/10280 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./17-4-1913/Lowther to Grey/Annual Report on Turkey for the Year 1912/enclosure no.1. P.R.O. F.O. 371/1481/13474 Scutari to General Consulate of Trieste/14-3-1912/Durham to Spence. See also previous note.

<sup>52</sup> Later, the British Embassy in Constantinople reported certain rumors, according to which the pro-liberal Macedonian officers had entered into negotiations with the leader of the M.R.O. Matov. However, I did not find any evidence supportive to this claim. F.O. 881/10280 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./17-4-1913/Lowther to Grey/Annual Report on Turkey for the Year 1912/enclosure no.1, AHMAD (1969, p.106)

On 29 July 1912, the united Albanian mainland tribes demanded from the Sublime Porte the establishment of an Albanian autonomous province in the provinces of Janina, Scutari and the Albanian-inhabited western sanjaks of Kosovo and Monastir.<sup>53</sup> An independent Albanian National Assembly was to be set up to deal with local problems and financial affairs.

On 9 August 1912, the Moslem Kosovars presented their own package of demands in a 14-point programme. It claimed: recognition of an Albanian nationality; creation of a united Albanian vilayet to be governed by a devolved administrative system in conform with local necessities; senior officials appointed in Albania were to be either ethnic Albanians or persons with a good knowledge of the area, the language and the people; judicial, civil and economic public functionaries to be ethnic Albanians; freedom to apply customary law in the Albanian districts; Albanian military service to take place in Albania; introduction of Albanian language in local schools; freedom to carry arms; the impeachment of the Hakki Pasha and Said Pasha Cabinets for their Albanian policies; dissolution of Chamber of Deputies and holding of new elections.<sup>54</sup> The Ottoman Cabinet did not reply instantly and the Albanian-Macedonian tribesmen marched into Prizren and Uskub. By mid-August 1912, these towns had fallen into Albanian hands and the insurgents had established their position throughout northern Macedonia and the Albanian mainland, threatening to advance on Salonica should the government fail to comply with their demands. On 18 August 1912, the Ottoman administration gave way. The Sublime Porte accepted the Albanian demand for the establishment of a united Albanian autonomous province in the vilayets of Janina, Scutari and the western sanjaks of Monastir and Kosovo.

To the Christian Balkan states, the establishment of a strong Albanian province in areas which they coveted was unacceptable. It was the threat of losing these regions to the Albanians that spurred the Balkan states to precipitate their activities and resort to the use of force against the Porte. This exhibition of inter-Balkan solidarity and strong resolve was neither spontaneous nor circumstantial. It was the product of a long process of reconciliation and agreement between Bulgaria, Serbia,

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<sup>53</sup> KONDIS (1976, pp.74-5)

<sup>54</sup> VLACHOS (1954, pp.223-4)

Montenegro and Greece; a process which had started as early as the spring of 1909 under the aegis of Russia.

## CHAPTER X

### THE EMERGENCE OF THE BALKAN LEAGUE. ITS ORIGINS AND ESTABLISHMENT

Russia had emerged from the Near East crisis humiliated with her Balkan prestige at an extremely low ebb. To raise its influence among the Slav Balkan countries, to prevent Austrian expansionism in Macedonia and secure its interests in the Straits the Imperial Russian government decided to encourage a political understanding between the Slav Balkan countries with a view to create a Balkan Alliance. Although a similar scenario had been advocated by Russia and England during the Balkan crisis as the ideal barrier to Austria,<sup>1</sup> at present the Russians did not seem to have any clear-cut ideas as to what would be the most pertinent way to bring about this combination.

On the question of the Balkan League, two trends were apparent within the circles of the Russian F.O. The first trend, favored by Prime Minister Stolypin and the assistant Foreign Minister Charikov, urged the advisability of a close collaboration between the Balkan Slavs and the Ottoman Empire. The second current, which was expressed by Foreign Minister Izvolsky and senior diplomats like Sementovski-Kurillo and Hartwig, considered this impracticable and supported the establishment of a Balkan Slav Alliance, in which Greece could also participate, excluding Turkey.<sup>2</sup> Temporarily, the views of the Russian Foreign Minister seemed to prevail and from the second half of spring 1909 the implementation of this scheme was to become one of the principal considerations of Russia's Balkan policy.

#### 10.1 Building a Serbo-Bulgarian Entente in 1909

In the original Russian project for a Balkan Alliance the fundamental element was an understanding between Serbia and Bulgaria. In the spring of 1909, Serbo-Bulgarian relations were far from good. The dispute over the Macedonian provinces of Kosovo and Monastir and the paramount impression in Belgrade that throughout the

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to chapters 5 and 7.

<sup>2</sup> ROSSOS (1981, pp.8-16), JELAVICH (1991, p.228), THADEN (1965, p.40)

annexation crisis Sofia had been supporting Austria had clouded the atmosphere between the two Slav neighbors.

It was the kingdom of Serbia that made the first move to overcome mutual mistrust and normalize bilateral relations. In mid-April 1909, in a clear endeavor to end her Balkan isolation and strengthen her economic and political position vis-a-vis Austria-Hungary, Serbia approached Bulgaria with a proposal for a commercial agreement, similar to the Customs Union of 1905. On 15 April 1909, the Serb representative in Bulgaria Simic sought to explore the views of the Bulgarian Premier Malinov regarding the prospect of a "close Serbo-Bulgarian entente", the commercial agreement being a part of it.

Although Malinov was not unreceptive to the Serb suggestion, he reserved his stance until Belgrade provided a more definite proposal on the basis of this understanding and its "immediate object".<sup>3</sup> At a time that the negotiations with the Sublime Porte on the final settlement of the independence question continued the Bulgarians tended to believe that a rapprochement with Serbia could consolidate their diplomatic position.

The settlement of the Bulgarian question at the end of May 1909 and the intention of the Bulgarian Cabinet not to alienate Austria by aligning with Serbia seemed to shelve the issue of a Serbo-Bulgarian rapprochement. But not for long. In mid-June 1909, while Malinov visited Vienna to confer with the Austrian Foreign Minister Aehrenthal on the new situation in the southern Balkans, the Bulgarian Minister of Commerce Liaptchev gave an interview to the Sofia correspondent of the Austrian paper *Neue Freie Presse* on the rumored Serbo-Bulgarian entente. Liaptchev denied that secret negotiations were being carried on between Sofia and Belgrade for a political understanding but he expressed the opinion that a renewed Customs Union could promote bilateral trade and economic cooperation. To allay Austrian anxieties, the Bulgarian Minister stressed that if a Customs Union was to be agreed it would strictly confined to commercial, non-political, issues.<sup>4</sup>

Whatever the views of the Bulgarian officials on the issue of an understanding with Serbia might be at the time, in the summer of 1909 Sofia had been much more interested in its relations with the Porte. Bulgaria had gained her political

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<sup>3</sup> B.D. vol.9(1) p.4. F.O. 881/9531 Belgrade Embassy to F.O./13-4-1909/no.43/Whitehead to Grey

independence but her expansionist aspirations in Macedonia and Thrace had not been fulfilled. At this juncture, the principal dilemma of Bulgaria's Ottoman policy was détente or war.

Certainly, the weakening of Ottoman authority in Europe -a result of the Balkan crisis, the aggravation of the Albanian and Cretan questions and the worsening of Macedonian conditions- had increased Bulgarian aggression.<sup>5</sup> These warlike tendencies however Sofia had decided to restrain at least until the European Powers withdrew their support from Young Turkey. In the meantime, the Malinov Cabinet professed its reluctance to join any regional alliance which was directed against another country and manifested, through the newly-appointed Bulgarian minister in Constantinople Sarafov, its desire for the establishment of friendly relations with the Ottoman Empire.<sup>6</sup>

By mid-summer, the Aehrenthal-Malinov talks and certain rumors regarding an alleged understanding between Austria and Bulgaria in the Balkans produced a very disquieting effect on Russia. The Russian F.O. and Izvolsky suspected that Austria and Bulgaria might conclude a pact to attack Turkey-in-Europe jointly using her internal convulsions as a pretext. This scenario was anathema to Russia's Balkan bid to protect her interests in the Straits and keep Austria away from Macedonia. For, its implementation might secure for Bulgaria a large part of Macedonia and proximity to Constantinople and the Straits and for Austria-Hungary control over the rest of Macedonia and the strategic port of Salonica.<sup>7</sup>

Alarmed by this prospect the Russian government instructed its representatives in the Slav Balkan countries to propagate the idea of a south Slav alliance. More importantly, on 24 October 1909, Izvolsky signed an agreement with his Italian counterpart Tittoni at Raccogini. The Russo-Italian agreement guaranteed Italian interests in Libya and, as far as Rome was concerned, legitimized the Russian claim for "the opening of the Straits to Russian warships."<sup>8</sup> It also referred to the intention

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<sup>4</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK/Sofia Legation/8/21-6-1909/no.421/Simopoulos to Baltazzis

<sup>5</sup> In his conversation with Aehrenthal, Malinov stated that "should the unification of Crete with Greece come about this development would inevitably lay the groundwork for the materialization of Bulgarian national aspirations in Macedonia." *Vreme*, 8/21-6-1909. (The extract of the *Vreme* is to be found in I.A.Y.E./1910/File A.3/Sofia Legation). See also: B.D. vol.9(1) p.18

<sup>6</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK/Sofia Legation/8/21-7-1909/no.522/Zalokostas to Baltazzis and also I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK/Sofia Legation/23/5-8-1909/no.566/Zalokostas to Zografos

<sup>7</sup> B.D. vol.9(1) p.39

<sup>8</sup> JELAVICH (1991, p.225)



of the two Powers to follow the “principle of nationality in the development of the Balkan states, excluding all foreign domination” in case the Balkan status quo was disturbed.

