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MUSTAFA KEMAL ATATÜRK AND MACEDONIA
- PAGES ON THE MACEDONIAN – TURKISH RELATIONS-

Writing history is as important as creating it; if the author who is writing it is not faithful to the one that created it, the truth which is unchangeable can take a strange form in the eyes of humanity.

K. Atatürk

1. General biography notes

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk lived in the turmoil period of wars, uprisings and revolutions in which the long-century and multinational Ottoman empire slowly disappeared, spread even in his time on the vast Asian, European and African regions and the Republic was created as a national state of the Turkish people within its ethnic boundaries. It is beyond any doubt that it was a major historic transformation that designated the future of other peoples in the empire, among which the Macedonian people as well. In a number of those events, Kemal Atatürk stuck the stamp of his outstandingly dynamic and creative personality. At the beginning, in the events during the Young Turk Revolution (1908 – 1919) – an overture into the Turkish National Liberation Revolution – modestly, while in its concluding stages, between 1919 and 1938, Atatürk took the role of its prime leader. This very fact is the reason why Kemal Atatürk has attracted the attention of a number of Turkish and European researchers for a long time, and in 1981 the centennial of his birth was celebrated with a rich program.

We simply cannot come to the topic about Kemal Atatürk and Macedonia without first noting the elementary data from his biography. He

was born in Salonika on 19 May 1881. This date should be taken as provisional, because it was stated by Atatürk himself, years later, referring to 19 May 1919, when he moved from Istanbul to the Black Sea town of Samsun, where he initiated the fight for new Turkey. By that, he wanted to highlight in a symbolic way his second, political birth – the arrival in Anatolia (Small Asia) with the aim of organizing an armed movement for liberation from the Entente occupiers. At this birth, his father, Ali Rıza, gave him the name Mustafa. Later on, in Thessaloniki, his mathematics teacher Mustafa Bey in the military secondary school (Rüştiye) added his second name Kemal, which literally means *perfection*. Years later, in the series of reforms and in recognition of his deeds, he was named Atatürk, “The father of Turks”. In this way he got his complete name Mustafa Kemal Atatürk¹.

Mustafa Kemal started his education in Thessaloniki in privat lay schools and was then transferred to the above stated secondary school Rüştiye and the military secondary school – idadîe. His life path then took him to the Military high school in Bitola. This Macedonian city was for a long time the most important military focal point in European Turkey (Rumelia) filled with extensive military personnel and officers, and the Bitola military high school was regarded as the best in this rank in the overall Empire. His transfer to Bitola meant an end to his young years and his real education began, not only in the military occupation. From Bitola, he was sent to Istanbul, where he completed the Ottoman War Academy (1902) followed by the General Staff Academy of the Ottoman army in 1905. Upon completing the latter, he was produced into the rank of a General Staff captain. After that year, his participation in the political life of the Empire and, later on Turkey, can be followed with greater certainty. Hence, the Macedonian cities of Thessaloniki and Bitola became indivisibly interwoven in the life of Kemal Atatürk since the period of his childhood and his growth into an independent person².

¹ See: *Grand Larousse encyclopédique*: Tome septième, (Paris, 1963), p. 611-612; *Большая советская энциклопедия*, Vol. 2, III publication, (Moscow, 1970), p. 368-369; А. Ф. Миллер, *Турция, Актуальные проблемы нозой и новейшей истории*, (Moscow, 1983), p. 77.

² *Grand Larousse encyclopédique*, p. 611; A.F. Miller, p. 78

In the period of time when the work of Mustafa Kemal was connected with Macedonia to a higher or lower extent, he was primarily an officer and a fighter. Even following the dissolution of the Empire at the end of the First World War, his outstanding statehood commitments came to a full expression. He received his appointment as an operational officer and a commander of a military unit in Damascus, Syria, where he was actually expelled due to his participation in the secret revolutionary society “Vatan” (Motherland), composed of young officers who were opposed to the Sultan’s absolutism and Islamic clericalism in the Empire. In the following years, he participated in all wars of Sultanic Turkey: in Tripoli (present Libya) against the Italians (1911), in the First Balkan War (1912) and the First World War 1914 – 1918. After 1919, he continued his fight, which by that time received more of a national – liberation character, against the Entente powers and completed it with great victories over the Greek occupiers who were substantially supported by the British. Mustafa Kemal, with his outstanding talent of an army leader, was regularly sent to the places with the gravest situation. And he always won, which eventually made him the greatest army leader that Macedonia has ever given since the time of Alexander the Great and Tsar Samuel.

Concurrently with the victories, he went up the ladder of his military career: from a colonel at the beginning of First World War to a *Gazi* (Victor) in 1922. He defeated the Greeks with his new army, which was more of a national – liberation character than a regular army, in three battles: in the vicinity of the village İnönü, the battle near the river Sakarya (1921) and finally at Afyonkarahisar in August 1922. With these victories, he expelled the Greek occupiers from Anatolia and Eastern Thrace. After liberating the country from the occupiers, Mustafa Kemal annulled the Sèvres peace treaty (1919), one in the series of the Versailles peace treaties, which was then replaced by the much more favourable Lausanne peace treaty of July 1923. In this way, Atatürk saved Turkey from the imperialist disintegration and slavery. At the same time, his political power grew as the state and the Turkish society were being transformed in direction of becoming part of Europe. In November 1922, he abolished the last Sultan and proclaimed the Republic, and he was elected its president on 29 October 1923; he transferred the capital from cosmopolitan Istanbul to Ankara, which became

the centre of the new Turkish state; he abolished the caliphate, he separated the church from the state, he introduced the Western European civil law and the Latin alphabet, he built a new army etc.³ In short, he oriented the Turkish society and state towards full laicism and modernization. The Turkish Republic became a state to be built upon the European model of political and social organization.

2. Origin, education and creation of personality

Mustafa Kemal came from a civil family that belonged to the lower middle class (in Thessaloniki there is still the two-storey family house where he was born, and it was later transformed into a Museum of Atatürk). His father Ali Risa Efendi changed several occupations. He was first a clerk in the Thessaloniki customs. He then became a timber merchant and spent more time outside Thessaloniki in warehouses than home. During the Russian – Turkish war (1877 – 1878), he was mobilized in the so-called voluntary auxiliary battalion. He died in 1892 when Mustafa was only eleven years old. The entire care for the upbringing and education of their only son fell on his mother Zübeyde Hanım, whose predecessors moved to Thessaloniki from somewhere in Western Macedonia. The son Mustafa inherited from his ambitious mother many positive personality characteristics and her clear blue eyes. There are two hypotheses for the origin of his father Ali Risa Efendi: one that he was a Thessaloniki native, and the second that he came to Thessaloniki from the Debar village Kojajik. In any case, Mustafa Kemal was a Macedonian Turk who had ties with his motherland Macedonia.

His views on life and the deeds of the great reformist Atatürk reflect almost all major moments of his childhood, young and mature years. His development as a person was evidently influenced by the family upbringing, education, the social ambience in which he grew up and lived and the constantly changeable historical circumstances of his time. Mustafa Kemal changed the life of the Turkish people, but on the other hand, life itself

³ Grand Larousse éncyclopédique, p. 611; A.F. Miller, p. 1349, 208, 230-231; Јусуф Хамза, *Односот на младотурката партија “Единство и напредок” спрема македонското национално-ослободително движење во развојните етапи на Младотурката револуција*, (Скопје, 1989), 418 (PhD dissertation).

modeled his development as well. We will dwell on some moments from his early biography.

Mustafa Kemal lost his father very early, which brought about sudden impoverishment of his family. When he was 12, the family found temporary accommodation with one of his uncles in the town Langada, some 30 km north of Thessaloniki. At his mother's direction, he briefly attended an Orthodox religious school there. Prior to that, he received his education at the private progressive Şemsi Efendi school and upon its completion, he attended for two years a civic high school in Thessaloniki. Another information is also very important from his early school days: young Mustafa took French lessons for one summer at the Catholic missionaries, the famous Lazarists. He could probably notice at that period the huge difference between the phonetic alphabet and the complicated Arabic script studied in the Turkish schools, a fact that afterwards inspired him to introduce the decree for replacement of the Arabic alphabet by the Latin alphabet.

