Blood Ties

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The primary and most essential factor in the problem [of the Near East] is then, the presence, embedded in the living flesh of Europe, of an alien substance. That substance is the Ottoman Turk.

—J. A. R. Marriott, 1917

The Crimean War marked the accession of the Ottoman Empire into the Concert of Europe, which, ironically, was also a confirmation of Ottoman dependency on external power to preserve its territorial integrity.1 The positive publicity and sympathy the Crimean War generated in favor of the Ottomans faded as quickly as it appeared. No sooner had the ink on the Paris Treaty dried than the Ottomans found themselves back in the position they would occupy until the end of the empire: as an entity too big to be dismantled without major disruption to the European balance of power. Even though the Great Powers kept up the appearance of preserving Ottoman sovereignty on paper, this policy did not extend to cases where the Sublime Porte could be coerced into concessions that would not directly alter the status quo to the point of causing an open conflict among the Powers. Crises such as the uprising in Crete and the violent conflict in Mount Lebanon were resolved with the intervention of the Great Powers and resulted in special administrative status for the island and an internal constitution for Mount Lebanon. For this reason, understanding the shifting relations between the European Powers and their ambitions beyond southeastern Europe would become the cornerstone of

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1. In the words of Ahmed Cevdet Pasha: “While Rumelia, the most precious of European lands was under Ottoman control, the Europeans refused to consider the Sublime State as European. After the Crimean War, the Sublime State was included in the European state system.” Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, Ma’ruzat (İstanbul, 1980), 2, quoted in Selim Deringil, The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1909 (London, 1999), 135–49. The wording of the treaty, while confirming the membership of the Ottoman Empire in the Concert of Europe, did not explicitly guarantee territorial integrity; Roderic Davison, “Ottoman Diplomacy and Its Legacy,” in The Imperial Legacy, edited by L. Carl Brown (New York, 1996), 174–201. As later crises showed, this was an important omission, and the Ottomans sought a formal alliance with a European Power until the outbreak of World War I; Mustafa Aksakal, The Ottoman Road to War in 1914: The Ottoman Empire and the First World War (Cambridge, 2008).
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Ottoman foreign policy, which, despite its obvious shortcomings, managed to preserve the standing of the empire as a member of the European Powers until the dawn of the twentieth century.

As the Ottomans responded to their growing loss of prestige among the European Powers with successive reform attempts, they met with obstacles from within and without that demonstrated the limited potential of these reforms for lasting change. Their diplomatic and military dependency was accompanied by growing indebtedness to European financial institutions, which eventually resulted in the Ottomans’ loss of control over their public finances when they became unable to service their debt and had to declare bankruptcy in 1876.² The financial crisis was partially averted in late 1879 when the government reached an agreement with domestic creditors to forgo its “indirect revenues from stamp, spirits, and fishing taxes, the silk tithe, and salt and tobacco monopolies.”³ When the arrangement, overseen by the Ottoman Bank and other local creditors, turned out to be a success, it drew the ire of foreign debtors, who wanted a restructuring of the Ottoman foreign debt and lobbied their governments to force the Ottomans to the negotiation table. The result was the establishment of the Public Debt Administration in 1881, which essentially handed direct control over Ottoman public finances to debtor governments by forcing the Ottoman government to agree to relinquish a considerable part of its tax revenues for the payment of the foreign debt.⁴

As the financial crisis unfolded, a series of crises of another nature was brewing in the Balkans that would culminate in one of the worst disasters of the nineteenth century for the Ottomans. The first sign of trouble came from Hercegovina. Facing a financial crisis and dwindling tax revenues from Anatolia following the double calamities of draught and flood in the early 1870s, the government had put an undue tax burden on the peasants of Rumeli. In 1874, the peasants of Hercegovina rebelled, refusing to pay their taxes. Soon the rebellion had spread to Bosnia, and it seemed that Bulgaria and Serbia were getting ready to join in a general insurrection. Despite promises of reform by the Sublime Porte, the insurgents were not satisfied and pushed on against the Ottoman troops sent to quell the revolt. Coinciding with the first phase of the Ottoman government insolvency crisis, the situation was dire enough to warrant Great Power intervention, which came in the form of a note presented to the Sublime Porte in January 1876.⁵

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² For developments leading up to the financial crisis of 1875 and the subsequent establishment of the Public Debt Administration, see Edhem Eldem, “Ottoman Financial Integration with Europe: Foreign Loans, the Ottoman Bank and the Ottoman Public Debt,” European Review 13, no. 3 (2005): 431–45.
³ Ibid., 441.
⁴ For the restructuring of Ottoman debt and the institutional composition of the Public Debt Administration, see Emine Kiray, Osmanlı’da Ekonomik Yapı ve Dış Borçlar (Istanbul, 1995).
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The Andrassy note, as it was called after Habsburg Foreign Minister Gyula Count Andrássy, who drafted it, required further reforms than those already promised by the Ottomans concerning local representative governance, tax reform, and religious liberty. The Sublime Porte accepted the note with the exception of the provision calling for direct local taxation in Bosnia Hercegovina; the insurgents, however, were not satisfied.\(^6\)

In early May 1876, the Ottomans had to confront another diplomatic nightmare in Salonika when a Muslim mob, agitated by news that a Bulgarian girl who had come to town to convert to Islam had been seized by Christians and taken to the U.S. vice consul’s residence, attacked and killed the French and German consuls who were trying to mediate the conflict.\(^7\) It seemed that there was no end to troubles in spring 1876, and the worst was yet to come. In April, a group of Bulgarian revolutionaries gathered outside Panagiurisht to discuss the course of action for a rebellion soon to take place. One among their numbers was an informer, who went straight to the Ottoman authorities to report the plans, and the revolutionaries were ambushed. When they retaliated and were soon joined by groups elsewhere in the region, the April Uprising began.\(^8\) The rebellion lasted about a fortnight and was brutally suppressed by the Ottomans with assistance from groups of başbozuk, or irregulars, many of whom were apparently Circassian refugees from the Caucasus who had settled in the area after being driven out by the tsar’s armies in the 1860s.\(^9\) The worst of the atrocities occurred in Batak.\(^10\) The final death toll was estimated to be 10,000–15,000. As the irregulars went on a murderous rampage, local Muslim peasants reportedly “gave shelter to the revolutionaries on occasion, refused payment, and did not inform the authorities.”\(^11\)

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8. The starting date was in April, according to the Julian calendar. Duncan Perry, Stefan Stambolov and the Emergence of Modern Bulgaria, 1870–1895 (Durham, 1993), 29–30.
10. The Batak massacre was the subject of a national controversy in Bulgaria in 2008, when Martina Baleva and Ulf Brunnbauer organized a conference with the main theme of the memory of the massacre in Bulgarian national consciousness. The conference did not take place because of protests, but the would-be presentations were published as Martina Baleva and Ulf Brunnbauer, eds., Batak: Das Bulgarischer Erinnerungs ort (Berlin, 2008). The protesters were not just a fringe group of extreme nationalists but also included, among others, members of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. For a critical evaluation of the Batak controversy, see Evelina Kelbecova, “The Short History of Bulgaria for Export,” in Religion, Ethnicity, and Contested Nationhood in the Former Ottoman Space, edited by Jørgen Nielsen (Leiden, 2012), 223–48.
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The massacres, or the “Bulgarian horrors,” as the tragic event was named by William Gladstone’s pamphlet, irrevocably destroyed what little remained of the positive publicity the Ottomans had briefly enjoyed at the time of the Crimean Wars. Gladstone, British member of Parliament and former premier, used the reports of unspeakable violence to rejuvenate his political career by attacking the conservative government, which, in his estimation, had stood by while innocent Christians were massacred. Gladstone also gave voice to what would remain the liberal European public opinion of Ottoman Turks, who were, in his memorable words, “upon the whole, from the black day when they first entered Europe, the one anti-human specimen of humanity.” The Ottomans certainly did not fail to deliver more material to confirm this opinion, as racist as it may have been, during the decades that followed. The notion that the “Turks” must be thrown out of Europe with their “bag and baggage” was only reinforced as news of further atrocities against Bulgarians, Armenians, and other Christian communities periodically circulated, followed by increasingly hollow-sounding promises of reparation, retribution, and reform.