On 4 November 1909, outlining the significance of the Raccogini agreement for the Balkan national states, Izvolsky wrote to his agents in Serbia, Montenegro and Bulgaria that the common intent of the two Powers was to guarantee the independent existence of the Balkan states, secure them against foreign aggression and contribute to the process of inter-Balkan understanding.<sup>9</sup>

The Russian support for a Balkan Alliance and the apprehension of Austria moving into Macedonia encouraged the rapprochement between Serbia and Bulgaria. In the autumn of 1909, it became clear that the two south Slav states had started to contemplate the termination of their racial confrontation in Macedonia and that the climate in Serbo-Bulgarian relations had considerably improved since the end of the annexation crisis. A few days before the visit of King Ferdinand to Serbia in mid-November,<sup>10</sup> the Serb Foreign Minister Milovanovic stated that “Bulgaria and Serbia had drawn closer and an entente was possible and workable.”<sup>11</sup>

For the time being however, the Serb political leadership considered that an agreement with Bulgaria could consolidate Serbia’s position vis-a-vis Austria but it should not, at least for the moment, be used against the Ottoman Empire. So long as Serb commerce and war material passed through Ottoman territory and the Danube-Adriatic railway had not been constructed, Belgrade was in no position to alienate Constantinople. As Simic had pointed out to Sofia, for Serbia a bilateral entente should be based on the common agreement that the two states were to “pursue a clear, honest and non-aggressive policy toward the Ottoman Empire”.<sup>12</sup>

A decisive factor in the Serbo-Bulgarian understanding was the gradual estrangement between Sofia and Vienna. Since the end of the annexation crisis there were signs that Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria no longer held similar views on the situation in the

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<sup>9</sup> GARDIKAS-KATSIADAKIS (1995, pp.42-3)

<sup>10</sup> Ferdinand’s visit, although itself devoid of political importance, stirred popular enthusiasm in Serbia as it was seen as a further indication of Serbo-Bulgarian rapprochement. I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK/Sofia Legation/28/10-11-1909/no.808/Zalokostas to Mavromihalis/enclosure no.1

<sup>11</sup> See previous note and I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK/Sofia Legation/20/2-11-1909/no.789/Zalokostas to Mavromihalis/enclosure no.2

<sup>12</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK/Sofia Legation/20/3-12-1909/no.850/Zalokostas to Mavromihalis. F.O. 881/9717 Belgrade Embassy to F.O./5-1-1910/no.3/Whitehead to Grey

Balkans. While Sofia had resolved to follow a policy of non-alignment and concealed aggressiveness toward Constantinople, Austria favored the maintenance of the Balkan status quo working for cooperation with Young Turkey and particularly Romania, the principal enemy of Bulgaria in the north.<sup>13</sup>

At the end of December 1909, King Ferdinand visited Vienna.<sup>14</sup> In his meeting with Aehrenthal the Bulgarian ruler stated that the question of Austro-Bulgarian relations had placed him in a difficult position at home for in public opinion, the military and the government there was a clear and traditional pro-Russian sentiment but no pro-Austrian orientation. Ferdinand went on to recognize that the implementation of the Bulgarian national program in Macedonia was dependent on Austrian consent but he did not fail to point out that the recent pro-Turkish attitude of Vienna had profoundly concerned the Bulgarian political establishment. Aehrenthal, avoiding any comment on the Austrian attitude respecting Bulgaria's expansionist aspirations in Macedonia, stressed that the practice of Vienna in the Balkans was to preserve the status quo by upholding Ottoman rule in Europe.<sup>15</sup>

Given Serbia's bad relations with the Dual Monarchy and her apprehensions of Austro-Bulgarian collusion in the Balkans, the removal of Bulgaria from the Austrian orbit pleased the Belgrade government, rendering a Serbo-Bulgarian understanding, under Russian auspices, a more plausible eventuality. Equally, Bulgaria, while fearing at least as much as Serbia an Austrian descent on Macedonia, concluded that so long as Vienna supported the status quo in the region and aligned itself with Constantinople and Bucharest, an Austro-Bulgarian collaboration was out of the question. As a result, the idea of an entente with Serbia gained significant ground in Bulgarian capital.

The Ottoman Empire had been watching these Balkan developments and especially the striking improvement in Serbo-Bulgarian relations with increasing suspicion. On the initiative of the Albanian deputy from Argirokastro Mufid Bey, the new situation

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<sup>13</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK/Sofia Legation/23/5-8-1909/no.566/Zalokostas to Zografos. I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK/Sofia Legation/20/3-12-1909/no.850/Zalokostas to Mavromihalis. See also: BRIDGE (1972b, pp.147,149)

<sup>14</sup> Possibly influenced by the Russian embassy in Sofia, Ferdinand went to Vienna almost convinced that Austria-Hungary nourished expansionist designs for Macedonia. Aehrenthal denied that such was the case. F.O. 881/9717 Vienna Embassy to F.O./5-1-1910/no.1/Cartwright to Grey

<sup>15</sup> F.O. 881/9717 Vienna Embassy to F.O./5-1-1910/no.1/Cartwright to Grey. F.O. 881/9717 Vienna Embassy to F.O./8-1-1910/no.5/Cartwright to Grey. F.O. 881/9860 Vienna Embassy to F.O./2-9-1910/no.50/Cartwright to Grey

in the Balkans and the threat to European Turkey from a south Slav alliance was discussed in the Chamber of Deputies on 27 November 1909. Mufid Bey asked the Ottoman Foreign Minister Rifat Pasha “whether the government had taken measures in view of the imminent formation of an anti-Turkish alliance of the Slav Balkan states and whether, given the aggressive speeches in the Bulgarian Sobranje, the government had prepared for a Slav attack...”<sup>16</sup>

The news from Macedonia was also disquieting as the local Ottoman authorities had ascertained that the Serbs had recently withdrawn their educational propaganda from Salonica vilayet to Bulgarian-Macedonian benefit, in return for a free hand in Kosovo. Behind this move, the Porte discerned the first step toward the eventual delimitation of zones of influence between the two Slav nationalities in Macedonia.<sup>17</sup>

Even more alarming were the reports of the Ottoman legation in Sofia. In December, Paprikov declared in the Sobranje that the key determinant of Turco-Bulgarian relations remained the welfare of the Bulgarian-Macedonians. Whereas, in regard to Serbia, he remarked that the Malinov administration desired “honest and sincere relations” with the neighboring kingdom.

The statements of the Bulgarian Foreign Minister perturbed the Ottoman minister in Sofia Mustafa Assim Bey. Like the Ottoman Cabinet and the Committee, Assim Bey resented Sofia’s tendency to interfere in Macedonian affairs. He was truly convinced that in so far as Bulgaria continued to foster expansionist aspirations against Turkey-in-Europe the likelihood of the two countries coming to terms was virtually non-existent.<sup>18</sup>

To investigate the progress of the Serbo-Bulgarian entente, the Unionist Minister of Finance Cavit Bey paid a visit to Belgrade in the last week of December 1909. In their talks with the Unionist official, the Serb leaders strove to assuage the fears of the Porte concerning the recent rapprochement with Sofia. On 26 December 1909, Milovanovic assured Cavit Bey that the Serb strivings to ameliorate the climate with Bulgaria aimed exclusively at eliminating the sources of tension between the two Slav neighbors and had no anti-Ottoman character. The Serb Minister went as far as to

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<sup>16</sup> F.O. 881/9717 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./31-1-1910/no.56/Lowther to Grey

<sup>17</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2330 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/2-12-1909/Lamb to Lowther, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2330 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/9-12-1909/Lamb to Marling

claim that “Serbia would not take part in any Balkan entente or coalition which was directed against Turkey, or in which she was not also associated.”<sup>19</sup>

Although strategic and commercial considerations forced the Serb Cabinet to remain on good terms with the Ottoman Empire, Serbia shared Bulgaria’s consternation at the worsening conditions in Macedonia, much more so following the implementation of the ‘Ottomanization’ policy in the provinces of Kosovo, Monastir and Salonica.

Indeed, by the end of 1909 it was clear that the Macedonian policies of the two Balkan Slav countries coincided at two points. The first was that under the Unionist regime the position of their fellow-countrymen in Macedonia was threatened. The second was that, in view of the Unionist nationalist commitment to denationalize the Macedonian Christians, the Serbo-Bulgarian dispute over Macedonia should cease and give way to a strategy of reconciliation and understanding between the Macedonian Slavs and their metropolitan countries.<sup>20</sup>

## **10.2 The Greco-Bulgarian Rapprochement**

By the beginning of 1910, a considerable degree of mutual confidence between Sofia and Belgrade had been restored. Significantly, there were also certain, though hazy at the time, indications of an attempted Greco-Bulgarian rapprochement.

Despite the predominant belief in Greek historiography that the process of entente with Bulgaria commenced in 1910, Greek archival sources indicate that the first attempts in this direction had been made in the summer of 1909. In June 1909, the accentuation of the Cretan question and the urgent need to consolidate its diplomatic position toward Young Turkey directed the Theotokis Cabinet to seek an understanding with Bulgaria.