After leaving Langada he enrolled again at the Thessaloniki Rucholigè School and lived at his aunt's. The graduation from this school opened up the door for the next level of education – Idadisi (high school), which would enable him to become a junior clerk (kjatib). However, young Mustafa did not finish either of these schools. One day, the assistant principal Kajmak Haf'z , almost without any reason, beat him ferociously, as a consequence of which Mustafa gave up on the civil schools for good and chose to continue his education in a military school. In his recollections, according to the renowned Russian turkologist Anatolij Fillipovic Miller, confessed that he was attracted by the military profession from early childhood and he admired the nicely clad cadets and young officers he saw on the Thessaloniki streets. The above stated Anatolij Fillipovic Miller says: "This act primarily reflected his strong, although not fully comprehended feeling of a protest against poor life, servanthood and all forms of humiliation that young Mustafa had suffered. It seemed to him that if he became an officer that would mean salvation from all miseries in life. The life of a soldier is subject to a stringent and clear discipline... Mustafa Kemal was also unavoidably influenced by the evident difference between the civic and military schools of that time. He did not know at that time the

underlying reasons for that difference, but he suffered personally the shortfalls of the Turkish civil schools, even of those called “new”. Moreover, his friends told him that the lectures at the military schools were given by good teachers and that the curriculum was “a la franga”, that is, by the European model”. This reasoning of the young cadets was indeed appropriate, because the Sultan’s despotism, restricted to primitivism in civil education, had to introduce European standards and exact science disciplines in the military schools for preparation of qualified officer personnel. The thirteen-year-old Mustafa made the final decision without his mother’s knowledge, with whom he did not get along for about two years because, still being a young woman, she remarried to a widower who had four children of his own. After passing the entrance test in the summer 1894, Mustafa Kemal went to the third class of the Thessaloniki military school. After a year and a half, at the end of 1895 he completed the secondary military education. Thus, his window of opportunity opened up for going to Bitola. By this time, the Macedonian revolutionary organization put down its roots in Thessaloniki, Bitola, Shtip, Prilep and other Macedonian cities, and Goce Delchev travelled round entire Macedonia. Mustafa Kemal faced this organization some ten years later.

After leaving Thessaloniki and arriving to Bitola, he could notice the evident difference in the social ambience of the two cities. Let us go back for a moment to Thessaloniki. The city of Thessaloniki was at the time a major port, traffic, administrative, economic and primarily trade centre. It was the second in rank in the Empire, after Constantinople, and all other Balkan capitals at the time lagged far behind it. It is considered to have had about 150 000 population with a very heterogeneous ethnic composition. Only about 14-15 thousand of them were Turks and the same number of other Moslems, within which Donme was the prevailing group, consisting of not fully islamized Hebrews. The Jewish community was the largest and they mainly came from Spain and kept their religion and the Castilla dialect. In figures, the Jews and the Turks were followed by the Greeks, then by the Macedonians, whose community was constantly being increased as a result of internal movements. According to contemporaries of that time, the Macedonian spoken language, thanks to the trade and other ties of Thessaloniki with its Macedonian hinterland, acquired an equal status with

the Jewish, Turkish and Greek languages. A large share of foreigners also lived in the city – Europeans and “Levantine”, and thus had the look of a large cosmopolitan city. The ancient architectonic monuments of the Roman and Byzantine periods were supplemented by new sacral and profane works in the city itself and its surrounding. A.F. Miller draws the following conclusion: “Almost no Turkish word could be heard on the main streets. There were scattered advertisements written in French, Jewish and Greek. Strange posters could be seen, printed in Italian with Jewish letters”.

In Thessaloniki, there were evident signs of the dependence and humiliation in Turkey, the lack of power and corruption of the leadership, on the one hand, and the power and the disdain of the foreigners and the rich people under their protection, who belonged to all other nationalities, but not Turks.” The social picture of the population in the major city centres in Macedonia had similar, though not so drastic characteristics. We likewise came to similar conclusions several years ago when we wrote: “The Ottoman authorities, in their servility and weakness, always humbly favoured the esteemed individuals and richer strata, regardless of their ethnic or religious belonging, and particularly respected the various European representatives. The extent of their privileges was directly dependant of the scope of their wealth or the social status they possessed.” Some European authors – experts for the Turkish circumstances called the European consuls in Macedonia “small kings” as they entered the premises of the Turkish district judges (valia) as in an occupied country. The Turkish soldiers at the guard posts had to salute them with all honoraries, because otherwise they risked getting severe punishments (such a guard killed the Russian consul A.A. Rostkovski in front of the Bitola barracks in the first days of the Ilinden uprising as a consequence of the consul’s affective temper). The dignity of the Turkish patriots was impaired in hundreds of different ways, especially of the young educated officers. In short, Thessaloniki, where young Mustafa Kemal got his first knowledge of life was everything but a Turkish city. Or at least, it seemed that way.

It is very possible that even at that time the suffering soul of young Mustafa Kemal gave way to the feeling of resistance to the evident inequality in the relations with the foreigners; to the complex of inferiority of the Turkish lower classes and clerks; the discontent of the substantially better

Orthodox schools in Thessaloniki, etc. He also developed the feeling that the Turk, the ordinary Turkish citizen of Thessaloniki is neglected, poor, culturally deprived and in many aspects unequal in his own country. It is very probable that he recalled his native Thessaloniki from his childhood when many years later he decided to move the capital in the heart of “Turkish” Turkey, abandoning the cosmopolitan megalopolis at the Bosphorus where espionage, corruption and inferiority, and even treason, had long ruled. Following the revolution, he sought in Ankara and Anatolia healthy Turkish national forces and more security for the central government.

In Bitola, Mustafa Kemal encountered a significantly different social situation. In the city, where according to some authors about 45-50 thousand people lived, the share of the Turkish population was about 14-15 thousand. The portion of the Macedonians was slightly larger. The political power of the Turks in Bitola was felt much more in comparison with Thessaloniki. In addition to the numerous clerks, policemen and the Moslem clergy, Bitola was also a very strong military centre of the vast *villayet* (Ottoman governing unit). There were scarce foreigners grouped around the European consulates and the two schools – the Catholic and the American school. At their expense, the clerical-educational institutions of the Balkan propaganda in Western Macedonia were numerous and fairly active. There were nine primary and two secondary Turkish civil schools and three military schools. His real education and more serious development into a personality and an influential member of society began at the Military College in Bitola. Thus, Mustafa Kemal recollected with reverence his history teacher Kolagasi Mehmet Tefvik-Bey, who taught him for the first time that in addition to the history of the Islam there is also the history of the Turkish people, which did not encompass only the rule of the different sultans and viziers. This new knowledge was the first emancipation step out of the Islamic (religious) towards the Turkish (national) belonging, his own and his people's. Only until recently, there were also oral recollections of the history teacher Tefvik-Bey. In Bitola it is a known fact that he was the author of the “History of the city of Bitola”. Danalili-Efendi was as renowned person – great expert for the Persian language, Mustafa Kemal's teacher and a poet.

