

# **Refugees of the Greek Civil War: Politics and Ethnicity**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION – THE CENTURY OF THE REFUGEE.....	4
The Greek Civil War Refugees.....	7
CHAPTER 1 – ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK, SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY .....	10
1.1 Defining the Refugee .....	10
1.2 Sources .....	17
1.3 Frontiers, Borderlands and Symbolic Geography .....	18
CHAPTER 2 – CONTEXTUALIZING THE GREEK CIVIL WAR REFUGEES: THE IRON CURTAIN, GREEK FRONTIER, MACEDONIAN BORDERLAND AND THE “PEOPLE WHO HAVE FALLEN INTO THE CRACKS OF HISTORY”* .....	23
2.2. The Peculiarity of the Region and The Greek Civil War Refugees of Greek Ethnicity.....	31
2.3 Macedonia as a “Border Land” and the “Slavophone” Greek Civil War Refugees .....	38
2.1 Conclusion .....	44
CHAPTER 3 – THE GREEK CIVIL WAR REFUGEES IN YUGOSLAVIA .....	46
3.1 Why Did They Leave?- Refugees’ Accounts.....	47
3.2 Buljkes – the “Greek Republic of Yugoslavia” .....	51
The Epilogue .....	61
CONCLUSION .....	62
Bibliography .....	65

## ***INTRODUCTION – THE CENTURY OF THE REFUGEE***

*Displacements of whole populations. Refugees from famine or war. Wave after wave of emigrants, emigrating for either political or economic reasons but emigrating for survival. Ours is the century of enforced travel...the century of disappearances. The century of people helplessly seeing others, who were close to them, disappear over the horizon.*

John Berger<sup>1</sup>

Hugo Gryn was right when he claimed that the future historians would call the twentieth century, an extraordinary period of movement and upheavals, not only the century of great wars, but the century of the refugee, as well. Although movements of population had existed throughout history, it was in the twentieth century that they gained a, so far unconceivable, momentum and became more of a political and international issue than ever before. Michael Marrus, contemplating “the emergence of a new variety of collective alienation, one of the hallmarks of our time”<sup>2</sup> argued that “Refugees, people obliged by war or persecution to leave their dwellings and seek refuge abroad, have tramped across the European continent since time immemorial. Yet only in the twentieth century have European refugees become an important problem of international politics, seriously affecting relations between states.”<sup>3</sup>

The Second World War and its aftermath brought about an unprecedented flow of forced migrations. According to Malcolm Proudfoot’s calculations, sixty million European civilians had been forced to move during the war – ten times the number of

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<sup>1</sup> In Tony Kushner and Katharine Knox, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide. Global, National and Local Perspectives during the Twentieth Century*, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Marrus, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

refugees in the First World War.<sup>4</sup> Joseph Schechtman argued in 1955 that the aftermath of the war generated some twenty million displaced people – expelled, transferred, or exchanged.<sup>5</sup> This crisis brought about international responses in the form of the variety of agencies that worked alongside national governments - the League of Nations sponsored Refugee Settlement Commission (RSC), in November 1923. World War II left some 30 million displaced. The United Nations relief and Reconstruction Agency (UNRRA) helped seven million displaced people return to their countries. Replacing UNRRA, which came under criticism as it became embroiled in inter-governmental conflicts with the onset of the Cold War and was replaced by the International refugee Organization (IRO) in 1948. In 1951, the UN created The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which remained in existence ever since with its mandate renewed repeatedly.<sup>6</sup>

Modern refugee movements bore some completely novel characteristics that distinguished them from those of the previous times. First of all, their number was stunningly greater than ever before and their displacement usually lasted much longer, due to newly defined technical issues regarding citizenship and nationality. Another difference is that “a radically new form of homelessness” was created. The peculiar characteristic of the 20<sup>th</sup> century refugees is the fact that “their homelessness removed them so dramatically and so uniquely from civil society”. “Unlike vagabonds or the

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<sup>4</sup> Malcolm J. Proudfoot, *European Refugees: 1939-1952. A Study in Forced Migration Movement*, London: Faber & Faber, 1957, p. 340. (Reference in “Forced Migrations in Central European History”, Dariusz Stola, *International Migration Review*, Vol. 26, No. 2, p. 330)

<sup>5</sup> Joseph B. Schechtman, *Postwar Population Transfers in Europe, 1945-1955*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962, p. 363, (Reference in “Forced Migrations in Central European History”, Dariusz Stola, *International Migration Review*, Vol. 26, No. 2, p. 330)

<sup>6</sup> Marrus, pp. 340-344.

wandering poor (of the previous centuries), who at least were seen as part of society, refugees often found themselves entirely outside the web of national community.”<sup>7</sup>

Marrus argues that the absence of a general term to designate refugees until the 19<sup>th</sup> century proves that this category did not impinge on European consciousness at the time. One of the reasons for such a state of affairs, in his opinion, was the fact that central governments and military commanders favored population growth, and, therefore, usually welcomed refugees. Another reason is that, since “there was no generally accepted obligation to protect and succor strangers who arrived from afar, few people worried about the particular economic burdens refugees might impose”.<sup>8</sup> This, ironically, leads to the conclusion that the rise of humanitarian concerns in the twentieth century accompanied by obligations imposed on the states strengthened the (need for reassertion of national identity and) influenced emergence of “fear” of refugees and the social construct of them as “problems”. It has, consequently, brought about stronger control of the “exclusion” and “self-protective” regulations for minimizing a state’s legal responsibility, which has often made refugees’ legal status hazardous. Quite illustrative of this is Hannah Arendt’s comment regarding the state of refugees after the First World War. She argued that “the only ‘country’ the world had to offer the refugees had been the interment camps as early as the thirties” and that “all the discussions about the refugee problem revolved around how to make them deportable again”.<sup>9</sup>

In his synthesis of the history of the twentieth century, Mark Mazower also observed:

Europe may seem to be a continent of old states and peoples, yet it is in many respects very new, inventing and reinventing itself over this century

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> Hannah Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p.284.

through often convulsive and political transformation...When my grandmother was born in Warsaw, it was part of the Tsarist empire, Trieste belonged to the Habsburgs and Salonika to the Ottomans. The Germans ruled Poles, the English Ireland, France Algeria.<sup>10</sup>

## **The Greek Civil War Refugees**

Redrawing of Europe's political map took its, perhaps highest, toll in the Balkans, where various ethnicities were inextricably interspersed. In this region the doctrine of "pure national states" proved to be particularly difficult to put to practice, which by no means meant the absence of recurrent attempts in state after state to either get rid of the minority population or to assimilate it. These resulted in massive population transfers throughout the twentieth century. Greece was not immune to these processes.

Greek refugees of the Civil War were a result of the confrontation in the aftermath of the Second World War between royal governmental forces supported by Great Britain and America and the Communist movements that played the most important role in fighting German and Italian occupying troops. The conflict erupted into a bloody civil war that lasted from 1946 to 1949.<sup>11</sup> One of the consequences was a significant population transfer that included some 90,000 people (Greeks (60%) and Macedonians (40%), mostly from Northern Greece) who had to flee to the countries that belonged to the Eastern block. These were mostly Communist fighters who feared repercussions and children who were repatriated for their safety or ideological reasons.<sup>12</sup> Yugoslavia played the key role in this process, accepting the highest number of Greek

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<sup>10</sup> Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999, p. IX.

<sup>11</sup> See Richard Clogg, *A History of Greece*, pp.

refugees (more than 11,000 children, only<sup>13</sup>). After the confrontation with Information Bureau, most of them were repatriated. A number of refugees settled in the new host countries and others returned to Greece only when they were allowed in the late 1970s and in the 1980s (Macedonians mostly opted for Yugoslav Macedonia). The destiny of these people was succinctly expressed by one of them: “We left for three days and returned after thirty years”.<sup>14</sup>

The issue of Greek refugees of the Civil War is a very complex one and it can be put into different and mutually intertwined conceptual frameworks. Firstly, we can regard these refugees from a larger historical perspective of trends of population movements in the twentieth century. Secondly, we can perceive them as “part and parcel” of the specificity of the historical legacy of the region of Southeastern Europe with its multi-ethnicity and multi-culturalism. Thirdly, we can regard them as a “product” of specific geopolitical position of Greece, which was at the time a country illustrative of the Cold War divide. The final possible level of observation is from the “frog’s perspective”, i.e. a microhistorical representation of the psychology of these people, their encounter with new countries and new cultures, establishing new social ties, etc.

Whereas there are quite a few microhistorical studies depicting the life of these people, their place is rather peripheral in the works of the authors who deal with international perspective and mostly focus on diplomatic relations of Greece with other countries. Frequently, what interest has been shown by historians has been in the issues of policies involved, principally with reference to the relations between states, the

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<sup>12</sup> See *Historical Atlas of East Central Europe*, Paul Robert Magocsi, “Population movements, 1944-1948”, p. 168, University of Washington Press, Seattle & London, 1993; Michael R. Marrus, *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.

<sup>13</sup> Milan Ristovic, *Dug povratak kući*, Beograd: Udruženje za drustvenu istoriju, 1998, p. 187.

<sup>14</sup> Riki van Boeschoten, “The Impossible Return: Coping with Separation and the Reconstruction of Memory in the Wake of the Civil War”, in Mark Mazower (ed.), *After the War Was Over...* p. 122.

refugees not being the focus of their academic enterprise. Authors dealing with a wider context of global changes have almost indiscriminately failed to analyze the position of the Greek Civil War refugees in their works mentioning them at best in a few sentences.<sup>15</sup>

The purpose of this thesis is to fill the gap placing Greek Civil War refugees into a larger scheme, which is necessary if we want to understand the narrower national and local developments and, in doing so, to disentangle the intricate web of the reasons that led these people to leave their country. I would argue that, in case of both Greeks and Macedonians fleeing the war, the ethnical component was present, due to the peculiarity and historical legacy of the Balkan region. Thus, most of these people cannot be regarded as mere political refugees, without going into a deeper analysis of their background and conditions.

In the second section of my thesis I deal with the life of the refugees that ended up in Yugoslavia using Buljkes, an exclusively Greek refugees' settlement, as a study case. Although the issue of their position in Greek-Yugoslav relations and in the Cold War confrontation has been tackled, a little effort has been made to describe the lives of these people during the exile.<sup>16</sup> One of my aims is to depict the specific type of community that emerged in Buljkes and circumstances that surrounded its existence.

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<sup>15</sup> For international perspective see, for example: Baerentzen, Lars, John O. Iatrides, Ole L. Smith (eds.), *Studies in the history of the Greek Civil War, 1945-1949*, Copenhagen : Museum Tusculanum Press, 1987; Amikam Nachmani, *International Intervention in the Greek Civil War. The United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans, 1947-1952*, New York : Praeger, 1990.

For microhistorical perspective see, for example: Boeschoten, "The Impossible Return: Coping with Separation and the Reconstruction of Memory in the Wake of the Civil War"; Mando Dalianis and Mark Mazower (90-104); S. Troebst, *Evacuation to a Cold Country*.

<sup>16</sup> Milan Ristic's is the only scholar who has dealt with this issue in his article "Eksperiment Buljkes" in *Godisnjak za drustvenu istoriju* IV/2-3, 1997.

# ***CHAPTER 1 – ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK, SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY***

## **1.1 Defining the Refugee**

*The term “refugee” shall apply to...any person who owing to a well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.”<sup>17</sup>*

Article 1A, paragraph 2 in the 1951 Geneva Convention and Protocol Relating to the States of Refugees

*The right to leave one’s country is an attribute of personal liberty.*

Socrates

*Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.*

Before proceeding to the main section of my thesis, I will try to offer the analytical framework and to define, as precisely as possible, the category of persons I am concerned with. In the twentieth century definitions and legislation regarding the ambiguous term “refugee” became increasingly important, since they can often make the difference between life and death. Specifically, in the aftermath of the Second World War the international community faced a pressing need for a precise and clear definition of a refugee. The definition that I have started this section with was accepted by the United Nations Convention on the Status of Refugees in 1951. It is the first internationally accepted one in the post-war period and the one that has served as a standard benchmark for establishing refugee status ever since. Although it is beyond the time scope of the

subject of my thesis, it is still rather relevant because it emerged as a result of the Europe's post-War experience and formulated the notion of refugees prevailing at the time.