On 12 June, following instructions from Athens, the Greek representative in Bulgaria Zalokostas conveyed to General Paprikov the desire of the Greek government to end the Greco-Bulgarian racial conflict in Macedonia. Reassuring Paprikov that Athens was willing to contain its Macedonian nationalists, the Greek representative inquired the Bulgarian official what were the views of Sofia on this question and whether the

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<sup>18</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK/Sofia Legation/26/9-12-1909/no.863/Zalokostas to Mavromihalis. F.O. 881/9717 Sofia Embassy to F.O./22-1-1910/no.1/Findlay to Grey

<sup>19</sup> F.O. 881/9717 Belgrade Embassy to F.O./5-1-1910/no.3/Whitehead to Grey

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* F.O. 881/9717 Foreign Office to Rome Embassy/29-1-1910/no.9/Grey to Rodd and F.O. 881/9717 Vienna Embassy to F.O./6-2-1910/no.19/Cartwright to Grey

Malinov administration would put a restraining hand on the anti-Greek activity of the Bulgarian-Macedonians.

To these Greek overtures, Paprikov was initially receptive. Taking into consideration the Unionist attacks against the religious and educational privileges of the Christian nationalities and the deteriorating situation in Macedonia, the Bulgarian Minister stated that the termination of the Macedonian controversy between Greece and Bulgaria was desirable and could pave the way for a Greco-Bulgarian understanding.<sup>21</sup>

During June and July 1909, the Greek legation continued to discuss the question of bilateral reconciliation with the Bulgarian leadership but the military revolution in Athens on 28 August 1909 by the "Military League" blurred the political atmosphere in Greece.<sup>22</sup> The ensuing instability in Greek politics in conjunction with Sofia's tendency to work out an entente with Serbia first interrupted the Greco-Bulgarian rapprochement. However, it is interesting that in the following months the racial antagonism between the Greek and Bulgarian communities in Macedonia did diminish, if it did not end.<sup>23</sup>

By summer 1910, though little had been achieved in the direction of a Greco-Bulgarian entente through the official political and diplomatic channels, the process of bilateral reconciliation had made far more significant progress between the local Bulgarian and Greek populations in Macedonia. To resist the C.U.P. commitment to denationalize the non-Moslem nationalities, the two large Christian Macedonian communities had shown a clear inclination to set aside all their previous disagreements and disputes and collaborate against the common menace. This informal understanding was expressed in the striking diminution of their racial rivalry during the winter; the practice of the Bulgarian and Greek bands of operating in more or less designated areas thereby avoiding clashes; and the amicable settlement of the ecclesiastical disputes by the native Bulgarian and Greek populations,

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<sup>21</sup> I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK-5/Sofia Legation/16/29-6-1909/no.490/Zalokostas to Baltazzis. The semi-official organ of the Bulgarian government *Vreme* also reaffirmed that the Greek legation had sounded out Paprikov on the prospect of a Greco-Bulgarian rapprochement and that Sofia's response had been favorable. I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK/Sofia Legation/10/23-7-1909/no.529/Zalokostas to Zografos, I.A.Y.E./1909/File AAK/Sofia Legation/11/24-7-1909/no.572/Zalokostas to Zografos.

<sup>22</sup> See: DERTILIS (1985)

<sup>23</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2359 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/22-11-1909/Lamb to Lowther

notwithstanding that in July 1910 the Ottoman Parliament voted a Law regulating church and school differences in Macedonia.<sup>24</sup>

The inter-communal reconciliation in Macedonia benefited the political rapprochement between the two countries. In August 1910, the tendency of the two Balkan countries to work together to defend the interests of their co-nationals in Turkey and advance their national aspirations was reflected in two events: the unusual collaboration of Bulgarian and Greek parliamentary groups in the Ottoman Chamber of Deputies and the renewed negotiations between the Athens and Sofia governments on the Macedonian question.

Urged on by the worsening situation of Christian nationalities in Turkey the Bulgarian and Greek deputies, backed by their Armenian and Albanian colleagues, submitted two memoranda to the Hakki Pasha government containing their positions on the guarantee of the minority privileges and the well-being of all Christian ethnic groups in the country. In a rare display of Greco-Bulgarian political solidarity, the two memoranda (the Bulgarian was submitted on 19 June while the Greek on 28 August) espoused almost identical views and put forward similar claims.

Characteristically, they requested: the termination of Ottoman interference with the religious, educational and communal institutions of the Christian ethnic groups; equality of the Christian communal institutions' degrees with those awarded by the Ottoman public schools; Christian recruits to serve in their native provinces and be admitted to Ottoman military academies to become officers; the establishment of a Supreme Administrative Council, under the Grand Vizier, with mixed composition and the task of examining the grievances of the local nationalities respecting the attitude of public functionaries and punishing corrupt and incompetent administrators; the elaboration and enactment of a new electoral law, whereupon universal suffrage and proportionate representation of the minority nationalities in the Ottoman Parliament as well as in provincial councils would be secured.

The Hakki Pasha Cabinet refused however to take the Bulgarian and Greek proposals into consideration on the grounds that the deputies should refer these questions to the Parliament rather than to central government.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> F.O. 881/9811 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./14-2-1911/Lowther to Grey/Annual Report on Turkey for the Year 1910/enclosure no. 1

In the meantime, Greece and Bulgaria worked for the conclusion of an understanding in Macedonia. On 25 August 1910, the Bulgarian agent in Athens Dobrev presented to the Greek F.O. a scheme for delimitation of zones of influence in Macedonia and the repair of schism between the Patriarchate and the Exarchate. In these conditions though, the Greek Cabinet considered that a binding agreement with Sofia in Macedonia would be premature. Athens seemed to suspect that an understanding at this stage with the more powerful Bulgaria might amount to the restriction of Greek claims in Macedonia.

Sensibly, the Greek government favored a cautious rapprochement with Bulgaria and felt for the time being, that a preliminary consensus in Macedonia which could improve the climate between the two counties and lay the groundwork for a more definite agreement would be sufficient. Later, having reorganized her armed forces and strengthened her diplomatic position, Greece would be able to enter into negotiations with Bulgaria on the delimitation of spheres of influence in Macedonia without running the risk of compromising her interests in the provinces of Salonica and Monastir.

Therefore, Kallergis's<sup>26</sup> counter-proposals were far less radical than Dobrev's. The Greek scheme provided for: the ceasing of racial confrontation in Macedonia; the development of the cooperation between Greek and Bulgarian deputies in the Ottoman Parliament for the promotion of Christian welfare; and the need to play down the ecclesiastical issue by referring it to Patriarchist and Exarchist religious leaderships.

On 27 October 1910, Paprikov informed the new Venizelos government<sup>27</sup> through the newly-accredited Greek minister in Sofia Panas that Kallergis's proposals had been accepted. Eventually, following many decades of mutual hostility and bitter strife over Macedonia, the first Greco-Bulgarian agreement had been accomplished.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> F.O. 881/9860 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./29-8-1910/no.611/Lowther to Grey, VLACHOS (1954, pp.208-9)

<sup>26</sup> Kallergis had been appointed Foreign Minister in the Dragoumis Cabinet in January 1910.

<sup>27</sup> The Venizelos Cabinet took office on 18 October 1910, succeeding the Dragoumis government.

<sup>28</sup> GARDIKAS-KATSIADAKIS (1995, p.48)

### 10.3 The Turco-Romanian Understanding and Its Impact on the Making of Balkan League

The Hakki Pasha Cabinet was very apprehensive about the secret diplomacy of the Christian Balkan countries and their apparent tendency to act in collusion to safeguard the status of their 'unredeemed brethren' in the Ottoman Empire as well as to promote their nationalist programs at the expense of Turkey-in-Europe. To counteract a south Slav alliance and consolidate its position in the Balkans, the Ottoman leadership began to contemplate an alignment with Austria and her Balkan ally Romania; an alignment which had been constantly advocated by the German-trained Ottoman military group of Shevket Pasha but did not coincide with the civilian Unionist party's foreign policy of being on good terms with both the Triplice and the Entente.<sup>29</sup>

A community of geo-strategic and commercial interests between the Ottoman Empire and Romania rendered a bilateral understanding on political, and possibly military, grounds attainable, if not imperative. Both countries opposed Bulgarian and Russian expansion. In addition, they had a long tradition in commercial partnership since the entire external Romanian trade necessarily passed through the Straits and the Ottoman market had attracted the largest share of Romanian exports.<sup>30</sup>

In the spring of 1910, Turco-Romanian relations entered a more intimate phase. Exploiting the visit of its War Minister in Constantinople in April 1910, the Romanian government suggested that, in view of their common interests in the region, the two countries should proceed to complete a political agreement and military convention. Claiming that Bucharest was able to mobilize 300,000 men in case of war, the Romanian Minister stated that Turkey could obtain invaluable political and military profits from an agreement with Romania and alignment with the Triple Alliance. Yet, he pointed out that such a development was dependent upon the non-existence of a Serbo-Ottoman pact.<sup>31</sup>

Apparently, the idea of a Turco-Romanian convention was further elaborated during the visit of the Grand Vizier Hakki Pasha to Bucharest in May and his meeting with King Charles. However, even though these talks did not produce any concrete

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<sup>29</sup> I.A.Y.E./1910/File Γ 2.3/Constantinople Legation/5/18-8-1910/no.1280/Gryparis to Kallergis

