



THE MACEDONIANS OF AEGEAN MACEDONIA: A BRITISH OFFICER'S REPORT, 1944. ANDREW ROSSOS

The numerous national problems in Eastern Europe, which were left unresolved by the peace settlements ending the First World War and which contributed so much to the instability in the area during the inter-war years, have attracted the attention of scholars in the West. They have been treated in regional surveys, in national histories and, in a few cases, in full-scale monographic studies.

Some of these problems have been investigated more thoroughly and are better appreciated than others. However, none has been more neglected and more misunderstood in the West than the Macedonian national question in all three parts of divided Macedonia: Vardar Macedonia in Yugoslavia, Pirin Macedonia in Bulgaria, and above all Aegean Macedonia in Greece. Indeed, the Macedonians in Greece are hardly ever mentioned in scholarly literature. They have been virtually forgotten as a people and as a national minority.

I

The Balkan Wars (1912-13) and particularly the Inter-allied or Second Balkan War marked the high point in the long struggle for Macedonia on the part of the neighbouring kingdoms - Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia - and a turning point in the history of Macedonia and the Macedonians. As a result of that war the territorial integrity of Macedonia, which comprised a natural economic and, in the main, an ethno-cultural unity, was violated for the first time since the era of

the warring dynastic states in the medieval Balkans. Macedonia was partitioned by force of arms in a war between the claimants to it; Bulgaria, on the one hand, and allied Greece and Serbia, on the other. This partition was sanctioned by the Peace Treaty of Bucharest of 10 August 1913, and confirmed, with some minor modifications at the expense of Bulgaria, by the peace treaties ending the First World War. [1]

Greece acquired the largest Macedonian territory, Aegean Macedonia. Even though this territory acquisition did not necessarily satisfy its maximal pretensions in Macedonia, official Athens claimed, as did Belgrade, that Macedonia and the Macedonian problem had ceased to exist. For the ruling elite in Greece Aegean Macedonia became simply northern Greece and its Slavic-speaking Macedonians were proclaimed Greeks or, at best, 'slavophone' Greeks.

Once the new rulers had consolidated their control over the respective parts of Macedonia, they initiated policies which aimed to destroy all signs of Macedonian nationalism, patriotism or particularism. This was to be accomplished through forced deportations, and so-called voluntary exchanges of populations, colonization, social and economic discrimination, and forced denationalization and assimilation through the total control of the educational systems and of cultural and intellectual life as a whole. [2] These policies were pursued systematically and with great determination by Greece. [3]

Statistics on the ethnic composition of Macedonia under Turkish rule, the area consisting roughly of the Vilayets of Salonica, Monastir (Bitola) and Kosovo, are notoriously unreliable and confusing; its Slavic-speaking population, the Macedonians, were claimed by the Bulgarians, Greeks and Serbians. [4] Nevertheless, with the exception of the Greek sources [5], all others are in general agreement that the Macedonians, the Slavic speakers, constituted the majority of the population before the partition of 1913. [6] And, as L. S. Stavrianos has rightly emphasized: "These Macedonians had a dialect and certain cultural characteristics which justify their being classified as a distinct South Slav group." [7]

All statistics, except the Greek ones, are also in general agreement that these Macedonians represented the largest single group on the territory of Aegean Macedonia before 1913. The figures range from 329,371 or 45.3 per cent to 382,084 or 68.9 per cent of the non-Turkish population; and from 399,369 or 31.3 per cent to 370,371 or 35.2 per cent of the total population of the area of approximately 1,052,227 inhabitants. [8]

The number of Macedonians in Aegean Macedonia began to decline both in absolute terms and as a percentage of the total population during the Balkan wars and particularly after the First World War. The Treaty of Neuilly with Bulgaria provided for the so-called voluntary exchange of Greek and Bulgarian minorities. According to the best available estimates, 86,582 Macedonians were compelled to emigrate to Bulgaria in the years from 1913 to 1928. [9] More importantly still, as a result of the compulsory exchange of Greek and Turkish or rather Christian and Muslim minorities required by the Treaty of Lausanne, which ended the Greek-Turkish war (1919-22), 400,000 Turks, including 49,000 Muslim Macedonians, were forced to leave Greece; and 1,300,000 Greeks and other Christians were expelled from Asia Minor. [10] In the years up to 1928 the Greek government settled 565,143 of these refugees as well as 53,000 colonists from other parts of Greece in Aegean Macedonia. [11] Thus, as a result of the removal of 127,384 Macedonians and the conscious and planned settlement of 618,199 refugees, the Greek government transformed the ethnographic structure of Aegean Macedonia in the period between 1913 and 1928.

However, the available statistical figures of the remaining Macedonian population in Aegean Macedonia after 1928 are even less reliable and verifiable than for the period before 1913. The official Greek census of 1928 sought to present Greece as an ethnically homogeneous state and minimized the numbers of all minorities. This was especially the case with the Macedonians, who were not even recognized as a national minority. [12] They were classified as 'slavophone' Greeks and the census claimed that there were only 81,984 of them in Greece, [13] a figure that is far too low when compared to all the non-Greek pre-1913 statistics on the size of the Slavic-speaking population of Aegean Macedonia. S. Kiselinski, a Macedonian historian who has carried out a critical evaluation of the various available statistics for the pre-First World War period, the migration movements of the 1920s and the official Greek census of 1928, came up with a more credible and realistic figure. He estimated the regions of Kastoria (Kostur), Florina (Lerin), and Edessa (Voden), which were not greatly affected by the population shifts and, unlike eastern and central Aegean Macedonia, preserved their Macedonian character. [15]

In any event, as a result of the various migratory movements in the immediate post-First World War period, the remaining Macedonian population in Aegean Macedonia found itself a minority in its own land, and an unrecognized and oppressed minority at that. It was overwhelmingly rural and scattered in small, mainly mountainous towns and villages. There was no longer any large Macedonian urban centre there; and, since virtually the entire Exarchist

(Bulgarian) educated intelligentsia and most Macedonian activists had been forced to leave and seek refuge in Bulgaria, it lacked an elite of its own. The number of well-educated Macedonians remained small and their education in Greek tended to estrange them from their Slavic roots and cultural traditions. [16]

This minority bore the brunt of the Greek state's determination and conscious policies of forced denationalization and assimilation. The latter employed everything under its control and at its disposal - the military, the church, the schools, the press, cultural institutions and societies, sports organizations, etc. - to further the cause of hellenization. It went so far as to 'Greekocize' the personal names and surnames; and if it was not possible to 'Greekocize' them, they were replaced by Greek names and surnames. A special law was passed and published in the official government newspaper which ordered the replacement by Greek names of all the Slavic names of cities, villages, rivers, mountains, etc. Indeed, Athens made a concerted effort to eradicate once and for all any reminders of the centuries-old Slavic presence in Aegean Macedonia by erasing the Slavic inscriptions in churches and cemeteries. This campaign reached its most tragic dimensions in the second half of the 1930's, during the dictatorship of General Metaxas, when use of the Macedonian language was prohibited even in the privacy of the home to a people who knew Greek scarcely or not at all, and in fact could not communicate properly in any other language but their own. [17]

The ruling elite in Greece and all its bourgeois parties denied the existence of the Macedonian people or nationality and supported the policies of forced assimilation. Only the Communist Party of Greece (CPG), in accord with the official line of the Comintern, took up the cause of the Macedonians. As was the case with the other Balkan Communist parties, at the outset it emphasized the existence of a Macedonian political consciousness and nation, and by the late 1920's it embraced the existing reality and officially recognized the Macedonians in all three parts of divided Macedonia as a distinct Slav nation with its own language, history, culture, territory and interests. [18]

Rizospastis, the organ of the Central Committee of the CPG, the only official organ of a Balkan Communist party to be legally published through most of the inter-war years, was, until 1936, the sole important publication in Greece to recognize the Macedonians and to come to their defence. In addition to its ideological condemnation of the bourgeois regimes in Athens, it also consistently attacked their policy of national oppression, discrimination and forced assimilation against the Macedonians. [19] Macedonians, on the other hand, accepted Rizospastis as their sole spokesman. Their many letters and

other communications to this newspaper were frequently and affectionately addressed to 'Dear Rizo', 'our only defender', [20] they were sometimes written in Macedonian, 'the only language we know', though in the Greek script; [21] and they were mostly signed 'a Macedonian' or 'a group of Macedonians from' with the name of the village or town. Macedonians used the pages of Rizospastis as their mouthpiece, the only available platform from which to declare their Macedonian national identity and to demand their national rights.

