THE MUSLIM MINORITY OF GREEK THRACE

VEMUND AARBKKE

VOLUME I

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor Philosophiae
at the University of Bergen
2000
Preface and Acknowledgements

The end of the cold war has witnessed a string of “ethnic conflicts” in Eastern Europe and the Balkans. In places such as the former Yugoslavia, this evolved into armed violence or full scale wars. As usual, most attention is paid to the dramatic conflicts with massive material destruction and boundless human suffering. However, when a conflict has escalated to such a level it takes on rules of its own. This thesis attempts to look at low level ethnic tension in a society where all the normal functions of government are intact, and in particular a minority’s efforts to influence its own situation through democratic procedures. Certain internal and external political developments in the late 1980s made the “Muslim minority” in Greek Thrace a natural choice for such a case study. Although this minority has attracted a certain interest over the years, many issues of central importance have been either ignored or explored inadequately. The present work attempts to remedy some of these shortcomings and shed light on social and political processes which influence minority/majority relations in this area.

The writing of a doctoral thesis is the fruit of a long process indeed. I did my undergraduate studies at the University of Bergen where I took exams in Philosophy, History of Religion, Ancient Greek, and Turkish. I got my first taste of both the Greek and Turkish languages way back in the academic year 1984–85. When I decided to pursue my interest in modern Balkan history, I moved on to the Institute of Modern Greek and Balkan Studies at the University of Copenhagen. Since then I devoted much time and energy under the inspiring supervision of Jørn Qvonje, until I reached a level of proficiency where I felt ready to undertake the present work. In many ways my choice of subject grew naturally out of my experiences while learning about Balkan history and philology. As part of my studies I have taken advantage of Norway’s bilateral cultural agreements and attended several language courses in Greece (1984, 1990), Turkey (1987, 1989), Bulgaria (1989, 1992), and Yugoslavia (1991). These courses provided me with welcome opportunities to get in closer touch with people, culture, and politics. As soon as I had obtain a basic grasp of the language, I tried to spell my way through newspaper articles out of curiosity about which perceptions and opinions were current. My first attempt at working systematically with the press was in 1989 when I attended a Turkish language summer course in Istanbul. This was right after the crisis which led to the exodus of Bulgaria’s Muslim/Turkish populations. I sensed right away the importance of the issue and tried to follow the day by day coverage of the Turkish press. After the course, I went home by way of Bulgaria and was able to obtain a collection of relevant Bulgarian press clippings. I
worked with this material throughout the autumn and used it for an essay that became my first published article.

This event coincided with developments in Greece concerning the minority in Thrace. Long built up frustration among the minority first surfaced in January 1988. This was an event that I became aware of only afterwards. However, out of general curiosity I followed the coverage of the Greek elections in 1989–1990. During these elections the Greek press devoted much space to the “independent Muslims candidates” as they were called—or “dependent independent candidates” as a political opponent within the minority coined them, because of their obvious affiliation with Turkey. For someone interested in both Greece and Turkey the minority issue is an obvious subject, but what really inspired me at this juncture was exactly the massive interest by the Greek and Turkish press. As I have had my entire education within the humanities, what attracted me most was the cultural aspect of the controversies. Of course, I mean culture in the wide sense and not only “music, dance, and poetry”. I feel that it is equally important that we inquire into the culture of less pleasant subjects such as the “culture” of oppression, bigotry, nationalism, racism, exploitation, discrimination, political manipulation, etc. In short, I became aware of the existence of some interesting material and tried to manoeuvre in a direction which would make it possible to undertake an extensive research of it in the future.

I made my first acquaintance with someone from the minority in summer 1990. Mehmet Bilge was then a student of medicine at the University of Thessaloniki. He grew up in the village Fillira in a pure Muslim-Turkish environment. He went to Turkey for secondary education, and learned proper Greek only after the age of 20. When I stayed in Thessaloniki during spring 1991 we saw each other frequently and had vivid discussions. By this time Mehmet was well acquainted with Greek society and politics, but has always remained close to the values of his village upbringing. He and İbram Onsunoglu are my closest friends from the minority. While İbram is more of an independent spirit, as will be evident in my many references to him, Mehmet has often been a good corrective because of his more traditional “reflexes”. In June 1991 I also made my first proper visit to Thrace, when I accompanied Bjørn Cato Funnemark of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee as his interpreter.

The basic funding for my doctoral thesis was provided by a 3 year grant from the Norwegian Research Council. This was not due to any particular interest in Thrace, but to the existence of a program for “international studies” to support research projects on areas outside western Europe. I was lucky that this program appeared at a point in my studies where my needs and the intentions of the program coincided. When I began my research in 1993–1994, I spent about 10 months in Greece and five months in Turkey. During my “field work” I divided my time between collecting written material, and discussing the minority issue with people involved on various
levels. In Greece I am grateful for the services offered me at the library of the Institute of Balkan Studies (IMXA), the library of Macedonian Studies, the public library of Thessaloniki (HAN), the library of ELIAMEP, the library of Parliament, the library of the old Parliament (Benaki), the Nordic library in Athens, the library of the Democritos University of Thrace, the public library of Ksanthi, and the public library of Komotini. In addition I must thank the journalists known as o Ios and the journalist Mihalis Tremopulos, for letting me copy their extensive collection of press clippings related to the minority. For some additional material I would also like to thank the lawyer Yiorgos Apostolidis. In Thrace I met, repeatedly, all the major minority politicians as well as many local politicians from the villages. I have also seen the Christian MPs, prefects, mayors, etc. I visited all the local newspapers—both Greek and Turkish language—and would like to thank them for their co-operation. I must in particular mention Rıza Kırlıdökme who most generously gave me a complete post-war collection of the newspaper Trakya. I met Greek diplomats both at the Foreign ministry in Athens and the “offices of cultural relations” in Komotini and Ksanthi as well as personnel of the Turkish General Consulate in Komotini. I would finally like to thank the directors and staff at the Norwegian Institute in Athens for their practical assistance. I should also mention that I have later been on several shorter visits to Thrace to supplement my research. In this connection I have to thank for a small grant from Nansenfondet.

The Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul provided me with both accommodations and a good research environment during my stay in Turkey. I have fond memories of many pleasant discussions with the director Bengt Knutson, and other people at the institute. I did also avail myself of the services of the Beyazit library, the library of Istanbul University, the library of Boğaziçi University, the IRCICA library at the Yıldız Sarayı, and the Atatürk public library at Taksim. In Istanbul I visited regularly the Western Thrace Turks Solidarity Association and would like to thank in particular the assistance of the chairman Halit Eren who provided me with their various publications and let me copy their collection of clippings from the Turkish press. From the immigrant milieu, I would also like to thank Selahattin Yıldız, Süleyman Cihan Sefer, and Selahaddin Galip for their assistance. Finally, I benefited from discussing several aspects of Greek-Turkish relations with the Greek correspondent Alkis Kurkulas. On a shorter visit to Ankara I was able to speak with diplomats at the Foreign Department. I would also like to thank Reşat Genç of the TDK and Yusuf Halaçoğlu of the TTK who were very helpful. In Ankara I was fortunate to get the opportunity to discuss many aspects of the Western Thrace issue with Professor Baskın Oran, and to copy his collection of press clippings.

My friend and colleague Alexei Kalionski has been of great assistance with the Bulgarian material. However, in the end I had to restrain myself and not incorporate as much as originally planned.
After completing the basic “fieldwork” I was fortunate to obtain a grant from the “U.S. Norway Fulbright Foundation for Educational Exchange” supplemented with funds from the “Norway - America Association”, which enabled me to spend the academic year 1994–1995 at the University of Princeton. In this connection I would like to thank Heath Lowry and the staff of the Near Eastern Studies Department which hosted me. I further from the assistance of Dimitri Gondicas, head of the program in Hellenic Studies. Last but not least, I must thank the staff of the fantastic library at Princeton.

During the early phase of my work I was also able to collect some material when I visited the University of Utrecht and the library at Leiden. I am very grateful to Fred De Jong, who generously supplied me with much material from his private collection. In the autumn of 1995, I spent two months in Munich where I availed myself of the facilities of the Südost-Institut. I would like to thank the director Gerhard Seewann and the staff which were most accommodating. I must also thank for the assistance of Suraiya Faroqhi, who apart from being a distinguished scholar is also great fun to be around. While in Munich I was also able to renew my acquaintance with my friend from Thrace, Faruk Nurioglu, who like many others had gone to Germany to seek employment. He helped me when I first arrived and introduced me to the Munich solidarity association of workers from Thrace. Finally I would like to thank Tue Magnussen of Roskilde University who provided me with some information and material from his research in Thrace in the mid 1980s, and Erik Siesby of the Danish Helsinki Committee for informing me about his experiences in the area.

The writing up of the thesis has been done back in Bergen at the Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies. It has been a long and arduous work, but I am sure it would have been a lot worse without the sound advice and good judgement of my supervisor R. S. O’Fahey. I am also grateful to the director Knut Vikør, for his patience with a struggling scholar, and the secretary Sylvia Liland for her practical help and encouraging words. I would also like to thank my other colleagues at the centre, Anne Bang, Inger Marie Okkenhaug, and in particular Marit Stålesen who shared my interest in Turkish history. In the final stages, I must also express my gratitude to Ilias Nikolakopulos who commented on part of the manuscript.

It is impossible to list everybody who have helped me during my work on this project, but they have not been forgotten. Last but not least I must thank my mother Helga Aarbakke for her unflinching support to her son’s academic adventures, and my wife Ellie Scopetea for her love and understanding throughout the long period that I have struggled with this thesis.
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Transliteration

In order not to clutter the manuscript unnecessarily, words in the Cyrillic or Greek alphabets have been rendered in Latin transliteration. In the case of Greek I have followed the suggestions in *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 4/1 1986. This is close to modern pronunciation, but deviates significantly for the system used to transliterate ancient Greek. For Bulgarian I have used a slight variation of the system in (Crampton 1987). In the case of authors who write in both English and their native tongue, I use the English form of their name they prefer themselves throughout instead of adhering to the scheme below, i.e. Alexandris not Aleksandris, Coufoudakis not Kufudakis, etc. The bibliography is sorted according to the order of the English alphabet, ignoring any diacritical marks, i.e. σ is s, θ is g, etc. In some cases a book’s publishing date is not printed. When the date is fairly obvious, I have indicated it with a question mark (?) behind. When the date is fairly obvious, I have indicated it with a question mark (?) behind. In some cases this is more helpful to the reader than just writing “no date”.

Greek Transliteration Scheme

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Transliterated words of more than one syllable have an acute accent on the stressed vowel, except for proper names (Names have been excepted for practical reasons mainly related to my bibliography data base).
**Bulgarian Transliteration Scheme**

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**Pronunciation of Turkish**

Modern standard Turkish spelling has been employed. The Latin letters used in this system are pronounced about the same as their English equivalents, with the following exceptions:

- **c** = j
- **ç** = ch
- **ç** = lengthens preceding vowel
- **g** = like a in *serial*
- **ü** = like German ö
- **š** = sh
- **ü** = like German ü
- **v** = lighter than English v

**Problems with Muslim names**

The lack of standardisation of Muslim names is a well known problem to scholars. In regard to the local context of Thrace, Selahaddin Galip wrote the following:

In one quarter of our city Komotini there are 7 persons with the name Ali oğlu Ahmet [Ahmet son of Ali]. 5 of them have the same birth dates [year?]. 3 of them have both mothers and fathers with the same names as well as the same birth dates.

This situation creates problems for our kinsmen who have business with official authorities such as Registry of Birth, military service, law court, tax office, police, post office, etc., and complicates the work of the officials. Almost all the employers and employees are constantly complaining about this situation.

On the other hand, in particular our illiterate kinsmen are not able to pronounce properly our names which are almost all from Arabic and Persian, and when asked they say “Amet” instead of “Ahmet”, “Sülmân” instead of “Süleyman”, “Zilla” instead of “Zeliha”, and “İbram” instead of “İbrahim”. The [Greek] officials who do not know the spelling of Turkish names write the names of our kinsmen incorrectly in records, receipts, and documents, which becomes the cause of confusion.

When the official of one office writes the name “Salîh oğlu Mehmet”, while the official of another office writes “Sali ulu Memet”, this creates the suspicion of an official in a third office since many of our names are very similar and he makes him go to the Municipality Registry of Births to obtain a document which proves that “Salîh oğlu Mehmet” and “Sali ulu Memet” are the same person, which takes both time and money *(Azınlık Postası 07.10.1967).*
Even today the Muslims have no established procedures for obtaining surnames, which was the problem raised in the article. Particularly those of Turkish origin, while the situation is somewhat better for the Pomaks. The usual procedure is to utilise their father’s name as surname. Sometimes they are referred to in newspapers etc. with name-surname and other times with surname-name. In those cases you have to know the person in order to ascertain whether his name is “Ahmet Mehmet” or “Mehmet Ahmet”. Other times people are referred to by nicknames, their profession, etc. Often the same person is referred to with several name combinations. There is great anarchy which presents many problems. For example, Mustafa Mustafa can be referred to as doctor Mustafa, but since there is another doctor Mustafa he is also referred to by his specialisation “mikroviológos”. Mehmet Emin Aga is often referred to only as Hafız, i.e. someone who knows the Koran by heart. Osman Nuri Fettahoğlu is often only referred to as Nuri Ustad (master Nuri), while Hamdi Hüseyin Fehmi is referred to as Hamdi Bey. There is a lack of standardised orthography. Particularly as regards voiced or unvoiced consonants, i.e. Mehmet or Mehmed, Selahattin or Selahaddin for the same persons. Some persons are referred to by their first name while others are referred to by their last name. The guiding line is whatever name is convenient for identifying them. Here I follow established practice. For example Orhan Hacıibram is usually referred to as Orhan, while Ahmet Faikoğlu is usually referred to as Faikoğlu. Selahaddin Galip insists on writing his name with the “correct” orthography, while İbrahim Onsunoğlu prefers the local variant.

Another problem is presented by the place names. Many traditional place names have been changed in both Greece and Turkey. Greeks still use Imvros instead of Gökçeada and Constantinople instead of Istanbul, Turks still use Gümülcine instead of Komotini and İskçe instead of Ksanthi. Some use their preferred form out of habit, while some use it demonstratively. In Greek Thrace most of the Turkish village names were changed officially in 1928. In many cases the new name was a translation of the Turkish name. Sometimes this was not done with particular care. For example, I wondered why the little brook outside Komotini was called the “Mad Torrent” (Trellohímaros), until I learned the Turkish name “The Brook of Mad İbrah” (Deli İbrah Çayı). In the present study today’s names will be used throughout. For the villages in Thrace I will often put the Turkish names in parenthesis, since this can make it easier to identify them for some people.
Abbreviations and Special Terms

AA
Anadolu Ajansı = ANA (Anatolia News Agency).

abdest
Ritual ablutions.

AN
Anangastikós Nómos. Greek legislative decree issued in times of an anomalous political situation.

ANA
See AA and APE

ANAP
Anavatan Partisi (Motherland Party). Turkish political party founded by Turgut Özal in 1983.

APE
Athinaiko Praktorio (E)idiseon = ANA (Athens News Agency).

AYK(-YK)
Azınlık Yüksek Kurulu (Supreme Minority Council-AYK), and its Yürütme Komitesi (Executive Committee-YK).

Barış
Peace, the independent minority ticket in Ksanthi in the 1985 parliamentary elections.

berat kandili
The sacred night between the 14th and the 15th day of the month Shaban.

BTAYTD
See YTD.

BTTDD
Bati Trakya Türkleri Dayanışma Dernekleri (Western Thrace Turks’ Solidarity Association). The main association is in Istanbul, but there are several branches.

BTTÖB
Bati Trakya Türk Öğretmenler Birliği (Western Thrace Turkish Teacher’s Union).

cemaat
The Muslim community. The term is commonly applied to the communities in Komotini and Ksanthi.

cemaat başkanı
The leader of the Muslim community, sometimes also called cemaat reisi.

CHP
Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People’s Party). Turkish political party founded by Kemal Atatürk in 1923.

çiftlik
A farm. Used mostly as a term for large estates.

CSCE
Conference of Security and Co-operation in Europe. See OSCE.

CU
Council of Europe.

CUP
Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). The party of the Young Turks, founded in 1908.

Deltio
Deltio Dimosievmátōn yia ti Musulmanikí Mionótita tis Ditikís Thrákis (Bulletin of Publications about the Muslim Minority of...
Western Thrace). Bulletin issued by the General Secretariat of Press and Information which has extracts of Greek, Turkish and minority publications (in Greek translation).


**DIKATSA**  *Diapanepistimiakó Kéndro Anagnórisis Títlon Spudón Alloadients* (Greek institution for recognising foreign university degrees)

**DIKKI**  *Dimokratikó Kinonikó Kinima* (Democratic Social Movements). Splinter party of PASOK, founded by Dimitris Tsovolas in 1995.

**DK**  *Danışma Kurulu* (Consultation Council). The successor of AYK-YK after the parliamentary election in October 1993.

**dönüm**  Turkish land measure. Approximately 900 sq. m. In Thrace it is often used interchangeably with the Greek measure *stremma*.


**EAM**  *Ethnikó Apelefherotikó Métopo* (National Liberation Front), which was active during the Second World War and the civil war.

**EC**  European Community

**EDA**  *Eniéa Dimokratikí Aristerá* (United Democratic Left). Greek political party founded in 1951.

**EDE**  *Ethnikí Dimokratikí Enosis* (National Democratic Union) Ultra right Greek party founded in 1974 and led by Petros Garufalias.


**EEC**  European Economic Community

**EIP**  *Ethnikí Iperisía Pliroforión* (National intelligence service). Formerly KIP.

**EK**  *Enosis Kéndru* (Centre Union). Major Greek political party founded in 1961, and led by Yeoryios Papandreu. After 1974 it was first led by Yeoryios Mavros.

**ekloyikó métro**  The amount of votes necessary for election in the first distribution of seats.
EP

EP
-European Parliament.

EPATH
-(E)idikí Pedagogikí Akademía Thessalónica. Greek college for educating minority teachers.

EPEN
-Ethnikí Politikí Enosis (National Political Union). Originally an alliance in the 1946 elections. The ultra right regrouped under this name before the European Election 17 June 1984.

ERE

ES
-Ellinikós Sinayermós (Greek Rally). A political group created by Aleksandros Papagos in 1951, which passed from the scene after his death in 1955.

établis
-Term (French) for those who were “established” in the areas exempted from the population exchange.

EU
-European Union.

ezan
-Muslim prayer call.

ferace
-Traditional Muslim woman dress.

fetva
-Mufti’s opinion on a matter involving the Islamic religious law.

fez
-Traditional hat.

Fileleftheri
-The liberals, splinter party from ND. Founded by Stefanos Manos in 1998.

GTGB
-Gümülcine Türk Gençler Birliği (Komotini Turkish Youths’ Union).

Güven
-Trust, the independent minority ticket in Rodopi in the 1989–1993 elections.

Hacivat
-One of the main characters in the traditional shadow play. See Karagöz.

hatip
-Muslim preacher.

imam
-Muslim prayer leader.

IA
-Inoméni Aristerá (United Left). Election alliance in the 1974 Greek elections.

İkbal
-Good Fortune, the independent minority ticket in Ksanthi in the 1989–1990 parliamentary elections.

İTB
-İskeçe Türk Birliği (Ksanthi Turkish Union).

Kadi
-Islamic judge.

kadir gecesi
-Night of power. 27 Ramadan when the Koran was revealed.
KAE  Kόmma Agrotón ke Ergatión (Party of Peasants and Workers). Greek political party led by Aleksandros Baltatzis in the 1981 elections.

karagöz  The main character in the traditional shadow play.

KF  Kόmma Fileléftheron (Liberal Party). Greek political party founded by Eleftherios Venizelos in 1910.

kinotárhis  Township president.

kinotikó simvúlio  Township council.

kinótita  Township.

KIP  Kratikí Iperisía Pliroforión (State intelligence service). Greek intelligence service. See EIP. In common speech the name KIP is still in use.

KKE  Kommunistikó Kόmma Elládas (Communist Party of Greece), founded in 1918.

KKE (e)  Kommunistikó Kόmma Elládas-esoterikú (Communist Party of Greece-Interior). The Greek Euro-communists’ party, which emerged after the KKE split in 1968.


KP  Kόmma Proodeftikón (Party of the Progressives). The party was originally founded by Spiros Markezinis in 1954. He revived it for the 1981 parliamentary elections, when it represented the far right.

kurban bayramı  Muslim Festival of Sacrifices.

MAT  Monádes Apokatastáseos tis Tákseos. Greek riot police.

MEA  Monádes (E)idikón Apostolón. Special police units which superseded MAT in 1982.

mevlid kandili  Evening of the Feast of the birth of the Prophet.

mevlit  Religious meeting held in memory of a deceased person, in which the Mevlit poem is chanted.


miraç kandili  The night of Mohammed's ascension.

MIT  Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı. The Turkish National Intelligence Organisation.

MMMMC  Medrese Mezunu Müslüman Muallimler Cemiyeti (Teachers Association of Medrese Graduates).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MNA</td>
<td>See MPE</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPE</td>
<td><em>Makedonikó Praktorío (E)idíeson</em> = MNA (Macedonia News Agency).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>müderris</td>
<td>Muslim higher religious teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>mufti</td>
<td>In Turkish <em>müftü</em>. Muslim religious leader learned in Islamic law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>müftülük</td>
<td>The Mufti Office (the Turkish term).</td>
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<tr>
<td>muftía</td>
<td>The Mufti Office (the Greek term).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td><em>Nomothetikó Diátagma</em>. Greek legislative decree. This abbreviation comes before the number of the law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>omoyenís</td>
<td>Kinsman. Greek term characterising the members of the Greek nation. Similar in scope to the Turkish <em>soydaş</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>OAKKE</td>
<td><em>Organismós yia tin Anasinkrótisi tu Komunistikú Kómmatos Elládas</em> (Organisation for Restructuring the Greek Communist party). Marginal party on the far left.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OGA</td>
<td><em>Organismós Yeoryikón Asfalíseon</em> (Organisation of Agricultural Insurance). Health insurance and pension fund:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSCE</td>
<td>Organisation of Security and Co-operation in Europe, formerly CSCE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTE</td>
<td><em>Organismós Tilepikinonión Elládos</em>. The Greek public telephone organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rabita</td>
<td>The Muslim World League founded in Mecca in 1962.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ramadan</td>
<td>The ninth Muslim month, which is the month of fasting. The Turkish name is Ramazan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regaip kandili</td>
<td>Feast of the conception of the prophet Mohammed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadik File</td>
<td>Photocopies of a series of documents which I obtained from the late Sadik Ahmet when he was MP. The file contains mostly various questions and petitions to official authorities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sinaspismos

Full name: *Sinaspismós tis Aristerás ke tis Proódu* (Coalition of the Left and the Progressive). This coalition was founded in 1989 and included the parties on the left of PASOK. KKE later broke out, and ran as a separate party in the 1993 elections.

soydaş

Kinsman. Turkish term characterising the members of the Turkish nation. Similar in scope to the Greek *omoyénís*.

stremma

Greek land measure. 1000 sq. m.

şeker bayramı

Feast following Ramadan. Sometimes referred to as *ramazan bayramı*.

TRT

*Türkiye Radyo ve Televizyonu* (Turkish Radio and Television).

UN

United Nations.

vaîz

Muslim preacher.

vakîf

Pious foundation based on the Ottoman social administration. Known in Greek as *Vakúfi*.

VİH

*Vaaz ve İrşad Heyeti* (Sermon and Guidance Committee). Unofficial committee for the higher Muslim religious personnel in Thrace.

YK

See AYK

YTD

*Yükseâ Tahsilliler Derneği* (University Graduates’ Association). Association of people with higher education (full name BTAYTD: *Bati Trakya Azînlîği Yüksek Tahsilliler Derneği*).
INTRODUCTION

It is usual for people who write a thesis to say something about the importance of their work. It is easy to feel that one’s own work is important, and if I did not feel so I would of course not have done it. However, I do not want to be overly pretentious or naive about it. The minority issue is only one of several ongoing disputes between Greece and Turkey, which include the Cyprus issue, the delimitation of the continental shelf, the extent of air space and territorial waters in the Aegean, and the militarisation of certain islands. Within this nexus the minority issue is generally viewed as the least important. First of all, because it is reasonably well regulated by treaties and has less room for diplomatic manoeuvring than the other issues. Next, because it has little strategic or economic value. There is no reason to believe that Turkey would be more concerned about the human condition of poor and ignorant villagers in Greece, than about poor and ignorant villagers within its own borders. Of course, traditional Turkish concepts have always regarded the interest of the individual as insignificant in comparison with the “great interests of the state”. Consequently, the attention which exceeds the domestic concern for villagers can be ascribed to the minority’s value within the diplomatic tug of war with Greece. Neither are there reasons to believe that Greece’s interest in the well being of the minority exceeds the concern for other marginal groups in Greek society. The deviations (positive and negative) from this standard can be ascribed to the minority’s position in Greek-Turkish relations. Nevertheless, even though the importance of the issue in the overall balance of Greek-Turkish controversies may not be too high, it has certain peculiarities exactly because human beings are involved. With the increased general interest in human rights after the end of the cold war, it became a suitable issue to promote internationally. It has consequently involved a relatively greater range of people and institutions than is usual for diplomatic issues. The opinions of the people who are the object of the controversies, which may or may not be their own, also contribute towards complicating the picture. In spite of the “lack of importance”, all these factors make the issue more diversified than the purely strategic issues. This is also the reason why I find it more fascinating for an academic analysis than other themes with a higher political priority within Greek-Turkish relations. What is little known, is that the minority went through a deep political and moral crisis after 1989. This led to some very interesting discussions in the minority press, which
exposed many fundamental minority problems in a whole other fashion than previously.

The methodological problems of a particular project are very much dependent on the peculiarities of the case and the approach adopted. The social sciences are often concerned with “hard facts”, which means a preferred interest for things that can be measured and numbered, such as electoral variations, demography, etc. In history there is also a tendency to seek a solid basis for a study in a concrete body of “facts”. In practice this means that there has been a tendency to assign the greatest value and prestige to archival work. This is also tied to the notion of bringing out in the open something that was hidden and inaccessible. Much like the archaeologist who digs at a promising site and hopes to unveil some unknown or valuable artefacts from the past. There are however many problems worth investigating where there is little access to “hard facts”, and even if there were they could not answer the most pertinent questions. The present project clearly falls into the last category. The “hard facts” about the minority are scanty and sometimes difficult to gain access to. Because of my interest in the contemporary problems of the minority there is of course no question of available archival material. To be frank, I also doubt if there ever will be much archival material available for the future student. However, my intentions are not to unveil some hidden secrets. The goal has rather been to investigate what takes place in the public space and is manifest for everybody in the society in question, or at least could be for those who are interested and inquire about it. In other words I am not primarily interested in “secret decisions” taken behind closed doors by some politician or civil servant, but in how the problems are presented and discussed by the interested parties within the framework of a democratic society. In this respect there is to a certain degree a shift in interest from the decision making process to the effects of the policy applied. How things work in practice, as can be seen by the general sources of information available. For this reason the main body of my material consists of press clippings. My adherence to the above principle will however often give a very different perspective from the story of a journalist interested in finding some sensational story that can entice the reader. I remember a couple of years ago when I spoke to a Norwegian journalist about the minority. After we had conversed for a while he let the cat out of the bag and asked (eagerly) if Thrace could be the next point of crisis. There is of course no particular reason why it should be, and sensible politicians have all the means to prevent it. Similarly I have observed an excessive interest by some people in the so called “controlled zone” (epitirúmeni zóni), i.e. the mountainous region towards the Bulgarian border where you need a special permit to enter. Personally I have not been particularly allured by this area, but without making any special efforts it just so
happened that I was able to visit the area two times before the restrictions were lifted in the autumn of 1995.\footnote{The first time I went there with Mr. Faikoğlu in June 1991 when I acted as an interpreter for Mr. Funnemark of the Norwegian Helsinki Watch Committee. The second time in spring 1993 the Greek official Manolis Kandas offered to take me there without any prior request by me.}

Although the material I have used is in principle available to everybody, this does not mean that everybody reads it. The most obvious example is that Greeks generally do not read Turkish and vice versa. Another problem is that much of the material has been written to reinforce certain stereotypes, not to add to our knowledge. A Turkish scholar wrote recently that with very few exceptions, all the indigenous works on Greek-Turkish relations give no place to the views of the other party, but simply reiterates its own discourse (Fırat 1997: 288). Greek scholarship and public discourse are plagued with similar problems. Besides the ideological blinkers, the minority issue has also been regarded as sensitive or even “dangerous”. This has stifled the public debate, and possibly prevented many from looking into it. It could be timely to warn against the kind of particularism that is sometimes advocated. The visit of the Norwegian Helsinki Watch committee brought forth the following comment in the local newspaper Fontis Ksanthis (08.06.1991):

It is particularly unacceptable to us that a Viking [Bjørn Cato Funnemark] travels to Thrace, the cradle of civilization, and takes liberty of talking about human rights (Funnemark 1991: 5).

In Thrace, locals will often claim that those who live in Athens cannot understand the problems of Thrace. Of course, the interest of the “outside world” (i.e. outside of Thrace) comes in leaps and bounds and there is a clear lack of continuity. Although there are several possible pitfalls for outsiders, I regard this kind of attitude as fundamentally wrong. To say that something is above discussion, is worse than making a mistake. Whether they like it or not, they cannot get rid of their “opponents” by default, they have to argue their point.

Others will claim that a foreigner has the advantage of seeing the things from outside without the usual stereotypes and prejudices. It is more correct to say that a foreigner who wants to investigate the minority would hardly be able to make any sense of the situation in the beginning. First there is the problem of obtaining reliable data, then to situate the data within their social, economic and political context. Only after these preconditions have been fulfilled, would it be meaningful to take a bird’s eye view on the situation. From a theoretical perspective, we would no longer compare isolated events or issues but rather several “systems” of values and norms which makes it possible to capture subtle nuances necessary for a more complete understanding. A major objective of the present work is consequently to establish a more reliable factual basis for comparison and generalisations. It is a question of proceeding in a
logical order. Like a philologist who first tries to establish the text, before he goes on with the interpretation.

**Previous Scholarship and Other Writings**

I will not go into an exhaustive discussion of the bibliography, but simply attempt to give a general overview of the character of the available material. A more detailed treatment of certain works will be done at the appropriate place in the thesis. The general rule is of course that the major events have attracted most attention, such as the Greek-Turkish war, the Lausanne treaty, the population exchange, etc. However each country has its own peculiarities.

**Greek Bibliography**

To start with the Greek bibliography. Many of the Greek refugees have written about their “unforgettable homelands”, which in many cases were right across the Turkish border in Eastern Thrace. They provide us with a lot of interesting details about the life of ordinary people in the multi-ethnic setting of the late Ottoman Empire. In some cases this includes descriptions of their settlement as refugees in Greek Thrace, such as (Sarandis 1987) and (Gudelis 1984). There is unfortunately no comparable literature in Turkish. In Greece it is the period before the Second World War which has attracted most scholarly attention. For this period several scholars have made use of the records of the Foreign Ministry. The most comprehensive study specifically about the minority is the unpublished doctoral thesis of Konstandinos Tsiumis (Tsiumis 1994). This is also the most satisfactory treatment of the early period. It gives a good insight in many of the conflicts in the post Lausanne period, although in a very careful language. This is related to the Greek sensitivity about the matter. Unfortunately there has been no systematic study of the minority press for this period, but Tsiumis makes use of the scattered references in the general bibliography and diplomatic reports. Of more special studies there is the unpublished master thesis of Hrisula Karamatsiu, which presents new information about the political representation of the minority in the early 1920s (Karamatsiu 1996). Simeon Soltaridis wrote a doctoral thesis about the history of the mufti offices of Thrace (Soltaridis 1997). He has had access to a lot of unused material, but his off-handed treatment of it leaves much to be desired. There is also the excellent study by Ilias Nikolakopoulos of the electoral behaviour of the minority (Nikolakopoulos 1990–1991a). He has made careful use of all available material in Greek, and conducted original research in Thrace, but still his work rests on a quite narrow empirical base. There is also interesting information about the minority in more general works such as (Anastasiadu 1980; Anastasiadu 1982; Mavrogordatos 1983 a; Tunda-Fergadi 1994). Then there are some references to the minority by what could be termed local historians, such as Kalliopi Papathanasi-
Musiopulu and Petros A. Yeorgantzis, but these deal mainly with the very early period. Periodicals about local history and society such as *Thrakiki Epetirida*, *Thrakika Hronika*, and *Endohora* also contain occasional articles about the minority.

There is a smaller academic output on the situation after the second world war. Here as for the earlier period Alexis Alexandris’ ground breaking doctoral thesis on the “Greek minority of Istanbul” is important because the fates of the two minorities are interconnected (Alexandris 1983). It includes a small chapter on the Muslim minority in Thrace, but he gives it a fuller treatment in a later work (Alexandris 1988). This is an intelligent treatment by an accomplished scholar, but unfortunately he lacks the intimate knowledge which he has about the Greek minority. There are various works in English by Greek civil servants. It is no coincidence that these appeared at periods when there were problems in the relationship with Turkey. Among these works I can mention (Andreadis 1956; Nikoglou 1956; Anonymous 1963–1965; Greece’s Information Services 1965; Mylonas 1966; Economopoulos 1967a; Economopoulos 1967b).\(^2\) For more recent publications of a similar character, see (Anonymous 1984?; Anonymous 1994?). There are a few well written specialist studies by people with a background in law. Most prominently, the doctoral theses of (Minaidis 1990a; Tsitselikis 1996). In this connection it is also worth to mention the book by (Yeorgulis 1993). On the other hand we have the example of a local lawyer with a narrow-minded nationalist outlook (Mekos 1991). There is an intelligent attempt to analyse the electoral behaviour of the minority in 1989–1990 by (Dodos 1994). However, he lacks a sufficient grasp on internal minority developments. There are also two monographs on heterodox groups and Muslim Gypsies (Zenginis 1988; Zenginis 1994). Again this fits well with the official policy to stress the heterogeneous elements in the minority. However, in this respect the main target has been the Pomaks. There exists a plethora of books with more or less fanciful theories about the Pomaks. Most of it is of very poor quality and highly ideological.\(^3\) Some of the local works have a very hostile attitude towards the minority. Here it is pertinent to single out the church leaders, who write in the spirit of Muslim-Christian antagonism. For characteristic examples, see the works of the local metropolitans (Damaskinos 1989; Anthimos 1995a; Anthimos 1995b). For some examples from the local press, see (Kidoniatis and Gonatas 1985). The human rights approach to minority studies have been adopted by some Greek scholars and human rights activists. Most notably by Panayiotis Dimitras, who is now the chairman of the Greek Helsinki Watch Committee and Minority rights group. For some early examples of his work, see (Dimitras 1990;

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2 See the review of Andreadis book by (Kienietz 1958). He visited Thrace himself in 1958 and considered Andreadis’ presentation reliable.

3 There is a critical review of this literature in an article by (Seyppel 1992). Much more has been produced after this time, but it is not necessary to go through it in detail.
Dimitras 1991). This is of course another kind of highly ideological approach which has its roots in countries with a different social organisation, but exactly because it is built on western models most outsiders do not find it as obviously slanted as some of the local material. Within the Greek context, Dimitras was among the first to write openly about some of the public secrets concerning the minority. Younger scholars often display a mixture of old perceptions and new approaches. A case in point is a doctoral thesis about minority education (Panayiotidis 1996a). It should be noticed that the debate on minorities is in constant development and there have been great advances. A state sponsored examination can be considered a brave and sincere attempt to come to grips with the situation (Notaras 1995), and a recent collective work displays an openness and interest to inquire into the problems of minorities in Greece, that would have been difficult to imagine only ten years earlier (Tsitselikis and Hristopulos 1997). Still, the feeling remains that only the first feeble steps have been made towards a serious study of many aspects of the minority issue.

A few words should also be said about the Greek press. In 1984, the small left wing periodical *Scholiastis* was first to raise the problems concerning the discriminations against the minority. However, the references to the minority continued to be few and far between until January 1988. It is clear from the many misspellings of names and confusion about the events, that the major newspapers were deeply ignorant about the minority when it first started to reach the headlines. Gradually the minority and its leaders became household words. The interest of the press peaked in late January-early February 1990 when tension ran high in Thrace and in Greek-Turkish relations. A great deal of information reaches the press, but it is necessary with some background knowledge to evaluate it properly. Some articles are clearly written by people who are hostile to the minority, or emanates from sources which try to depict the problems in a certain fashion. However, there are also examples of articles which strive to give a fair presentation of the situation. Traditionally the minority itself has been absent from the Greek public debate, but in recent years minority members have had greater opportunities to participate. Unfortunately, relatively few have been willing or able to take advantage of these opportunities. The most stable interest for the minority is displayed by newspapers and periodicals on the far left or far right. Those on the far right such as *Stohos*, *Hrissi Avyi*, or more recently *Nemesis* are very nationalist and biased. On the left *Scholiastis*, *O Politis*, *Epohi*, *Avyi*, etc., have tried to present many of the minority’s problems. Of course, both sides have their own agendas and their knowledge about the situation on the ground in Thrace varies. To exemplify the problems of obtaining dependable information, we can look at a particular case. Simeon Soltaridis has been writing regularly for the large liberal newspaper *Eleftherotipia* about events in Thrace and in particular about the minority. He was born in Istanbul where he received his primary and secondary education. After studying
theology at the University of Thessaloniki he settled in Komotini. In the 1980s he taught for several years at the minority secondary school in Komotini, without mentioning to his pupils that he had an excellent command of Turkish. He wrote his first book about minority affairs under the pseudonym Megas Revmiotis. With his residence in Komotini, knowledge of Turkish, and access to various centres and sources, he is in a privileged position to know about what is going on in the minority. However, because of his obvious attempt to please different masters and his inconsistency, he does not enjoy a good reputation among Athenian journalists. On the other hand, he is close to the sources and exactly because of his sloppiness he can also write about things that expose the Greek administration, where a more careful person would have hesitated.

**Turkish Bibliography**

The Turkish material has its own peculiarities, and focuses on other matters than the Greek material. There is quite a lot on the Turkish war of independence (1918–1922). In this context, the standard work on Thrace is (Bıyıklıoğlu 1955). The few documents which have been published about Muslims in Greece from this period are usually brief and stereotype, cf. (Binark 1995). There are the memoirs of certain statesmen who were involved in handling the minority issue, such as (Nur 1992b), but there is not the abundance of personal testimonies which we have in the Greek case. For Turkey, the Lausanne treaty did not only concern the relationship with Greece, but marks the foundation of the modern Turkish Republic. Consequently it has a more central place, and much greater scope than for Greece. In contrast to Greece, there exists no systematic study of the minority issue based on Turkish archival sources for the period 1923–1940. For a long period the Turkish focus was on internal developments, and the interest for kindred minorities in neighbouring countries remained marginal. The early interest for the “outside Turks” (diş türkleri) was taken care of by the Pan-Turkist circles, such as (Bahtiyar 1928). This is the kind of narcissistic and sentimental approach which basically attempts to reinforce certain stereotypes. These circles also dominated the output after 1960, which is evident from the many articles in periodicals such as Türk Kültürü and Türk Dünyası. Some of these article were written by well known historians, such as Cengiz Orhonlu. He had been able to find some documentation, but on the whole the result was superficial and unsatisfactory. The presentations of people with direct experience from Thrace are also very uneven. This includes the immigrant circles in Turkey with books by people like Ahmet Aydınli, Abdürrahim Dede, and “Ümit Kurtuluş”. A recent doctoral thesis by a student from Thrace is heavily influenced by traditional Turkish nationalist ideology.

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4 (Revmiotis 1984; Revmiotis 1985). The pseudonym means someone from Mega Revma (Turkish: Arnavutköy), which is the area of Istanbul where he grew up.
Selahattin Yıldız, who publishes the periodical *Batı Trakya*, has preserved for the record some interesting information about early Kemalist teachers and similar themes. However, he is not so well in touch with the present situation. Two exchange teachers from Turkey have written about the minority (Özgüç 1974; Yaz 1986). Özgüç has by far the best presentation, while Yaz’s sentimental approach betrays itself already in the title: “Crying Western Thrace”. The closest we have to memoirs by someone from Thrace, is a book which describes the situation during the second world war (Batıbey 1976). There are also the memoirs of the Turkish communist who joined the Greek guerrilla during the civil war (Belli 1998). These have an unusual approach in the Turkish context, because of the author’s political commitment. The most eloquent presentation in English of the Turkish position was made in the influential article by the diplomat (Bayülken 1963). The weaknesses of this article will be discussed later. A significant change of approach took place with the works of Baskın Oran. As a scholar with no direct attachment to Thrace, he attempted to treat the issue in light of the international system for protection of minorities. The theoretical considerations dominated the first edition from 1986, while the second and much expanded edition has more information about the actual situation in Western Thrace (Oran 1991). This is arguably the most extensive and satisfactory treatment of the issue. His main weakness is his lack of familiarity with Greek society and politics. When he did his research he gained access to files from the Turkish Foreign Ministry, and to some degree his sources colour his presentation. However, he is clearly a person with academic integrity which is apparent from the evolution of his work, cf. (Oran 1978; Oran 1995). For the developments within the minority he supports himself on one sided sources, but it could be said to his defence that the minority’s internal conflicts came out in the open with full force only after he had published his book. For a brief presentation in French, see (Oran 1988). Oran’s work has also to some degree influenced those who ideologically are closer to traditional approaches, for example (Eren 1989; Eren 1997). Around 1989–1990 there was a significant output of publications related to the initiative behind Sadık Ahmet. This had one internal and one external front. Internally there were the people who tried to use the Turkish interest as a vehicle to promote themselves. This includes the leader of the solidarity associations in Turkey (BTTDD), who was very active towards the press, and kept a high public profile, see (Salıhoğlu 1989). The periodical of the solidarity associations, *Batı Trakya’nın Sesi*, was closely tied to this initiative. So was the leader of the solidarity associations in Germany, see (Alioğlu 1998). These groups tried to profile themselves as human rights defenders, but lacked commitment to democratic procedures. The attempts to present the minority issue to an international audience was backed by the highest quarters, see (Yılmaz 1990). During this period it was referred to frequently in the bulletin of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, *Newspot*. There were
also presentations by semi-official agencies, such as (INAF 1992). These tried to emulate the style of human rights organisations, with Helsinki Watch as their greatest influence. They were only partially successful, since they could not break completely away from traditional concepts. A few words should also be said about the role of the Turkish press during recent years. Part of the Turkish press is very nationalist and treats Greek-Turkish issues according to established stereotypes. Articles by people such as the regular columnist of Türkiye Mustafa Necati Özfatura, are very predictable. The presentation of developments in Thrace after 1988 was influenced by the commanding position of the forces behind Sadık Ahmet. They would also try to instruct journalists who visited Thrace about whom to see, etc. However, ultimately there are examples of that other people were listened to. Serious journalists from major newspapers would try to seek out all the parties in order to give a balanced presentation. Some of Sadık’s opponents in Thrace were able to take advantage of their good connections to the newspaper Zaman. The left wing (and pro-Kurdish) periodical 2000’e Doğru, had several articles which were strongly coloured by opposition to Turkish government politics.

**Minority Press**

The minority press in Thrace has been an important source for the present work and the newspapers which have been utilised most deserve a closer presentation. They are almost all of them simple publications consisting of a single sheet of paper. As a rule they are weekly, but average seldom more than some 40 issues a year. The distribution and circulation display great variation, but it can be mentioned that İleri reached its peak in the 1980s with 2,750 paying subscribers. This is probably the highest number of any of the newspapers.


I have only examined the 1946–1966 collection. Founded by Osman Nuri Fettahoğlu (1902–1991), who was educated in the Young Turk spirit. He served as MP for a number of years before 1967. Fettahoğlu was arguably the foremost representative of the Kemalist section in the minority. He displayed a keen interest in the educational and cultural development of the minority. He has clearer concepts, and expresses himself with more lucidity, than someone like Hasan Hatipoğlu. His influence on the minority extended over several generations, and he is held in extremely high regard by Hâki, who has Trakya as his model.


I have only a complete collection for the period after 1982. Akin was founded by Asım Haliloğlu (1923–1980) and Hasan Hatipoğlu (1923–). Asım Haliloğlu had his whole education from Turkey and held a law degree from the Istanbul University. He was a dedicated adherent of the Kemalist reforms and the newspaper was influential in
spreading those ideals among the younger generation during the 1960s. After his death in 1980, Hasan Hatipoğlu took sole responsibility of the newspaper. He has his education from a Greek secondary school. Before 1967 he was MP for several periods, and has remained strongly involved in minority petty politics. His commitment to the educational and cultural aspects of the Kemalist reforms was superficial. Hatipoğlu excelled mainly as political manipulator. His newspaper is a model of machiavellian propaganda. This is not so easy to see through if not compared with other sources, but even a systematic reading of Akın over a longer period reveals many self-contradictions related to changing political conditions.

İleri (Forward) Komotini (1975–)

Founded by Salih Halil (Hâki) (1939–). Hâki was the first person who grew up in a village (Rizoma-[Gebecili]) to start a newspaper. After completing the medrese in Komotini he went to Turkey where he graduated from an İmam-Hatip school. While others use their newspapers as vehicles for their political ambitions, Hâki’s ambition is the newspaper itself. It is the minority newspaper which has been issued with the greatest regularity, and his dream has been to unite the minority’s forces to make it possible to issue a daily newspaper. He is by far the most prolific writer in the minority and has developed a very personal style. Hâki is dedicated to Turkish ideals, but has at times fallen out of favour with the Turkish Consulate because of his tendency to speak out about things which others would have liked to pass over in silence. He is a good source exactly because he reacts emotionally, and cannot refrain from expressing his own opinions about everything. Even when he tries to be cunning, he is unable to keep his cards close to his chest. His self-centred attitude does not make him into the most objective commentator, but a systematic reading makes it possible to see through his many obsessions. On the other hand, he is generous when it comes to give room for people with other opinions in his newspaper. It was a hard blow to him when Turkey punished him for his “indiscretions” after 1981, and he protested loudly against this. When he was taken back into favour, he wrote an “apology” and “admitted” that he had been careless (İleri 804/16.06.1995).


Founded by İsmail Molla (Rodoplu) (1938–). After completing the medrese in Komotini he went to Egypt for higher education. He is known to have good relations with the Turkish Consulate and represents generally the same section of the minority as Akın. Several articles on education by the “Turkish Teachers Union” have been published in this newspaper. He is not known for industriousness and his office has been a social gathering place for parts of the minority. Rodoplu founded the independent “Trust” ticket with Sadık Ahmet and Sabahaddin Emin and was elected independent MP for Rodopi in November 1989, when Sadık Ahmet was prevented from running.
Trakya’nın Sesi (Voice of Thrace) Ksanthi/Komotini (1981–)

Founded by Abdülhalim Dede (1956–). This newspaper represents an unusual mixture within the minority context. It has a certain religious profile, and has reprinted various articles with religious content. On the other hand, Dede is far from being a backward conservative and keeps in better touch with general developments in Greek society than the other newspapers. He is very outspoken and has often been in conflict with the group which enjoys Turkish patronage. İbrahim Onsunoğlu (1948–) who is the most articulate voice among those who try to redefine the minority’s position towards a modern European orientation, has also written extensively in this newspaper. In addition, Onsunoğlu has written in several other newspapers and had for a short while his own Denge (Balance) Komotini (1989). His good command of Greek has enabled him to present eloquently the minority issue to a Greek audience.


Aydın Ömeroğlu (1948–) has his secondary education from Turkey, where he was strongly influenced by left wing currents. He later studied economy at the University of Hamburg. During the early 1980s he was instrumental in organising the minority workers who lived in Germany. He issued first the newspaper Yeni Adım, and later Diyalog. He has also written several books about minority related issues. His academic training enables him to write with a more scholarly approach about many issues. However, in spite of his indisputable abilities, his personal ambitions and ideological blinkers sometimes hamper his judgement.

Yankı (Echo), Ksanthi (1987–1991)

Enver Kasapoğlu (1941–1991) had his education from Turkey and taught at the minority secondary school in Ksanthi. He belonged to the Kemalist section and was close to the independent ticket in the 1989–1990 election. Ahmet Faikoğlu’s younger brother, Erdinç, was co-owner of the newspaper.

Aile Birlik (Family Unity), Komotini (1989–)

Refika Nazım (1947–) has her teacher education from Turkey. The newspaper has been issued somewhat irregularly. She is close to Dede, and her newspaper has also featured several articles by the younger politicians with left wing leanings. In the beginning she was part of the opposition against Sadık Ahmet and the independent ticket, but has lately concentrated on literary subjects.


The newspaper was owned by Sadık Ahmet, but mainly written by Mustafa Hafiz Mustafa (1945–1996) who had his education from a Turkish teachers college. It was first of all a propaganda vehicle for Sadık, and picked up the threads from Sadık’s previous newspaper Güven (Trust - 1989–1990). Mustafa was considered one of the best pens in the minority, but he excelled mostly in the kind of internal manipulation and mud-slinging which have been such a prominent feature of the minority press.
Gündem (Agenda) Komotini (1996–)

Hülya Emin (1968-) founded this newspaper after a previous abortive attempt with Ortam (Surroundings - 1992–1993). She has a degree in journalism from Turkey, and represents a more professional approach. From a technical point of view it is by far the most advanced minority newspaper with its modern lay-out and several pages (usually 10). She has been able to gather a team of writers around her, who contribute with regular columns about a variety of subjects. As a writer she is less inspired, and has a tendency to express orthodox Turkish views.

Bulgarian Bibliography

Just a few words about the Bulgarian bibliography. Thrace was part of the Bulgarian irredentism project at the end of the 19. century and there are consequently some accounts by those who participated in the “liberation struggle” against the Ottoman Empire. There is a larger output about the period around the First World War, when Western Thrace was under Bulgarian rule. This includes accounts by contemporaries such as Miletich and Altînov, and later scholarly works where Stayko Trifonov has played the leading role. I took a long time for Bulgaria to accept the loss of Western Thrace in the Neuilly Treaty (1919) and there was a considerable output to support Bulgarian irredentism claims in the inter war years. There is also a certain output on the occupation during the Second World War, see (Yonchev 1993), and several articles by Daskalov. There is a significant Bulgarian bibliography on the Pomaks, or Bulgarian Muslims which is the preferred term. For the early period St. Shishkov has the largest output on Thrace, while there is the sketchy account by the Bulgarian Patriarch Kiril who visited the area during 1943–1944. The discussion on Pomaks is heavily influenced by ideological factors, but the Bulgarian preoccupation with ethnography and linguistic similarities makes it an interesting alternative to the Greek and Turkish discourses. The fall of the communist regime in 1989 led to a resurgent interest in the ethno-cultural situation of the country which resulted in a scholarly output which is interesting from a comparative perspective. Among the first efforts were the two volumes which were published by the “Friedrich Neuman Foundation” (Rusanov and Aleksandrieva 1992a; Rusanov and Aleksandrieva 1992b). In the case of Pomak studies, Yulian Konstantinov has played a leading role.

International Bibliography

The international bibliography on the Muslim minority in Greek Thrace is quite uneven. There is no extensive monograph on the minority, but shorter articles and indirect references. The population exchange and the refugee settlement after the Lausanne Treaty (1923) have attracted much scholarly attention and there is a vast bibliography on the subject. There are also the accounts by people who were involved
in the refugee settlement, such as (Eddy 1931). The extensive German study on the impact of the refugee settlement in Thrace deserves special mention, because of its intimate acquaintance with local conditions (Schultze 1937). In extension to this there is also a recent doctoral thesis which takes an overall look at the region (Dalègre 1995). Dalègre has also written several articles about the minority, but the thesis is her best effort. There are the occasional short references to the situation in Thrace in the periodical *Oriente Moderno*, often based on news from the Greek or Turkish press. There are a few accounts by visitors to the area such as (Tchemalovitch 1933) and (Balic 1952), but no substantial study. A more recent visit by a Japanese scholar can be placed in the same category (Kamosawa 1982). Alexandre Popovic has made a good concise effort to sum up the state of the research within the context of Islamic studies (Popovic 1986a). There are a few political science studies which touch on the minority issue as part of the Greek-Turkish differences. By far the best is the excellent study by (Meinardus 1985a). His main focus is on the attitude of the Greek government in its politics towards the minority. He has an intimate knowledge of the Greek bibliography and visited Thrace where he met the foremost minority leaders and politicians. However, he does not occupy himself much with the internal organisation of the community. The book by Tozun Bahcheli has a similar scope, but is based on a very narrow bibliography and negligible personal research (Bahcheli 1990). On several occasions he has made a point of his first-hand knowledge of the situation, which in fact amounts to a visit of “no more than two days” in June 1993. However, this has been sufficient to make him into an expert in human rights circles. In recent years, the emphasis on human rights and minority rights have created a new interest in the minority. The pioneer work was done by the historian Fred De Jong, who knew the situation on the ground from extended periods of research on various themes. He wrote an article which reflects the grievances in the minority press at the time (De Jong 1980a). The human rights approach hit Thrace with full impact around 1989, with the engagement of the American, Danish, and Norwegian Helsinki Watch committees. The most extensive report was written by (Whitman 1990). As representative of a prestigious organisation, she had the advantage of gaining good access to all the interested parties. On the negative side, her insufficient knowledge of Greek-Turkish issues and internal minority relations sometimes prevented her from evaluating her information properly. A later report by the same organisation suffers from some of the same shortcomings (Panico 1999). A more scholarly study on Greek minority politics gives insights into the sociological background for the Greek attitudes (Pollis 1987). Another scholarly article looks at how the Greek practice conforms to international standards. It gives a good and candid description of the Greek policy, but is not quite

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in touch with the social reality in Thrace (Stavros 1995). It is impossible to mention all
the smaller articles with some bearing on minority affairs. In closing I could just men-
tion the German scholar Tatjana Seyppel, who did some fieldwork in Thrace with the
view of writing a thesis, but ended up with a couple of articles on the Pomaks.

**Interviews and Fieldwork**

Greek sensitivity related to academic interest in various groups that are usually
labelled “minorities”, attracted much attention when Cambridge University Press
withdrew in November 1995 “a verbal agreement to publish a promising manuscript
about Greece written by Dr. Anastasia Karakasidou, entitled Fields of Wheat, Hills of
Blood. They did so because of threats of potential violence that might have harmed
CUP employees in Greece.”6 This naturally led to strong reactions. Several academics
resigned or dissociated themselves from the publishing house in protest. As can be
expected, Greek diplomats felt uneasy about the way their country was depicted.
“Elias Gounaris, the Greek ambassador to London, sent a scathing letter to the
Guardian newspaper, defending his country’s honour. ‘The worst possible fate that
could befall a Cambridge University Press book on an anthropological subject in
Greece would be indifference, spiced perhaps with the odd verbal attack against it in
the column of some obscure extremist publication,’ the letter said. ‘Intolerant voices
do of course exist, as in most countries, but so far they have always dismally failed to
silence anyone. In Greece, at least.’” (ibid.)

The issues referred to above are linked to several questions. How strong is the
democratic tradition in the country in question? How sensitive is the particular issue
perceived to be? What are usual or acceptable modes of reaction? How well founded
was the perceived threat, or were there other interests involved such as fear of loss in
the profitable text book market to Greek students of English? Because of the real or
perceived problems encountered by foreigners who have worked on minorities in
Greece, it could be pertinent at this stage to write a few words about my own exper-
ences. When I began my project I was aware of the sensitivity of the issue and the
problems involved when working in a provincial setting. Some people are uneasy
about working on highly contested problems and prefer to limit themselves to less
controversial issues. I have always felt that it is important to investigate and discuss
openly every relevant problem, although some people may feel uneasy or offended by
it. However, I do not have a taste for needless polemics and prefer to discuss these
issues quietly and soberly. To avoid unnecessary misunderstandings I contacted rele-
vant authorities before I went to Thrace and informed them about my research. The
persons I spoke with in the Foreign Department always behaved very sensibly

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6 All the relevant information about the case was taken from *H-Net, Humanities OnLine organisation*
: http://www.h-net.msu.edu/~sae/threads/CUP/.
towards me. They said that it was not possible to treat the problem only theoretically and advised me to go and see for myself. When I asked them if they had any advice about people I ought to see, they replied that I should try to see as many different people as possible and not be led around by one particular group.

When it comes to the actual situation on the ground in Thrace there are several other factors involved. Some Greek journalists from an Athenian newspaper titled their reportage “Casablanca”, as an allusion to the abundance of informers and news mongers. I have always been an advocate of stating openly and clearly what kind of work I am doing, since it is a perfectly normal and legitimate academic activity carried out by an impartial researcher with the best of intentions! By keeping an open line I had hoped to avoid embarrassing situations, stemming from rumours or disinformation. This does not mean that everybody were able, or wanted, to grasp what I was doing. Once I told someone from the minority that I was a Norwegian historian working on a doctoral thesis about the minority issue and Greek-Turkish relations. To my surprise I experienced just minutes later that I was introduced as a Dutch journalist doing a reportage on the minority. Several foreigners have made comments about that they have been tailed by civil police. Of course there is civil police in Greece (as in every other country), and of course they show an interest in foreigners who inquire about the minority. Personally, I have never really felt uncomfortable by their presence and I have certainly not been bothered by them in any way. Another thing is that some of my interlocutors could feel uncomfortable about their presence. However, in this respect there are many circuits of “informers” in operation and the Greek civil police is only one among several factors. I was told that some people from the Christian majority in Thrace had labelled me an agent (práktoras). This was certainly one way of making it more difficult for people to approach me. At another time I heard of a rumour circulating among the minority that my mother was Greek. There are of course also instances where researchers are unable or unwilling to collect information from all sides. When Lois Whitman of Helsinki Watch visited Thrace, members of a local association disapproved of that she was only seeing the Muslims, and indeed those who were known to be under the wings of the Turkish Consulate. Their repeated attempts to get in contact with her bore no fruits and they complained bitterly about it.\footnote{Dikeoma 6/November 1991. This may of course also be an attempt to discredit Helsinki Watch to the local public opinion.}

All in all it is important to have in mind the peculiarities of the area where the research is done and behave correspondingly. In Thrace the reactions were conditioned by the sensitivity surrounding the minority issue and modes of behaviour not uncommonly found in small and transparent societies. When carrying out research in Athens or Thessaloniki the atmosphere is of course totally different. It is possible to meet people
who are both positive and negative to the research, but they have a much more relaxed attitude.

During my research I have met a great number of people from both the minority and the majority. Given the sensitivity of the issue, interviews have not been the best way of gathering information. Particularly when I took up my cassette recorder, the conversations tended to become uninteresting, while they would improve after I shut it off. It has been much easier to pick up information in relaxed conversation, but I have been told very few things which I could not find in written sources. Usually it has been the other way around. The Greeks are much more frank when they discuss the minority issue in the press, than when they present it to a foreigner. From a methodological point of view the interviews have also been of secondary importance, since my interest is centred on the minority issue’s place in the public debate. When I have met with minority politicians I have not been interested in learning “secrets”, but in judging their ability to conceptualise the problems and present their political position. The personal contacts have first of all helped me in getting more in touch with the situation, and been a corrective to the written material. In the few cases where I refer to oral information I do not mention names, since this could make some people feel uneasy.

Much of the material used is little known and not accessible to many potential readers. For someone with a philological training it would be easy to put a lot of emphasis on the presentation of textual excerpts, parallel texts of originals and translations etc. I have chosen to avoid this approach for the simple reason that an excessive concern for philological procedures would take on too large proportions in relation to the overall problems involved. Many quotations in various languages would also clutter the manuscript unnecessarily much and could distract from the general argument. I have consequently decided to simply translate relevant passages into English with the philological comments reduced to a minimum. In continuation of this I have even opted for translating quotations in common languages such as German and French into English to secure a more uniform presentation. I have however chosen to include an appendix with a representative sample of texts in translation to make it possible for the non specialist reader to get an impression of overall form, style, rhetoric, intellectual level etc. within a larger context. Since I have been working in an area that is poorly explored and little understood I feel that it is important to present the results in a fashion which make them accessible to as large a variety of scholars as possible. Instead of adhering strictly to the conventions of one discipline I would ideally like to consider it as an attempt of interdisciplinary study, where I will use various approaches eclectically with an intimate knowledge of the material at hand as my point of departure. For the open minded reader I hope that it can serve as a bridge between philological and social-sciences approaches.
An additional problem is the presentation of sensitive issues. Since the issue is situated in the midst of the Greek-Turkish controversies it is of paramount importance to give it an even handed treatment. There are of course different ways to approach this task. In the early work of (Millas 1989) it is possible to observe an almost painful observance of equal distances between the Greeks/Greece and the Turks/Turkey, with the result that he is basically saying the same things about both parts. His approach is conditioned by the general political climate in Turkey at the time. It is also an attempt of criticising various practices in Greek and Turkish minority politics while avoiding the question of responsibility. My position, and the character of my work, is of course very different. I will strive to give a fair treatment of everybody involved without letting my analysis degenerate into bland and obscure statements. On the contrary, my idea of being fair is to aspire towards exactness. To scrutinise the different practices and expose them as clearly and precisely as possible. My other concern is balance. That there should be an internal balance in my work in the sense that I subject all the factors to the same rigorous investigation and evaluate them by the same standard. I will on various occasions compare the treatment of minorities in Greece and Turkey, but only when it is appropriate for understanding underlying patterns in the treatment of the minority in Thrace. I may also compare the degree of severity in the politics of both countries, but not with the intention of making one morally superior in relation to the other. I wish both countries peace, prosperity, development of their democratic institutions etc. However, in order to improve and move ahead it is beneficial now and then to make a sober and critical evaluation of past and present practises. It is of course not possible to know everything equally well, but one of the strong points of the present thesis is its ability to draw on a wide variety of sources which are usually not seen in combination. For the period before 1974 I rely mostly on secondary sources. I attempt to give an overall introduction to the history of the minority as well as some important underlying social and political structures. For the period after 1974 the presentation is much more detailed. Since my main emphasis is on political developments, the introduction of several issues will be made at the time they became disputed. The reason why some problems are treated more fully than others is not always connected to their “objective” importance, but to their central place in the political debate.
PART ONE

THE EARLY YEARS

General Background

Thrace in History

Thrace is the name of a larger geographical region which today is divided between Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey. Greek Thrace is often referred to as Western Thrace and covers an area of 8,706 square kilometres, which for the sake of comparison makes it slightly bigger than the island Crete. The name Thrace is connected to the ancient Thracians who have long vanished. In antiquity the area was on the fringes of the Greek world and included scattered Greek settlements along the coast, side by side with other population groups. For example, the Greek philosopher Dimokritos, who has given the name to the University of Thrace, was from the town Avdira south of Ksanthi. After the Macedonian conquest Thrace was subsequently controlled by the Roman and the Byzantine Empire. The Bulgarian Slavs arrived in the area about 600 A. D. Several times during the Middle Ages, Bulgarian kingdoms overthrew the Byzantine domination. The Ottomans conquered the area in a series of swift campaigns after first crossing over from Asia Minor in 1346. Komotini, which today is the most important centre for the Muslim minority population, was conquered by the Byzantine convert Evrenos Bey in 1363. During the Ottoman rule, Thrace had a mixed population both ethnically and religiously. When the Empire broke up, it became the meeting point of the national aspirations of the three successor states mentioned above.

By the 19th century the Ottoman Empire had weakened to the degree that it became known as the sick man of Europe, and the Great Powers competed both politically and economically to fill the power vacuum left by the ailing Empire (the so-called Eastern Question). The Christian subjects of the multi-ethnic Empire started to assert themselves too. The Serbs revolted in 1804 and were able to establish a semiautonomous state in 1815. The Greek revolution of the 1820s was a larger affair and led to an independent Greece in 1830. However, both Serbia and Greece were on the periphery

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8 Sometimes Turkish sources include parts of Southern Bulgaria and the Eastern part of the Greek province Macedonia in their conception of Western Thrace. For example, Bahtiyar refers to an area comprising about 23,000 square kilometres (Bahtiyar 1928).
of the Ottoman Empire and the loss of these provinces had limited significance. The
great turning point is the Russian-Turkish war (1877–1878) which led to the estab-
ishment of the Bulgarian Principality after the Ottoman defeat. Bulgaria was close to
the capital and considered part of the Ottoman heartland. In the first peace treaty of San
Stefano (3 March 1878), Russia was able to impose its conditions on the Ottoman
Empire and Bulgaria acquired large parts of Thrace. The other Great Powers were not
willing to accept such a large Bulgaria, which was considered to be a Russian satellite,
and the San Stefano treaty was revised by the Berlin Congress later the same year (13
June–13 July). The war did not only lead to new political borders, but also to signi-
ficant population movements. Large numbers of Muslims left the new Bulgarian lands
for the Ottoman Empire. These refugees were very hostile to the Christians and upset
the balances between the various population elements in European Turkey (Shaw and
Shaw 1977: 189).

The San Stefano Treaty led to vehement protests from Muslims, who put up organ-
ised resistance against their inclusion in the new Bulgarian Principality. This culmi-
inated in the declaration of the “Temporary Turkish State of Rodopi” (Rodop Türk
Devlet-i Muvakkatesi) which had its centre in the northern part of the Rodopi mount-
ains (Bıyıklıoğlu 1955: 19–30; Aydınlı 1971: 528–531). Bulgarian historiography
refers to the participants as the “insubordinate villages” (nepokornite sela).9 When
Bulgaria annexed Eastern Rumelia 18 September 1885 these villages successfully
resisted Bulgarian rule. Their success was confirmed in the Tophane agreement (5
April 1885) between Bulgaria and Turkey (Bıyıklıoğlu 1955: 58–59).

The Balkan Wars and the First World War

The Balkan Wars (1912–1913) resulted in new Ottoman losses. In the first Balkan
war Bulgaria seized both Eastern and Western Thrace,10 but was not able to fulfil its
ambitions in Macedonia. This led to new hostilities between the former allies (Bul-
garia, Greece, and Serbia). Bulgaria attacked her neighbours in the end of June 1913,
only to be defeated within a month. During the second Balkan war, Greek forces took
control over Western Thrace. In the ensuing Bucharest peace conference (10 August
1913), the Greek prime minister Eleftherios Venizelos accepted as a result of pressure
from the Great Powers to withdraw to the Nestos (Mesta) river and Western Thrace
was given to the Bulgarians.

When the Greek forces left Western Thrace in compliance with the Bucharest
treaty, Muslim guerrilla forces under Enver Bey attacked the Bulgarians and after

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9 For a brief account of the Bulgarian view see (Hristov 1958a), It goes without saying that the
Turkish and Bulgarian versions of these events vary greatly, but it is outside the scope of this work to
take a full discussion of it.

10 For a Greek account of the effects of the Bulgarian occupation locally in Western Thrace, see
(Yeorgantzis 1993).
nearly two months of hostilities they controlled the whole area. Because of the Ottoman Empire’s diplomatic commitments, this was organised secretly by officers who would later form the “Special Organisation” (Teşkilât-ı Mahsusa). When Komotini was taken (31 August 1913), they established the “Temporary Government of Western Thrace” (Garbî Trakya Hükûmeti Muvakkatesi) with Müderris Salih Hoca as president. It consisted of 5 Muslims, one Greek, one Armenian, and one Jew. The leaders sought assistance from Greece and the Ottoman Empire. Greek and Muslim leaders from Western Thrace presented their case before the representatives of the Great Powers in Istanbul, but were not able to obtain sufficient support. In the peace talks the Ottoman Empire used the “Temporary Government” as a lever to put pressure on Bulgaria, which was in a weak position diplomatically. When the desired concessions had been obtained the Ottoman-Bulgarian treaty was signed in Istanbul 29 September 1913. The treaty recognised Bulgarian sovereignty in Western Thrace and the Ottoman Empire asked the representatives from Western Thrace to abandon their struggle. At this point the leaders of the autonomy movement Süleyman Askerî and Eşreف Kuşçubaşî rejected the Ottoman leadership and renamed the temporary government “Independent Government of Western Thrace” (Garbî Trakya Hükûmet-i Müstakîlesi). This movement was not able to succeed after being abandoned by the Ottoman Empire and its military leaders. Towards the end of October 1913 Bulgaria took control of the area. This gave Bulgaria a much desired outlet to the Aegean. Consequently, on the eve of the First World War the area had been ceded to Bulgaria by treaty.

A Protocol annexed to the treaty formulated for the first time the idea of a population exchange. It was to be voluntary and involved the population in the border area. As most of this population had fled during the hostilities, it was intended to confirm a fait accompli. A few months later the Young Turks tried to make a similar agreement with Greece to exchange the Greek population on the Asia Minor coast. By this time it seems like the Young Turks had lost faith in the possibility to incorporate the minorities into the Empire and strove to get rid of the “foreign” elements. It was of course the Ottoman Empire which had been most affected by destabilisation and territorial losses because of its minorities. Greece was in a phase of expansion and in many cases eager to display that it was able to administer successfully areas with mixed

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11 Teşkilât-ı Mahsusa was a semi-official secret organisation connected to the leading Young Turks.
12 (Biyikgölpü 1955: 76–77). For more details see also: (Miletich 1914; Kutay 1962; Orhonlu 1964b; Sener 1982; Gündaş 1987) In the titles above Müderris Salih Hoca is alternatively referred to as Salih Hoca, Hafız Salih or Hafız Salih Mehmetolu (both müderris and hoca mean teacher, while haftz is used for someone who knows the Koran by heart).
13 For a more thorough discussion see: (Ladas 1932: 18–20; Pentzopoulos 1962: 54–57) 48,570 Muslims and 46,764 Bulgarians were entitled to the benefits of the accord, but the First World War interrupted the appraisal of their properties.
14 For subsequent expulsions in Asia Minor during 1914 cf. (Petropoulos 1976: 137), and the more recent study by (Mourelos 1985), based on the Greek Foreign Ministry archive.
population. However, on several subsequent occasions Venizelos too contemplated various forms of population exchange (Petropoulos 1976: 146–148).

Those in the Ottoman administration who surrendered Western Thrace to Bulgaria were thinking about the overall situation of the Empire. This is evident in the diary of the Grand Vizier Mahmut Şevket Paşa. Towards the end of May 1913, right before the outbreak of the second Balkan war, he considered it best that Western Thrace remained with Bulgaria. He did not want a common border with Greece, because while there was only a negligible number of Bulgarians in Eastern Thrace the more than 300,000 Greeks could disturb Ottoman-Greek relations. On the other hand he hoped that the differences between Bulgaria and Greece would continue, which would give the Ottoman Empire an opportunity to have the last word. Consequently, he viewed Western Thrace as a strategic buffer zone between Greece and the Ottoman Empire, and tried to stay out of conflicts which exceeded the capacity of the Empire.

On the other hand, the Muslim population with ties to the area hoped for an Ottoman recovery. Representatives for the refugee organisations in Istanbul took on an active role in the Thrace issue until the outbreak of the first world war. When the “Special Organisation” (Teşkilât-ı Mahsusa) was formed (5 August 1914), it played a vital role in organising the Muslim resistance in Thrace. Subsequently the “Turkish Western Thrace Committee” (Türk Batı Trakya Komitesi) was formed in Istanbul under the leadership of Süleyman Askerî Bey. The Ottoman officer Fuat Balkan led operations in the Rodopi mountains until he was recalled to Istanbul (Bıyıklioğlu 1955: 89–91).

**Allied Occupation**

After the Bulgarian defeat in the First World War, Western Thrace came under Allied control. In the beginning of October 1918 Greek troops occupied Eastern Macedonia, but they did not take part in the advance into Thrace which was carried out by British and French units (Petsalis-Diomidis 1978: 91). The signing of the Mudros armistice on 30 October 1918 scheduled the partition of the Ottoman Empire between the victorious Entente nations. As part of the victorious nations the Greek Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos was invited to the Paris Peace Conference (1919–1920) to present the Greek territorial claims.

In Thrace the political situation continued to be very fluid. Representatives for Greek, Turkish, and Bulgarian interests all jockeyed for position as the Paris Peace conference was under way. For example, in November 1918 the Greek Colonel Konstandinos Mazarakis established contact with a group of Muslims from Western

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Thrace who were MPs in the Bulgarian parliament. He persuaded them to send petitions to the Allied authorities complaining against the Bulgarian administration and requesting Western Thrace to be occupied by Allied forces, including Greek troops, which could protect both the Greek and Muslim inhabitants. He drafted these petitions himself and forwarded them on 2 January 1919 (Petsalis-Diomidis 1978: 90). However, the Western Thrace Committee in Istanbul also contacted the same Muslim MPs. 16 18 December they submitted a memorandum to the representatives of the Great Powers in Sofia, claiming that 90% of the population of the areas consisted of Turks and Muslims, while only 7% were Greeks and 3% Bulgarians. They asked further for the right to decide on their own future according to the Wilson principles. 17

In the interim period before the final allocation by the Peace Conference, Western Thrace came under Allied administration under the name Thrace Interallée. 18 The area was ceded from Bulgaria by the Neuilly Treaty, 27 November 1919. Allied authorities led by the French General Charpy controlled the area from mid-October 1919 until 22 May 1920 when Greece obtained de facto control over Western Thrace by the provisions of the San Remo Conference (20 April 1920). Most of the Bulgarian civil servants had fled and a new administration was organised by the French forces. The Turks took advantage of the fact that the area had passed under allied control and in October 1919 the central administration of the Western Thrace Committee transferred from Istanbul to Komotini. The Greek diplomat H. Vamvakas, who had previously served as a deputy in the Ottoman Parliament, was sent to Komotini on Venizelos’ advice to assist Charpy. He was able to influence the formation of the administrative Council in Komotini which advised Charpy, and secured the appointment of four Greeks, four Turks, one Jew, and one Armenian (the last two Greek speaking) to the administrative council, defeating the plan of the Western Thrace Committee to appoint six Muslims and only two Greeks. 19 Later a “Supreme Administrative Council” was created, functioning as an advisory board. It consisted of 5 Greeks, 5 Turks, 2 Bulgarians, 1 Armenian, 1 Jew, and 1 Levantine. When the Council first assembled on 4 April 1920 it elected the Greek Emmanuil Dulas as chairman, against 3 Turkish and the 2 Bulgarian votes. The fact that 2 Turks, Hafiz Salih and Osman Ağä, voted for

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16 The committees in Istanbul who took an interest in Thrace went through several names and transformations. For simplicity I refer to them collectively with one of the names in use, the “Western Thrace committee” (Batı Trakya Komitesi); other names include Trakya Müdafaai Hukuk Cemiyeti, Trakya-Paşaeli Müdafaai Hukuk Cemiyeti, Trakya-Paşaeli Müdafaai Heyeti Osmaniyesi, and Batı Trakya Müdafaai Hukuk Cemiyeti. For details, see (Bıyıklıoğlu 1955).
17 For a reprint of the whole memorandum, see (Bıyıklıoğlu 1955: Vol. 2, 37–41). According to Greek diplomatic reports from December 1919, the Young Turk Committee terrorised the MPs who had signed the Greek petition with death threats (Papathanasi-Musiopulu 1975: 130–131).
18 For a description of this administration by a Bulgarian who served in it, see (Altînov 1921). This book also appeared in French translation.
the Greek chairman displays the internal tension among the Muslims. The “defectors” immediately received death threats from the Western Thrace Committee.\(^{20}\)

The political situation throughout this period remained very confused. There were all kinds of tactical manoeuvres and unholy alliances, either to secure direct control over the area or some sort of autonomy. After the area passed under Greek control there was a short Turkish-Bulgarian attempt to make a Western Thrace government, and a congress led by Peştereli Tevfik Bey took place 25 May 1920 in the Organî (Hemetli) village north-east of Komotini (Bıyıklıoğlu 1955: 139–141). Representatives from almost every part of Western Thrace participated along with Bulgarian and Turkish armed bands (chetnîtsi) consisting of several hundred men. 7 Turks and 3 Bulgarians were elected ministers for the Temporary Government of Western Thrace. Some of the members had previous experience from the Supreme Administrative Council of Western Thrace formed by general Charpy.\(^{21}\) The Temporary Government never played an important role, and dissolved when Peştereli Tevfik Bey was recalled to Istanbul. It was not able to draw the support of Cafer Tayyar Bey who organised the Turkish resistance in Eastern Thrace against the imminent Greek occupation. However, Turkish and Bulgarian guerrilla bands continued their co-operation to undermine the Greek authorities.\(^{22}\)

After long negotiations, the Allies managed to produce a peace formula which was signed at Sèvres on 10 August 1920. This awarded all of Thrace to Greece, as well as an enclave in Asia Minor around Izmir. The treaty was never ratified and the nationalist forces under Mustafa Kemal ( Atatürk) opposed the Greek occupation and defeated them eventually in August 1922. Britain still held on to Istanbul, but in the armistice signed at Mudanya on 11 October 1922 the Ankara government forced the Entente to make significant territorial concessions, particularly in Eastern Thrace. The final regulations of the territories were left for the Lausanne Peace Conference.

**The Turkish Nationalist Movement and Thrace**

The situation in Thrace was complicated not only because of the competing nationalisms, but also because of the internal turmoil of the Ottoman Empire. The Sultan was losing his authority, and had to face the challenge of the emerging nationalists.


\(^{21}\) (Trifonov 1988: 63–66; Trifonov 1989: 241–245). The later so significant politician Hafız Ali Galîp (1882–1948) is sometimes mentioned as member of the Organî (Hemetli) government. He must have been mistaken for Ali Galip bey (Ali Galip Pekel), who was present but did not obtain a minister post, see (Bıyıklıoğlu 1955: 140–141). The Greek authorities arrested and condemned to death the leaders of this government, but they were later given amnesty in return for the amnesty of the inhabitants of Beyküz on the Bosphorus who had been given death penalty for assisting the Greek division stationed there (Nikolakopulos 1990–1991a: 175).

\(^{22}\) (Trifonov 1988: 54–75), has the most detailed account of this co-operation. See also (Dede 1978b).
The Turkish nationalists did not accept the partition of the Ottoman Empire contemplated by the Great Powers in the armistice of Mudros. The principles for their opposition were laid down in the “National Pact” (Misak-ı Millî) which was approved by the Sivas Congress on 17 February 1920 (Shaw and Shaw 1977: 347–348). In the National Pact it was held that the juridical status of Western Thrace should be determined by a plebiscite of its inhabitants. Bıyıklıoğlu presents Mustafa Kemal’s views in 1920 concerning Western Thrace. It is mentioned that the objective was to keep Western Thrace intact in the hands of the Turks and join it to the motherland at a suitable time and opportunity, as Turkey could not accept this Turkish fatherland to become a foreign colony. However, in another paragraph Kemal draws a sharp division between Eastern Thrace and Western Thrace, which had been ceded previously by treaty. To insist on the unity of Western and Eastern Thrace could lead to claims against Eastern Thrace. The first objective in Western Thrace was to work for independence or autonomy according to the Wilson principles and secure the rights of the Turks who formed an overwhelming majority.\(^23\)

While this is how the matter was presented in retrospect by official Turkish historiography, the recent publication of Mustafa Kemal’s speeches in İzmit 16/17 January 1923 gives a different picture. Here he stated that the article about Western Thrace for the National Pact was not his idea, but that it was added afterwards by thoughtless persons. It was claimed that a referendum would secure Western Thrace for Turkey. However, Kemal argued that Western Thrace would be a liability rather than an advantage for Turkey. On the basis of its strategic position, the advantages to be gained by holding it could not balance the force needed to obtain it. Thus, “the real solution of the matter is to leave it to Greece. Simultaneously it will be a continuous source of conflict between the Bulgarians and the Greeks”.\(^24\) It is clear that Mustafa Kemal, like Mahmut Şevket Paşa in 1913, thought like an Ottoman general and had an unsentimental approach to the issue.

**A Note on Nationalist Historiography**

As a rule, writers participating in the nationalist discourse in both Greece and Turkey refer neither to the full positions of Mustafa Kemal as presented by Bıyıklıoğlu nor the later disclosures. They quote him selectively to serve their purpose, ignoring historical circumstances and the full context of his statements. They

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\(^{23}\) (Bıyıklıoğlu 1955: 191–195) Tevfik Bıyıklıoğlu (1899–1961), finished the war academy in 1914 and took part in the First World War and Turkish War of Independence as officer. Subsequently he had a career as diplomat, writer, and historian. He was military advisor to the Turkish delegation at Lausanne, served as personal secretary for Kemal Atatürk, and was the first president of the Turkish History Society (Türk Tarih Kurumu). Consequently his book represents the official Turkish history view.

\(^{24}\) This was first published in (Oran 1991: 300–301), but has since been made available in a new an allegedly uncensored edition of the speeches (Kemal 1993: 90–91).
feel of course no need for a historical analysis, as their main concern is to reproduce stereotypes and slogans. What is most often referred to is that according to Atatürk Western Thrace should remain intact in the hands of the Turks and be joined to the motherland at a suitable time. This is a *leitmotiv* in the periodicals of the immigrants from Western Thrace who live in Turkey, and is in turn picked up by Greek nationalist circles to display the “intentions of the Turks”. As a consequence, these circles are able to almost monopolise the mutual images of Greeks and Turks. While their assertions may not be correct from a historical point of view, they are certainly instrumental in producing the history which determines today’s viewpoints.

Former Turkish “governments” or “republics” in Western Thrace, constitute another favourite theme in Turkish nationalist historiography. This is partly done to display the Turkish character of the area, and partly to show their progressive leanings as they associate themselves with the ideology of the Turkish Republic as opposed to the Ottoman Empire. In this connection the “Independent Western Thrace Government” of 1913 is often hailed as the first Turkish republic in history. It is usual to refer to four such governments, but there are several variations. The lack of agreement displays that these “governments” have as yet no institutionalised status in Turkish historiography. The need to stress their Turkish character also results in a static interpretation of events. The writers are only able to see their “own” contributions in an unchanging Turkish world, and ignore the dynamics of inter-ethnic relations. For example, the 1913 government owed its existence partly to the encouragement by Greek forces which wanted to obstruct Bulgarian rule, while the Hemetli government in 1920 was a joint Turkish-Bulgarian effort to obstruct Greek rule.

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25 See (Hidiroglu 1988: 303–305, 326–329; Hidiroglu 1991b: 73–75; Hidiroglu 1992: 13–24). The turcologist Pavlos Hidiroglu worked for years as advisor for the Greek Foreign Department and has been in a central position to survey the material mentioned above. He appears to be the main supplier of this kind of material (in translation) to Greeks who take an interest in the subject. His references are mostly to the periodicals *Batı Trakya* (1967–), and *Yeni Batı Trakya* (1983–), while the newer *Batı Trakya’nın Sesi* (1987–) is generally overlooked. This reference to Atatürk is also much mentioned in nationalist Turkish historiography, cf. (Ünal 1969a: 280)

26 For example, Şevket Kemal Batıbey mentions: 1) The resistance in the Rodopi after the Russian-Turkish war in 1878, 2) the Independent Western Thrace Government which was formed in Komotini 31 August 1913 and lasted for 52 days, 3) the local administrative council which was founded in Western Thrace under the French administration from 15 October 1919 to 23 May 1920, 4) the Organi (Hemetli) government which was formed 25 May 1920 (Batıbey 1979: 129–131) Tahsin Ünal mentions 1) The Independent Western Thrace Government from 31 August to 28 October 1913, 2) the guerrilla activity of Fuat Balkan from 30 July 1915 to 27 September 1917, 3) the Organi (Hemetli) government which is regarded to have lasted from 25 May 1920 to 30 August 1923, and 4) the Turkish section of the communist guerrilla during the Greek civil war, which was led by Ekrem bey and lasted from 1 January 1947 to 25 August 1949 (Ünal 1969a: 279–280).
Population Figures

After the early political developments have been outlined, it is necessary to look at demography and the peculiarities of the population elements. There are several problems involved in tracing the demographic developments in the area which today comprises Greek Thrace. This has to do with the technical quality of the various statistics, lack of standardised criteria, incongruity between the areas included which makes comparison difficult, statistics tailor-made to back the territorial claims of the interested parties, etc.

Yusuf Halaçoğlu demonstrates that there was a strong Muslim presence already in the middle ages, according to Ottoman sources from 1530 (Halaçoğlu 1993). The same is true for the Ottoman census of 1831.27 The Crimean War (1853–1856), and particularly the Russo-Turkish war (1877–1878), resulted in the settlement of large numbers of Muslim refugees in Thrace. Some 150,000 of the Muslims refugees who fled the advancing Russian army went to the Rodopi mountains and Western Thrace. English diplomatic sources mention the many refugees in Ksanthi and Komotini area after the war who were in great distress. At its peak the number of refugees reached 80,000 in the Komotini area. By January 1879 it was reduced to 40,000.28 The increase of Muslims in the Evros valley from 17,330 to 37,075 during the period 1878–1900 is related to the settlement of refugees (Razbojnikov 1944: 125–127). Several villages are known to have been founded at this time, but there is no overall account about the settlement of refugees. After the Austrian annexation in 1908, many Muslims came from Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, most of them preferred to proceed to Istanbul and other central areas.29

The period from the outbreak of the Balkan wars in 1912 until the settling of the Greek refugees in the mid 1920s influenced profoundly the demography of the area that became Greek Thrace. The population movements during this period were partly the direct result of warlike operations, partly the result of political reprisals and

27 (Karpat 1985: 109). His figures are not detailed enough for comparison with later figures. It should also be kept in mind that the Ottoman reorganisation in 1864 created new administrative borders for the Edirne vilayet.
28 (Şimşir 1989, vol. I.: 502, 628, 742, vol. II.: 116–118). (Papathanasi-Musiopulu 1974) has the Ottoman statistics for each kaza of Thrace in 1871. According to them there were 58% non-Muslims (mostly Greeks) to 42% Muslims. However, the kaza of Gümülcine (Komotini) had 77% Muslim population (6,461 households). The number of refugees settled in Thrace as a whole after the Russian-Turkish war is regarded to be 180,000. For some additional figures see (Dâlègre 1995: 202–203).
29 (Trifonov 1989: 105–106). It should also be kept in mind that the new borders after 1878 and 1885 had an impact on the economic life since it influenced trade routes, grazing rights, etc. At the turn of the century the towns Ksanthi and Komotini, experienced significant increase of population because of economic development (Hristov 1958a: 112).
persecutions, partly the consequence of voluntary emigration, and partly the result of formal agreements. To give an impression of the demographic developments, a table with the best comparable population figures for this period is included below. The “Others” category consists mostly of Armenians and Jews, but I have not bothered to specify them in detail. The Pomaks are sometimes counted together with the Turks—following the Ottoman system of classifying people according to religion—and other times specified separately. According to the Bulgarian view, they are “Bulgarian Muslims” and an integral part of the Bulgarian nation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Muslims</th>
<th>Pomaks</th>
<th>Bulgarians</th>
<th>Greeks</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1912 estimate</td>
<td>120 000</td>
<td></td>
<td>40 000</td>
<td>60 000</td>
<td>4 000</td>
<td>224 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919 Bulgarian</td>
<td>79 539</td>
<td>17 369</td>
<td>87 941</td>
<td>28 647</td>
<td>10 922</td>
<td>224 418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919 Bulgarian</td>
<td>77 726</td>
<td>20 309</td>
<td>81 457</td>
<td>32 553</td>
<td>8 435</td>
<td>220 480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920 French</td>
<td>74 730</td>
<td>11 848</td>
<td>54 092</td>
<td>56 114</td>
<td>7 906</td>
<td>204 690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920 Greek</td>
<td>93 273</td>
<td></td>
<td>25 677</td>
<td>76 416</td>
<td>6 038</td>
<td>201 404</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A comparison of the figures leads to the following conclusion for the three major groups: Some smaller variations may be due to the technical quality of the censuses, but the overall tendencies are quite clear. Most of the Muslim decrease after 1912 must be ascribed to the impact of the Balkan wars and the Bulgarian-Turkish conventions for exchange of border populations in 1913, when about 30,000 Muslims emigrated from what later became the Greek-Turkish Thracian frontier. This means that the Muslim population remained relatively stable during the First World War when we consider the circumstances. The Bulgarian and Greek populations were subject to the greatest changes. The Bulgarian annexation in 1913 forced most of the Greeks to emigrate, and Bulgaria commenced a policy of settling Bulgarian refugees from Eastern Thrace and Greek Macedonia. While the Muslims lived in a “parallel community”, Bulgarian and Greek nationalism competed to a large degree for the same people. The Bulgarian rule after the Balkan Wars implied simultaneously supremacy for the Bulgarian church and Bulgarian education among the Christian population, and the oppression of the priests and teachers who represented Greek nationalism. This resulted in the drastic reduction of the Greek population during the Bulgarian rule, and the reversal of this process after the armistice in 1919 when the indigenous Greeks

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The figures for the eve of the Balkan Wars in 1912 are an estimation by Joelle Dalègre who has worked extensively on population statistics and has a lot of relevant details for the whole period up until 1991. She finds it impossible to give exact figures for the population of Western Thrace at this time, but makes an estimate by comparing the Bulgarian, Greek, and Turkish statistics (Dalègre 1995: 83). The first Bulgarian figures are from the census taken in the beginning of 1919 (Znamierowska 1993: 32). The second Bulgarian figures were provided in October–November 1919, on request by the French occupation force (Trifonov 1989: 107–110). Earlier Bulgarian figures do not lend themselves to comparison, because they include large parts of southern Bulgaria. The French figures are from the population census for Western Thrace by the Allied administration, which was completed on 30 March 1920 (Dalègre 1995, Vol. II, Fiche VII). The Greek figures for 1920 were taken by the Greek authorities soon after the area passed under their control (Tsiumis 1994:99).
started to return. The Greeks were later reinforced by the great influx of refugees in connection with the Greek–Turkish population exchange. In the 1920s the Bulgarians would disappear completely, which means that those who openly espoused the Bulgarian nationalist cause left, while those who remained declared themselves to be Greeks.\footnote{For a more extensive discussion of the population movements during this period see (Schultze 1937: 248–251). For a good overview of the Bulgarian position, particularly as regards the settlement of Bulgarian refugees, see (Trifonov 1989; Trifonov 1992). According to Greek archival sources all the Slav-speaking population had left by the end of 1925 (Michailidis 1998: 17). For a detailed account of the fate of the remaining Bulgarians see (Dalègre 1995: 263–270). I am not able to discuss all the finer points of the population movements. For example, the French were of the opinion that many of the Greeks “returning” when Thrace was under French administration had never lived there formerly (Paksimadopulu-Stavrinu 1997: 63, fn. 94).}

The population census for Western Thrace by the Allied administration which was completed on 30 March 1920, should give a fairly accurate picture of the population \textit{in situ} on the eve of the Greek take-over.\footnote{Dalègre 1995, Vol. II, Fiche VII.} A more detailed look at this census gives us some information about the population distribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Turks</th>
<th>Pomaks</th>
<th>Bulgarians</th>
<th>Greeks</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orestiada</td>
<td>27 193</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10 210</td>
<td>15 045</td>
<td>1 933</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didimotiko</td>
<td>26 313</td>
<td>1 274</td>
<td>4 956</td>
<td>18 856</td>
<td>1 227</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufli</td>
<td>21 250</td>
<td>2 770</td>
<td>10 998</td>
<td>7 435</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleksandrupoli</td>
<td>16 317</td>
<td>642</td>
<td>11 543</td>
<td>3 355</td>
<td>777</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Komotini</td>
<td>64 951</td>
<td>39 601</td>
<td>14 794</td>
<td>3 442</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ksanthi</td>
<td>48 666</td>
<td>30 438</td>
<td>9 507</td>
<td>480</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>204 690</td>
<td>74 730</td>
<td>11 848</td>
<td>56 114</td>
<td>7 906</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Today the four first districts correspond to the prefecture of Evros, while Rodopi (i.e. Komotini) and Ksanthi have retained more or less the same administrative borders. We can observe that the Muslims are concentrated almost entirely in the Ksanthi and Komotini area. Ksanthi has the peculiarity that there is a relatively high share of Pomaks. The Greeks had left massively the Ksanthi area after the Balkan wars, when only 85 remained (Trifonov 1989: 107–108). However, at the time of the census we can see that the Greek population was returning. In Evros few Muslims remained, while the Bulgarians were most numerous in the south and the Greeks in the north.

The overall picture of the Muslim population distribution at the time Western Thrace came under Greek administration resembles the present situation. Today the main body of the minority is concentrated in Rodopi and Ksanthi, while few remain in Evros. The Muslims of Evros live mainly in the towns Aleksandrupoli and Didimotiko.

\footnote{For a more extensive discussion of the population movements during this period see (Schultze 1937: 248–251). For a good overview of the Bulgarian position, particularly as regards the settlement of Bulgarian refugees, see (Trifonov 1989; Trifonov 1992). According to Greek archival sources all the Slav-speaking population had left by the end of 1925 (Michailidis 1998: 17). For a detailed account of the fate of the remaining Bulgarians see (Dalègre 1995: 263–270). I am not able to discuss all the finer points of the population movements. For example, the French were of the opinion that many of the Greeks “returning” when Thrace was under French administration had never lived there formerly (Paksimadopulu-Stavrinu 1997: 63, fn. 94).}
and in a few villages just across the border of the north-east and south-east corners of the Rodopi prefecture.  

**Demographic Developments after 1920**

Any serious study of the Muslim minority’s demographic development after 1920 is confronted with the problem of insufficient data. Questions which could identify the minority groups were only included in the Greek censuses for 1928, 1940 and 1951. There is a tendency to veil these issues in a certain “secrecy”. This was evident when the MP of the Ecologist-Alternative Groups, Anastasia Andreadaki, posed a question to the relevant ministers before the 1991 census. She held the opinion that the lack of questions about ethnic, religious, and linguistic characteristics in the censuses after 1951 for “national reasons”, led to insufficient knowledge about the minority situation. While the ministers avoided to give a straight answer, it became clear from other sources that there were indeed compilations of these kinds of data in “sensitive” areas during the censuses, which however were kept secret. Consequently, there are reasons to believe that there is in fact very good material available which can be used for serious demographic studies when the time is ripe. I have no intention of attempting to “discover” or extrapolate the missing information. I will confine myself to the readily available figures, and look at the way demographic issues related to the minority are treated in Greece and Turkey.