The month of May had one more crisis in store before it came to a close: a coup d’état in Istanbul deposed Sultan Abdülaziz and brought to the throne his nephew Murad V, who had a psychological breakdown only three months after his accession and was replaced by Abdülhamid II in August 1876. As the rebellion in Bosnia went on, Serbia and Montenegro declared war on the Ottoman Empire in July. Montenegrin forces were able to hold their own, but the ill-prepared Serbian army proved to be no match for the Ottoman forces. Worse, hopes of a general Balkan rebellion were dashed, and Russia was not initially forthcoming with military assistance. In October, after the Ottoman army started to advance into the Morava valley, Russia finally intervened and presented an ultimatum to the Sublime Porte. In November an armistice was signed, but the Bosnian rebellion carried on. In December the Great Powers convened in Constantinople to discuss the terms of a new reform program that would be imposed on the Sublime Porte. Sultan Abdülhamid II took them by surprise by announcing that a parliamentary constitution had been proclaimed, making the reform proposals redundant. Count Pavel Ignatieff, the Russian representative, immediately withdrew from the conference, but the remaining diplomats formulated a revised set of demands and presented them to the Sublime Porte. The new terms included “concession of autonomy to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bulgaria under an international commission.”

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13. Ibid., 31.
categorically refused these terms. Russia had threatened war, and now it seemed inevitable.

The Russo-Ottoman war of 1877–1878, one of the pivotal events of European history, started on June 22, after the Russian army, already mobilized at the Romanian border, marched south across the Danube. The other theater of war was in the Caucasus, where the Russians advanced as far as Erzurum. On the Balkan front, they were met with unexpected resistance in Pleven, which the Ottoman troops held until December. The fall of Pleven changed the course of the war, galvanizing Serbia and Greece to commit to the action, albeit a little too late. By the time they mobilized, the Russians had signed an armistice with the Ottomans. Adrianople fell on January 20, 1878, and the Russian army proceeded to Agia Stefanos, or San Stefano, a suburb of the imperial capital. The peace treaty of San Stefano, signed on March 3, 1878, came as a shock to Serbia, Romania, and Greece, as well as Austria-Hungary. Bulgaria was the indisputable winner: the borders of “Greater Bulgaria” drawn up by the San Stefano treaty could satisfy even the most ambitious Bulgarian nationalists’ territorial aspirations. They were formed by the Danube in the north, the Rhodope Mountains in the south, the Black Sea coast in the east, and Vardar and Morava valleys in the west. The territories included most of Macedonia and even had an opening to the Aegean near Kavala and the Gulf of Orfano, although Salonika and Edirne, two other prizes the Bulgarians would have liked, were left out. Montenegro, having nearly tripled its territory, was the other winner.

The treaty was in complete violation of the Reichstadt Convention of July 1876, an agreement between the Russian and Habsburg foreign ministers in which the two countries pledged to partition the Ottoman Balkans if the Balkan states won a victory against the Ottomans, “but with the provision that no great Balkan state should be established.” The British were not happy with its terms either, which, according to Lord Beaconsfield (Benjamin Disraeli), would “make the Black Sea as much a Russian Lake as the Caspian.” A detachment of the British fleet, which was already at Besika Bay, was ready to sail into the Marmara Sea, ostensibly for “the protection of British subjects in Constantinople,” but action was halted after the sultan, fearing a Russian reaction, pleaded with the British to remain where they were. Pressure to revise the terms of the treaty was mounting from another side—the Austrians, mobilized in the Carpathians, and the Emperor Francis

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17. The Russian ambassador, Count Ignatieff, who had played an active role in the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate was also the “chief architect” of the St. Stefano treaty Bulgaria and, apparently, at one point had considered including Salonika within its borders because it was “the birthplace of Cyril and Methodius.” Pundeff, “Bulgarian Nationalism,” 120.
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Joseph demanded that a congress be held in Vienna. As Şükrü Hanoğlu puts it: “Russian territorial gains at the expense of the Ottomans were one thing; the wholesale transformation of the Balkans into a Slavic federation under Russian hegemony was another matter altogether.” Finally, the Russians agreed to a revision, but the congress would be held in Berlin, not Vienna, under Otto von Bismarck’s “honest brokerage.”

The status of the Ottoman Empire as a secondary power at the congress could not have been made clearer than in the words of the host, Chancellor Bismarck, apparently fortified with “full tumblers of port”: “If you think the Congress has met for Turkey,” he told Karatheodoris Pasha, a Phanariot diplomat and the head of the Ottoman delegation, “disabuse yourselves. San Stefano would have remained unaltered, if it had not touched certain European interests.” It certainly was altered: Bulgaria, which appeared as an immense satellite of Russia in the Balkans, was now partitioned in a way that did not threaten British and Austrian zones of influence. None of the Balkan states sat at the table during the congress. They were relegated to the kids’ table, so to speak, having been allowed to send representatives to participate in a separate session that did not have any binding power over the outcome. In the end, Macedonia was restored to the Ottomans on the condition of their implementing reforms to improve the living conditions of its Christian inhabitants. Similar reforms were called for in the Six Provinces of Eastern Anatolia to protect the Armenian population from the exactions of Kurdish and Circassian marauders. What remained of Bulgaria was divided into two parts: the Principality in the north, between the Balkans and the Danube, and the province of Eastern Rumelia in the south. The latter would nominally remain under Ottoman sovereignty but retain autonomy under a Christian governor approved by the Great Powers. In sum, the Bulgaria that emerged out of the Congress of Berlin had only 37.5 percent of the territory accorded to the Bulgaria of the San Stefano treaty, which for Bulgarians remained “the real Bulgaria” so that “the new Bulgarian state was to enter into life with a ready-made programme for territorial expansion and a burning sense of the injustice meted out to it by the great powers.”

None of the Balkan states returned from Berlin with a territorial gain that satisfied its desires. Nor was the restoration of Ottoman sovereignty in Macedonia and Thrace a diplomatic victory for the Ottomans. On the contrary, it essentially marked the end of centuries of Ottoman presence in the Balkans. The Ottoman Turks, the “alien substance” in the “living flesh

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of Europe” were on their way out of the continent for good.\textsuperscript{24} The Ottoman Empire had lost “more than a third of its territory and much of its non-Muslim population.”\textsuperscript{25} It had to cede control of Bosnia Hercegovina to Austria. Russia retained Bessarabia as well as its acquisitions in the east: Batum, Kars, and Ardahan. Britain took control of Cyprus under a separate convention. Serbia, Montenegro, and Romania were recognized as independent states. Greece was not immediately accorded any territorial gains, but a conference held in Berlin two years later made a frontier settlement in its favor. As a result, the Hellenic Kingdom extended its borders to include Thessaly and Epirus in 1882. All these border changes were accompanied by voluntary and involuntary emigrations of large numbers of Muslims from former Ottoman territories into the receding empire.\textsuperscript{26} The aim of the Congress of Berlin had been to prevent a total breakdown of the Concert of Europe; this it did, but only temporarily and at a high cost. Its higher aim, to settle the Eastern Question, was quite far from fulfilled. The political map of southeastern Europe that emerged as a result of the Congress of Berlin would precipitate decades of violent struggle for territory and set in motion events that ultimately resulted in the deaths, deportations, and ethnic cleansing of thousands of people. The epicenter of the first round of the struggle was Macedonia, a region that did not easily lend itself to partition along ethnic lines.

The Establishment of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization and the Supreme Committee

When the Bulgarian Principality united with Eastern Rumelia in 1885 as the result of a swift coup by revolutionaries on either side of the Balkans, and with the acquiescence of Alexander of Battenberg, the prince of Bulgaria, a diplomatic crisis ensued. The Russians withdrew their support of the Bulgarian military, which left Bulgaria unprepared against the Serbian aggression that followed the unification. The dream of a pan-Slavist federation under Russian tutelage had crumbled to pieces. Despite the lack of support from Russia, the Bulgarian army prevailed over the Serbian forces and was stopped from proceeding to Belgrade only by the intervention of Austria-Hungary.\textsuperscript{27} The military victory did not bring much in terms of territorial gains, but the unification of Bulgaria was complete—although

\textsuperscript{24} Marriott, \textit{Eastern Question}, 3.
\textsuperscript{25} Caroline Finkel, \textit{Osman’s Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1923} (New York, 2006), 486.
\textsuperscript{26} Alexandre Toumarkine, \textit{Les Migrations des Populations Musulmanes Balkaniques en Anatolie} (Istanbul, 1995).
\textsuperscript{27} Crampton, \textit{Concise History of Bulgaria}, 91.
Macedonia still remained an unfulfilled promise.\textsuperscript{28} After the abdication of Prince Alexander in 1886, an interim regency consisting of the Prime Minister Petko Karavelov and Stefan Stambolov, the former revolutionary (later, speaker of the събрание), took charge until a suitable replacement for Alexander could be found. Prince Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha was instituted as the new regent of Bulgaria in 1887, without Great Power support or endorsement.\textsuperscript{29} The person who really was in charge until 1894, however (and has given the period his name, Stambolovshina), was Stefan Stambolov.

