

## The Peace Treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine of 27 November 1919

**Key words:** *minorities, nationalism, exchange, Kingdom of Greece, Bulgarian Empire, World War I, Treaty of Neuilly, Paris Peace Conference.*

The Peace Treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine represented the official ceasefire between the Main Allied and Associated forces and the Kingdom of Bulgaria. It concerned the states of Greece and Bulgaria, their relationship towards the Macedonian national minority and their pretensions towards the territories which remained within the borders of the Ottoman Empire with the provisions of the Berlin agreement of 1878. The paper also gives an estimation of the influence of the exchange of the populations in the process of the national homogenization of the state interests of the Kingdom of Greece and Bulgarian Empire, during the first decades of XX<sup>th</sup> century. This is an especially important moment in the history of Macedonian nation, as the effects of the exchange of minorities between these two Balkan states contributed to the denial of the right of the Macedonian national individuality and the right of the Macedonian independent national development.

It envisaged the territorial concessions of Bulgaria at the expense of Greece. Namely, it concerned the western Thrace, a region inhabited by Greek, mixed Slavic population and also by Turkish population. Thus, the strategic interest of the forces of the Triple Entente consisted of obstructing the exit of Bulgaria to the Dardanelles<sup>2</sup>. For Bulgaria, it meant closing the exit to the Aegean Sea, which represented a major economic barrier. Besides Western Thrace, Bulgaria was sanctioned also in the regions of South Dobrudja, the western provinces and in the region of Strumica, all of which Bulgaria saw as parts of its geographical entity.

Besides the territorial sanctions, there have been other sanctions envisaged for Bulgaria. They referred the restrictions of the military to 20,000 people, the abolition of the general military mobilization, and Bulgaria was obliged on a payment of war damages amounting 2.25 billion francs of gold, with annual interest of 5% within 37 years.

In connection with the obligations towards the minorities, they were regulated in the section IV, articles 49 to 57, of the Treaty of Peace. These regulations obliged Bulgaria not to hinder the right of the citizens to opt for Bulgarian citizenship. The crucial point concerning the

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minorities, consisted in the Bulgarian adoption of all main provisions that the main Allied Forces and the Associated Forces suggested, with regard to the proposed reciprocal exchange of population between Bulgaria and the other Balkan states.<sup>3</sup>

Accordingly, the article 56 of the General Peace Agreement between the members of the Triple Entente and Bulgaria became the foundation upon which was legalized, as well as implemented the Convention of the voluntary exchange of population between Greece and Bulgaria, which both countries signed on November 27, 1919 in Neuilly, beside the river Seine, i.e. on the same day when the general peace treaty with Bulgaria was signed.<sup>4</sup>

At its foundation, the Peace Treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine guaranteed the minorities the right of equality and legality, regardless of race, language and religion. The corpus of these rights also included a free use of the mother tongues in education, in commerce, in the press, and, in other spheres of life. Having in mind the actual circumstances, it is quite obvious that in the prescribed peace clauses, the "principle" of voluntarity was nothing more than a flosculus, behind which there was a screenplay for the violent expulsion of the undesirable ethnic elements from the Greek state territory.

Thus, the basic task of the Greek state apparatus turned to the persecution and the "cleansing" of the non-greek ethnic minorities on the gained territory. In this way, Greece being a subject in the international relations, created the basis to build its own arguments about possession, and about the legitimate state territory, which belonged to it due to the new territorial division after the war. In this way, the process of the further completion of the state territory was violated by the declared principles of self-determination of people and by the ruling of the principle of force over the principle of law.

### **1. Convention of voluntary exchange of population between Greece and Bulgaria, November 27, 1919**

On September 10<sup>th</sup> 1919 during the 49<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Committee for New States and the Protection of Minorities in Paris, the Annex (B) concerning the withdrawal of the Committee's authority on the issue of reciprocity of exchange of minorities, between the previously proposed draft-contract by the Greek delegate at the Peace Conference, Eleftheros Venizelos was published.<sup>5</sup> The Committee considered that the application of this general concept should not be restricted only to the population of the territories provided by the Peace Treaty between the Joined Allied forces and the Kingdom of Bulgaria,

<sup>3</sup> "Balkanski ugovorni odnosi" 1876 – 1996, Volume II, Belgrade, 1998 p. 64.

