

PRO MACEDONIA

THE MACEDONIAN SLAVS
Their National Character and
Struggles

CENTRAL COMMITTEE
of the Union of the Macedonian Political Organizations
of the United States of America and Canada

Indianapolis, Indiana

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It is not the purpose of this pamphlet to give a complete review of the general political, economic and social crisis that has harassed the Balkan Peninsula for decades. The Central Committee has no intention of exhausting for the reader the complications of the Macedonian liberal movement and particularly of the Macedonian question, in a few pages. A series of pamphlets will follow this first one as the publications of the Union of the Macedonian Political Organizations in the United States and Canada. They will give a clear conception of the real situation in the most unhappy and most heroic country of South Eastern Europe—Macedonia. In spite of repeated epic struggles for freedom and independence and in spite of the numberless victims offered for its ideals this country is still under subjection today. This first issue of the series "Pro Macedonia" will present a few facts which will show the national character of the Macedonian Slavs who are subjected by the governments of Serbia and Greece to a more severe regime of denationalization than any of the other nationalities of Macedonia. These governments deny the existence of the Bulgarian element in our native land. They take a stand which contradicts science, history and humanity.

Being unable to enumerate in a small brochure such as this, the abundant proofs which combat the theories

of the oppressors of Macedonia, we would endeavor to comment on a few of them and then leave to the reader the burden of judging for himself the weight of the absurdity and inconsistency of the Greek and the Serbian assertions that there are no Bulgarians living in Macedonia.

Until 1912 during the Turkish rule the Bulgarians in Macedonia had 13 gymnasias with 148 professors and 2191 students; 87 progymnasias with 238 teachers and 4309 pupils; 1273 grade schools with 1880 teachers and 72,354 pupils—a total of 1373 schools, 2266 men and women teachers and 78,854 scholars. They had 1331 churches, 294 chapels, 273 monasteries with 7 bishoprics, newspapers, magazines, libraries, etc. All these institutions, which were the foundation of high culture, the expression of an active national consciousness, and the fruit of moral and material sacrifice of the native population are today brutally destroyed.

But the enforced injustice did not destroy the determination of the people to live in a free fatherland and to be the element of progress and brotherly understanding among all the Balkan people. The Bulgarians of Macedonia insist on the recognition of their elementary human and national rights which are provided for even in the peace treaties. All sons of Macedonia, irrespective of faith and nationality, in their great majority struggle also for the independence of their fatherland. Macedonia now divided among Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria, should be constituted into an independent state unity, for the sake of justice and the peaceful development of her people.

Macedonia is located in the heart of the Balkan Peninsula, bounded on the East by the river Mesta, the

Rodope and Rila mountains; on the North by the Shar mountain; the Drin river and lake Ochrid on the West; the river Bristritza and the Aegean sea on the South, covering some forty-one thousand square miles and inhabited by about two million three hundred and fifty thousand people.

We firmly believe that only a free and independent Macedonia could serve as the best guarantee for the realization of a Balkan federation i. e., for the complete pacification of the Balkan Peninsula and for the elimination of that injurious foreign influence which has selfishly encouraged hatred among the Balkan people, driving them into wars and mutual destruction.

(1) The Bulgarian renaissance in the beginning of the 19th century started in Macedonia. The first Bulgarian books in modern language were written and published by Bulgarians of Macedonia. The struggles for the deliverance of the Bulgarians from the Greek Patriarchate and for the obtaining of a national clergy developed first in Macedonia.

(2) Before the Russo-Turkish War in 1877, i. e., before the establishment of the present Bulgarian Kingdom, the Bulgarians of Macedonia had Bulgarian Bishops in the three Dioceses of Veles, Skopie, and Ochrid.

The Veles Diocese obtained a Bulgarian Bishop by virtue of the **FIRMAN***, which granted the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate. Ochrid and Skopie secured Bulgarian Bishops by referendum, which was a proof that Bulgarians formed more than two-thirds of the Orthodox Christian population in these Dioceses.

(3) During the sessions of the Berlin Congress in 1878 the Macedonian Bulgars from different cities of the Country petitioned the Great Powers to be includ-

*Imperial order signed by the Sultan.

ed within the boundaries of the proposed Bulgarian principality.

Soon after this Congress the Bulgarians in Macedonia revolted against Turkey for the purpose of uniting with Bulgaria. This is shown by many reports published in the English Blue Book.