<sup>30</sup> F.O. 881/9860 Sofia Embassy to F.O./23-9-1910/no.122/Findlay to Grey



agreement, by the end of summer 1910, western diplomatic circles were convinced that the Ottoman Empire and Romania had arrived at an “oral understanding” to act in collusion, in case a regional crisis erupted.<sup>32</sup>

Significantly, on 23 September, the Romanian Cabinet through its semi-official organ *L' Independance Roumaine* (The Romanian Independence) openly admitted that the recent rapprochement with Turkey was aimed at the consolidation of the Balkan status quo and the dissuasion of the geopolitical enlargement of Bulgaria. The Ottoman administration was in perfect accord with these Romanian views. In one instance in early October, though, contravening the official practice of the Ottoman F.O. of referring generally on the extent and limitations of Turco-Romanian entente, Assim Bey was straightforward. He said to his British counterpart in Sofia Findlay: “if Bulgaria were to attack Turkey the Romanian army would attack Bulgaria”.<sup>33</sup>

The Turco-Romanian rapprochement put the Balkan Slav countries and Russia on alert. The Serb Cabinet, despite its efforts to appease public opinion and the opposition press by playing down the importance of the Turco-Romanian rapprochement and arguing that friendly Serbo-Turkish relations guaranteed Serbia's territorial integrity, was very suspicious and fearful. In the minds of Serb officials, Austria's Balkan ambitions lay beneath Turco-Romanian entente. It was the Dual Monarchy, not Romania, which according to Milovanovic had succeeded “in drawing the Ottoman Empire much nearer to the orbit of the Triple Alliance” placing the

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<sup>31</sup> I.A.Y.E./1910/File Γ 2.3/Constantinople Legation/19/2-5-1910/no.386/Gryparis to Kallergis, F.O. 881/9860 Belgrade Embassy to F.O./20-9-1910/no.64/Barclay to Grey

<sup>32</sup> I.A.Y.E./1910/File Γ 2.3/Berlin Legation/25/7-11-1910/no.606/Theotokis to Dimitrakopoulos, I.A.Y.E./1910/File Γ 2.3/London Legation/19/1-11-1910/no.881/Gennadios to Dimitrakopoulos, F.O. 881/9860 Sofia Embassy to F.O./12-10-1910/no.129/Findlay to Grey. There is no convincing evidence that Austria-Hungary had played an energetic role in the Turco-Romanian understanding. However, since Romania was an ally of the Triplice, it is almost certain that Vienna was aware of the entire affair and had given its tacit approval to it. In October 1910, Aehrenthal stated to the Hungarian Foreign Affairs Committee that although Bucharest had denied the existence of a Turco-Romanian convention, a source which intended to stir trouble in the Balkans (i.e. Russia) had circulated these rumors in order to undermine the efforts of the Hakki Pasha Cabinet to secure a loan at the French money market by pointing to Turkey's entente with Romania: the Balkan ally of Central Powers. Germany also shared the opinion that behind the circulation of the Turco-Romanian understanding lied the Russian government. I.A.Y.E./1910/File Γ 2.3/Vienna Legation/21/3-11-1910/no.532/Streit to Dimitrakopoulos, I.A.Y.E./1910/File Γ 2.3/Berlin Legation/23/6-10-1910/no.526/Theotokis to Kallergis, I.A.Y.E./1910/File Γ 2.3/Berlin Legation/22/5-10-1910/no.3623/Theotokis to Kallergis

<sup>33</sup> I.A.Y.E./1910/File Γ 2.3/Bucharest Legation/14/27-9-1910/no.273/Ioulianos to Kallergis, I.A.Y.E./1910/File Γ 2.3/Constantinople Legation/31/13-9-1910/no.3524/Gryparis to Dimitrakopoulos, F.O. 881/9860 Sofia Embassy to F.O./12-10-1910/no.129/Findlay to Grey, F.O. 881/9860 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./21-9-1910/no.198/Lowther to Grey

kingdom of Serbia “between the hammer and the anvil”.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, the Serb government felt that the only way to consolidate Serbia’s position in the Balkans was by concluding an entente with Bulgaria.

Since the Turco-Romanian understanding had a predominantly anti-Bulgarian character it evoked anxiety in Sofia. Aware of Romania’s territorial designs for Bulgarian-held Dobroudja, the Malinov administration discerned in the Turco-Romanian collaboration a formidable deterrent to the materialization of its Macedonian aspirations and, more importantly, a direct threat to Bulgarian independence. At this juncture, Sofia decided to revise its entire Balkan policy, the pivotal element of which was not any more the conservative strategy of non-alignment but the active preparation of a political entente and military alliance with Serbia, Montenegro and eventually Greece, under the aegis of Russia.

It is within this context that the official Bulgarian feelers to Greece for an understanding in Macedonia on 25 August 1910<sup>35</sup> and Ferdinand’s important visit to Cettigne on 21 August should be examined. Ottoman reports from Montenegro and Bulgaria concurred that, whilst in Cettigne, Ferdinand reaffirmed the excellent relations between the two states and dwelt with King Nicholas and the Serb Prince Alexander upon the possibility of forming a tripartite Balkan Slav alliance to counteract the projected Turco-Romanian axis. It appears that in these talks the three Slav leaders agreed that an inter-Balkan understanding had become a necessity. The product of this meeting was communicated to the Russian F.O.<sup>36</sup>

By the end of the summer, the Imperial Russian government had become convinced that Turkey and Romania, under the influence of Vienna, had arrived at a verbal agreement concerning the situation in the Balkans. Sazonov, who had succeeded Izvolsky in September, believed that the essence of this entente was that if Bulgaria mobilized to attack Turkey, Romania would deploy her armies across the Bulgaro-

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<sup>34</sup> F.O. 881/9860 Belgrade Embassy to F.O./20-9-1910/no.64/Barclay to Grey. The last statement belongs to Izvolsky. B.D. vol.9(1) p.175

<sup>35</sup> It is true however that owing to Greece’s military weakness, Bulgaria was still hesitant to conclude a military convention with Athens. Thus, when on 7 August 1910 the Greek government sent Colonel Frantzis, a military attache, in Sofia to explore the prospect of a Greco-Bulgarian collaboration in the event of a Greco-Turkish war, the Bulgarian leadership refused to discuss the issue. F.O. 881/9860 St. Petersburg Embassy to F.O./3-9-1910/no.248/O`Beirne to Grey

<sup>36</sup> I.A.Y.E./1910/File Γ 2.3/Constantinople Legation/18/1-10-1910/no.1655/Gryparis to Dimitrakopoulos, I.A.Y.E./1910/File Γ 2.3/Sofia Legation/10/23-10-1910/no.611/Zalokostas to

Romanian border. Fearing that the south Slav states would be encircled between Austria, Romania and Turkey, Russia's Balkan policy focused on establishing a south Slav Balkan Alliance and encouraging Greece to join this coalition.

Sazonov's plan, at its original phase, provided for the thorough reorganization of the Balkan states' armed forces amounting to 600,000 men. Following a short period of time, the Balkan countries should proceed to set aside their Macedonian controversy and conclude military conventions. On 1 October 1910, in an explicit attempt to clarify its intentions for the Balkans the Russian government warned Young Turkey through the columns of *Novoye Vremya* that "the surrender into Ottoman hands of Bulgarian, Serb, Montenegrin or Greek territory is an impossibility."<sup>37</sup>

The fact that the pro-German Ottoman military party tended to steer the Ottoman Empire towards the Triple Alliance rather than the Entente, induced the Russian Imperial government to recognize the strategic importance of the Greek factor and pursue the participation of Greece in the Balkan League. Conversing with Psychas, the Greek chargé d'affaires in St. Petersburg, Sazonov impressed upon the Athens government the need to accelerate its military preparations, stating that the Balkan status quo might be preserved for a period of 1-2 years and if within this time Greece had not been prepared "for all eventualities" then it would be too late for her.<sup>38</sup>

Instead of consolidating the regional status quo and containing south Slav expansionism the informal entente between Bucharest and Constantinople oriented the Balkan Slav states, notably Bulgaria and Serbia, to form a counter-combination, in which, as Russia argued and Sofia inclined to agree, the participation of Greece was of crucial strategic importance.

#### 10.4 The Establishment of the Balkan Alliance

In Greece, the advent of the first Venizelos government to power on 18 October 1910 marked an important, though at that time elusive, turn in Greece's Balkan

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Dimitrakopoulos, F.O. 881/9860 Cettigne Embassy to F.O./24-10-1910/no.43/Beaumont to Grey. F.O. 881/9860 Belgrade Embassy to F.O./6-10-1910/no.70/Paget to Grey

<sup>37</sup> I.A.Y.E./1910/File Γ 2.3/St. Petersburg Legation/17/30-9-1910/no.628/Psychas to Gryparis. F.O. 9860 St. Petersburg Embassy to F.O./4-10-1910/no.273/O' Beirne to Grey, F.O. 881/9860 St. Petersburg Embassy to F.O./2-10-1910/no.400/O' Beirne to Grey. *Novoye Vremya*, 18/1 October 1910

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. I.A.Y.E./1910/File Γ 2.3/St. Petersburg Legation/21/4-10-1910/no.639/Psychas to Gryparis. F.O. 881/9860 St. Petersburg Embassy to F.O./1-10-1910/no.398/O' Beirne to Grey

policy. When he formed his first administration, Venizelos was convinced that the nationalist policies of Young Turkey against Christian nationalities would result sooner or later in a collision between the Ottoman Empire and the Balkan national states. In the mind of the Cretan statesman therefore, the prospect of Greece's alignment with her south Slav neighbors had emerged as the most appropriate way to defend Greek interests in the Ottoman Empire and promote Hellenic national aspirations in Crete, Macedonia and Epirus.<sup>39</sup> Temporarily, though, since the Greek program for military reorganization had not been completed, good relations with the Sublime Porte remained an advisability.