<sup>4</sup> Pržić, p. 106 (quotation) „...On October 24<sup>th</sup> 1919, Bulgaria addresses the peace conference with a diplomatic note, in which it expresses its readiness for accepting the provisions that were editing the rights of the minorities on its territory”.

<sup>5</sup> "Balkanski ugovorni odnosi" 1876 – 1996, Volume II, Belgrade, 1998 p.54.

but that it should be extended to all of the residents from all the Balkan states, in case they want to settle and live in another country. For these reasons, the Committee suggested the establishment of a mixed commission which would regulate the emigration, in order to create a reciprocal stimulation for all the Balkan countries equally.

At the 61<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Committee for New States and Protection of the Minorities, held on November 24<sup>th</sup>, 1919, it was summarized that during the signing of the Convention for voluntary exchange of population between Greece and Bulgaria, the signatures of the main Allied forces, as well as the accompanying forces, would not be of a decisive importance.<sup>6</sup> Because of this, it was agreed to include in the Annex to the Convention the formal decision of the Supreme Council that these clauses have been accepted by the main Allied forces and accompanying forces, in accordance with Article 56 of the Peace Treaty with Bulgaria.

### Article 56, page 2

*“Bulgaria pledges to acknowledge the main regulations that the Allied forces and the accompanying forces, would consider appropriate in terms of a reciprocal and voluntary emigration of ethnic minorities.”*

Such an agreement was accepted by both the Balkan countries. For the Kingdom of Greece this act represented liberation from the undesired population on its territory, while for the Kingdom of Bulgaria – it gave an impression that the kingdom was ready to play within the newly created rules, preferred by the winning forces.<sup>7</sup> On the basis of reaching the Bulgarian neutrality, the Kingdom of Bulgaria was rebuilding its international reputation, through which it was expected, after some time, on a diplomatic plan, to begin opening the issue of the revision of the Peace Treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine.

The Convention for voluntary exchange of population between the Kingdom of Greece and the Kingdom of Bulgaria was signed at the same time as the Peace Treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine between the Allied and Associated forces and Bulgaria, on November 27<sup>th</sup> 1919, in Neuilly on the river Seine. It predicted the voluntary emigration of the ethnic, religious and linguistic minority groups in Greece and Bulgaria, without specifically naming these minorities.

The Committee for New States sent an invitation to the Government of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (SCS) to take part in the same agreement.<sup>8</sup> However, in a letter to the President of the Serbian delegation, Nikola Pašić from November 8<sup>th</sup> 1919, the SCS delegation refused to participate in the agreement. Therefore at the 59<sup>th</sup> meeting

<sup>6</sup> Also p.55. See also Documents about Macedonia, p.455.

<sup>7</sup> „Bulgaria as well as Hungary, primarily required a plebiscite to be held on the disputed territories through which they hoped to reduce the losses in the territorial sense. But the Allies were not concerned by this request because at the determining of the new boundaries, they were led more by the strategic, rather than ethical principles.“ quotation according to Stavrijanos, p. 551.

<sup>8</sup> Jovanovic, p.98. "... The Kingdom of Greece has offered a plan for population exchange also to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (SCS), because it wanted to get rid of all the Slavic population as much as possible, but the SCS has rejected this proposal ..."

session on November 13<sup>th</sup> 1919, the committee decided not to insist further in that direction.<sup>9</sup>

The Convention for the exchange of population became effective on August 9<sup>th</sup> 1920. The exchange of population with this document turned into a violent eviction, which also reached Thrace, despite the original intention.<sup>10</sup> This Convention was followed by a heavy demographic picture, especially in the part that was annexed by Greece, i.e. in Aegean Macedonia. In fact, due to the Convention, the Kingdom of Greece has committed an inappropriate pressure for emigration of the Macedonians from the Aegean part throughout the entire period between the two world wars.<sup>11</sup>

In terms of its structure, the Convention is composed of a total of 16 articles and it contains instructions for the implementation of reciprocal exchanges, as well as the conditions under which it was intended to be carried out.