As opposed to voluntary migration, refugees are classified under forced migrations, which, apart from them, include population transfers, expulsions, deportations, resettlements, ethnic cleansing, and genocide.<sup>17</sup> The criteria that differentiate between refugees and immigrants are sometimes very questionable and they have been a subject to a lot of academic and political debate. One of the main analytical tools in differentiating the two is examining “push and pull factors”, i.e. factors that stimulate or influence the migration decision.<sup>18</sup> E. F. Kunz argues that whereas immigrants may be lured to migrate to another country by opportunities for a better life, refugees do not have the same element of choice. “It is the reluctance to uproot oneself, and the absence of positive original motivations to settle elsewhere, which characterizes all refugee decisions and distinguishes them from the voluntary migrants.” This *is* to an extent a subjective interpretation, as Kunz admits that “the validity of fear for one’s safety which is the creator of all refugees can after all never be tested”.<sup>20</sup> However, I would argue that, in the case of Civil War refugees, fear for one’s life as a motivational force to flee the country of permanent settlement is undeniable. Kunz’s suggestions are thus valid for the topic of my thesis, as well as Joly’s and Cohen’s distinction between immigrants, who “cherish the myth of return but in the final analysis the decision to go

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<sup>17</sup> *Convention and Protocol Relating to the States of Refugees* (1951 Geneva Convention, Article 1A, paragraph 2), *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 63, No. 2 (April, 1969), p. 390.

<sup>18</sup> For a short survey and definitions of these types of forced population transfers see: Alfred J. Rieber, *Forced Migration in Central and Eastern Europe, 1939-1950*, ..., p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> See “Table 2.1: Force and choice in outward and return migrations” and “Table 2.2: Force and choice in five components of migration”, in Nicholas Van Hear, *New Diasporas. The mass exodus, dispersal and regrouping of migrant communities*, RRRR, p. 42 and p. 44.

home remains within their control” and refugees, for whom “the possibility of returning home is less feasible”.<sup>21</sup> According to the Article 33 of Geneva Convention, which defined man-made causes of migration, Civil War is one of the legitimate reasons for leaving one’s country, whether it is ethnic or religious war or fight for power. Civil War refugees are regarded as *de facto* refugees, push factor in their case being “War: mortal danger” and pull factor “Safe Haven: survival”.<sup>22</sup>

Another important issue is the nature of persecution according to which the typology of refugees is delineated. We differentiate among refugees who are victims of religious persecution, political persecution and those who are persecuted due to being national minorities or the stateless.<sup>23</sup> The main concern of my thesis are persons who were regarded as political refugees. I will argue that in this specific instance, even though they were formally political refugees they can be interpreted as ethnic refugees as well: in the case of Greeks who fled the country there is an obvious continuity between them and the Lausanne agreement on forced population transfer between Greece and Turkey in the 1920s; in case of Slav Macedonians the issue of ethnicity is even more conspicuous. However, they were still formally regarded as political refugees and their acceptance and status in Yugoslavia was granted according to this classification. Therefore, there is a need to make clear what an ethnic and what a political refugee is and what the international laws for accepting political refugees are.

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<sup>20</sup> E. F. Kunz, “The Refugee in Flight”, *International Migration Review*, Vol. 7 (Summer 1973), pp. 130-136.

<sup>21</sup> Daniele Joly and Robin Cohen (eds.), *Reluctant Hosts: Europe and Its Refugees*, Aldershot: Avebury, 1989, p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> See “Figure 2.2: Forced vs. Voluntary Migration” and “Table 2.2: Forced Migration: Push and Pull Factors” in Andreas Demuth, “Some Conceptual Thoughts on Migration Research” in Biko Agozino (ed.), *Theoretical and Methodological Issues in Migration Research. Interdisciplinary, intergenerational and international perspectives*, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2000, p. 35 and p. 37.

<sup>23</sup> See Aristide R. Zolberg, Astri Suhrke, Sergio Aguayo, *Escape from Violence: Conflict and the Refugee Crisis in the Developing World*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989, pp. 5-16.

Hannah Arendt's theory of ethnic refugees is rather applicable to my case study. She argued that in the system of nation states it was implied from the very beginning that "only nationals could be citizens, only people of the same national origin could enjoy the full protection of legal institutions, that persons of different nationality needed some law of exception until or unless they were completely assimilated and divorced from their origin".<sup>24</sup> It proved very difficult to apply this formula in multi-ethnic states, which was more often than not the case of the Balkan states, in which different ethnicities were so inextricably interspersed that it proved impossible to form viable, ethnically homogeneous political entities. The gap between the formula and the social realities generated enormous tension, out of which emerged two "victim groups, the minorities and the stateless."<sup>25</sup> The minorities were persons insisting on a nationality different from that of the state in which they lived (often nationality of the neighbouring country). As the doctrine of nationally guaranteed rights came to be equated with the notion of rights guaranteed to nations only, the minorities were thus turned into political misfits.<sup>26</sup>

Legal definition of a political refugee adopted by the Institute of International Law at the Brussels Conference in 1936 was the following one: "those who have left or been forced to leave their country for political reasons, who have been deprived of its diplomatic protection and have not acquired the nationality or diplomatic protection of any other state".<sup>27</sup> Wander claimed in 1951 that at least seventy million persons had been uprooted as a result of political, military or ideological dispute since the First World War

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<sup>24</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973, p. 290.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 275.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 268.

<sup>27</sup> Louise W. Holborn, "The Legal Status of Political Refugees, 1920-1938, *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (October 1938), p. 680.

and that “they can no longer be looked upon as displaced persons or as refugees in the narrower sense, but as political emigrants”.<sup>28</sup>

For political refugees freedom of movement is fundamental – the freedom to leave one’s country, which was for the first time incorporated into national law in the Magna Carta, and the freedom to enter another country or the right for asylum. These basic human rights are embodied in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the General Assembly in 1948. Article 14 states that:

1. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution,
2. This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.<sup>29</sup>

Also Article 13, paragraph 2, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares:

Everyone has the right to leave any country including his own and to return to his country.<sup>30</sup>

These Articles were supplemented by Article 3, paragraph 2 of the Resolution 2312 in 1967:

No person referred to...shall be subjected to measures such as rejection at the frontier or, if he has already entered the territory in which he seeks asylum, expulsion or compulsory return to any state where he may be subjected to persecution.<sup>31</sup>

Asylum is one of the oldest institutions of the international law and the fundamental one for protection of a refugee, since it enables him to survive in the first place and lays *ipso facto*, and sometimes *ipso jure*, the basis for any further action

<sup>28</sup> Wander 1951 in Gunther Beyer, “The Political Refugee: 35 Years Later”, *International Migration Review*, Vol. 15, No. 1 / 2, Refugees Today. (Spring-Summer, 1981), p. 26.

<sup>29</sup> United Nations: Territorial Asylum, *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 62, No. 3. (July, 1968), p. 822.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 822.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 823.

relevant to the asylee.<sup>32</sup> The right of asylum, by which a state can accord hospitality and protection to political refugees and refuse to expatriate them even on demand of their state of origin has been widely practiced and has been the basis for the immediate relief of vast numbers of refugees.<sup>33</sup> Nonetheless, it has often been asserted that this right has not been accorded often enough and that there has been a huge discrepancy between the number of those seeking it and the number of asylums granted. According to some authors this discrepancy stems from important characteristics of refugee movements in the twentieth century. Firstly, modern refugees have usually been a result of violent expulsions and, thus, it was usually masses of people and not individuals that one had to deal with. The other important determinant of asylum policy has been the fact that the institutions of nation-states have been too narrow a gateway to accept these masses of people.<sup>34</sup>

Therefore, in practice, the fulfillment of the basic human right for asylum is a complex and often impossible process. According to Paul Weiss, from the legal point of view, this is due to the fact that in classic international law nationality is considered as the link between the individual and international law:

In the case of the refugee, this link is not affective, it has been broken...Refugees may be stateless or not. It is not their nationality status but the absence of protection by a state which is a determining element of their refugee character. It would, therefore, in the case of refugees and stateless persons who have been called *flotsam, res nullius*, 'a vessel on the open sea not sailing under any flag', be more proper to speak of *de facto* and *de jure* unprotected persons.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> See Gilbert Jaeger, "Refugee Asylum: Policy and Legislative Developments", *International Migration Review*, Vol. 15, No. ½, Refugees Today. (Spring-Summer, 1981), p. 52.

<sup>33</sup> Gaynor I. Jacobson, "The Refugee Movement: An Overview", *International Migration Review*, Vol. 11, No. 4. (Winter, 1977), pp. 514-523.

<sup>34</sup> See Alfons Sollner, Brian D. Urquhart, "The Politics of Asylum", *New German Critique*, No. 46, Special Issue on Minorities in German Culture. (Winter, 1989), pp. 141-154.

At the period that I am concerned with the situation was additionally aggravated by the fact that there was nothing close to the universal consensus on the granting of territorial asylum, due to different legislations or conflicting geopolitical interests.

In this situation, not surprisingly, the Cold War ideological cleavage between the East and the West existent at the time proved to be helpful to certain categories of refugees, since the Western countries were more than willing to accept non-communist emigrants who fled their Eastern European states due to persecution and vice versa. Yugoslavia, therefore, regarded granting asylum to Greek communists as a gesture of international communist solidarity and as an obligation of helping the communist struggle against “monarcho-fascists” for establishing a state of people’s democracy. However, since Yugoslavia was one of the members of the United Nations the acceptance of refugees could not be regarded as an internal affair of the Yugoslav state solely, but rather as a matter that relegated to the international law.

The UN was introduced into the Greek Civil War by establishment of the UN Special Committee on the Balkans (UNSCOB) in October 1947 by a resolution of the General Assembly. The initiative came from America and it was tolerated by Russia. The committee was active in the period until 1952 and its main task was observation of Greece’s relations with its neighboring states Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania regarding their assistance to the Greek guerilla forces. The UN supervision was supposed to guarantee that the conflict would remain a civil war and turn into a Balkan or global conflict. In December 1947 three additional subcommittees were appointed: the first one for assembling, installing and operating the observation groups; the second one for discussion of political problems and implementation of conciliatory role between Greece

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<sup>35</sup> Paul Weiss, “The International Protection of Refugees”, *The American Journal of International Law*,

and the neighboring countries. Sub-Committee 3 was responsible for refugees and minorities – its duty was interrogating refugees and preparing occasional studies of the question of refugees and minorities.<sup>36</sup>

## 1.2 Sources

The primary sources I use are the documents of The Archives of Serbia and Montenegro, Fond of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. I used materials of the Commission for International Relations regarding Yugoslav-Greek relations. Among these, there are the documents on the Communist Party of Greece and its relations with the Yugoslav regime, documents on EAM and ELAS, and most importantly Materials on Aegean Macedonia and Greek Refugees in the period from 1944 to 1973. The last fond proved to be very useful since it contained information about Buljkes settlement and the organization of social life in it, as well as the Memorandum of the Buljkes refugees sent to the UN Security Council and numerous statements of Slav Macedonians. It also offers a rather detailed account of the Macedonian question at the time and Yugoslav involvement in the Greek Civil War.

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Vol. 48, No. 2. (April, 1954, pp. 193-221.

<sup>36</sup> For more details see Amikam Nachmani, *International Intervention in the Greek Civil War. The United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans, 1947-1952*, New York : Praeger, 1990 pp. 32-44.

### 1.3 Frontiers, Borderlands and Symbolic Geography

Hamlet: *Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in the shape of a camel?*

Polonius: *By the mass, and 'tis like a camel indeed.*

Hamlet: *Methinks it is like a weasel.*

Polonius: *It is backed like a weasel.*

Hamlet: *Or like a whale?*

Polonius: *Very like a whale.*

Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, III. ii. 401-6<sup>37</sup>

My slightly unorthodox opening of the subchapter is due to the resemblance I find between the content of this dialogue and an attempt to come up with an exact and precise definition of the aforementioned elusive concepts. My intention here is, therefore, to offer a brief survey of the main theories and interpretations of these concepts that I rely on throughout the thesis.

The seminal work in the field of studying frontiers was Frederick Jackson Turner's essay "The Significance of the Frontier in American History". The field of research has since developed into a multidisciplinary and comparative one as different interpretations of the concept emerged. Among the most prominent is one offered by the *Annales*, particularly Lucien Febvre, who emphasizes the spatial concept connected with the rise of the centralized state (it developed according to the French or Jacobin model). Another approach stemmed from the emergence of the symbolic geographies, i. e. the construction of imaginary borders between civilizations. The latest trends are those of redefining space and frontiers in terms of linguistic and social context. Thus, the main development in the field has been the shift "from line and place to process, symbol and mythology".<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> From George Schopflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe: 1945-1992*, Oxford, Cambridge: Blackwell, 1993, p. 5.