The Stambolov-Ferdinand team was not without its detractors, including those who were in favor of a more proactive policy in Macedonia. An important figure among them was Major Kosta Panitsa, who was of Macedonian origin and a close ally of the former prince. Panitsa was convinced that mending relations with Russia was the only option Bulgaria had for furthering its cause in Macedonia. To achieve this, he hatched a plan to assassinate Prince Ferdinand in February 1889, but when his valet spilled the beans about the planned coup, the assassination was aborted and Panitsa arrested and executed.\textsuperscript{30} After the coup attempt, Stambolov resolved to use diplomacy to further Bulgarian interests in Macedonia; at this he proved to be quite successful. He had a long-term vision for the Bulgarianization of Macedonia through churches and schools rather than using weapons.\textsuperscript{31} The good relations of the Stambolov regime with the Sublime Porte bore their first results in 1890 in the form of berats for new bishoprics in Uskub, Monastir, and Ohrid. The Exarchate was also allowed to publish a newspaper in Constantinople and establish direct relations with the Bulgarians in the Adrianople province.\textsuperscript{32} Despite these accomplishments, his determined pursuit and suppression of Macedonian revolutionary activity made Stambolov many enemies within the Macedonian circles in Bulgaria.\textsuperscript{33} In 1891, there was another assassination attempt, this time on Stambolov, which he survived.\textsuperscript{34} He then tightened his grip on the pro-Macedonian circles even further. As Bulgaria moved further away from Russian influence (and favor) during the Stambolov regime, things could not have been

\textsuperscript{28} The treaty signed in Bucharest to end the conflict essentially preserved the status quo; Pundeff, “Bulgarian Nationalism,” 126.
\textsuperscript{29} Duncan Perry, \textit{The Politics of Terror: The Macedonian Liberation Movements, 1893–1903} (Durham, 1988), 32.
\textsuperscript{30} His sentence was carried out by a firing squad of fellow Macedonians; Crampton, \textit{Concise History of Bulgaria}, 105–6.
\textsuperscript{31} Perry, \textit{Politics of Terror}, 32–33.
\textsuperscript{32} These concessions also helped to mend the relations between the Stambolov government and the church in Bulgaria. In 1889, the Bulgarian government had suspended the payment of subsidies to the Exarchate because the clergy in Bulgaria refused to pray for Ferdinand, who was a Catholic; Crampton, \textit{Concise History of Bulgaria}, 106–7.
\textsuperscript{33} Pundeff, “Bulgarian Nationalism,” 129.
\textsuperscript{34} Duncan Perry and R. J. Crampton differ on the dates of the assassination attempt on the prince; Perry mentions that it was after the attempt on Stambolov in 1891, but according to Crampton the plan had been foiled a year earlier.
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Rosier with the Sublime Porte. Despite Russian attempts to disrupt the visit, Sultan Abdülhamid II hosted Stambolov and his wife with great pomp and circumstance in Istanbul in August 1892. During his visit, Stambolov also met with the Exarch and left the city having secured further privileges for the Bulgarian community from the Sublime Porte: the Exarch’s seat would be moved to Pera, where all the embassies were located, and Bulgarian schools in Macedonia would be granted autonomy.\(^{35}\)

Meanwhile, the experience of political autonomy and representative government in Bulgaria and the success of the Exarchate in expanding its base in Ottoman Macedonia gave the local dissidents hope, but many of them were convinced they could obtain their goals only through armed struggle. In the 1880s, a number of them had started to organize in small paramilitary bands, but these remained under the radar of Ottoman officials. A group of young men based around Salonika started the conspiracy that to organize these paramilitary groups into an army of insurgents fighting for Macedonian autonomy. They were Damian “Dame” Gruev, Georgi “Gotse” Delchev, Ivan Hadzi Nikolov, Andon Dimitrov, and Hristo Tatarchev. Gruev had been educated in Serbia and Bulgaria and had briefly been jailed in connection with the assassination attempt against Stambolov. Delchev was a cadet in the Bulgarian army, and Hadzi Nikolov was a schoolteacher. They were all natives of Macedonia who decided to go back there to start a revolutionary movement in 1891. Dimitrov was another teacher who happened to meet Gruev and Hadzi Nikolov in Salonika. Soon Tatarchev, a physician who had recently returned from Zurich and, incidentally, had been treating Gruev for eczema, joined them. The other two founding members, Petur Poparsov and Hristo Batandzhiev were also schoolteachers. These men constituted the core group that formed the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) in Salonika in 1893.

In Bulgaria, opposition against Stambolov was mounting with the connivance of Prince Ferdinand, whom Stambolov had single-handedly propped up during his early years as the unwanted Bavarian, mentored, and literally saved from death. Finally, Ferdinand and his supporters managed to force the prime minister–president’s resignation in May 1894, although not without resorting to a number of vaudevillian tricks.\(^{36}\) The former prime minister–president was brutally murdered on a Sofia street only fourteen months after his resignation.\(^{37}\) After Stambolov’s resignation, the tenor of the relations between the Sublime Porte and Bulgaria changed considerably.\(^{38}\) The Armenian massacres in 1894 led to the commonly held opinion

\(^{35}\) Perry, Stefan Stambolov, 190–91.

\(^{36}\) Stambolov was accused, among other things, of having had an affair with a minister’s wife; Crampton, Concise History, 110.

\(^{37}\) The assassins hacked him to pieces; Crampton, Concise History, 109. His funeral became another scene of scandal when his widow was insulted and the supporters of one of his rivals chanted as he was being laid to rest; Perry, Stefan Stambolov, 209–33.

\(^{38}\) Jelavich and Jelavich, Establishment of the Balkan National States, 168.

in Bulgaria that it was only a matter of time before the Ottoman Empire crumbled and a rapprochement with Russia brought benefits. The new, pro-Russian regime quickly shelved Stambolov’s policy toward the Sublime Porte, and the leaders looked favorably on plans to incite a rebellion in Macedonia that might invite European intervention.

In 1895, a second organization for Macedonian independence had been founded in Sofia, the Supreme Committee, or the Vürhovists (also known as the External Organization). The Supreme Committee attempted a rebellion the same year with the support of officials from the Bulgarian army, which would presumably have put pressure on the Sublime Porte to approve the Exarchate petition for new berats for more bishoprics. But the revolt was a failure; the Ottoman army apparently expected it and responded swiftly, but, more important, the Supremists were not successful in convincing the local population to participate. On the other hand, the revolt did serve as

39. The symbolic culmination of the rapprochement with Russia was the baptism of Prince Ferdinand’s son as an Orthodox Christian with Tsar Nicholas II in attendance as the godfather; Crampton, Concise History, 110–11; Fikret Adanır, Makedonya Sorunu, translated by İhsan Catay (İstanbul, 1996), 112.
40. Adanır, Makedonya Sorunu, 124.
41. Boris Sarafov, a former officer in the Bulgarian army who eventually rose to leadership of the IMRO-Supremist merger, made his reputation during this revolt by managing (temporarily) to capture Menlik.
enough of a threat that Abdülhamid II approved a new reform program for Macedonia shortly afterward, which, alas, remained a dead letter.\textsuperscript{42}

In the meantime, IMRO was occupied with setting up a secret network throughout the region, accumulating weapons and recruiting supporters to form village chetas (militias) which would later be mobilized for a general uprising. It had chapters that coincided with local administrative units such as the kazas and sancaks, and each sancak was assigned a voyvoda (leader). IMRO also acted like a shadow government within the Ottoman domains, dispensing “justice” and collecting “taxes” through the local chapters—not to mention its control over the means of coercion. The taxes were supposed to be voluntary contributions paid in liras and recorded in the currency unit of the organization to be paid back after independence, but more often than not they were exacted from the population at gunpoint.

The Ottoman authorities did not detect the existence of IMRO for years, thanks to its secretive methods of recruitment and organization and its ruthless punishment of any violation of its rules. It was only chance that gave it away in November 1897.\textsuperscript{43} That month, a group had crossed the border from the Bulgarian principality into Uskub, to rob one of the local notables, which was the main method of fund-raising for the organization. After robbing and murdering a landowner, the band apparently took off with 800 liras.\textsuperscript{44} The incident, which normally might have been considered a common act of brigandage revealed the existence of a wide-reaching organization when the authorities found caches of weapons and ammunitions in peasants’ houses during the search for the “brigands.” It was clear that the disturbances in the region could not be attributed solely to infiltrations from across the border and that there was a homegrown movement developing. The Exarchist population, now collectively branded as subversives, bore the brunt of the insurgents’ activities and suffered at the hands of the Ottoman military and paramilitary forces. Following the searches, most schools in the region were closed after their teachers were arrested, and the Exarchate was dealt a major blow to the (relatively) favorable relations it had been enjoying with the Sublime Port.

