# MINORITIES IN THE BALKANS IN THE ERA OF GLOBALISATION: THE CASE OF THE TURKS IN WESTERN THRACE

MARIA DEMESTICHA

Boğaziçi University
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by

Maria Demesticha

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"Minorities in the Balkans in the Era of Globalisation:
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This thesis has been approved and accepted by:

Assoc. Professor Aydın Babuna _____
(Thesis advisor)

Professor Dr. Zafer Toprak _____

Assoc. Professor Duygu Köksal _____

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Title: Minorities in the Balkans in the Era of Globalisation:
The Case of the Turks in Western Thrace

This thesis explores the history of the Turkish minority of Western Thrace from 1923 until the present time. By presenting the life conditions and the problems that the minority has faced in Greece it shows what an important positive change in Greek policy towards the minority has taken place since 1991. The thesis presents the reasons of change, the way the change took place, and the new policies that were followed. The effects of globalization and of the international protection of minorities that intensified, especially after the end of the Cold War, the pressure exercised over Greece by the European Union and other international organizations, the efforts of minority politicians and of their media to present their problems, and the cultivation of a European identity among the members of the minority are among the basic factors that contributed to the "change." Through the presentation of the current situation, the reader is afforded a look into the basic problems of the minority in the present day and the discussions inside the minority. Finally, the thesis stresses the fact that the way Greece changed its policy towards its minority can work as a model for other countries, future members of the European Union (like Turkey) that try as well to improve the life conditions of their minorities.

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Başlık: Küreselleşme Çağında Balkanlardaki Azınlıklılar:
Batı Trakya'daki Türklerin Durumu

Bu tez, Batı Trakya'daki Türk Azınlığın 1923'lerden bu güne tarihini inceler. Tez, azınlığın Yunanistan'daki hayat şartlarını ve karşılaştıkları sorunları sunarak, 1991'den sonra Yunan azınlık politikasının nasıl olumlu yönde değiştiğini gösterir. Tezde bu değişimin nedenleri, ne şekilde meydana geldiği, ve değişim sonundaki yeni politikalar sunulmuştur. Küreselleşmenin etkileri ve özellikle soğuk savaş bittikten sonra yoğunlaşan uluslararası azınlık korumacılığı, Avrupa Birliği ve diğer uluslararası organizasyonların Yunanistan üzerindeki baskıları, azınlık politikacılarının ve medyasının problemlerini sunmadaki çabaları, ve azınlık bireyleri arasında Avrupalı kimliğinin gelişmesi değişime katkıda bulunan temel nedenler arasındadır. Şimdiki durumun sunulmasıyla, okuyucu azınlığın bugünlerdeki temel problemlerine ve azınlığın içindeki tartışmalara göz atabilir. Son olarak, bu tez; Yunanistan'ın kendi azınlığına karşı politikalarını değiştirme şeklinin; azınlıklarının yaşam koşullarını geliştirmeye çalışan, Türkiye gibi gelecekteki Avrupa Birliği üye ülkelerine bir model olabileceği gerçeğini vurgular.

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I would like to acknowledge the support of my family throughout my master years in İstanbul, especially of my parents, Zaferios and Stefania Demesticha, whose strength and love have always provided me with an important source of stability. I shouldn't forget to thank my friends in Greece who, through their emails and phone calls, encouraged me in my work; and my friend, Katerina Kitidi, here in İstanbul, for her useful advice and all the information that she provided concerning the issue. Finally, I would like to thank Orhan Çelik, for his constant encouragement in the final stages of the writing.

This thesis is dedicated to all the Greeks and Turks who struggle for peace and want to live in a world where minorities do not feel like minority and majorities do not behave like that.

# PREFACE

Komotini, Western Thrace, Greece: Thursday 6 May 2004.

I visited the city of Komotini two days before the official visit of the Turkish Prime Minister R. T. Erdoğan. The local newspapers, Greek and Turkish, gave the details of the program of the Turkish Prime Minister. It is the first time that a high-ranking Turkish statesman had visited Western Thrace since the visit of the Third President of the Turkish Republic, Celal Bayar, fifty-one years ago.

I think the visit of Erdoğan in Komotini will stay in the history as a visit-proof of how many things have changed to the better in the Greek-Turkish relations and more specifically in the situation in Western Thrace. Some years ago, it would be impossible even to think that a Turkish politician could visit the region because the "ready" pessimistic scenarios that start with the words "what if...", "in case that..." would become big titles in all the newspapers. But it's not only the newspapers, it is also the mind of the people that was different some years ago. So, what happened? Did things really change? If they changed, up to what extent?

My first contact with the issue of Western Thrace was when I was in high school and one day in the newspaper I saw an article about a girl, Aysel Zeybek from Xanthi. Aysel was a Greek citizen, a Muslim who had lost her citizenship as a result of the Article 19 of the Greek Citizenship Law. The article included interviews with her and her family. Aysel became famous for one day. After that, her problem – which was not only hers, but so many others- was forgotten, like so many other problems that we read everyday in the press. I was impressed; I felt sad because despite the fact that I didn't know the laws I could sense that something unfair was happening to that girl.

My second contact with the issue was sometime later when my family organized a trip in Western Thrace. My memories are not very clear, but I remember we visited villages and the locals ran to hide full of fear and suspicion, seeing a car with Athens license plates. We visited the bazaars of Komotini and Xanthi and I saw women with headscarves speaking another language, and mosques with minarets. These images were something far from my Athens reality.

The years passed; I entered university; I made friends from Western Thrace, Greeks and Turks; I learned; I visited again and again. My last visit, for this study, was in the beginning of May 2004, when I decided that I needed to have a clearer image for what is going on in Thrace in order to be able to write about it.

What I can say is that when I compare the things that I saw and read ten years ago to the things that I see and read now, there is a great difference. Just the fact that a Greek student was writing a Master's thesis on this issue in Turkey was also a big change, because in the past the Western Thrace issue was taboo for Greek researchers and an undesirable topic.

I visited Komotini; I saw with my eyes the change. People are no longer afraid; young people are much more free to express their ideas. I visited the Turkish Youth Union and the Turkish Teachers' Union (unions officially closed for the Greek state). I had a very interesting discussion with the Turkish Consul in Komotini and I also visited the Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association. I spoke with young Turks and their Greek friends and I was given permission to search the archives of the Turkish newspapers *Trakya'nın Sesi* (The Voice of Thrace) and *Gündem* (Agenda).

Before closing this small preface, I would like to point out that still research on minorities is a difficult task. It is very easy for your words to be misunderstood, your movements to be considered suspicious. The bibliography on the specific issue of the Turkish Muslims of Thrace is limited to a few good Turkish and Greek books. The foreign bibliography on the issue is not very expanded, with the exception of a very good PhD dissertation by V. Aarbacke, which I used extensively in my research here. I should point out that Aarbacke's dissertation offers a brief history of the minority after 1923, but mainly focuses on the internal affairs of the minority, the actions of the minority politicians, their supporters, the developments in the minority political parties and the backstage of the actions of the politicians of the region. Aarbacke's interest is mainly in the "social and political processes, which influence minority/majority relations in this area." I also found it useful to search foreign, Greek, and Turkish minority newspapers after 1990 to see how they depicted the change and how they see the future. Finally, I am happy that I did my research on this issue because it is an issue that connects Greece and Turkey and it taught me things about my country that I would not have had the chance to learn otherwise.

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# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

## Definition of Minority

It is very difficult to give specific definitions for terms like "minority," "national group," "ethnic group," and "ethnic minority." The difficulty comes from the fact that these terms are not static; they change through the years and are influenced by several factors and situations, so a limited definition of "minority" might not include the latest developments. The difficulty also is connected to the fact that many times the definitions are given in order to support specific arguments. Even today the definition of a national minority is a contested concept.

The concept of minority was shaped together with the concept of nation-state because the utopia of identification of ethnic with state borders became obvious. The transformation of multi-ethnic empires into nation-states was the turning point for the acceptance and recognition of a minority group as an ethnic one. It was in 1878, with the treaty of Berlin, that the concept of minorities not only as religious but also as ethnic entities became apparent. Bulgaria was obliged to protect the Turks, Romanians and Greeks living within its borders and it had to respect their rights. But it was after the First World War, in 1918, that U.S. president Woodrow Wilson announced his 14 points program and the right of nations for self-determination. The treaties concluding the 1919 Versailles Peace Conference referred to the protected people who belong to racial, religious or linguistic minorities. Minority groups

started to be protected when the nation-state acquired some characteristics of the welfare state.[1] Still, there is no satisfactory definition of ethnic minority. It is often argued that in order for a group of people to constitute a separate nation there are some necessary preconditions that have to be fulfilled (partly or totally) such as common origins, common language, common religion, common history and common traditions expressed through legends and songs. The criterion of citizenship is also often mentioned. The experience in today's world shows that all these characteristics are not enough or are not confirmed by reality.

The League of Nations System of Minority Guarantees was one of the most significant examples of the protection of European national minorities, even though its final contribution and the conflict resolution formula it offered were not enough to guarantee the stability of states and minorities. It could not form a universal system of minority protection and the most obvious example was the exploitation of national minorities in Europe until the 1930s. So the protection and security of human rights was a case of the internal law of each state until the Second World War. It was after 1945 that efforts towards a universally accepted definition of minority began.[2] Also, after 1945, national minority rights no longer preserved their independent formula although they were included in the broader context of universal human rights regime.[3] According to the model that evolved after the Second World War, the state

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[1] L. Divani, *Η Ελλάδα και οι Μειονότητες [Greece and Minorities]* (Athens: Livani), 1999, p.24. For the history of minorities' protection, see F. Rigaux, "Peoples and Minorities, the Legacy of the Past," *C.E.A.* 4, no. 4 (1991); and Felix Ermacora, *The Protection of Minorities before the United Nations,* Academie de Droid International, Recueil des Cours 182, no. 4 (1983), pp. 256-8.

[2] Emrah Yaman, *The Turkish Minority in Changing Bulgaria"* (MA Thesis, Bosphorus University, 2003), p. 6.

[3] J.J. Preece, "National Minority Rights vs. State Sovereignty in Europe: Changing Norms in International Relations?" in *Nations and Nationalism* 3, no. 3 (1997), p. 347.

is responsible for protecting and promoting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities living within their jurisdiction.[4]

Another important document of the time was the the European Convention of Human Rights, signed in November 1950 by the Foreign Ministers of the Founding Member States of the Council of Europe that put its own stamp on the protection of human rights. Still, the situation after the World War II was that minority rights were rolled back, giving their place to individual human rights and minorities were viewed with suspicion as a factor of instability for the security of the states.

Here, it should be pointed out that a widely accepted definition of what constitutes a minority is the one formulated by Francesco Capotorti and adopted by the United Nations, for whom he acted as Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities:

> A group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State, in a non-dominant position, whose members-being nationals of the State- possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language.[5]

Capotorti's definition remains the only universally-binding instrument in public international law regarding minorities[6] and gives emphasis to four different characteristics[7]:

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[4] W.Kemp, "Applying the National Principle: Handling with Care", in *Journal on Ethnopolicis and Minority Issues in Europe* 4 (2002), p. 7.

[5] Cited in Chrstos L. Rozakis, "The International Protection of Minorities in Greece," in *Greece in a Changing Europe: Between European Integration and Balkan Disintegration,* eds. Kevin Featherstone and Kostas Ifantis (Manchester: 1996), p. 96.

[6] Carmen Thiele, " The Criterion of Citizenship for Minorities: The Example of Estonia," in *ECMI Working Paper,* no. *5 (*August 1999), available [online] at http://www.ecmi.de

[7] For problems concerning the specific definition, see the analysis of Javaid Rehman, "Uluslararası Hukukta Azınlık Hakları," in *Ulusal, Ulusalüstü ve Uluslararası Hukukta Azınlık Hakları,* (Istanbul: Istanbul Barosu, Insan Hakları Merkezi, 2002), pp.95-123.

First, for Capotorti, the minority group is numerically inferior to the rest of the population. This idea is seriously challenged on the ground that a minority is not defined by the limited numerical size of the group, but by the limited power and influence that it exercises over the social system.[8] The few cases like South Africa, where during the period of Apartheid a numerical minority dominated the majority of the population, show that this definition could not be applied to universal level.

Second, the non-dominant position is an objective criterion necessary for the protection of minorities. A minority should be protected not because it is numerically small, but because it does not enjoy the freedoms and rights enjoyed by the rest of the citizens of a state.

Third, members are nationals of the State. This criterion differentiates foreigners, immigrants and refugees from the minorities, who are under protection. Capotorti advances the criterion of citizenship as a prerequisite for a group to be protected.

Finally, the showing of a sense of solidarity. This is a subjective criterion that differentiates this definition from previous ones focusing on objective criteria. The objective criteria are not enough; even if there is a common language or religion or traditions, when the members of the minority do not show the will to preserve them, then the minority is assimilated into the majority.

Capotorti's definition was not approved by the United Nations. Other definitions of minorities before and after Capotorti that included or excluded several of the minority characteristics were expressed in different periods. The citizenship criterion has been among the most debated.

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[8] N. Papadimitriou, Μουσουλμανική μειονότητα και εθνική συνείδηση [Muslim minority and national conscience], (Alexandroupoli, 1995), p. 17.

In the following years, generalities or indifference towards the issue did not result in any definition for the minorities. For example, neither the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966 nor the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities of 18 December 1992 gave any specific definitions on this term. The latter one does not restrict minority rights to citizens, but relates the rights to the principle of territoriality.

The definition of the minority in the Proposal for a European Convention for the Protection of Minorities adopted by the European Commission for Democracy through Law of the Council of Europe (8 February 1991) adopted a definition focused on "minority members nationals of that state." Also, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, proclaimed in 1992, was of major importance for minority rights because it was devoted exclusively to minority protection. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted a text on 1 February 1993 for an Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights concerning Persons belonging to National Minorities. According to Article 1, the term "national minority" refers to

> a group of persons in a state who: a) resides on the territory of that state and are citizens thereof; b) maintain longstanding, firm and lasting ties with that state; c) display distinctive ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic characteristics; d) are sufficiently representative, although smaller in number than the rest of the population of that state or of a region of that state; e) are motivated by a concern to preserve together that which constitutes their common identity, including their culture, their traditions, their religion or their language.[9]

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[9] Proposal for an additional protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms concerning persons belonging to national minorities. Article 1, quoted in Tamer Bacınoğlu, "The Human Rights of Globalization: the Question of Minority Rights", in *Perceptions 3*, no. 4, (December 1998-February 1999).

For some scholars, the definition of the minority should not be connected to the number of the minority; this is "an accidental feature". "Minority status is connected to membership in a specific historical group not in the abstract class of citizens."[10]

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, adopted by the Council of Europe on 5 November 1992, stresses as well the criterion of citizenship.

The absence of a definition for minorities from the documents of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is indicative of the subjective acceptance of the term by the member states. In 1994, Max van der Stoel tried to define minority in a way similar Capotorti, stressing more the subjective criterion of the "will of the minority to maintain and develop its own distinct identity." Unlike Capotorti, who included the notion of "citizenship in the State" as a precondition for the recognition of a minority, Stoel did not include it in his definition even though later he explained that his definition encompasses traditional (non-immigrant) minorities.[11]

The Council of Europe (COE) faced similar difficulties with the other international organizations and gave emphasis to the particularities of the minorities of each member state, avoiding for some time the expression of a general definition of minority. For example, in the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of 1 February 1995, the definition of minority could not be made due to disagreements between the participating states concerning the criteria of the

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[10] Talal Asad, "Muslims and European Identity: Can Europe Represent Islam?" in *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union,* ed. Anthony Pagden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 222.

[11] *Controlling Ehtnic Tensions in Europe: The Experience of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities.* Adressed by Max van der Stoel (OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities) to the Oxford University Civil Liberties Society, Oxford, 28 October 1994.

minorities.[12] The lack of a specific definition of "national minority" gives the states the right to define the national minorities and does not guarantee the collective rights of the minorities bur rather emphasizes the "individual rights of persons belonging to national minorities". Finally, in 1990, national minorities were described as separate or distinct groups, well defined and established in the territory of a state, the members of which are nationals of that state and have certain religious, linguistic, cultural or other characteristics which distinguish them from the majority of the population.[13]

The importance of European intervention in the issues of minorities can be seen by the Framework Convention for the Protection of the National Minorities of the Council of Europe, which was a result of the changes after 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe. The Framework Convention is considered to be the first legally binding international instrument generally devoted to minority protection.[14] The initiative of the Council of Europe to ask Eastern and southeastern European States for minority protection before admitting them into membership and adding to its human rights instruments the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in 1995 was a very important step. In the Convention for the National Minorities, the member states are asked to protect, in addition to the individual human rights of their citizens, the identity of ethnic minorities.

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[12] Thiele, p. 5.

[13] Council of Europe, *Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1134.* Availabe [online] at http://www.coe.int

[14] Kinga Gal, "The Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and its Impact on Central and Eastern Europe," in *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe* (Winter 2000), available [online] at http://www.ecmi.de/jemi

The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities was adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 10 November 1994. It was opened for signature on 1 February 1995 and entered into force on 1 February 1998.

A minority can be identified when the "different" characteristics are composed and expressed in the political space under the form of legal demands, especially concerning human rights and the rights to tolerance. Minorities are shaped as a "relation and result of ideology, typology that is imposed by the central administration."[15] The "minority" group expresses its demand for recognition and the state may adopt some measures that at first sight can be considered as protection of the different (for example, international decisions of protection of ethnic identity), but in reality they are means of direct exercise of dominating control over the "other" (for example, national policies of shaping of ethnic identity).

## The Nation State: A Utopia "Broken" by the Minorities

Whether we accept the "nation" as an "imagined" community[16] or whether we want to use a more complicated model of the interpretation of nationalism, one thing is for sure, the nation-state and its ideological structure is against anything "different," because it is constructed on the basis of sameness. Nation-state tends to ignore any different elements (class, sex, social role) by uniting all these differences in a common ethnic identity.

Nation-state is a concept that developed in the West and has been applied throughout the world, often with dramatic results. The basic concept of nation-state that is "one nation, one state" excludes the different. In order for differences to be excluded or eliminated, it is necessary that the nation-state follows policies that will

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[15] D. Hristopoulos, "Ανθρώπινα δικαιώματα και μειονοτικός λόγος στην Ελλάδα" [Human rights and minority presence in Greece], in Σύγχρονα θέματα (Contemporary Issues) 63 (1997), p. 39.

[16] B. Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. New York: Verso Books, 1991.

"hide" the existence of the "others," that will eliminate the differences by assimilating, and not give special privileges to minority populations so that the "desirable" homogenization becomes a reality.

The following questions can be posed: what happens when in the frame of a nation-state not every citizen finds himself identified with the same ethnic identity? What are the characteristics of the "ethnic different" inside the frame of nation-state? How can we define scientifically the "different" groups of the people inside a state?

## Globalization and the Nation-State

At the beginning of 1990's, in a period where the cold war had come to an end, after the break-up of the state socialist federations of the USSR and Yugoslavia into independent republics, a wave of "newly born nationalisms" appeared in the societies of the former Soviet block that had been suppressed for decades. The collapse of the communist system brought an end to the bipolar international security system and most of the emerging new states experienced waves of nationalism, different in tension and duration, that can be called a "infantile nationalist reawakening."[17] The minorities were victims of their "destiny": instead of being accepted as equal elements of a multicultural society, the historical fears, the nationalisms, the interests of the "great powers" did not allow these minorities to develop equally with the dominant nations. The collapse of the Soviet Union had

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[17] The term belongs to scholar Evangelos Kofos, "Textbooks: The Pendulum of Loading and Disarming History: The South-Eastern European Test-Case," in *Disarming History: International Conference on Combating stereotypes and Prejudice in History Textbooks of South-East Europe,* Visby, Gotland (Sweden), 23-25 September 1999.

serious effects both on the relation of the EU with the newly born states and also on the internal affairs of all the states of the region.

This new order and globalisation was viewed with skepticism by most of the small states that considered it as "a new name for the old game of all-encompassing domination by the developed countries."[18] Globalization seems to promote the interdependence of the state economies. One of the biggest effects of globalization has been the serious challenge of the homogenous nation-state. In the frame of "globalization," of the continuous movement of ideas, capitals, technology and people, the new power forms surpass the traditional borders of the states.

Ken Booth observes that,

> sovereignty is disintegrating. States are less able to perform their traditional function. Global factors increasingly impinge on all decisions made by governments. Identity patterns are becoming more complex, as people assert local loyalties, but want to share in global values and lifestyles.[19]

The state system started losing its importance and power since two different dynamics, one from above and one from below, "squeezed" it and thus transformed the nation-state into a new more flexible and less defined reality where the political initiatives are not taken anymore directly by the centre (of the state). The emergence of a new transnational order from above that pushes for global integration and the reappearance of territorial and cultural identities from below that lead to local differentiation are the two transforming "powers."[20] The globalization process gave

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[18] Petru Dimitriu, "The Seven Sins of Globalization: A Perspective from Small Developing States," in *Perceptions* 2 (June-August 2000).

[19] Ken Booth, "Security in Anarchy: Utopian Realism in Theory and Practice," *International Affairs* 67, no. 3 (July 1991), p. 542.

[20] Michael Keating and John McGarry, "Introduction," *Minority Nationalism and The Changing International Order*, eds. Michael Keating and John McGarry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 2.

emphasis to "difference," to "multiculturalism," and thus changed the dominant concept of assimilation and integration in the corpus of the nation-state. The creation of the nation-state was put into question and was challenged seriously since in the frame of the new reality it seemed that it was unable to answer the questions posed by the new developments (multiculturalism, tolerance, civil society emergence). The governments of the states had to think of how to keep the state united, not by following integration policies towards the "different," but by trying to "protect" it.

The concept of "globalization" is a difficult to define term because of its complexity and its relatively new appearance and because of the fact that it is a concept under continuous change. It can be defined in many ways, as many as its numerable dimension. A simple definition is that globalisation is all of the mechanisms that make our world more and more interconnected.

Since the age in which we live is stamped by economic "miracles" and economic "failures" (see economic crisis that touch many countries in Europe and Asia) globalization is directly combined with the increased and easier mobility of goods, capital, services and human resources that have limited the state's control over the economy and have connected the economy of one state with those of many others. International corporations are the most obvious examples of this form of globalization and the financial flow is the result of it. The policies that support economic liberalization have great consequences for regional economies of the periphery and population and create concern in the developing world, which sees globalization as the will of the most powerful. Supranational bodies impose their regulations on economic and development policies and thus limit the authority of the state often creating inequality and widening the gap between rich and poor.

The concept of multiculturalism is another aspect of globalization. The new media (the Internet, satellite television, etc.,) have permitted the spread of forms of global culture and have facilitated communication to different parts of the earth.

The emphasis of the international community on human rights and the global efforts for the end of violations are other important aspects of globalization. States are no longer seen as capable of solving their own problems and the international community considers necessary the contribution of supra-state organizations like Amnesty International, UNESCO, and UNICEF that are not bound to a specific state and have been "given" the right to intervene in the states "violating" their sovereignty for the sake of human rights. Those who try to explain the effects of globalization on the notion of nation, citizenship and state express the view that national boundaries are not necessarily the basis for international co-operation.

Finally, the creation of institutions like the European Union (EU) that have transnational reach affect the global community in two different ways. First of all, there is a direct influence on the member states of such institutions whose sovereignty is by their own will "violated." Specifically for the European Union, it can be said that it is a transnational organization structured in the form of a nation-state. The states have rights and obligations and they apply specific measures, after receiving pressure from these transnational organizations, that would hardly be adopted by the state if it had to take the decision by itself (for example, in issues like human rights protection and civil rights). A second field of influence is over the citizens of the specific states: the citizens are not anymore only citizens of this state. They have multiple identities and they can choose which one is priority for them, not always stressing their ethnic identity anymore. The content of identity has been profoundly transformed. The relativization of identities in a variety of affinities

(region, origins, religion, language, gender, class) is a fact.[21] For example a member of the Western Thrace minority in Greece, in 2004, can feel that he is a citizen of the city of Komotini (because he can be elected in the municipal council), a citizen of Greece (because its his homeland and he has lived all his life there), a Muslim (because it is his religion and he can exercise it), a European (because Europe cares about him and protects him as a minority), and a Turk (because this is his ethnic origin and he can express it) or anything else.

## The Effects of Globalization on the Protection of Minorities

If we consider that state, nation and the minorities of a nation-state are concepts closely related to each other, then it becomes obvious that any effect of globalization on the nation-state affects the minorities seriously. This of course, does not mean that the nation-state is finished; on the contrary, it is certain that the nation-state will continue to exist as an "actor", but not the only one. Global civil society, with the actions of NGOs on a global level, is the other political force. It is exactly this influence of globalization that raises questions about minority protection and the limits and the power of the nation-state. One of the most important effects of globalization on minorities has been the increased interest of the international community concerning them since the process of globalisation has weakened the power and authority of the states. The re-occurrence of the wars in Europe and the renaissance of majority and minority nationalism in the 1990s, where the newly

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[21] Diamanto Anagnostou, Oppositional and Integrative Ethnicities: Regional Political Economy, Turkish Muslim Mobilization and Identity Transformation in Southeastern Europe (Greece, Bulgaria), (Ph.d, Cornell University, 1999), p. 5.

created states of Europe looked back at their real or imagined areas of national pride, has led the European Union and other organizations to put particular emphasis on protecting national minorities in Central and Southeastern Europe. The fact that the war in Yugoslavia and the instability in the Soviet Union were based on minority rights terrified Europe.

In a way, the protection of minorities became the antidote to the ethnic nationalism that spread into Europe after the end of the Cold War. According to Irakleidis, "from the mid 1980's and especially after the end of the Cold War, the threat of interstate conflict has been reduced radically while the threat of an internal war with ethnic or communal criteria has been increased seriously."[22]

The scholar Ronnie D. Lipschutz names three reasons that justify the appearance of the global civil society and its interest in human rights, especially after 1990's: First, the leaking away of sovereignty from the state, upwards to supranational institutions and downwards to subnational ones; second, global civil society is a functional answer to the decreasing ability of state governments to solve their problems; and third, global civil society is a form of resistance to the hegemony of the current international system.[23]

The protection of minorities includes among others *minority language rights* (the right to education in the native language, the right to publications, the right to the protection and preservation of traditions and minority cultures), *minority political rights* (the participation of minorities in decision-making processes on the local and

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[22] Al. Irakleidis, "Nationalism and Interstate Conflicts: The Phenomenon of Ethnotic Nationalism", *Σύγχρονα Προβλήματα Διεθνών Σχέσεων,* eds. M. Tsinisizelis and K. Yfandis (Athens: Sideris,2000), p. 35.

[23] Ronnie D. Lipschutz, "Reconstructing World Politics: The Emergence of Global Civil Society," *Millenium* 21, no. 3 (Winter 1992), p. 399.

national levels) and the creation of the possibility for effective dialogue between the minority and majority communities. The continuous interest in and the activities for the rights of the minorities (linguistic, cultural, political, etc.) have even given to the concept of "minority" a rather positive political value.[24] The dramatic effects that accompanied the end of communism (new states in Eastern Europe made under the model of nation-state) and the possibilities that minorities in the already existent nation states may decide to move on to independence, either uniting with states in which their kin ethnics live or creating their own state (taking part of the lands of the old state) have alarmed the international community. This is one of the reasons that minority issues and minority nationalism have started to be perceived as strategic factors in regional stability and strong claims for minority protection have emerged. The fact that today we no longer live in a state-focused society, but in a "multicentral" society with several governmental and non-governmental organizations increases the possibilities for initiatives in favor of minorities that can seriously affect the policies of the states towards them. It has been especially in recent years that the voices of intergovernmental institutions and their representatives, like the General Secretary of UN, the President of European Commission or the High Commissioner for National Minorities of the Commission of Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) have started to be heard. Institutions like the Council of Europe, the European Court of Human Rights, escaping from the decades-dominant logic of individual human rights in Europe, have tried to find formulas and tried to promote human rights and, consequently, the rights of

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[24] Jane Cowan, "Anthropology and Cultural Variety: Personal Thoughts Coming from the Greek Example", in *Σύγχρονα Θέματα (Contemporary Issues)* 63 (April-June 1997).

minorities, the respect of the different and the equality before the law, within the framework of the state.[25]

The European Union and NATO are two other organizations that give importance to the democratic record of their members. International NGOs like Amnesty International, Minority Rights Group, International Church Council and also independent states' committees try to give a voice to minorities by presenting their problems and the importance of human rights sometimes backed up with armed intervention, as in this case human and minority rights are placed ahead of state sovereignty. An obvious example is when the EU delegated the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) of OSCE the task of judging whether countries have done enough in terms of minority rights.[26] A variety of organizations has appeared as a reaction to the global needs for institutional protection of human rights.

Concerning the protection of the minorities since the end of the cold war, the most important step has been the agreement concerning minority languages and the European framework agreement on the protection of national minorities adopted by the states of the Council of Europe. These two agreements contain provisions on the main rules of the protection of minorities that were shaped by the international

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[25] The Council of Europe, founded 54 years ago, tries to identify the problems of democracy in his member states in the human rights sections by special resolutions addressed to individual states, international conventions, and assistance for the adoption of new laws.

"The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, created in 1994, worked to integrate minorities into the life of the state by ensuring that the state was not overly biased in favour of the majority. The basic philosophy was to try to integrate diversity." In W.Kemp, "Applying the National Principle: Handling with Care", in *Journal on Ethnopolicis and Minority Issues in Europe* 4 (2002), p. 4.

The European Court of Human Rights is the judicial instrument concerning the protection of the minorities, where individuals can address when facing problems with their states. The decisions of the Court have direct impact upon the law of the states.

[26] Kymlicka, W. "Reply and Conclusion", *Can Liberal Pluralism be exported? Western Political Theory and Ethnic Relations in Eastern Europe,* eds. by in W. Kymlicka and M.Opalski, ( Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.375.

community in the past and forced the states to secure the ability of individuals to determine themselves as belonging to a certain minority group.[27] All this international concern over human rights aims at influencing the governments that violate human rights to change their attitude towards their citizens.

An important debate on globalization and minorities, on whether globalisation encourages or hinders minority nationalism, continues. It is sure that distinct communities inside the state express their "difference" either by seeking cultural protection or demanding regional autonomy or national self-determination. The question is whether the protection and the rights they request, motivated by the general "spirit" of our times (emphasis on minority protection through humanitarian organisations etc.), encourage their minority nationalism or reduce it.

The importance of the state is being stressed by those who support the dominance of nation-state and speak about the need for controlling the disrupting effects that globalization. These writers ignore the reality of the re-waking of minority nationalism, especially after the 1990's. The reason why Yugoslavia and the USSR were dissolved was this kind of minority nationalism. The supporters of this idea claim that despite the multi-identity and the transnational reach of globalization effects, minority identities –that were "hidden" or in "hibernation"- emerged or re-emerged with the form of minority nationalism.[28] So, despite the fact that globalization offers the possibility for many identities; minorities may choose nationalism as a way to express themselves in a transnational world. The nation is

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[27] Christos Rozakis, "The Protection of Human Rights in Europe: Evolving Trends and Prospects." Discussion paper of *The Hellenic Observatory: The European Institute,* London School of Economics and Political Science, October 2000, p. 12.

[28] Keating and McGarry, p. 4. The writer gives examples in Western countries like Great Britain and Canada, where the minority nationalism increased as an effect of these global trends.

still the basis of the identity and the state continues to play an important role, though changed compared to its traditional form. The challenge of globalization, despite its being the force that weakened the nation-state, is that it wields the power that can legalize minority nationalist movements and justify minority nationalisms. The erosion of the state and the decentralization as a result of economic interdependencies, transnational organizations and obligations undertaken by the states in the frame of global treaties encourage the inter-community relations and local identities. The center of the international security moves from the state to the nation. The emphasis is given to the protection of the different identities expressed within the same state. The pattern of state/domination comes face to face with another rival: nation/identity.[29] So, the concept of identity and the nationalism of minorities can have serious effects on the system of states.

The many humanist organizations that present the violations of human rights give voice to minority members and challenge the authority of the state over its citizens. Thus, they can encourage the minority claims because the state no longer enjoys the same power of social cohesion.[30] This doesn't mean that all the claims of minorities lead to independence and the creation of independent states. The dissolution of Yugoslavia as an example of the destabilization of a state and the broader region should not be taken as a model. The weakening of traditional notions of sovereignty often affects minorities to express specific demands within the frame of their state. Europe should search for solutions other than separation on the basis of ethnicity; it is not a "must" that separate nation-state can satisfy fully the needs of the

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[29] K. Yfanids, " System Change, European Security and Institutional Strategy: The Case of NATO in the New European Reality," in Tsinisizelis and Yfandis, pp. 318-139.

[30] Keating and McGarry, p. 7.

minorities. There are alternative ways in the frame of the nation-state and Europe is exploring these alternative avenues today.[31] Minorities are no longer unprotected, as stated above, and the reports of human rights organizations (for example OSCE, Amnesty International etc.) exercise serious pressure on the states on their behalf.

A growing number of studies in sociology and political science claim that there are two kinds of minority nationalism. The first one can lead to conflict. Some of the prerequisites for a minority nationalism-based conflict can be summed up as follows:[32] The first are the three independent factors. The existence of a distinct population which is by definition a numerical minority and can be either a separate nation or part of a nation, either a community that does not consist a nation or not even a community but a separate society that is distinct by the society or community of the centre. In addition to this, the interaction relationship between the centre and the periphery group characterized by oppression exercised on the minority through discriminatory measures is also an important factor. In such a case, the minorities feel that the state neither represents nor cares about their interests and that a kin-state could perhaps better protect their identity. This kind of minority nationalism has an emotional basis: it focuses on past historical glories and promises victories. It bases its demands on shared (actual or imagined) characteristics and cultural bonds. It stresses the importance of the protection of the community/minority, often demanding separate territory either through autonomy, the creation of a federal state, the federalization of the whole state according to ethnic criteria, etc. It does not aim at the restoration of the civil rights in the frame of the state, but it is mostly positive

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[31] Rozakis, p. 7.

[32] For a detailed analysis, see Al. Irakleidis, pp. 45-70.

about the creation of a new state because the minority is under threat. It is most seen in societies where civic institutions are weak and where an "ethnic" definition of citizenship is dominant.

According to Irakleidis, except from the "independent" factors, the contribution of some "dependent" factors is also crucial[33]: the existence of a separate leadership that expresses liberating (secessionist) intentions that cause a sensation inside the minority, the interaction of state and centrifugal minority, several catalysts (expectation of foreign help and diplomatic support) that give the impression that a separate state could be created and would be feasible can also influence a minority nationalism towards the creation of a different state.

The second form of minority nationalism is the more flexible one. In this case, the minority is orientated not towards a new nation-state, but to the solution of their problems through peaceful means in the frame of a multicultural state. The minority is more concerned for the protection of its rights rather than the breaking away and focuses on effective and democratic participation.[34] It tries to find solutions in the existing legal framework through national and transnational institutions by changes that will result in equality for all citizens before the law and equal participation in the public sphere.

In the era of globalization, there is greater interest in human rights. In the international forums and in the bilateral relations there is a constant stress on the importance of human rights and the degree of the respect that each state shows is

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[33] Irkaleidis, p. 63.

[34] M. Jovanovic, "Territorial Autonomy in Eastern Europe-Legacies of the Past," in *Journal of European Minority Issues,* no. 4 (2002), p. 9.

controlled by the other states. The influence of the mass media and the publication of the violations of human rights contribute to a better handling of the problem.

## The "European Identity": An Alternative for the Minorities

Despite the fact that the concept of the identity of European Union is still debatable, a European identity that comes as a result of the intervention of the EU in favor of the minorities as a result of the funds of the EU for projects concerning minority populations and minority-favored intervention has started to become obvious in more and more cases. The European Union is neither a state, according to the traditional definition of the nation-state, nor an international organization like the United Nations or NATO. It is obvious that the final destination of the EU and the prospects that it offers the future are still unknown, but some new concepts like the European identity have started to become apparent.

The fact that state governments are no longer the only actors in the international political field has reduced the power of the state and has increased the power of concepts like "citizen of the world" or more general identity frameworks that are spread especially inside minority groups that for years have suffered by the states' oppression. What happens is a decentralization of authorities and a re-distribution of power and authority between governments, NGOs and international organizations.

Minorities in Europe are the ones who are able to profit more by the concept of "European identity" since "evasions of sovereignty" have reduced the power of the state and have encouraged the direct contact of the minority groups with the EU, for economic, development or humanitarian issues without many times the

"participation" of the central governments.[35] The emphasis of the EU on policies that promote the identities of the minority groups and multiculturalism is a fact.

## Balkan National Identities: The Case of Greece

The effects of globalization on nation-states and their minorities in the Balkans cannot be understood without a brief explanation about the creation of the Balkan states and processes of nation- and state-building. Nationalism has always been a popular concept in the Balkans. Either it has had the form of a stateist nationalism (used by the nation-state) or it has been applied as a minority nationalism (by the minorities inhabiting the Balkan states). Most of the Balkan states (Serbia, Romania, Croatia, Slovenia) belong to the category of "ethnic nations" (in contrast to "civic nations"). [36] All the wars fought in the Balkans in the twentieth century were nationalistically motivated and aimed at the integration of territories from neighbor states and the reunification of nations with their minorities.

The beginning of the nineteenth century marked the starting of the independence struggles of the Balkan nations. Until that time, all the Balkan nations had been living in groups within the frame of the Ottoman Empire. Being bounded

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[35] R. Falk, "Evasions of Sovereignty," in R. Walker and S. Mendlowitz (eds.), *Contending Sovereignties: Redefining Political Communities,* Boulder CO, Lynne Reiner (1990), pp. 61-78.

[36] "Civic nationalism: the collective identity of a group of people born or living in a specified territory with a shared history, and owing allegiance to a sovereign government whose powers are defined and delimited by laws enacted and enforced through institutions such as parliament or Congress that evoke common loyalty to powerful symbols and myths of nationality". Ethnic nationalism: the sense of national identity and loyalty shared by a group of people united among themselves and distinguished from others by one or more of the following factors: language, religion, culture; and most important, a belief in the common genetic or biological descent of the group." Definitions are given in J.McPherson, *Is Blood Thicker Than Water? Crisis of Nationalism in the Modern World* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), pp. 31-33.

by common characteristics like language, religion, or belief in common origins and the feeling of belonging to a nation were not historically connected with the feeling of having a state. So, the processes of state- and nation-building were not parallel. The independence wars strengthened the social cohesion between people whose connections were based on culture, folklore, and language, and finally nationalism was used for the creation of independent states out of foreign rule. The shaping of different national identities in the Balkans and the creation of some states out of these national identities led to the assumption, as Ivanov puts it, that "national self-determination was feasible only in the form of full state independence."[37] The development of Balkan nationalism followed a different way from that of the nationalism in the rest of Europe. Some researchers characterize Balkan nationalism "more mystical," because it was created out of legends, traditions, and myths and deeply connected to the past, while European nationalism "arose in an effort to build a nation in the political reality and the struggles of the present without too much sentimental regard to the past."[38] Actually, European nationalism is more a "civic nationalism", while the Balkan nationalism is more an "ethnic nationalism."

The new states that were born were not "tolerant" of their minorities or towards their neighbors. The coexistence inside Empires (the Habsburg Empire and the Ottoman Empire) despite the common "destiny" that prepared for the Balkan nations, created rival nationalisms (opposing and conflicting) and claimed territories that after the creation of the different Balkan states, remained outside the territories of each of them. Living inside Empires with different and multinational populations

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[37] Andrey Ivanov, "Ethnic Minorities and Nationalism in the Balkans: The Bulgarian Case," *Newsletter of the Institute for Market Economics of Bulgaria* 6, no. 1 (January 1999), p. 1.

[38] H.Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism* (New York: McMillan,1961), p. 330.

that experienced invasions and armed conflicts, was not a choice made by the nations, and thus the multinational environment was not something adopted by them. It has been argued that the relationship of multiethnic empire and nationalism is similar to the –later-relationship of the Soviet Union and the nationalism of the countries of the Communist bloc.[39] In both cases, the multi-ethnic character of the Empires and the Soviet Union worked as an umbrella over nationalism.

The "exclusive" nature of Balkan nationalism combined with "lost territories," the importance of history and of pre-state characteristics like language, religion, traditions and the lack of trust in neighbor countries shaped and influenced to a great extent the minority policies of the Balkan states. The ethnocentric appraisal of the past and the negative stereotypes of the neighbor states created the conditions for "revanche," antagonism and efforts to "correct" the mistakes of the past. The minorities that are connected linguistically, ethnically or religiously to a neighbor "rival" state are usually the "mirror" of the Balkan inter-state rivalry inside the lands of one state. Their different characteristics are perceived as a threat to the ethnic homogeneity of the nation-state. The Balkan states perceived every sign of minority nationalism as a threat. They were extremely sensitive to national issues and much more susceptible to nationalistic appeals both by their "leaders" and the "others."[40] Their own "nationalism" was something positive, but the "minority nationalism" inside their states was something that must be stopped. As Andrey Ivanov notes, "minority nationalism in the Balkans is perceived solely as exclusive majority

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[39] Ivanov, p.2.

[40] ibid., p. 3.

nationalism in an embryonic stage."[41] The "insecurity" born by the existence of minorities resulted in different policies adopted by the Balkan states under the same basis: efforts for national uniformity and denial of the existence of ethnic minorities in their territories.

The policy of the Balkan nation-state to promote the culture of the "majority" has produced isolated minorities and artificially structured majorities and created the basis of the nation-state over the basis of the culture of the majority. Thus, any expression of another identity inside its lands has been seen problematic.

The lack of a specific definition of a minority (linguistic, religious or ethnic) creates additional problems. That which in one country is defined as ethnic, in another country is classified as linguistic or vice versa.[42] The Balkan states have followed different policies towards their minorities, but the general feeling is that minorities bring instability and constitute a threat towards the territorial integrity of the state, since in some cases the minorities identify themselves with their kin from neighbor states that have territorial claims over their own state. The suspicion with which minorities are treated pushes the governments to follow several measures: refusal of ethnic identity, isolation, forced expulsion, and extinction. The example of the Pomaks of Greece is an obvious example of this mentality: the Pomaks, for a very long time, until the 1990's lived isolated in a "supervised" zone in Northern Greece because the state conceived them as potential "traitors" that could cooperate with Bulgaria and threat the Greek territories.

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[41] ibid., p. 2.

[42] Paskal Milo, "The Constitutional Rights and Minorities in the Balkans: A Comparative Analysis," in *Perceptionss* 2, no. 3 (September-November 1997).

