

THE DRAGON'S TEETH IN MACEDONIA

The fable of Cadmus's sowing the Dragon's Teeth has been dramatized in Macedonia for five centuries—a parable of the harvest of hatred and war on a terrain soaked with the blood of Albanian, Serb, Bulgar, Greek and Turk.

During the Great War, Venizelos aroused the hope that Constantinople might be given to Greece, and that a *Megala Hellas* might extend from the Adriatic across Macedonia and Thrace to the Black Sea. This latter dream was realized for a few short months, cutting off the Bulgar's access to the Aegean and depriving the Turk of Eastern Thrace. No natural geographical or ethnographical boundaries exist between Thrace and Macedonia and any division of the territory was necessarily fraught with tension and danger.

From a Turkish point of view Eastern Thrace, although poor in agricultural products, is of immense importance, for in the hands of a hostile power it furnishes a *place d'armes* at the very gates of Stambul. No Bulgarian government could view with friendly eyes exclusion from the Ægean, and no Greek could resist the desire to seize a province which would give his nation a way to the Black Sea and strengthen its position against Turkey and Bulgaria.

The Peace Conference was kind to Venizelos, one of the few great statesmen at Paris, and from a territorial point of view he realized the fondest hopes of his country. But Bulgar and Turkish claims were insistent and Venizelos gave his country doubtful riches when he crowded the Bulgar from the Ægean littoral and created what would have been a perpetual source of irritation with

Turkey by the acquisition of Eastern Thrace. Greece received what she bargained for at Paris, but her soldiers and farmers slept uneasily in Macedonia and Thrace, knowing that a few leagues away her neighbors were plotting revenge. A captain of horse, born at Salonika, one Mustapha Kemal, was rapidly rising to power and gave notice to the world that *Megala Hellas* should be reduced.

Greece, relying on Lloyd George's promises, entered upon a disastrous war with the new Nationalist Turkey, which ended with the burning of Smyrna, the collapse of *Megala Hellas* and the inundating of Greece with one million four hundred thousand refugees. Feeling was so bitter in Asia Minor that the remaining Greek population was in daily peril of massacre. This gave rise to the proposal of Fridtjof Nansen for the exchange of populations whereby the remaining Greeks from Asia Minor were moved to Greece, and Turks, largely from Macedonia, were sent to Turkey. Fascinating old racial distribution maps with patches of blue and purple, red and yellow, no longer convey information which corresponds to peoples actually on the soil. North and west in the Danube Basin the population may be outlined in a rough manner by vivid adjacent splashes of color which intermingle for a few kilometres on the speech frontiers; but in Macedonia, where ingenious cartographers have attempted to picture interweaving of ethnic and confessional strains, the result was like a Persian carpet! To add chaos to confusion, protagonists of different races have published maps which picture territories ranging from a few hill villages to whole countrysides in colors favorable to their cause. The five strongest groups in Macedonia during the last century have been the Turks, Bulgars, Greeks, Serbs and Albanians, and these for decades have striven with equal tenacity for mastery, through diplomacy, brigandage and actual war.

Racial maps of Macedonia made a few years ago are out of date. The thin and interrupted stream of minority

populations, which had been slowly migrating to more congenial surroundings, became a torrent of refugees during the Balkan and Great Wars, culminating after 1918 in the exchange of populations under the provisions of the Treaty of Lausanne, streams of destitute people, crowding shipping and highways and mountain trails from one end of Macedonia to the other.

The Turks of Southern Macedonia who once composed two-thirds of the population are gone, with the exception of a few hundred in Western Thrace. Numbers of the fifty thousand Greeks who fled from Bolshevik rule in South Russia and the Caucasus have settled in Macedonia, while Bulgar Slavs who once found homes in that territory have been exchanged for Greeks from Eastern Roumelia. The Greeks are now nearly as sparse there as Turks in Southern Macedonia.

For the first time in twenty centuries, Southern Macedonia and Eastern Greece are Hellenic by an overwhelming preponderance of Greek blood. Thrace, east of the River Maritza, is almost completely Turkish, and Macedonia north of the Belatista is almost purely Bulgarian. The fact that the racial constituency of Macedonia has changed enormously since the war is one which no student of international affairs can ignore when addressing himself to the Eastern question.