<sup>38</sup> Alfred J. Rieber, "Frontiers in History", *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, pp. 5813-5817.

Alfred J. Rieber defines frontiers as “broad bands and zones rather than linear boundaries, moving rather than well established, highly contested, shifting sites of intense military activity, cross-cultural exchange and migration, lacking clear-cut ethno-linguistic, religious or, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries national justification.”<sup>39</sup> He sees frontier as a dynamic concept, which opposed to linear boundary, signifies space (the contested lands between rival empires or states), process (the movement of peoples through colonization, resettlement, and deportation) and symbol. Symbolically, the frontier represents “the dividing line between civilization and barbarism, sites of religious or ideological mission, cradles of heroic myths”.<sup>40</sup>

Rieber also identifies the three essential components of each frontier society:

- 1) the geographical-territorial - conceived as a zone rather than a line with different carrying capacities, attractiveness and resources;
- 2) the cultural, in terms of the interpretation between two previously distinct societies, one indigenous and the other intrusive; and,
- 3) the operational, the process of opening and closing, the former dated by the arrival of representatives of the intrusive society and the latter, more complex stage because it was variable and potentially reversible...<sup>41</sup>

He distinguishes among three different types of frontiers – “consolidated state frontiers; dynamic frontiers of advancing settlements; and symbolic frontiers”<sup>42</sup> – the features of the three often overlapping. The common characteristic of all three is “the

<sup>39</sup> John A. Mears, “Analyzing the Phenomenon of Borderlands from Comparative and Cross-cultural Perspectives”, [http://www.historycooperative.org/proceedings/interactions/mears.html#\\_edneref](http://www.historycooperative.org/proceedings/interactions/mears.html#_edneref), 27.03.2007

<sup>40</sup> Rieber, “The Comparative Ecology of Complex Frontiers”, p. 178.

<sup>41</sup> Rieber, “Frontiers in History”, p. 5815.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 5813.

existence of zones of influence and exchange on both sides of the real imaginary line that presumes to divide them”.<sup>43</sup>

A number of scholars argue that the concept of a borderland must be carefully differentiated from that of a frontier. In the third chapter I use Owen Latimore’s distinction of frontiers as “the outer limit of zones on the margins of socioeconomic systems that represented their optimal limit and growth” as opposed to borderlands.<sup>44</sup> This theory is applicable to the Balkan space where each of the states’ “optimal limit and growth” has been the one represented by its name plus the attribute “Greater”. I use the term borderland to designate the zones of intersection among the “frontiers” of different national states. This perception agrees with Evan Haefeli’s understanding of a borderland “as a place where autonomous peoples of different cultures are bound together by a greater multi-imperial [or more recently multi-national] context”.<sup>45</sup> I found Michel Baud and Willem Van Schendel’s analysis useful, as well. They argue that borderlands emerged as a “problem” with the emergence of modern nation-states in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. They reject the *Annales* state-centered approach and adopt “a cross-border perspective, in which the region on both sides of a border is taken as the unit of analysis”. They maintain, furthermore, that borderlands represent “unique transnational patterns of interaction shaped in part by complicated relationships between regional elites, the common folk, and the two state governments whose authority meets at the political divide”<sup>46</sup>.

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<sup>43</sup> Alfred J. Rieber, “Analyzing the Phenomenon of Borderlands from Comparative and Cross-cultural Perspectives”, [http://www.historycooperative.org/proceedings/interactions/mears.html#\\_edneref2](http://www.historycooperative.org/proceedings/interactions/mears.html#_edneref2), accessed on 21 May 2007.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Evan Haefeli, “A Note on the Use of North American Borderlands”, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 104, No. 4 (October 1999), pp. 1222, 1224, in Rieber, *Analyzing the Phenomenon of Borderlands*.

<sup>46</sup> Michel Baud and Willem Van Schendel, “Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands”, *Journal of World History*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Fall 1997), p. 216, in Rieber, op. cit.

Before I proceed to the next chapter in which I deal with notions of “Southeastern Europe”, “the Balkans” and the symbolic frontiers, I need to briefly touch upon the concept of symbolic geographies, which encompasses all the aforementioned ones.<sup>47</sup> Symbolic geography, namely, developed as a transdisciplinary field under the influence of late modern and postmodern critiques of discourses which shattered all the previous claims for hegemonic representations of the world and under the influence of Edward Said’s seminal work in the field *Orientalism. Western Conceptions of the Orient* in 1978.<sup>48</sup> Said’s book by “unsettling received oppositions between the Orient and the Occident, reading literary texts as historical and theoretical events, and cross-hatching scholarly monographs with political tracts...forced open the authoritative modes of knowing the Other”<sup>49</sup>. The latest trends have been dominated by “the insistence on space and spatiality, (dis)location, locality, and territoriality in the study of individual and collective identities...discussions on mental mapping, facilitated by a social and cultural turn in the cognitive and neuro-sciences...the rediscovery of sacred/mythical/eschatological geographies”.<sup>50</sup>

The primary aim of scholars dealing with symbolic geography is to delimit a specific geo-cultural space. Maria Todorova argues that regions should be perceived as systems of categories. Thus, Europe can be thought of as “the nexus of several complex networks of meaning in which it plays often quite different and far from commensurate

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<sup>47</sup> For the literature on the notion of *symbolic geography* see: Edward Said, *Orientalism. Western Conceptions of the Orient*, Penguin Books, 1978, as the seminal work in the field. For more specific notions of symbolic geographies of Eastern Europe, Southeastern Europe and the Balkans see: Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997; Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilization on the mind of the Enlightenment*, Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1994; George Schoepflin and Nancy Wood (eds.), *In Search of Eastern Europe*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989; Michael D. Kennedy (ed.), *Envisioning Eastern Europe. Postcommunist Cultural Studies*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994.

<sup>48</sup> Sorin Antohi, “Introduction: Symbolic Geographies, Comparative Histories”, in *East Central Europe/ L’Europe du Centre-Est. Eine wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift*, Vol. 32, 2005/ 1-2, p. 1.

roles: of geographic area but also of economic and administrative powerhouse, of historical and intellectual idea, and, increasingly, of an ideal”<sup>51</sup>. An important concept in symbolic geography is that of mental maps, seen as “*recipes, forms, or schemata* into which we put our impressions in the course of the life-long human attempt to give meaning and order to the world”; they are not only mathematical, but may be spiritual, political or moral, as well.<sup>52</sup> Hayden White characterizes a mental map as a “conceptual apparatus by which facts are ordered”, and which is an “implicit shaping device”<sup>53</sup>. The term coincides to a large extent with the term coined by non-European post-colonialist scholars – “textualizing the world” – which refers to the mental construction of the globe and its discursive sub-division to fit the European vision.<sup>54</sup>

Nevertheless, there is the notion of actual historical legacies, which cannot be overlooked. Todorova sees a region as a complex product of the interplay of different historical periods, traditions and legacies. Legacies are distinct from traditions in their encompassing of both the good and the bad that is bequeathed by history and by the lack of conscious choices of the elements from the past. In the following chapter I will look in more detail into the specific historical legacies of the Balkans and the results of their interplay with the “mental maps” of “Western” politicians and specific ideological circumstances.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Gyan Prakash, “*Orientalism Now*”, *History and Theory*, Vol. 34, No. 3, 1995, p. 199.

<sup>50</sup> Antohi, op. cit. p. 2.

<sup>51</sup> Maria Todorova, “Spacing Europe: What is a Historical Region?”, in *East Central Europe/ L’ Europe du Centre-Est. Eine wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift*, Vol. 32, 2005/ 1-2, p. 64.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Rieber, “Changing Concepts and Constructions of Frontiers: A Comparative Historical Approach”, <http://abimpero.net/scgi-bin/aishow.pl?state=showa&idart=636&idlang=1&Code=>, accessed on 21 May 2007.

<sup>55</sup> Todorova, “Spacing Europe”, pp. 66-68.

## **CHAPTER 2 – CONTEXTUALIZING THE GREEK CIVIL WAR REFUGEES: THE IRON CURTAIN, GREEK FRONTIER, MACEDONIAN BORDERLAND AND THE “PEOPLE WHO HAVE FALLEN INTO THE CRACKS OF HISTORY”\***

*This is the Balkans, a land of dreams,  
Among the strong walls, between the good and the evil,  
Here everybody can be a villain or a brother,  
And each fifty years a war breaks out.*

*This land was created by warriors and poets,  
And by different Gods alike.*

*This is the Balkans, a sweet-smelling flower,  
An utter enigma to the whole world,  
And everybody can be a villain or a brother,  
Each fifty years a war breaks out.<sup>56</sup>*

*And what about the Balkans? I don't mean to defend them, nor ignore their merits. Their taste for devastation, for internal chaos, a world like a bordello in flames; their sardonic perspective on cataclysms past or imminent; theirs is the idleness of insomniacs or assassins...<sup>57</sup>*  
Emil Cioran

Southeastern Europe is, indeed, a complex product of the interplay of its historical traditions and legacies with uniquely confrontational ethnic nationalism that is often assumed to set this region apart from Europe as “the Balkans”. The most important

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\* The phrase is taken from Jane Kramer, *Unsettling Europe*, New York, 1981, p. xiii, in Marrus, p. 12.

<sup>56</sup> Lyrics of the song *Ovo je ovde Balkan* by *Bajaga i instruktori* emphasize the antive's notion of the specificity of the Balkans which set it apart from “the whole world”. (translation from Serbian is mine, as well as elsewhere in the text, unless specified differently)

<sup>57</sup> Emil Cioran, reference form “Russia and the Virus of Freedom” in Jacques Rupnik, *The Other Europe*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989, p. 21.

factors in shaping the history of the region were the Byzantine and the Ottoman legacies. The Ottoman elements are usually perceived as the ones which distinguish it from the rest of Europe – “Ottoman legacy of military domination, political corruption, and religious tolerance, from Northwestern Europe with its Atlantic connections, political advantages, and religious intolerance”<sup>58</sup>. Another important factor is the fact that this region in the early modern period represented a collection of imperial borders, disconnected from each other and too far from the Ottoman or Habsburg cores for a single administrative regime on either side. After the First World War five new or expanded states with greater ethnic diversity compared to the model of a nation-state in nineteenth-century Europe, emerged to incorporate all of the Ottoman and Habsburg territories.<sup>59</sup> The ethnic divisions have proved to be a source of numerous ethnic conflicts ever since. The interplay of the internal dynamics of the region and foreign intervention, brought about massive population transfers during the two world wars and their aftermaths, as a result of attempts to shape the Southeastern political space according to the Western European nation-state model according to which ethnicity should be matched with territory. The additional burden to the region was the emergence of the Cold War divide in the wake of the Second World War.