The situation in the Balkans after 1990, when the old system collapsed and an ideological vacuum appeared, was shaped to a great extent by "majority and minority nationalism." Despite the declarations for democratic reforms, nationalism came to fill this gap. Minorities often were conceived as greater threats than what they really were.[43]

The Greek identity is widely determined by several parameters: the connection of the Orthodox Christian religion, the Greek language, historical roots dating back to antiquity, and the sharing of a common culture. The third article of the Greek Constitution of 1975 declares that the dominant religion in Greece is Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ. The fact that the constitution of Greece reflects this reality even today is proof that the Greek official ideology, based on language, religion and origins, is still valid. The dominance of the religion dates back in 1821 and in the efforts of Greece to be organized as a modern state. The Orthodox Church was an institution that predated the Greek State and thus had to be protected. The best example of the dominance of religion in Greece is the invocation of the Greek Constitution: "In the name of the Holy and the Consubstantial and Indivisible Trinity." Other sentences in the Constitution place the Greek state at the service of the Greek Orthodox Church and not only this, but also at the service of the global mission of the Orthodox Church Universal.[44] The identification of hellenicity with Orthodox religion means that groups of people believing in other religions or other dogmas are "excluded" from the Greek identity and Greece is what it is called an

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[43] Ivanov, p.6

[44] See the statement of Vassilios Tsirbas, Senior Consul, European Centre of Law and justice in the hearing before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, *Human Rights in Greece: A Snapshot of the Cradle of Democracy,* June 20, 2002, p. 26.

"ethnic nation." This means that the state speaks for ethnic Greeks. This is in contrast to the "civic nation" (for example, the U.S.A.), where citizenship and acceptance of the institutions of the state are the basis of the state and not the ethnic origins or the religion of its citizens.

The Greek ethnic identity is shaped and formed within the framework of a bipolar relation against a hostile "other." This hostile "other" is opposed to the Greek imagined construction about Greek ethnic identity. The result is that historical facts are connected in an "unorthodox" way through education –that until recently at least it has given to the "Turk" all the characteristics of an enemy-, the aggressive words of politicians and partial realities (for example, the historical events of 1922) which lack their whole truth. Until recently Greece was presented as a homogenous state with no different minorities or communities.

## The Concept of Minorities in Greece

The concept of "minority" in Greece is still debated. Despite the tradition of perceiving minorities as security threat, Greece has not sought "violent" solutions for the minorities, like for example, the case of Bulgaria.[45] Richard Clogg notes that until recently there was no expression in Greek for "ethnic minority," despite the fact that "ethnic" in English is clearly of Greek origin. He admits that the expression "national minority" can not be accepted in Greece because the Greeks are afraid that "neighboring states would be entitled to take a greater interest in a national minority than in an ethnic one, or that a national minority might have claims to secede or unite

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[45] Ivanov, p.7

with another state and thus be perceived as a kind of Trojan Horse."[46] Still, the stress on the ethnic origins in Greece combined with the language and religious parameters have created serious obstacles in linguistic, religious or ethnic minorities in the past and up to some point in the present. The commitment of the Greek state to the Greek Orthodox Church often stands in opposition to the advancement and the enjoyment of the rights of citizens with other religious beliefs. Also, the primary importance of the "nation" had for years supremacy over concepts like "national minorities", "minority rights", and "individual human rights".

If we accept that states perceive their national minorities problem either as advocates of collective minority rights or as advocates of the stability and territorial integrity of the state, then Greece belongs in the second group. The minority policy of Greece was against the collective minority rights (for national minorities) and against the desire of any minority members (politicians, journalists or simple citizens) to preserve the national character of their community. For Greece, the priority was given to the political and territorial stability of the state and thus, at least, until 1990 there was not a serious minority policy that could guarantee the rights of national minorities. The sovereignty of the state was a priority and the state accepted the minority rights limited in individual human rights. Any expression of collective right that could be used by other states or the international community as a challenge to the state sovereignty was viewed with suspicion.

The official Greek position on the minorities is that in order for a minority to be recognized it must have a recognized legal status. The Treaty of Lausanne of 1923 has given this status only to the "Muslim minority" of Thrace. The Greek state refers

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[46] Richard Clogg, "Introduction," in Richard Clogg ed., *Minorities in Greece: Aspects of Plural Society* (London: Hurst, 2002), p. 15.

to them as "Muslims Greek citizens," an expression that doesn't satisfy the minority, because it doesn't give any ethnic specification. Greece does not recognize any other ethnic or linguistic minority. The good or bad relations with the reference-state of the minorities influenced the policies of the Greek state towards its minorities. Greece signed the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities but has not ratified it yet. The last census that included information about ethnic identity was in 1951. The researcher Ronald Meinardus reveals that at least until recently the great majority of Greeks see the minority issue mainly as an issue of national security. They perceive a clear Turkish threat in Western Thrace and fear this area might one day become a second Cyprus and be annexed by Turkey.[47] Greece is an obvious example of a state that suffers from "the obsession of territories," or what French international lawyer George Scelle called "obsession du territoire."[48]

According to a report of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) in 2002, concerning the depiction of the minorities through the media, it is reported that,

> most of the Greek mass media reject the ethnic character of the minority of W. Thrace and tend to connect it closely with the negative stereotypes about Turkey...The media during the period 1995-2000 depict the minority of W. Thrace as illiterate, victim of its religious leaders and the Turkish propaganda...The last years the moderate media expressed their interest for the socio-economic problems of the minority and criticized the lack of policy of the Greek state for local administration and education...The Mass Media admit periodically the discriminations against the Turkish minority, but

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[47] Ronald Meinardus, "Muslims: Turks, Pomaks and Gypsies," in *Minorities in Greece: Aspects of a Plural Society,* ed. by Richard Clogg (London: Hurst, 2002) p.81

[48] Jovanovic, n.p.

justify them with the argument that Turkey represses the Greek minority of Istanbul.[49]

In this thesis the term "Turkish Muslim minority" is used for three reasons:[50]

First, it reflects the Turkish consciousness of the biggest part of the minority and the affinities of the Pomaks and Gypsies with ethnic Turks. Second, it also shows the Muslim character, which was the basis of the Lausanne Treaty and the ethnic diversity of the group. And third, it is a term used in the last years by Greek and Turkish researchers who deal with the issue of minorities and it has been used in the past by minority leaders as well[51].

Also, another important aspect of the minority issue is the principle of "reciprocity," which, according to Greek sources, is regulated by the Treaty of Lausanne. The fact that the French text writes "*les droits...sont egalement reconnus*" shows that the rights of the minorities are the same, but that they do not depend on the reciprocal implementation of the same rights by the other country to its minority. It is very simplistic to degrade the human rights of minorities to the principle of reciprocity, because human rights (minority rights in our case) can not be subject to reciprocity. According to some scholars, reciprocity is implemented on technical issues: the exchange of teachers or lessons in minority schools, the books used in the lessons of the minority students for example, but not on issues concerning human

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[49] "O Ios" *Ελευθεροτυπία,* 13 April 2002. Translation of text of report by me. The original text can be found [online] at http://www.eumc.at

[50] The expression "Turkish-Muslim minority" belongs to Samim Akgönül, and according to my opinion is a satisfactory definition for the minority.

[51] The Turkish scholar Samim Akgönül (*Une communaute a des etats: La minorite turco-musulmane de Thrace Occidentale,* Istanbul: Isis, 1999), the Greek scholar Diamanto Anagnostou , the Turkish scholar Baskın Oran [ *Türk-Yunan İlişkilerinde Batı Trakya Sorunu (*Istanbul: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1991), p. 134]; and Sadık Ahmet, well-known minority politician (in "Grievances and Requests of the Turkish-Moslem Minority Living in Western Thrace, Greece," in *Turkish Review* 3, no.15 [Spring 1989]) are among the ones who use this definition.

rights.[52] The tendency in Greece, at least of some academics and politicians, to stress the reciprocal value of the Treaty started to disappear gradually after 1991, when facts about the treaties that Greece had signed and the reports of international human rights organizations emerged.

The basic concepts of the Greek minority policy (at least until 1991) can be summarized as follows: the territorial integrity of the state, the priority of individual over collective rights, the treatment of the minority issue as an element of political debate, especially depending on Greek-Turkish relations and the identification of the Turkish Muslim minority of Thrace with the Turkish nation (living in Turkey) and thus treating the minority in a "retaliative" way.

Greece is a country that has been affected in different way by the consequences of the developments in Eastern Europe, the Balkans and the West. Greece has received many immigrants due to the latest developments in Europe since 1990 and thus Greek society has come face-to-face with "the different." Greece has faced the huge challenge of living in peace and respect with "the others." Still the concept of "multiculturalism" is relatively new and not always positively regarded.

In this new political atmosphere, there was a change in Greek minority policy after 1991. The beginning of the change was in 1991 when the prime minister of Greece, Mr. Mitsotakis, officially admitted and denounced state-sponsored discrimination and declared "legal equality-equal citizenship" as the new principle of minority protection. Under the influence of the EU and due to the ideological position of the previous years' politicians, this was the first effort of shifting the

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[52] See Ach. Skordas, "Yunanistan'da Azınlıkların Korunması ve Liberal Reform Zorunluluğu," in *Ulusal, Ulusalüstü ve Uluslarası Hukukta Azınlık Hakları* (Istanbul: Istanbul Barosu, Insan Haklari Merkezi, 2002), pp. 329-330; K. Tsitselikis, "The Legal Status of Islam in Greece," unpublished article, p. 5.

concept of "Greek" from an "ethnic" definition of citizenship to "civic" one. The difference of Greece to the other Balkan states was that Greece was the only country in Europe that it was a member of the European Union. This thesis examines the historical background of the situation, and seeks to ascertain whether the change after 1991 was a real change, why it took place in 1991 and not earlier, what were the factors that contributed to this, what changed and what still needs to be changed.

# CHAPTER II

## THE EARLY PHASE

### General Background-Muslims in Greece

The Turkish Muslim minority in Greek Thrace is the result of the signing of the Lausanne Treaty (signed in 30 January and 24 July 1923) between Greece and Turkey. Most of the Muslims of Western Thrace belong to the Sunni dogma; still, there are some villages in the mountains of Rodope in which the population is Bektashi (for example, the village Roussa) or follows other Sufi sects.[53] Even if we disregard the religious differences among the Muslims, this doesn't mean that the group is homogenous. There are differences in ethnic origin, cultural habits, and social and economic levels. Despite these differences it is still considered by the Greek state only as a religious minority and is considered homogenous concerning language and origins.[54] The usage of different languages is very characteristic among the members of the minority. A small example: Greek is the official language of Greece and is the language used in all the official papers in the relations between the state and the citizens; Turkish is spoken in the family and community environment, especially in Turkish-speaking villages and in mixed communities, and also it is the

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[53] For more information on Besktaşi, see the book of E.H. Zengini, *Ο Μπεκτασισμός στη Δυτική Θράκη [Bektashism in Western Thrace]* (Thessaloniki: IMXA, 1988). Bektashism's origins date back to the thirteenth century with Hacı Bektaş Veli and its organization as *tarikat* in the sixteenth century.

[54] Eleni Kanakidou, Η εκπαίδευση στη Μουσουλμανική Μειονότητα της Δυτικής Θράκης,[ Education of the Muslim Minority of Western Thrace](Athens: Ellinika Grammata, 1994), p. 60.

official education minority language. It is estimated that it is spoken by the 95% of the minority. Pomak is spoken by 20% of the minority and Romani by only 3%.[55]

## The History of Thrace until the Lausanne Treaty

Thrace has been an area that was occupied and inhabited by different peoples during its long history and today is divided between Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria. The strategic importance of the region influenced its "destiny" for centuries: For Greece, Thrace was a part of Hellenic civilization and the border with Bulgaria. For Bulgaria, it was the "exit" to the Aegean Sea and for Turkey, who controlled this part since 14th century it was a matter of the protection of the Muslims of the region and of guarding Istanbul. It is Greece's northeastern border and part of the administrative region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. Its geographical border in the east is the river Evros (Meriç); in the west there is the river Nestos and the Prefecture of Kavala; on the north there are the mountains of Rhodope that are also the borders of Greece and Bulgaria and in the south there is the Aegean Sea. Greek Thrace occupies of 8,706 square kilometers of land and is mostly known as Western Thrace. Here we should note that for some Turkish writers, for example Nadir Yaz, Western Thrace also includes other lands, like the island of Thasos or parts of Eastern Greek Macedonia.[56]

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[55] Numbers are quoted by K. Tsitselikis, p.5

[56] Nadir Yaz, *Ağlayan Batı Trakya* (Istanbul: Yeni Batı Trakya, 1986). In the thesis, when we refer to cities and regions we will refer to them with their official name that is the name that is used in the country where they belong (speaking about places in Greece, we will refer the names in Greek; speaking about places in Turkey, we will refer the names in Turkish).

The settlement of Muslims in Thrace started in the middle of thirteenth century, with the conquest of the region by Sultan Murat I, in 1365.[57] From those years, Muslim nomads from Anatolia were transferred to Thrace. On the other hand, some historians speak about the voluntary conversion of Thracian inhabitants in Islam in order to gain more privileges in their new social environment.[58] There is no concrete information on the reasons or the number of the converted, and it remains a debated issue between the historians of the Balkans. 1453, the year of the Conquest of Istanbul, was important for the history of the region, because after that time, Islam penetrated Thrace completely. Later events, like the Russian-Ottoman War of 1877-1878 and the signing of treaties between the different newly born Balkan states, on the one hand, didn't stop Islam from becoming the dominant religion and the dominant characteristic of the Thracian populations. On the other hand, it affected the identity of the different populations of the region. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Muslim rural population of Thrace was still a closed traditional community whose socio-economic level was lower than that of the Christian farmers.

Inside the Muslim community, because of the changing economic developments and the acquisition of land, some landowners began to gain land and power and later played important roles in the developments of the minority. Hafiz

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[57] Nathanail M. Panayiotidis. *Μουσουλμανική Μειονότητα και Εθνική Συνείδηση*, [Muslim minority and national conscience], (Alexandroupoli: Editions of Local Unions of Municipilaties of Evros Perfecture, 1995), p.23.

[58] A. Popovic, *L'Islam balkanique. Les Musulmanes du sud-est europeen dans la periode post-Ottomane,* [The Balkan Islam: The Muslims of Southestern Europe in the post-Ottoman period], (Berlin-Wiesbaden, Otto Harrasowitz, 1986), p.165: The writer believes that the Muslims of Greece are result a) of the settlement of Ottoman populations coming from Anatolia to Greece, and b) of the acceptance of Islam by part of the autochthonic population. The settlement of populations from Anatolia in Thrace date back to the fifteenth century and it was plan of the politics of the Sultans for the expanse of Islam.

Ali Galip and Hamdi Fehmi, who were among the leaders of the Muslim community and became parliament members, are characteristic examples: the first was a big landowner and the second a tobacco-merchant.[59] The organized resistance of the Turkish population of Rhodope against the inclusion of their lands in the Bulgarian Principality, known as the "Temporary Turkish State of Rhodope" (*Rodop Türk Devleti Muvakkatesi),* the creation of an independent Bulgarian state in Thrace in 1908, the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) and the occupation of the same lands by Bulgarians in the first Balkan war, the creation of the first Turkish republic in the history under the name "Provisionary government of W. Thrace" (*Garbi Trakya Hükümet-i Muvakkatesi*), the occupation of Thrace by the Allies (British and French units) at the end of the World War I (1919), the signing of the Sevres Treaty on 10 August 1920 according to which Greece was granted all of Thrace and the final regulations of the territories' issue according to the Peace Conference and the Treaty of Lausanne (24 July 1923) are the main events that influenced the identity of Thrace in general and Greek Thrace more specifically. Greece's Muslims from being first-class Ottoman citizens became a minority in Greece[60]. The treaties signed before the Lausanne stressed the religious difference of the minorities giving the leadership of the Muslims to the Muftis.

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[59] Panayiotis Papadimitriou, *Οι Πομάκοι της Ροδόπης. Από τις εθνοτικές σχέσεις στους Βαλκανικούς εθνικισμούς (1870-1990)* [The Pomaks of Rhodope. From the ethnotic relations to the Balkan nationalisms, 1879-1990], (Thessaloniki: Kyriakidi, 2003), p. 54.

[60] In different treaties that Greece signed from 1881-1923, the religious character of the minority and its rights are recognized. For example, in the Treaty of Constantinople in 1881, the Islamic Courts in Greece are recognized. In the Treaty of Athens (1913) the juridical power of *Mufti* is recognized. In the Treaty of Sevres (1920) the religious character of the minority is recognized as well.

The events that shaped the history of the region show the influence of the competing nationalisms on the identity of the people of Thrace.[61] Greece, referring to the "glorious antiquity and the bright Byzantine Empire," Bulgaria speaking about the "glorious Medieval Bulgarian state," and Turkey stressing the "important Ottoman past" of the region, struggled to gain the territories and the hearts and minds of the diverse cultural, linguistic and religious communities of Thrace. The clash of the different nationalisms that has taken several forms until the recent history (in the beginning, real war, later propaganda, the cultivation of a "national conscience," the assimilation methods, privileges etc.) has influenced more than anything else the history and the identity of the people of Thrace.

## Populations and Numbers

The majority of the Muslims in Thrace today inhabit the Prefectures of Rhodope and Xanthi. The few who remain in Evros live mainly in the cities Alexandrupoli and Didimotiho. The three basic groups that make up the minority, that is predominantly Sunni minority, today are the Ethnic Turks, officially referred to by Greece as "*Tourkoyenis,*" (of Turkish origin, descendants of the Seljuk Turks and the Ottomans), or "*Tourkofonoi*"(Turkish speaking); the Pomaks, and the Athinganoi or Gypsies, *(*also called *Roma, Çingene, Katsiveloi, or Yifti.)*

According to the 1991 Greek general census, the minority in Thrace numbers approximately 98,000 persons or 29% of the local population, and 0.92% of the total

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[61] In 1922, one year before the Lausanne Treaty was signed, the different expectations of Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey concerning the future of Western Thrace were obvious in the negotiations and the secret meetings among politicians. Shortly, Bulgarian government was in favor of an autonomous Thracian State under the control of the League of the Nations. Turkey was supporting the autonomy only of Western Thrace, and the Turkish occupation of the Eastern Thrace.

population of Greece. The minority today is composed of 50% Turks, 35% Pomaks and 15% Gypsies[62].

Different numbers are given by different researchers for the size of the Turkish-Muslim minority, so it's very probably that there are as many statistical data as the books referring to the issue and this makes the understanding of the demographic development of the region difficult. The generally accepted number is about 120,000 out of a total of 360,000 people living in W. Thrace.[63] Very few Muslim Gypsies live in Evros Prefecture. The official census doesn't give detailed information about the ethnic origins of the population or linguistic differentiation, so it is difficult to calculate the exact number of Muslims in Western Thrace. It was last time in 1951 that there was a detailed report indicating the religious beliefs and mother tongues of the country's population.[64] In the following censuses (1961, 1971, 1981, 1991), despite the fact that there was no question concerning language, there was a question about the religious beliefs of the citizens. The categorization into the three groups (Turks, Pomaks and Gypsies) given above can even be complicated because the region is "a mosaic of groups with different languages, religions and

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[62] Information provided in the Report for the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the Section "Replies by the Government of Greece." Other sources: Information by the Greek "Minority Rights Group" mentions 110,000 Muslims in W. Thrace, while the 1990 *Human Rights Report for Greece* compiled for the State Deparmtnet by the US Embassy in Athens speaks about 130,000 Turks, Pomaks and Gypsies. For more information on the issue, see Ronald Meinardus, "Muslims: Turks, Pomaks and Gypsies," in Richard Clogg ed., *Minorities in Greece* pp. 84-86. In general estimates range from 90,000-120,000, but due to large scale migration over the years the data are changing. Some researchers claim that nowadays there are no more than 83,000 Turks in Thrace due to immigration to other parts of Greece and abroad. See K. Tsitselikis, *The Minority Muslims,* unpublished article, p. 3.

[63] L. Whitman, *Destroying Ethnic Identity-The Turks of Greece* (New York: Helsinki Watch, 1990), p. 1.

[64] 104,500 Muslims in W. Thrace, quoted by K. Andreadis, *Η Μουσουλμανική Μειονότητα της Δυτικής Θράκης [The Muslim minority of W. Thrace]* (Thessaloniki: n.p., 1956), pp. 9-10.

traditions," which are not recorded in the official Statistical data.[65] Several researchers give different information on the origins, the numbers and the history of the minorities of Thrace.[66] Even today, the discussion concerning the connection between religion-nationality-citizenship-national identity continues. We will refer to the basic facts that explain the differences between the three basic groups, their common characteristics and the different theories regarding their origins. We should add that different historians have used the history of each of these groups in order to justify the different political actions that have taken place over the years.

It should be pointed out that the splitting of the minority into three communities (Turks, Pomaks, and Gypsies) in our thesis does not aim at indicating the existence of three minority groups. It mainly aims at offering some information on the three main communities constituting the minority of Western Thrace. That most of the Pomaks and Gypsies identify themselves as Turks is a fact. The decision of choosing an ethnic identity is influenced not only by the common linguistic, cultural or social characteristics of the persons but also by their priorities. According to the scholar George Aggelopoulos, the conscious choice of an ethnic identity is directly connected to material needs but also ideological needs, that is, the need of

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[65] L. Embeirikos-G. Mavrommatis, "Ethnic Identity and Traditional Music," in *Εθνολογία [Ethnology Journal]*, nos. 6-7 (1998-1999).

[66] Frangopoulos writing about the composition of the Thrace population, refers to Pomaks, Turks, Tatars and Circassians that were part of the ethnically complicated regions. See Fotini Asimakopoulou and Sevasti Christidou-Lionaraki, *Η Μουσουλμανική Μειονότητα της Θράκης και οι Ελληνοτουρκικές Σχέσεις* [The Muslim Minority of Thrace and the Greek-Turkish Relations] (Athens: Livanis, 2002), p. 215. Other researchers focus on the religious criterion and speak about Alevis and Sunnis or the racial criterion and speak about black people of the villages near Xanth.

some people to identify themselves with an ethnic group.[67] Anthropologists' work proves that the identity transformations are a result of historical conditions.[68]

Usually in the Greek literature, the developing concept of the changing identity of the minority is neglected and the emphasis is given on the "known" historical groups, no matter if these categorizations reflect the existing reality or not. The fact that people who were defined Muslims in the beginning of the century, identified themselves with the Turkish identity or with the Pomak identity, and later on, with the Turkish, is a strong argument against all these scholars that support the idea that the ethnic groups continue to exist from the past as a static phenomenon.

Concerning the concept of "identity", despite the fact that until recently "identity" was considered to be a stable characteristic of a cultural group, the recent work of anthropologists emphasizes the subjective choice of the person who belongs or doesn't belong somewhere, making the concept of identity more flexible and "open". Not only the Greek identity, but also every national identity is full of changes and differentiations. To accept an identity as unstable does not reflect the realities.

In this thesis we are not interested in tracing the change in the identity construction of the minority of Western Thrace. We can only observe that identity can change and any change in identity is "the result of a crisis or an exit of a crisis."[69]

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[67] Yiorgos Aggelopoulos, "From the Greek as person to the person as Greek", in *Ελληνική Επιθεώρηση Πολιτικής Επιστήμης*, no. 9 (April 1997), pp. 203-204.

[68] Dimitra Gkefou-Madianou, "The Land of spirit and the land of alcohol: Tradition and Cultural Identity in Attica", in *Σύγχρονα Θέματα*, 66 (1998), pp. 104-105.

[69] D.G. Tsaousis, Ελληνισμός και Ελληνικότητα, Ιδεολογικοί και βιωματικοί άξονες της Νεοελληνικής κοινωνίας ( Athens: Estia, 1983), p.19.

## The Turks

The Turks constitute the biggest group that influences the total character of the minorities' population. Their ethnic and linguistic identity has been expanded to the other groups of Muslims, to such a degree that in the 1990s most members of the "Muslim minority" considered themselves to be members of the ethnic Turkish minority.[70] Their main center is Komotini (Gümülcine in Turkish), which is at the same time, the centre of Turkish culture for the region. In this group, we can also include the Muslim populations that have remained on Rhodes and the island of Kos.

The origins, the name and the existence of these people are still disputed between Greek and Turkish historians. Most of the Greek historians prefer to refer to them as *Tourkogeneis* (Turkish origin), avoiding the use of the word "Turks." Panayiotidis presents several sub-communities of this group, like the Seljuk's, the Ottomans, the Muslim-seeming or Turkish-seeming populations (consisting of Christian heretics, Pavlicans, Bogomils, Kızılbaşi, Circassians, Bektaşi, Derviş and Mevlevi.)[71] It is obvious that in all these classifications there is a conscious effort to separate the minority into different groups. The Turks are settled in privileged parts of the region (in the cities Xanthi and Komotini and on the plains of the prefectures of Rhodope and Xanthi). They are the descendants of the politically dominant Ottomans.[72] The rest of the Muslim population belongs to other minorities groups that did not have good relations with the Ottoman regime. They moved up into the mountains, where they live even today. The basic reason for this is that the Greek

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[70] R. Clogg, "Introduction," *Minorities in Greece,* R. Clogg (ed.), p. xv.

[71] Panayiotidis, pp. 24-32.

[72] Ibid, p. 25.

state refuses to recognize the existence of any different ethnic minority inside its territories and prefers to stress the religious characteristic under the title "officially recognized Muslim minority."

Andreadis argues that the Turkish minority consists of Turkish colonizers who settled in Greece at the end of the fourteenth century (after the conquest of Thrace by the Ottomans) and of Greeks who accepted the Islamic religion.[73]

## The Pomaks

The second biggest groups among the Western Thrace Muslims are the Pomaks. Pomaks, except from Thrace and Eastern Macedonia, can also be found in Bulgaria. Actually, the mountainous villages of Rhodope are inhabited exclusively by Pomaks speaking their native Slavic dialect. They are the geographical continuation of the Bulgarian Pomaks, who live on the borders with Greece and who are greater in number than the Greek Pomaks. Many Pomaks have left the mountains and immigrated to the big cities of the region (Xanthi and Komotini) and have accepted completely the Turkish identity, defining themselves as "Turks". Others have been encouraged by the Greek government to move from Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace to the areas of Athens and Pireaus. According to Christina Markopoulou, "this is an ethnic policy to facilitate the assimilation of this ethnic group with Greeks, and thus reducing the number of Turkish speaking people in North Eastern Greece."[74]

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[73] Andreadis.

[74] Christina Markopoulou, *Social Services and Minority Groups in Greece* (Ph.d., University of Sussex, 1990), p. 105.

The immigration of Pomaks to regions in Greece other than Thrace, the usage of the Turkish language and the degree of acceptance of the Turkish identity are facts that make it difficult to calculate the exact number of Pomaks in Greece today. According to 1951 census (the most recent one to classify the population of Thrace according to different ethnicities), the Pomaks of Greece were calculated as being 26,592 in number. Other more recent information speaks about 36,000 Pomaks, or 0.3% of the total Greek population.[75] An observation that can be made is that whereas in the 1920s Pomaks made up about one-tenth of the total, they now account for a quarter, maybe even one-third, but still it is difficult to take seriously the different numbers given by different researchers because there are many people of Pomak origin who define themselves as Turks.[76]

The history of the Pomaks is full of different interpretations, and the basic questions upon the researchers' interpretations conflict are:

Who are the Pomaks in historical terms? Are they an autochtonous or an immigrant population?

How did they convert to Islam (voluntarily or by force?)?

Should they be considered as an ethnic Bulgarian population, which is connected to Bulgarian history or seen as an Islamic Balkan population? (like the Turks, Gypsies etc).[77]

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[75] Papadimitriou, p. 35. There are also claims of 45,000 Pomaks in Greece Thrace according to S. Grigoriadis, *Ελλάδα-Τουρκία-Κύπρος 1930-1979. Μία πλήρη θεώρηση των ελληνοτουρκικών αντιθέσεων ιστορική-εθνική-στρατιωτική-οικονομική* [Greece-Turkey-Cyprus 1930-1979: A Full presentation of Greek-Turkish Conflicts: Historical-Ethnic-Military-Economic] (Athens, n.p., 1979), p. 356.

[76] Hugh Poulton and Suha Taji- Farouki, eds. *Muslim Identity and the Balkan State* (New York: NYU University Press, 1997), p. 84.

[77] Yulian Konstantinov, "Strategies for Sustaining a Vulnerable Identity: The Case of the Bulgarian Pomaks," in Poulton and Farouki, p.33.

Different historical claims about their ethnic origin cover the existence of the minority with a layer of mystery. In the dispute concerning their ethnic origins some Greek, Turkish and Bulgarian historians struggle to prove that the Pomaks are closer to their own identities, focusing on specific characteristics of the groups such as religion, historical background or language that correspond to the imaginary nation of each of these countries and can be used for political purposes.

The general description of the Pomak population in Greece is the following: "Inhabitants of the mountainous Rhodope...believers of Islam...speaking the non-written Pomakic language that includes Bulgarian, Turkish and Greek words...descendants of an indigenous Thracian population and especially of the ancient Thracian tribe of Ahrian."[78] A characteristic example of this Greek version of Pomakic identity is expressed by Panayiotidis. According to him, the Pomaks are the descendants of the ancient "Ahrian," the ancient inhabitants of Thrace.[79] He writes, "This means that they are neither Turks, nor Bulgarians."[80] This is a popular view among Greek historians who seek to explain the existence of Pomaks in the Greek mountains, and who want to offer counter-arguments to the Turkish and Bulgarian historians who speak about the Turkish or Bulgarian origins of the Pomaks. The mistake of the Greek historians is that they try to "invent" a different Pomak identity based on different language or traditions, without taking into considerations that

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[78] *Η Μουσουλμανική Μειονότητα στην Ελλάδα* ( The Muslim Minority in Greece)( Athens: ELIAMEP editions, n.d.), p. 20.

[79] For the word "Ahrian" that Pomaks use to identify themselves, Papadimitriou gives another explanation: " It comes from the word agarinos> Agaryan> Ahryan> Ahirjan (=muslim), a word that Ottomans used for naming the converted to Islam Balkan populations, and finally a word that Pomaks adopted for their self determination. See, Papadimitriou, p.62.

[80] Panayiotidis, p. 43.

these characteristics are not enough to justify the nomination of a community as "minority."

In general, Greeks claim a separate ethnic identity for the Pomaks, referring to their "glorious" past in antiquity, before their forced, as they claim, conversion to Islam.[81] Also, Greek writers like to "discover" and stress the different biological characteristics of the Pomaks, in contrast to the Turks (for example "blond hair, fair skin, etc.) and the existence of Christian traditions in their everyday life, trying obviously to prove a connection between a lost Christian identity and a forcibly acquired Muslim belief. Among the Christian traditions that have been adopted by the Pomak community are the sign of cross over their bread and over sleeping babies, new-year cakes that include a coin for the good luck, and also some Christian names and celebrations slightly changed.[82]

Also, researchers like Poulton and Popovic give a static image of the Pomaks as a traditional agricultural population that continues to live in the isolated villages of the Rhodope Mountains. Bulgarian historians, referring to the language of the Pomaks, consider them to be Bulgarian-origin Muslims (Pomak> pomagam and pomagaci= help, helpers) who were forcibly converted to Islam. Some Turkish historians, referring to the Muslim religion, consider them descendants of Turkish tribes (Pomak> Paçınak= Turkish tribe, ancestors of Pomaks) or refer to them as "mountain Turks." Also Panayiotidis gives as a synonym of the word Pomak the word "Thrakoellines" (=Thracian Greeks).[83] The basic claim of these kind of writers

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[81] see also, Kanakidou, p. 64; Foteas, *Οι Πομάκοι και το Βυζάντιο* (The Pomaks and Byzantium) (Komotini, n.p., 1977); A. Liapis, "Οι Πομάκοι μέσα στο χρόνο»[«The Pomak through Time"], *Θρακική Επετηρίδα* 4 (1983): 1-44. .

[82] Kanakidou, p. 64.

[83] Panayiotidis, p. 40.

is that the Pomaks were living in isolation in the mountains and that after the Bulgarian domination in the region (after 1344), it was difficult for them to come in contact with the city inhabitants who were preserving their language. So they accepted this dialect of Bulgarian, adjusting it to their own needs.[84]

Some scholars claim that Pomaks tend to support their own separate ethnic identity by emphasizing the fact that they once had their own independent state before 1886, in Bulgaria.[85] It can be said that Pomaks prefer to identify on the basis of and Islamic and Turkish identity. The definition "Muslim" may have been suitable for the years when the Lausanne Treaty was signed, but the rise of nationalisms and the clashes of rival nationalisms in the region pushed the Pomak population to choose an identity. Some of the members of the Pomak minority identify themselves with the "Turks" because they feel that if all the Muslims are united under one identity they can achieve more, or because they want to show that they have a higher social and economic position in Muslim society (taking for granted that the elite of the Muslims of Thrace is the Turkish elite).[86] The Turkish identity in Western Thrace is an identity with prestige and it is a reason that many Pomaks identify themselves as Turks.[87] Also, it is clear that behind the choice of Turkish national identity is hidden the desire for a reference state, a protector that would struggle for the

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[84] Ibid., p.40

[85] Markopoulou, p. 106.

[86] B. Oran, "La minorite turco-musulmane de la Thrace Occidentale (Grece)" in *Le differend Greco-Turk,* ed. S. Vaner, (Paris: L'Armattan, 1988), p.145. Actually he claims that for these reasons the Gypsies are more nationalists than the Pomaks and the Pomaks more nationalists than the Turks. Both Gypsies and Pomaks have "embraced" with their own will the Turkish identity. Also, according to Papadimitriou and his personal field-word in Western Thrace, the word "Pomak" was used by some of the Muslims with the meaning "illiterate villager." Papadimitriu explains this meaning of the word Pomak to the low socioeconomic status of the minority and their economic proletarisation.

[87] B. Oran, *Türk Yunan İlişkilerinde Batı Trakya Sorunu* (Ankara: 1991), p. 141.

minority rights that for many the Greek state was oppressing. The ones that give priority to the "Pomak" identity do it as a reaction to the Turkish nationalism, or because they feel that they will gain a better position in Greek society. According to Sevasti Trubeta, there are no members of the Pomak minority that identify themselves as Bulgarians.[88] Also, there is little evidence of Pomak participation in the Bulgarian national movement.[89] This can be explained by the fact that the Bulgarian nationalist movement remained exclusively a Christian movement in which the Muslim population had no place.

Some of the Pomaks speak their own language, which is a mixture of ancient Greek, Bulgarian and Turkish elements,[90] but without a written form. The exact number of the Pomak language speakers is unknown. The basis of the language is the Slavonic dialects of the region, and it is calculated to have been used since thirteenth century.[91] The Turkish words that exist in the Pomak vocabulary are explained by the adoption of Islam. Papadimitriou describes some Turkish words widely used by the Pomaks:

> A proof of the wide network of commercial relations between Turks and Pomaks in the markets of cities and of the plains is the fact that in today's Pomak language the Slavic numbers have been replaced, from the number 4 and after, by the Turkish words. The adaptation seemed to be necessary so that the commercial relations between Pomaks and the Turks, who were a majority, can be easier.[92]

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[88] Sevasti Troubeta, *Κατασκευάζοντας ταυτότητες για τους Μουσουλμάνους της Θράκης. Το παράδειγμα των Πομάκων και των Τσιγγάνων* (Constructing identities for the Muslims of Thrace. The example of the Pomaks and of the Gypsies) (Athens: KEMO-Kritiki,2001), p. 21.

[89] V. Aarbakke, *The Muslim Minority of Greek Thrace* (Ph.D. dissertation, Bergen University, 2000), p. 44.

[90] Panayiotidis, p. 39.

[91] Kanakidou, p. 64.

[92] Papadimitriou, p. 57, footnote no. 110.

According to one Turkish writer, the Pomak language, phonetically and linguistically has no relation to Greek; it consists of 65% Turkish words (of an Anatolian dialect), 25% Slavic words and only 5% Greek and Arabic.[93] Today, Pomak is still spoken in the villages in the mountains and in some cases among the Pomak population that has settled in the cities, but the majority speaks Turkish and many also speak Greek.

Many Pomaks are agricultural laborers or farmers of low socioeconomic status. The urbanism of the last years (inside Greece and abroad) has contributed to the change of the agricultural character of Pomak society. Those who live in the cities work in factories and small-scale enterprises or in the construction sector.

The above characteristics (ethnic origin, language, biological characteristics, socio-economic status) shouldn't be considered as static and unchangeable parts of the minority identity. All of them should be considered in the broader context of the changes in Greece and, more specifically, in the society of Western Thrace (mixed marriages, the use of many languages, changes in the work environment, etc.).

## The Athinganoi (Tsigganoi), Gypsies, Roma

They are known as *Roma, Athinganoi, Tsigganoi, Gyftoi, and Katsiveloi.* They prefer to call themselves as "Rom" (=human). According to several researchers, the word "Rom" comes from the word *"Romaios", "Rum"* (Byzantine.)[94] The word *Athinganoi*, which is used in many scientific texts, used to

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[93] A. Aydınlı, *Batı Trakya faciasının içyüzü* (Istanbul: Akın Yayınları, 1973).

[94] Zenginis, *Οι Μουσουλμάνοι Αθίγγανοι της Δυτικής Θράκης*( Thessaloniki: IMXA, 1994), p.16.

be the name of the members of a sect, that appeared in ninth century in Asia Minor, especially in Antioheia (Antakya), during the reign of the Emperor Michail II (820-828).[95] The word "gypsy" is believed to come from the word "Egyptian." Finally the word *Katsivelo*", according to N. Andriotes, comes from the Latin word captivus (prisoner) and the ending "ello", that became "cattivello" (= prisoner, miserable).[96]

Many Greek Gypsies are Christians. A Greek scholar specialized on Muslim Gypsies claims in his book that the Muslim Gypsies are believed to have been converted to Islam after the Turks conquered the Balkans.[97] The Athinganoi of Western Thrace speak mostly Turkish and Romany. According to the region of Thrace where they live, they use mostly one of the three languages. For example, the Athinganoi of the region of Komotini use mainly Turkish, because they grew up in an environment where the dominant language of the Muslim minorities was Turkish and they only use Greek when they deal with public services and Greek authorities. Also, a large percentage of them present characteristics that contribute to the possession of a "Turkish identity" (for example, Turkish mother tongue, connections with modern Turkish music, Turkish names, watching and listening to Turkish TV and radio).

Changes in the behaviour of the minority's Turks and Pomaks towards Muslim Gypsies should be noted. In the official political minority word, the Muslim Gypsies are included in the Turkish minority, while in the everyday speech and everyday life they are seen by the rest of the minority as "gypsies" and thus isolated.

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[95] Ibid., p. 14; also Sella-Mazi, *"La minorite musulmane turcophone de Grece: Approche sociolinguistique d'une communaute bilingue" (* The Muslim Turkish-speaking minority of Greece: Sociolinguistic approach of a bilingual minority*)*(Corfu: Troxalia, 1999), p. 35.

[96] Panayiotidis, p. 44.

[97] Zenginis, p. 17.

Still, since the Turkish identity is the dominant one, it also influences the identity of the gypsies.[98] These people are the most unfavored inside the minority: due to their poor knowledge of Greek, they are seen as "Turks" by the Greeks, and due their poor knowledge of Turkish, they are seen as *"Çingene"* by the Turks.

As "Romany" is not a written language, there are no Athinganian texts in Greece. Because of the lack of a script, the Athinganoi are obliged to write in the language of the country in which they live. They live in their own communities as the outskirts of the big cities of Thrace (Alexandroupolis, Didymoteiho, Komotini, Xanthi), but also in Greek or Turkish villages. They are excluded from the main areas of economic activity of the region, even from agriculture many times. They mainly work without social security and they perform the lowest paid jobs while they are almost completely excluded in the distribution of economic, political and social benefits (participation in administration, education, income etc.).[99] In Greece, like in most of the countries, they are not considered as an ethnic or linguistic minority, but as a social group with very low living standards.

According to some writers, the population of the Athinganoi in the Ottoman Empire is calculated to have been 200,000. According to the census of 1981, the number of the Muslim Athinganoi was 17,074. The numbers provided by researchers for the Muslim Gypsies vary from 5,000-25,000. Zenginis speaks about 24,000 Muslim Athinganoi in Western Thrace.[100] In this number, the Christian Orthodox Athinganoi of Thrace are not included. Because of their life-style, it's very difficult

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[98] E. Avramopoulou-L.Karakatsanis *Διαδρομές της ταυτότητας Από τη δυτική Θράκη στο* Γκάζι(Routes of identity: From W. Thrace to Gazi*)*. Available [online] at: www.kemo.gr/archive/papers/Avramo1.htm

[99] Troubeta, pp. 169-175.

[100] Zenginis, p. 48.

to speak about a certain number of people. Their population is unstable and different numbers are given to different censuses.

According to Panayiotidis, the relationship between the Muslim Athinganoi and the Turks of Thrace was not good before the signing of the Lausanne Treaty nor afterwards.[101] Most of the Muslim Athinganoi were not "orthodox" Islamic believers; many of them followed the ideas of different Dervish sects and especially of Bektashis. Also, the relationship between the Muslim and Christian Athinganoi of Greece was always problematic. The Christian Orthodox Athinganoi of Thrace have much closer relationships with the rest of Christian Greece than with the Muslim Athinganoi of Western Thrace.[102]

## Minorities before the Lausanne Treaty

Western Thrace, according to the Istanbul agreement signed on 29 September 1913 was left to Bulgaria, and remained under Bulgarian control until 1919. After the end of the First World War, Western Thrace was taken over by the Allied Powers (Greece, France, Britain, etc.). Before the Lausanne Treaty was signed, two other important treaties concerning the protection of minorities in Greece had been signed: the Athens Convention (1913) between Greece and the Ottoman Empire confirming the abandonment of Salonica, Macedonia and Crete by the Ottomans and the Treaty of Sevres of 1920. Before the Lausanne Treaty and during the last census that took place in Western Thrace from the English and French during the Allied Temporary

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[101] Panayiotidis, p. 46. Also, see Zenginis, p. 50, details on the negative approach of the Muslim Athinganoi of Western Thrace to the visit of the Turkish ambassador of Athens to the region.

[102] Zenginis, p. 48.