We find, for instance, the writer of a letter from the village of Eksi-Su, signed 'many Macedonian-fighters', stating: 'We must declare loudly to the Greek rulers that we are neither Greeks, nor Bulgarians, nor Serbs, but pure Macedonians. We have behind us a history, a past rich with struggles until we free ourselves.' [22] But the aims of the Macedonians in Greece are perhaps even better reflected in a lengthy communication, signed G. Slavos on behalf of an IMRO (Un.) [23] group in Edesa (Voden). They wrote:

"We Macedonians here, held a conference where one of our comrades spoke to us about the programme of the IMRO (Un.) and about how the minorities live in the Soviet Union. He told us that the Macedonians in Bulgaria and Serbia are fighting under the leadership of the Communist parties for a united and independent Macedonia. We declare that we will fight for our freedom under the leadership of the Communist Party of Greece and [we] demand that our schools have instruction in the Macedonian language. We also insist on not being called Bulgarians, for we are neither Bulgarians, nor Serbs, nor Greeks, but Macedonians. We invite all Macedonians to join the ranks of the IMRO (Un.), and all of us together will fight for a free Macedonia. [24]

It is not at all surprising, therefore, that in Greece, as in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, conscious Macedonians, both Communists and bourgeois nationalists, joined in large numbers the Communist-led resistance movement - in the Greek case, the EAM-ELAS (Etniko Apoleftherotiko Metopo-Elinikos Laikos Apoleftherotikos Statos [National Liberation Front - Greek Popular Liberation Army]). But long before the war came to an end serious differences had developed between the leadership of the resistance and spokesmen for the Macedonians within the movement. Meanwhile, beginning with the Battle of Athens in December 1944, the British-supported royalist reaction against the left was also directed against the Macedonians and that assured the continued co-operation of Macedonian nationalism with Greek communism in the turbulent aftermath of the Second World War in Greece, through the Civil War. The Truman Doctrine, the American intervention, and the final defeat of the

Communist side in that bloody conflict in 1949, also represented a crushing blow for the national aspirations of the Macedonians in Aegean, that is, Greek Macedonia. [25]

II

The document given verbatim below entitled 'Report on the Free Macedonian Movement in Area Florina 1944', was written by Captain P. H. Evans on 1 December 1944. It was forwarded to London by the British Embassy in Athens on 12 December, reaching the Foreign Office on 30 December. [26]

Patrick Hutchinson Evans [27] was born on 1 December 1913 in Reading, Berkshire. He was educated at Leighton Park School, Reading, and at St John's College, Cambridge, where he studied Modern Languages. He left Cambridge in 1936 and for eighteenth months served as a tutor to a British family on the Greek island of Corfu. After his return to Britain he worked as a freelance journalist.

In August 1940, he was called up for military service in the Fiftieth Royal Tank Regiment and was commissioned on 30 January 1943. He took a course at the Matlock Military Intelligence School, was recommended for a Special Operations Executive (SOE), which he joined on 13 May 1943, and was posted to Cairo on 19 May. After receiving para-military and parachute training in July and August, on 16 September 1943 he was dropped into Western Macedonia, as a British Liaison Officer (BLO). [28] Later he became a station commander in the Florina area, where he remained until October 1944. After that he was posted to Athens, where he wrote his Report, and on 21 December 1944 he returned to Cairo.

As a result of his studies at Cambridge, his prolonged stay on the island of Corfu, as well as his training for the SOE, Captain Evans must have been well acquainted with Greece, the Greek people and the Greek language. It would also be safe to assume, and he seems to imply as much in his Report, that he knew nothing about the Macedonians; and like all foreigners who had been 'hoodwinked' by official Greek propaganda, expected to find only Greeks in Greece.

Thus he came in contact with the Macedonian world without any prior knowledge or preconceived notions about the Macedonians. Moreover, and this is of critical importance, Captain Evans's exposure to Macedonia, and the Macedonians differed greatly from that of the rare diplomat, or other foreigner

who had ventured into the area before the outbreak of hostilities. The latter were normally welcomed and received by the local representatives of the state, and were invariably accompanied by interpreters employed by the state. The aim was to supervise the foreigner's contacts with the local population, who in any case distrusted and feared outsiders, and to impress upon him the official point of view. [29]

Captain Evans was parachuted into western Aegean Macedonia in the midst of the war. Thus, there were no agents of the old order waiting to welcome him, to influence his views or to oversee his movements and contacts with the Macedonians. During this prolonged stay in the area he lived and moved freely among the Macedonians, 'who accepted and trusted' him. His 'companion', a 'personal servant and guide', for a time was "andarte" [30], a produce of the region as colourful as the region itself, who, Evans wrote, 'had learned Macedonian from his mother, Greek from his father, Albanian from his travels in search of work before the war, and [who] was a Vlach by ancestry but a Greek by proclivity, though he was on easy terms with all local Macedonians.'

Consequently, as Captain Evans emphasized, 'all information in this report was obtained at first hand, during the period March - October 1944.' The descriptions, observations and opinions that he presents are his own and they were derived and shaped by his own uncontrolled experiences in Macedonia and among the Macedonians.

All these considerations make Captain Evans's report an invaluable source for the study of the Macedonians in Greece, and, indeed, for the Macedonians as a whole, since conditions in Vardar and Pirin Macedonia at the time were not all that different. It debunks many of the old myths and misconceptions about the Macedonians which had been fabricated in the capitals of the partitioning states and were readily accepted in the West. This did not go unnoticed by officers of the Foreign Office, who were traditionally Greekophiles and identified with and defended the interests of the Greek state as defined by the various regimes in Athens.

In a covering letter, the Chancery at the British Embassy in Athens described it as 'an interesting report'. 'The chief impression given by the report is of the unexpectedly solid Slav-Macedonian character of the area ..'; it represents the Macedonian population as 'much more homogeneous and less interlaced with refugees or other Greeks, and ... likely to be considerably larger than was indicated by Greek official figures'. In conclusion, the Chancery drew the attention of the Foreign Office to the author's claim that 'a free and fair plebiscite would in all probability go against Greece.' [31] H. K. Thompson of

the Southern Department of the Foreign Office also called it 'an extremely interesting document' and noted:

If it is accurate, it looks as though those Macedo-Slavs are a much less negligible minority than has hitherto been suspected; it would also affirm that the Greek attitude towards them, which had seemed to be one of rather passive neglect, had actually been considerably harsher. [32]

Clearly, Captain Evans's report discredits the arbitrary and artificially low official Greek figures for the Macedonian population in Greece. Furthermore, it shows conclusively that the determined efforts on the part of the Greek state and official society during the previous three decades forcibly to denationalize and assimilate the Macedonians had failed. The Macedonians remained Macedonians and the Macedonians language remained 'the language of the home, ... of the fields, the village street and the market'. For the most part Slav place names were still used, while the Greek ones 'are merely a bit of varnish put on by Metaxas'; 'Greek is regarded as almost a foreign language and the Greeks are distrusted as something alien, even if not, in the full sense of the word, as foreigners ...'. 'The region is "Slav" by nature and NOT "Greek"'.

Considering the fact that British officialdom was traditionally favourable to the Greek standpoint, even more striking are Captain Evans's observations on the national consciousness and patriotism of the Macedonians, the existence of which had been denied by the partitioning states whose views were embraced by many so-called experts in the West. He shows that without the benefit of a national intelligentsia, of any national institutions, of any sort of legal national work, and against overwhelming odds, this oppressed, largely peasant population had retained a clearly defined Macedonian identity. 'The inhabitants just as they are not Greeks, are not Bulgarians or Serbs or Croats. They are Macedonians', wrote Captain Evans. Their Macedonianism 'is not artificial; it is natural, a spontaneous and deep seated feeling which begins in childhood, like everyone's patriotism'. However, their Macedonian consciousness extended beyond this finely developed local patriotism. It aspires to a free and united Macedonia, 'regardless of present frontier-lines, which are looked upon [by them] as usurpation'. The fact that 'an independent Macedonian state does not exist today' was due to a lack of Macedonian patriotism; 'it is merely one of the mistakes or lapses of history, as it were ...', wrote Captain Evans. 'If a plebiscite were freely and fairly held, it is more than likely than not that free Macedonia would result.'

Finally, it should be noted that the report also throws fresh light on many other contemporary aspects of the Macedonian question in Greece: on the antagonism between Greeks and Macedonians; on the negligible Bulgarian influence; on the leftism of the Macedonians; on the opportunism of the CPG on the Macedonian question; and on the growing prestige and influence among the Macedonians in Greece of Marshal Tito and the partisan movement across the border in Vardar Macedonia.

the Macedonians in Greece during the Second World War. It discredits the Greek claims and misconceptions about them. Most importantly, it destroys the official Greek denials of the existence of Macedonians in Greece; and contradicts their refusal to admit the existence of a Macedonian identity, people and nation.

SECRET
SFU/107/1

REPORT ON THE FREE MACEDONIA MOVEMENT
IN AREA FLORINA 1944

(By Capt. P. H. Evans, Force 133)
Ref map: GREECE 1/100,000, Sheets, D. IV and D.V.

CONTENTS OF REPORT

1. Area under review.
2. The SLAV-MACEDONIAN population.
3. Leftism among the MACEDONIANS.
4. BULGAR influence among the MACEDONIANS.
5. The MACEDONIAN movement now:
 - (a) Personalities
 - (b) Military Forces
 - (c) Relations between Andartes and Partisans
 - (d) The failure of SNOF
 - (e) Communist Party role
6. The future.
7. Obtaining information.