Nowhere, unless we go back to the period of the great migration of the Goths, Visigoths, Vandals and Turanians following the collapse of the Roman Empire and the tragic Anatolian deportations of Armenians in Turkey during the World War, can we discover such movements of people as have taken place in Thrace and Macedonia since the First Balkan War. From October, 1912, the outbreak of the First Balkan War, to the beginning of 1925 when the migratory movements nearly came to a stop, Greek Macedonia, as distinguished from Serbian and Bulgarian Macedonia, according to Mr. A. A. Pallis (former Deputy Governor General of Salonika in 1917-1918, and Hellenic delegate on the Commission for the

Exchange of Populations between Greece and Turkey in 1923-1924), underwent seventeen distinct movements.

Arranged chronologically they would be:

(1) 1912—The advance of the Armies of the Balkan Allies with the Greeks marching on Salonika, the Serbs attacking toward Askut and Monastir, and the Bulgars moving in the direction of Cavalla and Salonika. Some 10,000 Turks fled in panic at this time to Constantinople and points in Asiatic Turkey.

(2) 1913—When the Bulgarian Army retreated on the outbreak of the second Balkan War, nearly 15,000 Bulgarians followed it to the north.

(3) 1913—When certain districts were ceded to Bulgaria by the conditions of the Treaty of Bucharest, over 5,000 Greeks left these districts for Hellenic Macedonia.

(4) 1913—The same condition prevailed in the districts ceded to Serbia, about 5,000 Greeks moving to the south.

(5) 1913—On the close of the Second Balkan War over 5,000 Greeks, encouraged by the success of Hellenic arms and by rumors of free land, left the Caucasus and settled in Macedonia against the objections of the Greek government.

(6) 1913-14—By the Treaty of Bucharest Western Thrace went to Bulgaria, which caused 40,000 Hellenes to migrate westward to Macedonia.

(7) 1914—Turkey, at the conclusion of peace with her Balkan victors, succeeded in inducing between 100,000 and 115,000 Turks to leave Macedonia and settle in Eastern Thrace and on the Anatolian littoral.

(8) 1914—In order to force Greece to give up certain Ægean Islands she had occupied in the First Balkan War, the Young Turks forced 80,000 Greeks from Eastern Thrace and 20,000 from the Asiatic littoral to flee, most of them taking refuge in Macedonia.

(9) 1916—In this year nearly all the Greek inhabitants of Eastern Macedonia, 36,000, were deported to Bulgaria by the then victorious Bulgar troops.

(10) 1918—After the Armistice, 17,000 survivors of the above deportation were returned to their villages.

(11) 1918-1919—When the Greek troops occupied Western Thrace, Eastern Thrace and the Smyrna Zone, Greeks were repatriated to these areas to the number of 140,000.

(12) 1919-1920—In 1919 the government at Athens decided to repatriate the Greeks in South Russia and the Caucasus. Of these, 55,000 settled in Macedonia.

(13) 1920—When General Wrangel's White Army was defeated by the Reds in the Crimea, many soldiers and civilians found asylum in Greece, some 1,000 settling in Salonika.

(14) 1919-1924—In 1919 Greece and Bulgaria drew up a convention for the interchange of populations, under which 27,000 Bulgarians left Macedonia for their homeland.

(15) 1922-1924—After the Smyrna disaster, Greeks from Pontus and the Black Sea littoral, as well as from Smyrna, fled to Greece. Following the Mudania Convention, by which the Allied Powers surrendered Constantinople and Eastern Thrace to the Kamalist government, most of the Greeks and Armenians in Eastern Thrace and large numbers from Constantinople took refuge in Greece. Up to the first of November, 1924, nearly 700,000 were settled in Macedonia and nearly 120,000 in Western Thrace.

(16) 1923-1924—In January, 1923, the Greco-Turkish Convention for the exchange of populations was drawn up, differing from the Greco-Bulgar convention in that it is a compulsory measure, with the exception of the Turks in Western Thrace and the Greeks of Constantinople.

(17) 1925—In May of this year, the remainder of the Greek population of Eastern Thrace and of Asia Minor were transferred to Greece. This movement comprised some 94,000 from Anatolia, 18,000 from Eastern Thrace, and 38,000 from Constantinople.