Government of Western Thrace on 30 March 1920, the number of Muslims in the region was calculated at 86,793.[103]

The following table shows the different numbers of the minorities presented by different sources before the Lausanne Treaty:

Table 1. Numbers of minorities presented by different sources before the Lausanne Treaty[104]

| Sources | Muslims | Pomaks | Bulgarians | Greeks | Others | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1912 Estimate | 120,000 | | 40,000 | 60,000 | 4,000 | 224,000 |
| 1919 Bulgarian | 79,539 | 17,369 | 87,941 | 28,647 | 10,922 | 224,418 |
| 1919 Bulgarian | 77,726 | 20,309 | 81,457 | 32,553 | 8,435 | 220,480 |
| 1920 French | 74,730 | 11,848 | 54,092 | 56,114 | 7,906 | 204,690 |
| 1920 Greek | 93,273 | | 25,677 | 76,416 | 6,038 | 201,404 |

It is in general accepted that the Muslims were greater in number than the Christians in Thrace before the Treaty was signed.[105] The Muslim communities in the Ottoman Empire were organized mainly around their religion (*millet*) and unified by this common characteristic. Despite the differences in the Islamic dogmas (Sunni or Shiite), Islam dominated in the organization of their lives and it was dominant in symbolic and practical issues of everyday life. Students of Islamic theology visited

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[103] More specifically, 73,220 Turks, 11,739 Pomaks and 1,834 Athinganoi. A. Alexandris and others, *Οι ελληνοτουρκικές σχέσεις 1923-1987* (The Greek-Turkish relations 1923-1987) (Athens: ELIAMEP, 1988), p. 64.

[104] The table is cited in Aarbakke p. 28. The source of the table as he explains is: The figures for the eve of the Balkan Wars in 1912 are an estimation by Joelle Dalegre, who has worked extensively on population statistics. The first Bulgarian figures are from the census taken in the beginning of 1919. The second Bulgarian figures were provided in October-November 1919, on request by the French occupation force. French figures are from the population census for Western Thrace made by the allied administration, which was complete on 30 March 1920. The Greek figures for 1920 were taken by the Greek authorities soon after the area passed under their control.

[105] D. Pentzopoulos, *The Balkan Exchange of Minorities and its impact upon Greece* (Paris, Mouton,1962), p. 135; and Tahsin Ünal, "Bati Trakya Türkleri" (Turks of Western Thrace), *Türk Kültürü* 7, *no.* 76, pp. 279-287.

Muslim villages especially during *Ramazan* to preach, and the basic education was the religious one, with religious schools (*medrese*) functioning in the larger villages of the region.[106] In the smaller villages, education was limited to the religious preachings at the mosques, by the official (*imam*). The imam was responsible for the educational issues of the community and special committees were responsible for the administration of the religious schools and the religious foundations (*vakıf*), that included the monasteries of the Dervishes (*tekke)* and the graves of important Muslim saints (*türbe).*

Big *medrese*s functioned in the city of Komotini and in big villages of the region. The main focus of the education was the learning of the Koran and the language that was taught was Ottoman Turkish. Finally, the Islamic Law (*Sheriat)* was used to solve the differences among the Muslims in every aspect of personal or collective activity. As in the other Muslim communities of the Ottoman Empire, a hierarchy of Islamic judges was present in every aspect of life (*ulema, sheih-ul-Islam, kadı, müftü).*

The predominance of the religious character of the minority did not mean that they were not organized politically. Little information is available concerning the pre-Lausanne political participation of the Muslims of Thrace in the political life of Ottoman Empire or in Greece later. In the Greek elections of 1 November 1920, twenty Muslims were elected with the Venizelist party in the whole region of Thrace In general, it should be noted that the Muslims were never integrated into the parties, but they tended to support the one in power.[107]

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[106] Papadimitriou, p. 59.

[107] Aarbakke, p. 72.

## The Treaties before the Lausanne Treaty Concerning the Minorities[108]

The Treaty of Constantinople of 1881, was the first official text that stipulated the protection of the Muslims who reside in Greece.

The Peace Treaty of Athens of 1913 arranged issues that concerned the Muslims of Greece (the issue of *muftis*, minority rights, etc.). According to this treaty, the *muftis* would be selected by the Muslims believers and they had also the right to give their "advice" on issues concerning marriage, divorce and other matters of everyday life. Concerning the minority schools, the school program was in Turkish and the Greek language course was compulsory.

The Treaty of Sevres of 1920 concerning the rights of the minorities, or "The Greek Sevres" as Oran calls it,[109] concerning the rights of the minorities, protects the religious freedom of the Muslims without making direct references to the issues of *Mufti.* It offered the possibilities for the Greek citizens who did not speak the Greek language to use their own language in the courts, and guaranteed the equality before the laws of all the Greek citizens.

## The Greek, Turkish and Bulgarian Position during the Peace Summit

The Lausanne Summit started on 8/20 November 1922 and lasted nine months, with a pause of seventy-five days. The Convention concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations was signed six months before the general peace

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[108] For the details of the Treaties, see Turgay Cin, *Yunanistan'daki Müslüman Türk Azınlığın Din ve Vicdan Özgürlüğü (Başmüftülük ve Müftülükler Sorunu)* (Ankara: Seçkin Yayınevi, 2003), pp. 101-148. and Oran, 1991, p.101-112

[109] Ibid, p.72.

treaty of Lausanne to which it was included (13 January 1923). The final peace settlement with Turkey was signed on 24 July 1923. Eleftherios Venizelos and Dimitrios Kaklamanos represented the Greek side. The Turkish side was represented by İsmet Paşa, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Ankara government and deputy of Edirne; the former deputy of Trabzon, Hasan Bey, and Rıza Nur Bey, Minister of Health and Social Care and deputy of Sinop. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lord Curzon, mainly represented England; Italy was represented by Mussolini; and France by Prime Minister Poincaire.

The Peace Summit started its negotiations on 20 November 1922. The committee of territorial and military issues discussed the Thrace issue on 22-25 November 1922. İsmet İnönü, the head of the Turkish delegation, he wanted the Muslims of Western Thrace to be excluded from the Exchange. According to Baskin Oran, there are two possible explanations for this behavior: first, the argument of the Turkish delegation was a plebiscite in Western Thrace where the Turks were in the majority, and second, Turkey wanted to create symmetry in the region by counter-balancing the thousands of Istanbul Rums with the Muslims of Western Thrace.[110] İsmet Paşa explained that he wasn't asking for the return of Western Thrace but that he wanted to protect the Turkish populations that lived there. He favored a referendum because; according to one census the majority of the inhabitants in several regions were Turkish.[111]

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[110] B. Oran, The Story of Those Who Stayed (Lessons to be Drawn from the Application of Articles 1 and especially 2 of the 1923 Convention) n.p.: n.d.), pp.3-4.

[111] The Turkish side offered statistical date on population distribution in order to support its arguments, see the table in Öksüz, p. 255.

Serbia and Romania supported the Evros (Meriç) river should be the natural border of Western Thrace and that a de-militarized zone on the two sides of the river should be created in order the region to become stable.[112]

The Bulgarian Prime Minister Stambolijksi declared that the giving of Eastern Thrace to Turkey should be counterbalanced with the giving of Western Thrace to Bulgaria for financial reasons (access to the Aegean Sea) or there should be autonomy for the region under the Great Powers' domination and transformation of this "autonomous state" into a neutral zone.[113]

The negotiations ended up with the decision that there could be no change in the borders of Western Thrace, because these had been defined earlier with the Neuilly Treaty, in 1913. In the "Convention Respecting the Thracian Frontier" signed at Lausanne, the borders of Thrace were defined: Western Thrace remained in Greece. Venizelos' basic idea was that the Muslims of Western Thrace would not need to go from Greece, and the Greek Orthodox minority of Istanbul would not need to go from Turkey. It is not clear whose idea the exchange of populations was. Some writers believe that it was Lord Curzon's idea, while others believe that it was Venizelos' because he had suggested a similar measure before the First World War.[114] Venizelos claimed that the idea for the exchange of populations belonged to the Norwegian Nansen, who participated in the negotiations and was entrusted by the League of Nations for the relief of the refugees. On his own part, Nansen claimed that he had received pressure from the Great Powers. İsmet Pasha, on the other hand,

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[112] Malkidis, p. 10.

[113] Papadimitriou, p. 135.

[114] Richard Clogg, *Synoptiki Istoria tis Elladas 1770-1990* (Concise history of Greece 1770-1990) (Athens: 1995), p. 106.

was in favor of a total exchange of populations, including the Greek Orthodox minority of Istanbul.[115]

## The Population Exchange [116]

Venizelos and İsmet Paşa signed on 17/30 January 1923 at Lausanne the Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek-Turkish Populations, part of the Peace Treaty which started to be implemented in May 1923.[117]

The first article of the Convention reads:

> As from 1st May 1923, there shall take place a compulsory exchange of Turkish nationals of the Greek Orthodox religion established in Turkish territory, and of Greek nationals of the Moslem religion established in Greek territory. These persons shall not return to live in Turkey or Greece respectively without the authorization of the Turkish Government or of the Greek Government respectively.[118]

The final decisions for the Thrace issue were taken on 26 May 1923, when the representatives of Greece and Turkey agreed on the peace conditions. The exchange of populations was referring to the Greek Orthodox of the Ottoman Empire and the Muslims of Greece. Under the Treaty of Lausanne, all Turkish nationals of the Greek Orthodox religion established in Turkish territory (except the Greek inhabitants of Istanbul) and all the Greek nationals of Muslim religion established in Greek territory (except the Muslim inhabitants of Western Thrace) were exchanged.

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[115] S. Meray, *Lozan Barış Konferansı- Tutanaklar- Belgeler* [The Lausanne Peace Conference; the documents] (Ankara: Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayını, 1, 1973), p.121, quoted in Akgönül, p. 25.

[116] Details on the Exchange of Populations in S. Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities. Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey* (New York: McMillan, 1932).

[117] Text of League of Nations Treaty, Series 37 (1925), pp. 78-87.

[118] Pentzopoulos, p. 67.

Turkey received 354,647 Muslims.[119] Greece 192,000, plus one more million Greek-Orthodox who had already left Turkey during the Greek-Turkish war of 1919-1922.[120]

The religious criterion was used to define the minorities in Greece and Turkey. That means, that populations with different historical background, traditions, language, life-style, and even religious beliefs were "institutionally" united under the expression "Muslim minority of Western Thrace". It was difficult to identify the ethnic identities of populations who had lived for centuries as *millet,*[121] distinguished from the other groups by their religion. So, the treaty makes no mention of "Turks" in Greece, but merely of "Muslims."[122] In an agreement signed on 30 January 1923 ((Türk-Rum Ahalinin Mübadelesı Ahitnamesi), the words Turk (and not Muslim) and Rum are used to define the two distinct minorities.[123] The Mixed Commission for the Exchange of Populations decided on 31 May 1927 that the interpretation of the term "Muslim religion" of Article 1 of the Treaty of Lausanne for the Exchange of Populations "does not take under consideration the ethnic origin."[124] The French and English original text refers to one "Muslim minority", "*minorite musulmane*". In the Legal Order of 25 August 1923, "for the ratification of the Lausanne Peace Treaty," the Greek translation speaks about "Μουσουλμανικάς μειονότητας»

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[119] The figure was taken from the Mixed Commission for the Exchange of Greek and Turkish populations: Opinion of the Neutral Members of June 12, 1930 and cited in Pentzopoulos, p. 69.

[120] The numbers of the exchange populations are not accurate. In general, the numbers vary from 300-450,000 Muslims who left from Greece and 1,300,000-1,500,000 Christians that left from Turkey.

[121] *Millet* literary means "nation." It was used during the Ottoman Empire in order to define the different religious communities inside the Empire.

[122] Poulton H., "Changing Notions of National Identity among Muslims in Thrace and Macedonia: Turks, Pomaks and Roma," in H. Poulton and S. Taji-Farouki (eds.), p. 83.

[123] B. Oran, 1991, p.135.

[124] Alexandris , p. 64.

*(Muslim minorities).*[125] According to Akgönül, a possible reason that explains the religious definition of the minority is that the Turkish delegation preferred it to the recognition of national minorities that could be reasons for foreign intervention, and thus the regulation was made on the criterion of religion.[126] It is important to note that the legal protection of a minority under religious criterion does not keep the minority from expressing other identities as well (ethnic, linguistic, etc.).

The agreement of the compulsory exchange of the Greek and Turkish minorities provoked big reactions, because it was the first time in history the international community accepted the forcible uprooting of hundreds of thousands of people. According to Pentzopoulos, "all the parties concerned rejected the paternity of the project."[127]

With the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne on 24 July 1923, Greek domination of Western Thrace was recognized officially. Also, the signing of the Treaty put an end to the long-lasting Balkan nationalisms. From now on they would continue to grow, but not with territorial aspirations. The Muslims of Greek Thrace would constitute the "bridge of Greek Turkish friendship" according to declarations of Venizelos and Atatürk.[128] Also, their Greek citizenship and their affiliation to Turkey would bring them (together with the Greek-Orthodoxs of Istanbul) always on the front line of Greek-Turkish relations. Thrace was divided into three parts: the biggest part, the North, was given to Bulgaria (42,259 $km^2$); the Eastern Thrace (23,932 $km^{2)}$ was given to Turkey, and Western Thrace (8.559 $km^2$) to Greece.

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[125] Papadimitriou, p. 36

[126] Akgönül, pp. 26-27.

[127] Pentzopoulos, p. 62.

[128] Malkidis, p. 12.

The Treaty included 143 articles and was accompanied by five special conventions, four declarations, six protocols, a final act, and many explanatory letters.

Articles 37-45 of the Lausanne Treaty specify the protection of minorities and provide equal treatment and the policy of "reciprocity" in the treatment of the minorities of both sides.[129] Articles 38-44 define the obligations of Turkey towards non-Muslim minorities and Article 45 states that Greece has the same obligations towards the Muslim minorities in Greece.[130] The presence of the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul and on the islands of *İmroz* (and later *Gökçeada*) and Tenedos (in Turkish *Bozcaada*)[131] was balanced by the presence of the Muslim minorities in Greek Thrace.[132]

The Treaty of Lausanne is considered to be the most important text related to Greek-Turkish relations. It regulates the borders of Greece and Turkey in Thrace and defines the religious rights of the minorities and the obligations of the two states. Despite the abrogation of the minority protection system created by the League of Nations after World War II and the foundation of the United Nation, the minority provisions of the Treaty of Lausanne remains valid.[133]

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[129] The articles of the Convention stress the equality without any discrimination, the freedom of worship, the freedom to exercise civil and political rights, the State's obligation to non-perform of acts contrary to Muslims' religious beliefs or customs and others.

[130] "The rights conferred by the provisions of the present Section on the non-Moslem minorities of Turkey will be similarly conferred by Greek on the Moslem minority in her territory". League of Nations Treaty Series, 28 (1924), pp. 31-7.

[131] Article 14 of the Lauzanne Peace Treaty

[132] Article 2 of the Lauzanne Treaty: "The following persons shall not be included in the exchange provided for the Article 1: (a) The Greek inhabitants of Constantinople (b) The Moslem inhabitants of Western Thrace".

[133] K. Tsitselikis, "The Legal Status of Islam in Greece," p.5.

The Lausanne Treaty offered a common "identity" for the members of all the different linguistic and cultural Muslim communities that survived in Greece after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. It should be kept in mind that in the 1920's there was a special relation between ethnic identity and religion in the region. New efforts at the creation and adoption of ethnic identity were based on the assimilation of people who had the same religious beliefs. The Turkish Muslim minority from now on would enjoy an official minority status, with recognized minority rights that could supposedly stop the state from taking assimilation or repressive measures. Turkey would be, from now on, the reference-state that would be responsible for the Muslim populations in Greece.[134] The new role of Turkey thus would affect, as will be shown later, the ethnic identity of the Muslims population.

Since the basic criterion of the Treaty was religious, this meant that the religious organization of the Muslim populations before the signing of the Treaty would go on. Islam would continue to be the basis of the organization of the populations of the region, but the reforms and modernization developments in Turkey would also influence the populations of Western Thrace. Turkey would try to export in Western Thrace reforms similar to the ones taking place in the Turkish Republic. This effort was interpreted by the Greek side as an effort to transform the Muslim minorities into an ethnic Turkish minority that would be under Turkey's control.

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[134] According to Poulton, a metropolitan state is a state that is governed by the community of the majority and with which they feel an affiliation with communities that live outside of its territories because of the common ethnicity, culture, religion, language or the historical past.

The Refugee Problem: Settlement of Refugees in Thrace

The following is a table with the demographic developments of the region after 1920[135]:

Table 2. Demographic developments of the region after 1920

| Census | Ksanthi Mixed | Muslim | Rodopi Mixed | Muslim | Evros Mixed | Muslim | Total Mixed | Muslim |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1920 | | | | | | | 201,404 | (93,273) |
| 1928 | 89,974 | (39,229) | 89,488 | (50,432) | 124, 417 | (12 ,510) | 303,879 | (102,171) |
| 1940 | 98,575 | | 106,575 | | 150,790 | | 355,940 | (112,535) |
| 1951 | 89,891 | (42,245) | 105,723 | (49,660) | 137,654 | (6,934) | 333,268 | (98,839) |
| 1961 | 89,591 | | 109,201 | | 153,930 | | 352,722 | (105,000) |
| 1971 | 82,917 | | 107,677 | | 135,968 | | 326,562 | |
| 1981 | 88,777 | (42,000) | 107,957 | (62,000) | 145,531 | (10,000) | 342,265 | (114,000) |
| 1991 | 90,965 | (39,115) | 103,391 | (56,865) | 140,312 | (7,900) | 334,668 | (103,880) |

According to this table, Muslims were almost the same in number as the Christians of the region just before Lausanne.[136] According to other researchers, before the Lausanne Treaty, Muslims consisted of the majority of the population of the region. According to some calculations Muslims made up 65% of the population;

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[135] Aarbakke, p.3 1. Aarbacke's source is the Greek census, conducted every ten years.

[136] A. Alexandris, in *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek Turkish Relations, 1918-1974* (Athens: Centre for Asia Minor Studies, 1983), p. 121, gives a number of 86,793 Muslims out of a 212,622 population of Thrace according to the census of 30 March 1920.

but after the Lausanne Treaty and the settlement of refugees the Muslim percentage fell to 39%.[137]

In the period 1920-1924 107,000-145,000 refugees (116,000 Greeks from Asia Minor and Eastern Thrace, 25,000 Greeks from Bulgaria and the Caucasus, and 4,000 Armenians) were added to the Greek population of Western Thrace.[138] In 1923–24 the Greek government utilized 8,245 rooms in rural houses and 5,590 rooms in urban houses belonging to Muslims for the shelter of the refugees. It also housed refugees in 127 mosques and schools, and 667 stables and granaries belonging to Muslims.[139] By late 1928, 17,000 refugee families had been settled in 208 villages in Western Thrace.

The Turkish side reacted to the settlement of the refugees in Western Thrace, knowing that the balance between the Christian and Muslim population of the region would change in favor of the Christians. As can be understood, the Greek population in the area increased dramatically and the problems of the new refugees became the first priority of the Greek state, while the problems of the Turks were overlooked. Finally, because of the problematic relations between the local Muslims and the refugees from Asia Minor, according to Greek sources, the Greek state moved 40,000 Greek refugees from Western Thrace to other parts of Greece in the years following the Lausanne Treaty and the settlement of refugees.[140] Greece, despite the Lausanne Treaty regulations that stated that "the properties of the non-exchanged

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[137] Papadimitriou, p. 139, footnote 347.

[138] Alexandris, *The Greek-Turkish Relations*, p. 64; Papadimitriou, p. 139; Oran (p.81) speaks about 189,000 Greeks settled in Western Thrace.

[139] Aarbakke, p. 54.

[140] Alexandris, p. 66.

populations would stay intact" (Articles 65 and 66), decided to settle this small percentage of refugees in Western Thrace and offer them part of the properties of the Muslim and Christian local population in order to solve the settlement problem.

Apart from the settlement problem, it is obvious that the Greek government, for national security reasons, took the decision for this form of "colonization" so that they could assure the Greek majority in the border zones. Eight million drachmas were given for the compensation of the confiscated properties. Except for the settlement of the Greek population in Thrace, so that the population balance shifted in favor of the Christian majority, the Greek state changed most of the Turkish or Slavic city and villages names, replacing them with Greek ones.

The result of the change of the demographic structure of the region was the beginning of a tendency of immigration to Turkey among the Western Thracian Turks. Some sources support the idea that the Western Thracian Turks started to immigrate to Turkey wanting to take up the old Greek lands of Anatolia, now empty after the exchange of populations. According to Öksüz, Turkish government not wanting to lose the strategic importance of the region took the decision on 4 November 1923 not to accept immigrants from Western Thrace.[141]

Relations between the local Turks and the new refugees from Asia Minor were not ideal. The Muslims had to accept that they would be a minority in a more or less homogenous new state with a Christian majority population. The fact that the Greek state distributed not only land abandoned by the departed Muslims but also land belonging to the Muslim inhabitants of the region to the refugees, increased anger and disappointment. The fact that land was given to Christian refugees was

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[141] Öksüz, p. 258.

interpreted by the minorities as a part of a plan to pass land into Greek hands. The state gave priority to the problems of the newcomers.

It should be pointed out that not everybody was positive towards the settlement of refugees; more specifically, the Communist Party of Greek (KKE) at its Third Big Congress, in November-December 1924 defined its policy on Thrace (and Macedonia) as "the need to work for a united and independent Macedonia and Thrace." The party's position towards the "national question" of minorities was obviously presented. The liberal principles of national self-definition (*autokathorismos)* and self-determination (*autodiathesis),* adopted by the party led to a condemnation from the side of the KKE of the Greek official efforts to "nationalize" the Greek parts of Thrace (and Macedonia) by settling Asia Minor and Pontic refugees in these lands.[142] Actually, the settlement of the refugees was seen by the KKE as "part of a sinister plan of the Greek bourgeoisie for a forcible alteration of the ethnic composition of these regions."[143]The official documents of the KKE recognize the right of "the Thracian people" to become part of a Soviet Balkan federation as "independent state." This line would continue until the 1935 Comintern directive for change, when the KKE abandoned its 1924 "independence" line and turned to an "equality for the minorities" line.

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[142] John S. Koliopoulos and Thanos M. Veremis *Greece, The Modern Sequel: From 1831 to the Present* (London, 2002), p. 114.

[143] Ibid., p. 134.

## After the Exchange

In the first elections after the signing of the Lausanne Treaty (16 December 1923) three MPs of Turkish origin entered the Greek Parliament. The Greek state after 1923, with the help of external loans, made investments in Western Thrace that could theoretically improve the life of the locals, Christian and Muslim alike. Also, after the settlement of Asia Minor refugees, there was no expropriation of Muslim land until the 1950s.[144] But still the relation between the two communities did not improve and the economic situation of the minorities' population was bad. Despite the construction of news roads, railroads and other public works, the life of the minority populations did not improve. It can be understood that the Pomaks especially, living isolated in their mountains, were not affected almost at all by all these measures. The economic crisis of 1928-1934 affected a big number of small minority tobacco producers, who were forced to ask for loans. This would affect the economic situation of their families for years and would be a serious obstacle for the improvement of their income and their living standards.[145]

Turkey made continuous complaints about violations concerning the Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek-Turkish Populations and started an international campaign for the defense of the rights of the Turks of Western Thrace. The Turkish Prime Minister, Fethi Okyar, announced that "more than 50,000 Turks in Western Thrace are living in miserable conditions" and also that with the installment of Greek refugees on Muslim properties the Articles 65 and 66 of the Lausanne Treaty had been violated. Article 16 of the Convention was against the

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[144] Aarbakke, p. 57.

[145] Papadimitriou, p. 143

expropriation of large rural lands of Western Thrace. Because of Turkish complaints, the Mixed Commission decided to make an investigation in the region concerning the life conditions of the Muslims of Western Thrace. The conclusion report, which was publicized on 17 December 1928, indicated that most of the problems had been solved and life had improved for most of the Muslim population.[146] Still, the main problems of the region can be listed as problems in education (the low level of minority education, no teaching of Greek language, thus creating Greek citizens who wouldn't be able to find employment in a majority Greek-speaking Greece); organizational problems in the administration of the region and the improper behavior of local Christian administrators; serious economic problems of the minority population and the polarisation of the Muslim communities between their religion and the domination of the Turkish national identity .

An important clash point between Greece and Turkey in the first years after the Lausanne Treaty was the encouraging stance of the Greek government towards the "conservative" (*muhafazakar)* leaders of the Muslim minorities. The Turkish embassy in Athens claimed correctly, from the middle of the 1920's, that the Greek government supported the conservative (anti-Kemalist) leaders of the Muslims instead of the "revolutionarists" (*inkilapçı),* and from 1926-1927 had sought their deportation.[147]

The revolutionary group was gathered around Mehmet Hilmi, the warmest adherent of the Kemalist reforms in Western Thrace, an active journalist, editor and teacher, who, according to Greek sources, was in close contact with the Turkish

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[146] Ladas, *Exchange of Minorities: Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey* (New York, MacMillan Press), p.439, cited in Aarbakke, p. 66.

[147] Özgüç Adil, *Bati Trakya Türkleri* (Istanbul: Kutluğ Yayınları, 1974), pp. 57-58.

consulate in Komotini.[148] The leader of the opposite "camp", the conservative one, was called Mustafa Sabri. He was the last Mufti of Istanbul (*ŞeyhülIslam*) and the highest spiritual leader in the Ottoman Empire. Around him there was a group of anti-reformists (fundamentalist Muslim journalists, teachers, soldiers) who went to Western Thrace after the creation of the Turkish Republic and the dissolution of Sultanate. They opposed to the implementation of the Kemalist reforms (the Latin alphabet, improvement of the position of woman in society, the rejection of the Islamic Law etc.) on the Muslims of Western Thrace.[149] Some members of this group, Turks or Circassians had been said to be in cooperation with the Greeks in Asia Minor and had left Turkey following the Greek army in 1922.[150] According to Nikolakopoulo, and Greek sources in general, the position of the Muslim population of Thrace was considered to have been on the side of the "conservative" camp because of the importance they gave to their religion.[151] They were an agricultural society and their life was arranged according to the Islamic rules and habits, so it was very natural for them not to "welcome" the modernization reforms in Western Thrace that were inspired by the modernization reforms in Turkey.

The two groups used every possible means to dominate the different Muslim minorities: the "conservatives" used the power of religion and the power that

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[148] He published the newspaper *Yeni Ziya* (New Light) in 1924-1925 and *Yeni Adım* (New Step) in 1926-1930.

[149] More information concerning the "Traditionalist" group can be found in Soltaridis, *Η ιστορία των Μουφτειών της Δυτικής Θράκης* (The history of the Muftus of Western Thrace) (Athens: Nea Synora, 1997), pp.197-209.

[150] Asimakopoulou, p. 246.

[151] Ilias Nikolakopoulos (1990-91), "Πολιτικές δυνάμεις και εκλογική συμπεριφορά της μουσουλμανικής μειονότητας στη Δυτική Θράκη, 1923-1955"[Political powers and election behavior of the Muslim minority of Western Thrace: 1922-1955"], *Deltio Kendrou Mikrasiatikon Spoudon* (Asia Minor Studies' Centre's Bulletin) H' (1990-1991), pp. 171-204.

members of this group had acquired through their participation in administration. An indicative example is the publication of the newspaper *Yeni Ziya* by Mehmet Hilmi with the cooperation of the communists. The newspaper was published as the organ of the tobacco workers' union of Xanthi. The "modernizers", on the other hand, had the support of the Turkish Consulate of Komotini, of the Turkish-Muslim members in the Greek Parliament and on some occasions, the support of Greek politicians that were aiming to gain their votes[152]

If we take into consideration that the adherents of the Kemalist, modernization reforms in Western Thrace were supported by the Turkish government, it can be concluded that they were as well the basic supporters of the Turkish national identity in the area. Secularization of the minority would mean a more effective Turkish influence and compliance to the ideology of Turkish state. On the other hand, the words of İsmet İnönü in October 1931 against the religious courts, during his visit in Athens show that Turkey believed that the Muslims of Thrace could integrate much better into Greek society if the religion didn't have so much importance in their lives:[153]

> The Greek government can not possibly administrate with religious officials the minority of Western Thrace. The Turks desire, exactly like the Muslims of Western Thrace, that the minority of Thrace live well like normal Greek citizens and develop intellectually.

The conflict between the modernization reforms that were taking place in Turkey and the situation of the minority in Western Thrace escalated. On the one

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[152] Tsioumis, « Ιδεολογικές αντιπαραθέσεις στη μουσουλμανική μειονότητα της Δυτικής Θράκης και οι επιπτώσεις τους στη μειονοτική παιδεία» («Ideological conflicts inside the Muslim minority of Western Thrace and its consequences on the minority education"). 18th Pan-hellenic historical Conference, 31 May-1 June 1997, *Thessaloniki: Elliniki Istoriki Etaireia,* p.422

[153] Anastasiadou Ifigeneia, *Ο Βενιζέλος και το Ελληνοτουρκικό Σύμφωνο Φιλίας του 1930* (Venizelos and the Greek-Turkish Friendship Agreement of 1930)( Athens: Filippotis, 1982), p. 81.

hand, in Turkey, there were radical changes concerning the orientation of the country to the West (the abolition of Caliphate, the introduction of the Latin alphabet, the introduction of European law, the control of the religion). On the other hand, even after the Lausanne Treaty was signed, the Muslim communities in Western Thrace continued to live and arrange their lives according to the religious law, as it had been before the signing of the Treaty. The developments in Turkey left the Turkish population of Western Thrace with the feeling that the new Turkish state was struggling against Islam and this would effect the identity of the minorities seriously[154]. The *müftüs* continued to exercise their power in the different Muslim communities and they were responsible for the selection of the people who would administrate the Muslim institutions. The focus on the religious practices of the minorities and the stressing of their Muslim identity can be considered as more ways for them to gain political power and representation as a "different" group in a homogenous society.

In the meantime, two Turks were elected members of the Greek Parliament. The Treaty of Lausanne recognised officially the usage of the Turkish language as the minority language, which gave it the legal status to be used freely in everyday life, in commercial relationships, in the court decisions and in education.

Education, like the other aspects of life, in the first years after the Lausanne Treaty was signed was traditional and religious oriented. The Greek state didn't intervene and the instructors were mainly religious teachers. In the period 1924-1927, twenty-six anti-Kemalist political fugitives from Turkey worked as teachers in

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[154] Tsioumis, p. 420.

the minority schools.[155] In 1929-1930 305 minority schools existed in Thrace, and the education language was officially and only Turkish. In 28 minority schools, Greek was taught as an elective course.[156]

## The Pomaks after the Exchange

The Exchange of Populations separated the Pomak population into three countries: the one had been living in Western Thrace before 1913 remained in Greece, many other thousands that were living in other regions of Greece (Kavala, Drama, etc.) were forced to move to Turkey (as part of the Muslim population that was exchanged with the Greek-Orthodoxs of Asia Minor) and finally others that were living in mountains north of Rodope were included within the new borders of the Bulgarian State.

The Pomaks did not have a reference-state. They were open to the propaganda addressed to them by all sides. For practical reasons (lack of knowledge of the Greek language, Muslim religion, life in isolated, mountainous villages) they formed their own minority inside the Muslim population, since their language and their traditions differentiating them from the Turks and the Athinganoi of the region. Since they were Muslims, they were the "others," the "different" ones in the Greek State; at those years, since the ethnic identity was under formation; it was enough to belong to a different religion in order to be "the other." The local Christians together with the refugees from Asia Minor did not care too much if the Muslims were of

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[155] Ibid., p. 423.

[156] Alexandris, p. 68.

three different origins; for them they were all "Muslims." "Muslim" was synonymous with "the Ottoman, the Turk." The Greek State unorganized and unready to accept the thousands of refugees from Asia Minor proved unable to offer help to its own people, the Muslim Turks.

The creation of a homogenous Greek state did not send promising messages to the future of this isolated community. Even inside the hierarchy of the Muslim minority, Pomaks were always outsiders due to the social characteristics of their lifestyle. Despite the fact that there were some mixed marriages between the Turks and Pomaks of Thrace, this was not common in the city of Komotini, which can be considered the centre of the Turks of Western Thrace.[157]

The Greek governments of this period, despite the fact that they had recognized the rights and existence of the minorities, they failed to consider these populations as part of "the Greek nation" and thus failed to help them live in Greek reality.

## The Greek-Turkish Friendship Agreement

The years 1928-1932 are considered to be among the "golden" of the Greek-Turkish relationships. Greece and Turkey had to cooperate in order to stop the Italian presence in Aegean Sea.[158] Venizelos won the elections of August 1928 and gave a new start to Greece's participation in the international arena. The "conservative" Muslim candidates were mostly in Venizelos' political party. Greece tried to improve

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[157] Poulton–Taji Farouki, p. 85.

[158] Akgönül, p. 34.

diplomatic relationships not only with Turkey, but also with other Balkan neighbors (Yugoslavia), despite the fact that territorial claims continued to be expressed by the side of Bulgaria. Turkey looked positively at cooperation with Greece that could help it avoid the influence circle of Stalin's Soviet Union. Venizelos was in favor of opening a new "page" in the relationships with Turkey, and against any "dangerous" activities that could open the way for a new Greek-Turkish conflict.[159] On 22 July 1928, Venizelos, presenting his government's program in a meeting in Northern Greece, asked that Greece and Turkey join hands and he declared:

> we desire to create with the Turkish Republic not just good neighbor relations, but really close relations. We recognize the fact that Turkey doesn't have territorial aspirations for our lands and it has to be sure that we as well have no territorial aspirations towards its lands.[160]

Greece and Turkey, after many negotiations and disagreements on several issues, signed a series of agreements.[161]

In the meantime, during a research on the situation of the minorities in Western Thrace and Istanbul by a team of the Mixed Commission of Exchange of Populations, the Turkish representative, Cemal Hüsnü, expressed his concern about the slow implementation of the modernization reforms in Thrace.[162] On 10 and 30 June 1930, they signed the Ankara Conventions concerning the lands of the

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[159] In May 1923, Venizelos stopped the "dreams" of Pangalos and his supporters for occupation of Eastern Thrace. See, Alexandris, p. 70.

[160] Malkidis, p.47.

[161] We should mention two Greek-Turkish agreements signed before 1928. The first is the Agreement of Exintaris-Hamdi, signed in Ankara in 21 June 1925, according to which Greece recognized as "etablis" "all the Greeks who lived in Istanbul before October 1918 and continued to live there." Other conditions of the exchange were never implemented due to a new crisis in Greek-Turkish relations after August 1925. A new agreement was signed in Athens between Argiropoulos-Saracoğlu, on 4 December 1926.

[162] Politisches Archiv des Auswartigen Amtes, Berlin, R72677, Die Lage in Griechenland, Berlin 28.11.1928, as cited in Tsioumis, p. 424.

exchanged populations.[163] According to the agreement, Greece could keep the properties of the Muslims who had left Greece while Turkey could keep the properties of the Greek Orthodox Turkish citizens who left with the Lausanne Treaty. According to Article 16, all the lands of Turks in Western Thrace who had decided to move to Turkey and a big part of lands belonging to Muslims outside of Western Thrace remained under Greek control. Turkey would keep the lands of Greek Orthodoxies who had left from Istanbul.[164] The Convention sought to present final answers to all of the "unsolved" questions that had emerged with the signing of the Lausanne Treaty, especially concerning the value of the refugees' properties.

In 30 October 1930, a Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality was signed in Ankara between Greece and Turkey. According to this treaty, each state could not participate in any political or economic alliance that would be against the interests of the other. Also, each had to remain neutral in event that the other was attacked by a third state. The rest of the agreements were:

The Economic Pact arranged the last details about the compensation of refugees.

The Protocol of Navigation, that required each side to inform the other for orders or the navigation of war ships. In this way, the two governments could stop the escalation of naval armament.

The Pact of Installation that guaranteed the freedom of movement of the citizens of one country to the other. The exchanged people included in the Lausanne Treaty didn't have the right to move back to their homelands through this agreement.

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[163] Mubadele-i ahaliye mütadir Lozan Muahedenamesi ile Atina İtilafnamesinin mütevellit mesailin sureti katiyede halli hakkında Ankara Mukavelenamesiç.

[164] Malkidis, p. 47.

Finally, the Commerce Agreement, which arranged issues of trade and exports, sought to arrange the balance of exports/imports between Greece with Turkey, at 1/5. The Greek and Turkish prime ministers exchanged visits to the capitals of the two states and discussed the minority issues.

Immediately after the signing of the Friendship Agreements, Venizelos suggested Kemal Atatürk as a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize because he believed that Atatürk contributed to stability in the Middle East:

> Mustafa Kemal, the President of the Turkish Republic, is a person who contributed so much to peace...and as chief of the Greek government in 1930, now that the signing of the Greek-Turkish Treaty inaugurates a new era in the process of the Near East towards peace, I have the honor to suggest the candidacy of Mustafa Kemal Paşa for the unique honor of the Nobel Peace Prize.[165]

In October 1931, İsmet İnönü and Tevfik Rüştü made an official visit to Athens. During the discussions concerning the minorities, the Turkish side, which had already asked Greece to remove some of the "conservatives," this time asked for the abolition of the religious courts of the Muslims. It was also suggested that the minority youth should decide on what kind of court they preferred.[166]

On 9 May 1933, the two states signed a new trade agreement in Athens and on 14 September 1933, the Ankara Pact was signed. This pact was a defensive alliance concerning the defense of Western and Easter Thrace, Greek and Turkish one. Each country agreed to respect the borders of the other and to defend them in the event of an attack by a third state. Finally, on 27 April 1938, the positive atmosphere in the relations between the two countries was concluded with the

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[165] Voros Fanis, *Θέματα Νεώτερης και Σύγχρονης Ιστορίας από τις Πηγές* (Topics of new and modern history from the sources), Athens 1996, p. 414.

[166] Ifigeneia Anastasiadou, p. 81.

signing of an agreement in Athens according to which, in case of the attack of one or more powers against one of the two states, the other part would have to stay neutral. Also, the two states, in case of attack from a third country, were obliged to collaborate in order to face the situation together and to stop the crossing from their land of the attacking army to the other country.[167]

## The Effect of the Friendship Agreement on Western Thrace

During the negotiations between Venizelos and İnönü in Athens, on 5-6 October 1931, the Turkish Prime Minister asked from Venizelos to remove from Western Thrace the group of anti-Kemalist Turkish and Circassian Muslim fugitives who had found refuge in Greece after the Greek-Turkish War of 1922.[168] Greece asked for the removal of the Turkish Orthodox Patriarch Papa Eftim, an anti-patriarch priest who was collaborating closely with Turkish nationalists and created his own church. Greece hoped that Turkey, in exchange for the deportation of the anti-Kemalists from Western Thrace, would also expel Papa Eftim from Istanbul; this never happened. Until today, the church of Papa Eftim in Istanbul continues to serve its few believers.

The supporters of Caliphate in Western Thrace, known as "the one hundred fifty" (*yüz ellilikler)* disseminated their propaganda by publishing newspapers written in the old Ottoman language. These newspapers (for example *Yarın* and later *Peyam-I Islam, İttila, Balkan, Zaman, İmdad, Adalet, Posta, Şule*) had readers not only in

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[167] Alexandris, p. 83.

[168] Ibid., p. 93.

Thrace but also in Turkey.[169] The "conservative" press mainly focused on the religion of the minorities and it was accused the Turkish government of persecuting the religious writing of the Koran; also these newspapers considered the supporters of the reforms to be "atheists." The counterbalance of these "religious oriented" newspapers were the newspaper *Yeni Ziya, Yeni Yol* (New Road) and *Yeni Adım* (New Step) printed in 1925 and 1926. The "reformist" press gave priority to the Turkish identity of the minority and it claimed that the settlement of the refugees of Asia Minor in Western Thrace would exterminate economically the Turkish minority.[170]

Venizelos accepted the Turkish claims, despite reactions from the local Christian and Muslim populations, and decided to remove these "undesirable" elements from Thrace.[171] So, Mustafa Sabri left for Alexandria (his petition to remain in Patras was rejected) and the rest of the group who were against the Kemalist changes and reforms was expelled from Thrace before the end of 1931.[172] Many of them moved to Egypt, Syria and Jordan. Officially, the number of the expelled was 150, but the real number of the "conservatives" who left Greece was never told.[173] The supporters of Mustafa Sabri who were not expelled founded the "*Ittihad-i İslam Cemiyeti*" (*Union of Islamic Unity*) and the newspaper *Mudafaa-yi*

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[169] Ibid., p. 93.

[170] Information from local newspapers printed in 1929 as sited in Tsioumis, p. 424.

[171] The Turkish Foreign Minister, Tevfik Rüstü Aras, in a petition towards the Greek authorities, was asking the deportation of a list of "rowdy elements", the deportation of the Western Thracian Circassians, the cessation of their newspaper and the seizure of all the copies of the newspaper of Mustafa Sabri. See Malkidis, p. 55.

[172] Mustafa Sabri was the last religious leader of the Ottoman Empire and editor of the group's newspapers. See Alexandris, p. 93.

[173] Malkidis, p. 63.

*İslam* (*Defence of Islam*) continued to spread their ideas. The Union of Muslims was made up members of the Muslim minorities that were defending the application of the holy Muslim law and the usage of the Arabic alphabet. They tried to forbid the entrance of teachers from Turkey assigned to teach in the minority schools and thus, promote the modernization reforms of Turkey.[174]

The conflict of "the conservatives" and Kemalists continued until the 1960's. An example of the most recent activity of the group was the foundation of the organization *İdibah-i-İslam (*Islamic Awakening*)* in 1949 by Yaşar Mehmetoğlu, ex deputy, for the "legal defence of the Muslims from the moral depravity and the breaking up of the ties of human being with his religion."[175] The *İdibah-i-Islam* was dissolved after 1974.

Greek Parliament members expressed their concerns about the removal of the "conservatives" from Thrace but Venizelos assured them that the expulsion of these "150" was not the result of the request of the Turkish government. It is possible that Venizelos acted like that in order to protect the rights of the Orthodox Christian minority of Istanbul. The plan was that the "150" would be exiled to in places far from the Turkish borders so that "they wouldn't have the ability to think, plan and act in an unpleasant way."[176]

The removal of the Muslim religious leaders from Western Thrace (a first decision for their deportation in Lamia had been taken in 1927 but it was temporarily postponed) had as result of weakening the power of religion among the Muslims. It also created a gap that had to be filled with another ideology; since the Greek state

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[174] Ibid., p. 85

[175] Ibid., p. 86.