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33 While what I said above is true as far as the general picture is concerned, there can be much local variation from village to village. For the statistic material for each village based on the Greek censuses up until 1991 see (Dalègre 1995).

There are a lot of different population figures referred to in connection with Western Thrace, which may seem puzzling at first sight. For example, the figures presented at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 by the Greek and the Ottoman sides give a much higher overall population for Western Thrace because it included large areas which today are in Bulgaria. In the Ottoman case it has as many as 313,794 Turks (See (Bıyıklıolu 1955: 248) and (Petsalis-Diomidis 1978: 344)).. The statistics submitted by the Turkish delegation at Lausanne in 1923 also gave a high number of Muslims. However, these figures were based on Turkish records for 1913 (Dalègre 1995, Vol. II, Fiche VIII). Evidently, these figures do not take into consideration the impact of the Bulgarian-Turkish exchange of border populations in 1913. The number of Christians is also reduced because the kazas of Demotika and Karagatç are not included.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kaza</th>
<th>Turks</th>
<th>Greeks</th>
<th>Bulgarians</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Komotini</td>
<td>59 967</td>
<td>8 834</td>
<td>9 997</td>
<td>1 367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleksandroupoli</td>
<td>11 744</td>
<td>4 800</td>
<td>10 227</td>
<td>702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufli</td>
<td>14 736</td>
<td>11 542</td>
<td>5 490</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ksanthi</td>
<td>42 671</td>
<td>8 728</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>129 118</td>
<td>33 904</td>
<td>26 266</td>
<td>2 403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

34 In practice we have only the complete figures for 1928 and 1951. The official figures related to the minority for 1940 were lost in connection with the war, however they may be rendered correctly in (Papaevyenidu 1946).

35 *Eleftherotipia* 24.02.1991, has both the question and answers, as well as a long commentary.
The demographic developments after 1920 are summed up in the table below, with information about the Muslim population added when it was available:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census</th>
<th>Ksanthi</th>
<th>Rodopi</th>
<th>Evros</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>89 974</td>
<td>(39 229)</td>
<td>89 488</td>
<td>(50 432)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>98 575</td>
<td>106 575</td>
<td></td>
<td>150 790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>89 891</td>
<td>(42 245)</td>
<td>105 723</td>
<td>(49 660)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>89 959</td>
<td>109 201</td>
<td></td>
<td>153 930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>82 917</td>
<td>107 677</td>
<td></td>
<td>135 968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>88 777</td>
<td>(42 000)</td>
<td>107 957</td>
<td>(62 000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>90 965</td>
<td>(39 115)</td>
<td>103 391</td>
<td>(56 865)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demographic developments in the 1920s were profoundly influenced by the settling of refugees after the Greek-Turkish war and the ensuing population exchange. From 1920 to 1928 the overall population increased by more than 50%. A Greek source stresses that the influx of people must have been greater, close to 150,000 persons, as there were also people who left the area (Notaras 1995: 45). If we look at the Muslim minority in isolation, there was a 9.7% increase. According to a Greek scholar, less than 5,000 Muslims left for Turkey during the period 1920–1928. Most of them were from two villages in Evros (Kavili, Ahirohori) (Fotiadis 1995: 64–65). The Evros valley had been ravaged during the war years and had a relatively small Muslim population. The new political situation as well as the proximity with Turkey contributed to the completion of the Muslim exodus from this area (Dalègre 1995: 260–263, 317). Minority sources too, indicate that there was little migration until 1930. There were few opportunities to migrate and those who left were mainly the wealthy people (Trakya 771/13.07.1959).

The population growth continued during the period 1928–1940, when the Muslim population increased by 10%, and the Christian population increased by 23.3%. On

36 The Greek figures for 1920 are from (Tsiumis 1994:99). The figures from the Greek censuses are taken from (Dalègre 1995, Vol. II, Fiches XVII–XXI). Her figures are usually some 2–3,000 lower than other sources as she does not include the population of the island Samothraki which belongs administratively to Evros. There is also some slight variance between her figures (see vol. I: 252, 309, 366, 371). Still, this is the most complete work with a well of information about various aspects of demography.

The sources for the Muslim population are: 1928: (Dalègre 1995, vol. II). (For some marginally different figures see (Nikolakopulos 1990–1991a: 171 fn. 1) and (Tsiumis 1994:102)); 1940: (Papaevyndu 1946: 23–25; Tsiumis 1994: 103); 1951: (Andreadis 1956: 3) has the most detailed break down of the population, but for some reason he has 5,500 more Muslim Gypsies than the other sources (Alexandris 1988: 144; Nikolakopulos 1990–1991a: 171 fn. 1). I have corrected this by reducing his number of Gypsies for Evros; 1961: (Psomiadis 1968: 83); 1981: (Kathimerini-Epta Imeres 14.03.1993). The figures are obviously rounded off. Although it is not stated explicitly the reference must be to the 1981 census because the overall figures match. 1991: I have calculated the number of Muslims in Ksanthi and Rodopi by using the overall figures supplied by Dalègre, and the percentages for each prefecture supplied by Notaras. For Evros I have added the difference between the figures of Notaras and Dalègre before calculating the percentage of Muslims.
the eve of the Second World War the population reached its highest number ever. In
the period 1930–1935 some people were seized by the idea that the minority should go
to Turkey and they tried to persuade others to join them. They appealed to traditional
Islamic ideas, and argued that migration (hicret) was necessary and a national duty.
This migration could not have reached large proportions, and many migrants returned
as they were worse off in Turkey. The prominent minority politician Osman Nuri
claimed that until 1941 the reasons for migrating to Turkey were mainly emotional (his
meselesi), related to problems of adjustment to the Greek administration and
unfamiliarity with minority life.

The Second World War put an end to the period of peaceful development. The
German-Bulgarian occupation created havoc for both the Christian and Muslim popu-
lations, and the subsequent Greek civil war had also serious consequences for Thrace.
According to Bulgarian sources, by 25 November 1941 a total of 33,074 Greeks and
12,486 Muslims had left Thrace in various ways. Most of the Muslims were from
Ksanthi (6,664) and Komotini (4,259) (Daskalov 1991: 23–24). Minority sources
also stress that the greatest mass migration took place in 1941. The Muslims settled in
Turkey and wrote to their friends and relatives to influence them to come to Turkey.
This lasted from June 1941 to May 1945. From the end of 1944 to mid 1945 various
Greek armed bands harassed some villages. Under the Greek Liberation Front (EAM)
administration in 1945 there was a new wave of migration. When the civil war began
in 1947 migration became rare as it was dangerous to travel.37 Many of the Muslims
who went to Turkey without papers during this period are considered to have return-
ed. However, the Turkish policy of free immigration in the period 1953–1960 led to a
significant new wave. Most of the population drain to Turkey took place at this period.
Consequently, the figures from the 1951 and 1961 censuses are not able to reflect ade-
quately the chronology of these population movements.

In the 1960s the migrations affected mostly the Christian population. This is related
to the cultural difference and level of development. The Christians had higher mobility
and would move to the larger cities following the general trend of internal migration.
When the migration of workers to Germany began, the authorities favoured the Christ-
ians, while the Muslims had problems with obtaining the necessary papers (Dalègre
1995: 369). In 1960 Turkey changed its policy and made immigration difficult in order
to keep the minority in Greece. Still, there was always a trickle of people migrating.
Generally speaking, people who were rich and influential could always surpass the
difficulties. By this time it had also become more common for minority members to
study in Turkey, and many of them stayed after completing their education.

37 Trakya 771/13.07.1959, 772/20.07.1959 (which includes reprint of a relevant article from Trakya
06.08.1932), and 773/03.08.1959.
During the years of the dictatorship (1967–1974), the Muslims were subject to oppression and various discriminations. Many wanted to leave, while Turkey tried to keep them in Greece. In the tense atmosphere after the Cyprus invasion in 1974 the demoralised minority left for Turkey in great numbers. I have no exact figures, but this is considered to be the second wave of massive migration after 1953–1960. Restrictions and pressure on the minority continued up until 1991. This made many look for possibilities to leave for Turkey, while a significant number also went to Germany and other European countries as workers. According to minority sources migration was particularly high when the climate sharpened around 1988–1991.

There are no exact data about the present size of the minority. Dalègre estimates the Muslim population in the 1980s to be about 120,000, at the most 130,000 (Dalègre 1995: 316). Greek figures based on the 1991 census give a total population of roughly 338,000, with 31% or 105,000 Muslims. These are the Muslims living in Greek Thrace. If the Muslim migrants who work abroad but keep their Greek citizenship were included, the figure would be about 120,000. It is estimated that about 3% of the minority have settled in other parts of Greece, mainly Athens and Thessaloniki, while a much larger group has settled in Turkey (Notaras 1995: 47–48). When I visited Thrace in 1993, two Greek officials in key positions told me independently of each other that the minority numbered about 100,000 persons. Some people estimate it even lower. In that case they have usually written off people who work in Germany, Athens, Thessaloniki, etc., or people who have already more than one leg in Turkey, where they have invested their money, sent their children to school, set up a business etc. Many people in these categories may technically speaking still live in Thrace, but are in reality on their way out.

The obvious conclusion is that after Western Thrace passed under Greek rule the Muslim population has shown no significant increase, but remained more or less on the same level. However, the same can be said for the Christians if we look at the situation after 1928. The population is considered to have had a natural growth rate until 1940, but after this time stagnation set in. If the growth rate had followed the national average, the population of Thrace ought to be 510,000 today instead of 338,000 (Notaras 1995: 46). The population decline in this sensitive border region is perceived as a great problem in Greece, which has resulted in various government programs to amend the situation.

**Different Patterns of Demographic Development**

The cultural peculiarities of majority and minority result in different patterns of demographic developments. For example, in Evros the Christian population increased significantly during the 1950s, while the Muslim population decreased due to migration to Turkey. Conversely, in the 1960s the Christian population decreased due to
migration, while the few Muslim villages displayed an increase. In the 1980s the same Muslim villages had once more a decrease for the first time since 1961. In the mountain area of the Northwest corner of the Ksanthi prefecture the Christian population decreased rapidly after 1951, while the neighbouring Muslim Pomak villages began to decrease only after 1971. In this respect the Muslims had a different pattern from people living in other mountain areas of Greece. There are also indications that young Christian girls have a strong desire to leave the country life and head for the urban centres. This is naturally not so easy to do for young Muslim girls (Dalègre 1990: 372–373). The Pomaks first started to leave massively their mountain villages from the middle of the 1980s (Trubeta 1998: 648).

Another matter is differences within the minority. This can be related to factors like uneven development in towns and villages, or to ethnicity. The migration to Turkey in the 1950s affected mostly the population in the towns or the Turkish speaking villages close to the towns, particularly in Ksanthi. Several villages in the plain of Ksanthi were emptied for Muslim population during this period. I have often heard from minority members that “the best left”, i.e. the educated Kemalists. It should come as no surprise that it was easier to migrate for those who were best integrated in modern Turkish culture. Migration has also influenced the class structure of the minority. As a rule most of the wealthy minority members have gone to Turkey. In the case of the Pomaks, migration to Turkey has often been a two-step operation. First they moved from the mountains to the plains or towns, and later they carried on to Turkey. The shanty town on the outskirts of Komotini was largely created after 1960 by Pomaks who left the mountains. In many villages Pomaks have also filled the gap left by ethnic Turks who migrated to Turkey.

The ethnic cleavages within the minority is a sensitive issue, as the minority members usually insist that the minority is one and Turkish. The Greek authorities divide them into people of Turkish origin (Turkoyenís), Pomaks, and Gypsies. According to Greek figures the minority is today composed of 48% Turkoyenís, 35% Pomaks, and 17% Gypsies (Notaras 1995:47). It is possible to find other subgroups based on racial or religious difference. The most obvious examples would be the Negroes in the villages outside Ksanthi and the “heretic” alevîs. The significance of these cleavages will be discussed elsewhere. All the subgroups are influenced to a greater or lesser extent by the dominant Turkish culture depending on the area they live in and their intellectual orientation. The statistic material on ethnicity is more unreliable than the population statistics in general, but a glance on the available material can give some interesting information about the dominant trends. I have made a table which
displays the development of the minority population composition in the two
prefectures Ksanthi and Komotini:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ksanthi</th>
<th>Rodopi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turks</td>
<td>Pomaks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The general tendencies in the table correspond with the other available information. Ksanthi had always the largest concentration of Pomaks. In the case of the Pomaks there are still mountain villages in Ksanthi where their native Slavic dialect has a strong position, while many of those who have moved to the plain and towns have been completely Turkified. There are reasons to believe that the number of Pomaks would be even larger if the criteria of descent was applied rigorously. I have heard this described as one of the minority’s secrets. The high concentration of Pomaks in Ksanthi also makes it easier for them to retain their cultural characteristics. The relative and absolute decrease of the Turks in Ksanthi is mainly due to migration. While Ksanthi took the lead in the early period of Greek rule, Rodopi asserted itself gradually as the most important minority centre. In this connection the ethnic peculiarities play a role. Rodopi has clearly the largest concentration of ethnic Turks, which makes it the natural centre for Turkish culture. The data for the Gypsies are more difficult to account for, and they are probably the most unreliable. They constitute a marginal group with limited political significance. There is reason to question how consistent the ethnic criteria have been applied in the various censuses. Some of the Gypsies have Turkish as mother tongue while other speak their own language (Roma).

The Polemics Surrounding Population Figures

The information given above may be unsatisfactory for a detailed analysis of demographic development, but it represents nevertheless the best readily available information. A completely different subject is the way demographic information is treated in Greek and Turkish public discourse. Turkish allegations of ill treatment are often accompanied by demographic arguments. This was, for example, the case in the campaign the Turkish press launched in the early 1950s. A long reportage in the Vatan Gazetesi claimed that Greece had always tried to keep up a friendly appearance to

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38 My calculations and figures are based on: 1928 (Dalègre 1990, Vol. II, Fiche XXII); 1951: (Andreadis 1956:3); 1981: (Kathimerini-Epameres 14.03.1993); 1991: (Notaras 1995: 47). The small number of Muslims in the Evros prefecture makes up a meagre statistic material. I can just mention that of some 12,000 Muslims in 1928, 98% were Turks. Of about 8,000 Muslims in 1991, there were 61.3% Gypsies, 32.3% Turks, and 17.5% Pomaks (Notaras 1995: 47).
Turkey, but had worked very systematically for 32 years so that the Turks who were majority became minority. From the 180,000 Turks who were étalbés only 100,000 remained and soon there would be no Turks left (Arpat 1954). Allegations of Greece’s systematic policy to undermine the existence of the minority is a leitmotiv in Turkish descriptions of the minority’s situation, which is seldom substantiated by careful arguments. It follows the usual propaganda axiom, that the accusations become valid through the simple method of repetition. The figure of 180,000 étalbés which occurs several times in the reportage is of course completely arbitrary, and indicates the general level of accuracy.39

The best argued presentation of the Turkish position from the 1950s is the speech by the Turkish diplomat Ümit Halûk Bayülken at the London School of Economic and Political Science, on 13 March 1958 (Bayülken 1963). It is often referred to, and remains influential in Turkey. It is clear from his speech that he stresses the problems of the minority in Thrace to support Turkish concerns in Cyprus, but his arguments deserve a closer consideration. Much attention is paid to demography, which has always been a favourite among diplomats. He argues that the Muslims were a majority in 1923, while they later became a minority. To substantiate this he evokes the figure of 129,120 Muslims which was presented by the Turkish delegation at Lausanne. Furthermore, he stresses that there has been no natural population increase of the minority which remains steady at 100,000, while it should have been doubled because of the favourable birth-rate. In this connection he also points to the radical population decrease in many Turkish villages. Conversely, he gives the figure of 33,910 Greeks in 1923, which later increased to more than 200,000 because of the refugee settlement. In this connection he quotes a book by the former Greek minister of Agriculture, Anastasios Bakalbas, who gloats about his courage to revoke a governmental order, in 1924, to remove 60,000 refugees from Thrace (Bayülken 1963: 147–149, 160–161).

While Bayülken’s argument may seem plausible at first sight, it contains a number of disputable premises. First of all, the Turkish figures presented at Lausanne reflected the situation in 1913 not in 1923. While these figures may be used to demonstrate the historical presence of Muslims in Western Thrace, it is incorrect to employ them when referring to demographic developments related to the Greek treatment of the minority. The French census which was completed less than two months before Western Thrace passed under Greek administration gave the figure of 86,578 Muslims. Likewise, it is not sufficient to present the words of one Greek nationalist politician without looking at the general context of the population exchange and refugee settlement. While it is true that refugees remained in Thrace in contravention to the Lausanne treaty, this was

39 The issue of the étalbés is discussed later. By 1934 the Mixed Commission had issued 106,000 certificates to Muslim étalbés, who were not subject to the population exchange (Alexandris 1988: 64).
dealt with in the Ankara accord, 21 June 1925, where Greece paid the price for letting the refugees stay by making concessions on other matters. Bayülken also focuses too narrowly on the birth-rate, which is not the only factor to influence demography. After postulating a high birth-rate (2.8% yearly), the matter is treated as a simple question of multiplication. The birth-rate of the Muslims has of course varied according to time and from district to district, and so has infant mortality. Any serious study of the demographic developments must also take political, cultural, economic, and social factors into consideration. He does of course mention migration, but covers superficially the causes and conditions for it. If the argument about lack of population increase is taken at face value, the migration to the large cities during the last decades means that all the countryside of Greece and Turkey is “oppressed”. In fact, the population decrease in Greek Thrace during the period 1981–1991 affected mostly the Christian population (Notaras 1995: 47).

The same line of argumentation is often seen in the Turkish press. Ahmet Tan writes that the Greek Orthodox [Rum] minority in Istanbul was only 80,000 in 1923 and could not have reached more than 120,000 by today. The Turks in Greek Thrace were 120,000 in 1923 and should have been 600,000 today if they had not been subjected to Greek oppression (Cumhuriyet 05.02.1990). Likewise, Reha Muhtar writes that if the minorities had been treated fairly there would today have been 120,000 Greeks in Turkey instead of 3,500, and 635,000 Turks in Greek Thrace instead of 120,000 (Milliyet 16.02.1990). The Press counsellor of the Turkish Embassy in London claims in a letter to the editor of The Economist that:

At the time of the 1923 Lausanne treaty, the Turkish population of Western Thrace was 129,000. Given its traditional annual birthrate of 2.8% there should be over 500,000 ethnic Turks in the area. In fact, the figure has barely changed. The discriminatory policies of successive Greek governments account for this.

To display the sheer repetitiveness of the Turkish line of argument I can supply one more example taken from the preface to the document collection of Greek atrocities by the General Director of the Turkish State Archives, İsmet Binark:

Greece does not give any number about the Turkish population. However, when the Lausanne Agreement was signed in 1923 the population of the Turks was 130 thousand. If one accepts a yearly increase of 2.8%, the population should be around 500 thousand. The difference of 350 thousand between these two numbers is because of those Turks who went abroad due to the assimilation and were not permitted to come back, or who were forced to migrate because their land were taken from them for various reasons or who became Greek by various oppressions or with the promise to be employed.

40 For a more thorough discussion of some of these points see (Dalègre 1995: 320–325, 377). Osman Nuri claims that the yearly population increase of the minority was 1.5% before the war, while after the war it increased to 2.7% as health conditions improved (Trakya 726/03.02.1958).
41 The Economist 20.04.1991. In an interview in Cumhuriyet (15.12.1990), the Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Kurtecbe Alptemoçin gives the same figures.
42 (Binark 1995: XXXIV). I have used the English version of his preface as printed in the book.
The letter sent by the minority MP Sadık Ahmet to the Council of Europe in 1992 had clearly adopted the Turkish demographic argument, and a Greek newspaper refereed to it as “Turkish-style statistics” (Pontiki 28.05.1992). In an international congress two years later Sadık Ahmet said that the Turks of Western Thrace would have been 1,500,000 instead of 150,000 if it had not been for the oppression and persecution by the Greek authorities (To Vima 10.04.1994).

Certain Greek politicians also engage themselves in the game of presenting the minorities in a way which benefits their view. The PASOK MP for Ksanthi, Panayiotis Sguridis, claimed that: “At the signing of the Lausanne treaty in 1923, the Greek representatives kept 87,000 Muslims in Ksanthi and Rodopi as counterbalance for the protection of the about 300,000 Greeks in Istanbul, Gökçeada and Bozcaada” (Ikonomikos Tahidromos 19.08.1993). There may have been such a number of Greek Orthodox in Istanbul around 1920, but the figures above are not related to any agreement between Greece and Turkey in Lausanne.

Exaggeration of Today’s Population

As a result of the lack of reliable statistical information about the minority, everybody are free to make arbitrary claims about its size. In some cases it is very clear that the figures have no roots in reality. Conventionally, the minority press used to refer to the 120,000 strong minority. In the course of a couple of months during 1992 part of the minority press first raised this figure to 150,000 and then 170,000. There are various kinds of reasons for these exaggerations. A Turkish journalist who visited the area provided the following explanation:

According to widespread comments, “the people who issue these newspapers try to keep the interest of Turkey for this place alive by exaggerating the numbers of Turks living in the area. Because the journalists in the area are getting material support from the Turkish State and one of their greatest fears is to lose this support.”

This is however only part of the picture. A lot of people are interested in exaggerating the size of the population, or pass on deliberately or unintentionally such kind of information. Obviously, Turkish diplomacy wants to keep the figures high. When interviewed by a Greek newspaper, the Turkish consul in Komotini gave the figure 150,000–170,000 (Epohi 28.03.1993). This becomes even more important when Turkish sources present the numbers to an international audience. The American researcher Graham Fuller, who is connected with the foreign policy think-tank Rand Corporation, states that there are roughly 200,000 Muslims, mostly ethnic Turks, in Greek Thrace (Fuller, Lesser et al. 1993: 113, 150). Generally speaking, the

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43 For examples of this practice cf. Akin 1055/18.05.1992; 1060/26.06.1992; 1064/19.08.1992. Minority newspapers such as İleri 687/25.09.1992, made fun of these obvious exaggerations. For a more complete overview of the manipulation with population figures by part of the minority press at this time, see (Ömeroğlu 1994: 42–45).

exaggeration of the Muslim population is adopted by those who are interested in promoting the minority issue as a problem. This includes Greek nationalists, who warn about the imminent Turkish danger in Thrace.

**Demography as a National Problem**

At times the Greek press occupies itself with the negative demographic developments in Thrace. The decrease of the Christian population together with the high birthrate of the Muslims is presented as a problem. This is also a recurrent theme among politicians, particularly when they are in opposition. During a visit to Thrace the party secretary of PASOK, A. Tsohatzopoulos, called the immigration to Germany the previous year a crime against the prospects of Hellenism in the area, and held the government responsible. He claimed that a future PASOK government would contribute to the development of Thrace (*Eleftherotipia* 19.01.1993). Sometimes comments on the issue take on the form of danger scenarios, known in Greek as *kindinoloyía*. In an article about the demographic problem in Thrace it is claimed that the Greeks risk to become a minority because of the province killing policy of Athens. The birth rate of the Muslims is 3–4 times higher than that of the Christians, while more Christians than Muslims die. In this connection the Turkish influence over the Muslims through the consulate in Komotini is regarded to aggravate the problem even more. The Muslims are said to be preparing the ground for creating future autonomy and self administration of Thrace, with the goal of incorporating it in Turkey following the example of Cyprus.

The preoccupation with the country’s demographic problem (*to dimografikó*) has deeper roots than the discussion sparked off by the situation in Thrace. The attitudes displayed in this discourse reflect the ongoing formation of an official Greek ideology, which involves the definition of what is “Greekness”. It reveals an image of a Greek Orthodox Greece, which ultimately hails back to Ottoman structures. The strong group identity fostered by the *millet* system favours the collective rather than the individual. These attitudes are also present in the Greek public debate on abortion which is often linked to the *dimografikó*. In this connection the critics of abortion do not primarily perceive it as a sin towards God, or as the killing of an individual. It is perceived as harmful because it diminishes the strength of the Greek nation, see (Halkias 1998). In Thrace this aspect is further accentuated because of the relationship to Turkey. In a paper read at the 1. International Conference of Greek Thracians the Metropolitan of

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45 *See Eleftherotipia* 15.01.1993 for an example of a relatively sober approach.
Aleksandrupoli argued that while the Greeks lamented justly the thousands of Greek victims of the Turkish genocide in Asia Minor in 1922, they did not lament the 300,000 Greek children who die each year by abortions. In the context of Thrace he argues against abortion and favours large Christian families:

Consequently, each year more than 800 children are killed in Thrace, mainly by Christian mothers. If the parents and doctors had let these children be born, the Christian population of Thrace would have increased by 8,000 in a decade.[…]
Particularly for Thrace, there should be given additional [economic] benefits to families with many children through the church, since it is only the Christian population of the area which has a demographic problem.48

Needless to say, the Metropolitan would not consider the Muslims to have a “demographic problem” no matter what happened to their birth-rate.

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48 (Anthimos 1995a: 12). In Greece families with four children or more get special state benefits, which of course include all the citizens. Further benefits distributed through the church would exclude the Muslims, and give the church additional influence among the Christian population.
National Identities and Thrace

Traditionally, Ottoman society was organised vertically into classes or social estates and horizontally into religious communities or millets. Besides the Muslims the three large traditional millets were the Greek Orthodox, the Armenian, and the Jewish. Since the millet system was strictly religious, racial and linguistic affiliations played a secondary role. There were no Turkish, Albanian, or Arab millets, but a single Muslim community (Cemaat) embracing all the adherents of Islam within the empire. Likewise, all the Orthodox people of the empire belonged to the Greek Orthodox community, the Rum milleti. This system had its roots in old practices common in the Middle East. In its Ottoman form it hailed back to the conquest of Istanbul. In the course of time the millet system created strong vested interests for people in leading positions, and influenced profoundly the world view of the people who were governed by it.

Niyazi Berkes points to the static nature of the non-secular or traditionalist system. The priority was given to stability and order, while change was associated with disorder and evil. Since God created every particle of the social universe for specific purposes, every individual should remain as God willed. This extended to the collective level where each group had a separate function and status, and consequently there was no equality between them. As a result they tended to form closed corporate groups, with limited contact. Each group was recognised by the ruler and possessed privileges granted by his favour. The heads of the millets, or other corporate associations such as the guilds, had both administrative and judicial rights and duties (Berkes 1964: 11–12).

The millet system prevented the integration of the non-Muslims into society on equal terms, and provided an opportunity for Great Power interventions when the Ottoman Empire declined. Russia, in particular, secured authority on behalf of the Ottoman Christians after the treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774). The traditional millet system came under great pressure in the 19th century both because of developments affecting the Ottoman state as a whole, and developments within the millets which challenged the traditional leadership. As part of the efforts to westernise the empire during the Tanzimat (Reorganisation) period of 1839–1876, there were serious changes...
attempts to fuse Muslims and non-Muslims alike into equal Ottoman citizens. These efforts were partly inspired by western educated liberal Ottoman politicians, and came partly as response to pressure from the Great Powers. However, the concept of secular Ottoman citizenship never gained a foothold among the common people. Both Muslims and non-Muslims preferred to exist in separately defined communities.

The greatest challenge to the millet system, and in particular to Greek national aspirations and national identity, came from the Bulgarian national movement. Bulgarian nationalism became a factor after the Crimean war in the mid 19th century. It was the Bulgarian merchant community in Istanbul which took the lead and their national aspirations were first expressed as opposition to the Greek hegemony of the Orthodox church. In 1870 the Bulgarians succeeded in obtaining a separate church organisation named the Bulgarian Exarchate by imperial decree (firman). Significantly, this mainly national-political organisation had to be cloaked in a religious mantle to fit into the Ottoman administrative framework, and gave rise to endless disputes among the Greeks and Bulgarians about spheres of influence based on ecclesiastical authority. This result was not undesired by the Ottoman government which followed a policy of divide and rule. On the local level the rivalry manifested itself by the fight for control over churches in the villages. Usually the rival Greek and Bulgarian parties fought for power. The formation of the groups was not necessarily connected with ethnic differences in a modern sense, but based itself on other existing cleavages within the villages. The goal for each group was to prevail, not to find a modus vivendi. The polarisation between the two elements reached its apex in the rivalry over Macedonia, where Greece and Bulgaria made great efforts to proselytise the local population.

The Greek world was faced with the problem of two “national centres”, where Athens represented the modern Greek state, inspired by ancient Greece and encouraged by philhellenism, while the Patriarch in Istanbul represented the traditional religious identity as expressed in the millet system. Large groups within the Greek Orthodox millet were Bulgarian speaking, Albanian speaking, Aroumenian speaking (Vlachs), etc. Implicitly equating Greek Orthodox with Greek, the Greek state could claim large areas in the southern Balkans. When the Greek cause was eventually challenged by Bulgarian nationalism, the concept of “bulgarophone Greeks”, “albanophone Greeks”, etc. appeared. Further it was claimed that nationality was first of all tied to “national consciousness” (ethnikí sinídisi), not mother tongue or race. At that point this position was certainly tied to expedience, but on a deeper level it was also close to the traditional millet system and had an element of truth in it.

In a rural setting such as the villages of Thrace, Greece supported its position also on the traditional religious identity. A Greek school inspector describes in his memoirs

51 For a comparison of how the nature of such a fight is depicted in Bulgarian and Greek sources, see (Kiril 1970; Angelopoulos 1973). For a fuller discussion see (Aarbakke 1992).
how they tried to counter the Bulgarian movement when he visited the area in 1907. Most of the villages he visited were Greek speaking. In the Bulgarian speaking villages he would stress that the Exarchate was condemned by the Patriarchate, and tell the pupils that they were genuine Greeks who had lost their language, which they would relearn in school. To strengthen the Greek position the teacher and priest would “fanaticise” the villagers with religion and Hellenism (Gonatas 1956: 192–193). While the Greek Orthodox in the Ottoman Empire had a separate identity from the Muslims, they were not necessarily well informed about the modern Greek state. They were first of all tied to their identity within the established system as they knew it from their local surroundings. In areas outside the main theatre of Bulgarian-Greek antagonism the difference between Bulgarians and Greeks could be quite difficult to perceive—not to say impossible for some of those involved—as can be seen in the following memoirs of a Greek refugee from his childhood in Gemlik (Kios) on the Asia Minor shores of the Marmara sea. There were 4–5 Bulgarian families in town and the Greek author is at a loss when it comes to grasping what it was that made them Bulgarians:

I would say that they were Bulgarians only in name. And only their closest neighbours knew them as such.

The indication of their nationality, as far as I remember, was that on official Turkish holidays during the (first world) war they flew the Bulgarian flag too, along with the Turkish, at their shops.

In other ways, they did not differ from us Greeks. They spoke Greek (I do not know which language they spoke inside their houses), they went to the Greek churches and had very harmonious relations with the Greeks.

Maybe inside their homes they would express themselves as Bulgarians in favour of Bulgaria. I do not know about that. However, they never expressed antipathy towards Greece. They were Orthodox Christians, closely tied to us (Kulingas 1988: 51).

Bulgaria represented in many ways a more consistent and “modern” nationalism than the Greek case. Greek nationalism was trapped in a series of anachronisms which will not concern us here. The Bulgarians appeared much more convincing to the western public opinion with their “politically correct” nationalism based on the common language, traditions, and cultural heritage of the Bulgarian nation. These differences are reflected in the separate outlook of Greek and Bulgarian scholars at the time; something which to a certain degree has been preserved until the present day. Bulgarian scholarly work on folklore, ethnography, dialect studies, etc. abound. The traditional taxonomy of the Ottoman administrative system was ignored, and all Slavic speakers of the Ottoman Empire (except for some Serbs) whether Christian or Muslim, were considered to be Bulgarians. Greek scholarship on folklore was mainly interested in tracing various customs back to ancient prototypes and can thus be characterised as more diachronic compared to the Bulgarian synchronic approach.

It is not enough to explain the Greek-Bulgarian antagonism by ideological differences. If we look at the desire and methods for expansion there are maybe more similarities than differences. It can of course be argued that diplomatic history is mainly
about the acquisition of additional land, where the arguments for obtaining it are of secondary importance. In the end, neither the Greek nor the Bulgarian state would be particular about what the local population felt, but postulate them to be Greek or Bulgarians according to their criteria. While the Bulgarian cause focused on people who today would be called ethnic Bulgarians, they would not hesitate to proselytise other “ethnic” groups in order to boost their number in the ongoing struggle to impress the Great Powers. However, their terminology would be different from the Greek. While the Greeks would call the Vlachs Aroumenian speaking Greeks, the Bulgarians would simply say that they were Vlachs who had espoused the Bulgarian cause.

As mentioned earlier, the Bulgarians did not only challenge the unity of the Greek Orthodox millet, but also the unity of the Muslim community by postulating that the Slavic speaking Muslims—otherwise commonly referred to as Pomaks—were “Bulgarian Muslims”. In the Bulgarian ideology the Pomaks were considered to be Bulgarians who had been forcibly converted to Islam. This had not changed their essential Bulgarian character, but only furnished them with a veneer of Muslim-Turkish culture imposed on them by the Turkish rule. As a Bulgarian historian of the old school expresses it: “Every Bulgarian-Muslim district, or group of villages, is a twig broken off from the common entity of the Bulgarian-Slav nation” (Shishkov 1936: 86). The Bulgarian position was also linked to expediency, particularly in Western Thrace, where the Bulgarian population element was weak. Here they needed the Pomaks in order to add weight and credibility to their territorial claims. The standard Bulgarian argument is that the Ottoman population statistics were based on religion and not nationality. In spite of this postulation, there is little evidence of Pomak participation in the Bulgarian national movement. The lack of success in attracting the Pomaks to the Bulgarian cause can be ascribed to several factors. A striking difference in comparison with the Bulgarian-Greek controversy is the institutional aspect. For social and political reasons the Bulgarian national movement remained essentially Christian. The Ottoman administration allowed the Bulgarians to establish separate churches and schools, which created a “civil war” within the Greek Orthodox millet. However, there would certainly never be a question of making separate Bulgarian mosques or Bulgarian Muslim schools. This was probably inconceivable to both the Bulgarian movement and the Ottoman authorities.

The Bulgarian attitudes led to forced mass conversions of Pomaks after the first Balkan war. There was a certain secrecy around this activity, but it nevertheless became known to the degree that it was used as a classic example of forced assimilation. The Moslems were ranged in groups. Each group was given some baptismal name, generally a name honoured in the Bulgarian church or in Bulgarian history. An Exarchist pope then passed from group to group and took aside each of his catechumens sui generis; and while sprinkling his

52 For a more extended discussion of the Bulgarian discourse on the Pomaks, see (Brunnbauer 1998).
forehead with holy water with one hand, with the other he compelled him to bite a sausage. The holy water represented baptism, the piece of sausage renunciation of the Moslem faith, since the koran forbids the eating of pork. […]53

The recent collection of documents from the conversion campaign has shed additional light on these events. After the advances during the first Balkan war, Bulgaria felt the need to consolidate its position. Both because of the ideological desire to unite the Bulgarian nation—both Christians and Muslims—and the fear that Turkey would try to exploit the religious tie to instigate the Pomaks against the Bulgarian authorities as had happened in the case of the insubordinate villages after the Russian-Turkish war. The conversion campaign started in the second half of November 1912 and continued with varying intensity until the summer of 1913. The main organiser and executor of the conversions was the Bulgarian Holy Synod. About 200,000 people from several hundred villages were converted. In some places there was great resistance, while others accepted Christianity more readily. After the defeat of Bulgaria in the second Balkan war the reverse process of restoring Islam set in. Of particular significance for this process was the peace treaty with Turkey, according to which Bulgaria took on obligations to respect the rights of the Muslims in the new Bulgarian areas. Turkish consuls and emissaries toured the villages which had been converted to secure that they returned to Islam. As a result, by the beginning of 1914 most of the Pomaks had returned to their old faith. Some converts came in a precarious position when the tide turned. It should be kept in mind that the question of faith could never really become an individual choice, but was related to the group at large. Many of the Pomak villages which now are in Greek Thrace were affected by these forced conversions.54

**Turkish Nationalism**

Not surprisingly, Turkish nationalism was much slower to develop than its Christian counterparts. There are several conspicuous reasons for this. For one, the Ottoman Empire was dominated by the Muslims-Turks, who were attached to the idea of the empire to a greater degree than the Greeks, not to mention the Bulgarians. The concern of the Young Ottomans in the 19th century was mainly to reform and preserve the empire, cf. (Mardin 1962). The development of Turkish nationalism was partly a reaction to the nationalism of the Balkan Christians. The Young Turks became the first exponents of a radical Turkish nationalism. While their revolution in 1908 was initially welcomed by all the population elements which were weary of Abdülhamit’s absolutist

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53 (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace 1914: 155–157). A slightly extended version of this quotation can be found in (McCarthy 1996: 153–154). McCarthy’s comment “Exarchist pope [sic, probably a priest]” displays his unfamiliarity with the area. It is simply a way to render the Bulgarian word for priest, *pop*, in English.

54 See (Georgiev and Trifonov 1995). The documents reveal many details about the conversion process.
rule, their fervent Turkish nationalism soon estranged even many Muslims of the empire.

In the aftermath of the revolution there were intense debates about the social and political direction of the empire. Yusuf Akçura had given some of the premises for this debate in his influential essay “Three types of policy” (Üç tarz-ı siyaset (1904)), where he presented the different alternative identities the Ottoman Empire could build its future on as 1. Ottomanism, 2. Islamism, and 3. Turkism. He did not think that it was possible to forge an Ottoman nation out of the diverse population elements of the empire, and took the radical step to reject Ottomanism. He acknowledged the importance of Islam, but considered Turkism to be the best alternative. He did also consider the possibility of incorporating the Turks outside the empire—primarily in Russia—and his article is considered to be the first coherent statement of Pan-Turkish political aims. However, the dominant tendency among Ottoman intellectuals was to limit themselves to the situation within the empire. Ultimately, their goal became to assimilate those who could be incorporated into the Muslim–Turkish nation, and to get rid of those who were unwilling or unable to join them. The transformation from a Ottoman/Muslim to a Turkish identity, as espoused by Turkish nationalism, has been an ongoing process. During the Turkish war of liberation the nationalists appealed mainly to Muslim resistance against the infidel aggressors, which were the familiar concepts of ordinary people. Later the emphasis shifted towards promoting a secular Turkish identity for the whole nation. The Turkish Republic was established as a modern secular state with well defined borders, where allegiance was based on citizenship. However, much of the traditional mentality has survived, which means that Turkey has an ambiguous attitude both to its own citizens and to its kinsmen abroad.

Although no distinctions of religion or race were made in according anyone born in Turkey equal rights and duties as a Turkish citizen, and although loyalty to the new Turkish vatan [fatherland] was promoted, affiliation with the Turkish millet [nation] depended, in the minds of most Turks, on membership in a community, rather than on birthplace. Islam remained essential to full Turkish identity, making all non-Muslims, socially and culturally, ‘outsiders’. But national or racial relationships, of the kind expounded by the Turkist intellectuals, seemed to be no less important. It was the common origin, history, language, and culture, sometimes even ‘blood’, which formed the basis of the Turkish community. As such, the Turks of Turkey were really only a part of a much larger Turkish irk (previously cins, race) which inhabited lands beyond the border of modern Turkey. The interest in these ‘outside Turks’ persisted, and like Islam, constituted a strong ideological force of potential political value (Kushner 1977: 102–103).

55 (Akçura 1991). The essay was first published in 1904 as a series in a Turkish newspaper published in Egypt. Significantly Yusuf Akçura (1878–1935) was from a Volga Tartar family which had emigrated to the Ottoman Empire from Russia when he was a boy. His awareness for the dynamics of nationalism is often attributed to the Russian experience and the influence of pan-slavism. In fact, many of the leading Turkish nationalists had an emigrant background.

56 For a more thorough discussion, see (Arai 1992: 3–4).
The Transformation of the Word “Turk”

The transformation from a Muslim to a Turkish identity was not unproblematic. In the Ottoman Empire the word “Turk” had acquired a derogatory sense. A gentleman would call himself an Ottoman, but never a Turk, which was a term associated with the uncouth village bumpkins of Anatolia. The word had unpleasant connotations and could easily be regarded as an insult. The need to find an ethnic foundation for the Empire, in accordance with nationalist tendencies in Europe at the time, led to the adoption of a term that had no social prestige attached to it. To make the new term acceptable to the public an unprecedented campaign was launched in the first years of the Republic. Many of the extremely nationalist slogans such as “Happy is he who calls himself a Turk” (Ne mutlu Türküm diyene) or “One Turk is worth the whole world” (Bir Türk dünyanın bedelidir), have their roots in this period. With the ideological developments outlined above the word “Turk” underwent an important shift of meaning. In a Balkan context the mixture of Turkish and Muslim identity is not a new thing, maybe for the reason that unlike the Arab case they had no Islamic tradition outside the Ottoman experience. Many people of non-Turkish origin had risen to the highest ranks, which indicates the consistency of the religious organisation. Besides, the threat posed by the Christian national movements left them with the Turkish co-religionists as their main pillar of support. All this has made the separation of Turks and Muslims of other descent quite delicate. A friend of mine from a Turkish speaking village in Western Thrace told me that as late as the 1960s people would usually designate themselves as Muslims. However, several groups that are not Turks by descent will declare to be Turks depending on time and place. In turn Turkey will regard them as Turks not only out of expedience, but also for ideological reasons. A nationalist politician such as Bülent Ecevit argues that both the Slav speaking Bosnian Muslims and the Turkish speaking Christian Gagavuz who live in the Balkans are Turks (Milliyet 27.07.1990). In the first case he plays the religious card, but modifies it by tracing their ancestry back to Turkish tribes. In the second case his argument is based on race, ignoring the significance of religion. Of course Turkey has been more disposed to play the kinship and religious cards at times when it wanted to make its influence felt in the Balkans. For all practical purposes, combinations of secular and religious identities are the object of manipulations and transformations which have continued up until the present.

Ironically, even before the foundation of the Turkish republic the word “Turk” was widely used as a synonym to “Muslim” by the Balkan Christians. This is firmly rooted in both the Bulgarian and the Greek language, and a part of everyday usage even today. A Bulgarian Christian who became a Muslim would be characterised as

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57 For a more thorough discussion, see (Kushner 1977: 20–26).
“Turkified” (*poturchen*). In the same fashion you would not say that a Greek who embraced Islam was a Muslim Greek. The common phrase is to say that he became a “Turk” (*tirkepse*). In Greek an Albanian speaking Muslim is referred to as a “Turcoalbanian” (*turkoalvanós*), or a Muslim Gypsy as a “Turcogypsy” (*turkó-yiftos*). While an American of Greek origin is called “Greek-American” (*ellino-amerikános*), there are no such words as “Greco-Turk” or “Turco-Greek”. Obviously, the traditional terminology in the Balkans does not harmonise with the modern western/international terminology. As a consequence, words which designate religion, ethnicity, and citizenship are often confused and lead to misunderstandings.

The Resilience of the Millet System

The *millet* system was of course not only a practical arrangement for the administration of the Ottoman Empire. It influenced profoundly the identity and world view of those who were subjected to it. Such a system of ideas and social relations cannot be replaced easily from one day to another. Even when there were determined efforts to break with this tradition, many of the old attitudes lived on. Turkey’s radical program of social transformation sought to replace the old Ottoman *millet* system of closed communities and make everybody equal Turkish citizens. This was secured through a series of new laws which sought to harmonise the system with Western models. Stanford Shaw makes the comment that this “convinced” the minorities into renouncing their separate legal status and rights (Shaw and Shaw 1977: 378). However, the attempt by Turkey to induce its minorities to relinquish their minority rights is regarded by others as an example of its efforts to evade treaty obligations.

The duress employed to compel minorities in Turkey to renounce their treaty rights was the threat to exclude them from the protection of the new civil code. The League of Nations held that this action was null and void and did not prevent either the minorities themselves or others from drawing to the attention of the League [of Nations] any violation of the rights of the Jewish, Armenian, and Greek communities in Turkey (Robinson 1943: 81).

The pressure on the minorities was related partly to the bad experiences of the past when the Great Powers attempted to interfere in the matters of the Ottoman Empire with minority protection as pretext, and partly to the general assimilation drive of the new nationalist government. In practice, neither the minorities were able to envisage themselves as equal Turkish citizens, nor was the state able to treat them equally. This is for example evident in the nationalist turkification of the economy. The traditional “division of labour” in the Ottoman Empire, and the influence of the Capitulations, meant that much of the business and commerce were on minority hands. In the 1920s several measures were taken to “rectify” this, including restrictions on the opportunities for non Muslims to practice certain professions (Alexandris 1983: 105–112). The

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58 The common Greek words for Gypsy are *athínganos*, *yíftos*, and *katsívelos*. 
millet mentality persisted in the Turkish mistrust to the minorities, and in practice only the Turkish-speaking Muslim citizens held full political rights. One of the leading Turkish politicians, Dr. Rıza Nur, who advocated strongly the new Turkish model of secularisation, was well aware of its side effects on minorities. This is apparent from his memoirs. He anticipated that by extending obligatory military service to non-Muslims, who would be afraid of serving together with Muslims and prefer to leave the country, the minorities would disappear in 40–50 years. A complete secularisation would also inevitably lead to mixed marriages, and the children would be assimilated into the Turkish nation. As a side effect conservative Greek Orthodox would prefer to move to Greece thus avoiding the possibility that their children married Turks. In other words, he thought this measure would dissolve and “Turkify” the Greek Orthodox minority (Nur 1992a, vol. 2: 272). It is an open question to what degree Rıza Nur was a modernist primarily occupied with the creation of a new Turkish identity and to what degree he was influenced by traditional rivalry in his desire to dissolve the Greek Orthodox millet.

The peculiar mixture of old and new ideology was also present in Turkish attitudes towards the Muslims in Greek Thrace. Turkey wanted to transform them into a modern secular minority following the Turkish reforms. In Greek scholarship this is usually presented as Turkish efforts to transform the religious Muslim minority into an ethnic Turkish minority, and consequently increase Turkey’s control over it. This is rather simplistic and overlooks the complexity of the various relations involved. There is a certain consistency in the Turkish position which is related to ideology as well expediency. The secularisation of the minority would make the minority more receptive to Turkish influence and bring it in line with the ideological mechanisms of the Turkish state. It would also obstruct any possible links to the anti-Kemalist opponents of the new regime within Turkey. However, there are also indications that by its secularisation policy Turkey was positive to a greater integration of the minority into Greek society. This would parallel the Turkish endeavour to integrate the Greek Orthodox minority into the Turkish nation, and disrupt its separate minority institutions. In many ways Greece was more explicit in regarding the Greek Orthodox minority in Turkey as part of the Greek nation, cf. (Tunda-Fergadi 1994: 169). In Greek they are usually referred to as omoyenís —of the same race—which is an expression hailing back to the millet system. There are of course many examples of the same attitudes in Turkey, where many will refer to the Muslims in Greece as soydaş, which is the corresponding

59 See for example (Alexandris 1988: 67). The danger presented by Turkey’s desire to turn the religious minority into an ethnic minority is a leitmotiv in Greek scholarship and journalism.
60 See for example the opinions of Ismet İnönü when he visited Athens in October 1931 (Anastasiadu 1982: 81).
Turkish expression. However, on the whole the Turkish attitude is more ambiguous than the Greek and varies throughout the post-Lausanne era.

Greece continued in many ways to regard its Muslim minority in traditional terms. They were considered to constitute a separate community, which lived side by side the Greeks with little integration. While Greece was willing to allow them a separate space within the larger society (or unwilling to let them participate fully in their own), their relationship to Ankara remained a sensitive matter. The minority itself had difficulties in adjusting to the new reality. The traditional attitudes connected to the Ottoman model of closed communities did not dispose people towards integration, and the stereotypes each community held of each other would help to preserve the differences. The feeling of being abandoned in a foreign environment is clearly expressed in the title of a book by a Western Thrace Muslim: *Rumeli’de Bırakılanlar, Batı Trakya Türkleri*, i.e. “Those who were left in the Balkans, Western Thrace Turks” (Dede 1975). The lack of willingness or ability to adjust is amply illustrated by the observation of a Turkish scholar who went to Western Thrace in the mid 1980s:

The Western Thrace minority community has not changed much from 1923 until today. It cannot be said that it has shown excessive fervour to adapt to Greek society. Most of the elderly have not learnt proper Greek. The kinsman [soydâ] who shows you around in Komotini will say: “My father and mother always said ‘Turkey will come now or tomorrow, we were only left here temporarily’ and did not learn a word of Greek until they died.” The reply of the ninety year old Salih Ağa from Komotini to the prefecture secretary he had consulted to get his work done is also instructive. When asked: —“Dear Salih Ağa, when you have reached this age shouldn’t you learn just one word of Greek?”, he answered on leaving —“How could I know dear Yorgo, how could I know that you would stay so long? I thought that you would leave immediately!” (Oran 1991: 305–306).

In closing this section it may be pertinent to point out that the impact of the various ideological currents would not hit the local level simultaneously everywhere in Western Thrace. Kemalism would first exert its influence in the larger towns. Village life was first and foremost tied to traditional patterns of identity. While traditional society to some degree has lingered on in Thrace, it could not escape the influence of education, nationalism, modernisation, and other factors which make redundant the closed community model of the Ottoman Empire. However, the villager often responds slowly to general currents of development affecting him and clings on to old values and behaviour patterns. Still, the fact that it is much easier for him to embrace modernisation through Turkish models than Greek, is partly a vestige of the *millet* system.
The Lausanne Treaty and its Implications

The Lausanne treaty would finally settle the remaining regional problems in the aftermath of the First World War. Factors such as the dream of expanding into what they considered historical Greek areas, the concern for their kinsmen, the rivalry between states to supersede the Ottoman Empire, had led the Greeks to take on the ill-fated—and ill conceived—Asia Minor campaign. After the Greek defeat, the time finally came to settle the pending issues after a period of ten turbulent years. While the Ottoman Empire had been defeated in the First World War, the new Turkey emerged as the winner of the Greek-Turkish War and was able to enter the negotiations from a position of strength. The importance of the Lausanne Treaty for the present work is twofold. First of all it is the agreement that gave the minorities their legal status and is consequently the charter of the Greek-Turkish minority regime. Secondly, Greeks and Turks have a tendency to refer to the Lausanne treaty on every relevant and irrelevant occasion when Thrace is on the agenda. From the minority perspective the main issues were the population exchange and the protection of the minorities.

The Population Exchange

The Turkish victory in Asia Minor swept the native Greek Orthodox population away together with the Greek army. The League of Nations entrusted Dr. Fridtjof Nansen with the refugee relief. Nansen proposed a separate convention for the exchange of the Greek and Turkish population after visiting Istanbul and Athens. The Greek government assumed that Turkey would not allow the return of any of the Greeks, and gathered that the transfer of the Muslim population in Greece by a compulsory population exchange would help create room for the large influx of refugees.61 The Turkish government informed Nansen already 31 October 1922 that the entire Greek population of Istanbul, which was under allied occupation, had to be included in the proposed population exchange. In the negotiations at Lausanne, Venizelos was ready to consider an obligatory or voluntary exchange of populations, but opposed the exchange of the Greeks from Istanbul. The Great Powers also opposed their departure because of their important position in commerce and industry. 13 December the Turkish delegation accepted that the Greeks of Istanbul should be allowed to stay in exchange for the Muslims in Greek Thrace. However, the Turks

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61 (Petropoulos 1976: 142). There is a very large literature on the Lausanne Treaty and the population exchange. The most detailed account of the population exchange is (Ladas 1932). For a brief recent interpretation, which includes a selected bibliography, see (Koufa and Svolopoulos 1991).
insisted on the proportionality of the two non-exchangeable minorities to limit the size of the Istanbul Greek community to match the numerically smaller Muslim minority of Thrace. This question of proportionality resulted in the decrease of the Istanbul Greek community from more than 300,000 in 1922 to about 100,000 in 1927 (Alexandris 1983: 83–87). Nationalist historiography often points to sentimental or irredentist reasons for insisting that the Greeks and the Patriarchate should remain in Istanbul.

From a practical point of view, the most important factor was the immediate concerns connected to Greece’s ability to absorb more refugees. Because of the “division of labour” in the Ottoman Empire, the Greeks represented traditionally a relatively large part of the urban population. With the many urban refugees who had already arrived, Greece felt unable to absorb the Istanbul Greeks.

The Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek–Turkish Populations, was signed by Greece and Turkey at Lausanne on 30 January 1923, six months before the general peace treaty of Lausanne which it was affixed to. The convention specified the exchange of the Greek Orthodox of the Ottoman Empire and the Muslims of Greece, adhering to the traditional religious criterion. The provision of exchange did not apply to Greek speakers in Turkey professing other religions than Greek Orthodoxy, such as Catholicism, Protestantism, or Islam. The text of the convention was sufficient in a literal sense to cover any Greek Orthodox Turkish subjects, but such a literal interpretation was considered to be contrary to the spirit of the Convention.

“Greece was not expected to receive emigrant of her own religious faith unless they had Greek national sentiments.” (Eddy 1931: 203). Likewise, the Albanian Muslims in Greek Epiros were excluded from the exchange. The exchange and subsequent liquidation of property comprised both those who had left their homes between 18 October 1912 (declaration of the First Balkan War) and 30 January 1923, and persons who had been left in situ and were now to be transferred. About 848,000 Greeks had fled from Anatolia with the withdrawing Greek army in September 1922, while 115,000 Muslims had left Greece in 1914 after invitation by the Young Turks to repopulate the regions in western Anatolia where they had deported the local Greeks. The exchange of those who still remained in the territories of the respective governments was completed under the supervision of the Mixed Commission by the middle

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62 For a complete text of the Convention, see (Psomiadis 1968, appendix II:120–126) or (Pentzopoulos 1962, appendix I: 257–263). Most of the convention concerns the conditions for the exchange and the liquidation of their property. However, article 16 also mentions considerations about those who were exempted:

“[…] No obstacle shall be placed in the way of the inhabitants of the districts excepted from the exchange under Article 2 [i.e. a] ‘The Greek inhabitants of Constantinople. b) The Moslem inhabitants of Western Thrace’] exercising freely their rights to remain in or return to those districts and to enjoy to the full their liberties and rights of property in Turkey and in Greece. This provision shall not be invoked as a motive for preventing the free alienation of property belonging to inhabitants of the said religions which are excepted from the exchange, or the voluntary departure of those among these inhabitants who wish to leave Turkey or Greece.”
of 1925, and included 192,356 Greeks and 354,647 Muslims (Eddy 1931: 202). Besides the Greek Orthodox of Istanbul and the Muslims of Greek Thrace, the Greek Orthodox inhabitants of the two small islands at the mouth of the Dardanelles, Gökçeada (Imvros) and Bozcaada (Tenedos), were allowed to remain after the islands were returned to Turkey for strategic reasons. Those who were entitled to remain in the areas exempted from the population exchange were recognised in the French treaty text as *établissement*. By 1934 the Mixed Commission for Settlement of Refugees had issued 106,000 certificates to Muslim *établissement* in Greek Thrace (Alexandris 1988: 64). For the sake of comparison, after the Greek-Turkish agreements in 1930, 73,000 Greek Orthodox in Istanbul were granted certificates as not subject to be exchanged along with 7,000 in Gökçeada and 1,200 in Bozcaada, while 30,000 Greek citizens who had lived in Istanbul for generations were granted residence permit (Alexandris 1988: 91). This arrangement gave the minorities a specific point of departure compared with many other minorities. The fact that they were allowed to remain after a bilateral agreement by two states which carried out a population exchange, influenced both their numbers and status.

**Protection of Minorities.**

Articles 37–45 of the Lausanne treaty specify the protection of the minorities. Article 37 states that the articles 38–45 shall be recognised as fundamental laws, and that no other law, regulation, nor official action shall prevail over them. Articles 38–44 stipulate the obligations of Turkey towards the non-Muslim minorities in Turkey while article 45 states that Greece has the same obligations towards the Muslim minority in Greece. In short, the articles give the non-Muslim minorities in Turkey the same civil rights as the Muslims, while their cultural peculiarities as minority must also be respected. This includes the use of any language both in private and public, the right to have interpreters in court, the right to establish, manage and control at their own expense, any charitable, religious and social institution, and schools and other establishments for instruction and education. The existence of minority schools should not prevent the Turkish government from making the teaching of the Turkish language obligatory.

Besides the legal framework we must also take into consideration the social realities. In other words, what was intended by those who formulated the articles for minority protection in the League of Nations, and what was the prevailing attitude of the host countries and the minorities themselves? After the First World War the host countries tended to resent the imposition of the minority treaties as a violation of their

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63 Besides the actual treaty text, there are also reprints of the minority clauses in several books which deal with the minority issue. For example (Psomiadis 1968; Alexandris 1983).
sovereignty and believed that they should have an entirely free hand in their internal affairs. The Allies did not heed these objections, but took pains to avoid that the protection regime should infringe on the sovereignty of the states. In reality the needs of the minorities were subjugated to the needs of the states. It is clear that the British policy-makers who took part in the promotion of minority protection did not do this to perpetuate their separate status, but to integrate them within their host countries in order to secure international stability. By allowing them to retain their cultural identity and assuring their civil liberties they intended to facilitate their assimilation into their host countries. The tendency towards exploiting minorities for revisionist purposes was resented by British diplomacy.

This conviction that protection might hinder the cementing of the post-1919 status quo by perpetuating inter-ethnic quarrels and that it was therefore objectionable became firmly established. In November 1925 this sentiment was reiterated by the foreign secretary, Sir Austen Chamberlain, when he argued that the minority treaties served ‘only to keep alive differences which might otherwise be healed in time’: in these circumstances he doubted whether they were ‘really anything but an evil for all concerned’ (Finney 1995: 537).

The position outlined above is very far from the traditional function of minorities in the Ottoman Empire, where the legal and social mechanisms had contributed towards keeping the religious groups apart and not integrating them. Republican Turkey made determined efforts to assimilate the minorities in her country. In Greece the Ottoman structures remained more intact and the Muslims and Christians continued to live as parallel communities. The integration of the Muslims into Greek society was hampered not only by traditional attitudes, but also by the environment. The rural minority often lived in pure Muslims villages and had very little contact with society at large.

**Settlement of Refugees in Western Thrace**

The political upheavals in the beginning of the century caused major changes in land ownership. The Muslims of Western Thrace started to sell at the time of the Balkan wars, and many sold their land during the Bulgarian rule. The Muslims who sold their agricultural estates (çiftlik) to Christians went to Turkey where they bought new estates (Gudelis 1991: 20–22).

The factor which contributed most to alter the physiognomy of Western Thrace was undoubtedly the refugee settlement. After the Greek-Turkish war, destitute refugees poured into the area with the retreating Greek army. For those who came by land it was their first safe haven. In the beginning the Greek authorities took a series of provisional measures in order to provide for the basic needs of the refugees. They requisitioned rooms for housing and land plots for cultivation. In 1923–24 the Greek government utilised 8,245 rooms in rural houses and 5,590 rooms in urban houses belonging to Muslims for the shelter of the refugees. It also housed refugees in 127 mosques and schools and 667 stables and granaries belonging to Muslims. Greek
homes and property were of course used for the same purpose, but the inconvenience was greater for the Muslims because of the hostile climate after the war and the different religion and family traditions. Greece recognised the legitimacy of the complaint against this and took measures to improve the situation (Ladas 1932: 478–480).

The practical arrangements throughout Greece soon came under the auspices of the League of Nations’ Greek Refugee Settlement Commission. The main areas for settlement were Macedonia and Western Thrace. In Thrace the procedure was complicated by the diplomatic negotiations with Turkey. The principles applied by the Commission to provide land for the refugees were the following:

- The Commission, which in the meantime had undertaken to settle the Thracian refugees, held that, in accordance with the treaties, it might—in agreement with the Greek Government—utilise for the settlement of 17,000 refugee families the State lands, the lands which had been abandoned by the Bulgarians when they left the country in conformity with the provision of the Treaty of Neuilly, the surplus communal lands (pasture lands capable of cultivation), which under Turkish law were also State property, the lands voluntarily abandoned by the Turks during the war, and, lastly, the large estates (Çiftlik) subject to expropriation.

- This is the land which made it possible for the Commission to establish 17,000 families. It returned to the Moslem owners all the estates which had been requisitioned, except the large estates referred to above, i.e., 14,000 Turkish houses and over 100,000 stremmas of cultivable land.

- It should be observed that under a legislative decree the first three categories of property referred to above had been placed at the disposal of the Commission without further formalities. With regard to the last two categories, the Greek Government refrained from exercising its right of compulsory expropriation, preferring to purchase the property directly from those Turkish owners who had entered into negotiations with the Government for a settlement with regard to the property not included in the above transaction.64

The revolutionary government of N. Plastiras had expropriated all the large rural estates throughout Greece to the benefit of refugees and landless farmers with the law 3473/14-2-1923. Turkish diplomacy declared that the expropriation of large rural estates in Western Thrace for settlement of refugees and landless farmers was in violation of article 16 of the Convention for the population exchange. The Greek delegation argued that the Muslims could not be treated differently from the rest of the population, but at a later meeting it informed that it did not intend to apply the Agrarian law to the Muslims in Western Thrace.65 Consequently, the Muslims were able to avoid the effects of a general law, not particularly related to minority rights, because of their relationship to Turkey.

The refugee settlement led to a massive increase of the Greek population in the area. Before the First World war the Greek rural population was concentrated primarily in the Evros valley and in a small strip along the coast. Most of the refugees were settled

64 (League of Nations 1926: 126–127). The plans for agrarian reforms hailed back to 1911. The commission which made a survey in 1920 over estates which could be subject to expropriation registered 84 Çiftlik in Thrace against 2,259 in all of Greece. The minimum size for estates subject to expropriation was 10 ha (Dailégre 1995: 87–88, 247). 18 Muslim Çiftilik expropriated in the Komotini area had a total of 24,150 ha which means that they averaged as much as 1,341 ha (Özgüç 1974: 138). For comparison, see the account of the refugee settlement in Turkey by (Shaw 1998).

in the Evros area which was mainly populated by Greeks and Bulgarians when it came under Greek control in 1920. By 31 July 1927, 7,024 refugee families had been settled in Evros as compared to 1,511 in Ksanthis, and 2,610 in Komotini (Doksiadis 1928: 68). In the Ksanthis and Komotini areas the Muslim villages in the mountain area remained untouched, as the area was unsuitable for new settlers. Likewise, in the Yaka area at the foot of the mountain range and other slightly elevated areas the Muslims lived on what was regarded to be the best land. Here there was little room for new settlements and the villages remained more or less in the state they used to be. Most of the settlements were done on the former large estates in the low swampy areas which gave the following impression:

On going through the vast undulating plains in this region before the settlement of the refugees one was struck by their deserted aspect. Despite the fertility of the soil, crops were rare and it was used chiefly for flocks and herds (League of Nations 1926: 89).

Apart from the cultivation methods, another reason for the sparse population was the malaria danger, which took its toll on the new settlers. A former MP of Rodopi, Stavros Gudelis, mentions that when he arrived to the area as a young man there were only 3–4 small villages, each with 20–30 families of sharecroppers, in the large plain which began outside Komotini and extended to the seashore.66 The former pastures were now converted to farmland with the help of large state owned tractors. To secure adequate water supplies to the new villages, deep drilling became necessary. As a result the Greek element increased, while the Muslim element remained stable. The new settlers had small plots which required intensive cultivation. Generally, the Muslims had plenty of land and participated little in the new agricultural methods. The same was true for the old Greek population. As a result the Komotini region made up a mosaic of new zones with intensely cultivated land, and old zones which remained as before.67

By late 1928 the Commission had settled 17,000 refugee families in 208 villages throughout Western Thrace. 103 of the villages were created on land belonging to the state or large rural estates bought or requisitioned by the government, and on land of abandoned Muslim villages. 52 villages replaced Bulgarian villages where the inhabitants had emigrated to Bulgaria, and 53 villages were settled on pasture land and land of Turkish villages partially evacuated. The Muslim population resented particularly the settlement of refugees on part of the pasture land, but this was regarded as an

66 (Gudelis 1984: 349). Gudelis was born in 1904 in a village of Eastern Thrace. He came to the Komotini area as a refugee after the Greek-Turkish war and settled in a village in the above mentioned plain. He served later as an MP for several periods. He presents a full list of the expropriations in the Komotini area, the number of families settled, and the land allotted to them in each village (pp. 368–370). For more details, see (Gudelis 1991: 17–21). For the colonisation of the Komotini plain cf. also (Dalègre 1995: 239–246).

67 (Schultze 1937: 307–309, 328–333). Gudelis mentions that each family was allotted 40–50 stremma of land (Gudelis 1991: 21).
unavoidable measure which took place all over Greece with the settlement of the refugees (Ladas 1932: 494). Generally, neither the owners nor the indigenous population welcomed the expropriations since the land was given to refugees. In Thrace the ownership by Muslims complicated the situation further, and it was interpreted as a measure to transfer land to the Greeks. However, the indemnities paid were higher than in any other part of Greece. The owners were paid more than 3 times the price per *stremma* than in Greek Macedonia. This was not only due to the fertility of the land, but to the sensitivity towards the Muslims and Turkey (Dalègre 1995: 247–248). In spite of the massive new settlement, Schultze, who carried out extensive field works in the 1930s, states that even at that time the area was not particularly densely populated and there was surplus farmland available (Schultze 1937: 199–200). Besides the practical reasons for settling refugees in Thrace, the colonisation policy of the Greek government was also implemented with due consideration to national security to reinforce the Greek presence in the newly acquired lands (Pentzopoulos 1962: 136).

**Subsequent Developments in Land Ownership**

By 1930 the property questions had for all practical purposes been solved. Some incidents occurred where land belonging to Muslims, but rented by Christians, had accidentally been included in land distribution. Strong measures were taken to prevent this, and apparently there were not many such cases (Tsiumis 1994: 223–224). There is no detailed work for subsequent development in land ownership, and the following is just an attempt to patch together the odd references.

After the settlement of the Asia Minor refugees there was no expropriation of Muslim land until the 1950s. When prime minister Nikolaos Plastiras launched a new agrarian reform, this led to the expropriation of the remaining large estates (*çiftlik*) throughout Greece, to make it possible to provide land to the landless. The law 2058/1952 called for the expropriation of agricultural land exceeding 500 *stremma* in the case of those who cultivated it themselves and 250 *stremma* for those who did not (Andreadis 1956: 30; Ünal 1969a: 283). Andreadis provides a list of expropriations in Ksanthi according to the law 2185/52, which includes 11 Muslim *çiftlik*. A former MP for Rodopi has an overview of subsequent developments in the prefecture which today has the highest proportion of Muslims. He points out that in 1922 the total amount of cultivated land was 722,000 *stremma*, belonging to both Christians and Muslims. By 1948 this had increased to 2,800,000 *stremma*. From a total of 59,905 *stremma* expropriated in Rodopi during 1952, 4,055 belonged to Muslims, 8,300 to American companies and the rest to local Christians. There were also expropriations in

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68 (Andreadis 1956: 30–32). One of these *çiftlik* was Evlalo, which at this point was able to avoid the expropriations, but later became the object of a major land dispute.
1953–55 when the first works were made to secure the land from floods, which had continued to be a problem during the winter months. Gudelis claims that the land expropriated was paid well and as a result of the works the value of the land increased.69

According to a Turkish source “Turkish” çiftlikleri were expropriated during this period for 1/9 of the value and only 1/3 was given in cash and the rest in bonds (Ünal 1969a: 282). I have not been able to check the validity of the above allegations concerning the economic arrangements. These claims could hail back to the campaign against Greece’s minority treatment launched by the Turkish press in the 1950s. In this connection a Greek source countered a claim by Turkish newspapers that the Muslims did not benefit from land distribution. A detailed table shows that in 14 villages 304 Christians families received 3,087 sterma land, and 316 Muslim families received 3,228 sterma land. It was claimed that at this time there were no Muslim households without land, only Gypsies and male children of rural families. They were categorised as landless if their father’s farm was small (Andreadis 1956: 26–32). Likewise, the prefect of Ksanthi claimed that, when the state divided up the Kodja-Orman forest it allotted 323 ha to Moslem families, as against 308 ha to Christians. When the state took over about 200 ha land in the mountain area belonging to Christian monasteries, all of it was distributed to the Muslims of Miki (Nikoglou 1956). The sensitivity of the Greek state towards the minority in the land issue is also displayed by other decisions. In order to impose a solution to the problems created during the occupation and civil war, the law 2536/1953 made all the land abandoned by emigrants in the frontier area into state property. However, with the law 2781/1954 the article 6 of the aforementioned law was suspended for the Muslims in Thrace who had left their land after 1940 (Andreadis 1956: 29; Nikoglou 1956). Again the Muslims were exempted from general measures because of the special minority arrangement with Turkey.

The most substantial criticism from this period concerning minority property was made by the Turkish diplomat Ümit Halûk Bayülken. It deserves a closer look, since it contains several standard Turkish arguments still in use. Bayülken pointed to the Turkish figures presented at the Lausanne Conference which claimed that 84% of the immovable property was owned by Turks, while some 30 years later this figure had dropped to 50%. The Greek authorities were accused of using subtle ways to deprive the Turkish farmers of their land. There was no such thing as a land registry in Thrace and when disputes of ownership took place the costs and obstacles involved in

69 (Gudelis 1991: 18–24). For a detailed breakdown of the land expropriated see table on page 63. In another table (pp. 64–67) he displays the amount of land distributed in various areas during the period 1951–1969 and how many persons benefited from this. He mentions that the land was distributed to both Christians and Muslims without discrimination, but does not indicate how much was given to each group.
proving ownership in court often became insurmountable. The farmer gave up in despair, and emigrated to Turkey to seek a living. The Turkish tobacco workers were employed for much shorter periods than the Greeks and way below the amount of days which would secure them pension rights. Neither did the Greek authorities treat the minority farmers fairly when it came to loans and credits. There had also been usurpation of community property by local authorities. He claimed that the expropriations in 1952 to provide land to the landless resulted in the loss of at least 42,720 dönüm of land belonging to the Turks. The compensation was inadequate, something which influenced their economic conditions (Bayülken 1963: 150–155).

The figure of 84% is almost used like a slogan in Turkish writings up until today. There is no further information about what this figure really consists of, and whether it included state land or only private property. The high percentage also indicates that it relates to the situation before the Balkan Wars. As seen before, the Evros prefecture, which accounts for about half of the arable land in Thrace, had very few Muslims left when the area passed under Greek administration. In Ksanthi and Rodopi it is an undeniable fact that almost all of the farmland was owned by Muslims/Turks in 1920. A Turkish source claimed that the Turks owned more than 80% of the land in Ksanthi and about 79% in the Komotini area. The figures concerning Turkish land were however bolstered by the practice of regarding all public land as Turkish. However, until 1950 the change of ownership ratio between Christians and Muslims was not so much affected by a decrease in Muslim farmland, as by the extensive cultivation of former wasteland by the Greek refugees. If the total amount of cultivated land in Rodopi increased fourfold by 1950, this would necessarily effect the minority’s proportion. Bayülken’s claims concerning the expropriations in 1952 are also difficult to endorse without more detailed evidence. For example, there was more expropriation of Christian than Muslim land in Rodopi at that time, and landless citizens from both groups benefited from the new distribution of land. Another Turkish scholar connects incorrectly the expropriations in the early 1950s to Greek-Turkish relations and the Cyprus issue, while it is related to internal agricultural policy. However, he is correct in pointing out that at this time the Greeks authorities did respect “the rule of law” in the Evlalo dispute (Oran 1978: 32, 34). It should be noted that problems with title deeds and registration of land was also a problem for the Christians, cf. (Dalègre 1995: 248–250, 338–339).

When this is said, I have no doubt about the possibility of moot land disputes, something which is a common phenomenon in most rural parts of Greece. Many times

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70 Interestingly, the earliest Turkish article on the minority uses the same figure of 84%, but defines Western Thrace as an area about three times as big as Greek Thrace (Bahtiyar 1928).
the minority complained about that pasture land allegedly belonging to Muslim villages, had been regarded as public land subject to distribution. In this connection the lack of a land register was a general problem throughout Greece, and not only affecting Thrace. The low educational level of the Muslims, the system of land ownership, the upheavals related to the wars etc., all contributed to create a situation where certain people could take advantage of minority members. However, I do not believe that this was part of a central policy at the time. Furthermore, Bayülken complains about the treatment of the minority in economic matters. I am not in the position to judge if loans and credits were allotted “fairly” to Muslim farmers, but according to Greek accounts the minority benefited extensively from such government support during this period, cf. (Andreadis 1956). Again, the lack of detailed evidence makes it difficult to interpret accurately the conflicting opinions.

The first time after Thrace came under Greek rule when substantial areas of cultivated land belonging to Muslims—as opposed to the fallow land of the çiftlik expropriated earlier—changed hands, was during the period 1953–1960 when Turkey encouraged immigration. As part of the formal arrangements the migrants had to liquidate their property in Greece before leaving, see (Gürün 1994: 203). Osman Nuri mentions that the migration in the 1950s was balanced by the population increase. However, the migration was from the fertile and rich villages and the land was sold to Christians. This meant that the economic strength of the minority decreased (Trakya 726/03.02.1958). I do not have any detailed knowledge about how much land was sold, but it must definitely have influenced the ratio of Muslim-Christian land ownership in the plain, particularly in Ksanthi. After this the situation was normal until 1965, when the tense Greek-Turkish relations led the Greek authorities to initiate certain discriminatory restrictions on the Muslims which will be treated later.

Today, Greek authorities estimate that 71% of the arable land in Ksanthi belongs to Christians, 23% to Muslims, while 6% is public. In the mountain area 99.5 % belongs to the Muslims, while in the plain 83.2% of the cultivated land belongs to Christians. In Rodopi 53.5% of the cultivated land belongs to Christians, while 46.5% to Muslims who have their greatest concentration in the eastern part of the prefecture (Notaras 1995: 48). According to the same source the peculiarities of Thrace have resulted in more usurpation of land than elsewhere in Greece. It began with community land and extended gradually to land abandoned because of migration, and public land. It is estimated that as much as 30% of the arable land may belong to the public. Notaras

73 The most detailed complaints are made in Trakya. A good example is the series in Trakya 508/16.05.1952–519/11.08.1952.
74 The work on a national land register started only in recent years. The draft law for the national land register is printed in Pontiki 02.03.1995. For some of the problems involved, see Eleftherotipia 20.05.1996. The work will not be completed before well into the next century. For the particular problems in Thrace, see (Notaras 1995: 57–59).
claims that the state has been hesitant to protect its property, or the property of third persons, and enforce the law. Sometimes it was claimed to be out of compassion for the landless, other times because it was thought that enforcement of the law would upset the relations with the minority or/and Turkey (Notaras 1995: 57–59). The situation is complicated further by the lack of registration of property transactions between Muslims during the period of discriminatory restrictions (1965–1991).
The pending issues in the aftermath of the population exchange proved hard to settle. All through the 1920s Greek-Turkish relations remained tense. The main problems centred on the liquidation of the property left behind by the refugees, the status of the property belonging to those remaining, and the question of who were entitled to be exempted from the exchange. These are also the issues which have attracted most scholarly attention, and are treated at length in the relevant literature. In the beginning, the strained relations were compounded by the political instability in both countries. Accords to settle the outstanding issues were signed in Ankara 21 June 1925 and Athens 1 December 1926, but little progress was made during the next few years. As the minorities did not have the strength to assert themselves on their own, their situation was directly related to the development of Greek-Turkish relations. When Greece complained about seized property in Istanbul the Turkish delegation countered the complaints by saying that it was reprisals for the occupation of Turkish properties in Western Thrace. In several instances the Turkish government made restrictions on the Greeks of Istanbul in order to bring pressure on the Greek government. In this connection the Turkish press played an active part in demanding retaliatory action against Istanbul Greek Orthodox for the illegal behaviour of the Greeks in Western Thrace. Greece was not in a position to absorb more refugees, and Turkey used the threat of exchange as lever in negotiations concerning Muslim property in Greece (Alexandris 1983: 131). Ultimately it was a question of bargaining practice, and the minorities became pawns within the greater framework of Greek-Turkish relations. This demonstrates that the minorities were not viewed as proper citizens of their host countries, something which ran contrary to efforts directed towards integrating them.

Alleged Abuse and International Investigation

It is clear that the arrival of the destitute refugees must have resulted in episodes where the Muslims suffered. However, the lack of detailed evidence makes it hard to obtain an accurate assessment of the incidents. In October 1922, Muslims complained to the French general staff about refugee violence. An inspection by aeroplane showed no burned villages and on the whole the complaints about plunder and violence

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75 For the Ankara and Athens agreements, see (Ladas 1932: 513–545).
76 (Ladas 1932: 489–491; Alexandris 1983: 120).
seemed exaggerated, but there had been cases of stolen cattle and assaults on people (Dalègre 1995: 227). A Turkish document from 21 June 1924 reports that a band of 200 Greek and Armenian brigands forced the Muslims to migrate against their will (Binark 1995: 330–331). A more curious confirmation of refugee violence printed by a minority newspaper in 1989, came to the surface when an old refugee bragged inadvertently about past accomplishments to some Muslim workers he thought were Christians. In spite of this, the population figures show that very few Muslims left during this period. The Turkish documents are often plagued by a lack of specific information. The reports about pressure and crimes against the Muslim population usually do not specify in detail the nature and extent of the encroachments. This is evident in the motion to the Turkish parliament dated 07.02.1925 by the MP Esat İleri:

Sir. This time the incitement of Constantine has caused the cruelties and oppression to reach an extreme level in Western Thrace where the Greeks always follow a politic of annihilation. What will happen with these unfortunate people who moan under all sorts of oppression and calamities, and who cannot enjoy the possession of their houses and property? Our victorious government must put the defeated Greek in his place [haddini bildirmelidir]. The co-religionists [dindası] must be given the right to live. I submit the matter to the illustrious Foreign ministry and request it to take measures quickly.

The point of departure for Esat İleri is the situation in Greek Thrace, but there is a certain “timeless” quality in his allegations and attitudes toward Greece. It is the kind of allegation which could be used any time, any place. And since what he basically does is to reproduce certain stereotypes, there is of course no need to be specific. In this sense, his motion teaches us more about Turkish attitudes than about the situation in Thrace.

The propaganda war between Greece and Turkey extended to Thrace where people from the minority participated on both sides. According to Greek archival sources, the Turkish consulate in Komotini organised part of the minority to support Turkish propaganda. The teacher Mehmet Hilmi was the most conspicuous figure among the Kemalist adherents. From the first issue of his newspaper Yeni Ziya (New Light), which appeared in 1924, he wrote about Greek oppression and attacks on the Muslims, reflecting what was written in Turkey during this period (Tsiumis 1994: 119–120). Greek sources imply that Mehmet Hilmi did not voice legitimate complaints, but exaggerated or distorted the problems to serve Turkish interests. Conversely, later when Mehmet Hilmi was sent in exile the local Kemalists would claim that the Greek authorities tried to muzzle the voice of the Turks in Thrace by sending away the one who spoke up for their rights (Tsiumis 1994: 129). Mehmet Hilmi would use his relationship to Turkey to increase his prestige among the minority. When he returned

77 See the whole text and commentary in Appendix 5, text 1.
78 (Binark 1995: 331–332). Esat İleri (1882–1957) was born in the Pilea (Torbalı) village of Western Thrace. He joined the Kemalist movement and served as army mufti during the Turkish war of liberation. He was MP for Menteşe (Muğla) and Aydın 1920–1927.
from exile in March 1928 he told that he was allowed to return because of pressure by the Turkish embassy. His newspaper *Yeni Adım* (New Step) published a series of articles in the form of memoranda to the Mixed Commission for the population exchange, accusing the government for usurping land and violating the rights of the minority. This was the same accusation as the Turkish members of the Mixed Commission claimed without success. Gradually the activity of the Kemalists intensified. In the beginning of 1929 the newspaper *Yeni Adım* cultivated the rumour that a population exchange was imminent, or that Turkey would conquer Western Thrace, to intimidate and control the conservatives. The propaganda was reinforced by newspapers and periodicals sent regularly from Turkey and distributed among the minority (Tsiumis 1994: 130–131, 252).

Turkish references to complaints voiced by *Yeni Adım*, provoked the response of Greek diplomats. The Greek Consulate in Istanbul declared that the governor observed scrupulously the clauses of the Lausanne Treaty, and the minority’s condition was good since its numbers had increased from 92,000 in 1922 to 102,000 in 1928. The production of tobacco by the Muslims in Ksanthi had increased fivefold during the last 6 years. The good conditions for the Muslims were allegedly confirmed by the fact that less than 100 persons had opted for Turkish citizenship as they could have done according to article 16 of the Lausanne treaty.79 The minority MP Hafız Ali Galip also made a declaration where he denounced the slander against the Greek authorities by the newspaper *Yeni Adım*. He stated that the requisitions of houses and land had ended and that everybody lived in complete freedom. Education was free, loans were granted for agricultural purposes etc. (F 1928b). The village headman Ali Vasfi wrote an answer to the “slander” of the Istanbul newspaper *Vakit* (15–16 July 1929). He mentioned that the Muslims in Thrace were entirely free and had 4 deputies and one senator in the Greek parliament. The owners of the expropriated estates (*çiftlik*) received good compensation and most of the tobacco cultivation was in the hand of the Muslims etc. (Fotiadis 1995: 70–71). This raises the obvious question: Why should someone like Hafız Ali Galip or Ali Vasfi make public declarations against the politics of Turkey? The logical answer is that they depended on Greece rather than on Turkey. It is very possible that they were “advised” by Greek authorities” to make these declarations.80 Theoretically, someone could have made a declaration to check a Turkish initiative which was perceived as harmful to the minority’s interests, but this is an extremely unlikely interpretation when we consider the situation at the time. Another

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79 (R 1928a). (Fotiadis 1995: 64–65) claims that only 200 of the 94,723 Muslims opted for Turkish citizenship which they could have done according to the Sèvres treaty.
80 This fits in with earlier practice. The Bulgarian historian Trifonov mentions instances from the period when Thrace was under French administration in 1920 when Greek authorities put systematic pressure on Muslims to make written declarations that they wanted to be subjected to Greece (Trifonov 1989: 90).
instance which has been presented by several Greek scholars concerns a protest letter addressed to the Greek prime minister signed by 111 inhabitants of the Pomak village Oreon (Yassıören). It was allegedly occasioned by the activities of Kemalist agents in the village who terrorised them by saying that a population exchange was imminent and when they came to Turkey there would be grave consequences for the Traditionalist Muslims who did not espouse Kemalist ideology. In the letter the villagers write that they are real Muslims, who do not love the new and infidel Turks. Racially they are not Turks, and in the case of a population exchange they will either remain in Greece or go to Egypt and Syria. The historian Kostas Fotiadis calls it a document which displays the absence of the Greek state in Western Thrace, and claims that the inhabitants of Oreon reveal their soul. However, it is very difficult to take such a letter at face value. Particularly because it is from the ideologically sensitive Pomak area. We are speaking about a village with a very low level of literacy, which makes it a crucial question who would have the skills to formulate such a letter, and the connections to forward it to the prime minister. The possibilities of manipulation are great, and without further information about the circumstances which led to the writing of the letter, there are many possible interpretations.

After repeated complaints by Turkey about violations of the Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek-Turkish Populations in Western Thrace and protests from Greek authorities that the situation had been greatly improved, the Mixed Commission agreed to conduct an inquiry concerning the condition of the Turkish population. The investigation began 8 November 1928 and a report was rendered to the Mixed Commission 17 December, which indicated that most of the problems had been solved and that there was a decisive improvement of the lot of the Muslim population (Ladas 1932: 439). One of the more peculiar features of the investigation was that the Turkish representative insisted on treating questions such as the use of fez by part of the Muslim population, the replacement of the Arabic characters by the Latin alphabet and other matters related to the social reforms introduced in Turkey, which were unrelated to the population exchange. This displays Turkey’s ambition to control the minority ideologically and constitutes even an interference in matters which are usually assigned to the private sphere. The Turkish complaints made little impact on the other members of the Commission.

In the opinion of a neutral, as disclosed to the present writer, the whole discussion on conditions in Western Thrace, including the visit there, was the usual sort of filibuster resorted to by the Turkish delegation to prevent any work being done. In his opinion there was nothing in Western Thrace to complain of. If there was a partiality on the part of the administration in favour

81 (Fotiadis 1995: 72–73; Soltaridis 1997: 208, 267–270). Soltaridis includes a facsimile of the Greek translation (from the Turkish original) which was sent to the prime minister. The letter has the date 28.12.1928, while the translation is dated 02.02.1929 and certified by 3 Muslims.
82 (F 1928a). The Turkish alphabet reform was prepared during summer 1928 and adopted by the parliament 1 November the same year.
of the conservative element among the Moslem population, rather than in favour of the liberal
element which followed the innovations of the present rulers in Turkey, this was hardly a question
of minority protection, and certainly was entirely outside the competence of the Commission
(Ladas 1932: 494–495).

The Greek-Turkish Friendship

When Venizelos won the elections in August 1928 he attempted immediately to
improve relations with Turkey, and negotiations were resumed in December 1928.
The implementation of the Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek-Turkish
Populations was completed by the Ankara Convention of 10 June 1930, which paved
the way for a Convention of Commerce and Navigation and a Treaty of Friendship
and Neutrality, both signed at Ankara 30 October 1930. The series of treaties signed
between Greece and Turkey at this time are usually referred to collectively as the
Greek-Turkish Friendship Agreement of 1930. The Ankara Convention dealt almost
exclusively with the liquidation of questions arising from the applications of the Laus-
anne treaty and of the agreement on the exchange of populations. The agreement led
to a shift in the principle for indemnifying the refugees. While before the states should
indemnify the refugees who had left their territory, it was now decided that each state
would take the responsibility for the refugees they had received. The curious result
was that while until this moment each state had an interest in exaggerating the value
of the property belonging to its kindred refugees because it claimed indemnification from
the other state, now the opposite took place because they had to pay themselves (Sarris

The Ankara Convention was regarded as one more Turkish diplomatic victory and
another Greek concession for the sake of stabilising Greek-Turkish relations
(Alexandris 1983: 178). When the ratification of the Greek-Turkish agreement (of
10.06.1930) was discussed in the Greek Parliament, the opposition leader Panayiotis
Tsaldaris claimed that it was necessary to sign a new Greek-Turkish agreement which
would consolidate the minority rights of the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul.
Venizelos replied that he did not consider it to be a wise policy to make the minority
rights a part of the bilateral relations with Turkey. He thought that the behaviour of
Turkey towards the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul would be analogous with the
development of friendly and close relations between the two states (Alexandris 1988:
90). Greece desired for their “co-nationals” (omoyenís) in Istanbul to live as law
abiding Turkish citizens, yet keeping their distinctive traditions and customs
(Alexandris 1983: 187). This gives us an important indication of Greek attitudes
towards the minority questions. Venizelos did not consider it prudent to demand
strong formal guaranties which could be used to challenge Turkey’s minority policy

83 For the full text, see (Ladas 1932: 817–830).
directly. He attempted to display Greece’s sincere intentions to initiate a period of cooperation, and to rule out Turkish suspicions which could lead to a harsher policy, by demonstrating moderation and not pressing for guardianship over the minority.

Neoklis Sarris goes further and interprets the Greek-Turkish friendship in 1930 according to established cultural patterns. He claims that it gave Ankara breathing space to confront the internal crisis and subjected Greece to its wishes. This is considered to derive from the prevailing outlook which regarded Greece as a seceded province of the Ottoman Empire: A small country which had to be obedient to the commands and orders of the protector Turkey, as its virtual satellite. According to Sarris, this is the result of the traditional mentalities which permeate the whole Turkish society. Relations are never equal, but one part dominates and the other is dominated. To a certain degree the image of themselves as the great empire reinforces this attitude. Part of the Greek politicians fell into this mould and behaved accordingly. Sarris ascribes it to the traditional attitude of the Muslims in the Ottoman Empire towards the infidel reaya.\(^{84}\)

**Subsequent Developments in Thrace**

The Greek-Turkish friendship also had bearings on the internal balance in the minority. When the Greek army withdrew from Turkey anti-Kemalist Muslim fugitives had followed it. Some of them belonged to the group which in Turkey is known as the hundred and fifty (\(Yüz Ellilikler\)), with the last Şeyhülislam Mustafa Sabri as the most prominent of them.\(^{85}\) They were men of a certain cultural level who took up positions as teachers and religious personnel in Greek Thrace. From the mid-1920s Turkey protested against their activities and after the Greek-Turkish agreement in 1930 Turkey used the opportunity to request their removal, as the influence of the fugitives prevented the Kemalist reforms from prevailing in Thrace (Alexandris 1988: 92–93).

After the initiation of the Greek-Turkish friendship, Greece agreed to expel from Thrace the people Turkey complained about. This took place on 28 February 1931 and is described by a foreign commentator as an act of “courtesy” by Greece towards Turkey (R 1931a). The Kemalist section succeeded now with the support of Turkey, and the toleration of the Greek authorities, to impose the Kemalist reforms. Allegedly, by the mid-1930s the Turkish consulate and the Thrace Committee in Istanbul had extended their influence to most of Thrace. However, Turkey’s improved relation to Greece also meant that it wanted the minority to behave accordingly. At one point the Turkish consulate withdrew its support for the newspaper *Yeni Adım* because it followed its own line and created tension which ran contrary to Turkish politics. Claims

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\(^{84}\) (Sarris 1992: 59–62, 70). Much of the same attitudes are reflected in the motion of Esat İleri referred to earlier.

\(^{85}\) For some more details about these fugitives, see (Soltaridis 1997: 197–209).
by the Modernist Turk minority newspapers about persecutions of the minority were disclaimed by both minority members and Turkish diplomats (Tsiumis 1994: 253–255). When Turkey asked for the removal of the conservatives, Greece had also requested the removal of the “Turkish Orthodox Patriarch” Papa Eftim, a renegade priest who in the 1920s had turned into some kind of anti-patriarch in the service of the Turkish nationalists. In spite of Turkish assurances, this was never done (Tsiumis 1994: 216). Papa Eftim and his descendants have remained as heads of the “Turkish Orthodox church” until today.86

The Greek state tightened its control again when Athanasios Suliotis-Nikolaidis was appointed General Governor of Thrace.87 He tried to reinforce the security of the state and the friendly relations between the state and the minority. During his tenure the administration reduced its support to the Kemalists. Other problems which occupied him was the foreign propaganda in Thrace and the need to co-ordinate the work of the state services. He created a service called “Section of Political Matters” (Τμήμα πολιτικών Ιποθέσεων) which could also make recommendations in minority affairs, to supervise the implementation of the minority protection (Tsiumis 1994: 228–229).

The political situation changed again on 4 August 1936 with the Metaksas dictatorship. In his foreign policy Metaksas kept friendly relations with Turkey, but the repressive features of his regime extended to the minority too. This put limits on both the political and educational activities of the minority. The initiative of Suliotis-Nikolaidis related to closer supervision of the minority treatment became institutionalised in the Section for Political Matters under the General Administration of Thrace (Νέική διεύθυνση Θράκης, Τμήμα Πολιτικών Ιποθέσεων), which was founded 25 September 1936 by the law N.N.132/1936. It was an independent service within the General Administration, staffed with personnel from the foreign ministry. In spite of the repressive features of his regime, it appears that Metaksas favoured the Kemalists (Tsiumis 1994: 237–245). The relationship with Turkey also saved the minority from such heavy handed treatment as the Slav speakers of northern Greece became exposed to during this period.

86 The curious story of Papa Eftim is treated briefly in (Alexandris 1983). A fuller treatment falls outside the scope of the present work.
87 Ath. Suliotis-Nikolaidis had a lot of personal experience with clandestine activities in Thessaloniki and Istanbul in the beginning of the century, when he served the Greek national cause. He was highly intelligent and must have been acutely sensitive to the effects of foreign propaganda. He began his work in Thrace under the Demertzis government which was appointed by King George II when he returned to Greece on 25 November 1935.
The Minority in Greek Politics Before 1940

Pre-Lausanne Political Representation

In the immediate period before Thrace passed under Greek control, several events contributed to the political organisation of the minority. After the Young Turk revolution overturned the absolutist rule of Abdülhamit II, there were two elections for the Ottoman parliament in 1908 and 1912. I do not have detailed information about the situation in Thrace for any of them. The 1908 elections were dominated totally by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), but in many places it relied on local notables rather than party members. The 1912 elections are known in Turkey as the “election with a stick” (sopalı seçim), because of the intimidation and violence employed by CUP to secure the majority. Several Muslims who would play an important political role in the following years were involved with the “Independent Government of Western Thrace” in 1913.

In the Bulgarian elections of 24 February 1914 the Muslim vote became very important because the Liberal coalition used it in a scheme of electoral engineering in order to remain in government. In the Komotini province—including parts which are now in Bulgaria—the government came to an agreement with prominent Muslims in return for important concessions. These Muslims had also close contact with the Ottoman authorities and their election campaign was directed by the CUP of Edirne. The one sided vote secured the election of 12 Muslims who formed a compact group in parliament and supported the Liberal coalition according to directions from Istanbul. This secured a majority of 126 deputies in parliament against 119 for the opposition. Consequently the Muslim deputies were able to exploit the precarious position of the government and influence strongly the directives to the local Bulgarian administration in Komotini.

Before the Bulgarian parliamentary elections 17.08.1919 both Greek and Turkish agents made agitation among people dissuading them from participating, as Western Thrace would soon be ceded from Bulgaria. The Muslim notables decided on the eve of the elections not to participate, as Greek occupation was imminent, and the elections took place in a tense atmosphere (Trifonov 1989: 49–50).