In the 1<sup>st</sup> Article of the Convention, by the contracting parts, the rights of the ethnic minority groups to move from their territories were recognized “*by religion or by language*”. In this, the contracting parts have taken the responsibility to implement the emigration of these minorities, thus committing not to select or make other difficulties in the implementation of the right of emigration.

Concerning the age of the migrants, the Convention had established that: (Article 4) “*Any person older than 18 years of age is entitled to voluntary emigration. That right can be used within two years after the formation of the mixed commission provided in Article 8, by which the person is obliged to give a statement to the committee or to its representatives. The statement of eviction of a husband includes the one of his wife. The statement of eviction of the parents or guardians includes those of their children or the persons under their custody, younger than 18 years of age.*”<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, in the Article 5 of the Convention, it was established that at the moment in which the immigrants are leaving the country in which until then they were staying, they were automatically cut off from their right to citizenship, with what they will automatically gain the citizenship of the state in which emigrated, from the moment reaching its territory. Moreover, these people were allowed, to take all of their movable property, without paying the custom duties, neither at the exit, nor at the entrance of the selected country.

The article 8 of the Convention for voluntary exchange of population between Greece and Bulgaria, envisaged that, within three months, a Mixed Commission would be established. It would be comprised of one member appointed by each of the interested contracting parties, and an equal number of members of some other nations that should be delegated by the Council of the League of

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<sup>9</sup> Poljanski – Andonov, Hirsto, Great Britain and the Macedonian issues at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, Archive of Macedonia, Skopje, 1973 p. 47.

<sup>10</sup> Lamouche, Leon, Colonel – La Question des minorités – Les Bulgares en Macedoine, dans les Confins occidentaux et en Thrace, Paris, 1931.

<sup>11</sup> History of the Macedonian People, Volume IV, INI, Skopje, 2000, p.204.

<sup>12</sup> Macedonia in the International Agreements, Volume I, (1913-1940), State Archive of Macedonia, Skopje, 2006 p.185.

Nations. These delegates, (referring to the members delegated by the Council) were supposed to elect a president.

The task of the Mixed Commission consisted of supervising the payment of the real estate property belonging of the emigrants. It also had the power of performing the audit of the property. Hence, after providing the liquidity of this real estate property, it was predicted for the Government of the immigrants where the liquidation was conducted, under conditions specified by the Commission, to convey the value of these properties in front of the Commission, which was obligated to refund it to its owners. The Commission thus had the power to pay in advance to the immigrants the amounts of the estimated value of all their real estate properties.<sup>13</sup>

Due to large waves of refugees, the Mixed Commission was authorized to pay for the property even to those refugees that emigrated to Bulgaria or Greece during the war, although initially they were not covered in the focus of the Committee for New States and for the Protection of the Minorities, when the plan for reciprocal exchange of population was discussed in Paris. Therefore, the legal effect of this Convention had an economic advantage also for those minority groups that were already outside their home territory. In addition to this, the Mixed Commission made a decision to include the people who emigrated in the past 20 years, which complicated its work expanding the benefits of the Convention to those who, from a legal point of view, still had an Ottoman citizenship.

However, the voluntary exchange of population provided with this Convention did not meet these goals. Indeed, in the period until June 1923 only 197 families from the Kingdom of Greece voluntarily moved into the Kingdom of Bulgaria. In turn, about 166 families emigrated in the same period, from the Kingdom of Bulgaria in the Kingdom of Greece. The xenophobia in Greece, (especially in Aegean Macedonia, which after being annexed, was renamed Northern Greece region<sup>16</sup>), through coercion determined the future "voluntary" emigration of Macedonians from their home regions into the Kingdom of Bulgaria.<sup>14</sup>