[176] Ifigeneia Anastasiadou, p. 73.

was based on Christianity and the local Christian populations viewed the Muslims as "the other", it was the Turkish national ideology that came to fill the gap, including the Pomaks and the Athinganoi. Kemalism first spread in the large towns while the villages stayed isolated for a long time and more bounded to traditions. The influence of the Turkish Consulate and of the Association of Independence of Western Thrace in Istanbul on this issue can be considered very important. Reformists like İbrahim Deir Serdarzade and Hamdi Fehmi accumulated economic wealth and power and thus increased their influence.

Mehmet Hilmi, teacher and publisher of the newspaper *Yeni Adım (*New Step*)* encouraged the usage of the Latin alphabet by the members of the minorities after the alphabet reform took place in Turkey in 1928. He wrote many articles about this issue. Several articles in newspapers of the opposite "camp" prove that many devout Muslims did not look positively at the shift to the Latin alphabet, believing that this change in the alphabet was aimed at weakening religious feeling.[177] Teachers' unions like *Batı Trakya Türk İlkokul Öğretmenler Birliği* (Turkish Primary Schools' Teachers' Union of Western Thrace), *Rodop-Evros Türk Öğretmenleri Birliği* (Turkish Teachers' Union of Rodop and Evros) and *Muallimler Birliği* (Teachers' Union) promoted the new script as even though the middle 1950's there were still mountain villages in Thrace where the Latin script was not taught.[178] The position of the Greek government towards the usage of the Arabic or Latin alphabet was neutral, stating that it was an internal minority issue. Still, the removal

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[177] Malkidis, p. 71.

[178] Foteas Panayiotis, «Οι Πομάκοι της Δυτικής Θράκης. Μικρή συμβολή σε ένα μεγάλο θέμα» (The Pomaks of Western Thrace -Small contribution to a big topic), *Zygos* 25 (1977), Pp.67-84.

of the "Conservatives" from Western Thrace contributed to the increased usage of the modern Turkish alphabet.

1930 marked an important period for the Turkish press in Western Thrace. Nine newspapers and magazines were being printed at that time. Most of these newspapers were not informative but propaganda instruments of their editors.[179] It is interesting that most of the Muslim Turks in the Greek Parliament were also the owners of newspapers. The most important ones were: *Milliyet* (Nation), founded in Xanthi in 1931 by Hamdi Hüseyin Fehmi (elected as Xanthi MP in 1931 and 1951 elections) and published until 1968. *Trakya* (Thrace), published for the first time in Xanthi by Osman Nuri Fettahoğlu (elected MP for eight consecutive terms and the editor of *İnkılap* Paper) in 16 July 1932 until 1965. *Ülkü* (Ideal), published in Komotini for the first time on 24 November 1933. In 1935, *Ülkü* it stopped its publishing in 21 July 1936. It is considered to have been the most important newspaper of Komotini that promoted the new Kemalist ideas in the region. *Yeni Yol* (New Road) published in Xanthi in 1933 by İbrahim Demir Serdarzade, printed in Arabic and Latin letters[180]. *Cumhuriyet* (Republic), published in Komotini in 1933 by the publisher of *Yeni Yol.* It only published three issues. *Mudafaa-yi Islam* (The defence of Islam), printed in Komotini as an instrument of the Union of Islamic Unity, defended the Islamic traditions of the minorities and fought the Kemalist reforms. It was published for the first time on 28 March 1935 until 1939 or 1941. The last two were *Ulus* (Nation) and *Muallim mecmuası* (Teachers' Review).

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[179] Akgönül , p. 15.

[180] According to another source, *Yeniyol* was the second newspaper edited by Osman Nuri Fettahoğlu. See Hikmet Öksüz, "Representation of the Western Thracian Turkish minority in the Greek Parliament", in *Turkish Review of Balkan Studies,* no. 7 (2002).

Several clubs were organized under the name "Turkish association". Such associations were the Association of Young Turks of Komotini (1938), the Association of Young Turks of Xanthi (1935), and the Association of Turkish Teachers of Western Thrace (1936).[181] The journalist K. Spanoudis, in an article in the newspaper *Eleftheron Vima,* observed that in the school year 1934-35, there were 300 schools in Thrace with 300 teachers and 12,000 students.[182] All the school documents were written in Turkish except for the school certificate. Most of the lessons were taught in Turkish. Greek was taught as a language in only sixty schools. The schoolbooks came from Turkey and the teachers from the Medreses of Edirne and Istanbul. Nobody had the slightest suspicion about their activities in the region. The first Turkish minority school was founded by İsmail Şahap Üstün. In 1930 the Turkish Consulate opened in Komotini. Also, in 1934, a senator-representative of the Muslim minorities was elected and this period marked an important turning point in the electorate behavior of the minority from Venizelism to Anti-Venizelism.[183]

It should be noted, that none of these initiatives were viewed positively by part of the Greek press, as can be concluded by articles in the Greek newspapers of the mid-1930s.[184]

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[181] Other writer gives the information that the "Union of the Young Turks", was founded in Xanthi in 1927 from Mehmet Hilmi and the "Union of Muslims of Greece" was founded in Komotini in 1933, as a counterbalance of the first one, and was considered by the Turkish writers "Association-secret agent" serving the interests of the Greek authorities. See Fotini, p. 236. Also, Alexandris, p. 160, footnote: 222.

[182] Newspaper *Elefthero Vima*, 16 February 1935.

[183] Nikolakopoulos, 1990-1991.

[184] *"Efimeris ton Valkanion"* (28/1/1928), *"Elefthero Vima"*, 16/2/1935, *"Makedonia"* (26/2/1928) and others.

## 1930-1936

The expansion dreams of Bulgaria seeking access to the Aegean Sea, forced the Greek government to agreements with Turkey and with other Balkan states in order to minimize the danger from the North. Bulgaria did not recognize the Neully Treaty of 1919, according to which Western Thrace was given to Greece. It also refused to sign the Balkan Pact of 4 February 1934 (signed in Beograd by all of the Balkan states except Albania and Bulgaria), and continued to express territorial claims until the Second World War, when it decided to try to make them true.

An important event of the interwar period was the Panthracian Congress organized in March 1936 in Komotini by agricultural associations and different communities and workers' unions from all over Thrace. The participants asked that the youth of Thrace be hired in public services and organizations without discrimination, that more schools be built, and better working conditions secured[185]. Unfortunately the dictatorship of Metaxas in August 1936 stopped the hopes of the Thracians for equal treatment and inaugurated a period of discrimination.

## 1936-1940 (From the Dictatorship of 4 August to the Second World War)

Ioannis Metaksas began his dictatorship on August 4 1936, without encountering many obstacles since the majority of the important Greek politicians of the previous period, Venizelos included, had died. The dictatorship of 4 August created insecurity and enacted serious violations of human rights among the whole Greek population, but especially among the minorities. Despite the fact that

[185] Malkidis, p. 81.

Metaksas continued in general the friendly relations with Turkey, the Slavic danger and the Bulgarian threat were used to limit the civil and educational rights of the minorities. Also, from reports of that time, it can be concluded that Metaksas favored the Kemalists.[186] Among the few "good moments" for Greek-Turkish relations were the visits of Metaksas and Celal Bayar, prime minister of Turkey at the time, in Turkey and Greece in 1938, where the minorities in both countries welcomed them.

It was during this period that the serious repressive measures against the Turks in Thrace appeared and especially against the Pomaks.

## "Protection" Measures against the Pomaks

The mountains of Rodope where the majority of Pomak population lived, was considered a "danger" zone. The Greek state felt that it had to increase the military presence in that region to protect it from possible Bulgarian claims. The basic concept behind the measures that were adopted as an obstacle towards Bulgarian attack was the isolation of the region. No public works were made in the mountainous area that could help the local population be in closer contact with the rest of the country. It is very characteristic that the road that connected Ehinos village with Xanthi city was constructed in 1936, not in order to help the circulation of the villagers, but in order to help the soldiers move easily in that region.[187] Freedom of expression was restricted. The minority newspapers *Ülkü, Yeni Adım, Millet* were closed down. The entire border with Bulgaria and also the border with Albania and

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[186] Aarbakke, p. 69.

[187] Papadimitriou, p. 144.

Yugoslavia in Epirus were considered "supervised zones" or "special zones", according to Article 5, Law 376/14-18/12/1936, for military and political reasons. The fact that the border with Turkey was not included in the supervised zone shows that Greece did not think of Turkey as a threat on the eve of World War Two. In Thrace, it was especially the villages of the Pomaks that suffered from this repressive measure, because they shared a border with Bulgaria. The border between Greece and Bulgaria became heavily fortified for many kilometers on both sides. These became the border of NATO/ Warsaw Pact later. No foreigners could visit the region without permission and the police authorities of Xanthi, Komotini or Alexandrupoli could only give this permission. There were serious limitations on the circulation of the isolated inhabitants of the villages. They could migrate within the zone only with the permission of the local military authorities and they were issued special identity cards that had to be renewed every year. Responsible for the region was a committee of military security that arranged the internal issues of the "supervised zone" in cooperation with the local prefecture.

The course of the Greek-Turkish relations would influence the importance of these zones. Until 1974, the main function of the zone was military. After that time, until 1996 when the Greek Minister of Defense abolished it, it continued to limit the lives of the people there, this time out of fear of Turkey.

Serious violations of human rights could be observed in the field of education. All minority teachers were obliged to know Greek, according to a law of 1937, and knowledge of Greek language had to be certified by a special inspector. There were limitations on the opening of private minority schools and special permission had to be procured from the Ministry of Education for the founding of such schools. Minority and Greek schools would follow the same curriculum.

Finally, a special certificate of "social beliefs" was necessary for every transaction with the State. The permission of the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs was necessary for school textbooks to be approved for use in the minority schools. Until 1938, the school textbooks of minority schools came from Turkey. In 1938-39, new textbooks were printed in Greece, according to the general political atmosphere and ideas of the time. These new books included propaganda texts supporting Metaksas' authority and nationalistic messages. The teaching of Greek became compulsory.

According to laws 375 and 376 of 1936, and law 1405 of 1938, all the transactions of the supervised zone that involved land were put under military control.[188] Also, according to Law 1593 of 1938, all of the lands belonging to people who had left Greece without the intention of returning were taken by the state.

Serious problems were created with the implementation of Law 1369 in 1938 concerning the construction of religious buildings. According to the new law, the metropolitan bishop was required to give his permission for the building of mosques, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs and National Education had to approve it.

Economic restrictions negatively affected the region's economy. Cattle breeding, one of the region's main employment sectors, was toughly restricted after the limitations on the movement of the people who lived along the borderline were introduced. Also, the possibilities of the Pomaks to work on the plains and fields that were outside of the mountainous restricted zone were almost decreased to zero, because of the limitations on movement and because of the granting of many of the fertile land fields to the refugees from Asia Minor by the Venizelist regime.

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[188] Dalegre J., *La Thrace grecque. Populations et territoire* (Paris-Montreal, L'Harmattan).

Concerning the application of these laws, it should be noted that even though there was discrimination, there were no specific laws of discrimination against the minorities. It was mostly the discriminatory application of existing laws that concerned not only the minority population.[189]

These repressive measures influenced negatively the psychology of the Pomak population. Their own state was behaving towards them as if they were possible collaborators with the "enemy from the North" and did its best to isolate them and to stop their economic development. Living isolated in their villages, without basic rights (the freedom of movement, freedom of property) and feeling an increased "psychological" distance between the Greek state and them, they began to resist.

Metaksas, despite the repressive measures taken against the Muslims in general, but especially against the Pomaks, officially tried to promote Greek-Turkish friendship. He visited Turkey, where he expressed his admiration for the action and the generosity of Kemal Atatürk. On his own initiative, the house in which Kemal Atatürk was born in Salonika was given to the Turkish State in 1937 for use as a Turkish Consulate and finally, with his own approval, the Chiefs of staff of Greece and Turkey, Al. Papagos and F. Çakmak on 27 April 1938, signed a complementary treaty between the two countries according to which "in case of the attack of one or more powers against one of the two countries, the other would remain neutral. In the event of an attack by a third power, Greece and Turkey "would arrange it so that they faced the situation together."[190]

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[189] Akgönül, p. 37.

[190] Alexandris, p. 83.

On 1 March 1941, the Bulgarian government of Filov, after negotiations with Nazi Germany, signed in Vienna a protocol of accession to the Axis Powers. Bulgaria agreed to help and facilitate the transition of the German army in an attack on Greece through Bulgaria. In exchange, in the final arrangement of the borders of the Balkan states, Bulgaria would be granted access to the Aegean Sea.[191] In this way, the lands of Western Thrace and Greek Macedonia would pass to Bulgarian control. On 9 April 1941, the whole of Western Thrace was occupied by German forces. On 20 April 1941, the 2nd Bulgarian Army invaded Greece and Greek-Bulgarian diplomatic relations stopped on 23 April 1941. All the administrative, religious, educational and economic activities of Thrace were put under Bulgarian control. It was obvious that Bulgaria had connected its accession to the Axis powers with the integration of the lands of Western Thrace into the Bulgarian state[192]. The region of Western Thrace and parts of Greek Macedonia experienced the Bulgarian occupation and all the consequences that an occupation can have: the forced usage of the Bulgarian language (Greek and Turkish language was prohibited), obstacles in Greek schools, prosecution of priests and efforts to change the ethnic composition of the population of the region.

The alteration of the ethnic composition of the population took place in two forms, the forced exodus of non-Bulgarian inhabitants from the region and the settlement of new inhabitants of Bulgarian origin, from Bulgaria. According to

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[191] The Aegean Sea would continue to be a target of the Bulgarian external policy even after Bulgaria accepted in 1944 to take her army from Western Thrace lands

[192] Papadimitriou, p. 147.

Papadimitriu, this new Bulgarian population would cover the population gap of the region, as a result of the discrimination of the Bulgarian authorities against the population of Western Thrace. By 25 November 1941, a total of 33,074 Greeks and 12,483 Muslim Turks immigrated from Thrace. Most of the Turks (6,664) were from Xanthi.[193] Minority sources stress that the greatest mass emigration took place in 1941. The Muslims settled in Turkey and wrote to their friends and relatives to persuade them to come to Turkey.[194]

## The Pomaks in the Second World War

The measures that the Bulgarian authorities adopted to assimilate population through education included the use of Bulgarian language in education. The teaching of Bulgarian culture could facilitate the Bulgarisation of the populations of the new lands. Bulgaria needed the Pomaks in order to add weight to its territorial claims over Western Thrace. The basic target of the new measures were Pomak students who spoke a Slavic dialect similar to Bulgarian. These students attended schools together with Christian Bulgarian students. Their number is estimated to have been 11,429 in the era that we examine.[195] The Pomak students were forced to attend schools where the teaching language was Bulgarian and where the Koran was taught in Arabic one hour a week. Despite the forced measures and the larger number of Bulgarian

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[193] Ibid., p.149.

[194] Aarbakke, p. 32.

[195] Papadimitriou, p. 149.

schools, the attendance of Pomak students in these schools was negligible. During the Second World War, most of them didn't attend any school.[196]

The Turkish Consulate, due to non-existence of the Greek state in the region in that period, played an important role in assisting the minority in the problems it faced.

Also, the nationalistic association *Rodina* (Homeland), forced the Pomaks of Western Thrace to be registered as Bulgarian origin citizens, to change their Islamic names to Bulgarian ones and were encouraged to stop using Islamic religious symbols in their everyday lives. Papadimitriu informs us that, according to a report of the Foreign Office, a group of Pomaks were registered as "Bulgarians" for their own interests.[197] In general, the fact that the Greek state believed that many Pomaks collaborated with the Bulgarian army that occupied Thrace in the Second World War would create a negative stereotype of them and the remained an "image of threat" for the post-war Greek governments. There are often accusations of collaboration with the "conqueror," by the Turkish minority newspapers[198] not for all of the Pomaks, but for specific persons.

## Greek-Turkish Relations during the Second World War

The relations of Greece and Turkey continued to be friendly during the war years. Turkey offered to send an army to Thrace "for its security," so that the Greek

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[196] Ibid., p. 150.

[197] Ibid., p. 150.

[198] Akgönül, p. 40.

army could move towards Albania and fight there, but Greece rejected the offer.[199] The Turkish ship *Kurtuluş* (Salvation) was one more contribution of Turkey to the struggle of Greece against the conquerors.[200]

The Turkish-Muslim minority participated actively in the struggle against the conquerors. The National Liberation Front (EAM), consisting of syndicates close to the Communist Party of Greece and the Socialist Party, would seek to motivate in 1943 the population of Western Thrace to participate in the resistance through ELAS (National Popular Liberation Army). More specifically, there was a Turkish branch of the Democratic (Resistance) Army in Thrace. The methods that the Democratic Army used were propaganda leaflets and declarations of participation in the war, and articles in a newspaper called "*Faşizmin Kökü Kazınması Uğruna-Savaş*" (For the uprooting of Facism-War). Many Turkish Muslims died during the defense of Pindos in Epirus and it can be said that the minority is proud of its participation in the resistance struggle.[201] Still, the position of the minority during the Second World War can be grouped into three categories: those who collaborated with the Bulgarians (mostly Pomaks), those ones who cooperated with the communists, and those who were faithful to the king and refused to collaborate with the rebels. Those last were in the majority, including the leaders of the minority.[202]

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[199] Malkidis, p. 92.

[200] The Turkish ship *Kurtuluş* carried to Peiraious the primary necessities for the Greek people who were suffering during the Second World War and it was characterized as a sign of "solidarity between the Turkish people and Greece." In 1942, it sunk somewhere in the Black Sea.

[201] Akgönül p.40

[202] *Trakya,* 12 March 1956, quoted in Akgönül, p. 42.

## After the Second World War

After the end of the Second World War, international attention was on the Soviet Union's policy. The communist system was adopted through the Balkans, with the exception of Greece and Turkey. Greece strengthened its ties with Britain, taking into consideration the new position of the Soviet Union after the war. The Greek government tried to cope with the huge problems that the triple occupation (German, Italian, and Bulgarian) left behind. It was especially in the economy of Greece that the most serious problems could be detected. Agriculture was hit heavily by the war, and farmers' lands lay fallow. Low wages, a black market, high inflation, and unbalanced trade were the main characteristics of the post-war economy.

During the civil war that started in Autumn 1946 between the Communist forces supported by Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria and the government forces, supported by the Western powers, the villages of Western Thrace were exposed to sudden attacks both by the Greek Army and communist gangs, as was happening in the rest of Greece. From the end of 1944 to mid-1945, a new wave of immigration began in Western Thrace, at the same time as EAM-ELAS harassed some villages.[203] It is estimated that the number of immigrants who entered Turkey either freely or illegally between 1946 and 1949 is 17,793.[204] In the villages controlled by the Democratic Army, abc-books in Turkish with Latin script, printed in Bulgaria, were

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[203] The number of people who took refuge in Turkey by fleeing was more than 2,000 till March 1948. In Necded Evliyagil, "Savaştan Kaçan Türkler 2000i Geçti" *Cumhuriyet,* No. 8440, 21 March 1948, quoted in Hikmet Öksüz, "Western Thracian Turks in Greek Civil War (1946-1949)" in *Turkish Review of Balkan Studies,* no. 5, (2000/02). Other sources claim that the total number of le 1 and illegal immigrants to Turkey was 17,793. See Ahmed Kayıhan, *Lozan ve Batı Trakya. 1913te İlk Türk Cumhuriyeti* (Istanbul 1967), p. 32, quoted in Öksüz, p. 62.

[204] In Ahmet Kayihan, *Lozan ve Batı Trakya:1913te İlk Türk Cumhuriyeti* (Istanbul, 1967), p. 32, quoted in Öksüz (2003), p. 274.

distributed.[205] The civil war and the intervention of the foreign powers (Britain, the USA and the USSR) in the internal policy of the state influenced the decisions of the political leaders. The ground had to be ready for the Truman Doctrine; the economic and military help of the United States to Greece and Turkey.

1946 was a crucial year not only in terms of the civil war, but also in terms of the Peace Conference in Paris where Bulgaria expressed its aspirations involving Western Thrace. The Bulgarian representative, Georgi Kulisef, expressed desire for the Greek part of Thrace, using the argument that Bulgaria needed an outlet to the Aegean Sea. In Sofia, demonstrations were organized with slogans like "Western Thrace is a vital part of Bulgaria!", "We want access to the Aegean Sea!" and others.[206] After negotiations, when the Paris Peace Conference finished, on 15 October 1946, Greek claims were taken seriously under consideration and the USA promised important economic help. The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs on 3 December 1946 decided that Bulgaria would not include Western Thrace in its lands, putting an end to the Bulgarian territorial aspirations for Western Thrace. Also, in 1946 the State Organisation for the Publishing of School Text-Books printed books for the Turkish schools in the Turkish language in the Latin script. This showed clearly the position of the Ministry concerning the language of the minorities. In the past, the Greek state had been neutral on the script issue, considering it an internal minority affair. Still, the "conservative" side was permitted to teach the Arab alphabet, but the Greek state had chosen to support the reformists at least in the issue of language. It should be added that the Turkish-Muslim politician Osman Nuri,

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[205] Tsioumis, p. 431.

[206] Malkidis, p. 109.

candidate for the elections of 1946 and 1950 from Western Thrace received many votes not only from the Turkish minority, but also from Pomaks, because he presented himself to be in favor of the less privileged minority citizens and thus attracted their votes.[207] This is an important indication that the Pomaks despite their cultural differences with the Muslims Turks had started feeling closer to them and believed that minority Turkish politicians could represent their demands.

Lastly, the EAM tried to approach the Turkish inhabitants of Western Thrace by publishing and distributing free in 1947 the propaganda newspaper *Savaş (*War*)*. The newspaper was issued by Kemal Kaptan in the village Kirtzali (Kırcaali) of Bulgaria and expressed the positions of the KKE (Communist Party of Greece). Savaş represented itself as the organ of Muslim Democratic Unity and invited Turks to join the civil war through headlines like "Get armed and go for victory!"[208] Kemal Kaptan was the nickname of Mihri Belli, member of the Turkish Communist Party, who was invited by the Greek Communists in the region to persuade the people of the area to join them.[209] Kaptan declared that they supported Kemalism and Atatürk policies, which they considered to be closer to Communism.[210] Among other measures of persuasion for participation with the Communist side, the communist guerrillas invited Belli, member of the Turkish Communist Party, to Western Thrace to stimulate the people in that area to join them.

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[207] Nikolakopoulos, p. 190.

[208] Hikmet Öksüz, "Western Thracian Turks in Greek Civil War, (1946-1949)," in *Turkish Review of Balkan Studies,* no. 5 (2000/01).

[209] For more information, see Mihri Belli, *İç Savaş Anıları-Rigasın Dediği* (Ankara 1988).

[210] In Tsioumis, p. 431.

The civil war finished, leaving at least 135,000 dead and political instability throughout Greece. A new era of Greek-Turkish friendship would develop with the encouragement of the United States.

## From the Truman Doctrine to the Entrance of Greece and Turkey into NATO

The general political targets of the USA through the Truman Doctrine were assistance to the preservation of the independence of Greece and especially hindering the Communist influence in Greece, which could be harmful to American interests. The U.S. Congress, in the frame of the Truman Doctrine (after the initiative of President Truman) provided $400,000,000 for Turkey and Greece.[211] Until 30 September 1947, 160 million dollars had been distributed to Greece and Turkey for special reasons. Greece asked repeatedly for guns from Turkey in order to face the Communist rebels, who were approaching the Greek capital. Also, according to some Greek sources, the Athens government had asked Turkey to work together on military plans and to move on to combined military programs "if the future developments required it."[212]

In 1949 the entrance of Greece and Turkey into NATO started to be discussed. Also in 1949, the *Intibah-I Islam* association was founded by the "conservatives" of Thrace. This new association was not against all of the modernization reforms. It accepted some of them tacitly.

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[211] 300 million dollars were given to Greece and 100 million dollars to Turkey.

[212] Malkidis, p. 118.

## The Greek-Turkish Educational Agreement of 1951

The victory of the Democratic Party of Adnan Menderes in the Turkish elections of 1950 contributed to better Greek-Turkish relations, at least until 1955. On 20 April 1951, a Greek Turkish educational/cultural agreement was signed aiming at the improvement of the position of the Muslims in Greece. This agreement is considered to be a very important step for the promotion of Greek-Turkish friendship and even though it did not aim at the minorities' education, its influence over the general minority policy of Greece and Turkey was obvious.

The agreement was signed in the frame of education agreements signed by the member states of the Council of Europe, so which where Greece and Turkey were members. It was aimed at the promotion of Greece and Turkish friendship through academic cooperation, the exchange of professors, students, and research programs that could lead to a better understanding of the history of Greece and Turkey. According to the text of the agreement, among others, each state gained the possibility to establish cultural institutes in the other state and they were bound to promote cooperation of youth organizations (Article 11) and the free circulation of books, magazines and other written publications (Article 12). Also, both states were considered responsible for correcting inaccuracies included in school textbooks concerning the other country (Article 14). Greece and Turkey were invited to encourage the scientific and cultural cooperation of universities (Article 6) and also the exchange of University professors, students and researchers (Article 3).

The articles of the agreement did not include direct decisions concerning the education of the minority students in Western Thrace, even though there were suggestions concerning the school textbooks and the exchange of students. Still, the

most obvious effect was that the lesson of Turkish language became the basic one both for all the students of the minority schools, no matter if their mother tongue was Turkish, Pomak or Romani.

As a result of the Ankara Education Agreement of 1951, Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia collaborated in the spiritual approach of the three States and the achievement of common projects in economic, educational and military spheres.

Evidence of the positive atmosphere in Greek-Turkish relations would be the official visits to Athens (June 1952) of the Turkish Prime minister Adnan Menderes and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Köprülü, and the visit of the Greek Prime Minister, Sophocles Venizelos, in Ankara in February 1953. Also an important event was the visit of the President of the Turkish Republic, Celal Bayar, to Athens in October 1952 and the foundation of a High School under his name in Komotini, to 3 December 1952. The school started functioning in the school year 1953-1954, when Turkish teachers from Turkey started to work in the minority Western Thracian schools. Its opening was a direct effect of the cultural agreement of 1951. The Turkish students of the school were coming from "modern" families, while the children of the "conservatives" were still attending lessons in *medreses*. It is reported that the ultraconservative Muslims reacted to the opening of the school.[213] It should be noted that the Lausanne Treaty bound Greece and Turkey only in the issue of elementary education; there was no obligation for the foundation of secondary minority schools.[214] The school continued to function under this name until 1960.

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[213] *Trakya,* 11 February 1957, as quoted in Akgönül, p. 52.

[214] According to the article 41 for the agreement of protection of the minorities : "the Turkish Government will grant...adequate facilities for ensuring that in the primary schools the instruction shall be given to the children of such Turkish nationals through the medium of their own language."

After 1960, because of the political situation in Turkey, the school's name was changed to Komotini High School (Gümülcine *Lisesi*) and finally it was changed to Muslim Highschool (*Müslüman Ortaokul ve Lisesi.*)[215]

The opening ceremony of Celal Bayar High School in Komotini was of great importance to the minority population of Western Thrace and thousands of Greek and Turkish inhabitants of the area welcomed the opening of the school holding Greek and Turkish flags.[216]

The Greek Royal couple, King Paul and Queen Frederika, visited Istanbul as well in June 1952 and the name "Frederika" was given to a Greek school in Istanbul. King Paul was the first King of Greece to step foot on Turkish soil since the Byzantine times.[217]

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[215] Adil Özgüç "*Bati Trakya Türkleri*" (Istanbul, 1974), p. 103.

[216] Malkidis, p. 127.

[217] Akgönül, p. 48.

# CHAPTER III

# FROM THE ENTRANCE OF GREECE AND TURKEY TO NATO UNTIL THE 1990s

## The Entrance of Greece and Turkey into NATO

The participation of Greece and Turkey in the Korean War was the best proof of alliance for the United States. Greece applied for entrance to NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) in August 1951 and together with Turkey it was accepted as an official NATO members on 15 February 1952. Despite the negative stance of several European countries that were expressing their concerns about the political instability of Greece and Turkey, the USA considered both countries as a guarantee of stability and a serious obstacle to the access of the USSR to the Mediterranean Sea.

The entrance of Greece and Turkey into NATO and the deteriorating relations of Tito with Stalin resulted in the signing of the Balkan Pact of Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia in February 1953. The doctrine of the "Threat from the North" dominated the post-war era, with Bulgaria as the common "threat" of Greece and Turkey. The fear of Bulgarian Communism was still present, so cooperation with Turkey was seen as the best solution for Greece. It was in the 1950s, it was decided that the Pomaks should be removed from Bulgarian influence. So, even though until that time they had been recognized as "Bulgarian-speaking Muslims," in the census of 1951 they are referred to as "Pomak-speaking Muslims."

The different historical stages through which Western Thrace passed left their signs on the local population and influenced the behavior of the Muslim minorities. The Bulgarian occupation during the Second World War was accompanied by the encouragement of Bulgarian nationalism; the Greek civil war transformed the region in to a battlefield of two opposite ideological camps struggling for dominance and the entrance of Greece and Turkey into NATO gave Western Thrace strategic importance against the communist threat from the North.

## The Period until the Junta of 1967

### The Immediate Effects of the Entrance of Greece and Turkey into NATO Concerning Thrace

The entrance of Greece and Turkey into NATO in 1952 was accompanied by important steps by both countries which aimed to strengthen the friendship between them. A very characteristic declaration of the then prime minister A. Papagos, during his visit in Turkey on 15 June 1953, confirms the positive climate between the two countries: "Turkish and Greek political leaders have realized that between Greece and Turkey, there is no issue which can not be solved friendly and according to the benefit of both States."[218] In the period after 1952, Greece and Turkey cooperated in different spheres and the press in both countries reflected the positive climate between the two states.[219] In 1953, a Turkish magazine published a now

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[218] Linardatos Spyros, Από τον Εμφύλιο στη Χούντα, (From the Civil War to Junta) (Athens: .II, 1978), p. 176.

[219] See for example, daily *Akşam* (25/11/1946), article of Necmetin Sadak.

well-known poem written in London in 1947 by Bülent Ecevit on Turkish-Greek friendship. This specific poem is a very good reflection of this peaceful period of Greek Turkish relationship (see Appendix).

Western Thrace officially from 1952 and onwards was considered a region of high strategic importance for NATO interests and the Greek policies towards the region would be defined according to this doctrine. The Greek minority policy of this period was characterized by a double effort: to keep the Pomaks away from Bulgarian influence and to secure the Greek northern borders.[220] The supervised zone, which included almost 40% of the area, was one of the cruelest measures taken. It is also worth noting that all the Muslims needed special permissions for the construction of mosques, building houses, the opening of shops or the purchase of a car. The so-called "cultural offices of Ministry of Foreign Affairs" in Xanthi, Komotini and Alexandroupoli were the official "representatives" of the Greek state in the region and they were responsible for the issuing of these permissions. These services were heavily criticized for the cruelty of the measures and the low quality of their employees.[221]

In the internal affairs of the minorities some changes began to appear due to the closer cooperation between the two states. Islamic fundamentalist newspapers, like *Muhafazakar* (The Conservative) close down and new ones, like the *Azınlık Postası* (The Postman of the Minority) appeared. The old conservative Muslims that had dominated the Muslim minorities during the first decades after the Lausanne Treaty had almost disappeared and a new elite dominated and expressed mainly the

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[220] Troubeta, p. 45.

[221] Malkidis, p. 154.

Turkish identity. The idea that the Pomaks could be a big danger for the region because of their closeness to Bulgaria initiated measures that encouraged the use of Turkish and practically prohibited the use of the Pomak language. The teaching of the Turkish language, the changing of names like "Muslim school" to "Turkish school" and the posting of Turkish teachers from Turkey to all the minority schools, were some of the new educational measures. These actions of the Greek government are interpreted by some scholars like Troubeta, as an effort of the Greeks to avoid the danger of claims by Bulgaria regarding the Pomaks.[222] Some of these teachers after the expiration of their service in Greece returned to Turkey and described their experiences in books that expressed a one-sided, nationalistic approach to the issue.

The Turkish identity becomes the dominant one among the Muslims, and the Turkish Consulate of Komotini became an important help centre towards the minority population and their leaders. A characteristic example is that in 1949, the Greek state gave permission to members of Turkish Consulate to visit the mountain villages of Thrace and offer economic help to the Turks and Pomaks there.[223]

The newspapers in Turkey published articles describing the repression of the Turkish minority and Christos Christidis, counselor of the Ministry of the Press, in one of his reports noted: "Some Turkish newspapers claim that the Turkish minority of Western Thrace is really desperate due to the unfair measures of Greek government and nation against her."[224] Together with the press, the Turkish

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[222] Troubeta, p. 44.

[223] Malkidis, p. 165.

[224] Christidis Christos, Κυπριακο και ελληνοτουρκικά (Cyprus issue and Greek-Turkish problems)(Athens: n.p., 1967), pp. 5-16.

government addressed international organizations condemning several repressive measures of the Greek governments.

In 1954, the Greek government accepted the Turkish identity of the minority by using the term "Turkish minority" in the official papers and reports. Turkish and Greek officials spoke officially about "the Turkish minority of Western Thrace." The Papagos government gave orders to the General Commander of Thrace, Fessopoulos, to direct the renaming of the schools and of other foundations of the Muslim minorities from "Muslim" to "Turkish," accepting the Turkish national identity for the total of the minority. According to the official text:[225]

> KINGDOM OF GREECE
> GENERAL ADMINISTRATION OF THRACE
> INTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTRY
>
> Komotini, 28/1/1954
>
> Urgent
>
> To the Mayors and President of Communities of Rodopi Perfecture
>
> According to order of the President of the Government we demand that from now on you use the words "Turk-Turkish" instead of "Muslim." That means that you are responsible to change the many writings in our prefecture, like "Muslim School," "Muslim Community" etc. to "Turkish."
>
> The General Administrator of Thrace
>
> G. Fessopoulos

The recognition of the minority as "Turkish" by the Greek state is an important point in the history of minority because it influenced all the interested parts: the Greek governments (because it considered the minority as a minority of Turks, and thus behaved to them according to the positive or negative climate in the Greek-Turkish relations;) the Turkish government that rightly considered itself as

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[225] Helsinki Watch Report (1990), p. 51.

protector of the Turkish minority; and, the minority itself: the Turks became dominant within the minority group, the Pomak and Gypsy communities started to identify voluntarily themselves with the Turkish one and thus accepting as well the Turkish identity. The Union of Muslims of Greeks, representing the most conservative parts of the minorities, reacted strongly to the intervention of Papagos government by considering it a violation in the way of life and the education of the Muslims.[226] The problems that the minority would face in 1960's were not present in 1954. This is why the specific period was relatively "relaxed" period for the minority in Greece.

The events of 6/7 September 1955 in Istanbul and İzmir against the Greek Orthodox Minority created a worry among the Turkish-Muslim minority in Greece in case similar events took place in Greece against them.[227] Still, in different Turkish minority newspapers, the Turkish-Muslim members of the Greek Parliament condemn the events in Istanbul and on the name of Turks of Western Thrace. They declared their satisfaction with the treatment of the Greek state towards the Turkish minority.[228] Of course, such movements of the minority can be interpreted as an effort to prove its faithfulness to the Greek state and thus avoid events like the ones that took place in Istanbul: A minority defense mechanism against possible attacks.

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[226] Tsioumis, p. 433.

[227] The events of 1955 are considered to be among the "black" pages of Turkish history. Groups of "angry citizens", demanding the annexation of Cyprus by Turkey, terrorized the religious minorities of Istanbul by looting and destroying properties, churches, houses and shops.. What happened that night was directly connected with the situation in Cyprus and the rumour that a bomb was placed in the house in which Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was born in Salonica set off the violent activities of the crowds in Istanbul.

[228] See article of Osman Nuri Fettahoğlu, Turkish member of Greek Parliament, in *Trakya*, 17 July1955, quoted in Akgönül, p. 56.

A Greek report of the Ministry of Press in 1955 presented the situation of the Turks of Greece.[229] It reflects the Greek point of view. According to the report, 110,000 Muslims were living in Western Thrace and 6,000 on some islands of the Aegean. Muslims constituted the 31% of the population of Western Thrace, they were sent representatives to Parliament and the municipality borders and they were published freely their ideas in newspapers and magazines. In 292 schools the Turkish language was taught (with the Arabic or Latin alphabet, according to the students' choice), and the school textbooks came from Turkey. The report presents an ideal image of the situation of the minority, avoiding sensitive issues like the Muslim properties taken by the Greek public. A serious problem that was generally avoided was the minority education issue. The Ministry of Education in 1957 publicized its official policy concerning minority education. A look at the text is enough to show that no special concern was taken for the students' social and linguistic background.

From September 1955 until the end of that year, almost 3,000 Turks left Greece for Turkey, but soon returned. The immigration of these people was organized by the Union for the Relief of Western Thrace's Refugees, founded in 1953. After the events of 1955 in Istanbul, Turkish newspapers in Western Thrace informed the public that nothing like what had happened in Istanbul had taken place in Western Thrace.[230] This was maybe a reason why the immigrants to Turkey returned.

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[229] Malkidis, p. 177.

[230] *Trakya,* 29 September 1955, quoted in Akgönül, p. 57.

## Article 19 of the Greek Citizenship Code

The events of September 1955 in Istanbul against the Greek Orthodox minority created a strange atmosphere in the minority issues. The numerical balance that had been secured until that time between the Muslim minorities of Western Thrace and the Greek Orthodox minority of Istanbul was changing. The Greek state, probably in answer to the September 1955 events, voted in favour of the "famous" Article 19, which secured the removal of Greek citizenship from every "*allogeni*" (of different race) that left Greece without the intention of returning.

From 1955 when this article was accepted until 1998, it is calculated that 60,000 people lost their citizenship. Here it should be noted that the article targeted not only the Turks or the Pomaks of Thrace, but also the Macedonians of Western Macedonia and the Muslim Albanians (Chams) of Epirus.

## Books, Journals and Activities of Western Thrace Activists after 1955

After 1955, Greece and Turkey continued their cooperation within the framework of NATO. But it was especially the Cyprus issue this time that increased the nationalistic feelings on both sides. Our observation concerning books and publications on "sensitive" issues (minorities, strategic issues, other problems) between Greece and Turkey is that in periods of high "tension" among the two countries, much more books concerning certain sensitive issues appear than when Greece and Turkey seem to be on good terms. So, after 1955 there was an increase in the publications from both sides concerning the Western Thrace issue.

In the Turkish publications, we can mention the book of Ahmet Aydınlı *Batı Trakya Faciasının İç Yüzü* (The internal aspect of the tragedy of Western Thrace),[231] the journal *Türk Kültürü* (Turkish Culture), that dedicated the issue of January 1976 to the subject of Thrace issue and published many articles in the period 1963-1966 on the violations of human rights in Western Thrace; and the magazine *Batı Trakya* (Western Thrace) published in Istanbul in 1967.

The *Batı Trakya Dayanışma Derneği* (Association for the Mutual Aid of the Turks of Western Thrace) was activated mainly in Istanbul. Founded in 1946, it had branches in the other big cities of Turkey where Western Thrace Turks lived. The association published the magazine *Batı Trakya Türkü* (The Turk of Western Thrace), the magazine *Yeni Batı* Trakya (The New Western Thrace) and also published texts in English, like the "How the West Thrace Moslem Turks are Annihilated. A Call for the Defense of Democracy" (1976), focusing especially on the problems of the Turkish minority in Thrace. In the magazines and journals printed in Turkey concerning the Western Thrace issue, we should also include magazines like *Milli Hareket* (National Action), a monthly magazine published in Istanbul from October 1966- August 1971; and *Sesimiz* (Our voice).

Authors in Thrace were very productive as well. Osman Nuri Fettahoğlu, member of the Greek Parliament, published the newspaper *Trakya* (Thrace), from 1932-1965. Other newspapers printed in Thrace were *Milliyet* (The Nation), from 1931-1968; and the newspaper *Akın* (The Attack). The *Batı Trakya Türk Öğretmenler Birliği* (the Association of Western Thrace Turkish Teachers) started publishing in Komotini from August 1963 the magazine *Birlik* (The Union). Finally,

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[231] Istanbul, 1971.

in the published newspapers of Thrace, the newspaper *Muhafazakar* (The Conservative), printed from 1956 in Komotini in Arabic letters, until 1966 should be mentioned. In Arabic letters and focusing more on religion was the magazine *Peygamber Binası* (The Construction of the Prophet), published in Arabic letters in Komotini from 1957. The last year that members of the minorities published a material in the Arabic language was 1977.

## The Relations of Greece and Turkey after 1955 and Their Effects on Western Thrace

Field-Marshal Alexander Papagos died and Constantine Karamanlis government succeeded Papagos. The Greek-Turkish rapprochement will go on in a different way.

The events in Western Thrace are reported in articles in the Greek Press. The newspaper *To Vima* (The Step), in a series of articles printed in September 1956 describes the situation in Western Thrace at that time reflecting the official Greek views and avoiding any reference to the basic problems of the Turkish Muslims. It is in this period that the Greek newspapers began to speak about "Muslims," not Turks anymore and they sought to create a division between the Turks, Pomaks and Gypsies, avoiding reference to a Turkish minority. An article by journalist Kostas Vasileiou shows the shift concerning the identity of the minority:

> Of 100,000 Muslims of Western Thrace, 26,592 are Pomaks and 5,116 are Gypsies...their social and educational level is very low...most of them are peasants, but there are also some merchants, but absolutely no scientists...their living standards are low because they transform their money into gold coins and take it to Turkey...The Turkish Consul uses the word "Turkish" when he refers to the minority...but he also claims that the Greek state doesn't treat the Muslims in a discriminatory fashion...The Prime Minister Papagos economically supported the Turkish schools, but it was

> mainly the Turkish government that helped these schools...The Turkish Consul suggests that the Greek state should force the Turks to educate...The Turkish deputies have to be approved by the Turkish Consulate... The *müftü* of Komotini claims that religious freedom is respected by the Greek state...The Pomaks are reacting to efforts made by Turkish teachers to "make them feel Turkish"...there are incidents where the Pomak language is forbidden in several schools.

Finally, according to the journalist, the reasons that members of the Turkish minority immigrate to Turkey (in 1956) are the following: First, they have participated in illegal activities and they want to avoid the punishment. Second, they want to avoid the military service. Third, they want to escape from Greece in order to live better in Turkey. Fourth, political and demographic reasons: they can settle in Turkish cities that are not heavily populated; also "they can demand the deportation of the Greeks of Istanbul if the number of the Turks that leave W. Thrace is big. Fifth, financial reasons: they have hopes for a better future in Turkey.[232]

The declarations of members of the elite of minority in the newspaper show that the elite of the minority (journalists, members of parliament and religious authorities) did not have the same opinion about the situation in Thrace.