In 1880 a European Commission assembled at Constantinople to discuss ways and means for the practical application of Article 23[†] of the Berlin Treaty in regard to the European Vिलाets[‡] of Turkey. The English delegate, Lord Fitzmorris, states in the Blue Book that he received from all cities of Macedonia petitions signed by the leaders of the local population, urging him to intercede before the Commission for the Bulgarian National Church and for the rights of the Bulgarian nationality. In this Commission England made a proposition for the establishment of an Autonomous Macedonia, but to this Austria objected, as she wished to keep the Vardar Valley under her own influence. In a letter addressed to the Minister of Foreign affairs in Vienna, the Austrian Delegate says that if an Autonomy were to be granted to Macedonia, the latter would at once take a Bulgarian aspect. This letter is in the Archives of Vienna and anyone could check the contents of it. During the Conference the Austrian Delegate asked the Greek Plenipotentiary Minister in Constantinople what administrative divisions should be given Macedonia so that the Bulgarian population should be in the minority in these divisions. This question the Greek Plenipotentiary Minister an-

[†]By which was granted to Macedonia an administrative autonomy—never allowed by the Turkish government.

[‡]County.

swered by a confidential memoir which is also found in the Archives of Vienna. This memoir contains statistics admitting openly that no matter what administrative division were given Macedonia the Bulgars would be in the majority. The Greek Diplomat further declared that with the exception of two small Kaazas,§ the Greeks had nowhere a compact population in Macedonia.

(4) The Serbian Propaganda appeared in Macedonia shortly before 1889. Some Serbian teachers came to Macedonia earlier, but they soon left the country or became Bulgarized. Among those who were so Bulgarized under the influence of the local population was the teacher Miletich, whose son is a Professor in the University of Sofia today.

Up to the time of the Berlin Congress only one Serbian, by the name of Milojevich, had asserted that in Macedonia there were Serbians, but his statement was ridiculed and reproached by his own countrymen. In his memoirs published in 1889 by the Serbian review "Srpstvo," he confesses in the following terms: "I was within a hair's breadth of being exiled or shut up in an asylum of lunatics."

(5) Up to the time of the Berlin Congress the Serbians actually admitted, without exception, that Macedonia was populated by Bulgarians in the majority. In their text books on History and Geography, in their ethnographic maps, in the correspondence and writings of their savants, Macedonia figured as Bulgarian country.

The Serbian scholar, Verkovitch, collected a number

§District.

of national songs in Macedonia and published them in Belgrade under the title "National Songs of the Macedonian Bulgars." This collection he made under the instruction of the Serbian Academy of Science and his book was published at the expense of the Serbian state.

While the Bulgarians were carrying on in Macedonia their struggle for a National Church, the Serbian press gladly recorded their endeavors, encouraged them and was jubilant over the Bulgarian success.

Austria instigated Serbia to turn her eyes towards Macedonia shortly after the Berlin Treaty. Her secret intention was to turn away Serbian attention from Bosna and Hertzegovina. Particulars about the Serbo-Austrian understanding on this occasion are found in the book of Myatovitch: "Memoirs of a Balkan Diplomatist."

(6) The unsettled internal situation of Serbia, following immediately the Berlin Congress, did not allow her to proceed with her new projects in Macedonia. The Ex-Prime Minister of Serbia, Milovanovitch, writes in the magazine "Delo" (XVII, p. 300) the following significant confession: "Up to 1889 Serbia had never thought of Macedonia." After 1889 Serbia started to send agitators and teachers to Macedonia. Simultaneously the Serbians began a literary propaganda in Europe and America to prove that the Macedonian Slavs were Serbs. Their chief arguments were as follows: (a) That when the Turks conquered Macedonia they took her from Serbians who were her possessors; (b) That the language of the Macedonian Slavs was Serbian; (c) That the Slavs in Macedonia called themselves Bulgars, but that they adopted this name to protect themselves from Turkish persecutions, because

after the uprising of Karageorgevich in 1813, the Turks wanted and endeavored to exterminate the Serbian race as a fighting and dangerous one; (d) That the Bulgarian Exarchate and Propaganda in Macedonia induced the Slav population to form their different organizations and so gave the impression that the Macedonian Slavs were Bulgars.