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<sup>58</sup> John R. Lampe, “Reconnecting the Twentieth-century Histories of Southeastern Europe, in John Lampe and Mark Mazower (eds.), *Ideologies and National Identities. The Case of Twentieth-Century Southeastern Europe*, Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

## 2.1 The Greek Civil War - Political and Ideological Context

*Apparently, only when they accepted the abnormal as normal were they able to understand the Greek way of life.*<sup>60</sup>

*The establishment of UNSCOB was a product of the US conviction that the Greeks were incapable of managing their own affairs.*<sup>61</sup>

Greece became embroiled in the World War II in October 1940 when it was attacked by Italy. The Italian invasion was repulsed, but after the German forces had swept through the Balkans, Greece was occupied and partitioned between the Italians, Germans and the Bulgarians in May 1941. After the occupation, the King and its government left the country. The first resistance movement was organized by the Communist Party of Greece (Kommounistiko Komma tis Elladas, or KKE). Under its umbrella, the National Liberation Front (Ethnikon Apelevtherotikon Stratos, or EAM) and a guerrilla body, the National People's Liberation Army (Ethnikos Laikos Apelevtherotikos Stratos, or ELAS) were established. From 1943 a rival right-wing resistance body, the National Republican Greek League (Ethnikos Dimokratikos Ellinikos Syndesmos, or EDES) was supported by the British, who feared Communist takeover in Greece. A coalition government was formed in May 1944, but in December the civil war openly erupted. The Greek army, with a massive support from the British, crushed ELAS. The conflict was to be settled by the Varkiza agreement of February 1945. However, the government failed to abide to its commitment to pardon the members of EAM and ELAS and unleashed what has come to be known as "white terror". Nor did the Left fully complied with its obligation to surrender all weapons. The remnants of EAM and ELAS retreated to the northern Greek

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<sup>60</sup> Amikam Nachmani, *International Intervention in the Greek Civil War: the United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans, 1947-1952*, New York : Praeger, 1990, p. 6.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

mountains to conduct guerrilla warfare from there. In December 1946 they renamed themselves the Greek Democratic Army (GDA) and were under the control of the KKE. They were assisted by the Communist regimes of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania. It was the onset of the bloodiest third round of the Greek Civil War. In 1947 the Truman Doctrine of “support for free peoples who were resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities, or by outside pressure” was enacted and the Americans took over aiding Greek right-wing from the British. The war ended after the KKE sided with Stalin during the 1948 clash between Yugoslavia and the USSR and after Tito closed the borders and cut his support to the Greek Communists.<sup>62</sup>

“From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent.” In his famous 1946 speech Winston Churchill encapsulated the mental/symbolical re-mapping of Europe as two ideologically opposing camps – Eastern Europe and Western Europe. By drawing the curtain on the line that divided them it was possible to darken the lands behind, or in Churchill’s words “these Eastern States of Europe”. Thus, a symbolic ideological frontier was created along with “the Other” beyond the line. “The Other” were all states in which Communists, backed by the Soviet troops, were trying to establish “totalitarian control” over society. And the line was, with an air of ease, sketched by Churchill himself together with Stalin four years earlier when sharing the postwar spheres of influence. According to what came to be known as the percentage agreement he offered Stalin 50 percent in Yugoslavia and Hungary, 75 percent in Bulgaria and 90 percent in Romania.<sup>63</sup> High percentages in

<sup>62</sup> See John O. Iatrides, “Civil War, 1945-1949: National and International Aspects, in John O. Iatrides (ed.), *Greece in the 1940s: A Nation in Crisis*, Hanover : University Press of New England, 1981, p. 207 and Richard Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, c1992, pp. 126-141.

<sup>63</sup> See John Lewis Gaddis, *We Know Now: Rethinking Cold War History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Bulgaria and Romania were Churchill's "payment" for 90 percents in Greece, which traditionally represented Great Britain's influence zone and which was important for the continuity of the strategic line of its military and political influence in the Mediterranean. Thus, due to its geostrategic importance, Greece was among the few Southeastern European countries to escape Soviet control, together with Turkey and Yugoslavia. The outcome of the Greek Civil War was one of the main preoccupations of Britain's foreign policy in the after-war period. The Communists could not be allowed to take over the power in the state. Consequently, Greece became a Cold War frontier between symbolic political traditions of Western Europe and the Communist countries in its surroundings. In 1946 Churchill maintained that: "Athens alone – Greece with its immortal glories – is free." <sup>64</sup>

Foreign intervention in the Greek Civil War and Greece's place in the Cold War have been substantially analyzed. In the following, I would like to point to one aspect that, I believe, has been neglected so far and which is connected to my argument concerning the lack of basic understanding of the Balkans' realities and responsibility carelessness on the part of Western politicians. The Greek Civil Refugees are a good example in this respect: they were regarded as an international affair as long as they could be used as a means of blackmailing Yugoslavia; yet, after the thawing of relations between Yugoslavia and Greece, they were forgotten very quickly and had no one to support their cause.

In this subchapter, I argue that Churchill's idealization of Greece, so characteristic of the British, proved to be at discrepancy with the reality during the actual meetings of the two "civilizations". It is an excellent illustration of "the West's" simplified and

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<sup>64</sup> Winston Churchill, "The Iron Curtain", *Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat: The Speeches of Winston*

uninformed notion of the Balkans. My attention is not to belittle the primacy of the political and ideological gains that were clearly at stake during the Cold War. I would rather like to point out the aspect which played a minor role, but still can be interesting. Namely, I find that the specific historical legacy of the region, in this case Greece, presented a considerable hindrance to the process of setting “the land of immortal glories free” and in the attempts of putting it on the symbolic map of Western Europe by simple implementation of a Western political system. I will try to document the discrepancy between Greece as Western perception and Greece as a Balkan state with its specific historical legacies. I argue that, in the Western symbolic representation of Greece, the country played the role of an older type of frontier, different from the Cold War ideological one – the frontier understood in the F. Turner’s sense of the word, but applied to European conditions – the line differentiating between the civilized and the “barbarian” world. Aware of the possible connotations, I want to point out that I use the term “barbarian” quite tentatively and in a metaphorical sense.

In order to document this perception, I will use the records to the UNSCOB observers in Greece. Going through these documents, one comes across stunning evidence of the Western perception of Greek mentality. Describing the obstacles these people met with during the Commission’s work in Greece, the historian Amikam Nachmani takes their comments on Greek mentality as evidence of their hardship. It was the sheer matter-of-factness of this account that struck me.<sup>65</sup> There is many an evidence of British and American officials being appalled with “inherent Greek defects” on which

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Churchill, ed. David Cannadine, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989, pp. 303-5.

<sup>65</sup> See Chapter 3, “The Observers Reports and the Hardships of Observation”, in Nachmani, *International Intervention in the Greek Civil War*, pp. 59-76.

they blamed the inefficiency of Greek politicians and, subsequently the crises in the country during the Civil War. Amikam Nachmani states that:

Greek internal politics and the incompetence manifest in each government move produced a sense of helplessness and despair, as well as dislike and distaste, among British and American officials. Incurrigibility was the prevalent shibboleth regarding the situation in Greece and the slim chances of improvement, and many of the problems were attributed to inalterable Greek characteristics.<sup>66</sup>

Konstantin Tsaldaris, the leader of the Greek Right and the minister of foreign affairs was characterized as lacking “that extra 10 percent of gray matter that distinguishes the statesman from a politician”.<sup>67</sup> Disappointment with Greek political reality led some British officials to conclude that it may be “wrong if we try to impose British standards or methods on this mercurial and semi-Oriental people”<sup>68</sup> and that they “may be judging the competence of the Greek Government by standards too high for this part of the world”<sup>69</sup>.

Nevertheless, the shock caused by the encounter with the Greek mentality led one British ambassador to contemplate on the possibility that it maybe could be controlled only by a dictatorship:

Even at its best Greece will afford a happy hunting-ground for those who seek evidence of muddle, incompetence, evasion, corruption, political persecution and lack of planning and control. So long as Greece remains truly democratic these things will exist in greater or lesser degree, and this is all to the advantage of the Communists...Only under a totalitarian regime of Left or Right could such evidence be suppressed. I refuse to be such a pessimist as to agree with those who hold that only under a totalitarian regime can the defects of the Greek character be minimized.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Nachmani, p. 6.

<sup>67</sup> British Embassy, Athens, to Foreign Office, 2 April 1948, PRO, FO 371/72241/R4690; British Embassy, Athens, to Ernest Bevin, 25 February 1948, FO 371/72240/R2576, in Nachmani, p. 6.

<sup>68</sup> Ambassador Norton to Bevin, 3 January 1947, PRO, FO 371/66994/R143, IN Nachmani, p. 9.

<sup>69</sup> Paul Porter to Dept. of State, Athens, 17 February 1947, Ethridge Papers, no. 3842, in Nachmani, p. 9.

<sup>70</sup> Sir Clifford Norton, British Ambassador to Athens, to Ernest Bevin, 3 January 1947, PRO, FO 371/66994/R143, in Nachmani, p. 7.

I believe that this short passage suggestively depicts the attitude of the “civilized” British and Americans towards “barbarians”. The fact that someone, and someone in a high position, can discuss matters in this way, coupled with the fact they “hold” that authoritarianism is the only cure for the “barbarians” is stunning. The ambassador patronizingly concluded that Greeks have qualities such as freedom and individualism, as well. However, since there will always be political crises in Greece, it would be the normal duty of British and American representatives to exercise political control in the country.<sup>71</sup>

My personal point of view is that, for the West, due to the practical experience of their officials in Greece and their interaction with Greek mentality and culture, they perceived their involvement not simply as a matter of fighting for the Western political interests. This, by no means, was the primary aim, but it seems to me that they held the belief that they were conducting a civilizing mission, as a “side-effect”, as well. In the case of the US officials, this was in accordance with its white-and-black Puritan vision of the world, a mission of bringing “light” into “darkness”. Perhaps, to their surprise, it turned out that the “darkness” behind the curtain was not only the Communist threat, but also the backwardness and “primitivism” of the Balkans as compared to the Western standards.

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

## 2.2. The Peculiarity of the Region and The Greek Civil War Refugees of Greek Ethnicity

*As they left on the last ship, they could still hear cries of desperation, names in the wind, gunfire. Then the man said: "A cloud of smoke rose and the beloved city disappeared".*

Spyros, in Theo Angelopoulos' *Trilogia: To livadi pou dakrizei*

*We left for three days and returned after thirty years.*<sup>72</sup>

The above two quotes have not been chosen randomly. The first one is from Theo Aggelopoulos' film *The Weeping Meadow*, and is pronounced by Spyros, a Greek refugee from the Black Sea coast in 1919. This film illustrates the topic of this section of the thesis. In the form of a Greek tragedy, through the destiny of Eleni (whose name indicates that she is a metaphor for Greece (Ellada)), who moves from one place to the other her whole life, Aggelopoulos depicts tragic Greek history and its refugee odyssey in the first half of the twentieth century. The second sentence was uttered by a real Greek refugee who had to flee his village during the Civil War. So, how are these two connected? In this section I would try to show the continuity between the two population movements in the twentieth century Greece – the refugees that were a result of the 1920s Greek-Turkish population exchange and the Greek Civil War refugees.

Both groups of refugees belong to a broader wave of repressive population transfers that shook the region of Southeastern Europe recurrently in the twentieth century. In a historical overview of repressive population transfers in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe, Alfred J. Rieber indicates four major factors that influenced the higher levels of repressive transfers in the region than in the rest of Europe:

- 1) a longer period of instability which was caused by the exposure of the region to nomadic incursions from Asia well into the seventeenth century;

- 2) formation of multi-cultural empires in the early modern period with frontiers that were neither natural nor ethnic, in contrast to the emerging nation-states of Western Europe, created in the age of nationalism the potential for serious conflicts;
- 3) wars of conquest became wars of expulsion;
- 4) the relatively late formation of nation-states fostered exclusionist historicist myths.<sup>73</sup>

These factors are important when considering the ill-defined and transient Balkan space where different ethnic groups and religions have mingled for centuries and whose political map has currently been in the process of redrawing. They are important, above all, because all the radically nationalistic movements spawn in the Balkans in the twentieth century drew on the previous traditions in creating their ideologies.

This perspective of the inherent instability of the region has been nevertheless contested by a number of authors. For example, Victor Roudometof stresses the artificiality of political borders that cut across lasting ethno-cultural divides, and which are usually the result of an international agreement by ruling elites. He argues that, rather than attributing the origins of the ethnic conflicts in the Balkans to the so-called “clash of civilizations” grounded in the discourse of “ancient hatreds”, one may relate them to the political, economic and cultural reorganization of Southeastern Europe according to the Western European model of nation-state.<sup>74</sup> In analyzing the Kosovo crisis, Tony Kushner, for instance, claims that “seeing it as a specifically Balkan – taking place in a part of Europe which is inherently unstable and liable to break out into ethnic hatred at any point in time...is unfair to the region and...carries with it the assumption that ethnic pluralism

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<sup>72</sup> Boeschoten, p. 122.

<sup>73</sup> See Alfred J. Rieber (ed.), *Forced Migration in Central and Eastern Europe, 1939-1950*, London: Frank Cass, 2000, pp. 1-27.

<sup>74</sup> V. Roudometof, “Nationalism, Globalization, Eastern Orthodoxy – “Unthinking” the “Clash of Civilizations” in Southeastern Europe”, in *European Journal of Social Theory* 2(2), pp. 233-247.

was of itself always likely to become divisive.”<sup>75</sup> Whilst it might be argued that Roudometof’s argument is grounded in historical reality, Kushner’s position fails to be substantiated in the historical reality. I will try to apply Rieber’s and Roudometof’s theory to the case of Greece and its population transfers.

