

## **BEGINNING**

Let us start by making an observation.

During the past year there have been plenty texts, posters, flyers and graffities on the infamous "Macedonian issue". This material however was a product of defensive movements during the frantic race to keep the balances of our city, something that we are glad to say we have achieved to a certain extent. However, this struggle did not leave us any free time to study and organize an event like this up until now. As a result thus far there has been a great political void around the subject from an anarchist-antiauthoritarian perspective. So, we wish that this event, along with the event that comrades from Yfanet squat organized a week ago, will help fill that void and will offer the place for us to express our views -with all their faults- and discuss them.

Another target of this event will help enrich the anarchists' political views on the subject through the points that will be discussed today. We have noticed that up until now many comrades' analysis is centered around antifascism and antinationalism without mentioning the part of NATO, EU or the Greek higher-class interests that are served by the Prespes agreement. We believe that the sole use of antifascism and antinationalism as analysis tools have shown their limits many times in the past. Especially in the current state of events we believe that those who in their propaganda solely focused on fascists who are against this agreement, - intentionally or unintentionally- came off like they were supporters of the agreement.

We are aware that -up until now- geopolitical games are beyond us, in contrast to class war and social contrasts within our country. We believe that in order for us to be decisive on how these relations evolve we need to be able to take into account every parameter that influences them. That's why to us it's very important to be capable of analyzing these issues with geopolitical and economical terms. Speaking about NATO, the euroatlantic totalization of west Balkans and the conflicting imperialisms in the Balkans does not make you a patriot nor an anti-imperialist, though we must admit we've seen many of those during the last year (Lafazanis, KOE, freedom cruise etc)...

## **HISTORICAL PART**

We begin with a short historic approach that is once more necessary in order to defeat obscurantism and historic lies which were born by the narrations of greek nationalism in the area:

1st fact: The Slavs descended to the area during the 6<sup>th</sup> century a.C. so they have lived here for over 1500 years. They lived as part of two empires (Byzantine and Othman empires), they came into conflict with the locals but also were mixed with them. During the Othman empire' s rule they were under the same administrative division with the Greek-speaking people who were under the authority of the Christian Wilayah.

2<sup>ND</sup> Fact: two centuries ago, along with the gradual rise of capitalism, the conditions for the death of the empires and the birth of nations were first formed. Before that, as weird as it might seem, even though love for one's place of origin existed as well as a sense of community with their fellow villagers or the people who shared the same religion, the concept of national consciousness did not exist. In the Balkans this process first gave birth to Serbia and later on to Greece both of whom continuously seeked vital space to spread from the Othman empire.

Fact 3: in 1870 the Bulgarian church seceded from the Patriarchy and became Greek-speaking Christians No1 enemy. Ever since the conflict between the two churches will play a decisive role on what happened in Macedonia and Traka.

Fact 4: In Macedonia, which up until 1910 remained under Othman rule, coexisted Jews, Muslims and Christians. The Christians were divided to those who were loyal to the Patriarchy and those who were loyal to the Bulgarian Exarchy. Based on a linguistic/ethinc criteria -even though the limits are not clear- they could be divided to people speaking Albanian, Wallachia, Greek , slav, Bulgarian and macedonski - the mix of languages that was spread in this area so that people could communicate with one another.

Greece and Bulgaria mostly – along with Serbia and Roumania to an extent- struggled with all means to take a piece of the population under their influence during the departure of the Othmans that they knew was not far away. This struggle ranged from who would get to have their teachers at schools, to executions and village pillages. A large portion of the population living in Macedonia didn't have Greek nor Bulgarian national consciousness. They had local consciousness, Macedonian.

At first, the organization of VMRO was created in Bulgaria with its main goal being for Macedonia to become autonomous and then be incorporated to Bulgaria. However, through this organization a more radical wing was formed whose values were close to those of socialists and anarchists. This wing wanted Macedonia to become an equal member of a Balkan federation and towards this cause it called all of its habitats without taking under consideration what language they spoke or which was their religion. This organization was attacked by Greeks, Othmans and Bulgarians. In 1903 a generalized riot took place against the empire from people who declared themselves Macedonians. In this riot participated people who were loyal to the patriarchate as well as those who were loyal to the exarchy, people speaking Albanian, Wallachian, Greek, Slav, Bulgarian. These people were local farmers and were slaughtered.