Among Mustafa Kemal's classmates, Ali Festhi-Bey was also a prominent figure and later on he became his close associate and a Turkish ambassador to London. At school, in addition to the regular classes, Mustafa Kemal practiced rhetoric with his friends. During his stay in Bitola, he became a close friend with another famous classmate – Ömer Nadji. Ömer Nadji, although a military cadet, was also a brilliant orator with extensive knowledge in literature. Through him, Mustafa Kemal was familiarized with the works of the Turkish “new literature”, which appeared in mid XIX century under the influence of the famous Tanzimat reforms and the Constitution movement of the “new Ottoman Turks” in the Empire. Ömer Nadji gave him patriotic books and verse books written by the Turkish enlightenment authors İbrahim Şinasi, Zija-Pasha, Nam'k Kemal and other authors that were banned by censure. What could young M. Kemal learn from them? The first two authors pointed out the dangers of religious fanaticism and primitivism; they stirred in him respect for science, a strive to learn about the world and the achievements of European civilization. From Nam'k Kemal, he learned the “new” notions of motherland, nation, patriotism, freedom etc. which were by that time unknown in Turkey. At the time, they were still filled with sufficiently nebulous Ottoman content, but nevertheless they helped him understand them as national and Turkish notions. Mustafa Kemal admired the patriotic verses of Nam'k Kemal, learned them by heart and by the end of his life he knew much of the poet's work.

His classmate Ali Festhi directed him to other spheres of thought. Among other things, Al Festhi learned French from early childhood and had the affinity for abstract sciences and politics. He passed his knowledge of the French philosophers (Voltaire, Rousseau, Auguste Comte) to the cadet Mustafa Kemal inspiring him to explore philosophical and political subjects. Mustafa Kemal later said that thanks to Ali Festhi, he was able to “understand something about politics”. In some sense, the two cadets complemented each other. That made them becomes very close.

Our source, A.F. Miller assumes that Mustafa Kemal did not know the numerous important events from the social life in Macedonia at the time, but that he intuitively linked the beginnings of the revolutionary turmoil around him with Abdul Hamid regime. However, in those last years of XIX

century, he, as many others around him, wrongly believed that the mass movements in Macedonia and the Balkans generally were not autochthonous and caused by the Sultan's despotism, but rather resulting from external propaganda and Turkey's internal weakness. Even after moving to the capital to continue his education, he became more oriented in the political situation in the Empire. At the Academy in Constantinople he got involved in the illegal political life in the country⁴. In the meantime, in his native Macedonia, the liberation movement of the Macedonian people developed with a very fast pace and the echo of the great Ilinden uprising in 1903 must have reached him in Constantinople as well. We do not have any information about his reflections on the famous Ilinden event. Anyhow, the three years he spent in Bitola acquiring his education constituted an outstandingly important stage in the creation of Mustafa Kemal, the future Atatürk. He left Bitola at 19 and upon turning 24 he became a General Staff captain and left the Ottoman capital.

3. Mustafa Kemal in the Young Turk Revolution. A comparison: Mustafa Kemal and Jane Sandanski

In the years studying in Constantinople, Mustafa Kemal, in addition to studying at the Academy, continued to read banned literature, educate himself and expand the circle of friends in and out of school in the liberal opposition circles. In the capital, he did not manage to establish an organizational tie with the Young Turk conspiracy, although he was spiritually ready to join the organization as he was intensively thinking which path to choose and what can be done to save the frail state. In literature, two episodes of his sufficiently visible activity are mentioned. At the Military Academy, a secret society was formed and at its meetings he spoke and wrote verses and articles in the illegal magazine whose purpose was to attract new followers. The Sultan's management and politics were severely attacked in the magazine and the literary works. Despite the

⁴ A.F. Miller, p. 74-90; *Гимназијално образование во Битола*, Битола, 1965, 4-7; Јусуф Хамза, „Создавањето на буржоаско-демократското друштво Нови Османлии“, *Гласник на Институтот за национална историја*, XXXI, 2, (Скопје, 1987): 149-160; Јоханес Гласнек, „Младотурската револуција од 1908 година и улогата на Кемал Атататурк“, *Историја*, VIII, 2, (Скопје, 1972): 67.

favouring of certain professors, the society was discovered and the group was imprisoned. After January 1905, when Mustafa Kemal graduated from the Academy, he was imprisoned for several months under suspicion. Upon initiative of Mustafa Kemal, the professor of military tactics delivered several lectures on partisan fighting (“guerilla”), in the framework of which an analysis was made of a hypothetical plan of an attack on the capital by partisan groups from Anatolia developed by the professor. These interests, supplemented by the experience of the tactics of the Macedonian guerilla, helped him later on in the establishment and warfare of the new Turkish national army composed by Anatolian peasants, Turkish patriots and soldiers.

His activities at the Academy did not go unnoticed by the numerous informants of the Sultan. Therefore, although he completed his education with excellent grades and was expecting a staff duty in a Macedonian city, they took him as a guard to Damascus so as to keep him as far from Macedonia as possible. Later on, Kemal recollects: “I just graduated from the Academy as a General Staff captain and was taking my first steps in life. Yet, it turned out that those were not steps in life at all, but those in prison were.” The suspicions, and later on the revealing of the society only brought expulsion to Mustafa Kemal to distant Damascus to prevent “any easy possibility for his return to his native motherland”, Macedonia, as the order stated. From the perspective of a senior command, this order was well founded, because in those years Macedonia was becoming most attractive to the Turkish patriots and the first district of the Young Turk illegal activities in the Empire. Captain Mustafa Kemal could only strengthen the Young Turk conspiracy there⁵. A new page in his biography opened up at that moment. One closed, and another was opening up. Finding himself outside the Academy, he embarked into a period of active political endeavours.

Mustafa Kemal remained in Syria for less than two years and developed significant political and organizational activity. Before elaborating more on this, we will dwell on another very indicative episode from his life. In Syria and the surrounding Arabic countries, the army of the Sultan was often engaged in crushing local rebellions and in those actions the Arabic

⁵ A.F. Miller, p. 92-93

villages were plundered and burned down. Mustafa Kemal was a witness, and against his consent even a participant in these punitive expeditions. A similar thing happened at that time to the Druze. The rage, accumulated in his soul, burst out one day when he saw from his office a non-commissioned officer – Turk beat up an Arab soldier. Kemal dashed to the Staff and demanded that the non-commissioned officer be punished, but not a soul wanted to protect the Arab from the Turk. He was overwhelmed by a great feeling of shame and guilt to the entire Arab people, whose ancient and rich culture was well known to him. He long remembered this episode and later wrote down: “The awareness of the Turk woke up in me, the awareness of the Turk, not of the Ottoman or the Moslem”. That was the first flash of the thought for the false nature of the Ottoman doctrine, as well as of the danger hovering over the Turks themselves who took the “right” to tyrannize other peoples⁶.

The awoken revolutionary did not stay at peace in Syria either. At the Damascus market he made an acquaintance, by accident or on purpose, with a certain D-r Mustafa-Bey (later Jantekin), a former student at the Military Medical Academy, who was expelled from Istanbul due to his participation in an oppositionist conspiracy. One night in his home, Mustafa Kemal pledging fidelity, founded the secret society “Fatherland and Freedom”, to which his friend Kemal Mufid and several other officers joined. Other officers joined them later on and Mustafa Kemal established branches of the Society in Jaffa, Beirut and Jerusalem. However, his initiative did not encounter the adequate conditions for acquiring a massive extent since it was cut off from Constantinople and had its birth in an entirely foreign national environment. The Arabs had different national interests and paid little interest in the Young Turk projections for the future of the Empire. Kemal himself dreamt about Macedonia, from where occasional and vague information reached him about the better possibilities for developing revolutionary activities.

The new organization assessed rightly that Macedonia was much more favourable for organizing an uprising against the Sultanate than Syria.

⁶ Ibid, p. 99-100; В. И. Шпилькова, *Младотурецкая революция*, 1908-1909, (Moscow 1977), p. 77-78.