The argument of continuity between the two above mentioned groups of refugees can be substantiated by the fact that the Civil War was a result of a deep cleavage in Greek society aggravated by the forced population transfer between Greece and Turkey in the 1920s under the approving eye of the international community. The disillusioned and dissatisfied refugees who came from Turkey mostly belonged to the Left and fought on the Communist side during the war, and thus those who had to flee the Civil War. Triadafilos Triadafilopoulos argues that these people found themselves at the bottom of the society, generating deeper polarization of the society in the interwar period. His argument is that the political instability of interwar Greece and the sharp social division during and after the Second World War, which culminated in the eruption of the Civil War, were actually generated by the Western powers.<sup>76</sup> Triadafilopoulos sees the conflict that ensued as the product of the Western policy of “engineered ethnic unmixing”. To describe this policy, I will use the words of Winston Churchill, which, although spoken some twenty years later in a speech in the House of Lords in 1944, bring forward the main arguments of its proponents.

Expulsion is the method which so far as we have been able to see, will be most satisfactory and lasting. There will be no mixture of

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<sup>75</sup> Kushner, Kox, p. XXVIII.

<sup>76</sup> Triadafilos Triadafilopoulos, “The Political Consequences of Forced Population Transfers: Refugee Incorporation in Greece and West Germany”, in Rainer Ohliger et al. (ed.), *European Encounters: migrants, migration and European societies since 1945*, Hunts” Rainer Ohliger et al Rainer Ohliger et al, Hunts: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003.

populations to cause endless trouble, as has been the case in Alsace-Lorraine. A clean sweep will be made. I am not alarmed by the prospect of disentanglement of the populations, nor even by these large transferences which are more possible in modern conditions than ever before.<sup>77</sup>

These statements illustrate the Western simplistic understanding of the Balkan region. Furthermore, they are connected to the topic of this subchapter as the “euphoria over the conceptual simplicity of the solution” among leaders of Western democracies was “attributable in part to a rather optimistic appraisal of the results of the Greek-Turkish population exchange”, as noticed by Zayas.<sup>78</sup>

The idea behind mass population transfers is that the process of matching peoples, territories, and states provides the surest means of settling ethno-nationalist disputes by establishing inter-state peace. In the words of Chaim Kaufmann, a leading proponent of this stream:

Stable resolutions of ethnic civil wars are possible only when the opposing groups are demographically separated into defensible enclaves...To save lives threatened by genocide, the international community must abandon attempts to restore war-torn multi-ethnic states. Instead it must facilitate and protect population movements to create true national homelands.<sup>79</sup>

This policy was applied in the case of Greek-Turkish conflict in 1922, which was settled, after Turkish victory, by the Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek-Turkish Populations. The negotiations were supervised by the League of Nations and the agreement signed by both states at the Lausanne Conference on 30 January 1923. As a result, in addition to approximately 900,000 refugees from Asia Minor who came to

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

Greece in the weeks following the fall of Smyrna, an additional 150,000 Turkish nationals of Greek Orthodox religion were transferred from Turkey to Greece in the wake of the Conference (350,000 Greek nationals of the Muslim religion remaining in Greece were forced to settle in Turkey, as well).<sup>80</sup>

The incorporation of “kin” group into Greek society proved to be a rather complicated process. It put an additional burden on the social and political structures that had already been strained by the war. In Triadafilopoulos’ words:

As a result of the exchange of populations, the vast majority of Greeks inhabited the same country and were bound by the borders of a single state. Consequently, cultural and linguistic differences that had been blurred by distance and submerged in the fiction of a homogeneous “imagined community” were revealed. It soon became evident that the arriving Greeks of Asia Minor, Thrace and the coasts of the Black Sea were quite different from the Greeks of “Old Greece”.<sup>81</sup>

This case study challenges the notion of a nation as being defined as belonging within clearly politically defined limits and substantiates the concept of a “cultural space of belonging” that overcomes the previous one. Nationality is to a large extent a cultural and social construct and one’s identity defined by the culture and society to which one belongs, rather than to an abstract “imagined homogenous community” within a specific, geographically and politically definable, physical space. Collective belonging is, rather, tied to an emotional commitment to a place. Thus, there are many testimonies to the fact that Greek refugees from Turkey did not identify with the political unit in which they were inserted and perceived themselves as belonging to Turkish culture (and, thus,

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<sup>79</sup> See Chaim Kaufmann, “Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Wars”, *International Security* 4, 1996, 136-175, and “When All Else Fails”, *International Security* 2, 1998, 120-156. ).

<sup>80</sup> Triadafilopoulos, p. 115.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

space), rather than Greek. Although they were of Greek nationality, they felt Turkey was their homeland and many hoped to return and be buried there. In addition to that, the native Greek population perceived them as foreigners and a “threat to their economic interests and the purity of Greek nation...indeed, ‘Greekness’ of the refugees was essentially denied at the time by a large proportion of the locals”<sup>82</sup>.

The “cultural” alienation in urban areas was accompanied by dire economic and material conditions of living, the refugees having problems finding proper housing or jobs. According to Mark Mazower, in the period from 1920 to 1928 the combined population of Greece’s five largest cities increased from 12.6 per cent to 21.3 percent of the country’s total population.<sup>83</sup> This massive afflux of refugees represented a great strain on the infrastructures. As a result, the majority of them lived on the periphery of the society (usually in secluded regions), and their social and spatial marginality made the affiliation with the Left more appealing. Those who had been well-off in Turkey tended to be republican and liberal, as well.

Apart from the “urban refugees”, a majority of these people was settled in the newly incorporated lands of Macedonia, which had a relatively low population density and an abundance of lands that once had been owned by the Muslims who left for Turkey. By 1930 90 percent of the 578, 844 refugees settled in rural Greece were concentrated in the regions of Macedonia and Western Thrace.<sup>84</sup> Experiences of these people were relatively better than of those settled in the urban areas. They were deemed to be a Hellenizing force to finally tip the demographic scales in Macedonia in Greece’s

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<sup>82</sup> Dimitri Pentzopoulos, *The Balkan Exchange of Populations and its Impact Upon Greece*, Paris and the Hague, p. 211, reference in Triadafilopoulos, p. 104.

<sup>83</sup> Mark Mazower, *Greece and the Interwar Economic Crisis*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 47.

<sup>84</sup> Anastasia N. Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood. Passages to Nationhood in Greek Macedonia*, Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997, p. 145.

favor. However, despite the work of the League of Nations sponsored Refugee Settlement Commission, the bulk of both urban and rural, remained lodged at the bottom of Greek society and they continued to be shunted into exclusively refugee villages and urban neighborhoods and derided by locals for their cultural heterogeneity.<sup>85</sup>

Consequently, most refugees sided with the Venizelos' Liberal Party, which polarized the Greek society even more. After the failed Venizelist coup of March 1935 and the restoration of monarchy, they mainly started shifting their allegiance to the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), whose leaders recognized this as a unique opportunity for gaining wider support and, accordingly, adjusted their programme to appeal to them, playing on the card of their dissatisfaction that drew mostly on their status of the "outsiders". Thus, during the Axis occupation of Greece and the subsequent Civil War, the main part of the Communist forces was constituted by these people, and, consequently, a great part of the refugees from the Civil War of Greek nationality. The other part were the Slav Macedonians who inhabited the Greek Northern Province of Macedonia.

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<sup>85</sup> Triadafilopoulos, p. 112.

### **2.3 Macedonia as a “Border Land” and the “Slavophone” Greek Civil War Refugees**

The impulse to use the notions of frontier and borderlands in analyzing the specificity of Southeastern Europe in general, and Greece in particular, came from Alfred J. Rieber’s article “Changing Concepts and Constructions of Frontiers: A Comparative Historical Approach”. The author starts by stating that from the earliest times “efforts to fix the outer limits of individual and collective societies and polities reflect the basic needs for group identity, stability and security” thus creating by the process of demarcation “‘the other’ on the far side of the real or imaginary line that by its very nature constitutes a potential threat”. However, the maintenance of these boundaries is an ambiguous process and “in practice boundary lines whether territorial or social tend to be porous rather than impenetrable”.<sup>86</sup> This was my point of departure when analyzing Slav Macedonian refugees from the Civil War.

As already mentioned, among the refugees of the Civil War, apart from those of Greek ethnicity, approximately 40 percent were Slav Macedonians, who inhabited the Northern Greek Province of Macedonia. Since this was a space where cultural and political influences of Greece, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria intersected, I would argue that the notion of “frontier”, as defined by Rieber can be applied to it. The Slav Macedonians inhabited central and western Aegean Macedonia, areas bordering with Yugoslavia and Albania. Greece was separated from Yugoslavia by a borderline, but the fact that its northern province was a contested area of rivalry between two different ethnicities and an area of mixed population is what makes it a frontier zone. Greece wanted to move its outer demarcation line by annexing the Yugoslav part of Macedonia and vice versa. This

was due to the fact that people who belonged to the same ethnic group were separated by an artificial borderline. The dichotomy of the Greek Northern Province of Macedonia with a co-existence of population of Greek and Slav ethnicities was capricious from the very beginning. The animosities between the nationalities or the ethnic groups were always present, sometimes dormant to a smaller or larger degree, but never completely eliminated. During the Civil War they were awakened and brought them to their culmination.

The Macedonian question<sup>87</sup> has been one of the most controversial issues of modern historiography. The definition of “Macedonia” and “Macedonians” has been marked by the importance of the region in the national agendas of Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria and has, therefore, been answered differently by historians and officials of the three countries. At least since 1860, when the Bulgarian community declared its desire to sever the ecclesiastical ties with the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople,

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<sup>86</sup> Alfred J. Rieber, “Changing Concepts and Constructions of Frontiers, A Comparative Historical Approach”, p. 1.

<sup>87</sup> My intentions are not to delve into the intricacies of the Macedonian question in this thesis, but the literature on the topic is vast. See, for example: Victor Roudometof (ed.), *The Macedonian Question: culture, historiography, politics*, Boulder: East European Monographs, 2000; Jane Cowan (ed.), *Macedonia: the politics of identity and difference*, London: Pluto Press, 2000; Martin Blinkhorn and Thanos Veremis (eds.), *Modern Greece: Nationalism & Nationality*, Athens: ELIAMEP, 1990; Hugh Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians?*, London: Hurst & Company, 1995; Evangelos Kofos, *The Macedonian Question: the Politics of Mutation*, Salonika: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1987. The literature that falls within the scope of my thesis, however, deals with the involvement of Slav Macedonians in the Greek Civil War. It differs to a great extent. There is the nationalistic approach of a number of Greek historians, such as Kofos, who deny the existence of the separate Macedonian consciousness and identity and refer to them as to Slavophones, Slav-speaking Greeks, or “Slav Macedonians” (See *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia*, Evangelos Kofos, Thessalonike : Institute for Balkan Studies, 1964.). They dismiss Macedonians who sided with the communists as “an alien conscious minority” and perceive NOF (the National Liberation Front) as an essentially Yugoslav inspired organization, a blind or mindless instrument of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. Others, such as Dominique Eudes, Edgar O’ Ballance, Peter Stavrakis and Haris Vlavianos, touch upon the international aspects of the Macedonian problem, or, more precisely on the role it played in the relations among the communist parties on the Balkans. Other writers, such as John O. Iatrides, Joze Pirjevec and Milan Ristic, mention the Macedonian question and NOF only in passing or ignore it altogether. Examples of works that tried to grasp the problem in wholeness of its complexity are Elisabeth Barker’s study from 1950 () and more recent works of Andrew Rossos (See for example “Incompatible Allies: Greek Communism and Macedonian Nationalism in the Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949”, *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 69, No. 1. (March 1997), pp. 42-76).

Macedonia has represented the “apple of discord” among rival Balkan nations. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the region was fiercely claimed by all the neighboring nation-states, which used the educational system and the local Orthodox churches as instruments to acculturate the population to their respective imagined community.<sup>88</sup> Ever since the foundation of modern Greek state, the Greek authorities consistently denied recognition of the Slav Macedonians as a separate people from the Greeks and referred to them officially as Slavophone Greek, while the Bulgarians claimed them to be Bulgarians and Serbs saw them as Slav people related to them and speaking a language that had the same roots as Serbian.<sup>89</sup>

The Greek part of Macedonia was annexed in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 and comprised a little over 50 percent of the whole Macedonian region, including the southern and most of the central zones. It was perceived as roughly corresponding to the assumed territory of ancient Macedonia. The northern part was partitioned among the Slavic contenders, Serbia and Bulgaria, in proportion of four to one. The First World War and its aftermath brought about a reshaping of the ethnological pattern in the three Macedonian provinces.