Fact 5: Pavlos Melas never fought a single battle. Cotte Christof did not speak Greek, he participated in Iliden's riot and later on he participated in the "Macedonian struggle" which is the way the battle between Greeks and Bulgarians for Macedonian grounds that led to the terrorization of the locals is known in Greece. Cotte Christof was betrayed and killed by Karavagelis Germanos because he was in league with local groups. This priest was sent by the patriarchate to terrorize Christians that were under the influence of the Bulgarian hexarchy. He gave orders for rampages, mass executions and complete obliteration of villages that cooperated with the Othman empire. The "Macedonian struggle" was in fact a conflict between the Greek and Bulgarian state over an area that they both wished to conquer. It is quite characteristic that a race was given over who would reach Thessaloniki first in 1912. The Bulgarians ended up losing for just a few hours.

Fact 6: The above happened during the first Balkan war during which Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia teamed up against the Othman and ran to get whatever each of them could from its pieces. The distribution was not fair towards Bulgaria which led it to immediately declare war to her former allies. This move led to Greece gaining more grounds over Bulgaria. The incorporation of these grounds gave Greece the form that it more or less has to this day. The fact that at the northern borders of Greece the populations were neither of the same religion nor language were a great obstacle for the formation of a Greek nationality consciousness. As a result the people who did not feel Greeks suffered great oppression. An even worse fate waited those who simply did not speak Greek. They suffered beatings, imprisonment, fines simply because they spoke the dialects they learned as kids.

Fact 7: the population ratio will gradually change with the movement of eastern Thracians Anatolians and Pontics during the first 3 decades of the century and by the evacuation of hundreds of thousands of Muslims from the area. In addition the transportation of thousands of Jews during the German occupation will transform the area to a place mostly inhabited by Greek speaking people. The local Slav speaking people numbering 150.000-200.000 become a minority.

Fact 8: the Greek Communist Party (GCP) has changed its views on the subject of the Macedonian minority over 4 times. The changes in its views are characteristic during the 40' depending on how many Slav-speaking Macedonians aided the party in the struggle against the Nazis. All the Slav-speaking people who were exiled during the civil war were not allowed to return to the homes they grew up in -in contrast to the Greek speaking lot. The GCP's current stand on the matter is tragic, not only from a revolutionary point of view, but also because it refuses to speak about the Greek nation's crimes against the Macedonian minority, which it had known first hand for decades.

Fact 9: since the 50' the Greek state recognized the neighboring state as the socialist democracy of Macedonia, as part of Yugoslavia. After the dissolution of Yugoslavia -when Macedonia

removed from its name the term “socialist”- Greece seized the chance to press the issue. Greece blocked even using an embargo the self-naming of the neighboring state in 1995, with the Greek capitals power to be so great that it brought horrible consequences to the population of Macedonia. Ever since the neighbor’s name in international organisms has been FYROM while in its bi-part relations most countries call it Macedonia.

## **THE RISE OF NATIONALISM**

We believe that the moments when the rulers chose to dope their subjects with nationalism and militarism are not left to chance. It might seem like war conflicts in the area nowadays have ceased, but the global economic crisis and the need for destruction of capitals in order to bring capitalism to a new circle of development and accumulation, the large quantities of natural gas in SE Mediterranean sea and the roads of energy transfer to an energy-thirsty Europe, the conflict between Greece and Turkey and the imperialistic rivalries of the great powers, show that this is not true.

At the same time, more and more representatives of the institutional politic world appeal the national welfare as the main want for all of us. We should note that it is no coincidence that this strategy is followed during the period of economic repression and the sudden degradation of living terms for the working class and generally the oppressed.

The people that bring us closer to war and try to turn desperate people into fanatics of national glory are not only those who scream that Bitola, Geugeli, Constantinople, Imbros, North Hepiros and Cyprus are Greek.

It is also the largest portion of Greece’s left political wing which is one of the most patriotic wings globally, due to the fear of being thought of as traitors to national causes. In order to avoid that they wink at the direction of local higher-class.

The “internationalists” of SYRIZA claim that the “Prespes agreement” is struck out of patriotic duty -even though they are the ones that have submitted to the will of the USA for the area as none other. They wish to expand national territorial waters -like at Ionian Sea-, to declare unilaterally EEZ cutting Turkey out of the deal, to turn Greece -as Tsipras announced- into a leading power in the Balkans, into a military border and energy interchange to Europe. At the same time Greece managed to change the constitution and the name of another country, serving NATO’s plans.

They say that they do all of these because if we put to rest the conflicts with our northern neighbors we will be able to focus on the east were Turkey lies biding its time. The fact that Turkey conducts aggressive interventions in Syria and Iraq turns it -in the eyes of loads of lefties- into an imperialistic power that wanders grounds within Greece’s borders. This magically makes them forget the reason that these two states will come to a small or large scale conflict in the following years. And the reason does not lie in the ground but somewhere in the sea between Cyprus and Crete, in the underwater natural gas field.