As a consequence of the Ilinden uprising, the famous Mürzteg program was enforced in Macedonia for a reform of the three Macedonian villaets (The Thessaloniki villaet, the Bitola villaet and the Skopje villaet) under the supervision of two so-called civilian agents – a Russian and an Austro-Hungarian – and gendarmery groups from five European great powers. The sovereignty of Turkey was gravely threatened. This fact, as well as the activities of the paramilitary companies from the Balkan states, seriously disturbed the Turkish patriots for the survival of the Ottoman state in Macedonia, which in its turn, stirred an increasingly more energetic movement among the young officers and the Turkish intelligentsia. This is the reason why the society “Fatherland and Freedom” decided that Mustafa Kemal had to secretly go to Thessaloniki with the task to form branches of the society in Macedonia as well. Hence, Mustafa Kemal, semi-legally and running a great risk, travelled to Thessaloniki via Jaffa, Alexandria and Athens. He remained in Thessaloniki for four months, with a permission by the corps commander for a “sick leave” and thanks to the good will of certain senior officers. In Thessaloniki, in the summer of 1906 established the Macedonian branch of the “Fatherland and Freedom”, that was initially joined by five to seven officers and was then significantly expanded by other officers and Thessaloniki intellectuals.

At almost the same time, in Thessaloniki another secret organization was founded under the name “Ottoman Association for Freedom” which was active outside the city boundaries among the officers of the Third Army Corps. Some researchers claim that this association dates from 22 July 1906, that is, from the time when Mustafa Kemal was staying in Thessaloniki illegally. However, these two organizations know nothing about each other. The new organization with its leaders Talaat Bey, a post office clerk and the officers Kemal Bey and Enver Bey was soon renamed into a “Committee of Union and Progress” (in Turkish: “İttihad Ve Terakki”, or simply İttihad) probably by suggestion of the Young Turk emigration centre in Paris and expanded rapidly.

The four months elapsed quickly and Mustafa Kemal left Thessaloniki in August 1906 in an attempt to cover up his trace and returned to his unit in Syria. He returned to Thessaloniki as a vice major on his request in the autumn 1907. He was then assigned by the Staff of the III

Army as a military inspector at the railway line Thessaloniki – Skopje. Afterwards, in the eve of the Young Turk Revolution in Macedonia, he got the same function at the railway line Thessaloniki – Bitola.

In that year of absence, many things changed in Thessaloniki, especially in regard to the Young Turk movement in Macedonia. The organization “Fatherland and Freedom” which he founded ceased to exist, so he took another entrance oath without knowing that was actually joining the new organization “Union and Progress”. He did not know personally most of its leaders.

Later on, “his” organization in Thessaloniki, upon prior agreement, joined the united “Ottoman Committee for Union and Progress” in April 1907. After 1906, Thessaloniki grew into the strongest internal centre of the revolution in Turkey. The term “Young Turks” was introduced at that time (in French but with Turkish plural suffix *Jeunes Turcs*) to identify the members of the “Union and Progress”.

Mustafa Kemal, in the interest of the ultimate deed, found himself in a situation to accept the new state of affairs, taking on the task, in addition to his regular duties, to instruct and connect the local sections of the Young Turks in the Macedonian cities with the central section in Thessaloniki⁷. However, this fact does not diminish too much his part in the building of the Young Turk conspiracy in the years preceding the July uprising in 1908 in Macedonia.

It is evident that Mustafa Kemal was suppressed in the rear in the most important preparatory period of the July revolution. It was primarily due to his exile in Syria. A.F. Miller makes a good note of that: “He did not find his place in its leadership and it “found” itself new leaders, although they were all much below him... His exile to Syria was a historic circumstance but, nevertheless it caused irrevocable consequences. Leaving Macedonia in the most decisive moment of its transformation into the main (and almost sole) centre of the Young Turk movement prevented Kemal from preserving his own organization and from taking an active part in the

⁷ Johanes Glasnek, p. 70-73; A.F. Miller, p. 100-105.

creation of the new secret society”. And that society namely took over the key position in the movement.

Who were the first leaders of the “Union and Progress” and later on of the political life in Constitutional Turkey? The head position of the emigrant circles in Paris was taken by Ahmet Riza Bey, who returned to Thessaloniki prior to the July uprising. In December 1908, the national delegates elected him as the president of the newly established Ottoman Parliament in Istanbul. Ahmet Riza shared the conservative positions and firmly stood behind the positions of the Ottoman state centralism. His close associate was doctor Nazim, upon whose effort the “Fatherland and Freedom” and the “Union and Progress” fused into one organization. In Thessaloniki, a dominant influence was exerted by the above stated Talaat Bey, Mithat Şükrü, as well as the two officers – Major Enver and the Colonel Djemal. These two officers later joined the Thessaloniki conspiracy. In Bitola branch of the Young Turk organization, the dominant positions were held by Colonel Sadik, Major Remzi and the senior villaet official Fahri. Among these dominant figures was also Vice Major Ahmet Nijazi Bey, commander of the Resen garrison, who was the first to organize the uprising with its company. He was soon followed by Major Enver from the Thessaloniki garrison with his company of insurgents. They both acquired the honorary name “heroes of the Young Turk revolution”. Nijazi Bey entered history only with this deed, because he is not encountered in the later political life in Turkey, while Enver Bey received the highest functions and became a great follower of the Ottoman movement. Other Young Turk leaders shared similar ideas.

Mustafa Kemal did not share these illusions of the Young Turk leaders, although he had not defined by that time his own views in direction of the pure Turkish national idea opposed to the nebulous Ottoman idea. In his system of views, he already felt the need for creating a purely Turkish national program that would be in time upgraded so as to enable major endeavours for renaissance of the Turkish people and republicanism, which will separate it from the Ottoman ideology as an ideological foundation of the community of the Moslem peoples, such as the Ottoman empire.

However, by the end of 1907 and at the beginning of 1908, he understood the danger for the Turkish survival in Macedonia considering the enhanced European interventions that ended in the Russian – British meeting (and agreement) in Reval in June 1908. Mustafa Kemal, as well as the leaders of “Union and Progress”, believed that his sacred duty was to defend the integrity of the state and that belief was not influenced by the initial ideological difference with the majority of the Young Turks. It should be appropriate to note here that this program item for defence and preservation of the territorial entirety of the Empire, including Macedonia, was the “meeting point” and the foundation for cooperation of the left democratic powers and all Macedonian patriotic powers, led by Jane Sandanski with the Young Turks from “Fatherland and Freedom”. Of course, the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (later National Federative Party) will raise a number of other political, economic, cultural and other requests in its agenda, all of them primarily directed towards the Young Turks as the governing political power after the victory of 23 July 1908.

The first and lasting necessity for both sides was the preservation of the country, while the internal political fights in and out of the Parliament were aiming at resolving the numerous long-ago matured issues. The Macedonian Revolutionary Organization of Jane Sandanski sought resolution of the Macedonian issue in the Empire, because out of the Empire Macedonia was threatened by partition. More visible differences lay in the identification of the external enemy: Sandanski and his fellow insurgents recognized their enemies primarily in the neighbouring Balkan invading policies, while the Young Turks wrongly saw the danger only in the European imperialist powers that had already been involved at the time in the internal affairs of the Empire.

Accordingly, there were differences between the majority of Young Turks and Mustafa Kemal. The leading Young Turks kept him at distance from their front lines. Moreover, it is clear that Mustafa Kemal, as a Turkish national revolutionary and a democrat, was ideologically closer to the Macedonian fighters than to the Young Turk “Ottomans”. Yet, these personal characteristics he possessed became fully prominent much later, after the dissolution of the Empire.