Gotse Delchev and Gorce Petrov established an external branch of the IMRO in Sofia in 1896 to foster connections with the immigrants in the principality and the Supremists. Relations between the two organizations were not extremely harmonious in the beginning. Supremists insisted on having

\textsuperscript{42.} Adanı, \textit{Makedonya Sorunu}, 125.
\textsuperscript{43.} Duncan Perry cites two prior incidents when IMRO mules were seized and arrested, and he argues that it is extremely unlikely that the Ottoman authorities were completely unaware of the existence of the organization until the Vinitza affair but that they probably considered it to be “inconsequential”; \textit{Politics of Terror}, 63–78.
\textsuperscript{44.} Christ Anastasoff, \textit{Tragic Peninsula}, 48. Given that the going rate for 50 kilos of wheat was about 30 kurus, 800 liras was a considerable sum.
Bulgarian army officers dominate their actions, whereas IMRO wanted to stay independent of government control. Delchev and Petrov envisioned a local grassroots revolt, whereas the Supremists favored tactics such as forming small militias and influencing public opinion through demonstrations and publications. In 1899, IMRO and the Supremists temporarily merged under the leadership of Boris Sarafov. The change in leadership was not sufficient for the two factions to work out their differences, however, and now they disagreed on the timing of the planned rebellion. The Supremists wanted to act faster because they were convinced that sufficient effort had been expanded for agitating the peasants and a widespread popular revolt was a utopian idea. The safest bet, according to the Supremists, was to start a rebellion with the help of the Bulgarian military and have the European Powers intervene on behalf of Macedonians.

The Internal Organization, on the other hand, considered that a rebellion was premature. Its members had been preparing by extending the *cheta* networks throughout the regions. These bands regularly carried out attacks against noncooperating Christians or Muslims as part of the IMRO agitation campaign, the purpose of which was to stigmatize the population. These operations required considerable financial outlay because they needed to maintain the *chetas* and provide them with weapons and ammunition. The “contributions” collected from peasants were not sufficient to support such an enterprise, even when supplemented with the spoils from robberies; this induced the IMRO leaders to turn to more inventive methods of raising cash, such as kidnappings. After a few amateurish and failed attempts, the guerrillas hit the jackpot when they seized Miss Ellen Stone, a U.S. missionary, and her companion Mrs. Tsilka, a Bulgarian Protestant, in Razlog in 1901. As protracted negotiations went on for the delivery of the ransom, Stone and Tsilka, who was pregnant during the time of the kidnapping, were forced to hike into the mountains by Jane Sandansky’s *cheta*. This was Sandansky’s first (and arguably most) high-profile action, and his name would soon become known throughout the region. Stone and Tsilka were released, exhausted but unharmed, after spending six months with guerrillas, during which time the pregnant Tsilka gave birth to a girl and, it seems, Stone developed an early case of Stockholm syndrome.

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46. Perry, *Politics of Terror*, 82.
47. The first three people kidnapped by IMRO, two Muslim landowners and a Greek moneylender, managed to flee and almost kill their kidnappers; Laura Beth Sherman, *Fires on the Mountain: The Macedonian Revolutionary Movement and the Kidnapping of Ellen Stone* (Boulder, 1980), 8. During the Stone kidnapping, the target had apparently been someone else, Dr. House, another missionary, who happened to change his itinerary, so Stone and her companion were taken instead; Anastasoff, *Tragic Peninsula*, 67.
48. The affair was especially sensational because Miss Ellen Stone was evidently the “first
amount that IMRO received was 14,500 liras, significantly discounted from the original demand of 25,000 but still sufficient to buy the rebels 5,000 rifles and 200,000 rounds of ammunition. The kidnapping had the added bonus of generating considerable international publicity for the Macedonian independence movement.

Support for the Macedonian revolutionary organization from Bulgaria and Russia had considerably been toned down by 1902. The crisis in Crete, which had resulted in a war between the Ottoman Empire and Greece, had proved that the Ottomans were not yet ready to throw in the towel. Russia, meanwhile, was more interested in pursuing its goals in the Far East and preferred that the Macedonian issue lay dormant in the meantime. In early 1902, Bulgarian Minister President Stoyan Danev asked the Russians for financial help. He was told that such help would be provided only if Bulgaria agreed to curb the activity of the Macedonian revolutionaries. Danev accepted the condition and started taking measures against the Macedonian activists, but these measures were in the main designed to convince the Sublime Porte and the Great Powers that the Bulgarian government was in control of the situation. In reality, the Supremists remained largely unchecked because a great part of the Bulgarian officer corps actively supported them.

The Supremists were actually preparing for another rebellion, which finally took place in September 1902, despite the IMRO opposition to it. The Gorna Dzhumaia, or Cuma-i Bâlâ (today Blagoevgrad), revolt, named after the district where it started, was another failure for the Supremists. Popular support was low, IMRO refrained from participating, and the disturbances did not spread over a large area. The Ottoman army suppressed the revolt by November. The purpose of the revolt was never entirely clear, but the most likely explanation, according to Duncan Perry, is that the Supremists were trying to take control and show the IMRO committees that “professional military leaders in Macedonia were much more effective than schoolteachers.” The reprisals were harsh, and the regrettably predictable script of burned villages, murdered noncombatants, and violated women was played out once again. A large number of the inhabitants of the region

American to be kidnapped outside the continental United States.” Stone was full of praise for her kidnappers and wrote articles in support of their cause upon her release. Sherman, *Fires on the Mountain*, 37. See also Teresa Carpenter, *The Miss Stone Affair: America’s First Modern Hostage Crisis* (New York, 2003). Martin Wills, another victim kidnapped in summer 1905 was not as lucky; he had to escape on his own and, having lost an ear for the ransom note, his thoughts for his kidnappers were quite different than those of Miss Stone. Martin Wills, *A Captive of the Bulgarian Brigands, Englishman’s Terrible Experiences in Macedonia* (London, 1906).

52. There are contradicting reports on exactly how many villages were burnt; Adamir puts the number at fifteen and Perry at twenty-eight; Adamir, *Makedonya Sorunu*, 163; Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, 117. No matter which is correct, the damage was significant.
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fled to Bulgaria. Fikret Adanır notes that the Cuma uprising was significant in terms of signaling the growing control of the Supreme Committee; the Supremists now dominated the movement and they had demonstrated that Macedonia was a national issue for Bulgaria by engaging Bulgarian officers. Moreover, the Macedonian question was now developing into an issue that the European Powers could not ignore for long.

After the Cuma uprising, Austria and Russia took the initiative for instituting reform in Macedonia. Agenor Maria Goluchowski, the Austro-Hungarian foreign minister, and Heinrich Freiherr von Calice, the Austro-Hungarian ambassador in Constantinople, along with their Russian counterparts, Vladimir Lamsdorff and I. A. Zinoviev, exercised great influence on the successive reform attempts. Abdülhamid II was aware of the imminent imposition of radical reforms and preempted them by introducing his own program in December 1902. The program was not directed only at the “Macedonian” vilâyets (provinces) of Monastir, Salonika and Kosovo; all provinces of the empire in Europe were made subject to the new measures, which added Yanya, Iškodra, and Edirne to the new administrative unit, called the Rumeli Umum Müfettişliği (General Inspectorate of Rumeli). Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha, a veteran of Ottoman administration who had held, among other posts, the governorship of Adana and Yemen, was appointed to head the inspectorate with the title Rumeli Vilâyetleri Müfettiş-i Umûmisi (General Inspector of Rumeli Provinces).

The reform program pledged to ameliorate problems with public works and services, which would presumably improve the lot of the locals and mend their relations with the government. A new gendarmerie force would be recruited from among the Christian as well as the Muslim population. Criminal law was to be put under the jurisdiction of new local courts, and legal clerks would be appointed equally from Christian and Muslim communities. A school would be provided to any village with more than fifty households, and 5 percent of the provincial revenues would be allocated for public works. Goluchowski and Lamsdorff did not find these measures satisfactory. Calice and Zinoviev, the Austrian and Russian ambassadors, drafted supplementary measures for the program to be presented to the other Great Powers. In addition to the original proposals of the Sublime Porte, the “Wiener Punktation” (as it was later named) called for the introduction of Christian fieldguards in Christian areas, the expansion of valis’ (governors’) authority, financial regulations that involved separate budgets for the three Macedonian provinces and supervision by the Ottoman Bank,

53. Adanır, Makedonya Sorunu, 164.
54. Steven Sowards, Austria’s Policy of Macedonian Reform (Boulder, 1989), 17–23.
55. Abdülhamid II had commissioned a proposal for this purpose before the uprising, in July 1902; Adanır, Makedonya Sorunu, 166.
56. Ibid., 167; Sowards, Austria’s Policy of Macedonian Reform, 23.
the protection of the population from Albanian excesses, amnesty for political prisoners, and a predetermined tenure for the general inspector.\textsuperscript{57} These proposals were presented to the Ottoman government in February 1903 and were immediately accepted—but they remained a dead letter in terms of implementation.