NOTE: Throughout this report the term 'MACEDONIANS' or 'SLAV-MACEDONIANS' is used as meaning the Slavophone inhabitants of GREECE and in certain cases indicated by the context, the MACEDONIAN minorities of BULGARIA, YUGOSLAVIA and ALBANIA.

1. AREA UNDER REVIEW

All information in this report was obtained at first hand, during the period March - October, 1944. During that time I lived successively at VAPSORI [BABCOR] [33] 5256, [34] on VITSI [VIC] 5754, near DHASERI [DROBITISTA] 3268 (i.e. on the WEST bank of LITTLE PRESPA LAKE); at KORIFI [TURJE] 5061 and finally in FLORINA [LERIN] 6068. During part of September and the whole of October there was an outstation at BOUFI [BUF] 5173. Besides these places I have visited or passed through a large number of villages in the general area EAST side of FLORINA [LERIN] plain - GREEK/YUGOSLAV frontier - PRESPA - KASTORIA [KOSTUR] 4640 - AMYNTAION [SOROVIC] 8257. I never went more than a few yards into YUGOSLAVIA or ALBANIA, nor was I at any time SOUTH of the road KASTORIA - AMYNTAION.

My knowledge is consequently fairly intimate as far as it goes, but I must stress that it does not go further than the area above defined. I have never been, for instance, to EASTERN MACEDONIA or THRACE, and some of the generalisations I have drawn from experience in my own area may not be applicable elsewhere.

2. THE SLAV-MACEDONIAN POPULATIONS

The one salient fact about the area in question is very rarely grasped. Englishmen, even those who know GREECE, fail to grasp it because few of them ever go so far NORTH. GREEKS fail to grasp it for two reasons. First, they do not want to. It is to their advantage to believe that all places which are marked 'GREECE' on the map are, or ought to be, GREEK in sympathy and in every other way; GREEK by nature as it were; they do not wish to realize that many of the inhabitants of MACEDONIA-in-GREECE have almost as good reasons for considering themselves MACEDONIANS as they themselves have for considering themselves GREEK. It is a slight case of wishful thinking, a sort of hoodwinking which is an inseparable part of the Great Idea. [35] The second reason is that, or so at least I am told, successive GREEK Governments since the liberation of Slavophone GREECE from the TURKS have been, despite their various political complexions, alike in one thing, that they have carefully fostered this delusion, as if to give the impression both to their own people and to the world that there was no SLAV minority in GREECE at all; whereas, if a foreigner who did not know GREECE were to visit the FLORINA region and from that to form his idea of the country as a whole, he could conclude that it was the GREEKS who were the minority. It is predominantly a SLAV region not a GREEK one. The language of the home, and usually also of the fields, the village street, the market, is MACEDONIAN, a SLAV language.

(Not knowing any SLAV languages myself I cannot comment much on it, but it seems to be closer to BULGARIAN than to SERBO-CROAT. It is however, corrupt and debased, without a literature or a fixed grammar, and with a large number of borrowings from TURKISH, GREEK, ALBANIAN and VLACH, and even a few from ROMANY. But in any case it is a SLAV tongue. POLES, for instance, get along with it quite easily, though not as easily as they do with SERBO-CROAT, which is purer and more fixed.) Many of the women, particularly the old women, many of the old men and nearly all the children born about 1939 or later have NO GREEK. Even those who know GREEK prefer to speak MACEDONIAN when they can. A stranger who says 'Good Morning' in GREEK will get the same reply, but if he says it in MACEDONIAN he will get a flood of welcoming phrases in addition. The place names as given on the map are GREEK; KALLITHEA, TRIGNON, DHROSOPYI and so on, but the names which are mostly used, though the map prints them in small type and in brackets, if at all, are ROUDARI, OSTINA, BELKAMENI - all SLAV names. The GREEK ones are merely a bit of varnish put on by METAXAS (but are, however, universally understood). GREEK is regarded as almost a foreign language and the GREEKS are distrusted as something alien, even if not, in the full sense of the word, as foreigners. This obvious fact, almost too obvious to be stated, that the region is SLAV by nature and not GREEK cannot be overemphasized!! It is after all the start of the whole problem, and it is only by bearing it in mind that a satisfactory solution may be reached, instead of some botched-up remedy which will invite trouble later.

It is also important to emphasise that the inhabitants, just as they are not GREEKS, are also not BULGARIANS or SERBS or CROATS. They are MACEDONIANS. Here I cannot dogmatise, as I do not know the history and particularly the ethnology of the MACEDONIANS. The GREEKS always call them BULGARS and damn them accordingly, except for EAM/ELAS, who for once in a way have shown some wisdom and who call these people 'SLAV-MACEDONIANS'. If they were BULGARS, how is it that while they spread over part of four countries, one of which is BULGARIA, they consider themselves a single entity and for the most part describe themselves as 'MACEDONIANS'? Those, moreover, who do claim to be BULGARS are proved in every case I have been able to verify to have been under the direct influence of BULGARIAN propaganda (during the war, that spread by KALTCHEF and GELEF from KASTORIA and FLORINA). The MACEDONIAN notion as well might, it is true, be something artificial, a result of propaganda. But it does not seem so. It appears to me correct to consider the MACEDONIANS an entity, even though a loose one, which has for a long time been subjected to partition.

The MACEDONIANS are actuated by strong but mixed feelings of patriotism. In GREECE this seems to be of three kinds, usually coexisting in the same person. There is a certain loyalty to the GREEK State; and a thriving and at times fervent local patriotism; and a feeling, hard to assess because rarely uttered before strangers, and because it fluctuates with the turn of events and of propaganda, for MACEDONIA as such, regardless of present frontier-lines, which are looked upon as usurpation. The loyalty to GREECE broke down to some extent when the GREEK State broke down, and the BULGAR propaganda and coercion organisation started working hard, and the MACEDONIAN Partisans of TITO did a fair amount of proselytising on the quiet; and it was unprofitable anyway, except in villages permanently garrisoned by Andartes, [36] to display GREEK sympathies. Moreover, when the country was over-run by the enemy, the anti-SLAV repression exercised by METAXAS began to rebound in the form of indignation against the GREEKS. But a fair degree of loyalty did once exist, even under METAXAS. That is quite clear from the way in which the regiments from the SLAV areas fought in the ALBANIAN WAR, when they distinguished themselves not only by their fighting spirit but also by their endurance of fatigue and cold, in which they surpassed most other units; and it does not seem that they contained a higher proportion of traitors, in relation to the size of the respective minorities, than say the VLACH element in the GREEK army.

But what is far stronger than the MACEDONIAN's feeling for GREECE is his local patriotism, not so much his love of country as of his own bit of country, his patridha [37] - in this he resembles the population of GREECE generally. When in October 1944, GOTCHI, [38] as Capitanios [39] and virtually commander of the 2nd Battalion of ELAS 28 Regt, was ordered to VERMION [DURLA], he replied 'No, we are MACEDONIANS and our place is here in MACEDONIA; that is what we are fighting for.' (VERMION is ofcourse in MACEDONIA but it is I believe less SLAV than the region of VITSI where GOTCHI's battalion was then stationed and where he had recruited it in the first place; and GOTCHI's patridha is VITSI). He then mutinied and went to PRESPIA, and later to MONASTIR [BITOLA], his battalion with him. The material for this explosion was evidently a mass of feelings which had been accumulating for some time, among them GOTCHI's personal ambition, but the order in question was about as good a percussion-cap as could have been found, and a great blunder by ELAS 9 Div.

Again, an ELAS Andarte at VAPSORI during the summer, on being ordered to report back to his unit which was SOUTH of the ALIAKMON [BISTRICA], said no, he was a MACEDONIAN and wanted to stay in MACEDONIA; he did

not want to go to GREECE and if they did send him there they would regret it, because they would find that he would simply turn dumb-insolent and be useless to them.

The same tenacity comes out in MACEDONIAN songs, traditionally ones as well as those which have been made up expressly in the present war. It is true that the songs usually mention MACEDONIA and not one particular place in MACEDONIA, but the feeling which runs through them is a simple and direct love of country, not an intellectual enthusiasm for a political idea. The feeling is the same, whether the song by the universally known "Mare more Mare" (the story of a girl whose young man did not come back from the wars, ending with his words to her: 'Mare, do not wait for me; get married. I have got married already - for the black earth, for MACEDONIA'; and in one version there is the additional couplet 'FOR MACEDONIA - that we should all be free'); or whether it is the humourous ditty of 'Mare Prilepka', 'Mary from PRILEP' whose mother tried to marry her - successively - to three young men she did not want - one from PRILEP, one from BITOLA (MONASTIR) and one from KOSTUR (KASTORIA), and who, in a last and optional stanza gets the lover of her choice - a stanza which cannot be sung in drawing-rooms, however. Or the song may be a gay little marching tune, colourful and festive, which says that 'MACEDONIA's, days of slavery are ended'. Pulsing through them all is the MACEDONIAN's love of the place he lives in.