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88 In 1908 three Turks were elected from the Komotini (Gümülcine) election district. Mehmet Arif Bey (CUP), Hasan Fehmi Bey (independent), and İsmail Hakkı Bey (he was a member of Firka-i Ahrar, Ahali Fırkast, and Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkast). See (Kansu 1995: 372–373).

89 For details, see (Karamatsiu 1996: 38).

90 (Trifonov 1992: 91–102) gives quite a detailed description of the situation before the elections including election propaganda where the prominent Muslims said that those who did not vote for them betrayed their faith, or that they would be expelled from Western Thrace if the government fell.
In the Greek elections of 1 November 1920, 20 Muslims were elected from Thrace (both Eastern and Western) which had recently come under Greek occupation, all of them on the Venizelist ticket. Recent research displays the established viewpoint that the Antivenizelists were unable to field candidates as groundless. The Muslim vote for Venizelos in this area is primarily ascribed to anti-Bulgarian sentiments. The other factor was the conservatives’ opposition to the Young Turks (Karamatsiu 1996: 51–54). In parliament the Muslim MPs of Ksanthi and Rodopi supported the Antivenizel-ist Gunaris government. The Muslims were never really integrated in the parties, but tended to support the one in power.91

In addition to the parliamentary elections we must also bear in mind other political initiatives mentioned earlier, such as the “Independent Government of Western Thrace”, the “Supreme Administrative Council” under the French administration, etc. These must all have contributed to the development of the minority leadership’s political awareness.

**Inter-War Period**

After the “Asia Minor disaster” definitely foiled the Greek irredentist aspirations, the time came for internal developments. The rapid territorial expansion since the Balkan Wars had nearly doubled the size and population of Greece. The integration of these areas proved a formidable task, because of differences in economic structure, legal and administrative systems, and not the least the presence of large groups of alien and refugee populations. These areas were commonly referred to as the New Lands as opposed to Old Greece. The peaceful integration of the New Lands required a gradual process of adaptation through special legislative and administrative provisions which distinguished them from Old Greece for more than three decades. The various regions of the New Lands were headed by governor-generals (super-prefects). In Thrace the last governor-general was G. Fessopulos, who served when the institution was abolished in May 1955.92 A sensitive problem down to the present has been the domination of government administration by Old Greece, and particularly the over-representation in the civil service by its core region, the Peloponnese. Typically the civil servants regarded their assignment as temporary exile, and showed little sensitivity for the local problems. Resentment among the native population (Greek and other) has been widespread and lasting.

91 (Karamatsiu 1996: 58, 85). The more detailed treatment of Karamatsiu displays that the support for the Antivenizelist government was not as unequivocal as presented by (Mavrogordatos 1983a: 238). Mavrogordatos should be consulted for a general picture of electoral behaviour in Greece during the inter-war period.

92 The institution of governor-general began to change character earlier, when the General Administration of Northern Greece appeared in 1945. This was later renamed “Ministry of Northern Greece”, and in 1988 it became the “Ministry of Macedonia-Thrace”, cf. (Tziouras 1996: 264–268, 312–317). For a profile of Fessopulos, see (Skordilis 1994).
The Muslims’ influence in local politics was completely upset by the new reality. In the villages with a pure Muslim population life continued much as before, but in mixed villages and towns the Greek administration made its presence felt. The Christians organised themselves in various cultural and political organisations which had a strong influence on local affairs. The refugees in particular played an important role in this respect, and were often able to impose their wishes independent of the government policy.93 The Muslim leaders based their influence partly on the ability to negotiate the minority vote, partly on the Greek sensitivity towards the minority because of its connection to Greek-Turkish relations. This sensitivity was naturally greater in the central administration which did the negotiations with Turkey, than locally where Christians and Muslims were competing groups.

**The Minority and the Political Parties**

In parliamentary elections the minority did not function as an integral part of Greek politics.94 The parties avoided to create political organisations and networks within the minority and confined themselves to seeking its electoral support through *ad hoc* arrangements on the eve of elections. I do not have any details about such political horse trading during this period, but it is a practice which has continued up until the present. During the inter-war period Greek politics revolved around two main poles: Venizelism headed by the Liberal Party and Antivenizelism headed by the People’s Party. They were supplemented by the smaller Agrarian Party and Communist Party on the left. The Communist Party displayed some tendencies towards Christian–Muslim integration, and was the only party where a significant number of Christians voted for a Muslim candidate. However, this represented a marginal aspect of minority politics (Nikolakopulos 1990–1991a: 179). The nature of the relationship to the larger parties makes it futile to interpret the minority vote according to ideological considerations. There are certainly no ideological reasons why the conservative Traditionalist Muslims should vote massively for Venizelism in the 1920s, which was the party with the clearest formulated policy of integration and assimilation.

The minority’s separate status was reinforced by the creation of electoral colleges for the Muslims in Thrace and the Jews in Thessaloniki in October 1923. In the 1920 elections the Jews and Muslims of Macedonia had voted massively for the Antivenizelists, which tipped the scales of the overall result for this area. By separating the minority votes and granting them a fixed number of mandates, the Venizelist majority in the

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93 See (Tchemalovitch 1933), quoted in (Popovic 1986a: 155–156).
94 See (Mavrogordatos 1983a: 243; Nikolakopulos 1990–1991a: 176) which are the basic sources, together with (Tsioumis 1994: 181–195), for the minority’s participation in Greek politics. See in particular the excellent overview of the minority’s electoral behaviour by Nikolakopulos. The main weakness is the scanty empirical evidence concerning internal minority developments, which reflects the present state of research. For example there exists no systematic study of the minority press in the inter-war years.
remaining population would prevail. Consequently, the electoral colleges were created primarily for domestic reasons, and can be considered as electoral engineering. They were in force in most of the inter war elections (1923, 1928, 1932, and 1933 for the Chamber, 1929 and 1934 for the Senate). Only in the 1926, 1935, and 1936 elections for the Chamber did the Christians and the Muslims of the area constitute a united election district. The separate “electoral college of the Muslims in Thrace” was abolished definitely in 1934 when it was deemed unconstitutional by the State Council. It should be noted that contrary to the Jews, the Muslims in Thrace resisted the abolition of their separate electoral college. This was hardly due to the fact that Venizelism practically monopolised the electoral support of the minority for most of the inter war period; it rather reflected traditional attitudes tied to the separation of the confessional groups in the Ottoman Empire. In other words, they were more concerned about keeping the minority’s status as a separate group, than to influence the overall development of Greek politics. Likewise, unlike the Jews the electoral influence of the minority never became an issue among the Greek public because it tended to side with the block in power.  

**The Minority’s Political Orientation**

The minority was divided between workers and sharecroppers on one side and the notables on the other— surprising in the villages, surprising and zadegân in the towns. Minority politics was dominated totally by the notables in Komotini or Ksanthi. They had several methods of controlling the rural population. Of particular importance was their position as local agents of the large tobacco companies. There was strong political rivalry between the notables who were the spokesmen (söz sahibi) of the minority. The Kemalists camp did not develop into a force threatening the class structure of the minority, but evolved by attracting certain notables to its side. Mehmet Hilmi was the only one among the young educated Kemalists who is known to have challenged the beys (İleri 411/06.12.1985).

The most important factor in minority politics during the inter war period was the traditional clientelist relations and the creation of political parties around a person. Since most minority members only approached the Greek authorities through their leaders, their position was reinforced by their function as middlemen. This function is maybe the prime reason for the seemingly inconsistent behaviour of some minority politicians. To be able to function successfully as middlemen they would need the confidence of both the parties they acted as brokers for. Since the Greek authorities

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96 (Tsiumis 1994: 190–192) has a small portrait of Hafız Ali Galip where he links his contradictory behaviour to his personality. I believe this to be wrong. During a period of tremendous political changes the behaviour of a secondary figure cannot be interpreted independently of the forces he depends on.
and common minority members had little contact, the minority politicians could easily get away with telling a different story to each of them. We must also remember that often the same people functioned as middlemen between minority members and Turkey—usually represented through the consulate in Komotini—which could require other viewpoints. The possibilities of the minority leaders to negotiate their influence towards different masters gave them a certain leeway. If they disagreed or were not satisfied with one master, they could opt for the other one. On the other hand, Greece and Turkey could “forgive” some of the leaders’ past mistakes to get them, together with their clientele, back into their own sphere of influence. Sometimes this degenerated into sheer opportunism by the minority leaders. In the early period, the best example of this is probably Hamdi Hüseyin Fehmi (Hamdi bey) (1897–1965).97 His father had participated in the brief autonomous government in the Pomak villages of Bulgaria after the annexation of Eastern Rumelia in 1885. Afterwards he settled in Ksanthi where he was granted large land areas in the plain. Hamdi bey studied in Istanbul and advocated the Kemalist reforms. When he first ran for MP in 1932 he drew his support mainly from the Pomak areas. During World War II he collaborated openly with the Bulgarian occupation authorities, while after the war he supported Greek claims against Bulgaria. His son Şevket Hamdi was appointed chairman of the pious foundation (vakıf) committee in Ksanthi in 1967 and has remained there since, drawing his support from the Greek authorities.

Each of the personality centred political minority groupings identified with a Greek political party, but without any clear ideological relation. In Komotini the three central persons were Hafız Ali Galip, Hatip Yusuf, and Mustafa Ağa who towards the end of the inter-war period represented respectively the Republican Coalition, the People’s Party, and the Liberal Party. Particularly in 1933 the personal political groupings seemed to centre around three ideological blocks within the minority:

a) The Modernist Turks headed by Hatip Yusuf.

b) The moderate Traditionalist Muslims headed by Hafız Ali Galip, and Mustafa Ağa.

Traditional in their personal behaviour, but not hostile to the Kemalist reforms.

c) The fanatical anti-Kemalist Traditionalist Muslims headed by Ali Rıza Ahmetoğlu.98

In Ksanthi the political formations followed the cleavage between Turks and Pomaks. This was particularly clear in 1932 when two almost pure Pomak tickets participated. In these elections the Pomak tickets obtained 72.2% of the vote in the rural Pomak areas and only 20.7% in Ksanthi town, while conversely the Turkish ticket obtained 22.5% in the rural Pomak areas and 67.1% in Ksanthi town (ibid.). Some of the politicians were able to establish “family dynasties” which have continued to play a role up until the present. In Komotini this was the case of Hafız Ali Galip,

97 If nothing else is indicated see the small portrait by (Nikolakopoulos 1990–1991a: 203).
who was the outstanding politician in the inter-war period, as well as Hatip Yusuf. No one was able to establish their influence to the same degree in Ksanthi, but there are some examples of family continuity.

While the Christian population in Thrace voted consistently for Venizelism, a considerable portion of the minority vote displayed a sharp turn towards Antivenizelism after 1933. This was not due to ideological developments, but seems to be related to Antivenizelist exploitation of the cleavages within the minority. It appealed to people of the Modernist Turks’ camp in its bid for power since the most prominent Traditionalist Muslims were already associated with Venizelism. In Komotini, the Greek prefect who belonged to the People’s Party made a deal with the Modernists to attract minority votes (Üstün 1971). Conversely, the Modernist Turks’ relationship with the party in power reinforced their position within the minority. It should be kept in mind that the Modernist Turk camp had already strengthened its position after the Greek-Turkish treaties of 1930, which means that it also had some influence to bargain. This is of course a generalisation since the Greek parties dealt with persons, not organisations. The same is true within the minority where the Traditionalist Muslim/Modernist Turk cleavage did not prevent instances of peculiar alliances across these lines, such as the collaboration in 1936 of Hamdi Hüseyin Fehmi who supported the Kemalist reforms and Niyazi Mumcu who was regarded as a fanatic conservative.

Tsiumis mentions that the Muslim politicians occupied themselves with the full range of minority issues, of both general and particular interest, such as education, military service, property rights, solution of local problems, etc. They did not make their presence felt in the parliamentary discussions (Tsiumis 1994: 190). Their loose integration in the Greek political parties and their insufficient knowledge of Greek must have ruled out any such participation. There are also questions about the seriousness of some MPs. The Kemalists in Ksanthi had high hopes to Fehmi Hasim Bey when he was elected in 1926. However, he sold his estate immediately and settled in Istanbul. His salary was transferred to him and he never returned (Trakya 771/13.07.1959). The best known political initiative took place when the minority MPs made an application to Venizelos, and in response he worked out a draft law dated 13 June 1930. This represents the most conspicuous attempt to put the minority affairs within a clear legal framework. It would have given the Muslims greater freedom to regulate internal minority affairs such as their schools, pious foundations, religious institutions, etc., and anticipated the election of muftis by general male suffrage.99 Their choices would of course be subjected to the Greek authorities for final approval. The law was never ratified, unknown for which reason. It could be

99 Of the 41 articles in the law draft, 34 are reprinted in (Tunda-Fergadi 1994: 192–202). For the views of a minority member, see the comment by Osman Nuri in Trakya 470/28.03.1951.
related both to internal Greek opposition and to the question of reciprocity in Greek-
Turkish relation. There is of course the question if the minority could have done more
itself. Osman Nuri held the opinion that there had later been many opportunities for
both conservative and modernist MPs, but they hesitated to shoulder such a complex
question (Trakya 470/28.03.1951).

Kemalist Movement and Traditionalist Muslims

The most important political cleavage within the minority was the rivalry between
the Traditionalist Muslims and Modernist Turks. The Traditionalist Muslims based
their influence on the conservative character of the minority, while the Modernist
Turks identified with the Turkish reforms. However, Greek or Turkish patronage
must have been as important as their support within the minority.

The Traditionalist Muslim conservative element did not only draw on local forces,
but was reinforced by the anti-Kemalist fugitives. The later so prominent Kemalist
minority politician, Osman Nuri, was highly critical of them. He mentions that they
were not only political refugees belonging to the 150, but people who were afraid of
returning to Turkey because they had incriminated themselves during the Turkish war
of liberation. When the reforms began in Turkey after the war they used the reforms as
pretext for their opposition to Turkey. He claims that by their hostility to Turkey, they
played with the feelings of the local Turks. They were imposed on the minority insti-
tutions and appointed to the vakıf management, mufti office, as school teachers, and
head masters with a salary paid by the minority. According to Osman Nuri “this group
of traitors” played a great role between 1923 and 1933, and broke the morale of the

The first adherents of the Kemalist reforms in Thrace, were comparatively few and
mainly concentrated in Ksanthi. Several of them had their education from Edirne
where they had frequented schools controlled by the CUP. They often worked as
teachers and were quite young at the time. The best known among the early activist
was the teacher Mehmet Hilmi (1901–1931). He was a graduate from the teacher
college in Edirne, and has later been hailed as the one who “kindled the light of
Turkish nationalism in Western Thrace”. Another important figure was Osman
Nuri (1902–1990) who later gained prominence as MP. In his successive newspapers
Mehmet Hilmi was the staunch defender of the minority’s rights and the main
propagandist for the Kemalist reforms. According to a Greek scholar, Mehmet Hilmi
used every opportunity to criticise the authorities, many times wrongly. The leitmotiv

100 For portraits of some of the secondary figures, see (Yıldız 1966; Yıldız 1968a; Yıldız 1968b;
Yıldız 1968c; Yıldız 1970).

101 (Yıldız 1976). For another portrait by an admirer, see Trakya’nın Sesi 20/25.06.1982. The
information is taken from the minority newspaper Ülkü. No date is specified, but it must have been
written by his collaborators relatively shortly after his death.
was that the Turks could not live in Thrace. He criticised in particular the fugitives, whom he blamed for the bad state of education and for being national traitors.\textsuperscript{102} As a result of his fierce criticism of the Greek authorities, he was sent 3 times in internal exile. The first time he was accused of harming the security of the state and spreading communist propaganda. The accusation related to communism was probably due to exaggerated zeal by the local Greek authorities, and to the fact that his first newspaper, \textit{Yeni Ziya}, was published as the organ of the tobacco workers’ union. However, he was able to return after intervention by the Turkish embassy, which made the Foreign Minister himself ask for his case to be reexamined to avoid friction and accusations from Turkey (Tsiumis 1994: 126–127). He is said to have followed the Kemalist reforms in Turkey day by day and worked for their parallel development in Thrace. He was able to gather the “progressive” youth around him and organise them in associations (Kurtuluş 1979: 173). In 1927 he founded the “Ksanthi Youth Association” (İşkeçe Türk Gençlik Yurdu). It was frequented by the “progressive” youth and not looked favourably on by the well to do families.\textsuperscript{103} In the following year he organised the youth in Komotini in the “Turkish Youth Union” (Türk Gençler Birliği). These associations were modelled on the “Turkish Hearths” (Türk Ocakları), which played a leading role in Turkish nationalism. For all their zeal, the influence of the Modernist Turks must have been quite limited in the beginning. Their foremost proponent Mehmet Hilmi received only 66 votes when he was candidate for the Agrarian Party in 1926 (Tsiumis 1994: 185).

There is a fine line between demanding the minority rights and doing propaganda for a foreign power. Sections of Greek society were deeply suspicious and hostile towards the Modernist Turks because of their connection to Turkey. Some of the complaints against them may have been exaggerations and/or deliberate provocation. This is difficult to ascertain without further evidence, but it can be instructive to recapitulate some of the complaints presented by the Greek press: The newspaper \textit{Makedonia} (26.02.1928) claimed that the Kemalist propaganda was rampant in Western Thrace and undermined the authority of the state. The centre was the Turkish consulate in Komotini which supported various agents who toured the Turkish villages and pressured people to collect money for the Turkish air force. They also terrorised the refugees and said that Western Thrace would soon be taken by Turkey, and those who co-operated with the Greek authorities would suffer the same fate as people suffered in Asia Minor. Some of the conflicts concerning land were said to have been created on purpose by the Kemalist propaganda, which in turn gave the Turkish government

\textsuperscript{102} (Tsiumis 1994: 139–141). When Tsiumis refers to the minority press he makes use of contemporary translations by the Greek authorities.

\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Gündem} 43/06.05.1997. Allegedly, Mehmet Hilmi’s initiative came after suggestions from Osman Nuri.
pretexts to complain and oppress the Greeks in Istanbul. The newspaper criticised the
state for allowing the foundation of the “Turkish Youth Union” in Ksanthi which
created discord between the Muslims and the state services. Likewise, the newspa-
paper *Efimeris ton Balkanion* (28.02.1928) wrote that the Kemalist propaganda
worked systematically in Thrace while the authorities were sleeping. The “Turkish
Youth Union” was presented as a branch of the Turkish government party which had
the goal to spread Kemalism in Western Thrace and to undermine the state. It also tried
to create a chasm between the two population elements in order to justify the clamour
Turkey was making about Western Thrace. The coincidence in time as well as the
similarities in content of these two articles may point to an orchestrated campaign.
However, some of the accusations may be correct as Mehmet Hilmi displayed little
restrain and the Kemalist regime could be quite heavy handed at times. Some of the
accusations are also found in reports by Greek officials. Venizelos’ minority inspec-
tor, Stilianopulos, mentions in a report from July 1929 that the Turkish propaganda
was very well organised. It was led by the consul in Komotini, who kept the
formalities outwardly. In every important town in Thrace there were a couple of
confidants who also visited the smaller villages. The most important centres were
Ksanthi, Komotini, and Didimotiho. They had most success among the educated
youth who were attracted by the Kemalist reforms (Tsiumis 1994: 251–252).

The conflict between the two wings extended and intensified towards the end of the
1920s. It took place in politics, education, press etc., and included both legitimate and
illegitimate methods. Both wings tried to secure the support of the Greek admini-
stration to undermine the opponent. The Muslim conservative religious personnel
refused to carry out services such as weddings, burials etc. for those who wore
modern hats. They refused the children of their Kemalist opponents to attend school,
with the result that they had to study at home or attend Greek schools. Modernist
teachers were sacked from their jobs by the Muslim Community. The conservative
wing called the modernists heretics and asked them to make their own mosques and
schools. They also tried to prevent the introduction of the Latin alphabet with all
means. The modernists on their part secured the backing of the consulate and
undermined the authority of the *muftis* by threatening or bribing religious personnel to
do the services for them. The conflict between the Kemalists and the conservatives
continued unabated until 1931 when Mehmet Hilmi died and a large part of the fugi-
tives, including Mustafa Sabri, were expelled. After the signing of the Greek-Turkish

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105 Quoted in (Tsiumis 1994: 122, 250).
106 (Tsiumis 1994: 127–129). He bases his account on archival material from the Greek Foreign
Ministry and reports from Stilianopulos to Venizelos.
friendship agreement Greece favoured the Kemalists, but the rivalry inside the minority continued (Tsiumis 1994: 135–136).

The expulsion of conservative leaders together with the new climate in Greek–Turkish relations, led to the decline of the conservative section which simply tried to preserve its position. The conservatives and remaining fugitives made a new association “Committee of Islamic unity” (İttihat-i İslami Cemiyeti) in 1933 with Komotini as centre. They also issued the newspaper Mudafaa-yi İslam (Tsiumis 1994: 222).

Turkish nationalists regard these people as traitors who undermined the Turkish national feelings in Thrace. It is claimed that the Greek authorities were behind the foundation of this association, and used it as a vehicle to make propaganda against the Kemalist reforms favouring Muslim identity as preferable to Turkish (Özgüç 1974: 75–77). Whatever its popular support, it was able to survive at least until the 1970s.

By the mid 1930s the Turkish propaganda had gained foothold throughout most of Thrace. In 1933 there broke out discord within the Kemalist wing for personal reasons. Some of them were under the influence of the Thracian Committee led by Fuat bey and the official Turkish authorities. In December 1933 the Turkish consul tried to reconcile the two wings. He told them to abandon their old aspirations and work for the good of both Greece and Turkey against their common enemy Bulgaria (Tsiumis 1994: 226–227).

The minority inspector Stilianopulos mentions in a report to Venizelos from 1929 a third group, constituted by modernists who were anti-Kemalists and friendly disposed towards the Greek state. They opposed the policy of Mehmet Hilmi and the Turkish consulate, which they regarded as damaging for the minority and wanted him exiled to another part of Greece (Tsiumis 1994: 134). This is very interesting from an ideological point of view, and a position which could have secured a more harmonious integration of the minority into Greek society. However, there are no signs that this group developed into a force to reckon. Consequently the way to modernisation was more or less monopolised by Turkish nationalism.

The Minority Press

The first Turkish language newspapers in Western Thrace appeared in 1923 after the area had passed under Greek sovereignty. Before this time the nearest cities with a Turkish press would be the larger cities Thessaloniki and Edirne. In the

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107 I have no ambition to present a complete overview of the minority press. An admirable attempt has been made by (Konortas 1985). It goes without saying that it has not been possible to trace with accuracy the fate of all the newspapers and periodicals. Hâki has an overview of the minority’s publications in İleri 301/27.05.1983, adding on Trakya 708/18.07.1955. For brief presentations of the content of various newspapers, see (Özgüç 1974: 116–131), (Kurtuluş 1979: 171–179), (Iordanoglu 1989), and (Eren 1997: 160–171). I do not possess a collection of any newspapers before 1946. For the sake of comparison, an overview of the Turkish language press in Bulgaria is offered by (Şimşir 1986a).
beginning the minority press in Ksanthi held the most prominent position, while from
the mid 1930s the pendulum swung towards Komotini. As a consequence of the fact
that the newspapers were owned by one or a few persons, who used them as a vehicle
to serve their personal ambitions, the newspapers did not outlive their founders. The
eyearly newspapers showed little interest for Greek society at large and were mostly
concerned with the internal minority issues. None of them participated in associations
for the Greek provincial press (Tsiounis 1994: 136). There is no available information
about the circulation of these newspapers, but I find it unlikely that any of them print-
ed more than a couple of hundred copies. Some newspapers have been issued with the
support of Christian politicians in connection with elections, as was the case with the
first minority newspaper Zaman in 1923. Many of the minority politicians have had
newspapers on a regular basis and/or election newspapers. Up until the mid 1970s
most of the newspapers can be classified according to the important cleavage between
the conservatives and the Kemalists. Since there was no indigenous press tradition
both groupings were directly or indirectly inspired from outside.

In the beginning the conservative newspapers were dominated by the anti-Kemalist
fugitives from Turkey. Çapur İslâm Hakkı wrote polemically against the reforms of
Atatürk in his newspaper İtilâ (1925–1930). He was joined by Mustafa Sabri who
took the leading role as opponent of Kemalism with his newspaper Yarın (1927–
1930) (Özgüç 1974: 119–123). The Kemalist newspapers were dominated by young
persons educated according to the spirit of the new Turkey. The most prominent
person of this group was the aforementioned Mehmet Hilmi.

It is unlikely that any of the newspapers could cover their expenses by sales alone.
Questions surrounding the origin of regular or sporadic financial support have been a
reoccurring and sensitive issue, particularly during periods with tension in Greek-
Turkish relations. What is usually implied is that the Kemalist newspapers obtained
support from Turkey through the consulate in Komotini, while the conservative
newspapers enjoyed the support of the Greek authorities. Kemalist writers accuse
routinely the conservative newspapers of being instigated and supported by the Greek
authorities. For example, Özgüç divides the minority press into the “nationalist” (milli-
A scholar who supports himself on Greek archival sources, argues that the longer life
span of the modernist newspapers was due to external support. In particular Mehmet
Hilmi’s Yeni Adım, is reported to have been the organ of the Turkish consulate and
was inspired and supported economically by it after May 1927. Conversely, he argues
that the brief life span of most conservative newspapers repels the Turkish claim that
they were financed by Greek funds (Tsiounis 1994: 141–146).

Besides financial support there is also the question of direct interference. This con-
cerns a nexus of relationships within the triangle minority-Greece-Turkey involving
protection or punishment. The activities of the fugitives provoked the reaction of the Turkish embassy in Athens and the consulate in Komotini. From 1924–25 Turkish diplomats protested to Greece because of the fugitives’ “intrigues” against Turkey. They also accused the local authorities in Thrace for supporting the fugitives and subsidising their newspapers, since they flattered the Greek regime. Later they protested against the appointment of some of the fugitives in key positions as teachers and religious personnel. According to Greek sources the accusations usually proved to be inaccurate on closer inspection, and in most cases the appointments happened on the request of the minority. In many instances the authorities treated the conservatives favourably, but they also took measures to limit their activities in order to improve the relationship to Turkey. In May 1926, responding to protests by the Turkish ambassador, the Greek foreign minister requested that any favourable treatment of the anti-Kemalist newspapers had to stop. The General Governor of Thrace answered that there was no such treatment. The sensitivity towards Turkey is well illustrated by the punishment of 7 Greek officers with 30 days imprisonment after the Turkish consul accused them of cursing the Turkish president. In August 1926 repeated pressure from the Turkish embassy caused the Greek foreign minister to ask the general governor of Thrace to close down the anti-Kemalist newspapers, if they continued to criticise the Turkish president. As a result of the insistence by the Turkish embassy, it was decided towards the end of 1927 to banish the fugitives who wrote in the minority newspaper İtilâ, among them Mustafa Sabri. However, the decision was suspended after the relationship with Turkey deteriorated.\footnote{Tsiumis 1994:124–126. Long passages of the relevant documents from the Greek Foreign department are included in (Sarris 1992: 493–497).}

Local Greek authorities reacted against the decision to exile the anti-Kemalist fugitives, as it would leave the field open to the Kemalists. In its recommendation, the General Administration of Thrace asked for the simultaneous removal of the editor of Yeni Adım, or else it would create great impressions and give momentum to the nationalist section of the minority (Soltaridis 1997: 203–204). Mustafa Sabri reacted strongly to Turkish attempts to stop his writings and condemned it as Turkish disrespect for press freedom:

> The [Greek] government ought to answer officially those gentlemen who move heaven and earth with the good relations [to Turkey] as pretext, and to teach them not to make suggestions outside their authority. In the opposite case these faltering actions lead to the conclusion that Ankara fears the Şeyhülislâm and that Greece fears Ankara…\footnote{Yarın 09.01.1928, quoted in (Soltaridis 1997: 205, n. 458).}

On the whole, I have the impression that the Turcophone press in Greek Thrace has been very vocal about the minority’s rights. A Greek diplomat had the opinion that the freedom was so large in Thrace that some newspapers almost openly became organs of the Turkish consulate in Komotini, enjoyed material support from it, and had systematic and ferocious criticism of the Greek authorities. The newspapers were
considered totally Kemalist Turkish in style and overtly anti-Greek (Tunda-Fergadi 1994: 174). From the post-war press I know Trakya as very outspoken towards the Greek authorities. Greek sources claim that Trakya and Akın followed an anti-Greek line and often published articles of an abusive and even subversive nature. In recent years there are also abundant examples of articles criticising strongly the Greek authorities. There have of course been instances of prosecution and penalties against the minority press, something that I will mention later, but the minority has had ample possibility to voice its grievances.

This forms a stark contrast to the situation in Turkey. The Greek diplomat claimed that the newspapers in Istanbul were under strict control and did not dare to write anything which might offend Turkey. They were more or less Turkish newspapers in Greek, consisting of news translated from Turkish newspapers. He did not want these newspapers to be like the minority newspapers in Thrace, but they should at least be able to serve the particular interests of a section of the Turkish population within the framework of the law (Tunda-Fergadi 1994: 174–175). This pattern continues up until today. The only exception was Eleftheri Foni of Andreas Lambikis. When he demanded security for their children and homes after the September events in 1955, the military authorities banned his newspaper. It was allowed to resume a month later, but Lambikis was detained in a military prison for three months. “On one occasion, he was questioned for three consecutive days as to whether the Patriarchate or the Greek embassy had instructed him to campaign on behalf of the minority.” (Alexandris 1983: 256, 261, 288). He was expelled from Turkey in September 1965, after he had published an open letter to the minister of education about the restrictions on the minority schools. Later the Grecophone press in Istanbul seems to have avoided any explicit criticism of Turkish authorities. When I read regularly the minority newspapers (Apoyevmatini, Iho) during the autumn of 1993, I found them devoid of anything which could possibly be perceived as criticism.

The Minority’s Institutions

The strong dependence on Greek-Turkish relations should not make us ignore other aspects of minority existence. The social organisation of the Muslim minority was faced with a new situation when the Muslims ceased to be the ruling element. For the sake of comparison, the Greek Orthodox of Istanbul were adjusted to minority life,

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110 (Greece’s Information Services 1965). See also (Nikoglou 1956: 7).
111 See for example the collection of articles from Iho during the 1970s (Zafiris 1981). It is difficult to give a concise description of the factors which conditioned the fear. It could be mentioned that when the American Helsinki Watch committee wrote a report about the Greek Orthodox minority of Istanbul, it mentioned in particular the great fear among the minority members they had been in touch with (Whitman 1992a: 1). Hâki has a description of the fear he felt about certain books because of his experiences when he was a student in Turkey. This is highly illustrative and has been translated in Appendix 5, text 2.
and had well developed minority institutions which survived more or less intact grouped around their spiritual leader the Patriarch. In the Ottoman Empire they had always been ruled indirectly through their communal leaders. The Muslims in Greek Thrace—like Muslims in other parts of the Balkans—lost much of their social organisation together with their political power. During the Ottoman period the administration on the level of empire had belonged to the Muslims, and when the empire vanished this part of their social organisation was lost along with it. What remained was their religious institutions led by the muftis, their pious foundations (vakıf), their schools, their political representation, and their newspapers. On the village level, the two pillars of the minority’s social organisation were the mosque and the school.

The Mufti Offices

The highest religious leaders of the minority are the muftis. The three mufti offices are situated in Komotini, Ksanthi, and Didimoticho. The muftis are public servants and have their salary from the Greek state.\textsuperscript{112} Lower religious personnel such as imams (prayer leader) and muezzins (man who calls people to prayer) were not employed by the state and usually have other sources of income beside their religious services. Like religious personnel of other religions in Greece they are exempted from military service. The religious institutions and pious foundations of the minority received financial support from the Greek Government. In 1929 there were 300 mosques in use, with 378 imams and a total of 667 religious personnel. There were 5 medrese with 83 pupils and 7 teachers, and two tekkes with 21 novices.\textsuperscript{113}

The functions of the mufti office went through a restructuring after Western Thrace was incorporated into Greece. Earlier the mufti only gave opinion on legal matters, while the kadi functioned as judge. Now the kadi lost his function, as civil law suits were taken care of by Greek courts. The mufti was given the right to judge in religious/family matters, and his decisions were accepted by the Greek authorities of justice. The function of the mufti and kadi was thus fused in the mufti office.\textsuperscript{114}

Within this system the mufti takes care of cases such as marriage, divorce, alimony, guardianship of orphans, inheritance etc. He also has a central position as regards the minority’s social institutions. He supervises teachers and religious personnel, and controls the income of the pious foundations. For the conservative Muslims his office

\textsuperscript{112} Originally there were four, but Aleksandrupoli and Didimoticho fused in 1927 (Soltaridis 1997: 80–81).

\textsuperscript{113} The figures from 1929 are taken from a report by the Greek minority inspector Stilianopulos (Tsiumis 1994: 147). For the Greek economic support to the minority institutions for 1929–30, see (Tunda-Fergadi 1994: 183). Stilianopulos can be considered a good source, but it should be noticed that Tchemalovitch claimed that many of the mosques were not in use (Tchemalovitch 1933), quoted in (Popovic 1986a: 158).

\textsuperscript{114} (Soltaridis 1997: 73–74). I am not sure exactly when this change took place. There are no kadis in Thrace any more, but the abortive law draft from 1930 made provisions for them (Tunda-Fergadi 1994: 195–197).
wields considerable authority. The initiatives of the young Modernist Turks was 
resented by the mufti of Komotini, who in the late 1920s sometimes refused to execute 
services for them such as marriages and burials. This made the Modernists seek the 
services of the muftis who were outside his area of jurisdiction (Tsiumas 1994: 151–
153).

According to the law 2345/1920 the minority should elect its muftis by general 
vote.115 This law was made for the different situation which existed before the popu-
lation exchange. It was never applied, and in practice the muftis became appointed by 
the Greek authorities after consultations with the leading minority members. After 
Mehmet Hilmi’s complaints in the 1920s, this does not seem to have been an 
important issue, as Turkey generally ignored the religious leaders and put its weight 
behind the adherents of the Kemalist reforms. It was only after 1985 that the mufti 
issue took on a whole new dimension, something which I will come back to later.116

It is interesting to observe how Greece and Turkey expressed their concerns in 
minority matters after their relations improved. The Turkish delegation led by İnönü 
which visited Athens in October 1931 pressed for the abolishment of the religious 
courts as their main demand. Venizelos replied that this was not possible to do because 
it would violate the agreements on minority protection and create reactions from the 4 
minority MPs who all belonged to his party. It was also necessary to have the react-
ions of the older generation in mind. İnönü argued that it was not possible for Greece 
to administer the minority with hodjas. Turkey wanted the Muslims in Thrace to 
become good Greek citizens and develop intellectually. Venizelos did not make any 
demands for the Greek Orthodox minority in Turkey, but expressed his faith in the 
Turkish government. İnönü immediately turned his attention to the role of the Greek 
Orthodox church in Turkey, and said that its traditional role in the administration 
would not be tolerated. In his comment, Venizelos pointed out that the Patriarch was 
the religious leader, and any attempt to challenge his position would be felt by all 
Greeks (Anastasiadu 1982: 81). As has usually been the case, we can observe that the 
position of each state is influenced by a curious mixture of ideological motives and 
expedience coupled with their dual relationship to the minorities in each country.

The Pious Foundations (vakıf)

The economic backbone of the minority’s communal life is their pious foundations 
(vakıfs).117 Consistent with the Ottoman system where each group was defined by

115 This was also envisaged in the abortive law draft from 1930 (Tunda-Fergadi 1994: 193–194).
116 Some of the treaty and legal aspects of the mufti issue will be treated later in connection with the 
controversy which began in 1985.
117 The pious foundations are sometimes referred to by their Arabic forms wakf (pl. awkâf or evkaf 
according to Turkish orthography) while the regular Turkish forms are vakıf (pl. vakıflar). In Greek it 
is vakis (pl. vakisia). Frequently they are also referred to as the Muslim community (Cemaatı 
İslamiyye). In fact, these were two different institutions which in practice became united, cf. Trakya
religion, these are religious institutions. They consist of various kinds of property such as land plots, houses, shops etc., and the rent collected is used to pay religious personnel, teachers, charity, etc. In the inter-war years, the important vakıfs in the towns were managed by a committee of five prominent Muslims, proposed by the mufti and approved by the Greek authorities. The committees were obliged to give accounts twice a year and present a budget in the beginning of each year (Tsumis 1994: 149–151). The smaller vakıfs in the villages were managed by persons elected by the inhabitants. This was not based on any law and the authorities were ambiguous towards it. However, in many cases they recognised de facto these committees. Some of the vakıf property had been used for the temporary settlement of refugees, but this was returned already in 1925. In April 1927 the Muslim MPs proposed a law for the organisation of the minority to the Greek Department of Education and Religious Affairs, which asked among other things for the villages in the countryside to be subjected to the Muslim communities in the larger cities. This was regarded to be inspired by Ankara, and the General Governor of Thrace did not want such a strong centralised organisation of the minority.

When the Greek minority inspector, Stilianopulos, visited Thrace in 1929 he observed that the committees did not function satisfactorily and there were many irregularities. They sold land without permission, lent money without a proper procedure, and spent considerable sums outside the purpose of the foundations. It is very difficult to get an overview over how the administration of the vakıfs have functioned through the years. As is always the case in economic matters, there are many conflicting interests involved. The persons of the vakıf commissions had no salary, and would say their work was a service to the community. However, they could use their position both to increase their political influence and to make transactions which gave direct or indirect economic benefits. Usually these transactions are difficult to trace, and those involved would of course have no interest in exposing them to public scrutiny. There are many accusations about abuse of vakıf property, but these cannot be taken at face value because they are often politically motivated. Hâki gives an example of someone who complained about the abuse of vakıf property.

468/12.03.1951. For an overview of the legal status and the laws which concern the vakıfs, see (Eren 1997: 63–134). The developments up until 1951 are summed up in Trakya 465/12.02.1951–472/09.04.1951.

118 For more details, see (Tsumis 1994: 149–151). Tsumis mentions that the committees were formed according to the decision No. 29799 by the General Administration of Thrace (Yenikí Diíkisi Thrákis). It has later been a point of dispute to which degree the law 2345/1920 should be applied for the election of the committees. For figures on Greek subsidies to the Muslims communities in 1925, see (Soltaridis 1997: 82). Appendix 3, has a list of chairmen for the Komotini vakıfs from 1903 until today, according to (Eren 1997: 69–70). This book has also much information about the legal framework and the appointment/election practice up until today.

119 (Soltaridis 1997: 84–85). The abortive law draft from 1930 had also provisions for the vakıfs which can give an impression about ideas for the administration of them (Tunda-Fergadi 1994: 198–200).
because he wanted to manage it himself, although he had already settled in Turkey and it was clear that he only intended to exploit the communal property for his own enrichment. Many of the religious personnel, and local notables are accused of abusing vakif property, and the vakif property has decreased because minority members have sold out the assets. In the nationalist discourse it is easy to say that the Greek authorities do not want the minority organisations to function well. However, many Muslims who rent shops, houses etc. are of course also pleased to pay as little as possible and to deal with a lax administration.

The Greek authorities’ attitude to the pious foundations has been greatly influenced by Greek-Turkish relations where the principle of reciprocity is applied. From this point of view Turkey is considered to have the upper hand because the vakıfıs in Istanbul are of much greater value. A foreign observer remarked after a visit to Thrace in the early 1950s that the vakıfı property in Western Thrace had not been confiscated as was the case in the other Balkan countries (Balic 1952: 37). In this connection it is important to have in mind the different relation of Greece because of the minority in Istanbul.

When the National Liberation Front (EAM) took over control in Thrace after the occupation ended in 1944, there were elections of vakıfs management. These functioned until the parliamentary elections in 1946 (Nikolakopulos 1990–1991a: 185–189). During the Greek-Turkish negotiations in 1946 the Greek delegation pressed for the return of the customary system of electing committees in Istanbul, which had been arbitrarily abolished during the 1930s (Alexandris 1983: 242). In the case of Thrace, the paragraph of the law 2345/1920 concerning the management of the vakıfs was put in force by Royal decree in 1949. This initiated a period with regular elections of management committees of 12 persons in Komotini and Ksanthi and 7 persons in Didimotiho and Aleksandrupoli. Several people who served during this period used their position as a springboard to a political career. In 1967 the junta issued a general law (65/1967) which substituted elected commissions with appointed ones. This also restricted the size and the authority of the commissions. In Ksanthı and Komotini the committees were made up of 7 persons. The management committee in Aleksandrupoli became abolished as there was no muftı office there. The committee in Didimotiho did not function and the deputy muftı took care of community affairs alone. After the Junta fell, the vakıfı managing committee in Komotini asked for elections to form a new committee, while the managing committee in Ksanthı remained indifferent. When the Greek authorities introduced the new vakıfı law 1091/1980 it resulted in great reactions from the minority. It reduced the status of the minority vakıfs from being private institutions to normal public committees. The Greek prefects would have ample

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120 fleri919/28.08.1998. This is the first article in a longer series.
121 The reactions to this law will be examined later.
possibilities to interfere as the vakıf property was divided between many trustee committees. The law has not been applied, and it seems today that the fate of the vakıfs is mainly a question of Greek-Turkish relations.
Greece’s involvement in the Second World War began with the Italian attack through Albania 28 October 1940. Greece was not only able to repel the Italians but launched a counter-attack into Albania. Several minority members served in this campaign, something which is occasionally referred to in the minority press to stress their services to the fatherland. After this initial success, Greece was invaded by Germany 6 April 1941 and by 9 April all of Thrace was taken. 21 April, the administration of Eastern Macedonia and the central part of Thrace, comprising Komotini and Ksanthi, was handed over to Germany’s ally Bulgaria which remained there until 1944. A period of colonisation and Bulgarisation of the native Christian population followed. The persecutions of the Greeks led to a wave of refugees towards other parts of Greece.\(^{122}\) The Greek premier Tsaldaris said in his speech on 16 September 1946 at the peace conference:

> …Three times our hearths were plundered, our population was chased away and slaughtered. During the war, which ended recently, tens of thousands people found their death under the Bulgarian occupation. Other tens of thousands had to fly from the Bulgarians zone and seek refuge in the German occupation zone… (Zalimidis 1966: 13).

There are reasons to believe that Bulgaria was somewhat more cautious towards the Muslim population, both because they were not “ideological competitors” like the Greeks, and they had a strong patron in Turkey. However, there are descriptions of extreme hardship and oppression towards the Muslims as well. Some prominent minority leaders were sent in exile to Bulgaria.\(^{123}\) The Pomaks became the target of Bulgarian assimilation attempts, and there were also instances of collaboration.\(^{124}\) There were no conversion campaigns for the Pomaks like in 1912–1913, but new religious personnel was brought from Bulgaria and except for religion, which was taught in Arabic, the language of education became Bulgarian.

Activists of the Bulgarian Muslim cultural educational organisation “Rodina” [fatherland] under direction of the Ksanthi mufti Kamen Bolyarski (Arif Beyski) took the initiative to throw away

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\(^{122}\) For a contemporary presentation, by someone who was engaged in the relief of refugees, see (Svolos 1945). For further descriptions of the situation during the Bulgarian occupations, see (Lefakis 1954: 53–68). For well written recent presentations of the consequences of the Bulgarian occupation on the Greek population in Eastern Macedonia see (Kotzageorgi and Kazamias 1994) and (Kotzageorgi 1998). For a Bulgarian account of the influence on the local population, see (Daskalov 1991; Daskalov 1992).

\(^{123}\) See (Batibey 1976). This is not a scholarly work, but the author is a native of Thrace and writes about the events as he experienced them. According to Bulgarian sources 2,474 Greeks and 3 Turks (all from Ksanthi) had been expelled by 30 September 1941 (Daskalov 1991: 23).

\(^{124}\) The best known instance of Pomak collaboration with the Bulgarian occupational authorities is Hamdi Hüseyin Fehmi Bey, see (Alexandris 1983: 310). For observations on the Pomaks by a Bulgarian official who was in Thrace under the occupation see (Kiril 1960). For additional information on the Pomaks, see (Tsiumis 1997d: 75–79).
the feraces and fezes, change the Turkish-Arabic names to Bulgarian ones and shake off the
Turkish influence. In spite of dissatisfaction among the hodjas and imams they had significant
success among the Bulgarian Muslims in the Ksanthi region.\footnote{125}{Daskalov 1992: 33. For a collection of documents concerning the activities of “Rodina”, see \textit{Rodopski Sbornik} vol. 7, 1995.}

Many from the minority migrated to Turkey because of famine, but after a while the border was closed. During the occupation their common fate brought the local Christian and Muslim element much closer to each other. An indication of this is that the leading Greeks among those who had been able to remain frequented the minority coffee houses (\textit{Trakya} 773/03.08.1959).

**The Bulgarian Factor and the Civil War**

 Atatürk’s prediction in 1923 that Western Thrace would become a source of conflict between the Bulgarians and the Greeks proved ominous. Bulgaria’s \textit{de jure} acquisition of Western Thrace in 1913 had given her significant political, economic, and strategic advantages. Of prime importance was the much desired outlet to the Aegean Sea. In addition to the objective benefits it also contributed towards realising the nationalist aspiration of a “Great Bulgaria”. Consequently, the loss of Western Thrace in 1919 dealt her a serious blow. The vindication of Western Thrace had exceptionally high priority in the foreign policy of Bulgaria in the period 1919–1941. The area was thought of as genuine Bulgarian land based on the short rule between 1913–1919 and vague ideas about Bulgarian domination in the Middle Ages.\footnote{126}{For a good presentation of the Bulgarian discourse on Western Thrace, see (Znamierowska 1993; Znamierowska-Rakk 1995). For a general overview of the war time occupation, see (Yonchev 1993).} In the inter war years Bulgaria emerged as the chief revisionist power in the Balkans, with Macedonia and Western Thrace as her highest priorities. This set the premises for the foreign policy of Greece during this period, and played a key role for the Greek-Turkish \textit{rapprochement} in 1930. Bulgaria also proved to be the main stumbling block for the attempts of Balkan co-operation on minority policies in the inter-war years, cf. (Tunda-Fergadi 1986a; Tunda-Fergadi 1994). The occupation during the Second World War gave new impetus to Greek suspicions about Bulgaria’s designs, something which was later reinforced by the Cold War. The Greek grudge and fear against Bulgarian designs—usually referred to as the “northern danger”—would last for several decades.\footnote{127}{There are several publications condemning Bulgaria at the end of the war. For characteristic examples, see (Pipinelis; Christopoulos 1944).}

When the Bulgarians retreated in September 1944, Thrace passed under the control of EAM. The Bulgarian occupation had ravaged the area and there were serious problems with the supply of food and other basic necessities. In April 1945 power was transferred to the regular Greek authorities. This alleviated somewhat the situation as it secured more regular supplies, although it could hardly cover the needs of the
population. Thrace became one of the main theatres of the civil war. It affected in particular the Pomak villages which occupied the mountain area suitable for guerrilla warfare. The government forces came during the day and the communist guerrilla during the night while the minority was caught between the devil and the deep blue sea.\textsuperscript{128} The communist forces in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace included a “Turkish section”, but its ability to attract the Turkish speaking Muslims of Thrace is questionable.\textsuperscript{129} Osman Nuri claims that many were fooled by the communists, and that the damage to the minority could have been much larger if he had not intervened so that people did not assist the armed bands which seemed strong at the time (\textit{Trakya} 888/08.08.1964). The subsequent minority MP Hasan Hatipoğlu was an officer in the Greek army at the time and toured the villages making anti-communist propaganda.\textsuperscript{130}

\textbf{Greek-Turkish Friendship Once More}

The first period of Greek-Turkish friendship is considered to have lasted until 1938. After the death of Atatürk, the new political leadership in Turkey was more reserved towards Greece. During the Second World War Turkey kept its neutrality, while Greece came under the German–Bulgarian occupation. The discriminative measures against the Greek Orthodox in Istanbul during the war, have sometimes been interpreted as that Turkey took advantage of the suspension of the reciprocity and balance with the minority in Thrace.\textsuperscript{131} The best known among these measures is the infamous Capital Tax (\textit{Varlık Vergisi}), which was applied unfairly and ruined the economy of the Greek Orthodox community.\textsuperscript{132} The application of this tax constitutes another example of Turkey’s unwillingness to accept the non-Muslims communities as

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{128} The minority newspaper \textit{Trakya}, which began to be published again with the issue 290/21.10.1946, after a 5 1/2 year break because of the war, had regular reports about incidents in Muslim villages because of the civil war. See, for example, \textit{Trakya} 332/04.08.1947. See also (Tsiumis 1997d: 94–99).
\item \textsuperscript{129} For various appeals to the minority and a facsimile of the Communist newspaper in Turkish \textit{Savaş}, see (Aydınlı 1971: 311–316). Here the minority is exhorted not to migrate to Turkey, where the government is said to have deviated from the principles of Atatürk, in order to keep the minority in Thrace. Simeon Soltaridis also presents the newspaper \textit{Savaş} in a reportage about the Muslims during the civil war (\textit{Eleftherotipia} 18.02.1998). The Turkish communist Mihri Belli, who edited the \textit{Savaş} newspaper, has quite a lot of information about the situation in his memoirs (Belli 1998).
\item \textsuperscript{130} Personal communication.
\item \textsuperscript{131} See (Nikolakopoulos 1990–1991a: 185, n. 26).
\item \textsuperscript{132} For the situation of the Greek Orthodox community in Istanbul see (Alexandris 1983: 207–233). The basic Turkish source for the Capital Tax is (Ökte 1951) (also available in English translation), who had first hand experience as he was involved in the bureaucratic application of the tax. His presentation of the discriminatory features led to accusations of treason. A more recent Turkish study represents a new attempt of internal criticism of a dark page of Turkish history (Akar 1992). A more open discussion about these events has only started recently after the ANAP deputy Yılmaz Karakoyunlu wrote a “fictional” book describing these events titled “Salkım Hanımın Taneleri” (\textit{Turkish Probe} 361/12.12.1999). For a look on the general consequences of the Capital Tax, see (Clark 1972).
\end{itemize}
equal Turkish citizens. However, Turkey also sent significant relief to the hunger stricken Athens in 1942.\textsuperscript{133}

Within the framework of Turkish diplomatic efforts to approach the allies, the ambassador in Athens took initiatives to improve Greek-Turkish relations in July 1945. In 1947 Greece and Turkey became included in the Truman doctrine and a new period of co-operation commenced when both countries became members of NATO. However, both periods of Greek–Turkish friendship (1930–1938 and 1947–1954) had been imposed by external considerations, rather than emerging as the result of genuine understanding (Alexandris 1988: 114–119). The improvement in Greek-Turkish relations proved to be a blessing for the minorities in both Greece and Turkey. It initiated a period which even today is remembered as a golden age.

The Minority Society in the Aftermath of the War

In the early 1950s minority life had still very much the character of a continuation of Ottoman society (\textit{İleri} 411/06.12.1985). A foreign observer drew a rather favourable picture of the situation at the time. There had of course been damage and destruction during the war and civil war, but nothing as vicious as in Yugoslavia. The Muslims’ relationship with their Greek Orthodox neighbours was considered to be of a friendly nature. He mentioned particularly the rivalry between the conservatives and the Kemalists. The religious conservatives were regarded as few and with little influence. Most of the minority sympathised with the secular ideas of Kemal Atatürk, and the visitor seemed to be taken aback by the intensity of Turkish nationalism among them (Balic 1952: 35–37). His observations are indicative for the atmosphere among the town population, and explains in part the desire for migration to Turkey.

Migration

There has always been a certain immigration from former Ottoman lands to Turkey. Turkey has also encouraged this at various periods. In June 1934 the Turkish Grand National Assembly passed a law concerning “placement and life of population becoming bound to Turkish culture”, and initiated a policy of wholesale repatriation of Turks from foreign areas, particularly the Balkans, as part of the country’s demographic policy (Kostanick 1957: 103–104). In spite of this, the Muslims in Greece were regarded as a particular case because they were left there as part of the arrangement laid down in the Lausanne Treaty. The early migration from Western Thrace to Turkey was rather limited and consisted mostly of wealthy people and youth who went to

\textsuperscript{133} A Greek scholar points out that the Greek Orthodox community had organised collections which financed much of the food. It had initially been permitted to send 50,000 tons, but Ankara later withdrew its permission and only 17,500 arrived. He claims that Turkey exploited this gesture to the utmost for propaganda purposes (Alexandris 1988: 103–14). An example of this kind of writing, which also gives the higher figure of 30,000 tons of food, can be seen in (Er 1987: 30).
Turkey for education etc. The Bulgarian occupation and the civil war gave a new
impetus to migration from Thrace, and many fled because of the difficult living
conditions. However, when the situation stabilised the migration continued and was
reinforced from the mid-1950s by the Turkish policy of free immigration. In the 1950s
there was also considerable migration from other Balkan countries. The large
migration and expulsion of Muslims from Bulgaria in 1950–1951 was related to the
collectivisation of land, imposition of communist ideology on the Muslim population,
and cold war tactics. During this period the stream of refugees became too great to
cope with for Turkey, which had to close the border on two occasions (7 October
1950 and 8 November 1951). On both occasions the border was closed on the pretext
that Bulgaria sent illegally a group of Gypsies into Turkey along with the *bona fide*
refugees (Kostanick 1957: 106, 108). The large migration from Yugoslavia later in the
decade was related to Turkish demographic policy. A Turkish scholar gives the
following figures for the period 1939–1960: There was a total number of 23,808 from
Greece, 7,753 of them before 1950. It reached a peak in 1955–1956 when there were
more than 3,000 a year. During the same period 153,928 migrated from Yugoslavia,
with more than 30,000 a year in 1956–1958. From Bulgaria there were 193,652 with
154,393 only in 1950–1951.134

In the early 1950s many people left Greece illegally (*kaçak*) without papers. This
was partly organised by networks including people from both the majority and minor-
ity.135 After a while Turkey started to take measures to curb this traffic. For example,
*Trakya* reports about the procedures involving the return of 100 people who had gone
to Turkey without papers by boat (*Trakya* 480/19.06.1951). Some people complained
about the unbearable situation in Greece when they were caught. This was made into a
big issue in an article by *Hürriyet* in September 1953. The newspaper embarked on a
polemic against Greece, which Greek authorities took great pains to prove was un-
founded (Andreadis 1956: 52–53). Obviously the Greek authorities were very sensi-
tive to this kind of critique because of the implications for the minority in Istanbul.136

In the period 1953–1960 there was free immigration to Turkey, and Turkey encour-
gaged people to leave.137 This did not only effect the conditions of those who left, but
also of those who remained. When Hâki made one of his village tours some 30 years
later, an old man told him what had happened to his village Thalasya (Tikızl). It had
once been one of the finest villages of the area, but it was ruined by the free migration

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134 (Orhonlu 1964a: 60), who bases his figures on (Geray 1962). The Turkish diplomat Bayüلكen is
at variance with these figures and states that from 1939 to 1958 more than 40,000 Thracian Turks
emigrated to Turkey. From 1951 to 1957, 19,550 Turks emigrated from Western Thrace in accordance
with Turkish migration regulations, while 884 emigrated without papers (Bayüلكen 1963: 150–151).
136 For a broader treatment of the polemics related to migration during this period, see (Tsiumis
1999).
137 cf. (Gürün 1994: 203).
policy (*serbest göçmen politikası*) in 1955. Most of those who went to Turkey without papers in the years of crisis 1940–1950 returned. However, with the free migration policy people sold what they had and obtained a paper from the municipality that they had liquidated their property in Greece, which was a condition for migrating. People were seized by panic and the village emptied. This influenced greatly the surrounding villages too, which started to empty at this time (*İleri* 341/27.04.1984). Osman Nuri describes the phenomenon as a migration fad (*moda*). It began in 1953 when those who had relatives in Turkey could migrate freely, while others went illegally. They were encouraged by Turkish newspapers. The next year, the procedure for obtaining papers became more regular. Some who had gone earlier to Turkey did not obtain citizenship and had to return to Greece and obtain a migration visa. In this fashion they also lost their Greek citizenship (*Trakya* 631/11.07.1955).

Not everybody who wanted to migrate were able to do so. A Turkish newspaper mentions the requirement of migration visa for Western Thracian Turks who desired to settle in Turkey according to the “Vekiller Heyetinin 30 Mart 1954 No. 4/2781” decision. In the Pırmalık mahalle of Ksanthi more than two thousand people had acquired Greek passports and wanted to settle in Turkey. They were registered as *établis* according to the Lausanne treaty, but could not obtain migration visa from the Turkish consulate in Komotini. They were given no official explanation why they could not get a migration visa, but according to hearsay it was because someone had said that they were Gypsies. Allegedly, this was done on purpose by some notables both to keep up the market and the number of Turkish votes. When the journalist asked the Turkish consul about the case, he answered that the Foreign Ministry would only give immigrant visa to those who were of the Turkish race (*Türk soyundan*). He held the opinion that they were not of the Turkish race because of their dark skin etc., and Turkey wanted people who could be useful for the state (Arpat 1954).

There were of course both general and specific reasons behind the migration. A minority member mentioned that many migrations to Turkey were related to that the greatest fear of Turks living in foreign countries was to become Christians (Batıbey 1976: 112). A Greek author mentioned more prosaic reasons, such as avoiding military service, lack of land leading to population pressure, hopes to find a better job, and other economic reasons. Many of the most prominent Muslims migrated to Turkey during this period. Some people did not find what they had hoped and returned to Greece (Andreadis 1956: 53–58). Minority members consider Turkey’s politic at the time as contradictory, because on the one hand she did much to improve the minority schools in Thrace, on the other hand she encouraged migration (*İleri* 685/11.09.1992).
Cyprus and 1955

The period of Greek-Turkish co-operation in minority affairs came to an abrupt end with the so called “September events” in Istanbul. These events had a number of both short and long term effects, and have been referred to constantly in Greece up until the present. The September events have often been interpreted as a Turkish attempt to put pressure on Greece to relinquish her initiatives in connection with Cyprus. The most complete study on the Greek Orthodox minority in the 1950s connects the Turkish minority policy only indirectly to Cyprus, and argues that Cyprus was the pretext rather than the reason. When Ankara granted greater freedom to the minority after the Second World War it began to flourish again. A new round of initiatives to strengthen the minority organisations, which would secure them some self-sufficiency within modern Turkish society and make it easier for the minority to survive, made Ankara concerned and caused her to reverse its policy. This happened before Greek-Turkish relations became strained because of the Cyprus issue, and displayed Ankara’s reluctance to tolerate the existence of the minority, cf. (Stamatopulos 1996: 25).

In the end of August 1955 the situation was tense because of the Cyprus issue. There were rumours that the Greek Cypriots were preparing an attack on Turkish Cypriots on 28 August 1955. The “Cyprus-is-Turkish Society” (Kıbrıs Türktür Cemiyeti) stirred up public opinion in connection with the Tripartite Cyprus conference in London. A Turkish scholar interpreted the riots which took place on the night of 6/7 September as a youth demonstration which got out of hand, in response to the news about the bombing of Atatürk’s house. He stressed that the events created great sadness in Turkish opinion. The contemporary Turkish press centred on three issues: The effects of Greece’s “provocative attitude” in the Cyprus issue on Turkish opinion; the bomb in Atatürk’s house of birth in Thessaloniki; provocation of the left-wingers against a sincere demonstration. Much later a Turkish general characterised proudly the September events as “the successful work of extremely well organised secret services”. Turkey continued to hint to that Greek commitment to enosis would endanger the Istanbul minority.

Thus in February 1956, during the Makarios-Harding negotiations, the Turkish Ambassador in London, Fuat Ürgüplü, said that if Turkey sensed a Greek success in Cyprus, “there was a risk of a massacre of Greeks at Istanbul which would make the riots of last September a mere child’s play” (Hatzivassiliou 1991: 151).

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138 They are usually referred to as the “Eylül olayları” in Turkish and “Ta Septemvrianá” in Greek.
139 There is of course a vast material in the Greek press. Some representative articles that I have read include: Ena 18.09.1991, pp. 114–119; Kathimerini 05.09.1993; Eleftherotipia 06.09.1993; Eleftherotipia 04.09.1995.
140 (Armaoğlu 1959: 78–83). For longer and more recent Turkish accounts of the events cf. (Dosdoğru 1993; Demirer 1995)
141 Quoted in Milliyet 01.06.1991 and Aktüel 09.09.1992.
The moral and material losses in the “September events” were great. According to Greek sources 200 women were raped in the suburbs, where the greatest destruction of churches and other Greek institutions took place. 1,004 houses, 4,348 shops, 27 pharmacies and laboratories, 21 factories, 110 restaurants, cafés, and hotels were destroyed. The mob gutted 73 churches, 26 schools, and 5 athletic clubs, which was a serious blow to Greek Orthodox communal property. In contrast, a Turkish scholar gave the figure of 862 destroyed shops and mentioned the great material losses (Armaoğlu 1959: 82). There are of course a lot of personal testimonies. We can for example look at a recent reportage in a Greek newspaper where Despina Isaakidu, who was an 8 year old girl at the time describes the events as she experienced them. She lived in an area near the city walls. One week before the events the town councillor (dimotikós símvulos) came and marked all the houses of the Greek Orthodox with a red cross. When her mother went outside to ask why they did this, she was told brusquely to go inside. Her father was a cobbler and he too sensed that the marked was uneasy. He usually worked until 21.30 to 22.00 o’clock at night, but on the evening of the events his partner who was a Turk told him to go home at 18.00 to be close to his family. When he asked why, he got no answer. A long time afterwards his partner told him that everything had been planned. He also revealed that some years earlier they had made an oath on the Koran inside the mosques that when the time came and they got the order they would not leave upright any houses belonging to infidels. At 20.00 o’clock when they had supper, the first stone broke a window pane. A little later hordes of people were brought in with trucks. They broke everything in their way and left the walls as empty shells. When the martial law was declared around 5 o’clock the next morning there was nothing left to break. 6 soldiers were posted at their door, ostensibly to protect them. She could hear one of them say: “You three take the mother and rape her, and we three will rape the daughter.” She became scared and started to cry and scream and someone came and scolded the soldiers and took the women to his house to protect them (Ta Nea 12.01.1998).

Of particular interest from our perspective, was the involvement of a Muslim student from Thrace in the bomb affair. Oktay Engin (1934—), son of the former MP Faik Engin, had been admitted to the Thessaloniki law faculty in 1952 as the first minority member to study at a Greek university. He did not participate in the university entrance exams, but secured entrance and a full scholarship (550 drachmas a month) by favouritism from the Greek authorities. However, by the intervention and recommendation of the Turkish consulates in Komotini and Thessaloniki he also received a large scholarship from the Turkish Foreign Ministry’s fund for the assistance of the

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142 For the figures above and a concise presentation of the events, see (Alexandris 1983: 256–266). The most complete accounts of the events presented within the Greek framework, including large photographic material, are (Kaloumenos 1991; Drinis 1998).
Western Thrace Turks (963 drachmas a month as well as expenses for books and study material). After his arrest the Turkish government covered all his legal expenses and gave material support to his family. He was set free on bail next June and a couple of months later he escaped to Turkey where he has had an illustrious career in the Turkish administration.\textsuperscript{143} It is probable that he fled with the tolerance of the Greek authorities, because of broader political considerations, and the whole case was downplayed in Greece (\textit{Kathimerini} 07.05.1995). This case gives us a glimpse of the possibilities open to leading minority members. The ordinary minority members are not properly integrated into Greek society, and the minority community is structured so that both Greece and Turkey deal with the minority through relatively few persons. These persons are able to use their position to obtain favours from both countries. As is clearly demonstrated in the case of Oktay Engin, a favour from one country does not necessarily foster loyalty, nor does it exclude the soliciting of favours from the other. In other words, it is not so much their abilities as their special position in Greek-Turkish relations which makes both countries “court” them.

The continuous reference to the September events in Greece contributes toward keeping up the negative image of Turkey and the sense of injustice inflicted by her on Hellenism. It is to a certain degree cultivated and exploited politically. The Greek MP (and later Foreign Minister) Theodoros Pangalos proposed in parliament to make 6 September into “commemoration day for the uprooting of the Constantinopolitan Hellenism” (\textit{Eleftherotipia} 04.10.1995). This displays the central position of these events in the Greek discourse on the relationship with Turkey. A side effect is the tendency to refer to it every time Turkey or the “Turkish” minority have any complaints about the situation in Thrace. Osman Nuri, who condemned the September events when they took place, claimed that Greece reminded the minority about this all the time and used it as basis for retaliation and to justify its own bad behaviour (\textit{Trakya} 775/24.08.1959).

\textbf{Grievances and Discrimination}

In the 1950s there were several campaigns in the Turkish press against the alleged ill treatment of the “Turkish minority” in Greek Thrace. At times the Turkish government too expressed various complaints. It is impossible to understand the dynamics of these allegations without viewing them in their proper political setting. Towards the end of 1953 the newspaper \textit{Hürriyet} took the lead in a campaign against the Greek treatment of the minority and soon others followed. There can of course be several motives involved, but Andreadis points to the internal Turkish political scene as the

\textsuperscript{143} See (Gudelis 1991: 12–14) and (Dosdoğru 1993, 99–100, 364–366). See also the interview of Oktay Engin by Simeon Soltaris in \textit{Eleftherotipia} 01.09.1999. Here he mentioned that he wanted to study in Turkey like all the minority members at the time, but his father insisted that he should study in Greece. His portrayal of the events and his own role is unconvincing.
newspaper was in opposition to the Menderes government. The articles are claimed to have been full of lies (Andreadis 1956: 45). Judging from the scanty selection of press clippings in my possession from this period, I am inclined to agree with him. The allegation that Greece carried out a systematic politic to undermine the existence of the minority is a leitmotiv in Turkish descriptions, but seldom substantiated by arguments. Turkey was particularly concerned about the influence of the conservatives. When the Turkish parliament discussed the situation of the minority, there was resentment because the Pomaks were referred to as only Muslims and not Turks, while the medrese in Komotini was accused for being a centre of reactionaries. The Turkish press was also known to have made a furious polemic against Greece for not restricting the conservatives (Andreadis 1956: 47). With the benefit of hindsight these accusations seem odd as we are speaking about a period when Greece tried to placate Turkey in every way, and which is known as the best period in the history of the minority. This is another example which shows that Turkish writings often are out of touch with the actual situation in Thrace. Andreadis claims that the false accusations were made to create hatred against the Greeks of Istanbul. The newspaper Her Gün (22.01.1955) wrote in an article titled “The Greek oppression in W. Thrace”: “If we do not retaliate promptly against the Greek Orthodox in Istanbul for the injustices inflicted on the Turks of W. Thrace, the Turks of Thrace will suffer the harmful consequences of our leniency.” (Andreadis 1956: 46). It is considered that the minority in Istanbul was used as a scapegoat by Turkey after Makarios had made the Greek sponsored application to the UN for the application of self determination in Cyprus. Turkey’s complaints that the Muslims of Thrace lived “under almost intolerable conditions” were an indirect argument against Enosis (i.e. unification with Greece) in Cyprus (Hatzivassiliou 1991: 152). In 1956 the situation became so tense that Greece contemplated the exchange of the Istanbul and Thrace minorities as a last resort, for the protection of the former (Hatzivassiliou 1991: 153). After the signing of the Cyprus Agreement in 1959, Ankara stopped claiming that Greeks and Turks could not live together and reverted to its pre-1955 attitude. The British Embassy in Turkey reported that the Turkish Government was more concerned—for reasons of prestige—with the failure of the Thracian minority to embrace the Kemalist reforms, than with their material well-being and alleged Greek discrimination (Hatzivassiliou 1991: 158).

It is interesting to look at the role of the leading minority politicians in the Greek-Turkish polemics concerning discrimination. Andreadis points out that when Hamdi bey failed to be re-elected to the Greek parliament in 1952, he wrote a series of articles in his newspaper Milliyet where he described life in Thrace as unbearable. He targeted

144 (J 1955), referring to articles in Cumhuriyet 22 May, 31 May, and 8 June 1955.
145 (Greece’s Information Services 1965). For a more exhaustive treatment, see (Linardatos 1978: 193–222).
mainly his voters and presented it as a result of his absence from parliament. He also fed continuously the Turkish newspaper *Hürriyet* with his articles, which picked up on this and exploited them for its own purposes (Andreadis 1956: 45–46). Hamdi bey was known for his opportunism and changed continuously positions and alliances throughout his political career. Osman Nuri criticised his lack of principle, and blamed him for undermining his own struggle. In 1952 Hamdi bey wrote in his newspaper that the minority had never been unjustly treated. This happened when he was MP for the opposition and under no particular obligation to support the government policy. In the middle of 1953 he made a U-turn and changed his position completely. If a Greek herdsman got into a fight with a Turkish villager late one night because they were drunk, he acted as a demagogue and presented it as a problem concerning the minority’s rights. Osman Nuri claimed that these excesses made harm to the minority (*Trakya* 888/08.08.1964). The above incidents give us various information about the options and choices of the minority. It points to a high level of press freedom, even to the degree that the minority was not afraid even of slandering Greece. It cannot be excluded that Hamdi Bey possibly used his articles as extortion towards the Greek authorities, knowing their sensitivities. His behaviour exemplifies the very short term and opportunistic behaviour which has been part and parcel of minority politics. In the final instance, it also reinforces the minority’s marginal position in Greece’s political life.

The Greek sensitivity to the Turkish criticism during this period is amply displayed by the fact that the Greek authorities organised an excursion for the foreign press to examine the conditions on the spot. Dr. Stephan Nikoglou, former Governor General of Western Thrace and Prefect of Ksanthi, gave an orientation about the situation in a booklet which has the form of a speech. He said that the excursion was occasioned by the need to disclaim the “spate of calumnies and falsehoods” from Turkey since 1953, particularly by its press and radio. He informed about the general situation of the minority; the schools, religious organisation, political representation, government subsidies to the minority etc. (Nikoglou 1956). The impressions of the participants in this excursion were later referred to by the Greek authorities to counter Turkish accusations. Leslie Jerman was one of 35 international journalists who had participated in 1956. After touring the region and interviewing members of the Turkish and Greek communities, he wrote in the London *Daily Telegraph* (09.11.1956):

> We flew back to Athens. There I asked the views of a Turkish Government official. He said that the Moslems in Thrace were being held back and that the Greeks put impediments in the way of a raised educational standard. The argument was scarcely borne out by the evidence of my eyes and ears (Greece’s Information Services 1965).

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146 His “opportunism” could also be interpreted as emotional reactions and narcissism.
The quotation above is of course carefully selected by Greek authorities to disclaim Turkish complaints about mistreatment. However, all the foreign reports that I have seen from this period point in the same direction. A few months before the “September events” the American embassy in Greece sent a secret report to the State Department titled: "The minority of Greek Thrace: harmony and happiness". The writer Murat Williams stressed that: "The minority seems very satisfied and live in absolute harmony with the Greek neighbours", and that contrary to the Turkish publications “the Greeks do not treat its members harshly" (Kathimerini 24.03.1990). The German scholar who reviewed Andreadis’ book (1956) visited Thrace in the spring of 1958. He had a thoroughly positive impression of the good neighbour relations between the Greek and the Turkish/Muslim population, and of the just treatment by the Greek authorities. He thinks Andreadis’ book gives a reliable and objective picture of the situation (Kienietz 1958). Greek sources also point to a statement by a Turkish visitor:

The prefect of Istanbul, Niyazi Aki, who at the Greek Government’s invitation visited W. Thrace in November 1962, stated on his return to Turkey that the rights of the Turks in Greece were fully respected, that they were well treated by the administrative authorities and no pressure at all was exerted on them (Greece’s Information Services 1965).

Regardless of who describes the situation of the minority, the dominating perspective is to look at it within the confines of Greek-Turkish relations. There exists nothing like a sociological analysis of their living conditions, or about their social integration. In particular, the Greek and Turkish discourse describe the situation in black and white without attempting to look at the finer points of what makes up minority life. The foreign policy perspective leads to a game of accusations and refutations, where the conclusion has consequences for other unsettled issues. The obvious political implication of some Turkish accusation against Greek minority treatment during this period, made it easier to refute them. Particularly, because many of them were obviously exaggerations and distortions. The mere language in some of them makes them objectionable to most impartial readers. There are, however, some carefully argued critiques which have more substance and are also harder to evaluate without detailed knowledge of the situation. The best argued and most influential presentation of the Turkish position during this period is the speech by the Turkish diplomat Ümit Halük Bayülken at the London School of Economic and Political Science, on 13 March 1958 (Bayülken 1963). It is clear from his speech that he stresses the problems of the minority in Thrace to support Turkish concerns about Cyprus, but his arguments deserve a closer consideration.

I have referred earlier to the parts of his speech which concern demography and land ownership. In this connection, some of his accusations did not withstand closer scrutiny. Bayülken also touches indirectly on the problem of conflicting statements by minority members. He mentions that the statements of the muftis cannot be taken at
face value since they are dependent on the Greek authorities which appoint them. Later he quotes the minority newspaper *Trakya*, to underscore a point. He stresses that he quotes *Trakya* for the sake of objectivity, as the other newspaper, *Akın*, has been accused of receiving support from Turkish authorities (Bayülken 1963: 153–158). Bayülken is, of course, correct in pointing out that the muftis’ statements cannot be taken at face value. However, they are not the only people who must take into consideration certain relations and dependencies. In other words, there are no reason to take Bayülken’s quotes at face value. The newspaper *Trakya* was known to have a very good relationship to the Turkish consulate and can hardly say to represent the objectivity or impartiality he attributes to it. Statements in the minority newspapers must be seen within their context, which can be everything from petty politics to Greek-Turkish relations. For example, the same newspaper later described the 14 years from 1950 to the beginning of 1964 as the calmest period in minority history. Everybody had been able to express themselves freely, and Osman Nuri took the advantage of this to defend the minority against those who were hostile to it. He also tried to take a lead in the educational questions of the minority, and claimed that during these 14 years the minority made significant progress in education (*Trakya* 888/08.08.1964). In this case Osman Nuri’s approach was influenced by his need to accentuate his accomplishments when he was MP.

The question of discrimination is also closely connected to the ideological outlook of Turkey. It is clear that Turkey wished to impose its ideological structures on the minority, and Greek reluctance to act as Turkey’s proxy was denounced as discrimination. A Greek prefect mentions that when Turkey insisted, especially in 1954, on the term “Turkish” instead of Moslem”, this was tolerated by the Greek Government “with the sole object of bolstering Greek-Turkish friendship.” For comparison he also stresses that the Turkish government would not call the minority in Istanbul “Greek” (Nikoglou 1956: 1–2). The best known examples of this Greek policy are two circulars by the General Governor of Thrace, Fessopulos, from 1954–1955. In the first he instructs on the order of the Prime Minister, that the terms “Turk-Turkish” should be used instead of “Muslim-Muslim” on all occasions, replacing the various inscriptions such as “Muslim School, Muslim Commune, etc.” with “Turkish”. In the second circular he pointed out that there were still some signs with “Muslim” instead of “Turk” and enjoined that the previous order should be enforced.147 Turkish sources usually refer to these circulars as a proof of the minority’s turkishness, while Greek sources usually consider them to be embarrassing Greek concessions. Whatever you call it, clearly the matter is handled strictly within the framework of Greek-Turkish relations,

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and what the minority members themselves may think is not at issue. When Greek-
Turkish relations cooled off after the “September events” we have the publications of
protests by conservative minority members against the imposition of modern Turkish
ideology. To which degree this was encouraged directly or indirectly by Greek author-
ities can be debated. However, it is natural that part of the minority would not feel
comfortable with all aspects of the Kemalist ideology, as has been the case in Turkey
itself. A Greek prefect presents the dilemma of Greece in the following fashion:

The Moslem minority of Thrace, probably bearing in mind the period when it was necessary to
revive national feeling in Turkey, is also divided into “Young” and “Old” Turks. We thus find
controversies continually springing up between the two, each seeking the intervention of the
Greek administration, with a view to imposing its point of view, especially in religious matters,
on the other. Our administration, however, is careful not to interfere, since any such intervention
would be contrary, not only to the Treaty of Lausanne, but also to the spirit of our own
Constitution, according to which, liberty of religious conscience is inviolable. This is a situation
which often places us on the horns of a dilemma, since on the one hand it is our wish to give
satisfaction to the Turkish Government, whose non-toleration of the Old Turks is well known,
and on the other we desire to respect the religious traditions of the Moslem minority (Nikoglou
1956: 4–5).

Later a Greek source also stressed that the Greek state did not interfere in if the
minority members wanted to adopt the Turkish reforms or not, and respected both
groups (Economopoulos 1967a: 195).

There were of course people in Greece who could be characterised as narrow
minded nationalists and intrinsically hostile to the minority. The “September events” in
1955 increased their enmity. In this connection it is pertinent to mention the work of a
then relatively unknown journalist named Yiannis Kapsis (1929–).148 He wrote a series of articles in 1959 under the heading: “Thrace is under threat by a group of fanatic
Turks who seek autonomy”. Osman Nuri accused Kapsis of making a slanted presen-
tation and relying on information from the police which was deliberately hostile to the
minority. Kapsis wrote in his characteristic suggestive style, and in his endeavours to
impose his own perspective he was not even careful with the factual details. He laid
the following words in the mouth of the “Muslim” Şerif Hakki: “They say that we are
Turks… When I go to Athens I am overjoyed. In Turkey I feel afraid, like a stranger”
(Ethnos 04.08.1959). Şerif Hakki sent a disclaimer to the newspaper Trakya where he
wrote that everything Kapsis had written about him was false. In fact, he had never
been to Athens (Trakya 774/17.08.1959). It is of course always possible to find
examples of anti-minority writings. However, the important question is not whether
there existed forces which were hostile to the minority, but what strength they had.
There are no signs that Kapsis wielded crucial influence at this time. He complained
later that: “About 25 years ago—in 1965 [sic]—when I wrote as the result of a close
investigation on the spot, a series of articles with the general title ‘Thrace is under

148 The 8 consecutive articles by the later deputy foreign minister (1981–1989) appeared in the
daily Ethnos 03–11.08.1959. Osman Nuri presents them in his newspaper Trakya
(774/17.08.1959–790/01.02.1960) in Turkish translation together with a very detailed criticism.
threat’, the most serious reactions which I confronted were… ironic smiles” (Ikonomikos Tahidromos 23.11.1989). The chairman of the “Komotini Turkish Community” Sabahaddin Galip sued Kapsis for libel because of the sections in the reportage concerning him. Kapsis was first convicted to 3 months, but was later acquitted in the court of appeal (Trakya 808/28.11.1959). In other words, Kapsis was not only unable to convince with his danger scenarios, he also suffered the humiliation of being sentenced after a minority member took him to court. Consequently, the allegations of Kapsis were no serious matter at this time, but they are of course ominous considering his central position in minority affairs later.

The Istanbul Expulsions in 1964

While the “September events” in 1955 is the incident most often referred to in the Greek press, it is the 1964 expulsions which marked the beginning of the end for the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul. Most of the minority members were Turkish citizens, but some 10,000 établis held Greek passports. This arrangement hails back to the transition from Ottoman Empire to modern Turkey. The Greek nationals were an integral part of the minority and had as a rule lived in Istanbul for generations. In order to put pressure on Greece in the Cyprus dispute, Turkey denounced unilaterally the 1930 Conventions of Establishment, Commerce, and Navigation on 16 March 1964, and announced the intention of expelling all the Greek nationals resident at Istanbul. 149 This measure affected a much larger group than those with Greek passports, since the Greek Orthodox of Turkey formed one single ethnic group. The expulsion of one person could consequently lead to the departure of a whole family. The Turkish Government based itself on an article of the Convention which gave the authorities the right to expel persons dangerous to the state. The charge had no roots in realities, something which was displayed by the fact that the list of those to be expelled included six dead, many persons suffering from incurable diseases and lunatics who were dragged out of hospitals and asylums, aged and infirm persons, blind, cripples etc., as well as highly respected members of the Greek community. On September 11, 1964 the Security Council met in session at the request of the Greek government to consider the dangerous situation created by the mass deportation of Greek Citizens from Turkey. 150 The neutral members of the Council condemned the Turkish actions, but no effective measures were taken. The minority was in a state of fear due to months of psychological warfare against them, including threats and whispering campaigns. In the Greek schools the children were given subjects for essays and composition such as

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149 For a more thorough treatment see (Alexandris 1983: 280–286).
150 (Mylonas 1965) includes the explanatory memorandum which was submitted by Greece.
“Greek Atrocities”, and forced to make contributions to “our Turkish brethren in Cyprus” (Bitsios 1965).

Threatening letters were received by many members of the Greek minority. An anonymous letter addressed to the Greek Consulate General contained threats that women and girls of the Greek minority would be raped (Anonymous 1965: 124–125).

Fiscal authorities took a series of arbitrary measures intended to ensure that Greek nationals were deprived of all possibility of liquidating their assets.

The expulsions were carried out with extreme harshness and with the intention of humiliating the victims. They were not allowed to take out with them more than $20 and one suitcase containing only clothing; and they were forced to sign a declaration of the contents of which they were not allowed to take cognisance. It was revealed, through a friendly police officer, that by this declaration the signatory admitted: (a) having committed currency offences; (b) having been a member of the dissolved Hellenic Union of Istanbul which had been accused of political activities inimical to Turkey; (c) having sent money to the Greek “terrorists” in Cyprus; (d) finally, that he was leaving Turkey of his own free will (Greece’s Information Services 1965).

The problems of liquidating the assets left behind in Turkey continued to be a problem. It later became known that a secret law (6/3801/2.11.1964) tied up the property of the Greeks who had left. This measure was only lifted in 1989, in connection with the Turkish EU negotiations. While this opened up for the liquidation of much of the property, some disputed cases are still pending. The dramatic reduction of the minority as a result of the expulsions and the pressures on the remaining minority members, has brought the minority to the verge of extinction. This process was more or less completed in the tense atmosphere after the Cyprus invasion in 1974 and the crisis in the Aegean in 1975–1976. Critical voices to these events are few and far between in the internal Turkish discourse. The tendency is to stress passionately the Turkish magnanimity and tolerance towards the minorities, and by no means admit any wrongdoing by the Turkish state. Only recently a Turkish study of the 1964 expulsions takes a critical look at these unsavoury events.

This should be viewed within the general Turkish framework. The self-image of the Turks in school books reveals how Turkish citizens have been “moulded”. Within the internal Turkish historiographical debate the historian Salih Özbaran criticises a history textbook for 2. year high school which claims: “The whole Turkish administration from the most insignificant employee to the ruling monarch, considered it to be their duty to make the people they administered completely happy. For this reason there is no question of oppressing or exploiting the people.” The book continues by comparing the oppression in Europe to the splendid state of affairs in the Ottoman Empire which makes Özbaran comment:

151 (Alexandris 1988: 511). This law is considered secret as it was not published in the government gazette. In connection with the situation in Gökçeada (Imvros), Pontiki (26.06.1996) also mentions secret laws from 1970 and 1975. It goes without saying that it is very difficult know precisely the effect of secret laws, administrative circulars, local practices etc.

152 See (Demir and Akar 1994), which refers to a good selection of the contemporary Turkish press, and also includes interviews with both Greeks and Turks who were directly involved.
Will it not mess up the mind of the pupil to give the official viewpoint that “the people were completely happy” when he does not know what is written in sources such as ‘şikayet defterleri’, ‘adaletnamele’, and ‘kadi tutanakları’ [various court documents] and has not read publications dealing with the reaya, taxation, tax farming, and Timar system? Will the pupil not ask: “Why do we not return to the middle ages?”

According to the same author, “the Ottoman state system can be described by one word as perfect… There was not the slightest deficiency nor excess in the organisation of the administration, judicial power, army etc.” How much has the Turkish society, which today seeks just taxation, social welfare, and judicial independence, declined in 500 years! Really, “The analyses regarding the history of our country which to a large degree presuppose perfection” makes historical science into a matter of “faith”… (Özbaran 1992: 197–198).

In such a climate it is clear the Greek Orthodox minority members had little opportunity to criticise the treatment of them. We should also have in mind the general level of democracy in Turkey. In fact, there are very few example of open criticism. In their behaviour towards the Turkish authorities, submission and flattering prevailed. There are many examples of this, such as for example the busts of Atatürk and İnönü in the courtyard of the Balıklı minority hospital with laudatory inscriptions. Any complaint would have been interpreted as ingratitude and could provoke reactions. When more recently some remaining Greek Orthodox were asked about their opinions concerning the events in 1964, they gave stereotype answers supporting Turkey, and avoided anything which could be perceived as criticism (Demir and Akar 1994: 102–108).

**Gökçeada and Bozcaada**

It was also during the 1960s, that the Greek Orthodox population of Gökçeada and Bozcaada began to decline dramatically. In contrast to the urban population of Istanbul, these islands were populated by farmers and fishermen. In 1912 the Greek navy took control of the islands, but they were returned to Turkey in 1923 because of their strategic position outside the Straits of the Dardanelles. Besides the minority provisions of the Lausanne Treaty, these islands were also given a special self-governing status (which was never respected) by article 14 of the same treaty. According to Greek figures from 1912 the 9,207 strong population of Gökçeada (280 km²) was completely Greek Orthodox while the 6,620 strong population of Bozcaada (32 km²) included about 18% Turks. A Turkish guide book mentions that in 1947 there were only 4 Turkish families on Gökçeada. Only one of them still remained on the island in 1988. Of the 15 Turkish families from Sürmene which were brought to the island as settlers in 1947 only 4 remained in 1988. The author stressed the difficulties the Turks had in adjusting to island life: “It is not easy to be an islander. The population of Gökçeada (which has been continually renewed since 1964), is a society that has been brought together from different regions, from different customs and traditions. […]

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153 They are also known by their Greek names “Imvros” (or “Imbros”) and “Tenedos”. In the case of “İmroz” (Turkish spelling) Turkey changed the name to “Gökçeada” as late as 1970.

154 The basic source in English about the Greek population of these islands is (Alexandris 1980), which I make use of if nothing else is indicated. See also (Alexandris 1988: 515–523).

155 The Turkish population during this period is partly related to the presence of a military garrison.
The adults of today have not got much chance to become real islanders. But I do believe that their children will succeed in becoming ‘islanders’.\textsuperscript{156} In 1964 Turkey took a number of strong measures—often referred to as the “dissolution programme” (eritme program\i\v{t}i)—towards these islands, which were presented as a direct response to repression inflicted upon the Turks in Western Thrace and Cyprus. The teaching of Greek language was suspended and the Greek community schools along with other buildings became sequestrated. As a result many of the islanders went to Istanbul or Greece to secure Greek education for their children. After 1964 Turkey took first away the Turkish citizenship from those who studied abroad, and afterwards from all the young persons who consequently had to leave. They even took away the citizenship from people who had died, but whose deaths had not been recorded.\textsuperscript{157} Kostas Argaliotis who was born in 1961 went to a Turkish primary school. Earlier it had not been necessary with exams to be admitted to secondary school, but in 1972 when he wanted to enrol in a minority secondary school in Istanbul there were tests in Greek and Turkish. By some dubious procedure 98\% of the pupils failed and only 1 passed as alibi. The goal was to make the youth of Imvros leave, which was what happened (ibid.). Large scale expropriation of farm land took also place and in the course of the 1960s most of the productive land was nationalised. Later on (1983–1984) the pastures that traditionally had been used for sheep would be characterised as “forested” or “about to be reforested” state lands, which deprived the local people of this livelihood too. Simultaneously the first in a series of Turkish colonisation campaigns commenced. The authorities established a teacher college and an army camp. A mosque was built in the main village and a program for settling 3,000 was initiated. On top of this there was set up an “Open Farm Prison” on Gökçeada, and the heavy convicts spread a climate of terror among the native population. In the aftermath of the Cyprus invasion in 1974 (known as the “peace operation” in Turkish), the situation became very tense. The authorities did not allow the Greek Orthodox to leave their houses, and prohibited the shepherds to look after their flocks which left the 75,000 sheep and goats without protection. 20 July, all the Turks between the age of 20–60 on the island were armed with automatic weapons, and 250 bullets each. They went around to the Greek Orthodox villages and threatened the inhabitants. There were much pillage and ugly incidents such as breaking into houses, beatings, rapes, and murders (Tenekidis 1986: 152–157). Today the Greek Orthodox population has all but vanished. For Gökçeada this decline is presented as follows: In 1950 there were 6,100 Greeks and 200 Turks. According to the 1960 census there were 5,487 Greeks and 289 Turks. In 1970 there were 2,571 Greeks and 4,020 Turks. In 1985 there were 496 Greeks and

\textsuperscript{156} (Saygi 1993?: 18–20). The continual renewal probably refers to that many settlers left when the initial period of financial assistance ended.

\textsuperscript{157} Pontiki 26.06.1996. This refers to the hearing in the Greek parliament about Gökçeada.
7,114 Turks. In 1990 there were 7,200 Turks and 300 Greeks, most of them more than 60 years old. Only some 40 Greeks remained on Bozcaada.\footnote{Kathimerini 29.06.1991. See also (Alexandris 1994: 5). This is one of several articles in an issue of Epta Imeres dedicated to “Imvros” and “Tenedos”.} Judging only from the demographic material, the natural conclusion would be that these islands had suffered a major catastrophe after 1960. It is clear that the Greek Orthodox islanders had no way of protecting themselves against the measures of the Turkish authorities.\footnote{For a description of everyday life on the island, including the earlier period when the Turkish governor was considerate towards the islanders (pp. 94–95), see the memoirs of (Paleopulos 1993).} Today the situation is much better, but there are of course hardly any Greek Orthodox left (see, Eleftherotipia 22.06.1991).

Greece was not able to do much to support the islanders. In 1964 Greece protested to Turkey and the UN against the closing of the minority schools. However, when the complaint was treated by UNESCO 5–6 November 1964, it only resulted in a recommendation that Greece and Turkey should take the necessary steps to provide the minority pupils in both countries with an education which agreed with their cultural identity (Alexandris 1988: 520). Greece had no more luck in obtaining the support of NATO. The meetings between Greece and Turkey in September 1967 had no results, and by this time Greece was in a weak position internationally because of the dictatorship. According to the islanders, Greek diplomacy was not receptive to their complaints, because it was not deemed expedient for Greece’s general interests to antagonise Turkey on this point. In the hearing by the Greek parliament in June 1996 a representative of the islanders revealed that for decades the inhabitants of Gökçeada and Bozcaada were obstructed from appealing to international organisations (Eleftherotipia 14.06.1996; Pontiki 26.06.1996). Another islander complains bitterly about that Greek diplomats would say: “We cannot spoil the relationship with Turkey for ten fishermen.” (Paleopulos 1993: 123). However, with the present climate in Greek-Turkish relations the issue has turned up again. For example, prior to the EU-Turkey Association Council in 1996 the Greek Euro-Deputy Yiannos Kranidiotis from the governing PASOK party posed a question to the EU Council of Ministers about the violation of the rights of the “Greeks living in the islands of Imvros and Tenedos” (MPA 29.02.96). Another aspect is the indignation often expressed in Greece when Turkey cried up about the situation in Thrace, since the memories of the Turkish handling of minorities were fresh.\footnote{See for example the comments in connection with the large article on Gökçeada and Bozcaada in Eleftherotipia 13.03.1993 or Epta Imeres 22.05.1994.}
Parliamentary Representation

The liberation of Thrace from the Bulgarian occupation in 1944 initiated a new period in minority politics. Very little information exists about the political developments during the occupation, but the absence of Greek authorities made the Turkish consulate in Komotini the sole pole of support for the Muslims. This may partly explain the great progress of the Kemalists, who were able to dominate both the parliamentary elections and the elections for the Management Committees of the Pious Foundations, i.e. the vakıfs. Up until this time these committees had been appointed by the Greek authorities, but there were elections right after the Bulgarian occupation when the area was controlled by the National Liberation Front (EAM). Osman Nuri was elected in Ksanthi, and a coalition of Hafız Ali Galip and Hatip Yusuf Salıhoğlu (1895–1957) in Komotini. They had the support of the Liberal party and held their positions until the parliamentary election in 1946.161

The First Post-War Parliamentary Elections

The 1946 parliamentary election resulted in an overwhelming victory to the Kemalist wing, while the conservatives were left completely in the shade. Particularly in Komotini where the young Osman Üstüner (1914–1978), chairman of the Turkish Youth Union, ran on the same ticket as Faik Engin (1902–1981) and both were easily elected with 7,175 and 6,450 votes respectively. Faik Engin was the son of the former mufti of Komotini and his collaboration with Osman Üstüner shows that the Kemalists were able to attract the support of the moderate conservatives. In Komotini this election also signifies the natural political succession by a new generation. Osman Üstüner would be elected several times and was a candidate in most of the elections up until his death. He had been involved in the social activities of the minority ever since he became elected president of the Yıldız Athletic Club in 1933 when he was 18 years old. People knew him as a fanatic supporter of the party he ran for and he became a steady candidate for Karamanlis, first in ERE and later ND. He provided favours to his voters because of his party connection, but was never considered an important leader figure.162 In Ksanthi the picture was more complicated, both because of the Pomak factor and a strong traditional leadership which could oppose the Kemalists. The two Pomak candidates obtained 68.4% of the votes in the mountain area. Hamdi Bey

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161 (Nikolakopulos 1990–1991a: 185–189). This is again the most complete source for the electoral behaviour of the minority until 1955 and includes tables of elections results etc.
162 See the long interview with him in İleri 15/16.07.1975, and the comments about him in İleri 418/07.02.1986.
(1897–1965) belonged to the traditional leadership and exerted control as tobacco merchant while Hüsayin Zeybek (1898–1969) was of more humble origin, but bolstered his influence by his position in the Agricultural Co-operative. They obtained a total of 2,719 and 1,410 votes respectively, and Hüseyin Zeybek was elected because of the electoral conjunctions. The leading Kemalist, Osman Nuri, was also elected with 2,197 votes. His victories in both these and the two subsequent elections were not due to greater influence than his local rivals but to electoral conjunctions and in particular the many votes he obtained in the Komotini area, which are ascribed to his kinship with Hafız Ali Galip and his status among the Kemalists (Nikolakopulos 1990–1991a: 189–190).