These arguments we would answer as follows: (a) Unquestionably the Turks took Macedonia from Serbia, which had had control over that country for several years previously, but this fact is of no avail to the Serbian thesis. Macedonia has been controlled at different times for short periods by several nations, but the undisputed fact is that she was the genesis of the Bulgarian National State and that for centuries the See of the Bulgarian Patriarchate was there. If the Serbian thesis of Historical possession is accepted, then the city of Milano today should be in the hands of the Austrians and Warsaw in the hands of the Russians; (b) So far as the language of the Macedonian Slav is concerned, all foreign linguists of Slavic Philology, without exception, agree that the language of the Macedonian Slavs is Bulgarian. The Serbians could not quote the opinion of a single foreign authority in their support; (c) The thesis that the Macedonian Serbs called themselves Bulgars for the purpose of saving themselves from Turkish persecution is not a serious one. If this thesis is true, then why did the Macedonian Slavs call themselves Bulgars in Monastir, Ochrid and Skopie, where the danger of persecution was far less and why did the Slavs in Prizren and Prishtina, where the Turkish regime was most fearful and the danger greatest con-

tinue to call themselves Serbs? The fourth argument is also untenable. Bulgarian Exarchate did not create Bulgars in Macedonia, but the Macedonian Bulgars together with their co-nationals from other parts created the Bulgarian Exarchate. In Constantinople in 1871 a Bulgarian National Congress gathered to work out the Constitution of the proposed Bulgarian Exarchate which was established the same year by a FIRMAN of the Turkish Sultan. The Official gazette of the Serbian Government, "Yedinstvo," published on its first page a list of the Bulgarian delegates from all Dioceses in Macedonia with expressions of sympathy for the Bulgarian cause. By the time the Bulgarian State was established in 1878, Macedonia was already covered with Bulgarian schools and churches. The Bulgarian character of Macedonia was so evident that about two years before the liberation of Bulgaria, the representatives of the Great Powers at the International Conference called during 1786 in Constantinople, decided that Macedonia should become an Autonomous province under the name of Western Bulgaria. There is an English Blue Book published about this Conference, and no suggestion in this book indicates that the Serbians protested giving Macedonia to Bulgaria. This Conference also placed the boundaries of Bulgaria after the opinion of experts, one of whom was Mr. Eugene Schuyler, the American traveller and diplomat.

(7) After 1889 the Serbs began to send to Macedonia teachers and agitators supplied with large amounts of money for propaganda but with no success. Despite the intrusions of Serbia in Macedonia, the local Bulgarian population started to work for political liberation. In 1893 the leaders of the Bulgarian In-

tellegentzia in Macedonia established a Revolutionary Committee which later was known under the name "The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization." In 1895 the first uprising of the Bulgars in Macedonia took place; in 1902—the second, and during 1903 the third, which was the largest and embraced the whole province. According to information of the European Consuls in Macedonia about 30,000 Macedonians took up arms in the last uprising. The demands of the insurgents were two: Autonomy of Macedonia and European Control. France, England and Italy after the revolution of 1903, published their respective diplomatic correspondences. In these communications it was explicitly stated that the Revolution was an act chiefly of the Bulgars in Macedonia.

It is significant that the center of the great revolution in 1903 was Western Macedonia, the Monastir Vialaet. This fact is the best proof that the movement was an act of the local population and not of official Bulgaria.

(8) After the young Turkish Revolution in 1908, the Macedonian insurgents put down their arms and desired to co-operate in the new regime. The short sighted nationalism and intolerance of the Young Turks soon brought about a general disappointment. However, in 1909 the Revolutionary Organization started its activity again and increased it gradually. A short time after this the Balkan States concluded the well-known Alliance against Turkey. This Alliance was based upon the principle of division of Macedonia. The Revolutionary Organization which was, as it is today, the only rightful representative of the people of Macedonia, opposed the principle of the Division of

Macedonia with all its strength but without avail. War was declared in 1912 and it was the duty of every one to fight for its success. The Macedonian insurgents formed 15 battalions of volunteers and all of them fought under Bulgarian banners. The Serbian Army had volunteers from Old Serbia, but not from Macedonia.

(9) As a result of the military operations the greater part of Macedonia was occupied by Greeks and Serbs, who commenced to take measures of denationalization of the Macedonian Bulgars. Details about these attempts at denationalization are found in the report of the Carnegie Commission.