The aforementioned exchange of populations between Turkey and Greece influenced the status of Slav Macedonians in Greece. The large influx of Greek refugees was in part aimed at assimilation of the Slav Macedonians to correct what was interpreted as the only remaining “problematic” minority in the young nation-state of Greece. The policy of assimilation and acculturation of Slav Macedonians was decidedly applied in

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<sup>88</sup> See Victor Roudometof, “Invented Traditions, Symbolic Boundaries, and National Identity in Southeastern Europe: Greece and Serbia in Comparative-Historical Perspective, 1830-1880”, *East European Quarterly*, Vol. 32 No. 4 (1998), pp. 429-68 and Kofos, “National Heritage and National Identity”.

<sup>89</sup> See “National Heritage and National Identity in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Macedonia”, in Blinkhorn, *Nationalism and Nationality*, pp. 106-13 and Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians?*, pp. 78-89.

the inter-war period; as a result many fled the country and went to neighboring states. As a result, the official Greek census of 1928 recorded only 82,000 “Slavophones” in Aegean Macedonia (1,237,000 Greeks (a number which must have been exaggerated) and 93,000 others)<sup>90</sup>, as opposed to 326,426 which were recorded by some Bulgarian and Greek sources just before the Balkan Wars of 1912<sup>91</sup>. The Metaxas regime, which was established in 1936, was particularly hard on Slav Macedonians, continuing the policy of assimilation. At the beginning of the war between Greece and Italy in October 1940, the repression against them was increased. Following the defeat of Greece by the Axis powers in 1941, the eastern portion of Greek Macedonia was occupied by Bulgaria and a regime of terror was enforced. Many of the Greeks who suffered were refugees who came from Turkey. They proved to be very hostile to being once more ruled by a foreign power, and bitterly anti-Bulgarian. Consequently, they became even more violently opposed to the idea of “United Macedonia” than before.<sup>92</sup> Since the KKE, as will be discussed in the following section, was the only force in Greece in favor of this idea up until mid-1930s, the non-Communist forces relied heavily on this fact in their anti-Communist propaganda and in their attempts to attract more support for their cause.

Although the Greek Civil War was an ideological confrontation between two camps that represented East and West at the onset of the Cold War, I would argue that, struggle for the Communist cause, was also shaped by above delineated regional characteristics, which bore an immense impact on its progress and outcome. Though the National Liberation Front (Naroden Osloboditeln Front, or NOF) comprised of Greek Macedonians shared common ideology with the Communist Party of Greece and both

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<sup>90</sup> Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians*, p. 87.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 108-11.

wanted to replace monarchy with a system of people's democracy, the cleavage between the two was created by issues of nationalism.

Macedonians perceived the Civil War as a primarily national struggle for independence and, in order to achieve this, the only option available to them was siding with the KKE. This was the only party that recognized Macedonians as a separate ethnicity and after the First World War even showed official support for a united Macedonian state in a future Balkan communist federation, under the direction of the Cominform.<sup>93</sup> These promises were easy to give at the time when the KKE was a rather insignificant political movement. They were later retracted, when the KKE perceived the opportunity of seizing power as possible, and it kept adapting its policies according to different needs at different periods. Throughout the Civil War KKE officials realized that, if they wanted help from Yugoslavia, which proved to be the strongest supporter of the communist cause in Greece, they had to play along and offer certain concessions to the Macedonian minority from time to time. The basic official line from 1935 to early 1949 was a policy of supporting equality for all national minorities in Greece, including Macedonians.<sup>94</sup>

Macedonians, in turn, gave their unrestrained support to the KKE. According to Andrew Rossos, their estimated representation in its military arm, the Democratic Army of Greece (Dimokratikos Stratos tis Elladas, or DSE), ranged from more than a quarter in April 1947 to more than two-thirds in mid-1949, which was far out of proportion to their demographic in the total population of Greece at the time (estimated twentieth part).<sup>43</sup> . However, in the course of the Second World War, with the KKE continuously

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<sup>93</sup> See Andrew Rossos, "Incompatible Allies: Greek Communism and Macedonian Nationalism in the Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949", *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 69, No. 1. (March, 1997), pp. 42-76.

downplaying its promises, the Macedonian population began to feel more and more alienated. The dissatisfaction reached its peak after the signing of the Varkiza Agreement in the beginning of 1945, by which the KKE accepted the disarmament of communist forces. Macedonian leaders saw this act as a shameful capitulation. The Agreement signaled the beginning of the so-called “white terror” against the Left, and particularly Macedonians. They were perceived not only as ideological “sinners”, but as the ultimate traitors to the nation, for not considering themselves Greeks. The price they had to pay was high:

...armed attacks on their villages, murders, arrests, trials, jail, and exile; confiscation of property and movable equipment; burning of homes and entire villages; economic blockades of villages; forcible expulsions; discriminatory use of taxes and UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) aid; restrictions on freedom of movement and so on.<sup>95</sup>

The post-Varkiza conditions influenced the decision of a great number of Macedonians to flee Greece and to seek refuge in the neighboring communist countries.

In the words of a KKE official Solon Grigoriades of 1946:

a mass exodus of Macedonians will begin. Entire villages escape into the mountains or seek refuge in Yugoslavia. I have seen Slav villages from which 90% of the men have run away; from others 60%-70% of the villagers have run away, and in some there is not a single inhabitant left.<sup>96</sup>

As a result, the census of 1951 recorded only some 47,000 “Slavophones”<sup>97</sup> (this figure should be regarded very cautiously, due to the official attitude at the time, but, still, it is believable that the number *was* much lower than in the pre-war period). In August 1953,

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<sup>94</sup> See Evangelos Kofos, *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia*, Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1964.

<sup>95</sup> Rossos, 56-57.

Decree no. 2536 was enacted to settle the northern territories “with new colonists possessing a healthy national consciousness”<sup>98</sup>. Many of the Slav Macedonian refugees fled to Yugoslavia and a great number of them settled permanently in its Republic of Macedonia which was established after the Second World War as one of the six Yugoslav republics.

## 2.1 Conclusion

Refugees remained one of the continuing legacies of the Greek Civil War long after it ended. The Greek Government deprived them of their Greek citizenship and confiscated their property by Decree 2536/53 in its aftermath<sup>99</sup>; thus, they could not return to Greece and were denied visas to enter the country. During the Cold War period the issue of these refugees who were scattered across countries of the Eastern block kept reappearing in international politics. For example, during the negotiations among Greece, Yugoslavia and Turkey regarding the establishment of a common Balkan Alliance in the second half of 1953 the above-mentioned law regarding colonization of Greece’s northern border territory was one of the issues that hindered cooperation between Yugoslavia and Greece. Yugoslav delegation maintained that the aim of the law was to prevent the return of refugees who had fled to Yugoslavia during the Civil War and to populate the territory with ethnic Greeks. There was a campaign in the Yugoslav press at the time against the “policy of discrimination implemented by the Greek Government and its attempts to alter the ethnic composition of Aegean Macedonia”. As a result, a media campaign was

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<sup>96</sup> *KPG*, No. 150, p. 341, in Rossos, p. 57.

<sup>97</sup> Poulton, p. 161.

<sup>98</sup> Lazo Mojsov, *Okoly Prashenjeto na Makedonskoto Natsionalno Maltsinstvo vo Grtsija*, Skopje: The Institute for National History, 1954, p. 17.

launched in Greece in defense of the Government's policy. It was maintained that the Macedonian question, as well as Slav Macedonians, did not exist in Greece and that Yugoslavia was attempting to interfere with the internal affairs of a sovereign country because of its aspirations towards its northern parts.<sup>100</sup> Nevertheless, with the thawing of relations between the Eastern and the Western block, the issue of the Greek Civil War refugees was forgotten.

I would argue that in the case of the Greek Civil War refugees it seems that, although political circumstances certainly played the role of the catalyst, the historical legacies of the region proved to be extremely important. To use the notion of "the frontier", though Greece at the time represented "a new land" attacked by the International Communist movement, a symbolic Cold War frontier, the national "local" frontiers and inter-ethnic rivalries were still in existence. These two levels overlapped and interacted with each other creating a rather complex situation in Greece at the time. The international involvement aggravated the pre-existing problems in the country and the already existent inter-ethnic and social rifts additionally complicated the Cold War confrontations. The refugees were a result of this interaction.

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<sup>99</sup> Tosho Popovski, *Makedonskoto Natsionalno Maltinstvo vo Bulgaria, Grtsija I Albanija*, Skopje, 1981, p. 196, reference in Poulton, p. 167.

<sup>100</sup> See Dragan Bogetic, *Jugoslavija i zapad 1952-1955*, Beograd: Sluzbeni list SRJ, 2000, pp. 86-89.

### ***CHAPTER 3 – THE GREEK CIVIL WAR REFUGEES IN YUGOSLAVIA***

Yugoslavia was involved in the Greek Civil War from the very beginning. Its large-scale political and material help to the Greek Left was manifold and had a great impact on the position of the insurgents. The policy of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) was to an extent shaped by the growing self-confidence of its members, due to the great success the CPY had in the World War II and in getting to power, as well as to the belief in the specificity and importance of its position for the Communist movement. It was also marked by the leadership's ambitions to make Yugoslavia the leading political, ideological and military force in the region.<sup>101</sup> Its help to Greek Communists was particularly overwhelming during the third round of the Civil War. During his visits to the countries of the Eastern Block in the spring of 1946, Nikos Zahariades, the leader of the KKE visited Belgrade, as well. During his meeting with Tito it was agreed upon stationing a section of the KKE's Ppolitbureau in Belgrade from where they would coordinate military actions. Tito also consented to sending material help to the insurgents, to promoting their struggle by means of propaganda, organizing channels for sending help, organizing the members of the KKE on the Yugoslav territory, to making efforts to influence inhabitants of the Greek colonies in Yugoslavia to help the communist cause,

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<sup>101</sup> See Milan Ristic, "Jugoslavija i gradjanski rat u Grckoj (1945-1950), in *Balkan posle drugog svetskog rata*, Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 1996, pp. 71-85; Elizabeth Barker, "Yugoslav Policy towards Greece 1947-1949", in *Studies in the History of Greek Civil War 1945-1949*, Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 1987; Risto Kirjazovski, *Makedonskoto nacionalno prasanje i graganskata vojna vo Grcija*, Skopje, 1998; Iatrides, "National and International Aspects".

and, finally, he gave permission for recruiting fighters from Greek and Macedonian political refugees.<sup>102</sup>

In this section of my thesis I turn from a global and a regional perspective to a local one and to a micro-level approach. The aim of this chapter is to show in more detail through a case study of Greek Civil War refugees who ended up in Yugoslavia what the lives of these people actually looked like before and, particularly, during the exile. First, I will give a brief account of the repression these people suffered before they decided to leave Greece, an issue which I only briefly touched upon in the previous chapter. Moreover, I will try to depict a picture of the circumstances these people encountered when settling in Yugoslavia juxtaposing the official representation of events with a more plausible one that emerges from the documents.

### 3.1 Why Did They Leave?- Refugees' Accounts

Yugoslavia started accepting Greek refugees from the Civil War as early as 1945. Numerous settlements, as well as temporary camps for accepting refugees, were established. Most of them were on the territory of People's Republic of Macedonia – in Kumanovo, Teotovo, Bitolj, Veles, Prilep, etc. First help regarding accommodation, food, clothes and medical protection was offered by local authorities and local “mass organizations”, Antifascist Women's Organization, Communist Youth Organization, People's Front, etc. A large number of the refugees were afterwards transported to the refugee settlements in Serbia and Croatia.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>102</sup> See Kirjazovski, *Makedonsko nacionalno prasanje*, pp. 114-116.

<sup>103</sup> See Milan Ristic, “Eksperiment Buljkes”, *Godisnjak za drustvenu istoriju*, Vol. IV, No. 2-3, Beograd, 1997, pp. 179-180.

We can judge about the reasons for which these people left Greece from the archival material containing their statements in the collection of documents of the CPY – a file containing statements of 121 refugee. They were a part of the Memorandum the refugees from Buljkes (mainly Greeks) sent the UN Security Council. The other part are the statements (mainly of Slav Macedonians) collected by Macedonian authorities after they entered the country. It is obvious from the recurrent phrases and formulas that these people knew what they had to say in order to please Yugoslav authorities. Still, factual data about their persecution by the Greek right-wing forces are in most places very detailed and depicted in a way that makes them credible.