When discussing the comparison between Mustafa Kemal and Jane Sandanski, several important ideological positions are evident. In the turbulent years of Kemal's participation in the political life of the Empire, there were several ideological – political doctrines, among which the Ottoman ideology, the Pan-Turkish ideology and even the Pan-Islamism. In these ideologies, the pure Turkish national idea melted and vanished from sight. They were all in their essence reactive and anti-national doctrines even in relation to the Turkish people – its cultural and national revival and the constitution of the modern Turkish nation. Differently from the Ottoman ideology of the other Young Turk leaders, and particularly of Enver Bey, the nationalism of Kemal had a positive connotation and had an expression of a healthy Turkish patriotism. This was best confirmed by the numerous reforms that he undertook later. Mustafa Kemal needed both time for maturing of the new ideas and adequate conditions for their realization, but before the wars (1912-1918) he still felt the suppressing role of the stated doctrines. When proposing the reforms and afterwards bringing them into life, he primarily had in mind their political goal – gaining and providing national independence of Turkey. At that time he definitely realized that the Turkish people did not need the huge empire, but rather a Turkish national state. These views he adopted led him to a definite break-up with the Ottoman ideology in 1911 – 1912 and distanced him from the circle of the Young Turks, as neither could he join them nor could they accept him as entirely theirs. For instance, Mustafa Kemal and Enver Bey never got along. The dislike was mutual and its underlying reason was not entirely due to their contrary characters.

Hence, Mustafa Kemal deliberately distanced himself from political activity in the period of the Young Turks rule in Macedonia (1908-1912) and devoted himself entirely on his military advancement and command. During the twenty-day Young Turk uprising (3-23 July 1908) in Macedonia, as we saw, he was suppressed in the shadow of the other leaders. However, he had to unavoidable participate in the attack on Istanbul in 1909. In addition to A.F. Miller, we can find substantial information on these issues in Turkish

and partially Bulgarian literature⁸. The most frequently mentioned name in this literature is the name of the most popular leader at the time - Enver Bey, noted on various occasions: meetings, talks, statements and speeches. However, there are occasional statements by Mustafa Kemal as well. There is, for instance, an information about a meeting of Mustafa Kemal with the Kilkis inhabitant Ivan Manolev in Thessaloniki in 1907. That was probably his first contact with the Macedonian revolutionaries. Mustafa Kemal told I. Manolev many of his radical reformist ideas which he planned to introduce in Turkey some day. His focal thought was about modernizing the social life by turning to the Western civilization. He was already determined for an armed action, opposite to Ahmed Riza Bey (Paris), who was still in favour of non-armed means and was hoping for a European diplomatic intervention. This information was noted by several Turkish authors⁹. Mustafa Kemal expressed his commitment to a resolute revolutionary action in Thessaloniki as well in the period before the Young Turk revolution. One of his advocating statements was noted in Thessaloniki, when, inter alia, he said: "Our country is in the hands of foreigners. The Sultan indulges in luxury, while the people are exposed to the pressures of the absolutism. In a country in which there is no freedom, but only death and destruction. Therefore, I call upon you to respond to this absolutist regime by a revolution, to topple it down to liberate our fatherland and make the people the masters of their own fate"¹⁰.

In 1908, Mustafa Kemal embarked in unpleasant debates with the leading Young Turk leaders at the time. Even then, he was clearly against the idea for creating one single Ottoman nation. He considered this idea as an impossible illusion. In Thessaloniki, he said openly to Djemal Bey (one of the later Young Turk leaders) at one moment – that they did not have a feeling of reality, that they daydream and search used up formulas. The following 1909, he said the same thing to the leader of the party "Fatherland and Freedom" Ahmet Riza Bey. He pointed out the need for intensifying the national awareness of the Turks, instead of being committed to the nebulous

⁸ A.F. Miller, p. 110, 115-116; Ј у с у ф Хамза, „Односот на младотурската партија“, 253, 255, 301-302; 403, 500; Григор Василев, *Македонија и турската револуција*, (Софија, 1908), 89, 106-109.

⁹ Jusuf Hamza, p. 92, 420-421

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 92, 440-441

Ottoman ideology and the alike doctrines. His ideas became particularly prominent after his participation in the war against Italy in 1911 in Tripolitania. He supported this understanding with the fact of the diverse peoples, which he respected and he expressed his opposition to their melting into the chimeric artificial Ottoman nation¹¹. In order to grasp his views on the national issue, it is important to understand that Mustafa Kemal was able to see the individuality of the different peoples, especially that of the non-Turkish Moslem peoples. One of the probable reasons for that was the sanctioning expedition of General Mahmut Sefkhet Pasha for crushing the Albanian rebellion in Kosovo in the spring 1910. Mustafa Kemal took part in this expedition, in all likelihood against his will¹². As he came in terms with reality throughout his life, his knowledge also increased and got its reflection in the mirror of that reality.

Jane Sandanski, as a Macedonian revolutionary, underwent a similar ideological evolution in regard with the Macedonian national individuality. Like Mustafa Kemal, he also based his fundamental views on the historic reality in which the Macedonian people was, and particularly on the Macedonian liberation movement. For Sandanski too, a decisive influence on his understanding was exerted by his awareness of the distinct and specific nature of the interests of the Macedonian people, which did coincide with, and were moreover directly contrary to the interests of the Balkan hegemonies, especially to the conquering policy of the Bulgarian hegemony. He assessed the constant involvement of the Bulgarian policy as having destructive consequences on the Macedonian liberation movement. Jane Sandanski became a preponderant fighter for the independence of

¹¹ Ibid, p. 257, 435, 957

¹² The unfavourable position of the Turkish people in the Empire was clearly discerned by other contemporaries in Turkey. The authors of the well-known after-war Manifest dating from the days before the First Balkan War, pledging for intensified reforms in the Empire, among other things wrote: "These reforms can be opposed by the Turkish bureaucracy, meaning, several thousands persons who are strongly committed to their privileges. However, these reforms will be greatly beneficial to the Turkish people, which the current Turkish regime has reduced to the sole role of soldiers and gendarmes who run to all borders and one or another province of the Empire to fight against the disasters striking the country due to the inability of the Turkish oligarchy" (Манол Пандевски, „Манифестот на социјалистите од Балканот и Турција против Балканската војна“, *Гласник на ИНИ*, XXVII, 1-2, (Скопје, 1983): 170.) Similar observations are found in a number of Macedonian revolutionaries and contemporaries.

Macedonian liberation movement; in the matrix of this movement was the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization and from its position he identified the friends and enemies of Macedonia. For him, the unity, the independence and the self-sustenance of Macedonia were a prerequisite for gaining a political independence as well, and an assumption for preserving independent Macedonia after gaining its independence. As years went by, before and especially after the Ilinden uprising (1903), he became even more convinced that only an internally united, massive and enhanced political organization will be able to guarantee the political stability of Macedonia from the destructive actions of the hegemonic policies and the well known propaganda – their extended hands in the midst of the Macedonian people and in its revolutionary liberation movement. In that context of positions, in the course of one and half a decade, Sandanski took special consideration of the relations of the political powers and streams within the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) itself and accordingly determined the tactics and the main directions of the fight, following at the same time the set goal of the Macedonian liberation revolution. The historic magnitude of Mustafa Kemal and Jane Sandanski (and not only Sandanski) is reflected in their vision of the future and they were committed to providing conditions for smooth development of their peoples.

In the course of four decades before the Balkan wars, the Bulgarian policy, not saving any effort and money, and means, was strongly committed to exerting its influence in Macedonia through two separate institutions: the Exarchate – in the domain of the church and the education and the overall spiritual life of the Macedonians and the Supreme Macedonian Committee, that is the varhivist stream of the IMRO – in the revolutionary liberation movement of the Macedonian people. The first was legal and worked within the scope of the Ottoman legislation and mainly in Macedonia, while the Supreme Macedonian Committee was active in the broader framework of the Macedonian liberation movement in emigration – in Bulgaria, and to a lesser extent and later on, illegally in Macedonia. The Exarchate had better conditions for work and better chances for success in Macedonia in comparison with the varhivists, who were prosecuted on the Turkish territory both by the IMRO activists and the Turkish law enforcement forces.