Compared with the Greek immigrants, especially after the Acts on the agrarian reform, which were adopted in the Kingdom of Bulgaria in 1920/21, the Macedonians were unsatisfied by the newly approved

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<sup>13</sup> Ivanovski, Todorovski, *The Macedonian issue in...* p. 74-75. ... "Article 8 predicted within a period of three months after the entry into force of the Convention of the League of Nations, a formation of a Commission that will have the task to oversee and facilitate the emigration and to liquidate the foreign assets of the emigrants. The Commission was tasked to determine the way of the displacement of the property. The Commission had full authority for decision-making by majority vote. With the Article 10 it was provided that the Mixed Commission had the right even for determining the price of the real estate properties after hearing the owners. The Government of the country, after paying the value, became the owner of the property ... "

<sup>14</sup> *History of the Macedonian people*, Volume IV, INI, Skopje, p. 202 (Quote) "...The area was divided into three general directorates: one for the central part of Aegean Macedonia based in Thessaloniki including the counties: Thessaloniki, Halkidiki, Kukush, Voden and Ber; the second one for the eastern part of Aegean Macedonia, based in Kavala, which included: Ser, Drama and the Kavala region; in the city of Kozhani the third directorate was located concerning the western part of Aegean Macedonia, with the counties: Kozhani, Lerin and Kostur.

conditions, especially those who lived beside the border with the Kingdom Yugoslavia, decided not to move.<sup>15</sup>

## 2. Settlement of the immigrants and the refugees in Bulgaria

After World War I the smallest part of ethnic Macedonia was connected to Bulgaria.<sup>19</sup> Within it, despite the annexed part inhabited by a majority of Macedonian population, in the Bulgarian state there were many Macedonian immigrants and refugees.<sup>16</sup>

After the Peace Treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine, the Macedonian population in the Pirin part of Macedonia remained mainly compact. Through a reciprocal exchange implemented by the Convention signed between Greece and Bulgaria, this percentage bolstered even stronger. But the problems that the Macedonian population confronted with were almost unsolvable. Above all, this concerned the economic situation in which the people found themselves because of the contact with the Aegean Sea, through the rivers Struma and Mesta was cut.

With the signing of the Greco-Bulgarian Convention on the voluntary exchange of population, from 27<sup>th</sup> November 1919, the Kingdom of Bulgaria accepted the emigrants from the Aegean part of ethnic Macedonia. Actually, many of these immigrants were already on the territory of Bulgaria at the moment when the Convention on reciprocal exchange was signed, even during the refugee crisis during the Balkan Wars and World War I. Relying on the Convention, about 150.000 Macedonians "*voluntarily*" moved from Greece and emigrated to Bulgaria.<sup>17</sup>

The settlement of the refugees in Bulgaria went through two phases: 1) the settlement until the end of 1926 and 2) the settlement between 1927 to 1939.

According to Ph.D. *Nadežda* Cvetkovska, citing the data referred to in the newspapers "Ilinden" and "Autonomous Macedonia" in

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<sup>15</sup> Ivanovski, Todorovski, p.75 "...In this respect, within the Bulgarian Parliament a heated discussion evolved between the deputies and lawmakers. The Convention was regarded as extremely negative and detrimental for Bulgaria... As the person most responsible was charged Alexander Stambolisky who signed the Convention. The signing was considered a big mistake of the Bulgarian foreign policy. It gave the right to Greece of violent eviction of "all Bulgarians" left on Greek territory, without the possibility of declaring the right to live where they were born. That deal excluded the right of returning the refugees for one or other reason... The deputies reacted to the unrealistic terms in the Convention which was supposed to be an obstacle to signing the very same by the Bulgarian side, because the Greek government set a condition for Bulgaria to settle the costs of the exiles "from their homes", which was unacceptable ..."

<sup>16</sup> See more at Ladas, the part no. 289, Statistics of emigrants transferred under the auspices of the Commission. p.437 – 439.