Karamanlis and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, E. Averof, visited Turkey on 7-12 May 1959. The issue of Western Thrace came to the surface with statements made by the Turkish side. F. Zorlu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, expressed his worries about the importance of religion for the Muslims of Thrace and the influence of specific "reactionary persons" who were trying to influence the minorities' populations against the government of Menderes and the secular character of the Turkish state. Zorlu made several recommendations to the Greeks for the better treatment of the Turkish minority in Greece: the Pomaks should attend the

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[232] Newspaper *To Vima*, 9-11-12-13 September 1956.

Turkish schools and the Greek state should try to bring them in contact with Turkey and not with Egypt. Land expropriation should be prohibited. The Greek state was expropriating lands belonging to Muslims without direct compensations.[233]

Despite the expressions of complaints of both sides about the treatment of minority, the foreign and local press expressed surprise at the positive climate of the negotiations. The French daily *Figaro* expressed with the following sentences the positive atmosphere: "The aim of the Greek-Turkish negotiations in Ankara was completed with success. The atmosphere between the two countries changed and a spirit of cooperation replaced the enmity recent years."[234]

## Developments in Thrace in the 1960's

### The Emigration of Christian and Muslims

The immigration of the local Thracian population to Europe started in the late 1950's. The difficult socioeconomic conditions that the Muslims experienced through the repression mechanisms resulted in their socioeconomic marginalization. This, in combination with their introversion and the severe crisis of the tobacco industry in the 1960s and 1970s, did not help the access of this population to the labor market. The Muslims did not emigrate to a great extent; the reason for staying was not their good conditions of life. On the contrary, the Turkish Muslims lived in an undeveloped region and they faced the suspicion of the Greek state. It is probable that one of the reasons that they didn't immigrate abroad was the fear that they would

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[233] Malkidis, p. 195.

[234] *Le Figaro,* 14 May 1959.

lose their citizenship, according to Article 19 of the Greek Penal Code. The Greek government controlled the emigration procedures and emigration to a foreign country, even if it was temporary, could be a good excuse for the state to revoke the citizenship. Also, especially for the Pomaks, the difficulties stemming from the "supervised zone" were enough to keep the local population from leaving. Especially Muslims who lived inside the supervised zone needed special permissions from the police authorities to move to another city or place.

Western Thracian Turks who moved to Europe, and especially Germany, formed associations that would represent them and would help them keep their identity.

The result of the poor socioeconomic conditions of the minorities was the creation of a wave (relatively small) of internal immigration in the big cities, to Attica, central and western Greek Macedonia, and also a wave of emigration to Germany. It is reported that 7,236 Turks of W. Thrace worked in Germany in 1987.[235] It should be pointed out that the relatively small immigration to other big cities of Greece stemmed from the fact that the rights of the minority were guaranteed only in the region of Thrace. Minority schools, mosques and minority politicians could only be active in the region of Western Thrace where the minority was gathered. Immigration to a big city with Christian population, without the basic minority rights (freedom of exercise of religion and minority education) was a clear threat to the identity of the minority.

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[235] Troubeta, p. 148, footnote 83

## Developments in Thrace after 1960

Despite the problems in Cyprus that deteriorated after 1963,[236] Greece and Turkey continued their friendly policies officially at the beginning of 1960's and this atmosphere influenced the minorities as well.

With their declarations both the Prime Minister K. Karamanlis and the Minister of Foreign Affairs E. Averof, during their official visits in Ankara, pointed out their efforts for "the better arrangement of several minority issues."

At the end of 1960, the Turkish government voted for a special law[237] "for the economic support of the teachers of Turkish origin who live in other countries carrying foreign citizenship." With this law, Turkey could give economic help to the Turkish minority teachers and their families. The Turkish Consulate of Komotini announced the application of the law, which was profitable for all the minority teachers of Western Thrace. In this way Turkish and Pomak teachers, facing serious economic problems, were able to receive aid from the Turkish government.

In the meantime, the problem of Cyprus continued to influence negatively the Greek-Turkish relations. The instability in Greece was not a sign of positive

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[236] After the defeat of Karamanlis in the election of 1963, George Papandreu, leader of the Centre Union coalition, was faced with the clash between the Greeks and the Turks on the island of Cyprus. Archbishop Makarios, President of Cyprus, suggested to the Turkish Cypriot Vice-President Dr. Küçük, amendments to the 1960 Constitution. Among the amendments was that the number of Turkish Cypriots in the administration should be reduced and some basic articles that had been included in the Agreement of 1960 for the protection of the Turkish-Cypriots be abolished. The fact that the Constitution of the Cyprus Republic was not respected was a primary source of worry for the Turkish-Cypriot side. Fighting broke out between the two communities, which lasted until the summer of 1964 and had many victims from the side of the Turkish Cypriots. The riots that broke down in December 1963 and the massacres committed by the Greek-Cypriots are known in Turkey and in the Turkish-Cypriot community as "bloody Christmas."

[237] Law 168/16-12-1960.

developments[238]. In June 1963, Karamanlis moved to Paris after a dispute with the royal family. The party of George Papandreou, the Center Union, dominated the politics of Greece. The centrist liberals of George Papandreou was the only political force that by merging forces ranging from moderate right to socialist seemed the only political force capable of challenging the "archaic political system of Greece."[239]

In the meantime, a law passed on 17 March 1964 by the Turkish side declared that the residence and working permits of 8,600 Greek citizens living in Turkey would not be renewed. These people had moved to Turkey as a result of a special agreement signed in 1930's between the two countries that had given the right to citizens of each country to move to the other. The ones who were seen as "harmful for the Turkish state" had to leave the country immediately (for the others a period of six months was given.)[240]. The Turks of Western Thrace were deeply concerned by the situation, fearing retaliation from the Greek government.

In 1964, the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs, speaking in the parliament, reassured the minority that Greece would not follow a policy of retaliation because it wouldn't like to use its own citizens as "means of foreign policy."[241]

During the negotiations of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Greece (Mpitsios) and Turkey (Kuneralp) in 1965 and in the Greek-Turkish educational agreement of 1968, Turkey asked that the number of Greek teachers be decreased in the minority schools and that Turkish teachers replace them.

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[238] Governments were changing one after the other, and the polarization in politics caused by the Civil War was a very serious obstacle to the creation of a stable social democracy according the model of Europe. The fragility of post-war democracy in Greece was obvious.

[239] John S. Koliopoulos and Thanos M. Veremis, *Greece: The Modern Sequel, From 1831 to the Present* (London: Hurst, 2002), pp. 100-101.

[240] Akgönül, p. 61.

[241] Malkidis, p. 220.

The press and the political activity of the minority in Thrace continued. The Association of Greek Muslims was the most important representative of the Conservative camp. Its views were published in the newspaper *Conservative* that started to be printed in Komotini in 1958 with the Arabic alphabet. Other religious unions such as The Rebirth or The Association of Teachers of Western Thrace, Graduates of Religious Schools appeared as the last efforts of the conservative circles of the minorities to be united around their religion.

Muslim Turks, members of the Greek Parliament made their own suggestions about the improvement of the life of the minorities. The most important Turkish MPs in the Greek Parliament at that period were Molla Yusuf, Hasan Hatipoğlu and Osman Nuri. Molla Yusuf in the past had belonged to the conservative circle of the minority. Hasan Hatipoğlu was elected to the Greek Parliament in October 1961. Their result of their political action was the posting in minority schools of teachers who had studied in Turkey and the foundation of a private Minority High school in Xanthi in 1965.

In a conclusion, it can be said that the minority until 1967, when the junta of the Colonists came to power, the Muslim Turks were defined and accepted as "Turkish minority." Mistakes and wrong "movements" by the Greek state deteriorated the situation of all the minority population: the Turks lived with the fear of retaliation after the September 1955 events against the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul; the Pomaks was legally and practically isolated in the "supervised zone"; and the Gypsies were always treated as second-class citizens.

A clash between G. Papandreou (Prime Minister representing the parliament) and King Constantine (representing the monarchy) for the control of the armed forces became obvious after 1965. In 1967, the military would move in fill the gap that was created between the two of them. On 21 April 1967 the legal government of George Papandreou was overthrown by a group of colonels (Papadopoulos, Pattakos and Makarezos) who justified the coup by declaring, "it had prevented an imminent Communist take-over"[242]. According to some scholars, the Communist threat was the excuse; the real reason for the coup was to prevent G. Papandreou from winning the next election.[243] The Colonels who made the coup was a group of extreme right-wingers who had identified in the past with Papagos in his quarrels with King Paul.[244] Polls leading up to elections that had been planned for 28 May 1967 were showing the complete victory of the Center Union of G. Papandreou. The action of the Colonels prevented Papandreu from winning the elections. The junta organizers would devote themselves to the interests of NATO. This created a dilemma in the U.S. of how to treat the Colonels' regime because, on the one hand, they could not agree with the internal order of the regime, but on the other hand, the Colonels were

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[242] Koliopoulos-Veremis, p.300. It should be also noted that this group of officers and others as well wanted not only to prevent a Communist or Leftist government, but also to stop the influence of Communism inside the military ranks.

[243] Ibid., p. 102.

[244] The colonels of 1967 Coup were supporters of Marhsal Papagos, head of the government armed forces in the Civil War, who had come in serious conflict with King Paul. The death of Papagos didn't mean the end of his supporters; it was the colonels of 1967 that continued their rivalry with the King that ended up in the junta of 1967.

loyal NATO partners.[245] G. Papadopoulos, as the head of the group, whenever he had the chance expressed his dedication to NATO and attacked "the global communism and the Soviet totalitarianism"[246]. G. Papadopoulos became Prime Minister. The Minister of Defence and King Constantin II were sent into exile. The Colonels abolished the monarchy and Papadopoulos was elected President of the Republic for eight years. The new ideology "Greece of Christian Greeks (*Hellas Hellinon Christianon)* became the slogan of the new regime.

The recognition of junta by Turkey and the will of the Colonels to overcome the international isolation increased the efforts of junta to improve Greek-Turkish relations.[247] An important event for Greek-Turkish relations was a meeting that took place in 9-10 September 1967, on the two sides of the river Evros (Meriç) that separates Greece and Turkey. The meeting started in the Turkish city of Keşan and continued on the other side of the border in Alexandroupolis. Among the issues discussed, was the Cyprus issue and the problems of the minorities. In the final report it was written that,

> the presidents of the two governments...expressed their belief that long-term interests of the two countries demand stronger friendship, and cooperation bounds...that have been started by two very important politicians, Atatürk and Venizelo."[248]

The leader of the Greek military government, G. Papadopoulos, in an interview with a Turkish newspaper on 29 May 1971 said: "I believe that the world

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[245] Maurice Goldbloom, "United States Policy in Post-War Greece," in R. Clogg and G. Yannopoulos, eds, *Greece under Military Rule,* (London: Secker & Warburg. 1972), p.247 cited in Koliopoulos-Veremis, pp. 300-301.

[246] Malkidis, p. 252.

[247] Akgönül , p. 65.

[248] Malkidis, p. 259.

developments will lead to a Federation of Turkey and Greece. Maybe this will take place after twenty or fifty years, but it will happen."[249] It should be noted that the recognition of the junta regime by Turkey was important for the negotiations and the meetings that took place in the seven years of the dictatorship. On 20 January 1968, Turkey became the second country in the world to officially recognize the junta of Greece after Congo.[250]

In the meantime, in Istanbul, the Union of Solidarity of Turks of Western Thrace was founded in 1971. The Union later published the magazine *Yeni Batı Trakya Dergisi* (The magazine New Western Thrace). In that period many books were printed in Turkey dealing with the history and the culture of Western Thrace.

## Developments in Minority Human Rights

The Colonels implemented repressive administrative measures for all Greek citizens. The discriminatory measures were not specifically against the minority population, but they were aimed at eliminating any possible threat coming from any side. Specifically for the minority, the expressions "Muslim minority," "Muslim/ minority schools," started to be used by the Greek state again after years of accepting the existence of a Turkish minority in Western Thrace; the division among Turks, Pomaks and Gypsies was stressed on each occasion. The discrimination measures aimed at the total minority population thus helped in the "homogenization" of the minorities. The "supervised" zone, a decision of an earlier Greek dictatorship,

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[249] Ibid., p. 277.

[250] Akgönül, p. 66.

continued to exist; while in the past it had mainly restricted the Pomaks living in the borders with Bulgaria, after 1967 it was extended to Evros Prefecture, covering the borders with Turkey. The isolation of the minority (both in geographical terms and in political terms since there was no longer any minority parliamentarian) is a fact.

Despite the positive declarations of high-ranking Greek officials about Greek-Turkish relations, it was in the period 1967-1974 that Turkey became again an important "threat." Until the fall of the dictatorship in 1974, the defensive doctrine based on the "Northern danger" had not been abandoned, but the attention was shifted to the eastern borders. The supervised zone was part of an undefined minority policy that sometimes was aiming at the assimilation of the minorities and their control and other times at their forced "self-willing" abandonment of Thrace. The supervised zone, which continued to exist until 1996, continued to affect the Pomaks negatively.

Low-ranking administrative employees violated the human rights of the minority populations, who were treated as "foreigners," and enemies. All these discrimination measures are interpreted today, by several Greek scholars, as "delayed" retaliation measures for the mistreatment of the Greek Orthodox minority of Istanbul and as a means of forcing the Muslims, and especially the Turks, to abandon their lands and move to Turkey.[251]

Turkey defended the rights of the Turkish-Muslim minority, in international human rights organizations. The Turkish Consulate of Komotini encouraged the efforts of the Turks of Western Thrace to express their identity, and it sponsored their publications and many of their associations. Many new repressive measures started

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[251] Troubeta, p. 48.

to be implemented after 1971, when the Turkish government decided to close the Religious Academy of Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Istanbul.[252]

## Repressive Measures in Everyday Life

Among the most commons were: discrimination concerning building permits, driver's licenses and land purchase and the cancellation of the right of Muslims to elect their own religious representatives.[253] There were serious prohibitions in the circulation of Turkish records and listening to Turkish music.

Concerning the problems in the purchase of land, this was based on a law of 1938, which had been issued during the dictatorship of Ioannis Metaxas, aiming at that time at the political enemies of Metaxas and used after 1967 against the Muslims of Thrace. Members of the minority groups were prohibited to buy land in border zones without State's permission. On the other hand, Christians are said to have been encouraged (with long-term loans) to purchase land from Muslim families.[254] Also, a great amount of land passed in the hands of the State through the mechanism of *anadasmos (*land redistribution).

The junta in 1967 abolished the democratically elected committees responsible for the managing of religious foundations. It should be noted that the same law continued even after the fall of junta and the return to democracy. Also, the same thing happened with the councils of the "Muslim communities," as they were called, the members of which had been elected by the minority until 1967. The new

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[252] Ibid., p. 49.

[253] Poulton, Muslim Identity and the Balkan State, p. 86, footnote 8.

[254] Meinardus, p. 90.

name of these associations became *Müslüman Emlakini Tedvire Memur Heyet* (Council Charged for the Estimation of Muslim Properties). The properties of minority came under the control of the State.

## Education

The junta tried to put under State control the minority schools, and thus "Hellenize" the education of the minorities. A first step was the foundation in 1968 of the Special Academy for Teachers' Training of Salonica (ΕΡΑΘ) (*Azınlık Pedagoji Akademisi*) aiming at the "education and training of Greek Muslim teachers." The aim of the Academy was the improvement of the education of the minority teachers, which would the upgrade the level of the education offered in the minority schools. These teachers could replace both the Turkish teachers coming from Turkey, who didn't have knowledge of Greek, and the graduates of the religious Islamic schools, whose education was purely focused on religion. It was planned as a two-year course.

Turkish sources claim that the real reason of this Academy was to give a higher certificate to graduates of *medrese* and keep them, under State control, as the only teachers permitted to teach in minority schools, prohibiting Turkish teachers coming from Turkey.[255] The Academy started its academic year 1968-1969 with thirty students, all graduates of *medrese.* Serious reactions accompanied the opening of the Academy: many members of the minorities refused to accept graduates of this

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[255] Adil Özgüç, p. 107.

Academy as their teachers, and graduates of the Academy faced serious problems in their everyday lives and were not accepted to the Turkish Teachers Union.[256]

A second step in the control of minority education was the changing of the expression "Turkish schools" to "Muslim Schools," according to legislative decree of 28 January 1972. The prefects could decide on the lessons program and on the posting of school directors and the Greek language was made compulsory.[257]

Despite the general imbalance in Greece, the two countries decided to continue their cooperation on several issues concerning the minorities. One representative of each side (Greece was represented by Ioannis Tzounis, in the place of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Turkey by Adnan Bulak, general secretary of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs) were responsible for pinpointing the problems of the minorities and trying to find solutions to them. The report that the two representatives prepared on 1st June 1968 (known as "The Report of Vienna") is very important.[258]

A mixed educational committee that examined the recommendations and comments of the two representatives accepted their suggestions, which led to the signing on 23 December 1968 of a bilateral Greek-Turkish educational protocol.[259] The protocol was important because it dealt exclusively with the educational problems of the minorities. The most important points of it where the following: The Turkish language, which had been introduced to the minority schools after the

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[256] Oran, 1991, p. 131.

[257] Before 1967 in one out of three minority schools there were no Greek language classes at all. See H.J. Psomiades, *The Eastern Question: The Last Phase. A Study in Greek-Turkish Diplomacy* (Thessaloniki: n.p. 1968), p. 84.

[258] Details for the Report in Baskin Oran, 1991, p.126.

[259] In Turkish printed as Protokol Türk-Yunan Kültür Komisyonu Ankara ve Atına Toplantıları (AnkaraX: 1969).

Greek-Turkish agreement of 1951, was recognized as the official language of the Turkish minority of Thrace, despite the fact that Pomaks and Gypsies were also using their own languages in everyday life. Arabic would no longer be taught in the minority schools and the children were obliged to learn the Latin script. The protocol decided which lessons would be taught into Greek (history, geography and the Greek language) and which into Turkish (the rest).

The two states encouraged the creation of school libraries with minority books and decided to facilitate the approval of minority textbooks. It was recommended that the images, signposts and pictures decorating the minority schools "should empower the friendship bounds between the two states"; also, the images of Kemal Atatürk (in Greek schools in Istanbul) and the Leader of the Greek state (in the Turkish schools in Thrace) would permanently decorate the walls of the schools. Finally, it was recommended that the teachers of the schools respect the religious identities of their students, not to try to change their beliefs and not to discriminate against them because they belonged to a different nation or religion.[260] The protocol repeatedly stated "reciprocity right."

There were also proposals concerning the school textbooks and the visual educational materials. The interesting thing about this protocol is that in each paragraph the principle of "reciprocity" is stressed. For example, concerning the school text books, the Greek ministry of Education would not distribute Turkish books from Turkey unless the Turkish Ministry of Education had done the same for Greek books. The principle of "reciprocity" bound the minorities in the Greek-Turkish relations and transformed them into instruments of pressure for each side.

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[260] Ministry of Foreign Affairs: *The Greek Turkish Educational Agreements of 1968* (The Vienna Report and the Educational protocol), Athens.

We can observe that the educational agreement was in favor of the minority, since it officially recognized the existence of a minority who speaks Turkish language and has Turkish origins.

## Economy

The serious economic problems that Greece faced during the junta times and especially the first years of the 1970's forced many Muslims to abandon their villages and move to the cities. The indifference of the Greek state towards Thrace was obvious; good roads were not constructed, investments were not made, new technology did not arrive in. Many Muslims from Thrace moved to the outskirts of Athens (Lavrio) or to the downgraded neighborhood of Gazi, in the centre of Athens. It was mainly unemployment and lack of opportunities that brought them to the big cities. They started working in the construction of buildings in Athens, but again their working conditions were not satisfactory.

## Developments in Western Thrace after the End of the Junta until the 1980's

The devastation of Greek citizens by the junta regime would soon bring its end. The fall of junta marks a turning point in Greek foreign and domestic policy. Constantine Karamanlis was the leading figure in this turn of events. He returned from Paris to Greece in 1974, after the end of junta, to accelerate the route of Greece to Europe. He was elected Prime Minister in November 1974 (the first elections after the end of junta). The intervention of Turkey in Cyprus in August 1974 and the problems experienced by the Greek-Orthodox minority of Istanbul increased the

feeling of a "Turkish threat".[261] The danger no longer was perceived to come from "the North" (Greece's Communist neighbours), but "from the east" (Turkey).[262] It is not exaggeration to say that after the events in Cyprus, the Turkish Muslim minority was viewed as potential internal enemy in Greece.

Many Turks of Western Thrace fearing that Greece might retaliate for the Turkish intervention to Cyprus and the numerical decrease of the Greek Orthodox minority of Istanbul immigrate to Turkey[263]. Several incidents are reported to have taken place in 1974 by groups of young Greek extremists damaging the shops and houses of Muslims through Thrace.[264]

The Greek policy towards the minority focused on an effort to increase the Christian population of Western Thrace. There was a plan for some thousands of Greeks originating from the Soviet Union to be settled in the region.

The foundation of Democritus University in Thrace in 1973 and its opening in 1974 in Xanthi and Komotini also served a similar aim: in addition to the creation of an intellectual community in Thrace, it would attract a large number of students from all over Greece and so would alter the composition of the population in the region. The creation of a University in Thrace was not based on economic, demographic or intellectual criteria alone; in 1965 and in later years, local

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[261] The Turkish intervention in Cyprus was justified by the Turkish side as the only possible way Turkey could react in order to stop the annexation of Cyprus to Greece and to help the Turkish-Cypriot population of the island which was under Greek-Cypriot threat. For more information on Turkey's official position on the issue of Cyprus, see the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs [online] at http://www.mfa.gov.tr

[262] For statements by senior Turkish officials, see Koliopoulos-Veremis, p. 308, footnote 31.

[263] Estimations for the numbers of Turks who left W. Thrace for Turkey are around 20,000 people, in H. Eren "Cumhuriyet döneminde göç ve iltica" in *Batı Trakyanın Sesi* (August 1993), p. 24, quoted in Akgönül, p. 81.

[264] For details, see Akgönül, p. 75.

associations, with letters to the Prime Minister and other state authorities, demanded the creation of a university in their region "that would promote the Greek culture, that would refresh the patriotic feelings of the locals and would create in them a feeling of security."[265] Another dimension concerning the creation of the specific university was the expropriation of 3,000 hectares of land belonging to the Turks of the region. Concerning the expropriation of the land sixty percent of the land expropriated in Xanthi and ninety-five percent of the land expropriated in Komotini for the needs of the University belonged to the minority.[266]

Concerning the educational issues, two new laws in 1977 gave the right to the Ministry of Education to intervene to a great degree in the administration and organization of the minority schools. Also, as a result of the law, the minority schools were recognized to have equal legal status with the rest of the primary schools of the Greek state.[267]

Also, the minority committees' members who had been nominated by the junta, instead of by the minority, continued to exercise their duties even after the return to democracy.

The Turkish policy focused on protests to international human rights organizations for the problems of the Turks of Western Thrace. The years after the fall of junta were accompanied by tension in the relations of Muslims and Christians of the region, as is reflected in the articles of the local press.

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[265] Koukos Moshos, "The First Efforts for the Foundation of a University in Thrace," *THRAKIKI EPETIRIDA* (1995-1998) 10, pp. 437-451.

[266] Georgia Petraki, "The Social Structure of the Muslim Minority," in *Ο Πολίτης* 46 (January 1998), p. 17.

[267] Akgönül, p. 78.

The transition to democracy in Greece resulted in the public emergence of minority leaders that struggled for the rights of the minority and the recognition of the Turkish identity. Turkish-Muslim politicians mainly were candidates in Greek political parties (from right to left) and independent minority political parties participated in the elections of 1985, 1989 and 1990. In the elections of 1974 (the first elections after the restoration of democracy and the Turkish intervention in Cyprus), two minority politicians appeared: Hafız Yaşar Mehmetoğlu and Sabahattin Galip, both elected in Komotini with the Center Union Party. The two candidates despite being members of the same minority and same party had different backgrounds and political visions. The first one was a well-known conservative writing in newspapers with Arabic letters printed in Western Thrace and was the founder of the Islamic association *İntibah-ı Islam Cemiyeti.* The second one was among the founders of the Republic of W. Thrace in 1913. He stressed more the Turkish character of the minority than the Muslim one.

The 20 November 1977 elections resulted in two new minority representatives in the Greek Parliament: Hasan İmamoğlu (*Ethniki Parataksi*, National Party) and Orhan Hacıibram (PASOK). Celal Zeybek replaced Orhan Hacıibram one year later.

Many new associations carrying the adjective "Turkish" were founded in Turkey, Cyprus and other countries trying to promote the interests of these people in the world (for example Islamic Union of Turks of Western Thrace in Australia, Association of Muslim Turkish Immigrants of Western Thrace in Holland and many other associations in Germany). Foreign researchers like the Dutch Fred de Jong and the Japanese Iawao Kamosawa, published studies on the Turks of Western Thrace,

and Turkish newspapers published in Xanthi and Komotini printed the opinions of politicians and religious leaders concerning the problems of the minorities.

The State, through several well promising development projects, created great expectations for the developments of the region and the prosperity of its citizens. The fact that Thrace for a very long period (including the 1970's and 1980's) remained one of the poorest regions in Europe proves that few actions took place.

In the middle of 1970's many Muslims started working in positions that were not sought after by Greeks, (for example, in companies that produced dynamite or matches). Also jobs like cleaners or similar jobs that did requiring any special qualifications were filled by Muslims. Finally, there was a tendency for job offerings to members of the Turkish minority especially, out of Thrace (for example in Athens).[268]

## The Developments in the 1980's

The 1980's marked a tens period for Greek-Turkish relations. Greece became a member of European Community (EC) in 1981. Turkey experienced a military coup, on 12 September 1980. The transitional period until the restoration of democracy lasted until 6 November 1983.

The entrance of Greece to the EC could mark a new period in the amelioration of the human rights of the minorities. Still, the beginning of 1980s was not a period when the international community was focused on the rights of the minorities. The focus of the EC was on the economic aspects of a European

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[268] Troubeta, p. 52.

unification and not on foreign policy, security or internal human right affairs. The most important element in this period was that the participation of Greece in the EC meant a transfer of sovereignty from the state to the Community, later the European Union. Despite the fact that according to some scholars, "membership of the European Community was seen as an institutional means capable of contributing to the restoration of Greece's sovereignty and independence and consolidating the newly founded democratic institutions,"[269] transfer of sovereignty meant that Greece agreed to participate in this international organization and transfer sovereign rights to it. The entrance of Greece in the EU meant that national independence was sidelined and a transnational concept of the Europe started to become a reality. The entrance to the EC meant not only institutional support but also financial help through the various EC funds.[270] Since the entrance of Greece into the European Union, a large amount of funds have been distributed throughout the country and especially after the middle of the 1990's the minority has profited by the funds. The funds are distributed from the local commissions of the EU and are independent of race and religion.

Going back in the 1980s, the Greek state passed news laws concerning the administration of religious foundations, without any serious "resistance" from Turkey due to the political instability in Ankara. Concerning the religious rights of the minorities, Law No. 1091/1980 gave the right to the prefects of the region to intervene in the administration of the foundations and created serious problems in

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[269] P.C. Ioakimidis, "The EC and the Greek Political System: An Overview," in P. Kazakos and P.C. Ioakimidis (eds.) *Greek and EC Membership Evaluated* (St. Martin's Press, 1994), p. 142.

[270] Among others, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund-Guidance Section (EAGGF-G) were very important for the economic development of Greece.

their administrative and financial autonomy.[271] Heavy taxation was imposed on them, the prefects could intervene in issues of finance, and selection of committee members, among other things. Another law concerning the duties of *müftüler* was violated seriously freedoms of the minority.

Samim Akgönül considers the period of the military coup in Turkey important because of the indifference of Turkey to the minority's problems strengthened the circles that wanted to increase the distance from Turkey, inside the minority: "The formation of a circle near to Ankara and another one which takes its distance more and more from motherland Turkey, has its origins in this period."[272]

Andreas Papandreou in Greece and Turgut Özal, the new Turkish Prime Minister after the elections of 6 November 1983 in Turkey, influenced the minority of Western Thrace with their policies in the 1980's. Concerning minority issues, the basic issues with which the minority was concerned were the names of associations, the selection of *müftü,* and "DIKATSA."[273] Together with Özal, an increased interest in Turkish populations living abroad was observed in Turkey. The daily Turkish newspapers dedicated articles and interviews to the Turks of the Balkans and Central Asia. Turkish newspapers expressed serious complaints about the situation of the Turks of Western Thrace, which was a taboo issue for Greece.

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[271] The day that the law passed from Greek Parliament both the minority politicians were absent and the only one who opposed to the law was a member of the Communist Party of Greece (Kappos). The two absent politicians were heavily criticized later by the minority for their lack of interest on the minority affairs.

[272] Akgönül, p. 89.

[273] DIKATSA is the Greek office of the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs responsible for the recognition of University diplomas acquired outside Greece. Akgönül names these issues "scandals" because of the way they were presented in the newspapers, the situations they created, the way Greek government reacted and their protagonists.

A characteristic example that shows the situation in 1980's is given by Jane Cowan, who writes that "in the beginning of '80's well-known British and American anthropologists had discouraged an American Master student of my generation that knew excellent Greek and Turkish, from studying the identity of the Turkish minority in Thrace because the issue was very sensitive."[274]

Human rights become one of the first priorities of the international community; several associations of solidarity with the Turks of Western Thrace presented the situation and problems of the minorities of Thrace to international organizations and ask for the contribution of the international community to pressure Greece.

The 1980s, concerning the relation of the Greek state with its minority citizens, was marked by an effort to fragment the minority, through the "hellenization" of the minority, according to government's declarations. Efforts were made to aid the local economy so that the Christian population remained in Thrace. On the other hand, under the excuse of exercising social policy, there was an effort for the artificial provocation of the internal migration of Turks and Pomaks towards the big cities. From the summer of 1985, a special department of the Labour Ministry shaped a plan that would encourage such a migration of Turks and Pomaks. In the frame of this plan, promises of jobs in the public sector, housing loans and social security to those who accepted to migrate to the Athens metropolitan area were included.[275] The immigration to the urban centers far away from Western Thrace

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[274] Cowan, p. 16.

[275] Eirini Avramopoulou, Leonidas Karakatsanis, *"Διαδρομές Ταυτότητας Από τη δυτική Θράκη στο Γκάζι"* (Routes of Identity: From W. Thrace to Gazi). Available [online] at http://www.kemo.gr/archive/papers/Avramo1.htm

meant cutting off the feeling of belonging to a community and the cutting off from the minority social, religious and political life. The people that moved to Athens were registered in the municipal rolls of their new places of residence and were no longer considered as "minorities," because minority rights could only be enjoyed in the region of Western Thrace. The cutting off from their homelands meant that they no longer voted in their home cities and they no longer registered as inhabitants of Thrace.[276] The result of these measures was that it was mainly the Muslim Gypsies and some Pomaks that "believed" in these promises, and not Thracian Turks whose economic situation was better and who followed the advice of the Turkish Consulate.[277]

Also, it was in the 1980's that an obvious effort was made by the Greek state to prohibit the use of the words "Turkish," and "Turk," both in the official speech of minority members and in the names of their associations. Despite the efforts of the junta to prohibit their functioning, the associations continued to function until 1984. The restoration of democracy permitted their functioning, but with many problems. In 1983, by the request of the prefect of Rodop, Apostolos Papadimitriou, the court of the first instance of Rodop decided to forbid the usage of these words and signs with the names of associations containing the word "Turkish."[278] The whole activity especially targeted the Association of Turkish Youth of Komotini (*Gümülcine Türk*

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[276] According to Avramopoulou-Karakatsanis, the changing of municipalities and the registration in a new municipal roll was obligatory if the immigrants wanted to be hired. The ones who didn't accept to transfer their electoral rights in their new residence address they got fired from private or public departments where they were working. Finally, some of the ones who changed municipality roll were not finally hired. Ibid., p. 6.

[277] Ibid., p.6.

[278] A reason of closing of the associations is reported to be the fear that after the declaration of independence of Northern Cyprus and the recognition by Turkey of this state, the usage of the words Turkish or Turk could lead to dispute the Christian and Muslim communities of Komotini. This is reported in the newspaper *Batı Trakyanın Sesi* (May 1993), p. 21, quoted in Akgönül p. 94.

*Gençler Birliği, GTGB)* and the Association of Turkish teachers of Western Thrace (*Batı Trakya Türk Öğretmenler Birliği, BTTÖB).*[279] A court decision of May 1984 dissolved the associations, using as an excuse "the fact that the terms Turk or Turkish do not refer only to people who belong to different religious, ethnic or linguistic community, but also they refer to citizens of another state" and so "associations using these terms and refusing to change them are considered illegal and it opposes the public order." Despite the efforts of the associations, they proved unable to avoid the negative developments. They continued to function but without any sign outside. Articles in different newspapers throughout the world expressed the concerns for the Turkish minority: "Despite the agreements and the constitutional rights, the Muslims of Greece are second class citizens,"[280] "The Muslim Greek citizens continue to suffer, not enjoying the rights of the Christian Greek citizens."[281]

The clearest example of denial of the ethnic identity of the Turkish minority of Western Thrace was the decision of the Supreme Court concerning the Association of Turkish Teachers of Western Thrace in 1986, according to which "the people who live in Greece (independently from their religion, language or ethnicity and independently from how they got the Greek citizenship) are called Greeks and only Greeks and the word Turk, Turkish can not refer to a Greek citizen". Also it was said that

> the usage of words like Turkish teachers, Turkish students, Turkish schools gives the impression that in the Greek state exist Turkish schools while in reality there are only Greek schools; the use of these terms gives the impression that the members of these associations have Turkish citizenship,

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[279] Details for the issue of the name of the associations in Baskin Oran, 1991, p.172-180.

[280] "Ausland Journal" program of W. Germnay ZDF TV Channel, 31 August 1984

[281] *Herald Tribune* 17 January 1983

while in reality the members of these associations are Greek citizens of Muslim religion.

Finally, on 4 January 1988, the Supreme Court of Appeal decided that the word "Turkish" was prohibited for any of the Turkish minority associations of Xanthi or Komotini and the minority lawyers were informed about the decision.[282] Turkey did not react diplomatically to this decision, which had been taken some days before the Davos meeting of Papandreou and Özal, on 30 January 1988. Actually, during the negotiations on Davos, "the name of Western Thrace was not even pronounced."[283]

This decision created serious worry among the minority in Thrace. The Turkish press, both in Turkey and in Western Thrace, reacted seriously to this violation.[284] The Prefecture of Istanbul refused permission for a protest demonstration of members of the Association of Solidarity of Turks of Western Thrace in Istanbul. Turkish associations prepared big demonstrations in Komotini, despite the fact that police refused consent. The events that took place during the demonstration on 29 January 1988 were the most obvious expression of the feelings of the Turkish minority members. The behavior of the Greek police towards the demonstrators, the restrictions on the expression of identity of the minority members and the dynamism of the participants became issues in Greek and Turkish newspapers and showed the importance of the demonstration.

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[282] Oran, 1991, p.176

[283] Ibid, p.188.

[284] Turkish newspapers of W. Thrace were full of nationalistic slogans. Akgönül quotes: *Gerçek,* 28 January 1988, "Batı Trakya Türkü Tarihinin En Büyük Yürüyüşünü yapıyor...Batı Trakya Türkü Türklüğünü inkar edecek bir güç tanımıyor..." (The Turk of Western Thrace makes the biggest protestation of its history...The Turk of W. Thrace doesn't recognize any power that rejects its Turkishness.", see Akgönül, p. 101.

In an interview with the Greek Prime Minister, after his meeting with Turgut Özal in Davos the events of Komotini were characterized as "provocation aiming at canceling the meeting" (of the two Prime ministers).[285] The approach between the two states was continued with the visit of the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. Yılmaz, to Athens, in 24-27 May 1988, where he raised the question of the Turkish minority in Greek Thrace.

Some days later, on 28 May 1988, a bomb exploded in a mosque in Komotini, increasing the tension further.

The electoral behavior of the minority in the 1980's was not stable and was marked by the participation of independent minority political parties at the end of the decade, which was a sign of the "change" that was coming.

In the elections of 18 October 1981, the Turkish votes went mainly to PASOK. It was in these elections that minority politicians who would dominate this decade appeared in the big political parties: Mehmet Emin Ağa (son of the *müftü* of Xanthi, Mehmet Hilmi) and Ahmet Faikoğlu, both candidates with New Democracy Party (ND) in 1981, even though not elected in 1981, would become protagonists in the minority political life some years later. In the elections of 1985, 1989, 1990 and 1993 independent minority parties participated in the Greek national elections. The first minority party was *Barış* (Peace), which participated in the elections of 1985. In the elections of 1985, two Muslim deputies were elected: Mehmet Müftüoğlu (ND) and Ahmet Faikoğlu (PASOK).

It should be noted that the existence of minority political parties was not seen as a positive development by the rest of the Greek political parties, for whom the

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[285] *Cumhuriyet,* 1 February 1988, cited in Baskin Oran, 1991, p.190-191.

votes of the minority members were of great importance for the final result of the elections. Turkish newspapers in Thrace had realized the importance of the votes of the minorities for the final results: "Our minority holds the magic key that will bring power to the political parties...This key should work only if the minority is given what she asks."[286] Also, local authorities like the Metropolitan bishop of Komotini, Damaskinos, known for his extreme chauvinistic feelings against the Turks of Western Thrace, expressed their anger towards the minority candidates who didn't belong to the big Greek political parties; Damaskinos believed and expressed publicly that the independent candidates in the elections sought to separate the Christians and Muslims of the region in order to create an independent Thrace, which would be united with Turkey.[287]

Damaskinos on several occasions accused the Turkish Consul of Komotini of illegal actions against the interests of Greece and demanded his removal from Greece and his replacement from a more suitable Consul.[288] He believed that the settlement of Greek origin people coming from the former Soviet Union could solve the demographic problem of the region and increase the Greek population. He said that the Muslims had no reason to complain because they had the same rights as the Christians and their economic situation was much better because they produced all the tobacco in Thrace. In his interview in *Eleftherotypia,* he explained that the reasons he considered the independent minority candidates dangerous was the fact

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[286] Newspaper, *Ileri* (To the front), 266/17 September 1982.

[287] *Ο Χρόνος* (The Time), 15 June 1989

[288] Η Πρώτη (The First), 15 June 1989

that they could not be controlled by the Greek state and that they provoked the Christians of Thrace through the messages they send.[289]

The movement of minority leaders was a clear sign of development in the internal politics of the minority. An important factor that contributed to the creation of the independent minority parties was the pressure exercised on the minorities by the authorities of the region. Also, through the minority political parties a new leading team appeared inside the minorities of Turkish ethnic origins, thus defending the Turkish identity. The interesting thing about these parties was that they received not only votes from not only the Turks of Western Thrace, but also by Pomak and Gypsy communities who saw these parties as a means for their own expression of minority identity. Sadık Ahmet (candidate in the elections of 1989 with the minority party *Güven* (Trust) justified his participation in the elections as an independent candidate as a result of the pressures of the Greek state on the Turkish minority of Western Thrace and the repressive measures exercised on them.[290] The reaction of the Muslim candidates participating in the elections through the big political parties towards the exclusively minority movement was negative.

The reaction of part of the local Christian population towards the independent candidates was negative as well; in a meeting organized before the elections of June 1989, extreme slogans that were heard by the participants expressed the tension in the region at that time: "Thrace shouldn't become a new Cyprus!" "Yes to the Greek Muslims, no to the agents of Ankara!" "Dynamic national policy for Thrace!" "The

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[289] Κυριακάτικη Ελευθεροτυπία, 17 June 1990

[290] For details concerning the political action of Sadık Ahmet, see Akgönül pp. 107-127.

Turkish Consul should go from Komotini!" "We should do what the Bulgarians are doing!", "We should occupy the Turkish Consulate of Komotini!"[291]

The result of the elections of June 1989 was more or less expected: the two minority political parties ("*İkbal*" –"Destiny, Fortune" in Xanthi and "*Güven*" in Rodop) collect a large number of minority votes and Sadık Ahmet was elected to the Greek Parliament with 22,216 votes.[292]. Many Western Thracian voters that lived in Turkey came to Thrace for the elections with the help of the Association for Solidarity of Turks of W. Thrace (*Batı Trakya Türkleri Dayanışma Derneği),* to vote for the minority politicians.[293] Sadık Ahmet in an interview in the Greek daily *Eleftherotypia* explaining the reasons for his participation in the election he said:

> I will inform the Parliament of what is going on in Thrace...the laws should be implemented...Neither the laws, nor the Constitution is valid for the Muslim Greek citizens; the minority is of Turkish origin. You speak about a Greek minority in Istanbul and we speak of a Turkish minority in Thrace....the education is at a very low level and everything is forbidden. The freedom of movement is forbidden because there are restricted zones. Even though everybody knows very well our origins, they don't accept them. They say you are Greek Muslims...they know very well that we are people of Turkish origin.[294]

In a big Panthracian meeting that took place in September 1989 in Komotini, under the initiative of the Metropolitan Bishop Damaskinos, the concern of several Greek associations about Sadık Ahmet, his actions and his popularity were stated: the

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[291] *Μακεδονία,* 15 June 1989.

[292] Candidates with Ikbal: Mehmet Emin Aga, K. Yunusoğlu M.Hasanoğlu R. Murcaoğlu. Candidates with Güven: Ismail Rodoplu, Sabahattin Emin and Sadık Ahmet.

[293] For the problems presented by the Greek authorities during the elections see Oran, pp. 204-210. During the elections of June and November 1989 Greek customs employees were on strike, and thus it is said that 6,000 voters working or studying in Turkey were not able to come to Greece and vote for their own candidates, see Turkkaya Ataöv " Property Rights in Western Thrace," in *Turkish Review* 5, no. 23 (Spring 1991).

[294] Interview of S. Ahmet in *Κυριακάτικη Ελευθεροτυπία,* 16 July 1989, as cited in Malkidis, .365.

participants considered Ahmet an agent of Turkey and believed that his election to the Greek parliament could be the turning point for the annexation of Western Thrace to Turkey.[295]

Sadık Ahmet and İbrahim Şerif, (who had replaced Sebahattin Emin on the ballots of *Güven*) were not permitted to participate in the elections of November 1989 (which were organized soon after the June elections due to the failure of creation of a stable government), under the decision of the Court of Rodop, for technical reasons; the official explanation of the court was not enough to justify this prohibition This action and other similar and spontaneous actions of the Greek authorities created tension in Thrace. Also, it was an important reason for the indirect "intervention" of international human rights organizations; the interest of the foreign press was increased and the international community took its first steps to criticize Greece for the treatment of the minority.