The MACEDONIAN's feeling for MACEDONIA as a whole, as a country, and a potential state, is dealt with in section 5 of this report. In passing, it must be noted that in spite of a number of agitators in GREECE, YUGOSLAVIA and BULGARIA, being and having been active recently on behalf of an independent MACEDONIA, this feeling does not seem to be something created by propaganda in the first place, though propaganda has heightened it. Macedonian patriotism is not artificial; it is natural, a spontaneous and deep-rooted feeling which begins in childhood, like everyone else's patriotism. Consequently the separatist tendency will go on cropping up; it is not a flash in the pan. It seems to me that it is merely one of the mistakes or lapses of history, as it were (and I repeat, I know nothing of MACEDONIAN history), that an independent state does not exist today. The MACEDONIANS having been in a greater degree a subject race than any of their neighbours lost their resilience, their initiative; they are a backward group; they were liberated from the TURKS but never freed themselves of [sic] their various European overlords; when these were becoming nations and each was strengthening and developing itself as such the MACEDONIANS were not sufficiently audacious and unified to do so too, and now [that] they seem ready to make a serious bid for

nationhood it is too late. The fact that there may have been an excellent case for an independent MACEDONIA once does not mean that there is such a case now. (See Section 6, below).

A factor which I have not heard mentioned, but which GREECE could use to good effect in keeping her SLAV element loyal, is that element's peculiar combination of apathy with penury. The ordinary MACEDONIAN villager as I have met him is not half as interested in politics as he is in prosperity. His interest in politics is more than anything a wish to be left in peace, left alone (and is therefore a good deal more respectable than most political interests). He is curiously neutral; he adopts a protective colouring and, like the chameleon, can change it when necessary. I have seen this happening. Once during June, when the road VATOKHORI [BREZNICA] 3758 - KASTORIA was still being used by the GERMANS and I was making one of several journeys on horse-back by night from DENDROKHORI [D'MBENI] 3549 to VAPSORI, I noticed that while the SLAV villages of MAVROKAMPOS [CRNOVISTA] and KRANIONA [DRENOVENI] had not put out any sentries, at the GREEK refugee village of AYIOS ANTONIOS [ZEVENI] I was halted well before the first house and was not allowed to proceed until I had proved I was a British officer, upon which I was warmly welcomed. My companion at that time was an Andarte who had learnt MACEDONIAN from his mother, GREEK from his father, ALBANIAN from his travels in search of work before the war, and who was a VLACH by ancestry but a GREEK by proclivity, though he was on easy terms with all local MACEDONIANS. I had chosen him deliberately for his being such a mixture, as well as for his knowing the mountains and being good with horses. He explained that the people of KRANIONA and MAVROKAMPOS had not put out sentries because, if a party of GERMANS or a comitadji [40] band were to pay them a call, they could not then be accused of being hostile or having anything to hide. At the same time, however, they had no arms and so were not in danger of being attacked by the Andartes as a comitadji stronghold.

An old man at KORIFI put this aspect of the MACEDONIAN character very clearly to me. He was a SLAV, yet had been proedhros [41] of his own village VAPSORI during METAXAS's regime. In consequence he was now out of favour with EAM and ELAS. He told me: 'You see, we have had so many different masters that now, whoever comes along, we say' (placing his hands together and smiling pleasantly and making a little bow), 'Kalos orisate!' [42] It was most eloquent. It is this perfect duplicity of the MACEDONIANS which makes them difficult to know. It is hard to find out what they are thinking. A third man present at the conversation completed the thing by saying: 'At

bottom, our attitude is really this. We don't mind if the state takes away part of our produce as tax; five, ten, even 15 per cent. But let the state be reasonable; let it only take a moderate amount, so that I know that what I work for, what I sweat for, will at the end be mine. If I go out on the hill this evening and spend the night making charcoal, what do I get? Only a few drachmae, about enough for a packet of cigarettes. You see, our mountains are poor, and we have so very little. What we really want is for some rich country like ENGLAND or AMERICA to open up MACEDONIA, exploit her for her tobacco and her untouched minerals. Then everyone would draw his pay every week and there would be plenty to eat and good clothes to wear. GREECE can't do it; she is too poor. There was an AMERICAN company which wanted to open mines in these mountains after the last war, but the GREEK Government wouldn't let them.'

His protestations of poverty may have been a little exaggerated, but not much; and the general picture his words convey is confirmed by what I saw in a number of villages during my 7.5 months in the area.

Incidentally, the same man, who had always seemed to me a steady fellow and who had fought as a machine-gunner in the ALBANIAN War, eventually joined the battalion of GOTCHI and took part in its defection to YUGOSLAVIA in the name of an independent MACEDONIA. I have often been struck by this ambivalence or more-than-ambivalence of the SLAVS in GREECE, their willingness to go in this direction or that according to the vagaries of propaganda and the altering pressure of circumstances. They are a set of muddle-headed peasants who perhaps hardly know from one month to the next what they really want. In the political sphere, that is; on the practical side they are clear enough. They all want to be able to eat wheaten bread, instead of rye or a mixture of rye and maize; and they would like to earn more and have a little more comfort. Beyond that nothing is clear. The confirmed pro-GREEK or pro-MACEDONIAN or pro-BULGARIAN among them is rare. It is reported that a number of those who revolted with GOTCHI would like to return to their homes but do not dare to do so. They would be slaughtered by ELAS and in any case the fanatics in their band, in particular GOTCHI, prevent them from leaving.

It can be proved by example after example that on the whole the MACEDONIANS of GREECE are guided, even if unwillingly, by whoever had the whip hand at a given moment; GREEK Government, foreign invader, or ELAS Andartes as the case may be. Though being perpetual underlings they have come apathetic, but only to a degree, not completely. When they are discontented they side with whoever will treat them better, or who they think

will treat them better. What they aspire to is not so much a nationality of their own as freedom to speak their own language and to live unmolested and enjoy a better living than before.

Want exacerbates their discontent, plenty reduces it to the point at which it doesn't matter.

(Obviously this presents certain possibilities, not for removing the problem set by the existence of a SLAV minority in GREECE, but at least for diminishing it. If GREECE can give the MACEDONIANS what they want - freedom of language and a somewhat better life - they will be content to remain GREEK citizens. If this happens, and in addition, if GREECE is associated in their minds with BRITIAN, they will think better of BRITIAN and will be so much less inclined to look towards RUSSIA. The share of BRITIAN in the task of rehabilitating GREECE will make this association clear.)

A few random points must suffice to fill in the remainder of this picture of the SLAV-MACEDONIANS as I have seen them.

The SLAV-MACEDONIANS fear and distrust BRITIAN on the whole, though they have usually shown themselves friendly to British officers and OR's in the mountains during the occupation, once the British had shown themselves forthcoming and not stand-offish. The reason for this distrust is that in the MACEDONIAN peasant's mind BRITIAN is linked with the King of GREECE and the King with METAXAS, who made the SLAV language illegal in GREECE and fed people on castor oil for speaking it. During the occupation BULGAR propaganda was quick to exploit this angle of the situation. 'KALTCHEF and some others came to our village from KASTORIA and they gathered all the people together in the square and told us "The Andartes are with the British and the British will bring back the King and an old GREECE [i.e. the GREECE of METAXAS]. Therefore you must take arms against the Andartes".' (From the deposition of a woman captured by the Andartes in an attack on PERIKOPI [PREKOPANA] 5950, Apr 44).

THIS DISTRUST OF BRITIAN is in part offset, but not wholly by the mixture of greed, reverence and pleasure which is inspired in many peasants by the spectacle of a large and rich nation. 'BRITISH is rich, BRITIAN will save us', they say (they would say AMERICA if one was AMERICAN), and then proceed to charge one double for the potatoes or wine or eggs ones is buying from them.

The MACEDONIANS' feelings towards the GREEKS, and vice versa, are at the moment sour and revengeful. But this is a dubious generalisation to make. In FLORINA for instance the two appear to live amicably side by side; no one molests the common people for speaking MACEDONIANS in the street, and it is only in private conversation that the GREEKS confess their animosity. (As for the MACEDONIANS I do not know, because I do not speak their language, and if at this time I were to ask them about it in GREEK they probably would not tell me. They are temperamental, distrustful creatures). A characteristic of MACEDONIA is for this state of apparent amicability to continue for a long time, and then be interrupted by a brief terror, and it may well be that outbreaks of this sort will occur frequently during the next year or two.

The attitude even of educated GREEKS towards the SLAV minority, not only in SLAV areas but everywhere, is usually stupid, uninformed and brutal to a degree that makes one despair of any understanding ever being created between the two people. Many GREEKS can give the text of the Atlantic Charter verbatim or hold forth copiously if not very accurately on the Versailles Conference, who do not know that within their own frontiers there is a SLAV-speaking minority; or, if they have some hazy cognizance of the Macedonian's existence, condemn them as BULGARS and say 'They ought to be killed off, or sent back to BULGARIA where they came from'. They either will not listen at all, or even listen with a kind of wooden unbelief, none the less dense for their being unable to reply, to the suggestions that the MACEDONIANS are not BULGARS and did not come from BULGARIA, or, if they did come, came so long ago that it no longer counts anyway.