The GCP views a possible war between Greece and Turkey unfair only towards the Greeks and it calls upon young lads to go fight for our indisputable right for national domination and at the end of the war it dreams a simultaneous battle with Greece’s higher class. It is logical to wonder what GCP’s views are going to be if a war breaks out because the Greek state chose to declare unilaterally EEZ -throwing Turkey out of the cut- simply because this is what is best for NATO at the moment. How are they going to say that this war is to defend our national domination. Why does GCP speak about irredentism from the Macedonians but keeps quiet about the crimes conducted at the expense of the locals during civil war and the oppression that the few thousands people that remained in the area suffered by agents after the civil war? Why doesn’t it simply focus on an anti NATO-antiimperialistic criticism?

The rest -less powerful- left organizations (LAE, Freedom cruise, KOE) have even worse views than GCI that traditionally is the main source of their analysis. We do not to mention their ideas on the subject of the EEZ. To form an opinion about them we only need say that to this day, they support the rallies conducted under the moto “Macedonia is Greek” even after everything that

has happened in these rallies. They continue to speak about how Macedonia is being sold out, they participate in the rallies alongside with nationalists and fascists, they defend the way these rallies were born by a popular base and the students' school occupation for the issue, while they dare criticize anarchists and communists saying they are ethnonihilists because they do not share the same views. They even created a committee for the Skopjain issue -as they call it- in order to fish around for some votes.

Since this is the way that the left wing is organized, the question is what goes on with the traditional national backbone.

New Democracy has found itself in the awkward position of having to go against a deal that is along the exact same line it set in 2008. But in order to gain votes now it says that the SYRIZA government signed a traitorous agreement. So, it is only natural that the role of the main organizers of these rallies was undertaken by others. The church played the most important role in the rallies' organization. It used its priests, parishes, Sunday schools, its pull with the army and its connections with business men for this cause. Along the church stood associations of reserve military men, cops, tv channels, businessmen (with a national consciousness, with interests opposing the agreement or both), generals like Fragoulis, nationalist organizations, Golden dawn and all the new parties of the right block. On top of the above there is the Russian factor that -using the church- is making an effort to block a deal that takes away from Russia a useful ally, gradually stripping Russia of the influence it had in the Balkans even after the downfall of the Soviet Union.

Greece is a country where the ratio of military men, cops and priests per habitant is amongst the highest in the world, it is the country with the unproportionally large middle class, it is the country that raised its citizens to believe that they are always on the defense, it is the country that votes based on which politician helped find them a job. So, in a country like this, it is only natural that under these circumstances there is a rise of nationalism. This is not something that we unfortunately see in our everyday conversations, in our everyday relations, in our everyday lives.

However, things are not as tragic as they might seem, nor are they irreversible. In Thessaloniki, an important city for this nationalist wave, the streets are still ours -due to our hard efforts to keep them this way. When we say this we do not only refer to demonstrations (where we keep going without fear as opposed to the fascists that suffer losses every single time or find us against them having counter-rallies etc). We are referring to the streets as the place where we spend most of our day. The streets are filled with our messages, our posters, our graffities. We refer to the streets as a culture. Even though some hulgians -for their own selfish reasons- played an important part the past year, even though we saw students's squats at schools for the issue, we know that the youngsters that live in the streets are with us. The same goes for the largest portion of the working class. We do not claim that the majority of the workers is with us but it has more important issues to face than what the neighboring state will be called, like finding a job or paying its debts. Despite the pressure of some conservatives, only one firemen union took a stand on the matter, as opposed to the merchants, tradesmen and businessmen. In the end hundreds thousands of people participated in the rallies with the moto "Macedonia is Greek" however this is not the number that the organizers wished for.

Life is evolution. Our struggle is evolution. History is evolution. This is how we should perceive things and we should not let them bring us down: The number of people that participated in these rallies this and last year is not compared to the one of those that had participated in the rally of 1992. It doesn't mean that those who participated in the rally of 1992 became fascists nor that they still care about the matter. More importantly, this time there is a great difference. As opposed to 92' this time the opposing views were made public and there was a great conflict with the rising nationalism. Fascists were beaten up, some their rallies were blocked, but what's most important is that an opposing analysis on the agreement and all that it lead to managed to exist. With all its internal issues, the anarchists, a political force that did not have the same quality or quantity might in 1992, tried to set obstacles (and it achieved it to an important extent) to the rise of nationalism. This battle was of course not without losses. As a result of the rallies fascists were able to burn down libertatia squat, they attacked the free social spaces like

School and Empros (unsuccessfully), they desecrated the monument of the holocaust, they launched attacks against homosexuals and immigrants even against random passengers. It is not a coincidence that these task forces never targeted even with their speech NATO or the EU and instead they attacked those who are consciously opposed to national narrations. They are simply following orders from their bosses.