On 25 January 1990, the trial of S. Ahmet started. The symbolic meaning of the trial was that for the Turks of Thrace, it was not only A. Sadık who was on trial but also the whole minority population. The verdict of guilt on 26 January 1990 for S. Ahmet and İbrahim Şerif (the other minority politician in the case) of eighteen months in prison for ""causing and inciting citizens to commit acts of violence upon each other and disturbing the peace through disharmony among them" (Article 192 of the Penal Code), because in an election leaflet during the election campaigns of October 1989, together with İsmail Molla, he had called the minority "Turkish," he made reference to "Turkish Muslims" which had created serious concern to the State about the minority.

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[295] Ελεύθερο Βήμα [ Free Step], 28 September 1989.

On 29 January 1990, violence broke out in Komotini. The initial event was an argument between Aggelos Solakidis and Hasan Ali in a hospital of Komotini that resulted the death of Solakidis. Some researchers characterize the events of that followed as a "small 6/7 September 1955" and describe it as an "anti-Turkish pogrom organized by Greek nationalists."[296] Many shops were looted and Ahmet Faikoğlu and Mehmet Emin Ağa, candidates of the independent minority parties, were injured seriously. Mehmet Emin Ağa was transferred to Istanbul for treatment. Some weeks later, his father, Mustafa Hilmi, was transferred to Istanbul as well, where he died. The foreign Press presented the event with the following headlines: "Greek Attacks on Ethnic Turks Alleged" and "Greek-Turkish Tensions grow."[297]

The Prefect of Xanthi, Konstantinos Thanopoulos, on 15 February 1990, nomitated the son of Mustafa Hilmi, Mehmet Emin Ağa as the new *müftü* of Xanthi, despite the protestations of the minority that they would not accept a *mufti* nominated by the Greek state. Ağa, despite being one of these protestors, at first accepted the nomination, but later, due to pressures exercised by the minority, resigned. The Greek authorities nominated Mehmet Emin Şinikoğlu as the new *mufti* of Xanthi and Meço Cemali as the new *mufti* of Komotini in 1990.[298] On 31 January 1990, the Prime Minister X. Zolotas and the three leaders of the biggest political parties (Kostas Mitsotakis, New Democracy; Andreas Papandreu, PASOK; and Kharilaos Florakis, Synaspismos) participating in the government, organized a meeting to discuss the developments in Thrace and possible solutions that would eliminate the

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[296] Details for the events in Κυριακάτικη Ελευθεροτυπία, 04 April 2004, Ο Ιός της Κυριακής. The expression, "a Greek small 6/7 September 1955" version has been used by Baskin Oran, 1991, p.191 who gives detailed information about the events before, during and after the attack.

[297] Financial Times (London)-London Edition, 30 January 1990, 03 February 1990.

[298] For details concerning the events of 1990, see Akgönül, pp. 105-106; and Aarbacke,

possibilities for such events to be repeated in the future. The participants expressed their concern for the increasing number of Muslim Turks in the region at the expense of the Greeks (it was said that 54% of Rodop prefecture were Muslim Turks). From the suggestions made, the most important ones were: First, increase the Greek population in the region through development works; increase the living standard of the minorities could reduce the birth rate and attract new inhabitants; also, settlement Pontic Greek in regions heavily populated by Turks. Second, state effort to purchase Turkish farmlands and encourage the urbanization of the minorities through better living standards and employment in factories and public services outside the minority region. Third. democratic conduct by elected committees of the property of *vakıflar* so that the influence of the Turkish Consulate in Komotini was limited. Fourth, reduce the judicial powers of the *muftis* and transfer these powers to the Greek courts. Fifth, the abolition of "administrative annoyances" that brought the opposite results from those wanted. And finally, a stronger state presence.[299]

In the elections of 8 April 1990, the political party *İkbal (* Destiny*)* in Xanthi elected the second independent minority deputy, Ahmet Faikoğlu. On 24 October 1990, the electorate law in Greece was changed: 3% of the votes were necessary for entrance into parliament of any political party. This change in the law was considered by members of the minority as a direct attack on their rights to select independent deputies. This 3% blocked the entrance of small political parties in the parliament, so that the Muslims could only be elected through the big political parties. The tension among the Turkish minority and the Greek authorities escalated when, on 22 August 1990, in a protest demonstration organized by minority

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[299] The translation of the text belongs to the writer of this thesis; the text can be found in *Ελευθεροτυπία,* 2 March 1990.

members against the State nominated *müftü*, Greek civil police and groups of organized Christian locals attacked the protestors. Thirty-six people were injured and Turkish shops in Xanthi were attacked.[300] From the declarations of minority politicians and information from the minority political press, the problems that minority faced at the beginning of 1990's can be summed as follows:[301]

First, the low level of education of minority students. Due to problems in the usage of Greek language, Turkish students continued their education in Turkey and thus had difficulties adjusting to Greek society after they returned. Inadequate school buildings (at the end of 1980's there were only two minority high schools in Western Thrace); the refusal of the minorities to accept school text-books written by the Greek state; the indifference of the state towards the education of the minorities; problems in the appointment of Turkish teachers; the Special Education Academy of Salonica was believed by the minority members to effect negatively the relations of the minority with the State

Second, problems concerning the administration of Properties of Muslim Islamic Foundations. The state selected those who would administer these properties without letting the minority members select the ones that they wanted.

Third, problems concerning the religious freedoms. One of the most important problems was the selection of the *müftüs*. The Greek Constitution, according to Article 13 par. 1 and 3 and the Article 25 par.1, protects the religious freedoms of Muslims and recognizes the *müftüs* to decide upon the personal

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[300] Cin, p. 56.

[301] Useful information provided by the Helsinki Watch report of April 20 1992 on the situation of Turks in Western Thrace and also the book of Mega Revmiotis, *« Η συρρίκνωση του Ελληνισμού. Μειονότητα και αρθρογραφία»* (The shrinking of Hellenism. Minority and articles in press), Komotini, 1985, that includes articles of many Greek and Turkish newspapers of the time.

differences of the Muslims, according to Islamic law. This meant that the *müftüs* in addition to their religious duties also had judicial duties. Both Turkey and a large number of minority members do not recognize the nominated by the Greek state *müftüs*. The problem with the *müftü* started in 1985 when the minority was unready to face the death of the *müftü* of Komotını, Hüseyin Mustafa. The decision of the prefect of Komotini to nominate the new *müftü* created serious reactions. The minority nominated their own religious leaders. The Greek authorities called them "pseudo-müftüs" and they acted parallel to the state nominated *müftüs*. Also, the Greek authorities, and more specifically the local Metropolitan bishop, had the authority to give permission for the building and repairing of mosques. Several cases were reported of the authorities refusing permits on the grounds that height of the minaret of the mosque is greater than the bell tower of the nearby church."[302]

The fourth problem was the law 1366, the implementation of which prevented Muslims from buying land. The minority complained that it was forbidden for a Christian to sell his land to a Muslim, while it was permitted to a Muslim to sell his land to a Christian. In addition to this, the Turkish newspapers reported on cases of the forced expropriation of Muslims lands (using the excuse of constructing a university or prison) and heavy taxation of Muslim traders. Also the Greek state was accused of giving low-interest loans to Christians in order to buy lands belonging to Muslims.[303]

The fifth problem involved violations in human rights. It was reported that the state was trying to hinder Muslims from practicing several professions

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[302] Cin, p. 121.

[303] Malkidis, p. 387.

(pharmacist or dentist) and also did not recognize university diplomas earned by youth taken in Turkey. Even though minority members theoretically could find jobs in the public sector, at the beginning of 1990's very few of them were working for the state and they could not occupy positions such as judge, policeman, or attorney.[304] Also, according to human rights organization reports, ethnic Turks could not repair houses or mosques; gain car, truck or tractor licenses or open coffee houses, or machine and electrical shops.[305]

Concerning the youth, serious problems were observed in the recognition of university diplomas attained in Turkey. DIKATSA (the responsible organ dealing with the recognition of university degrees in Greece) refused to recognize the diplomas of many young scientists who had completed their studies in Turkey. During the 1980's serious protest demonstration took place in Western Thrace with the participation of not only the Turkish Muslims but also of Greek organizations such as syndicates and professional associations.

The sixth problem involved the deprivation of minority members of their Greek citizenship. An article in 1985 in the Greek newspaper *Rizospastis* reported the incident of the deprivation of citizenship of some Turks of Western Thrace and the complaint of a Greek member of parliament to the Minister of Public Affairs for the unreasonable behaviour of Greek authorities.[306]

Seventh was the prohibition of the word "Turk"- "Turkish" in the names of the minority associations of Xanthi and Komotini (used since 1927 and 1928) and of the minority schools. Associations like the *İskeçe Türk Birliği* (Xanthi Youth Union,

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[304] Cin, p. 120.

[305] Helsinki Watch,*Report on Western Thrace Turks* 4, no. 6 (April 20, 1992), p.1

[306] *Ριζοσπάστης*, 19 May 1986.

1927-1984), *Batı Trakya Türk Öğretmenler Birliği* (Western Thrace Turkish Teachers' Union, 1936-1984), *Gümülcine Türk Gençler Birliği* (Komotini Turkish Youth Union, 1928-1984) were closed down.[307]

Finally, there were problems in the free circulation of Turkish language newspapers, books and magazines from Turkey.

A Human Rights Watch in a report entitled *Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Turks of Greece,* published in August 1990 noted that:

> The many abuses of human rights documented in this report reveal a pattern of denying the Turkish minority the rights granted to other Greek citizens; the pattern includes outright deprivation of citizenship; denials of the right to buy land or houses, to set up businesses or to rebuild or repair Turkish schools; restrictions on freedom of expression, movement and religion; and degrading treatment of ethnic Turks by government officials.[308]

The Greek position towards the minority and the way Greece viewed Turkey's influence on the minority, in the beginning of 1990's are reflected in the words of the Former Ambassador V. Theodoropoulo:

> The interest of the Turkish government in the situation of the Muslim minority of Western Thrace is acceptable if it is based on the articles of Lausanne concerning the right application of these articles (freedom of religious expression and usage of language). The indirect stirring of an independent movement in Western Thrace, the incitement of the minority to ignore the Greek authorities and the efforts of Turkey to control the minority through trusted minority members in order to create inside and outside of Greece impressions of repression, affect seriously Greek-Turkish relations.[309]

While the minority was experiencing discrimination in Thrace, many Greek politicians and journalists known for their concern for the security of Greece and the

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[307] Batı Trakya Azınlığı İnsan Hakları ve Belgeler (Ankara, 1987), pp. 31-32.

[308] Human Rights Watch Report, Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Turks of Greece, p. 1

[309] General Secretariat of Prefecture of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, *Θράκη [Thrace]* (November 1994), p. 275.

possible and imaginary dangers that the country faced expressed through the press their opinion on the minorities' issue. It is worth to taking a look at some of these opinions to understand the change that took place after 1991 and to obtain a clear idea of how the political world of Greece looked at the minority issue.

Stelios Papathemelis, the well-known Greek ultranationalist politician, expressed his concern after a visit in Western Thrace in March 1990. He recommended that Greece do something about to Turkey's intervention in the region so that the Muslims could integrate in Greek society. Among his suggestions was the economic development of the region and the reminder to the Turkish minority that "there are no Turks in Greece; if some people feel they are Turks, they are free to go back to their homeland. Here there are Greek Muslims, nothing less and nothing more."[310]

The historian Constantine Vakalopoulos, of similar ideological background, stated, "Turkey uses the Muslim minority of Greece in order to persuade...the interest of the international public opinion to turn on Greece."[311]

Finally, according to journalist Thrasivoulos Papatratis, "the independent deputies actually don't represent the real interests of the Muslim minority. They entered to Parliament in order to create tension. So, as long as we, the Greeks are sleeping, we will listen to them shouting more and more loudly "I am a Turk!" Among the suggestions he made for the solution of the problems of the Turkish minority were:

> persecution...in one night all the members of the minorities can be ordered to leave Greece and pass to Turkey...but this solution would bring international

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[310] *Ελευθεροτυπία*, 18 March 1990.

[311] *Ελευθεροτυπία*, 14 June 1990.

> intervention against Greece and maybe Turkey would desire to settle these people in Northern Cyprus. A second solution could be the obligatory participation of Greek women in the army. In this way, Muslim women as well will enter the Greek army, their families wouldn't like to let them, and so they would escape to Turkey.[312]

All these opinions reflect the unreasonable –according to our opinion- concerns of a part of Greek politicians and journalists in 1990 who preferred to close their eyes in the reality and let their imagination to create unrealistic scenarios. As will be shown, many things changed afterwards and make this kind of articles seem extremely unjustified and dangerous.

## The Lack of European Perspective inside the Minority and the "Indifferent" Attitude of the European Union

The information provided above proves that the contribution of the European Union towards the protection of the minorities was rather small until the end of the 1980's. Greece was no exception. The indifference towards minority issues was a general rule in the EU stemming from the structural character of the Union. It should not be forgotten that until the end of 1980's European Union was mainly an economic institution with economic targets and aims and thus humanitarian issues were not on the agenda and were not considered to be priorities. The entrance of Greece to the EU did not mean automatically a change in the human rights record or strict requirements by the European Union for better human rights records. Entrance to the EU facilitated the modernizing process. In the frame of the sovereignty transfer mentioned before, should be added the decentralization period that started

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[312] Προοδευτική Ευβοίας, 13 December 1990

with the entrance to the EU and the change in the relations of state and society and state and economy. The fact that centralism was a fundamental characteristic of the Greek administration influencing the economy and society did not mean that European Union would tolerate centralist policies. The role of the EU in many cases was restraining.

The membership of any state in institutionalized mechanisms means restrictions on the concepts of national independence and centralized decisions. It is especially after 1991, as we will see, that the Union began to give priority to the human rights of minorities and not to economic factors. Complex issues like minority rights, collective or individual, required different mechanisms and serious consensus from the member-states. It was after 1991, when the need for minority protection became urgent due to the war in Yugoslavia, that the EU and the governments of the states decide to take some serious decisions for their minorities.

Until the beginning of 1990s, when the European Union began to take more seriously the concept of minority, minority nationalism, and minority rights, the minority of Turks of Western Thrace felt isolated and deprived of many basic rights. The "separation" of the Greek society between "us" and the "others" that didn't include the minority neither in its economic plans nor in its equal treatment increased the feeling of injustice inside the minority and justified the rise of the minority movement of deputies. At the end of 1980s Greece was a society separated among the centre and the dominant Christian majority and the peripheries, among which Western Thrace, where the minority was living in socially inferious conditions. The lack of European funds and any effort aiming at the economic development of the minority had segregated the Greek society, increased the economic inequalities between the Christians and the Muslims and forced the minority to turn to separate

solutions and resist in its assimilation. This is a possible reason why at the end of 1980's the minority used different cultural and ethnotic symbols (Turkish identity, resistance in any reforms) and differentiated itself from the majority.

The measures that successive Greek governments followed can not be easily explained. What was the reason for all these measures? From this brief presentation of the situation of the minority until the end of 1980s, we can conclude that the repressive measures aimed at the assimilation of the minority within Greek society through the denial of their ethnic identity. The result of these policies, which began to be abandoned in the beginning of 1990s, was, as has been already stressed, not only the social isolation of the minority but also the economic "crisis" of the minority population and its inability to follow the economic developments in the rest of Greece. As a scholar notes

> the minority didn't have the ability to follow the social, cultural and consumptive behavioral patters of the Greek society and the standards of their social reproduction lead them in the reproduction of a culture of nationalist discourse which on the same time is based on economic and cultural diversification making them "nation inside the nation.[313]

At the beginning of 1990s Greece became "trapped" between the modernization and liberalization that the EU had started to initiate on the one hand, and the developments in the Balkans (the war in Yugoslavia, minority nationalism) that raised a traditional kind of politics based on nationalism and ethnicity, realized that the minorities should be treated equally and should have opportunities to maintain their identity. What happened after 1991 is the subject of the next chapter.

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[313] G. Petraki, "The Social Structure of the Muslim Minority," in *Ο Πολίτης* 46 (January 1998), pp. 14-19.

# CHAPTER IV

## FROM 1990-2003: THE MUSLIM TURKS IN GREECE IN THE ERA OF GLOBALISATION

The international developments of 1989 and the fall of Communism brought a new meaning to concepts like "nation-state," "national boundaries," "national identity," and influenced Greek-Turkish relations. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia forced the international community and each separate country to rethink issues like territorial integrity of the state, minority rights (collective or individual) and the concept of citizenship. Since the treatment of minorities between Greece and Turkey had always depended more or less on the relations between the two countries, possible changes in Greek-Turkish relations consequently influenced the situation of the minorities as well. The new era was characterized by the increased role of the international community in the internal affairs of the two states and the increasing importance of human rights in the priorities of the "developed" states.

### The Events (1991-2003)

The turning point concerning the behavior of the Greek state towards its minorities, and especially towards its Turkish-Muslim minority was 1991. As mentioned above, the report of Prime Minister Zolotas in 31 January 1990, despite the fact that it was more an "anxious and concerned" report of the Greek state about

the increasing number of Turks in Thrace, it inaugurated a new concept in Greek politics concerning the behavior of the state towards the minorities and to the region of Thrace: development. Development meant an increase in the living standards of the inhabitants, better health and education system, better quality of life for everybody, and more state funds that would contribute to the general development of the area. Despite the fact that even in 1997, Western Thrace was considered the poorest region of Europe, the new initiatives of the Greek government, even if they came considerably late, were characterized as bold.[314]

In chronologically specifying the "beginning of the change," the visit of Mitsotakis in Thrace on 13-14 May 1991 marks a break.[315] Mitsotakis admitted that the Greek state had followed a discrimination policy towards the minorities in the past because of the negative climate in Greek-Turkish relations and he promised that the Greek government would respect the traditions of the "Muslim minority" (Turks, Pomaks and Gypsies).[316] This approach's basic vocabulary is the words *isonomia-isopolitia* (equality before the law and equality in civic rights to all Greek citizens) and is still widely used in Greece in the speech of minority politicians. It is one of the few times that a Greek Prime Minister has admitted officially the discrimination measures of the previous governments. This is why maybe these declarations were

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[314] *Το Βήμα* 26 October 1997, "Following Evros", Kostas Kostis.

[315] *Ελευθεροτυπία,* 14 July 2001, interview with Mustafa Mustafa, Turkish member of Greek Parliament for the years 1996-2000.

[316] Mitsotakis's declarations in Xanthi, in 13 May 1991: "Ladies and gentlemen, I don't have any difficulty to admit- I already did it in the past- that mistakes happened in the past. But this was not due to a conscious decision of the Greek governments. The Lausanne Treaty –all of us know it- is based on reciprocity. The persecutions of our brothers in Istanbul, Gökçeada and Bozcaada, the obvious violation by Turkey of her obligations, and the Turkish presence in Cyprus, created a negative climate that unavoidably- I have already said it, speaking at your city in the past- was reflected on the Muslim Greek citizens", *Ελευθεροτυπία,* 14 May 1991.

very important for presenting the problems of the region in the Greek and Turkish public opinion.

Also Mitsotakis promised that the Greek government would increase the living standards of the population by infrastructure works and educational reforms. Concerning education, Mitsotakis presented specific suggestions for the education of the minorities including the raising from a two-year to a four-year teacher's college of the Special Pedagogic Academy in Thessaloniki responsible for preparing the teachers of the minority schools, funds so that all vacancies in minority schools were filled and last new textbooks for minorities' students.[317] Greek, Turkish and foreign media followed the declarations of Mitsotakis and presented the situation of Turkish Muslims. In a speech Mistotakis gave in Xanthi on 13 May 1991, he mentioned that the term "Muslim minority" accepted by Greece applies to several different ethnic communities: the Turks, the Pomaks and the Roma (the Gypsies). It was the first time in recent years that a Greek Prime Minister avoided the "classical" term "Muslim minority" and acknowledged at least partially the existence of a Turkish community.

Until 1991, especially after the years of the Greek junta, the Greek state systematically denied the existence of Turks in its lands. The Greek and Turkish press accepted positively the new policy of the Greek state towards its minorities.[318] The foreign press, even one year after the statement, welcomed the initiatives of Mitsotaki to direct European Community funding for regional development in

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[317] *Helsinki Watch Report* on Greece 4, no. 6 (20 April 1992).

[318] Articles of newspapers *Έθνος*, *Καθημερινή*, 15 May 1991

Thrace and for changing the attitudes of the local officials so that the obstacles to active Muslim representation in the local community were removed.[319]

The immediate effects of the change of policy can be seen in articles in the local press and in the daily life of the minorities' populations. The journalist Abdülhalim Dede, in an article in the Turkish newspaper of Thrace, *Trakya'nın Sesi,* admitted that soon after Mitsotakis had visited the area it had become possible to buy and sell land, obtain driving licenses and bank loans, repair houses and mosques (even though permission to repair a mosque had to be obtained from the Christian religious leader in Komotini, Metropolitan Damaskinos) etc.[320] Also, the nominated *mufti* of Komotini, Meço Cemali, in declarations published in newspaper *Ελευθεροτυπία* admitted that Mitsotakis promises were becoming reality.[321]

The *Mufti* of Komotini also considered the day that Mitsotakis came to Western Thrace a historic day and he believed that the visit was the beginning of a state of equality before the law for everybody: "Seventy-five percent of equality is now being implemented; if the problems of the schools were solved, we would have complete equality. That is the only remaining problem...In court; Moslems and Christians are not separated. Moslems have the same social insurance as other Greeks. There are 200 mosques in the Rodopi prefecture, and 350 in all of Western Thrace."[322] The other *mufti,* Mufti Sinikoğlu, the appointed mufti of Xanthi, was also optimistic for the problems of the minority after the declaration of the Prime

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[319] Financial Times (London), 04 November 1992.

[320] *Trakya'nın Sesi* , 390, 13 June 1991.

[321] *Ελευθεροτυπία* 25 July 1992.

[322] Statems of Mufti Cemali, in *Helsinki Watch report on Greece*, 20 April 1992.

Minister: "I take seriously the Prime Minister's words about equality."[323] İbrahim Onsunoğlu, a psychiatrist and minority activist, was as well optimistic about the initiatives of the government, even though he believed that deeper changes should take place to "destroy" the network profited by the discrimination measures:

> One observes a slacking, sometimes small, other times greater and more important, of the administrative measures that were carried out to the detriment of the minority. What is important is that there is a central decision. A political will. If this continues, it is a question of time before it would pass on to the lower levels of the administration. 10–15 years ago, simplifying things, we said that the solution of the minority problems depends on only a telephone call from the Prime Minister. Let us not be naive. The abolishment of the discrimination touches an establishment, which has matured during the last 30 years within the administration as well as outside of it. It touches organised interests, which depend on the continuation of a policy of discrimination. This establishment provokes and will continue to provoke resistance. But the important thing is that there is political will. But this is not enough in itself. Further measures must be taken. It is imperative to abolish the various autonomous services in Thrace, which administrate the minority affairs. You cannot, on the one hand, declare equality before the law and on the other conserve services and mechanisms, which were founded exactly to apply the opposite policy, which is now abolished. The existence of these services provokes crudely the meaning of equality before the law. And finally, let it [the government] start a dialogue with the minority.[324]

Six years later, in an article in the newspaper *Trakyanın Sesi,* İbrahim Onsunoğlu would conclude that the end of the basic discrimination measures in 1991, in combination with the internal Greek situation and the international framework, would provide the minority with many possibilities to solve its problems.[325]On 18 October 1991 Mitsotakis stated in the Greek parliament that all administrative discriminatory measures against Muslim Greek citizens had been

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[323] Ibid.

[324] Hand-written manuscript dated 12 November 1991, consisting of the written answers by Onsunoğlu to an interview which was later published in the magazine ENA, as cited in Aarbakke, p. 561.

[325] *Trakya'nın Sesi,* 596, 4 September 1997.

abolished. He also said, "I declare categorically that any possible attempt at deviation [from this policy] on the part of lower administrators will be mercilessly crushed."[326]

But still, many important problems continued to exist (the selection of muftis, control of the *vakıfs,* educational problems and others) and just the promises of the Prime Minister for equality before the law were not enough to solve the problems. Greece needed to create a better plan with more specific objects that would solve the problems of the minority in Thrace. Despite the good will of government not everybody was positive about the new developments.

The Metropolitan of Komotini, Damaskinos, continued to "inform" the public about the possible dangers of lifting the discrimination measures with a series of articles in the local and national Greek press. Another example of "suspicion" of the media is an article by Makarios Drousiotis in the Greek Cypriot newspaper *« Ο Φιλελεύθερος»,* where shortly after the new declarations of Mitsotakis he published an article under the title "Hellenism: the need for common confrontation of Turkism. The Turks were moving free in Thrace" just a few days before the visit of Mitsotakis in Cyprus. In his article, he claims that the Muslims of Thrace are treated better by the Greek state than the Christians, because Greece is afraid not to be accused for repression of the minority. He expresses his fears about the situation in Thrace and the influence of Turkey on the local populations by ringing the alarm for Cyprus. There were also rumors that the Turkish teachers that came from Turkey to teach in the minority schools were members of the Intelligence Service and thus the Greek

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[326] Helsinki Watch, *Report on Greece* (April 20, 1992).

state cannot prevent the spread of the Turkish nationalist ideology to be spread in the youngest generations of the minority.[327]

The behavior of the minority politicians towards the new initiatives of the Greek state was characterized by suspicion. The minority politicians could not trust or immediately believe in the words of government knowing that there is a big possibility the promises not to become a reality. According to Aarbacke, despite the fact that the independent politicians were very active concerning the information of the Greek and international public opinion on their problems, they did not try to produce realistic solutions for the existing problems and their words were many times interpreted by Greek side as sentences that encourage discrimination. It should also be noted that the Turkish politicians of Western Thrace were seriously concerned about the new electoral threshold of 3%, which meant that a political party could enter parliament only if it gathered at least 200,000 votes nationally.

According to Irakleidis, the change that started in 1991 was "partial," and not "total." He expresses his concerns about the real importance of this "change" by taking into consideration that in the following years racism, xenophobia and skepticism towards Turks, Albanians, Macedonians, Jews and Roma (as has been proved by European research) increased in Greece. Also, according to the same source, the role of the mass media, private and public, has been uncontrolled and very harmful.[328]

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[327] Makarios Drousiotis, Newspaper " *Ο Φιλελεύθερος*», 8 June 1991.

[328] Alexis Irakleidis, «Μειονότητες, εξωτερική πολιτική και Ελλάδα» (Minorities, foreign policy and Greece), in Το Μειοτικό φαινόμενο στην Ελλάδα: Μια συμβολή των κοινωνικών επιστημών,(The Minority phenomenon), p.225.

## Political Representation of the Minority in Greek Elections (1991-2004)[329]

As seen, until the end of 1980's the minority expressed itself through the existing political parties. The fact that "Athenian politicians" remembered the minorities only when they wanted to get their votes, that are before the elections, was obvious. As Dimosthenis Dodos, specialist on the electoral behavior of the minorities observes, the minority candidates' action in the big political parties was based on two poles: on the one hand, they did not consider the decisions of their political parties as binding for them, on the other hand the political parties wanted to include them in their lists for gaining more votes.[330] The indifference of the big parties towards the minorities and their problems resulted in the creation of minority political parties.[331] On 13 September 1991, the Friendship-Equality-Peace Party (*Dostluk-Eşitlik-Barış Partisi, DEB)* was founded. At the 1st General Congress held on 11 April 1992, Dr. Sadık Ahmet was elected unanimously as the party president. Ahmet Faikoğlu, the other minority-party Turkish MP, didn't connect directly to this Party. A new newspaper, reflecting the ideas of the specific political party, appeared in February 1992: *DEB Partisi Gazetesi,* and later renamed *Balkan. Balkan,* even under its new name continued to reflect the ides of DEB.

The efforts of Turkey and independent MPs to change the 3% electoral threshold rule, failed. This made it very difficult for any minority political party to be

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[329] Complete list of W. Thracian Turks in Greek Parliament can be found in Hikmet Öksüz, "Representation of the Western Thracian Turkish Minority in the Greek Parliament,"*Turkish Review of Balkan Studies,* no. 7 (2002).

[330] Dimosthenis Dodos, *Εκλογική Γεωγραφία των μειονοτήτων, Μειονοτικά κόμματα στη Νότιο Βαλκανική, Ελλάδα,, Βουλγαρία, Αλβανία.* (Electoral Geography of the minorities: Minority parties in South Balkans, Greece, Bulgaria, Albania), (Athens: Exandars, 1994), p. 34.

[331] For details on the political presence and activities of S. Ahmet, see V. Aarbakke, pp. 357-390.

elected to the Greek parliament, because through this decree it was impossible for a minority party to take more than 3% of the votes at the national level. Before the elections of 1993, the independent MPs, through articles in newspapers, explained that they would try to change the 3% percentage first by applying to the State Council and then, if needed, to the European Court of Justice. Except for the minority party, Turkish minority politicians such as İbrahim Onsunoğlu (ND), Ahmet Mehmet (PASOK), Orhan Hacıibrahim (ND), Mustafa Mustafa (participating as "honorary" candidate with Synaspismos) participated in the elections on the tickets of the big political parties. From articles in the local newspapers in 1993, it can be seen that the candidates of the big political parties were more "moderate" when speaking and did not present themselves only as Turkish minority candidates but as candidates of their party and of the whole Greek society. For example İbrahim Onsunoğlu, candidate from New Democracy, in an interview with the Turkish newspaper *Zaman*[332] explained the importance of Mitsotakis' initiatives, and he criticized Turkish policy of the years before 1990 (especially 1989-1990) as a mistake.

The result of the elections of 10 October 1993 was that none of the minority MPs was elected to the parliament, despite the fact that Sadık Ahmet's political party had now the largest percentage of votes in Rodop Perfecture (32.75%). The popularity of Ahmet was obvious; one of his voters is quoted to have said, "We talk about Sadık every minute and hour of the day...even when we are sleeping with our wives we talk about him because he's the only one who has talked about our

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[332] 29 September 1993.

problems openly."[333] It should be noted that the main difference between the minority politicians participating in independent political parties and the others participating in the election through the main political parties is that the first mainly stressed their national Turkish identity, while the other ones, probably due to their participation to the big political parties, focused on other issues.

The death of Sadık Ahmet in a car accident near the village Sosti (Susurköy) on 27 July 1995 was an important even for the internal developments of the minority and its relations with Greece and Turkey. Ahmet's wife became elected chairwoman of the DEB party and in 1999; she was succeeded by one of his colleagues. After Sadık Ahmet's death, the party became very weak and ceased to participate actively in elections or in local politics.

The death of Andreas Papandreou, leader of PASOK, in 1996 brought in the premiership of Kostas Simitis. The political parties gave importance to the development of Thrace and to other issues that interested the minority. During the elections of 22 September 1996, the minorities showed a leftist inclination. Galip Galip (Komotini-PASOK), Birol Akifoğlu (Xanthi-ND) and Mustafa Mustafa (United Left-Synaspeismos) were elected to parliament. The election of Mustafa Mustafa was a surprise for the Greek political world because he was not a candidate promoted by the media, so it was not expected to be so popular among the minority. The political party that he supported was a European-oriented leftist party and the votes that he gained show that among the minority there was a big number of people who believed in the importance of Europe concerning their rights. It was the first time after 1974 that the minority elected three MPs to the Greek parliament.

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[333] *The Guardian* (London), 02 April 1990

Mustafa Mustafa, elected with the leftist party of Synaspeismos, represented moderate minority politicians, whose positions were supported by his political party. According to Aarbacke, "he represented a commitment to the general work of his party, which was unusual for minority politicians."[334] Aarbacke quotes Mustafa after his election as a sign of change in the behaviour of minority politicians:

> We must look at things differently, and approach them with the reasoning which regards the minority as a cultural wealth for the country, which we really want to integrate in the Greek reality and society, surpassing racist and isolating perceptions, so that there will be development and an equal society for both Christians and Muslims.[335]

In the local elections of 11 October 1998, PASOK continued to be powerful in Rhodopi. A new Christian mayor in Sapes, Dinos Haritopulos (independent) won many minority votes and worked hard for the good relationships between the different communities in its region.

In the European parliament elections of 13 June 1999 PASOK dominated in Rodopi and ND in Xanthi.

In the elections held on 9 April 2000, Galip Galip (Komotini-PASOK) and Ahmet Mehmet (Komotini-PASOK) were elected. Finally, in the elections of 2004, İlhan Ahmet (Xanthi-ND) was elected. It is interesting to note that in the elections of 2000, minority candidates took many votes not only by the minority voters but also from many other Greek voters.

In conclusion, it can be said that the minority politicians have had an active presence in the Greek parliament. In total thirty-six politicians were elected in the period 1923-2004. The existence of minority politicians who participated in minority

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[334] Aarbacke, p. 634.

[335] *Καθημερινή*, 24 September 1996.

political parties in the beginning of 1990's was a need in order to mobilize the minority and to motivate the public opinion. The activism of these politicians, and especially Sadık Ahmet's activities alarmed the Greek government, and contributed to the lifting of the discriminatory measures. Nowadays, despite the fact that there is no special regulation of the political rights of the minority population, members of the minority enjoy the same political rights as the rest of the Greek citizens and can elect their own deputies through the lists of the big political parties. However, we should observe that the three percent that is required for the entrance of a political party in the Greek Parliament is very high, and it actually excludes the minority from representation in the parliament. Three percent means 200,000 votes in the total territory of Greece and even if somebody argues that the creation of minority political parties is not necessary nowadays, it actually forbids indirectly the creation of a minority political party. Dimosthenis Dodos notes that Greece can not ask Albania to secure the representation of the Greek minority in the Albanian parliament when the Greek state creates problem in the representation of its minorities in its own parliament.[336]

## What Has Changed? What Has Not?

One year after the declarations of the Prime Minister, many of the old restriction measures belonged to the past. According to a report by Helsinki Watch in April 1992, one year after the "change" had been announced, minority members were able to buy and sell houses and land, repair houses and mosques, obtain car,

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[336] Dodos, p.62.

truck and tractor licenses, and open coffee houses and machine and electrical shops.[337] It is obvious that the violation of these rights was heavily criticized by human rights organizations, foreign governments and European organizations.

## Development-Economy

After 1991, much more funds were given for the overall development of Thrace.[338] A great amount of the money was given to education, culture, sports and infrastructure in minority quarters, in order to raise the living standards of the population.[339] Western Thrace, and more specifically the regions where the Turkish population live, until the end of 1980's had the lowest indicators in terms of infrastructure (roads, hospital beds, telephones, etc.).[340] Here it should added, that Western Thrace presents serious socio-economic differences, with the region of Komotini (where the majority of the Turkish population live) to be heavily dependent on the tobacco agriculture, and the region of Xanthi to be more industrialized. In the period 1990-1994 more than $250,000,000 was directed by the government through EU projects for Thrace and generous incentives for investment were provided.[341] Still, a report of the U.S State Department for 2000 observed, "the

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[337] Helsinki Watch, *Report on Greece* 4, no. 6 (April 20 1992).

[338] The Ph.D. dissertation of Diamanto Anagnostou is the latest source concerning the economic development inside the minority after 1990. Dimanto Anagnostou, *Oppositional and integrative ethnicities: Regional Political Economy, Turkish Muslim mobilization and identity transformation in Southeastern Europe.* (Ph.d., Cornell University, 1999).

[339] Aarbakke, p. 622.

[340] *Η Ανάπτυξη της Ανατολικής Μακεδονίας & Θράκης*1 (Athens: Commericial Bank), 1986 cited in Anagnostou, p. 166, footnote 24.

[341] *Financial Times*, London Edition, 10 December, 1994.

development of basic public services (electricity, telephones, paved roads) in Muslim neighborhood and villages continues in many cases to be significantly slower than the development of such services in non-Muslim areas."[342] It should also be added the infrastructure differences between cities and villages is very big, and the Pomak villages in the northern mountains of Xanthi are the less developed; in 2004, one can obviously observe the lack of investments, good roads or hospitals in the mountainous zone of Greek Thrace. The "supervised zone" and its restrictions in the life of the Pomak inhabitants, influenced seriously the developments of the region and the economic prosperity. Ten years after the lifting of the "bar of shame"[343], despite the limited infrastructural investments, the signs of this unreasonable national policy are still obvious.

Concerning the personal investments of minority in Thrace, in the period 1990-96, the number of registered firms, shops, etc. Turks own doubled[344]; this can be attributed to the lift of the restrictions, the increase of the feeling of security and the lifting of the restrictions concerning bank loans. We can observe that total absence of serious investments of the minority population in Greece until 1991, despite the fact that it happened because of the objective difficulties mentioned above it was interpreted in Greece in the following way: "The Turks save their money and invest it in Turkey", giving a negative interpretation to the investments in Turkey.

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[342] U.S. State Department, State Department's Annual Report for International Religious Freedom: Greece.

[343] The term is used by Anagnostou, p. 165.

[344] Ibid., p. 177.

In 1992, members of the parliament prepared an important text called the "Report of the Parliamentary Committee for the Border Regions." In a special paragraph concerning the minorities, the Committee recognized the importance of the Western Thrace minority as a "valuable part of the human resources of Greece," it promised it would protect its "religious, linguistic, social and cultural freedom according to the regulations of the Lausanne Treaty and OSCE's demands," it encouraged efforts aimed at the "cultural, educative and social life of the minorities," referred to the creation of Institutes of Historical Researches in the region and it asked the State to give the necessary funds so that new schools could be built and the initiatives of local municipalities could be supported.[345]

Concerning the funds distributed in Western Thrace, the contribution of the EU is notable. One of the most significant contributions of the EU membership is the liberalization of the Greek economy, which has constrained seriously any efforts of governments to influence the distribution of funds and the construction of public works that depend in clientelism and political favoritism. This means that while in the past domestic resources were distributed according to "non-transparent" criteria, it was in the beginning of 1990's that a more objective and serious effort for the allocation of the funds started. From this effort, many remote areas of Greece (including Western Thrace) have been influenced.

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[345] Greek Parliament, Period Z-Convention B, 14 February 1992, quoted in Malkidis, p. 625.

## Religious Freedom

Today, there are 280 mosques in Western Thrace: 165 in Rodop prefecture, 95 in Xanthi prefecture and 20 in Evros. There are also a few *tekkes* for the religious needs of the Bektashi Muslims. These mosques function for every day religious needs and employ one *imam* and one *müezzin* in each of them. The Muslims are under the religious authority of the *Mufti* who must be a Greek citizen and graduate of a Theological University. He is selected from among a list of candidates and has important authority within the religious Muslim community. The *Sharia* (Islamic law) is applied by the *Mufti* –as an inheritance from the Ottoman *millet* system- to family issues such as marriage (issuing marriage licenses and performing marriage ceremonies according to Islam), divorce, inheritance, and children custody.[346] The choice whether to use the *Sharia* or the Greek Civil Code in family and inheritance cases belongs to the Muslims themselves.

In Thrace, Sharia law functions in "an interdependent and symbiotic rather than antagonistic way with the civil one, and Islamic theological principles have with time blended with local and broader societal norms."[347] Muslims can choose to address themselves either to the Greek Civil Courts or to the *Mufti*. In case they choose the *Mufti*, the state accepts as valid his decisions, providing that they are not in conflict with the fundamental values of Greek society, as defined by the Greek Constitution.[348] The *Mufti* can also issue religious opinions *(fetvas)* for cases of

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[346] The application of the Islamic law is parallel to the application of the Civil Code by the Greek courts. Until recently the Greek courts denied the right to Muslims to bring their cases in front of the Civil Court.

[347] Anagnostou, p. 192.

[348] According to Article 5, Para. 3 of Law No. 1920/1991, the courts shall not enforce decisions of the Muftis that are contrary to the Greek Constitution ( as an effort to guarantee the equality of both

private dispute.[349] He is responsible for the appointment and release of the employees (*imam and muezzin*) of the local mosques and for the supervision of the religious high schools (*medrese).* He has the right to name the *İmam* and the *müezzin* of each mosque who will not perform their military service under the justification that their participation is necessary for the functioning of the mosques[350]

The *selection of muftis* is one of the most important issues of debate concerning the rights of the minorities. There are three legally recognized by the Greek state *Muftis* in Western Thrace, one in each prefecture: Xanthi, Komotini (muftis), and Didimotiho (assistant mufti). Presidential Decree can alternate their number and their duties after suggestion of the Ministers of Internal Affairs, Justice and National Education and Religious Affairs. One of the rights guarded by the Lausanne Treaty is the exercise of religion.

According to the Athens agreement signed in 1913 by Greece and Turkey, people belonging to the minority would select the muftis. Greek citizens of the Muslim religion living in Athens would have their own religious leader who would be selected by the Greek king from a list of three candidates. Despite the fact that legally the Muslim community could select their own religious leaders, in the period until 1991 no organised selection of *muftis* by the community took place. Act No. 2345, adopted in 1920, is also very important concerning the issue of the *muftis*. Articles regarding the *Başmüftülük* (Head Director of Religious Affairs) were never

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sexes). So, despite the application of *Sharia* Law, polygamy or marriage before legal age are not permitted.

[349] The *fetvas* do not have legal binding effect.

[350] Tsitselikis, "The Place of Mufti in the Greek Legal Order," in D. Christopoulos, *Νομικά ζητήματα θρησκευτικής ετερότητας στην Ελλάδα*(Athens: Kritiki & KEMO, 1999) p. 300.

put into practice, and the election of Muftis by their community was never made.[351] In the issue of the selection or election of the *muftis,* the Lausanne Treaty remains "silent".[352] The problems started after the death of the *mufti* of Komotini in 1985, when the state appointed a new mufti, Cemali Meco, not selected by the Muslim believers. A law that came into force in February 1991 radically changed the process of Mufti selection. It gave the right to the government to appoint the *muftis* for ten-year terms with the agreement of a committee of Muslim notables selected by the government.[353]

The argument of the government was that it must appoint the *muftis* because, in addition to religious duties, they performed judicial functions in many civil and domestic matters under Muslim religious law, for which the State paid them; additionally, since they had juridical duties, that meant they were Judges, the Greek state had the obligation to appoint them.[354] The *Mufti* except from his judicial duties, he is also president of the committee of the religious property administration.

The reactions of the two Turkish MP's and minority members in 1990-1991, resulted in the "paradoxical" fact of the existence of two muftis in each prefecture: one appointed by the government and "one elected" by the Muslims but both

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[351] Cin, p. 311. Also Oran, pp. 160-161.