The Macedonian question is fraught with many stresses and strains but the Treaty of Lausanne, unsatisfactory as it is in many respects, is aiding the settlement of at least the Macedonian section of the Eastern Question. There were, and are, misunderstandings between Serbia and Greece caused by historical antipathies and by the presence of many slavophones in the north central part of Macedonia who naturally look to Serbia as their cultural and national home. Bulgaria was promised a port on the Ægean at Dedagatsch and hoped for a corridor to the same, neither of which she received. The exchange of population, however, which followed Smyrna and Lausanne had done away with the major cause of friction between Turkey and Greece, at least as far as Macedonia is concerned, although the removal of the entire Turkish population is under a condition which forbids hope of return.

The Greek Settlement Commission, through the foreign loan, was able to make provision for its new citizens in a way to furnish them with implements and tools whereby they might support themselves. A standard equipment was devised for those who wish to occupy farms. Each family was extended a loan in the nature of a donkey or an ox, a new, unpainted farm cart, a plow, seed grain, and a house—either an old Turkish dwelling or a newly constructed one—or the materials to complete a frame already erected. In addition, in certain categories of cases, there was a cash advance of five hundred drachmas. It is doubtful whether the government will receive payments in return for these loans, as the refugees may some day form a *bloc* in the Greek parliament to transfer these debts into the list of expenditures for the common good. At any rate, the nation has been vastly benefited by the addition of this homogeneous Greek group to occupy the vacancies left by the Turk, as well as putting under cultivation many hitherto unoccupied regions.

Vast reclamation projects are under way, one by an

American concern, to drain the swamps of the Vardar Valley and restrain that capricious stream in months of high water, which will add more than twelve hundred square miles of fertile soil to cultivation. Greece is a trading, maritime and agricultural state. The great bulk of her population must find a living from flocks and farms. The Peloponnesus, for the most part barren and rocky, with the exception of a fertile strip along the narrow coastal plain, offers nothing for future exploitation. The central plain of Thessaly is at present occupied—Macedonia is the hope of Greece from the standpoint of both wealth and population.

While Macedonia is more nearly homogeneous now than at any other period, there are still ethnic elements remaining to be absorbed or adjusted. The Spanish Jews of Salonika have all the distinctive and adaptable characteristics of their race. There is no reason to fear that they will cause serious inconvenience to the Greek population or the government. They are traders, money-lenders and property holders. An Armenian increment came as part of the multitude that fled from the holocaust in Asia Minor; they number some fifteen thousand souls in all Greece, of which some ten thousand are located in Macedonia. Because of the magnitude of the refugee problem, certain circles of Greeks intermittently agitate against the presence of the Armenians, but while this attitude is understandable it is short-sighted, as the Armenian is no idle fellow, but a good citizen. Of all racial groups he is perhaps the most adaptable. If the Greek government should construct a formula allowing all Armenians who wish to become naturalized Greek subjects, the overwhelming majority of the emigrants would accept the solution. Unfortunately the Armenian National Committee in Paris—a self-perpetuating survival of the body which secured assurance from the Peace Conference of a National Armenian Home—has refused to consider the changed conditions under which these Armenian refugees find themselves or to urge their

naturalization in the lands where they find their daily bread. It is far better for Armenians in Greece to become loyal Greek subjects than to remain unassimilable and discontented strangers, or find their way back to Armenia which is today a part of Red Russia.

One of the greatest assets the Greek nation possesses in Macedonia at the present time is some fifteen thousand young men and young women who are graduates of the orphanages of the Near East Relief. After careful personal investigation of families the children are placed in homes of relatives or friends, either as permanent members of the family or under a definite wage contract. No group of children in southeastern Europe has received better training in general knowledge and in the arts and crafts of village and farm. Their presence during the next two decades will be an economic, cultural and spiritual addition to the life of Macedonia of incalculable value.

As one plods along the road through western Macedonia, the bitterly contested route that leads to Monastir, remade by the French Army under Franchet d'Esperey, or as one climbs the hills north of Salonika over the paved ways laid by British Forces, one sees roadside graves or cemeteries acres wide, where sleep the men who came long distances to die, on ground ever thirsty for the blood of fighters; the retrospect is not encouraging. But to visit the homes of the refugees, catch their frontier homestead spirit, see the clean and happy homes of orphanage graduates, one may see a parable of a new era in Macedonia. Will the trail of Cadmus still be followed by black crosses against the red and windswept sky, or will interest in her homes and the sowing of young life usher in a new day for Greece and her northern marches?

The question will be answered by the degree of restraint Balkan statesmen will employ, and the prestige and power the League will command in a day of increased desire for peace.

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