In 1911, the preparatory steps and behind-the-scenes diplomatic efforts intended to bring the kingdom of Greece and the south Slavs closer began to pay dividends. The original implicit indication of inter-Balkan solidarity came in the end of March 1911, when the Albanian Malissors revolt broke out. It is important to underscore here that, although Greek and Slav nationalist programs in Epirus and Macedonia conflicted and overlapped with the Albanian bid for the creation of an autonomous Albanian province, all Christian Balkan states adopted an attitude of sympathetic benevolence towards the Albanian movement.<sup>40</sup>

Being less a product of common geopolitical perspectives in the region and far more a circumstantial display of Balkan unanimity, the Balkan Christian states' benevolence to the Malissors struggle in north Albania had however its own distinctive significance: it exhibited the opposition of the Slav states and Greece to Young Turkey.

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<sup>39</sup> ROSSOS (1981, p.47). See also: SVOLOPOULOS (1992)

<sup>40</sup> As it has been already pointed out, Montenegro provided material support and sanctuary to the Malissors, anticipating to gain some profit from the Albanian disturbances. Serbia, although opposed to the establishment of an autonomous Albanian province under Austrian protection, recognized that the continuation of the Albanian turmoil could be a valuable instrument to test the Balkan attitude of Austria-Hungary and Italy. Bulgaria supported the Malissors' revolt for it undermined Ottoman authority in Europe. In fact, Sofia encouraged cooperation between the Bulgarian-Macedonian committees and the Albanian rebels. As far as the Greek administration was concerned, in so far as the Albanian revolt did not spill over in Epirus which Athens regarded as a Greek territory and confined itself to northern Albania, it was willing to uphold it. On Montenegrin assistance to the Malissors see chapter 9. On Serb position see: HELMREICH (1969, p.45) and MALCOLM (1998, p.243). For the Bulgarian stance: P.R.O. F.O. 195/2382 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/20-7-1911/Lamb to Marling, P.R.O. F.O. 195/2382 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/3-12-1911/Lamb to Lowther. On the Greek thesis: I.A.Y.E./1911/File 34.1.1/Foreign Office to Prefecture of Corfu/23/5-6-1911/no.12589/Gryparis to Varatasis

These developments had an impact in Macedonia. In July 1911, it was rumored among the Ottoman authorities that in mid-June representatives of the Bulgarian, Albanian and Greek Macedonian revolutionary organizations had secretly gathered in Djumaja to coordinate their paramilitary activities against the Ottomans. Even though there is no convincing evidence indicating that such a meeting did really take place, it is clear that by that time the Balkan Macedonian committees avoided inter-racial clashes and began to direct their operations against the Ottoman regime.

“...it seems to be admitted on all hands that some sort of agreement has been arrived at and it is the intention of the Greek, Albanian and Bulgarian bands to operate in more or less clearly designated areas and with the object not, as in 1903-1907, of exterminating each other but of conjointly making things difficult for the Turkish administration and if war should break out, facilitating the enemy's operations by harassing the Ottoman troops and impeding their communications” remarked a British report from Salonica on 20 July 1911.<sup>41</sup>

During the second half of 1911, the process of inter-Balkan understanding made great progress. On 29 September, the Italian attack on Tripolitania unveiled the vulnerability of the Ottoman Empire to foreign aggression. Since the Libyan war raised the specter of an Italian onslaught on Turkey-in-Europe, the new Said Pasha Cabinet ordered the mobilization of the Ottoman army in the province of Adrianople. More importantly, in early October 1911, the Russian ambassador in Constantinople Charikov put forward a projected convention to the Ottoman government providing for the opening of the Straits to Russian warships. In return, Russia would guarantee Turkey's position in the district of Constantinople and the adjacent territories.<sup>42</sup>

At this juncture, the Bulgarian political establishment realized that the time for decisive measures had come. The pro-Russian Geshov-Danev coalition, in office since March 1911, began to work systematically for the establishment of a complete Balkan alliance system. In the first week of October 1911, the Bulgarian agent in Rome Rizov received instructions to go to Belgrade in order to discuss the question of alliance with the Serb leaders. In a short time, Serbo-Bulgarian talks focused on

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<sup>41</sup> P.R.O. F.O. 195/2382 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/20-7-1911/Lamb to Marling. In a later report however, in December, Lamb wrote that there were no indications of a concrete agreement between the Bulgarian, Albanian and Greek committees. P.R.O. F.O. 195/2382 General Consulate of Salonica to Constantinople Embassy/3-12-1911/Lamb to Lowther

<sup>42</sup> B.D. vol.9(1) p.312

Macedonia, the perpetual apple of discord between the two south Slav states. Rizov informed the Milovanovic Cabinet that Bulgaria no longer insisted on the indivisibility of Macedonia. Thus, Sofia had decided to enter into negotiations with Belgrade respecting the delimitation of "spheres of influence" in the provinces of Kosovo, Monastir and Salonica.

On such occasions, diplomats and politicians tend to present their maximum claims first, which, if not accepted, they intend to reduce during the course of the negotiations until they obtain what they consider a favorable and workable agreement. During the Serbo-Bulgarian negotiations this "normal procedure" was followed. Rizov suggested that Serbia should acquire the region lying between her borders and the Uskub vilayet. On the other hand, the Serb leadership demanded the Macedonian districts of Uskub, Veles, Perlepe, Kirtchevo and Porech.<sup>43</sup> This disagreement led the negotiations to deadlock. Rizov's mission nevertheless, laid the groundwork for a Serbo-Bulgarian understanding over Macedonia.

On 11 October 1911, Geshov met with Milovanovic in Serbia in utmost secrecy. In this meeting the two Balkan statesmen arrived at an agreement for the conclusion of an alliance "in principle". However, owing to their inability to designate their respective Macedonian zones of influence, they decided that the "contested region" extending from the Rhodope mountains in the east to Skadros mountains in the west should be subject to Russian arbitration.

Partitioning Macedonia between the Christian Balkan countries was unpopular with the Bulgarian-Macedonian revolutionary organizations. They argued that autonomy, not partition, should be the principal objective of Sofia's Macedonian strategy. In view of the Macedonian opposition in Bulgaria, the Geshov administration reviewed its stance. Sofia had no illusions that unless it managed to include in the Bulgarian zone the largest parts of Kosovo and Monastir, the understanding with Serbia would founder in the vehement reaction of the Bulgarian-Macedonian nationalists.<sup>44</sup> Thus, Geshov resumed negotiations with Belgrade.

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<sup>43</sup> DJORDJEVIC (1970, p.361)

<sup>44</sup> While the refractory Macedonian committees in Bulgaria seemed prepared to exchange the abandonment of their dogma of Macedonian integrity and autonomy only for a lion's share in the provinces of Kosovo, Monastir and Salonica, the position of the Serb revolutionary organizations was more pragmatic. Formed in May 1911, the *Uyedinyenye ili Smrt* (Union or Death), the successor of the Narodna Odbrana, favored an alliance with Bulgaria and unconditionally supported the Serb government's efforts in this direction. "The Black Hand", as this organization was widely-

In the Serb camp, the question of Macedonia had also divided the political leadership. Pashic raised strong objections to the Milovanovic Cabinet's tendency to concede so much Macedonian territory to Sofia. He envisaged the Serbo-Bulgarian alliance as an instrument for Serb expansion to the Morava valley and north-central Macedonia; a solid basis for dominating central Balkans. Premier Milovanovic, apprehensive of Austrian designs, believed that Serbia should pursue an outlet to the Adriatic sea and use the alliance with Bulgaria to check an Austrian move in Novibazar or Macedonia.<sup>45</sup>

Therefore, when he met with the Bulgarian delegation in Paris in November, the Serb Premier agreed to accept the acquisition of "the western bank of the Vardar river"; the eastern was to be ceded to Bulgaria. Based on this understanding but without having resolved the critical question of the "contested zone", Serbia and Bulgaria signed a secret Treaty of defensive Alliance on 13 March 1912.

Serbia was to obtain Old Serbia and a large part of Scutari province, the north-western region of the Rhodope mountains. Bulgaria was to incorporate the area stretching from her border to the Skadros mountains and Ohrid as well as the region lying east of the Struma river. This arrangement however, left in dispute the area between lake Ohrid, the Skadros mountains and Rhodope mountains. The signatory parties agreed that the final partition of this region would be decided in future negotiations between the two states. Failing to reach an agreement, the question was to be submitted to the Russian Tsar for arbitration, whose decision would be binding and mandatory for both parties.<sup>46</sup>

Concluding an agreement with Serbia was the first pole of Sofia's Balkan policy. The second was an understanding with Greece. Like the other Balkan capitals, Athens had followed developments in Libya with increasing concern. Facing an impending regional crisis, the Greek Premier Venizelos was determined to take action to advance Hellenic aspirations in European Turkey instead of remaining a passive spectator. In the first week following the commencement of the African war, Venizelos wrote to Rangabe, the Greek representative in Crete:

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known, cooperated with the Belgrade government and carried out underground activities in Old Serbia and Kosovo, its goal being to pave the way for a Serb attack in Macedonia. HELMREICH (1969, pp.41-4)

<sup>45</sup> I.A.Y.E./1911/File 34.1.1/Belgrade Legation/6/19-10-1911/no.603/Karantzias to Gryparis. DJORDJEVIC (1970, pp.362-3)

“It is impossible to foresee the developments of the present crisis and we have stated that in case that Balkan peace is to be disturbed, the government reserves its stance to act in accord with our interests.”<sup>47</sup>

Greece, nevertheless, could not embark on a forward policy in the southern Balkans by herself. To end diplomatic isolation, to exert pressure on the Porte to respect the rights of non-Moslem populations and secure Greece’s position against all eventualities,<sup>48</sup> the Greek government decided to approach Bulgaria with a proposal for common action in case of Turkish attack. On 16 October 1911, after having received instructions from the Greek F.O. the Greek minister in Sofia Panas communicated the Greek plan to Geshov. Its substance was that Greece was fully prepared to help Bulgaria in case she suffered a Turkish attack, providing Bulgaria committed herself to acting similarly should Greece be attacked by Turkey.