The Ilinden Uprising

The consensus among the Great Powers was in favor of maintaining the status quo in Macedonia rather than supporting autonomy, but nothing short of independence would satisfy the leaders of the Macedonian movement, especially after the example of Crete, which had gained its autonomy despite the failure of Greece in the war with the Ottoman Empire in 1897. Danev, the Bulgarian minister president, was feverishly trying to control the Supremists, but his efforts, such as banning the organization and arresting some of its leaders in January 1903, only drew the ire of the Macedonian circles and nationalist Bulgarians. So, another minister president buckled under pressure from the pro-Macedonian camp and had to resign in April 1903. He was replaced by Racho Petrov, a general in the Bulgarian army.\textsuperscript{58}

The Gemidzis, an anarchist fraction that had branched off from the Macedonian revolutionary movement based in Salonika, carried out a series of bombings in Salonika in April 1903.\textsuperscript{59} The Guadalquivir, a French steamer in the harbor, was the faction’s first target, followed a day later by a bomb planted on the railroad tracks at the main train station, which exploded when the train arriving from Istanbul rolled over it. An attack on the gas plant left the city in darkness the following day, preparing the stage for a more spectacular attack: the Ottoman Bank and the neighboring German bowling club blew up in flames as dynamite charges set in tunnels under the bank exploded. The German school also suffered a great deal of damage from the explosion. Attacks on a café, the post office, and the Russian consulate were next, and these were stopped only after a show of force by the squadrons of European Powers that were in the bay. These operations did not, however, publicize the Macedonian cause, as had been hoped, because these acts harmed mostly European interests and the reaction in Europe was far from favorable.\textsuperscript{60} The attacks were followed by reprisals by the Ottoman

\textsuperscript{57} Adanur, \textit{Makedonya Sorunu}, 170–71; Sowards, \textit{Austria’s Policy of Macedonian Reform}, 24–26.
\textsuperscript{58} Perry, \textit{Politics of Terror}, 129.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 100. For more on this group, see Giannis Megas, \textit{Oi “Varkarides” tês Thessalonikês: è Anarchikê Voulgarikê Omada kai oi Vomvistikes Energeies tou} (Athens, 1994).
\textsuperscript{60} The principal exception to the condemnation coming from the European press was Victor Bérard, a long-time supporter of the Macedonian revolutionaries. In an article published in \textit{La Revue de Paris} on June 15, 1903, he made the following remarks about the activists:
army and irregulars in the countryside, and more IMRO operatives were arrested. The IMRO changed its course of action partly because of the negative reaction generated by the activities of this radical group. In May 1903, IMRO held a congress in Smilevo, in Monastir province and decided to prepare for a general uprising in the summer. Thanks to the combined efforts of Patriarchists and Ottoman officials organized by Germanos Karavanglis, the charismatic Metropolitan of Kastoria, to chase the chetas out of the region, IMRO suffered several blows to its operations during spring and summer 1903. Despite these setbacks, the uprising broke out in Monastir province on August 2, the day of Saint Elijah, or Ilinden.

The insurgents first cut telegram lines and disabled the railroads to halt communications across the region. The greatest accomplishment of the rebels was the capture of Kruševo, where they proclaimed a short-lived republic after they set government buildings on fire and killed the officials. After a few days, on the Feast of the Transfiguration, or Preobrazhenie, the rebellion spread to Adrianople province, where the rebels were briefly able to set up a government in Strandja. In principle, the uprising was meant to be an invitation to the entire population, without respect to language or religion, to rise up against tyranny, but in practice this proved to be an improbable ideal. In fact, in many places the insurgents did attack Patriarchists and Muslims despite prior orders to the contrary. Other acts such as singing Bulgarian marching songs and waving the Bulgarian flag undermined the committee claim that this was a general uprising and associated the insurgents—more or less accurately—with Bulgaria.

By September, the Ottoman army had suppressed the rebellion and hundreds of villages were left devastated after the guerrillas pulled out and the soldiers and militias exacted the toll from the local population. The Macedonians’ plight did garner sympathy in Europe, and relief missions were organized and sent to the smoldering villages, but contrary to the expectations of the committee, the European Powers did not intervene on behalf of the Slav population, let alone demand autonomy for Macedonia. The revolt

“Their crime is, perhaps, inexcusable, but their courage was without any doubt, of the most heroic!” Quoted in Michel Paillarès, l’Imbroglio Macédonien (Paris, 1907), 13. (Michel Paillarès was rumored to be in the pay of the Greek government.)
61. Adanır, Makedonya Sorunu, 193–94.
63. Ibid., 196–99.
64. According to Adanır, the auxiliary Albanian militias, not the regular infantry troops, were responsible for the atrocities following the uprising; Makedonya Sorunu, 203.
65. Ibid., 195–206. For the aftermath of the uprising, see Henry Brailsford, Macedonia, Its Races and Their Future (London, 1906), which provides a detailed, although pro-Bulgarian, account of the devastation in the countryside. For an evaluation of “humanitarian” motives of the European intervention in Macedonia, see Davide Rodogno, “The European Powers’ Intervention in Macedonia, 1903–1908: An Instance of Humanitarian Intervention?” in
had come as a surprise and cast doubt on the effectiveness of the reform attempts. Nevertheless, again under Austrian and Russian leadership, the idea of reform within Ottoman sovereignty was accorded another chance. The Mürzsteg Reform Program, as it came to be known, was accepted by the Sublime Porte in November 1903.

Implementation of the Mürzsteg Reform Program

The Mürzsteg Program was not fundamentally different from the previous “Wiener Punktation,” except for the provisions it introduced for implementation of the measures. The program was criticized for being merely a continuation of the agreement between Russia and Austria dating from 1897 to not disturb the status quo in Macedonia.\(^{66}\) Whether the program was indeed prepared with such a cynical agenda would be hard to ascertain, but it is true that, having been formulated and implemented under the stewardship of Russia and Austria, it had a decidedly conservative tone. Under the program, Austria-Hungary and Russia would directly oversee its progress through the two special civil agents whom they appointed. Even though they carefully limited the interference of other European Powers in the design of the program, as a concession Austria-Hungary and Russia invited other signatories to the Berlin Treaty to participate in the discussions. The status of the civil agents became a continuous source of conflict between the Great Powers and the Sublime Porte. Proponents of more efficacious reforms considered the civil agents to be a half-hearted attempt by Austrian and Russian diplomats to give the illusion that they had some purchase on the actions of the Ottoman government, embodied by Inspector General Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha. They were “not representatives of European control,” writes Draganoff, “but functionaries who are to be absolutely at his disposal and whose office is to lighten the responsibility in the eyes of Europe.”\(^{67}\) The Sublime Porte, on the other hand, viewed even this concession a potential breach of sovereignty and insisted that Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha’s authority be paramount in the region and over the implementation process, and that the civil agents’ role not exceed that of assistance.

Establishing stability and ensuring the security of the inhabitants were the two priorities of the program. Consequently, the reorganization of the gendarmerie, which the Great Powers considered to be the prerequisite for

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\(^{67}\) Ibid., 61.
both goals, became the primary focus. The French consul in Salonika, Louis Steeg, had made a similar proposal a year earlier, emphasizing the important role that a reformed gendarmerie, “well paid, well selected and commanded by first-class officers,” could play in preventing the activities of the revolutionary bands and the abuses of the “Turkish gendarmerie, who are recruited from a bad class, irregularly paid, and obliged to ‘live on the inhabitants.’” Steeg’s proposal, which had not found an enthusiastic audience at the time he drafted it, now seemed to constitute the centerpiece of the reform program, and it indeed had potential to ease the tension in the region if implemented in good faith. There were, however, too many obstacles to this good faith effort. The reforms got off to a slow start due to the difficulty of accommodating varying desires of the Great Powers as well as the difficulty of persuading the Ottoman government to agree to the plan once it was drafted. Colonel Wladimir Giesl, the military attaché of Austria-Hungary in Istanbul, conceived the original plan, which proposed that a large force of foreign officers command the reformed gendarmerie. The Austrians recommended that an Italian officer be in charge of the organization, which was accepted by all the Powers, and the Sublime Porte formally asked Italy to appoint one of its officers to the mission. General Emilio Degiorgis was thus appointed to command the reformed gendarmerie.