The Kemalists confirmed their supremacy in the following elections (1950 and 1951) and monopolised the parliamentary representation of the minority. In January 1950 they also won easily the first official vakıf committee elections in both Ksanthi and Komotini. However, the significant amount of votes to the conservatives, particularly in Komotini, and the conservative influence in the countryside (which did not participate in the vakıf committee elections), means that the Kemalist supremacy was not as solid as might be the impression on first sight. Subsequent elections for the vakıf committees were held in February 1953, December 1957, July 1961, and July 1964. All these elections employed the majority system, except those in 1964 which took place with the proportional system (Nikolakopulos 1990–1991a: 190–191).

**Osman Nuri Fettahoğlu**

Osman Nuri Fettahoğlu (1902–1990) developed into the leading minority politician in Ksanthi and virtually monopolised parliamentary representation there until 1964. When we speak about Kemalists, it is important to distinguish between those who simply adopted a partisan position within the minority framework and those who had a clear conception about what they wanted to do. Osman Nuri definitively belonged to the latter group. He was born in the Dutlumüslim village (Chernichevo) which today is right across the Bulgarian border. When he was a small child he lost his father and moved to his maternal uncle Hacı Hafız Ali Galip Efendi—grandfather of today’s MP for PASOK, Galip Galip—in Komotini in 1906 where he finished primary school. Later he went to a secondary school in Edirne after the encouragement of the leading Young Turk cadre Süleyman Askerî, who founded the independent government of Western Thrace in 1913. This school accepted only orphans and was under the protection of the “Special Organisation” (Teşkilât-ı Mahsusa). The pupils were raised to serve the Young Turk plans in the Balkans. When the Ottoman Empire lost Edirne in 1919 this private school closed and the pupils went to Istanbul. However, the school was able to carry on to some extent as a “teacher” college, and Nuri graduated in 1920 together with his friends Mehmet Hilmi and Osman Seyfi. He returned to Komotini
where some of the foremost people gave him money to go to Thessaloniki and attend the French Lycée. After finishing this education in 1925, he went to Ksanthi to assist his old friend Mehmet Hilmi with the publication of the newspaper *Yeni Ziya*.\textsuperscript{163} He was consequently very well educated—according to the standards of the day—in the spirit of the Ottoman governing class. In an obituary, Osman Nuri is called the last member of the “Union and Progress” school (*Gerçek* 258/09.05.1990). For all his abilities, he never gathered a group of followers around him like Mehmet Hilmi, but preferred to operate alone (Yıldız 1976: 150). His stern personality and strong temperament may also have made him more difficult to approach. Osman Nuri played an important role in introducing the Kemalist reforms during the inter-war period, and displayed a keen interest for education throughout his career.\textsuperscript{164} After co-publishing newspapers with various other people he founded his own newspaper *Trakya* in July 1932. He had consequently much to his merit before he embarked on his remarkable political career after the Second World War.

Unlike Hatipoğlu, Osman Nuri had a relatively stable relationship to the Greek political parties he represented. His changes of party always coincided with changes in the overall Greek political landscape, and each time he succeeded to become candidate for the prevailing Greek party.\textsuperscript{165} It is an open question how he was able to secure his candidatures for his preferred parties. Various information suggests, but I have no conclusive evidence, that like so many other things this was to some degree contingent on Greek-Turkish relations. Turkey would like to have a say about “its” minority, just like Greece wanted to have a say about “its” minority in Istanbul. In other words, the Greek authorities would discuss unofficially the minority candidatures with the Turkish consulate in Komotini. Consequently, during most of the period Osman Nuri could benefit from being the candidate favoured by Turkey. In his newspaper, Osman Nuri stated repeatedly his view on the minority’s place in Greek society and politics:

> Our chief principle as a National minority, is to try to be on the same economic and cultural level as the majority without sacrificing our national integrity [*bütünlük*] and protecting our integrity in every respect. In the political and social fields there are various ideologies [*fikir cereyanları*] on the face of the Earth. We do not have the possibility as a National minority with our present social structure to follow these ideologies without sacrificing the integrity of our group. For this reason, we consider it always to be the most beneficial attitude during political crisis to walk in the same direction as the majority of the Greek nation.\textsuperscript{166}

\textsuperscript{163} *Gündem* 42/29.04.1997. This is the second part of a long series covering the whole career of Osman Nuri.

\textsuperscript{164} This is evident from his newspaper *Trakya*. It is also interesting to observe that in a long interview about his political career, the conversation was first of all about the question of education (*İleri* 1/02.04.1975).

\textsuperscript{165} He represented the KF in 1950, 1951; the ES in 1952; the ERE in 1956, 1958, and 1961; and EK in 1963. In 1964 he ran for EK without being elected.

\textsuperscript{166} *Trakya* 877/18.03.1964. He points out repeatedly the necessity of following the majority, see for example also 869/18.10.1963; 873/05.02.1964; 874/25.02.1964; 878/30.03.1964.
In other words the minority should only vote for its own candidates, and preferably those who represented the leading parties. The rationale behind this choice was that only the party in power could offer the minority adequate protection; at the same time he was conscious of the minority’s inability to go against the general flow of Greek politics. Osman Nuri made a point out of that he ran for ERE in 1961 because it would become the party in power, although he disagreed with Karamanlis’ minority policy \((\textit{Trakya} 877/18.03.1964)\). However, he claimed he would not run for ERE in 1963 when it was clear that it would lose the elections.\textsuperscript{167} This should not be taken entirely on face value. He would not have been accepted on the ERE ticket anyway at this time, after he had clashed with the party because of its education policy. Osman Nuri used the same rationale when commenting on the actions of his political opponents, and criticised the way Hasan Hatipoğlu and Asım Haliloğlu had accused ERE in the past when it was the party in power (ibid.). In relation to the 1964 election, he made a strong warning against the inappropriate and false election propaganda against Papandreou by Hasan Hatipoğlu, Molla Yusuf, Asım Haliloğlu, and Hamdi Bey. They were accused of sacrificing the interests of the minority for their own petty interests. Before the 3 November 1963 elections, Asım Haliloğlu said when he visited the villages in the Komotini area that Turkey did not want the Centre Union (EK) party, but preferred the party of Markezinis (KP-where Hatipoğlu was a candidate). He also claimed that the Turkish Consulate opposed the candidacy of Sabahaddin Galip. This was a kind of demagogy by minority candidates which had no basis in realities. As a result, Komotini became a stronghold for Markezinis who had lost influence all over Greece. Osman Nuri considered their propaganda dangerous, as they fell into the trap of the enemies of the minority who attempted to spoil the relationship to the Centre Union which would become the party in power.\textsuperscript{168} He maintained that Papandreou could not be blamed for what happened in Cyprus, and those who used this as propaganda against Papandreou’s party in the election campaign were slanderers. He called it a provocation to have such an attitude against the political direction of the majority of the Greek people. The provocation went so far that the Turkish government had to make a declaration before the elections through the embassy in Athens that it did not interfere in the Greek elections and did not instigate the minority against the Centre Union party \((\textit{Trakya} 874/25.02.1964)\).

### The Conservative Revival and Molla Yusuf

The watershed in post-war minority politics is the 1952 elections. The radical changes in the Greek political landscape during this period affected first the Christian

\textsuperscript{167} \textit{Trakya} 881/06.05.1964, which quotes long passages from \textit{Akın} 06.05.1958.

\textsuperscript{168} \textit{Trakya} 873/05.02.1964. See also \textit{Trakya} 891/15.09.1964 which mentions Hatipoğlu’s claim in the 1963 elections that Turkey did not want Osman Nuri and Sabahaddin Galip. Osman Nuri pointed out that Turkey did not interfere in the Greek elections.
population of Thrace. The Muslims followed suit and in Ksanthi it was completed when Osman Nuri joined the Greek Rally party (Ellinikos Sinayermós) in August 1952. This also secured his re-election 16 November 1952. The political changes in Komotini were even greater and led to the dynamic appearance of a new conservative leadership. It started with the creation of the religious association “Islamic Revival” (İntibah-i İslam) in 1950, with Hafız Yaşar Mehmetoğlu (1920–1992) and Molla Yusuf Hasanoğlu (1915–1969) as leading figures. This association suggested Molla Yusuf as candidate for the Greek Rally party in 1952. He was elected and re-elected continuously until 1967, monopolising the parliamentary representation of the conservative wing. During the same period Hafız Yaşar had the fate of being the eternal number two without the chance of being elected. The Greek Rally party and subsequently the National Radical Union (Ethnikí Rizospastikí Enosis - ERE) of Karamanlis attracted much of the minority vote through their relationship with Molla Yusuf. This is clear from the overwhelming success in the mountain area of Rodopi, where the conservatives had their greatest strength. Conversely, the conservative wing enjoyed the protection of the party in power. The creation of “Islamic Revival” also led to a split in the conservative wing with the isolation and marginalisation of the most extreme anti-Turkish tendencies represented by Hafız Ali Reşat and Hüsnü Yusuf who regrouped their forces by founding the new association “Islamic Union” (İttihat-i İslam). They too solicited the protection of the Greek authorities which oscillated between the two associations depending on Greek-Turkish relations. The “Islamic Union” controlled the medrese in Ehinos and the scholarships network for the El Ezher college in Cairo, by cultivating contacts to the conservative Arab states. The new development of the conservative wing was facilitated by two external factors: The encouragement of the General Administration of Thrace, and the ascendance to power in 1950 of the Democratic Party in Turkey, which broke the monopoly of the hard core Kemalists. The new Menderes government was more lenient on traditionalist Muslims, which contributed towards playing down the conflicts between Kemalists and conservatives as it was known in Western Thrace. To put it bluntly, you could be a good Muslim without sacrificing your Turkism and arouse Turkey’s suspicion.

When we consider the effects of the ideological developments in Turkey on the minority it is important not to overrate the direct influence on the largely illiterate agricultural population. The new developments effected first of all the little group which competed for the leadership, and their shifts in ideological orientation were also contingent on personal relationships. The inherent disposition of the conservative “Islamic Revival” was to seek the protection of both Greece and Turkey, benefiting from the good climate in Greek-Turkish relations in the early 1950s. Hafiz Yaşar

169 (Nikolakopulos 1990–1991a: 193–194). Nikolakopulos assumes that the remarkable progress of Osman Nuri in the mountain (Pomak) area during these elections could be due to fraud.
tended more towards Greek protection, while Molla Yusuf had the best relationship to
Turkey.\textsuperscript{170} However, both of them would seek to balance the double dependence. The
success of Molla Yusuf indicates a new reality, where the former polarisation between
the Kemalists and conservatives gives room for a compromise solution signifying tacit
and gradual acceptance of the Kemalist reforms by the conservatives related to the
organic development of Turkish influence on the minority, and not the sudden imposi-
tion of radical innovations by the Turkish state.\textsuperscript{171}

The picture is not complete without saying a few words about Molla Yusuf’s
personality. He was a graduate from the medrese in Komotini. During the Bulgarian
occupation he made his marks as merchant. First of all he was known as a practical
person and “man of the people”. He was quite an imposing figure and could speak up
for his voters towards the Greek authorities. He excelled at providing petty services
for minority members, and his straightforward attitude inspired people with confi-
dence. His success also gave the minority the impression that the Greek authorities
were receptive to their problems when presented by the right middle man.\textsuperscript{172} The fact
that the conservatives in Komotini town obtained many times the votes in parliamen-
tary elections than in the elections for the vakıf committee, must be ascribed to the
personal influence of Molla Yusuf. The conservatives were able to keep up their
strength and obtained more votes than the modernists in all the parliamentary elections
after 1956, except in 1963. The Greek parties avoided to identify exclusively with the
conservative or the modernist wing and included candidates from both wings on their
tickets. In Komotini the National Radical Union (ERE) of Karamanlis identified
mainly with the traditional leadership: Molla Yusuf and Osman Üstüner, while the

\textbf{Parliamentary Elections 1956–1967}\textsuperscript{173}

The period of Greek–Turkish co-operation in Western Thrace ended abruptly with
the riots in Istanbul 6–7 September 1955. The various reactions to these events within
both the conservative and Kemalist wing of the minority reflect the expectations of
their patrons or those who regarded themselves as their patrons. In this connection, a
criticism of Turkey would mainly relate to the governing Democratic Party of Men-
deres, as the Republican People’s Party of İnönü could wash its hands. The most
explicit denouncement came from Osman Üstüner, which can be partly explained by

\textsuperscript{170} See below for his co-operation with Hatıpoğlu. In his early career Molla Yusuf had shared
the conservatives’ scepticism towards Turkey. According to a minority source, sometimes after Field
Marshal Papagos won the elections in 1952, he summoned his two minority MPs, Hasan Hatıpoğlu
and Molla Yusuf, and scolded the latter for criticising the friend and ally Turkey.

\textsuperscript{171} In this discussion of the conservatives I follow mainly the argument of (Nikolakopulos 1990–
1991a: 195–199), but with a slightly different emphasis at certain points.

\textsuperscript{172} The above is based on oral communications from various minority members.

\textsuperscript{173} For the political developments during this period I draw heavily on (Nikolakopulos 1990–1991b).
Osman Nuri was also very explicit in his critique of the events. In his newspaper he called it a disgrace for the Turkish people, while the Greek people showed maturity and did not retaliate against the minority (Trakya 638/12.09.1955). This led to the appearance of a very pro-Turkish modernist group led by Hasan Hatipoğlu. The conservative leaders were much more reserved when it came to denounce the events, which led to the re-activation of the anti-Turkish section of “Islamic Revival” led by Hafiz Yaşar with support from the Greek authorities. The new developments in Greek-Turkish relations were expressed by the publishing of two new minority newspapers in the beginning of 1957. The first was Sebat (Stability) published by Hafiz Yaşar and with Hüsnü Yusuf as main contributor of articles. He had been sent in internal exile during the early 1950s to placate Turkey, but returned to Komotini after the September events. The second was Akin (Attack) published by Asım Haliloğlu and Hasan Hatipoğlu (Nikolakopoulos 1990–1991b: 42–43). After this there was a four way system in Komotini with Molla Yusuf and Hafiz Yaşar struggling for leadership of the conservative wing, while Osman Üstüner and Hasan Hatipoğlu contested the modernist wing (Nikolakopoulos 1990–1991b: 44).

The political landscape in Ksanthi differed mainly by the lack of an organised conservative wing. The last conservative MP, Niyazi Mumcu, had retired, and the association “Islamic Union” of Hafiz Ali Reşat had a limited influence only in the mountain area. Since the conservatives had not enough influence to secure their own election they made propaganda for Christian candidates. This constituted the main election alternative, and was promoted by both the administration and the Greek parties. Particularly in the mountain area, where their significant success was related to the lack of politically organised conservatives and Pomak candidates (Nikolakopoulos 1990–1991b: 48). Another element was the organisation of the tobacco trade, which seems to have been the primary factor of attaching Muslim voters to Christian candidates. The relationship between tobacco trade and election clientele was a common phenomenon for all the tobacco producing regions, and in the mountain area of Ksanthi the tobacco was the only cash crop. In these villages there was a clear relation between the amount of tobacco grown and the number of votes to Christian candidates. In the elections from 1956 to 1964 minority votes to Muslim candidates averaged around 70% in Ksanthi and around 92% in Rodopi. When the number of MPs for Ksanthi was reduced from 4 to 3 in 1964, the votes for Christian candidates contributed to the failure of all minority candidates (Nikolakopoulos 1990–1991b: 49–50). Osman Nuri was very concerned about the vote for Christians in the mountain area and denounced it repeatedly:

To vote for a Christian means that: “I entrust him with my destiny, conscience, life, and honour.” Our people do not consider carefully what they do and fall into this trap. Some vote profiteers urge our people to do this mistake because of their personal interests.
This is very wrong; it is the first duty of every sensible Muslim to prevent this behaviour which dissolves our national and religious unity (Trakya 653/07.02.1956).

Doubtless, it is the national and religious duty of both groups that the Turks vote for the Turks while the Greek Orthodox [rum] vote for the Greek Orthodox. Our Greek Orthodox compatriots fulfill this obligation completely, and give no + [mark of preference on ballot] to a Turk.” (Trakya 654/14.02.1956).

Among the local Christian politicians Aleksandros Baltatzis was considered particularly adroit in “deceiving the Turks”. He would always have some minority members on his ticket who could bring enough votes to secure his election, but who had no chance of being elected themselves. Osman Nuri also complained about some Christian fanatics who worked systematically, particularly in Ksanthi, to obtain votes from the minority and to secure that no “Turks” were elected. They wanted to spoil the relation between “Turks and Greek Orthodox”, and attempted to split the minority vote as much as possible. The minority members who assisted them were promised various material and moral benefits (Trakya 892/13.10.1964).

After the “September events”, the established Kemalist politician in Ksanthi Osman Nuri was challenged by the extreme Kemalist and nationalist ‹brahim Bey in 1956 and the publisher of Akin, Asım Haliloğlu, in 1958, 1961, and 1964. In his rivalry with the new proponents of Turkish nationalism, Osman Nuri received most votes only in 1961 and 1963, but was also elected continuously due to the overall results of his party (ERE). During this period the modernists could also notice considerable success in the mountain area. The military take-over in Turkey 27 May 1960 and the fall of Menderes made Osman Nuri again the favoured candidate of the modernist wing, and an authentic mouthpiece of official Turkish politics. He consequently reclaimed the area challenged by Akin. This left room for his local rival Hamdi Bey to return to the Greek “protection” and oppose him in the 1963 and 1964 elections (Nikolakopulos 1990–1991b: 51–52).

Hasan Hatipoğlu

Hasan Hatipoğlu (1923–) was a leading minority politician for decades, and left his personal stamp on much of the political life during this period. It is important to understand his role, in order to grasp the many peculiarities of minority politics. He was born in Komotini into a well to do family with a past in politics. His father was the

175 (Nikolakopulos 1990–1991b: 50). According to Osman Nuri, ‹brahim Bey had supported him in the previous election but attacked him viciously in 1956. He claims that this had nothing to do with ideology but that he wanted to sell 500 strémma land. ‹brahim Bey could only sell it to the agricultural co-operation controlled by Baltatzis who told him that he would get a better price if he helped him during the elections. Osman Nuri accused him of sacrificing the interest of the minority for his personal interests (Trakya 654/14.02.1956).
176 Hasan Hatipoğlu is the only politician of his generation whom I have actually met (several times from 1991 and after). I have read all the issues of his newspaper Akin from January 1982 until it closed in June 1993 (the issues 802–1096), but only some odd issues of the newspaper before this period.
former MP and senator Hatip Yusuf who belonged to the Kemalist wing. After primary education in a minority school Hasan Hatipoğlu attended a Greek secondary school. He was the first minority member to rise to the rank of reserve officer when he did his military service. During the civil war the Greek authorities entrusted him with making anti-communist propaganda in the minority villages. This is an indication of his ability to ingratiate himself, and obtain the trust of persons in key positions. After this he served as chairman of the Turkish Youth Union in Komotini for a period.

When he first ran as candidate in the parliamentary elections in 1951—without being elected—he was a young man of 28. Hâki mentions that the advantages Hatipoğlu obtained from a few years of Greek secondary school made him a star of his generation.\footnote{177 We have to bear in mind that until 1974 you could count on your fingers the minority members who read Greek newspapers. Hatipoğlu exploited this advantage fully, and always projected himself as someone superior. In the 1950s, when people in the country side wore traditional clothes (potur, kuşak, sarık, etc.), he would come to the villages for his election propaganda immaculately dressed in European style with a modern Homburg style hat (repúblika). While he excelled in the petty politics of Komotini because of his smoothness, he could be very condescending (tepeden) and intimidating towards the villagers. He was not a man for systematic work, and spent his evenings in the coffee houses playing cards and discussing politics. At first mainly with the Christians, and it was only in the tense atmosphere after 1974 that he really began to frequent the minority coffee houses. I do not believe that he was really interested in minority education, and he displayed a certain distrust towards the educated who were in a position to see through his posture. On the contrary, he would try to maintain a situation where he could master the others. Hâki is of the opinion that Hatipoğlu had no thorough knowledge of things, and possessed neither the ability to grasp the problems properly nor to present them convincingly to a greater public neither in Turkish or Greek (İleri 52/16.10.1976; 69/18.03.1977). I tend to agree with this assessment, because in his writings Hatipoğlu often displays ignorance. However, he is recognised as the minority’s foremost political manipulator because of his wits and unscrupulousness.

In the 1952 election Hatipoğlu initiated his long time co-operation with Molla Yusuf. Hâki characterises Yusuf as the conservative of the conservatives, and Hatipoğlu as the conservative of the modernists (İleri 53/23.10.1976). In fact, one of the few stable features in Hatipoğlu’s career is his disdain for the left. Both of them ran on the Greek Rally ticket and both were elected. Hatipoğlu’s influence must have been quite limited in these elections (Nikolakopoulos 1990–1991a: 195). His success is to a

\footnote{177 cf. İleri 47/08.09.1976. This is part of a longer series on minority politicians where the exploits of Hatipoğlu are covered extensively. For a later comment about his style by Onsunoğlu, see İleri 235/18.12.1981.}
large degree explained by the personal assistance he obtained from Molla Yusuf. This relation may seem strange at first, but has its own logic. In their symbiotic relationship Hatipoğlu benefited from Yusuf’s influence on the voters, while Yusuf benefited from Hatipoğlu’s closer relations with the Turkish consulate. The very fact that they represented the two opposing ideological poles—the conservatives and the modernists—meant that they appealed to different groups of voters. The main rivals of Hatipoğlu were Osman Nuri and the Galip family, who competed against him for the hegemony of the modernist wing, a position which wielded influence towards both Turkey and the Greek authorities.

After Papagos’ death, Hatipoğlu was expelled from the Greek Rally party in 1955. This initiated the beginning of his shifting relationship to Greek political parties, which continued throughout his career. I do not have detailed knowledge about each case, but my impression is that Hatipoğlu was just too “smart” for his own good in his political dealings. He was not the kind for long term political commitment, but preferred to maximise the immediate benefits playing on (at least) two horses. As a result his partners too would know that he was not someone they could depend on. When the other modernist politicians condemned the 1955 riots in Istanbul, he took advantage of it to become the main proponent of the Turkish nationalist right. This did not yield immediate results and in the 1956 election the old leaders Molla Yusuf and Osman Üstüner prevailed easily.

The newspaper Akın, which he founded in 1957 together with Asım Haliloğlu, became an important vehicle for extending his political influence. The significant changes took place in the next elections in May 1958. In the 1958 elections Hatipoğlu surpassed Osman Üstüner in votes, although the latter was elected because of the overall vote distribution between the parties. However, it became clear that Hatipoğlu was about to take over the leadership of the modernist wing with his brand of Turkish nationalism as expressed in Akın. Hatipoğlu prevailed in the next elections (1961) and remained MP until the dictatorship in 1967, while Osman Üstüner did not accomplish his re-election. In the 1958 elections Asım Haliloğlu ran for the Progressive Agrarian Democratic Union (Proodeftikí Agrotikí Demokratikí Enosis) in Ksanthi, while Hatipoğlu ran for the Liberal Party (Kómma Fileléftheron) in Komotini. This gave them a dilemma, since they could not both promote their party as the best choice for the minority. They solved this problem by printing separate editions of Akın in Komotini and Ksanthi, and Akın which claimed to promote the Kemalist principles fell into great contradictions already in the beginning.178

Sometime during this period Hatipoğlu pulled off another trick which several different persons have recounted to me. When he drove around to the villages for

election propaganda he had with him a friend who sat in the back seat carefully dressed up to impersonate the Turkish consul. After saying a few words in the village coffee houses he pointed to the car on his way out and told that the consul accompanied him. This was of course an effective way to boost his own prestige. The various petty games where some people tried to exploit their alleged relation to the Turkish Consulate in Komotini took on such proportions that the consulate had to issue an announcement which warned that some people tried to exploit the consulate for their personal gains by saying that they were acting in its name. In a later comment Hâki adds that people had been deceived, exploited and scared in the name of the consulate for years. The relationship to the consulate has always been an issue in the minority press. Hâki mentions the suspicion surrounding the minority newspapers where everybody would look for who were behind the newspapers and supported them economically. Those “who were assisted” by the Greek authorities were looked on with suspicion, while those “who were thought to be aided” by the Turkish consulate were looked on with envy. In a small community the verdict of the society is very strong and this was reflected in the characterisation of various people (İleri 62/10.01.1977).

Hatipoğlu’s relationship to the consulate has had its ups and downs in spite of his loud pro-Turkish rhetoric. In order to prevail he supported himself alternately on the Greek and Turkish side and it is known today within the minority that Hatipoğlu has never been quite “forgiven” by Turkish authorities for some of the tricks he pulled off in the 1960s. In other words, they resented that he did not take heed of Turkey’s choices. However, he is somehow tolerated because of his influence, and because it would be a bit awkward for Turkish authorities to counter someone who kept the banner of Turkish nationalism so high. It should be noticed that Hatipoğlu has never challenged the policy of Turkey openly, even when he must have had a different opinion. On the contrary, outwardly he always tried to portray himself as the representative of Turkey’s will.

Besides his manipulating skills in petty politics, Hatipoğlu tried to extort support from his voters by exploiting their national sentiments. Osman Nuri wrote a strong critique of this practice. After mentioning the conservative rhetoric which accused those who did not vote for Hafız Yaşar, who was on the same ticket as Asım Halil-oğlu, of not being Muslims, he continued:

“Akin” constitutes the other side of the coin. The special supplement to Akin for Komotini writes that those who want to prove that they have Turkish blood in their Veins must vote for Mr. Hasan Hatipoğlu. This claim provoked a lot of people…

Are you a chemist test tube you blessed…\textsuperscript{180} You have made the voting ballots a blood tests; you have become a nazi…

[...]

So those who have given tens of thousands votes to [Molla] Yusuf and Osman [Üstüner] do not have Turkish blood; or those who look for a test tube or a touchstone to test their blood have doubts about themselves?

Let us remind the young politicians that people do not forget these kinds of blunders. In due time they make them pay for them… (\textit{Trakya} 733/26.05.1958).

I think Osman Nuri hit the nail on the head when he characterised the behaviour of Hatipoğlu as “the other side of the coin.” In many ways it corresponds to the bigotry which can be encountered among conservative Muslims, with the important difference that religion has been replaced by extreme Turkish nationalism. However, he had a superficial relationship to the progressive and educational aspects, which were such a prominent feature of early Turkish nationalism. His brand of nationalism not only makes integration in Greek society impossible, it also makes suspect any contact with the Greeks (Christians) except when absolutely necessary. As the great Turkish nationalist he was, of course, above suspicion himself, but others could easily be put in an awkward situation if they were not careful. In this way he tried to restrict contact with Greek authorities. This represents in many ways a continuation of the Ottoman model of closed communities where the group was represented outwardly by very few persons. By reinforcing these traditional attitudes he had a significant effect on the political and social development of the minority.

As a politician Hatipoğlu seldom went beyond the level of creating impressions. He was famous for sending telegrams, and made people think that everything would be corrected by this. In the early 1960s Hatipoğlu had a great influence over people. He had room to manoeuvre, a newspaper for propaganda, and volunteers to help him.\textsuperscript{181} For all his manipulating skills, he was probably not so able outside the narrow confines of minority politics. Hatipoğlu tried to monopolise the Kemalist wing in Rodopi and Hâki remarks ironically that he acted as if Atatürk had made him the representative of Kemalism in Thrace.

Osman Üstüner was never a serious rival, but when Sabahaddin Galip ran as candidate in 1963, the contest became a question of the leadership of the minority. Now the goal of Hatipoğlu became twofold: To secure his own election and prevent the election of Galip. Both of them appealed to the same group of voters, in particular the Kemalist urban population of Komotini (\textit{Ileri} 69/18.03.1977). Hatipoğlu had the

\textsuperscript{180} For the sake of clarity. The characterisation of Hatipoğlu is suppressed because Osman Nuri probably do not want to present it in writing, but I suppose he wanted to say something like \textit{“be mübarek…” [patavatsız]”}. i.e. “you blessed fool”, corresponding to something like: \textit{“You stupid…” [arse]”}.

\textsuperscript{181} \textit{Ileri} 68/11.03.1977. For an example of such a telegram, see \textit{Bati Trakya} 68/15 December 1972, p. 15. This was sent by Hasan Hatipoğlu to Yeoryios Papadopoulos and concerned problems with buying real estate, infringement on education rights, and disrespect of the constitutional rights.
upper hand in both the 1963 and 1964 elections, when he achieved both to be elected and to obtain more votes than Galip.182

In 1963 he joined the ticket of the Progressive Party (Kόmma Proodeftikόn) which already had the minority candidate Hafiz Yaşar. This party had almost no appeal among the local Christians, but the two Muslim candidates obtained enough votes on their own to secure the election of Hatipoğlu. In anticipation of later events, we should notice that this displays the minority’s ability to elect an MP “independently” of party support. Osman Nuri commented later on Hatipoğlu’s choice of party in the 1963 election. He described it as a last resort for him, since the National Radical Union and the Centre Union did not want him because of his dubious political past. Osman Nuri pointed out that the Progressive Party had no political power and could not serve the minority. He claimed that Hatipoğlu joined the party only because he had no profession and tied his fortunes to the parliamentary elections (Trakya 889/19.08.1965). In other words, he was accused of not thinking about the minority’s interests, but only to exploit it for personal benefits.

However, Hatipoğlu was able to use his bargaining abilities in parliament too. During the political crisis in July 1965 he and the other minority MP Molla Yusuf held the balance in parliament and agreed to support the Stefanopoulos government in exchange for certain concessions. These included change of prefects who were not to the liking of the minority and appointment of teachers educated in Turkey.183 In Greek works this is often portrayed as unacceptable minority influence, while in the minority press Hatipoğlu has been accused for not using the opportunity to do something with the anti-minority measures which began at this time.

Asım Haliloğlu

Asım Haliloğlu (1923–1980) was born in the important village Hrisa (Kireççiler).184 After finishing primary school he succeeded in the exams to the free boarding schools in Turkey and went to Edirne, Sivas, and Istanbul. The change of places had to do with security reasons during World War II. Hâki describes him as a

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182 In 1963 the relation was 6,263 to 4,700 and in 1964 it was 7,862 to 5,685. This was the highest amount of votes obtained by any modernist after the war, but well behind Molla Yusuf who received 10,297 votes in the 1964 election. The situation is slightly different in Ksanthi, but for comparison I could mention that Osman Nuri had his best result in the 1963 election with 6,143 votes, while in 1951 he succeeded to be elected with as little as 1,858 votes. In this connection it should be kept in mind that women did not vote before in the 1956 elections.

183 (Alexandris 1988: 525). Alexandris also mentions the establishment of a new minority secondary school in Ksanthi as one of their demands, but this is not correct for chronological reasons. The minority had taken the initiative to this school in 1963 and the approval is printed in the Government Gazette (Efimeris tis kiverniseos) 142/27.04.1965 (Trakya 905/16.06.1965). The initiators were Osman Nuri and the chairman of the Muslim community (cemaat başkanı) Muzaffer Bey, which the school was named after.

184 The information about Asım Haliloğlu’s background is from the series on him in İleri 409/22.11.1985–415/17.01.1986.
foreigner to the minority society when he returned after graduating from the Istanbul law faculty in 1953, which is natural considering how long he had been away. Since he had spent all of his formative years in Turkey it is also natural that he was deeply influenced by the ideals of the Turkish Republic. He was better educated than Hatipoğlu, and is considered to have been more sincere. However, he was not as knowledgeable about Greek society, and in this domain he had Hatipoğlu as teacher.

In 1954 Asım got the Komotini Turkish Youth Union—which had been closed for some years—on its feet again. Later he put his hand to the Ksanthi Turkish Union (İleri 412/13.12.1985). He worked for a while as a teacher and remained engaged in the minority’s educational issues throughout his life. His career is mainly connected to the newspaper Akın which he founded together with Hatipoğlu in 1957. It was the first newspaper in Komotini to be printed in only the Latin script and became the rallying point of the modernists. To the young generation it appeared like a fresh voice and soon obtained a large following (İleri 63/17.01.1977).

Asım Haliloğlu was very dedicated to the Atatürk reforms and saw it as his task to help these principles prevail in the minority (cf.İleri 414/10.01.1986). He was considered to be open minded and fought ignorance and bigotry. In an obituary Doctor Mehmet Bağdatlı points out that Haliloğlu was very well liked by those who had higher education. When an association for those with higher education was founded he was a strong supporter and worked out the statutes personally. This was right after the “Cyprus events” (in 1974) and the word Turk created “allergy” among the Greeks. Many of the younger members wanted to use Muslim instead of Turk in the title of the association. Asım was strongly against this:

> What he said that time always rings in our ears. “We gave all our life to make others accept the Turkishness [türkülük] of the Western Thracian Minority. This word is not erased from these statutes” he said (İleri 193/21.11.1980).

Asım Haliloğlu had little success as a politician, although he obtained a considerable amount of votes in several elections. There was a strong rivalry between Osman Nuri and Asım Haliloğlu for the hegemony of the Kemalist wing in Ksanthi. This became particularly apparent after the 1964 elections, when Osman Nuri was not elected for the first time after the war.185 Afterwards Osman Nuri wrote a devastating critique of Haliloğlu’s role in this and previous elections which may have influenced his further career.186

Before the 1964 elections Asım Haliloğlu wrote in Akın (306/24.01.1964) that he would run on an independent ticket if he was not accepted as party candidate and

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185 Osman Nuri would not have been elected anyway. Although he received 5,052 votes he came third on the Centre Union (EK) ticket. Hamdi Bey with 5,168 votes was only four votes short of coming first on the National Radical Union (ERE) ticket which would have secured his election.

186 Trakya 892/13.10.1964–903/08.04.1965 contains a long and severe critique of Haliloğlu’s political life. This belongs to a series in 25 parts titled “Various Elections and the Western Thrace Turkish Minority” in Trakya 877/18.03.1964–903/08.04.1965.
claimed the minority would be able to elect the candidate of its choice. Osman Nuri commented that this displayed his ignorance about the election system. It was clear that he could only run for a party which did not find a strong minority candidate, and none of the major parties wanted him because his independent candidature would work to the advantage of the Christian candidates and secure that no Turk was elected (Trakya 902/17.03.1965). Osman Nuri pointed out that in 1964 an independent candidate needed 11,490 votes in order to be elected, while Asım Haliloğlu obtained only 1,762 votes. He claimed that these were mostly from naive people who became deceived by false propaganda. He compared Haliloğlu to Hamdi Bey whose contradictory actions were only related to personal gains, and blamed his intrigues for resulting in that a Christian was elected MP with Muslim votes.

Only that in the 1964 election Asım presented the old formula of Hamdi. He found it permissible [mubah] to vote for Christians. He said that we, i.e. I [Osman Nuri] and Hamdi, were unpopular [sevilmiyen]. He obtained 1,700 votes because he was very popular, while we who were unpopular obtained 5,000 votes each. 

It is not possible for me to trace all the ups and downs of his career, but at some point Asım Haliloğlu fell out of favour with the Turkish authorities. We have a clear indication of this in Hâki’s obituary, which mentions that his greatest disappointment was that he was not able to obtain a pension from Turkey when his health began to fail, after serving the minority with his journalism for 22 years. He had told Hâki: “You write what I was not able to write; Congratulations. Be careful however, those teeth will want to eat you too, Hâki!” (İleri 190/31.10.1980). On another occasion Hâki also mentions that what saddened Haliloğlu most was the way certain people within the minority exploited the minority people and the wounds he obtained by struggling against their personal influence. Because of the “slander and groundless accusations” against him, some of the people he had known for years turned away from him then (İleri 190/31.10.1980). This information gives us a glimpse of the darker sides of internal minority politics, where the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate criticism was not so clear cut. The intense rivalry between the minority leaders led to many bitter conflicts which could involve large minority groupings.

Summary of the Political Situation Before the Junta

The period which ends 21 April 1967 with the military dictatorship, is characterised by an impressive stability in the minority’s parliamentary representation. In Ksanthi Osman Nuri represented the minority continuously from 1946 to 1963 and monopolised the representation from 1952. In Rodopi Molla Yusuf represented

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187 Trakya 894/19.11.1964. In reality the amount of votes needed for an independent candidate was 11,734, but this has no significance for Osman Nuri’s argument.
188 Trakya 880/22.04.1964. mubah is in fact a religious term which testifies to the survival of Ottoman structures from the time religion played a more prominent role in society.
continuously the conservatives from 1952, while Osman Üstüner and Hasan Hatipoğlu alternated in representing the modernist wing. The stability reflects a strictly constructed system of political formations, which has its own margin of autonomy. Contrary to the situation in the inter-war years and the first years after the war, the politicians of the minority were no longer tied to local political “protectors”. They generally had a more long term relation with a political party, while enjoying freedom of ideological and political orientation in relation to the internal minority oppositions.\textsuperscript{189}

\textsuperscript{189}Here I follow closely (Nikolakopulos 1990–1991b: 53), but he goes too far in his further analysis where he claims that the ideological identity of the political structures of the minority became gradually more and more related to the ideological identity of the Turkish political parties and the political oppositions in Turkey.
EXCURSUS

MINORITY EDUCATION

Historical Background

Education is one of the most complex minority issues and has been of central importance up until today. This is natural when we consider the political and social changes in both Greece and Turkey during the 20th century. Traditional education was religious and had been among the key ideological mechanisms for both Muslims and Christians in the Ottoman Empire. As such it was deeply rooted in the religious administrative system of the empire and considered an internal matter of the millets. The Christian children would go to the priest, while the Muslim children would go to the hodja. The educational system was not meant to help fuse the different elements of the empire as in a modern nation-state. On the contrary, it was a mechanism to keep the millets apart. The confessional groups needed a permission (berat) from the state to open a school, but the state did not care to regulate the education in detail. Neither would the millets take kindly to any attempt by the state to tamper with their vested rights of a certain autonomy in educational matters. When traditional patterns began to crumble and break up under the weight of European influence during the 19th century, the Christians adopted a modern secular western education much earlier than the Muslims. The traditional Muslim medrese education catered for religious needs and basically functioned within the Community (Cemaat), much like the minority schools functioned within their millet. There was also a much smaller number of schools functioning on the level of empire, which trained the Ottoman elite. The Muslim education in the Ottoman Empire was far from uniform, and relatively few had access to higher education.

Modern Turkish education on a national basis began with the Turkish Republic. Atatürk set out not only to reform the existing system, but to revolutionise and transform it completely. The ideas and policies known as “Kemalism” (Atatürkçülük) were during the first years of the republic presented under certain slogans such as “Republicanism” (Cumhuriyetçilik), “Nationalism” (Milliyetçilik), “Populism” (Halkçılık), “Revolutionism” (İnkilâpçılık/Devrimcilik), “Secularism” (Layiklik), and

190 Even today after several decades of secular reforms it is quite common that Turkish university students refer to their professor as hodja.
“Statism” (Devletçilik).\textsuperscript{191} In education, the break with the past was clearly expressed by his choice to change from the Arabic to the Latin alphabet.\textsuperscript{192} A Turkish scholar presents his ambitions in the following way:

The avenue through which elite status was achieved in Turkish society throughout Ottoman history and in the early years of the Republic was education. Therefore, the Republican leadership aimed to achieve an elite consensus on the national basis of the political community and the regime as well as on the secularization program by socializing the new generations into the Republican system of values through education. It was assumed that those who acquired elite status through education would serve as agents who would propagate these values, leading eventually to the transformation of the entire society.

Although somewhat scant and spotty, available empirical evidence suggests that this strategy has proven effective. In a survey of college students, it was observed that the Turkish youth tended to be highly nationalistic as compared to those of other nations (Turan 1984: 89).

The connection between modernism and nationalism is often evident in the minority press. There was no other model available, and the road to a modern education went hand in hand with nationalist ideology. The minority members who studied in Turkey have certainly been influenced by this climate, but there are people among them who have emerged with an intellectual level and integrity which rise above the narrow stereotypes. They usually argue that one should be afraid of ignorance and bigotry and not of education. It should be kept in mind that nationalism in the minority is not conditioned only by Kemalism, but by a mixture of the old Muslim and new Turkish identity. To some extent it has also developed in reaction to Greek nationalism, which excludes them from Greek society.

In Turkey, the main victim of the new policy was the traditional religious establishment. Many leading political and military figures of the early Republican period were known for their religious opposition to the Kemalist regime. “In this context, the use of modern Turkish has long been a political issue due to the opposition of Islamic and ultra-nationalist groups to the change of the alphabet and the language.” (Toprak 1988: 132–133). The ideological conflict between the Kemalist establishment and religious circles has continued up until today. It has recently (summer 1997) appeared in the controversy concerning the bill about extending obligatory education from 5 to 8 years, which affects the İmam-Hatip schools.

In Greek Thrace the relationship between the secularist and religious parties displayed a different dynamics than in Turkey. Mainly because the Greek authorities have often supported the religious circles, except when relations with Turkey were good and Greece conceded to Turkey’s wishes. There are several reasons for this. On a superficial level it is related to the relations between Greece and Turkey in general, the

\textsuperscript{191} For a presentation of these principles, see (Shaw and Shaw 1977: 373–395). The book gives a good insight into the Turkish discourse, as it is reproduced with little critical distance. In the context of Western Thrace, the teacher Enver Kasapoğlu has a very similar presentation in an article written on the occasion of the anniversary of Atatürk’s death (Yankı 39/11.11.1988). He went to school in Turkey during the late 1950s and represents the second wave of Kemalist influence in Western Thrace.

\textsuperscript{192} In a Turkish context the Latin alphabet is often called the Turkish alphabet, as opposed to the Arabic, and features among the symbols which signify the Turkification of education.
diplomatic tug of war, petty local interests etc. On a deeper and maybe more subconscious level, I feel that it is related to the Greek image of the Turks where there are two general types based on their position in the Ottoman social system. On the one hand you had the good, pious, docile peasants which the Greek merchants could do business with, and dominate economically. On the other, you had the people in power, which in the later stages of the Empire were connected with the Young Turks, who were dreaded for their oppressive behaviour towards the minorities.

**Minority Education in Greek Thrace**

The basic charter for minority education in Thrace is the Lausanne Treaty. According to article 40, the minority is entitled to “establish, manage and control at their own expense, any charitable, religious and social institutions, any schools and other establishments for instruction and education, with the right to use their own language and to exercise their own religion freely therein.” Greece is also obliged to secure that the minority has adequate facilities for instruction in their own language, and an equitable share of public funds. However, this provision should not prevent Greece from making the teaching of Greek language obligatory.

In 1920, when Western Thrace passed into Greek possession there were 86 Muslim schools in use. In 1922 Greece issued a law (2781/1922) concerning financial support to minority schools and in 1924 a law (3179/1924) concerning their operation. The financial support to the schools was significant and the number of schools increased steadily during the decade to reach 305 by 1930–1931. The information about this period is somewhat scanty, but in 1929, for example, 217 schools out of a total of 241 had only one classroom for all the pupils. The number of pupils doubled from some 6,000 in 1925 to 12,000 in 1934 (Tsiumis 1994: 224–225). The school facilities were modest and without satisfactory equipment. In most cases the school consisted of an annex to the mosque, which was not suitable as classroom. Education had not been a high priority. The school was rather a place to send the small children who could not help their parents in their work. The older children only went to school a few months a year. Many schools did not work for longer periods because of indifference by the school committees. There was irregularity with the funds handled by

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193 If nothing else is mentioned the Greek facts and figures about pre-war education are taken from (Tsiumis 1994: 155–180). Tsiumis makes use of Greek archival material, mainly reports by the Greek minority inspector Stilianopulos to Venizelos and to a lesser degree by reports from the General Administration of Thrace to the Greek Foreign Ministry as well as certain other documents.

194 For example, in 1929–1930 the religious and educational institutions of the Muslims in Thrace were subsidised by 700,000 drachmas by the Greek State, and 3,789,000 drachmas by the townships. It is mentioned that adequate sums were also granted for health care and philanthropic purposes. Conversely there were complaints that Turkish subsidies to Greek minority schools were minimal and did not even cover the high salaries of the Turkish teachers imposed on the schools. The minority institutions in Turkey were also heavily taxed (Tunda-Fergadi 1994: 183–184). Several schools closed and the minority had to ask Athens for economic assistance (Alexandris 1983: 133–134).
the Muslim school committees. Nor were the funds administered by the General Administration always used in a suitable manner. In spite of the funds granted, few schools had rudimentary teaching equipment such as blackboards. About 8–10% of the schools, located in the towns and larger villages, were in much better condition. These were the schools of the Kemalists and signifies the importance they attributed to education. They succeeded mainly in villages outside the control of the conservative establishment, whom the accused for neglecting education. The Greek authorities closed the Kemalist schools from time to time because of serious violations of rules and intense Turkish propaganda (Tsioumis 1994: 140). During this period the General Administration appointed the community and vakıf councils which managed education in the larger towns Komotini, Ksanthi, Aleksandrupoli, Didimotiho and Yenisea. In the villages the Muslims elected their school committees freely. The signs on the school building were in Turkish and they used Turkish when communicating with the General Administration. The authorities’ control of the schools centred on preventing the hiring of unsuitable teachers and making sure that the running of the schools did not contravene Greek law. The Greek supervision does not seem to have been very tight. In 1930 only 97 of 305 schools were inspected (Tunda-Fergadi 1994: 178). In some remote areas of Evros without enough pupils to establish minority schools it was suggested that they could attend Greek schools, but this provoked reactions and was abandoned.

There was little tradition for secondary education. Apart from the medreses the only schools on a secondary level had been a Rüşdiye and an İdadiye in Komotini. Both buildings were probably built under Abdüllahamit II. The İdadiye was founded in 1884, but closed when Bulgaria took possession of the area in 1913 (Soltaridis 1997: 138). Afterwards there was no modern secondary education in Turkish until 1952. During this period some went to Turkey for secondary education while 5–10 attended Greek schools (İleri 832/16.02.1996). There were some religious secondary schools (medrese). Haki does not leave them much honour: “As for the medreses, they existed during the Ottoman period, later under Bulgarian administration, and in the Greek period both earlier and at present… And imams and teachers acquired diplomas from these medreses, and some hodjas… However for years, yes for years, it was impossible to find a person in the villages who could write a letter, but that is another matter…” (İleri 832/16.02.1996).

The law 3179/1924 “about the schools in Thrace” made the townships (kinőtites) or villages responsible for the appointment of teachers after their approval by the General Administration. The situation in the village would determine if a Kemalist or anti-

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195 The Rüşdiye corresponds roughly to the modern ortaokul and the İdadiye to lise (In Turkey education is 5+3+3 years, while in Greece it is 6+3+3). The building which used to be the İdadiye is now the central minority primary school in Komotini.
Kemalist teacher was appointed. Of the 277 teachers in 1929, 4 had graduated from Turkish teacher colleges, 20 had relevant teacher education and 255 had graduated from medrese (Tsiumis 1994: 224–225). The pupils would usually learn the Koran and rudimentary writing and arithmetic. The demand for educated teachers came mainly, if not only, from the Kemalists. Such teachers would necessarily attend higher education in Turkey. In 1930, 17 persons from the minority attended Turkish teacher colleges with scholarships from Turkey, but many of them did not return. There were attempts by Greece to make a teacher education in Thrace for the minority, but this did not bear fruits because of insufficient interest among the minority.

In the field of education the opposition between the Kemalists and conservatives was very pronounced. The conservatives were sceptical to the Kemalist reforms, but lacked a proper education alternative. During the period 1924–1927, 26 anti-Kemalist fugitives from Turkey were appointed teachers in minority schools (Tsiumis 1998a: 423). Several of them were later dismissed, but three worked as teachers until 1929. The appointment of the fugitives provoked strong reactions in the minority, and protests from Ankara. Another point of dispute was the introduction of the Latin alphabet. In December 1928 Yeni Adım accused the Greek authorities for intervention in the minority schools where the Latin alphabet was used and maintained that the muftis and heads of the pious foundations were behind these interventions. The newspaper used the temporary prohibition of the Latin script in some schools by the local authorities to claim that the Turkish education was persecuted and the “Turkish people” were treated as second class citizens (Tsiumis 1998a: 424). According to a document from the Greek foreign ministry dated 31.12.1928, the Greek state did not care if the Muslims used the Latin or Arabic alphabet (Soltaridis 1997: 199). Conversely, the conservative Yarın accused the Turkish government for persecuting the script of the Koran and condemned the supporters of the Kemalist reforms for being atheists (Tsiumis 1998a: 425). The reformers also complained when their school in Hrisa (Kireççiler - a large village which today is a suburb to Ksanthi) was put under the administration of the conservative vakıf committee in Ksanthi appointed by the General Administration of Thrace. However, this decision was later considered arbitrary and revoked. On the basis of unpublished archival material, Tsiumis concludes that the central Greek authorities did not take side in the conflict between conservatives and reformers. On the other hand, the General Administration of Thrace, which had the direct responsibility for the matter, acted sometimes with exaggerated zeal which resulted in initiatives that were opposed to the policy indicated by central authorities (Tsiumis 1994: 163). In other words, the support of the conservatives is mostly ascribed to local authorities.

To circumvent the conservative control over education, the reformers established their own competing schools. In Komotini 6 minority members, including Hatip
Yusuf, applied for permission to open a primary school. The “Rodopi Private Turkish Primary School” (*Rodop Hususi Türk İlk Mektebi*) obtained permission from the Greek authorities 19.11.1929, and started modestly with 8 pupils (Üstün 1971). In 1928, Osman Nuri opened a school named the “children’s home” (*Çocuk Yurdu*) in Hrisa which used the new alphabet. The interest for this school made it necessary for some old style teachers to introduce the new alphabet in their schools too. Osman Nuri continued his school until 1930–31 when the Ksanthi central primary school got into the hands of the reformers (*inkılapcılar*). After the Ksanthi central primary school provided complete education with the new alphabet, all the teachers and pupils of the private schools were transferred to this (*Gündem* 43/06.05.1997). The Turkish delegation led by İnönü which visited Athens in October 1931, informed that after the removal of the fugitives 50% of the minority had accepted the Latin alphabet (Anastasiadu 1982: 75). When the People’s Party came to power in 1933 the general governor of Thrace handed the minority institutions over to the Kemalists, which led to protests from the conservatives who lost their schools. This gave a larger foundation for promoting the Latin alphabet and all the schools connected to the Muslim community started to use it. The Kemalists used the opportunity to settle old scores with the conservatives and expelled their children from the schools. The conservatives asked for permission to build new schools, but this was not granted. This success reinforced the position of the Kemalists (Üstün 1971; Tiumis 1994: 227–228; Tiumis 1998a: 427). Soon the Muslim MPs made a request to the Greek minister of education to make the Latin alphabet obligatory and replace the Arabic as had happened in Cyprus (R 1934e). However, this did not happen and the two alphabets continued to be used side by side. In Ksanthi the Kemalists founded a teacher association (*Muallimler Birliği*) in 1933, which closed the same year. In 1936 a new attempt was made in Komotini, but the “Rodopi-Evros Turkish Teachers’ Union” (*Rodop-Evros Türk Öğretmenler Birliği*) soon dissolved because of internal conflicts (Özgüç 1974: 72–74).

The Metaksas dictatorship of 4 August 1936 initiated a period of greater control and restrictions on minority education. The law N.N.132/1936 provided for the appointment of two inspectors for the minority schools who knew Turkish and had relevant education experience. The law A.N. 248/17.10.1936 established a position for a general inspector of foreign and minority schools. Still, the relations with Turkey caused Metaksas to favour the Kemalists (Andreadis 1956: 75). From 1937 the minority teachers had to know Greek. New teachers were examined before obtaining employment, while old teachers had to take an exam within two years. Teaching of Greek in the minority schools became obligatory. The procedure for establishing new private schools became more complicated. Those who were responsible needed a certificate of correct ideological orientation (*pistopiitikó kinonikón fromimáton*).
The minority schools suffered under the lack of a standardised education. There was no official curriculum. The General Administration of Thrace tried to work out a program in co-operation with the directors of the schools. In reality there was little interference and the schools operated according to the wishes of the directors and teachers. In the beginning schoolbooks were imported without any control from Istanbul. Later it was discovered that the books had whole chapters with insults against Greece. Subsequently schoolbooks from Turkey were confiscated routinely or teachers who had used them were dismissed. Afterwards the General Administration formed a special committee to write schoolbooks which were approved and printed by the Ministry of Education. They did not come into use as the minority school trustees considered them inappropriate. Greek sources consider this not to be the case, and ascribe the insistence on Turkish schoolbooks to nationalist propaganda and economic interests. Schoolbooks continued to come from Turkey and were distributed after inspectors had cut away the objectionable pages. Naturally, this was not an ideal solution as the mutilated books created a bad impression on the pupils, and even with the removal of objectionable passages the general spirit of the books was clear.

Minority sources have more or less the same information.

[...] particularly in the reading books there were pictures of the Turkish flag, poems against Greece etc. The Greek inspection looked through these books in advance and ordered to cut the pages containing that sort of texts, and the books were used for instruction with several pages cut away (Trakya 908/14.07.1965).

The alphabet question caused further complications since at first there were no facilities for printing Turkish with Latin characters in Greece. For schools which had adopted the Latin alphabet there was no other solution than importing books from Turkey after controlling them. A curious incident took place in 1933, when the fervent Kemalists of the Ksanthi teachers association copied a Turkish textbook and distributed it in the minority schools to introduce the Latin alphabet. However, the Turkish publisher who had the copyright sued them, and when they lost the case they had to dissolve the association as they were unable to pay indemnity (Özgüç 1974: 73). After Metaksas came into power, the tendency toward greater control came into effect. Circulation of teaching material from Turkey without permission from the Ministry of Education became prohibited. Until 1938 the minority schoolbooks had been imported from Turkey. In 1938–39 the Greek state published its own schoolbooks and prohibited the use of other books (Tsiumis 1994: 241). These were based on pieces taken from Turkish schoolbooks. Osman Nuri interpreted this as an attempt by Greece to take greater control over the minority education (Trakya 909/28.07.1965).

The teaching of Greek was a matter of particular significance for the prospect of integrating the minority in society at large. There are many objective problems involved, which can explain the lack of success in accomplishing this. Of course the millet
tradition of closed communities ran contrary to modern ideas about an integrated
society. As there was no tradition for secular education even in Turkish, conservative
minority circles confronted the teaching of Greek with suspicion or indifference. The
authorities did not take a tough stand against those who obstructed the teaching of
Greek out of fanaticism. It should also be kept in mind that the minority schools
were spread over a large area. The farmers in isolated villages had little immediate
need for Greek, and few opportunities to practice it. Assessment of minority education
provided by the Greek state should be seen in connection with the general level of
education in rural areas. A Greek report about the minority education from 1928 gives
an indication of the situation. By order of the Foreign ministry the teaching in Greek
was limited to 9 hours a week, in order not to infringe on the minority’s right to
separate education. The Greek teachers were appointed and paid by the state and the
Muslims could not be billed for them. With the few lessons in Greek it was found
impractical and costly to appoint teachers to about 300 village schools. As a result
Greek teachers paid by the state were only appointed in the larger towns (Komotini,
Ksanthi, Aleksandroupoli, Didimothio, and Hrisa). The authorities approved the hiring
of teachers by communities which paid for it. For those who were unable to do so,
they recommended the Muslim teachers to take care of the education in Greek with the
help of teaching aids (Soltaridis 1997: 138). The minority inspector Stilianopulos
claimed that the General Administration of Thrace did not approach the question of
education in Greek with the necessary seriousness. The quality of the teachers
appointed to minority schools was not good. Suitable people had not been chosen and
there was not adequate instruction and control. This was mainly due to the fact that
some people in the General Administration did not see the use of teaching the minority
Greek. As a result even some Muslims, probably from the Kemalist camp, protested
against the neglect of Greek lessons and asserted that the authorities wanted to keep
them inferior. In 1930 it was decided to gradually introduce Greek to all the minority
schools. At this time Greek was taught in 28 out of 305 schools and was not obliga-
tory. Of 24 Greek teachers 10 were paid by the state, and 11 of the others by the
townships. Venizelos was considering certain measures to secure qualified Greek
teachers, such as giving them pension rights for the years served in minority schools.
In 1931 Greek was taught in 44 schools, and in 1934 the number increased to 60.
However, the minority’s knowledge of Greek remained very low and the pupils
showed little progress (Tsiumis 1994: 168–172, 224–225; Tunda-Fergadi 1994: 178,
186–188). The Metaksas dictatorship put new emphasis on the teaching of Greek. It

196 This is mentioned in contrast to the Turkish policy towards the Greek Orthodox minority of
Istanbul. A report by Greek diplomats in Istanbul shows that the minority schools were under very
tight control of the Turkish state and subjected to a strong assimilation policy (Tsiumis 1994: 176–
178).
also prohibited the use of foreign (Turkish) signs on the minority schools (Tsiumis 1998a: 428). In this case the greater emphasis on Greek education was linked to a repressive regime which did not display sensitivity toward the minority culture. The authoritarian features of all the sides (Greece, Turkey, and minority), prevented a sincere dialogue on the place of Greek in minority education. The minority itself was clearly first of all preoccupied with the conservative-Kemalist conflict, and spent little effort on defining its place in Greek society.

The New Impetus to Education After 1950

Modern Turkish education had unfavourable conditions during the occupation (1941–1944). The Bulgarian administration did not permit the use of the Latin alphabet, and favoured the conservative teacher (Batıbey 1976: 52–55). After the war the modernists took the lead in the field of education just as they did in politics. The Greek administration followed suit and in 1946 the Greek Schoolbook Publishing Company printed Turkish readers in Latin script. This indicates that the Greek ministry of education favoured the modernists, but those who wanted to continue to use the Arab script were allowed to do so (Tsiumis 1998a: 430).

The great turning point in minority education was the cultural agreement between Greece and Turkey in 1951. After recommendation by the Council of Europe in 1949 Greece and Turkey began negotiations for a cultural agreement, which was signed 20 April 1951 in Ankara. The agreement did not particularly target the minority, but concerned the cultural relations as a whole. It lacked clear instructions and had more the character of a statement of intent, although it envisaged the possibility of exchanging books and teachers. A mixed committee of 2 Greeks and 2 Turks became established to work out detailed propositions based on the agreement.\(^{197}\) The subsequent developments were related more to the good climate in Greek-Turkish relations than to specific instructions in the cultural agreement. From the minority the MP Osman Nuri of the Liberal Party participated in the committee led by Sofoklis Venizelos which went to Ankara in February 1952. The same year King Paul of Greece went to Turkey and on his initiative the Greek government built a minority secondary school in Komotini.\(^{198}\) It should be stressed that this does not primarily represent a Greek interest in improving the minority’s education. The Greek King, who was instrumental in supporting the new educational drive, said explicitly that the minority secondary school was built in order to secure advantages for the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul, and Greek

\(^{197}\) See (Alexandris 1988: 137), and (Panayiotidis 1996a: 227–231) for the whole text.

\(^{198}\) The school was built to high standards to create impressions. The prefect of Ksanthi mentions that it had cost 1,800,000 drachmas at a time when the Greek lycée in Ksanthi was housed partly in old buildings from the previous century, and partly in a tobacco store (Nikoglou 1956). Many details relating to the founding of the school are well presented in (Tsiumis 2000).
involvement in its education. That it was named after the Turkish president Celâl Bayar, who attended the inaugural celebrations in Komotini 1 December 1952 as it coincided with a state visit, is a further indication that Greece tried to flatter the Turkish political establishment.\(^{199}\)

The Greek attempt to flatter Turkey in order to secure advantages in return hails back to old patterns of minority behaviour in the Ottoman Empire. This kind of behaviour pattern can also be found in Bulgaria’s attitude to Turkey. A Greek scholar points out that Greece resorted to this kind of behaviour to achieve something for the minority in Istanbul that was already guaranteed by treaty rights.\(^{200}\) It is important to observe that Greece seems to have had no overall plan for the integration of the minority in Western Thrace, but was mainly concerned with its own minority in Istanbul. A second point is that the treatment of the minority was not contingent on an educational programme created by mutual consent, but on the fluctuations in Greek-Turkish relations. In this context it is a question of where the minority belongs. Does it first of all belong to the community of its host state, or does it primarily belong to its confession-al/national group? While the system of the modern nation-state put the emphasis on the first concept, traditional behaviour in Greece and Turkey identifies with the second.

The 1951 cultural agreement and the good climate in Greek-Turkish relations paved the way for a massive Turkish influence on minority education. Because of the lack of local teachers, exchange teachers were sent from Turkey beginning with the school year 1952–53. The first group numbered 24, and by 1956–1957 the number had increased to 35. A Turkish journalist mentions that the school in the Hrisa village near Ksanthi and the Komotini central school had exactly the same instruction as modern Turkish schools, with teachers from Turkey (Arpat 1954). From 1953–54 important measures began to bring the minority education in line with the developments in Turkey. The Greek authorities withdrew the schoolbooks which had been prepared specially for the minority, and accepted to import Turkish schoolbooks from Ankara (Alexandris 1988: 532). The mixed education committee decided that these books should be edited in Turkey, approved by Greece, and finally printed in Turkey. There came books in this fashion from Turkey only for the school year 1955–56.\(^{201}\)

\(^{199}\) When the relations with Turkey cooled off it was renamed, and since 1964 it has been referred to officially as the Minority Secondary school. However, the minority still call it Celâl Bayar and when I quote the minority newspapers I use this name. It should be mentioned that Osman Nuri wrote after the military coup in Turkey in 1960 that “Celâl Bayar” was not a suitable name for the secondary school any longer as he was out of favour in Turkey, and that it should rather be named after Atatürk who was a person commanding undisputed respect (Trakya 807/26.09.1960).

\(^{200}\) (Stamatopulos 1996: 276–277, n. 2). The 1950s represented the “golden age” of minority education both in Western Thrace and Istanbul. Stamatopulos’ book is the most complete account of the situation of the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul during this period and should be read for the comparative aspect.

\(^{201}\) Trakya 909/28.07.1965. Provision of proper schoolbooks has continued to be a problem. I will deal more with this issue in connection with the political conflict about them in the 1990s (see below).
The Greek education law 3065/1954 recognised the minority as Turkish and provided a programme for the schools. Greece made a decided effort to improve the minority education. It was stressed that the authorities desired to elevate the education level of the minority, which was regarded as quite a task considering the situation at the time. In 1954–1955 the Greek government provided 600,000 drachmas for the building and repair of schools, while in the preceding decade it had built 62 new schools (20 in Ksanthi, 38 in Rodopi, and 4 in Evros). Of the 217 other schools in use, 153 had the required hygienic standard while 64 were unsatisfactory.\(^{202}\) As a result of the improvement in Greek-Turkish relations, Turkey too was able to give much support to the minority education. Hatipoğlu mentions that Turkey spent a lot of money to upgrade the minority schools in Western Thrace during the 1950s.\(^{203}\)

The order from 1954 by the general governor of Western Thrace, Fessopulos, that the minority schools should hereafter be called “Turkish primary schools”, marks the culmination of Greek concessions. It is evident that the central administration’s willingness to comply with Turkey’s wishes met local resistance. Both conservative Muslims and Christians must have resented the order to change the names of the schools. It is hard to assess the extent and character of this resistance, but the difficulties of the central authorities to make people comply is evident by the second order:

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Kingdom of Greece
General Administration of Thrace
Governor-General’s Office
Number of Protocol A202

Komotini, 5/1/1955

To: Our Interior office.

In spite of the strict orders of the government, announced by us with the [circulars] Number E.P. 728/22-4-54 and A 24869/22.12.54 to replace the terms “Muslim [noun]-Muslim [adj.]” with “Turk-Turkish”, in the village Aratos on the public road between Komotini and Aleksandropoli there is a prominent sign with the words “Muslim School”.

This as well as any other such signs that might exist in the area of the Rodopi Prefecture should be replaced immediately.

The prefects, to whom the present communication is sent, should take care to replace any such signs that might exist in their areas.

Governor-General of Thrace
G. FESSOPULOS

Notification to: The prefects of Evros, Ksanthi, Kavala, Drama.\(^{204}\)
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\(^{202}\) (Andreadis 1956: 16). The section on education in this book (pp. 12–20), is a good source for the Greek position. See also (Nikoglou 1956).

\(^{203}\) Akin 920/24.09.1987. Trakya 794/04.04.1960 mentions in detail the money given by the Turkish consulate for school buildings etc.

\(^{204}\) (Andreadis 1956: 10). According to Andreadis the villagers of Aratos protested strongly when the sign was changed from “Muslim school” to “Turkish school”. In a declaration [ipēthinos dílosi] from 21.01.1955 two of the village leaders wrote that when they did not wish to change the day of rest for their school from Friday to Sunday the Turkish consul threatened that he would complain to the general governor Fessopulos, put them on a black list preventing them from going to Turkey, and called them reactionaries and enemies of twenty million Turks (Andreadis 1956: 77).
The Latin and Arabic alphabet continued to be used side by side according to local wish. However, the Greek authorities evidently wanted to placate Turkey since the minority school inspector recommended the Latin alphabet to 105 teachers from the conservative (Pomak) mountain area in the summer of 1955, but he would not impose it on them. The minority was also free to choose between Friday or Sunday as holiday (Andreadis 1956: 18).

It is clear that the conservative wing was under pressure. Hatipoğlu makes a point of mentioning that during this “golden age” for minority education the Greek authorities sent the conservative leader Hüsnü Yusuf, who was opposed to the Atatürk reforms, into exile because he was “against the Greek-Turkish friendship” (Akın 919/14.09.1987). The conservatives were of course displeased with the situation. In three letters to the Greek authorities dated 29.08.1955, the religious organisation “Union of Muslims in Greece” complained about the situation. They argued that the minority rights and the minority institutions belonged to the Muslims, not to the Turks: Muslims and Turks were two different things. They were against that the vakıf funds were used for [Turkish] nationalist purposes, and the interference in the way of dressing, alphabet etc. They claimed that teachers who went for further education in Turkey were imbued with anti-Greek sentiments. While the mosques and medreses were in a sorry state, the Kemalists wanted to use the vakıf funds for “non existent” school needs, since they got money from both Greek and Turkish authorities. The conservatives wanted Greece to show some care for the Muslims instead of spending all her efforts on pleasing Turkey because of the minority in Istanbul. They claimed that the conservatives were the best Greek citizens and did not participate in the clamour against Greece. In many villages they had success, but controlled no primary schools and mosques in Komotini.

However, the Greek efforts were not sufficient to please Turkey. When the situation of the Muslim minority was discussed in the Turkish parliament, it created resentment that the Pomaks were referred to as Muslims and not Turks. They accused the medrese in Komotini of being a centre of reactionaries. The Turkish ministry of education wanted to change its program to make it similar to İmam-Hatip schools in Turkey. The vehement polemics in Turkish newspapers have been mentioned earlier. Greek officials would argue that the authorities could not make the desired interventions against the conservatives since freedom of religion was granted by the constitution. Andreadis portrayed Greece as torn between the desire not to offend Turkey, while respecting the Muslims in Thrace. He stressed that the conservatives were not only made up of the fugitives from Asia Minor, but also many local Muslims.

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205 (Andreadis 1956: 67–76). The letters were signed by the chairman Hafiz Reşat and the general secretary Mehmet Emin Aga, who would later switch to the Turkish side.
206 See (J 1955), which refers to articles in Cumhuriyet 22 May, 31 May, and 8 June 1955.
particularly the Pomaks (Andreadis 1956: 47–51). Turkish sources portray Greek attempts to sabotage the imposition of Turkish education. It is mentioned that after the education agreement in 1954 the minority should use the official alphabet of the Turkish Republic. Then the minority school inspector Minas Minaidis assembled secretly the religious teachers and told them that the Greek government could no longer let them teach the Arab alphabet and lessons on a traditional religious basis. However, if they collected a significant number of signatures and applied to the Greek government claiming that the new education was contrary to their traditions, it would be possible to find a solution so that they could continue with their traditional education. This put the conservatives to work, with Hafız Reşat taking the lead. They claimed that those who accepted the Latin alphabet could not be regarded as Muslims. The Turkish diplomat Bayülken accused certain quarters in Greece of encouraging “some reactionary elements among the Turkish community”. He considered them to be few and insignificant in numbers but by exploiting religious sentiment they diverted their compatriots from education and progress. As a result there was not a single minority student in Greek universities, so they tried to go to Turkey for higher education (Bayülken 1963: 153–155). These allegations display that the Turkish diplomat was out of touch with the realities in Greek Thrace. He clearly underestimates the popular support of the conservatives. Furthermore, since the Turkish educational ideals did not prepare them for Greek universities, it was quite natural that the minority members oriented themselves towards Turkey for higher education.

The Ideological Battle of the 1960s

My impression is that the Greek authorities were not prepared for the effects of the new educational impetus. When the relationship to Turkey grew sour towards the end of the 1950s, Greek authorities looked for ways to limit the influence of Turkey on minority education. The Kemalist section of the minority reacted strongly to this, and Osman Nuri wrote a number of articles which give us an insight into the values and priorities of this group. He developed a tense relationship to the local cadre of his party (ERE) after 1958 because of its minority policy. Particularly after the 1961 elections the newspaper launched a strong critique. The conflict with ERE was only related to the policy concerning the minority’s “culture, and national conscience” (Trakya 884/04.06.1964). Osman Nuri ran on the ERE ticket in 1961 in spite of his differences, since the party would win the election. His attempt to make the minority protest against ERE’s education policy in the 1963 election by voting for the Centre.
Union party was a mixed success. People tended to agree with Osman Nuri in Ksanthi, while in Komotini many were pleased with the minority policy of Karamanlis (Trakya 877/18.03.1964; 878/30.03.1964). In this connection it is necessary to have in mind the stable relationship of the conservative Molla Yusuf to ERE.

The scepticism of certain Greek circles to the Turkish influence is clearly expressed in the series of articles by Yiannis Kapsis where he “warned” about the situation in Western Thrace.\(^{208}\) He claimed that Thrace was under threat by a “fanatical Turkish group which wants autonomy”. Osman Nuri accused Kapsis of distorting the situation and relying on information from the police which was deliberately hostile to the minority. I believe that Osman Nuri is correct in many of his objections. However, there are points where the difference in ideological outlook becomes particularly pronounced.

Kapsis denounced a Turkish exchange teacher who in collaboration with the “chauvinist fanatics” used the Turkish school oath to “poison the pure spirits” of the little school children (Ethnos 05.08.1959). This led to the following reaction by Osman Nuri:

\[
\text{"I am a Turk, I am honest, I am hard working.}
\]

\[
\text{My principle of life is: To respect my elders, to protect those younger than me, to love my homeland more than myself}
\]

\[
\text{My ideal is: progress and development}
\]

\[
\text{May my life be a gift to the existence of my Homeland! "}
\]

You may call the above words an oath, or a prayer, or whatever you want. They are in its entirety an educational motto. To interpret this as a manifest evil intention, chauvinism and enmity towards Greece is to slander the minority and treat it with enmity.

What is a Turkish teacher supposed to teach a Turkish child?

No, you are not a Turk and consequently he should say “I am not a Turk”? Should he say I am not honest, I am a hypocrite? Should he say I do not respect my elders, I do not protect those younger than me? Should he say may my existence not be a gift to the existence of my homeland; I do not serve the homeland?

Those who say these words are not possessed by chauvinism, but those who do not let them say them are.

Here there is an evil interpretation of the word homeland: If the Western Thrace Turkish child says that it will sacrifice its existence to the homeland, why does it not enter the mind of the chauvinist Greek that this is the Greek homeland and he seeks immediately for a bad motive underneath it? However, this has also been experienced. Since Western Thrace became a part of Greece the Turkish homeland i.e. Turkey has not been in danger. However, Greece has been in danger. In the 10 years from 1940 to 1949 when Greece was in danger the Western Thrace Turk who was raised with this motto served the Greek homeland. I can even make the claim that he served it with more devotion than people like Mr. Kapsis. Consequently, to see enmity towards Greece in the meaning of the word homeland in this motto is both downright forgery and ingratitude.\(^{209}\)

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\(^{208}\) The series of 8 articles by the later deputy foreign minister (1982–1989) appeared in the newspaper Ethnos 03–11.08.1959. Osman Nuri presents them in his newspaper Trakya (774/17.08.1959–790/01.02.1960) in Turkish translation together with a very detailed criticism.

\(^{209}\) Trakya 779/28.09.1959. Osman Nuri underlines that this “motto” was not only used after the exchange teachers from Turkey came as Mr. Kapsis claimed. It had been used in the Ksanthi central primary school since 1944, before the war in Hrisa, and in 1930 in the Çocuk Yurdu school. This “motto” is otherwise referred to as the Turkish pledge of allegiance. It is repeated in Turkish schools every morning and printed on the first page of most schoolbooks. It is also used in the schools of the Greek Orthodox and Armenian minorities in Istanbul. In the Turkish nationalist discourse there are also other well known slogans such as: “How happy is he who calls himself a Turk” (Ne mutlu Türk’üm diyene).
To get a clearer picture of Osman Nuri’s views, we can look at his substantial criticism of the authorities’ restrictions on the new developments in minority education. The title of his first article “spiritual oppression” (Manevî tazyik yahut ruhî baskı) is an attempt to render Yeoryios Papandreu’s phrase psihologyiki viya which was used to criticise the government’s behaviour towards the opposition parties. Nuri used this phrase to describe the behaviour of certain local authorities, particularly in “cultural questions”, whether it was a personal initiative or a systematic policy towards the minority (Trakya 831/21.11.1961). He claimed that teachers were dismissed for no apparent reason and it seemed as if the authorities desired to abolish Turkish from the schools and to inspire fear in the teachers. He says that in the course of the minority’s history, despite difficult times with dictatorship, war etc., there had never been such a systematic psychological oppression of the minority, and never had the central authorities ignored the complaints of the minority to this degree (Trakya 837/29.03.1962).

A central point for Osman Nuri was that the minority is national, and he wanted to protect the integrity of it. His language reveals that in spite of all his zeal for reforms, he was nevertheless to a certain degree trapped in the Ottoman concept of “closed communities”. Far from being a mere concept, the Ottoman model was directly related to the social reality of the area. However, when arguing for the Turkish identity of the minority, Osman Nuri took recourse to formal arguments related to the Lausanne treaty. He stated that the 103,989 persons with établis certificates are officially recognised as Muslims and Turks (Trakya 839/19.04.1962). This makes the minority first of all a part of Greek-Turkish relations. The minority is viewed as some kind of branch of Turkey, and should have the same development as the Turks of Turkey. He wrote specifically that Turkey had to be consulted about the minority issues and the minority’s cultural questions (Trakya 844/27.06.1962).

As has often been the case, the Pomaks are on the cutting edge when it comes to questions about the identity of the minority. Osman Nuri reacted to attempts of dividing the Pomaks from the rest of the minority (Trakya 844/27.06.1962). The authorities had told the “Mountain Turks” (Cebel Türkleri) that they were Greeks who had been forcibly converted to Islam, and not Turks. They distributed history books which “A Turk has no other friends than Turks” (Türk’ün Türk’ten başka dostu yoktur). “One Turk is worth the whole world” (Bir Türk dünyaya bedeldir). Of course, this excessive “value” can only be expressed within a nationalist context. For example when it comes to labour rights in Turkey his value is substantially less.

210 The critique in 22 parts is published in his newspaper Trakya (831/21.11.1961–852/27.11.1962). Hâki republishes it with his own comments in Ileri, beginning with the issue 831/09.02.1996. The first article of the series has the heading “Manevî tazyik yahut ruhî baskı”, while he gradually settles on “Manevî baskı” as a general heading for the series. Some of the issues are repeated with variations in several of the articles. The lack of a tighter structure is probably related to that he did not plan it as a series when he started. This series signifies Osman Nuri’s break with ERE because of its education policy.
were half Greek and half Bulgarian. He maintained that there was no difference between Turks and Pomaks.²¹¹ The school inspector made a campaign against the use of Turkish in the Pomak villages above Ksanthi. Locally the authorities told the villagers: “What do you need Turkish for, why do you study Turkish, we can write you the Koran and religious books with Greek letters” (Trakya 833/13.02.1962). A few years earlier textbooks in Bulgarian with Greek letters appeared. Osman Nuri reacted by pointing to the necessity of following a policy where every Muslim was also a Turk (Trakya 837/29.03.1962). Ten years earlier he had mentioned the unpleasant experiences because of Bulgarian claims. He admonished the Pomaks to abandon their language since it only created trouble for them, and speak pure Turkish. Some villages above Komotini such as Organi (Hemetli) and Nimfeo (Yanıköy) had in fact abandoned the language right after the Balkan Wars and by this time it had almost vanished.²¹²

Osman Nuri claimed that the conservatives Hamdi Bey, Hüsnü Yusuf, and Hafız Ali Reşat were assisted by the authorities in various ways. He stressed that assistance to them and their likes could not be regarded as help to the minority (Trakya 839/19.04.1962). His recurring theme is that some people inside the minority are given certain privileges and used as tools so that it appears as if the people themselves want what the authorities impose on the minority (Trakya 835/13.03.1962). The ERE party tried to keep the “Mountain Turks” away from the Turkish language, and supported exceedingly the schools which employed the old alphabet. They responded to Osman Nuri’s protests by saying that the administration was democratic and gave people what they wanted. Osman Nuri would claim that many forms of spiritual oppression masked itself behind the formula: “People want it that way” (Trakya 878/30.03.1964).

Osman Nuri represents the clearest statement of the Kemalist position in the 1960s. We must however bear in mind that during this period the conflict between modernists and conservatives was very prominent. From reading Osman Nuri one can easily get the impression that there were only a few conservatives among the minority, and he is not willing to admit that they had a popular basis. I have several acquaintances with a vivid memory of the conflicts in the villages between adherents of the two parties. They remember Hüsnü Yusuf and Hafız Ali Reşat as persons with a higher traditional religious education and a devotion to Islamic values. However, we can assume that some people adopted the conservative position because it was favoured by the Greek authorities. It is clear that there was not much mutual tolerance between the groups,

²¹¹ Trakya 870/25.10.1963. The euphemism “Mountain Turks” for the Pomaks is reminiscent of similar terminology (Doğ Türkleri) for the Kurds of Turkey. I have no further details about these books, but there have been occasional campaigns to detach the Pomaks from the Turks. We can observe that Osman Nuri calls the Pomaks’ language Bulgarian.
²¹² Trakya 504/07.04.1952. (Liapis 1995) mentions this and other examples of pressures to assimilate the Pomaks into the main Turkish minority body.
and each group wanted to impose its views on the other. We see that Osman Nuri
applauds the situation in the early 1950s, when the Greek authorities suppressed the
conservative element in the name of Greek-Turkish friendship, while he protested
vehemently against the reversal of fortune in the 1960s.

Osman Nuri was particularly concerned about the lack of an institutional framework
which would give clear directives for the education of the minority. The agreements
with Turkey from 1913 and 1920 had fallen out of use. This meant that there was no
fundamental law for the regulation of minority affairs (Trakya 848/24.09.1962). Or as
he writes in another place: The law 2345/1920 is ignored consistently, while the edu-
cation law 3065/1954 is imperfect and ignored, unless when it could be used to pre-
vent the progress of the minority (Trakya 837/29.03.1962). He also criticised the lack
of clear and binding directives for the minority school inspection. This inspection was
in the hands of a few people, and not integrated in the general school administration. It
was led by Aryiriadis from 1923 to 1936, and by Minaidis from 1936. Osman Nuri
asked whether the minority school inspectors should not be under the authority of the
General Inspection of Private and Foreign Schools in Thessaloniki. It so happened
that when someone from that office came to address some problems, the local inspect-
ors ignored him. The Minority School Inspector in Thrace seemed to be responsible
only to the prefects. It was not clear whether the minority schools were private or state
schools, and the inspector regarded them as one or the other according to circum-
stances (Trakya 836/20.03.1962). Repeated applications to the prefect and the highest
authorities remained unanswered. Osman Nuri tried to discuss the problem with the
ministry of education to no avail, and was left with the impression that the question
was handled by the foreign ministry (Trakya 831/09.01.1962). He explained in detail
the procedure followed:

Since the question was about education, naturally the first petition was made to the ministry of
education and religion. Thereafter in turn, and without neglecting the ministry of education,
petitions were made to the office of the Prime Minister, the foreign ministry, the home office, and
the chief ministry [ipuryio proedrias]. No office would consider itself to have the authority to
handle this question and nobody gave a definite answer. The Prime Minister refers the petition to
the ministry of education and the home office, he also wants an answer from them but no answer
is given. The home office informs that it has referred the petition to the ministry of education
again. As for the ministry of education, it gave orally the following answer: The ministry of
education cannot change a decision taken by the prefects. In that case it means that the prefect is
not responsible to anybody [lâ yûs’el amma yef’al]. It means that the questions pertaining to the
minority are referred without control to a “high commissioner” [ipatos armostís]. Is Western
Thrace not a part of Greece, is it some newly occupied land? Shall the Turkish minority in
Western Thrace be treated according to a treaty signed 40 years ago, or like a hostage, prisoner of
war, or native of a colony of newly occupied land?

Does this minority not have the right to want to be governed by clear state laws instead of

Osman Nuri mentions that in 1954 for the first time 700,000 drachmas were
allotted in the state budget to minority education in Western Thrace. He would have
liked the minority to dispose of this money freely through its community institutions,
but complained that: “It is not recognised officially or tacitly that we Turks have a Community institution (Cemaat Müessese)” (Trakya 844/27.06.1962). Generally it was considered difficult to know where and to whom this money was given and on which conditions. It could be observed that some schools were repaired and some new school built. He considered that in the first 2–3 years the aid to minority education appeared to have good intentions, but after 1958 this changed and teachers and school trustees who insisted on using the word Turkish were not looked kindly on (ibid.). Hâki added in his comment to this article that the money allotted to minority education gradually became a secret fund. The medreses and old style hodjas were funded by this money (İleri 844/10.05.1996).

Many of Osman Nuri’s grievances are indirectly confirmed by Greek sources, but they have of course a different outlook. They claimed that Ankara pressed continuously for the homogenisation of the minority, particularly after the Greek-Turkish educational protocol in 1951. In the 1950s Turkey insisted on obtaining permission for sending exchange teachers from Turkey to the Pomak villages in the mountain area. Turkey attempted to stamp out the conservative leaders and to turkify the Pomaks. Greece is portrayed as more liberal than Turkey. It is mentioned that the permission to build a minority secondary school in Ksanthi was granted at a time when Turkey prohibited Greek education on Gökçeada (Imvros). It is believed that Turkish diplomacy was able to secure important concessions from Greece in the field of education during the 1950s and 1960s, in particular as regards the introduction of Turkish education in the minority. The educational agreements of 1951 and 1968 established Turkish as the only language of instruction although it is not the mother tongue of the Pomaks and Gypsies. In this fashion Turkey laid the foundation for the gradual transformation of the minority from a religious to a national Turkish minority. It is stressed that the Turkish education promoted so strongly by Ankara prepares the minority for integration in Turkish and not Greek society (Alexandris 1988: 144, 524–525, 532).

The 1968 Education Protocol

The tense Greek-Turkish relations had an adverse effect on minority education during the 1960s. After the crisis in November 1967, the two governments desired to straighten out the minority problems and make this the beginning of a general improvement in their relations. During the first half of 1968 top-ranking Greek and Turkish diplomats met several times to determine the problems and propose solutions for them. Complex problems would be referred for further study. The goal was to reinstate mutual trust and understanding. It was pointed out that the Lausanne treaty created a balance between Greece and Turkey in minority matters, and that the governments were aware of the necessity to protect and restore the spirit of this reciprocity
through the strict enforcement of this treaty. The diplomats stressed the importance of having as much education in their mother tongue as in the official language of the state. They agreed that there should be no restrictions on the use of the minority language. It was noticed that both minorities suffered from a lack of proper schoolbooks in the minority language, and initiatives were taken to mend this.\footnote{For the text of the first set of proposals signed in Vienna at the end of May 1968, see (Panayiotidis 1996a: 232–234).}

The Greek-Turkish education protocol was signed 20.12.1968. Members of the mixed committee, as conceived by the 1951 educational agreement, met several times during the autumn. They adopted the earlier propositions and sanctioned officially the curriculum currently employed by the minority schools. History, geography, knowledge about Greece and Greek language were taught in Greek and the rest in Turkish. After initial inspection, teaching material could be used without restrictions. The procedure envisaged was to send teaching material by diplomatic channels, which had to be accepted or declined within a month. The protocol mentioned particularly the principle of respecting “the religious, racial, and national conscience of the Greek and Turkish people”. The teachers should not make comments which could embarrass the minority pupils because of their different religion etc.\footnote{For the whole text, see (Panayiotidis 1996a: 235–241).}

The protocol mentioned Turkish as the only minority language of instruction. After pressure from Turkey, the Greek dictatorship appointed massively teachers educated in Turkey. This strengthened the nationalist circles and contributed to the further turkification of the minority.

The 1968 education protocol represents the last major attempt to resolve the education problems within the framework of Greek-Turkish relations. It has much more detailed provisions than the 1951 agreement, but the beneficial effects of it were gradually offset because of the political developments between the two countries. The diplomatic negotiations about minority education were certainly conditioned by ideological blinkers. However, I have also the impression that there was a desire to “outsmart” each other and give as little as possible for much in return. The Greek junta was of course in a weak political position, and with little diplomatic competence. Clearly, it had hoped that the protocol would secure the future of the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul. The decline of this minority, effected adversely the treatment of the Muslims in Thrace. This is the natural result of an educational regime dominated by Greek-Turkish relations rather than educational principles. Consequently, after this time the minority education depended more on what Greece was willing to give than what Turkey was able to obtain.
The Teacher Issue

The problems in minority education during the 1950s and 1960s are well illustrated by the developments relating to the teaching staff. Before this time the teachers with a proper education were few and far between. Most of those who went to Turkey for education during the period 1930–1941 chose to stay. Others who returned to Thrace were not accepted by the Greek authorities or migrated to Turkey because of the uncertain working conditions (no insurance, pension arrangement etc.). Those who went after 1946 took university education and remained in Turkey. In 1954–55 there was no teacher with a 12 year education. Most of them had only 6 years of primary school or medrese (Merçil 1966). The teachers were faced with primitive conditions and low pay. The diverse background of the minority teachers has often been considered a problem, preventing the creation of a uniform minority education. A series of articles in İleri, pointed out that earlier people thought everybody who could read and write could be teachers. Only recently it was accepted that teaching was a profession (meslek) which needed special education. In Turkey this happened as late as 1973 (İleri 359/26.10.1984). The diversity of the teachers has continued to be a feature of minority education up until today. Hâki presents them in the following manner:

1. Those who have not even finished primary school,
2. Primary school graduates,
3. Medrese graduates,
4. Lycée graduates,
5. Turkish religious college graduates,
6. Turkish teacher college graduates,
7. Turkish trade school graduates,
8. Egyptian religious college graduates,
9. Egyptian El Ezher college graduates,
10. Thessaloniki Academy graduates,
11. Hafız Reşat School graduates.

After 1954 teachers were invited to Turkey for courses. Exchange teachers from Turkey arrived in Thrace, and a significant number of minority pupils received scholarships to Turkish teacher colleges each year. This prepared the ground for the creation of a uniform teaching corps. The first minority primary school teachers

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215 This is related to internal developments in the Turkish educational system. Earlier it had been possible to proceed with 6 year of teacher college after finishing primary school. However, when it became necessary to attend secondary school (orta okul) before teacher college, the pupils from Thrace went first to orta okul in Turkey, as there was none in Thrace, and most of them continued with lise instead of becoming teachers, as they were supposed to, and went on with university studies.

216 İleri 329/25.11.1983. Hâki presents the same information in Embros (=İleri) 3/02.07.1975, in one of his occasional attempts to address a Greek audience.
educated in Turkey graduated in 1960 and began to teach in the school year 1960/61. Hâki describes the excitement when they came to Thrace:

The first and second group of graduates from the Turkish teacher colleges started to come. An excitement-love for education started to spread throughout the minority. Every village wanted a graduate from Turkish teacher colleges…

On the other side… i.e. on the side of the friends who had graduated…: Except for one or two, they were all idealists. Some of them brought with them the famous VILLAGE INSTITUTES SPIRIT. The writer of these lines too brought with him some of this spirit, and feels proud of it. Because we went often from Konya to the Ìvriz teacher college…

It seems as if the authorities regret the signing of the 1951 TURKISH-GREEK CULTURAL AGREEMENT… Because they see the EDUCATION EXCITEMENT which was suddenly born in our community… They see the resolution-excitement of the friends… And… they start to send directives upon directives [to the schools]…

The spirit, the EDUCATION SPIRIT or FREEDOM was gradually restrained and narrowed… Just like the HOURS in the curriculum… Most of the hours were moved to the Greek Orthodox [rum] teachers… It was aimed to erase the TURKISM SPIRIT-WIND in the minority education…

The graduates from Turkish teacher colleges provided the minority with teachers who had a modern education, and represented a vast improvement in educational standards. Many of these teachers were from villages and had a very limited knowledge of Greek. They were raised in a Muslim-Turkish environment in Greece and continued their education within the ideological framework of the Turkish state. Consequently they had the Turkish teacher ideal as their sole role model. The great importance Kemal Atatürk attached to the teacher’s role in transforming the society through education is symbolised with the celebration of the “teachers’ day” on November 24. This is duly celebrated by the minority teachers educated in Turkey. In this connection the minority press usually refers to the Kemalist ideals and Kemal’s words about the teachers’ duties. Or, as Hâki would put it:

In Turkey, the Turkey of Atatürk, someone who was raised in an environment where the “Atatürkism” [“Atatürkçülük”] views and thoughts prevailed, would be formed by this atmosphere-nourishment and on various occasions within a school year he would at least 7–8 times listen to speeches in ceremonies organised to present the various proposals of Atatürk, and as a result of this he would enter more consciously the war on the “progressive” side to enlighten the community (İleri 319/18.11.1983).

The teachers educated in Turkey were not favoured by the Greek authorities, and there were many difficulties connected to their appointment. Osman Nuri opposed vehemently this policy. Osman Nuri reported that the minority school inspector for Ksanthi, Dimitriadis, dismissed 5 teachers from their work and prevented the

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217 İleri 851/24.06.1996. The “village institutes” (köy enstitüleri) along with the “folk-houses” (halkevleri) were part of the Kemalist regime’s endeavours to establish alternative social networks to those of religion. The “folk-houses” offered entertainment, organised courses etc., while the “village institutes” were a kind of agricultural teaching centres in the villages which also intended to promote a sense of local community among them. These institutions were completely secular and soaked with national patriotism. However, they were not able to compete in popularity with the religious associations, and could consequently not replace them.

appointment of two others. This also led to protests from the Ksanthi mufti Mustafa Hilmi. Osman Nuri complained in the capacity of MP to the highest authorities, including the prime minister and the foreign minister, but received no answer (Trakya 833/13.02.1962). He claimed that the teachers were dismissed for no apparent reasons. In one case the dismissed teachers had written “From the Şahn (Ehinos) Turkish primary school” on a wrath (Trakya 831/21.11.1961). In another case the teacher chosen by the Kiknos (Sadnoviça) village was dismissed. In his place a young teacher who had not completed even primary school was appointed, because he was considered to be the man of the authorities. When the school trustees started a signature campaign in favour of certain teachers, they were stopped by the school inspector (ibid.). Particularly in Ksanthi, the prefect would not appoint teachers competent in Turkish for certain villages (most probably Pomak) on the basis of reports from the school inspector. He would ask school trustees to come to the police station and impose a teacher of his choice on the village (Trakya 831/09.01.1962). Osman Nuri claims that the school inspector made it extremely difficult for teacher candidates who had more than primary school, while he encouraged some to become teachers who had not even completed primary school and exerted pressure on people to accept them (Trakya 836/20.03.1962). Later on, many of the teachers educated in Turkey were sacked during the junta regime 1967–74 (Gerçek 153/08.01.1987). Generally, the appointment of teachers educated in Turkey was stopped after the 1960s. Many teachers worked as labourers and Hâki considered that about two hundred had left the country. He also points to the inflexible rules for changing school. The teachers had to remain in their position whether the teacher or the villagers were satisfied or not.219

There is also occasional information about teachers who lost their job. For example, the teacher in the Kırnos (Kirköy) village, Kara Ahmet Şaban, was removed from his job because he taught Turkish history. He was originally from Oreon (Yassioören) and had served continuously as teacher since 1957 (İleri 355/28.09.1984). More recently there are the examples of Asım Çavuşoğlu (1993) and Rasım Hint (July 1996) who have been subjected to punitive transfers for promoting the Turkish character of the minority.

Traditionally the parents of the school children paid the teacher’s salary. This is the case for the teachers educated in Turkey too. There are several examples from the minority press where the teachers complained about the low salary, and that the parents did not pay what they owe. Some villagers who did not want to pay for the teachers mentioned that there were also free teachers, meaning the EPATH graduates (the Special Pedagogical Academy in Thessaloniki, see below).220

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earlier, some of the first teachers who studied in Turkey, did not return to Western Thrace. To prevent them from staying, Turkey took measures such as denying work permit and citizenship to foreign Turks (Merçil 1966). There were also granted certain incentives to make the teachers return to Greece, and to secure them an income. This is generally known under the term “social aid”. It was stated specifically that no “social aid” would be given to people who behaved contrary to Turkish culture and Kemalist reforms. Greece followed suit by supporting the conservatives.