<sup>17</sup> *Nadežda* Cvetkovska, The political activity of the Macedonian emigrants in Bulgaria 1918 - 1929, INI, Skopje, 1990. p.24; taken from Ivan, Katardziev, Ripening time, I, Skopje, 1977, page 11, History of the Macedonian People, Volume III, Skopje, 1969, p.170.

1922, the overall number of refugees from Macedonia, Dobrudja and Thrace, are divided in districts:

- the Burgas district – 9.231 families with 43.760 or 43.768 members;
  - the Varna district – 1.476 families with 5.332 members;
  - the Vidin District - 144 families with 533 members;
  - the Vrachia District - 176 families with 803 or 808 members;
  - the Kyustendil District - 497 families with 1.535 members;
  - the Sofia district – 3.187 families with 16.332 members;
  - the Plovdiv district – 2.736 families with 10.110 members;
  - the Pleven district - 319 families with 1.666 members;
  - the Ruse district – 1.015 families with 3.235 members;
  - the Old Zagora District - 5851 families with 28.716 members;
  - the Trnovo District - 214 families with 1.189 or 1.169 members;
  - the Shumen District - 644 families with 2.833 members;
  - the Petrich District (the Pirin part of Macedonia) – 4.196 families with 19.637 members;
  - the Pashmakli District - 45 families with 157 members;
  - the Mesta District - 70 families with 373 members;
- By the newly formed site of residence, there were 1.983 families with 15.633 members counted. The general number of refugees was 31.405 families with 152.136 members.

The main preoccupation of the exchanged population after the arrival at the state territory of the Kingdom of Bulgaria was the issues of finding homes, settlement and the payment of compensation for the abandoned homes in Aegean Macedonia. They were particularly revolted by the stalling payment of the damages and other existential questions. On the whole, the picture was more than sad and dramatic also because of the fact that this population was poor; it consisted mostly of farmers and other small craftsmen that found it very difficult to integrate in the new environment. Statistically speaking, the structure of the refugees settled in the Pirin part of Macedonia was: 5.959 farm families, 343 artisans and 231 other different professions. For these reasons, particularly the question of damages for the properties seized by the Greek state was consistently popular and represented a very sensitive issue.<sup>18</sup>

Despite of the orders received by the Committee for New States, for the solving of the payment of the value of real estate in Greece, neither she, neither Bulgaria, did advocate for the effective resolution of this existential issue of the immigrants.<sup>19</sup>

The need of respect for the defined procedure stalled the payment of seized properties and the very same was hardly implemented in its own objective frames. Hence, the reaction of the Committee for New States before the Council of the League of Nations, a Bulgarian-Greek Committee was formally made in 1923 to organize the payment of the seized properties to immigrants.

<sup>18</sup> History of the Macedonian people, Volume IV, in the editorial of Ph.D. Ivan, Katardziev, Skopje, 2000, p.247.

<sup>19</sup> See more at Ladas, p.264.

On September 9<sup>th</sup> 1923, the foreign ministers of Greece and Bulgaria signed an agreement for the financial compensation of the exchanged population, known as the Mollov-Kafandaris Agreement. This committee did not respond to the obligations which it was assigned to fulfill. The findings confirm that in the course of its work, often not paying attention to the procedure, it left the issues unresolved and without an honest unraveling. Because of this, it was condemned among the Macedonian population in Bulgaria, particularly because of the double standard used when assessing the property value. They believed that the injustice was concerned the ways of the assessment of the real estates. Namely, in the process of assessing the properties of the Greeks that left Bulgaria, the same was conducted in the presence of the owners, while the same procedure in relation to the persecuted Macedonians was being performed without the presence of their respective owners.<sup>26</sup> Because of that, throughout the whole century after the signing of the Convention for the reciprocal exchange of population, within the Macedonian immigration associations, this issue was a constant topic of discussion and disagreement.<sup>20</sup>

During the whole period of the governing of the Bulgarian Prime Minister Alexander Cankov, in the decade between 1923 and 1934, a systematic elimination of all the Macedonian progressive national-revolutionary currents was carried out. The idea of an autonomous Macedonia in this period was turned into a tool which represented the transitional stage in the future annexation of the entire ethnic territory of Macedonia within the Bulgarian state. By performing an elimination of the Macedonian progressive personnel, a pressure in the Bulgarian society was developed – that there was no possibility of secession from the Macedonian ethnicity from the matrix of Bulgaria, as well as that without being taken under its wing, it is impossible for the Macedonian people to exist.