The first disputes over the plan broke out over the proposed headgear for the officers. Giesl had suggested that the uniform be identical to that of Ottoman soldiers, including the fez, which became an issue of discord, presumably because of ideological connotations. This issue was temporarily resolved with a compromise suggested by the Russians: instead of the quintessentially “Turkish” fez, the officers could don kalpaks, which were also used by the Ottoman army but did not have the same connotations. But the kalpak could also pose a small problem: “It appears,” remarked General Degiorgis, “that in the regions where the foreign officers will be operating, the kalpak is the habitual headgear of the Bulgarians, and could expose the officers to danger.” The resourceful general added that they would “look for a different model of kalpak that did not resemble that of the Bulgarians,” and the headgear issue was resolved. Another bone of contention was the

68. Ibid., 54–55.
69. Sowards, Austria’s Policy of Macedonian Reform, 35.
70. MAE, Turquie, vol. 415, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, memo to embassies in London, Istanbul, St. Petersburg, Berlin, Vienna, and Rome, January 4, 1904; French Embassy in Rome to the Ministry, Rome, January 9, 1904. The French ambassador in Rome attributed the Italians’ being overjoyed at having been accorded this mission to “national vanity” and downplayed the importance of the decision, which “had been known for a long time.”
72. MAE, Constantinople Serie E 145, Verbal Proceedings of the Session on February 20, 1904.
73. The headgear issue occupied more working hours than it should have, and the
issue of command; instead of forming mixed battalions from different countries, as has been originally envisioned, the final resolution favored the division of officers according to their countries with a specific zone accorded to each division. This was tantamount to creating spheres of influence, which, not surprisingly, generated another round of struggle among the European Powers.

The final plan demanded that the foreign officers be authorized to give direct orders to their Ottoman subordinates and to dismiss officers and soldiers whom they deemed unfit for their mission. The foreign officers would be appointed at one rank above the one they held in their country of origin and would be allotted generous salaries and benefits.\textsuperscript{74} The total budget was estimated to be around a quarter of a million liras, which would be secured through the Ottoman Public Debt Administration.\textsuperscript{75} The proposals were presented to the Sublime Porte on February 29, 1904, and promptly refused.

As the talks were going on, the uniform problem surfaced again; this time, the issue was not the headgear but the fabric, color, and style of the officers’ garb.\textsuperscript{76} The dispute was apparently settled by accepting the original proposal, which was a uniform similar to the one worn by the Ottoman officers with a \textit{kalpak} as the headgear. A new draft proposal, which toned down the European demands from the Ottoman side concerning command, was formulated. Now the adjoint generals’ orders would be transmitted through Ottoman officers, and the right to dismiss unfit soldiers was rephrased as the right to transfer them outside the Macedonian command. The total number of foreign officers was reduced to sixty.\textsuperscript{77} The Italian \textit{carabinieri} model would be adapted for a gendarmerie school to be established in Salonika to train the new recruits.\textsuperscript{78} The final arrangement of zones was as following: in Kosovo, the district of Uskub was assigned to Austria-Hungary; in Monastir, the town of Monastir as well as Kastoria and Serfice were to be under Italian command; and the province of Salonika was to be divided among the Russians, British, and French, who took over the \textit{sancaks} (subprovince) of

\footnotesize{sultan’s insistence on the \textit{fez} made matters more complicated. When it was finally resolved, the Austrians, Russians, and French opted for the \textit{kalpak}, whereas the Italian and English agreed to the \textit{fez}; Colonel Léon Lamouche, \textit{Quinze Ans d’Histoire Balkanique} (Paris, ca. 1928), 45.\textsuperscript{74} MAE, Constantinople Serie E 145, Verbal Proceedings of the Session on February 20, 1904.\textsuperscript{75} Lamouche, \textit{Quinze Ans d’Histoire Balkanique}, 35–41.\textsuperscript{76} General Degiorgis suggested a style reminiscent of the battle dress of the English army; meanwhile the French were getting impatient with what they called the general’s “Italianisms”; MAE, Turquie, vol. 415, Verbal Proceedings, March–April 1904. Apparently the German government made the uniform controversy a point of dispute in St. Petersburg, and the German ambassador in Istanbul, talking to the French chargé d’affaires in Pera made a joke on the subject, which his French colleague found in bad taste, especially given that his country was not sending officers to the Macedonian gendarmerie; MAE, Turquie, vol. 415, Chargé d’affaires to Delcassé, Istanbul, April 15, 1904.\textsuperscript{77} MAE, Turquie, vol. 415, Embassy to the Ministry, March 10, 1904.\textsuperscript{78} Lamouche, \textit{Quinze Ans d’Histoire Balkanique}, 49
Salonika, Drama, and Serres, respectively. In addition to the military adjoints, all the Great Powers (except for Germany) committed five officers to the mission. The Ottomans approved this revised draft, and the reforms officially started.

Armed Activity and the Appearance of Greek and Serbian Bands

A short-lived détente between Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire resulted in an agreement signed by the two countries in March 1904, according to which Bulgaria pledged to suppress Macedonian insurgent bands and the Ottoman Empire promised a general amnesty. With the general amnesty, in April 1904 all political prisoners, including participants and organizers of the Ilinden Uprising, were set free, which created a temporary sense of joy among the population. Shortly afterward, the recently liberated rebels took up arms again and the Ottomans were back in pursuit.

In 1904, the first incursions of Greek bands or andartes into the region started. The activity was in retaliation for Bulgarian support of the komitajis that menaced the Patriarchist, especially the Slavic-speaking Patriarchist population, and to curb the growing Bulgarian influence in a region to which Greeks maintained they could lay at least as legitimate a claim. Similarly, Serbian bands started to organize in the northwest, in the areas of Kosovo that the Serbs considered to be part of “Old Serbia.” Into this mix was added the Muslim and Albanian bands, the self-proclaimed protectors of the Muslim population, who menaced Christian villages in retaliation for attacks against Muslims.

IMRO, after the Ilinden Uprising, was a “shadow of its former self,” and the Supremists used this opportunity to take over the organization. Fragmentation within the organization started shortly afterward, and two camps emerged, known as the right wing and the left wing. The right wing were the Supremists such as Ivan Garvanov and Boris Sarafov, who favored close relations with Bulgaria. The left wing was dominated by the

79. Partition was a touchy subject given the different and contradicting interests of the Great Powers in the region. Austria-Hungary was not content with Italian control over Monastir but had to strike a compromise that allowed it control over Skopje, which was strategically more significant because of its proximity to Bosnia-Hercegovina; Routier, Macédoine et les Puissances, 19. Areas in the north where the Albanian population was the overwhelming majority were not included in the reform; Lamouche, Quinze Ans d’Histoire Balkanique, 44.
80. Adanır, Makedonya Sorunu, 231.
81. The Ottoman government vehemently denied the existence of these bands, but they were undeniably active by 1905; Şükrü Hanoğlu, Preparation for a Revolution (Oxford, 2001), 221. See also Nadine Lange-Akhund, The Macedonian Question 1893–1908 from Western Sources (Boulder, 1998), 199.
82. Perry, Politics of Terror, 141.
83. This was not a monolithic group either; Boris Sarafov espoused more radical and violent activities even when there was a tendency within the group, under the influence of
Serres-Strumnitza group and was under the leadership of Jane Sandansky, who supported autonomy for Macedonia. The Congress of the Revolutionary Organization at the Rila Monastery in October 1905 did not succeed in bringing together the opposing factions.\textsuperscript{84} On the contrary, Sandansky was expelled from the group, and the Supremists decided to tone down armed activity and instead channel their energies toward “educating” the population.\textsuperscript{85} The two groups staked out two separate zones of influence: the right wing dominated the Monastir and Uskub region, whereas the left wing was in charge of the south, the districts of Salonika, Serres, and Strumnitza, where its primary engagement was with the Greek bands.\textsuperscript{86} The two camps convened separately for the next congress: the Supremists (rightists) in Sofia in January 1907 and the leftists in Doubnitza a month later. By this time, the rift within the organization was beyond repair. There were failed attempts on Sandansky’s life by the Supremists. In retaliation, Sandansky’s associates assassinated Boris Sarafov and Ivan Garvanov, after which point the separation of the two groups became irreconcilable.\textsuperscript{87}

Meanwhile, there was a dramatic increase in Greek armed activity in Macedonia. It was no coincidence that this development occurred after the appointment of Lambros Koromilas as consul general of Greece in Salonika in May 1904.\textsuperscript{88} Early signs of armed activity came from Kastoria, where Germanos Karavangelis, the district Metropolitan, attempted to organize a band and buy off IMRO members; however, this venture failed to transform into a tangible network.\textsuperscript{89} Against the rise in the perceived threat to Greek interests, civil organizations and paramilitaries coordinated their efforts with that of the state in a common cause in Macedonia. The first forays into Ottoman territory were initiated by officers of the Greek army, such as the legendary Pavlos Melas, with the support of Cretan volunteers, who could travel into the region with ease because of their official status as Ottoman moderates such as Damian Gruev, to renounce violence. Some sources indicate that he even considered a “central committee” separate from IMRO; Lange-Akhund, \textit{Macedonian Question}, 206–7.