**Greece Takes Over the Education of Teachers**

The first primary school teachers educated in Turkey graduated in 1960 and the last teacher college graduates obtained their diplomas in 1966. There are about 300 such graduates. When these graduate fell out of favour with the Greek authorities, some were dismissed while others were never appointed (İleri 835/08.03.1996). At some point the Greek authorities decided to create a teaching staff dependent on them, and in 1966 the Medrese Graduate Muslim Teachers Association (Medrese Mezunu Müslüman Muallimler Cemiyeti, i.e. MMMMC) was founded. This association was established under the leadership of Mehmet Emin Aga after the initiative of the school inspector Minas Minaidis. After the MMMMC was established, there was no longer room for the Turkish teacher college graduates. In 1968/69 the Special Pedagogical Academy in Thessaloniki was founded and determined the future employment of teachers.

**The Medrese**

In the 1920s there were 16 medreses in Thrace, half of them in Komotini (Andre- adis 1956: 74). Gradually they had closed because of little interest and changes in the education system. In 1949 the medrese-i hayriye was started up again in Komotini under the auspices of the mufti. Likewise, the medrese of Ehinós, which had originally been established in 1903, came in use again in 1956 (Soltaridis 1997: 142–143, 154). They were opened to provide religious personnel for the minority. These

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221 Turkey passed a special law (168/16.12.1960) to aid financially foreign citizen Turks who served Turkish culture. The Foreign Department determines who are eligible (Diyalog 4/07.03.1997 or (Ömeroğlu 1994: 62–63) have the whole text as well as comments). The Turkish Consulate in Komotini announced (380/51-03.04.1961) that the teachers in Western Thrace who could benefit from this law should apply promptly (Trakya 816/04.04.1961). In practice, this money is given in a semi-official fashion, and corresponds to the money given by the Greek consulate in Istanbul to the Greek Orthodox minority and the Patriarchate. It would probably be difficult to get someone to speak publicly about it, but the sums are generally known. In the autumn of 1996 the teachers who were waiting to become appointed got 90,000 drachmas and the pensioned teachers got 130,000 drachmas a month from the Turkish Consulate. According to Rodoplu there were about 60–70 teachers in 1993 who had graduated in Turkey and were still waiting for appointment (Gerçek 368/07.09.1993).

222 İleri 669/03.04.1991; 846/24.05.1996. This is the same Mehmet Emin Aga who today is known as the “elected mufti”/”pseudomuftis” of Ksavthi. He changed “camp” after 1974 and is now known in Greece as one of the “hard-liners” (skliropirinikós).
medreses had their best period in the years after 1952/53 when many pupils attended them. They lost popularity because the parents saw that the education could not secure their children a future. As the religious personnel do not have a proper salary, the medrese pupils in Thrace are all from poor families. Hâki graduated from the medrese in Komotini in 1955, and continued his education in Turkey at an Imam-Hatip school (Prayer leader-Preacher school). He is now an ardent adherent of Kemalism and can be regarded as a “convert” from this point of view. In a recent article he gives a vivid picture of the education in the medrese, which provides a rare insight into its program, as well as the educational development and priorities of Hâki himself.

Hâki begins by recounting how the education of the Muslims in the Ottoman Empire lagged far behind not only the West, but also the minorities of the Empire. He describes in detail the education in the medrese which was Koran reading and religious education. There were some lessons on Islamic history, but nothing on “Turkey and Turkism”. The teacher Hafız Ahmet kept on brainwashing the pupils every day: “You are like birds with two wings… You learn the sciences for both this and the next world… How fortunate you are! Those who study at the Celâl Bayar will be in a sorry state in the other world!” (İleri 887/29.08.1997). Hafız Hasan called the Turkish Youth Union a communist nest and cursed Atatürk and Turkey every day. By learning such lessons and listening to the teachers they really believed that they became birds with two wings.

Afterwards Hâki went to Konya to attend an Imam-Hatip school. Already on the first day he realised that he had wasted three years at the medrese. At the Imam-Hatip School there was a wide variety of lessons. However, spiritually it was still tied to the Ottoman Empire and had a negative attitude towards the Republic.

The Greek administration always supported the medrese and he claims that it spent billions from the secret funds to keep it running. There are many people within the minority who benefit from this money. Hâki would have liked to close the medreses in Greece and reduced the Imam-Hatip schools in Turkey drastically, so that they only catered for the needs of religious personnel.

An important and recurrent part of Hâki’s polemic, which is also present in this piece, is that the Greeks would let the Muslims practice their religion, but not become educated:

(…) In 1919 Venizelos gave the Greek Army which went to Izmir this instruction: “Do not touch the Hacıs-Hodjas-Mosques!” And he added afterwards: “Let the Turks make as many mosques as they want; but never schools!” And in Turkey there are still not schools, the desire to make mosques or have them made prevails….
Hâki thinks that there have always been some dubious intentions behind the management of the minority schools, and claims that many totally incompetent persons were given positions as teachers. He writes that today some people have been made teachers through the Medrese-Academy education, who should never have been entrusted a school and pupils (Ileri 836/15.03.1996).

By the mid-1960s we have a situation where the prospects of co-operation between Greece and Turkey in educational matters had reached a low point. Turkey stood behind the “modernist” teachers educated in Turkey, while Greece tried to establish a teacher corps based on the “conservative” element in the minority. Osman Nuri opposed vehemently this policy. He said the Greek administration was encouraging a medieval mentality by supporting the medreses. Rodoplu points out that this policy also made the medrese turn away from its fundamental purpose of educating religious personnel and made it the sole source of students for the EPATH. Their education did not permit them to apply to other higher education. The teachers educated in Turkey think that the medreses must be brought up to the standards of Turkish Imam-Hatip secondary schools, so that the graduates from these school can continue with the higher education of their choice (Gerçek 204/07.05.1988). In other words, they want to make this education compatible with the general education system.

The Special Pedagogical Academy of Thessaloniki

The Special Pedagogical Academy of Thessaloniki (EPATH) was established by the Greek authorities in 1968 and as a consequence reflects their idea about what minority education should be. The authoritarian features of this education in the years immediately after its foundation, as described by the first students, can partly be ascribed to the influence of the dictatorship. If the current policy continues this institution is bound to become the sole source of minority teachers. The EPATH teachers are public servants and receive their salary from the Greek state.

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was religiously forbidden (haram) to let the children study at Celâl Bayar when he was a preacher in the Dokos (Domrüköy) village during Ramazan in 1962. The names “Turkish Youth Union” as well as the “Turkish Teachers Union” are now outlawed because of the term “Turk” in the name. However, I follow the terminology of the minority newspapers.

225 Trakya 793/07.03.1960. This must be viewed in connection with Osman Nuri’s adherence to the Kemalist reforms in Turkey where the medrese was abolished in 1924, when there were a lot of reforms suppressing religious institutions such as the caliphate, the office of Şeyh-ül-Islam, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Pious Foundations (Şeride ve evkaf vekâleti), the Şeriat courts etc. For a short overview of this policy, see (Toprak 1987: 223).

226 In the Turkish bibliography there are various descriptions of the goals of EPATH. Baskın Oran claims that when it first opened in 1966 (sic), it was supposed to give minority members who had studied in Turkey a three year education of Greek and to influence them accordingly (Oran 1991: 214). There were some seminaries for minority teachers in Thessaloniki in the 1960s, but when the Academy started on a regular basis it took care of the whole teacher education.

227 In 1992 the EPATH graduates made up 260 of the 430 Muslim teachers (Anonymous 1994?: 26).
The students in EPATH are generally recruited among the Pomaks from the mountain villages. The opportunities for youth from these poor and backward villages are very limited. The prospect of free education and a subsequent position as public servants have attracted people to the Academy. The recruits have generally had a 5 year traditional religious education at a medrese after finishing primary school. They have in many cases a weak command of the Turkish language. In the EPATH they are taught by Greek teachers, and many of the lessons are also taught in Greek.

Turkey opposed this school from the start. It is claimed by the Turkish side that these teachers have an insufficient knowledge of Turkish, which can be true in many cases. I have heard several EPATH teachers who speak poor Turkish, particularly in the Ksanthi area, where there are many Pomaks and Turkish is not so well established in everyday conversation among minority members. In 1972–73, after it was no longer possible to educate teachers in Turkey, the Turkish ambassador in Athens, Kâmuran Gürün, proposed that Turkey should send professors to teach at EPATH. However, this was declined by the Greek authorities.  

Today it is usual to hear the complaint that the authorities only select students from the medrese for EPATH. In reality the question is not so simple. The various alliances and oppositions within the minority make it very inflexible towards alternative solutions. When the EPATH opened it was said by the local authorities that lycée graduates and teachers from Turkish teacher colleges would be accepted. None of the graduates from the Turkish teacher colleges went. As Hâki points out, they could not because they would immediately be branded as traitors (İleri 664/28.02.1992).

Whatever the reasons for opening EPATH, there is also the question of how it functions. The academy opened in 1968–69 with 11 students. The first students were promised a lot of benefits and the medrese graduates received special invitation to enter. People who did not want to go were asked personally why. In 1969–1970 all the medrese graduates (24) entered EPATH. The same year the medrese was extended from 4 to 5 years. In 1970–1971, 40 new medrese graduates went to Thessaloniki. This was the highest number ever. For medrese graduates the academy lasted 3 years, for lycée graduates 2 years. However, the lycée graduates did generally not apply, and those who did were not able to pass the entrance exams. Mehmet Hakses suggests that maybe they did not pass because the Greek authorities did not desire it.

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228 (Gürün 1994: 212). A large extract from Gürün’s memoirs is included in the minority newspaper Divalog 2/13.10.1995.

229 This is confirmed indirectly by Greek sources. A table which displays the number of graduates between 1970 and 1990 has an average of 15.5 graduates a year with the highest number in 1973 (27), and the lowest number in 1985 (5), which reflects the unrest at this time (Panayiotidis 1995: 99).

230 Batt Trakya’nın Sesi 1/November–December 1987, “A Strange Academy in Thessaloniki”, by Mehmet Hakses. This article appeared in the periodical of the Western Thracian Turks’ Solidarity Association in Istanbul. The style and content of this periodical clearly displays its propagandistic
I have met some of those who were among the first students there. According to one of them there were few restrictions on the first students. The housing and facilities were very good. Religion was emphasised heavily, and the Muslim holidays were strictly observed. All this was done to create a favourable impression among the students. After 2–3 years, when the school authorities had recruited a sufficient number of students, they started to get tougher on people who did not behave as expected. They demanded total obedience and people suffered while waiting for graduation or left the school altogether. A former student describes the climate of the day, not omitting to emphasise his own Turkish patriotism: From the school year 1971–1972 the director Ioannis Kotitsas started the brainwashing. He said in class:

“— … In the course of time you lost your language and religion under the influence and administration of some occupying powers. You are TURKOPHONE MUSLIMS. In other words you are originally Greeks. (When he saw grumbling and protest among the pupils he got angry and cried): — Gentlemen! There are no Turks in Greece. If there is anyone among you who says he is a Turk he can go to Ankara !… That is where the Turks are. Do not leave them here!…” (ibid.)

The students became very humiliated by this. Kotitsas said there were no Turks in Greece, but at the same time they could read in their geography book that many Turks were left in Greece after the population exchange. He continued to speak about the necessity of spreading Greek language and culture among the Western Thrace Turks:

“— You are apostles of culture! You shall bring the good and beneficial things you have learnt here to Western Thrace and teach the people who for years have been neglected and left ignorant. You shall spread Greek civilisation there. You shall be the vehicle for teaching the Turkish speaking Greek Muslims’ children Greek. This is your sacred teacher duty.”

We answered:

“— Teacher, our people speak Turkish. They want Turkish teachers. If we started to teach the children Greek in the villages we are going to be employed in, the villagers would lynch us. Are you realising what you are saying?…”

“— Surely you will encounter reactions in this matter. There will be people who oppose you. But do not bend. Continue steadily your struggle…. THIS CAUSE IS SO HOLY, THAT IT DOES NOT MATTER IF BROTHER OPPOSITES BROTHER, CHILDREN OPPOSE THEIR MOTHER AND FATHER, FIGHTING OCCURS OR EVEN BLOODSHED….!!!” (ibid.)

It may be worth to look closer at what Hakses reckoned to be the Greek authorities’ reasons for opening the school:

1. To educate teachers who are faithful to the state. To keep the minority education of the Western Thrace Turks under constant control by means of them. To prepare the ground for taking the minority education under their own auspices and easily enforce what they desire.

2. To gradually and stealthily extinguish their Turkish conscience and impose and spread Greek civilisation, culture and language.

3. To diminish and gradually stop completely the appointment of graduates from Turkish teachers colleges who opposed Greek culture policy.

purpose. Nevertheless, if one overlooks the rhetoric it is a quite informative article with arguments similar to those in the minority press.
4. To prepare personnel which in the future, when circumstances would permit it, could make the education of the Western Thrace Turkish schools totally Greek. To avoid provoking reactions, these teachers were prepared from within the Western Thrace Turks.

5. To divert youth from Western Thrace in the educational age group and prevent them from opening their eyes. (Because if there was no Academy the youth who were directed towards it would seek education elsewhere. They would go to public high schools, go abroad, see different worlds and have their eyes opened, become educated).

Hakses asked, if this was not the case why did they not make the *medrese* in Ehinos and Komotini official religious high schools? Why did they not open the doors of other Greek educational colleges for the *medrese* graduates who wanted to become teachers and abolish the special Academy? Would that not be more democratic and more economic for the state? Why special education?… (ibid.)

One serious objection by Hakses is that the EPATH college is separated both from the Turkish mainstream culture, and the Greek educational system. This information may seem puzzling to those who are not acquainted with traditional cultural patterns. One of the minority’s constant complaints is that the Greek policy is to assimilate them. At times when more moderate groups advocate the necessity of integrating the minority in Greek society, this is often dismissed by other factions as attempts of assimilation. The example above shows that the lines are not always so clear cut. Not all minority members are afraid of integration, nor is Greek policy always directed towards assimilation-integration. In fact, the pattern outlined above is rather reminiscent of the old Ottoman pattern, i.e. the minority is confronted as a group by the Greek authorities and kept separate from the confessional group of the majority. Within this context it is also natural that it is kept away from the influence of Turkey, a foreign power. This pattern continues when the EPATH graduate enters his professional career. These teachers are isolated from their Christian colleagues. The teacher organisations of Rodopi and Ksanthi have in their statutes that they do not accept their Muslim colleagues, while the organisation of the EPATH teachers that was founded in Ksanthi in 1993 is not yet accepted as member of the Teacher Union of Greece, as far as I know. As mentioned earlier the EPATH teachers are not accepted in the associations of the teachers educated in Turkey.

There was a lot of unrest concerning EPATH in the beginning of the 1980s. The students tried to obtain support from the minority, and on 6 March 1980 a student phoned Hâki and told him that they had organised a boycott. Out of 66 students 57 took part and their demands included the following:

1. The school authorities should not control their life outside school.
2. They should have a Turkish professor for the Turkish language/literature lessons.
3. They wanted practice in minority schools as part of their education (İleri 165/14.03.1980).

The two minority MPs posed a question about EPATH to the Minister of Education, Kondoyiannopulos, but received only a vague answer that it would be dealt with according to the existing laws.  

The next year 17 EPATH teachers sent a note to the Ksanthi prefect, asking him to improve the situation in the schools before 1 March or they would stage a boycott. In Rodopi the EPATH teachers remained inactive (İleri 206/13.03.1981). The EPATH teachers were in a difficult position, squeezed between the authorities and the Kemalists. This is clearly expressed in a letter to İleri: “I am a graduate from the Special Pedagogic Academy. But I have no intention to be appointed. Because here in Ksanthi it is a very delicate question: Some were called sold out, some spies, and some heroes! What can I say? I have become confused and decided to be a labourer” (İleri 233/04.12.1981).

In the autumn of 1981 the EPATH students staged a new boycott. Among other things they wanted teachers from Turkey for their Turkish lessons. Interestingly enough, certain minority circles were suspicious to this demand. They considered it a trap which would give prestige to EPATH within the minority. There were also protests in the Ehinos medrese. Some teachers were sacked, and there were taken extraordinary measures to secure its continuity. The EPATH students sent a memorandum to the minister of education on 29 November 1981 where they criticised the treatment they received.

21 December 1981 the students held a press conference in the garden of the medrese-i hayriye to inform the minority about their problems. They said that the education at EPATH was gradually getting worse, and wanted a proper education based on modern pedagogical principles. The medrese should be brought up to the standard of the minority lycées so that the graduates from the medrese would not have the academy as their only alternative; they should be able to enter university. One of the students said:

-“Do you see me? Look, I who speak Turkish with difficulty will tomorrow be the teacher of your children. But at the Academy those who do not know Turkish are favoured, not those who know. Those who know fail [their exams], not those who do not know. They educate us in such a way that I would not even be teacher of my own children! Our situation is tragic, ruined. You must do something.”
-“If we should leave now, they would find other students in place of us, you know that. In the last years our friends who were before us screamed and shouted, but they were not able to find support. The MPs at the time Hasan İmamoğlu and Celal Zeybek were ignored.” (İleri 238/08.01.1982)

After 3–4 months of conflict the 7 student representatives said that they would go on strike if they did not obtain an answer to their demands in 3 days (negative or

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231 İleri 172/02.05.1980. According to Hâki the minority MPs posed the question 21.03.1980 and received the answer 19.04.1980.
positive). When they went to school on 19 February 1982 they were notified that they were expelled. That made 26 students leave in solidarity with them, which means that 33 students out of a total of 49 left the school (Trakya’nın Sesi 17/26.02.1982).

In a letter to İleri signed by a certain “Kuman” the problems of staging an effective protest are touched upon. He explains how the Academy was opened because of the “conscious or unconscious sins” of the muftis and their relatives. When they later realised their mistake they were not able to reverse it.

Although the young Academy students were expelled from school because of the above actions, the muftis, the sons [Mehmet Emin and Hüseyin Aga] and the son in law [Hasan Paçaman] who were the founders of the medrese-Academy line now understood the gravity of the situation, but—because ‘the sun shrinks the sandal and the sandal squeezes the foot’—they do not set out to do the fundamental operation which is in their hands to do and hide themselves behind their finger.

Some boys with common sense joined the Academy students who were expelled, packed up their belongings and came to Western Thrace. And the son of the Ksanthi mufti [Mehmet Emin Aga] paid the bus expenses of these students, taking a part of the large sum constituting the marriage portion [paid by the bridegroom] of a thirteen year old girl—in spite of the screaming and protests of the girl’s father—so they should say that “he had helped the boys”. (If this is a lie let the Ksanthi mufti office take me to court.)

Some of the students who came to Western Thrace together with the students who had been expelled from the Academy (the students who were hodja sons, the pride of the Ksanthi mufti office…… the imam’s son and sons and relatives of some preachers, imams, and very nationalist-pious [milliyetçi-dindar] people who sell televisions and sewing-machines) were cajoled by their material and spiritual interests into returning to the Special Pedagogical Academy of Thessaloniki. Why? Because ‘the sun shrinks the sandal and the sandal squeezes the foot’!

Well, as there is no more need for the sun to shrink the sandal and the sandal to squeeze the foot, who will make the Minority education and instruction reach the goal of its own historical reality; who will help? The responsible Minority heads are obliged to think…

In a later comment, the former minority MP, Celâl Zeybek, claimed that the education had cancer. It was sabotaged by the authorities for national reasons and they exploited people within the minority by giving them material advantages. The muftis should first of all do something with the cancer source EPATH, as it was they who were exploited when it first opened. He had a long attack on the medrese and the EPATH. The teachers educated in EPATH should resign, and he was ready as Kemalist to collaborate with the mufti office in doing something about the education (İleri 280/23.12.1982).

Generally, the EPATH teachers have not been well received by the minority. Greek officials will say that Turkey has tried to boycott these teachers, while Turkish sources will say that it was the people who did not want them. There are reasons to believe that both the accusations are valid according to circumstances. Whatever the underlying cause may be, the EPATH teachers have been in an uneasy position.

With this situation at hand, Greek authorities had to take special measures to secure the employment of the EPATH teachers. Oran claims that the law 695/1977 was used

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232 İleri 248/26.03.1982. The proverb: “Günefl çarıği, çarık ayağı sıkıştırır”, i.e. “the sun shrinks the sandal and the sandal squeezes the foot” is the leading motive of the letter. It is an attempt to portray how the various pressures find their way down through the hierarchy.
to impose the EPATH teachers on the minority schools. This law states specifically that EPATH teachers shall be preferred for vacant positions. It also leaves the responsibility for employing the teachers to the discretion of the Greek authorities, thus circumventing the minority school committees. There are many instances of protest actions by the minority against EPATH school teachers. As usual, there are often conflicting interests involved.

We can take a closer look at one such instance. The primary school at Melivia (Elmalı) in Ksanthi had been closed for three years in protest when they got a EPATH teacher, while they wanted someone educated in Turkey. In 1988 the authorities took several initiatives to reopen the school. The prefect, Gagas, said he would accept a teacher educated in Turkey. However, according to Abdülhalim Dede the villagers turned down this offer, because of the interests of “some opportunists”. He held the opinion that the minority should not have ignored this opportunity, and said that the people of the village did not know what they wanted or did not understand how far they could pull the rope.

We get an impression of the intrigues involved when we see how the same events are portrayed by Hasan Hatipoğlu. He treated the whole episode as an exercise in Turkism. He wrote that the prefect addressed the villagers:

“You Pomaks here…”

However, the Ehinos (Şahn) township president Fikri Ğtiyar interrupted him immediately and said: “Honourable Prefect, we regard this way of addressing us as an insult and a curse; please take back the word POMAK!”

When after this the Prefect said: “These are your words; what do the people here say?” All the Elmalı (Melivia) people surrounding him shouted with one mouth: “WE ARE TURKS, WE ARE TURKS” (Akın 958/13.09.1988).

Dede explains that the prefect gave them three days to answer his offer to accept a graduate from Turkish teacher colleges. The “known circles” turned it down and insisted that both teachers had to be graduates from Turkish teacher colleges. After considering the offer for one month and getting the “known clique” out of the way, they decided to accept it. Now the prefect said that he had not given such an offer. Dede criticised the prefect for this. However, he stressed that the villagers were also responsible to a great extent for the dirty games concerning the school. If the offer of the prefect had been accepted at once, it could have secured a graduate from a Turkish teacher college to the mountain area for the first time (Trakya’nın Sesi 298/13.10.1988).

Interestingly enough, in the last few years there has been a reversal of Turkey’s tactics in this matter. As it has become clear that it is not possible to prevent the
employment of EPATH teachers and that the teachers educated in Turkey are bound to be gradually replaced (if not earlier, at least upon retirement), Turkey has now started to “proselytise” the EPATH teachers. On 16 February 1991 the independent MP Sadık Ahmet said that the graduates of EPATH would be invited by Turkey for summer courses (İleri 664/28.02.1992). This again led to reactions from the Greek authorities. Two years later, Rodoplu mentioned “oppression and terror” against the EPATH teachers who took part in the summer courses in Turkey, as they were reprimanded by the prefect K. Siatras. Rodoplu argued that Greek minority teachers from Albania also participated in courses in Greece.235

The courses for EPATH teachers in Thessaloniki during the month of August have generally been commented negatively on. Allegedly, the Greek authorities tell the teachers that they want them to be informers (hafiye). Since they have their monthly salary, they should report what is going on in the villages where they work (İleri 769/23.09.1994). When the EPATH teachers were invited to bring their families with them to the summer courses, this was taken as an attempt towards assimilation. They were advised by Hâki not to bring their wives and children with them (İleri 797/28.04.1995).

Hâki complains repeatedly that the Greek authorities have constructed a medrese-EPATH mould (kalıp), producing teachers to their liking, who are completely ignorant (İleri 780/09.12.1994). However, the front against the EPATH teachers has softened in recent years. It is of course a question of being able to adjust to what is feasible. In an article written as a dialogue, someone tells Hâki how his son studied at Celâl Bayar while the neighbour’s son studied at the medrese. His son looked down upon the neighbour’s son who studied at the medrese. Years later his son took part in the university entrance exams in Turkey, but because of weak primary and secondary education he was unsuccessful in his two attempts. The neighbour’s son went to EPATH and returned as a teacher. He was soon appointed and has a monthly wage, while his own son grows tobacco. When his son studied at Celâl Bayar he told all the girls in the village that he was engaged. The girls paid no attention to the one who was at the medrese. Now his son is not able to find a wife while they stand in line for the

235 Gerçek 368/07.09.1993. I met Mr. Siatras personally right before the elections in October 1993 and had a very favourable impression of him in the sense that he showed determination to treat the minority equally as Greek citizens. This corresponds with what I was later told by some of the minority township leaders (kinotárhes). He told me that he was willing to appoint Muslims to government offices on two conditions: 1) That they knew well Greek, 2) That their allegiance to the Greek state could be trusted. To help the minority fulfil the first condition he had taken special care to appoint good teachers to the minority schools. However, the intrigues around minority education are no easy matter. Siatras’ version of the event referred to above was that he had told the EPATH teachers that he did not want them to go to the summer courses in Turkey, and it was obviously hard for him to accept that they did not obey as Greek public servants.
neighbour’s son. He asks Hâki: who is smart and who is stupid? In a letter to Hâki someone wrote that he did not consent to “give” his girl to someone who had graduated from EPATH. His wife was not pleased as the girl was now working in the fields. He explained that, earlier, “the poor guys could not go to the coffee house or out in the neighbourhood”. Now the atmosphere had changed and the EPATH teachers seemed to have been accepted (Ileri 793/24.03.1995).

However, this does not necessarily mean that the EPATH teachers will find a place within Greek society. Rodoplu was sceptical about the future of the EPATH teachers in Greece and asked the rhetorical question: To what degree have the authorities been able to become masters (sahip çıkmak) of the medrese graduates which they favoured 30–40 years ago (Gerçek 368/07.09.1993)? It is known that today the MMMMC works in total co-operation with the Turkish teacher college graduates and the Turkish consulate. Many of the EPATH teachers are buying property in Turkey and send their children to Turkey for education. Hâki commented on the Greek attitude towards the minority by saying that no matter how much they call us Muslim they will really see Turkism and Turkey in all of us (Ileri 855/13.09.1996).

Higher Education
The Secondary Schools

The secondary education presents a special problem. While the primary education was established from the time of the Lausanne treaty, the secondary education is a relative newcomer related to the greater demands of a modern society. According to Hâki, the first secondary minority school (Celâl Bayar) did not open because of any pressure or desire from the minority (Ileri 157/18.01.1980). The whole matter was treated within the framework of Greek-Turkish relations. Hâki considers that the Celâl Bayar worked well between 1952 and 1960. The pupils received a good education and it was a matter of pride and privilege to be accepted to the school. After 1967 and particularly after the 1974 Cyprus invasion the school declined (Ileri 723/25.06.1993). This is more than anything else related to the ups and downs of Greek-Turkish relations with the various measures and counter measures in education as well as other matters. The problems in the minority secondary education after 1983 are thought to be related to the declaration of the “Northern Cyprus Turkish Republic”.

The problems became acute when the minority secondary schools were classified as private schools. After 1984 exams were held in Greek for lessons taught in Turkish

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236 Ileri 791/10.03.1995. Hâki sometimes writes in the form of dialogue. This does not necessarily mean that he refers to an actual conversation. He rather uses it as a narrative devise, but the content is based on his experiences.

throughout the year. There were also problems with lack of proper books and exchange teachers who came in the middle of the school year. As a result the students failed their exams at the end of the year.

In a meeting in the “Turkish Youth Union” on 29 March 1984 it was decided to boycott the minority lycée. This led to various meetings attended by the minority MPs and other prominent minority members. When the general school inspector Kefalidis came from Kavala, he said that he could do nothing. The same regulations were in force for all private schools. They told him:

a) Besides the legal aspect it was also an educational question. How would he explain that no people passed the class with this system?
b) What really scared them was that the new system would lead to that all the lessons except Turkish and religion would be in Greek and with Greek teachers.

The inspector could not give a satisfactory answer to the first question and to the second he responded by asking: “Is that something to be afraid of?” (İleri 338/06.04.1984)

In 1986 not a single pupil passed his class in the Celâl Bayar. The minority attempted to correct the situation by seeing various authorities. The MP Müftüoğlu (ND) went to the Prefect and the minority school office in Kavala. The fathers of pupils in the Ksanthi secondary school formed a committee which went to Athens to see the Minister of Education. They were assisted by the two minority MPs but did not succeed in meeting him. In a petition by minority school trustees to the Ministry of Education, signed by 32 parents, it was argued that the minority secondary schools are not completely private schools but rather semi-private schools as some lessons were taught by Greek teachers employed by the state. In short they wanted:
1) The lessons taught by state employed teachers should not need special exams.
2) The lessons taught in Turkish should be examined in Turkish.
3) The teachers from Turkey should arrive in time at the beginning of the school year.
4) The entrance exams to the minority secondary schools should be abolished.238

There had been protests earlier when 9 years mandatory education was introduced for Greek public schools but not the minority schools in 1980. The minority MPs, Hasan İmamoğlu and Celâl Zeybek posed a question to the minister of education dated 11.06.1981. They claimed that it was not in accordance with the laws of the country that the pupils were admitted to the minority Gymnasium with entrance exams. Another innovation was that the minority pupils were submitted to an entrance exam to pass from the gymnasium to the lycée. They asked if the new exams were valid for all of Greece, and if not why they were introduced (İleri 219/19.06.1981).

238 (Gercek 141/30.07.1986; Akin 881/14.08.1986). These proposals were later followed by an open letter from Gurçek to the Minister of Education, A. Tritsis (Gercek 164/29.04.1987).

The following figures illustrate the magnitude of the problem:

In 1984, of 96 pupils in the minority lycée of Komotini there were only 4 in the first grade, 1 in the second grade, and 1 (of 29) in the third grade who had not failed some lesson. In other words 93.8% of the pupils had failed (İleri 326/13.01.1984). Rodoplu gave the following figures for pupils in the secondary minority schools in 1987:
Because of the limited number of places in the minority secondary schools the pupils were admitted with entrance exams. This was a constant object of critique by part of the minority press. Rodoplu complained that 10 years after secondary school became obligatory, the minority still had entrance exams for the minority secondary schools. Everybody was encouraged to enrol in the state schools, but the parents preferred not to send their children (Gerçek 180/22.09.1987). When the entrance exams to the minority secondary schools were replaced with a lottery system in 1993, this led to even greater protests. This case is a sterling example of the difference between the minority rhetoric and actual behaviour. I can sum up Hâki’s presentation of the situation:

For years the minority did not want to study in Western Thrace any more. Because of the various problems, most people wanted their children to study in Turkey. There were two reasons: A) To enter university in Turkey, i.e. pass the entrance exams. B) Migration, i.e. to secure a better future for their children. When the minority secondary education became unattractive, Turkey countered by granting a special entrance quota for the minority lycée graduates to Turkish Universities. This became the easiest way to enter Turkish universities. In 1985 there was only one graduate in the two last years of the Komotini minority lycée, while earlier there had been at least 20–30. As a temporary measure the pupils were brought to Turkey for the final exams and they were allowed to enter university without a regular graduation. When the pupils wanted to go to secondary schools in Turkey the Turkish Consulate took precautions to prevent migration. It only gave educational visa to those who did not pass their class in the minority secondary schools for two consecutive years. In December 1984 there were long queues outside the Turkish Consulate in Komotini, as 300–500 parents were applying for education visas. On the other hand, the leading minority members always obtained visas for their children. Turkey’s visa measures sometimes made bad worse, because the parents would not let their children apply to the minority secondary schools at all and preferred to send them to Turkey immediately after primary school. In the Komotini secondary school the number of pupils dropped from 360 in 1983 to 50–60 two years later. Most went either to Turkey or the Greek secondary schools. In order to be able to send their children to Turkey the parents started to tell their children

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In Komotini 172 took part in the entrance exams in September and 12 succeeded, 173 took part in June and 14 succeeded. There were 26 pupils in the first grade, 17 in the second grade and 7 in the third grade of the gymnasium. There were no pupils in the Celâl Bayar lycée section. In Ksanthi 55 pupils participated in the September entrance exams and 14 succeeded, while in June the figures were 53/14. There were 27 pupils in the first grade, 15 in the second grade and 19 in the third grade of the “gymnasium”. In the lycée section there were 14 in the first grade, 4 in the second grade, and 5 in the third grade (Gerçek 180/22.09.1987).

Rodoplu points to a letter from Mr. Kristallis of the Minority School Supervision dated 21.05.1993 which said that the pupils would now be admitted to the secondary school by lottery instead of exams. He presents various protests from the minority including a letter from Faikoğlu to the prime minister (Gerçek 365/12.06.1993; 366/25.06.1993)
not to write anything in the entrance exams to the minority secondary schools. This suited the lazy and incompetent primary school minority teachers who could say that the pupils did not score well because they did not want to succeed in the entrance exams. Some people even begged the school authorities not to accept their children. When the results were announced, those who succeeded in the exams cried, because they would have to spend six years in a school which did not function. Those who did not pass the exams would get a visa and go to Turkey. After completing well functioning secondary schools they would have good chances to enter university. Hâki thought the minority should protest to both Greece and Turkey about this situation. In reality, the entrance exams had been with lottery for the previous 15–20 years, because if 40–50 children delivered blank papers you needed some victims anyway. Consequently there was no difference between the former exams and the present lottery system. Hâki stressed that the problems needed to be corrected from the base, and accused the minority for not being engaged in its own fate (İleri 366/14.12.1984; 401/27.09.1985; 723/25.06.1993).

It is natural to ask what alternative solutions could possibly have been found to some of the educational problems? In order to answer this question it is necessary to look at the various factors which determine the education politics. The main agents are Greece and Turkey, i.e. it is a question of what Greece considers to be its obligations and is willing to provide, and what kind of education Turkey wants for the minority. While the minority may have certain wishes and ideals for their education, they have in reality not developed an independent position. Generally they have to adjust to what is provided by Greece or Turkey. From the father’s point of view it is a question of where he would like to send his child and where it is possible for him to send it. A conservative father will sometimes have problems with sending his child to the “modernist-secular” secondary minority schools. Likewise, someone who is ready to send his child to a “modernist-secular” secondary minority school, will often not want to send it to a Greek secondary school. These are choices related to identity, educational ideals, sense of security, etc.

Some articles in İleri illustrate the dilemmas of the fathers. One father worried about that his son would not be able to compete with the Turkish children in university if he sent him to a Greek secondary school. He considered Turkey to be the best alternative, and had determined that his son would study there if he could solve the visa problem (İleri 437/20.06.1986). In a letter to İleri another father expressed his dilemmas after the minority graduates from lycées in Turkey could participate in the entrance exams for foreign students. The graduates from the minority lycées could in no way compete with them, so why should the parents send their children to the minority lycées any more? The writer like hundreds of others had his child in a Greek lycée and wondered what to do with the new rules. Their children could not compete with the graduates
from Turkish lycées. They could not even compete with the Greek Orthodox children who graduated from the Greek lycées and applied to Turkish Universities. Their children finished primary school totally ignorant, and while in lycée they did not have money to attend a lot of private lessons (frontistíria) like the Greek Orthodox children (İleri 380/29.03.1985).

However, the choices of minority politicians are often conditioned by other concerns. For example, the problems because of the exchange teachers from Turkey who did not arrive in time, led people to look for alternative solutions. They wanted the school trustees to start a signature campaign demanding that lessons like chemistry should be taught in Greek. When the signature campaign had begun, this led to reactions from the Supreme Minority Council’s Executive Committee (AYK-YK). Hatipoğlu commented that: “However, afterwards a sober evaluation was made, and the collections of signatures which meant returning with our own hands a right we had won with law was stopped.” (Akın 1035/30.06.1991.) When Hatipoğlu speaks of privileges in this sense, it is not a question of what the parents are willing to accept for their children. It is rather a question of preserving a minority regime which depends on Greek-Turkish relations, where he can play a role as mediator. Hatipoğlu was not really interested in correcting the minority education, but in keeping it as a problem between Greece and Turkey. This would enhance his own position as middle man. His Turkish nationalist pose would project the image of an uncompromising defender of Turkish ideals, but he must have been aware himself that it was empty rhetoric for goals which in many cases would be unobtainable. Someone like Hatipoğlu would guard jealously the “privileges” of the minority to the degree that it has become impossible to reach practical solutions within the framework of what was feasible.

However, in spite of all his rhetoric against the Greek assimilation policy, he sent his own children to Greek secondary schools. In other words, he used minority education as a vehicle for politics and majority schools to educate his children. The same was the case with the “Turkish hero” and independent MP Sadık Ahmet. He took his son and daughter out of the “Celâl Bayar” and sent them to a Greek lycée (İleri 769/23.09.1994).

An article by Onsunolu from the time he was candidate for ND in the general elections, gives a good description of the problems a politician who tries to correct this situation is up against. He commented on a father’s reactions to his attempt to protest against the entrance exams for the minority secondary school:

“[… last part of the father’s objections] Those who did not succeed are very happy. They can obtain education visa from the Consulate. And now you stand up and say that the entrance exams should be abolished. For heavens sake, do you realise what you have done! You are clashing with public opinion. They will curse you. If you really want to help us, you should work for our children to obtain education visa without conditions and obstructions…”
One must certainly have in mind the situation of the kinsmen who adapt to an existing injustice and manoeuvre according to the presence of this injustice. However, it is nobody’s right to resist opposition to this injustice, to the detriment of the general interest.\textsuperscript{240}

The parents wanted to send their children to Turkey for educational reasons, because of the problems in the minority secondary schools, while Turkey tried to keep the minority children in Thrace. Turkey would use both the stick, i.e. refusing pupils educational visa, and carrot, i.e. granting those who went to the minority secondary school entrance to Turkish universities as a special favour. From the point of view of a minority member, the key question would be to secure university admission whether it happened by merits or favouritism. In the cases where it happened by favouritism, the minority would of course stress the relationship to Turkey and play on the particular value Turkey ascribed to the minority. This value was connected to Turkey’s desire of keeping up “Turkism” in Greece, while the benefits obtained because of this value would in many cases lead to migration to Turkey.

It is useful to stress the great difference between the demands of Onsunoğlu and Hatipoğlu in regards to the minority education. In the Greek discourse there is a tendency to view the minority as a single entity, disregarding the various currents within it. When reading in isolation demands for the upgrading of the Turkish education by both of them, it can be easy to fall into the trap of equating their position. However, Onsunoğlu approached the problem as a Greek citizen who endeavoured to prepare the children for a career in Greek society by giving them a contemporary education. Simultaneously he wanted the minority to be able to cultivate its cultural peculiarities. He naturally viewed the main component in the minority culture as Turkish-Muslim, but in a wide sense and did not identify completely with the Turkish state. Consequently, he strove for the development of a Greek society which would be more tolerant to people of different religious faith and cultural/national background. As a Greek citizen he held Greece as the main responsible for the situation, and criticised the education policy to influence the authorities towards changing it.

Hatipoğlu, on the other hand, compared the 20 secondary schools of the Christians, with the two of the minority. There were 1,200 minority primary school graduates and only 60 places in the Komotini secondary school and 30 in Ksanthi. He asked why the authorities had not helped in opening new secondary schools instead of saying that there was no room, and why the minority was not allowed to open schools and appoint teachers. He found it disquieting that the Greek teacher staff in the mountain villages would be increased. “Because our kinsmen who live there need to learn Turkish and not Greek” (Akın 1082/13.03.1993; 1093/23.06.1993). He has of

\textsuperscript{240}Denge 8/04.08.1989. The whole argument is included in Appendix 5, text 3, while in the following text (4) Onsunoğlu presents the education problems to a Greek audience.
course a point, but again the way he poses the problem is more conditioned by rhetoric than an attempt to find practical solutions.

However, there was a change in the attitudes of the Greek authorities in 1996. The minister of education Y. Papandreu promised that in the autumn all the applicants would be accepted in the minority secondary schools (İleri 851/24.06.1996). As a result the capacity of the two minority secondary schools increased significantly.

The mountain villages which have a Pomak population present a particular case. In the early 1980s several secondary schools were built in this area: Four in Ksanthi and one in Rodopi. All the lessons were in Greek, except religion. As a rule, the Pomaks were not admitted to the minority secondary schools in Ksanthi and Komotini. These secondary schools have been under strong attacks from parts of the minority press:

(…) Although our village kinsmen had not been informed and had not asked for it, three year gymnasiums [secondary schools] which accepted primary school graduate pupils without exams were opened in some of our mountain villages. Our kinsmen displayed no interest in these schools, they were even alarmed by them. Because the schools were opened in villages inhabited by minority people, but were not related to the minority. The names of the schools, the curriculum, and aims did not comply with any of the particularities of the minority education. The arguments contrived by the authorities in favour of these schools did not please our people, and nobody wanted to send their children to these schools which clearly had no sincere foundation. After a while the requests of the authorities became advice, and the advice turned into threats, still without results, and they did not find a way to inscribe pupils in the schools. In the winter months of 1985, for four months there were even no bus schedules to some villages in order to break the resistance against these schools. Insidious threats began, but people did not yield to this either and started to display reactions. When it was realised that the authorities’ plans came to a dead end and that it would not be possible to impose them, the method changed. People of ours [i.e. from the minority] with hodja costumes were found, these men were given a high salary, the title of religion teachers, and a position in these schools. They supposedly changed the appearance of the beliefs and identity assimilation policy, and gave it a Hasan-Hüseyin [i.e. Muslim] colour. They approached the needy, exploiting their poverty and inexperience, and paved the way to inscribe 3–5 pupils in some schools, and in some a few more. But a dark road which will be able to attract thoughtless persons remains open with all its possibilities, waiting for travellers who will agree to change their beliefs and identity (Gerçek 183/22.10.1987).

Hâki too was negative to these schools because he wanted more education in Turkish, but he also criticised the attitude of some people in Komotini who opposed the secondary school in Organi when it was opened in 1984.

They gave you wrong information. They said that this school was opened to hellenise you [rumlaştırmak]… However, in this school there are both Turkish and lessons in religion… So what happened now? i.e. what did they who advised you do? They sent their own children to Greek schools… Do you want examples? Look at Mr. Recep Karapaça who works in the consulate… Look at the chairman of the Western Thrace Turkish Teachers Union Mr. Sadık Salih… Look at the dormitory director [yurt müdürü] of the Celâl Bayar lycée Mr. Miçahit Mümin… And other rich people too. So think about it! (İleri 404/18.10.1985).

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241 There may have been some adjustments of the curriculum, which I do not know in detail. For example, Hâki mentioned that in the Organi secondary school there were first 4 Greek teachers and one Turkish for 16 pupils. He only taught religion (İleri 364/30.11.1984). The next year the number of pupils increased to 29 and there were now two Turkish teachers. They had been able to attract pupils, something they did not succeed with in Ksanthi (İleri 368/28.12.1984).
In spite of all the reservations, in the last few years there has been a tendency that ever more minority children attend regular Greek secondary schools. This is a new situation which there has not really been adequate preparations for. Some of the leading minority politicians in the towns send their children to Greek secondary schools. This does not present particular problems as their children are generally doing well and obtain good grades. However, many children from the villages do not have a proper foundation when they begin in the Greek secondary schools and have great difficulties in keeping up with the students who have attended Greek primary schools. Obviously, there is great need for special programs to help them adjust to Greek secondary education. Some of the younger minority politicians seem positive to a greater adjustment to the Greek educational system, and are willing to accept the adoption of majority education as long as they can have some special education in Turkish and religion. It is still a bit early to evaluate how strong this trend is, and to which degree the Greek authorities are ready to respond to it.

**University Studies**

For higher education the minority has relied almost exclusively on Turkey. To my knowledge there are only two persons from the minority who have been admitted directly to Greek universities. There are also some who have studied in Arabic countries, mostly religious personnel. The generation of Ahmet Sadık, İbrahim Onsunoglu, Adem Beciroğlu etc. was able to transfer to Greek universities after studying a year (or more) abroad. Many Greeks who did not pass the entrance exam used the same “trick” and it became so widespread that the authorities had to change the system. Lately there are also some instances of people studying in England and Germany. Most of those who study in Turkey remain there. This is partly a natural consequence of their education choice, partly due to uncertainty about their future in Greece. Those who returned to Greece had great problems with obtaining recognition from DIKATSA in the mid 1980s, and several students had their degrees approved only after a long struggle which reached its peak with the hunger strike in June.
1987. The minority doctors who studied in Turkey have been able to do their specialisation at Greek Universities.

The minority’s main concern has been to secure a place in Turkish universities. Many aspects of the patron-client relationship between Turkey and the minority are related to education privileges. The minority pupils who graduated from Turkish lycées could use a special quota to enter university. This was changed in 1978 so that only the graduates from the minority lycées could use the quota (İleri 110/24.03.1978). In 1985 the system changed again, and enabled the pupils from Western Thrace who had graduated from secondary schools in Turkey to participate in the entrance exams reserved for foreign students. Hatipoğlu wrote that earlier, when this system was in force, almost all of the students from Western Thrace were able to enter university. This included the graduates from both the minority and the Turkish secondary schools. 90% of those who studied in Turkey had started in the minority secondary school, but after losing 2–3 years failing the tests in Greek they continued their education in Turkey. They usually had difficulties in Turkey too in the beginning because of weak primary school education (Akın 854/20.03.1985). Hâki tells a different story: With the former system those who went to lycée in Turkey passed the entrance exams to important universities, while those who attended the minority lycée had no success. Then the children of 3–4 rich minority members went to Turkey and complained, obtaining the support of the Solidarity Association in Istanbul (BTTDD). This changed the system and those who went to secondary school in Turkey had to go through the general entrance exams. As a result, in the first half of the 1980s only 3–4 children from Western Thrace who graduated from lycées in Turkey succeeded in entering university. At the same time there were only 20–30 graduates from the minority lycées so they were not able to fill the quota provided for them in the various faculties (İleri 378/15.03.1985).

When no one was able to graduate from the minority lycée in 1985, the pupils took their final exams in Ankara. They did not receive a diploma, but a simple document which enabled them to enter university. This created additional problems as the universities kept asking for their diplomas, and there was also the question of military service in Greece. The side effect of this was that people thought they did not need to work because they would be admitted to university anyway. The parents did not say a word about the fact that there were no graduates from the minority lycées in 1985, because they thought everything would be fixed by Ankara. However, it did not prove as easy as they had thought. One third of the 20–25 pupils did not succeed, and those who succeeded did not enter the best universities (İleri 397/30.08.1985). There are

244 DIKATSA is the institution which recognises foreign degrees. These protests will be treated later. 245 It is difficult for them to do their specialisation in Turkey, since they are foreign citizens and not entitled to a salary.
probably also personal favours involved. When Hâkı wrote that Hatipoğlu’s children studied with scholarship at Turkish universities, Hatipoğlu was quick to publish a disclaimer (Akin 920/24.09.1987). However, I am reasonably sure that Hâkı knew what he was writing. The same Hâkı was also quick to ask for favours to the minority. He complained that the minority members who studied at Turkish Universities paid five times the fee of those who were Turkish citizens. He thought they should be treated as “kinsmen” and not as foreign citizens (İleri 369/18.01.1985). He appealed to Turkey to think about the “outside Turks”.

Today the Turkish nation has one single state in the world. The Motherland, the hope, in short everything for this two hundred million world Turkism [cihan türklüğü] is TURKEY. This is the outside Turk’s sole source of consolation and reliance. If he cannot go himself, or migrate, he wants his son-daughter to go-migrate there. Thus he wants to secure his family and relations (İleri 371/25.01.1985).

He also appealed to Turkey on behalf of the minority right after the general elections in June 1989:

OUR FIRST WISH…

Our first wish to our independent MP Mr. Sadık Ahmet, is that he on behalf of our Motherland Turkey: Secure a place in the Motherland faculties for all our Western Thrace ethnic Turkish students who participate in the ENTRANCE EXAMS for higher education this year… No student should be left without a place…

This would be a great gesture from Turkey as reward for that we elected an independent MP… (İleri 559/30.06.1989)

A few years later Hâkı wrote a petition to the Turkish minister of state Cavit Çağlar and asked for the increase of the quota for students from Western Thrace to Turkish Universities. He also described how the students in the last year of lycée went to the Turkish consulate and begged: “Please make a special quota for us! We are not educated properly, do not leave us without opportunities…” (İleri 738/26.11.1993).

The greatest innovation in recent years is the special 0.5% minority quota to Greek universities which commenced in 1996, and resembles measures of affirmative action. This would make it possible for 200 minority students to enter Greek Universities. However, only 48 pupils applied and 39 pupils took actually part in the exams. The same year the graduates from secondary schools in Turkey succeeded, while graduates from the minority schools did not succeed in the entrance exams to Turkish Universities for foreign citizens (Trakya’nın Sesi 557/05.08.1996). The few applicants to the Greek universities during the first year may be ascribed to the novelty of the measure, but there were many sceptical voices from the minority. Hâkı expressed doubts whether it was done for the benefit of the minority (İleri 851/24.06.1996). There have also been doubts whether the exams would be carried out fairly. What probably lurks behind some of the scepticism, although it is not stated explicitly, is a fear of that

246 On another occasion Hâkı estimates that in 80–90% of the cases the scholarships are given to the children of rich minority members (İleri 400/20.09.1985).

247 İleri 675/15.05.1992. Cavit Çağlar was born in Komotini, but his family migrated to Turkey when he was a child. He is now a major businessman and politician.
Turkey may cut back on the privileges for those who want to study in Turkey. Personally, I would regard the new minority quota as only positive. In particular, there are definite advantages for those who want to stay in Greece, depending on the profession. For example, a popular minority profession such as practising law requires a good knowledge of both Greek language and society. It is clearly much better to attend a Greek university for this purpose, which is what the generation which transferred from Turkish universities in the 1960s and 1970s did (Adem Bekiroğlu, Hasan Kaşıkçıoğlu, Sabahaddin Emin, Orhan Hacıibram, Hüseyin Aga). Later the minority lawyers graduated from Turkish universities and had to go through supplementary exams in Greece to have their degrees recognised.

The Minority’s Relation to Greek Education

Knowledge of Greek is of particular importance for the minority if it is going to succeed in Greek universities and in Greek society in general. Their knowledge of Greek is known to be poor, and there are various ways to explain it. It is sometimes attributed to an old mentality surviving from the time when they were the majority group. Some of those who live in pure Turkish speaking villages, hardly ever use the Greek language. They speak Turkish with everybody, watch Turkish television etc. When they go to town they are together with their family or friends. In fact, earlier it was quite usual that Greek shopkeepers spoke Turkish to them. Hâki claims that the Greek education system started to make its presence felt only after 1950 in the villages of Western Thrace. He mentions that until 1950 there were no teachers for the Greek schools, so how could there be for the minority schools? (İleri 838/29.03.1996). When Hâki attended primary school 1945–1950 there was no Greek teacher in the minority school. Afterwards there was one Greek teacher for 3 villages and he taught only Greek language (İleri 340/20.04.1984).

Besides the old attitudes it is also a question of the minority’s strategy towards Greek education. Osman Nuri, who represented the Kemalist ideals, had a very clear position in the question of learning Greek. His first priority was that the minority should learn Turkish well. He considered primary education to be most important for the minority. This was where they would develop their national conscience (millî şuur ve vicdanları). Afterwards there was no problem to go to non-Turkish universities because they would already be secure for the group. The primary schools were not only regarded as a place of education, but even more as a place to socialise the children into their national group (Trakya 904/27.04.1965). He was critical to claims by “Greek chauvinists” who said that people in the mountain villages did not want to learn Turkish, but preferred to learn Greek as long as they could have lessons in
religion (Trakya 793/07.03.1960). He reacted strongly to accusations by Yiannis Kapsis, that the minority did not want to learn Greek:

The Turkish press in Western Thrace has never objected to the teaching of the Greek language in the Turkish schools. This is completely a lie, slander, and calumny. There is, and will be, opposition towards the policy which hides behind these lies and slander, and tries to abolish Turkish from our schools and wants to take away the Turkish character from them and make them completely like Greek schools.248

He countered Kapsis’ claims and said that: “You find it inappropriate that the Turkish children have secondary education and that they learn Greek” (Trakya 789/25.01.1960). In fact, in articles addressing the minority he was constantly pointing to the importance of learning Greek. In an article titled: “The most important need of our minority is that the young teachers know Greek”, he wrote that it was a high priority for the minority to learn Greek and that the minority teachers should take the lead in this. He thought that it would be very useful if the Turkish government would provide Greek lessons instead of foreign languages in the Turkish teacher colleges where minority members were students (Trakya 815/28.03.1961).

Hatipoğlu complained about the insufficient Greek language education. The Greek teachers were said to lack the necessary education or to be lazy. However, he also stressed that in order to learn Greek the minority has to learn their mother tongue first (Akın 1046/25.02.1992). The minority is at times reproached because of its inadequate knowledge of Greek. When the late minority politician Celâl Zeybek was asked if the minority could not be blamed for not learning adequately Greek, he pointed to an instance from the time he was MP, when a father complained to him because the Greek teacher just opened the school in the morning and left without teaching the children anything (Eleftherotipia 16.06.1989). The same problem was touched on by Hâki more recently. He mentioned the discussion about education in the Law Faculty Conference Hall in Komotini on 17 March 1995. At the end of the discussion a Greek teacher said:

–“It is discussed vaguely whether the minority knows Greek or not. How could the minority know Greek? Until 1–2 years ago OUR OFFICIAL LINE was to not teach the minority children Greek. For that reason the Minority Schools were viewed as ‘LIE DOGGO SCHOOLS’ [scholía lúfas]… Now, in the last 1–2 years the OFFICIAL LINE wants that these children are taught Greek…”

Of course we were stunned when we heard this…. But we looked and saw that the whole hall was stunned by this… (İleri 797/28.04.1995).

A young minority member who was a student in Turkey had the following explanation: The primary school “patriot” teacher does not want to teach the minority children, because if they learn well Greek he thinks they can spy for Turkey. If they learn Greek they may also want democracy and become dangerous. After primary

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248 Trakya 785/15.12.1959. Later when the minority was negative to the secondary schools in the mountains Kapsis accused the minority: “You live in Greece, and you do not want to learn Greek.” Hâki’s reaction was that Kapsis did not want to provide them with proper minority education and accused them on top of it (İleri 369/18.01.1985).
school the children are not able to enter the minority secondary school. They go to Turkey, and return to Greece only during holidays. Their Turkish is good, but their Greek remains insufficient. There is no real incentive for learning Greek, and their families are pleased that they study in Turkey, hoping that they will stay there and have a better life than themselves.249

Recently, the minority student Mehmet Dükkancı (1970–) took up the subject in an article titled: “It is no shame to learn Greek”. He was about to graduate from a Turkish university, and had decided to return to Greece. Two girlfriends had left him for this reason, and an important factor was that they did not know Greek. He criticised the minority for not taking seriously enough their need to learn Greek. It was a great shame that the young people did not know better Greek so that they could participate in Greek society. Often the families could be blamed, since they did not encourage their children to learn Greek (Gündem 72/20.01.1998). The article created a lot of reactions in the minority. Someone Mehmet Dükkancı spoke with mentioned:

“Our older people think that to learn Greek means to lose their religion, to be hellenised, assimilated. Because of this mistaken perception they oppose that we learn Greek. But now their time is about to pass. They have gradually begun to withdraw from the opinion and decision making process. The leaders around 35–45 know our problems better. But we have not started to discuss it openly in the society. We need to discuss it. In our villages, community, among people, in coffee house corners, newspapers, and periodicals. To learn Greek is not to become infidel […]” (Gündem 74/10.02.1998).

The habit of approaching Greek as something suspect and not a skill to be learned, disqualifies the minority from the Greek job market. Dükkancı mentioned an interesting example of a Turkish company which opened an office in Thessaloniki and looked for people who knew Turkish, Greek, and English. None of the university graduates from Western Thrace who applied knew sufficient Greek for the job. They had finished good Turkish universities, but since they had also their secondary education from Turkey their Greek was weak (Gündem 85/05.05.1998).

Education Ideals

Today there are three main tendencies or ideas about minority education. 1) The EPATH teachers represent an attempt by the Greek authorities to build a loyal teacher corps from the element which is furthest removed from Turkey. 2) The teachers educated in Turkey and others with close relations to Turkey represent Kemalism and Turkish educational ideals. 3) The younger generation of university graduates with left wing leanings are generally less dogmatic and more open to integration into the Greek educational system.

249 Personal communication.
The EPATH Teachers

The EPATH teachers are caught between the demands of the Greek state and the group representing the Turkish educational ideal. This was evident in the schoolbook conflict (see below) when they came under pressure from the authorities to accept the books prepared in Greece, while the minority leadership pressured them to refuse it and demand books from Turkey. It is an old policy of the Greek authorities to support the religious-conservative element as a counterweight to the Kemalists. However, today this group does not carry enough weight to represent an ideological alternative. After Hafız Yaşar Mehmetoğlu died in 1992 there has been no convincing leader for this group, and time is not on its side. The authorities have also supported the element which does not have Turkish as its mother tongue, i.e. the Pomaks. Hâki complained that the two spiritual supports of the minority—the schools and the mosques—are in the hands of the conservatives from the mountain areas. In education this is related to the Greek policy of accepting the Pomaks educated in the medrese for EPATH, while the religious personnel have low prestige and unsure income, which makes it an unattractive profession for young people from the plain (İleri 365/07.12.1984). The EPATH teachers are tied to the Greek authorities by their regular salaries and status as civil servants, rather than by ideology. The main weakness with the EPATH “mould” is its lack of perspective. The conservatives are not only remote from Kemalist ideals, they are also the element with least prerequisites for integration in Greek society. Those who want an education outside the narrow confines of the minority regime, have the alternative of either the Greek or the Turkish educational system. In many cases the EPATH teachers send their children to Turkey for higher education and drift towards Turkey.

Traditional Kemalists and Adherents of Turkey

The main concern for this group is to keep in touch with the educational system in Turkey and to protect/develop the Turkish character of the minority. Both the defensive attitude to anything which can decrease the education in Turkish, and the ideological outlook of this group, naturally direct it towards higher education in Turkey. There are of course individual variations, but some of them are very dogmatic in their approach. They represent a desire to keep both a separate identity

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250 Characteristic examples of these attitudes can be seen in the Educational Report by the “Western Thrace Turkish Teachers Union” (BTTÖB) and the “University Graduate Association” (YTD) in Gerçek 200/19.03.1988–205/12.05.1988, or more recently in the communications from the Second International Western Thracian Turk’s conference in Istanbul, and the conference about Turkish education in the Balkans, where some teachers from the minority participated (Anonymous 1996; Anonymous 1999). See also the proposals in İleri 269/18.06.1982 and 303/10.06.1983, and the problems pointed out by the minority teachers to the minister of education Y. Papandreu when he visited Thrace in 1995 (İleri 793/24.03.1995).
from other Greek citizens as well as to be a part of the Turkish nation. They oppose kindergartens with Greek teachers and the secondary schools which have most of the lessons in Greek. Ideally they would like the teachers to be educated in Turkish teachers colleges and the religious personnel in Turkish İmam-Hatip schools or institutions for higher religious education. They may suggest an upgrading of the education in Turkish for the EPATH teachers, but are in principle opposed to them. They want to decrease the Greek authorities’ possibilities to interfere with the appointments of teachers etc. and to increase the patronage of Turkey. A usual complaint is that the minority does not get a modern education. The minority rarely expresses clearly what it means by this. Rodoplu presented it in the following manner:

Let us explain what we mean when we speak about a modern education. As Turkish children we want an education which is in accordance with the education developed in our Mother Country Turkey, and as Greek citizens we also want an education in accordance with the Greek educational system (Gerçek 368/07.09.1993).

He is not specific about the practical aspect of minority education, but presents some vague ideas about the results he would like. Hâki points out that the children are studying in Turkey because of the obstructions on the minority education by Greek authorities. It should be noted that about 90% of those who study in Turkey remain there as they see no future in Greece. He thinks that if the minority was free, it would be able to compete successfully with the Greek children in education and later vocationally (İleri 780/09.12.1994). This seems to me like wishful thinking. In addition to equal treatment, the minority would need special programs to compete successfully with Greek children. Although this group sometimes mentions the necessity of learning Greek, it has not made vigorous demands to the Greek authorities.

The Young Generation

We can see the contours of new attitudes to education by the young generation of minority politicians. While they share many of the complaints of the others, they show more willingness to adapt to Greek society and the Greek education system. Ekrem Hasan claims that the minority wants a contemporary European education which respects their ethnic origin, religion, language, usage and customs within the framework of the constitution. The minority should organise itself openly towards this goal. He is concerned about the problem of learning Greek and points out that unfortunately the Greek reader is the same for the minority children as for the majority children who have Greek as their mother tongue. There should be prepared a book for children who do not have Greek as their mother tongue. The cultural protocols between Greece and Turkey do not work in practice. The last meeting about this protocol was by a mixed committee in 1981. The minority should make its own report about the education
problems, call both countries to organise a meeting of the Greek-Turkish mixed committee and request for minority representatives to be present as observers.\textsuperscript{251}

This group wants a greater involvement by the minority itself in its education. Nazif Ferhat expressed it clearly when talking to a journalist about the problems in the village Miki (Mustafçova) after the school was closed in connection with the schoolbook protests. He complained that the minority was not involved in its own education on any level, and that the problems with Turkey did not justify the authorities’ unwillingness to discuss the education problems with the teachers and parents (\textit{Eleftherotipia} 03.06.1994).

The situation within the minority has been very tense in recent years, so the political climate has not been fertile for developing new alternatives. The initiatives above can only be characterised as preliminary. It should be stressed that the younger generation too is sceptical to many of the initiatives by the Greek authorities. This can be seen in an announcement about education on 11 October 1995 by the University Graduates Association (YTD) at a time when Mustafa Mustafa was chairman. It was stressed that when the authorities talked about plans for “transcultural” and “modern” education, the minority was not consulted at all. Not without irony it was asked whether EPATH was what they meant by a modern and transcultural education? (\textit{İleri} 819/27.10.1995).

The Greek Attitude to Minority Education

Generally the Greek policy has been to honour its treaty obligations formally, while displaying less interest in the educational results of the minority schools. A complaint against the education politic of the junta comes to mind: “[…] in Greece the establishment has always found means of restricting the benefits of education without interfering with the trends of its statistics” (Anonymous 1972: 128). Semi-official presentations of the minority education, usually list number of schools, teachers, and pupils, subsidies by the Greek state, etc. It is specified that the teacher to pupil ratio in the minority primary schools is 1 to 12 compared to 1 to 20 in majority schools, and that the Greek State runs about 30 elementary minority schools which have less pupils than the minimum requirement (Anonymous 1994?: 25–26). An interesting point which is made by several authors is that “Greece does not insist on its right that the pupils must know Greek to pass their exams”, or “No pupil is failed because of insufficient knowledge of Greek” (Nikoglou 1956: 4; Economopoulos 1967a: 196).

\textsuperscript{251} \textit{İleri} 703/05.02.1993, Ekrem Hasan is member of the Prefecture Committee of Sinaspismos. After the visit of Mitsotakis to Thrace in May 1991 Ekrem Hasan presented his views on the minority’s education problems for a Greek public in \textit{Eleftherotipia} 04.06.1991 (see Appendix 5, text 5). Nazif Ferhat and Mustafa Mustafa, who is MP today, also belong to Sinaspismos. İbrahim Onsunoğlu represents another attempt to redefine the minority education and find solutions which both respect the minority culture and integrate it better in Greek society. See his article about the minority education in Appendix 5, text 4.
This does not mean that the children learn sufficient Greek, but that the Greek state does not impose Greek education on the minority, and lets them pass on to the next grade even though their knowledge of Greek is below normal requirements. This is compared with the tighter control of the Turkish authorities with the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul. On the other hand, Turkish sources compare the success of the Greek Orthodox minority in Turkish universities to the few Thracian Muslims in Greek universities (Bayülken 1963: 155; Merçil 1966: 692).

It is of course difficult to compare minorities with such different character. The success of the Greek orthodox minority in Turkish universities is probably due to several factors such as its urban nature, strong educational traditions, and the greater assimilatory pressures of modern Turkey. However, this success did not prevent the minority from vanishing. In Thrace the largely rural minority occupied with agriculture lacked both a sufficient standard in its traditional education and incentives/pressures to progress within the Greek system. It should be noted in this connection that in the Turkish Republic itself, the expressed emphasis on modern education was not matched by practical initiatives. “In Turkey the rate of enrolment in mandatory primary education, which stood at 23% in 1927, reached 50% only between 1945 and 1950” (Yerasimos 1987: 86). This was to a large degree related to the class structure of Turkish society, something which has also been a factor in Greek Thrace. Turkey has consequently not been able to live up to the expectations projected for Thrace on its own turf. However, the minority’s lack of integration in the Greek education system meant that its educational progress went almost exclusively through adoption of models tightly connected to the ideological mechanism of the Turkish state. From Greece this has been interpreted as Turkish efforts to extend its hegemony over the minority. In this connection it is pointed out that while Turkey took an active interest in the minority from 1957, the projection of concrete demands began in 1964 after the population balance between the minorities had been destroyed by the expulsions in Istanbul (Alexandris 1988: 525). As seen earlier, Osman Nuri coined the Greek reluctance against letting the minority adopt indiscriminately Turkish ideological models for “spiritual oppression”. There has consequently been a “spiritual war” between Greece and Turkey for the minority’s “consciousness”. This attitude is also present in a recent Greek book which centre its attention on the minority’s “national consciousness” (Panayiotidis 1995). In these kinds of works the integration of the minority in Greek society is perceived as the identification with majority ideology. Unfortunately, the question of identity is approached by all parts as a zero sum game where one identity excludes the other. It is rarely seen as possible to perceive oneself as a product of both Greek and Turkish cultures. As a result, the ideological aspects

252 For characteristic Greek examples comparing minority education in the two countries, see (Economopoulos 1967b; Economopoulos 1979).
The Muslim minority of Greek Thrace have received far more attention than the educational, just as traditional minority attitudes do not consider learning Greek as a skill to be mastered, but as something which may harm their identity.

There are, however, some Greek works which focus on the practical educational problems. A paper by Greek teachers in minority schools belonging to the “Association of Friends of Nikos Raptis” points out that Thrace has by far the lowest percentage of high school graduates and the highest percentage of illiterates in the country. It considers that the Greek governments do not engage in the essence of the minority education, but seem only to take an interest in the administrative control. It is indicative that all the minority schools are controlled administratively by one co-ordinator of minority education. He is not answerable to the Ministry of Education but to the Foreign Ministry. Such a system is necessarily limited to administrative control and do not occupy itself with the educational procedure, thus being unable to give solution to the problems in minority education (Tambaki and Plati 1995). In a description of the situation in the backward villages in the mountain areas above Ksanthi where the Pomaks live it is claimed that: “The best students (very few) learn to read and write Greek, however they do not understand what they read, they do not learn to express themselves and compose” (ibid.). The pupils in the plain and towns attain school more regularly and for more years than the pupils in the mountain areas. In the mountain area the pupils are often absent in spring and autumn when they help on the farm, while their father and elder brothers are away for work (Kanakidou 1994: 75). Some of the problems are due to minority suspicion and the educational facilities. However, it is pointed out that there is no special program for the minority schools which takes into account their particular problems. The schoolbooks for the lessons taught in Greek are the same as those that are in general use in Greek schools, and are difficult for those who do not have Greek as their mother tongue. This makes it very hard for the teacher to compose a meaningful program. These schools that need experienced teachers are often staffed with young, inexperienced teachers who are often changed. They lack proper educational training for the situation, even though there have been requests for special seminars (in 1991). The pupils do not use Greek outside school and in the mountains they have few chances to practice the language. They cannot expect any help at home or from their close family with their homework. There is also the problem of the underdeveloped educational and social environment which makes the pupils mature late. “Lastly, the large number of holidays, which limit the workdays, the lack of interest from the parents but also the sad phenomenon of professional unreliability as well as prejudices of some of the educators complements the lack of care by the state for providing substantial education and abolish the educational inequality” (Tambaki and Plati 1995). As a result of this the pupils feel they cannot succeed in Greek secondary schools, and many of those who continue
with secondary education go to Turkey. Every year, about 1,300 Muslim pupils graduate from primary school. About 900 (70%) of them continue their studies in Turkish religious schools, Turkish secondary schools, or emigrate to Turkey; about 100–150 enter Greek secondary schools (almost all of them boys) and the rest leave school altogether. The pupils have most problems with Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, and Language. The most common reason for leaving secondary education is failing for two or three years the same grade. Those who go to Turkey return after a while with some diploma from secondary education and very seldom with diploma from some higher institution. This does not help them in finding a better job because the educational system is different than the Greek.²⁵³ According to research carried out in 1997 the number of Muslims who had not completed obligatory education was 78.2% in Rodopi, 73.6% in Ksanthi, and 67.1% in Evros.²⁵⁴ An inquiry among minority pupils about their expectations for the future displayed little sense of realities. In particular the pupils from the villages did not understand the connection between education and job. When asked about which profession they would like to have, most of them said they wanted to become a doctor. In the more urban areas there was a better understanding of the education’s role in social mobility. However, most of them did not believe that they could succeed in the Greek secondary schools and preferred to enrol in minority or Turkish schools.²⁵⁵

There are signs of changing attitudes to minority education. A couple of years ago the Greek authorities initiated a large project to improve minority education under the direction of professor Anna Frangudaki of the Athens University. This is based on modern educational principles acknowledging the special problems of the minority. It still remains to see how successful the implementation of the program will be. Significantly, the project is limited to the education in Greek. Since minority education is still very much confined by Greek-Turkish relations, questions pertaining to the education in Turkish are handled by the Foreign ministries. This was evident recently in the case of the teachers who applied for appointment in the Ksanthi minority secondary school. It was first claimed that there were sufficient teachers, but the Greek school inspector Lambakis said later that they waited for order from above (Gündem 81/07.04.1998). This could very possible be related to Greek grievances about the minority education in Istanbul.

²⁵³ (Kanakidou 1994: 95–97). Obviously this work describes the situation some years before the increase of minority children in Greek secondary schools.
²⁵⁴ Rizospastis 08.08.1999, “What hides behind the noise” by Nikos Boyiopoulos.
²⁵⁵ (Kanakidou 1994: 97–99). Other Greek research on minority education is presented in (Vakalios 1997).
PART TWO

THE “DARK PERIOD”


The rule of the military junta (1967–1974) caused profound changes to Greek society as a whole. The effects were even greater on the Muslim minority. During this period the Greek state altered radically its policy towards the minority. This did not happen overnight, but was a gradual process which took place over several years and resulted in a whole new foundation for minority politics.¹

Naturally, the junta regime’s lack of legitimacy weakened the international standing of Greece. Still, it enjoyed the steady support of the USA, which was mostly concerned about strategic considerations within the logic of Cold War rivalry.² Developments in Cyprus, pressure from members of the Greek Orthodox minority who had left Turkey, and wishes to counterbalance its international isolation, led the junta to seek a new rapprochement with Turkey. It welcomed a Turkish proposal for a Greek-Turkish conference which took place in Keşan and Aleksandrupoli on 9–10 September 1967. The conference resulted in far-reaching Greek concessions, particularly on Cyprus. Ankara proceeded by recognising the Greek military regime on 20 January 1968, as the only country to do so besides Congo-Kinshasa. Furthermore, the decision to begin talks on outstanding minority issues resulted in the educational agreement (Kitsaras-Bilgen) which was signed in Ankara in December 1968. The bilateral relations continued to be relatively good in the following years, but gradually dissatisfaction arose over the handling of their respective minorities. By May 1973, the two governments exchanged notes complaining about their maltreatment.³ A further worsening of the situation took place after the Papadopoulos regime was

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¹ The written information about this period is meagre and I have not been able to obtain an extensive collection of the relevant minority newspapers in circulation, notably Akin, Azmihz Postası, and Sebat. Although they were subject to censorship and did not come out regularly, there should still be information of interest. Baskın Oran mentions the timid behaviour of Akin after the establishment of the dictatorship. Almost immediately, the complaints about the minority’s situation vanished from its columns (Oran 1991: 125). Apart from the written sources I have of course had the opportunity to discuss the impact of the junta with several minority members.

² For a good description of the heavy handed American interference in Greek politics, see (Stern 1977).

overthrown on 25 November 1973. The new strong man, Dimitrios Ioannidis, had a much more negative attitude towards Turkey than his predecessor.\textsuperscript{4} This was an additional factor which contributed towards worsening the situation in Thrace.

The Discrimination

Most of the discriminatory measures which would plague the minority for years, were established during the military dictatorship. A Greek publication on Thrace gives the following characterisation of the policy initiated by the junta after the first concessions to Turkey:

\[\ldots\] the Greek side starts to become aware of the mistakes of the past, mainly the fact that the foreign factor [i. e. Turkey] strives to decide to a great degree the behaviour and attitude of the minority. The dictatorial regime of the period has recourse to administrative measures with repressive character [diikitiká métra katastålitiká haraktíra], which are not only unable to overturn the climate and the momentum of things but have the opposite effect. They rally the minority, not only for “national” and religious reasons, which had been the case until this time, but also to protect themselves against an oppressive administration.\textsuperscript{5}

The above statement touches upon two important questions: The character of the discrimination, and its effect on the minority regime. According to minority sources the discrimination had started tentatively before the junta, in connection with the tension between Greece and Turkey. One of the main complaints of the minority has been the application of the Metaksas law 1366/1938, which made property transactions subject to the approval of a commission. According to the minority politician Sabahaddin Galip there was no discrimination against the minority by this law until 1963. Even in 1963 the minority could buy as much as 20 stremma land or the equivalent to the value of 40,000 drachmas without applying to the commission. It was the Stefanopoulos government (17.09.1965–22.12.1966) which first ordered that any kind of land transaction had to be approved by this commission. After this the sale of property to Muslims began to be restricted and came almost to a halt (Gerçek 13/29.07.1978).

Generally, there is great agreement in the minority sources about this. To defend himself against accusation from his political rivals, Hasan Hatipoğlu would usually claim that the restrictions started with the junta, or that there was no important discrimination in the years 1965–66 when he was MP and supported the Stefanopoulos government. It may be a slip of the tongue, but once he wrote in his newspaper (Akın 844/22.09.1984) that the political embargo against the minority started in 1965 on the basis of an agreement between the parties.\textsuperscript{6} Besides the problems related to buying land, the

\textsuperscript{4} Previously, in an attempt to charm Turkey Colonel Papadopulos had even declared to the Turkish newspaper Milliyet (30.05.1971) that he believed in a Greco-Turkish federation (Xydis 1972: 203).

\textsuperscript{5} (Notaras 1995: 40). He mentions later that there was an attempt in the mid-1960s to control and restrict the minority by administrative and repressive measures. The policy of administrative measures against the minority were formally abolished in 1991, but according to Notaras it had already been moderated for quite a while (ibid. pp. 51–52).

\textsuperscript{6} See the discussion of the minority polemic on this issue in Ileri 356/05.10.1984.
grievances most frequently mentioned concerned the great difficulties with obtaining permits to build or repair houses, driving licence for automobile and tractor, loans and credits in banks etc. On the whole it was stressed that the minority members began to be treated differently from their Christian neighbours (Gerçek 4/21.01.1978). This kind of discrimination influenced directly the economic life of all the minority members. With its complete domination of the state services, the junta enjoyed unprecedented opportunities to control and repress the minority.

A central link in the control apparatus was taken up by the so-called “Offices of Cultural Relations”. These offices in Ksanthi, Komotini, and Aleksandrupoli were staffed with Foreign Ministry personnel and co-ordinated by a central office in Kavala under the direction of a career diplomat. The local leaders of the offices in Ksanthi and Komotini became notorious in minority circles. Every kind of administrative procedure affecting the minority—from hunting licenses to loss of citizenship or the issuing of passports—passed through the desks of these offices. It should be noted that similar kinds of measures were also applied to other segments of Greek society. People would need a certificate of “civic reliability” to open a business, obtain driving or hunting licence, while passports were arbitrarily withheld, cf. (‘Athenian’ 1972). Before the dictatorship such measures had mainly been applied against the communists, while now they were extended to everybody the regime perceived as its opponents. From a minority’s point of view, it was an innovation to be classified as a dangerous enemy of the nation. Earlier the left had found it hard to defend itself against all kinds of sinister accusations, and the minority was much less equipped to meet the challenge.

The authoritarian features of the military regime also had a bearing on the communal life of the minority. As mentioned earlier, the Special Pedagogical Academy of Thessaloniki (EPATH) was founded in 1968. While the Greek-Turkish educational

7 According to a Greek official working in one of these offices, the system of “Offices of Cultural Relations” (Grafía Politistikón Schéseon) had been established in 1964 and was the continuation of the “Bureau of Political Matters for Thrace” (Diéfthinsi Politikón Ipothéseon Thrákis) which functioned from 1924 to 1956–57. From other sources I know only about the “Section of Political Matters” (Tmíma Politikón Ipothéseon) which was founded by Suliotis-Nikolaidis in 1936 (Tsiumis 1994: 228–229). I have not attempted to trace the responsibilities and functions of these services in detail, but it is clear that they acquired a new importance during the junta. In an interview, the minority politicians İbram Onsunoglu and Orhan Hacıibram asserted that these offices were founded during the junta (Eleftherotipia 14.02.1990). This is a further indication of their rise to prominence during this period.

8 Both Manolis Kandas in Ksanthi and Theodoros Pavlidis in Komotini headed these offices from around 1971. Except for a brief period when he was recalled, Kandas held his position until 1997, while Pavlidis held his position continuously up until 1999. This service is presently in a process of restructuring.

9 The functioning of these offices has often been commented on by the minority press. For typical examples, see İleri 306/19.08.1983, Akın 895/22.01.1987, Trakya’nın Sesi 520/07.09.1995. For comments on the function of these offices in major Greek left wing newspapers, see the articles Rizospastis 28.03.1989, “The life of the minority is a sob…” by Stamatis Hatzistamatiu and Avyi 13.10.1996, “Hostages of the Foreign ministry in Thrace” by Yiorgos Apostolidis.
agreement of 1968 paved the way for increased Turkish influence over minority education, the EPATH would play the opposite role. However, the misgivings by several of the early students display that the authorities lacked the ability to successfully entice the conservative element as had been the case earlier. Now, it became rather an authoritarian mould crudely imposed on the future teachers. The junta also reversed the earlier “concessions” towards Turkey by which the minority schools had been characterised as Turkish. In 1972 the signs in use portraying the schools as “Turkish Minority Schools” were changed to “Muslim Minority Schools”. According to a Greek official (who considered this policy to have been a mistake), this was a counter measure to Turkish authorities’ removal of the marble slate of a renown Greek Orthodox secondary school in Istanbul with the historical Greek inscription: “The Great School of the Nation”. Another well known incident was the destruction of the historical Tabakhane mosque in Ksanthi, allegedly because of town planning. It could also be mentioned that the programme in Turkish for the minority on Greek state radio was reduced and renamed “News bulletin for the Muslims of Thrace”. This was only reversed as late as August 1996, when the name was changed again to: “Local news bulletin in Turkish.” Naturally, the dictatorship abolished the elected boards of the Muslim minority’s pious foundations (Cemaat/vakıf). The abolishment of elected bodies was a general measure, which did not only affect the minority. Later, Greek authorities would point out that Turkey—where there was no change of regime—reacted promptly by abolishing elections in the Greek Orthodox institutions by administrative action.

Minority Protests - The Trial of Selahaddin Galip

Although the censorship imposed by the junta restricted the possibility to protest against the discriminatory policy, there are still examples of criticism in the minority

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10 Today, the signs usually employ the abbreviation “(village name) M/kon Scholión”, where “M/kon” can mean either “Muslim” or “Minority”.

11 According to Baskın Oran the marble slate was taken down in retaliation to the removal of the inscription on the historical “Clock Tower” in Ksanthi (Oran 1991: 125). The Greek name of the school is: Η μεγάλη τυένους σχολή, Yénos, which I have translated as “nation” corresponds to the traditional Ottoman use of the word millet. Oran’s translation: “The Great School of Our Race” is not accurate. It could also be mentioned that around 1971 the Greek Orthodox school children in Istanbul became obliged to begin their lessons with the oath: “I am a Turk, I am honest, I am hard working,” etc., and end their lessons with the slogan: “How happy is he who says he is a Turk” (Alexandris 1988: 515).

12 For details about the mosque and its destruction see (Dede 1984b: 9–11). The mosque was not regarded to have any particular architectural value.

13 Praktika Vulis [pp. 4293–4297] Question No. 12, 11.05.1978 by the minority MP Hasan İmamoğlu to the Foreign Ministry about the Managing Committees of the minority Pious Foundations. Answered by the under-secretary Andreas F. Zaimis, 31.05.1978. Alexandris interprets the Turkish Law 903/1967, which imposed severe restrictions on the Greek Orthodox pious foundations in Turkey, as part of a co-ordinated effort to put restrictions on the Greek Orthodox minority during the period 1964–1967, and mentions it together with several other measures (Alexandris 1988: 514).
press. Most notably the articles of Selahaddin Galip in his newspaper Azınlık Postası. He wrote an open letter to Colonel Papadopulos in November 1969, where he complained about the various discriminatory measures against the minority.\(^{14}\) In January 1971 he wrote another article where he levelled a substantial criticism against the Greek authorities’ treatment of the minority under 4 subheadings: a) The most extensive complaints concerned education, where he basically asked for a standardised modern Turkish education for all the schools, b) He criticised the appointment instead of election of the Cemaat committees, c) He mentioned the problems with buying and selling property, d) Particular attention was given to the name of the minority. Galip mentioned that the “Turks of Western Thrace” were referred to by various names such as “Turks”, “Muslims”, “Ottomans” etc., and asked for the uniform characterisation of the minority as “Turkish”.\(^{15}\)

The next important initiative took place in February 1973, when Galip wrote the article: “What should be done with these unbecoming attitudes?”\(^{16}\) In this article he claimed that the oppression against the minority had increased during the previous six months. Apart from the problems mentioned earlier, there was evidence of a tighter control on both the minority’s education and economy. According to Galip, minority members were fined for no apparent reason. They also had problems with obtaining the necessary permits for tractors or small vans for professional use. From the beginning of 1973 the minority merchants had troubles with their permits. Among other measures it could be mentioned that the minority members could only obtain passports valid for one single journey within one year from the date of issue. The police had also begun to show less tolerance towards manifestations of Turkish culture such as music, posters, etc. As a result of this article, Galip was shortly after sentenced to 3.5 years of prison. In the trial of appeal he was sentenced to 20 months of prison and a fine for “disseminating false information” and “insulting” civil servants. This trial was covered extensively in the Turkish press.\(^{17}\) Galip was able to summon many minority members as witnesses. Among the most prominent was the Ksanthi mufti, who stated that Galip had written the truth. Among other things, the minority was not able to buy

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\(^{14}\) This letter dated 7 November 1969 is referred to in Azınlık Postası 23.01.1971.

\(^{15}\) Azınlık Postası 23.01.1971. This article titled “The questions of Western Thrace which await their solution” was reprinted in the Turkish periodicals Bati Trakya 46/15 February 1971, and Türk Dünyası, Vol. 5. No. 20. pp. 18–19 (slightly abbreviated). The almost simultaneous publication of the article in Turkey displays the close connection.

\(^{16}\) The article “Bu yakışıkız tutumları ile ne yapılmak isteniyor?” was published in Azınlık Postası 162/10.02.1973, and is referred to in Bati Trakya 70/15 February 1973 because of its content, and in 71/15 March 1973 because of the subsequent trial against Galip. See also the article in Milliyet 03.04.1973 reprinted in Türk Dünyası Vol. 8, No. 29, 1973.

It should also be mentioned that the former MP Hasan Hatipoğlu sent a telegram presenting briefly the grievances of the minority to Yeoryios Papadopulos, which is reprinted in Bati Trakya 68/15 December 1972. However, this seems like one of his usual attempts to create impressions, and did not have any further consequences.

\(^{17}\) In the following, the dates refer to the article series “The Komotini Drama” by Oğuz Şeren which was printed in Tercüman 24–27.04.1973.
land. To counter this the prosecution presented a list which showed that 6 Muslims had bought property the last year (24.04). The defence lawyer presented a document from the Agricultural Bank containing instructions to only grant loans to ethnic Greeks (Yunan asıllı) (25.04). In his defence Galip claimed that he did not write to instigate the minority against the state or to insult the government, but to make known in Athens what was happening in Thrace (26.04). His Athenian lawyer maintained that the minority was subject to oppression. One of the proofs was that he had to defend the case as no lawyer in Komotini, Ksanthi, or even in Thessaloniki dared to take it. He was sad to see the situation and said it was not a simple trial against the press but against the whole minority (27.04). The trial against Galip led to questions in the Turkish parliament and requests for retaliation against the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul. The Turkish foreign minister Halûk Bayülken made a statement where he informed that “various and vigorous initiatives” had been taken to save Selahaddin Galip (Batı Trakya 72/15 April 1973). It is clear from the minority press as well, that at this time Galip enjoyed the support of Turkey. This did not only determine his behaviour towards Greek authorities, but also gave him a dominant position within the minority.18

There should be no doubt that Galip’s allegations about discriminatory measures were basically correct. He is the kind of person who selects his words carefully, and would not put forward exaggerated accusations. I will not discuss their finer points at this stage. What concerns me here is not so much the content of the grievances as the framework they were voiced in. It would be naive to claim that Galip’s accusations displayed the minority’s ability to voice its grievances within the Greek system. Galip was not just any minority member, and in reality he did not take a personal initiative. He was able to take his initiative because of Turkey’s backing, and acted in all probability in understanding with Turkish diplomacy. This displays the basic dilemma of the minority. It does not have the power by itself to act as a pressure group within the Greek system, and when it uses the supports Turkey it becomes entangled in the mesh of problems connected to Greek-Turkish relations. As a consequence the minority front figures—in this case Galip—relate themselves first of all to the two dominant powers in the game, Greece and Turkey, while the minority becomes a vehicle rather than a participant.

18 See Hâki’s article in İleri 380/29.03.1985 where he looks at the situation around 1973, and mentions that other minority members did not dare to oppose Galip because they feared the force behind him (i.e. Turkey). Eventually, Selahaddin Galip spent some months in prison until he was released by the general amnesty in summer 1973. He secured benefits from Turkey because of his involvement and settled in the Bakırköy suburb of Istanbul (İleri 358/19.10.1984). Later Galip lost his Greek citizenship according to article 19 of the citizenship code by the decision 4636/16.10.1984. He later regained it after appealing to the State Council, but lost it again according to article 20, after accusation of subversive activities (Akın 855/10.04.1985; Gerçek 230/19.01.1989).
Developments in Minority/Majority Relations

The marginalisation of the minority which became firmly established during the junta was related both to natural social developments and the particular measures against it. As long as Thrace functioned as a traditional agrarian society there were many things that united the two religious elements. It is even possible to observe that some of the refugees who arrived from Asia Minor were attracted to the mixed ethno-religious environment, because it reminded them of their homeland. The two groups shared the same occupations, and many of the Muslims were better off economically than the impoverished refugees. The old fabric of society became initially upset in the 1950s. Much of the changes were related to the increased importance of education. As seen earlier, the migration in the 1950s affected in particular the well to do urban Muslim population with Kemalist leanings. In other words the minority suffered both economical weakening and brain-drain. The Christians virtually monopolised the possibilities of upward social mobility through education. Another important observation is that up until the 1960s the minority could function much like other traditional local interest groups and networks. At this time their relationship to Turkey had not yet been stigmatised, and the main opposition in Greek society ran between the left and the right. The right wing state which emerged victorious after the civil war was able to dominate the left. Favourite mechanism for ostracising its opponents included virulent accusations of communism, anti-national behaviour, treason etc. The lack of common ground rules for the political game because of the supreme value attached to group interests, made almost any kind of accusation legitimate. Even prominent politicians with no particular left wing leanings were subject to the persecution of the right, and the process of restoring the Greek left has been a long and arduous process.

Already in 1965 Adamandia Pollis considered that the probable emergence of the nation-state as a major reference to which primary loyalty was owed, could lead to some form of authoritarian or totalitarian political system in Greece. Within the traditional cultural patterns of Greek politics, the nation could become the “group” which defined one’s existence just as easily as the village, clan, or professional association.

Instead of bridging the cleavages through democratisation, which was the goal of the more mature politicians, it would result in the formation of a new interest group and new scapegoats. Such a development would of course leave no acceptable space

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19 For a characteristic example see the memoirs of (Sarandis 1987), in particular pp. 275–299. The subsequent story of his family’s life in Ksanthi also gives an indication of the social development the Christians were liable to.

20 A moderate conservative politician describes very well the climate in the 1960s, and the slander that even he was subject to (Papakonstandinu 1997: Vol. 2, 332, et passim).

21 (Pollis 1965: 44). The whole article gives a valuable insight in some of the social mechanisms of Greek politics.
for the Muslim minority. In Thrace this happened to a large degree when the junta initiated its populist and chauvinist politic. Many minority members remember bitterly the junta slogan “Greece of Christian Greeks” (Ellás Ellínon Hristianón). Hatipoğlu mentions that at this time it became common to write slogans on walls such as “Greece belongs to the Christian Greeks”, “Death to the Turks”, etc. (Akin 917/28.08.1987).

Several of my acquaintances have mentioned the good neighbourly relations between the Muslims and Christians before the dictatorship. It was usual with family visits and the atmosphere between the two elements was friendly. Such neighbourly relations became susceptible to the influence of the chauvinist policy and by 1970 they had become completely disrupted. This was to a large degree the result of a campaign sponsored by the authorities to instigate the Greek Orthodox against the Muslims and spoil the good neighbour relations which had existed until this time.

The ideological development went hand in hand with economic measures. Now the opposition between Christians and Muslims became operative in a whole new fashion. The demands for state subsidies to the Christians would be legitimised by pointing to the “Muslim (or Turkish) danger”. Clearly, such an approach could only contribute towards the further marginalisation of the minority. It is difficult to obtain an overview of the various measures, because of the secrecy surrounding them. However, there will always be leaks, and even a Turkish newspaper printed an official translation of a document from the Greek Agricultural Bank which offered special loans to Greek Christians who bought land belonging to Muslims in Thrace.22 Particularly towards the end of the military rule the oppression against the minority increased with the goal of making them leave for Turkey. In this stifling atmosphere during the last months of junta rule some Christians would try to intimidate the Muslims by saying: “In any case you will become fed up and leave. Why should we buy your fields?” (Son Havadis 19.06.1974). The repercussions of this policy were felt even at a much later date. It is outside the scope of the present work to provide details about the economic priorities of the junta in Thrace. Suffice it to say that many individuals and networks obtained a vested interest in legitimising and expanding the discrimination politic. It is generally acknowledged that the money did little for the development of the area. Instead of being channelled into productive investments, it simply subsidised one part of the population for “national reasons”.

**Developments in the Minority’s Internal Organisation**

The radical developments during the junta period had a profound influence on the internal organisation of the minority. These developments have previously been little studied and are often ill understood. The dominating Greek view has been to ascribe

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22 *Son Havadis* 20.06.1974. This is part of the article series by Ali Özlüer, “What happens in Western Thrace?” *Son Havadis* 16–25.06.1974.
the developments to increased Turkish interference after 1964, connected to the pro-
cess of uprooting the Greek Orthodox element in Turkey (Alexandris 1988: 525). In
the continuation of this the grievances of the minority have usually been ascribed to a
small group of foreign instigated “hard-liners” (skliropirinikós), who do not represent
the overwhelming majority of moderate (filísios) law-abiding (nomotayís)
Muslims.\footnote{An article by Alexandris (1990), represents an example of this conceptual framework.} A more perceptive article points out that the attempts from the mid-1960s
to apply political control and restrictions on the minority with administrative and
repressive measures, could only be effective in their extreme form and were conse-
quently not feasible. On the contrary they contributed to the “homogenisation and
rallying of the minority around the most extremist and foreign led elements of the
minority leadership” (Notaras 1995: 51–52). This article labels somewhat indiscri-
minately the Kemalists as “extremist and foreign led”. However, it has grasped the
fundamental problem that the Greek authorities did no longer keep up a viable ideo-
logical alternative to the Turkish nationalist position. At best, the conservatives could
claim to be less undesired than the Kemalists.

In reality, the break-down of the system of double protection which was operative
in the 1950s and 1960s influenced all of the minority politicians. Many of them had
drawn on the support of both sides, but now the Greek sponsored conservative alter-
native lost much of its legitimacy. Consequently, Turkey became by far the most
attractive ideological alternative by default. These developments are quite evident when
we look at the management of the pious foundations. As mentioned earlier, after
World War II the elections of the Managing Committees had been dominated by the
“modernists”, who often used their position as a springboard for a political career.
When the junta abolished the Cemaat boards, the “modernist” leaders were replaced
arbitrarily with people from the “conservative” side. The nationalist minority circles in
Turkey commented sharply on this. Selahattin Yıldız concluded after visiting Greek
Thrace that the minority did not have proper leaders because the Greek authorities
would not allow the election of the Cemaat managing committees. He claimed that the
community leaders (Cemaat Reisi)—Hafız Yaşar in Komotini and Şevket Hamdi in
Ksanthi—were opposed to Atatürk and Turkey and called them “sold dogs” (satılımş
köpekleri). Consequently, they could not be regarded as leaders. On the other hand,
with the reigning political situation the potential leaders who were “full of Turkism”
(Türklükle dolu), did not come out of their shell (Bati Trakya 51/15 July 1971). The
article portrays a subdued “modernist” wing and a “conservative” wing with little
legitimacy. The Kemalists in Turkey had always had this attitude towards the conserv-
atives, but now the policy of the junta undermined the prestige and influence they had
enjoyed within the minority. With the death of Molla Yusuf in 1969, they had also lost
their most prominent leader. If we turn to a minority source it is possible to distinguish further differentiation in the “conservative” camp.²⁴ In Komotini Hafız Yaşar was a leader of the conservative camp, and gained the confidence of the authorities under this label. In Ksanthi Şevket Hamdi did not base his position on representing a part of the minority, but on conforming completely with the Greek authorities. He enjoyed a certain prestige as he was from a distinguished family of beys, but had no real power base within the minority. The same source considers the developments in minority organisation to be related to several factors. It looks back on the traditional division of the minority leadership between “Atatürk idealists” and conservative “government collaborators”, or “radical Kemalists” (inkılâpçılar) and “conservative Muslims” (muhafazakârlar) as they are also called. They are considered to have made up two distinct interest groups (zümrê or klikê) which were separate before 1974. However, while the “collaborators” saw that their own interests were in Greece, the interests of their children were in Turkey. This is related to cultural developments, as only Turkey provided a modern education alternative. At the same time the junta started to apply the same oppressive measures towards all of the minority irrespective of whether people were “conservative” or “progressive”. The discriminatory policy of the junta estranged the conservative element. It no longer felt that it had the support of the authorities, but that it was just as undesired as the progressives. As a consequence the antagonism between the two groups weakened since the distinction seized to be operational towards the Greek authorities. According to the article these developments took place a little before 1974 and created an atmosphere of “unity and solidarity” (birlik ve beraberlik) in the minority.