For two reasons the Greek offer was unacceptable to the Geshov Cabinet. Influenced by the Russian Embassy in Sofia, Geshov had already given precedence to working out an understanding with Serbia rather than Greece. In addition, Sofia suspected that any bid on its part to support Greece in the event of a Greco-Turkish armed conflict might encourage Athens to instigate serious disturbances in Crete thereby provoking Ottoman aggression. As an outcome, Bulgaria could be driven into a conflict with the Porte over Crete. On the other hand, the Geshov Cabinet had no plans to fully alienate the Greeks. For it feared that in such a contingency Greece might seek an understanding with ‘anti-Slav powers like Austria-Hungary, Romania and the Albanians’.<sup>49</sup>

In early February 1912, using Bouchier -the *Times* Near East correspondent and a highly-esteemed personality both in Athens and Sofia- as trustworthy mediator, Geshov secretly informed Venizelos that the Bulgarian administration would welcome any new Greek proposals for a Greco-Bulgarian convention. It took the Greek government two and a half months to elaborate its alliance proposals. Finally, on 27 April 1912, Panas presented a Greek alliance scheme to the Bulgarian leaders which provided: reciprocal obligation of the two parties to extend military support to

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<sup>46</sup> B.D. vol.9(2) p.1011, CRAMPTON (1983, p.407)

<sup>47</sup> Cited in VLACHOS (1954, p.263)

<sup>48</sup> I.A.Y.E./1911/File 21.8.1/Athens to Constantinople Legation/29/12-10-1911/no.25969/Gryparis to Alexandropoulos

<sup>49</sup> HELMREICH (1969, p.74). ROSSOS (1981, pp.49-50)



each other in case of Ottoman attack; constant Greco-Bulgarian collaboration for the protection of their co-nationals' rights in the Ottoman Empire; the Sofia Cabinet would undertake to observe an attitude of "benevolent neutrality" if war erupted between Greece and Turkey on account of the Cretan deputies being accepted in Greek National Assembly; the treaty of alliance was to remain valid for a period of three years and could be extended for an extra year.<sup>50</sup>

Greek proposals made no reference to the issue of Macedonian partition. According to Gardikas-Katsiadakis, contrary to his Financial Minister Koromilas's contention that Athens should seek a concrete demarcation of spheres of influence in Macedonia with a view to preventing Sofia claiming the whole of Macedonia, Venizelos had no intention of concluding any binding territorial agreement with the more powerful Bulgaria at this stage.

Greece being the weak side in the negotiations, he believed, Sofia would acquire the largest parts of the Macedonian vilayets of Salonica and Monastir irretrievably ruining Hellenic aspirations for expansion in these departments. The Greek Premier advocated that the principle of de facto occupation of Macedonian territory should be applied and a definite partition agreement be left for the future.<sup>51</sup>

The Bulgarian leadership hesitated to accept the Greek alliance project. The Geshov Cabinet considered the inclusion in the convention of an explicit provision concerning the implementation of articles 23 and 60 of Berlin Treaty in Macedonia and Thrace as an essential precondition for signing the treaty. Clearly, Bulgaria mounted pressure on Athens to accept Macedonian autonomy. This, however, the Venizelos Cabinet was unwilling to do. In the end, the Athens government, perturbed by the Italian occupation of Dodecanese during the second half of April 1912 and anxious not to be isolated from the Balkan Allies, decided to meet Sofia half-way.

Greece would not insist on the partitioning of Macedonia while Bulgaria was to abandon her claim for the establishment of Macedonian autonomy by means of articles 23 and 60. Sofia was asked to consent that any demands on the part of the two allied states for the introduction of administrative reforms in Turkey-in-Europe would neither amount to autonomy nor to be confined to Macedonia and before they were put forward to the Sublime Porte they should have been sanctioned by both

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<sup>50</sup> KARDIKAS-KATSIADAKIS (1995, pp.99-100)

parties. The Bulgarian government agreed to this suggestion and on 29 May 1912 Greece and Bulgaria signed the defensive Treaty of Alliance.<sup>52</sup>

Bulgaria's Balkan strategy had nevertheless an additional -third- aspect: an agreement with Montenegro. While the negotiations with the Serbs and the Greeks had been painfully difficult and long-lasting owing to the Macedonian imbroglio, the prospect of an entente with Montenegro involved much less contention for the small kingdom did not nurture aspirations on Macedonia. Cettigne though fostered ambitions for Scutari vilayet. Informed of the Serbo-Bulgarian Alliance Treaty and keen to join the Slav coalition the Montenegrin leadership was unlikely to raise obstacles to Sofia.

Preliminary talks between Sofia and Cettigne began in early June 1912 in Vienna, where both Balkan rulers were on official visits. In a short time, Danev and Rizov agreed with the Montenegrin Prime Minister Martinovic to jointly commence hostilities against Turkey at the most propitious moment. Further, Bulgaria pledged to financially support Cettigne's military operations.<sup>53</sup>

In the summer of 1912, Ottoman authority in Europe had reached the verge of collapse. The Turco-Italian conflict had drifted from northern Africa to the Aegean sea and on 23 July an Italian squadron tried to force the Straits. Frontier incidents between Ottoman and Montenegrin or Bulgarian troops became more and more frequent. Adding to the seriousness of the situation the Bulgarian-Macedonian revolutionary organizations had intensified their activities. On 1 August 1912, two bomb explosions devastated the center of the Kosovar village Kotchana killing 18 Bulgarians, 4 Moslems and 2 Jews. Outraged by the terrorist attack, a Moslem mob massacred 40 Bulgarians and wounded 120 while the local Ottoman authorities did nothing to restrain the malefactors.<sup>54</sup>

Yet, it was the Albanian-Macedonian revolt that dealt the decisive blow to Turkey's European authority. Unable to deal with the armed Albanian movement and faced with large-scale military mutinies in the Macedonian army, the Ottoman administration had succumbed to the rebels. On 18 August 1912, the new Ghazi Ahmet Muhtar Pasha Cabinet accepted their demand for the creation of an Albanian

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<sup>51</sup> KARDIKAS-KATSIADAKIS (1995, pp.98-9)

<sup>52</sup> ROSSOS (1981, pp.50-1)

<sup>53</sup> HELMREICH (1969, pp.86-7)

<sup>54</sup> F.O. 881/10280 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./17-4-1913/Lowther to Grey/Annual Report on Turkey for the Year 1912/enclosure no.1

autonomous province in the vilayets of Janina, Scutari and the Albanian-dominated sanjaks of Monastir and Kosovo.<sup>55</sup>

This project had the support of Austria-Hungary. Part of Aehrenthal's Balkan legacy, which the new Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister Count Leopold von Berchtold had fully espoused, was the prevention of Serbia obtaining access to the Aegean and the Adriatic seas or territory in Macedonia by supporting the establishment of a strong Albanian province and possibly allowing Bulgarian expansion to central Macedonia. An Albanian province, Austrian policy-makers felt, could develop on an outpost of Vienna's influence in the region.<sup>56</sup>

However, Vienna knew that the creation of a united Albanian province was anathema to Balkan national states, which, given Turkey's Balkan entanglements, were likely to disturb the status quo by attacking Turkey-in-Europe. To avert this looming danger, on 13 August 1912, Berchtold addressed a circular to the Powers inviting them to impress upon the Porte the need to extend "the principle of decentralization" not only to Albania but also to Macedonia and Thrace. The Austrian circular sought to discourage Balkan aggressiveness stressing that the Porte should be given time to carry out the necessary reforms in provincial administration.<sup>57</sup>

In the Christian Balkan capitals, Austrian declarations as well as the strong warnings of France and Russia against the disturbance of the regional status quo had little effect, not least after the disquieting turn of the Albanian question. War fever was running high in all Balkan countries. On 26 August 1912, the Bulgarian leadership gave the green light to Cettigne to begin hostilities with the Ottoman Empire at the most opportune time.

Throughout September, the Balkan states were negotiating fervently on the terms of the military conventions. Eventually, on 5 October 1912, Greece and Bulgaria signed a military convention. Next day, Serbia and Montenegro followed them. At the eleventh hour, while the Ottomans had already put their Thracian forces on a war footing and the Balkan Allies were issuing decrees of mobilization, the Powers attempted to avert the war. On 8 October 1912, Montenegro commenced hostilities with the Porte.

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<sup>55</sup> Refer to chapter 9.