Two recurrent and most prominent themes in both Greeks' and Slav Macedonians' statements are the cruelty of the persecution and, especially in women's narratives, the dissolution of families. The statement of one of the Macedonian refugees, Mara Catkova, a thirty-five year old housewife and a mother of three children, given on 27 January 1947 in Kumanovo, goes as follows:

A year ago [the EDES fighters] started visiting our village plundering cattle and groceries. My husband could not go neither to the mill nor to the market, because he had been imprisoned and bitten by the soldiers.

As he could not stay at home, because the whole village was stigmatized as a partisan one, he joined partisans together with a couple of his friends. When they were coming to the village, soldiers were shooting from far so that the people would run away and that they could plunder more easily. Everything we had was stolen from our house – a donkey and two hundred kilograms of wheat.

During their visits, they were taking people who could not hide from them to the center of the village and they were beating them severely. For example, two Santov's children were stripped naked and were beaten in order to confess where the peasants who fled the village were hiding. Children were threatened that they would be

hanged...One of the villagers, Tanas Naste, was beheaded and his head was taken to the town of Gumenica. They were saying that they had caught the partisan commander Stafe. They got seven golden coins for the head.

When they came to our village they caught four women...whom they raped. The girls from the village were raped as well...<sup>104</sup>

In the Memorandum to the UN, a Greek fifteen-year old refugee girl Ana Ioannidon, describes her life before she came to Buljkes. Her father was killed and she had only a mother and a brother. During the fascist occupation she had been a member of the pioneers' organization of her village. During occupation, soldiers of the Security Battalion<sup>105</sup> of Anton Tasos were frequently visiting the village, plundering groceries and killing people. Her brother and mother were arrested in 1945 by the National Guard soldiers and thrown into prison. Their house was burnt down. She fled to the Yugoslav border, which was near to her village, where she was taken to Veletovo and after three days transported to Buljkes.<sup>106</sup> Savas Consantinidi, a 14 years old boy had a similar story. These two, however, probably were a part of groups of children whose deportations were partly organized by the rebel's Provisional Government of Greece. Around 24, 000 children were "collected" and sent to Yugoslavia and other communist countries.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> The Archives of Serbia and Montenegro (ASM), Fond of the Central Committee(CC) of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY), Commission for International Relations (CIR), 507, Greece, IX/33/ V, box 15, file 250 , Memorandum of Greek political refugees in Yugoslavia sent to Commission of the Security Council of the UN.

<sup>105</sup> Security Battalions were organized by the occupying forces, which was comprised of Greeks, who collaborated with them.

<sup>106</sup> ASM, Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Milan Ristic in his book *Long Journey Home* and in an article "Yugoslavia, the Cominform, and the Problem of Greek Child Refugees 1948-1956", *Godisnjak za drustvenu istoriju*, Vol. V, No. 2-3, Beograd, 1998, pp. 97-109, gives an extensive account of the life of the refugee children sent by Greek Communists to Yugoslavia and of their destiny after the break-up between Tito and Stalin. On the other hand, children were also gathered by the royal government in the war zones and placed into foster care homes in Greece. Their lives are depicted in a text by Mando Dalianis and Mark Mazower, "Children in Turmoil during the Civil War: Today's Adults" and Riki van Boeschoten, "The Impossible Return". On page 194, Ristic argues that "a shadow of the ideological "fight for the souls" lurked behind the actions of 'gathering' and

The twenty-year old Caterine Constantinodou from Kavaleri was fighting in EAM during the war, as most of her fellow-villagers. After ELAS surrendered the weapons, the Right imposed a terrible terror on the village. They arrested her and other women's husbands and threw them to jail. Her brother was also savagely tortured and taken to prison. Their house was burnt. "Being unable to live under such conditions, I left for the Yugoslav border and I was sent to Buljkes."<sup>108</sup>

The nineteen-year old Lazaros Kukas was a member of the Communist youth of Greece (the EPON), as well as Clara Georgiadu. Both had fathers fighting in the communist forces and came to Buljkes with their mothers.<sup>109</sup>

The forty-five year old Savas Konstantinidis left after Varkiza fearing for his life, because he had been an EAM fighter, as well as Georgios Fenifanos and most of other men in the village.<sup>110</sup>

It is obvious from the accounts of these people that most of them had greatly suffered before coming to Yugoslavia. Many fled to other communist countries, as well. The experience of these people was described by Riki van Boeschoten in a micro-historical study dealing with refugees of a village, Ziakas, who left Greece during the Civil War:

Husbands and wives living apart for decades, children growing up without their parents, feelings of estrangement poisoning the happy reunion of beloved ones, the difficult survival of those who stayed behind amidst the scattered ruins of the material and social body of the village<sup>111</sup>

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'saving' ...children suffered without guilt of their own, in the years of living separated from their families, in a childhood full of traumatical experiences".

<sup>108</sup> ASM, Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Boeschoten, "The Impossible Return", p. 122.

During exile the sense of community and the family ties were severed, with the people from a same place or, very often, from a same family, ending up in different countries of Eastern Europe, as refugees were sent into different countries depending on the availability of housing and the labor needs of the host countries.

### 3.2 Buljkes – the “Greek Republic of Yugoslavia”

Buljkes was a settlement of Greek refugees, who began arriving in Yugoslavia in February 1945 in small groups, and later in greater numbers. The first group of refugees came to Vojvodina on May 1945, first to village Sivac and, after ten days, they were settled in village Buljkes, in the district of Novi Sad.<sup>112</sup> It was a village which had been previously inhabited by the Germans before the World War II, and in which after their expulsion some 625 houses were left empty.<sup>113</sup> During and after 1945 Buljkes was transformed into a specific “autonomous Greek commune”, organized by “Government” (Board) of this “exterritorial” commune. The village was envisioned and organized as a peculiar Soviet-utopia type of a settlement. All social and economic activities were based on the collectivist, communist concepts, making Buljkes in the period from 1945 to 1949 a unique ideological “Greek communist experiment”.<sup>114</sup> According to the estimates from 1947, there were around 4023 refugees living there, 161 women and 30 children, 22 of whom had been born in Yugoslavia. Most of the refugees (around 3,500) were members of the KKE.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>112</sup> ASM, CC CPY, CIR, 507, IX, 33/5 – box 15, file 252, Izvestaj o zivotu i radu grckih emigranata, koji se nalaze u Vojvodini u selu Buljkesu, srez Backa Palanka, okrug novosadski, 29 jun 1946, Novi Sad

<sup>113</sup> Ristic, “Eksperiment Buljkes, p. 180.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., p. 200-201.

<sup>115</sup> ASM, CC CPY, CIR, 507, IX, 33/5 – box 15, file 252.

In an article in the Yugoslav newspaper *Borba* of Jun 1949 the settlement of Buljkes is described in an idealistic fashion:

As Greece turned into a country of tears and people's hatred for the monarcho-fascists and their supporters, people were running into the woods or hiding in the cities. On the roads to Yugoslavia, running away from the terror, there was a Greek man, a bureaucrat from Athens, a Macedonian student from Florina, a Greek peasant from Kostur, a worker from Thessaloniki, a seven-year old girl from Fustani... Since February 1945, thousands of men, women and children crossed the Greek border. Thus, in June 1945 a new group of refugees came to Buljkes, a village in Vojvodina, in the vicinity of Novi Sad. The old teacher came with the first refugees to Buljkes on June 14, 1945...After Dekemvriana in 1944, as a fighter o ELAS, he had to leave Athens. In an attempt to flee from terror, he found refuge in Yugoslavia. He left his family in Greece only to find a new one in Yugoslavia. Now, it has 7,000 members.

Almost four years have passed since the day when the first group of exhausted, poorly dressed and hungry refugees settled in Buljkes. The number has been growing constantly since...Here they felt what friendship and love of the people of Yugoslavia meant... the first help regarding accommodation, food, clothes and shoes, was only one part of the help that they would receive a year later, when a People's Board was organized and made it possible for them to build such a village of which they are proud today.<sup>116</sup>

Buljkes was organized according to the Soviet collectivist model. In 1946 a People's Committee of Greek refugees was established and the state gave the refugees 3.500 acres of land to plough, agricultural machinery and tractors, machines and tools for working on the land, it built a factory for weaving hemp, gave them cattle (horses, cows, pigs).<sup>117</sup> Buljkes was, thus, a small Greek republic with its own self-management, schools, hospitals, its specific way life and laws. It even had its own currency "Buljkes dinar" used for internal payments in the village.

<sup>116</sup> "Buljkes, selo grckih izbeglica", *Borba*, (25 June), 1949, p. 4.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

In the above-mentioned article, the author praises the Yugoslav state “for making it possible, in such a fashion, for the refugees to, establish a rich, decent social life. A kolhoz or a collective farm was established in which the whole village was included. People were relegated to different jobs according to their professions or skills and their work was awarded according to its worth<sup>118</sup>. “There is one rule in Buljkes”, writes the author, “all the people capable of working do work. And children are being taught that work, except freedom, is the ultimate value in life and source of all goods”.<sup>119</sup>

The village had sties built for round 250 cows, 150 horses and pigs; they also had farms for poultry and rabbits. They received help from the surrounding mechanical stations, experts-agronomists and experienced agricultural workers. Whereas one part of the people was engaged in agriculture, the other worked in workshops. Buljkes had a carpenter’s, a blacksmith’s, a rope-weaver’s, a tailor’s and a cobbler’s workshop.<sup>120</sup>

They are placed in a row in a wide long street. From morning till evening (some workshops have three shifts) one can hear sound of hammers, of laughter and song while crafty hands put together parts of cars, make bridles of excellent quality, ropes and nets. These products are sold to the surrounding collective farms or exchanged for various necessary articles.<sup>121</sup>

The executive Committee of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina was in charge of supplying the village with textile, shoes and materials for workshops.<sup>122</sup>

All spheres of life were organized according to the collectivist model. Canteens and kitchens, in which all the villagers had their meals, were established. In one report on the state of affairs in Buljkes, the author proudly asserts that “there is not a single family which feeds out of the canteen”. The food was received from the Third Yugoslav Army

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

(basic groceries such as fat, oil, beans, sugar etc). Wheat, of which they made bread, was rationed from the supplies which they produced by themselves working on the fields by the Agricultural Commission of Vojvodina.<sup>123</sup>

Schools and different courses were organized as well, with around 600 students. Children were educated in Greek and textbooks were printed in the village printing house. There was also a grammar school and a theater with 1.500 seats, which was built during the first month of the existence of the village. In the separate part of the village young children were placed in children's homes - there were 400 children up to age of four. "Homes are clean, rooms large and freshly painted, furniture simple and tidy there are enough sheets, food is excellent...The same atmosphere can be encountered in the hospitals and ambulances".<sup>124</sup>

In the village printing house, a weekly newspaper "Foni ton Buljkes" was published. It covered all the daily events, especially in Greece, and informed people about all the issues of political, economical and cultural life. Various books and brochures were published in Greek as well, scholarly literature, textbooks, such as History of Greek People, Geography, etc, as well as a monthly Tejtópula (Pioneers).<sup>125</sup>

The author of the text in *Borba* concludes that Greek refugees greatly appreciated the help offered by the Yugoslav state. They took part in various youth labor actions, such as building railways Brcko-Banovici and Samac-Sarajevo. They claimed that it was a great experience, since they intended to transfer the acquired skills and knowledge in building their country and socialism after they returned to the liberated Greece.

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> ASM, CC CPY, CIR, 507, IX, 33/5 – box 15, file 253.

<sup>124</sup> "Buljkes, selo grckih izbeglica", *Borba*

We will work for children for whom we want happy and careless life, exactly as the one children in Buljkes and in whole Yugoslavia have. That is what the bureaucrat from Thessaloniki told us. That is what everybody who felt the beauty of building socialism in Tito's Yugoslavia told us. The teacher, and the old woman at the loom, the boy who just enters life, and a peasant who exchanged wooden plough for a tractor – all of them want Yugoslavia to build socialism as fast as possible, because it will make it easier for them after the victory to build a more beautiful and a happier Greece.<sup>126</sup>

Nevertheless, thoughts of all the refugees were with the fighters of the GDA who fought for freedom and who were invincible because they belonged to a people who had not learnt how to be a foreign slave. The author asserts that the Greek refugees in Buljkes firmly believe that the day will come when they will return to their liberated country to give everything for its building. “And Buljkes will stay in the memories of these people as a token of eternal gratitude towards Tito's Yugoslavia, the friendly neighboring country, which offered them brotherly help in the harshest times.”<sup>127</sup>

A life like this can be offered to the refugees only by a true democratic country, which traveled the road of hard and glorious struggle against similar enemies and traitors. No matter how beautiful and happy the life in the village is, no matter how much gratefulness these people feel for Yugoslavia and mothers bless those who saved their children, the thoughts of Greek refugees are constantly in Greece, that beautiful sunny country, now soaked in blood...<sup>128</sup>

Nevertheless, it the reality was at discrepancy with this idealized account. Everything did not seem to work so perfectly in practice, although the Yugoslav officials

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

wanted to represent it in this way. In a report which was written in 1946, an official names the existing problems in the village.