In fact, during this period both the Turkish and the Greek policy contributed to dissolve the old oppositions and creating a new unity. The most important Turkish initiative was taken by the ambassador in Athens, Kâmuran Gürün. He visited Thrace 23–25 October 1973 and was even able to inspect the Pomak villages in the military zone above Ksanthi. He had few possibilities to influence the Greek policy, and concentrated his efforts on eliminating the various divisions within the minority. According to Gürün the primary division of the minority was between “progressives” (ilerici) and “reactionaries” (gerici), while the progressives were further subdivided into cliques. To his surprise, he found almost all of the medrese and EPATH graduates he met with to be open minded and sincere, and was pleased to observe that they were tied to their national Turkish consciousness. He concluded that much of the criticism against these institutions was arbitrary and far from the truth. For example,

²⁴ In the following I support myself on İleri 400/20.09.1985. The article is an interview with Orhan Hacıibram who makes the main analysis, but there are also comments by Hâki.
²⁵ The Turkish speakers of Thrace render the word “clique” by its Greek form klika and not the Turkish form klik.
many of the conservatives used the Latin alphabet. This testifies to the exaggerations in the minority members’ slandering of each other. Gürün was also able to speak with the leader of the conservatives (no name is mentioned, but it must have been Hafız Yaşar). In Gürün’s opinion he was not very conservative, but used this image to appeal to his voters. The formation of cliques within the progressive camp was related to political rivalry for candidatures in the parliamentary elections. At the time of the visit it was expected that rumours about an immanent election would reactivate the rivalry between these cliques. To forestall this, Gürün invited the leaders of the cliques to a meal at the Turkish consulate, where he requested them to determine freely among themselves who were the best candidates and later unite their forces in the elections. The leaders agreed to bury their differences during this meeting and said they would prepare for the elections together. During the same meeting Gürün took pains to explain to them the importance of abolishing the division between “progressives” and “reactionaries”. Gürün considered his efforts to abolish the “progressive-reactionary” division to be his most important accomplishment (Gürün 1994: 214, 232–237). It is clear that Gürün wanted the minority to act as a single body. He was not so specific about the degree of Turkish tutelage. Although he said that the leaders should determine the candidates freely among themselves, he clearly had very definite expectations for the minority’s behaviour.

Other sources display Turkey’s inclination to interfere directly in the internal minority rivalry. A Turkish report from 1974 about the “Outside Turks” mentioned that those who “exploited” the minority had been put on a black list.26 It mentioned that the leaders of the community in Ksanthi and Komotini were quarrelling continuously with each other because of conflicting personal interests. Allegedly, the people who were really “nationalists” (milliyetçi), the honest people who had a command of the minority issues, had been slandered both to Turkey and the Greek authorities and thus been set aside. Those who supposedly exploited the minority made up a list of 20 names including Şevket Hamdi, Asım Haliloğlu, Muzaffer Salıhoğlu, Hasan Hatipoğlu, and Hafız Yaşar. The list of people who were said to be continuously oppressed by the Greek authorities because they defended the rights of the Western Thrace Turks included among others Osman Nuri, Sabahaddin Galip, Selahaddin Galip, and part of the teachers. According to the report, they had also been slandered to Turkey by the people who exploited the minority. The report clearly approved only one side of the “progressive” group centred on the Nuri/Galip family. However, it is interesting to notice that Muzaffer Salih and Osman Nuri, who were placed in different camps in the report, collaborated in the general elections a couple of months later. Although the political associates and publishers of Akın Asım Haliloğlu and Hasan Hatipoğlu were

26 Son Havadis 16.06.1974. The article does not specify details about the origin of the report, but it was clearly written by some state organ. The last section dealt with the “Western Thrace Turks”.
out of favour with the Turkish authorities, they evidently had other centres of support in Turkey. People who wrote for nationalist periodicals with an interest in the “Outside Turks”, such as Türk Dünyası and Türk Kültürü, made consistently use of Akın as their main reference when they wrote about Greece. It is clear that Turkey sought actively to influence the situation in Greek Thrace. However, at this time the possibilities must have been rather limited. The sources also reveal the germ of a conflict between the centres in Turkey which took an interest in the minority. This difference would develop and become a major factor some 10 years later.

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The Minorities in Greek-Turkish Relations

It is not possible to blame the profound developments during this period only on the junta. The whole minority regime within the larger context of Greek-Turkish relations went through important transformations. Both the Greek and the Turkish nation building projects have each in their own ways aimed towards creating a homogeneous population. In this context the minorities constituted an undesired anomaly, or even a threat to the national ideal. On top of this, in both countries minorities are associated with unpleasant past experiences related to irredentism and foreign interference. The most important counterweight to the negative attitudes was the reciprocity envisaged by the Lausanne treaty. The traditional Greek position is expressed in the following way by a major newspaper:

From the time of Venizelos and the Lausanne Treaty (1923), nearly all the Greek governments regarded it necessary to make continually concessions in issues concerning the Muslim minority, both to accomplish the survival of the Greek community in Istanbul and to prepare the international public opinion for the future union of Cyprus with Greece as something which would not put the rights of the Turco-Cypriots in danger (Tipos tis Kiriakis 26.11.1989).

As it gradually became clear that Greece was losing out on both these fronts, a revision of the Greek position was imminent. The idea of a balance between the two minorities is prominent in both Greek and Turkish attitudes to the minority issue. More recently the problem of the lost balance was clearly acknowledged by the former Turkish ambassador to Athens, Fahir Alaçam. In his analysis he considered the minority question to be based on two balances: People and property. This view was supported by the minutes of the Lausanne negotiations. He remarked that each country was pleased to get rid of its minority. However, when one of the balances changed in favour of one country, and consequently to the detriment of the other, in all probability difficulties would arise. After the Greek Orthodox of Istanbul left, the population balance was totally ruined to the detriment of Greece. Theoretically there was still a balance in property. Theoretically, because according to stories which were impossible to confirm, most of the property of the Greek Orthodox, “who have gone to Greece by their own will and can return whenever they want”, had been usurped illegally or liquidated by the Greek Orthodox themselves in various ways. As a result Greece had nothing to fear. It adopted the “strange attitude” of refusing that the minority was Turkish, and that it was necessary to consult Turkey about it, ignoring their numerous bilateral agreements.28

28 Fahir Alaçam was ambassador in Athens 1980–1985. I base my presentation of his position on his long article in Cumhuriyet 15.03.1989, and the discussion in a conference on Western Thrace, see Ahmet 1995: 109–110) Bülent Ecevit who was minister of labour in the İnönü government in 1964
The concept of balance is related to traditional “bargaining practice”, and consequently raises the question of value. In the first place it is a question of the value each country attaches to the two minorities in question. Furthermore, it is a question of the value attached to them within the overall bargaining of outstanding bilateral issues. In other words, what is the value attached to the minorities themselves, and what is the value attributed to them as a bargaining chip within the larger context? For example, in 1957–1958 Turkey displayed an interest in exchanging the minorities (Alexandris 1983: 273). At that time the Greek Orthodox minority was clearly regarded as more “valuable” by both countries. Consequently, an exchange would be a “good bargain” for Turkey, or the threat of an exchange could lead Greece to make concessions on other points to redress the balance. After the dramatic reduction of the Greek Orthodox minority, Athens began to raise the issue of “proportionality” and “reciprocity”. 2

February 1976, 15 Greek MPs submitted a petition to the government concerning the fate of the Greek Orthodox minority in Turkey. They argued that article 45 of the Lausanne Treaty called for an approximately equal minority population in Istanbul and Thrace and asked the government to seek ways for restoring the minority balance.

On 31 May 1978, the under-secretary of the Foreign Ministry, Andreas Zaimis, revealed that the issue of proportionality was raised by the Greeks on four different occasions between 1968 and 1977. The Turks complained bitterly against the treatment of the Turkish minority in Greece, but refused to debate the grievances of the Greeks in Turkey. The main opposition party PASOK repeatedly urged the government to provide a new formula which would take into account the steady growth of the Muslim minority population and the virtual disappearance of the Greek minority in Turkey:

The numerical balance of the minorities, according to the opposition, was wiped out by the Turkish refusal to honour its commitments undertaken at Lausanne. As a result, this account concluded, Greece, under article 45 of the Lausanne minority clauses, has the right to take measures to restore the numerical balance of the respective minorities, which has been undermined since 1955.29

The same kinds of attitudes also began to appear in the Greek press. A commentary to the Foreign Ministry’s handling of the minority issue claimed that Greece never did

29 (Alexandris 1983: 294–295, 315). The governments view on various Greek-Turkish issues as presented by Andreas F. Zaimis are included in the “Parliamentary minutes” (Praktika Vulis pp. 4293–4297). In reply to question No. 9, 13.05.1978, it is mentioned that the question of reciprocity was presented: a) During Greek-Turkish negotiations in Athens 11–23 March 1968 and Ankara 15–27 April, b) During exchange of problems 31.05.1974, c) Long report to the Turkish Foreign ministry from the embassy in Ankara 03.02.1976, d) Protest of the ambassador in Ankara to the Turkish Foreign Ministry 13.01.1977. The Greek government requested the restoration of the numerical balance between the two minorities. The aspect of reciprocity is also well covered by (Meinardus 1985a). See also (Plumidis 1975: 53–58), for an example of the presentation of the problem in the Greek press.
anything to redress the balance. There were no measures against the Muslims in Greece, and if they had any problems with the bureaucracy, they were the same as in the rest of Greece. The author argued that the Greek policy was to pass over in silence the measures against the Greek minority in Turkey, with the result that Turkey got used to that the only reactions from Greece were written protest through the embassy in Ankara. As a result, Turkey succeeded in its long term policy to uproot the Greeks of Turkey. The article pointed out that Greece did not grant full citizen rights to the “kinsmen” (omoyenís) Constantinopolitan Greeks who found themselves in Greece by necessity, considering that it would help the minority by keeping its number fictitiously undiminished. The author expressed the opinion that the issue of lost property should be put on the table of negotiations and that Greece should adopt a more dynamic policy. The Greek government was surely thinking along the same lines. Responding to a question in parliament the deputy Foreign Minister stated that “Based on the principle of inter-state reciprocity (arhí tis diakratikís amiveótitas), the Greek Government keeps always the freedom to impose counter measures on the Turkish or minority property in Greece.” However, it should come as no surprise that the open or concealed government measures could not satisfy the more impatient critics of the situation. In the Greek press there have been frequent calls for retaliatory measures against the minority, although there are also some voices which stress moderation and the minority members’ rights as Greek citizens.

Logically, the balance between the minorities could be redressed in two ways: Either by securing the increase of the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul or the decrease of the Muslim minority in Thrace. This was of course easier said than done. The pronounced difference in the social structure of the two minorities as well as many other factors makes an immediate comparison between them difficult. It is also difficult to evaluate to what degree the minority in Istanbul left because of direct government measures and to what degree it left because the general developments in Turkish society left little room for it. However, in the nationalist perspective which dominates Greek-Turkish relations it is clear that Turkey did not display any disposition to re-evaluate its minority policy. At the time of the 1964 expulsions the Turkish ambassador to the United Nations argued that the Greek minority in Istanbul was “one of the happiest and most prosperous minorities anywhere in the world”, while in 1977 Turkish diplomats insisted that the Istanbul Greeks were a privileged minority.

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30 Politika Themata 211/12–18.08.1978, “The minority issue creates demands only in favour of Greece”, by Mih. G. Melas.
31 The question No. 11/13.05.1978 belongs to the series of questions about Greek-Turkish relations answered by Andreas F. Zaimis 31.05.1978, Praktika Vulis pp. 4293–4297.
32 For examples of the two positions, see Adesmefti 18.07.1990, “The Union of Thracian Organisation proposes for the informers of Ankara - Take away their Greek citizenship” and Kathimerini 24.09.1988, “They are Greek citizens”, by Aristotelis N. Gavriliadis (Appendix 5, texts 6 & 7).
(Alexandris 1983: 291, 295). After the dramatic reduction of the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul, Turkey lost all interest in exchanging the minorities. On the contrary it started to promote its tutelage over the Muslim minority more actively. Of course, within the framework of traditional attitudes it would be foolish “to exchange something for nothing”. At the same time the “lost balance” eliminated one of Greece’s strongest incentives to be sensitive to the problems of the Muslims in Thrace. In its simple everyday form this can be traced in such reactions as: “If they (the Muslims) are not satisfied they can go to Turkey”. More significantly, the various “administrative measures” against them, make it clear that by now the state apparatus considered it an undesired minority. There are few official statements endorsing such methods to redress the balance. Responsible organs would usually repeat monotonously that Greece fulfilled all its obligations according to the Lausanne Treaty.

The most prominent public exponent for the view that the Muslim minority should leave Greece is probably professor Neoklis Sarris. In short, he argues that it is the case of an “artificial” minority since it was left after a population exchange to counter-balance another minority. To substantiate his point he goes back to Lausanne and subsequent Greek-Turkish negotiations. Consequently, since Turkey had compelled the Greeks of Turkey to leave, this should according to previous Turkish arguments logically lead to the conclusion that the Muslim minority also had to go. With his intimate knowledge of Turkish society, Sarris turns their own arguments against them. His views are very much in agreement with the position of Fahir Alaçam. Within a Greek context Sarris appeals to, and becomes the spokesman for, nationalist circles. However, Sarris is a complex personality and subtler than the average nationalist. Another of his basic points is that he does not believe in the possibility of integrating the minority in Greek society. He does not think that the minority can take the step from the Ottoman model of closed communities, to modern allegiance based on citizenship. In this connection he will naturally stress the minority’s own shortcomings, rather than the Greek society’s inability to embrace it. He does not advocate oppressive measures, but envisages the departure of the minority as a natural result of its modernisation through Turkish models. In this connection Turkey is not refused a say over the minority. On the contrary, he declares that Turkey should open its doors and take responsibility for it in its natural environment. This approach considers the minority issue to be primarily a Greek-Turkish affair and leaves little room for the minority to have a say in its own destiny.

The former ambassador Themos Stoforopulos often appears in the same fora as Neoklis Sarris and appeals much to the same kind of audience. However, his position differs significantly on many points. Stoforopulos served in the Greek consulate in

33 Sarris expounds his views on the Muslim minority in Thrace mainly in (Sarris 1990–1991).
Istanbul in the 1960s during the expulsions of minority members with Greek citizenship, and is influenced profoundly by this experience. He thinks that Turkey has forfeited any right to have a say over the Muslims in Thrace, because of its treatment of the Greek Orthodox minority in Turkey. However, the members of the Muslim minority are certainly entitled to stay in Thrace as Greek citizens, and since the Greek administration is probably far from perfect they are free to voice their grievances within the framework of a democratic country. Consequently, he advocates the integration of the minority into Greek society, while eliminating the Turkish influence over it, something he portrays as protecting the minority from the “imperialism” of Ankara. In this connection he proposes measures such as abolishing the Turkish General Consulate in Komotini, and the Greek-Turkish educational protocols. He thinks that Greece should no longer recognise any right to Turkey to interfere in issues concerning “Muslim Greek citizens” or let it pretend that it cares for them. Every attempts of undermining Greek sovereignty should be opposed strongly, without violating the rights of the Muslims. In Thrace he thinks that Turkey exploits the Greek inability to approach the great majority of well-intentioned Muslims and help them integrate into society, while allowing them to keep and cultivate their minority culture as much as they want. He criticises the former restrictive measures on the minority as wrong reactions to Turkish expansionism. They made some Muslims vulnerable to the propaganda of Ankara which was also furnished with arguments (Stoforopulos 1995). As a former diplomat it is perhaps natural that he in this context is mostly concerned about eliminating Turkish influence, and has less to say about how he envisages the integration of the minority. In many ways his position is close to modern concepts of minority protection, but he obviously lacks sufficient familiarity with the minority’s situation to have a clear understanding of what it would take to integrate them successfully into Greek society.

While for all practical purposes the “balance” between the minorities in Greece and Turkey is lost, it is interesting to observe that it is not only the Greek side which insists on redressing the balance. In Turkey this view is quite prominent in nationalist circles, including part of the immigrant milieu from Greek Thrace. Partly, the reason for this can be sought in traditional behaviour patterns. These circles believe that they can impose their view on Greece through extortion based on threatening Greek interests. Such viewpoints are indirectly accepted by an American study centred on strategic interests. Here the Turkish interest in keeping a large military presence in Turkish Thrace after the evaporation of the Warsaw Pact threat is ascribed largely “to the perceived value of Turkish military superiority in deterring the mistreatment of Muslim minorities in Bulgaria, Greece, and elsewhere in the Balkans” (Fuller, Lesser et al. 1993: 114). Within this framework the question of “value” and “correspondence” becomes very fluid, and ultimately everything becomes comparable. As a result
the whole issue degenerates into a simple matter of tit for tat. In this connection there may also in some instances not even be a question of calling for retaliation to redress the balance, but the other way around, i.e. to justify arbitrary acts against the minority or exploitation by referring to excesses committed by the other side. Calls for retaliation can also come from prominent persons in leading positions. When Fahir Alaçam proposed that Turkey should apply a “tooth for a tooth” policy concerning the measures against the Turks in Thrace, Professor Dr. Mümmtaz Soysal had the following response:

The proposal of the honourable Alaçam is correct and valid. Greece is exercising its Western Thrace politics with the air of Europe’s spoilt child. Turkey is playing the role of the well-behaved child. However, Turkey must now play the role of the child who seeks his rights in the Western Thrace issue.

A typical exponent for the mentality of “retaliation” is Tahsin Salihoğlu, who served as chairman of the Western Thrace Solidarity Association (BTTDD) in Istanbul (1988–1992). In particular before the Greek parliamentary election, 5 November 1989. He claimed that the Muslim vakıfs in Komotini were under occupation and also referred to demands in Greece to close the Turkish consulate. Salihoğlu declared that the Turkish consulate and the vakıfs in Komotini corresponded to the Patriarchate and the Istanbul Greek Orthodox vakıfs. “If this occupation in Western Thrace continues, we will occupy the Patriarchate and the Greek Orthodox vakıfs. Everybody should know this.” This was no empty threat, as he later proved in connection with the mufti controversy in August 1991 when he organised the blockade of the Patriarchate (see below).

At times the proposals about manipulation of population and retaliatory measures also involve Cyprus. In January 1990 Turkish newspapers claimed that the Turks from Western Thrace who were “forced to migrate to Turkey because of the pressures of the Greek authorities” would be settled in North Cyprus. A Turkish journalist claimed that “Our kinsmen in Western Thrace do not have security. They are attacked. The best solution is that they settle in Cyprus. The Turkish Cypriots will embrace them and in addition it will normalise the population imbalance [in Cyprus].” Sometimes minority members who have migrated to Turkey involve themselves directly in such plans. In November 1995 the chairman of the Izmir branch of the

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34 For a criticism of what this attitude can result in by a member of the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul, see (Millas 1989: 114–119).
35 Cumhuriyet 06.03.1989. The metaphor “spoilt child” (şmarık çocuk) is commonly used when describing the adversary and corresponds to the Greek expression haideméno pédi. In fairness I should mention that in 1982 when the possibility of retaliations was discussed in the Turkish parliament because of the situation in Greek Thrace, Mümmtaz Soysal commented that it did not become Turkey to apply such measures (Unspecified article from Turkish press, reprinted in Gerçek 71/11.05.1982).
36 Batı Trakya’nın Sesi 14/January 1990. See also the report by Alkis Kurkulas (APE 01.11.1989).
37 As referred in Thessaloniki 17.01.1990. Fileleftheros and Ethnos have the same news.
38 Article in Hürriyet by Ertuğrul Özkoğ referred to in Eleftherotipia 07.02.1990.
Western Thrace Turks Solidarity Association, Muhittin Soyutürk, announced at a press conference that negotiations would be held for the resettlement of the ethnic Turks from Western Thrace to the Varosha area in the “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus” (TRNC). He claimed that the Greek government put pressure on the minority to make it migrate to Turkey and that their houses and land were being expropriated by the Greek government.

With the settlement of the Western Thrace Turks to the Varosha region, the Greek government will have to make great concessions in its assimilation policy on the Western Thrace Turks […] We have no other request from the governments than to become TRNC citizens and to settle there. We will take care of everything. The Western Thrace Turks cannot get Turkish citizenship and face great difficulties. We do not want them to be left without a land or a nation […] 39

At this point of time the accusations against Greece are clearly exaggerated and articulated within a nationalist context. What is really at stake is some minority members attempt to settle in Turkey. Since Turkey does not want to grant them work permit in order to keep them as pawns in Greek-Turkish relations, the minority members try to surpass this obstacle by offering themselves as a pawn in another nationalist project, namely Cyprus. In other words, they promote their value within a traditional form of bargaining practice.

Minority Members and Reciprocity

As mentioned earlier, Osman Nuri was very sensitive to what influence the “September events” in 1955 could have on the minority regime. He represented a somewhat mature Turkish nationalist who had grasped that it was difficult to demand something for the “Turkish minority” which Turkey was not willing to give to the “Greek minority”. 40 However, even after the breakdown of the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul many Muslim minority members living in Greek Thrace considered themselves primarily within the framework of the Greek-Turkish “balance”. Particularly, part of the older leadership may articulate such views. This can even reach the point where they will vent their frustration over the situation in Thrace by asking for retaliation against the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul. One of the best known examples concerns the journalist Hâki. In 1978 the Turkish foreign minister, Gündüz Ökçün, had declared that if necessary Turkey would retaliate against the minority in Istanbul

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39 Article from Turkish Daily News, as it appeared on the “THRACE@TREARN” list 14.11.1995. The former tourist resort Varosha is a suburb of Famagusta which had mainly a Greek Cypriot population prior to the 1974 invasion and has now turned into a ghost town. The UN has decided that the area should be returned to the Greek Cypriot side. Sometimes the Turkish Cypriot side mentions the possibility of returning the area to its former inhabitants to entice the Greek Cypriots to accept other de facto consequences of the invasion, while other times it tries to obtain concessions by threatening to integrate it with the TRNC. For example, in connection with the conflict surrounding the S-300 missiles, Denktash threatened to move people into Varosha (Reuters 13.01.1997)

40 Characteristically, while stressing the Turkish character of the minority in Thrace he said that it was time to call the minority members in Istanbul Greeks (elen) and not rum (Trakya 774/17.08.1959).
because of the Greek policy in Western Thrace. After referring to this statement, Hāki continued with an imagined dialogue between two peasants, where one of them expressed the opinion that the simplest way to stop the expropriations in Thrace would be to line up a couple of graders outside the Balıklı Greek Orthodox hospital in Istanbul (Ileri 113/21.04.1978). A Greek court found him guilty of subversion and sentenced him to three months of imprisonment. According to his own account, he spent 34 days in jail muttering “Ökçün, retaliate”.

The question of “value” is also prominent in his conception of Greek-Turkish “bargaining”. Hāki claims to have understood from reading Greek history books that the “Patriarchate is worth all of Western Thrace.” (Bir PATRIKHANE tüm Batı Trakya’ya bedeldir!). Consequently, he thinks that Turkey has the greatest trump in its hand. It is only a matter of playing it well (Ileri 550/07.04.1989). Later when the local Greek press in Komotini asked for the closure of the Turkish General Consulate, Hāki claimed that what corresponded best to it was the Patriarchate in Istanbul which should be closed in retaliation (Ileri 583/09.02.1990). In recent years articles in both the local and national Greek press have discussed the possibility of moving the Patriarchate to Greek Thrace. Interestingly, Hāki responded to this by arguing that the Patriarchate belongs in Istanbul, like the Kaaba in Mecca, the pyramids in Egypt, the Parthenon in Athens and the Pope in Rome (Ileri 905/20.02.1998). This means that in Hāki’s mind, the move of the Patriarchate would definitely upset the “balance” and give Greece a free hand in dealing with the minority. Or as another minority member of Hāki’s generation told me: He felt very comfortable in Ksanthi as long as the Patriarchate remained in Istanbul. If it moved, he would go and settle in Turkey the next day.

It is not always easy to identify cause and effect. In my opinion, the Turkish nationalists have blown the importance of the Patriarchate as a balance to the minority completely out of proportions. However, those who have a firm belief in this interpretation behave accordingly. They consider their lot as minority to be immediately contingent on Turkish abilities to pressure or carry out reprisals against Greek interests, or simply that the “strong” Turkey can “force” Greece to comply with its wishes. Because most minority members are out of touch with general developments in Greek society, they can easily interpret measures of democratisation or efforts to comply with international human rights standards, as the fruits of Turkey’s threats. Hāki’s understanding of politics is rather crude, and moves along these lines. He

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41 Ileri 164/07.03.1980. According to Alexandris, Hāki “demanded the demolition of the Greek hospital of Balıklı in Istanbul as a reprisal to the pressure applied by the Greek authorities in Western Thrace (Alexandris 1983: 311, n. 17). However, Hāki stresses that he only meant that the graders should be placed outside the walls of the property as a threat to prevent the Greek authorities from going ahead with the expropriations (cf. Ileri 550/07.04.1989).

42 In Turkey there seems to be an obsession with the Patriarchate. For a well argued presentation of official views, see the article by the Turkish ambassador (Uşaklıgil 1964). For some examples of the hysterical outbursts which appear regularly in the Turkish press, see (Demir 1995).
views politics solely as a question of “domination” (hakimiyet) or “power” (güç) (cf. Ileri 848/07.06.1996). Or as he expressed it once in his characteristic blunt manner:

What did we say? We said the following… WE SAID THAT everything is a QUESTION OF DOMINATION… anything else is hot air… Are there any objections????????????????????????43

In the above quotation, Hâki vents his frustration against the minority’s lack of power against the policy of the Greek state. This makes it clear that the nationalists do not primarily disagree about the goals and methods of minority treatment. What bothers them is that the opposing nationalism has the upper hand. In fact, I have heard several minority members, who after complaining about some treatment go on to say that Greece is doing the right thing. An acquaintance in Ksanthi once told me that if people had not left because of the junta’s oppression the minority would be most numerous today, tacitly approving Greek nationalist policy. Another one told me that after all he admired Greece’s ability to absorb or get rid of its minorities. By saying this he subscribes to the principles of both Greek and Turkish nationalist ideology. However, in Thrace he is on the losing side. These perceptions have of course a bearing on the political orientation and strategic choices of the minority. It impedes the normal functioning of the minority within the Greek political system, and provides endless opportunities for manipulation by unscrupulous politicians.

Beyond the question of an operational or imaginary “balance” when comparing the situation of the two minorities, there is also the aspect of traditional perceptions and stereotypes. These become very apparent when we move to the local level of people directly engaged in the minority issue. Each side will always think that it has suffered most and that the other owes it something. It is of course natural that people consider their own problems to be larger and more important than those of the others. However, in the case of Greek-Turkish minority relations this becomes reinforced by the narcissistic propensities of each group. To get an impression of widespread attitudes it is worth to quote at length some suggestions by people particularly engaged in the issue who can safely be characterised as narrow-minded bigots or nationalists.

Ahmet Aydınlı now lives in Istanbul, but is originally from Western Thrace. Apart from being a prolific writer, he also served as chairman of the Western Thrace Turkish Solidarity Association (1981–1983). Since the book I quote from was published in 1971, his concerns may be perceived as related to the particular problems of the minority during the dictatorship. In reality this is of secondary importance. He rather expresses the “timeless” concerns of Turkish nationalists. In the preface of his book he draws a gloomy picture of the situation in Thrace and mentions in particular the difficult conditions in the controlled mountain zone:

43 Ileri 777/18.11.1994. (Ne dedik? Şunu dedik… Her şey HAKİMIYET MESELESİDİR, DEDIK… kalanı, fiso-fisodur….İtiraz eden var mı????????????????????????)
the 70 thousand mountain Turks [Yaylâlı Türk, i.e. Pomaks] are exposed to an inhuman and sadistic treatment that not even the cannibals [yamyam] in Africa are exposed to.

We:

Confronted with this grave situation we feel the necessity to warn in a well-intended manner, with a reproach coming from the dept of our conscience, those who are occupied with our foreign policy towards the W. Thrace problem and tragedy. If we desire the establishment of a serious, sincere and well-intended “Turkish-Greek friendship”:

A—) The articles of the Lausanne treaty relating to the Western Thrace Turks must promptly be modified and corrected:

B—) The Istanbul Fener-Orthodox Patriarchate must be expelled from Turkey or the international activities, clerical status and the “legal and spiritual authorities” still in its possession must be fixed and limited with a new “legal status quo”.44

C—) Our Western Thracian kinsmen must in a definite manner be given “autonomy” in the ethnic, theological, clerical, cultural, social and economic field.

If not;

The distress of our Western Thrace kinsmen will not cease in any manner; this unstable life will continue for many more years and certainly in the end those who act with “Greek fanaticism” will lose their case in the face of the world’s public opinion. Facing today the “Western Thrace tragedy” we as a nation prefer unwillingly a partial silence.

But…

There will come a time when, if our legitimate rights and wishes are not fulfilled; we will overflow as oceans, break the dikes before us, and definitively head for the “national goal”.45

Conversely, the metropolitan Damaskinos and the lawyer Zafirios Mekos in Komotini present their concerns within a Greek ethnocentric framework. Again, although they refer to minority-majority tension in the recent past, their viewpoints convey a more fundamental authoritarian attitude:

Today the main problem of Greek Thrace is that of the minority, which has become acute during the last five years and obtained the dimension of a national danger. The problem does not consist of the presence of the Muslim minority on the soil of Thrace, because Orthodox Hellenism, actuated by a spirit of love and absolute religious tolerance, never encountered problems of coexistence with different racial, religious, and cultural groups, but did always develop admirable co-operation and excellent brotherly relations with them. The problem consists of the fact that the political-military establishment of Turkey, after several decades of methodical and patient efforts, succeeded through the Turkish General Consulate in Komotini, in putting under its complete control a small, but dynamic and fanaticised part of the minority and to influence decisively almost the whole minority through it and to direct it to undisguised hostile actions against the Christian majority and the Greek state, which serve the insidious chauvinistic aspirations of Turkey against Thrace.

So the problem consists of the fact that the religious minority of Greek Muslims recognised by the Lausanne treaty—which as known is made up of at least three separate ethnic-racial groups—, directed willy-nilly by a group of frenzied and unscrupulous agents and organs of the Ankara imperialists, is used continuously as an organ to realise the well-known oath of Kemal Atatürk for restoring Turkish sovereignty in Thrace. Unfortunately, the creation of the problem is not only caused by the infiltration of the Turkish chauvinists and the innocence and naiveté of the Greek Muslims, but also by the unforgivable co-operation of the various Greek national leaderships, which with criminally careless acts and neglect allowed and facilitated the disastrous work of pan-turkism against Greek Thrace. Deeds and neglect which also continue today in spite of proclamations and assurances of the opposite.46

44 I have translated “hukuki statuko” as “legal status quo”. In Turkish it is usually spelled “statüsku” and is a loan-word from French. It strikes me as a little odd, and it is possible that he rather means legal status. On the whole Aydınlı has a rather old-fashioned and pompous style.

45 (Aydınlı 1971: 16). For an older example of Turkish nationalist writing on Thrace, see (Bahtiyar 1928).

46 From the preface by the metropolitan Damaskinos in (Mekos 1995: 7).
It is instructive to look closer at the way these attitudes are expressed in relation to concrete problems. The status of the Ecumenical Patriarchate has been a continuous source of friction in Greek-Turkish relations. After 1985 the status of the muftis in Greek Thrace, and in particular the procedure for selecting them, became a new matter of dispute. Zafirios Mekos argues at length that the Orthodox and Islamic institutions are not comparable. In Turkey the muftis are appointed by the state, and in the case of Greece he contends that: “In a civil state, with determined hierarchy of civil servants, it is inconceivable that the civil servant of higher rank is elected, and indeed on indication by foreigners [i.e. Turkey].”\(^47\) However, the Patriarchate is considered to be a totally different institution subject to other rules:

The patriarch as well as the bishops and cleric of the Orthodox Christian Church, are according to its dogma representatives of God and continuation of the Apostles on earth, they have received the divine grace of ordination, which accompany them throughout their life, they have the capability to perform the mysteries of the Church—a fearsome and sublime, unearthly and mystical authority.

[…]

When we mention the Patriarchate it is advisable to promote a suggestion which has been put forward earlier and remains timely [footnote pointing to earlier suggestion by the author]: the best solution is that it becomes independent with a regime similar to that of the Vatican, together with a general effort to make all the sacred places of all religions autonomous under the auspices of the UN. In this fashion the holy places such as Jerusalem, Fanari [Fener], Mecca, and the other patriarchates, will gain autonomy similar to the Vatican, a state existence which will secure them the unimpeded function and the consecration of all their efforts toward the God they believe in.

However, until this is accomplished, Turkey should be obliged: 1) to allow by law the Patriarchate to function according to the holy laws of our Church, and 2) to give Turkish citizenship to every clergy who decides to serve God under the wings of the Patriarchate. In this way the election of the ecumenical patriarch will take place according to the holy canons—not the whims of various governors of Istanbul—and the danger that there will be no patriarch candidates will eclipse (Mekos 1995: 51–52).

Without disregarding the different theological basis of Islam and Orthodox Christianity, it is striking that Mekos advocates the application of Greek secular law in the case of the muftis and divine law in the case of the Patriarchate. When it comes down to the crux of the matter Aydınlı and Mekos are remarkably similar in approach. There is simply no agreement on common ground rules. Both argue that their kindred minority should be virtually autonomous while the foreign minority should be under tight control. Within this framework it is natural that they consider themselves eternally wronged, while the other part should be grateful for the magnanimity displayed towards them. These positions do not facilitate a sincere dialogue with the minority about their problems, and contribute further towards making the minority issue determined by Greek-Turkish relations.

\(^{47}\) (Mekos 1995: 51). For a longer presentation of his views about the mufti office, see also (Mekos 1991). Zafirios Mekos belongs to the inner circle of people around the metropolitan Damaskinos in Komotini.
The Human Rights Perspective

With the gradual breakdown of the traditional bilateral Greek-Turkish approach to the minority issue, the only new perspective which carries enough weight to offer a realistic alternative is the one offered by modern international concepts of human rights. The prevalence of this perspective is by no means obvious, as so many people involved in the minority affairs are entrenched in old perceptions. Among Turkish scholars, Baskın Oran has made the most conspicuous attempt to approach the Western Thrace minority issue from a human rights perspective. In his ground breaking book, he analyses the minority’s possibility to claim its rights on the basis of existing minority treaties and subsequent developments in human rights (Oran 1991). He also stresses that it is important for Turkey to honour its obligations and treat its Greek Orthodox minority according to international recognised standards (Oran 1995: 57). In other cases it is not always clear if the appeal to human rights represents a commitment to their principles or an attempt to employ them as a vehicle to execute traditional nationalist politics. For example, Fahir Alaçam alleged that the developments in human rights which Greece put great emphasis on, gave another opportunity for Turkey to support the minority (Cumhuriyet 15.03.1989). However, when we look at this statement within the overall context of his writings it is hard to interpret it as a commitment to modern human rights principles. The immigrant milieu of Western Thracians who live in Turkey will often appeal to human rights, but its overall approach is closer to traditional nationalist ideology.

The selective appeal to human rights displays both the lack of a proper understanding of their principles and a lack of commitment to them. The same holds true for many of the minority politicians living in Thrace. There are however some minority politicians who have displayed a firm commitment to human rights principles as well as a good grasp of what they entail. This can for example be seen in İbram Onsunoğlu’s criticism of Greek appeals to reciprocity in cases which in reality involved retaliation.

In Greece too, it is evident that many people waver between traditional approaches and modern concepts of human rights. In a recent treatment of the minority issue by prominent Greek diplomats, it is stressed that the new developments in minority protection within OSCE means that the emphasis has shifted from the bilateral Greek-Turkish to the international level. Now Greece will not have to confront primarily Turkey, which will continue its activities in Thrace anyway, but OSCE. Greece had been able to invoke the argument about balance from the Lausanne treaty—even if it

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48 For example, their periodical Batı Trakya’nın Sesi does not feature the views expressed by people like Baskın Oran, but traditional nationalist writers such as Cihat Özünder.

49 Trakya’nın Sesi 454/16.06.1993. There are also several other politicians who have displayed a consistent commitment to modern human rights principles. For example the Sinaspismos cadre Mustafa Mustafa, Nazif Ferhat, and Ekrem Hasan. However, they are not as prolific writers as Onsunoğlu.
brought no result—in its discussions with Turkey. However, this argument would be weak towards OSCE. The European partners showed understanding for Greece’s position in the Aegean and in Cyprus, but the minority question was a different matter. Consequently, it was reckoned that Turkey could play the international minority protection card openly or in the wings to “increase the difficulties” of Greece (Theodoropulos, Lagakos et al. 1995: 74–76). Although it is not stated explicitly, it is clear that they feel more comfortable dealing within the established bilateral minority regime, than the emerging international system.

A rare attempt to embrace the possibilities offered by the new developments in minority protection is offered by the Greek scholar Stephanos Stavros. He considers it advantageous to replace the bilateral system originating from the Lausanne treaty, by a system built on the developments of OSCE. This would allow the Greek state to take greater control of minority education and create an education “that could distinguish among the different ethnic, cultural, and linguistic groups existing within the larger religious one” (Stavros 1995: 21–24). In short, the interest and obligation to protect the cultural peculiarities of the minority would pass from Turkey to Greece. It should be kept in mind that this could be used to promote traditional authoritarian measures in a modern guise towards the Pomaks and other subgroups. Throughout the post-junta era we can witness the conflict between the break up of the old system and the emerging importance of new approaches to minority protection. At the time of writing neither Greece nor the minority seem quite ready psychologically and conceptually for such a major paradigm shift. Immediately after he became Foreign Minister, Yeoryios Papandreu expressed the desire to make respect for human rights a top priority for Greece.50 This has led to various reactions, but the minority issue is now on a better path than it has been for a long time.51

50 To Vima 07.03.1999. “So that the “great [powers]” will hear - The new leadership of the Foreign Department focuses its counterattack on four points”, by Nikos Marakis. These views have since been reiterated on many occasions.

51 See the interview with Papandreu in Avyi 29.08.1999, where he comments upon both the attacks on him in the previous month and the principles for his policy.
The collapse of the junta coincided with its disastrous attempt to overthrow the legal government of Cyprus. The attempted coup against president Makarios sparked off the Turkish invasion 20 July 1974. When the junta lost control over the situation it was decided to summon the former prime minister Konstandinos Karamanlis, who lived in self-exile in Paris, to take over the reigns and oversee the return to democratic rule. In the immediate period after the downfall of the junta the minority was severely affected by the tension in Greek-Turkish relations. The minority was struck with panic, something which resulted in a wave of migration towards Turkey. Many Christians too were frightened by the prospect of a confrontation with Turkey, and sought refuge in more central areas of Greece. There are several descriptions in the minority press of the tense atmosphere.\textsuperscript{52} According to Onsunoğlu, the “terror” against the minority after the Cyprus invasion lasted until the winter of 1975. It manifested itself by insults and beatings. Both the police and various “gangs” were involved. The minority members did not dare to walk out in the street even at daylight. Onsunoğlu’s neighbourhood (Kirmahalle, on the outskirts of Komotini) was much affected. During the evenings people threw stones against the houses breaking the window panes. At the end of August 1974 people were not able to go out in the fields and gather the tobacco \textit{(Trakya’nın Sesi 405/02.01.1992)}. This is a good indication of how serious the situation was, since the tobacco crop was the only source of income for many families.

A particular role was played by certain student associations which had been founded by the junta in 1973 after Ioannidis overthrew Papadopulos. In the summer of 1974 they took advantage of the situation and tried to escalate the episodes against the minority. \textit{(Trakya’nın Sesi 407/16.01.1992)}. Onsunoğlu characterises these associations as para-state anti-minority organisations. He mentions an episode which took place after some of the incidents against the minority had been presented to the new prefect, Panayiotis Foteas. When he became pressured, he exclaimed: “Here the junta still rules. Believe me, I am not able to stamp it out.”\textsuperscript{53} There had of course always been forces which were sceptical or hostile to the minority. However, while they earlier held a marginal position, the dispositions of the junta had provided them with a much

\textsuperscript{52} In a letter to \textit{İleri} (684/04.09.1992), a reader claims that the Christians were armed and ready to annihilate the Muslims in 1974 (İleri 684/04.09.1992). Another letter by a sailor who returned to Thrace after the downfall of the junta is more subdued, but nevertheless bears testimony to the tense situation (İleri 685/11.09.1992).

\textsuperscript{53} \textit{Trakya’nın Sesi} 547/11.04.1996. Onsunoğlu mentions the same episode in \textit{Trakya’nın Sesi} 405/02.01.1992.
broader power base. The tension in Greek-Turkish relations also made it much easier for them to cloud the issue with nationalist rhetoric. Consequently, they would play a greater role in minority affairs in the post-junta period, but they were not the only factor…

**The Discrimination Continues**

The minority had hoped that the discriminative measures against it would disappear together with the dictatorship. This was not to be the case, and the central political issue in the post-junta period turned out to be the continuation of the discrimination. The complaints about discrimination were no longer simply a question of arbitrary actions by insensitive officials or pre-election outcries by some manipulative minority politician. The virtual disappearance of the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul and the insecurity about Turkey’s intentions after the Cyprus invasion, had turned the Muslims of Thrace into an undesired minority. As a consequence the central authorities became intent on taking measures against it. In the words of a minority member it is presented as follows:

> In the last fifteen years the political milieu in the Minority has changed completely. The Greek Governments adopted the view that the Minority is a danger. And certain practices came in use to gradually eliminate it. In a democratic country these practices had to follow democratic rules. Since the Minority was tied to other states with the Lausanne treaty it was very important that not very much leaked out. Like a Greek proverb says: Both the pie remains whole and the dog full [i.e. have one’s cake and eat it too].

> The Greek governments undertook this difficult work in Thrace. A very special democracy was applied to the minority. We will call this Minority democracy. […]

This policy was of course not stated clearly, but carried out by secret directives. Consequently, the minority was unable to deal with it effectively because it lacked solid evidence, and because it was up against the very same centres of government which had devised the anti-minority policy. It soon became clear for everybody who wanted to understand that something was terribly wrong. For example, when Hasan İmamoğlu was MP he made a question to the minister of communications about the minority members’ problems with obtaining driving licences. He claimed that the Muslims passed successfully both the theoretical and practical test (símate, i.e. the signs), and it was clear that the candidates were not passed on purpose. While 95% of the Christians succeeded, the corresponding figure for the Muslims was only 5%. “And it is certain

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54 İteri 237/30.12.1981. This is the beginning of a longer article on minority politics. Mehmet Bağdatlı mentions in the introduction that he wrote the article much earlier, but was hesitant about publishing it. The practice was widely known. Meinardus identified the policy after 1974 as mainly an expulsion policy. He also mentions that it is difficult to find concrete proofs for the discrimination against the minority during the junta period, because this was not done by particular laws, but by administrative measures (Meinardus 1985a: 535, 552).
that the success of the 5% is due to the intervention of either the MP, through the
prefect, or another person of influence. How Mr. minister, can this incredible situation
be explained?"  

I do not know if İmamoğlu posed his question only on the basis of
the experiences of the minority, or if he got wind of the secret directive. In any case,
he turned out to be remarkably accurate in his estimation. It became known later that
there had indeed been a secret directive to approve only 5% of the applications by
Muslims. When there was a change in government in 1989, bureaucrats in Komotini
contacted the relevant ministry and asked if they should continue with the “5%
arrangement”. The minister Nikos Konstandopulos of Sinaspismos was first at a loss
about understanding what they were talking about. When he realised what was going
on the directive was scrapped.  

It is worth to take a closer look at how the discrimination was felt in its everyday
form by the minority members. For the sake of simplification it is instructive to con-
centrate on a straightforward problem such as that of obtaining a driving licence. The
need of driving licences is obvious in a rural community with little public transpor-
tation. Even more serious, was the difficulties with obtaining driving licences for the
tractors which they needed for cultivating their fields.  

Hâki portrays the situation in a village where there were 30–40 tractors, but no one had a driving licence. The
problem was not a lack of knowledge of Greek, because at this moment they had a
much better knowledge of Greek than earlier when it was not difficult to obtain driving
licences. Anyway, they usually passed the written test but failed in the practical. This
situation caused much resentment among the farmers and several of them even
considered emigration.  

When the minority members understood that they were
subjected to special measures, they attempted to circumvent them in various ways. In
the beginning a favourite method was to go to another area for the test. This made the
authorities take new countermeasures. In an interview with a Greek newspaper
Onsunoğlu described his own experiences from the late 1970s.

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55 Question by Hasan İmamoğlu dated 01.06.1979 to the minister of communications about the
problem of obtaining driving licence (İleri 141/22.06.1979). İmamoğlu also claims to have mentioned
the various restrictions against the minority, including the problems with obtaining driving licence,
in a letter to prime minister Konstandinos Karamanlis dated 25 July 1979 (İleri 240/22.01.1982).
56 Trakya’nın Sesi 510/14.06.1995. Later, in connection with the case of the stateless minority
members, their lawyers “cited a secret directive signed in the Eighties by the socialist ex-deputy
foreign minister, Yiannis Kapsis, which instructed authorities to process applications (business
licences, building permissions etc.) at the rate of 19 Orthodox applications for every Muslim one”
(Athens News 11.12.1997). A Greek scholar also mentions this practice, without giving the exact
percentage (Dodos 1994: 67, n. 19). Although there is no concrete documentation, the question by
İmamoğlu indicates that there was a similar ratio in the 1970s.
57 This may seem incredible to a foreigner. For example, I live on a farm myself and in Norway it is
much easier to obtain a driving licence for a tractor than for a car, and a holder of a regular driving
licence can also drive a tractor. However, in Greece a tractor driving licence requires some additional
tests about mechanical knowledge.
58 İleri 178/13.06.1980. Hâki portrays the situation in an imagined dialogue between the main
characters of the traditional Turkish shadow play theatre “Karagöz” and “Hacivat”.

 [...] the greatest problems originate from the secret instructions circulars [mistikés enkiklías]. The governments manage the minority issues with these. I will refer to one example. Until a few years ago there existed a secret instruction, which must have been abolished today and which prohibited the Muslims from acquiring driving licence outside the place of his descent. I have suffered personally from the application of this concrete instruction. In Kefalonia where I was rural doctor [i.e. mandatory service after completing the medical degree], I was not able to get a driving licence. When the official understood that I was from Thrace he told me: “You must go to Komotini, we will ask the prefect of Rodopi to allow you to take the exams and get a driving licence”. For example, a Muslim farmer who lived for five or ten years in Larisa and wanted to get a driving licence for car or tractor, had to go to Komotini.

It is worth to notice that Kefalonia is about as far from Thrace as you can possibly go, and not a likely place for a Muslim to take a driving test. This testifies to the degree of central control with the matter. It was natural that people would look for loopholes or particular solutions to circumvent the problem. In an illuminating article Hâki mentioned first the usual practices of ordinary people, such as going to the larger cities for the driving test, voting for influential Christians, bribes, etc. However, he went on to point out that not all the minority members seemed to have the same problems with obtaining the much coveted driving licence: 1) Minority members who worked at the Turkish Consulate in Komotini all obtained their driving licence without particular problems. 2) All the minority lawyers were kept outside the discrimination and there were even rumours that they obtained their driving licence “on the prefect’s order”. 3) All the minority doctors and engineers had obtained it with one exception. 4) The members of the rich and influential minority families obtained their driving licence in a regular fashion. 5) Those who worked at the mufti and cemaat offices all obtained driving licence. 6) Some poor minority members who had no personal need for a driving licence obtained it because they needed it in their work for rich and influential Christian employers. 7) Hâki ends by mentioning his own situation. When he recently began to consider the possibility of obtaining a driving licence himself, the thought occurred to him that people would ask: “So what did you give them?”

In short, the above list shows that those who had a certain position or “protection” — including Turkey’s protection — were able to surpass the government measures. The main victims were the defenceless poor and ignorant farmers. Furthermore, the procedure of obtaining driving licence ceased to be an individual application based on skill, but became a restricted commodity subject to the exploitation of various interest groups which were in a position to control its distribution. Since the minority members became aware of that driving licences were no longer awarded on the basis of skill, it reached the point where those who passed the test became suspected of carrying out shady deals with the authorities. In the climate of intense polarisation

59 Avyi (on Sunday) 24.03.1991. For those who are unacquainted with Greek geography, the distance from Komotini to Larisa is 431 km, while for the island Kefalonia the distance is some 800 km according to the “ELPA” road map.
60 Ileri 152/07.12.1979. The article has the telling title: İşlerini becerenler!.. “Those who contrive to get their business done!..”
between minority-majority created by the discriminations, this could result in accusations of being “Greek collaborators”.

For ordinary people there were of course other ways to adjust to the situation. Or it is probably more correct to say that the problems connected with obtaining necessary permits created whole new behaviour patterns in majority-minority relations. In another interview Onsunoğlu attempts to explain some effects of the anti-minority measures:

[...] we reached a point where the minority, knowing the last 30 years that they are not able to get their job done with the administration, does not apply to it for things like building permits, because it knows that it will not get it, and builds illegally. It takes recourse to whatever law violations and clandestine actions there are; for example as regards tractors. Most people know that they will not get a license and for this reason they break the law directly. Which means that at any moment they are to the disposal of the police, and as everything is controlled and policed, when the order “give fines” arrives they go and take them one by one.

In one day you may see 70 Muslim perpetrators in trials which last three minutes, with the imposition of the fine as the sole object. The court investigates only the case, and does not ask why they do not give you a permit.

When the accused tries to explain, the judge says that it does not interest him, ‘do you have a permit? You do not. Then you will pay 8,000 drachmas.’ In such trials they do not even get a lawyer. The situation is tragicomic (Epohi 25.02.1990).

The fact that most of the minority farmers drove illegally and with the fear of being caught by the police, resulted in other tragicomic incidents. Before the general elections in 1981 it was proposed to the minority villagers and farmers who supported PASOK that they should take their tractors to the election rally featuring Papandreu. However, this initiative came to nothing as the farmers were afraid of being caught for driving without a licence (İleri 214/15.05.1981).

The competition for minority votes during elections resulted in the easing of the measures against the minority for a while. In many cases politicians would barter or extort minority votes in exchange for the partial return of rights they were deprived of. Driving licences were a favourite item in this respect. As only the Christian candidates had the influence to circumvent the anti-minority measures, leading Muslims criticised sharply these attempts to erode the minority vote. This was a very prominent issue in the minority press during the 1981 general elections, as we will see later.61 Hâki mentioned later that many votes were given to Christian candidates in the general elections for these promises, but he questioned to which degree the promises had been fulfilled.62 Clearly there was a lot of frustration in the minority because of these problems. In May 1982 the PASOK minority MP Ahmet Mehmet said that he was glad to say that the authorities had started to accept people for driving tests again and that those who passed would obtain their licence (İleri 255/14.05.1982). In other words

61 Characteristically, see the comments by Hâki in İleri 221/04.09.1981.
62 İleri 263/27.08.1982. For another characteristic example of “vote-peddling” see İleri 328/27.01.1984. In this case the price for a regular driving licence was 10 votes and it was not possible to obtain driving licence for tractor. The 30 votes for Christian candidates in the village secured 3 driving licences.
the driving licences would be awarded on merit and not as favours. However, in the local elections a couple of months later the provision of driving licences would play the leading role again (cf. Ileri 263/27.08.1982; 271/22.10.1982). Hâki was preparing for the driving-test himself at this time. Since he owned a newspaper, the political parties were conscious about his influence on the minority vote. This caused the representative of one party to approach him and make an offer. Hâki provides a vivid description of the scene which took place right before he was going to take the test:

[...] While I was walking back and forth between the columns, suddenly a gentleman in a white suit appeared and said “Are you Salih Halil?” I said “Yes.” “Please, let us go inside for a minute” he said. “Fine” I said and while we were walking he introduced himself: “I am the lawyer Yanginis” he said. “I recognise you” I replied and added: “I have a driving-test soon; if there is much to discuss let us do it another time”. “That is the subject we will talk about; it will not take long” he said and after ascending the staircase he went to the right corner inside the entrance of the Prefecture conference hall. “Please speak” I said. “You will fail again sir…” he replied. I pretended that I did not understand what he was saying and asked once more what he had said. “You will fail again…” he said and started to talk: “I have heard that you wanted help from doctor Mehmet Bağdatli [minority PASOK cadre] in this matter; he told us about it and we said that it was all right. But first you have to promise that you will not attack PASOK! You must assist us! Collaborate” he said.

At first I was dumbfounded; I was really dumbfounded. I said that: “God is my witness, that in the 8 years I have published my newspaper; I have never asked for a favour from anybody whether politician, party cadre, or state official in this or any other matter. If I get the licence I get it; If I do not get it I do not. As for my writing, I write what I find correct according to my knowledge and culture. I am not the servant of any faction. You too should be aware of that…”

After he had pulled himself together somewhat he continued more calm and collected: “We thought that… you received help from the other side… [i.e. from ND] That is why you write this way about PASOK.” “No; if I had wanted the driving licence, İmamoğlu [who was then MP for ND] would have brought it to me four years ago from Athens and put it in my pocket… But I did not deign to do it. Neither do I want it now. If I obtain it I do it as my right, if I do not let it be so.”

When we parted he added: “There can always be some small mistakes…” [i.e. in the driving-test]

As I descended the staircase my head felt hazy… as if I was drunk. The person who had taken me aside and spoken to me was the general secretary of the PASOK prefecture committee…”

XXX

-Why did you fail me?

-Because you did not stop in front of the “Stop!” sign… That is why I failed you…

I thought of saying to him: “So if I had said upstairs by the Prefecture door ‘Fine! I will not attack PASOK; I will collaborate with you!’ would you still have spoken to me like this?” , but I decided that it was not worth it. I went straight to Doctor Mehmet Bağdatlı.

XXX

-Hello Doctor!

-Hello, Did you pass the test? What happened?

-Doctor, did I ask for your help to get a licence?

-No; You did not… But when the PASOK leaders said “It will be given to everybody” I used you as example and said “If it is so, why do you not give it to Ileri?” […] (Ileri 268/01.10.1982).

Hâki told Mehmet Bağdatlı about the episode with Yanginis. Later Bağdatlı came to Hâki’s office and told him that Yanginis denying having said “You will fail again…” and that he threatened to take Hâki to court if he wrote it. A year later minority

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63 ibid. Hâki had bought a car already in 1981 When he failed his first driving-test he considered it to be fair because he did not drive well (Ileri 233/04.12.1981). He finally got his driving licence 30.05.1983 (Ileri 308/02.09.1983). For a similar attempt by a minority member supporting ND in the 1978 local elections, who offered Hâki money to write in favour of the Stoyannidis ticket, see Ileri 269/08.10.1982.
sources signalled that it had been easier to obtain driving licence for cars but not for tractors and professional vehicles (İleri 306/19.08.1983). Generally speaking, during the first period of PASOK the minority regime loosened up and lost many of its most severe features. This was partly related to the general democratisation of Greek society. Hâki presents the following picture after the 1985 parliamentary elections:

 [...] for the last 2 1/2–3 years the Minority people have drawn quite a deep “breath” during the government of this party [PASOK]: The gendarmerie was not sent much to the villages. The shop owners were not fined for silly reasons. Besides that car driving licences were given fully it was also registered progress as regards the tractor driving licences. They closed their eyes to the fact that some people drove without licence. i.e. the gendarmerie did not lay an ambush in the dirt roads-behind the bushes… They did not look for the owners of the tractors with the motor running in front of the houses and asked if they had a licence… [...] (İleri 394/26.07.1985).

It is not necessary to go into much details with later developments. Suffice it to say that in spite of the improvement there continued to be certain irregularities with the issue of driving licences, particularly for tractors and professional vehicles. The issuing of tractor driving licences was used again in the 1986 local elections to entice voters (Akin 855/25.10.1986), and there were also “favours” in connection with the 1989–1990 parliamentary elections (Scholiastis 78/July 1989). The answer from the ministry of Transport-Communications in March 1991 to a question by the independent MP Sadık Ahmet, indicates a normalisation of the situation.64 During the first 3 months of 1991, 117 Muslims passed the driving-test for regular driving licence (57% of applicants). The corresponding number for Christians was 147 (50%). For professional driving licence category B, 26 (61%) were granted to Christians and 11 (40%) to Muslims. Of 23 applications for professional driving licence category C, 13 Christians and 10 Muslims, 6 licenses had been granted to Christians while the others were pending. In recent years the acquisition of regular and tractor driving licences has ceased to be a pressing issue and has faded from the pages of the minority press.

The Majority View

Until 1991 the Greek state followed the firm policy of denying any accusations of discrimination against the minority. When minority deputies in 1980 posed a question about the discriminations, they received an answer from the Foreign Department (!) which stated inter alia that driving licences were issued with the ability of the driver as sole criterion.65 The problems of the minority with acquiring driving licence etc. were usually passed over in silence by the mainstream Greek press with the notable exception of some small circulation left wing newspapers and periodicals.66 In late 1988 the

64 Question from Sadık Ahmet to the ministry of Transport-Communication, No. 3963/15.3.91). Information from the prefect of Rodopi to the ministry, TMSY 2161/22.3.91 (Sadık file).

65 Question by the minority deputies Celâl Zeybek and Hasan İmamoğlu No. 9673/14.07.1980, answer GYF-364/08.08.1980 from the Foreign Ministry (İleri 182/05.09.1980).

66 For attempts to mention the discrimination against the minority in small left wing periodicals, see Scholiastis 85/March 1990, “The Rights of the minority”, by A. G. (translation in Appendix 5, text
The Muslim minority of Greek Thrace

The Thrace branch of the Communist party made an attempt to take a critical look on the Greek minority policy and recognised many of the minority’s grievances as legitimate. In its paper it mentions the various unjust restrictions on obtaining permits related to profession, such as licences for tractors, professional vehicles etc. A year or so later the traditional policy is characterised by the left in the following terms:

[...] the Muslims of W. Thrace may really have freedom of religion and language, however injustices and inequality are preserved (such as the insurmountable obstructions for driving licence (!), purchase and driving tractor, building permits for houses, approval of [university] degrees etc.). However these obstructions disappear as if by magic on the eve of elections. The politicians of ND and PASOK, in co-operation with rackets, “surmount” easily the obstacles, granting these licences, of course for some thousand votes.

The parties on the left made a point of the fact that the selective circumvention of the discriminative measures was used to cultivate clients during times of election. As this happened to be the prerogative of the two major parties, the other parties were in a natural position to criticise it. It had to some degree ceased to be a “national” policy and became the object of party exploitation. Greek nationalists would at times criticise this practice as selling out a “national policy”, for narrow party interest.

As the problems became more known, it also became possible to see condemnation of the discrimination policy in the mainstream conservative press (cf. Eleftheri Ora 01.12.1991). However, there were also many articles which clouded the issue, or displayed quite an immature perception of legitimacy. For example, the journalist Simeon Soltaridis would not dispute that the minority had problems with various permits, but in his opinion this was not discrimination because he claimed the problems were solved on the eve of elections (Eleftherotipia 27.07.1990). Other people would portray the minority as privileged, when the measures against it were slackened in connection with elections:

Illegal rackets maintained by the minority, distribute lavishly thousands of permits for hunting guns, cars or construction work, circumventing the legal procedures. While a Christian will go and take exams for driving licence, confronted with the possibility of failing, the Muslim will pay 50–100,000 drachmas and they will send the licence to him at home, without him having to pass before an examination committee.

[...] “During elections the state is put to shame by the illegal patronage (rusfet) to the Muslims. The candidates for a party came, collected the demands and made it a trade of votes. Shame and disgrace.”

8), and Se Fonto Kokkino 1/Summer 1988, “Greece-Turkey, Acquaintance with the “non-Turks”” (translation in Appendix 5, text 9).

67 (KKE 1988). Translated in Appendix 5, text 10. The initiative of KKE also attracted comments in the Turkish press, which wrote that oppression of the “Turks” was admitted for the first time (Cumhuriyet 19.01.1989).

68 Eleftherotipia (on Sunday) 11.03.1990. Article by Manos Trandalidis, member of the Executive Office of EAR and the Political Committee of Sinaspismos.

69 Ethnos 22.03.1990. The last statement belonged to the mayor of Komotini Andreas Stoyannidis.
Yiannis Kapsis, who had been responsible for the handling of the minority issue as deputy foreign minister in the 1980s, would later write about the administrative measures that:

[...] The Sadıks of the time [i.e. minority leaders] were screaming, protesting and propagandising about “oppression” because the Muslims had, relatively, few tractors, cars etc. And they were forced to buy them in the name of Christian fellow citizens. This was a de facto “discrimination” based on the fact that the Muslims, not knowing sufficient Greek, did not pass the exams for obtaining driving licence.

In the second quarter of 1984, special groups with special orders—with responsibility and expenses covered by the Foreign Department—gave—irregularly—licence to everybody without exception (To Vima 07.02.1993).

In other words, according to Kapsis the Muslims had problems with obtaining driving licence only because of their own inadequacies. He goes on with an extraordinary statement which says nothing less than that the Greek Foreign ministry (!) arranged for the distribution of driving licences to all the Muslims in Santa Claus fashion, contrary to any traffic regulations. Apparently, the rationale behind his statement is to show that Greece is “spoiling” its Muslims. The Christian PASOK MP for Ksanthi, Panayiotis Sguridis, displays himself as a kindred spirit of Kapsis. In an interview with a party newspaper he displays a curiously contradictory position:

Q[uestion]: However, we cannot close our eyes for the just protest cries of the Muslims for the discrimination against them:
A[nswer]: It is a fact that certain state officials but also politicians have their methods to obstruct the Muslims, to obtain on the one hand political benefits, on the other economical benefits.
Q: So we have an “oppression industry”?
A: Indeed, but we must say that within this “oppression industry” there is no policy line from Athens, the Greek state, but on the contrary there is a certain handling that gives certain people of influence benefits, whether political or economical.
Q: So you tell us that there is no strategy of oppression of the Muslims by the Greek state. So what is there?
A: There is equality before the law.
Q: Just a minute, because here we have a foul. Even the rocks know that the Muslims are “outside the Greek reality”, also because of the Greek administration, which took care of that…
A: Look, usually the oppression which is mentioned (by almost everybody) exists for issuing building permits, driving licence, and permits for tractors and cars.
Q: Right…
A: Eh, I may say that if there was not some kind of help, some irregularities–violations of the law concerning the issuing of driving licences and building permits, I think that matters would have been more difficult for the Muslims. Because usually most of them are illiterate and are for example unable to pass the theory test (for the driving licence). The building plots are usually so small that they cannot build. So many times the violation of the law which exists is deliberate and to their benefit (Eksormisi 25.02.1990).

If we ignore the contradictions, Sguridis’ basic position is that the Greek state cannot be blamed for anything, and any violation of the law is in fact a question of favours towards the minority. Also on other occasions the MP displays a weak grasp of the difference between civil rights and political horse trading. For example, according to him the mistake of the Greek policy is that it has been on the offence and tries to answer spasmodically the demands of the Muslims instead of having an overall plan. As a result the minority has escalated its demands. While earlier the leaders of the Muslim minority had demands of the type driving licence, building permits or lack
of infrastructure in the area, lately they complained about loss of citizenship and to-
morrow they might ask for self-determination and autonomy within the framework of
the OSCE ( _Ikonomikos Tahidromos_ 2050/19.08.1993). In the case above the permits
are considered to be concessions bestowed on the minority, and if they are granted in
excess this can lead to insolence and dangerous demands. Within the logic that “one
thing may lead to another” he reaches the natural conclusion that it is dangerous to
grant the minority fair driving-tests because it might lead to demands of autonomy!

Looking back on the various presentations of the problem, it is important to have in
mind that we speak about basically two versions with very little communication
between them. The story of the Muslim farmers who lived in fear of driving licence
control was little known to the average Greek citizen, particularly outside Thrace. In
addition the problems with Turkey would also make them less receptive to Muslim
complaints. The story of the farmers was well known in minority circles, but at least
in the early period the minority lacked the ability and opportunity to make its problems
sufficiently known to a wider Greek audience. In this connection the minority’s
conservative leanings prevented it from seeking allies among forces in Greek society
which were committed to modern democratic principles. We must also have in mind
the development of vested interest to keep the system intact. The limitation of rights
meant greater power to those who were in a position to broker the “exceptions”, a
position welding large economic and political interests. The nucleus group of “middle-
men” included both Christians and Muslims, who would keep up a nationalist rhetoric
which functioned as a smoke screen for their shady dealings. It is interesting to see
that both the major political parties adjusted their apparatus to this reality. While
PASOK in many ways represented the reaction to the unfair favouritism awarded by
the right wing state of the 1950s and 1960s, it behaved in much the same fashion
towards the minority.

The Centres of Discrimination

During the period 1974–1981 when ND was in power, the minority press ascribed
the handling of the discriminatory measures against them to a few centres. The Offices
of Cultural Relations, which have been mentioned earlier, are connected directly to the
Foreign Ministry. This shows that the policy was based on a central decision. There
are a few references to the secret service (KIP). Of course, the secret service’s invol-
vement goes back to the time before the junta when it had also wielded a certain influ-
ence in minority matters. Another important position was taken by the government
appointed prefects. The minority press refers in particular to the prefect of Rodopi,
Panayiotis Foteas, who served during the whole ND period. It must be stressed that
Foteas did not obtain his position by coincidence. He was close to Karamanlis during
the years of exile in Paris, well educated, and considered an acceptable person by all
the political parties. It is consequently natural to assume that he was hand picked by
the prime minister to supervise a state policy of low key minority persecution. After
his term expired in 1981, Rodoplu expressed the minority’s sentiment by writing that
there was no difference between the junta and the way “democracy” was applied from
1974–1981. Foteas would now and then write articles, where he portrayed the
complaints of the minority as Turkish fabrications. He was at times referred to in the
Greek press as an expert in minority affairs. For example, at a later date when he was
asked to comment on minority protests:

 [...] the former prefect of Rodopi Mr. Foteas told us this is part of the general and long term
goals of Turkey, i.e. To cultivate and widen the gap between Greeks and Muslims in Greece. So
that the gap at some time will lead to conflict (Eleftheros 03.01.1989).

The detailed interference in the minority’s affairs with basic administrative
measures is demonstrated convincingly in an open letter by Abdülhalim Dede to the
prefect Panayiotis Foteas. Dede described his experiences when he attempted to
register a car. When he first went to the relevant government office he was told that all
the documents were in order, but that he needed the signature of the prefect. He went
on to describe how he went back and forth between the “Office of Cultural Relations”
and the prefect’s office without being able to solve the problem (Trakya’un Sesi

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70 Gerçek 62/02.10.1981. Similar comments abound. See for example the comments of İbrahim
Onsunoğlu in Ileri 230/06.11.1981 and Trakya’un Sesi 452/26.05.1993 where he blames Foteas for
supporting and strengthening the junta measures against the minority, and the comments of Mehmet

71 For minority reactions see Rodoplu’s comments in Gerçek 71/11.05.1982 and 72/05.06.1982 to
the articles by Foteas in Mesimvrini 14–16.04.1982, and in particular the comments by Hâki in Ileri
516/29.04.1988–520/03.06.1988 to the series of articles by Foteas beginning in Politika Themata
677/26.02-03.03.1988.
The Post 1974 Political Situation

When the dictatorship fell the political climate of Greece changed profoundly. The central role of Karamanlis in the transition to democratic rule secured him the prestige and position to take the lead. His choice to found a new political party *Néa Dimokratía* (New Democracy-ND) signifies an attempt to make a new start although the links to the pre-dictatorship ERE are obvious. He was consequently able to become the undisputed leader of the right, while he distanced himself from the extreme right. The old *Enosis Kéndru* (Centre Union-EK) party continued under the respected but somewhat uninspired leadership of Yeoryios Mavros. Andreas Papandreu had belonged to the radical wing of the EK before the dictatorship, and was considered by many to be a natural heir to his father's party. However, he chose to found his own *Pannelínio Sosialistikó Kínima* (Panhellenic Socialist Movement-PASOK) with a more radical image. After a modest start it would gradually replace the old centre and adjust its ideology accordingly along the way. In August 1974 Karamanlis displayed his new democratic commitment by legalising the *Kommunistikó Kómma Elládas* (Communist Party of Greece-KKE) which had been outlawed since 1947. Instead of isolating the far left, which had been the policy before the dictatorship, he now sought to integrate it within the political system. In 1974 the *Ethnikí Dimokratikí Enosis* (National Democratic Union-EDE) headed by Petros Garufalias led the authoritarian pro-dictatorship right.

The Minority's Place in Greek Politics

Like the rest of the Greek population, the minority too had hoped that the change of regime would solve the problems created by the junta. It seems to have had some vague ideas about returning to the old order, and was slow to understand that it faced a totally new political reality. Like so many things related to the minority, its political life had been highly dependent on Greek-Turkish relations. There were many forces which supported the continuation of this approach both inside and outside the minority. First of all Turkey, which wanted to have a say over the minority and use it as a card in Greek-Turkish relations. Strange at it may seem at first, there are reasons to believe that the Greek Foreign Department wanted the same. As Greece was unwilling or unable to integrate the minority, it became the easiest solution to treat it as a Greek-Turkish problem. Besides, the dependence on Turkey facilitated migration which led to a decrease in minority population. There were also leading cadres within the minority which preferred this approach. It may be pertinent to ask why the minority
would choose to base its political choices on being a part of Greek-Turkish relations at a time of great tension between the countries, and after the minority in Istanbul had almost disappeared. This is partly connected to the structure of the minority. The minority members did traditionally not take much part individually in Greek political life, but were represented through their leaders who had a much greater leverage to broker their representation than what was usual for other Greek MPs. At times the leaders’ position also became enchanted by their central role as brokers of the minority in the conflicts between Greece and Turkey. Another factor is that many minority leaders viewed their long term interests to be in Turkey, which made it vital to keep up a strong connection.

The malfunction of Greek-Turkish relations lays at the core of many recurrent problems in minority politics. The bad relations with Turkey strengthened the case of those who wanted to isolate or exclude the minority from Greek political life. Many articles in the minority press are concerned with the problem of making the major parties accept suitable minority candidates. The lack of understanding with Turkey and the Greek discrimination policy also made it easier for those who were not accepted to question the legitimacy of the party candidates. The political behaviour of the minority after 1974 is characterised by great instability and large movement of voters between parties and candidates. As a consequence the minority’s choices have often been portrayed as a conundrum by Greek commentators. In reality, the answer is quite simple, as we will see in the following. The obvious explanation, which however can be difficult for some people to admit, is that the continued discrimination caused the minority to look in despair for alternative solutions.

The Parliamentary Elections 17 November 1974

In the first elections after the fall of the junta in 1974, minority politics more or less picked up from where it was interrupted by the 7 year junta. The candidates did not represent any political innovation, but were rather a continuation of the political constellations of the 1960s. On the other hand the Greek attitude had changed because of the recent political events. In Rodopi this was reflected by a petition from the Christians to the major political parties signed by some 7,000 people asking for the exclusion of minority candidates from the party tickets. Local newspapers would write both against the inclusion of the minority in general and against specific candidates. One newspaper stressed that everything should be done to prevent the minority from being represented in parliament. No Greek party should accept minority members on their ticket. The minority should show the courage to form independent tickets, in
which case it would surely lose. According to minority sources the petition to the central party organisations in Athens nearly brought a result. Leaders of the major parties discussed the possibility of excluding the minority from their tickets. In a meeting Andreas Papandreou for PASOK, Yeoryios Mavros for EK, and Konstandinos Papa- konstandinu for ND, agreed in principle to close out the minority, but Papakonstan- dinu said he had to clear it with Konstandinos Karamanlis first. Allegedly, Karamanlis reacted by calling it a foolish initiative, but added that they should rather accept candidates who had no chance of being elected. However, the lack of agreement made the selection of candidates subject to party rivalry. In the 1974 election PASOK had a Muslim candidate only in Ksanthi. PASOK was not yet a major party, but still had its minority supporters who made great efforts to make the party include a minority candidate in Rodopi too. They even sent a telegram to Papandreou imploring him to accept a minority member on the PASOK ticket. When PASOK did not have any Muslim candidate in Rodopi, this was interpreted as opportunist speculation for the votes of the Christians who urged the political parties not to accept Muslim candidates.

As for the actual carrying out of the elections there were several complaints about pressure on the Muslims and measures which created obstacles for the Muslim voters. Hasan Hatipoğlu complained that while there were placed ballot boxes in all the Christian villages, for the Muslim villages there was one ballot box for 4–5 villages or in one area only one for 9 villages. Some of the Christian villages outside Komotini had separate ballot boxes even though they were within 15 minutes walking distance from each other, while the Muslims of the village Darmeni (Değirmendere) had to vote at Ragada (Kızılaç) which was three hours away. He gave several other examples and accused the Greek authorities for creating obstacles to make it difficult for the minority to vote (Akin 12.11.1974). These very detailed and specific complaints seem plausible to me notwithstanding that a village such as Darmeni is in the sparsely populated mountain region, but they have also a rhetoric component related to Hatipoğlu’s attempt to make the minority rally around one candidate, which he hoped would be himself. Hâki recounts another incident. In the 1974 election an official, who controlled the only income source of many minority members, made a lot of phone calls and went personally to the Turkish coffee houses and gave them the following message:

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72 Eleftheri Gnomi (Komotini) 12.09.1974, quoted in (Şahin 1976a: 136). Since I do not have the original Greek article, I use the more neutral terms minority member-minority where the Turkish article employs Turks-Turkism. The campaign in the local press have been mentioned by several minority members, but I have not had the opportunity to study it in detail.

73 The above information originates from the late Celâl Zeybek, who was a candidate for ND in 1974. I was told about it later by one of his associates.

74 Personal communication. Papandreou was later confronted with the question why PASOK did not accept Muslim candidates for Rodopi in 1974 in an open meeting at Fanari during a visit to Thrace. The telegram was also mentioned. He brushed the question off in his usual autocratic fashion saying that it was not the right place to discuss it.
If they voted for the Turkish candidates he threatened that he would make minced meat of them — this was the phrase used — and take away their tobacco growing permits and by realising the second threat he left hundreds of people without a permit.  

He also mentions that the issuing of passports was used for similar kind of extortion in connection with the 1977 general elections. Some of this is of course related to a political culture based on the patron-client relationship where the vote is bargained in return for certain “favourites”.

### The Election Results in Rodopi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sabahaddin Galip (EK)</td>
<td>11,213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hafiz Yaşar Mehmetoğlu (EK)</td>
<td>5,135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osman Üstüner (ND)</td>
<td>3,902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasan İmamoğlu (EDE)</td>
<td>3,547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasan Hatipoğlu (EDE)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total for minority candidates</strong></td>
<td>23,810</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The minority elected two MPs, Hafiz Yaşar Mehmetoğlu and Sabahaddin Galip, both representing Mavros’ EK. As mentioned earlier, during the last year or so of the junta regime the minority found a new unity. Hâki commented later that in the 1974 elections all the minority forces rallied behind these two and there was no opposition between “progressives” and “reactionaries” (*İleri* 154/21.12.1979). The elected MPs represented each of these traditional groupings.

**Sabahaddin Galip**

Sabahaddin Galip represented the Kemalist wing. Earlier the Galip brothers had at times collaborated with the Greek authorities, but were also those who enjoyed the strongest support of the Turkish consulate (*İleri* 154/21.12.1979). Galip had run as candidate for EK as early as 1963, but at that time he was surpassed by the other “modernist” Hasan Hatipoğlu. He had served as chairman of the Muslim community (*cemaat başkanı*) in the 1960s, and belonged to a family which had been at the centre of the minority’s political life since the beginning of the century. When Hâki looks back at the 1974 elections he comments that Sabahaddin Galip was very proud when he received more than 11,000 votes. He said afterwards that it would be difficult to take “this” away from them. With “this” he hinted at the leadership of the minority, the MP position, the position of his brother’s newspaper (*Azılık Postası*) which enjoyed

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75 *İleri* 107/03.03.1978. Hâki does not reveal the name of the official, but mentions that he was known by Galip, Yaşar, and İmamoğlu.

76 In 1974 the Christians cast 33,352 votes in Rodopi.

77 In the elections the *Enosis Kendru* (Centre Union - EK), ran together with the small *Kinima ton Neon Dinameon* (Movement of the New Political Forces), more commonly referred to as *Nees Dinamis* (New Forces).
the support of the Turkish consulate, representing the minority both in Greece and Turkey etc. (İleri 96/02.12.1977). He appeared as the strongest minority leader, and had reason to have high hopes for his political future.

_Hafız Yaflar_

Hafız Yaşar had been appointed chairman of the Muslim community during the junta regime, and as leader of the conservative wing he was generally preferred by the Greek authorities. He had been a candidate for a number of times before the junta, but had always played second fiddle to Molla Yusuf. After Molla Yusuf’s death in 1969, Hafız Yaşar took over the leadership of this wing, without being able to muster the same following. There are several reasons for this. He was not as charismatic and imposing as Molla Yusuf, he was more marked as a man of the Greek authorities, and finally the time worked against the conservatives. Still, it was a considerable achievement to obtain more than 5,000 votes and he was elected to parliament for the first time. Hâki comments that Yaşar had collaborated with the Greek authorities as he had willy-nilly been in that position. Turkish radio often spoke against him earlier, but this was not the case in 1974 (İleri 154/21.12.1979).

_Osman Üstüner_

Osman Üstüner was the candidate of ND. He had earlier been a steady candidate for Karamanlis’ ERE and had represented the minority in parliament several times. He was not a natural leader figure, but rather known for his loyalty towards the parties he represented. This was what secured him his candidature, but he did not have the vote potential to secure his election.

The two remaining minority candidates ran on the EDE ticket of Petros Garufalias. It may look strange that any minority candidates would team up with the pro-dictatorship right. This was first of all related to the problem of being accepted on the tickets of the major parties. Besides the nationalist arguments, which could be used as an explanation by all sides, there are of course many considerations involved in the choice of party candidates. Not the least, petty politic calculations by potential rival candidates. The solution for those who were unable to run for a major party was to seek an opportunistic collaboration with the right, which has been a recurrent phenomenon pursued actively both by certain minority politicians and by right wing parties.

_Hasan İmamoğlu_

Hasan İmamoğlu (1942–) was a graduate of the Thessaloniki law faculty and became appointed lawyer by the Rodopi bar organisation in 1972. He was the first representative of a new generation with a higher education from Greek universities.
Unlike many of the older generation his Greek is very good, and he is considered the best minority lawyer in Komotini. He does not have the smoothness of Hatipoğlu, and can be very outspoken or loose-tongued. He would clearly have preferred to run for ND, but had not been accepted. This was to some degree related to a campaign against him in the local Christian press, which claimed that he was dangerous for the national interest. There was also propaganda against him within the minority, which accused him of being pro-Greek (İleri 154/21.12.1979).

The campaign against İmamoğlu in the Christian press provides us with a good example of the way someone can come under the double pressure of Greek and Turkish nationalism. The campaign against İmamoğlu was related to a particular incident right after the Cyprus invasion in 1974. It is impossible to know what actually happened, but another minority member gave me the following account. When İmamoğlu passed by the court, a frightened secretary had asked him what would happen if a Greek-Turkish war broke out. Allegedly İmamoğlu had answered carelessly: “They’ll fuck you” (Tha sas gamísun). This created reactions against İmamoğlu which were exploited in the political games both before the 1974 elections and later. The episode even led to a court hearing. Before the 1989 elections, Hatipoğlu presented a facsimile from the newspapers Makedonia and Ellinikos Vorras, which displayed the incident as the Greek press had reported it. According to these articles İmamoğlu was accused of cursing the court employee Eleni Klapsida in July 1974 threatening her with the phrase: “If a war breaks out with Turkey I will give it to you” (Tha sas kanonísos). In his defence İmamoğlu said among other things that he was not a Turk, but was and felt Greek and that the whole case was a fabrication. This was of course the most sensible thing to say in a Greek court at this time, and İmamoğlu knew his way around the system and how to push the right buttons. Hatipoğlu must have seen the mud slinging potential in this material and saved it for later use. 15 years after he found a good opportunity when İmamoğlu ran for ND, while Hatipoğlu supported the independent ticket. On the basis of these press clippings he wrote an article titled: “It is forbidden by religion for the Turkish Muslims to vote for those who deny Turkism.” When all this is said, it is difficult for me to judge if he was excluded from the ND ticket because of the incident, or if it was related to petty interests of political rivals etc.

**Hasan Hatipoğlu**

Hatipoğlu would probably also have preferred another party. If nothing else, because such a marginal party as EDE could only secure him a seat in parliament if he obtained enough votes in the first distribution of seats. He later withdrew his candidature at the last moment. In his newspaper he presented the reasons which led him to

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78 Akın 984/12.06.1989, [Türklüğünü İnkâr Edenlere Türk Müslümanların Vereceği Oy Haramdır].
take this step. As has so often been the case, it was a question of how the minority could concentrate its votes most effectively in order to secure parliamentary representation. Hatipoğlu complained that the authorities tried to create obstacles for the election of minority representatives. This led to greater polarisation between the Christian and Muslim voters, and the minority responded by trying to concentrate its votes. Hasan Hatipoğlu arranged a meeting with the candidates on the other ticket, Sabahaddin Galip and Hafız Yaşar, to discuss the matter:

I wanted one of the parties to sacrifice its ticket. We [ i.e. Hatipoğlu] had the strongest vote potential. However, Mr. Sabahaddin and Mr. Hafız Yaşar said that they would never withdraw; but they pointed out that they would act in accordance with our programme which we published in AKIN. After this I believed that it was necessary for me to do the sacrifice which I had wanted the others to do but I did not find them willing to, and I decided not to support my candidature and appeal for votes.79

Hatipoğlu continued by writing that in his 25 year political career he had never thought about personal interests, but done everything solely for the benefit of the minority. Hatipoğlu has the reputation of being the minority’s most unscrupulous political manipulator. He was far from the truth when he portrayed himself as an idealist and as having the strongest vote potential. The case was rather that he became aware of the fact that he did not have any possibility to win, since people had lost faith in him. By “sacrificing” his candidature for the benefit of the minority, he obtained two things. He avoided to lose face by obtaining less votes than his adversaries, and by presenting it as a “sacrifice” he also gained prestige which could possibly help him in the next elections. Rodoplu commented later that Hatipoğlu gained much respect when he withdrew in 1974, even more than he held when he was MP (Gerçek 1/16.12.1977).

It is worth noting that although the minority class structure, with a high percentage of “proletarians”, should fit well to the program of the communist party, there were no minority candidates running for this party. This can be interpreted in various ways. With the precarious position of the communist party after the civil war, it carried a certain stigma. I suppose it carried enough stigma to be a minority member, so there was little need for the additional burden of being a communist. We should also bear in mind that the traditional hostility to the left in Turkish politics may have been an additional influence. Finally, the conservative nature and little developed political culture of the minority itself meant that it was not ready to embrace such a radical novelty.

The Election Results in Ksanthi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muzaffer Salih Bey</td>
<td>EDE</td>
<td>6,069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celâl Zeybek</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>5,934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mehmet Emin Aga</td>
<td>EK</td>
<td>2,998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hüsnü Serdarzade</td>
<td>PASOK</td>
<td>557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total votes for minority:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>15,558</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Ksanthi the minority was not able to elect any candidate, just as had been the case in the last elections before the dictatorship. Here the Muslims make up a smaller portion of the population than in Rodopi. This makes the possibility of electing a minority MP more difficult.

Muzaffer Salih Bey (1913–1984) was the director of the minority secondary school in Ksanthi and belonged to a wealthy urban family. Before the junta he had for years served as community chairman in Ksanthi. In the elections he co-operated with Osman Nuri who did not run himself. According to one of their associates, Muzaffer Bey had been promised a candidature by a major party but was eventually deceived. This is an indication of the lack of Greek-Turkish understanding during the elections, since earlier Turkish protection had always secured Osman Nuri a place on the ticket of a major party. Consequently he had ran for the ultra-right EDE party where in reality he had no hope of election. The new reality was also reflected in the election result. For the first time the influence of the major parties in the minority differed radically from their influence in the Christian population. This displays the alienation between the political systems in the majority and minority population.

Celâl Zeybek (1938–1993) ran on the ND ticket. He represented the younger generation and was the son of Hüseyin Zeybek who had earlier (1946–1950) represented the minority in parliament. He had graduated from a lycée in Turkey and was a dedicated Kemalist, but also a devout Muslim. Ideologically he had much the same mentality as his rivals Muzaffer Bey and Osman Nuri (cf. Ileri 154/21.12.1979).

The oldest son of the mufti in Ksanthi, Mehmet Emin Aga (1932–), ran on the EK ticket of Mavros. Before the junta he had been a leading figure in the Greek sponsored conservative camp. Mehmet Emin Aga was chief secretary of the mufti office and used this position as a vehicle to obtain political clients. His influence was particularly strong in the Pomak villages of the mountain area he descended from.

PASOK was still a novelty for the minority and had to satisfy itself with the weak candidate Hüsnü Serdarzade.

In the elections the minority vote was spread between the strongest candidates, with the result that none of them obtained enough votes to be elected. Hâki presents the election in Ksanthi as revolving around the battle for leadership within the minority, a subject he often returns to. Muzaffer Bey knew that he was not in a position to be
elected, but had sufficient electoral basis to fragment the minority vote in order to thwart his rival Celâl Zeybek (cf. İleri 264/03.09.1982). Mehmet Emin Aga, who was also a rival of Zeybek, contributed further to the fragmentation of the minority vote. If Zeybek had been elected MP he would by the strength of his position also become the leader and spokesman for the Muslims of Ksanthi. This would put the old leadership represented by Muzaffer Bey and Osman Nuri in the shadow. By preventing the election of Zeybek they assured that central minority positions did not pass out of their hands. Consequently, Osman Nuri prevented the election of a Muslim MP, which was exactly the same thing he accused Asım Halıoğlu so vehemently for, after he lost in the 1964 election. Zeybek, who had a good chance of being elected for the party which won the elections, told Hâki afterwards that:

“I lost with a small margin because some of our egoist, parasite, liar (kalpazan) politicians cheated the minority voters and put our pure and clean people under psychological pressure because of their personal interests” (İleri 119/02.06.1978).

Work in Parliament

Hafız Yaflar did not leave a mark in parliament. This is no surprise, as his Greek was weak and it was not his right environment. We must also bear in mind that the political situation in general did not make it easy for the minority to take any initiatives, and as a rule the minority MPs could not expect much help from their parties. What Hafız Yaflar could provide for the minority was limited to petty local services as a middle man between authorities and the minority. Later, when Hafız Yaflar recounted his work as MP in an interview, he said that he had several meetings with ministers about the discriminations against the minority. This could not solve the problems, but after these initiatives there was some slackening of the measures. He tied the minority problems to Greek-Turkish relations. When asked if he got any help from the EK party, Yaflar said that he had explained the problems to the party leader Mavros, but was not able to obtain the result he wanted. However, Mavros intervened in 1976, when the minority was about to lose 900 tobacco growing permits (Gerçek 4/21.01.1978).

Sabahaddin Galip, who belonged to the Kemalist wing, was better equipped for the job. He had gone a couple of years to a Greek secondary school and was among the better educated minority members. He is also known to have had good relations with the Turkish consulate, which means that he could co-ordinate his efforts to some degree with the Turkish priorities, and obtain practical support in preparing petitions etc. Nevertheless, he too did not leave much of a mark in parliament. He expressed reservations to the new education law in 1977, which he said was unclear and gave the minister of education the possibility to decide things without consulting the minority. The minister of education Vasilios Kondoyiannopulos replied that it only brought the minority education in accordance with the general principles for education in the law
309/76, and that it was in accordance with the Constitution and the Lausanne treaty. Galip also complained that he was informed about the law draft only through the newspapers, because the issue was treated when he was not supposed to be in parliament (tríto Tmíma Diakopón).

Local Elections 6 April 1975

In the 1975 local election the minority vote became once more the matter of dispute. The “Union of Local Forces” ticket of Andreas Stoyannidis obtained 53.87% of the valid votes, while the “New Movement” ticket of Sotirios Ortaktsidis obtained 46.13% and remained in opposition. When the results were announced, the adherents of Ortaktsidis claimed that Stoyannidis had obtained 94% of the minority votes, and reacted strongly with protest marches through the streets. The following day, Monday 7 April, they closed their shops and lowered their flags to half mast as a sign of mourning, while the children did not go to school. They demanded the resignation of Stoyannidis. The protests continued in the following days and the opposition sent strong protest telegrams to Athens. After meetings in the Ministry of Interior and between the parties, it was announced definitely that Stoyannidis had won the elections and he had become Mayor of Komotini. However, the “Christian Voters’ Committee” announced that it would continue the struggle against the result. Hatipoğlu commented that it was the first time that an election had resulted in this kind of “sad events” in the area. He called it a big mistake to try to transgress the minority’s right to elect and be elected. I do not have documentation to verify the claim that Stoyannidis obtained 94% of the minority vote, but I do not doubt that the great majority of the minority cast their votes for Stoyannidis. This has to do with the way the minority vote was negotiated. The usual procedure was that the minority leaders got together and discussed what line the minority should follow and negotiated the minority vote as a “package” with one of the political parties. It was much easier for the minority leaders to come to an agreement in local elections than in parliamentary elections, when they would be rivals for the MP office. As a result, while the Christians would

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81 The Christians were in majority in the town of Komotini, while the Muslims made up 34% of the population. During the previous decades many minority members had moved to the outskirts of Komotini. If they had been inscribed in the town register, which has been demanded from time to time, the Muslims could make up the majority.
82 See the large interview with Stoyannidis in Paratiritis tis Thrakis 20.07.1999. In connection with the 1975 election, he mentioned that they accused him of “reduced national consciousness” and “lack of religious faith”. He claimed that the only thing his ticket did was to address the minority too, which was natural. Indeed, those who today receive the minority votes protested loudly against him. For 7–8 days between the first and second round of the election the city was in turmoil. Someone sent a newspaper from Germany which showed Stoyannidis together with the mufti. They asked the metropolitan not to swear him in, and not to accept him in church. However, he did not consider the locals to have had the main responsibility. “He who directed the campaign against me and demanded my resignation was the minister of interior of the time and today’s president, Kostis Stefanopulos.”
follow voting patterns similar to the distribution between political parties elsewhere, the “package” voting of the minority would tip the result in favour of the party which could attract them. During the first local elections after the fall of the junta Stoyannidis struck a deal with the minority leaders, and he was promoted within the minority as “our Andreas”. However, the political climate caused by the tension with Turkey and the strong critique of the opposition did not give him much leeway to follow a minority friendly policy. As leader of the conservative element, he also had many within his own party with a chauvinist attitude towards the minority.

The Parliamentary Elections 20 November 1977

Before the 1977 elections Hâki painted a bleak picture of the prevailing mode in the minority. He felt that no matter which party came to power, the treatment would be the same. The Christians would be supported and the minority would not regain the legal rights it had lost in the last 5–10 years. People of the minority were commenting on the new democratic period that: “It is worse than the junta!” Hâki admonished the minority not to get involved in the party quarrels, but to struggle to avoid being left without parliamentary representation in Rodopi and Ksanthi in the upcoming elections. The goal was to obtain two MPs from Rodopi and one from Ksanthi (Ileri 88/30.09.1977). As is usually the case, there were long discussions about who were likely to become candidates for the parties. This became clear first by mid October (Ileri 91/21.10.1977).

The Election Results in Rodopi

Hasan İmamoğlu (EP) 8,063
Hasan Hatipoğlu (EP) 4,852
Sabahaddin Galip (EDIK) 3,267
Hafız Yaşar Mehmetoğlu (EDIK) 2,698
Osman Üstüner (ND) 3,206
Ahmet Mehmet (PASOK) 1,357
Mehmet Halil (KKE) 319
Total for minority candidates: 23,762

The minority elected one MP, Hasan İmamoğlu who ran for the ultra-right Ethnikí Parátaxis (National Camp - EP) led by Stefanos Stefanopoulos. The Christians cast 34,301 votes in Rodopi. In 1977 the Christians cast 34,301 votes in Rodopi.

84 In 1977 the Christians cast 34,301 votes in Rodopi.

85 EP succeeded EDE as the alternative on the far right. Mavrogordatos says that it was not “a party in any sense of the term, but only an ad hoc assortment of converging reactionaries: Royalist diehards, dictatorship nostalgics, religious fanatics and fascists” (Mavrogordatos 1983b: 75).
did not accept them (Gerçek 1/16.12.1977). In the case of İmamoğlu this was mainly related to the former campaign against him in the Christian press. As a result he ended up by joining forces with Hatipoğlu as in 1974. The two minority candidates on the EP ticket gathered enough votes to secure a place in parliament in the first distribution.\textsuperscript{86} When it came to the internal competition between the two minority candidates, Hatipoğlu had been sure that he would get more votes than İmamoğlu, but this did not happen (İleri 154/21.12.1979). Hatipoğlu seems to have held a grudge against İmamoğlu ever since this loss (cf. İleri 686/18.09.1992). As is often the case, the minority candidates did not unite for a specific political cause. The political struggle was to a large degree tied to personal ambitions. When there are two candidates on one ticket and only one of them has a chance of being elected, the candidate who obtains less votes “work” for the other candidate. In the cases where the candidates are rivals the result it is thought that the stronger candidate “eats” the weaker, or that the weaker candidate “carries water” for the stronger. This is a frequent \textit{leitmotiv} in the presentation of the political struggle within the minority.