Atrocities on both sides have been fairly common in the last three years. In the victorious Andarte attack on POLYKERASOS [CERESNICA] 5448 during August about 300 prisoners were taken. The ELAS commander gave orders that they were not to be shot but must be killed with the knife. This was done. When 80 comitadjis with 50 GERMANS entered DHENDROKHORI in June and killed several Andartes and civilians, one Andarte wounded and captured by the comitadjis was put to death on the spot with an axe. (This Andarte had been trained in demolition by me and was at that time under my command.) And so on. I could give several more examples, and I was not particularly 'collecting' atrocities. GREEKS often declaim against the barbarity of the 'BULGARS' but in fact it is six of one and half a dozen of the other. Some GREEKS will admit this and then go on declaiming.

Needless to say, these atrocities have only embittered an already bitter situation. One atrocity begets another.

It is a question how much of this hatred between the two races can be avoided. Maybe there is an irreducible minimum, a blind animosity springing from something strange, something antithetical, which they automatically sense in one another. But it is certain that a good deal of the bad feeling is purely the creation of propaganda, particularly where propaganda has been used to aggravate the bitterness aroused by repression. GREEKS and SLAVS can live comfortably together. This is the view of Colonel LOVKARIS, now 'General' of ELAS of the Reserve Division of KASTORIA, a retired officer of the GREEK army who has had a successful career in spite of being a SLAV-MACEDONIAN by birth, and who knows Slavophone GREECE very well.

GREEKS often adduce, as proof that the minority has been fairly treated, the fact that they were once given the alternative of remaining in GREECE and behaving themselves, or of removing to BULGARIA. But it seems to me that this is rather like the question: 'Have you given up beating your wife? Answer YES or NO!' The MACEDONIANS in GREECE are almost aliens and in some cases feel themselves altogether so. But to a MACEDONIAN family their own bit of mountain, their own little patch of stony cultivation, is home, something the family has lived in for generations. So that the Government's order amounted to telling them that they must either abandon their home, or else stay on as aliens. This dilemma stands still; it is in the nature of the situation. There is probably no satisfactory solution, but a wise and tolerant attitude on the part of successive GREEK Government's to come, combined with an absolute insistence on loyalty to GREECE, would afford a passable MODUS VIVENDI which would go far for making life run smoothly in MACEDONIA, though it would not ensure it.

If one lives surrounded by the struggle between the GREEKS and MACEDONIANS, as I did for more than seven months, what strikes one more than anything is what a sordid affair it all is. It is a matter of ruthless lang grabbing. There is a peculiar kind of sordidness which is possessed by all nationalist struggles and this one possesses it to the full. Moreover, it is a fight between peasants, for the most part mountain peasants. Mountains produce men who are tough and hardy and who, when they fight, if their passions are engaged, fight with fury, and underneath the skin of almost every peasant, whatever his good qualities, lies somewhere concealed a murderous materialist. And under the pressure of certain circumstances this materialist pops out of his skin and stands forth in all his naked unpleasantness.

Doubtless this psycholological background has something to do with the low savagery with which the struggle is waged.

An incident which sheds some light on the MACEDONIAN problem in GREECE is one which appeared in summer 43. An old gentleman called KARAGEORGIU was living in ARGOS ORESTIKON [RUPISTA]; he was the head of a much respected family in that district, and in the old days under the TURKS had been Chairman of the 'GREEK Committee' which provided a focus for local GREEK unity against both TURKS and comitadjis. one of his sons, Captain (then Lieutenant) IRAKLIS KARAGEORGIU, fought brilliantly as a Coy Commander in 1941 and was decorated three times. In 1943 old Mr KARAGEORGIU was thrown into prison in ARGOS by the comitadjis, who were very active at that time in terrorising the GREEKS. A young comitadji entered his cell, began to beat him and ended by killing him, some say by smashing his head against a wall, others by bashing it in with the heel of his boot. Not very long afterwards Captain KARAGEORGIU arrived in the area by parachute as a member of Force 133 and heard of his father's death. On arriving at the village which at that time contained the HQ of Force 133 in Western MACEDONIA, he was surprised to see the murderer walking about the streets, a free man. It appeared that he had come over to ELAS and enrolled himself as a member of the Community Party, which ofcourse meant a free pardon. Captain KARAGEORGIU told me: 'I have sworn on my father's grave to kill that man'. I fully expect he will do so. He is a Royalist, a Nationalist, completely intransigent and exceptionally brave, so that nothing is likely to stop him. It remains to be seen whether some friend or relative of the comitadji will execute a similar oath.

3. LEFTISM AMONG THE MACEDONIANS

It is just as important in dealing with MACEDONIA as with the rest of GREECE to distinguish between the genuine out-and-out doctrinaire Communist, who is a rare specimen, and the rowdy ragtag who form the majority of Left Wing supporters, who represent various shades of Left Wing thought and sometimes no thought at all, and are miscalled, both by themselves and by others, Communist. Hence my using the convenient barbarism 'Leftists'.

I have heard it said that before the war the MACEDONIANS showed a greater tendency towards Communism than the GREEKS did. If this is so I take the reasons to be first, SLAV sympathy with RUSSIA, second, a reaction against repression, third, the natural extremism of the SLAV temperament which seems almost habitually to gravitate towards a tyrannous orthodoxy.

4. BULGAR INFLUENCE AMONG THE MACEDONIANS

This has been considerable during the past three years. The BULGARS maintained propaganda offices in FLORINA, KASTORIA and I believe, VASSILEIAS [ZAGORICANI] 5944. The most active propagandists were GELEFF and the more notorious KALTCHEF (GREEK born, educated in BULGARIA and a fanatic). Arms were supplied for a number of villages by the GERMANS and ITALIANS, whose purpose was to weaken guerilla resistance by dividing the population and also to create a deep protective ring round [KASTORIA and a string of garrisons along the road] KASTORIA - AMYNTAION. This effected a considerable economy in troops. Most armed villages seemed to have contained a few fanatics and a large number of indifferent people who would have much rather not taken sides against anybody. Some villages, e.g. ASPROYIA [SREBRENO] 6350, were forced by brutal methods to take arms. Probably the most pro-BULGAR village was VASSILEIAS, which contains a small number of GREEK refugee families but is mostly SLAV. Several families there have relatives who emigrated to BULGARIA and made good, one even becoming a General in the BULGARIAN Army. As far back as 1938, the inhabitants used to boast of their village as 'Little Sofia'.

Besides arming villages the BULGARS also tried to get people to have themselves registered as BULGARIAN citizens. An old man in TRIVOUNON [TRSJE] 5065 told me that only six families there, besides his own, insisted in remaining GREEK. [43]

MACEDONIANS as a whole do not seem to be really attracted to BULGARIA, and some were actually afraid that she would have treated them as an inferior minority, as the SERBS and GREEKS already do. If the area i am acquainted with had been genuinely pro-BULGAR, all the villages in it would probably be armed, whereas the only ones that did take arms were those situated on the low ground on the fringes of the VITSI mountain pass. The mountain area proper was always free of armed villages, though not of informers who would betray Andartes and British personnel to the GERMANS. Those of the inhabitants who were not pro-GREEK - that is to say, the majority - were either uneasily neutral or else filled with a rather vague aspiration towards a free MACEDONIA run on Left Wing lines. Thus, when in May the Andartes of VAPSORI sent a long-winded letter to SIDHEROKHORI [SESTEOVO] telling them to come over to ELAS and the Allies, SIDHEROKHORI replied: 'If you (ELAS) were real Allies you would wear a Red Star on your caps'.

5. MACEDONIAN MOVEMENT NOW (1944)

(a) Personalities (full names are in footnotes [44,45..etc] at end).

TEMPO: [44] TITO's representative with the MACEDONIAN units of the YUGOSLAV Partisans. His Headquarters was reported to me on 10 Nov to be at PRILEP.

ABBAS: [45] 'Agitprop' of the MACEDONIAN Partisans under TITO (Agitprop equals much the same as Capitanios of an ELAS unit). Quiet and good mannered; intelligent; educated, but to what extent I do not know. Gives the impression of being completely determined. Said to a British officer last January: 'No, I am not a Communist; politically I don't know what I am. All I want is MACEDONIA for the MACEDONIANS - MACEDONIAN language, churches, schools, hospitals, and so on.'

DEYAN: [46] A member of TEMPO's HQ. Was working in Spring and Summer of this year in area PRESPE, recruiting Partisans and making propaganda for MACEDONIA. Good mannered, quiet, but a strong personality; is said by some to have been an architect (probably correct), by others a journalist.

The above are said to be [in] PRILEP. I have met the last two before now but not TEMPO.