(10) According to the Serb-Bulgarian Treaty of 1912 Macedonia was divided into two zones; one of them was recognized by Serbians as implicitly Bulgarian, and the Russian Czar was to decide whether the other should belong to Bulgaria or to Serbia. Nevertheless in January, 1913, Greece and Serbia signed a secret Protocol by which they divided Macedonia between themselves upon the basis of their respective military occupation. Then in June, 1913, came the war among the Balkan Allies and the Bucharest Treaty followed. By this Treaty Macedonia was divided into three parts against the wishes of her population and subjected to a terrible despotism. The Macedonians consider the Turkish regime as ideal when they compare it to the Serbian and Greek, for under the Turks there was at least liberty for native schools and churches. But the Neuilly Treaty confirmed the subjugation of Macedonia.

(11) From the above statement it is evident that from 1912 to this day the fate of Macedonia has been

determined not by the will of her people but by the result of military operations in the Balkan Peninsula. To some conquered people was given the right of plebiscite to determine the disputed territories, as was the case with Silesia, Carinthia, etc. The Macedonian people alone were not allowed to express their wish. The Macedonians and their land were treated in the Peace Conference as Spoils of War. Only a few members of the American Peace Delegation tried to help Macedonia in gaining her liberty, for the experts of the American Delegation knew that the great majority of the population was neither Serbian nor Greek and that this country had led epic struggles for her independence. The noble American endeavour remained without success. The last hope of the Macedonians for a peaceful and just solution of the Macedonian question, their hope in Wilson and his fourteen points, vanished.

(12) The Macedonian people rejected the Neuilly Treaty as they had rejected the Bucharest Treaty in 1913. After struggling for thirty years with arms against Turkish tyranny, the Macedonians could not voluntarily submit to the new tyranny imposed upon them by the Peace Treaties. The old Revolutionary Organization was revived and started its action with a hearty support from all Macedonia. The Macedonians residing in foreign countries as the United States, Canada, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Austria, Turkey, etc., organized themselves into legal political organizations and by speech and pen are endeavoring to help their native cause for liberty.

(13) In order to camouflage the significance of the struggle the Serbians and Greeks represent it as a move-

ment instigated and supported by the Bulgarian Government. We proposed long ago that a Commission of Americans accompanied by a member of our Central Committee and one Serbian representative should go to Macedonia and determine on the very spot what the population was and what it wanted. Even without going to Macedonia any American may find correct information among the Macedonians in the United States of America and Canada regarding the Macedonian movement. These Macedonians are from different parts of Macedonia. They have left their country, but they have their families there and are still imbued with the free spirit of the Macedonian people. Protected by American Liberty and free from the exercise of compulsory influence on their consciousness they have expressed their national aspirations in a great Political Organization incorporated in the State of Indiana. Ask them what nationality Macedonians are and what kind of regime they want in Macedonia.

(14) The Macedonian Slavs in America have their schools and churches in which they use their native Bulgarian language. Their newspaper is written in Bulgarian, their correspondence is conducted in Bulgarian. When the Macedonian Slav is in America he calls himself Bulgar, attends the Bulgarian Churches, reads Bulgarian books and manifests himself as a Bulgar in every respect. And when he returns to Serbia or to Greece he is punished with prison or exile if he tries to call himself Bulgar.

(15) What do we Macedonians want? Our ultimate ideal is: Independent and united Macedonia. With a self-governing Macedonia the whole Balkan problem can be solved and the Balkan Federation created. For

this ideal we will fight to the end. The Revolutionary Organization in Macedonia, however, has repeatedly declared that it was ready to give up arms as soon as Jugo-Slavia and Greece established conditions allowing a legal national struggle. The great leader of the Revolutionary Organization, Theodore Alexandroff, himself declared that the Macedonians would stop their revolutionary action if the Jugo-Slavia Government allowed all nations in Macedonia to have the right to organize into political parties of their own.

(16) Any foreigner reading this declaration will say: "But these rights are guaranteed by the Treaties of Peace and the clauses for protection of minorities." Such presumption is absolutely right, but Serbia and Greece refuse to apply the Treaty stipulations regarding the Bulgarian "minority" in Macedonia, which in reality is the majority of the Macedonian population. Their thesis is that there are no Bulgars in Macedonia.

(17) On the day when the Governments of Serbia and Greece allow the Bulgarians and the other nationalities in Macedonia to exercise the rights of minorities, the revolutionary struggle will cease and the Balkans will be pacified. Those who yearn for justice and for permanent peace in the Near East should work for the early arrival of this blessed day.

CONCLUSION: The above cited facts show:

1. That the Macedonian Slavs are Bulgars.
2. That the Macedonian Bulgars have fought for their independence, which is the ideal of all other Macedonians.
3. That all political combinations concerning Macedonia have taken place without the consent of the Macedonian people.