\textsuperscript{84} For more information on the contentious issues of the congress, see ibid., 231–38.
\textsuperscript{85} Hanioglu, \textit{Preparation for a Revolution}, 245.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid.; Lange-Akhund, \textit{Macedonian Question}, 263.
\textsuperscript{88} Koromilas served as consul until October 1907. His predecessor, Eugenios Eugeniadès, had been appointed to the job at a critical time, after the Greek-Ottoman war of 1897, and had managed to maintain good relations with the Ottoman establishment despite the post-war bitterness and the ongoing crisis in Crete. He was one of the early architects of the Greek policy that favored collaboration with the Ottomans in Macedonia until the greater common enemy (i.e., the Bulgarians) could be eliminated. For a summary account of the two consuls’ activities in Macedonia, see Vasileios Laoudras, \textit{To Ellinikon Genikon Proxeneion Thessalonikēs} (Thessaloniki, 1961).
\textsuperscript{89} Douglas Dakin, \textit{The Greek Struggle in Macedonia, 1897–1913} (Thessaloniki, 1966), 120–24; Adamir, \textit{Makedonya Sorunu}, 191.
At this stage, local Patriarchists did not have a significant presence in the armed activities. Consuls such as Lambros Koromilas in Salonika and Antonios Sachtouris in Serres assisted in supplying weapons, facilitated recruitment, and protected the interests of the Patriarchate through methods not always approved by the Patriarchate itself. Their task was facilitated by the indifference—even active collaboration—of the Ottoman authorities, who saw the Greek bands as a welcome counterweight against the Bulgarian “bandits.” The local Muslim population also actively collaborated with them, and apparently, “Greek committees that did not have Turkish members were rare.”

Despite the reforms and the European presence in the area, security did not improve; in fact, it deteriorated between 1904 and 1908. With the exception of brief interruptions in armed activity, the monthly casualty records told a grim story. One estimate puts the number of people killed in Macedonia between 1903 and 1908 at 8,000; of these 3,500 were guerrillas and the rest civilians.

Problems with Financial Reform and the Customs Duty Increase

Financial difficulties beleaguered the gendarmerie reorganization from the start. The Ottomans had pledged to finance the new force, but the truth of the matter was that this new commitment imposed an enormous burden on a budget already bursting at the seams. This problem was the basis of the reluctance by the administration to accept more foreign “advisors,” an issue brought up again by Austria-Hungary and Russia late in 1904. The treasury was in such a dreary situation that oftentimes Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha himself had to plead with the Allatini brothers, owners of the largest mill in the region, in Salonika, which supplied flour to Macedonian garrisons, to continue shipments despite payments being in arrears so that the soldiers would have bread to eat. On occasion, the government had to borrow money from the Salonika industrialists, including the Allatinis and the Kapanzades, so that it could pay soldiers, orphans, and widows. Or the government dipped

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90. The young and dashing Pavlos Melas became the proto-martyr of the Greek cause in Macedonia when he was killed in a skirmish with Ottoman forces in Siatista on October 13, 1904. His death was considered a turning point that finally shook Athens to take action to protect Greek interests in Macedonia; Alexandros D. Zannas, O Makedonikos Agón (Anamnēseis) (Thessaloniki, 1960), 19.

91. For a list of local participants from the Serres region, see Iakoivos D. Michailidēs and Konstantinos S. Papanikolau, eds., Aphpaneis Gêgeneis Makedonomachoi (1903–1913) (Thessaloniki, 2008), 138–60.

92. Letter from Dr. Nâzım to Bahaeddin Şakir, cited in Hanioglu, Preparation for a Revolution, 222.

93. Sowards, Austria’s Policy of Macedonian Reform, 76.
into the purses of the Anatolian provinces, which hardly had any extra funds to spare.94

Work toward a financial commission that would serve as an advisory body to solve the budgetary problems in Macedonia started shortly after the gendarmerie reforms in 1904. Calice and Zinoviev were the architects of the early proposals. Compared with later proposals, these were rather conservative schemes that essentially aimed to rectify the revenue base without creating any major upheaval of the existing framework. One of the major concerns at this stage was the payments to the civil personnel that were in arrears, which, the civil agents held, should take priority over payments to the military. After Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha warned that this kind of prioritization might cause a military revolt, another proposal that balanced the needs of the Ottoman administration with the demands of the European Powers was formulated. According to this plan, revenues from the Macedonian provinces would be allocated to cover both civil and military expenses, but the amount earmarked for military expenses would be capped at peacetime levels and the difference would be covered by an extraordinary fund supplied by the imperial center.95 The Ottoman Bank was instituted as the treasurer for Macedonia.

In December 1904, Lord Landsowne (Henry Charles Keith Petty-Fitzmaurice) was not content with the work of Zinoviev and Calice, and was already sounding the alarm about a looming crisis because of financial difficulties. He proposed that an international commission be established to oversee the financial reforms.96 In February 15, 1905, the Sublime Porte made a formal request to increase the rate of custom duties from 8 to 11 percent to defray the costs of the reforms. Austria-Hungary and Russia were in favor of accepting the increase provided that the Ottoman state met certain conditions regarding the administration of the extra revenue.97 But the tariff increase would prove to be one of the most problematic issues in the execution of the Mürzsteg Program, as benign a proposal as it might seem. Even though all the Great Powers concurred on the need to raise additional resources to finance the rising expenditures, there was hardly any consensus on how to raise them. A tariff increase was a measure that directly interfered with British commercial interests in the Ottoman Empire.

94. I have documented these dealings between the Allatini brothers and Hüseyin Hilmi Paşa, and the extraordinary measures taken to procure bread for the troops in Ipek K. Yosmaoğlu, “Ekmek Parası: The Allatini Brothers and the Ottoman Army in Macedonia at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” paper presented at the conference on Local and Imperial Histories: Approaches to Ottoman/Greek Civilization, Chios, Greece, September 2000. The correspondence between the Allatinis and other army contractors can be found in, BOA,TFR.I.SL 1/23, December 21, 1902; TFR.I.SL 8/782, April 7, 1903; TFR.I.ŞKT 9/185, April 27, 1903; TFR.I.SL 48/4724, July 25, 1904.
95. Sowards, Austria’s Policy of Macedonian Reform, 51–52.
96. Draganoff, Macedonia and the Reforms, 63–64.
97. Dakin, Greek Struggle in Macedonia, 303.
The Anglo-Ottoman Convention of Baltalimanı in 1838 had abolished all internal customs in the Ottoman Empire, ensuring an open market for British goods. Since then, Britain had established a profitable market for its manufactured goods and dominated the foreign trade of the empire. Despite the facts that the current tariff rates were among the lowest in Europe and that increasing that rate was the only unexplored source of revenue that could be diverted for the benefit of the reforms, Britain found this an undesirable measure and jealously protected its interests even though that meant jeopardizing the implementation of the reforms.

Another obstacle in the way of financial restructuring was the objections raised by the Sublime Porte against the proposed financial commission, which it considered to be a violation of its sovereignty. Between the Ottoman objections and the assorted attempts by the European Powers to assert their own concerns, the shape and function of the financial commission were revised six times from the beginning of 1905 until the year's end, with the proposals delivered to the Sublime Porte with a note verbale each time. In November 1905, a seventh note verbale was presented, which included not only the new proposal concerning the financial commission but also a bundle that contained the renewal of the foreign officers’ and the civil agents’ contracts, and the reappointment of Hilmi Pasha. This seventh note was also rejected, precipitating a demonstration of gunboat diplomacy by the Great Powers. With the exception of Germany, all the Powers contributed to a fleet that appeared before the port of Mytilene in the northern Aegean on November 26, 1905. After the demonstrators threatened to move to Lemnos, the Sublime Porte agreed to all the demands: the tenures of the inspector general, general of the gendarmerie, civil agents, and adjoints were extended for two more years, and the International Commission for Financial Control in Macedonia was officially recognized.