A more interesting topic for us is the activity of the Bulgarian Exarchate. Its primary task was to spread the idea of an alleged Bulgarian belonging of the Macedonian believers (Exarchists) and to cultivate illusions for spiritual and political unity of the “Macedonian Bulgarians” and the Bulgarian people in the principality, that is, with the “Bulgarian” Bulgarians. The resistance of the Macedonian side in terms of the church and the language belong more to the earlier period and, moreover, they were marginalized in the overall social life of the Macedonian people. Since the Exarchate, with a segment of its work, was part of the political life, the IMRO came in a severe friction with it immediately after its establishment (1893) and these two institutions were confronted to a greater or lesser degree by the end of the Ottoman rule in Macedonia.

It seems that the essence of the confrontation was most distinctly expressed during the first Congress of the IMRO after the uprising held in Rila in October 1905. Among other issues, the Congress discussed the propaganda of the Balkan countries in Macedonia. In the Congress documents it was assessed that the fight for church rule serve as a cover up for the invading political powers directed towards Macedonia. The Organization confronted the propaganda with the “autonomist ideal it will continue to fight for”. The Congress resolutions fully equate the goals of all three propaganda – the Bulgarian, the Greek and the Serbian. The propaganda activities of the Exarchate was directly connected with the Bulgarian state nationalism. The Congress underscored its negative position to this nationalism. Its position to the Exarchate remained unchanged: “The Organization qualifies all manifestations in the deeds and politics of the Exarchate and its subordinate bodies directed in the spirit of the Bulgarian state nationalism as dangerous to the Organization’s goals and opposes them”¹³.

¹³ For more see М а н о л П а н д е в с к и, „Рилскиот коингрес на Внатрешната македонско-одринска револуционерна организација“, *Прилози на МАНУ, Одделение за општествени науки*, XI 1—2, Скопје, 1980 година. Due to this decision, Hristo Siljanov, a participant and a well-known historian of the revolutionary movement, witnesses: “This brisk formulation caused astonishment and dissatisfaction in Bulgaria. The media assessed it as “monstrous”, “unreasonable” and even “infantile”. He added that the Bulgarian public was used to consider both institutions, the Exarchate and the IMRO as “Bulgarian and its own” and then they appeared as “being opposed to each other” (X.

Jane Sandanski and the leftists in IMRO continued to expand these positions even after the Rila Congress. In this context is his statement for a broader consultation of renowned leaders and fans of the IMRO, held in November 1907. After pointing out the extremely tensed relations with the new varhivist stream in IMRO, Sandanski developed the thesis that it would be disastrous for the Macedonian people and for Bulgaria itself if the Macedonian issue was treated in the sense of “a national unity of the Bulgarians”. He also added that the people from the opposite faction sold themselves to the Bulgarian government. His conclusion for the actual behaviour was as follows: “All those who agitate in Macedonia and outside Macedonia, on the basis for liberation of the Bulgarians and their unification, should be opposed by the IMRO, in the same manner that the Organization opposes the Serbian and the Greek agitations and companies”. After repeating the decisions from the Rila Congress, Sandanski made a new step forward in his thinking. The participant in the consultations, Stefan Kemilev wrote as follows: “He explained in broad terms that we should work on the awakening of the masses, that they are an independent people, that they have the right to their own political life and that they should fight for winning their freedom without relying on help by others, since those who would come to liberate them would actually occupy them”¹⁴.

In these statements of Sandanski we can trace the same train of thought that Mustafa Kemal had regarding the need to work on the self-perception of the Turkish people in the Empire. Their attempts in this direction were a logical response and a natural reaction to the slow and unavoidable dissolution of the great Empire, under which ruins they did not want to see their own people – the Macedonian people in the case of Sandanski and the Turkish people in the case of Mustafa Kemal. The situation itself, which both of them assessed very well, turned them towards the interests and future of their own people, the first rejecting the Ottoman idea, the second rejecting the Pan-Bulgarianism behind which the reactive ruling powers hid and only inflicted disasters to the peoples in Turkey and the Balkans. Jane Sandanski came to the logical conclusion about the

Силяновъ, Освободителните борби на Македонија. Том втори. След Илинденското въстание, (София, 1943), p. 518.)

¹⁴ X. Силянов, *Освободителните борби...*, p. 497-498

individuality of the Macedonian people, moving through the fight for Macedonian statehood in the broader framework of the Empire; a state that would be democratic and reformed and would not negate, but on the contrary, would only supplement the Macedonian ethnic and language independence. He came to the same conclusion as the cultural and national activists at the time, the only difference being that he based his ideology on a political position and followed the track of the revolutionary fight.

It is an evident fact that both the Macedonian and the Turkish peoples in the Empire were not nationally constituted at that time and Mustafa Kemal and Jane Sandanski anticipated the processes of their national individualism, committing themselves to expanding and accelerating those processes. It could not have been any different, since the Macedonians could liberate themselves and live free only as a Macedonian people, whereas the Turkish people could live only as Turks and not as Ottomans. That was in fact the deeply rooted persuasion of Sandanski and his fellow fighters that the Macedonian issue was unachievable if set as a Bulgarian issue, that is, an issue of some "national unification of the Bulgarians". History went to a completely opposite direction from the "unifying" one and the Macedonians had invested too much effort, suffering and sacrifices in the fight for their state in the Balkans.

When speaking about comparisons, let us note another one. As Mustafa Kemal had hard time separating the Turkish people ideologically from the rest of the Islamic world in the Empire, it was difficult for Sandanski too to come to terms with the broadly spread illusion about the Macedonian belonging to Bulgaria. This illusion, on the other hand, was founded on the traditions for the joint anti-phanariote fights of the Macedonian and Bulgarian peoples in the past and was kept by means of numerous Exarchate institutions and people in Macedonia.

4. Mustafa Kemal and Jane Sandanski in Thessaloniki and Constantinople

With the outlawing of Niyazi Bey with his military unit in the mountains and villages around Resen, the uprising of the Young Turks began

in Macedonia and in the Empire. In the forthcoming days several other officers joined the uprising with their own uprising units, and in the Kichevo unit of Asan Bey several Macedonian teachers entered among which was Anastas Mitrev,¹⁵ later the follower of Sandanski. In Macedonia and the neighbouring countries of European Turkey a wide uprising movement was enkindled by Young Turks which paralysed the Sultan power. Very quickly two uprising leading centres became active – the Bitola and Thessaloniki centres. From the village regions and smaller cities the movement was shifted to the city centres. The night of July 22 several thousand rebels entered Bitola, took over power and freed all political prisoners. After some days doors were opened also in the prisons in Thessaloniki, Skopje and other Macedonian cities. In Thessaloniki, according to some contemporaries, 30,000 people went out on the streets. The demonstrations openly received an Anti-Sultan character, whereby the portraits of Abdul Hamid II were thrown out of public places, and some were stamped on the streets. The basic requirement was for the suspension of the absolutism, the return of the Constitution from 1876 and the employment of parliamentary democracy.

Losing the control over the situation, the Sultan had no alternative, and on the night of July 23/24 he accepted the ultimatum of Thessaloniki. On July 23 1908 in Thessaloniki “on behalf of the army and people” the Constitution was proclaimed. After the seizing of the Sultan decree, manifestations, meetings and gatherings of fraternization and the celebration of the constitutional victory spread throughout. The celebration continued more than two months, especially in Thessaloniki, which was becoming the paramount political centre in the Empire. One contemporary wrote: “Everything that mentioned tyranny, despotism, power, administration, according to the understanding of the people's mass, should fall.”