4. That the Macedonian question is a result of unjust and unwise Treaties of Peace, and;

5. That the Macedonian Revolutionary movement in Macedonia will cease at the moment when Greece and Serbia apply the minority clauses.

We refrain from long discussions but we give the numerous facts. The veracity of these facts stands beyond any doubt. If any one can prove that even one of them is untrue, we will admit publicly that the Macedonian cause has failed.

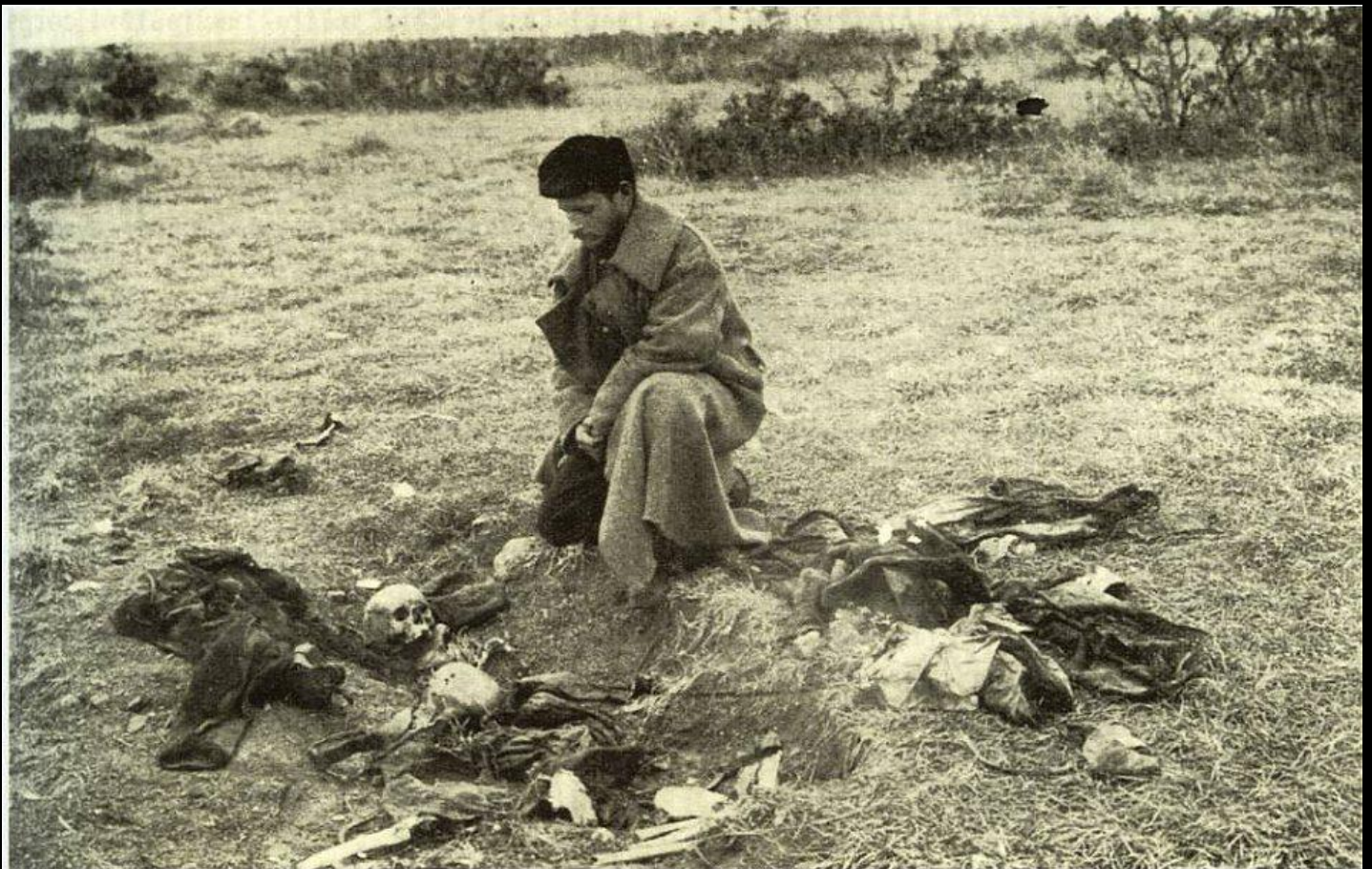
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Voivode Dimiter Madjarov before the remains of two comrades in arms killed in the battle of Ferres