## **NATO**

In order to understand how the Prespes agreement was reached it is important to mention the role of NATO and the EU. The Balkans are the most southern point of where Europe and Asia meet and are bordering the Middle East. Through them, a series of natural gas pipelines will feed into the "thirsty for energy Europe", while at the same time they are a hub-point for the so-called shopping streets between three continents. The largest part of them as 30 years ago belonged to what was then called the "Eastern Bloc", and after the fall of the socialist democracies, there were long periods of complete looting (with privatizations being made immediately) but also looting (of workers and nature after the free market has no pretensions to keep). The wretched living conditions of a large part of the population and its habit of wild capitalism combined with all of the above, make these countries a pole of attraction for the EU. Looking for its own expansion to overcome the economic and political earthquakes it has to manage inside.

The role of NATO is even more crucial. With the leading power which is US . the North Atlantic alliance is striving to win its own vital space in a military, economic and political way through global competitions. It is facing new emerging superpowers such as China, and its main purpose is an increasingly intense encirclement of Russia, which is shown by recent events in Ukraine and earlier in Georgia, with the administrative and geographical redeployment of troops and military exercises like the recent general rehearse of war in Norway.

At the same time at the energy level, the US tried and partly made it through TAP to help dependence of Europe on Russian gas interests by bringing gas to the European market (which is important to say that it opposes the allied power in NATO, Germany, for which it is more cost-intensive and which is under pressure not to buy the cheapest Russian gas). They also want to succeed with east med, the pipeline that will bring natural gas off the coasts of the eastern Mediterranean, which today are mining American and French companies-overseas on behalf of Israel.

And here it is important to understand that as distant as they may seem, however many comrades are well aware that it is fearful to target enemies outside of our own state, it is precisely the focal point that the Greek bourgeoisie , the Greek state and its interests are inextricably linked to those of the alliances involved, since, as mentioned above, the business with EEZ and the pipelines, the military co-operation that accompanies it, the upgrading of the presence of the Nato in the region will be profitable for both sides

However, continuing in NATO's role in this agreement, it is important to mention the problematic, at least until now, relationship of the USA with Turkey, which has a decisive role in the agreement. As much as Turkey comes closer to Russia by cutting off arms, gas, technology, commerce and trade from Syria, we have the majority of the personnel and equipment of Indirlici transferred, a giant NATO base in Turkey. which is transferred to other bases of the area (eg in Alexandroupolis). At the same time, and because geostrategy is a continuous move, this agreement brings yet another Balkan region under NATO auspices, which can fit bigger forces and equipment into one more box of the area's checker, even better in a piece that some time ago it was under the influence of a major, if not the main opponent of the US, Russia.

So these oppositions and these antagonisms affect us and it is disastrous to act like we do not see them. Now as to what we can do about them, there is much that can be discussed. There is a series of contradictions that we must interfere with and relate to the first and main places in which we move into our everyday life and encompass exploitative and oppressive relationships

that, with little organization and stubbornness, can also give rise to revolutions.

We have many organizations in our minds, we mentioned a few before, that in the name of anti-imperialism, of a bad, old anti-American or anti-German anti-imperialism, ended up embracing bourgeois nationalism and even popular patriotism. But we say and believe it that it makes sense to put on our agenda and in our common international struggles the struggle against the wars and the struggle against NATO, a militarist machine, a war machine that we will find opposite us when we will trigger our next uprisings and revolutions. Along with our propaganda against the metaphysical lies about nations and homelands, without flirting with other superpowers, at the same time with fighters from other states, we have no reason to close our eyes to the crimes of organizations like the EU. and NATO because parts of the left that do it speak in terms of national unity. We have shown it, perhaps unsuccessfully, in the design of our poster: NATIONS ARE OUR CAGES, WITHIN A PRISON WITH NEO-CAPITALIST ELEMENTS . Because we are neither in favor of the Balkans of nationalisms and states, nor of their Euro-Atlantic integration and unification. For we neither want nations, nor states, nor gods and masters. We do not want man to exploit man and plunder nature, we do not want to create wars for economic interests. We want a life of equality and freedom, a world liberated from the bonds of private ownership of means of production, racism and patriarchy. . We want a tomorrow completely free from all kinds of exploitation and oppression, a tomorrow made by us for us. Let us dare to claim it with our wildest dreams to incarnate in a violent revolution. And when one of the most murderous forces of the planet is filling the region with force, only profit we will have for the above-mentioned case by blocking it ...