<sup>56</sup> KONDIS (1984, pp.377-387)

On the same day, Russia and Austria-Hungary informed the Balkan capitals of the Great Powers' intention not to recognize any change in the status quo. On 10 October, the two Powers communicated a note to the Porte respecting the introduction of reforms in Turkey's European provinces based on article 23 of the Berlin Treaty.<sup>58</sup>

Yet, the Balkan powers were determined to take the war path. On 13 October 1912, they addressed the Sublime Porte demanding: "ethnic autonomy for all nationalities in the Ottoman Empire; Christian admission to civil administration in Christian-populated areas; equality between Christian and Moslem schools; an official guarantee that the Ottoman administration would not allow Moslem immigration in Christian districts; the Christian recruits to provide military service in their native provinces; reorganization of the Ottoman gendarmerie by Swiss or Belgian instructors; in Christian-inhabited areas the nomination of European valis who would be assisted by local counselors; the creation of a Supreme Council, under the Grand Vizier, with Christian and Moslem participation to supervise these reforms."<sup>59</sup>

The Ottoman administration dismissed the Balkan ultimatum. On 17 October 1912, the Ottoman government declared war on Serbia and Bulgaria. On the following day, the Athens Cabinet entered the war against the Porte. Two months later, Ottoman authority in Europe was confined to the area around Constantinople.

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<sup>57</sup> F.O. 881/10280 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./17-4-1913/Lowther to Grey/Annual Report on Turkey for the Year 1912/enclosure no.1, BRIDGE (1990, pp.315-6)

<sup>58</sup> B.D. vol.9(1) pp.734-5

<sup>59</sup> B.D. vol.9(2) p.18

## **CONCLUSION**

The Young Turk revolution was a catalyst for the Macedonian question. On 24 July 1908, the absolutism of the Hamidian regime had eventually come to its end. The prospect of the establishment of a liberal Constitutional and Parliamentary system which would respect all Ottoman ethnicities led to the dissolution of the Christian Macedonian bands and the pacification of the most troublesome region in the Balkans. With the victory of the Young Turk Macedonian forces the key concept of national-political egalitarianism and inter-ethnic unity (Osmanlilik) seemed to return to the forefront of Ottoman political life.

Within this atmosphere of general rejoicing and optimism, the Young Turks declared the continuation of the European condominium in Macedonia unnecessary. The Young Turks believed that they were fully capable of reforming the country from within, the driving force in this campaign for internal rejuvenation being "Ottoman subjects" rather than the Great Powers. Acknowledging the failure of the Macedonian reform project -save the gendarmerie- and anxious to avoid straining the relations between themselves on account of their conflicting Macedonian policies and interests, the Powers raised no objection to leaving the Ottomans to put their house in order. The crucial question now was whether the Young Turks possessed the resolve and ability to fulfil their principal political commitments: the termination of foreign interference in Ottoman affairs, the protection of the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire, the promotion of inter-ethnic unity and the institutional reform of the country.

By April 1909, when the abortive counterrevolution movement broke out in the capital against the C.U.P., it had become apparent that the Unionists were incapable of coping with this herculean undertaking. The Committee's attitude on the important issues (Ottoman education, non-Moslem conscription, proportionate representation of all nationalities in peripheral administration and central government, the agrarian question and the labour movement) indicated that it lacked the vision to introduce radical institutional reforms into the Ottoman socio-political edifice. Furthermore, the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the declaration of Bulgarian independence were severe blows to the Unionist bid to defend Ottoman territorial integrity and sovereign rights.

During an internal debate about provincial decentralization, the two major Young Turk currents, the liberals and the centralists, collided. The liberal tendency stood for

administrative devolution, guarantee of the minority groups' privileges and salvation of the ailing Empire by promoting inter-ethnic unity. The centralists suspected that the application of administrative devolution in the Ottoman provinces, in particular those dominated by non-Moslem populations, would encourage non-Moslem separatism and dissident nationalism thereby instigating the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. For the centralists, the formation of a strong, efficient and westernized administrative system seemed the best way to improve local government, restrain centrifugal forces and forge Ottoman unity. Local questions could be raised by provincial deputies and be dealt with in the Parliament.

In the First Annual Young Turk Congress, the centralist current -expressed by C.U.P. leaders like Talat Bey, Enver Bey, Rahmi Bey, Ahmet Riza Bey- gained the upper hand forcing leading liberal figures like Prince Sabaheddin or Ismail Kemal Bey to remain in the background. Liberal opposition however was not eclipsed from the Parliament or from segments of Ottoman society.

A strong Parliamentary majority was also a key precondition for controlling Ottoman affairs. Although it is true that often many deputies who had been elected under the Unionist banner did not hesitate to distance themselves from C.U.P. directives, the pro-Unionist parliamentary group remained the most influential in the Chamber. That the Unionist influence on the Chamber was strong became visible during the vote of no confidence against the Kiamil Pasha government. Following the introduction of a Constitutional regime, the Committee was the most influential organisation in the Ottoman Empire but its power was neither unlimited nor indisputable. Apart from the liberal opposition, policy-making centers such as the Palace and the Sublime Porte still enjoyed considerable influence over the army, the civil administration and the country as a whole.

Lacking administrative ability and experienced leadership, the Unionists allowed the Porte officials to form a Cabinet and run the country. Nominally, the C.U.P. was a non-political, non-governmental, body committed to protecting the Constitution. In reality, having established itself in the Chamber of Deputies and maintaining strong connections with the three European armies, the C.U.P. controlled the Empire behind the scenes. Prominent Porte officials such as Kiamil Pasha and later Ibrahim Hakki Pasha resented the Unionist tendency to interfere in the executive and sought, albeit

unsuccessfully, to end it. Hence, this system of “dual leadership” entangled Ottoman politics in the period under review.

The Unionist factor had been closely linked with the Macedonian question. It was during the reform period that the Young Turks had managed to establish themselves in the Macedonian provinces of Salonica, Monastir and Kosovo and obtain experience and knowledge of local matters. It is certain that even after the revolution the bases of Unionist power continued to lie in Macedonia.

For their part, exploiting the European presence in Macedonia and the diminution of local Ottoman authority, the Balkan states had struggled to promote their Macedonian aspirations by means of religious, cultural and paramilitary propaganda. Recently, Albanian nationalists had also embraced this practice but it was their privileged position in the Ottoman civil administration and security forces that gave a boost to their struggle. To all those Balkan nationalists, the Young Turk declaration that the revolution had settled the Macedonian question seemed unfounded.

Bulgaria was truly convinced that the only viable solution to the Macedonian question was the establishment of an autonomous status in the three provinces. Furthermore, the Bulgarian political establishment viewed the prospect of Ottoman revival with alarm. A strong and reformed Turkey would not only repel Bulgarian expansionism but it could also develop into a constant threat to Bulgarian independence. Obtaining full political independence seemed the most appropriate way to cement the country's position vis-a-vis Young Turkey.

Had it not been for the Unionist insistence on working out an understanding with Vienna on Bosnia first and the accentuation of political rivalry between the Kiamil Cabinet and the C.U.P., the “Bulgarian question” might have been settled much sooner than it was. During the Turco-Bulgarian dispute, the Bulgarian government thought it advisable to avoid injuring Turkey's Macedonian susceptibilities, opting for a policy of reconciliation with the Porte. The specter of Sofia's Balkan isolation, which had emerged during the Serbo-Ottoman negotiations, and the threat of Austria moving into Macedonia seem to be the factors that influenced the Bulgarian leadership to espouse this policy.

Not that the Bulgarian government had abandoned its Macedonian struggle. This was left to the Bulgarian-Macedonian revolutionary organizations and the Exarchate to carry out. The incompatibility between the M.R.O. dogma of Macedonian



autonomy and the centralist tendencies of the C.U.P. forced the Bulgarian element to rely on the formation of Constitutional associations for the promotion of its political program. However, so long as the political elite in Constantinople considered these societies instruments of Bulgarian nationalism, the Bulgarian-Macedonian efforts were bound to fail.

The Unionists always had closer ties with Sandanski's independent M.R.O.-Left. In fact, Sandanski had actively supported the Young Turk movement and shortly after the revolution he went as far as to renounce the dogma of Macedonian autonomy. Soon, nevertheless, the conservative and pro-bourgeois C.U.P. policies frustrated the M.R.O.-Left. Its leaders inclined to see the Macedonian question from a socialist rather than a nationalist point of view. To them, its emergence had been the product of the chauvinist and capitalist policies of the Ottoman Empire and the Balkan states. Its resolution was to derive only from the eventual reconciliation and social struggle of the lower Macedonian strata, regardless of religious or national attractions. As far as the Bulgarian Exarchate was concerned, its attempts to acquire an equal status with the Greek Patriarchate failed, primarily on account of Ottoman reluctance to allow the growth of the Exarchist influence in Macedonia.

In Greece, expectations that the numerous and prosperous Ottoman Greek communities could develop into the driving force in the Ottoman Empire under a free Constitutional regime, utilising their economic strength and cultural superiority, soon ran high. True, the Greek Cabinet desired to cooperate with the new rulers of Turkey. In its attempt, however, to bring about the final settlement of the thorny Cretan question and promote a junction between the Ottoman and Greek Macedonian railways, the Athens Cabinet relegated the Macedonian question to the background. Unfortunately for Hellenic nationalist aspirations, this strategy damaged Greece's position in Macedonia. Socio-political developments in the region and divisions within the Greek-Macedonian leadership impeded Athens's efforts to regain momentum in Macedonia.