A significant mark on the July days was given by the legalization of the Macedonian armed companies and their official welcoming in all Macedonian cities. The picture was supplemented with the return of the prisoners and the several political emigrants in their places. All more renowned Macedonian revolutionaries gathered in Thessaloniki for the

¹⁵ Анастас Митрев, *Мемоари, огледи, статии* (Избор, превод, предговор и редакција: Манол Пандевски), (Скопје, 1974), 45-46.

purpose of establishing cooperation with the Young Turks and the continuation of the liberation battles with legal means.¹⁶

Little is known about the participation of Mustafa Kemal in the short Young Turk uprising in Macedonia. However, in general, his participation in the uprising, in those first months, did not fall much behind that of the other Young Turk officers. (The withdrawal from the political scene would come later, in 1909). This is witnessed by one group photography, taken in Thessaloniki on July 23 1908 on the balcony of the popular hotel in that time “Olimpos-Palace”. In the front row the central place was taken by Enver Bey, and left and right from him stood the orthodox priest and Jewish rabbi. All three held their hands, symbolizing in that manner the unity and equality of all “Ottoman Turks”. Behind them was the group of officers, where we can recognize the figure of Major Mustafa Kemal. That is a historic photo from the historic day!¹⁷

The contacts among the Macedonian and Young Turk revolutionaries in the previous period were rare, episodic, incidental. Both movements developed illegally, each for itself and mutually non-connected. However, after July 24 1908 when they were legalized, a sharp turning point in their mutual relations happened. Most of Macedonian organizations and trends revealed incomparable larger interest for unity and cooperation, than which was the case with the Young Turk committees and organizations. The Macedonian revolutionary “left” without hesitation accepted not just the newly formed situation but also the call from the Young Turks for alliance and cooperation.

The news for the Young Turks uprising came across Sandanski in Nevrokopsko. Moving around freely, with his people, first they came down the village of Gajtaninovo where he was welcomed by the citizens and a group of Turks led by the lawyer Selim Bey. The national celebration was under way. In Nevrokop from the balcony of the surrounding administrative building (quarters) he held a spirited speech in front of the gathering crowd of citizens and villagers. It is claimed that the speech was enthusiastically

¹⁶ See: Манол Пандевски, *Политичките партии и организации во Македонија (1908 - 1912)*, (Скопје, 1965), 26-29; В.И.Шпилџкова, *Младотурецка револуција*, 116-120.

¹⁷ A. F. Miller, *op.cit.*, p. 109.

heard by 15,000 persons. It looks like Sandanski had not yet known about the response of the sultan to the Young Turk ultimatum. This is why from Nevrokop he telegraphed the Thessaloniki Young Turk Committee that the “left” supports the “readiness to fight for expanding the people’s freedom with all assets, including an armed raid in Istanbul against the Sultan government.” Further it was said: “VMRO gives you the brother hand of assistance and promises that it will continue the fight for winning the rights and freedoms for all peoples that live in our fatherland.”¹⁸

With his 25 people and in accompaniment of the Nevrokop kajmakam, Sandanski moved to the south from Nevrokop, towards Drama. From here by train, through Seres, they transferred to Thessaloniki. Everywhere by the road they were cheerfully welcomed, and in Seres the group was welcomed by officers, by the mutasarrif of the Seres sanjak and many Turks.

The group reached Thessaloniki the same day, on 28 July 1908 in the afternoon. The ambient of the welcoming through the railway station represented an unrepeatable sight. A military band played on the opposite side, a crowd of people gathered, representatives of the city, of the ethnic religious communities, officers – to see them and greet them. Sandanski and Todor Panica arrived in civilian clothes, and the guerilla fighters in their uniforms and with weapons. The official delegation for welcoming was led by Enver Bey, and Major Mustafa Kemal was in it as well, according to Taksin Uzer. The heroes of the Young Turks uprising welcomed the hero of the Macedonian uprising. It is further said that the long-time Young Turk member Taksin Uzer was included in the delegation, who knew Jane from the time of the “affair” Miss Stone in Bansko. During each handshake with the present the shouts “Long live freedom!”, “Long live Jane Sandanski”, “Long live the most faithful friend of Goce Delchev” and similar were heard. The old friend Taksin Uzer spread his arms wide and embraced Sandanski.

¹⁸ В. И. ШпилѸкова, *op.cit.*, 109; Манол Пандевски, *Политичките партии...*,35; М е р с и я Макдермот, *За свобода. и слѸриенство. Биографија на Јане Сандански*, (Софија, 1987), 298-300.

At the end they all went together to the luxury hotel “Angleterre” (England) by the sea.¹⁹

After the arrival in the hotel Enver Bey and Sandanski appeared on the balcony from where they held short speeches in front of the several thousand mass, which had already gathered. That was the first public appearance by Sandanski in Thessaloniki, after which many would come. In his speech he condemned the Sultan tyranny under which all peoples from the Empire suffered for a long time. He especially underlined the countless crimes because of “national hostilities and the repulsive self-destructive battles”, systematically fostered by the Sultan regime according to the old rule “Divide et Impera”. He did not forget to condemn the European forces who, with their political interventions and economic robbing of Turkey, they halted the economic development and forced the people to emigrate in the search for better living standard and more freedom. Sandanski attacked the Sultan, but also all the crowned tyrants outside the Empire, because of which some Consuls groundlessly accused him for anarchism. He finished his speech with the message that the uprising is not complete and that freedom has not been provided. On the contrary, now they just began the joint fight for a reformed, democratized and stable Turkey which should provide for them economic and cultural progress. He briefly finished the message; “Until we see that the freedom is provided, we will not lay down our arms. Be united and ready for action, because everything is possible!”²⁰

Even though short, the speech briefly explained the programme of the Macedonian revolutionary “left”, and especially the Sandanski followers in it, for the next 3-4 months. Sandanski presented in more detail the programme in the popular “Manifest to all peoples in the Ottoman Empire” from July 31 1908. In it with one paragraph Jane addressed his “compatriots”, i.e. the Macedonians, and the Turks with another paragraph, while all the other nationalities, he called them “compatriots”, which was in line with the Ottoman Political Orientation of the Young Turks. The expression “compatriots”, in fact was taken from the terminology of the Young Turks. According to this, Sandanski, and with him the whole

¹⁹ J. Хамза, *Односот на Младотурската партија...*,170.

²⁰ М е р с и я Макдермот, *op.cit*, 302-303.

Macedonian “left”, accepted the so much unclear as non-dangerous Ottomanism, but not because of simpering and careerism, but in the interest of the future of those “compatriots” and Macedonia as their fatherland. He gave recognition to Macedonians for the numerous given lives in the fight against the Sultan Tyranny, he inspired that now they can take a breath, because they have already gained allies in the fight and advised them not to “give into to the offending agitations which might be brought by the official authorities of Bulgaria against our joint fight with the Turkish people and its intelligence which strives towards freedom.”²¹ This warning was justified and came from the experience until then. The contemporaries state that Sandanski's manifest, in the type of flyer, was printed in Bulgarian, Turkish and French language and dispersed in Thessaloniki. Until the medium part of August the three district organizations of the “left” – the Seres, Strumica and Thessaloniki – elaborated and published a new Programme of the Organization, but now with a changed name, the “Macedonian-Edirne Revolutionary Organization.”²² Jane Sandanski engaged in the rough waters of the choppy political life in Macedonia.

Even though certain source data is missing, we in basic assume that Mustafa Kemal had the opportunity to hear and familiarize with the programme standpoint of Jane Sandanski, and also probably to approve his assessments about the close past and about the joint future battles of the nationalities in Turkey. We have already stated that Mustafa Kemal was closer to the Macedonian revolutionaries than most of his Young Turks comrades. Actually, the facts state that Sandanski had permanently set himself in the constructive opposition towards the party in power “Unity and progress”, and Mustafa Kemal temporary left the scene of the political battle. The meeting of both political men in Thessaloniki showed to be brief, but was not the last one.

In the easily won victory the Young Turks went in the direction of separation of power. In the Parliament, during the first elections, they won a

²¹ See: Павел Делирадев, *Јане Сандански*, София, 1946; Јане Сандански, *Биографски прилози*, Скопје, 1985, 105-107; *Документи за борбата на македонскиот народ за самостојност и за национална држава*. Том први, (Скопје, 1981), 501-502.