He says that, apart from those who are incapable of working, all the others are employed. However, the number of the refugees in Buljkes who could not work is too high, the author complains. These were employed only for 5-6 hours per day and the rest of their time was dedicated to teaching Marxism and other educational work. However, their work seems to have been satisfactory, the official concluded, since there were 3.500 party members in the village, who were well organized and disciplined, so they fulfilled given tasks.<sup>129</sup>

One of the problems the refugees were faced with was that of food supplies. The rations they received consisted of some limited numbers of basic articles, and, apart from that, the meals were prepared in large caldrons for all the villagers. The rations of fat were also very small (30 grams per person) and the oil they received was often spoilt. Due to the lack of vitamins there were cases of scurvy. Although the refugees grew vegetables on the fields around the settlement, they were not allowed to use it in the beginning, since it was transported to the Novi Sad market to be sold. However, this policy was changed in 1946 and the Commission allowed them to take one part of the produced vegetables, but they had to submit regular reports on how much they had spent. Since there were many children and sick people in the village they received eggs and milk and other light food, from the Commission.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> ASM, CC CPY, CIR, 507, IX, 33/5 – box 15, file 252.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

Wood, which was needed for heating and the mill, was also lacking. The official who wrote his comments on the margin of the report suggested that they be given a part of woods, where they could by themselves acquire wood.<sup>131</sup>

An unresolved issue was also that of working permits. The refugees received no salary for their work in Buljkes, since they had no contracts. Only those who were employed in factories and firms in Novi Sad received money. This was regarded as a waste of the working force, due to incorrect employment. The suggestion was that it would be best if a certain number of them would be employed in factories and other firms. They still had to be a part of the village collective, however, and they received a plot of land from which they were able to sustain themselves on their own.<sup>132</sup>

The greatest problem, however, were diseases - tuberculosis and malaria. There were around 300-400 ill in June 1946. According to the doctrine that everybody should work, even people with malaria were engaged in agricultural work. According to the estimations of the village doctor, to cure all of them, around 90,000 pieces of quinine were needed. Tuberculosis also spread rapidly since the refugees had difficulties getting used to the new climate. On the margin of the report, an official wrote his suggestions for enhancing the situation: those with tuberculosis should be sent to the mountain parts of the country, where they would find it easier to adopt to the climate; those with malaria and other diseases should be given medicines, if possible. The difficulty was that even the Third Army which was supposed to supply the village with medicines, did not have enough itself.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

The above depicted picture of everyday life of the refugees in Buljkes, albeit specific, reveals nothing extraordinary about this village – we see people who struggle to make ends meet, to build new social ties and organize their lives. However, under this disguise, quite extraordinary things *were* hidden. The hemp-weaving factory was not just an ordinary factory for making textiles – there, women were making uniforms for the soldiers of GDA. The materials published by the printing house were not only textbooks, but propaganda leaflets and brochures, as well.

The “School for general education” had under its umbrella a Military Academy. In a report of 12 June 1946, a CPY official gives an account of the state of affairs at the Academy and a list of necessary “teaching” materials. He informs the Central Committee of the CPY that 140 officers are taking the three-month military course at the time. When they had been recruited their Party membership had been taken into account, as well as their participation in the Greek resistance movement. They study general subjects like History, Geography, Mathematics and Marxism, as well as History of the USSR and of the KKE and some military subjects. He states that the most important thing is to employ one or two Yugoslav officers, who would teach them military tactics and examine the school’s work. He asks for necessary materials in order to maintain high standard of teaching at the academy. The list is as follows:

1. 20 strategic maps of Greece, proportion 1/100, r maps of some regions of Greece (it is necessary for topographic exercises).
2. Military rules of infantry
3. A brochure on military tactics of the two previous wars regarding all kinds of weapons
4. A brochure on guerilla fight
5. Set of rules of sabotage
6. Anti-aircraft defense
7. Anti-tank defense
8. Set of rules of the activities of parachuters
9. A brochure on chemical warfare

10. History of classic battles
11. A brochure on organization of intelligence work...

Besides these, the comrades should be given the following weapons:

1. 20 soldiers' jackets
2. 5 automatics
3. bombs, guns, anti-tank weapon, 2 telephones and 2 cables.<sup>134</sup>

The Academy became a bone of content between Greek Government and Yugoslavia. Namely, the Greek officials were complaining that it was used as a base for recruiting, training and dispatching to Greece guerilla officers. Due to the accusations of the Greek delegation in the UN a group of UNSCOB Subcommittee observers was sent to Buljkes on 2 April 1947 to investigate the allegations. They interrogated six witnesses suggested by the Yugoslav official and five which were chosen by the Greek delegate. All of them refuted existence of "special courses held by partisan officers, which were meant for theoretical and practical training of Greek refugees in order to make them capable of leading guerilla actions in Greece".<sup>135</sup> The Commission concluded that no signs of such an occurrence were encountered in Buljkes, which meant that "the military training is halted at the moment".<sup>136</sup>

Despite the fact that the Yugoslav officials maintained that the military academy in Buljkes did not serve the purpose of helping Greek Democratic Army, there was substantial evidence to the contrary. It is obvious from the accounts and documents that Buljkes was a center where exiled guerilla fighters were recruited and sent to Greece. It served also for training officers, making uniforms and propaganda materials.<sup>137</sup> Top

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<sup>134</sup> ASM, CC CPY, CIR, 507, IX, 33/II – box 12, file 8.

<sup>135</sup> ASM, CC CPY, CIR, 507, IX, 33/5 – box 15, file 251.

<sup>136</sup> See Jadranka Jovanovic, *Jugoslavija u Ujedinjenim Nacijama*, pp. 71-76.

<sup>137</sup> Dragan Kljakic, *Izgubljena pobeda Generala Markosa. Gradjanski rat u Grckoj 1946-1949. i KPJ*, Beograd: Narodna knjiga, 1987, pp. 87, 188-190.

coordinator of these projects was Aleksandar Rankovic and they were implemented by the State Security Agency (UDBA). General Jovo Kopicic was in charge of sending weapons and officers to Greece.<sup>138</sup> In the middle of 1946, there were around 112 “students” in the military academy of Buljkes and until the beginning of 1947 around 600 people passed the courses that lasted for three months. They were sent to Greece, usually through Bulgaria, after they finished training.<sup>139</sup> The first group of these people left Buljkes on 1 July 1946 and reached the battlefield of Gramos on 4 July. This group played the key role in raising an insurgence in west Macedonia, since the first organized battle formations of GDA were formed only in August 1946. One part of these forces was comprised of Slav Macedonians (510 of 4,030).<sup>140</sup>

In the report of UDBA lieutenant-colonel Voja Biljanovic sent to Aleksandar Rankovic in November 1946, he states that his agency “took complete control over sending people to the other side, as well as all the courier services”. For that purpose three roads were organized in regions of Djevdjelija, Dojrane and Bitolj (Macedonian towns). He also informed Rankovic that each day 20-25 people for transportation arrives to Buljkes. They are transported to Greece without delay the same night. An action of sending 240 demobilized Macedonian fighters of Aegean Macedonia to Greece was also organized.<sup>141</sup>

Thus, Buljkes was much more than a peaceful, though unusual, village in Vojvodina. It was, in a way, a revolutionary cell in which everything was subordinated to furthering the Communist cause in the Greek Civil War.

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<sup>138</sup> Bojan B. Dimitrijevic, *JNA od Staljina do NATO pakta*, Beograd, 2005, p.p. 128-9.

<sup>139</sup> Ristic, “Eksperiment Buljkes”, pp. 179-186.

<sup>140</sup> Iatrides, “National and International Aspects”, pp. 205-207 and Kirjazovski, pp. 118-120.

## The Epilogue

The clash between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in 1948, brought about the disbanding of Buljkes “commune” in the summer of 1949. The new political context caused conflicts between a small group of “Titoists” and the “Stalinists” who outnumbered them by large. Since the majority of the KKE members, as well as of other inhabitants in the village, were openly pro-Stalinist and anti-Yugoslav, the Yugoslav leadership decided to disband “the Greek Republic” in September 1949 by sending the entire population to Czechoslovakia via Hungary. In that way the lives of these people were disrupted ones again and their refugee odyssey continued.

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<sup>141</sup> ASM, CC CPY, CIR, 507, IX, 33/VI-1-48, 18 November 1946.

## ***CONCLUSION***

As a result of a bloody Civil War in Greece in the aftermath of the World War II, tens of thousands of people were exiled and forced to live in the countries of the Eastern Block. They were allowed to return to their home country only in the 1980s after decades of refugee life, when the “National Law on National Reconciliation” was passed. The first part of my thesis aims to contextualize these refugees putting them into a broader perspective of Europe’s population movements and regional specificities that played an important part in influencing the eruption of the Greek Civil War and in shaping these people’s fates.

It seems that in the case of the Greek Civil War refugees, although political circumstances certainly played the role of the catalyst, the historical legacies of the region proved to be extremely important. To use the notion of “the frontier”, though Greece at the time represented “a new land” attacked by the International Communist movement, a symbolic Cold War frontier, the national “local” frontiers and inter-ethnic rivalries were still existent. These two levels overlapped and interacted with each other creating a rather complex situation in Greece of the time. The international involvement aggravated the already existent problems in the country and the already existent inter-ethnic and social rifts additionally complicated the Cold War confrontations. The refugees were a result of this interaction.

In illustrating the complex interplay of ethnicity and political factors that influenced the Greek Civil War refugees to flee their country, I look into the case of the Civil War refugees of Greek and Macedonian ethnicity respectively. In the case of Greeks, the conclusion is that the disillusioned and dissatisfied refugees who came from Turkey

played an important part in polarizing Greek society in the interwar period. These refugees mostly adhered to the Left and fought on the Communist side during the war, and thus they were among those who had to flee the country during the Civil War. The war, itself, was a result of a deep cleavage in Greek society aggravated to an explosive extent by the forced population transfer agreed upon between Greece and Turkey in the 1920s under the approving eye of the international community.

The Slav Macedonians inhabited the Northern Greek Province of Macedonia, which was a space where cultural and political influences of Greece, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria intersected. Greece was separated from Yugoslavia by a borderline, but the fact that its northern province was a contested area of rivalry between two different ethnicities and an area of mixed population is what makes it a frontier zone. The dichotomy of the Greek Northern Province of Macedonia with co-existence of population of Greek and Slav ethnicity was capricious from the very beginning. The animosities between the nationalities or the ethnic groups were always present, sometimes dormant to a smaller or larger degree, but never completely eliminated. During the Civil War they were awakened and brought to their culmination. The cleavage that existed between the Slav Macedonians and the Greeks influenced, not only harsher treatment of the former on the part of the Right, but raptures within the Communist movement, as well.

In the second part of my thesis I turn from a global and a regional perspective to a local one trying to show in more detail, through a case study of Greek Civil War refugees who ended up in Yugoslavia, what the lives of these people actually looked like before and, particularly, during the exile. I give a brief account of the repression these people suffered before they decided to leave Greece and I try to depict the circumstances they

encountered when settling in Yugoslavia juxtaposing the official representation of events with a more plausible one that emerges from the documents.

In the end I should, perhaps, mention that the issue of the Greek Civil War refugees is a vast and a very complex one, and that the existing literature on it still has many lacunas, which should be covered in the future. One of the issues that has been largely neglected and that is left to new scholarly works on the topic is the destiny of the refugees in the period from 1960s to 1980s and afterwards. Nevertheless, I hope that, by this thesis, I managed to contribute to the field by disentangling, to an extent, the complex web of the circumstances that surrounded the fate of the refugees of the Greek Civil War.

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