The fundamental conflict of political and regional interests between Greece and Young Turkey was revealed when the Near East crisis broke out. Greek military support was indispensable to Ottoman defence in Macedonia but even this strategic necessity did not suffice to bring the two neighbours closer. The Greco-Ottoman rapprochement did not materialize. This was primarily the result of the Ottoman -and

indeed the Unionist- tendency to view cooperation with the kingdom of Greece in the narrow context of repelling south Slav expansionism and preserving the Balkan power equilibrium. Real convergence of political interests was lacking.

This was also the case with the Greek Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Young Turks. The Unionist declarations for equality among all ethnic groups in the Ottoman Empire seemed to lay the groundwork for the eventual demise of the millet system. Had this been fulfilled, the Ecumenical Patriarchate would have lost its privileged position in Ottoman Orthodox spiritual and communal affairs. Hence, the Patriarchate distrusted and opposed the C.U.P. regime.

Progressively, the Greek leaders grew more suspicious of the anti-Christian Unionist attitude. Official Ottoman attacks against the bases of Greek influence in Macedonia -the Metropolitan Patriarchist sees and the Greek consular institutions- and the partial resumption of Greek-Macedonian revolutionary activity suggested the return of the Macedonian question to its original context of inter-ethnic strife. Altogether, by the spring of 1909, Greece's faith in the political merit and potential of the C.U.P. had broken down.

True, the Young Turk revolution had prevented Ottoman Macedonian authority from collapsing under the combined pressure of Christian revolutionary propaganda and the increasing European-imposed reforms. For the Serb kingdom, this development was not unwelcome on the grounds that it did not run contrary to its Macedonian strategy: the prevention of Macedonia becoming autonomous or being partitioned between the Balkan states at a moment that Serbia was unprepared for such a development.

During the Near East crisis, the Austro-Hungarian syndrome left Serbia little room for political manouevring in Macedonia. Under these conditions, the short-term targets of Serbia's Macedonian policy was to obtain preferential treatment from the Porte for Serb commercial and cultural institutions in Macedonia as well as a concession for the reinstitution of the medieval Serb Patriarchate of Ipek. The long-term objective of Serbia however, remained territorial aggrandizement in the vilayets of Kosovo and Monastir.

Following the April 1909 counterrevolution, the engagement of the Ottoman armed forces in politics rendered the Young Turk regime more military and nationalist. The Committee, although it saw a serious threat to its own political predominance in the

politicization of the army, for reasons of sheer political expediency, did not hesitate to uphold the military regime. A more military and less liberal regime served the new Unionist practice of neutralising the dangerous liberal opposition and restricting the constitutionally established political and cultural rights of the non-Moslem ethnic groups ('Ottomanization'). Unionist leaders believed that this policy would solidify the Committee's position in domestic politics, contribute to the establishment of an effective and centralist system and discourage the secessionist tendencies of the non-Moslem Ottoman nationalities. The Third Annual Young Turk Congress' resolutions subscribed to the further elaboration of this political strategy. Thus, the introduction of the Turkish language in all Ottoman educational institutions and the politicization of Islam featured right next to the C.U.P. bids for suppression of Ottoman liberalism and reaffirmation of the non-Moslems' reaya status. Apparently, in the Unionists' point of view, to survive politically and develop materially, Young Turkey should rely on her Turkish cultural heritage and Moslem religious identity.

The effect of the new Young Turk policy on Macedonia was by no means negligible. Ottoman discrimination, intimidation and oppression against local Christians coupled by Moslem immigration to Macedonia and the instigation of anti-Christian Moslem political terrorism provoked irreparable damage to Christian-Ottoman relations. All in all, Unionist 'Ottomanization', both as ideological concept and political practice, was ill-conceived, out-of-date and impracticable and, therefore, bound to fail. As Karpát put it: "it was a belated attempt after more than 400 years of tolerance towards the Balkan nationalities to denationalise the Balkan peoples, who had by 1908 consolidated in terms of economy, culture, religion and military enough to withstand such an onslaught."<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, the 'Ottomanization' policy undermined the previous C.U.P.-Albanian collaboration. Unionist centralization was in conflict with the Albanian commitment to autonomy. In the Diber Congress it became evident that the Committee's Albanian strategy was to retain the Albanian provinces within Turkey-in-Europe and use the Albanian manpower to counteract Slav and Greek expansionism. Instead of opting for a policy of understanding with the Albanians by granting them reasonable

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<sup>1</sup> KARPAT (1975, p.293)

concessions on the issues of language, education, taxation and conscription the Unionist regime attempted to fully militarise the Albanian question.

In doing so, Young Turkey failed to take into account the very essence of the Albanian question: Albanian nationalism. Turkish warfare and repression convinced even the Moslem Albanians, who were far less nationalist than their Christian compatriots, that salvation lay in the unification of the Albanian tribes and incessant struggle against the Ottoman regime. Although it is still debatable whether all segments of the Albanian people had come to terms with the nationalist concept, the Albanian revolts of 1911-1912 almost succeeded in creating an autonomous Albanian province.

As the Unionist regime grew more military and nationalist in the period 1909-1912, the Balkan national states' Macedonian policies underwent very important changes. For decades, Macedonia had been the major impediment to an inter-Balkan entente. Nonetheless, continuous Ottoman encroachments against the Christians' political and spiritual rights, the apprehension of an Austrian advance southwards and the active Russian diplomatic support to a Balkan Alliance necessitated the termination of the Serbo-Bulgarian conflict over Macedonia and encouraged the rapprochement between the two south Slav countries.

In 1910, Constantinople's tendency to align itself with Bucharest in order to contain south Slav irredentism prompted the political leaders in Sofia and Belgrade and their Russian patrons to acknowledge Greece's strategic value for the effectiveness of the Balkan League and pursue her participation in it. During the same year, the revision and redefinition of the Christians' Macedonian policies were in part reflected in the ceasing of their inter-racial confrontation and in part in their inclination to collaborate against Unionist autocracy. Underlining these key developments in the changing shape of the Macedonian question, Lowther remarked in his report for Turkey for the year 1910: "The Young Turk regime threatens to unite against itself all the elements that nothing else would bring together."<sup>2</sup>

The process of inter-Balkan understanding accelerated in the period 1911-1912, as consecutive Albanian revolts and the commencement of the Turco-Italian African war weakened Turkey's European authority and undermined her international position.

At this juncture, unable to reach an agreement on the delimitation of their Macedonian 'spheres of influence', Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece decided that, for the moment, the dismemberment of Turkey-in-Europe should take precedence over the final division of the Macedonian spoils, which could be postponed until the victory of the Balkan coalition. However, this disposition sowed the seeds of future dissension between the Allies and basically became the factor responsible for the eventual dismantling of the Balkan Alliance system. True, Balkan military might was to bring about the collapse of European Turkey but due to the Allies' conflicting Macedonian interests and claims it was unlikely to contribute to the settlement of the Macedonian question.

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<sup>2</sup> F.O. 881/9811 Constantinople Embassy to F.O./14-2-1911/Lowther to Grey/Annual Report on Turkey for the Year 1910/enclosure no. 1

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**Greece**

General States Archives (G.S.A.), Athens. Tsontos-Vardas Archive 1906-1910.  
Files 3-4

Historical Archive of the Greek Foreign Ministry (I.A.Y.E.), Athens.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to point out here that during my research in the I.A.Y.E. I found a number of Ottoman documents, translated into Greek, containing the correspondence between the Ottoman Macedonian authorities and the central administration in Constantinople. Unfortunately, these documents, which if properly classified could facilitate the researcher to trace pieces of information respecting the Ottoman policy in Macedonia, remain dispersed and unclassified. They are to be found as enclosures in the reports of the Greek Macedonian Consulates, particularly the General Consulate of Salonica.

Legations: Constantinople, London, Berlin, Vienna, Rome, St. Petersburg, Belgrade, Sofia, Bucharest, Cettigne

General Consulates: Salonica, Janina, Alexandria, Budapest

Consulates: Uskub, Monastir, Kavala, Serres, Skodra, Avlona, Argirokastro, Duress, Berat, Preveza, Ellassona, Dedeagach, Adrianople, Mytilene, Smyrna

Files 1908-1912

1908

20.1, 20.2, 20.3, 20.4, 20.5, 20.6, 21.1, 21.2, 21.3, 21.4, 21.5, 21.6, 38.1, 39.1, 39.2, 39.3, 39.4, 39.5, 40.1, 41.2, 71.1, 71.2, 84.3, 85.2, 85.3, 85.4, 87.1, 88.1.1, 88.1.2, 88.1.3, 90.1, 90.3, 91.1.1., 91.1.2, 91.2, 92.2, 94.3, 97.3.1, 97.3.2, 99.1.1, 99.1.2, 99.1.3, 106.2, 115.4, 115.6, 115.7, 118.1, 118.2, 121.1, 121.2, 121.3, 122.2, 122.3

1909

Δ/4.1, Δ/4.2, Δ/4.2.1, Δ/4.2.2, Δ/4.2.3, Δ/4.3, Δ/4.4, Δ/5, Consulates/P.O. Activity, Consulates 2, Consulates 3, Consulates 5, AAK- A, AAK, A-5, AAK/P.O., AAK-5

1910

Γ 2.3, A.3, AAK-A, AAK-IΘ, AAK-IH

1911

21.1, 21.8.1, 21.8.2, 34.1.1

1912

A/4, A/5, A/18

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Εκκλησιαστικη Αληθεια.

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<sup>2</sup> All newspapers used in this study are extracts of archival material or published documents.