Although the minority voted for the İmamoğlu/Hatipoğlu ticket, their party allegiance was far from unproblematic. Rodoplu wrote that the minority and most of the Greek people had bad experiences from the junta. When some junta sympathisers founded the EP party it was not thought that it would find minority supporters. However, when Hatipoğlu was unable to become accepted as candidate for any other party he embraced the old junta prefect Alamanos. Rodoplu claimed that people were sceptical to him because he supported Alamanos instead of thinking about the minority interest (Gerçek 1/16.12.1977).

\textit{Hasan İmamoğlu}

In his written appeal to the voters İmamoğlu pointed out that he was grateful for the 4,000 votes he obtained in the last elections in spite of difficulties, threats, oppression, cheating etc. He believed strongly he would get more votes this time, and those who were afraid of that he would become MP—a hint to the opposition against him in the Christian press—knew this very well. He thought he could be a good voice for the minority and as a lawyer he had the knowledge to defend it (İleri 92/28.10.1977). From what I have heard, İmamoğlu was a charismatic speaker, who was the first minority member to adopt an aggressive style shouting out loudly that he would put all the minority problems in order. He also said that he would bring the issue to the UN if the Greek authorities would not co-operate. In this way he presented himself as a “fearless” spokesman for minority interests. However, there are no reasons to take it

\textsuperscript{86} İmamoğlu and Hatipoğlu obtained 12,915 (54.4\%) of the Muslim votes and were also aided by the 3,130 (9.1\%) Christian votes for the EP ticket. This showed that the minority was able to elect an MP by itself, as it was sufficient with 12,420 votes to obtain a seat in the first distribution.
for anything more than the usual big promises made in elections campaigns, as he had done no preparations to internationalise the issue.

By now the education of the candidates had become a greater issue. The minority had longed for someone with higher education to represent it politically (İleri 89/07. 10.1977). Of the old generation Osman Nuri was best educated, but he knew no Greek before his early twenties and Hâki did not consider his Greek to have been good enough for parliament. He did his politics and propaganda through his newspaper (İleri 97/09.12.1977). The minority was inclined to vote for someone with higher education, and Hâki pointed out that İmamoğlu had no lawyer, doctor, or even lycée graduate up against him (İleri 96/02.12.1977). Hâki would at a later date write that İmamoğlu came like a fresh wind in the 1977 elections, and everybody were spellbound by him. For the first time the minority sent a lawyer to parliament, and indeed a lawyer who knew Greek well (İleri 240/22.01.1982).

In an interview after the election Rodoplu asked İmamoğlu if he thought the EP was the most suitable vehicle for him to serve the minority. İmamoğlu answered vaguely that he was the MP of the Western Thrace Turkish community, and got involved in politic to do something for this community. After the slightly embarrassing question about his party allegiance, he was asked about his political priorities. According to İmamoğlu the only question of the minority was to be treated as equal citizens. The Greek state should give the same rights to the Western Thrace Turks as to the Christian citizens. The only wish of the minority was to live like human beings (insan gibi yaflamak) (Gerçek 3/10.01.1978). While it can be claimed that İmamoğlu was virtually elected on an independent ticket in 1977, this was by no means his own choice. His marginal place in the Greek political system is first of all the result of choices made by the Greek administration and the Greek political parties. İmamoğlu did not emphasise Turkish nationalism. His law education was maybe a contributing factor to making him pose the problem first of all as a question of civil rights.

Hasan Hatipoğlu

Hasan Hatipoğlu played the Turkish nationalism card. His election newspaper (Akis) had the following slogan under his picture: HASAN HATİPOĞLU - THE HOPE OF TURKISM NOT ONLY IN RODOPI BUT IN ALL OF WESTERN THRACE. In the first issue he concentrated his propaganda against Karamanlis’ ND party. He claimed that, while the junta was a dark period for the minority, Karamanlis’ ND party had been an even darker period for Turkism. ND was blamed for various unfortunate local episodes (fires in schools and mosques). There was also a long attack on the minority ND candidate Osman Üstünler:

[...] in Mr. Üstünler’s election campaign we heard no thoughts and program concerning the future of our community and our Minority’s vital questions. He thinks that he will be elected MP only
Osman Üstüner was accused of not raising his voice against the injustices the minority was exposed to, but first of all trying to be obedient to the party. Hatipoğlu claimed that this was why he had been a candidate in all the elections since 1961, indirectly trying to ascribe his own failure of being accepted by a major party to his fighting spirit.

In the next issue Hatipoğlu continued his attacks on Karamanlis’ ND and went on to criticise Mavros’ EDIK party. He criticised Mavros for having done nothing for the minority in the difficult years it had been through. He pointed to that Mavros had said in parliament that the Turks of Western Thrace lived in happiness and prosperity. By saying this he insulted the minority who had supported him with so many votes. When the time came to argue for his own candidature, Hatipoğlu admitted that he too had to enter a party, but he considered all the parties to have the same attitude towards the minority. Consequently in the upcoming elections the minority would not elect a MP (milletvekili), but a representative (temsilci). People should elect the person who could best represent them. Hatipoğlu claimed that in these difficult times his hope was that Turkey and Greece could come together and discuss the minority issue like Atatürk and Venizelos did in 1923. This was the only thing which could save the minority, anything else was demagogy. He pointed to his experience and stressed that if even the smallest mistake was made the children might pay for it in the future (Akis 2/15.11.1977).

Hatipoğlu’s line of argument is very interesting as background for subsequent developments in minority politics. Much of it is of course tailor-made for his own position. He was not able to join a “decent” party, and as a result he argued that it did not matter which party you run for. In reality he discredited the Greek political system as a whole and viewed the minority’s situation as dependent on Greek-Turkish relations. In this connection it was clear that he regarded Turkey as the only legitimate support for the minority. The minority MPs were not regarded to represent political choices and principles, but were simply personalities. He promoted himself by virtue of his experience without making any commitments. In addition he played on the fear and insecurity of people by pointing out that their children could suffer if they did not have the right representative. With the benefit of hindsight, 1977 was probably the most favourable opportunity for Hatipoğlu to be elected in the post-junta period. The prestige of his old rivals was low after their term in parliament, but Hatipoğlu was still not able to prevail over the new generation.
Sabahaddin Galip

The incumbent minority MPs, Sabahaddin Galip and Hafiz Yaşar, continued to run on the EDIK ticket of the main opposition leader Mavros. They were in a somewhat awkward position because of the unsatisfactory minority policy. This was aggravated by a statement of the party leader. Hâki engaged in polemics against Mavros who had said in parliament that the dwindling minority in Istanbul was no longer able to elect a MP, while in Thrace the population had increased and the minority had two MPs who “coincidentally” belonged to his party. Hâki asked what he meant by “coincidentally” and noticed that there was no reaction from the minority MPs (İleri 92/28.10.1977). Among the other candidates in Rodopi, Sabahaddin Galip was probably the candidate who had the greatest reason to be disappointed with the result. Hâki mentioned that the young candidates, Orhan Hacıibram and Hasan İmamoğlu, did not work as systematically with their election campaign as the older generation, while Sabahaddin Galip worked hardest and most systematically (İleri 125/08.09.1978). Nevertheless, this did not give him enough votes, although he felt very sure of success before the elections (İleri 154/21.12.1979). It seems to me that Galip still thought along the lines of the stable minority representation before the junta, and thought that after the reins had passed into his hands they would remain there. He was unable to understand how the dissatisfaction which had built up in the minority would ultimately threaten his position.

Hafiz Yaflar

Hâki claimed that it had been clear from the beginning that Hafiz Yaşar would not be elected (İleri 154/21.12.1979). In an interview a couple of months after the election, Hafiz Yaşar said that he had considered himself the MP of the minority not of the party. He found it natural that the minority wanted to try other MPs because it was difficult for the old ones to obtain much under the reigning conditions. Before the 1977 elections Yaşar also had a proposal to run for another party, but he did not find it necessary to change (Gerçek 5/02.02.1978). As an established conservative without connection to Turkey he did not have the problem of finding a party to run for as many of the other candidates.

Ahmet Mehmet

The main question mark before the election was PASOK. It was rumoured that the prefecture committee had proposed to the young lawyers Mehmet Müftüoğlu (1939–1999) and Sabahaddin Emin (1941–) to become candidates (İleri 88/30.09.1977). At this time PASOK had problems with finding suitable minority candidates for its ticket. This was partly due to the fact that the minority traditionally voted for conservative

87 The Enosis Kendru had fused formally with Nees Dinamis in 1976 to form the Enosis Dimokratiku Kendru (Union of the Democratic centre - EDIK).
parties, and partly due to that PASOK was not yet a large established party. Consequently the possible candidates had doubts about if they could become elected on the PASOK ticket. The young minority lawyers who turned down the offer from PASOK regretted it later when they saw the success of the party on a national basis (*İleri* 96/02.12.1977). PASOK had to settle for the young car mechanic Ahmet Mehmet (1946–). In an interview he did not express clearly any political goals. He only said that he would work as hard as he could for the minority (*İleri* 90/14.10.1977). By virtue of running as a candidate for PASOK, Ahmet Mehmet also made an investment for later elections. He would try to maintain his position, which meant that the opportunity might be lost for the university graduates (*İleri* 96/02.12.1977).

*Mehmet Halil (Çolak)*

The greatest innovation among minority candidates was that for the first time someone ran for the Communist party. The late Mehmet Çolak (1946–1996), whom I came to know very well, tried to forward a message of brotherhood and understanding between the two population elements. He had little success in obtaining votes, and as a result of his association with the KKE he had to withdraw from his job as secretary in the “Turkish Teachers’ Union”. Later, when he worked in Athens as translator in a Greek department, he was sacked one day in “retaliation” for some Turkish action towards the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul. While the times obviously were not ready for him, he was nevertheless an influence on persons from the slightly younger generation who today are cadres of the *Sinaspismos* (Left-Coalition Party).

*The Fine Balances*

The chances of becoming elected were to a great degree connected to how the minority distributed its forces. Hâki points out that in 1974 Muzaffer Bey participated in Ksanthi and the minority remained without an MP, while Hatipoğlu withdrew and two MPs were elected in Rodopi. In 1977 Hatipoğlu participated and only one minority MP was elected from Rodopi. Hâki thought that if Hatipoğlu had withdrawn in 1977 too, Galip would surely have been elected, and İmamoğlu’s chances to become elected would decrease radically. This would have left Galip as sole MP and he would secure his position as leader for the rest of his life. Hâki concluded that the members of the old generation destroyed each other. Hatipoğlu did not get elected, but was able to take Galip with him. However, if the young university graduates had taken up the offer from PASOK the picture would have been much different. In this case he thought that Hasan Hatipoğlu, Sabahaddin Galip, Hafız Yaşar, and Osman Üstüner would not even have obtained half of the votes they received (*İleri* 97/09.12.1977). The 1977 elections were a defeat for both Sabahaddin Galip as leader of the Kemalists and Hafız Yaşar as leader of the conservatives. The other minority
candidates contributed to get the Christian candidates on their tickets elected. Osman Üstüner (ND) secured sufficient votes for Stilianos Bletsas, and Ahmet Mehmet (PASOK) contributed to the election of Dimitrios Vradelis (İleri 96/02.12.1977). They “carried water” for the Christian candidates.

**The Election Results in Ksanthi**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Celâl Zeybek (ND)</td>
<td>6,767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orhan Hacıibram (PASOK)</td>
<td>4,655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mehmet Emin Aga (EDIK)</td>
<td>3,491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>İmam Kasım (EP)</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efendi M. Hüseyin (KKE)</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veysel Yunusoğlu (Independent)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total for minority candidates:</strong></td>
<td><strong>15,288</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Ksanthi the possibilities for electing a minority MP depended a lot on what Muzaffer Salih would do. It was thought that he would join the EP ticket in the last minute (İleri 90/14.10.1977). When it became clear that Muzaffer Salih would not be a candidate, Hâki considered the chances of electing MP much better. However, he was afraid that people were demoralised and would think that they could not elect a minority MP since they had not been able to elect any in 1964 and 1974 (İleri 91/21.10.1977). Eventually, the minority would elect Orhan Hacıibram. However, he lost his position 6 months later after the final adjustments of the elections result. After this the minority was represented by Celâl Zeybek.

**Celâl Zeybek**

Celâl Zeybek was able to retain his candidature for ND. Hâki describes him both as an ardent party adherent and as deeply minority minded (İleri 154/21.12.1979). In an article to promote his candidature, Celâl Zeybek claimed that all the parties were the same for the minority. He was not in the position to promise much, as the minority could not form a government or make one fall with its vote. Ankara and Athens would have to solve the big problems, while he could help the minority with their day to day questions. He warned both against those who exploited “the turban on their head for politics” and the leftist which would bring trouble to the minority. “The Komotini Turks gave no educated Turkish candidate to PASOK, because it is a dangerous and excessive nationalist party” (İleri 95/18.11.1977). It is clear from his rhetoric that he was very close to traditional Kemalism in his critique of both the religious establishment and the left.
**Orhan Haciibram**

In this election PASOK found an educated candidate in Ksanthi. The lawyer Orhan Haciibram (1946–) had always been passionately occupied with politics. He became early a member of PASOK, which made him look odd to many minority members. Hâki commented later that Orhan Haciibram reminded him of Osman Üstüner because of his strong party adherence (*İleri* 154/21.12.1979). This was also prominent in his election campaign. In an article he criticised ND and EDIK. He claimed that PASOK was the only party in the country which had a different view on the minority, because it was a party which cared about the living conditions of the individual and was against exploitation. It advocated equal rights for everybody regardless of religion and race (*İleri* 94/11.11.1977). In a later article he engaged in a polemic against the aspiring minority leaders who said that what mattered was personalities and not the parties. Orhan opposed this mentality and pointed out that many of the minority troubles had been caused by right wing governments, beginning with Metaksas. He claimed that those who said that only personalities and not ideology were important, were only thinking about themselves and about exploiting the minority farmers (*İleri* 128/13.10.1978).

**Mehmet Emin Aga**

Among the other candidates Mehmet Emin Aga ran for EDIK as in the 1974 elections. Hâki was particularly concerned about his “unholy alliance” with the Christian candidate, Baltatzis. Mehmet Emin Aga could bargain his large clientele in the mountain villages, and in this connection it was clear that he deliberately “carried water” for Baltatzis, who was on the same ticket. Hâki criticised that Baltatzis, who needed Muslim votes in order to become MP, even went to the Turkish villages and asked for votes for himself and not for Mehmet Emin Aga. However, Baltatzis must have had some influence of his own among Muslim voters because of the agricultural cooperatives. Hâki said that he had nothing against Aga, but specified that the votes for him would help Baltatzis, who had always become MP with Muslim votes. He appealed to the Muslim voters not to vote for the Christian candidates.

Readers! The men are selling snails in the Muslim quarter; snails! As if it is not enough with the Christian villages, they look for votes in the Muslim villages!\(^{88}\)

Finally, Baltatzis did not become MP, but he would have been with a few hundred more Muslim votes.\(^{89}\) Hâki claimed that Mehmet Emin Aga’s motivation was to

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\(^{88}\) *İleri* 95/18.11.1977. This is a well known saying, as snails are unclean to Muslims.

\(^{89}\) Before the 1981 elections Hâki mentioned again that in Ksanthi there was a peculiarity. Baltatzis of the agricultural party was not complete without Mehmet Emin Aga. Baltatzis did not have Mehmet Emin Aga on his ticket so that Aga might have a chance to become MP, but to secure the election of Baltatzis. Everybody knew this including Mehmet Emin Aga, but this was part of the political game (*İleri* 218/12.06.1981).
prevent other Turks from becoming MP. This meant that Mehmet Emin Aga would remain the leader and spokesman of the Ksanthi Turks in his capacity as chief secretary of the mufti office. He would be confronted as leader both by the Turkish consulate and in Turkey.

The Other Candidates

The medrese educated İmam Kasım (EP) and primary school educated Efendi M. Hüseyin (KKE) were marginal figures for marginal parties. The question of forming an independent minority ticket also appeared in these elections. Asım Haliloğlu said that he would make an independent ticket if he was not accepted by any party, and started preparations for it (İleri 89/07.10.1977). The attempt fell flat on its face. Hâki asked: “Who wants to be on an independent ticket? It would never enter the mind of those who are able to secure a place on the ticket of the three largest parties” (İleri 90/14.10.1977).

Work in Parliament

The two MPs represented a new generation. Both Hasan İmamoğlu and Orhan Hacıibram held law degrees from the University of Thessaloniki and had a good command of Greek. This made them much more able spokesmen than the older generation. However, the new power balance within the minority was not unproblematic. Hâki spoke up against the old leadership’s attempt to cling on to their position without a mandate from the people. He proclaimed that now the whole world and not only the fatherland (Greece) and motherland (Turkey) should know that Osman Nuri, Muzaffer Salih, Hasan Hatipoğlu, and the Sabahaddin-Selahaddin brothers were not the leaders of this minority. Now there were MPs elected by the people (İleri 96/02.12.1977). After the first euphoria following the elections, the new MPs commenced their work. Hâki described the climate in the minority:

Our people have generally believed the following for a long time: They [the minority MPs] did not speak about the oppression and discrimination against us in the National Assembly in Athens. There are also people among us who say the following: They do not know in Athens what is taking place here!…

We do not share the last opinion. There are few who say so. They are generally in favour of the established order and always think about their personal benefits.

In our opinion Athens knows very well what takes place here. More correctly, those who are here have the support of Athens. Or Athens have given them independence in minority issues. They have given them free hands to decide and act. They save themselves from being inquired by justifying every practice with that it is necessary for national reasons… (İleri 97/09.12.1977).

Hâki continued by writing that the minority did not expect that there would be built a factory or that the minority would become eligible for public employment. The minority wanted the MPs to present the problems which were troubling the minority and work to put an end to the outdated treatment of them. First of all the authorities should treat the minority members as citizens and stop giving the Christians billions in
loans to buy the minority’s land. The particular minority rights took a second place. He ended the admonition by writing that the MPs should not forget that they represented first of all the “Minority Party”. It was no excuse to say that they would like to say something, but the party did not allow them.

**Orhan Hacıibram**

Orhan Hacıibram is arguably the minority politician who has made the finest performance in parliament. This is due both to his personal qualifications and the political framework he functioned within. Orhan Hacıibram’s tendency to be carried away by his enthusiasm, and to believe excessively in ideological statements of intent is maybe his main political weaknesses. However, it was also these attributes which made him perform well in parliament. Some of the ideas he expressed were not within the usual framework of minority centred politics, but directed toward Greek society as a whole. Contrary to normal practice he had declared that he was not only an MP for the minority, but for all Greek citizens. The active opposition politics of PASOK, as well as Orhan Hacıibram’s interest in Greek society as a whole gave him more opportunities to speak than has been the case for other minority MPs. Unlike them, he did not act alone posing questions of exclusive minority interest. When he spoke in parliament he joined other PASOK MPs (usually 5) in posing questions to the responsible ministers and could in this fashion treat issues of vital interest to the minority within the general framework of Greek politics. He was able to participate in questions to the Ministry of Agriculture about the situation for animal husbandry, the conditions for the tobacco growing farmers where he in particular mentioned the problems for the villages in Ksanthi, and about the determination of prices for certain agricultural products. He was also involved in questions concerning the use of agricultural vehicles and driving-tests. As a concrete example of Orhan Hacıibram’s abilities as parliamentarian we can look at a question by him and 5 other PASOK MPs about the forest policy. This was not a question related strictly to the minority, but Orhan was able to use the opportunity to present some of the problems in the mountain area, of direct and vital interest to his minority voters. Orhan Hacıibram’s approach must be considered wise if we use normal political criteria. He availed himself of the opportunities and possibilities the parliamentary system offered to influence Greek politics. Unfortunately, the special problems of the minority were determined by factors outside the realm of normal political procedures. Orhan

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91 *Praktika Vulis*, Session 15 - 24.01.1978, pp. 438–439, 442; *Praktika Vulis*, Session 52 - 02.03.1978, pp. 1529–.
92 *Praktika Vulis*, Session 61 - 05.04.1978, 2277, 2279, 2287.
Hacıibram did not confront these problems directly, however it is doubtful if he could have influenced the situation much at this point.

**Orhan Hacıibram Loses His Seat**

Half a year after the elections, fate took a new turn for Orhan Hacıibram, as he lost his seat in parliament in connection with the final adjustments by the election court. The circumstances surrounding this event caused Orhan to lose much prestige within the minority, and has been a contributing factor to his declining political career. When the results were first announced in Ksanthi, Orhan received most votes on the PASOK ticket, and came some 150 votes before the second candidate, Haralambos Atmatzidis. However, after a second count of the votes Atmatzidis came ahead of Orhan with one vote. Right after the elections, Hâki expressed his puzzlement over this. He pointed to the problem that the minority did not have people to look after the ballot boxes. He was afraid of mistakes, or injustices, when the votes were counted (İleri 96/02.12. 1977). Orhan Hacıibram’s fall from first to second place on the PASOK ticket had no immediate personal consequences, as PASOK won two seats in Ksanthi. He was asked by the leader of PASOK, Andreas Papandreu, not to protest against the new result and followed loyally the advice of the party leader. However, when the final distribution of seats in parliament was regulated, the election court (Anóta Idikó Dikastírio) decided 27.05.1978 that the PASOK seat of the third distribution would be in Evros and not in Ksanthi. As a result Orhan Hacıibram lost his seat, while ND obtained two seats in Ksanthi, which secured the election of Celâl Zeybek.

Hâki described the climate in the minority after Orhan lost his position. He wrote that Orhan must now give account to the people for his earlier position, when he had said that: “I became MP, why should I create a question within the party” (İleri 119/02.06.1978). The event was commented on by various politicians. İmamoğlu said that such things had happened before. It was a mistake of Orhan not to protest and İmamoğlu told him so several times, the last time only two days before the last deadline. The decision was now final and could not be appealed. Hatipoğlu commented briefly that it was the sad result of inexperience, which was part of his rhetoric to cultivate his own image as the experienced minority politician. The news hit the minority like a shock. When Hâki went to Ksanthi, everybody wondered why Orhan had not protested about the one vote difference. A young villager expressed it in this way:

—I am one of those who voted for Orhan because he is a lawyer; not because I am a PASOK adherent. As a lawyer he was not able to protect his rights within the party; how will he protect my rights and the rights of the Minority? (İleri 119/02.06.1978).

I was told by a Greek scholar who knows the background of the case, that certain quarters had been strongly against Orhan Hacıibram. He was subsequently the victim of manipulations in the second count of the votes, and then when the final distribution
of seats was decided. In reality there was nothing Orhan could have done about it. However, with his passionate PASOK engagement and lack of precautions, the minority got the impression that he did not go down fighting. The authorities’ opposition against him seems to have been related to certain initiatives in parliament. According to his own account he had prepared a folder with proposals to revise some of the laws and regulations which were used against the minority. When he wanted to submit his proposals during his first appearance in parliament, the speaker declined and said it had to be done through his party. He trusted that PASOK would be true to its principles and submitted his proposals to the party organs. After that the party never seemed to finish its treatment of the case. As a result Orhan had a row and resigned from the party. He could now submit his proposals as independent MP. However, when he went to submit his proposals, he was handed an envelope by the Speaker of parliament with the message that he was no longer MP after the decision of the election court. Consequently his proposals were not accepted (Dede 1988b: 48–51).

Imamoğlu’s Work in Parliament
The minority MP from Rodopi, Hasan İmamoğlu, has a very good command of Greek, a quick mind, and often a directness in speech. However, his party adherence did not provide him with a suitable vehicle for promoting the minority’s interests in parliament. He did not participate in any discussions. His participation was limited to written questions to various ministers directly related to minority matters. A few months after his election he forwarded a petition by the Western Thrace Minority University Graduates Association (Batı Trakya Azınlığı Yüksek Tahsillileri - BTAYD) to the foreign minister and the minister of interior. It protested against the various forms of discriminations directed at the minority. They had hoped that the rights they were deprived of during the junta regime would be returned quickly after 1974, but this had not been the case. In his written answer the vice Foreign Minister Zaimis claimed that there was no discrimination and mentioned among other things that the minority had made 5,485 applications to repair their houses between 1957 and 1977 and 5,000 were granted, while 8,886 property sales were approved in this period (Gerçek 13/29.07.1978). Much can be said about the use and abuse of statistics. However, in this case it is obvious that when the minister operates with statistics hailing back to 1957 concerning questions which appeared in earnest after 1967, he is avoiding to address the problem seriously. Among the other problems İmamoğlu posed I can mention his questions to the relevant ministers concerning the return of hunting weapons which were confiscated in 1974 after the Cyprus events;  

96 Petition dated Komotini 08.03.1978, in Gerçek 12/04.07.1978.  
the problems with obtaining the title deed for the “Turkish Teacher’s Union” building;98 the problems with obtaining permits to build and repair houses;99 the problems with obtaining driving licences;100 the introduction of special entrance exams to the higher section of the minority secondary school.101 At one point he sent a telegram to the foreign minister Konstandinos Mitsotakis which complained about the violation of the minority’s constitutional rights. He mentioned the problems with buying land, obtaining permits to repair or construct houses, obtaining permits to carry on free vocations, and finally he protested against the large expropriations of minority farm land.102

It may be instructive to look at some questions a bit more in detail to illustrate the Greek authorities’ attitudes to the questions, and the lack of political will to address them seriously. In connection with the expropriations in the Yaka area, the first committee went to Athens in January 1980 and met with Rallis who was Foreign Minister at the time. Afterwards a memorandum signed by 13 minority members was sent 01.02.1980 about the various problems of the minority, including the expropriations. The minority MPs followed up with a question in parliament. The answer by the foreign ministry said that there was no discrimination in Greece based on religion when it came to buying property anywhere in Greece. The only exception was the border areas where the law 1366/1938 was applied equally for all the citizens because of the security of the state. There was no restriction on building and repairing houses but everybody had to obtain permits according to the law, driving licences were issued only according to the ability of the driver. The expropriations took place according to the law and for the common interest after a procedure which lasted several years. Those affected had also the possibility to submit alternative plans, but this had not happened. The owners were also able to cultivate the land as long as the procedures of the expropriations took place and two years after the final decision.103 In other words, the authorities took care that everything was formally correct, but did nothing with the problems.

A central issue concerning the organisation of the minority, was the administration of its pious foundations. This issue is complicated because it tends to become

98 Question to the minister of interior and the foreign minister about the Union’s application dated 25.01.1978, **Ileri** 136/02.03.1979.
99 Question dated 05.04.1979 to minister of publish works, **Ileri** 141/22.06.1979.
100 Question dated 01.06.1979 to minister of communication, **Ileri** 141/22.06.1979. (For more details see earlier treatment of discrimination in connection with obtaining driving-licence.)
101 Question by İmamoğlu and Zeybek to the minister of education dated 11.06.1981(İleri 219/19.06.1981).
102 İleri 181/29.08.1980. See also his question dated Athens 18.02.1981 to the Foreign ministry, Ministry of interior, Defence ministry, Ministry of transport, and Ministry of Agriculture where he addressed these and other problems (Gerçek 55/04.03.1981).
103 Question in parliament by Celâl Zeybek and Hasan İmamoğlu No. 9673/14.07.1980, with the answer GYF-364/08.08.1980 from the Foreign Ministry (İleri 182/05.09.1980).
entangled with the fate of the Greek Orthodox pious foundations in Istanbul by “reciprocity”. In Greece the administration of the pious foundations was abolished together with all other elected bodies in the country by the dictatorship in 1967. Instead the prefecture appointed the necessary managing councillors. In a question to the minister of interior İmamoğlu asked why there had not been an election of chairman (cemaat başkani) and board (azaları) for the Muslim pious foundations after the fall of the junta in 1974 (Gerçek 9/05.04.1978). In the answer he was told that a new law concerning the pious foundations was in the draft which would also regulate the issue of the elections of the managing committees. This would of course be done in conformity with the Lausanne Treaty and the principle of inter-state reciprocity (diakratikí amiveótita) introduced by it. İmamoğlu followed up the question and asked how it was possible for the Muslim property to be still under the management appointed by the junta and when there would be elections. He received the answer that the law was almost ready (İleri 138/27.04.1979). The law concerning the Muslim pious foundations (vakıf) was voted through in parliament 12.11.1980. The law was not well received by the minority. There was a meeting in the Komotini mufti office 19.11.1980, and a protest signed by 50, including the foremost minority members, was sent to the government (İleri 194/28.11.1980). The two minority MPs Hasan İmamoğlu and Celâl Zeybek sent a protest, because the new vakıf law was passed in parliament when they were on leave. They were under the impression that this was done on purpose so that their voice would not be heard. To them it seemed that the law aimed to fragment the communal property, create strife between the minority members, and ultimately annihilate the vakıfs. The law was never accepted by the minority, while the authorities neither enforced nor revoked it.

What other possibilities İmamoğlu availed himself of to influence the political establishment in Athens is not so easy to document. However, there is an example of how he presented his own achievements back in his constituency. He explained that he had spoken with various ministers in Athens about the rights the minority had been deprived of in the last ten years. They told him that they would correct it soon because they were against the violation of citizen rights. He even saw the prime minister Karamanlis 5–6 months earlier, who told him: “Be patient Esteemed İmamoğlu, the questions will reach a conclusion and everything will be put in order” (İleri 134/16.02.1979). In an interview after his term had expired İmamoğlu explained how he presented all the questions.

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104 Praktika Vulis, pp. 4296–4297, question No. 12, 11.05.1978. There is a problem with the material concerning İmamoğlu’s work in Parliament. When I searched the index of the Praktika Vulis (Parliamentary Proceedings) the only question I found under his name is the one above. The other questions referred to, I found later in the minority press. I asked him later on two occasions if he had copies of his questions and answers, but he never made them accessible to me. 105 Letter to the foreign minister dated Athens 24.01.1979 (İleri 134/16.02.1979). 106 İleri 195/05.11.1980; 196/12.12.1980; 197/19.12.1980.
minority’s problems in parliament. He sent letters and telegrams to Karamanlis and both the Greek and Turkish Foreign Departments. He portrayed his initiatives as very dangerous for his personal interests, i.e. his possibility to be accepted as candidate for a party. His initiatives were from time to time commented on in both the Greek and foreign press. For this reason the Greek press and some politicians branded him “a dangerous person from the point of view of Greek national interests”. He admitted that he was only able to be effective in minor matters, but believed that it was important that he presented the minority’s problems and the oppression against it both orally and in writing inside and outside Parliament. In the same interview he revealed the content of a letter to Karamanlis from 25 July 1979. In the letter İmamoğlu reminded Karamanlis that he had promised earlier to correct everything in Thrace. That it was unacceptable that the Greece citizens of Muslim faith and Turkish origin did not have the same rights as other Greek citizens, particularly at a time when Greece was about to join the EEC. In this connection he mentioned the various rights of the minority which had been violated since 1967 (İleri 240/22.01.1982).

There are of course many uncertainties connected to the way a person portrays his own achievements. However, there is no doubt that Hasan İmamoğlu had the ability to present the minority’s problems eloquently, and formally correctly. If his own account is correct, it indicates that the Greek authorities took recourse to the old tactics of giving vague and uncommitted answers, as well as, endless delays. The lack of political will obstructed any real development, while it left little room for formal complaints. Naturally the minority was dissatisfied with İmamoğlu, as they could not see any improvement in the government’s policy towards the minority. This was unjust in the sense that İmamoğlu could not be expected to be able to change the minority policy single-handedly when the necessary political will was lacking.

Hâki expressed the frustration of the minority when he advised the MPs to drive a harder bargain for their support of the government. He called to mind the 1965 government crisis, and what the MPs where able to obtain in return for their support (İleri 172/02.05.1980). There was much discussion within the minority when the MPs voted in favour of Greece rejoining the military wing of the NATO alliance, which she withdrew from in connection with the Cyprus invasion in 1974. This caused the two MPs to issue a common statement. İmamoğlu said that it was not a vote of confidence to the ND government but a yes to NATO. Zeybek said that he thought joining NATO could help normalise the situation between Greece and Turkey. In a comment to this statement, Müftüoğlu voiced the opinion that İmamoğlu should have voted against, but he could not say the same for Zeybek as he was with the government party (İleri 190/31.10.1980).

There were doubts expressed in minority circles about İmamoğlu, as they thought he was trying to play on both horses to further his own interests. i.e. on one hand he
would have to satisfy his voters to have hopes of being re-elected, on the other he was looking for a better party ticket to run for. His desire to be candidate for the governing party ND in the next elections, was widely known. In this connection his vote in favour of Konstandinos Karamanlis, which was instrumental in electing him president, was in minority circles interpreted as selling out the minority for his own personal interests.\textsuperscript{107} They could not accept that he voted in favour of Karamanlis while the minority’s problems remained unsolved. At the time of the vote his party had decided not to vote for Karamanlis as president.\textsuperscript{108} In an interview by Hâki he explained why he did not vote together with his party. “As MP for EP I was not able to be of help to my kinsmen. They were viewing me with junta eyes.” He was in contact with ND and Hâki asked him if he would be MP for ND. İmamoğlu had no comments about it, but pointed out that ND claimed to be the only party which could improve Greek-Turkish relations (İleri 172/02.05.1980). In an interview after his term had expired he was more explicit about his resignation from EP during the election of president in 1980. İmamoğlu said he disagreed with the party chairman who did not want him to vote for Karamanlis. He also had to vote for Karamanlis because of the agreement he had made with him. Thus he preferred to resign instead of being expelled from the party. Before the 1981 elections İmamoğlu said that he had voted for Karamanlis after being promised that some of the injustices against the minority would be stopped. According to İmamoğlu, Karamanlis made such promises in a meeting with him 10 April 1981, but they were not kept. He pointed this out to Karamanlis in a letter from 25 July 1979 which he had not revealed before, but which is included in full in the reportage. He argued that at this time he was not thinking primarily about being accepted on the ND ticket, as he had already been promised this when he voted in favour of Greece joining the EEC. This was something he would have done anyway, as he believed it was in the interest of the minority. When he was asked why he wanted to run for ND despite of the fact that it did nothing with the oppression of the minority, İmamoğlu answered that he believed he could be much more effective as MP for the party in power. He did not think that PASOK would bring significant changes as the oppression of the minority was a state and not a party policy (İleri 240/22.01.1982). However, he was not able to shake off the suspicion against him. In a comment to the above reportage Mehmet Bağdatlı (PASOK) criticised him for only working for his own benefit and for having done nothing in his four years as MP. He was called a bad minority politician example as “The fish smells from the head”. Bağdatlı pointed out that İmamoğlu was able to buy an expensive apartment when he was MP and indeed after voting in favour of Karamanlis. He wondered if you had to be MP to obtain a title deed (İleri

\textsuperscript{107} The vote was very tight and Karamanlis was only successful in the third attempt securing 183 votes, three more than the minimum required.

\textsuperscript{108} It should be kept in mind that by this time EP was disintegrating.
242/05.02.1982). At a later occasion, Onsunoğlu too held the opinion that İmamoğlu was not the kind to forfeit his personal interests for the minority (İleri 288/25.02.1983). İmamoğlu did not have the ideological enthusiasm of Orhan Hacıibram, and represented in this respect a more level headed approach. He was aware of the delicate balances between the Greek and Turkish interests, and as a Greek citizen with a successful business, Greece would ultimately carry greater weight. He did not in any way represent a radical attack on the Greek state. However, in the 1981 parliamentary elections there was once more a campaign against him by the Christians. They exaggerated in their efforts to portray him as “dangerous” in comparison to more “submissive” candidates. In this connection it was also used against him that he had higher education and was capable of giving statements etc. (cf. İleri 288/25.02.1983). Under other circumstances, he could have developed into an important minority leader, with the ability to negotiate realistically the minority’s interests with the Greek state. However, with the regime in force there was simply no way for him to balance between the incompatible interests of the minority and the state.

**Zeybek’s Work in Parliament.**

The activity of Celâl Zeybek in parliament is limited to certain questions of narrow minority interests. Since he represented the governing party he was in a better position to influence the minority policy than İmamoğlu, but in a more sensitive position if he wanted to pose embarrassing questions. His questions are limited to issues like the prospect of building mosques in Thessaloniki and Athens (Praktika Vulis 13.021981), or road construction to the mountain village Thermes (Ilica) (Praktika Vulis 15.05.1981).

A question about delay with the issuing of passports to Muslims in Ksanthi is of particular importance. The answer from the Ministry of Interior stated that:

[...] this delay is due to the procedure of preventive control during the issuing of passports, which as known has been kept for certain border areas of the country for security reasons and concerns all of the inhabitants in these areas and not only the Muslims.109

As usual the Ministry of Interior was able to keep up appearances, and did not give any formal reason for complaint. In reality, the problems of obtaining passports must have been related to the Pomak population. Celâl Zeybek was himself a Pomak, but an ardent Turkish nationalist. He claimed the Greek Pomak propaganda was part of a plan which had the final goal to make them Christians. Students from the mountain area had great problems with obtaining passports for their studies in Turkey. Celâl Zeybek sent a telegram to the prime minister 20.08.1980 about the problems of obtaining passports for the students who studied abroad (İleri 181/29.08.1980). He

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submitted questions to relevant ministers (Foreign, interior, public order), as all his attempts to solve the passport problem with the local authorities had been in vain (İleri 183/12.09.1980). Zeybek displayed his sensitivity about the Pomak issue in other cases as well. In a letter to the MP Alavanos of Komma Dimokratiku Sosialismu (Party of Democratic Socialism- KODISO), he countered a question sent by Alavanos to the Foreign and education ministry. Zeybek pointed out that the Pomaks are Turks and Muslims even though they speak a mixed dialect. He argued that their written language is Turkish because they are recognised as établis in connection with the Lausanne Treaty.\footnote{110} The problems of the Pomaks in obtaining passports for education in Turkey, seems to be part of the general policy of limiting Turkish influence in the Pomak areas.

Contrary to the practice of several minority leaders who used their position to bypass the discriminatory measures against the minority, Celâl Zeybek displayed great solidarity with the common minority members. For example, as MP he could easily have obtained a driving licence, but preferred to drive without licence instead of obtaining special treatment. Neither did he buy an expensive car, which most MPs would do because of their special tax exemption, but drove a cheap East European model. As long as he was MP he could drive the car without being bothered by the police because of his parliamentary asylum. When he was not re-elected in 1981 he stopped driving altogether.

**Local Elections 15 October 1978**

In the local elections of 1978 the question of the minority vote was again a central issue. As usual, the information in the minority press is mostly about the situation in Komotini. The overriding question was if the minority should vote as a block like it had done in the previous elections, or if the minority candidates could participate on the tickets of different parties. First the mayor Andreas Stoyannidis (ND) contacted the mufti office and Management of Pious Foundation and wanted them to propose a number of candidates from the minority to his ticket. A little later the local PASOK cadre, Haris Dimitriadis, together with the minority PASOK member Hasan Kaşakçıoğlu, took contact for the same purpose. The minority politicians held a meeting in the mufti office, where they discussed if they should provide candidates to both tickets or like last time only to one ticket, with the purpose of keeping the minority united. After a vote the majority was in favour of giving candidates to the minority to his ticket. A little later the local PASOK cadre, Haris Dimitriadis, together with the minority PASOK member Hasan Kaşakçıoğlu, took contact for the same purpose. The minority politicians held a meeting in the mufti office, where they discussed if they should provide candidates to both tickets or like last time only to one ticket, with the purpose of keeping the minority united. After a vote the majority was in favour of giving candidates to one ticket only, but disagreement broke out again when they should decide on which. Most of those who were in favour of supporting one ticket were thinking about Stoyannidis. The old generation Hatipoğlu, Galip, and Yaşar wanted to support only one ticket, while the new

\footnote{110 Letter from Zeybek dated 01.04.1981 (İleri 211/24.04.1981). KODISO was founded in 1979 when four MPs broke away from the disintegrating EDIK.}
generation Kaşkçıoğlu, Bağdatlı and Sabahaddin Emin wanted to support two. Both of the party tickets did only accept 6 minority candidates each. When they did not accept 8 as the minority had asked for, some proposed to form an independent minority ticket. Kaşkçıoğlu opposed this as he had promised to be candidate for PASOK.111

As usual, the minority was vulnerable to various forms for pressure by the local authorities. In some cases this was a combined stick and carrot approach connected to the ambitions of minority politicians. According to Mehmet Bağdatlı, the prefect Panayiotis Foteas (ND) made great efforts to influence the minority vote. He called the minority politicians to his office (presumably one at the time) and promised them that they would take the place of the late Üstüner as candidate for ND in the general elections if they worked for him. Some minority politicians opposed this because Foteas did not behave well towards the minority. The minority MP İmamoğlu supported first the ticket which co-operated with the opposition (PASOK). A couple of days before the elections he was summoned to the prefecture. The next day he announced in the local Christian newspaper Hronos that he had no relation with this ticket (which Bağdatlı supported). Consequently this ticket was left in a difficult situation and did not succeed in winning the election, but had to satisfy itself with electing 3 minority members for the town council.112 In Komotini Stoyannidis’ ticket (ND) won the elections with 9,494 votes (69%), which gave 17 members to the city council, while Vavatsiklis’ ticket (PASOK) obtained 4,295 votes (31%) which gave 8 members (Gerçek 18/27.10.1978).

The minority was most numerous in many of the townships (kinótita) with a mixed population. Still, they would often elect Christian township presidents (kinotárhis), or co-operate with Christian candidates for various reasons. Hâki was hard in his criticism of those who made propaganda for Christian candidates in the villages. He complained that Christian township presidents were elected in areas with an overwhelming Muslim majority. In areas where Turkish tickets could be 100% sure of winning they preferred to be candidates on Christian tickets and did not make a “Turkish” ticket (İleri 129/20.10.1978). Mehmet Bağdatlı touches on the reason for this in another connection. He mentioned that even though the Muslim township presidents (kinotárhis) were elected democratically, the Christian secretaries ran most of the business. The Muslim township president had little actual say in what was happening. People asked themselves: We elected Turkish township presidents and nothing was done in the village, we elected a Christian township president and we got roads etc.

111 İleri 127/06.10.1978; Gerçek 17/09.10.1978.
112 İleri 266/17.09.1982. The article was written in retrospect by Mehmet Bağdatlı before the subsequent local elections.
These are all part of what Bağdatlı called the minority democracy. In the case of Ksanthi it was later revealed that there had been central interference in the choice of candidates. It had been suggested locally to include a Muslim on the PASOK ticket. On the eve of the publication of the ticket there came a message from the central offices of PASOK in Athens:

—Get the Turk out of the ticket.
—But he is all right and he will bring us a lot of votes.
—No “but”. Get him out immediately and another time do not do whatever you pleases… (Scholiastis 14/May 1984).

The Parliamentary Elections 18 October 1981

Before the 1981 general elections the minority press began early with speculations about who would become candidates for the various parties. Hasan İmamoğlu, Hasan Hatipoğlu, Sabahaddin Galip, Hafız Yaşar, and Adnan Yusufoğlu all hoped to become candidates for ND after the death of Osman Üstüner. They would be equally happy with an offer from PASOK, but there the situation was more or less settled. As always, there was intense rivalry involving both Muslim and Christian candidates. The manoeuvring for a place on the large party tickets continued in the following months, and there was much speculation. In the minority there was a desire for new politicians. People had grown tired of the old style politicians and were looking for young and educated candidates. Another tendency was for people to look for solutions from the Christian candidates to circumvent the discriminatory measures, particularly when it came to obtaining driving licence. Hâki stressed that the minority should vote for its own candidates, and not fall prey to these manoeuvres. He maintained that the Christians were looking for a way to make all the MPs Christians. They did not look for candidates in the minority who could be elected MPs, but people who would “carry water” (İleri 221/04.09.1981). A more substantial criticism of the anti-minority forces which tried to obstruct parliamentary representation for the minority was made by Onsunoğlu. He accused the newspaper Hronos for the racist, mud slinging articles which usually appeared in connection with elections or tension with Turkey, disguised in the cloak of “national interest”. This time Hronos had suggested to strip the minority members of their Greek citizenship. Onsunoğlu ended his article with the slogan: “DOWN WITH RACISM. FASCISM WILL NOT PREVAIL” (İleri 222/11.09.1981). Onsunoğlu’s critique was made against the attempts to isolate the minority from Greek political life. On the other hand, Hâki’s orientation was very much

113 İleri 227/16.10.1981. The position of the secretaries is important all over Greece as they enjoy life tenure, and have wide administrative responsibilities. For comparison, see the anthropologic work on a Christian township in northern Greece by (Karakasidou 1997: 175).
directed towards making the minority act as a separate body. In this respect he resembled the Christian nationalists who regarded the elections as a struggle between the Christians and the Muslims. However, it was not so easy for the minority to act as a unified body in the parliamentary elections. Hâki mentioned the many meetings in the mufti office before local elections, and asked if the general elections were less important, or if it did not suit their interests to hold these meeting (Ileri 222/11.09.1981). Certainly the last is the case, as virtually all the prominent minority members had the ambition to become MP. For this reason the personal ambitions overshadowed efforts of co-ordinated action by the minority.

The Struggle to Enter the ND Ticket

Since the places on the PASOK ticket were already occupied the remaining would-be candidates jockeyed for a place on the ND ticket. On the background of the minority’s experiences during recent years, Onsunoğlu criticised those who still looked to ND for thinking only about their personal interests (Ileri 220/28.08.1981). In particular Hasan İmamoğlu’s efforts were much in focus. Hâki reported a couple of months before the elections that İmamoğlu went to Athens to persuade the central committee of ND to let him run in exchange for the yes he gave in the presidential vote (Ileri 220/28.08.1981). The local press, in particular Patrida, wrote with large headlines that İmamoğlu was dangerous for the national interests. Local opposition built up, committees went to Athens, signatures were collected, and organisations put in motion (Ileri 277/03.12.1982). Onsunoğlu took an ironic approach to the matter and wrote in an article that İmamoğlu’s attempts to be admitted to the ND ticket had reached epic proportions (Ileri 221/04.09.1981). In an interview Hasan İmamoğlu presented the long story of his unsuccessful attempts to join the ND ticket. He said that he had been promised earlier by Karamanlis that he would be candidate. He had also talked with Rallis. They told him to be patient but finally he was deceived. As a result he advised the minority not to vote for ND, which “treacherously deceived me and consequently the whole minority” (Ileri 224/25.09.1981).

Hasan Hatipoğlu’s attempts to get on the ND ticket also ended in failure. This made him too turn against ND. Rodoplu asked jokingly why the two Hasans did not like ND? The answer was not related to the injustices against the minority, but to the fact that ND did not want them as candidates (Gerçek 62/02.10.1981).

Finally, Adnan Yusufoğlu and Hafız Yaşar were accepted for the ND ticket. It is clear that even those who became ND candidates had difficulties with defending their party. In an answer to Onsunoğlu’s article Adnan Yusufoğlu admitted that he was right in many things, but reacted to his assertion that the ND minority candidates were only thinking about their personal interests (Ileri 224/25.09.1981). In an interview Hafiz Yaşar explained his motives. He admitted that ND had not had a good minority
politic, but thought that the minority should try to get an MP for the governing party (*Gerçek* 62/02.10.1981).

In Ksanthi there was not such a large struggle around the candidatures. Celâl Zeybek was the foremost minority candidate for ND, just as in the last elections. The main concern before the elections in Ksanthi was that the large number of minority candidates with a certain vote potential would fragment the minority vote too much to make the election of a minority MP possible. Zeybek tried to play the Turkish nationalism card, in an attempt to counter leakage of votes to Christian candidates. In his appeal to the voters he mentioned among other things:

[...] Kinsmen! You will go to the ballot box thinking about all these bitter and actual realities and as a TURK you will not surrender your honour to someone who is not OF YOUR RELIGION, OF YOUR LANGUAGE, OF YOUR RACE. This is the command of Turkism [Türklük] and Islam [Müslümanlık] (*İleri* 226/06.10.1981).

**PASOK - The Rising (Green) Sun**

PASOK had the catch-all slogan “change” for the elections. It played on the dissatisfaction which had built up against the right-wing domination since the civil war. Nowhere was the desire for change more manifest than in the minority. It was thoroughly disappointed with the old regime and ready for new alternatives. Because the minority had a tradition for voting conservatively, there was a certain doubt about the minority’s willingness to vote for a declared socialist party such a PASOK. This can be sensed in some of the election material. In Rodopi Ahmet Mehmet and Hasan Kaşıkçıoğlu became candidates as expected. Ahmet Mehmet had already established his position in the previous elections, while Kaşıkçıoğlu developed a relationship with the party during the previous 3–4 years.

Ahmet Mehmet had excelled by his work as party cadre in PASOK. Since 1977 he had worked hard and systematically to serve the minority. After the 1977 elections he was elected to the town council and also served as primary school trustee (*Gerçek* 63/31.10.1981). Ahmet Mehmet held a higher profile in these elections than would be the case any time later. In his election advertisement he lashed out against the old establishment, and said that he was tired of the notables and rich minority members’ corruption (*İleri* 225/02.10.1981). Ahmet Mehmet had his electoral base in the urban minority population of Komotini. Onsunoğlu described the climate which elected Ahmet Mehmet in 1981 as a “radical populist movement”. Ordinary people had grown weary of the way their problems were handled by a closed elite. This group had no leader and embraced Ahmet. However, he did never become a leader figure because he did not have these abilities nor would he like that role. He only used these people to be elected MP. Afterwards he abandoned them, and they dispersed (*İleri* 292/25.03. 1983). Before the elections Ahmet Mehmet mentioned his commitment to the party program, but stressed that he was first of all he a minority MP. He pointed to the fact
that PASOK was socialist and would give equal rights and opportunities to everybody. When he added that PASOK was in favour of “change”, he obviously hinted to a change in the minority regime. He identified himself with the ordinary minority members, saying that he would always remain a MAN OF THE PEOPLE (*halkın adamı*). This is the slogan he has also used in subsequent elections. He attempted to portray himself as a man of the people moulding his image on Molla Yusuf. Hâki also remarked that Ahmet reminded him of Molla Yusuf (*İleri* 228/23.10.1981). Ahmet Mehmet was not a man of grand scale innovations. He tied his fortunes first of all to the party, and has been able to secure a central place up until the present by using this position to serve petty interests of the minority members.

The lawyer Hasan Kaşkçıoğlu appeared as a strong PASOK partisan in his campaign and said that he believed the party would solve the minority’s problems. He pointed out that as a socialist party PASOK would be treating all the citizens equally. Kaşkçıoğlu countered the old minority slogan that “For us it is the persons who are important, not the parties”. He considered this opinion to be bankrupt, and stressed that he did not run as a personality, but relied on the party (*İleri* 224/25.09.1981). In an appeal to the voters he said among other things:

Kinsmen,

Our votes are our pride [*şeref*] and honour [*namus*]. Pride and honour is priceless. The New Democracy party’s Christian candidates and only they, pretend to have authority 115 in the questions which are our most natural rights, our rights which their own party restricted and abolished. In connection to the oppression and discrimination applied against our minority which their own party is responsible for, they come and openly reduce between them our pride and honour with false promises and small concessions and want our votes. Let us show them that we do not sell our pride and honour and votes, that we keep them for ourselves. We are not for sale. We are ready to sell our hide dearly (*İleri* 227/16.10.1981).

Kaşkçıoğlu’s rhetoric against the practice of petty political patronage was in many ways related to the rhetoric of those who said that the minority should only vote for its own candidates, but he was more party oriented.

In an interview Orhan Hacıibram said that the right wing parties which ruled the country for years only brought discrimination and oppression to the minority. The minority members usually expressed this in the following way: “Now Democracy has come to Greece, but for us nothing has changed since the dictatorship.” Consequently the minority should not vote for the right wing parties. Besides this, some minority candidates consciously “carried water” for Christian candidates or worked to fragment the minority vote. In his advertisement he warned against those who tried to leave the minority without MP (*İleri* 225/02.10.1981). This was a reoccurring theme, and he would also refer to them as the “dark powers” (*İleri* 226/06.10.1981).

115 The phrase: *ellerindeki sahte mühürle süleyman kesilerek*, in the original is almost untranslatable. It is a variation of the Turkish saying: *Mühür kimde ise Süleyman odur* - whoever has the seal is Solomon, i.e. Whoever is empowered has the authority.
Besides the actual candidates for PASOK, many of the other young educated minority members supported PASOK and worked actively in the election campaign. Mehmet Bağdatlı and İbram Onsunoğlu expressed the priorities of the minority most eloquently in writing. Mehmet Bağdatlı made a long critique of the restrictions on the minority’s civil rights. The minority was excited about the prospect that PASOK would win and hoped to regain its rights (İleri 227/16.10.1981). In an article Bağdatlı summed up the minority’s expectations as follows:

In Western Thrace some of our Christian compatriots fear the Greek-Turkish friendship. They are old party men who obtained state loans to buy Turkish property and became suddenly rich. They consider it to be inconvenient to apply the laws equally to Muslim citizens and by this discrimination they continue their interests. They give tractor driving licences for money or votes. The minority is made to wait or is deceived in the state offices where they go for their affairs.

We want the PASOK government to put an end to this interest policy and have equal civil and constitutional rights. First we want security for the fields which remain in our hands, to use the tractors with driving licence, and to get our children and family under a roof.

These are our most natural rights and if they are not granted we will not be able to speak about socialism and democracy in Greece (İleri 299/30.10.1981).

İbram Onsunoğlu campaigned very actively for PASOK in the 1981 election and supported the candidate Hasan Kaşıklıoğlu. In an article he called ND a continuation of the junta as regards the treatment of the minority. He criticised the minority candidates who still looked to ND after the experiences during the 1977–1981 period. He claimed that those who worked for personal benefits in these elections and thought that the minority was little developed politically would be mistaken. Although there was no tradition for class struggle, there were reflexes. People would react to the way they had been treated (İleri 220/28.08.1981).

In a more extensive article he launched an attack at the political practice of ND:

It seems like the wind of change which blows throughout the country will make New Democracy fall from power in the 18 October elections like a rotten worm eaten pear.

To prevent this, New Democracy exploits to the utmost the possibilities it has by controlling the state mechanisms, violating fundamental democratic rules and plays once more in all its ugliness the game of persuading the voter, skilfully handing out concessions, favours, and promises and if needed intimidation. Ceremonies laying down the foundation to roads, schools, university, hospital, factory, payment postponement of the farmers’ and artisans’ debts to the bank, distribution of checks, appointment of civil servants through the window [i. e. outside the required procedure] in spite of that this is illegal…

What is the share of the big purse which is opened to Thrace and particularly to the Minority community? (!)

In our prefecture the New Democracy Christian candidates also want votes from the Muslim voters. In particular one, when he is calculating how many votes he will get, keeps a list of his minority votes neighbourhood by neighbourhood, village by village. Well, what do the New Democracy Christian MP candidates promise to the Minority people? Did they promise roads, schools, loans… to the village? Those who wanted the votes made promises to the Minority people, which the government has made into 3. class citizens, according to their class. “I arranged that two persons from your village got tractor driving licence, I will make arrangements for three more persons. It is not possible with building permits, but if you give me many votes I will arrange that too for one or two persons. I arranged that three hunting guns were returned to your neighbourhood, I will get hunting permits for five more…” And they say this shamelessly brazen-
faced as if they are making fun of them and try to make them swallow what they are serving them. [...] 116

In an interview he gave a very explicit critique of the policy towards the minority:

—Can you make a general evaluation of the political climate-situation in our Minority before the elections?
—Before the 18 October general elections we can sum up the discussions and evaluations by the Minority people about their problems in the following manner:

The minority is for fifteen years the target of an insidious, systematic, and gradual oppression and discrimination policy by the Junta and New Democracy governments. The Minority question must be recognised as a national [ulusal] oppression and discrimination question. The discrimination policy is a government policy established by the government in Athens taking into consideration the views of the local authorities and para-state networks [yan devlet örgütleri] and its application is left to local administrators with wide authorities. The general elections must from the minority’s point of view be evaluated as an opportunity on the one hand to give a struggle, on the other hand to find a solution for the Minority problem.

Before the 18 October elections the above thoughts are widespread among the minority and the formation of public opinion in this direction gives hopes. The Minority people become conscious, they diagnose its troubles correctly, extend their struggle, and seek for a fundamental solution to their problems. Looking at the 74 and 77 election results, the 81 results within the minority will be very different (İleri 226/06.10.1981).

He continued by saying that the minority has great hopes towards the new government in spite of the suspicion. The minority politicians were accused of being left behind the thoughts of the people. They were reluctant to make a struggle for the fundamental problems and made small calculations about how to get enough votes to become MPs. This was particularly the case for the ND candidates who tried to display black as white. He considered it a duty to mention the ugly games played against the minority by Hatipoğlu and the teacher Reşit Salıhoğlu in Rodopi and Mehmet Aga in Ksanthi as candidates for an extreme right royalist-junta party.

An open letter in Greek from İmamoğlu to Papandreu when he visited Komotini a couple of years later, gives us an idea of the climate during these elections. He pointed out that the “Muslim Greek Citizens” (Ellines polítes Musulmáni) had great hopes to PASOK’s promises of equal rights independent of nationality and religion. However, nothing had changed except that before the local elections in 1982 certain concessions were done to obtain votes.

What happened with “the green booklets” which included the principles of your party and the Muslims MP candidates of our prefecture brought with them when they visited the coffee houses of the minority and said:

“The day is drawing near when you will be relieved of the black days you lived under the right wing governments (meaning the period from 1967 to 1981). From the day PASOK will take over the government of the country we will live in freedom and equally before the laws, and our rights will not be violated. You will be free to buy whatever real estate you want whenever you want, to build, to obtain driving licences, agricultural machines. You will... and you will...”117

117 İleri 299/13.05.1983. Several minority members have mentioned 1981 as “the elections with the “green booklets” (containing the PASOK program) which the minority candidates waved in front of the voters as a symbol of the new policy during their campaign speeches.
The First Attempts to Create an Independent Ticket

Hatipoğlu criticised the two great parties for not selecting candidates who were preferred by the people, and leaving out the strong minority candidates (meaning himself). This made the various politicians come together and plan to make an independent ticket, but this did not succeed for various reasons. İmamoğlu and Hatipoğlu struggled to get accepted on the ND ticket, while Galip struggled to get on the PASOK ticket. When there was no result, the question about what they should do emerged. They were all strong candidates with political ambitions. At this point the idea of an “Independent Turkish Ticket” was suggested. Hasan Hatipoğlu has a long account where he presented his version of how this idea took form. In short he presented it as a problem which emerged when the parties did not accept the “natural candidates” of the minority. He claimed that it was a reality known by everybody that the choice of minority candidates was unsound. At this time Mehmet Bağdatlı came by his office and suggested that the politicians who were left outside the party tickets should form a minority ticket as a reaction to the policy of the parties. This ticket would include Hatipoğlu, Galip, İmamoğlu, and Müftüoğlu. Hatipoğlu said he accepted immediately this proposal. İmamoğlu was first positive, but later he declined to participate on an independent minority ticket. Galip then proposed to run on an independent minority ticket together with Hatipoğlu. Hatipoğlu objected to this as he claimed that it would not be a minority ticket, but a ticket of the two politicians Hatipoğlu and Galip. This would be much easier for the opposing minority candidates to fight, so that it would not be possible to obtain enough votes to be elected in the first distribution of seats (Akis 5/13.10.1981). Hâki mentioned briefly the independent ticket as a transient idea by the minority candidates who were not accepted to the major party tickets. He thought that nothing came out of it, because on such a ticket Galip would probably prevail and the others would “carry water” for him (İleri 225/02.10.1981).

The next possible solution was to join a small party. The social democratic KODISO and the revived Komma Proodeftikon (Party of the Progressives - KP) of Spiros Markezinis on the far right did not have minority candidates. Galip suggested that they should join the KODISO party, while Hatipoğlu suggested that they should run for the party which attracted most Christian votes, in order to obtain enough votes to become elected in the first distribution. Hatipoğlu thought that this was the KP of Markezinis, but he could not persuade Galip to participate on this ticket because of its junta leanings. This made Hatipoğlu criticise Galip for letting down the interests of the minority because of his personal ideals (Akis 5/13.10.1981).

Finally Hatipoğlu decided to run on the ticket of Spiros Markezinis, and was joined by the minority teacher Reşit Salıhoğlu. In his election newspaper he explains why he decided to participate in the elections. The article began in the following manner:
The reactions to the fact that the two super parties “PASOK”-“ND” for various reasons have excluded our minority’s political forces, continue to create a lot of comments among our kinsmen. The general opinion is that from now on the great parties will take the political representation of our community under their control, i.e. to compel the kinsmen voters to elect whomever they put on their ticket.

Paying attention to this very delicate matter which violates the pride of our minority, we felt the obligation as a real personality of our minority to participate in the elections under the umbrella of the great turcophile Markezinis’ “Progressive” party with the aim of resisting these deceitful parties [...].  

On the front page of his election newspaper *Akis* (3/01.10.1981), he had a strong attack on ND in an article with the following heading:

**The Junta was a Dark Period for our Kinsmen**

**The “Nea Dimokratia” Party was a Pitch-dark Period for Turkism**

**Are there Any of our Kinsmen who will Vote for “Nea Dimokratia”?**

**Turkism will Say “No!” With One Mouth with its Vote 18 October Against the Ordeal it Suffers**

Hatipoğlu displayed his rhetorical flair in his election propaganda, but there was not much substance. It can be summed up in the following: He portrayed Spiros Markezinis as a great turcophile who believed in Greek-Turkish friendship like Venizelos and Atatürk. Markezinis was aware of the fact that part of the population was deprived of its right. He said that all the citizens should be treated equally, and his party was against this kind of discrimination. Furthermore, Hatipoğlu tried to display that the minority candidates for PASOK or ND were not in a position to become elected, as this was only possible with the party of Markezinis. Everything was of course a gross lie, and difficult to sell even for Hatipoğlu. He complained about the oppression of the minority, but did not have any suggestions about how he would try to combat it. In fact, he wrote later that in his opinion only a well intended agreement between Athens and Ankara could solve the problems of “Western Thrace Turkism” (*Akis* 4/07.10.1981).

It was of course difficult for Hatipoğlu to be convincing in his attacks. This can be seen in the comments within the minority. When Hatipoğlu presented the party of Markezinis as “sound”, Rodoplu asked what he would have called ND which he had begged for months to become a candidate for if he had been accepted (*Gerçek* 62/02.10.1981). Onsunoğlu too, expressed disappointment when Hatipoğlu joined the KP ticket and considered it to be dangerous opportunism. As a result the danger for the minority to be left without MP increased. These developments pleased the “dark forces”. Onsunoğlu made a strong appeal to him to resign, and pointed to his “heroic resignation” in 1974 (*İleri* 225/02.10.1981). Reşit Salıhoğlu, who had joined

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118 *Akis* 3/01.10.1981. It is quite possible that Hatipoğlu plays on the old minority division between conservatives and progressives when he mentions the “Progressive” Party.
Hatipoğlu, complained after the elections that certain candidates had not been accepted to the big parties because of shrewd calculation.

Hatipoğlu was renowned for his many tricks. In an article titled: “Old tactics”, Hâki mentioned a trick which was known to be part of the Hatipoğlu repertoire, although he was not mentioned by name in this connection. This tactic hailed back to the 1950s, when some people in the minority tried to gain more respect and prestige by showing or attempting to show that they had the consulate and consequently the “motherland” behind them. This is something the minority newspapers too made use of. They tried to present themselves as the authentic voice of Turkey, and people were influenced. Hâki claimed that many of those who applied this tactic “do not love Turkey and the consulate more than themselves”. Some people did not even love them at all (İleri 227/16.10.1981).

From time to time we see reactions against Hatipoğlu’s opportunism. A reader of İleri sent a letter commenting on the sincerity of Hatipoğlu a few months after the elections. Hatipoğlu had written in Akın (26.11.1981) that someone who speaks about good intentions and sincerity must first of all possess them himself. The reader was not impressed by Hatipoğlu’s own conduct. In the same issue Hatipoğlu wrote about the ugly slogans written on walls like: “Turks out of Thrace-1955”. He should know that this was not written recently, but had been there for months. And some of these writings which his newspaper condemned after the election, began to be wiped out before the elections. Consequently the “news” in Akın about the “wall slogans” were wrong. Many of those slogans were written by people from the youth organisation (NEP) of the Proodeftikon party which Hatipoğlu was a candidate for. He directed four questions to Hatipoğlu:

a) Esteemed Hatipoğlu, did these ugly writings on the walls written before the elections not make you sad since you ran as MP candidate for a party with this kind of racist activities?

b) Did you now discover the writings “1955” which appeared for months on even your own house and you publish as hot news (!) in your newspaper?

c) According to you, is it a sign of sincerity and good intentions to publish this kind of false and deceitful news?

d) Should the new generation have such an “example of sincerity and good intentions”? (İleri 237/30.12.1981).

The Communist Party

In these elections some of the younger minority members, ran on the ticket of the Communist party (KKE). Mustafa Mustafa (1955–) in Rodopi and Nazif Ferhat (1954–) in Ksanthi. They have represented the left ever since. First for KKE and later for Sinaspismos. Both of them studied in Turkey. Mustafa Mustafa went to Turkey when he was 17 after graduating from a Greek secondary school, and has part of his political schooling from the Turkish Communist party which he was a member of. Interestingly, these are persons who have studied at Turkish Universities, but have a
very different outlook from the generation who studied in Turkish teacher colleges in the 1950s and 1960s. I guess it is natural that they have more of an internationalist approach, and try to surpass the narrow nationalist stereotypes. As part of communist ideology the focus shifts from the minority as the only unit and into other political categories like class struggle, etc. As a person Mustafa Mustafa had much sympathy within the minority. It is interesting to observe the reactions of Hâki, who belongs to the old mentality centred on Turkism. He went to an election speech of Mustafa Mustafa. Hâki thought that he could become a fine politician, but did not like the fact that he spoke about the general problems of the country. He wanted the minority communists to be minority minded (azinlıkçı) (İleri 225/02.10.1981).

The Election Results in Rodopi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mehmet Ahmet (PASOK)</td>
<td>8,996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasan Kaşıkçıoğlu (PASOK)</td>
<td>4,780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hafız Yaşar Mehmetoğlu (ND)</td>
<td>6,919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adnan Yusufoğlu (ND)</td>
<td>2,243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mustafa Mustafa (KKE)</td>
<td>876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmetoğlu Ali (KODISO-KAE)</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memiş Memiş (KODISO-KAE)</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasan Hatipoğlu (KP)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reşit Salihoğlu (KP)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabahaddin Galip (Independent)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total for minority candidates:</td>
<td>24,203</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This secured two minority MPs from Rodopi. Ahmet Mehmet for PASOK and Hafız Yaşar for ND. Hafız Yaşar is thought to have profited from being the only one from the old generation who took part in the elections. Most of his votes came from the older voters. PASOK took the lion share of the minority vote, and obtained an impressive result. The minority was close to elect a second minority MP for PASOK with Hasan Kaşıkçıoğlu. Onsunoğlu wrote jokingly after the election that the prefect Foteas (ND) had a great share in the minority’s vote for “change”, because of his oppressive policy. Although the minority was known to be conservative more than 65% voted for a left wing party. If Foteas had been prefect for four more years, the minority could have even elected 2 MPs for KKE (İleri 230/06.11.1981).

The Fine Balances

Hasan İmamoğlu, Hasan Hatipoğlu and Sabahaddin Galip withdrew before the elections. The minority press commented much on the fate of these politicians. An

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119 In 1981 the Christians cast 39,355 votes in Rodopi
article signed “M. H.” claimed that it seemed as if the big parties had agreed not to accept strong candidates to their tickets. This meant that if strong candidates like Galip, İmamoğlu, or even Hatipoğlu had run separately for small parties, the minority vote would have been fragmented and not a single MP elected. But their calculations went wrong as Galip and İmamoğlu withdrew early and Hatipoğlu followed later (İleri 231/13.11.1981). Hâki looked at the motives of the various candidates. He thought that Galip’s concern was simply to be elected at any prize. When he saw that he had no chance of election, it had no meaning to keep up his candidature even if he could have obtained a significant share of the minority vote. On the other hand, Hatipoğlu would not have withdrawn if he had better prospects, even though it would have been far short of securing his election. According to Hâki he was involved in dangerous games for his own profit (İleri 230/06.11.1981). In other words, Hatipoğlu withdrew in order not to make a fool out of himself. Although Hatipoğlu exaggerated his own strength, he was not the only one to raise the question of the party candidates’ legitimacy. The minority policy in general and the various manoeuvres before the elections gave ammunition to those who wanted to attack them, even when it was only for petty politic reasons. Mehmet Bağdathlı voiced the more general concern in an article which appeared right after the elections:

In a democracy the voters and those elected are mature people. They know why they voted and why they were elected. Those who were elected are the leaders of that community; they direct this community. The leaders work for the benefit of this community. Their own interests and the interests of the community coincide. When we speak about leaders we think about the MPs. We are not able to elect the MPs we want. First the parties indicate the candidates they want. The Minority elects their MPs from these candidates. During the recent years the attitude of the government party (except the last government, because we do not know its attitude yet) has been negative towards the Minority. Does a party with such an attitude want a candidate who works reasonably for the Minority interests as MP? (İleri 237/30.12.1981).

It is also a recurrent theme in the minority press that Kaşıkçıoğlu was close to being elected. Hâki exclaimed in his usual fashion that the minority could have elected 3 MPs if some “bird brains” had not voted for Christian candidates.¹²⁰ Later there were strong and persistent rumours about fraud against Kaşıkçıoğlu, which I have heard from several minority members. These rumours are difficult to check, but I will include them for the record: After the elections the content of the ballot boxes from the minority polling-stations was not brought directly to the court of first instance as the election law prescribes, but to the prefecture, where representatives for the parties were gathered. The results from the Muslim polling-stations were controlled at the prefecture and not announced immediately. After a while it became apparent that there would be elected three Muslim MPs from Rodopi; two for PASOK and one for ND.

¹²⁰ İleri 231/13.11.1981. Hâki estimated that about 6,000 votes went to the Christians (İleri 230/06.11.1981). I lack solid documentation but these figures seem a little high to me. He mentioned that the number of minority votes to Christians increased in villages like Asomatos (Bulatköy), Fillira (Büyük Sirkeli), Amaranda (Yahyabeyli), and Kalhas (Kalfa) (İleri 229/30.10.1981).
The order of the PASOK candidates were as follows: 1. Ahmet Mehmet, 2. Hasan Kaşıkçıoğlu, 3. Dimitris Tsetines, 4. Dimitrios Vradelis. The Prefect, Panayiotis Foteas, then conferred with the representatives of the parties present and it was agreed that for national reasons the results had to be modified. Some 3,000 votes were taken from Kaşıkçıoğlu and given to Dimitrios Vradelis who as a result obtained the second place on the PASOK ticket. This had repercussions in the following elections. In the 1985 elections the party determined the order of the candidates on the ticket, and it was not possible for the voters to change this with cross of preference. The last election result was taken as basis for the order. The first two, Ahmet Mehmet and Dimitrios Vradelis, headed the ticket but in reversed order because Ahmet Mehmet was from the minority. This made one of Tsetines adherents (Haris Dimitriadis) in the PASOK prefecture organisation protest, because in reality Tsetines had obtained most votes of the Christian candidates in the previous elections. He even contacted the party secretary, Akis Tsohatzopulos, in Athens. Tsohatzopulos did not believe him at first, but was convinced after speaking with the prefect on the telephone. However, it was too late to change the ticket. In November 1989, when Rodoplu won for the independent ticket they were ready to repeat the same number at the Prefecture. Haris Dimitriadis became angry—not because he cared for the minority, but because of the way they had excluded his friend Tsetines earlier—and threatened to reveal everything to the press if the results were tampered with. Consequently they did not dare to do anything. Afterwards he spoke with Rodoplu and said that his election would only be approved if he supported PASOK, in order to reap political benefit from what had happened. Consequently, it is important to have this incident in mind when we look at the behaviour of Rodoplu in 1989.
The Election Results in Ksanthi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Celâl Zeybek (ND)</td>
<td>3,997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hüsnü Serdarzade (ND)</td>
<td>1,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orhan Hacıibram (PASOK)</td>
<td>2,967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmet Faikoğlu (PASOK)</td>
<td>1,447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mehmet Emin Aga (KP)</td>
<td>3,725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haşim Çolak (KODISO-KAE)</td>
<td>446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasan Hacıbedel (KODISO-KAE)</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Üzeyir Hüseyin (KF)</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavit Boz (KF)</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nazif Ferhat (KKE)</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total for minority candidates:</strong></td>
<td><strong>14,846</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The minority press expressed early its concerns about that the number of minority candidates in Ksanthi would result in a fragmentation of the vote and leave the minority without parliamentary representation (İleri 224/25.09.1981). This was also what happened. Mehmet Emin Aga had no chance of election because of his party ticket, while the presence of two minority candidates on each of the major parties’ tickets fragmented the vote further (İleri 228/23.10.1981). Several minority newspapers were concerned about the leakage of votes to Christian candidates. Rodoplu wrote that unfortunately the minority was not able to elect MPs in Ksanthi in spite of the fact that it had 20,000 votes. Particularly the religious conservatives had a tendency to vote for Christian candidates, who obtained about 6–7,000 minority votes. Hâki pointed out that in spite of the vote distribution if the votes given to the Christians had gone to Celâl Zeybek or Orhan Hacıibram one of them would have surely been elected (İleri 230/06.11.1981).

The greatest difference between Rodopi and Ksanthi in these elections, was the lack of success for PASOK in the latter prefecture. Orhan Hacıibram and Ahmet Faikoğlu obtained less votes together in 1981 than Orhan alone in 1977. This is best explained as the after-effects of Orhan’s inglorious fall from his MP position. The similar reduct- ion in votes for the ND minority candidates is related to the resentment against the minority policy.

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121 In the elections KODISO was in alliance with the Komma Agroton ke Ergaton (Party of Peasants and Worker - KAE) of Aleksandros Baltatzis who was an important politician in Ksanthi. It received only 0.7 % on a national basis.

122 The Komma Fileleftheron (Liberal Party - KF) was revived for the elections by Nikitas Venizelos, the grandson of its founder. It received a mere 0.4% of the vote on a national basis, mainly in Crete.

123 Gerçek 63/31.10.1981. Again I lack good documentation, but the figure 20,000 voters seems likely. This means that only some 5,000 votes went to the Christian candidates, which nevertheless is 25%.
After the elections Orhan Hacıibram gave his interpretation of why the minority had not been able to elect any MPs. He estimated that the minority had about one third of the votes in Ksanthi. The state mechanisms supported some of the candidates who could not be elected to split the minority vote. Some minority members were candidates because of petty interests. Mehmet Emin Aga insisted on his candidature even though he knew he could not be elected. The Christian candidates obtained minority votes for money or promises. They had the mentality that whatever could be gained by deceiving some minority members before the elections was to their profit. Some minority members who had the potential, did not come out of their shell to struggle. The above factors were sometimes referred to intentionally to make the minority voters believe that “it is not possible to elect anybody from the minority.” He also complained about the ugly election propaganda of some of the minority candidates, and some officials and “dark forces” in the prefecture who worked hard so that the minority would not elect any MP.124

Much was written about the role of Mehmet Emin Aga in these elections. While he ran for the respectable EDIK in the previous elections, he was now on the ticket of the ultra right KP. Aga is the foremost representative of the old political order, and resembles in many ways a feudal leader. He had a tight patron-client relationship with many voters in the mountain villages above Ksanthi, who would follow him blindly whatever party he chose to run for. As chief secretary of the mufti office, and as being the one who in reality took care of business for his old father the mufti, he also used this position to further his political influence. There were several critical voices to this. Hâki remarked that the mufti office had become a politicians’ nest as the two secretaries were both candidates in the elections. Faikoğlu for Papandreu and Mehmet Emin Aga for Markezinis (İleri 225/02.10.1981). This critique was even more explicit in an anonymous letter from Ksanthi by someone who claimed to have been in the first line of the mufti office’s unifying effort to struggle against the discriminations. Now he was disappointed because the mufti office was exploited for personal political ambitions (İleri 226/06.10.1981).

Celâl Zeybek was very critical to the dispositions of the mufti office. In a letter he accused it for being part of the government’s policy of discrimination. Specifically, he criticised that the mufti did not want to repair the mosque in Ehinos, but waited for it to fall down only to have something to protest to the government about.125 In an interview Celâl Zeybek accused the “Ksanthi mufti office & sons Ltd.”, and the “dark

124 İleri 299/30.10.1981. In this connection it is worth mentioning that Stohos later published a document—allegedly from intelligence sources—that showed among other things that Faikoğlu had co-operated with KIP in these elections so that no minority MP would be elected. This was republished in the Turkish newspaper Günaydın 26.07.1992 under the title “Code name Iperidis”, which was the code name used for Faikoğlu in the document.

forces” they co-operated with, for leaving the minority without MP in Ksanthi (Ileri 231/13.11.1981). Zeybek was even more explicit in a later interview where he mentioned that certain people within the minority had been used as tools to leave the minority without MPs—without a voice.

[...] For example, the son of our Ksanthi mufti became candidate on Markezinis’ ticket. He told people, giving an oath, that he was 100% sure of being elected MP. However according to the election law, for Hafiz to be elected MP he would have needed to get one fourth of the votes given in the prefecture of Ksanthi. One fourth of the votes in the Ksanthi prefecture means some 15,000 votes. There was not a chance in a million that Markezinis’ party would get this amount of votes. When we as a responsible person warned our people, Hafiz said to our poor people “If I am not elected in the first distribution, I am one million percent sure of being elected in the second...” However, according to the election law a party must have at least 17% of the votes throughout Greece to be eligible for the second distribution. Hafiz who knew these finer points, and felt no shame about the turban he had on his head, lied deliberately to our people, and the result of the lie was that we remained without MP in the Ksanthi prefecture as the dark forces wanted.126

Judging from the election result, this explanation does not seem far fetched. The increase of votes for Aga from the previous elections cannot be ascribed to his party affiliation, which should have had the opposite effect. Consequently, it is probable that certain centres which were involved in the handling of minority affairs would try behind the scene to entice people to vote for a minority candidate who surely would not be elected.

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126 Ileri 279/16.12.1982. Mehmet Emin Aga is often referred to as “Hafiz”, a usual epithet for someone who knows the Koran by heart. The KP of Markezinis obtained 1.7% of the votes on a national basis.
PASOK in Power

PASOK’s landslide victory in the 1981 parliamentary elections is a watershed in Greek politics. PASOK’s political message was soaked in populist rhetoric against the privileged “oligarchy” and right-wing forces. The election victory broke the traditional monopoly of the right, and provided opportunities to large groups which hitherto had not been able to share in the spoils of power.¹²⁷ The policy of PASOK meant a reconciliation with the left which provided the basis for healing the wounds hailing back to the civil war. The change in power led to a certain democratisation and abandoning of old authoritarian practices which the minority too benefited from. The effects on the minority were first of all of an indirect nature, since the PASOK brand of nationalism prevented the minority from joining the left’s ideological incorporation in Greek society.

Another feature of PASOK was a new pride in foreign politics. It had accused the other parties for being vehicles of foreign interference and dependence. Against this PASOK advocated national independence and popular sovereignty, producing slogans with often thinly disguised nationalistic overtones (Elephantis 1981: 112). The new assertiveness in foreign policy also had repercussions on the relationship to Turkey, although the rhetoric against Turkish aggression often gave way to a more pragmatic approach when handling the actual differences. Again the Cyprus issue loomed high. Papandreu did not break off diplomatic relations with Turkey following the unilateral declaration of independence by the Turkish Cypriots in November 1983, but this event froze Greek-Turkish relations until the March 1987 crisis in the Northern Aegean, and ended all forms of dialogue between the two countries (Coufoudakis 1993: 172). Concerning the more specific problem of the minority relations, Yiannis Kapsis provides the following account:

The Greek-Turkish dialogue, on the level of general secretaries of the two Foreign Departments broke off in 1981. It is contested who is responsible for the break, and if it ought to be broken. But only the issue which the two general secretaries discussed during their last meeting would justify the break. Their subjects were the vakıfs and the land ownership regime (idioktisiakó kathestós) in Thrace. It was a factual recognition of a right which do not belong to Ankara (To Vima 03.09.1989).

The more self-assertive and independent policy of PASOK did not only make it refuse any aspirations towards Turkish tutelage over the minority. There was also a tendency to ignore the minority’s peculiarities and connections to Turkish culture. For example when Papandreu spoke in Komotini 20.05.1985, he did not mention the minority by name but proclaimed that “There is no religious, racial, or social

¹²⁷ For a critical look at these transformations, see (Mavrogordatos 1993)
discrimination in our party. All citizens are equal” (İleri 388/24.05.1985). However, in practice PASOK did not consistently abide by its socialist principles. Hâkı criticised PASOK, which explicitly claimed to be against racial discrimination, soon after it came to power. The prominent party members in Komotini and Ksanthi had all obtained some position. The exceptions were the minority PASOK cadres Orhan Hacıibram and Hasan Kaşkıçtaoğlu. Hâkı asked rhetorically if this was just a coincidence (İleri 264/03.09.1982).

Yiannis Kapsis

Under PASOK the minority affairs continued to be handled largely by the Foreign Department through the local offices in Komotini and Ksanthi. In this connection, the person who is most often referred to by the minority press is our old acquaintance Yiannis Kapsis. He became vice foreign minister in charge of Greek-Turkish relations under the PASOK governments of the 1980s, and in this capacity he was responsible for the handling of the minority issue. He is a person who has kept a high profile due to his work as journalist and author. As a consequence we know much more about him than is usually the case for government officials. Yiannis Kapsis (1929–) descends from a family of Asia Minor refugees who left their native Ayvalık (Kidoniés) in connection with the Greek defeat in 1922. The relationship to Turkey has held a central position in his journalistic and literary work. In one of his early works he described the fate of the Greek Orthodox during the last decade before the “catastrophe” in 1922. In this book Kapsis gives an intensely hellenocentric and passionate account of the events. It is almost like a fairy tale describing the struggle between good and evil. To a certain extent this represents a conscious choice by the author. In connection with a more recent book he made a point of the fact that he was not writing history, but presented the events in an emotional rather than rational fashion. During the junta he demonstrated his sensitivity over “national issues” by conducting an interview about Cyprus which resulted in the arrest of those involved and the shut-down of the newspaper Ethnos where it had been published (Vlachos 1972: 70–71).

His fanatical tendencies and animosity towards Turkey did not bode well for the minority. Already in 1959, Osman Nuri had written that the articles of Kapsis were not a reportage written by just any journalist. They represented the outline of a chauvinist administration’s policy towards the Western Thrace Turks (Trakya 785/15.12.1959). The content of his articles suggests that he had collaborated with

128 He was made Ifipurgós in April 1982 and became later Anaplirotis Foreign minister.
129 (Kapsis 1962). Later he also published a book about Turkish atrocities from the same period (Kapsis 1992).
130 Eleftherotipia 10.05.1996. Kapsis said this in connection with the presentation of his book To telefíeó stavrodómi, Athens 1996.
officials who were hostile to the minority, a relationship he possibly kept up. A
usually well informed left wing periodical claimed that anti-Turkish forces in the secret
police (KIP) were his main advisers in the 1980s (Scholiastis 61/04.03.1988). He
also had close relations to the Metropolitan in Komotini, Damaskinos, who became
notorious in minority circles and was often accused of instigating the Christian
population against them. In short Kapsis was not a minister for the population of
Greek Thrace as a whole, but for Hellenism and the Greek Orthodox.

Kapsis was intensely influenced by the fate of the Greek Orthodox minority in
Istanbul, and drew attention to its fate when justifying his own politics. Sometimes his
outlook and style give the impression that he wanted to beat Turkey at its own game.
Publicly he expressed it in the following fashion:

The international treaties are applied and interpreted—on the basis of the Law of Treaties—with
the term reciprocity. In the Lausanne Treaty the reciprocity appears in its strongest form—under
the form of condition. Under the condition that Turkey will fulfil the obligations, then—and only
then—Greece, too, will act accordingly. And Turkey has breached this condition in the most
provocative and crude fashion—she has destroyed politically, economically but also even
physically the Greek minorities in Istanbul, Gökçeada, and Bozcaada.

[…] The events of 55 shocked the Public Opinion. Our reaction—in its totality—provokes shame
even today. And then we lost even one more opportunity: Of course not to expel, by force, the
minority—which there were many suggestions and even plans for—but to announce the chapter
on “Protection of Minorities” in the Lausanne Treaty to be in abeyance. To cut the umbilical cord
between Ankara and the minority.

His endeavours to “cut the umbilical cord” between the minority and Ankara is
among other things evident in certain crude initiatives in the education sphere. When
he visited the Pomak area above Ksanthi people complained about the lack of teachers.
Kapsis offered to bring teachers from Saudi Arabia. When people asked about the
possibility of having teachers from Turkey, he answered that this was impossible (İleri
345/25.05.1984). Kapsis’ suggestions represented an authoritarian attempt to over-
emphasise their Muslim identity to the detriment of their Turkish, without giving
serious thoughts about their education needs.

Kapsis’ excellent connections in Greek mass media gave him ample opportunities
to propagandise his views (cf. Scholiastis 61/04.03.1988). His consummate rhetorical
skills and manipulative talents were employed to create an image of the minority which
suited his policy. By distorting the facts and having recourse to wild exaggerations he
put the minority in a very unfavourable light to the Greek public. To a certain degree
he functioned as an ideologist to nationalist Greeks, who would adopt many of his
arguments. He had recourse to the frequent devise in nationalistic discourse of
presenting the minority as a “national danger”—commonly referred to in Greek as

131 Eleftherotipia 15.02.1998. Interview of the metropolitan Damaskinos by the journalist team
known as O los tis Kiriakis. Damaskinos obviously appreciated Kapsis who also had supported the
metropolitan economically.

132 To Vima 03.09.1989. His notion of reciprocity seems tied to a peculiar interpretation of article
45 of the Lausanne Treaty.
kindinoloyía—which ultimately would legitimise any kind of measures against it. In his articles he expressed views such as:

And today the instigators of the “minority issue” do not speak of “Muslim” or even “Turkish minority”, but about “Turkish community”. They do not speak about minority rights but “self-government [aftodiíkisi]”. It was with exactly those two critical terms Denktaş started his campaign with in the 60s to create today’s pseudo-state.

 [...] The children of the minority are taught only Turkish and are soaked in the conviction that they are Turks who live, only temporarily, under Greek administration.133

He also provided a completely distorted picture of the minority’s living conditions. The article “Who are oppressing whom in Thrace?” is a case in point, where he portrays the situation in Thrace as Muslims oppressing the Christians.134 In a comment, Hatipoğlu mentioned correctly that the many mistakes and distortions in the article would never hold up in a round table discussion with the minority (Akin 1079/15.02.1993). Needless to say, this comment had no repercussion outside the minority. Thus Kapsis was free to impose a certain image of the minority from a superior position, while the minority was unable to present its view to a larger Greek audience. Against lack of better judgement, Kapsis seems to have thought that he could even impose his views on the minority press.135 Hatipoğlu and Kapsis are in many ways two of a kind, and in this case Hatipoğlu had the “home court advantage”.

While Kapsis’ deliberate misrepresentations often made him look better than he was, it is nevertheless impressive to see what he was able to present in the Greek press under his signature. For example, when commenting on that many from the Greek minority in Albania left for Greece, and that Albania attempted to raise the issue of an Albanian minority in Greece, he expressed the following concern: “At a time when there are attempts to rearrange the borders between Balkan countries with minorities as pretext, Greece risks losing her last minority, which could be utilised—if nothing else—as a trump card in negotiations” (To Vima 02.06.1991). In other words, he proposed unabashedly to utilise the minorities as cards in foreign policy games, even when it was the case of a kindred minority. Kapsis can be both rude and ruthless. When more recently the vice foreign minister Hristos Rozakis came under attack by the internal opposition in PASOK, the government spokesman characterised Kapsis’ initial declarations as “indecent” (aprepís), Kapsis countered by saying that: “I am not interested in social decency (evprépia), but national dignity (aksioprépia)” (Eleftherotipia 04.01.1997). In this way he portrayed himself as the guardian of the

133 To Vima 03.09.1989. For a complete translation, see Appendix 5, text 12. For a minority reaction cf. Gerçek 245/09.09.1989, where Rodoplu calls Kapsis out of touch with realities. 

134 To Vima 07.02.1993. For a complete translation, see Appendix 5, text 13. 

135 Akin 876/06.05.1986. Letter to Akin from Kapsis dated Athens 08.04.1986 where he engaged in a polemic about the appointment of muftis. This sparked off a long series of answers to Kapsis by Hatipoğlu.
national interest, an interest which was above the interest of the people who made up
the nation, and in Kapsis’ efforts to defend this interest the end justified the means.

In his writings Kapsis would usually present a mixture of nationalist rhetoric and
flattering of Papandreu. The PASOK cadre who kept a high profile on “national
issues” had pulled the strings behind the scene for years. When they lost the power
they had through Papandreu they reacted strongly. In the words of Stefanos
Tzumakas:

They wore the mask of the patriot and the sensitive to social issues, particularly those who did
not say anything for 20 years. Together with them also certain journalists lost power who now
rage and surpass one another in inaccuracy, fabricated stories and related activities.

Tzumakas placed this tactic in the following tradition: In the 1960s under ERE there
were the miasma and the patriots (ta miásmata ke i ethnikófrones). While under the
jury and in the 1970s there were Greeks and anti-Greeks (i éllines ke i anthéllines). In
the 1990s the professional patriots of PASOK tried to divide the Greeks into the
submissive and the patriots (endotikí ke patriótes). “This was always the logic of the
ultra-right. These divisions facilitated some demagogues to portray the country
surrounded by dangers and they themselves were of course our saviours” (ibid.).

During this period when Kapsis was loosing his influence he also tried to slander
the Minister of Transport, Tasos Mandelis, in relation to his record during the junta.
However, Mandelis reacted strongly and countered the accusations of Kapsis
(Eleftherotipia 10.12.1997). It is important to take notice of the kind of methods
Kapsis would employ even towards high ranking party cadres. Of course, these
people were in a good position to defend themselves. The minority had been a much
easier victim.

Work in Parliament

After the elections, neither of the two minority MPs left any mark in parliament.
The only activity documented is their oath on the Koran when they swore into
parliament on 16 November 1981:

I swear in the name of the Almighty God and his only Prophet, who is Mohammed, to keep
my faith in the Fatherland, obedience to the Constitution and the laws of the State, and to fulfil
conscientiously my duties.

As mentioned earlier, Hafiz Yaşar was not particularly suited for politics beyond
the local level. The same can be said about the much younger Ahmet Mehmet. After
his election he ceased to be the standard bearer for any minority faction. He worked
well for the party and never challenged it. This was evident in the 1982 local elections
(İleri 288/25.02.1983). Onsunoğlu has an extensive parody of Ahmet Mehmet’s

136 For a very characteristic case, see (Kapsis 1990).
137 Eleftherotipia 14.12.1997. The interview with the Minister of Agriculture, Stefanos Tzumakas
(PASOK), reveals many unsavoury practices of this group.
working style. In short, Ahmet Mehmet avoided to do much with the minority problems as he knew this would open new questions. He avoided propositions in parliament, statements to the press, or initiatives to stage protests. When the minority problems led to confrontations he preferred to defend the government’s policy. He never accepted to support the Evlalo protest (see below) (*İleri* 289/04.03.1983). And Onsunoğlu continued:

> It is a fact that Ahmet did not and will not bring the Minority’s problems to the parliament and the departments in Athens, and of course not to European institutions, this is something he does not refrain from saying candidly himself. Since he never promised his voters to do so; [he thinks] they should not criticise him. [...]

> On the other hand, there is the new decentralised government system, the centres of decision have been moved from Athens to the prefectures. The Minority affairs have been transferred from the three interior-foreign-public order departments to office 105 of the prefecture. And instead of going to Athens for the Minority affairs Ahmet goes to office 105, which he works in cooperation and harmony with. No Minority problem falls outside the authority of office 105, and makes it necessary to go to Athens or Europe. So a perfect decentralised and self-management socialism is applied, and the Minority has been granted the privilege of a separate prefect. Yes, the Minority has been granted the right to employ the head of office 105, Mr. Pavlidis as its own prefect. But still there are some duties in Athens. To support completely the decentralised and self-management socialism spirit, a Minority member should be appointed in the place of the Minority prefect in office 105. Ahmet should realise this in some way or another. Thank God that this minority has now raised PASOK adherents who desire to become prefect.¹³⁸

In fact, after 1981 it seems that the minority affairs were mainly handled by these “Offices of Cultural Relations”. There are countless references to them in the minority press. Hatipoğlu describes their work in the following fashion:

> The honourable Prime minister [Papandreou] says that the problems of our minority are an internal question. In a democratic country the problems of the citizens are taken care of internally by the relevant public service. Among these public services the offices tied to the Foreign Ministry and above the Foreign Minister have no place.

> But is this the practice? Unfortunately not! Today in both our prefecture and Ksanthi there are offices operating under the title Office for Cultural Relations headed by career diplomats from the Foreign Ministry. All their activities have only to do with the minority. All the affairs of the minority people with public services also pass through these offices. The number of the office and the diplomat heading the office in our prefecture are known even by the children of the Minority. Because, if someone goes to the Prefecture for building permit, purchase-sale, passport or whatever business can come to mind, he is met with these words: “Your file did not arrive from 105; We sent your file to 105 etc.” Now we would like to learn: For example, what has the office 105 staffed by a Foreign Ministry official to do with the procedure of obtaining passport which is the business of a Ministry of Interior office?¹³⁹

This is a fairly straightforward description of the minority regime, phrased as a critique against the system. However, the minority also found ways to adjust to these anomalies in the administrative system, which led to countless accusations between various minority members centred on their relations with these offices. In time the

¹³⁸ *İleri* 290/11.03.1983. Office 105 in the prefecture belonged to the aforementioned “Office of Cultural Relations” which serves directly under the Foreign Department.