Regarding the treatment of the Macedonian population in Bulgaria, a decision was made by the government of Cankov, which limited the settlement of the immigrants at 50 km from the border belt between Greece, Serbia and Romania. In this way the forcible breaking off from the natural ethnic borders of Macedonia was done, and the Macedonian refugees were settled in the central areas of the Kingdom of Bulgaria and in the areas of the Black Sea.<sup>21</sup>

Recalling the Convention of reciprocal exchange, concerning the registration of the immigrants on its state territory, the Bulgarian state imposed them a written declaration which practically forced them to declare that they accept the Bulgarian citizenship.

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<sup>20</sup> History of the Macedonian People, Volume IV,... p. 248. (Quote) "...The resolution of the Fifth regular congress of the Macedonian beneficial brotherhoods, addressed to the public, the deputies and the government, The Mixed Greek-Bulgarian Commission was accused that by its conduct it contributed to: " The Macedonians under Greek governing to be forcefully evicted and their movable belongings to be looted, while the Greeks that left Bulgaria voluntarily, carried with them their movable belongings." Especially pointing out the application of the above-mentioned double standard used while assessing the properties, in the resolution it is specifically noted that the assessment of the properties of the Macedonians, was made by the commissions even after 2, 3, 5 or even 12 years after the expulsion of the people ... "

<sup>21</sup> A fragment from the History of the Macedonian people, Volume IV, p. 249.



On the initiative of the English expert on minority rights, Professor Gilbert Murray, on September 29<sup>th</sup> 1924, in front of the Council of the League of Nations in Geneva, the Protocol on the protection of minorities in Greece and Bulgaria, was signed between the foreign ministers of both countries, Hristo Kalfov and Nikolaos Politis. The protocol did an attempt to protect the rights of minorities who lived in the Greek and the Bulgarian state territory. To ensure that these provisions will be complied with, the document was also signed by the General Secretary of the Council of the League of Nations, Eric Drummond.<sup>22</sup>

On December 24 1924, the Bulgarian parliament ratified the Kalfov-Politis Protocol, but the Greek Parliament, rejected its ratification on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1925. The reason why the Greek diplomacy did not ratify it was explained by a diplomatic note, composed of three reasons:

1. The right of the Slavic population to submit complaints to the Council of the League of Nations and the possibility that the interviewers be sent by the Council on the state territory of Greece, by which their *"right"* of state sovereignty was being violated;
2. Nikolaos Politis was not authorized to negotiate all issues within the defined protection of minority rights in the Kingdom of Greece;

Allowing a foreign intervention in the internal affairs of the State of Greece, this protocol was in flagrant contradiction with the previously signed agreements for the protection of minorities.<sup>23</sup>

For these reasons, on the session of the Council of the League of Nations, held on March 14<sup>th</sup> 1925, it was noted, with some regret that, the Kalfov-Politis Protocol was being rejected, while it was pointed out to the Greek delegation that regardless the rejection, it is still obligated to secure the rights of the Slavs on its territory, especially in the field of education and religion.

Later, within the Council of the League of Nations, the Greek delegation said that they are obliged to study any request which would be submitted by the members of the Slavic minority living on Greek territory on the opening and the functioning of the schools in which teaching was being conducted on language of that minority.

According the promise of the Greek delegate Kaklamanos made to the Council of the League of Nations, on the session of June 10<sup>th</sup> 1925, the Greek delegation interceded in favor of the fulfilling the duties that resulted from the contract for the minorities. This concerned the promise that Greece would predict a loan in the state budget for supporting the schools where the teaching is performed in Slavonic language remains; further on, it would develop a special program for opening public schools for the minorities according to the article 9 of the Agreement; it would prepare an appropriate personnel and it would begin publishing textbooks at the expense of the State, and it would allow the minorities to elect their priests independently.