[352] Ach. Skordas, "Yunanistan'da Azınlıkların Korunması ve Liberal Reform Zorunluluğu" in *Ulusal, Ulusalüstü ve Uluslararası Hukukta Azınlık Hakları,* Istanbul: Istanbul Barosu, Insan Haklari Merkezi, 2002, pp. 316-317.

[353] The appointment of the *Moufti* takes place after a presidential decree following a proposal by the Minister of Education who, in his turn, must consult a committee comprising of the local Prefect and a number of Muslim dignitaries chosen by the State, see K. Tsitselikis, "The Legal Status of Islam in Greece", unpublished, p. 8.

[354] U.S. State Department, State Department's 2000 Annual Report for International Religious Freedom: Greece.

claiming that they were the only religious authority.[355] Mehmet Emin Ağa was the "elected" Mufti of the minority. On 23 August 1991, 300-900 Muslims (the numbers differ in the Greek and Turkish sources) hold a sit-down demonstration in the street in front of the *mufti's* building to protest the new law. The State cracked down the non-recognized elected *Muftis* and convicted them of "pretension of religious authority," convicting one of the elected muftis eleven times over four years for trying to replace the authority of the official mufti.

Finally, the Supreme Court overturned the prison sentence given to the "elected" Mufti Mehmet Emin Ağa. The Court found that in issuing a religious message and signing documentation as Mufti, Emin Ağa had not committed a crime since he had not tried to exercise the administrative or judicial rights of mufti.[356]

The issue of the non-recognized Muftis ended up in the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. The Court found for both cases (İbrahim Serif and Mehmet Emin Ağa's case) violation by Greece of Article 9 of the European Convention of Human Rights.

> In the Court's view, punishing a person for the mere fact that he acted as a religious leader of a group that willingly followed him could hardly be considered compatible with the demands of religious pluralism in a democratic society. Moreover the Court believed that in democratic societies, the State shouldn't take measures to ensure that religious communities remained or were brought under a unified leadership.[357] The Court recognized

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[355] On 28 December 1990 elections were held in Xanthi and Komotini's mosques, after the prayers, organized by the two independent MP's for the selection of the Mouftis, ignoring government's regulations.

[356] *Athens News,* 03 May 2002.

[357] Concerning the selection of the Muftis many scholars, Greeks and Turks, express their concerns about the democratic character of the selection of *Muftis* by the Greek state. (See, K. Tsitselikis, "The Place of Mufti in the Greek legal order", in D. Christopoulos (ed.), *Νομικά ζητήματα Θρησκευτικής Ετερότητας στην Ελλάδα,* (Athens: Kritiki & KEMO, 1999), pp. 271-330; and Turgay Cin, *Yunanıstandakı Müslüman Türk Azınlığın Din ve Vicdan Özgürlüğü* (Ankara: Seçkin, 2003). Still, according to Tsitselikis, "the reaction that started in 1990 concerning the appointed Muftis was not a result of the conscious desire of the minority for implementation of the selection process of 1920

that it was possible that tension was created in situations where a religious or any other community became divide.[358]

The Court ruled that the conviction violated his freedom of religion and self-expression, but it avoided giving a clear answer to the question of the legal status of *mufti.*[359] It is worth noting that except for the complains of the minority political parties politicians in Greek Parliament, no other minority Parliamentarian – participating in the elections through the big political parties- had suggested a law that could change the existing situation.[360]

The control of the social and charitable organizations *(vakıfs)* is another issue with priority for the Muslims. According to the Lausanne Treaty, minorities shall have the right to control their real property, the *vakıfs*, whose revenue guarantees the present and future of the minority's institutions (for example schools, etc.). Before the military junta came to power in 1967, minorities could decide upon the appointment of officials for their *vakıfs*. But, despite the return to democracy, the PASOK government with a law in 1980 decided that the administration of the *vakıfs* was in the hands of the appointed muftis and their representatives. The local Prefect's power would increase and thus would influence the independence of the vakıfs. According to Helsinki Watch, this decision of the Greek state provoked important reaction in the minority. Many Muslims believed that behind the actions of

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concerning the Mufti. The reaction was an opportunity for certain groups who controlled the religious leadership of the minority to express their disapproval for the newly appointed *muftis.*" Tsitselikis, p. 325.

[358] Greek Helsinki Monitor (GHM) Minority Rights Group-Greece (MRG-G), *Human Rights in Greece: Joint Concise Annual Report for 1999,* pp.11-12

[359] U.S. State Department, State Departments' 2000 Annual Report for International Religious Freedom: Greece.

[360] Declaration of the Greek delegation concerning the "ethnic minorities", Warsaw, 24 October 2000.

the *muftis* the prefects exerted power.[361] Directly connected to the control of the Muslim properties was a law that came into full effect in 1999, according to which the *vakifs* and all the property holders were required to register all of their property with the government. The law permitted the Government to seize any property that is not completely documented, ignoring the fact that the properties of the *vakifs* date back to 1560 and a large number of the files with the relevant documents have been destroyed. According to the State Department's annual report, the Greek state didn't enforce the registration requirement or the taxes that had to be paid for the properties (the non-documented ones).[362]

In 1994, the Greek government, in order to bring the country up to EU standards, instituted the election of previously state-appointed provincial governors and municipal councils. According to a Human Rights Watch report, the elected governors appeared more open to considering the needs of the minorities, upon whose votes they depended.[363]

## Language Usage

It is estimated that 85,000 minority Muslims speak Turkish, as their mother tongue or as a second language. More than one third of the Christian Greek-speaking population of Thrace is able to communicate through Turkish. Unofficially, 0.3% of

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[361] Helsinki Watch, *Report on Greece*, 20 April 1992.

[362] State Department's 2000 Report on Religious Freedom in Greece

[363] Human Rights Watch report, *Positive measures.*

Greece's population (around 300,000 people) speak or understand Turkish at various levels.[364]

Turkish is the official language of the minority in Thrace and is protected by the Lausanne Treaty. It is also used in the mosques (in addition to Arabic) by the religious men. Except for the education and religious services, it is secured in interpreting in legal and voting procedures. Turkish can be used in the courts and Turkish-speaking interpreters are supposed (not always in practice) to be provided in the courts. Turkish is not used by the authorities (at least in official matters) or on public and road signs. Turkish is used freely in advertisements in the local Turkish media and in newspapers in Komotini, and also in business contacts among the minorities. Many Greek-speaking businessmen who have professional contacts with Muslims understand and use the language as well. The *muftis* also use Greek in their relations with the authorities, except for family and inheritance cases where the usage of Islamic law gives them the right to speak Turkish.

The problem of the minority concerning language is not so much the use or the teaching of Turkish, but the use and the teaching of Greek, as İbrahim Onsunoğlu (Muslim Turkish activist) explained in a speech during the ELBUL conference, in Salonica (13-15 November 2002): "Until 1991, the basic principle for the minority students concerning the Greek language was the less they learn the better for us." Onsunoğlu explained that the Greek government was trying to force the minority to immigrate from Thrace to Turkey by making its life hard.[365]

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[364] The information concerning the Turkish language are found in Mercator-Education 2003, *Report Concerning "The Turkish Language in Education in Greece*, p.5

[365] See Ibrahim Onsonuğlu, Αυγή, internet issue, nd.

Concerning the usage of the Pomak language, it is spoken by a limited number of Pomaks living mainly in mountainous villages near Xanthi. Pomaks are either bilingual or trilingual and a large number of them have voluntarily shifted from using the Pomak language to using Turkish. Both the efforts of the Bulgarians during the first and second Bulgarian occupation of Thrace to transmit a Bulgarian ethnic consciousness to the Pomaks and the later efforts of the Greek state to encourage the separate existence of a Pomak minority with different national consciousness from that of the Turks brought the opposite results. The efforts of the 4th Army Unit, in Xanthi, in October 1995 to print a Greek-Pomak dictionary, so that the Pomak language had an alphabet did not seem to interest those for whom it was written. Together with the Grammar of Pomak Greek-Pomak dictionary, there was also printed the *Greek-Pomak dialogs* (1996), *the Grammar of the Pomak Language* (1996), *The Stroll in the Pomak Villages* (1996), *The Syntax book of Pomak language* (1997), written by Pomak and Greek soldiers. Together with this, a Greek-Pomak vocabulary was included in a book by Petros Theohairidis, called *Pomaks* (Salonica, 1995) and also a Pomak-Greek Dictionary (1996), a Greek-Pomak Dictionary (1996) and the *Grammar of the Pomak Language* (1996).

In 1997 a book including Pomak stories was published. In September 1996, a recording of Pomak songs and the creation of the Centre of Pomak Research in Komotini, together with the Pomak newspaper *Zagalisa* (Love) in 1997 were initiatives presented by the Greek press. In May 1997 the first Pomak textbook was published by two Pomak teachers from Western Thrace (Mumin Aydın and Ömer Hamdi). The reactions to these initiatives differed, but the fact that these books were not used or even purchased by Pomaks shows that the interest of the Pomak community in such initiatives is very low. A letter was sent by a group of thirty

Pomaks to a local newspaper protested the initiatives aiming at their differentiation from the rest of the minority.[366]

Finally, concerning the "Romani", the language of the Gypsies of Thrace, a Greek-Romani Phrasebook was published in 1998 that didn't manage to attract the attention of the Gypsy community.

## Education

The educational system has always been judged as problematic in Greece. Much more, minority education suffered from the overall problems of Greek education, in addition to the problems of minority education. Minority students present large percentage of illiteracy. It is important to note that, according to statistical data, the number of Turkish speakers in Thrace is declining because the number of students in minority primary schools over the last thirty years has declined dramatically. The urbanisation and modernisation processes are cited to as the main factors causing this decline.[367] Moreover, the minority education has suffered from the fluctuating Greek-Turkish relations and the lack of a systematic and well-planned state policy towards these students.

The Coordinating Bureau for Minority Schools based in Kavala is the authority in charge of the administration of minority schools. The Coordinator supervises the functioning of minority education. Despite the fact that Turkish was

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[366] *Χρόνος*, 1 December 1997

[367] Information concerning the minority education can be found on the webpage of the Mercator-Education: European Network for Regional or Minority Languages and Education. The site contains the series of regional dossiers, a database with organizations and bibliography and many rated links to minority languages. Available [online] at http://www.mercator-education.org

always taught freely in the schools, the *textbooks* were always a matter of debate between the Greek state and minority representatives, and between Greece and Turkey.

According to the 1951 cultural agreement between Greece and Turkey, Turkey printed some books in 1955-56 that was supposed to send at the beginning of the academic year. Greece was responsible for determining that the books contained no expressions harmful to Greek-Turkish relations. In a report by Helsinki Watch in 1992, S. Ahmet expressed his serious concerns on the issue because despite the fact that the Turkish government had sent the books three months earlier, the Greek government was still examining them and they had not been delivered to the schools. The answer of Greek side to the specific request was that the books had to be checked before being given to the students and Greece was preparing new books in the Turkish language that would be written and printed in Greece and would replace the ones sent from Turkey.[368] In 1991, the Greek Ministry of Education invited Professor Zenginis to be the head of a group of educators responsible for writing new textbooks for the minority that would replace the old Turkish textbooks of 1950 that were still used in minority schools in the beginning of 1990's.

In 12 November 1992, after a decision of the Supreme Minority Council's (AYK), a 51-member committee went to Athens to return the books to the Greek Ministry of Education. Abstention from school and protests accompanied the return of the books. The arguments that were used concerning the return of the books were mainly focused not on the material of the books but on the fact that Turkey did not participate in their preparation and that they were books prepared only by the Greek

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[368] Helsinki Watch, *Report on Greece*, April 1992

side.[369] Of course, the improvement of Greek-Turkish relations contributed to better communications between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the Turkish Embassy concerning the Turkish school textbooks. After many years, the Greek side in 1999, through the Educational Institute, accepted the books suggested by the Turkish side in order to facilitate the education of the Turkish students, as a result of the bilateral Educational Protocol.[370] Nineteen new Turkish-language textbooks, approved jointly by the two governments, were distributed to the students. It should also be noted that up until 1999, the textbooks used by the minority schools for subjects in Greek were identical to the textbooks used in all Greek primary schools. This meant that minority students that didn't speak Greek as a first language had great difficulties when using them. Now, new books, printed in Athens by O.E.D.B. (the organization responsible for publishing textbooks), specially written for Thracian minority pupils are used for the teaching of Greek. These books take into consideration the religious culture of the students and they are written in such a way that they can really help the students. Until 2000, the textbooks used for the teaching of Turkish were old and many times were photocopies of books printed in Turkey in the 1950's. In 1999, new Turkish books that did not contain Turkish national symbols were imported and distributed to the minority pupils.

The level of the education and the literacy of the minority students changes as somebody moves from the cities (Xanthi, Komotini) to the villages. The less privileged are the students of the mountainous areas whose family life conditions

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[369] Slogans like "we will not let our children use a book written by a Greek," "we want books printed in Turkey, not in Greece", cited in Anagnostou, p. 225.

[370] *Το Βήμα*, 08 August 1999.

force them many times to stop their education in order to help the family income. Girls usually leave the school earlier than the boys.

All levels of minority education present their own problems:

The pre-school education is not conducted by any regulations and practically is not offered in Turkish. In 2000, it was estimated that about 300 minority children were enrolled in pre-schools. The limited attendance can be attributed to the character of the minorities and also to the fear of some of the parents that contact of their children with Greek-speaking children might affect their ethnic identity.[371] Also, the fact that the linguistic specificities of the students are not taken into consideration makes the situation more difficult.

Primary education has its own problems, starting from the fact that the legal character of minority education is based on a combination of legal regulations governing private and public schools. In reality, the minority schools are registered as private schools, but fall under absolute state control. Minority schools are considered to be private schools governed closely by legislation concerned with public schools. According to the Mercator-Education Report, the right to establish a true private minority school, as provided for by the treaty of Lausanne, has never been implemented.[372] Turkish Muslim students have the right to be enrolled either in bilingual minority schools or in Greek-medium schools. Currently there are 223 minority primary schools.[373] The principal of any minority primary school is a Turkish Muslim while the Vice-Principal is a Greek-Orthodox. The curriculum

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[371] G. Mavrommatis and K. Tsitselikis, *The Turkish in Greece,* Mercator-Education (Leeuwarden, 2003).

[372] Ibid.

[373] Ibid.

includes 50% of the lessons in Greek and 50% in Turkish. All science and mathematics lessons are taught in Turkish. The Koran is taught in Turkish language, both in the primary and secondary schools.

In every minority school there are at least two teachers: one Turkish Muslim for the subjects taught in Turkish and one Greek for the subjects taught in Greek. The Turkish Muslim teachers are trained at the Special Pedagogic Academy of Thessaloniki (a two-year program, employed only in primary education) and the Greek teachers are graduates of the Primary Education University Departments (a four-year program). There are also teachers (currently sixteen) coming from Turkey (*metaklitoi)*, that are equal in number to the Greek teachers who go from Greece to Istanbul in order to teach in the Greek Orthodox schools of Istanbul, in line with provisions for the teacher exchanges between Greece and Turkey included in the 1968 Bilateral Cultural Protocol.[374] Finally, there is a big number of teachers who received their degrees from teachers academies in Turkey who from 1960s onwards are not hired. These teachers formed the "Turkish Teachers Union" in Komotini. The Greek state preferred graduates of the Special Pedagogical Academy of Thessaloniki and excluded the graduates of Turkish education colleges fearing that they might promote education under the influence of Turkish nationalism and ideology.

The graduates of SPAT that form today the majority of minority school Turkish teachers; they have limited knowledge of Greek and Turkish language despite the fact that they will be the teachers of Turkish courses in minority schools. The preference of the state for hiring the graduates of the Salonica Academy and not

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[374] The teachers coming from Turkey are paid by the Turkish state, while the others who are Greek citizens either are paid by the Greek State or working on the basis of a private contract with the School.

the graduates of Turkish academies is discriminatory and racist and has created tension among the teachers.[375] Finally, it should be noted that the discrimination between the graduates of SPAT and the graduates of the Turkish Education Colleges has created two opposite camps of teachers who accuse each other for several reasons: the graduates of SPAT are often called traitors and agents of the Greek state, and have a different association for their members than the Turkish Teachers Association. There are even cases where SPAT teachers are isolated and, according to interviews, in the past at least, they were victims of intra-minority pressures. The graduates of the Turkish Education Colleges who are not anymore hired in the minority schools have formed their own teachers association; they have an active role inside the minority youth by offering guidance and advices to the youth and presenting their demands in every occasion.[376]

Minority schools experience a very high dropout rate. It is estimated that in the period from 1985 to 1995, 23.5% of the pupils who entered minority schools were unable to finish.[377] Due to the bad quality of minority schools, a number of children that attend these schools finish the school year having deficiencies in subjects taught both in Greek and Turkish. The less privileged are the students of the isolated Pomak villages near Xanthi who are enrolled in Greek high schools without having sufficient knowledge neither of Greek nor Turkish.

The secondary education is as well a problematic area; despite the great number of Turkish primary schools, there are only two minority secondary schools

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[375] The conclusions and the information concerning this issue are from interviews conducted with members of the Turkish Teachers Union in Komotini, in May 2004.

[376] Information source are interviews conducted with teachers of both sides in Komotini, in May 2004.

[377] Mercator-Education, *Report on Greece*, 2003.

(one in Komotini, founded in 1954, and one in Xanthi, founded in 1964), which do not have the capacity to accept all of the graduates of the minority elementary schools. The students who will study in the bilingual minority schools are selected by lottery. There are also five public secondary schools in the mountainous areas attended exclusively by Pomak students who are taught the complete curriculum in Greek, except for Religion Instruction, which is taught in Turkish. Finally, there are two *Ierospoudasteiria* (*medrese,* Islamic seminaries), whose graduates can be registered with the Special Academy of Thessaloniki to work as teachers in the minority schools later. These Koranic schools, with the adoption of law 2621/1998 have been recognized as equivalent to the religious studies *Lykeio* (high school) of Greece. Representatives of the Turkish Muslim minority believe that Greece on purpose keeps the number of high schools low so that "children go to Turkey and thus not come back and often their families follow them as well."[378]. It is estimated that 150 students attend the Koranic schools, 600 students the bilingual minority high schools and 1,600 the Greek-language secondary schools.[379]

At the end of 1990's, when there was a big debate in Europe about linguistic minorities and their rights, in Greece a debate started about the linguistic rights of the minority. It was accepted that while the Turkish-speaking community enjoys full freedom of the usage of Turkish language, the right of the Pomaks and Romas to learn their language was denied. Actually the continuous usage of Turkish language in education and everyday life has made the Pomaks and the Muslim Roma fluent in Turkish (with the exception of some Pomak women who remain in isolated mountain

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[378] Statements of Ahmet Sadik in Helsinki Watch, included in *Greece's report*, April 1992.

[379] U.S. State Department, State Department's Annual Report for International Religious Freedom: Greece, 2000.

villages). It should also be noted that there was never any demand by Pomak-speaking and Roma-speaking communities for teaching of their languages. Despite the fact that both the Pomak and Roma language remain to this day unwritten and non-standardized languages, there are suggestions by Greek scholars that the Pomak language should start to be taught in the schools by Pomak teachers who would be helped methodologically by the state. In an article in the newspaper To Βήμα, Yiorgos Babiniotis, professor of linguistics at Athens University, supported the idea of teaching of minority languages even though he stressed the fact that it was wrong to speak about "ethnic minorities" for the different linguistic communities, giving as an example the case of the Greek-speaking populations of Southern Italy.[380]

Concerning the languages of the minorities, all the Turkish-speakers of Thrace know much less Greek (despite the fact that this is not anymore the case among the youth who graduate from Greek high schools and Universities) and this is happening because a large of Turkish youth attended high schools and universities of Turkey in the past. According to the linguist Elena Sella, the basic reasons for the insufficient knowledge of Greek is the weaknesses of the bilingual educational system (despite the changes that have occurred) and the refusal of Turkish-speaking populations to learn Greek with the fear of their assimilation.[381] The researcher suggests the following could contribute to the improvement of minority education: teaching Greek as a foreign language and the balanced teaching of Turkish language because often the progress of students in Turkish means also their progress in Greek.

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[380] *To Βήμα,* 02 March 1997, "Linguistic Human Rights", G. Babiniotis

[381] Sella-Mazi Helene, La minorite musulmane turcophone de Grece: Approche sociolinguistique d'une communaute bilingue (Athens: Troxalia, 1999).

Better minority education means more chances for minority youth to come out of isolation.

One of the most important and successful initiatives of the Greek state was the arrangement in 1996 of a special 0.5% minority quota (affirmative action measure) for students attending the minority schools in order to facilitate their entrance into Greek universities. The law requires universities and technical institutes to set aside places for minority students each year. The Turkish students participate in the pan-hellenic exams as a separate category, competing with one another rather than with the remaining large group of Greek students. In 1996, the first year of the measure, there were only 48 candidates. In 1997-98, 334 places were set aside: 114 students out of 120 participating in the exams were accepted in Greek Universities. In 1996-97, seventy-four minority students entered University under this program[382]. This decision of the then Minister of Education, Yiorgo Papandreu, met the reactions of both sides. From the Greek side, a group called "the Christian Orthodoxs" accused Papandreu of giving "a very big privilege to the Muslim minority and many young Christians could convert to Islam in order to the Universities more easily."[383] From the minority side, before the law was even implemented, there was an organized five-day abstention in minority schools with full participation, in protest of the law, despite the fact that the law was favoring the minority students. Many see the law as a positive measure while others regard the measure with suspicion "aiming at

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[382] Human Right Watch report, *Positive measures.*

[383] Newspaper *Αυγή.*

assimilating the minority to the Greek society."[384] Today approximately 700 minority students study in Greek universities.

The initiative of the Greek government to assist minority students in their education not just by providing "equal opportunities" but also by giving them some extra opportunities to enter the Greek Universities is a measure of "affirmative action." Many times equal rights alone are not enough for minority protection. Affirmative action measures are necessary because they guarantee not just formal equality, but actual equality in the access of minority members to education and other fields of the public sphere and help them to preserve the identity of the minority.

The changes in education observed after 1991 have contributed to helping many Turkish students to adjust to Greek reality by teaching them better Greek. The fact that the minority considers education as the number one problem and priority shows that there are many things that have to be done.[385]

Finally, the influence of the European Union, with the sponsorship of programs aiming at the minority students has been especially noteworthy. The interest of the European Union in the education of minorities, educational rights and minority languages, especially after the beginning of 1990's and the improvement in Greek Turkish relations that freed minority education from trapped within Greco-Turkish relations are the most important factors that leading to this change. Two research programs are currently being applied, sponsored by the European Union: the first is the Program for the Education of Muslim Children, designed by the Special

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[384] Interviews, Komotini, May 2004.

[385] This was confirmed by most of the interviews I did in Komotini with former students of minority schools, minority teachers, journalists and the Turkish Consul (Komotini, May 2004)

Secretariat for the Education of Greeks Abroad and Intercultural Education in collaboration with the National Kapodistrian University. The second program is the Intercultural Educational Support for Student Groups in Thrace, designed by the National Youth Foundation and also financed by the EU. Its aim is to facilitate the adaptation of students to the Greek educational system and to provide free supplementary education to the students who need it without extra cost to the families. Another program (initiated in August and September 1998) supports minority students in secondary education, particularly for first year students in lower secondary education and students that have failed exams.[386]

## Employment

As said before, after Mitsotakis' declarations in 1991 many Muslim Turks, Greek citizens, became able to practice their professions in the private sector as doctors, businessmen, dentists, pharmacists, and lawyers among others because the problems concerning the recognition of their diplomas by DIKATSA were lifted.[387] Almost all of them are graduates of Turkish Universities who had serious problem to recognize their University diplomas in Greece; this delayed their entrance in the job market. Many Turks won seats on the prefectural and town councils. Many farmers, who live in villages near the big cities, invest their money to open shops or to have a second money source in the cities and the lifting of the problems concerning bank loans does not constrain anymore their economic activities. The immigration to big

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[386] The information on the educational programs sponsored from EU were found in *Eurydice study* on "Foreign Language Teaching in Schools in Europe" (2001) National description of Greece, p.2

[387] Most of the information cited in this paragraph is the material of my interviews with minority members in Xanthi and Komotini in April-May 2004.

cities of Greece did not continue at high rates: in 1990 only 3% of the minority migrated to urban centers to work in construction and other low-wage jobs.[388] Especially after 1990, where the living standards in Western Thrace started to get improved, immigration to Turkey for work and education almost stopped. The ones who prefer to live abroad mostly immigrate in Germany where usually there are some relatives that immigrated there from the previous decades.

The problem continued to be the public sector. The low number of Muslim employees in the public sector (either as contractors or as civil servants) was accepted by their representatives as discrimination against the minorities while the Greek authorities argued that it stemmed from their poor knowledge of the Greek language and the need for university degrees for high-level positions. Employment in the public sector meant participation in examinations held by the Supreme Council for the Selection of Personnel (ASEP), responsible for the appointment of the employees in the public sector. About 400 minority Turks are employed in Thrace in Regional Administration in positions as teachers, firemen and clerks in state-owned banks, guards and firemen. Also several minority members are employed in the seasonal posts of the public sector, for example at the Forest Authorities in Xanthi.[389] Still, the participation of Muslim Turks in the public sector is problematic and limited concerning the numbers of the minority.

Concerning the women employment, many women are employed by the factories of the region. In the field of employment, significant steps that have been

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[388] Information taken by the collective work of Athens Academy, *Η ανάπτυξη της Θράκης, προκλήσεις και προοπτικές* (The development of Thrace, challenges and prospects) (Athens 1995).

[389] Information taken by the Report of "Consideration of reports submitted by states parties in accordance to Article 16 of the International Covenant on economic, social and cultural rights," p. 29.

taken with the creation of new educational structures such as KEK (Centers for Professional Training) and the Open University should be noted. The contributions of the European Union, which funds special projects managed by the Ministry of Labor targeting the Muslims and Christians of the region are very important. Independent bodies finance and manage other projects concerned with minority women, aiming at improving their fluency in Greek and their professional skills. It is especially the last years that small funds aiming at women's economic participation in the society (through OAED) gave the opportunity to many minority women to make their own little business. Still, the unemployment of the youth in the region continues to be very high and it is one of the biggest problems not only of the minority but also of the whole West Thracian society.

Finally, it should be noted that the obvious presence of the European Union in Greece, especially in the beginning of 1990's managed to limit in a great extent the traditional clientelism dominating the Greek society and influencing the life all over Greece and Western Thrace more particularly. This meant that while traditionally political candidates were gaining votes by offering jobs and making favors, the limits to centralism that European Union brought seriously reduced the possibilities for clientelism.

## Property Rights

The land expropriation always has been an issue of dispute. Representatives of the minority have always believed that the Greek government expropriates (fertile) lands from the Turks of Western Thrace at much more lower rates than from other

Greek citizens.[390]A characteristic example that received great publicity was the Greek government's plan in 1992 to build an agricultural prison of 16,000 acres, expropriating a large amount of land belonging to members of the Turkish minority. It is believed that 20.40% of the lands of Western Thrace belong today to members of the Turkish minority.[391]

In 1995, the restricted supervised zone of Thrace inhabited exclusively by Pomaks was abolished. The region, due to decades of military restrictions, remained undeveloped and isolated. This military zone, together with another one on the borders with Yugoslavia, were established in 1936 under the Metaxas regime and continued to exist until the 1990's. The restricted border zone with Yugoslavia was abolished with the end of the Cold War, but the Thrace zone continued to exist until 1995. A special permit was required for travel in and out of the zone. According to Aarbacke, the restrictions were aimed at limiting of Turkish influence and propaganda among the Slav-speaking Pomaks.[392] The Minister of Defence, Yerasimos Arsenis, visited Thrace on 17-18 May 1995 and while visiting the restricting zone on the mountains of Xanthi, he announced the lifting of the restrictions. Soon after, the first reactions from the "anti-minority" circles of Thrace appeared including "Anti-minority statements, anti-turkism, danger philology, nationalist demagogy, and racist confrontation."[393]

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[390] Helsinki Watch, *Report on Greece*, 20 April 1992.

[391] International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, *"Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Turks of Greece"*, August 1990. Others claim that today Turkish-Moslems posses 35 percent of the land of W. Thrace. See, Türkkaya Ataöv "Property Rights in Western Thrace", in *Turkish Review* 5, no. 23 (Spring 1991).

[392] Aarbacke, p. 565.

[393] Newspaper *Trakya'nın sesi,* 509, 7 June 1995.

Article 19 of the Greek Citizenship Code: Deprivation of Citizenship

Article 19 of the Citizenship Law (ND 3379/1955), which used ethnic origin to deprive non-ethnic Greeks of their citizenship, was abolished in June 1998 on grounds that it violated the constitutional equality before the law for all the Greek citizens. The issue became known in the Greek public opinion through the case of the 20-year old Aysel Zeybek, from Echinos village near Xanthi, who was unable to marry because her citizenship had been revoked when she was seven, even though she had never left the country. The abolition of the article was introduced by the government and supported by the Left Coalition, the Communist Party and some MPs of New Democracy. The arguments of those who opposed the abolition of the article were that Greece was doing this because of the pressure of Europe and thus it would "help Turkey to destabilize Thrace by exploiting problems within the Muslim minority."[394] The Ministry of Interior had the final word in the decisions for the deprivation of citizenship. The article's criteria concerning the deprivation of citizenship were ambiguous, fluid and open to interpretations:

> A person of non-Greek ethnic origin (*allogeneis)* leaving Greece without the intention of returning may be declared as having lost Greek nationality. This also applies to a person of non-Greek ethnic origin born and domiciled abroad. His minor children living abroad may be declared as having lost Greek nationality if both their parents or the surviving parent have lost the same. The Minister of the Interior decides in these matters with the concurring opinion of the Citizenship Council.[395]

The expressions "person of non-Greek ethnic origin", "without intention of returning" to Greece and the overall idea of the specific article violated the basic

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[394] *Athens News,* 13 June 1998.

[395] Helsinki Watch, *Report on Greece,* 20 April 1992.

articles of the Greek Constitution, in particular Article 4 concerning the equality of Greek citizens. The implication that Muslims belong to another nation was the basis of this article which was born at a time when the Greek government officially accepted the existence of a Turkish minority in its lands. Of course, the separation of the citizens of Greece according to "romantic" characteristics of belonging to the Greek nation or not contradicted the modern idea of citizenship and of the constitutional sense of citizenship. Article 19 implied that minorities' members were not accepted as equal Greek citizens. It is believed that the specific article was initially targeting not at the Muslim Turks of Western Thrace, but at the Slav-Macedonians that left Greece after civil war.[396]

The exact number of people whose citizenship was revoked is not known. It is reported that between 1955-1998 approximately 60,000 Greek citizens, Pomaks and Turks, lost their citizenship as a result of the article.[397] From these, 7,182 people lost their citizenship in the period 1981-97. According to S. Ahmet, some of those whose citizenship was revoked were actually living in Greece, serving in the Greek army or navy, or were students studying outside of Greece.[398] Also, people who had gone for trips to Turkey would return to Greece and would be informed at the borders that their citizenship had been revoked. They were allowed to enter Greece, but they no longer had their passports. According to the lawyer Yiorgos Apostolidis, despite the fact that the decision for the revocation of citizenship belonged to the Ministry of the Interior, in reality, it was the so called Offices of Cultural Affairs of Xanthi and Komotini that were responsible for the Muslims of Western Thrace and

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[396] Aarbakke, p.579

[397] *Αυγή*, 24 January 1998, data provided by the Minister of Interior Alekos Papadopoulos.

[398] Helsinki Watch, *Report on Greece*, 20 April 1992

were taking these decisions without the support of the Minister of the Interior[399]. An unknown number of stateless people continue to live in Greece without official papers. According to the Citizenship Directorate 1,000-4,000 stateless people live in Greece. Human Rights Watch gives their number as 10,000[400]. Panayiotis Dimitras, a human rights activist, had represented 7,000 stateless people since the law was passed in 1955.[401] These people live in Greece without being Greek citizens and without having the possibility to obtain official papers or to work[402]. Officially they do not exist.

In January 1998, 150 "stateless" Greek citizens regained their citizenship. Greece didn't give the citizenship to these people automatically, as happened with the Greeks who returned from the civil war. They asked them to apply, and only a little less than half of them were given citizenship.[403] In other cases, people learned that they had lost their citizenship when they applied for a permit or something related to the state and they were refused.[404] The people who had lost their citizenship, theoretically could take their cases into court, but according to Apostolidis, "all the applications to revoke the decisions of the minister are declined

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[399] *Οικονομικός Ταχυδρόμος*, 20 August 1992, "Discrimination in force to the detriment of those with other ethnicity."Yiorgos Apostolidis.

[400] Human Rights Watch, *1999 World Report*, Greece. Also other sources speak about 500 families living like that in Greece, see *Athens News,* 13 June 1998.

[401] Aarbakke, p. 591.

[402] Nazif Mandacı- Birsen Erdoğan, Balkanlarda Azınlık Sorunu Yunanistan Arnavutluk Madedonya ve Bulgaristandaki azınlıklara bir bakış (Ankara, SAEMK, 2001), p. 9.

[403] Panayiotis Dimitras, in *Human Rights in Greece: A Snapshot of the Cradle of Democracy,* p. 39. Available [online] at http://www.csce.gov

[404] Mandacı, p. 9.

(usually two or more years after they had been submitted)...and the procedure is both time consuming and expensive."[405]

Usually it was poor villagers who lost their citizenship, but there is also the case of a prominent Turkish Muslim, Selahaddin Galip, editor of the newspaper *Azınlık Postası* who lost his citizenship according to Article 19, won it back in the State Council, and the lost it again.

The Turkish side demanded not only the abolition of the article, but also for there to be a retroactive effect. This is still refused by Greece. It is possible that Greek governments have delayed abolishing the article out of the fear of new threatening scenarios (like the return of 450,000 thousands Turks from abroad) produced by nationalistic circles would appear in the media. In 1991 for example, when the discussion for the abolition of the article started, former MPs expressed their concern for a possible imbalance in the numbers of Christians and Muslims in Thrace, in case the people who had lost their citizenship return.[406]

Finally, the article was abolished on 11 June 1998 by parliament, but without retroactive effect.[407] When the vote was approved, human rights activists expressed their satisfaction to the government through the press but also asked that the vote have a retroactive effect so that those stripped of their citizenship could win it back through the courts.[408]

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[405] *Οικονομικός Ταχυδρόμος,* 20 August 1992, "Discrimination in Force to the Detriment of Those with other Ethnicity." Yiorgos Apostolidis.

[406] *Καθημερινή,* 21 September 1991.

[407] Εφημερίς της Κυβερνήσεως 139, 25 June 1998.

[408] See statements of Zoi Spiliopoulou, of the Left Coalition's party human rights bureau in *Athens News,* 13 June 1998.

## Freedom of Expression

A basic issue that has been debated during the last ten years has been the use of the word "Turkish" in the names of associations of the minority. According to Greek politicians, the word "Turkish" expresses the identity of citizens of a specific state and not an ethnic identity, and if this word is used on an ethnic basis then Pomaks, Gypsies or other communities that are not Turkish will be isolated.[409] Greek officials base their claim on the Lausanne Treaty's articles that are based on religious criterion.[410] The basic argument of Greece for not recognizing the minority as Turkish is that Greece is interested in the human rights aspect of the minorities and that the recognition of the minority as Turkish would violate the composition of the minority itself and would stimulate the political aims behind this assertion that could disturb the peaceful coexistence of several groups.[411] Turkish minority representatives strongly criticize the fact that the word "Turk" as definition of an individual can be used, but the word "Turkish" as a definition of a group/community is not yet accepted by the Greek state.[412]

The basic problem started when in 1988; the Union of Turkish Associations of W. Thrace was ordered closed by the Greek Supreme Court because of the word "Turkish". On April 25 and 26 1991, the Rodopi Court of First Instance ordered the closing of the Western Thrace Turkish Teachers' Association (*Batı Trakya Türk*

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[409] *Human Rights Watch Report*, January 1999 11, no.1 (D), Interview with Secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Yannos Kranidiotis, Athens, September 1997.

[410] See interview of Stavros Kambellis in Human Rights Watch Report, January 1999.

[411] See statements of Maria Telalian, legal advisor of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the Hearing before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe *Human Rights in Greece: A Snapshot of the Cradle of Democracy,* 20 June 2002, p. 11.

[412] International Helsinki Federation, 2000 Report, Interview with Hülya Emin, Komotini, September 1997.

*Öğretmenler Birliği)* and the Komotini Turkish Youth Association (*Gümülcine Türk Gençler Birliği)* (both founded in the 1930's) because of the word "Turkish" in their titles. The official explanation of the Supreme Court decision was that "The association creates the impression that it is a Turkish association. The word Turkish seems to refer not to those of other ethnic origin, religion or language, but specifically to the citizens of a foreign country. Therefore, the functions of the aforementioned association...became illegal and a threat to the public order."[413]

Concerning the issue of identity of the minority, the United States State Department's annual report on human rights around the globe it observes: "Although it [the Greek government] reaffirmed individual's right for self-identification, the government continues formally to recognize as a Minority only the Muslim minority specified in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne. As a result, some individuals who define themselves as members of a minority find it difficult to express their identity freely and maintain their culture although problems in this area decreased during the year. Muslims note positive developments in education and living conditions in villages."[414] Recently though, the Supreme Court overturned a decision of a court of appeal stating that the usage of the term "Turkish" in the names of associations is not illegal in itself unless the organisation's activities are against the public order or national security.

In a visit in Thrace in May 1996, Prime Minister Costas Simitis received a petition from some members of the minority to be recognized as Turkish. The comments of Simitis were negative ("we do not agree with the minority's expressed

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[413] Helsinki Watch, *Report on Greece*, 20 April 1992.

[414] *Athens News,* 28 February 2001, "US Human Rights Report on Greece Drugs and Terrorism."

views"), but he promised "equal rights [for all the Greeks] and equal treatment before the law."[415] In 1999, Yiorgos Papandreu, Minister of Foreign Affairs, in an interview referred to the minority with the word "Turkish":

> If a Greek citizen feels that he belongs to some ethnic group, international treaties allow this. And Greece is a country that respects international agreements...No one challenges the fact that there are in Greece many Muslims of Turkish origin. Of course the treaties refer to Muslims. If the borders are not challenged it concerns me little if someone calls himself a Turk, a Bulgarian or a Pomak...Whoever feels he has such an origin, Greece has nothing to fear from it and I want to stress this is not just my thought. It is a well-established practice that allows the integration of the minorities throught Europe, as well as in other countries as Canada, Australia and the USA. Such an attitude diffuses whatever problems might have existed, allows the real blossoming of democratic institutions, as well as gives these people the feeling that they too are citizens of the country.[416]

Despite the fact that it is widely accepted in Greek public opinion that the Turkish community exists in Thrace, it was the first time in recent history that a Greek Foreign Minister referred to them. A few days before Papandreu's declarations, three minority deputies and several Greek and Turkish NGOs, asked for the recognition of a Turkish minority, the ratification by the Parliament of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the respect of the minorities rights. According to confidential reports of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, printed in the newspaper *Το Βήμα (To Vima):*

> The difficulty of accepting an international definition of the concept of ethnic minorities pushed the international community to give the right to persons to identify themselves as members of an ethnic minority, to choose free their identity (ethnic, linguistic, religious, cultural) without this choice to have negative effects for these persons. The choice includes the right of the persons to refuse to be included as members of an ethnic minority. In practice, this means, that a person or several persons together are free to express their desire to belong in an ethnic minority with special, ethnic,

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[415] *Athens News,* 4 May 1996.

[416] Magazine *Κλικ,* 26 July 1999.

> linguistic or cultural characteristics and to express this privately (to speak their language, to be free to exercise their religious traditions etc.)...Still, an ethnic community doesn't have the (collective) right self-identify and to be recognized as a vehicle of minority rights, unless the state gives this rights.[417]

The criticism from opposition parties, commentators and even pro-government newspapers was strong. Papandreu was accused of ignoring the basic ideas of the Greek foreign policy (even if he didn't want it), and said that he was naïve because this way he could give Turkey the chance to intervene in Thrace. Only the newspaper *Eleftherotypia* supported Papandreu's remarks, arguing that, "Greece has nothing to fear from the self-determination of the individuals and the application of international agreements on the minorities." According to his critics, the expression "Turkish" could help the "dark" plans of Turkey to challenge the unity of the Greek state. Many journalists found harmful for the interests of Greece the characterization of the Muslim minorities as "Turkish." A characteristic example is an article of Stavros Psiharis in *To Vima*, where the "well-known" plans of Turkey to distance the Muslim population from the Greek state is stated and it is implied that Papandreu's expression helped this plan.[418] Psiharis does not attack the overall friendly policy of Papandreu to Turkey, and he tried to justify his "linguistic mistake," as he says, with the good intentions of Papandreu for Greek-Turkish relations. Still, he expected Papandreu to be more careful when he referred to Greek national interests. Yiannis Marinos, another well-known Greek journalist, expressed his concern about the concept of self-definition. He actually recommended that the Greek authorities accept this, because, as he says, "we accept this right for the

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[417] Confidential reports of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, printed in *To Βήμα*, 08 August 1999.

[418] *To Βήμα*, 01 August 1999, " Prerequisites for Dialogue"

Greeks of Albania, the USA or Germany," so it should be applied inside the Greek state. His suggestion concerning the name of the minority is to accept the existence of a Turkish minority, but at the same time to stress the existence of the Pomak and the Gypsy communities, by teaching Pomak students their own language, abolishing the implementation of the *Sharia* (Greece is the only country in Europe that recognizes the Koran as state law) in the family relations of the Muslims and distancing the Turkish influence.[419] Of course comments like these prefer to ignore the realities of the region and the fact that the "stressing of an identity" and the recognition of a specific identity to populations that do not demand it is against the concept of minorities and of the human rights.

Concerning the mass media in Western Thrace, many local newspapers and journals exist: the weekly newspapers (*Akın, İleri, Gündem, Gerçek, Balkan, Ortam, Trakya'nın Sesi, Görüş, Tünel, Aile, Birlik, Diyalog)* and 5 monthly magazines (*Yuvamız, Yeni Hakka Davet, Arkadaş Çocuk, Pınar Çocuk, Şafak)*[420]. Turkish satellite TV channels can be watched and several radio stations make broadcasts in Turkish throughout Thrace. The growing number of radio stations broadcasting in Turkish has created skepticism in the local community: supporters of these radio stations (which mainly broadcast Turkish music) claim that the stations belong to owners of Turkish music shops in Xanthi and Komotini who want to promote their products.