²² See: Манол Пандевски, „Програма и декларација на левицата на ВМРО од август 1908 година“, *Гласник на ИНИ*, 1972, XVI, 1,171-185.

large prevailing majority, but Abdul Hamid II, according to the Constitution, still possessed major power as a state ruler and as a supreme Islamic head, Padishah. This double rule did not last long. In the night between April 13 and 14 1909, the insurgent military units took control of power in the capital, they suspended the Constitution and Parliament and went in persecution of Young Turks leaders. Running from here, they concentrated on Thessaloniki where they will organize the struggle, and later to make a military raid on Constantinople. The Young Turks maintain control in all European vilayets, where Macedonia further remains the main struggle, and Thessaloniki the political centre of the constitutional forces. The most important thing was that two army corps remained with the Young Turks – of Edirne and Thessaloniki. Now it was shown that Sandanski was right when he asked the “powder to remain dry.”

With the coup, the separation and confrontation of the army state entered in a dangerous crisis: firstly, the constitutional order was endangered and the perspective for further democratic development and, secondly, the danger of invasion of the Balkan countries in Macedonia and European Turkey increased suddenly. In order to save the constitution and nation, quick and decisive actions were urged. Majors Enver Bey, Mustafa Kemal and other younger officers from the Committee in Thessaloniki succeeded to persuade general Mahmud Shevket-pasha to stand at the head of the units from III (Thessaloniki) and II (Edirne) corps, which will create so called “Operational army” for raid against the Sultan revolt in the capital. The units left with trains towards Çatalca right away, before Istanbul. Units from the so called reformed gendarmerie in Macedonia, students from Thessaloniki, and Turkish, Macedonian and Albanian volunteers joined the composition of the “Operational Army” in order to carry out the decisive blow. The battles for Constantinople lasted three days, from April 22 to 24 1909, and the struggle was suppressed. On April 27 the Senate and Peoples Assembly, ad hoc constructed in the Great Peoples Assembly, with a secret vote dethroned Abdul Hamid II, and with a special resolution they nominated the new Sultan Mehmed Reshad V on the throne.²³ Jane Sandanski and the other

²³ See more: Манол Пандевски, „Контрареволуцијата во Цариград во 1909 година и Македонија“, *Гласник на ИНИ*, год. X, бр. 2-3, Скопје; *J. Гласник, op.cit.*, 75.

Macedonian revolutionaries received big morale satisfaction for the several year battles and sufferings against the “bloody Sultan.”

From the very beginning Mustafa Kemal got involved in the preparations for the raid for the Anti-Sultan bunt, where he showed very noticeable organization activity. During that time he was the Chief of Staff of the redifska (reserve) division in Thessaloniki and after the coming of the news he visited the Commander of the II corps right away, convincing him that quick and energetic reaction is required in order to stop the spreading of the rebellion outside the capital and in the other parts of the country. He obliged the coup to be limited only for Istanbul. It was his proposal for the forming of the army for rapid action. Then the abovementioned “Operational Army” stepped on the scene. During the organized meeting in the military club in Thessaloniki, Mustafa Kemal insisted not to mix any other forces in its combat tasks, speaking of the politicians from “Unity and progress”. Mahmud Shevket-pasha then nominated for its commander Husein Husni-pasha, and for the Chief of Staff major Mustafa Kemal. (For the history the photograph of a larger group of officers from the Staff of the “Operational Army” was kept, among which also is the Chief Mustafa Kemal. The photo, probably, is from Çatalca). We should note that Mustafa Kemal was replaced in those days by his eternal rival the adventurer Enver Bey, a fact that speaks that the Young Turks Party, in other words the policy, interfered in the work of the army.²⁴

The replacement however could not decrease its large contribution in the suppression of the coup, in the defence of the constitution and the political stability of the country, and of Macedonia in it.

Right after the news of the coup, the Young Turks, Committees, the central one in Thessaloniki and the regions in Macedonia, asked for political support and armed assistance regarding the raid against Constantinople. With such a goal their representatives in Thessaloniki met Jane Sandanski, in Skopje with Petar Pop Arsov and the socialist Alekso Martulkov, in Drama with Todor Panica, in Strumica with Hristo Chernopeev. All of these people were engaged in the organization of the volunteer units composed of recent

²⁴ More about this at J. Хамза, op.cit., p. 280, 491 and photo enclosures.

Macedonian guerilla fighters and their leaders. The Central Bureau of the Peoples Federative Party in Thessaloniki, which was led by Dimitar Vlahov and Hristo Jankov, sent a call for enlisting volunteers and forming Macedonian Revolutionary Units. Gathering points for the Macedonians, as well as the other volunteers, were the Turkish military barracks in Macedonia, where they received modern weapons and ammunition. This was the first time in history of the Macedonian-Turkish relations for the Macedonians to receive weapons from a Turkish hand for the purpose of achieving joint political goals.

The most number of volunteers came out of the Seres revolutionary district, then from the Thessaloniki, the Strumica and Skopje. Several Macedonian, French, Russian and Bulgarian contemporaries left over short testimonies regarding the size and the combat contribution of the Macedonian volunteer units in the battles for the Turkish capital. The number of 1,200 Macedonian volunteers is mentioned, who came in front of Constantinople led by their leaders (voyvodi) Jane Sandanski, Todor Panica and Hristo Chernopeev. It looks like here they joined into the only volunteer unit under the joined command of Sandanski and Panica.²⁵

Several Turkish contemporaries and authors also give testimonies about the Macedonian participation in the raid and the battles for taking Constantinople. They mention one meeting of Sandanski with Enver-Bey and give testimony that Sandanski came with a unit of about 400 fighters, while the abovementioned Taksin Uzer in his memoirs speaks about himself that in the battles for taking the Sultan mansion "Yildiz Palace", he participated together with Jane Sandanski.

Ten days after the successfully carried out combat tasks the Macedonian volunteers returned to Thessaloniki by boat. The welcoming of the units with Sandanski, Panica and Chernopeev in the Macedonian capital city was noisy, exciting and very ceremonial. After a few days the volunteers left for their birth towns, into the inland of Macedonia, where once again they were welcomed massively and ceremonially. However, some were left behind. One memoir speaks that Sandanski and Panica intervened in the

²⁵М. Пандевски, „Контрареволуцијата во Цариград и Македонија...“, 92-99.

Ministry of Religious Affairs for it to determine a location for the burial of the fallen Macedonian volunteers, who were buried with military honours in the yard of the Bulgarian hospital in the Exarchate of the Shishli quart, not mentioning their number.²⁶ They also fell for the freedom of Macedonia.

Mustafa Kemal invested large personal contribution in the suppression of the counterrevolutionary coup. It was his idea for forming an “Operational army”, composed of units who were handed to the Young Turks from Macedonians and other volunteers. In the beginning he was the head of its Staff, he took the second command post. He composed a Proclamation “to the armies in Istanbul” where he explained the goal of the raid in order to neutralize their resistance. For now we do not have data regarding the repeated personal meeting of Mustafa Kemal with the Macedonian leaders Sandanski and Panica. But, at the same time, we are excluding the assumption that such a meeting, or meetings, did not happen, because the Chief of Staff, Mustafa Kemal and the Commander of the Macedonian volunteer units Jane Sandanski must have at least once met in order to agree the forthcoming operational tasks before going to attack the city. Mustafa Kemal, from his side, could not now be not interested in the so much famed and popular his compatriot from Macedonia Jane Sandanski. The future remains to confirm or reject our assumption. However, for our topic, pure formalism represents the puzzle regarding the possible second personal meeting between two national fighters and revolutionaries. The essential side of the question is that revolutionary Macedonia epitomized from Jane Sandanski, and the Turkish uprising, whose most seen leader was Mustafa Kemal, were on the same front – on the defence of the revolutionary benefits and the fatherland, the immediate one and the broader. And all of these events represent a significant chapter from the biography and the topic for Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and Macedonia.

²⁶ Quoted according to J . Хамза, op.cit, p. 238, 410, 497.