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<sup>22</sup> See more at Genov, p. 177.

<sup>23</sup> Vasilev, Vasil, Ст. Провалът на Протокола Калфов-Политис и претенциите на Белград за „сръбско“ национално малцинство в Егейска Македонија, Macedonian review, issue no. 1, 2004, p. 14.

Even on September 9<sup>th</sup> 1927, in Geneva, the infamous Financial agreement for compensation<sup>24</sup> of the exchanged population was signed. The Agreement was signed by the foreign ministers of Greece and Bulgaria, Molov and Kafandaris, so hence is known as a Mollov-Kafandaris financial agreement.

This agreement was anticipated, based on the Convention for voluntary exchange of population between Greece and Bulgaria in 1919 and it was based on the adopted Plan for compensation of immigrants by the Council of the League of Nations, from December 8<sup>th</sup> 1922. The Mixed Commission for compensation of the seized properties had to make refunds (in money) of the seized properties of the immigrants in the national currency of Bulgaria and Greece, i.e. in Bulgarian lev and in Greek drachmas. Under the terms of this Agreement, the payment of the cash fund was freed from any taxation. By it, the deadline for the payment of the cash amount was provided, for which the Mixed Commission was responsible. Thus, the possibility of postponement was placed under the direct jurisdiction of the Council of the League of Nations (article 7).

But, even though ambitious in its essence, the signing of this act by Bulgaria and Greece, was not realized according to the set provisions. For the purposes of the payment, the Greek state received an irrevocable loan from Great Britain at the amounting of 30 million U.S. dollars.<sup>25</sup> Greece transferred it directly into the Bulgarian state treasury. For its part, Bulgaria was not seriously prepared to pay them to the newly arrived residents, so that throughout the whole procedure of payment of these funds numerous manipulations and abuses by the State were being carried out.

Although the article 1 of the Agreement provided that the repaying of the funds should be in cash, the Bulgarian state, instead of paying the refugees in cash, i.e. in levs, gave them granted bonds without any financial cover, whose deadline for payment was set within 30 years. For its part, the National Bank of Bulgaria did not recognize these bonds, i.e. it bought them for half of their real value. The very same on the black market, became a frequent deal of the speculators that made these funds completely worthless. Thus, these obligations have practically been completely abused and their owners remained practically looted.

The Greek government did not conduct any of its promises concerning the minorities in Greece. The League of Nations, in turn, did not intercede in favor of solving of these issues, although they were under its jurisdiction. Thus, based on the Convention for voluntary exchange of the population between Greece and Bulgaria, a huge injustice was inflicted on the native population that lived in these States.

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Undeniable is the social importance of these processes, especially of the agreements for voluntary exchange of populations of year 1919. This derives from the fact that with the sole denial of the Macedonian national question and the rough assimilation at the time of

<sup>24</sup> League of Nations – Treaty Series, 1929. No.1970. p. 201.

<sup>25</sup> In a cash value against currencies of Greece and Bulgaria, this amount was around 600 to 800 million drachmas, or 120 to 140 million levs.

the exchange of the Macedonian population between Greece and Bulgaria, the question of the identity was opened, the question of the territorial pretensions and most of all, the question of the role of the big forces in the historical destiny of the Macedonian people through the whole interdependence of the balance of the forces on the Balkan peninsula in the XX<sup>th</sup> century.

## ABSTRACT

In this paper, the key attention is dedicated to the question of the peace agreements from the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, i.e. to those agreements which refer to the eviction and exchange of compact national groups from the occupied territories on the sides of Greece and Bulgaria (Treaty of Neuilly). The paper also gives an estimation of the influence of the exchange of the population in the process of the national homogenization of the state interests of the Kingdom of Greece and Bulgarian Empire, in the first decades of XX<sup>th</sup> century. This is an especially important moment in the history of Macedonian nation, because the effects of the exchange of minorities between these two Balkan states contributed to denial of the right of the Macedonian national individuality and the right of the Macedonian independent national development.

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