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[419] *Το Βήμα,* 26 September1999 ,"Selective Sensitivity in Favour of the Turks," by Yiannis Marinos.

[420] *Καθημερινή* 04 April 1993.

Their "rivals" claim that Turkey could use these radio stations in times of crisis.[421] The local state radio (ERA) and some other Greek media also have broadcasting sections in Turkish. Concerning the circulation of Turkish newspapers coming from Turkey in Thrace, they began to be sold commercially from April 2000, but they have a rather limited circulation.[422] Music and videotapes, mainly imported from Turkey, are widespread and Turkish music and songs are played at gatherings of all kinds. Still, no books in Turkish are published in Greece.[423]

Freedom of speech continued to be problematic. A characteristic example is the case of journalist Abdülhalim Dede, who was accused in December 1996 of spreading false information. The accusation was about his article in newspaper *Trakya'nın Sesi (*The Voice of Thrace), in which he claimed that in Thrace there is a deep state mechanism. He accused the Association of Istanbul Imvros and Tenedos Greeks of Western Thrace of blocking an institute for the teaching of Turkish language. Dede was finally acquitted, but the interesting thing was that in the same period politicians and other personalities ( the minister of Defence, Yer. Arsenis, in 1995, the Dean of Dimokriteio Thrace University Y. Panousis in 1993,) had repeatedly declared publicly the existence of deep state mechanisms in Thrace.[424] The case of the prosecution of Dede, the previous verdict of guilt of S. Ahmet and the prosecution of the selected by the minority muftis, are based on Article 191 of the Penal Code concerning the spreading of false news and disorder of international

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[421] *Athens News,* 05 May 1996.

[423] Mercator-Education, Report on Greece over "The Turkish Language in Education in Greece" (2003), p. 7.

[424] Yianna Kourtovic, " Δικαιοσύνη και Μειονότητες» [ Justice and Minorities], in Tsitselikis-Hristopoulos ed. *Το μειονοτικό φαινόμενο στην Ελλάδα,* pp. 271-272.

relations, an article that negatively counters any effort of expression of ethnic identity of the Turkish minority.

# CHAPTER V

## THE FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO "CHANGE"

The internationalization of a topic increases its supporters and makes it known to public opinion. One of the most important factors leading to the "change" of Greek policy, especially towards the Turkish minority, has been the effects of globalization on the nation-state through the direct intervention of NGOs and international organizations.

Despite the fact that from the first years after the signing of Lausanne Treaty, there were efforts made by Turkey and by minority Turkish politicians to publicize the violations of the Greek state against the minorities, the international community did not express great interest about the specific minorities. Through the years, the pressure mechanisms changed: it was no longer Turkey that applied to international organizations, but the Western Thrace Turkish organizations in Greece, in Turkey or in Europe that, with the help of the new technologies and the interest of Europe in human rights and minorities, managed to internationalise their problems, attract the interest of the international communities, and force Greece to change its practices.

The abolition of Article 19 is a characteristic example of the result that pressures from inside and outside can have. Sadık Ahmet, when elected to Parliament in 1989, submitted a proposal for the change of the specific article. Despite the fact that his efforts didn't have an immediate result, he continued his struggle by making attempts to register the people who had lost their citizenship and present the list with their names to the government. Turkish diplomacy, pressure

from international human rights organizations and other international organizations helped to abolish this law. Finally the efforts of the Greek government to improve the living standards of the minorities together with this increased internal and external pressure brought the abolition of Article 19. The following "pressure groups" in a synchronous effort led to the abolition of the specific article: the Greek Parliament initiative (KKE and Synaspismos), media pressure;[425] the US State Department and Helsinki Watch reports; the Council of Europe, which began to be interested on the minority issues, and sent a committee to visit Thrace to examine the problem and solidarity Associations in Germany.

Greek public opinion reacted with surprise towards all these mobilization activities. It shouldn't be forgotten that until the mid 1980s, Greece, in the eyes of the Greek people, was a homogenous state and the Muslim Turks of Thrace "were well-hidden behind an interior border and their existence was more or less unknown for most of the inhabitants of the rest of Greece."[426] The minority did not react publicly until the beginning of 1980s. The homogenous character of the Greek state was stressed through education, so a mobilization of a "forgotten" minority of Greece could be interpreted in eyes of Greeks as a "threat". Also, it should be pointed out that the different politics of the Greek state in the past towards the minority was not a policy of tolerance and led to the creation of specific names for the communities without the agreed opinion of the minority itself (see for example the continuous stress of the expression "Muslim minority", "Greek Pomaks," etc.). The active presence of the Muslim communities (not only the Turkish minority, but

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[425] *Trakya'nin Sesi*, 13 January 1998.

[426] *To Βήμα*, 18 October 1998, Christina Koulouri, "The Power of Majority and the Rights of the Minorities."

also the obvious presence of immigrants in Greece), "destroyed" the dominant image of ethnic homogeneity and challenged the usual discourse on a "Greek Christian-Orthodox State".

## The International Environment

The changes in the minority policy that took place at the beginning of 1990s were directly connected to the international environment. The dissolution of Yugoslavia created serious concerns in all the Balkan states concerning the ethnic identity of their people. Despite the fact that the possibilities of disintegration in the other states but especially in Greece were almost nonexistant (the minority in Western Thrace never expressed any request for autonomy or secession), the situation in the Balkans worried the Greek government. The dissolution of Yugoslavia and the appearance of the minorities as a threat for the stability of the national sovereignty contributed highly to a series of measures adopted by the European Union and the Greek governments of the time.

## The Formulation of a European Identity

Despite the fact that the Turkish population of Greece is a native population and the minority is a local minority and not a community of immigrants, the identification with the idea of "European citizen" has been proved difficult. Concerning the European identity, there are two parameters: how the minority sees itself and how others see the minority. How others see the minority includes not only how the Greek state and society them, but also how Turkey and Europe see the

minority which has the special characteristic not of just being a national or linguistic or cultural minority, but also a religious minority, Muslim.

The fact that Islam has been Christianity's other and Christianity has been connected so intimately with the Greek identity has influenced through the years the concept of Greek society and the politics of the Greek state towards its minority. The indifference of Europe to the Turkish minority's problems until the end of 1980s can be connected to the fact that a small Muslim minority in the peripheries of Europe did not attract the interest of the Europeans. After the beginning of 1990's and the pressure exercised over Greece by European institutions concerning the minority's problems, a new era of European interest in minority problems started. In the 1920's a European Muslim did not exist as a reality, as an historical fact or as a social phenomenon, but for the 1990's in the framework of the new civic citizenship Europe, Muslims are an important part of the population.

Despite the fact that identities are not imposed from the outside but are adopted by communities, the European identity of the Muslims of Greece can be traced in several parameters: 1) The active presence of European transnational institutions defending their rights; 2) the distribution of European Union funds that included the minority region and profited minority professionals; and 3) the facilities provided by the European Union which are not restricted to specific religious or ethnic populations but are addressed to every citizen of the European Union. Also, the increased feeling of Europeanness by the Christian inhabitants of Greece has contributed to the distancing from the narrow borders of the classical nationalistic discourse and the suspicion of the "other".

Specifically concerning the minority of Western Thrace it can be observed that for the minority, Europe did not represent only a cultural "refuge," but a means

of establishing their claims against the government. In a more general context, as Anthony Pagden observes, "Catalans and Basques, Lombards and Piedmontese, can agree to be European more easily than they can agree to be either Italians or Spanish."[427]

On the other hand, the Muslim religion as the basic characteristic of the minority creates problems in how Greek society perceives them. It is very often believed that the attachment of the minority to its religion is what differentiates it from the rest of Greek society and the modern way of life in general.

The Influence of European Institutions (Council of Europe, European Parliament)

The role of the international community concerning the human rights has been very important towards the improvement of the human rights records of many countries. In 1994, S. Ahmet described the improvements in the behaviour of the state in the minority said: "Nobody is in prison, nobody has been killed. But what small rights we have won are not because the Greeks love us. It is because of the pressure of Europe, the United States."[428] It was especially in the mid-1980's, after the entrance of Greece in the EU, that the initiatives of European Institutions increased, because it is the period that human rights gained big importance in Europe and Europe became more sensitive to minority rights campaigns. Despite the fact that the European Union promoted the protection of minorities, at least in the 1980's we

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[427] Anthony Pagden, "Introduction" in Anthony Pagden (ed.), *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 31.

[428] "Turks grapple for their rights in Greece; The appointment of a Greek as a Muslim leader in a Turkish-dominated town sparked another court battle over minority rights", in *The Independent (London)*, 30 June 1994.

saw rare signs of such efforts. Even in 1995, in the declaration of the EU in Paris, there were only indirect sentences about the "protection of national minorities." According to some scholars, the lack of a clear minority policy by the EU is connected to the fact that EU prefers bilateral agreements between states and the principle of reciprocity, reminiscent of the interwar period.[429] Representatives of the minority disappointed by the continuation of their problems in Greece, started to address themselves to European and international organizations. Greece was very much interested in its international image, so pressure from European institutions and international organizations worked effectively and contributed to the partial lifting of the discriminatory measures. The fact that Greece had to present national reports before international quasi-judicial or political monitoring organs, which describe the legislative measures taken by Greece in the field of human rights, was very important. The results of such committees, for example the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) issued a positive report on 22 March 2001 welcoming the measures taken by the Greek state, aimed at promoting effective equality among individuals with particular attention to "Roma people, migrant workers, refugees, and asylum seekers, and the minority population of western Thrace."[430]

One of the most important international instruments of protection is the European Convention of Human Rights. The Convention guarantees the protection of

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[429] Christos Giakoumopoulos, "The Minority Phenomenon in Greece and the European Convention of Human Rights", in K. Tsitselikis & D. Christopoulos (eds.) *Το Μειονοτικό Φαινόμενο στην Ελλάδα. Μια Συμβολή των Κοινωνικών Επιστημών (*Athens: Kritiki, 1997), p. 27.

[430] Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 22 March 2001.

the civil and political rights of all peoples without any distinction. Members of minority groups can present their problems to the judicial organs of the Convention.

The pressure exercised over Greece by international and European organizations contributed to a change in the interpretation of Greek law. The strict interpretation and usage of the Treaties (e.g., the continuous usage of the expression "Muslim minority" without any reference to ethnic origins of the population) has started to change due to the pressure exercised by European politicians and the reports and guidelines of the European Union that are more tolerant of ethnic minorities than before. Many academics and politicians no longer make use of expressions based on "papers," preferring instead use words that reflect the realities.

Finally, especially since 1991, there have efforts by leading academics and scholars to explain in the Greek public opinion forum the regulations provided by the European Union concerning minorities, the international protection law of minority rights and the equality of human rights which must be the cornerstone of a democracy. Expressions like "ethnic minority," "national minority" and others are used with increasing frequency in the articles of Greek journalists and academics in an effort to explain to the Greek public the realities of the twenty-first century.

## European Treaties after 1991

The Maastricht Treaty (1993), or the Treaty for the European Union, was a very important step towards the unification of the European states. The basis of the Treaty states that, "this treaty is a new stage for a closer union of European

people."[431] The text of the Treaty stresses that the Union will respect the integrity of the states and will not tolerate any threat concerning the identities of the member states. In the Treaty are indirect references to the state of minorities, especially in the fields of culture and education.[432] The Treaty of Amsterdam (1996), although it predicted the acceptance of a new Charter of Rights of the Citizens of the Union, aiming at the abolition of any form of discrimination, it did not include any extra provisions for the minorities.

## The Role of the Council of Europe

The Council of Europe expressed its interests in the situation of the Turks of Thrace in the early 1980's. Turkish associations of immigrants in Germany were organized to present their problems and asked for a solution from Europe to their problems, under the leadership of Aydın Ömeroğlu, a Turkish lawyer from Western Thrace living in Germany. In a meeting with the German parliamentarian Wilfried Böhm, in October 1983, a delegation of the Turks of W. Thrace expressed their problems and concerns for the future of their minority. In a meeting at 10 May 1984, the Council of Europe decided to look closer at the problems of the Turkish minority of Western Thrace.[433] A proposal of eighteen MPs, concerning the violation of rights of the Turkish Muslim minority was submitted to the chairmanship of the Council of Europe. After that time, the Council of Europe continued to express its interest in the

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[431] Hrysohoou, p. 270.

[432] Mustafa Fişne, *Political Conditions for "Being a European state"* (Afyon: Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi, 2003), p. 93.

[433] Aarbacke, p. 649.

problems of the Turkish minority, and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, published on 22 September 1992 is considered to be the first attempt by minority members to solve their problems through European institutions.[434]

The European Parliament expressed its concern about the minority of W. Thrace almost at the same time as when the Council of Europe did. It was 1983 when two British parliamentarians, John Taylor and Ian Paisley, submitted a memorandum presenting the problems of the minority. The Greek newspapers declared the memorandum to be an act of Turkish policy ("for unknown services in exchange").[435] On the same year, Aydın Ömeroğlu submitted a petition to the Committee for Regulating Petitions of the European Parliament. Greek Parliamentarian Gondikas was put in charge to investigate the issue. Gondikas' report, soon after he returned from Greece, in 1984, in a period very difficult for the minority in Greece, presented an extremely "pink" image: the conclusion was that the Muslims in Greece are treated the same as the Christians.[436] As we have already seen the situation of the Muslims of Thrace was not what the Greek parliamentarian wanted to present in Europe: Article 19 was still valid, there were administrative problems, serious problems in education and in freedom of expression.

The European Union manages many different programs aiming at the preservation of the minorities' characteristics and their languages. One of the most important ones has been a project aimed at improving the fluency of minority students in Greek and in this way facilitate their entry into the Greek public educational system and the probably into the Greek national economy and society. It

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[434] Ibid., p. 649.

[435] *Καθημερινή*, 5 May 1991.

[436] Aarbacke, p. 650.

lasted three years (1997-2000) and cost more than 3,500,000 euros. The result of the project was new textbooks specially adapted to the needs of the Turkish students. A similar project is now running for secondary school minority pupils. It is planned to last for three years (2002-2004), with a budge of about 4,400,000 euros and is aimed at improving the fluency of minority pupils in Greek and their position in the school system in general.[437]

Regarding the protection of any kind of minorities, Greece is a member of international organizations like the Council of Europe, the European Union and the OSCE. Important treaties concerning the protection of the minorities are the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ratified in 1997), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ratified in 1985), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Race Discrimination (ratified in 1970), the Convention on the Prevention and Repression of the Crime of Genocide (ratified in 1954), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified in 1992), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination of Women (ratified in 1983), the Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation (No. 111, ILO) (ratified in 1984), the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ratified in 1974), the European Convention on Torture and Inhuman and Degrading Treatment (ratified in 1993), the European Social Charter (ratified in 1984), the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (signed in 1997,

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[437] For more information concerning education and the effect of EU on projects see, Mercator-Education Report on *The Turkish language in Education in Greece*, 2003.

ratification announced for late 1999, not ratified yet in 2004) and the European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages (not signed nor ratified).[438]

On 28 June 1990, the then government of Greece, led by K. Mitsotakis, together with the governments of the other states participating in the OSCE, agreed to the Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the OSCE.

> The Copenhagen Document commits governments i.a. to provide persons belonging to national minorities the right freely to express, preserve and develop (individually as well as in community with other members of their group) their ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity and to maintain and develop their culture in all its aspects, to profess and practice their religion, and to establish and maintain organizations or associations.[439]

The two most important binding documents concerning minority protection are the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Greece signed the Framework Convention in Strasbourg on September 22, 1997, but has not ratified it yet. It is estimated that the signing and ratification of the European Charter for Region or Minority Languages and the ratification of the Framework Convention, together with their practical implementation which will accompany an official recognition of minority language and national minorities, will be an important step for the remaining problems. The International Pact on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,

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[438] The list of the treaties is available in Greek Helsinki Monitor and Minority Rights Group-Greece, Report about Compliance with the Principles of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (along guidelines for state reports according to Article 25.1 of the Convention),18 September 1999, pp.9-10. Available [online] at http://www.greekhelsinki.gr/Minorities_of_Greece.html, 14 June 2004.

[439] See statement of Max Van der Stoel, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. Available [online] at http://www.osce.org/inst/hcnm/news/stat-hcnm-99.htm

the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and other international treaties, protect the minorities in Greece. Ratified international instruments take precedence over other Greek laws.[440]

The European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages (1992) is an important document that aims at the protection of local and minority languages spoken in Europe. The basis of the Charter is that the states who ratify it have to encourage and facilitate the use of minority languages in public and private life and lift any obstacle to the usage of these languages in the media, economic and social life, education, justice and administration.

The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities was opened for signature on 2 February 1995. While Greece signed the document it has yet to ratify it. The Convention is a result of the worries of the European states after the wars in Yugoslavia and the developments of 1989. Despite the fact that in 1990 the participating states of the CSCE agreed that "to belong in a national minority is a matter of a person's individual choice and no disadvantage may arise from the exercise of such a choice," when the governments of Europe adopted the Framework Convention, they were much more cautious not to give away too many rights to their national minorities.[441]

The Framework Convention's importance is connected to the fact that it is the first international legally binding convention concerning the rights of the national

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[440] Greek Helsinki Monitor & Minority Rights Group-Greece, Report about Compliance with the Principles of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (along guidelines for state reports according to Article 25.1 of the Convention),18 September 1999, p.1. Available [online] at http://www.greekhelsinki.gr/Minorities_of_Greece.html, checked 14 June 2004.

[441] Stefan Troebst, "The Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities Revisited", in *Speaking About Rights* 14, no. 2 (1999). Available [online] at http://www.greekhelsinki.gr/english/articles/chrf-sar2-conseil.html, checked 14 June 2004.

minorities. Among the articles of the Framework Convention are articles concerned with equality before the law and the prohibition of any regulations that violate the rights of national minorities. The countries that ratify the Framework Convention are expected to encourage research concerning the national, linguistic and religious minorities and to facilitate minority education.

In addition, they are obliged to respect the minority languages and the educational rights of minority students. Finally, the states are obliged to facilitate and not to obstruct the free circulation and communication of their citizens who belong to a national minority with the citizens of neighbor states with whom they share common cultural bonds.

Concerning problematic "points" of the Framework Convention Law, scholars refer to its inability to define the term "national minority" and to its weakness to separate the personal rights from the group rights.[442] According to other scholars, the text of the Framework Convention is weak because neither it binds the states to follow specific policies nor really protects fully the rights of the national minorities. In many cases, the clauses of the legal text are in favor of the member States and not in favor of the minorities.[443] Even the name of it, "framework," reduces its legal weight. Still, the Framework Convention is a great step towards the protection of minorities and it can solve many of the existing problems.

The Framework Convention on National Minorities, which celebrates its sixth anniversary in 2004, provides an essential mechanism for responding to the needs of minorities by agreeing legally binding minimum standards that must be met

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[442] Rehman, pp. 113-115.

[443] Ibid.

by States. In some cases, the FCNM has been praised for the effectiveness of its monitoring mechanisms, which involve country visits and constructive dialogue between CoE, governments and minorities.[444]

The fact that some of the cases of the convicted politicians or muftis of Thrace reached the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) and were found unjustified, shows one more pressure mechanism over Greece. A special interministerial commission has been established, which monitors the implementation of all the judgments of the European Court concerning Greece. Concerning the function of the ECHR, there are serious restrictions in its functioning: the Court is not directly related to national minorities, but only directly to persons discriminated by the State and belonging to these minorities. The ECHR can help the enforcement of minority rights, despite the fact that it is not a mechanism protective of the collective rights of the minorities.

In conclusion it can be stated that the signing of international and mostly European Treaties and Conventions aiming at the protection of minorities and specifically the protection of the western Thrace minority has been very fruitful for the minority because it stopped the long-standing policy of basing the rights of the Turkish Muslim minority in Greece to a large extent on the relations between Greece and Turkey (and in the past, even Greece and Bulgaria). The Treaty of Lausanne is still in practice, but the rights of the minority are guaranteed by international treaties, especially after the 1990's.

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[444] Minority Rights Group International, Press Release, 15 April 2003. Available [online] at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/balkanhr/message/5361, checked 14 June 2004.

International Human Rights Organisations

The clear formulation of a global civil society permitted the intervention of international human rights organisations in the issue of the minorities. Except from the EU, a wide range of many heteronomous transnational organizations and networks have been established promoting human rights. The most distinctive organization that is exclusively interested in human rights and whose reports have special importance is the Helsinki Watch Reports. Greek politicians and Greek public opinion were not prepared for intervention from international human rights organisations. So, when Helsinki Watch Report published its report in 1991, there were incredulous reactions in the Greek press. The journalists' team " O Ios", in an analytical article in *Ελευθεροτυπία,* criticized all these reactions of the nationalists by admitting that in Greece the reports of human rights organizations are always accepted as proof of the international plot against Greece.

Also very important in the improvement of the position of the minority in Greece has been the contribution of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE, formerly CSCE) High Commissioner on National Minorities, that expressed complaints and offered advice for the better treatment of the minority in Greece.[445] The HCNM was established by the Helsinki Summit in 1992. The Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of 1990 is accepted as the most "eminent and far-reaching document on the international protection of national minorities."[446] Also the participating states acknowledged in the Document of the Geneva Meeting of Experts on National

[445] See the comments of Max Van der Stoel explaining Greece's obligations regarding the minorities. Available [online] at http://www.osce.org/inst/hcnm/news/stat-hcnm-99/htm

[446] Carmen Thiele, p. 6.

Minorities of 1991 "members of a national minority have the same rights and the same duties as the other citizens."[447]

The Greek Helsinki Committee established in 1992 under the chairmanship of Panayiotis Dimitras, became active in the region of W. Thrace, preparing reports concerning the violations of human rights, the positive steps of Greek governments and initiatives concerning the abolition of Article 19.

## International Organisations

The sensitivity of Greece to international criticism is, according to our opinion, a main factor that contributed to the change of the state's policy towards the Muslim minorities. Not only European Parliament and the Council of Europe, at the beginning of 1990s, but also overseas human rights reports alarmed the Greek authorities, even though the traditional Greek "anti-Americanism" would be the first reaction to the American initiatives. For example in 1998, the intervention of the U.S. in Kosovo created concern among Greek intellectuals who feared the possible results of a similar intervention of the U.S. to Greece in order to defend the minority.[448] Some of the reactions were not so important, but others, and especially printed reports, created serious concern among the Greek authorities who did not want to see such texts printed again. It was the first time in 1978, when the first "striking" report emerged from the State Department putting light on the problems of the minority. The Carter report as it is known among the members of the minority,

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[447] Ibid., p. 6.

[448] *Το Βήμα*, 15 March1998 "Democracy by Force", Vassilis Moulopoulos.

was the first serious report at the international level dealing with the problems of the minority.

Concerning the period of change, the State Department's Human Rights Report in 1991, presented in the U.S. Congress, was very critical towards Greece's attitude. The specific report created big reactions in Greece because it was issued by the USA and opened the doors for speaking once more about "the intervention of foreign powers."

International organizations expressed at different times their concern about the situation of the Turks of Western Thrace. The Muslim World League and the *mufti* of Xanthi in 1982 complained of Greece to the Human Rights Committee of the UN. Two years later, in 1984, the World Muslim Congress complained to the Human Rights Centre of the UN about the oppression of the Muslim Turkish population of Western Thrace.

## The Role of Turkey

As explained in the previous chapters, Turkey has always been interested in the situation of the minority in Thrace. Despite the fact that Turkish public opinion has been interested in the situation of Turks in Bulgaria or other Turkish communities in the world quite late, the situation of the minority in Greece has always been one of the concerns of Turkey. Turkey is the kin-state of the minority of Western Thrace and as a kin-state it has always been interested in and concerned for the situation of the minority in Greece. Greece is the kin-state of the Christian Orthodox minority of Istanbul. The fact that Turkey, as kin-state, has intervened in favor of the minority has very often been misunderstood by the Greek state as

"patronage". As K. Tsitselikis states, "the kinship (in general) has been revealed as an ambiguous legal relation, as it creates a right to intervene in the domestic affairs of the host state of the minority. Nonetheless, the interest of the kin-states would be the counterpart for uncontrolled maltreatment of the minority by the host-state."[449].

The common religious bonds have led many Balkan Muslims to look to Turkey as their kin-state.[450] The Turkish Consulate in Komotini has close contacts with the minority's associations and leaders (members of the Parliament, mayors, presidents of cultural associations etc.) and also the *Συντονιστική μειονοτική Επιτροπή* (Coordinating Minority Committee). It supports cultural events in the region and at least, until 1990's it worked as "ambassador" of the Western Thrace Turks abroad, presenting their problems in the international arena. On several occasions, Turkish politicians in Turkey explained to the public the problems of the minority in Thrace.

A characteristic example is the initiatives taken by Mesut Yılmaz, who, touched by the situation of the minority at the end of 1980's and because of the shameful events in Komotini against the minority by nationalist Greeks, sent a letter to international organizations like NATO, the UN Secretary-General, the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, the European Parliament, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, and many European foreign ministers.[451]

The same politician, in a conference organized by the Western Thracian Solidary Associations in Istanbul in 1996, he spoke about the violation of human

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[449] K. Tsitselikis, "The Legal status of Islam in Greece", unpublished article, p. 15.

[450] H. Poulton, "Turkey as Kin-State: Turkish Foreign Policy towards Turkish and Muslim Communities in the Balkans,"*Muslim Identity and the Balkan State,* eds. H. Poulton and S. Taji-Farouki , p. 197.

[451] Aarbacke, p. 64.7

rights and the religious freedom of the Turks of Thrace.[452] Greece started to care about the Turkish criticisms, especially at the end of 1980's, even though the standard argument in the Greek press was that Turkey has no right to criticize Greece since it did not respect the same rights for its own minorities. The counter argument of the Turkish side, which is often seen in Turkish articles, is that Greece, which is supposed to be a democratic country member of the EU, violates the rights of its citizens, while Turkey is not yet member of the EU and faces special problems which should be judged accordingly.

In 1991, the permanent representative of Turkey in the UN, Mustafa Akşin, presented the issue of Western Thrace to that organization. Also, İsmail Cem, in an article he wrote for the Italian newspaper La Stampa in August 2002, accused Greece of not respecting the rights of its minorities, not only the Muslim ones, but also the "Albanian, Vlach and Macedonian" minorities."[453]

The role of Turkey has been very important for the protection of the minority: mainly it has supported the minority in international institutions. Turkey many times has offered its solidarity to the minority of western Thrace, presented the violations of the human rights of the minority in Europe and has granted scholarships to many Turkish students for studies in high schools and universities in Turkey. The possible entrance of Turkey in the EU poses questions concerning the influence that Turkey might have on the population of western Thrace after a possible "opening" of the borders.

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[452] *Το Βήμα,* 10 November 1996.

[453] *Το Βήμα,* 06 August 2000, article by Ag. Stagkos.

The speculations we can make are optimistic: the entrance of Turkey in the EU will mean the entrance of the whole of the Turkish nation in the concept of the European citizen, and in an era where nationalism does not hold any more the superiority in values, we believe that the results from such an event will be positive for Greek-Turkish relations and for the future and the better understanding of minorities and majorities.

## Minority Action Groups (in Greece, Turkey and Europe)

The geographical fields of the minority activities to present and struggle for their rights can be separated into three: the ones activated in Greece, in Turkey and the rest of the world, mainly Germany. As can be understood, Western Thracian Turks living in Turkey or Europe have had much many chances to approach international organizations, while the representatives of the minority of Greece (with the exception of S. Ahmet) have been more hesitating to criticize their country in the international human rights organizations. They have preferred to act within the borders of their country.

### Turks in Western Thrace

As has already been discussed, S. Ahmet was the first and the most obvious activist who worked to internationalize the problems of the Turkish minority. He was a very good example since there were many trials against him, which could be used in international circles as a proof of oppression. In June 1991, Ahmet visited Washington on the invitation of the organization Oppressed Turkish Minorities in the

Balkan Peninsula. He complained about the number of Turks who had lost their citizenship and demanded pressure be exercised over Greece.[454]

Abdülhalim Dede, editor of the newspaper *Trakyanin Sesi*, is another example of an activist among the minority. Hülya Emin, another important and well-known minority journalist, editor of the newspaper *Gündem* offers a lot in the minority of Western Thrace through articles criticising not only Greek government's actions but also minority's wrong "movements".

Concerning the promotion of the minority problems, the role of the *Συντονιστική μειονοτική επιτροπή (*Coordinating Minority Committee) is very important. The Committee was established in 1980 and consists of minority mayors, deputies, businessmen and general the "leaders" of the minority and tries to promote the solution of the remaining problems.[455]

## Western Thrace Turks in Turkey

Many Turks of Western Thrace have moved to Turkey in several periods since the Lausanne Treaty was signed, especially when Greek-Turkish relations have reflected in a negative way how Greek state treated its minorities. The immigrants to Turkey have formed several associations under the names Western Thrace Turkish Solidary Associations (*Batı Trakya Türkleri Dayanışma Dernekleri, BTTD)* in different Turkish cities, like Bursa, Ankara, İzmir, but mainly Istanbul. Through informative bulletins and small journals, they have tried, first inside Turkey, and

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[454] *Cumhuriyet,* 3 July 1991.

[455] For the problems and the functions of the Committee see Oran, 1991, p.180-182

especially after 1974 abroad, to present the problems of their minority. The first of these organizations was formed in 1946, under the name Western Thrace Emigrants Aid Associations (*Batı Trakya Göçmenleri Yardım Cemiyeti)* with the aim to help Turks who suffered from the Bulgarian occupation of Western Thrace to move to Turkey. Among the activities of these associations that took place in Istanbul were the organization of a big conference on 28 June 1986 concerning the situation of the Turkish minority in Greece, and the publishing of the journal *Batı Trakyanın Sesi.* Their activities were always viewed with suspicion by the Greek authorities and their arguments were always counterbalanced with the deteriorating situation of the Greek Orthodox minority of Istanbul and the violations of human rights of Turkey as depicted in the reports of the Council of Europe.[456]

## Western Thrace Turks in Europe

Germany has accepted the largest number of immigrants from Thrace, Christian and Muslim. In 1960's immigration waves to Germany started from Thrace and it is at that time that several associations were formed with local criteria. In the 1980s there were five or six associations in Germany, and this number increased over the years. Today it is estimated that 12,000 Western Thrace Turks live in Germany.[457] Life in Germany, despite problems concerning working conditions, opened the horizons of Turks or Pomaks that moved to there from Greece in a difficult period and improved the living standards of the minorities. Aydın Öneroğlu,

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[456] Characteristic article expressing the doubts for the sincerity of the activities of Turks of W. Thrace is in *To Βήμα,* 10 November 1996, "In the house of the hanged..." by I.M. Konidaris.

[457] Ronald Meinardus, in Richard Clogg ed., p.84

a Western Thrace lawyer living in Germany, became active in the support of the human rights of the minority. At the beginning of the 1980s, when the first associations of Western Thrace Turks in Germany were organized, they started to make obvious their presence through visits to European Parliament to expose their problems (10 October 1983 visit by Aydın Ömeroğlu in Strasburg) and a conference with the participation of all the Western Thracian minority associations in Germany (18 October 1983).

The initiatives of Ömeroğlu and Western Thracian Turks resulted in pressure exercised by the Council of Europe on Greece to accept the Europe Human Rights Agreement's Article 25 and the mentioning of "Turkish origin" minority, instead of Muslim, by the commission of the European Parliament.[458] Despite these efforts, the European Parliament made no comment about "mistreatment of the minorities." Cafer Alioğlu took the leadership of the associations of Germany in 1994.

## Change in the Greek Policy: Economical Development

One of the very important reasons, contributing to the change of the Greek policy towards its minority in Thrace, has been the need for Greece to economically develop Western Thrace, which has always been one of the poorest regions in Europe. The new concept of "economic development" is expected to raise the living standards of the minorities, to increase the mobility inside the minorities so that the traditional patriarchal relations can be overcome, and finally to use productively the

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[458] Aarbacke, p.652, quoted by Ömeroğlu's book printed in 1994.

human resource of the Turks and Pomaks, outside of the frame of the traditional agricultural.

Except from development, the second axe of the Greek policy, especially towards the Turkish minority is that, according to confidential papers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which became public in 1999, "the minority of Thrace does not constitute anymore a danger and does not possess possible features that can be considered a threat."[459] The confidential report continues:

> In 1922, the minority of Thrace numbered 86,000 people. The most recent census (1991) recorded 98,000 Muslims in a population of 338,000 of Thrace. That is a percentage of 29% of the region, or 0.92% of the total Greek population. The minority consists of three ethnicities: 50% are Turks, 35% Pomaks and 15% Gypsies.

The conclusion of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was that "the minority does not constitute a threat and the fears that similar to Kosovo situations will take place in Greek Thrace are absolutely false."[460]

In other confidential notes, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs speaks about "interest networks," that delayed the lifting of the repression measures, because the existing situation was in the interest of the specific groups, of Christians and Muslims. Among others, the note refers to "local persons, Christians and Muslims, secret agents (not always of Greek Intelligence Service), but also people connected to illegal trade of gold, leathers, and drugs." It can be claimed that the change concerning the attitude about the minorities was based on a upwards orientation of the state for the historical "innocence" of the minorities: the suspicion of the Greek

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[459] Confidential records of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs printed in *To Βήμα*, 08 August 1999. The confidential report of Zolotas in 1990, almost ten years ago, was written in a different political atmosphere.

[460] Confidential records of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs printed in *To Βήμα*, 8 August 1999.

state towards its minorities due to their attitude especially during the interwar period and the civil war period are an important obstacle to understanding that today's minorities can not be considered responsible for probable "mistakes" or "choices" or their predecessors.

The third important factor that has improved the life of the minority of Thrace was the disconnection of the human rights situation of the minority from Greek-Turkish relations. In the past negative relations between the two states brought more repression, while positive relations brought more stability. The fact that the life of the minorities was influenced by the foreign policy is proved by the creation of special offices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the region. The new approach of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the disconnection of the situation of the minorities from the relations of Greece and Turkey. The Turkish Muslims are Greek citizens and they should be accepted like that, whether the relations with Turkey are good or bad. Human rights and equality before the law shouldn't be put in the second row. According to the confidential reports of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs "The minority issues are issues of internal policy and the role of the ministry of Foreign Affairs should be consultive."[461]

Finally, an overall change of Greek society that escapes from the narrow limits of "homogenisation" has occurred, especially in the last decade. The fact that Greece is no longer a "Christian Orthodox state with 99% Greek-origin Christians," but a country that accepts thousands of immigrants and has a multicultural environment contributes to a better understanding of the "other," no matter if it is a local minority or a "newcomer" minority. The society of western Thrace, as a society

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[461] Ibid

living in the periphery of Europe, may suffer from the prejudices and taboos of the wider Greek society and also by the difficulty of many Greeks to seeing society and the world in its wider context. But for sure, the overall change of Greek society due to its transformation to a multicultural country contributes to the formulation of a better

## Conclusions

Greece's policy towards the minorities was marked by a deep change at the beginning of the 1990's. Until 1991, the widely held idea of the minority as a "threat" influenced the shaping of the state's policy towards the Turkish Muslim minority. The alarming developments in the Balkans moved the Greek politicians to adopt protective measures for the minorities and to lift partially the existing discrimination measures in the beginning of 1990s. The war in Yugoslavia and its dramatic effects problematised Greek public opinion. The media and the academic world started to focus on the minorities of Greece and supported their equality before the law. On the same time, the activities of the "independent" minority MPs, the mobilization of the minority (protests, demands) attracted the interest of the international community and of the Greek public opinion. This resulted in the statements of Prime Minster K. Mitsotakis for equality before the law in Thrace in May 1991. These statements shouldn't be seen as an isolated action stemming from the good will of the Greek government. It was part of the new framework under which minorities should be protected, tolerance for the "different" should be encouraged and minorities should be incorporated in the state mechanisms, but not assimilated; their ethnic identity should be kept, but the state should make these

people feel they enjoyed the same privileges as the other citizens. The change in the Greek minority policy is heavily due to the mobilization of the minority as well. The Greek approach to minorities from 1991 and afterwards can work as an existing and functional model of a nonviolent approach to the issue of minority nationalism. Greece chose to adopt the idea that "in today's multiethnic societies there is no way to keep democracy unless preserving the rights of the minorities and give constitutional guarantees."

# CHAPTER VI

## CONCLUSION

In this thesis I presented a brief history of the Turkish-Muslim minority of Greece from 1923 until today. The history of the minority has been directly connected to the fluctuations in Greek-Turkish relations. The Lausanne Treaty recognized the existence of the minorities using the criterion of the religion. The acceptance of a common religion didn't mean that that minority could not have other definitions (linguistic or ethnic ones). The acceptance of the religious term for the minority was something suitable to the conditions of the time, supported by part of the minority (the conservative ones) and also by the Greek state. The minority protection provided by the Treaty is based on bilateral reciprocity.

As can be concluded after the brief history of the minority, the bilateral reciprocity had serious results because it was interpreted (in different periods) as a chance to reciprocate and retaliate for the other country's violations against the minority. Since then, the Greek governments have formed their policy towards the minority in the frame of the Lausanne Treaty under the influence of the relations of the two states. The problems that the Greek minority of Istanbul was facing were often used by the Greek side as an excuse in the frame of reciprocity for curtailing the rights of the Turks in Thrace. In the first years of the Cold War, the Papagos government had accepted the existence of the Turkish minority. It was still a period in which Greek-Turkish problems were not serious, Cyprus was not on the agenda, and Greece and Turkey were seen as allies in the war against communism.

During the Greek junta (1967-1974), the minority suffered seriously from administrative and repressive measures aiming at its deportation from Greece. Greek politicians spoke frequently about a Turkish threat (especially after the events in Cyprus) and the Greek state had difficulty in accepting in its land a Turkish minority that could be a possible factor of destabilization. The danger from the North has ceased to exist and the Turkish Muslim minority was seen now as an internal enemy. Despite the fact that several politicians after 1950's had admitted the existence of a Turkish minority, successive Greek governments referred only to a Muslim religious minority. The rise of PASOK to power, in 1981, resulted in more repressive measures against the minority.

After all these serious problems, the developments in Greece after 1991 are a sign of optimism and the beginning of a new era for the minority. Within the frame of globalization, under the "spotlights" of international and internal human rights organizations and NGOs, under the guidance and the instructions of the European Union and the Council of Europe, and of course due to the contribution of Turkey to the minority in international organizations and the minority mobilization, serious positive changes, depicted in most of the reports of human rights organizations started in 1991 and continue until the present.

The break-up of Yugoslavia and of the former Soviet Union alerted international community. Minority protection could only be fruitful in a broader context, not depending on the peculiarities of each state. The Council of Europe and other organizations would take the responsibility. Still, many countries, especially in the Balkans –Greece included- hesitated to recognize collective rights in case of demands for "autonomy" or "independence". The Mitsotakis government made the first steps of equality of rights in Thrace. While before 1991 weak political

participation, isolation and exclusion and ethnically based tension were dominant, after the middle of 1990's a different minority presence appeared. The Turkish identity for the whole of the minority is still not officially recognized, but the government officially admits the existence of a triple ethnic differentiation of the population, recognizing among others a Turkish community.

Maybe the keyword for the prosperity of the minority is no longer equality before the law, as was stressed at the beginning of 1990's. Equality before the law, at least on paper, is guaranteed. What is needed is more actions of "good will" on the part of the Greek state, meaning "affirmative action." We should bear in mind that minority protection cannot be fully achieved just by protecting the minority individuals by non-discrimination. The states should try to regain the "wasted time" by granting collective rights to the minority and thus gaining its trust.

Serious steps have been taken in Greece, but still there are many things that have to be done. The role of education is very important: the young generation should realize that the minorities are not a danger for the state, but they are "richness", they are part of the modern "multiethnic" and "multicultural" societies. The minority education is the number one problem nowadays: more qualified teachers, better textbooks, more open-minded approach on the education is necessary.

The abolition of discriminatory measures, important investments and a new minority generation that grows up in a freer environment than what their parents had grown up is a fact. Still, the experiences of the past generations as an "isolated and excluded" minority do not create a complete feeling of satisfaction for the life in Western Thrace. The fear that somehow painful events of the past can be repeated – bigger in the old generation, less in the younger ones- still exists. The lack of trust in

the Greek state and the belief that "things will stay the same" hinders up to a point the opening of the minority to the broader Greek society. The young generations are much more optimistic and much more ready to collaborate with the broader Greek society.

The influence of globalization on the structure of the minority can obviously be observed. The economic support of the European Union and the possibilities of the new generation to participate in other forms of economy rather than agriculture and to cooperate with other people out of the borders of their community alter the traditional employment positions in the minority. This has influenced the overall economy of Thrace; the image of the "poor Muslim farmers" and the "rich Christian owners" began to change, and everyone can equally participate through the European funds to common projects for the development of the region that do not depend on ethnic basis. The educational opportunities (mostly in Greek but also in good Turkish Universities) resulted in a more active presence of women. The end of the isolation of the minority results in a reformation of the standard patterns in employment, family relationships, sex relationships, and religion.

This thesis argues that the influence of the supranational organizations and the pressure exercised on Greece from external and internal factors resulted in the beginning of change of the Greek minority policy in 1990's. The Turkish Muslim MPs and the mobilization they created at the end of the 1980s, contributed highly to the change of the state minority policy. The belief inside the minority that the EU can be an alternative source of guarantee for their existence became obvious after 1990's through the economic and political participation of minority members to the region. The importance that Greece attributed to its European image contributed to a change in minority policy (in economic and human rights aspect) in order to adjust to the

norms of EU. The Turkish identity in 2004 should not be considered a sign of exclusion and isolation. On the contrary, the fruitful participation of Turkish Muslim deputies in the Greek Parliament the last years, the preference of the youth for studying in Greek Universities and continuing their life in Greece, the significance of education as the most important problem of the minority today show that there is a change not only from the state towards its minority but from the minority towards the State.

Because of the fact that globalization is not just an economic procedure but also it has many other dimensions the interest on human rights becomes more and more intense. Five key words can be the solution to the minority problem: Development, trust, respect equality before the law, equality of rights, affirmative action.

These conclusions can be finished with a positive message: the example of the last years proves that a state that tries to respect its citizens, gains their respect and their fidelity. The example of Greece and the minority of western Thrace could work in cases like Turkey or other prospect members of the EU with minority problems. In 1981, when Greece entered the EU, the minority issue was not on the agenda; in 2004, minorities and human rights are widely discussed. Equality before the law and affirmative action that will encourage the minorities to re-trust their states can have very positive effects on the lives of the citizens of every state, whether they belong to minorities or majorities.

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