GOTCHI: [47] Said to be in MONASTIR. Some at least of his men are picketing the frontier. Signs himself 'Commander of Brigade of KASTORIA and FLORINA'. Is a native of MELAS [STATICS] 4761 (a village with a strong under-current of anti-GREEK feeling). Is a boastful peasant with a reputation as a good fighter.

PERO: [48] A native of GAVROS [GABRES] 4053. Took arms from the GERMANS to fight the Andartes, but declared his aim to be an independent MACEDONIA, not a greater BULGARIA. Has and probably still has, considerable influence in villages near his own. His band was attacked and dispersed by ELAS by about mid-summer. He then fled to PRESPE and was given sanctuary by DEYAN, who was severely reprimanded by TITO for this. PEYO was sent back by Partisans, some say by TITO himself, to ELAS, who sent him under amnesty to the BATTALION of GOTCHI. When GOTCHI mutinied in October, PEYO accompanied and abetted him. PEYO is said to have been a Communist in peace time and to have gone to BULGARIA in the advent of METAXAS. Is said to be a great egotist. Education: attended FLORINA Gymnasium.

TOURLOUNDZOS: [49] Another petty leader from Slavophone GREECE. A native of KYNO NERO [VRBENI] 7757. At the time of GOTCHI's revolt was in KAIMATSALAN [KAJMAKALAN] on the SOUTH side of the frontier. Has since joined GOTCHI taking a band of guerillas with him (strength not known).

These three are men of far smaller stature than ABBAS, TEMPO and DEYAN. They are ambitious with some gift for leadership. Their movement is not important (a villagers' revolt), except as a symptom.

I have met GOTCHI once (before his defection); TOURLOUNDZOS

and PEYO never.

(b) Military Forces

GOTCHI is said to have had 500 armed men at the time of his revolt, nearly all of whom he took with him. He is said to have collected 500 to 1,000 unarmed civilians from the villages on the way to PRESPA. Some of these he took by force, others came of their own free will. Some also joined him from PRESPA area. [50]

I know definitely only of three brigades of MACEDONIAN Partisans under TITO/TEMPO. That was the strength I was told in July. (A brigade in the YUGOSLAV Organization equals 400 men).

Thus the strength of the pro-MACEDONIAN forces NORTH of the frontier is 1,700 or more. But I should be surprised to find they were not very much more than this. [51]

(c) Relations between Andartes and Partisans

These have usually been good, except for periodical friction cause by the Partisans' propaganda for a free MACEDONIA. The Partisans are more efficient and aggressive and look down on the Andartes as a sorry crew.

There was a disagreement between ELAS 1st Battalion of 28 Regt and 1 and 2 Brigades (MAEDONIAN) of the Partisans at VAPSORI in April. The ELAS Commander wanted to attack a comitadji village and asked the Partisans to attack them. ABBAS was there at the time and flatly refused. Later he told another officer and myself that he could get all the comitadji villages over to the Allied side by political means, had he been allowed to. A Partisan told me about the same time that the Partisans could go in and out of comitadji villages quite freely; they were never attacked or given away.

During this visit of 1 and 2 Brigades to VAPSORI and district, a small number of Andartes transferred themselves to the Partisans. These were all Slavophone Andartes.

Tito has always adopted a freer policy where his units are concerned than ELAS has. That is to say, the ALBANIAN units in TITO's forces use the ALBANIAN flag, the ALBANIAN language and have ALBANIAN officers; the MACEDONIAN units the MACEDONIAN flag (a gold star on a red background) and so on. ELAS, on the other hand, have always officered their MACEDONIAN units with GREEKS and this has always made a bad impression on Slavophone Andartes in ELAS. It has made them feel, as the civilians also feel, that the millennium announced by ELAS/EAM, with the SLAV-MACEDONIANS enjoyed equal privileges and full freedom, is just a sell-out after all; GREECE will go on being their over-lord, will go on excluding them from state posts, from promotion in the army and so on.

(d) The Failure of SNOF

SNOF was the SLAVOPHONE version of EAM; that is to say, EAM

(therefore a GREEK organisation) under a SLAV name and conducting its work mainly in the SLAV language. The letters SNOF mean 'SLAV-MACEDONIAN National Anti-Fascist Front' (I am not quite sure about 'Anti-Fascist'). [52] Some time during the summer when GREEKS were getting anxious about independent MACEDONIAN propaganda and the directing caucus in the EAM feared they would lose some of their GREEK adherents on account of this, the N (for 'narodny' or national) was dropped, and the organisation became known as SOF. [53] Today, the word SOF is rarely if ever heard; EAM is the name used even when the language spoken is SLAV.

The purpose of the SNOF disguise (for that was all it was, an EAM in SNOF's clothing) was to draw the SLAV-MACEDONIAN element into the orbit of EAM. The manoeuvre only half succeeded. SNOF certainly did excellent work at the start, opening up areas which had been hostile till then, not only to GREECE but also to the Allies. It was thanks to SNOF that I was able to exist in so thoroughly a SLAV area as that of VITSI. Little by little, however, the MACEDONIANS lost confidence in SNOF, began to think - rightly - that the GREEKS were not sincere in their profession, and that in fact the GREEKS were determined to remain dominant; that it was just another trick. This did not mean that SNOF disappeared; it simply changed its name to SOF and then to EAM and today EAM still controls nearly all the villages which SNOF won over. But the enthusiasm of the villages has mostly gone and a somewhat sluggish stirring in the direction of an Independent MACEDONIA has replaced it: perhaps what finally extinguished SLAV confidence in EAM was ELAS' conscripting young men as Andartes during August; in a SLAV area this naturally meant conscripting SLAVS. At LAIMOS [?] in the PRESPA region two men were savagely beaten up for refusing to be conscripted. So much for the freedom of the SLAVS. [54]

It is noticeable that whenever Partisans organised a village, i.e. convinced it that it ought to work against the GERMANS and Fascism and made it provide runners, sentries, a 'Q' and pack transport service, and so on, or habitually used a village which EAM had organised, the organisation worked much better. TRIGONON [OSCIMA] 4265 was such a place. The villages there had a wonderful arrangement for guiding Partisans, Andartes or British across the road, which was much used by the GERMANS. By a system of couriers and sentinels (who just worked in the fields with their mattocks or spades, and looked innocent enough) they would pass one across in broad daylight, through the village itself, even though a GERMAN unit was camped only a few hundred yards away on the outskirts.

(e) The Role of the GREEK Communist Party

At FLORINA in November it seemed likely, but was not absolutely certain, that the COMMUNIST Party there (which controls movement as it controls everything else) was allowing representatives of GOTCHI to enter the town from MONASTIR.

Probably the KKE [55] will pursue a completely opportunist policy. If the MACEDONIAN movement succeeds, KKE will applaud it; if it looks like failing, KKE will be the first to denounce it. I

emphasise 'the first'.

6. THE FUTURE

There can be no independent MACEDONIA. Even if one regards it, as I do, as right, in the abstract, that there should be, one has to concede that practically it is undesirable.

{ [57] Captain Evans developed an unusually clear understanding of
{ the complexities of the Macedonian problem. He was fully
{ conscious that the dominant impulse among the Macedonians was
{ in favour of a 'free Macedonia'. Although he considered such a
{ solution to be the 'right' one 'in the abstract', or morally, he did
{ not think it was 'desirable' on practical grounds. And yet, he could
{ not put forth another, more practical, clear-cut solution, for he
was
{ only too aware of the many grave difficulties that stood in the way
{ of any other resolution of the Macedonian question. Hence, his
{ pessimism about the future, a pessimism which, as subsequent
{ developments in the Balkans showed, was only too well founded....

A MACEDONIAN rising would be resisted almost violently by the GREEKS, who would probably rise in a body from all over GREECE to beat it down. In particular the demand for SALONIKA would rouse the GREEKS to fury. The result would be an extremely bloody war out of which no good would come.

There is also a PAN-SLAV aspect, which is real enough but on which I do not propose to comment here.

The frontiers of GREECE, at any rate between say PRESPA and KAIMATSALAN, must remain unaltered. (About the justice of GREEK claims in 'Northern IRIROS' [56] and the southern confines of BULGARIA I knew nothing.) GREECE is poor enough already; to take away one of her more productive territories would make her poorer still.

At the same time GREECE; if she is not to be severely troubled by her MACEDONIAN minority, and also in the interests of equity, must treat that minority well; firmly, yes, but with friendship, without discrimination. I am not sanguine of this happening. But it is not impossible.

It is quite likely, but not certain, that the MACEDONIANS over the border - both TEMPO and GOTCHI - will sooner or later make an armed bid for autonomy or independence. About 10 May TEMPO made a speech on MONASTIR in which he said they would set up free MACEDONIA which

would include FLORINA and SALONIKA. A British and an American officer were present at the speech, and this made an unfortunate impression both on the GREEK minority in MONASTIR and on many inhabitants in FLORINA, who wondered whether it meant that BRITIAN or AMERICA approved of MACEDONIA's demands.