The financial commission was not a body under the leadership of Austria-Hungary and Russia; all six Great Powers had an equal say in its functioning, which proved to be a recipe for delays and inefficiency and seriously hampered the progress of the proposals. With the Ottoman agreement to the financial commission, the issue of the tariff increase was revived. Drafting an agreement that satisfied all the Powers and the Sublime Porte at the same time took another year after the financial commission authorization, and then it took another six months for the increase to come into effect. The British aversion to the idea and mistrust of the management of the tariff revenue were largely responsible for the delay. Each time a note verbale

on the conditions for a tariff increase was presented to the Sublime Porte, Britain heaped another set of demands on the original text, seeking further concessions for its commercial associates, which confirmed the prevailing opinion that the British government was “acting in bad faith.” Finally, on July 12, 1907, the tariff increase was put into effect. Steven Sowards notes that “[w]hen the protocols [for the tariff increase] were signed in April, the Macedonian garrison had been paid just once in the preceding six months, the civil administration only twice.” Meanwhile, Britain had obtained every single concession it sought, including the regulation of porters in the Salonika harbor.

End of the Leadership a Deux, End of Reforms

Judicial reform had been included among the provisions of the Ottoman reform proposal of 1902, as well as in the Mürzsteg Program, but until 1907 not much attention had been paid to this part of the plan; in fact, there were very few complaints about judicial abuse in Macedonia. In March 1907, a new set of measures were put into effect that called for an increase in the number of courts, better pay for the judiciary, curbs on corruption, semiannual inspections, and assurance of judicial autonomy. These measures were not found to be satisfactory by the European Concert, which meant that additional demands were made of the Sublime Porte and, consequently, another chapter of protracted struggle among the Powers and with the Ottoman government began. After long negotiations, two alternative plans were drafted in June 1907 by Zinoviev and Johann Markgraf von Pallavicini, the Russian and Austro-Hungarian ambassadors. The plans were essentially the same and called for the financial commission to be involved in the judiciary reform through its chancery and to appoint the judicial inspectors who would supervise the courts. The discord stemmed from Pallavicini’s conviction that the Ottomans would not accept an arrangement in which they would not have some degree of control over the appointment of inspectors, whereas Zinoviev insisted on complete European control. The question of the degree of Ottoman control over the judiciary deepened the rifts among the Great Powers, and the final note verbale drafted in December 1907, which favored Zinoviev’s position, was more the result of a begrudging compromise than a real consensus.
As the year came to a close, the civil agents’ and other reform personnel’s mandates, which had been approved for another two years by the Sublime Porte in November 1905, were again about to expire. The request for renewal of the mandate was presented along with the judiciary proposal in a note verbale to the Sublime Porte on December 15, 1907. The response received “said nothing of the extension and proposed that the foreign agents in Macedonia be taken into Ottoman service.” An identical note was sent a week later, but the Great Powers lacked the cohesion necessary to convince the Sublime Porte to accept the extension. Sir Edward Grey, the British foreign secretary, found the performance of the Ottoman administration since the reforms started to be far from satisfactory and was vocal about his disapproval of a plan that would continue to defer to Ottoman authorities. The leadership of the program, which had been assumed by the Austro-Hungarian and Russian alliance, was no longer in effect. It had already been eroded by the financial commission, which relied on all six powers equally, and further eroded by the resignation of important diplomats who had originally conceived of the plan. The Russian and Austro-Hungarian foreign ministers, Lamsdorff and Goluchowski, and Ambassador Calice had all left office in 1906. The death knell for the alliance sounded when Austria-Hungary obtained the concession of the Uvaç-Mitrovico railroad.

Russia blamed the Dual Monarchy for engaging in secret dealings with the Ottoman Empire to obtain commercial concessions in return for favorable conditions in the reform proposals. Britain suspected that Germany was involved in the deal. Even though there is no evidence to suggest that this was the case, the railroad concession effectively ended the collaboration between the Dual Monarchy and Russia, which did not bode well for the future of Macedonian reforms. It seemed that the leadership was gravitating toward Britain, and now that the former alliance was broken, a new alliance was being formed between Britain and Russia, making it more likely that subsequent European demands for reform from the Sublime Porte would be more extreme than ever. In fact, on March 3, 1908, Sir Edward Grey repeated his proposal in a formal note that the number of regular Ottoman troops in the region be reduced and that of the gendarmerie be augmented. In addition, the influence of the palace had to be reduced to a minimum if the reforms were to be effective, and this would be achieved only with a truly autonomous, European-appointed Turkish governor, answering only to the Powers. Despite Austro-Hungarian commitment to the conservative reform scheme, Russia seemed

106. Hanioglu, Preparation for a Revolution, 233.
107. Sowards, Austria’s Policy of Macedonian Reform, 66–70.
108. Hanioglu, Preparation for a Revolution, 234.
109. Hanioglu, Preparation for a Revolution; Sowards, Austria’s Policy of Macedonian Reform, 87.
110. Hanioglu, Preparation for a Revolution, 235; Sowards, Austria’s Policy of Macedonian Reform, 90–91.
to be willing to cooperate with Britain. To avert further British demands, on March 13, 1908, Sultan Abdülhamid II preemptively renewed the mandate of the civil agents and the program until July 1914.\footnote{\text{111.} Hanoiğlu, \textit{Preparation for a Revolution}, 235.}

Despite the long diplomatic work hours devoted to it, the Mürzsteg Program had accomplished little in the way of ensuring the safety of the local population. To the contrary, it indirectly contributed to the increase in armed activity and violence. One of its major flaws was the provision that provincial administration be rearranged according to national principles, which the fighting camps understood as clear indication that the next stage of the reforms was autonomy and partition according to national boundaries. Another outcome of the reforms was the effect they had on the local Muslim population, who did not figure in any European plan for the region, except in references to their brutality against their Christian neighbors, and who viewed the European agents in the region as an occupation force engaged in the final preparations for the secession of the country from the Ottoman Empire. Consequently, local Muslims also started to take up arms and form bands.

More important, the Ottoman Committee of Progress and Union (CPU),\footnote{\text{112.} Although CUP (Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress) is the better-known acronym and commonly used in reference both to the coalition of opposition organizations against the regime of Abdülhamid II and the political party that dominated the Ottoman Empire after the 1908 constitutional revolution, I have opted for CPU here which is the more accurate term: this was the specific organization active in Macedonia at the time; for the fragmentation in the Young Turk opposition movement and the emergence of the CPU see Hanoiğlu, \textit{Preparation for a Revolution}.} which had merged with the Macedonian-based Ottoman Freedom Society in 1907, used this atmosphere to boost its recruitment and networking efforts in the region, connecting the independent and scattered bands to form a single organization.\footnote{\text{113.} Mehmet Hacisaliğlu, \textit{Die Jungtürken und die Makedonische Frage (1890–1918)} (Munich, 2003).} Rumors of an impending Macedonian autonomy, which peaked after the meeting of the Russian tsar Nicolas II and the British monarch Edward VII in Reval, served as a catalyst the CPU agitation plans.\footnote{\text{114.} Hanoiğlu, \textit{Preparation for a Revolution}, 236.} The affiliated Ottoman officers and clandestine agents were the organizational backbone of the CPU in the region, but its final plan of action also depended on an elaborate network that involved local notables, former brigands, and the neutralization, if not cooption, of the fighting bands in the region.\footnote{\text{115.} IMRO, despite its split into two enemy factions, was still the most important presence in the region. The CPU leaders never managed to convince its right wing (under control of the Supremists) to form a collaboration, but Jane Sandansky and the Serres group under his command agreed to a tactical alliance shortly before the revolution. Greek and Serbian bands were under the central command of their respective governments, and they opposed CPU overtures to join forces. For a full account of this network and the CPU tactical maneuvers to establish this base, see Hanoiğlu, \textit{Preparation for a Revolution}.}
the European reform program and brought about a fleeting sense of peace in the region. The restoration of the constitution was celebrated across Macedonia, where people rejoiced together on the streets regardless of their differences and where armed bands, even though they held on to their arms, came out from hiding. One of the most dramatic scenes was the legendary Sandansky’s arrival in Salonika, where he was welcomed like a comrade in arms by Enver Pasha, one of the CPU leaders who had planned the revolution. The euphoria, alas, would prove to be another Macedonian illusion.