However, we also need to make a brief mention of the role of NATO and the EU. to reach this agreement. The Balkans are the southernmost point of the Union of Europe and Asia and are bordering the MiddleEast. Through them, a series of natural gas pipelines will feed into the "thirsty for energy Europe", while at the same time they are a hub-point for the so-called shopping streets between three continents. The largest part of them as 30 years ago belonged to what was then called the "Eastern Bloc", and after the fall of the socialist democracies, there were long periods of complete looting (with privatizations being made immediately) but also looting (of workers and nature after the free market has no pretensions to keep). The wretched living conditions of a large part of the population and its habit of wild capitalism combined with all of the above, make these countries a pole of attraction for the EU. looking for its own expansion to overcome the economic and political earthquakes it has to manage inside.

Even more crucial is the role of NATO. With the leading power which is US . the North Atlantic alliance is striving to win its own vital space in a military, economic and political way through global competitions. It is facing new emerging superpowers such as China, and its main purpose is an increasingly intense encirclement of Russia, which is shown by recent events in Ukraine and earlier in Georgia, with the administrative and geographical redeployment of troops and military exercises like the recent general rehearse of war in Norway.

At the same time at the energy level, the US tried and partly made it through TAP to help dependence of Europe on Russian gas interests by bringing gas to the European market (which is important to say that it opposes the allied power in NATO, Germany, for which it is more cost-intensive and which is under pressure not to buy the cheapest Russian gas). They also want to succeed with east med, the pipeline that will bring natural gas off the coasts of the eastern Mediterranean, which today are mining American and French companies-overseas on behalf of Israel.

And here it is important to understand that as distant as they may seem, however many comrades are well aware that it is fearful to target enemies outside of our own state, it is precisely the focal point that the Greek bourgeoisie , the Greek state and its interests are inextricably linked to those of the alliances involved, since, as mentioned above, the business with EEZ and the pipelines, the military co-operation that accompanies it, the upgrading of the

presence of the Nato in the region will be profitable for both sides

However, continuing in NATO's role in this agreement, it is important to mention the problematic, at least until now, relationship of the USA with Turkey, which has a decisive role in the agreement. As much as Turkey comes closer to Russia by cutting off arms, gas, technology, commerce and trade from Syria, we have the majority of the personnel and equipment of Indirlici transferred, a giant NATO base in Turkey. which is transferred to other bases of the area (eg in Alexandroupolis). At the same time, and because geostrategy is a continuous move, this agreement brings yet another Balkan region under NATO auspices, which can fit bigger forces and equipment into one more box of the area's checker, even better in a piece that some time ago it was under the influence of a major, if not the main opponent of the US, Russia.

So these oppositions and these antagonisms affect us and it is disastrous to act like we do not see them. Now as to what we can do about them, there is much that can be discussed. There is a series of contradictions that we must interfere with and relate to the first and main places in which we move into our everyday life and encompass exploitative and oppressive relationships that, with little organization and stubbornness, can also give rise to revolutions.

We have many organizations in our minds, we mentioned a few before, that in the name of anti-imperialism, of a bad, old anti-American or anti-German anti-imperialism, ended up embracing bourgeois nationalism and even popular patriotism. But we say and believe it that it makes sense to put on our agenda and in our common international struggles the struggle against the wars and the struggle against NATO, a militarist machine, a war machine that we will find opposite us when we will trigger our next uprisings and revolutions. Along with our propaganda against the metaphysical lies about nations and homelands, without flirting with other superpowers, at the same time with fighters from other states, we have no reason to close our eyes to the crimes of organizations like the EU. and NATO because parts of the left that do it speak in terms of national unity. We have shown it, perhaps unsuccessfully, in the design of our poster: NATIONS ARE OUR CAGES, WITHIN A PRISON WITH NEO-EMPIRE FENCES AROUND IT . Because we are neither in favor of the Balkans of nationalisms and states, nor of their Euro-Atlantic integration and unification. For we neither want nations, nor states, nor gods and masters. We do not want man to exploit man and plunder nature, we do not want to create wars for economic interests. We want a life of equality and freedom, a world liberated from the bonds of private ownership of means of production, racism and patriarchy. . We want a tomorrow completely free from all kinds of exploitation and oppression, a tomorrow made by us for us. Let us dare to claim it with our wildest dreams to incarnate in a violent revolution. And when one of the most murderous forces of the planet is filling the region with force, only profit we will have for the above-mentioned case by blocking it ...