The method advocated by TEMPO is a plebiscite. If he insists on this and it is refused, he will probably resort to an armed rising. On the other hand, if such a plebiscite were freely and fairly held, it is MORE THAN LIKELY than not that a free MACEDONIA would result.

I do not believe that TEMPO is cooperating with the 'Comita' or any other organ of BULGAR Nationalism; though of course BULGARIA is interested in the formation of a separate MACEDONIA. But I do not think he is cooperating with the MACEDONIAN Leftists of BULGARIA.

The weakness of the present GREEK Government and its slowness in re-establishing the authority of the State in FLORINA and district must of course be allowing MACEDONIAN feeling to rise more freely than would otherwise be the cas, and the danger - for it is a danger - to keep on growing. [57]

7. OBTAINING INFORMATION

It is fairly easy to obtain information of MACEDONIAN developments, provided :-

- (a) one knows the country
- (b) one is up there and not down here
- (c) one sifts all reports, rumours, etc., very carefully
- (d) one is on the watch for stool-pigeons among the sources one employs

It is also helpful, almost essential, to speak MACEDONIAN. It encourages people to talk more freely.

This report is much too long. It also contains opinions as well as information. But I had sooner or later to allow myself this luxury if only for the purpose of clarifying my views to myself. Moreover, it is as well, for the reader's sake, to include them. For while opinions are derived from experience, from facts encountered, once formed, they influence the selection of facts in the writing of a report. So that NO report is complete without a brief account of the writer's own bias in the matter in hand.

ATHENS
1 Dec 44

(P. H. EVANS),
Capt.

Footnotes:

Andrew Rossos is Professor of History at the University of Toronto.

[1] On the partition of Macedonia see Rossos, A., "Russia and the Balkans. Inter-Balkan Rivalries and Russian Foreign Policy 1908-1914," Toronto, 1981; Stojanov, P., Makedonija vo vremeto na balkanskite i prvata svetska vojna (1912-1918), Skopje, 1969.

[2] Katardziev, I., Vreme nazreenje. Makedonskoto nacionalno prasanje megiu dvete svetski vojni (1919-1930), Skopje, 2 vols, 1977, I, chap. I. Katardziev provides the most comprehensive, valuable and interesting treatment of the Macedonian national question in the 1920s.

[3] Ibid., I, pp. 85-106; Institut za nacionalna istorija, Istorija na makedonskiot narod, Skopje, 3 vols, 1969, III, part 13; Kiselinovski, S., Grckata kolonizacija vo Egejska Makedonija 91913-1940), Skopje, 1981; Mojsov, L., Okulu prasanjeto za makedonskoto navionalno malcinstvo vo grcija, Skopje, 1954, pp. 207-87; Abadzjev, G., et al., Egejska Makedonija vo nasata nacionalna istorija, Skopje, 1951.

[4] Stavrianos, L. S., The Balkans since 1453, New York, 1958, pp.517-18.

[5] See, for instance, Kolokotronis, V., La Macedoine et L'hellenisme, Paris, 1919, p.612; see also Kiriakides, S. P., The Northern Ethnological Boundaries of hellenism, Thessaloniki, 1955, p.45. D. Dakin, who supports the Greek claims, admits that 'most of these Christians spoke Slav dialetcs', and that 'Macedonian slav ... stood in between, as it were, the Bulgarian and Serbian tongues'. See Dakin, D., The Greek Struggle in Macedonia, 1897-1913, Thessaloniki, 1966, p. 17.

[6] Bulgarians claimed them as Bulgarians. See Kunchov, V., Izbrani proizvedeniia, Sofia, 1970, II, pp. 440-581; Brancoff, D. M. [Mishev, D.], La Macedoine et sa population Chretienne, Paris, 1905, pp. 98-247; Rumenov, V., 'Bulgarite v Makedoniia pod grutska vlast', Makedonski pregled (Sofia), 1941, No. 4, p.90. Among Western writers who accepted the Bulgarian claims were L. Lamouche, E. Kupher, G. Weigand.

Serbians claimed then as Serbs or as a 'floating mass' with no national consciousness. See Ivanic, I., Makedonija i Makedonci, Belgrade, 1908, p.32; Cvijic, J., Presmatranje o etnografiji Makedonskih Slovena, Belgrade, 1966. In the West the Serbian standpoint was accepted by L. Villari and E. Bouche de Belle.

[7] Stavrianos, op. cit., p. 518. On the development of Macedonian nationalism see especially Ristovski, B., *Makedonskiot narod i makedonskata nacija*, Skopje, 1983. Ristovski is the leading authority on Macedonian national thought and development. The two volumes contain previously published studies on the subject. See also the following works published recently in the West: Adanir, F., *Die Mazedonische Frage. Ihre Entstehung und Entwicklung bis 1908*, Wiesbaden, 1979; Dogo, M., *Lingua e Nazionalitia in Macedonia. Vicende e pensieri di profeti disarmati 1902-1903*, Milan, 1985; de Jong, J., *Die nationale Kern des makedonischen Problems. Ansätze und Grundlagen einer makedonischen Nationalbewegung (1890-1903)*, Frankfurt, 1982.

[8] See Kiselinovski, *Grckata kolonizacija*, pp. 15, 36, 37.

[9] Rumenov, op. cit., p. 90.

[10] Kiselinovski, *Grckata kolonizacija*, pp. 78-80, 90.

[11] I bid.

[12] I bid., pp. 96-97, 107.

[13] I bid., pp. 95, 96; Kofos, E., *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia*, Thessaloniki, 1964, p. 48.

[14] Kiselinovski, *Grckata kolonizacija*, p. 108. See also Abadzjev, et al., *Egejska Makedonija*, pp. 324-25; Vlahov, D., *Makedonija. Momenti od istorijata na makedonskiot narod*, Skopje, 1950, p. 345.

[15] Kiselinovski, *Grckata kolonizacija*, pp. 53, 90, 128.

[16] See note 3.

[17] I bid. See especially Kiselinovski, *Grckata kolonizacija*, pp. 113 ff.; see also Risteski, S. *Sozdavanieto, na souremeniot makedonski literaturni jazik*, Skopje, 1988, pp. 88-103, and Poplazarov, R., 'Sotsial'noe i natsional'no-osvoboditel'noe dvizhenie Makedontsev v Egejskoi Makedonii s 20-ih po 50-e gody XX veka in A. Matkovski, ed., *Macedoine*, Skopje, 1981, pp. 421-41.

[18] On the Comintern and the Macedonian question, see Katardzjev, op. cit., I, part 3 chap. I; Troebst, S., *Die 'Innere Makedonische Revolutionäre Organisation' als Objekt der Einheitsfrontstrategie von Komintern und Sowjetrussischer Diplomatie in den Jahren 1923-24*. Magister Hausarbeit, Free University, Berlin; Barker, E., *Macedonia. Its place in the Balkan Power Politics*, London, 1950, pp. 45-77.

On the CPG and its attitudes to the Macedonian national question, see Kiselinovski, S., *KPG i makedonskoto nacionalno prasanje, 1918-1940*, Skopje, 1985; Kirjazovski, R., ed. *KPG i makedonskoto nacionalno prasanje, 1918-1974*, Skopje, 1982. See also Papadopoulos, J., 'Od borbata na makedonskiot narod vo Egejska Makedonija', *Razgledi* (Skopje), XXVIII, 1976, 9, pp. 152-55, and 'Od aktivnosta na VRMO (Obedineta) vo egejskiot del na Makedonija *Razgledi*, XXXI, 1979, 1-2, pp. 108-17.

[19] Popovski, J., ed., *Makedonskoto prasanje na stranicite od*

"Rizospastis" megiu dvete vojni, Skopje. 1982, pp. 5-11.

[20] See, for instance, O Neos Rizospastic, 19 August 1933, 700, p.4; Rizospastis, 23 May 1934, 71 (7008), p. 2, and 22 July 1934, 130 (7067), p. 4.

[21] Rizospastis, 2 September 1934, 192 (7129), p. 1; 3 October 1934, 203 (7142), p. 5; 13 October 1934, 213 (7151), p. 3; 30 January 1935, 319 (7257), p. 1; 3 August 1935, 400 (7843), p. 4.

[22] I bid., 1 September 1934, 24 (351), p. 3.

[23] The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (United) was formed by the left wing of the IMRO in 1925. It was recognized by the Comintern and accepted as a partner in the Balkan Communist Federation. Until its dissolution in 1936 it sought to act as a Communist Party of Macedonia, and in fact attempted to play the part of a Communist-led Macedonian national or popular front. See Katarziew, I., ed., Predavnicite na makedonskoto delo, Skopje, 1983, pp. 5-56 (Introduction).

[24] Rizospastis, 3 July 1935, 400 (7843), p. 4.

[25] On the Macedonian question during the Second World War and its revolutionary aftermath in the Balkans, see Barker, op. cit., pp. 78-129, and British Policy in South-East Europe in the Second World War, London, 1976, pp. 184-203; Vukmanovic - Tempo, S., Borba za Balkan, Zagreb, 1981.

On Greek Communism and Macedonian nationalism during the same period, see Andonovski, H., Makedonija pod Grcija vo borbata protiv fasizmot, Skopje, 1968; Pejov, N., Makedoncite i gragianskata vojna vo Grcija, Skopje, 1987; Kofos, op. cit., pp. 113 ff.

[26] (London) Public Record Office, FO 371/43649, Chancery (Athens) to Southern Department, 12 December 1944, Encluse 14, pp.

[27] Mr Gercase Cowell, the SOE Adviser at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, provided me with the biographical information on Captain Evans in a letter of 5 June 1989.

[28] Captain Evans states in his Report that he was in the area for seven and a half months, from March to October 1944.

[29] See, for instance, (London) Public Record Office, FO 371/8566, bentenack (Athens) to Curzon, 20 August 1923, Encluse, pp. 4-5.

[30] Guerilla fighter belonging to the EAM-ELAS, the Communist-led resistance movement.

[31] See FO 371/43649, letter, 1.

[32] I bid., Minute, 13 January 1945.

[33] The place names in square brackets are Macedonian.

[34] The numbers refer to 1:100,000 topographic map of Greece, Sheets D.IV and DV.

[35] The Megali Idea was the ideology of modern Greek expansionism and imperialism.

[36] See note 30.

[37] Birth place, native country.

[38] Ilija Dimovski-Goce.

[39] A political officer in the ELAS.

[40] Guerillas belonging to the IMRO of Ivan Mihailov. They collaborated with the German and Bulgarian occupation forces.

[41] Chairman.

[42] 'Welcome!'

[43] Bulgarian policies and the activities of Bulgarian supported bands in Aegean Macedonia during the Second World War have not been adequately investigated.

[44] Svetozar Vukmanovic-Tempo.

[45] Cvetko Uzunovski-Abas.

[46] Kiro Georgievski-Goce.

[47] Ilija Dimovski-Goce.

[48] Naum Pejov.

[49] Georgi Turundziev.

[50] In Early October 1944, before it revolted and crossed into Vardar Macedonia, on 13 October, the Kostur-Lerin (Kastoria-Florina) battalion had 1,500 armed men. (Kirjazovski, op. cit., p. 76.) The Voden (Edesa) battalion, the other Macedonian unit within ELAS, followed suit and revolted on 16 October. In November, in Bitola, these two battalions and other armed Macedonians escaping from Aegean into Vardar Macedonia were organized into the first brigade of the Macedonians of Aegean Macedonia. It became known as the First Aegean Brigade and comprised four battalions (ibid., pp. 88-90) with a reported strength of 4,000-5,000 men. (Barker, op. cit., note 5, pp. 110-11.) It took part in the final operations of the war on the territory of Vardar Macedonia and was disbanded on 2 April 1945. During the Civil War in Greece many, if not most, of these men returned to Aegean Macedonia and fought in the ranks of the Democratic Army of Greece (DAG) (Kirjazovski, op. cit., pp. 85-86). See also note 57.

[51] 'The year 1944, was momentous in Macedonian wartime history. By August the first Macedonian Partisan Division was formed, by November there were seven partisan divisions in the field with a total of 66,000 troops under arms'. (National Archives (Washington), R. G. 59, Dec. File 1945-49, Box 812, No. 868.00/4-1249, Cannon,

Belgrade, to Secretary of State, 12 April 1949. See the enclosed secret report entitled 'The Macedonian Question, Greece and South Slav Federation', Appendix A ('An Account of Communist Relationships in the Balkans'), p. 21. See also 'Istorija na makedonskiot narod, III, p. 442.')

[52] Slav-Macedonian National Liberation Front (Slavjano-makedonski narodno osloboditelno front).

[53] On the basis of the available evidence it is not possible to determine the existence, in the summer of 1944, of a formal organization as SOF (Slavhano-makedonski or Slav-janski osloboditelno front), Slav-Macedonians or Slav Liberation Front. SNOF was officially dissolved by the CPG in April 1944 (see note 54). It is conceivable that after that time the term SOF was used by the Greek leadership in disguise, so to say, to entice Macedonians into EAM-ELAS.

[54] Considering the time and the circumstances in which Captain Evans wrote the report, his all too brief assessment of SNOF is surprisingly accurate and perceptive. Macedonian 'leftists', to use his well-chosen term, had sought the creation in Aegean Macedonia, as had already been done in Vardar Macedonia, had sought a separate Macedonian national liberation movement. In October 1943, the CPG reluctantly sanctioned the formation of SNOF and SNOV (Slavjano-makedonska narodno-osloboditelna vojska), Slav-Macedonian National Liberation Army, as its military army. This Macedonian version of EAM-ELAS won immediate acceptance; and indeed, widespread support among the Macedonians. Paradoxically, however, it was this very success that sealed its fate. The CPG wanted an obedient and subservient, a token, Macedonian instrument to draw the Macedonians into the fold of EAM-ELAS and thus away from the various 'free' or 'autonomous' Macedonian bands supported by the Bulgarians and Germans. It was not willing to tolerate, let alone accept as an equal partner, an authentic Macedonian movement that enjoyed popular mass following and this an independent basis of power. Consequently, from the very outset, while the movement was still in its organizational stage, the CPG severely curtailed its independence, restricted and hindered its activities; and, in the end, after a short existence of only six months, SNOF-SNOV was suppressed altogether in April 1944.

In the Summer the CPG was forced once again to conciliate the Macedonian units within ELAS. However, only two battalions were allowed to come into existence, the Voden (Edesa) in June, and the Kostur-Lerin (Kastoria-Florina) in August. Their activities were tightly controlled and their numerical strength was purposely restricted so that all other Macedonian recruits, old and new, were forced to serve in regular ELAS units. Relations between the two sides remained tense and reached crisis proportions by October, when, faced with the prospect of being liquidated, the two Macedonian battalions revolved and crossed into Vardar Macedonia. (On SNOF-SNOV see Kirjazovski, op. cit., pp. 21-33, 67-85; Barker, Macedonia, pp. 109-12, 116, and British Policy, pp. 195-203. See also pejov, N., 'Stavovite in praktikata na Gracija sprema makedonskoto nacionalno prasanje vo tekot na NOV', and Simovski, T., 'Nekoi momenti od nacionalno-osloboditelната borba na Makedoncite od Egejska Makedonija'; both in Apostolski, M., et. al.,

Razvojot i karakteristikite no narodno-osloboditelna vojna i revolucija vo Makedonija, Skopje, 1973, pp. 155-74 and pp. 217-41.)

Finally, SNOF was re-established, independently of the CPG and under the flightly modified name of NOF (Naroden osloboditelen front), National Liberation Front, as early as April 1945. At the beginning the CPG was against it; but as the outbreak of the Civil War approached it recognized NOF and, on 21 November 1946, the two concluded a unification agreement. Throughout the bloody Civil War NOF and its auxiliary organizations successfully popularized and legitimized the Communist cause, as well as the cause of Macedonians in Greece. According to Kirjazovski, by 13 January 1948, when the first congress of NOF convened, 10,147 Macedonians were fighting in the ranks of DAG (Kirjazovski, op. cit., p. 118). And C. M. Woodhouse claims that by mid-1949 the Macedonians comprised 14,000 of the estimated 20,000 strong army (Woodhouse, C. M., *The Struggle of Greece, 1944-1949*, London 1976, p. 262). On NOF see Kirjazovski, op. cit., pp. 102-34; Barker, *Macedonia*, pp. 118 ff., and the works by Andonovski, Pejov and Kofos cited in note 25.

[55] Communist Party of Greece.

[56] Southern Albania.

[57] Captain Evans developed an unusually clear understanding of the complexities of the Macedonian problem. He was fully conscious that the dominant impulse among the Macedonians was in favour of a 'free Macedonia'. Although he considered such a solution to be the 'right' one 'in the abstract', or morally, he did not think it was 'desirable' on practical grounds. And yet, he could not put forth another, more practical, clear-cut solution, for he was only too aware of the many grave difficulties that stood in the way of any other resolution of the Macedonian question. Hence, his pessimism about the future, a pessimism which, as subsequent developments in the Balkans showed, was only too well founded.

The Macedonian question, the central issue that had long divided the bourgeois Balkan states, had by the time of his prolonged stay in Aegean Macedonia, also become 'the apple of discord' among the Communists in the peninsula. The Communist parties of Bulgaria, Greece and Yugoslavia were locked in a struggle for Macedonia. This struggle continued in the turbulent aftermath of the Second World War in the Balkans; through the abortive Yugoslav-Bulgarian negotiations for a federation, the Civil War in Greece, and the Soviet-Yugoslav conflicts. Because of the opposing forces involved in this struggle, and the internal and external complications that ensued, the Macedonians failed to achieve unification; and they attained national emancipation only in Vardar or Yugoslav Macedonia. (See the works cited in note 25.) Thus, the Macedonian problem remained unresolved and it has continued to divide the Balkan states to the present day.