¹³⁹ *Akin* 949/ 09.06.1988. The article is written as a comments to the debate in parliament 5, 6, and 7 June. For an earlier example, see *İleri* 306/19.08.1983, or the many references to the Ksanthi office in connection with the Evlalo conflict (Dede 1988b: 30–31). The offices have also been referred to many times in the Athenian press. See in particular the article by Stamatis Hatzistamatiu in *Rizospastis* 28.03.1989; the interview of Ibram Onsunoğlu and Orhan Hacıibram in *Eleftherotipia* 14.02.1990; the article by the lawyer Yiorgos Apostolidis in *Ayı* 13.10.1996.
accusations and counter accusations between the minority members would take on
great dimensions and be one of the dominating features of the political game. Such
accusations would play on one of the most sensitive spots of the minority
members.\footnote{To obtain an impression of the graveness of these accusations and the sensitivity of minority members, see the discussions by Onsunoğlu in \textit{Trakya'nın Sesi} 402/05.01.1991 (Appendix 5, text 14), and Hâki in \textit{İleri} 728/17.09.1993 (Appendix 5, text 15).}

It should be noted that at this time the minority still very much looking to Athens to
solve its problems. In connection with the expropriation issues, which will be dealt
with later, several committees went to see the central authorities. The minority would
also complain about the situation with memorandas to the prime minister, etc.\footnote{For characteristic examples, see Memorandum to Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou, Komotini 14/5/1983 (Appendix 5, text 16), and \textit{Trakya'nın Sesi} 67/14.05.1983, “Open letter to prime minister Andreas Papandreou”, by İbrahim Onsunoğlu (Appendix 5, text 17).}

**Local Elections 17 October 1982**

In the local elections in 1982 there were two main tickets in Komotini. The ticket
led by the mayor Andreas Stoyannidis (ND) and a ticket supported by the left
(PASOK-KKE) led by Haralambos Katsimigas. As earlier the older generation wanted
to make the minority vote exclusively for Stoyannidis, while the young generation
favoured Katsimigas and eventually the minority vote was split between these two. In
their comments to the election campaign, Hâki and Rodoplu regarded both the ticket
leaders as nationalists who would try to obtain the minority vote without giving much
back (\textit{İleri} 263/27.08.1982; \textit{Gercek} 75/20.09.1982).

In early September İbrahim Onsunoğlu took the initiative to a couple of meetings.
The purpose was to support the Katsimigas ticket as the most democratic alternative,
but not without demanding compensation in return. This is somewhat different from
the old practice of asking for petty favours and represents political demands of more
general significance. The demands were as follows:

1. In Komotini $\frac{1}{3}$ of the voters were Turks. This corresponded to 12 candidates, and
   it was undemocratic to only allow for 6 candidates on the ticket.

2. They should get the word of the ticket leader that there would be no discrimination
   in obtaining construction permits for building houses.

3. Children’s playgrounds should be made in the Turkish quarters.

4. The right according to the law to inscribe themselves in the public registers of a
   place after living there for two years should be valid also for the minority members.

The last proposal was of great significance, because it would give the many
Muslims who had settled on the outskirts of the town during the last decades the right
to vote in Komotini instead of the villages they came from. The initiative was not
welcomed by the minority PASOK politicians, who would not participate in any
initiative which was not in line with the party. Sabahaddin Emin and Hasan Kaşıkçıoğlu opposed the proposal, and called it separatism (bölücülük). This made Hâki ask if they were working for PASOK or for the minority (İleri 266/17.09.1982).

In an interview, Onsunoğlu made an attempt to analyse the situation. He maintained that the minority was not used to work together, but particularly in these local elections the attempts to work collectively were sabotaged. The minority was not politicised. This was to a large degree connected to that the minority was not treated equally, so that it did not make sense to express itself in parties and political ideologies on the same level as the Christians. The minority was first of all conscious politically as part of the minority (azınlıkçılık), and was under the present conditions unable to put a party ideology on top of this structure. The circumstances made it necessary for the minority to wage a united struggle against the policy of discrimination independent of party adherence. Onsunoğlu could to a certain degree accept that a minority member worked for a party, if he believed that by means of this party and its ideology it would be possible to lift the oppression and discrimination against the minority. However, he considered it dangerous and harmful when minority members worked blindly for their parties and did not stand up for the rights the minority has been deprived of. The lack of organised struggle by the minority was partly due to the internal organisation of the minority:

In both the prefectures [Ksanthi and Rodopi] a feudal understanding of politics dominates. According to this, it is attempted by the political feudal chieftains [siyaset derebeyleri] to grind to a halt and leave out the persons who convey new opinions by having recourse to all kinds of tricks and deceit.

It is possible to evaluate the last internal Minority conflicts in both of our prefectures from this point of view (İleri 267/24.09.1982).

The minority candidates would wage more of a regular election campaign for their ticket than previously. Mehmet Bağdathı on the Katsimigas ticket argued that the old mayor tried to get minority votes by emptying some cement in front of a few mosques. The minority had experienced some of the worst oppression when he was in office. When decisions were taken against the minority, he closed the mouths of the minority town council members on his ticket. The minoeiry’s situation improved after the prefect Foteas left the previous year, but the fundamental problems had not been solved (İleri 266/17.09.1982).

In a direct appeal to the minority on the occasion of the religious holiday Kurban bayramı, Stoyannidis wrote that he had always been a friend of the minority. As mayor he had always struggled to help the minority and people should not listen to various gossip and slander against him. Mehmet Bekir on the Stoyannidis ticket lashed out with strong attacks against PASOK, including personal attacks on...

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142 İleri 268/01.10.1982. For another appeal in the minority press, see Trakya'nın Sesi 36/13.10.1982.
Katsimigas. He claimed that the Christian candidates for PASOK were former members of the local ultra right secret organisation Akritas. Those who spread fear in the Muslim quarters in 1975 had now become socialists (*Ileri* 270/15.10.1982). After the elections Hâki wrote that Stoyannidis’ election newspaper (*Sesiniz*) resorted to mudslinging and personal attacks rather than solid arguments. An interesting point is that it abandoned the term “Muslims” and called the minority “Turkish” (*Ileri* 271/22.10.1982). This is an example of the kind of double standards resorted to during elections. While according to official policy the minority was classified as Muslim, party members would not hesitate to call the minority members Turks to get some extra votes. This seems, in particular, to be valid for right wing parties.

**Votes for Christians**

There is much information in connection with these elections about the relationship between Christians and Muslims in the rural townships (*Kinótita*). The general pattern was that some prominent minority members would work as intermediaries for Christian candidates in return for personal benefits. Hâki, with his minority centred approach, urged people not to listen to the rich minority members who worked for the Christian tickets. They should not be believed when they said they worked for the interest of their village. Hâki pointed out that the minority newspapers did not write about this subject, so the persons involved were not exposed. The reason was that the newspaper owners were themselves from prominent families (*ocaktan*), and as they had ambitions to become elected MPs they wanted the help of these wealthy villagers in the general elections. Hâki threatened to publish the name of the wealthy minority members who supported Christian candidates he learned about. He found it wrong that they on the one hand took refuge under the Christian umbrella and on the other “sold Turkism” in their rhetoric.¹⁴³ The wealthy village minority members would use various kinds of arguments to support the Christian candidates. They claimed that a Christian township president (*kinótárhis*) would protect them from trouble with the police station, and they would also ask when a Minority township president was able to get anything done? The minority villagers would generally not dare to protest against this (*Ileri* 265/10.09.1982). Hâki warned against those who attempted to scare the voters whether they were Turks or Greek Orthodox. Some would tell people that they would not get passports from the prefecture or visas from the consulate if they did not work for them (*Ileri* 267/24.09.1982). This shows that such kinds of extortion with reference to Turkey were already part of minority politics, but they had not reached the proportions they would later and Hâki condemned this practice without

¹⁴³ *Ileri* 263/27.08.1982. See also *Ileri* 264/03.09.1982 for similar comments about the horse trading behind the scenes by the declared Kemalists who accused the conservatives of being sold out Greek adherents.
making a major point out of it. A villager wanted Hâki to write about the situation in his village:

– Write, my friend. Write that the old game takes the stage again! Our neighbouring Christian bosses [şerbetçiler] started to be tough again [altın kesilmeye başladular]. They say: “It you do not vote for Kosta you will not be able to collect your tobacco!” They say: “The police will not leave your door!” The flatterers and hypocrites among us do not remain idle. With words like: “You cannot make the bosses angry!” “We will get into trouble!” “Can Mehmet be elected head of village [müdür, i.e. translation of Greek kinotárhis]”, the collaborators try to do their job. They compete to please the strong Christian bosses… Still some bosses resort to the old tactic: With the words “Tomorrow I will bring five driving licences for tractors. If you elect me head of village I will bring more. And I am also member of the governing party. If you do not elect me it will be difficult for you…” they try to cajole and threaten [etek altından sopa göstermek] people i.e. our people. Where are the mouths which said that the system has changed? Those who became more royalist than the king? The same manners and methods which were used previously to scare our people are applied again. Write all of it, my friend. Try to awaken and give courage to our people. Otherwise they will dandle our people again. Once more with a strength of 2,000 Muslims…” (İleri 269/08.10.1982).

As usual, Hâki would extort the minority to only vote for its own candidates. For these elections he made the slogan: “Let him be of mud, as long as he is one of us!” (Çamurdan olsun, bizden olsun!). In other words, the qualifications of the candidates were irrelevant, as long as they were from the minority. He ended one of his articles with the following appeal:

As for the townships with a majority of minority people, the only road to follow without hesitation is to create a minority ticket. Because, whatever political party we adhere to, we must never forget that first of all we are a Minority community. It is also we who can best understand our problems. The best Christian cannot understand us like we do ourselves. For this reason, our election slogan must be: “He can be of mud, as long as he is one of us!” (İleri 266/17.09.1982).

Hâki contended that not even one vote should be given by Muslims to Christian candidates. When someone came and asked Hâki if it was religiously permissible to vote for a Christian, Hâki first hesitated as there were people with higher religious education than him but finally answered:

– So listen: When there are Muslim candidates, it is not permissible according to religion [ser'an caiz] for Muslims to vote for Christian candidates, whether it is local or general elections!
– So, You want to say… “It is not possible!”?
– Yes! It is not possible! It means to vote in a way that is not religiously permissible [haram], like drinking alcohol, gamble, commit adultery, and eat pork… A sin of this calibre.
– Less or more?
– Not less; it is more! So bear that in mind… (İleri 268/01.10.1982).

After the elections Hâki expressed his misgivings against those who voted for Christian candidates in the form of a fetva:

Our second fetva…

QUESTION: There are 3,000 Muslim votes in a township, there are also 500 Christian votes. In this municipality there are two candidates for township president (kinotárhis), one Muslim and one Christian. Here no Christian can vote for the Muslim candidate. They regard this to be both religious and national treason. In spite of this the Muslims vote for the Christian candidate and elect him township president. Are there doubts about the faith of the Muslims who vote for the Christian candidate in this township? If there are, what must be done?
ANSWER: There are doubts and they must refresh their faith! (İleri 271/22.10.1982).

While both Hâki and Onsunoğlu advocated a minority oriented program it is necessary to grasp the immense difference in scope between them. Hâki was in many
ways close to the old concept of “closed communities” and did not want to corrupt the minority’s unity and separate existence as a group. Onsunoğlu was inspired by modern socialist concepts. He would probably have preferred for the minority members to participate as individuals according to ideological convictions. However, before the minority members became equal Greek citizens, it would be impossible for them to function normally in Greek politics. Both Hâki and Onsunoğlu criticised those who sacrificed the minority’s interest for their personal affairs with the political parties. In Hâki’s case it was a question of betraying their group solidarity, while in the case of Onsunoğlu it was a question of corrupting the political priorities imposed by the policy of discrimination.

The Election Results

In Komotini the minority elected 8 persons to the town council, which were the same as in the last elections. These were evenly distributed with 4 from each ticket. Katsimigas won the elections with the narrow margin of 50 votes and became the new mayor (Trakya’nın Sesi 215/03.10.1986). In the town of Ksanthi the minority supported the ticket of Kostas Benis (ND) because of a teacher conflict with the authorities and three minority candidates were elected. Only Ahmet Faikoğlu was elected from the Hristos Huhos (PASOK) ticket. In the Ksanthi prefecture 9 Muslim township presidents (kinotárhes) were elected, while in the Rodopi prefecture the number increased from 9 to 11.

The Christian majority showed great interest in the minority’s electoral behaviour. Some of the comments in the local press were clearly hostile and accused the minority of being directed by “foreign centres” or by the Turkish Consulate. The newspaper Hronos would use phrases such as “the directed minority votes” in its reportage. Hâki pointed out that these accusations left traces among the Christians, and had been written to create suspicion against the minority. He was glad to see that Onsunoğlu, as the only one among the younger generation educated in Greek universities, had taken up the task to defend the minority in the Greek press. In a letter published in Hronos 06.10.1982 Onsunoğlu wrote that since the newspaper claimed that the minority was directed, it should say in which direction it was directed in both Komotini and Ksanthi and display its evidence. Hâki pointed out that this was read by at least 2–3,000 Christians. With such a voice to defend the minority, the accusations would no longer be left unanswered. Earlier the minority newspapers Akın and Azılık Postası had often published answers to such accusations (in Turkish), but these were for internal consumption and had no impact outside the minority (Ileri 270/15.10.1982). Of course, the even distribution of votes in Komotini meant that neither the adherents of Haralambos Katsimigas nor Andreas Stoyannidis could accuse the minority of following directions from any centre.
Euro-Elections 17 June 1984

The minority showed comparatively little interest for the European elections. There were no personal interests at stake, as it could not muster the strength to elect a Euro-MP by itself. The minority politicians were more concerned about jockeying for position before the parliamentary elections (İleri 345/25.05.1984). This displays their inability to take interest in matters outside the narrow scope of minority politics. Those with an ideological commitment were the exception. Nazif Ferhat made a speech in Turkish in a rally by the communists in Komotini. Hâki did not refer to the content of the speech, but mentioned simply that the minority was pleased to hear a speech in Turkish from the town square (İleri 347/08.06.1984). Onsunuoğlu made an attempt to induce the minority to display its discontent with the situation by a protest vote. He wrote a manifesto where he urged the minority to vote blank, but did not get any response. Instead the minority displayed its dissatisfaction with PASOK by voting for ND. In both the prefectures of Rodopi and Ksanthi ND obtained about 50% of the total votes compared to roughly 30% by PASOK (İleri 349/22.06.1984). Hâki stated that the minority voted for ND to protest against that PASOK had not stopped the discrimination. The local PASOK cadre reacted by saying to a local newspaper that the minority should be punished for abandoning PASOK. This newspaper went even further in an attempt to solve the “mystery” why the minority did not vote for PASOK. It wrote that “The MIT [Turkish intelligence] agents who came here on the eve of the elections, made the minority vote for Nea Dimokratia.” Hâki reacted by asking why they did not write about MIT involvement when the minority voted for PASOK in 1981 and in the recent local elections. He mentioned that the local press wrote something about the minority every day. While some of it was close to reality, other stories were about “imagined agents” like the story above. Hâki printed a complete translation of a letter by one S. Papanastasiu in the local Greek newspaper Hronos (20.06.1984), which he thought to be a correct evaluation of the elections. In short this letter pointed out that:

ND obtained its highest percentage of votes throughout Greece in Rodopi. This was due to the minority vote, which wanted to punish PASOK for not keeping its word. In 1981 the PASOK cadre toured the villages showing the green booklet promising equal rights to the minority. PASOK did not keep these promises which was the first cause of the minority vote. The second cause was the recent fines because

144 İleri 348/15.06.1984. Abdülhalim Dede campaigned strongly to make the minority vote blank under the slogan: “YES to Europe, NO to the parties”, see Trakya’nın Sesi 112/31.05.1984 and the following issues. Hasan Hatipoğlu, on the other hand, warned that voting blank was against the interests of the minority (Akin 839/07.06.1984).
145 This is not entirely correct. On a national basis ND had its best result in Lakonia (51.9%), with Rodopi second (50.9%), and Ksanthi third (49.9%). Conversely PASOK had its worst result in Ksanthi (31.2%) immediately followed by Rodopi (31.7%). In the town of Komotini it is estimated that ND obtained roughly 70% and PASOK roughly 10% of the minority vote.
of the extraordinary zeal of the revenue office and the closing of the minority associations which had the word “Turkish” in their name. These were the reasons, and the thoughtless claims of the “mehmetologists” that there were directions from Ankara could only provoke ridicule. They use this argument to camouflage their own inability. The PASOK “party cadre” now spoke in the coffee houses of taking a tough revenge on the minority. A local leader said: “Now we were given free hands to take a tough line.” Papanastasiu criticised the thoughtless and anti-democratic attitudes of these men.146 The article indicates that many Christians were also uneasy about the policy of discrimination and that it was not so easy to use “Turkish interference” as an excuse at the time.

Prefecture Elections

The first elections to the prefecture council on 23 January 1985 provided a short intermezzo before the general elections, and give us some indications about the internal political climate in the minority. Four minority members were candidates in Rodopi and Ksanthi: İbrahim Onsunolu, Nazif Ferhat, Orhan Hacıbrahim, Abdülhalim Dede. Hâki criticised the minority newspapers Akin and Gerçek, which did not write a word about it beforehand; they did not even give the names of the minority candidates. On the other hand, they whispered a whole lot against the candidates. The muftis too showed no particular interest and spoke against the candidates. The only politician who was positive to the minority candidates was Celâl Zeybek. Hâki’s ideological orientation made him put this into the framework of Muslim–Christian competition. He complained about the minority and minority institutions’ inactivity, while the Christians “did their job”. As a criticism of the lack of engagement and the unsavoury aspects of internal petty politics he ended his article with an ironic reference to minority rhetoric:

LONG LIVE UNITY-SOLIDARITY
LONG LIVE ! LONG LIVE! (İleri 373/08.02.1985)

As so often before, the internal competition had greater priority than political representation. In this case, the group around Akin and Gerçek feared the possible success of its political rivals.

It is interesting to observe that a local Christian newspaper provided a totally erroneous interpretation of the minority vote. It was obviously pleased to see that no Muslims became elected and perceived this to signify that the minority was escaping from the influence of those who wanted to isolate it and create tension between the two population elements. Within the framework of PASOK rhetoric it was claimed to be a

146 İleri 350/29.06.1984. The expression “mehmetologist” is used in Greek as term of ridicule against the self proclaimed experts on Turkish matters. The threats by PASOK newspapers to give the minority a lesson was also mentioned by Rodoplu (Gerçek 102/21.06.1984), and Dede (Trakya’nın Sesi 121/22.08.1984)
sign of a new found maturity, as it opposed the internal feudal structures and the influence of the Turkish consulate (Elefthero Vima 24.01.1985 - Deltio). On the contrary, the minority candidates represented some of its most mature voices, which favoured a harmonious integration into Greek society without denying their cultural peculiarities, but they were opposed by the representatives of the feudal structures within the minority. The newspaper on its side did not represent a desire for socialist victory over feudal structures, but the exclusion of the minority from the political life for nationalist reasons.

The Parliamentary Elections 2 June 1985

Speculations about the upcoming parliamentary elections began already in 1982, after it became clear that the cross of preference would be abolished. Instead the party would determine the sequence of the candidates on the ticket leaving no possibility for the voters to influence their place. This was done to curb the personal ambitions within PASOK and increase the control of Papandreu, but the minority had of course its own particular concerns. The fact that the minority was given much attention during the elections, made it into an event which it valued accordingly. The minority was quick to comment on the new law, which gives us a good insight into the minority’s perception of the political situation at this time.

The minority candidates would have no chance of election if they were not in the first or second place on the ticket. İmamoğlu was afraid that the anti-minority circles would try to create a “national issue” (ethnikó théma), to deprive the minority of parliamentary representation. If the minority candidates were not accepted in one of the first two positions, İmamoğlu supported the founding of independent minority tickets, but not a minority party (İleri 277/03.12.1982). At this time the idea of an independent minority ticket was about to mature. Earlier the same year İleri (246/05.03.1982) featured an article which made a strong case for this alternative. It was first criticised, but gradually others picked up on the idea (cf. İleri 315/21.10.1983). In his comment Orhan Hacıibram said that it was not the procedure in itself which was important, but that the minority was represented with one MP from Ksanthi and 2 from Rodopi according to democratic rules and attitudes. Up until this time the parties and certain circles had done what they could to take this right away from the minority. He appealed to the parties to have this in mind. Otherwise the minority would have to take its precautions (İleri 278/10.12.1982). Celâl Zeybek thought that the minority candidates should run on an independent ticket only if they were put in a position on the party tickets which made their election impossible (İleri 280/23.12.1982).

The most elaborate attempt to analyse the political situation of the minority was again made by İbram Onsunoğlu. In a series of articles he commented on the minority
political scene in general, and the possible strategies of the minority after the new election law. This gives us a unique insight into the political situation in the minority by a perceptive analyst. First he took a look at the possible candidates for the upcoming elections. Ahmet Mehmet was MP for PASOK, so this door seemed closed for aspiring candidates. However, Hafız Yaşar had said that he would withdraw, which created an opening on the ND ticket. Sabahaddin Galip was not a likely candidate for ND, as his family had a tradition for supporting the “liberals”. He could argue that today’s ND was not the old right, but it would still be difficult to get the minority to vote for ND just because of Galip. It would be more convincing to his voters if he ran for the smaller social democrat party (KODISO), and he could be elected if he obtained some 7,000 votes. For Hatipoğlu and İmamoğlu the opposite was true, i.e. they would attract more votes if they ran for ND (İleri 287/18.02.1983). There was, however, the old problem of being accepted. There were no signs that PASOK would change the minority regime and people had now lost their hope. PASOK was on the way down and Ahmet Mehmet had not the personality to attract voters to PASOK by himself. Ahmet Mehmet’s position which seemed sure could be put in jeopardy by this, and open the way for surprise candidates like Galip (İleri 295/15.04.1983). When summing up the situation, Onsunoglu also pointed to the possibility of running for one of the smaller parties. The minority votes were important for KKE if it wanted to elect two MPs from Eastern Macedonia-Thrace. KODISO was the party most likely to put a minority candidate first on its ticket. For the minority the best scenario would be second place on the PASOK and ND tickets and first place on the KKE and KODISO ticket. This would secure 2 minority MPs from Rodopi (İleri 296/22.04.1983). The suggestion to run for the Communist Party was quite advanced for its time, but it displays Onsunoglu’s attempt to make the minority look for alternative solutions. Some of these deliberations lost actuality, as a result of other developments. KODISO folded before the elections, and as the number of MPs for each prefecture throughout Greece was established on the basis of the 1981 census the number of MPs for the Rodopi prefecture went down from 4 to 3.

**Rodopi**

Again the competition to be accepted on the tickets of the major parties was fierce. Rodoplu looked at the situation in the Rodopi prefecture in an article titled “The blue beads distributed to our politicians.” The potential candidates lived with the hope that they would be able to run on a party ticket, while the parties made the last calculation about which candidates to prefer, simultaneously stalling any initiatives from the candidates as long as no decision was made. Potential candidates for PASOK were Ahmet Mehmet and Hasan Kaşıkçıoğlu, while Sabahaddin Galip, Hasan İmamoğlu,

Mehmet Müftüoğlu, Adnan Yusuf, and Nahit Sadık competed for a place on the ND ticket. Finally PASOK included Ahmet Mehmet and ND Mehmet Müftüoğlu in the second place on their respective ticket. Nazif Ferhat ran for KKE as expected (İleri 387/17.05.1985). Two of the strong candidates who were not accepted by ND, Sabahaddin Galip and Hasan İmamoğlu, decided to run on an independent ticket. However, İmamoğlu was later to relinquish his independent candidature. By now the idea of an independent minority ticket had come of age and the main division in these elections was between those who ran for the parties, and those who favoured an independent minority ticket (i.e. who were not able to run for the parties).

Mehmet Müftüoğlu

The strongest minority candidate on a party ticket was the lawyer Mehmet Müftüoğlu (1939–1999). He belongs to the generation educated in Greek universities. As a lawyer he may not have had the astuteness of İmamoğlu, but as a politician he inspired more confidence. People considered him more sincere, and less preoccupied with feathering his own nest. He was a well qualified candidate, but did not represent any innovation in minority politics. Müftüoğlu presented briefly his position in a minority newspaper advertisement. He claimed that only ND and Mitsotakis could secure the Greek-Turkish friendship which would solve the minority’s problems. This was why he chose ND and he pointed out that the independent candidates who now criticised ND had done everything to enter its ticket (İleri 388/24.05.1985).

In his election newspaper Yeni Adım Müftüoğlu presented his position more analytically. He compared the agricultural policy of PASOK and ND and condemned the negative aspect of PASOK’s new agricultural law which had tendencies towards socialisation. He also pointed to certain negative aspects of PASOK’s minority policy such as the closing of the “Turkish association”. However, his biggest asset was probably a facsimile from the Turkish newspaper Hürriyet, which presented Mitsotakis as a reasonable politician—as opposed to the prime minister Papandreu and president Sartzetakis—who favoured Greek-Turkish dialogue and was determined to secure that the minority members were treated as equal citizens. Finally he became involved in a polemic with Hatipoğlu. He criticised him for his use of religion—Hatipoğlu had said that those who voted for the independents would go straight to heaven—as a tool in the elections campaign. This was particularly in bad taste since Hatipoğlu was known not to have a good relation with religion and faith. Further, he accused Hatipoğlu—who for 30 years had been involved in lies, tricks, and shady

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148 Gerçek 115/30.04.1984. The “blue beads” refer to the various promises by the parties to minority candidates.

149 For a biographical note, see Trakya’nın Sesi 161/10.06.1985.
political deals—for preparing new tricks. He had always been known as a political enemy of Galip, but was now supporting him out of opportunism (Yeni Adım 1/21.05.1985). Hatipoğlu countered promptly by printing a letter from Müftüoğlu dating back to October 1974, where he congratulated Akın for its struggle to defend the minority during a difficult period (Akın 858/24.05.1985).

In the following issues of Yeni Adım Müftüoğlu sharpened his tone against Hatipoğlu and the independent candidate. It was easy for Müftüoğlu to point out the self contradictions in the independent’s propaganda. He mentioned that Hatipoğlu and Galip who yesterday said that “the independent ticket is dangerous” were now resorting to slander and calumny. He also claimed that there were other realities behind Galip’s “Unity-Solidarity-Personality fairy tales”, pointing to the independent’s relationship to PASOK. This was done in revenge to ND since they were not accepted as candidates by this party. He mentioned that “a secret agreement” between PASOK and the independent candidate was revealed in a local Greek newspaper. According to this PASOK would support the independent candidate in every way, including money. If he obtained a considerable amount of votes and PASOK obtained two MPs from Rodopi because of this, he would be accepted as candidate for PASOK in the next elections. He also pointed to a meeting in the office of Akın between Hatipoğlu, Ahmet Mehmet, and Pavlidis. Apart from this, Müftüoğlu did not refrain from mudslinging, claiming that Hatipoğlu went to a restaurant and drank rakı in the evening, not respecting the religious sentiments of the minority in the holy month of Ramadan (Yeni Adım 2/2?.05.1985).

Müftüoğlu became also involved in a polemic against various statements by Sabahaddin Galip: Today he says, “If I become MP I will go to Europe and the United Nations”, what did he do when he was MP? If he is correct when he says—after he was not accepted on a party ticket—that the minority issue can only be solved by a MP elected outside the parties, why did he for months attempt to be accepted on the ND ticket? Is it good for the union and solidarity of the minority to say, “Those who do not vote for me are not Turks”? He ended with condemning the mud slinging and threats of the independent candidate and his followers (Yeni Adım 4/2?.05.1985).

The Independent Candidate

Hatipoğlu presented the case of those who favoured an independent ticket. He argued that just like in 1981 the minority would not vote for the parties, but for those who could really represent the minority. He accused the chauvinist authorities of labelling some minority candidates as dangerous because they could not be controlled, while others were characterised as “ours”. If the parties did not accept strong minority candidates the minority would run on an independent ticket within the framework of
the law, instead of accepting the candidates the parties tried to impose on the minority (Akin 856/29.04.1985).

Hatipoğlu applied all his rhetorical skill to promote the independent ticket. He argued that the minority should support the independent ticket to create unity within the minority. The minority had reached this conclusion as a reaction to the disgraceful way the parties tried to impose candidates on the minority who were unacceptable. Besides, the party MPs were under very strict control. They could not give declarations to newspapers without asking the party, see representatives of other countries, etc. The independent candidates would be outside the party discipline, and have much more room for taking initiatives. For many years the minority voters had been subjected to various tricks to prevent their representation in parliament. He warned against the new elections system because the parties might make a last minute agreement between them and put the minority candidate in the third place. This was of course impossible after the final determination of the ticket, and an outright lie by Hatipoğlu. He also asserted falsely that the independent candidates in both Rodopi and Ksanthi had greater chance of being elected than those on the party tickets (Akin 857/19.05.1985).

The rhetoric against ND was particularly strong, with hints to the arrogant behaviour of the local party cadre. In a section titled: “Even if ND presents a dunce [kûtsuro] as candidate he will be elected” Hatipoğlu criticised the attitude of the ND Rodopi candidate Stilianos Bletsas, who had claimed that even a dunce would be elected with the minority votes given to ND. If Bletsas had in mind all the votes for ND in the recent European elections, this was a reaction to PASOK because it had not provided what was hoped for. However, the minority did not forget the earlier treatment by ND. Hatipoğlu alleged that ND, led by the candidate Bletsas, both threatened and promised money to Sabahaddin Galip if he would refrain from running as independent candidate (Akin 858/24.05.1985). Rodoplu gave the following description of the party attitude:

“We chose the candidates from the minority, and put them in the order we want [on the ticket]. The minority people come and vote like sheep…” (Gercek 26.05.1985/117).

When the ND leader Konstandinos Mitsotakis held his election speech in Komotini, he stressed the necessity of Greek-Turkish friendship, and in this connection he referred to the minority as the Muslims of Thrace as it is conventionally called in Greek. Hatipoğlu grasped this term as a point of departure for a criticism where he threw all kinds of suspicion on Mitsotakis’ intentions. He claimed that this reminded of the Bulgarian policy of speaking about “BOLGARSKI MUHAMMEDAN” (i.e. Bulgarian Muslims, which is the term in use in Bulgaria, particularly for the Slav/Bulgarian

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150 Akin 857/19.05.1985. In Turkish the title is: “N.D. Partisi bir kütügü dahi aday gösterse seçilmiş.” Mehmet Bağdatlı probably refers to the same episode at a later date. He mentions that a Christian MP said: “Kûtsuro na vâlume, tha vâlume vulefî” [We will elect MP even if we put a dunce (literally: a log) on our ticket] (İleri 893/03.10.1997).
speaking Pomaks). Hatipoglu asked rhetorically if maybe Greece accepted the present situation in Bulgaria, and would only give back the rights of the minority if the relationship to Turkey improved? He reminded people about that when ND was in power it carried out a policy to eradicate the minority (Akın 858/24.05.1985). At this period the minority was very sensitive, because of the name changing campaign across the border in Bulgaria, and Hatipoglu tried to make the most of it.

Hatipoglu launched a strong attack on Müftüoğlu. He referred to a document containing the term “Greek Muslims”, which Müftüoğlu had signed previously and contended that he was unfit to represent “our minority” (Akın 858/24.05.1985). It is perfectly normal that Müftüoğlu used the acceptable terms in dealing with the Greek authorities. It could be correct that he had used this term in the sense Muslim Greek citizens, but Hatipoglu distorted this on purpose and castigated anything else than the most Turkish nationalist mode of address. In this way he distanced himself from the possibility to work inside the Greek political system. Hatipoglu presented the choice of running for the parties as incompatible with furthering the interest of the minority. He claimed that the fragmentation of the minority must stop: “WE ARE EITHER MINORITY ADHERENTS OR PARTY ADHERENTS.” The minority was said to gain the following with the independent tickets:

1—One MP each in Komotini and Ksanthi.
2—To elevate the personality of our Community in a legal fashion.
3—To prove that our Minority has the power to struggle for all its just and lawful causes.
4—To prove that the persons of our Community do not fear a lawful struggle to obtain the human rights the citizens of Western Countries have, particularly in the European Economic Community which we are member of (Akın 858, 24.05.1985).

Hatipoglu mustered all his rhetorical skill in his appeal to the minority.

Suffering Western Thrace Muslim Turk, we believe with all our heart that the HOLY UNION AND SOLIDARITY MONUMENT which has been erected by virtue of the decision by the great majority of our Minority for the first time in its 60-year history will not crumble. This is the parole of Our Minority in the historical elections: NO to the parties which do not extend their hand of compassion to our Community, which insult it, which belittle it!

It is not the parties which share the pain and anxiety of our distressed Minority and rejoice in the good and rightful which our Community will enjoy. We will vote for our INDEPENDENT candidates, which will be the bold and trustworthy representatives elected by the Minority people (Akın 859/29.05.1985).

As part of his repertoire, he attempted to presents himself as someone who conveyed public opinion instead of being someone who manipulated it. In this connection he claimed that a committee came from a minority village to the Akın office and declared:

—We did not see the political parties of our country extend a hand of compassion towards our Community so that our Minority could be saved from the stifling political environment it lived in for years. In these elections, if there had not appeared an INDEPENDENT candidate, we would have used a BLANK VOTE as a protest vote in reaction to the ruthless political parties. Thank God for the Minority INDEPENDENT candidate, he saved us from voting blank (Akın 859/29.05.1985).

Rodoplu followed the same line of arguments and was very anti-ND and anti-Müftüoğlu in his rhetoric. It had reached the point where it was no longer enough for

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1—One MP each in Komotini and Ksanthi.
2—To elevate the personality of our Community in a legal fashion.
3—To prove that our Minority has the power to struggle for all its just and lawful causes.
4—To prove that the persons of our Community do not fear a lawful struggle to obtain the human rights the citizens of Western Countries have, particularly in the European Economic Community which we are member of (Akın 858, 24.05.1985).
the minority to secure representation corresponding to its numerical strength within the political parties. In an allusion to Hâki, Rodoplu wrote that he had enough of the slogan “He can be of mud, as long as he is one of us!” and exclaimed: “No to letting the minority MPs be puppets in the hands of the parties. We do no longer believe in the false promises of the parties” (Gerçek 26.05.1985/117).

Abdülhalim Dede commented that in their support for the “independent” candidate Galip, Akın and Gerçek concentrated all their efforts against Müftüoğlu, who was accepted and loved by the community. In their mud-slinging they claimed that Müftüoğlu spoke of Greek Muslims 15 years ago. Even if this should be true, what about Aga in Ksanthi whom they supported? He had publicly been hostile to Turkey and cursed Atatürk, denied Turkism, etc. (Trakya’nın Sesi 159/31.05.1985).

The independent candidate Sabahaddin Galip made the following appeal in one of his election advertisements:

**My Precious Kinsmen**

Why did the political parties which want your votes in the 2 June elections not accept your strong candidates on their tickets?

Those who have usurped your fields for years,
Those who closed your associations,
Those who pushed your children into ignorance,
Those who made you destitute with your hard work in the fields
Those who want to wipe you away from Western Thrace, do they of course not have the mentality that it does not suit them to have as MP candidate your leader who’s hearts beat together with yours, who will defend your human, civil, and Constitutional rights, who will make your voice heard not only in Athens but in the whole world?

Instead of him they will accept to their parties colourless, passive, obedient persons who think more about their party’s interests than the interests of their own community.

Are you not too smart and intelligent a Community to accept any candidate thrown before you?
Your votes have been wasted on those who have oppressed you for years, who have violated your rights, who have looked down on you as second class citizens, who have given you the most simple permit as if it was a compensation; from now on the time has come to give them to your own Minority candidates who struggled and will struggle for your human rights, your Community, your honour, dignity, and self respect.

The time has come to prove once more after Lausanne that you are not an ignorant community, but the esteemed Western Thrace Turkish Minority.

The result of your votes will simultaneously make clear your personality.

The mentality which belittles you, regarding you as a heap of religious people without personality, is insisted on.

Show to those who regard you in this way that you are from the Exalted Turkish Race, posses the faith and knowledge of the great religion of Islam, and that you are an honourable and strong Community.

Show that you make us proud with the permission of God to represent you.

May your success be Blessed already.

SABAHAADDIN GALIP
INDEPENDENT MINORITY CANDIDATE (Akın 860/31.05.1985)

The campaign in favour of the independent candidates made a point about the greater possibilities it would give to internationalise the minority issue. Hatipoğlu wrote that unfortunately the minority had not been able to obtain the return of its natural rights by its initiatives within the country. It would now move its struggle outside the borders to the “European Community” and the “Council of Europe”. The
independent candidates could be the real representatives in this struggle. The minority MPs who had earlier been offered to go to Strasbourg, had not displayed the courage because they were tied to their parties. In spite of his resentment against the parties, Hatipoğlu was also able to say that the minority would have wanted the parties to accept the minority candidates regarded to be personalities (Akin 860/31.05.1985).

The pre-election period was not only a time of rivalry among the minority politicians. It also offered opportunities for people in general. Dede reported that the authorities had started to grant building permits, and told people to hurry as the prohibition could be reintroduced after the elections (Trakya’nın Sesi 155/04.05.1985). Hasan Hatipoğlu also reported that in the last few months PASOK had given some building permits for mosques, tractor driving licenses, etc. (Akin 857/19.05.1985).

Ksanthi

In Ksanthi, too, an independent ticket appeared, but with a somewhat different rationale behind it. In Rodopi it was related to the personal grudge of Sabahaddin Galip against ND for not being accepted as its minority candidate. The two minority newspapers Akin and Gerçek sided strongly with the independent candidate because of their personal interests. In Ksanthi it seemed for a long time that the parties would try to exclude all minority candidates. This made Abdülhalim Dede take the initiative to an independent ticket less than a month before the elections, as a strategy to compel the parties to accept minority candidates on their tickets. He had expected an initiative from the three strongest candidates (Celâl Zeybek, Mehmet Emin Aga, Orhan Hacıibram), but nothing had happened. This made Dede take the initiative to a meeting. Aga did not show up although he had promised to do so, which made Dede accuse Aga, who spoke about unity and solidarity, for boycotting the attempt (Trakya’nın Sesi 155/04.05.1985). In the meeting which took place after a second attempt Aga said: “Either I am in the first place [of the ticket] or this business is over right now.” Orhan proposed that they could draw lots, but this was refused by Aga and the meeting dissolved (Trakya’nın Sesi 156/14.05.1985).

The formation of the independent ticket in Ksanthi was influenced directly by the manoeuvres of the large parties. When ND of Ksanthi announced its ticket about three weeks before the elections the minority candidate was left in third place and had consequently no hope of election. This created a shock in the minority, as it had placed its hopes in ND. As a consequence, the independent ticket became unavoidable and Mehmet Emin Aga, Celâl Zeybek and Hikmet Cemiloğlu made a ticket with Aga in the first place. When the ND prefecture organisation learned about this they contacted Mitsotakis. 15 May Hüsnü Serdarzade was put second on the ND ticket. Dede regarded this to be the result of the political pressure exerted by the minority (Trakya’nın Sesi 156/14.05.1985). It was a case of the opposing interests of excluding the
minority from political representation, or attracting as many votes as possible to the party. There was critique in the Ksanthi press that PASOK had spoiled the gentleman’s agreement of putting the minority candidates in third place, which also induced ND to put the minority candidate in the second place. The situation in Ksanthi was quite complicated because of the internal party constellations. As a result the former vice minister of defence Yeoryios Rodiu, who had been in second place, was left outside the ticket after the personal intervention of Mitsotakis (Aktin 861/10.06.1985).

Meanwhile the independent Barış (peace) ticket started its election campaign. It had its opening rally in Ehinos 18 May. The atmosphere was ecstatic, and Hâki wrote that people might think that he exaggerated the excitement, but this was not the case. Here in the Pomak area people were very sensitive and anxious about what was happening on the other side of the border.

People are screaming: BARIŞ! BARIŞ!... Afterwards you heard voices: DOWN WITH THE BULGARIAN OPPRESSION (İleri 388/24.05.1985).

In its election newspaper the Barış ticket blamed the parties for the various intrigues against the minority and promoted itself as the minority’s own ticket. In its propaganda it played strongly on the religious and national sentiment of the minority (Barış 19.05.1985). After a while Abdülhalim Dede though they went too far and wrote several articles criticising the ticket. These articles give us an insight into the various motives behind the independent ticket in Ksanthi. Dede wrote that he was not able to keep quiet any longer after the independent candidates who appealed for unity and solidarity had recourse to coarse lies. He accused them of running as independent candidates only for their personal benefits (şahsi çıkarları). They insulted Turkism… They betrayed Islam. And in the holy month of Ramadan they lied and slang mud while being fully aware of what they were doing. Mehmet Emin Aga should be ashamed in the name of the turban he was wearing, and as secretary in the mufti office. Celâl Zeybek should be ashamed in the name of Turkish nationalism which he chewed on like a piece of gum. Hikmet Cemiloğlu should be ashamed in the name of the oath he gave as university graduate.

Dede looked back and gave the following analysis of the situation. Aga was the main culprit when the minority did not elect an MP in 1981, because he split the minority vote by running for Markezinis. In 1984 Dede started the campaign for voting blank in the European elections as a preparation to the general elections in 1985. They should show their strength to the parties. However, this was sabotaged by almost everybody, and they played the game of PASOK for petty benefits. Dede explained that his initiatives up to this point had been made to put pressure on the parties to accept candidates in the second place of their tickets. Dede had said in the meeting 8 May that the independent ticket was not established just for fun, but to put pressure on the parties. Everyone had promised that if ND or PASOK accepted any minority
(candidate in the second place the independent ticket would be dissolved to support him. Hüsnü Serdarzade who was an active ND member had promised in this meeting that he would resign if ND put him in the third place of the ticket. The same evening it was announced that Faikoğlu was given the second place on the PASOK ticket, and Hüsnü the third place on the ND ticket. Hüsnü kept his word and resigned. At this time Celâl, Aga, and Hikmet met without notifying Dede and Orhan and decided to go ahead with the independent ticket headed by Aga. When Hüsnü was promoted to the second place, Dede asked Celâl what he would do, and he answered that he would continue with the independent ticket. Dede reacted against this breach of his word of honour. He pointed out that they were sure of getting a minority candidate elected. What more could they ask for? Dede too admitted that the candidates were not very well liked, but asked what the popular candidates - “minority leaders” had done to be accepted. The only thing they had done was to try to trick each other. Aga did everything possible to be accepted as candidate for ND. He sent some minority township presidents under his control to ND to request his candidature, saying that Aga would bring the most votes. Zeybek reminded ND that he was a former MP for the party. Orhan, who had resigned from PASOK, also tried to be accepted by ND. ND gave no one a negative answer and made promises to everybody. Dede pointed out that everybody worked for himself and did nothing to make the parties accept candidates favoured by the minority. After putting enough pressure on the parties to put minority candidates in the second place, what did they serve by running on an independent ticket? (Trakya’nın Sesi 158/30.05.1985).

We as a newspaper say openly the following…

Under these conditions, it is definitely against the interests of our minority to participate with the independent Barış party. Because there is no reason why the independents should take part in the elections. The parties respected us because of the pressure we put on them. They did not push us into a corner. If the parties had not accepted us in the second place it would have been 100% correct for the independents to run. In that case we could defend ourselves in front of everybody. How shall we now defend ourselves? (Trakya’nın Sesi 159/31.05.1985).

Dede claimed that their reason for running on the independent ticket was simply that they wanted to keep their position within the minority. If others were elected, people would not listen to Aga, Celâl, and Hikmet anymore. ND was the party which would lose most. 90% of the votes for the independents would be taken from ND. At first glance there was the impression that PASOK supported the independents.

However, this is definitely not the case, it is deceptive. As this question is considered a “National” question and regarded as a “rebellion” [“baş kaldırması”] of the minority leaders. When it is regarded in this way, we must not ignore the troubles which can befall our minority.

The situation of our minority is really very critical. We must assess all of our moves very carefully. The complaints of our brother workers in Europe which they have submitted to the European parliament are there. The answers by the administration to these complaints are there. The administration attempts to portray us as Turkey’s agents and create the image that the Western Thrace questions have been “created” as a result of instigation by Turkey. This is completely to the disadvantage of the struggle we carry out on the European level.

The Western Thrace issue is run as a “defence”.

PASOK IN POWER
We have no possibility to “attack”. We had the possibility to attack, to make our voice heard, in the 1984 European Parliament elections. However, at that time these persons said the following to us: –Our struggle must be within the parties. To oppose the parties means to oppose the state. If this is the case what reasoning makes them now create a front against the parties? (Trakya’nın Sesi 159/31.05.1985).

Dede continued his criticism by pointing out that you cannot wage a political struggle by saying “GOD IS WITH US”. The Barış ticket had no chance of election and afterwards it would give the Greek administration a trump card for propaganda against Turkey. How could the minority clear itself? The votes for Barış would work against the minority. Dede asked what had brought Aga and Zeybek together, who used to be bitter enemies. If they said that it was for the benefit for the minority, why had they not been able to unite earlier to confront the problems the minority was faced with? (Trakya’nın Sesi 159/31.05.1985).

A more serious affair, which was ominous for the next parliamentary elections, was Dede’s complaints about the atmosphere of terror the independent ticket created in the villages. He also complained about the independent candidates’ spuriousness (Sahtekârlıklar). They had written that various Township presidents supported Barış, but this was only true in the case of Fikret İhtiyar from Ehinos. Ballots were distributed inside the mosques with the words: “Those who are Muslims vote for the ‘Barış’ ticket.” Someone from the village Oreon came to Dede and told that the previous day a minority party candidate had come for election propaganda. Half an hour after he left, the independent candidates came to the village.

Our village imam immediately prepared the microphone-megaphone equipment and started to speak in the following manner: Honoured congregation [cemaat], villagers, those who do not vote for the independent candidates are not Turks, and not Muslims. May the hands of those who vote for other than the independents wither up. Act according to this…(Trakya’nın Sesi 160/01.06.1985).

Hundreds of minority members were worried because of the threats. People were threatened with retaliation if they did not vote for Barış, “Your son who studies in Turkey, will not get visa any longer.” They tried to roughen up Dede, and Fikret İhtiyar played a leading role in this (Trakya’nın Sesi 163/05.07.1985).

The role of PASOK was the subject of contention. In a declaration Orhan Hacıibram, who was the only senior minority politician not to join the independent ticket, presented the following picture: When PASOK was in opposition, it promised equal rights to the minority, and he had believed and struggled for it. Unfortunately PASOK did not diminish the oppression but even increased it, and that was the reason why Orhan left the party. He claimed that Aga was working for PASOK in these elections. The local and Athenian PASOK press did not write a word about the Barış ticket. Aga’s goal was to secure the election of Ahmet Faikoğlu. In the 1981 elections Aga wasted intentionally 3,500 votes and this made Rodiu MP. It was time to speak up against those who had deceived the minority for years. Orhan posed the question
whether Aga would have been on the independent ticket if he had been accepted as candidate by ND? Or would in that case the interests of the minority be in ND? Orhan ended by appealing to the minority to vote for ND (Trakya’un Sesi 159/31.05.1985). Dede too, pointed to the relationship between PASOK and the Barış ticket. He stressed that he had nothing against Faikoğlu. However, he was against the independents’ scheme to assist PASOK to secure the election of Faikoğlu (Trakya’un Sesi 163/05.07.1985). The Barış candidates did nothing else in their election campaign than to quarrel with ND and speaking badly about its minority candidate Hüsnü Serdarzade. The close relationship between the Barış ticket, particularly Aga, and PASOK continued after the election. Some Greek newspapers wrote that this was done with supports of millions of drachmas. Dede would not voucher for this as he had not seen anything, but claimed that the support from PASOK was clear, unless you were blind. In his election campaign Faikoğlu said: “If you for one reason or another will not vote for PASOK, then vote for ‘Barış’…”151 The logic behind this manoeuvre was simple. If PASOK became the largest party in Ksanthi, Faikoğlu would be elected as the second on the ticket. A vote for Barış was considered to be a vote lost for ND.

The Election Results in Rodopi

Hatipoğlu presented the results for Rodopi in the following manner: PASOK and ND received respectively 16,234 and 17,127 of the Christian vote. The 38,571 valid minority votes were distributed as follows:152

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PASOK</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>18,621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabahaddin Galip</td>
<td>10,344</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34,469</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

There are several problems involved when calculating the minority’s share of the vote, however the small discrepancies between the various figures have no significance for the interpretation of the result. EPEN is the Ethniki Politiki Enosis (National Political Union) party, while KKE (e) is the party of the Euro-communists.

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151 Trakya’un Sesi 165/31.07.1985. Dede noticed the warm relations between Aga and Faikoğlu, although they portrayed themselves as enemies before the elections. Dede gives a detailed account about their collaboration behind the scenes. He also questions why Zeybek assisted his old enemy Faikoğlu. A local Ksanthi newspaper claimed that Aga and Zeybek had received 20 millions to make the independent ticket (Adesmefti 23.05.1985 - Deltio), while a local Komotini newspaper claimed that PASOK financed the candidature of Galip (Hronos 22-24.05.1985 - Deltio). A local newspaper in Ksanthi claimed that Barış was organised after orders from Ankara (Agonas 23.05.1985 - Deltio). This caused the independent candidates to bring indictments against the newspaper (Akin 859/29.05.1985).

152 Akin 861/10.06.1985. According to Hatipoğlu there were 46,500 eligible Christian voters in Rodopi. 36,323 of them voted and 36,011 votes were valid. There were 51,362 eligible minority voters, 39,073 voted, and 38,571 votes were valid. Note the difference between his figure of valid votes and the sum of the votes for the different the parties. Dede gave a slightly different breakdown of the minority vote (Trakya’un Sesi 161/10.06.1985):
The overall result for the two large parties was PASOK 22,597 (30.42%) which gave 1 MP, and ND 37,082 (49.92%) which gave 2 MPs (Digaves 1986: 380). This result secured the election of Mehmet Müftüoğlu by a very strong mandate.

The Fine Balances

Hâki had the following evaluation of the election result: He did not think that Ahmet Mehmet had much chances on the PASOK ticket this time. In addition, Dimitrios Tsetines had been a better choice than Dimitrios Vradelis to be first on the PASOK ticket. ND made a wise choice. It would not have received as many votes with the old candidates Hafız Yaşar or Adnan Yusufoğlu. PASOK could have elected the minority MP, if it had an educated candidate. Maybe also if ND had chosen Yaşar, Yusufoğlu or Galip to run against Ahmet Mehmet. Then he would have been reasonably sure of election. Ahmet Mehmet had hoped for one of these 3 candidates, but was very afraid of İmamoğlu. Galip courted ND to the last moment. He would have had bigger chances on the ND ticket than as independent, but Hâki questioned if anything made him different from the other politicians who had been elected formerly. He thought that without those who supported him—“Sabahaddin+Akın +Gerçek and… others”—he would not have obtained more than a couple of thousand votes. Hâki held the opinion that the minority had made its wisest elections to date, and that no one could deny that it was a fair result.153

However, the opponents of Müftüoğlu were not ready to accept the election result. In particular Hátipoğlu must have perceived him as a much greater threat to his position, than the outgoing MPs. He embarked immediately on a strong polemic against ND, and wrote that the minority voters in Rodopi had made a historical mistake, which would harm the interests of the minority:

For various reasons the election result created a shock in our Minority, particularly in the Rodopi prefecture. Because, although it was known beforehand that PASOK was certain to win the elections on the national level, some dark powers aimed at inciting PASOK, which would be in power, against our Minority by striving to direct the Minority votes towards ND. We have documents in our possession to prove this (Akın 861/10.06.1985).

153 İleri 392/21.06.1985. Basically I think he is right, but it should be kept in mind that Hâki was not well disposed toward Galip.
These allegations provoked a spontaneous reaction from Hâki. This is a good example of an incident where Hâki was just not able to keep his mouth shut, but had to speak up against the gross manipulation by Hatipoğlu. Hâki pointed out that it was the same persons who claimed that the minority had made a historical mistake by not voting for PASOK, who had done everything to get on the ND ticket. While İmamoğlu resigned, Galip participated in the elections with determination and enthusiasm supported by Akın and Gerçek. Hâki did not pay much attention to the words about co-operation between Galip and PASOK. However, he maintained that if Sabahaddin Galip had been a candidate for ND and İmamoğlu an independent candidate, there would have been the following reactions:

İmamoğlu and friends would have been accused of DEFEATISM-DIVISIVENESS, INSANITY, TREASON by Galip and the bunch [kumpanya].

And… would the two Minority (?) newspapers which took up weapons in order to prove their Turkism… have supported Mr. İmamoğlu?

By no means!

[...] At this point we ask willy-nilly the following question as we are not able to refrain from it:

-Did Sabahaddin Galip and the bunch play on two horses before the elections? Or was it even three?

A: We want votes although we are sure of not being elected.
B: We work against ND in revenge.
C: Consequently we assist PASOK, which will be in government, to reap benefits.

In other words if a minority MP was elected for PASOK they would celebrate because:

A-We were not elected but…
B- We were able to prevent you from being elected
C- Did not what we said happen? We won the second MP for you. May the MP period be blessed for Mr. Ahmet [Mehmet] whom we patted on his back.

So what is the PARADISE, TURKISM and BRIDGE literature about? for PASOK? 154

The petty politics games related to the understanding between PASOK and the independents leaked out later. PASOK was looking for ways to deprive ND of votes. According to Hâki, a scheme was organised by the lawyer Takis Andoniadis, who was the general director of the sugar factories and a prominent local PASOK cadre. He held a meeting in his office, where it was decided that Sabahaddin Galip would run as independent candidate in Rodopi, while Mehmet Emin Aga would head an independent ticket in Ksanthi. The minority had no knowledge about these secret agreements. Later Andoniadis gathered the independent candidates in his office and instructed them that they would have to stop their activity immediately after the elections. If one of the

154 Ileri 392/21.06.1985. Within this combination of religious and nationalist allusions, the “bridge” can be both the sırat köprüsü, which is the bridge on the road to heaven that only the righteous will cross or the border with Turkey over the river Evros/Meriç where those who had been branded as traitors would not be accepted (cf. Trakya’nın Sesi 393/04.07.1991). Hasan Hatipoğlu decided to act vindictively also in the 1982 local elections since ND had not kept its promise and made him a candidate in the 1981 parliamentary elections. He supported the left ticket to “show them who Hatipoğlu is”. He did not do this openly, putting his name on something in writing, but preferred to act behind the scenes. There were speculations about if his behaviour would have consequences for him, but Onsunoglu thought Hatipoğlu had increased his chances rather than forfeited them. Such petty games were viewed as permissible by the right, since local and parliamentary elections were two different things (Ileri 287/18.02.1983).
“independents” was elected he had to join a party (in this case PASOK) after the elections. If no one was elected they should immediately stop their activity. This was agreed to. In Ksanthi Mehmet Emin Aga kept up the agreement and closed down the independent party immediately after the elections. Celâl Zeybek, who was ideologically committed, and other eager adherents of the Bariş ticket, including Hâki, did not understand this idleness, because they did not know about the agreement. It is difficult for me to assess how many in the minority and the majority knew about these secret agreements. In the case of the majority, other important questions are related to if this was a local initiative and to which degree it was known in Athens or by people who should have informed Athens. In any case, this testifies to close collaboration between people who in Greece are characterised as “hard-liners” or agents of Ankara and high level cadre of a political party.

Hâki made an attempt to disclose the various motives behind the minority vote. He added that there could be other reasons, but these were the ones he had heard:

Look, we thought for a long while about why we “did not vote for it [PASOK]” and inquired about it. We examined-discussed it with various villagers and artisans. We posed them the following question:

- In spite of all the positive-reasonable policy of PASOK, it did not obtain the Minority vote. Or the Minority did not vote for PASOK. What do you think are the reasons? i.e. what is it?
- We sum up the answers and put them in order:
  1- The speech by president Sartzetakis 14 May 1985 in front of the Townhall.
  2- Prime minister Papandreu was not in favour of discussions with Turkey.
  3- The opposition leader Mitsotakis wanted to establish friendly relations with Turkey.
  4- Turkish Radio-Television and newspapers wrote about this.
  5- The removal of the name Turkish from the Turkish Associations.
  6- The negative education policy.
  7- The proposed re-allotment of land, i.e. the collectivisation question.
  8- The question of the 10–15 thousand stremma large open air prison…
  9- The feeble behaviour of Mr. Ahmet, i.e. he was unable to stand up against the Akın-Gerçek and Yeni Adım newspapers. We was unable to promote PASOK’s good sides.
  10- Heavy taxation. Or we could call it tax fines.
  11- While the two parties wrestle for power, people still choose according to candidate. They see that one is lawyer, while the other is someone without education…
  12- The wind which was created against the educated MP from 1977 to 1983 [against İmamoğlu] was no longer there. Since it was not there it resulted in the known distribution of votes.
  13- The private life of Mr. Ahmet may also play some role.
  14- After Mr. Ahmet was elected MP he did not even visit the villages to say “thank you”. In 3.5 years he did not visit 3.5 villages; he did not ask how things were going…

Hâki who was positive to the independents, considered Bariş to be a last minute effort by the candidates to put aside personal grievances and unite on one ticket. He remarked that it obtained 11,000 votes with 11 days campaigning. Turkey did not take account of these developments within the minority and favoured ND. Both Turkish

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155 Hâki elaborates about it in İleri 616/30.11.1990. This was later confirmed in a detailed account by Celâl Zeybek dated March 1990, which was published shortly after his death (İleri 720/04.06.1993). Zeybek was reputedly very angry with Aga when he learned about the deal.

156 İleri 394/26.07.1985. I deal with some of these problems in detail elsewhere. Point 7 refers to the new law for agricultural co-operatives, which was praised by PASOK and condemned by ND. For details, see İleri 404/18.10.1985. For more details about the party leaders speeches in Komotini, see İleri 345/25.05.1984; 388/24.05.1985.
newspapers and TRT (Turkish state television) displayed great interest in the minority candidates. Hâki thought that ND profited 30% from this atmosphere in both Rodopi and Ksanthi, while the Barış ticket suffered because of the attitudes of Turkish newspapers and TRT, which emphasised Mitsotakis’ words about friendship. Hâki concluded that the minority’s excitement around the independent ticket was blown out by a little wind from Turkey (İleri 392/21.06.1985).

**The Election Results in Ksanthi**

According to Dede, the minority vote in Ksanthi was distributed in the following manner:157

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PASOK</td>
<td>4,405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>11,092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barış</td>
<td>10,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>25,814</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall result for the two large parties was PASOK 17,860 (32.22%) and ND 28,338 (45.97%) (Dişaves 1986: 379). In spite of a clear victory for ND in the prefecture, some peculiarities in the election law resulted in two MPs for PASOK and 1 MP for ND after the final adjustments in the third distribution. This secured the election of Ahmet Faikoğlu.

Ahmet Faikoğlu was born in Ksanthi in 1947 into a poor family. He has only primary education, but possesses a quick mind and has picked up a lot in the school of life. Even some of the minority members educated in Greek universities marvel his ability to express himself elegantly in Greek. After doing odd jobs he became second secretary of the Ksanthi mufti office in 1968, where he worked until 1981. He was unsuccessful in the 1978 local elections, but was elected to the Ksanthi town council in 1982. At this time he had a coffee shop and also made money by writing petitions for those who had business at the town council. Although he had no formal qualifications, the Ksanthi mufti office appointed him imam.158 In the 1981 parliamentary elections he had obtained a mere 1,500 votes, and his election in 1985 was most of all a stroke of luck.

**Work in Parliament**

My impression of Müftüoğlu is that he was someone who worked conscientiously to address all the minority’s problems to the proper authorities. There are no lofty ambitions about changing society, but a down to earth attempt by a lawyer to take care

157 *Trakya’ının Sesi* 161/10.06.1985. Dede includes a breakdown of the minority vote in all the polling stations of Rodopi and Ksanthi.

158 For additional information, see the biographical notes in *Trakya’ının Sesi* 162/17.06.1985.
of the minority’s particular interests. He posed questions to the relevant ministers about matters such as the entrance exams to secondary education, problems with obtaining driving licence for tractor, two minority members’ loss of citizenship, and the lack of Turkish interpreters in the courts of Komotini. Generally, the authorities gave answers which were formally correct, but did not address the substance of the matter. For example, when Müftüoğlu asked a question about the old problem concerning permits to buy real estate for Muslims in Rodopi, he received the following answer:

The Government applies the Constitution and the Laws scrupulously in every direction, it distributes equal rights to all the citizens of the Country independent of religion etc.

It may be instructive to take a more detailed look at a particular problem. Normally, Greek citizens should obtain a passport valid for 5 years and multiple travels. As mentioned earlier, the minority had often complained about problems concerning the issuing of passports. In late 1985 there are reports that the authorities had tightened up the procedures. They issued passports which had the following stamp inside: “Valid for one year and one trip with return”. The minority became alarmed because the word return was crossed out. The clerk who issued the passports said that they would have to go to the Greek consulate in Turkey for the return. Soon it became known that those who carried a passport without return were turned back on the Turkish side of the border. The minority commented this positively. On the other hand, someone with a passport valid for 5 years had been turned back on the Greek side of the border (Ileri 409/22.11.1985). Hâki had asked the MPs about this matter. Müftüoğlu said that he had seen the prefect about it as well as the minister of interior Agamemnon Kutsoyorgas in Athens. Kutsoyorgas said that this problem did not concern him and sent Müftüoğlu to the vice foreign minister Yiannis Kapsis who was responsible for the minority affairs. Müftüoğlu was surprised about this, but went to see Kapsis. After Müftüoğlu had explained the problem, Kapsis asked him sternly why he had come to him with this, but softened when Müftüoğlu said he came from the ministry of interior and answered that he knew about the matter. Müftüoğlu explained the problem again in all its gravity. It seemed as if they would now at least issue passports valid for one

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161 Question 3625/13.5.86 by Mehmet Müftüoğlu, with answer from the minister of Public Order Andonis Drosoyiannis dated 09.06.1986 (Praktika Vulis, Session 151 - 10.06.1986).
162 Question 927/02.10.86 by Mehmet Müftüoğlu, with answer from the minister of justice Ap. Kaklamanis dated 21.10.1986 (Praktika Vulis, Session 18 - 07.11.1986, p.779). In this case he was told that the Ministry of Justice was looking for ways to solve this problem
year, but Müftüoğlu said that he would not drop the matter before the minority members obtained passports valid for 5 years and multiple journeys as they should (ibid.). Hâki also asked Ahmet Faikoğlu about the matter, who said that he expected the issue to be resolved soon. He had been promised that people would get passports valid for one year with return (İleri 411/06.12.1985). When Müftüoğlu made a question about the problem to the relevant minister he received the following answer:

There is no discrimination against the Greek Muslims of Western Thrace. Passports valid for less than 5 years, are only issued in cases provided for by the law, and without discrimination because of religion or other reasons.¹⁶⁵

The problem does not seem to have been fully resolved. An article in İleri presented the restrictions on the freedom of travel as an example of new discriminations. The authorities did not issue passports and the banks of Thrace would not give the amount of foreign currency people were entitled to according to the law. Some people who went abroad and returned 5–10 days later were turned back on the Greek side of the border and their passports stamped with the word “cancelled”. These people lost their citizenship and came in great trouble (İleri 429/25.04.1986). The problem seems to have continued, since promises of passports were among the “benefits” used to extort the minority voters in the subsequent local elections (Akın 885/25.10.1986).

Müftüoğlu spoke in parliament on two occasions in connection with problems particularly affecting the minority. The first time was about the problems of the tobacco farmers.¹⁶⁶ The second was in connection with the proposed tax of $100 on more than one trip a year to Turkey. This was possibly proposed in reciprocity with similar Turkish laws which affected the Greek Orthodox of Istanbul. From the side of Turkey it was a general economic measure to curtail expenditure of foreign currency. The proposal was not ratified in Greece, but Müftüoğlu’s speech gives an indication of the minority’s concerns in this connection:

As I mentioned earlier too, we have sick people who every 20 days or every month must go to Turkey for treatment. We have pupils of primary schools, we have pupils of secondary schools, and university students. We have the pensioners who have children living permanently in Turkey, since they have lost their Greek citizenship, and the old people must visit their children. And every three or two months they come to Greece to collect their pension or to look after their property. For these people, this provision will create many problems.¹⁶⁷

There is other information which demonstrates that Müftüoğlu tried to do his job conscientiously. He mentioned to Hâki that he too was from a poor village family and for that reason he had visited all the villages after he had served as MP for 8–9 months. He advised people about how to make correct application to public services. Even if they did not obtain their right the application was a document which could

be used to make their problems heard by the world (İleri 421/28.02.1986). When there was tension after a demonstration, he informed people about their constitutional rights; i.e. those who were asked to come to the police station did not have to go if they did not receive a formal request (Akin 938/17.02.1988). He also took initiatives like inviting all the township presidents (kinotárhis) for a meal to discuss their problems. Earlier many of them were very uneducated (cahil) and totally under the influence of the secretaries (İleri 463/20.02.1987).

Müftüoğlu’s greatest problem was that he was fighting on two fronts. While he did his best to defend the minority’s interests, he was relentlessly attacked by his political rivals within the minority. Their attacks were related to the mufti question (see below) and certain other issues which will be presented later. Much of the critique against him was waged by the minority newspapers Akin and Gerçek.168 This was a period when a particular minority faction grew strong with the backing of Turkey, and it used every opportunity to insult him, curse him, and slander him to the Turkish consulate in Komotini (cf. Trakya’nın Sesi 519/31.08.1995).

Ahmet Faikoğlu

Ahmet Faikoğlu did not leave much of a mark in parliament. This is to a certain degree natural, since he was a member of the party in power. Consequently he did not pose embarrassing questions to the government, but continued in his traditional role as middle man. The only time he spoke in parliament was when he introduced a law draft concerning blood donation.169 This had no relation to the minority and was done for PASOK. After his first 6 months as MP, he presented his achievements in the following manner to a minority newspaper: 1. Electricity to the Alma (Kıflaklar) village 2. Repair of the Taraşmanlı mosque. 3. Repair of the Kurhasanlı mosque. 4. Money to make roads in minority areas. 5. Fixing the water problem in Oreon (Yassıören) with the help of the people there. 6. Money for a 3 year old child who went to America for heart surgery. 7. A splendid mosque for the Evlalo (İnhanlı) village. 8. Pension from the agricultural pension fund (OGA) for the religious personnel (İleri 411/06.12.1985). His success as a middle man is evident in an interview by the newspaper Milliyet, Faikoğlu said that he was able to obtain permits for minority members, while Müftüoğlu said he was not (cf. Akin 911/30.06.1987). We know that he discussed the minority issue with Papandreou on the wish of the prime minister, but there are no details about the content of their conversation.170

170 İleri 439/08.08.1986; Trakya’nın Sesi 211/27.08.1986; Akin 882/06.09.1986.
Because of his subsequent activity as independent MP, it is important to establish his orientation when he was PASOK MP. Faikoğlu is a person with a great ability to adapt to the circumstances and as long as he represented PASOK he sounded as if he was cut out of the party program. Right after his election he was interviewed in a major newspaper where the “nice Ahmet” said *inter alia*:

—Well… I know what you are about to ask me. And I tell you: Where is the difference? Do you see those in front of us? In what way do they differ? In nothing. The Christians and Muslims are the same. God is the same for everybody. They have the same problems and ambitions. We breath the same air. So what separates us?

[...]

—I live in Greece and I am MP of the Greek Parliament. And I am proud, first of all because there is a Greek parliament, and even more because I the Muslim am a member of it. And my pride and sense of responsibility grow bigger, because it was PASOK that selected me (*Ta Nea* 21.06.1985).

When Faikoğlu lashed out against the minority policy of ND, he did not convince a subsequent collaborator, who remarked that PASOK was just as bad (*Gerçek* 169/20.06.1987). Rodoplu criticised Faikoğlu in his comment and said that PASOK was just as bad as ND. Later, Rodoplu accused him for insincerity and for sounding like a page of the PASOK program:

On the third day of the holiday [*bayram*], after the Muslims of Kimmeria (Koyunköy) had ended their Friday prayer which enveloped them in endless recitals of God’s greatness, they were addressed by Mr. Ahmet [Faikoğlu] with these words:

…… I am here to bring you Prime minister Andreas Papandreou’s warm greetings and congratulations for our holy holidays.

It is an honour for us Muslims to live here as Greek citizens. We live in a civilised country WHICH TEACHES civilisation, freedom, and democracy.

The Government respects us and embraces you who live in this remote area of ours. You are the objects of the Government’s and our Prime minister’s personal love.”

Mr. Ahmet used several similar sentences. Especially when he spoke about the Prime minister’s particular love (!) for us, there were people who curled their lips [in disdain] and gave a cold-shoulder of course.

The people of Kimmeria did not listen to these words, they appeared to listen and fell in thoughts. Mr. Ahmet knew the realities, but was not able to speak about them, he was saying other things, more correctly he was deriding people. For this reason the words were not convincing. Because he did not believe in the words himself. That was why people did not listen, they were thinking, they were thinking about their own fate (*Gerçek* 177/31.08.1987).

Similarly he declared to a local majority newspaper that “It is an honour for us to live in Greece which has taught Civilisation, Democracy, and Freedom.” Also when he was in contact with the immigrant organisations in Turkey (BTTDD) he spoke like a staunch government supporter. While the mufti Mustafa Hilmi and Mehmet Müftüoğlu were critical to the latest developments in Thrace, Faikoğlu declared his support to the chagrin of his interviewers:

“Here in Ksanthi there is no oppression. As for Komotini I do not know, but in Komotini too there is no intentional discrimination or oppression by the state or government. The government or state cannot order this. Such initiatives depend on the personal behaviour of a policeman or official. This happens everywhere in the world. For example in Turkey a police officer can treat badly any citizen, i.e. not a Greek Orthodox [*rum*] but a Turk. These events are similar. In other words there is no oppression against us here” (*Bati Trakya’un Sesii* 4/ May-June 1988).

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We can see the same behaviour in connection with the protest against discrimination pertaining to the recognition of foreign university degrees. When there was a question about signing a joint declaration and bringing the matter to international human rights organisations, Faikoglu made the following comment: “I propose that this joint declaration is not published now. Because there may be some solution in this diploma affair within a month. I know something as PASOK MP” (*Gerçek* 180/22.09.1987). He was not convincing, and people asked him how PASOK would do in one month what it had not done in four years. In the same meeting there was another interesting episode:

> When the former MP Orhan Hacıibram enumerated many other contrivances against the Minority, and was telling that directives had been sent to the owners of the factories in Ksanthi to sack the Turkish workers, the PASOK MP A. Faikoglu screamed and reminded Orhan that they could discuss these subjects some place else (ibid.).

From the political point of view it is interesting to see that Faikoglu adjusted completely to the Greek discourse or ideology when he argued towards the authorities against the restrictions on the Muslims in the “controlled zone” in the mountain area:

> “—I am a Muslim. Those who live in the mountain areas too are Muslims who are an indivisible part of the Greek nation. For this reason I hope that the MPs of the prefecture Mr. Atmatzidis and Mr. Aleksiu will do their best to let the area get rid of its status as “forbidden area”… (*Akin* 922/20.10.1987).

This provoked the strong critique of his subsequent companion Hasan Hatipoğlu, who stressed that the Greek and Turkish races were two different things. Later, Faikoglu would pass from the pro-government position to the Turkish nationalist position of Hatipoğlu almost in a snap, some months before the 1990 parliamentary elections.

*KKE’s Support for the Minority in Parliament*

Apart from the initiatives by the minority MPs, KKE started to take an active interest in the minority’s problems towards the end of this period. The party newspaper would claim that KKE had shown willingness to put the minority’s problem on the agenda where the two big parties resorted to “secret diplomacy”. During this period KKE submitted three questions (*erōtisi*) and 3 reports (*anaforá*) related to the minority. The MP Kostas Kappos was particularly active.172 After visiting Thrace he expressed surprise about the big problems the minority was facing. He mentioned in particular the problems with education and housing (*Rizospastis* 23.05.1989). The Papandreou government was said to follow “a policy of discrimination and violation of human rights” towards the minority.173

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172 *Rizospastis* 27.05.1989, as reprinted in *Aile Birlik* 1/30.05.1989.
Local Elections 12 October 1986

The minority newspaper Trakya’nın Sesi engaged itself strongly in the local elections and supported the ticket of Kostas Benis (ND) in Ksanthi and Yeoryios Papadriellis (PASOK) in Komotini. This support was based on their merits and not on party adherence. Ksanthi represents the easiest case in this election. The minority was very satisfied with the work of the incumbent mayor. The minority members felt that they were treated fairly, and the mayor had also initiated various kinds of works in the minority quarters (Trakya’nın Sesi 214/24.09.1986). In his Turkish language election propaganda Benis was very low-keyed and simply referred to his relationship with the minority. The minority is referred to in neutral terms such as “minority members”, “Muslims”, “friends”, “compatriots” (Trakya’nın Sesi 216/10.10.1986). He was easily elected in the first attempt when he received 55% of the votes (the three other tickets obtained 20%, 18%, and 7%). His share of the minority vote was 68% (Trakya’nın Sesi 219/31.10.1986).

Komotini presented a much more complex situation. Three tickets participated, Enosi Topikon Dinameon (Union of Local Forces - ETD), headed by Andreas Stoyannidis, Dimokratiki Sinergasia (Democratic Collaboration - DS), headed by Yeoryios Papadriellis (PASOK), and a third ticket headed by Nikos Fakiridis (KKE). The competition between the tickets became very fierce. Stoyannidis, who had lost with a very small margin in the previous elections, although he had received most of the minority votes, was determined to do anything to win this time around. To secure the minority votes, which represented roughly 1/3 of the total, he contacted the circle around Hasan Hatipoğlu. He gave them free hands to do anything necessary to win. His Turkish language election newspaper Sesiniz (Your Voice) began immediately with a very strong attack on PASOK and a detailed critique of the discriminatory measures against the minority. It appealed to the minority in the spirit of Turkish nationalism. The prefecture committee of PASOK reacted, and asked the prefecture committee of ND to curtail Stoyannidis, who they felt was carrying matters to the extreme. However, Stoyannidis was determined to continue his election campaign in the same tone (Grafio Tipu Thrakis 04.10.1986 - Deltio). A Greek populist newspaper would later point to some of his declarations at a time when there was tension in Thrace. Stoyannidis had asked people to vote for the “Turkish candidates” on his ticket so that their children and grandchildren would not forget their language and religion. In another appeal he asked them to elect a mayor who would not hesitate to

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174 Trakya’nın Sesi 212/09.09.1986. Dede mentions that in the last election Akit and Gerçek had supported Katsimigas, but now they changed side for no apparent reason. What they had once called white became black the next time.

175 Sesiniz was written by Mustafa Hafız Mustafa, the subsequent close collaborator of Ahmet Sadik.
call them Turks, and engaged in rhetoric against PASOK. This led to the following reaction from a PASOK newspaper:

In addition A. Stoyannidis do not hesitate in other proclamations to appeal to the minority to vote so that “three more Turks will be elected to the town council”, while furthermore, when “Avriani” reveals his activities he lashes out in the minority newspaper “Sesiniz” (“Your Voice”) 17.10.86: “That is the true PASOK. The voice of “Avriani” is the voice of PASOK, the voice of Alevras. It is the voice of Kapsis.” Anyway, it is surely not the voice of the Turks…[176]

Stoyannidis had always portrayed himself to the minority as a “friend of Turks” (Türk dostu), and his minority adherents referred to him as their partisan: “our Andreas” (bizim Andrea). In many ways he can be characterised as a traditional “friend of Turks” type. He belonged to the old generation who knew a smattering of Turkish, and would not hesitate to go to the minority coffee houses and speak strongly in favour of the minority before the elections. This would last until he obtained their vote, and afterwards he would carry out a nationalist Greek policy behind their backs. When he presented himself to the minority as its partisan, he would remind people about the reactions against him by the Christians in 1975. After he obtained almost all the minority votes, the nationalist Christians had made a man of straw portraying Stoyannidis which they strung up and burned. However he did not tell that two of the protagonists were now on his ticket.[177] There were many negative measures against the minority during Stoyannidis’ tenure, but he always tried to present it as if he had no responsibility for them and succeeded to some degree. When people from the minority went to see him he would say:

…You know, neighbour, that it is not in my hands, it is the government policy. I want to do it, but you see it is not possible. I want to surface the roads in your quarters, but they do not give permission. There is nothing for me to do. But do not worry, I go regularly to Athens to find solutions. Soon your problems will be solved… (Trakya’nın Sesi 215/03.10.1986).

And of course nothing happened. The different situation in Ksanthi is a good yardstick for measuring his performance, and demonstrates his lack of sincerity. There are also statements by him intended for a Greek audience, which are hostile to the minority.[178] It is a good example of the collaboration between Greek and Turkish nationalists, where nobody cares what the other part says as long as there are some petty benefits to obtain. The Turkish language election newspaper of Papadriellis Yeni Nesil (New Generation) first criticised the attempts at creating a nationalist climate, [176] Avriani 07.03.1988. During this period there was a polemic against the speaker of Parliament Yiannis Alevras who had said there were no Turks (i. e. only Muslims) in Thrace (cf. Gerçek 149/28.11.1986). For another good example of this rhetoric see the reprint of an article from Sesiniz 02.10.1986 in Akin 887/10.11.1986. Just like the Stoyannidis ticket used the statement by Alevras, the Papadriellis ticket used a press cutting from a Greek newspaper where Sotiris Kuvelas (ND) expressed concern about that much of the state subsidies for large families would be absorbed by the minority in Thrace. He proposed to find ways to distribute the subsidies through the church (Yeni Nesil 3/16.10.1986).

[177] Trakya’nın Sesi 218/17.10.1986. The political opponents of Stoyannidis also claimed that members of the Akritas organisation who wanted expel the minority after 1974 were on his ticket (Yeni Nesil 4/18.10.1986).

[178] See for example Ethnos 22.03.1990. I also know about incidents from personal communications.
“exploiting the national and religious sentiments” of the minority (Yeni Nesil 1/04.10.1986). However, soon it followed suit and often stressed the Turkish character of the minority:

DO NOT BE AFRAID of anybody, DO NOT BELIEVE THE FALSE MINORITY CHAMPIONS who try to INTIMIDATE you as everybody knows!. They do not think about you, they think solely on their own INTERESTS. PROVE that you do not believe them any more by VOTING FOR THE TURKISH CANDIDATES ON PAPADRIELLIS’ ticket!! (Yeni Nesil 2/11.10.1986).

After the elections a local Christian newspaper claimed that the minority was the only victor in the elections, and that the competition for votes was more effective than petitions to international organisations. The Muslim candidates on all three tickets exploited the need for votes. There were many proclamations about discrimination, the minority was called Turkish instead of Muslim, etc. (Hronos 22.10.1986 - Deltio). Since the PASOK ticket too stressed the Turkish character of the minority, Rodoplu, who supported Stoyannidis, asked rhetorically after the elections if Kapsis would accuse Papadriellis for separatism.

The election campaign became severely influenced by the cleavages which had developed within the minority during the previous year. Apparently, Stoyannidis must have thought that it was possible to bargain the minority vote as a package following earlier models. According to Dede, members of the minority who appeared as “guardians of the Muslims” (Hatipoğlu, Rodoplu) promised Stoyannidis that he would obtain 90% of the minority votes if he denounced the deputy mufti Meço Cemali, who had been appointed by the Greek authorities. Dede criticised the way these groups tried to divide the minority into “Turkists” (türkçüler) who voted for ND and “pro-infidels” (gavurcular) who voted for PASOK (Trakya’nın Sesi 215/03.10.1986).

When Stoyannidis denounced the appointment of Cemali, he became a pawn in Hatipoğlu’s campaign against Müftüoğlu, who had supported Cemali. Stoyannidis must have done this orally when campaigning in minority areas. Hatipoğlu was very careful in his newspaper and mentioned only discreetly that it seemed as if one of the large tickets would support the appointment of the deputy Cemali, while the other would condemn it. In this way the result of the local election would allegedly show the approval or disapproval of Cemali (Akın 883/25.09.1986).

This was the reason behind the strong reaction from Dede. He asked people not to vote for Stoyannidis as a protest against the “freeloaders” (löppeci), as he called them (Trakya’nın Sesi 214/24.09.1986). Dede portrayed them as political have beens, who wanted to benefit from the vote potential of Stoyannidis. Subsequently they would present it as their own success to make them look like leaders.

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179 Gerçek 149/28.11.1986. Kapsis has of course much of the same attitude as Stoyannidis. I have been told that before the parliamentary elections in 1985 he visited several minority villages and promised new mosques etc. at a time when he directed many of the measures against the minority.

180 Stoyannidis must have done this orally when campaigning in minority areas. Hatipoğlu was very careful in his newspaper and mentioned only discreetly that it seemed as if one of the large tickets would support the appointment of the deputy Cemali, while the other would condemn it. In this way the result of the local election would allegedly show the approval or disapproval of Cemali (Akın 883/25.09.1986).

181 Trakya’nın Sesi 219/31.10.1986. While this seems highly plausible, it is worth noting that Hatipoğlu did not commit himself to anything in writing, but claimed that Akın, Gerçek, and Hakka Davet were neutral in the elections (Akın 885/25.10.1986). On the other hand, a careful reading of his newspaper before the election displays that he subtly, but systematically, promoted Stoyannidis and
pointed out that neither Müftüoğlu nor Hafiz Yaşar supported the Stoyannidis ticket, which had the backing of ND (Trakya’nın Sesi 216/10.10.1986).

The elections gave the following vote distribution (Trakya’nın Sesi 217/13.10.1986):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Muslim Votes</th>
<th>Overall Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Papadriellis</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoyannidis</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fakiridis</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since none of the tickets received more than 50%, there was a new vote on the next Sunday (19.10) between the two strongest tickets. Fakiridis, who was left out endorsed the Papadriellis ticket. The result obtained by Papadriellis and Fakiridis was quite impressive, when we have in mind that PASOK had received only 18% of the minority vote in the recent parliamentary elections. This result caused Stoyannidis to change tactics. He sent away the Hatipoğlu group and sought support from their main opponent, the ND MP Mehmet Müftüoğlu. This turned the tide towards Stoyannidis and contributed to his election the second week (Trakya’nın Sesi 219/31.10.1986). This gave the following result:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Muslim Votes</th>
<th>Christian Votes</th>
<th>Overall Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stoyannidis</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
<td>52.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papadriellis</td>
<td>44.5%</td>
<td>48.6%</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stoyannidis was apparently high-strung because of the tight vote. There was an ugly episode when he cursed the leading minority candidate on the Papadriellis ticket, Mehmet Bağdatlı, and even threatened to kill him (İleri 451/14.11.1986). He later excused himself by saying that it happened in the excited atmosphere of the elections because he had heard rumours about irregularities (İleri 452/21.11.1986). Dede attributed the considerable success of the Papadriellis ticket partly to the treatment of the minority during the last 4 years, when PASOK/KKE coalition had held the mayor’s office, and partly to the fact that İmamoğlu supported him behind the scenes and displayed his strength in this fashion (Trakya’nın Sesi 219/31.10.1986). The

criticised PASOK for the illegal petty favours it employed to extort minority votes. Compare this to his support of PASOK in the 1985 parliamentary elections, and his highly negative portrait of Stoyannidis after he fell out with him in the 1990 local elections (Akın 1008/24.10.1990).

182 PASOK obtained 36.6% of the combined minority-majority votes in the town of Komotini in the 1985 parliamentary elections.

183 Akın 885/25.10.1986. There were 5,508 Muslim voters and 11,033 Christian voters in Komotini.
minority elected 5 members to the municipality council for Stoyannidis and 3 for Papadriellis. In the smaller townships of the Rodopi prefecture the number of Muslim township presidents (kinotárhes) increased from 11 (in 1982) to 13 (out of a total of 38 townships) (Ileri 451/14.11.1986). In Ksanthi town 4 Muslims were elected for the town council while in the smaller townships the Muslim leaders increased from 9 to 10. Hâki did not report about the intrigues in Komotini, but presented his usual extensive criticism of those who voted for Christian candidates in the villages.  

\[184\] See, Ileri 447/17.10.1986 and the following two issues, as well as 480/19.06.1987.
The Minority Versus the Authorities

In order to understand the dynamics of minority politics, it is not enough to look at the initiatives towards the Greek authorities. The post-junta period also saw important developments in the internal organisation of the minority and the structure of its interest groups (zümre-klika). As mentioned earlier, the old function and orientation of the two traditional groups (progressive-conservative), broke down and lost the significance a little before 1974. The common oppression faced by all the minority members created a new “unity and solidarity”, which was lost again shortly after the 1974 parliamentary elections. This led to the formation of new interest groups. The breakdown of the conservative wing was partly a result of the fact that the Greek authorities did no longer grant it a privileged position. Another factor was that general developments and the interests of their children (education-career) led the conservatives to seek a closer relationship with Turkey. Almost all of the senior leaders had sold their property in Greece and transferred their possessions to Turkey. Unlike many of the poorer minority members, they did not have problems with obtaining visas etc. which made the transition quite easy.

We can take a look at some of our protagonists: Hasan Hätipoğlu, who was among the leading “progressives”, had sold the land belonging to himself and his wife and had almost all his economic assets in Turkey. However, while linking the long term interests of his family to Turkey, he used his position in Thrace to obtain short term benefits. The plain minority members would say that leaders like him were only interested in saving their own ship. After 1974 he was not elected MP and had to find another power basis. Because of the discrimination politic, he questioned the legitimacy of the MPs elected on the party tickets, while he promoted the muftis as the natural leaders of the minority. Hafiz Yaşar would later mention that the old Komotini mufti was very fond of being flattered. Hätipoğlu exploited this and called him “our sole national and religious leader”. Yaşar found this a bit ridiculous, but the mufti was influenced, and afterwards Hätipoğlu was able to manipulate him to do the things he wanted him to do. The local foreign ministry representative, Theodoros Pavlidis, is said to have used a similar tactics towards the mufti. In this way Hätipoğlu was

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185 There are frequent references to these developments in part of the minority press. For a concise account, see the interview with Orhan Hacıibram which I draw heavily on in my presentation (İleri 400/20.09.1985).
186 See the retrospective article by Rodoplu (who was in the same interest group as Hätipoğlu), where he argues in support for this new role of the mufti offices (Gerçek 384/25.02.1994).
187 Trakya’nın Sesi 446/24.02.1993. For the flattering of the mufti by the “clique”, see also İleri 336/23.03.1984; 368/11.01.1985.
able to influence the mufti, whose authority he employed to enhance his own position. Hatipoğlu had earlier always been a standard-bearer for Kemalism, but had no scruples about soliciting the support of the mufti office when he found it expedient.

The muftis had previously not been held in high regard by Turkish diplomacy which represented the secular ideal. The policy initiated by Kâmuran Gürün seems to have upgraded their role, and this was further enhanced by the internal developments. Critics claimed that the mufti offices were the objects of exploitation by certain interest groups, which exploited them as if they were their “family farm”. The Aga family’s complete change of ideological orientation after 1974 is particularly impressive. Before the dictatorship the Ksanthi mufti office had belonged to the most trusted Greek collaborators, and been involved prominently in anti-Turkish conservative organisations. It also championed the separate identity of the Pomaks with the sponsorship of the Greek authorities. When it changed direction and espoused Turkish nationalism, the adversary Celâl Zeybek commented that this was done out of expedience and to cover up old sins: “Since there has remained no bread in the Pomak [agriyanlık] cause, today’s mufti and his son Hafız [Mehmet Emin Aga] have started to exploit the poor people with Turkism [Türklük]” (İleri 139/11.05.1979). Many in the minority were also exasperated with the mufti office because of dubious economic affairs, including sale of property belonging to pious foundations. A Muslim from the Diomidia (Hamidli) village south of Ksanthi expressed his disdain in the following manner:

“How did the mufti’s son build the block of flats on that large land plot in Istanbul? Let the General Consul come here and ask me about it! Let me show how the fields belonging to the vakıf in this area were sold! They would not repair this mosque when it was standing, but after it crumbled!

And today we look and see that those who should have been chased away with kicks are more respected by the General Consulate and Turkey than we are! […]”

It may be pertinent to ask why Turkey welcomed someone with such a “dubious” past to its ranks. The probable reason was that Aga had a significant following in the precarious Pomak area, and Turkey preferred to proselytise him rather than to have him as adversary. As a result Hasan Hatipoğlu and Mehmet Emin Aga, who had been leading members of opposing camps before the junta, now joined forces and became

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188 This has been pointed out repeatedly by his adversaries, with documents to prove it. For characteristic examples, see Trakya’nun Sesi 5/26.10.1981; 345/25.01.1990; 358/31.05.1990, Yeni Adim 3/February 1989, İleri 639/31.05.1991, Eleftherotipia 16.06.1989.

189 İleri 356/05.10.1984. Dede later presented extensive documentation about the mufti’s sale of communal property (see Trakya’nun Sesi 420/21.05.1992 and the following 6 issues). Dede stressed that the group around Mehmet Emin Aga could only counter his articles by mudslinging and not by taking him to court for any false allegations. Furthermore, the Greek authorities had helped Mehmet Emin Aga to cover up the sales. While the communal property of the mountain villages was filed under “v” for vakıf in the land register, the communal property of the villages in the plain were filed in irrelevant places, which made it difficult to trace the sales of them. The sales of communal property took place exclusively from the villages in the plain (see Trakya’nun Sesi 424/25.06.1992). In other words, Aga had not sold any property belonging to the Pomak villages, where he had his political influence.
protagonists of a new interest group which contained both progressives and conservatives, as well as the mufti offices. As Hâki would put it:

Those who had ground their teeth against each other until yesterday united within this interest group and whether it was their profiteering[vurgunculuklar], or exploitation[sömürü düzenleri] they carried it out and protected it with heart and soul: All for one and one for all! Those who opposed the common interests of these people and distanced themselves from them, everybody who was defiant, they accused without mercy for being traitors-anti minority-antiturkish[antitürkîyeciler] independent of if they were progressive or conservative… (İleri 400/20.09.1985).

This group developed its strength gradually and in the early period the fronts were not drawn up so firmly. For example, in Ksanthi there were many attempts to belittle Orhan Hacıibram and Celâl Zeybek, who were the main contenders for the leadership position. Dede mentions that after the 1977 elections the political opponents of Celâl Zeybek joined forces to prevent the MP from settling firmly in the leader position. They made up the “group of 4” that later became the “group of 6”, which co-operated for the local elections and in other connections until 1981. They put up a common front against the MP and belittled him in order to obtain the leader position for themselves so that they could “sow and reap” the minority (Trakya’nın Sesi 5/26.10.1981). Zeybek countered by attacking the mufti who owed his position to the Greek government when he was appointed. At that time he co-operated with Şevket Hamdi and accused all the Muslims of being anti-Greeks. Zeybek accused furthermore the mufti office of the mismanagement of the vakıfs, exploitation of the minority, and interference in politics which was outside its authority. He was also very negative to Faikoğlu, whom he found unfit for working in the mufti office. During this period Orhan Hacıbram had joined the common front against Zeybek and wrote a letter where he defended the mufti from the accusations (İleri 141/22.06.1979). As we have already seen, Zeybek also joined forces with Aga on the independent Barış ticket for the 1985 elections. It is of course natural that there are shifting coalitions and various forms of strategic or opportunistic alliances in politics. The crucial question in this connection is: When did the rivalry between certain minority members lead to phenomena which cannot be termed as legitimate opposition politics?

The emergence of this new interest group is amply documented in the minority press, which presented it under various names. Among the more common are the “clique” (klika), “gang” (kumpanya), “freeloaders” (hazîriyîciler), “gluttons” (lopçular). Onsunoglu who was one of its foremost critics would later refer to it as the “minority mafia” (azînlık mafyası). He regarded the first minority conflict influenced by mafia methods to have taken place in 1980. In a meeting by the foremost

190 İleri 140/08.06.1979. For more details about Zeybek’s strained relationship with the mufti office, see İleri 153/14.12.1979.

191 Hazîriyîcî, means literally someone who eats what is already prepared, i.e. he enjoys the fruits of others’ labours. It corresponds well to the Greek expression “Tröei apó ta étima”. Lopçu, which depicts greed and avarice, has a certain comic flavour as it characterises someone who bolts down large mouthfuls of nice food.
minority members in the mufti office the two “mafia godfathers” Hasan Hatipoğlu of Komotini, and Mehmet Emin Aga of Ksanthi declared the two minority MPs İmamoğlu and Zeybek to be traitors in their absence. At that time the new law for the management of the pious foundations (vakıf) was passed in parliament. The two Minority deputies were not present in parliament when the law was ratified, and became accused of having made a deal with the government, thus selling out the Minority. “They passed the judgement on the two MPs that they were ‘traitors’, and it was decided not to allow them to come to the mufti office meetings…” (Trakya’nın Sesi 414/19.03.1992). However, this event could be viewed as an isolated case if it had not been for the later developments. The two deputies had no problem in countering the accusations—a declaration by them was sufficient—and the accusations were not regarded as legitimate as became the case later (Trakya’nın Sesi 415/30.03.1992).

The meetings at the mufti offices were part of a new strategy to deal with the various problems the minority was confronted with. It was decided to found an umbrella organisation called the Azınlık Yüksek Kurulu (Supreme Minority Council—AYK) which could function as a consultative organ and co-ordinate the minority’s political struggle. This initiative took place because of the need to resist the expropriation of large land areas belonging to minority members. The AYK assembled under the Komotini and Ksanthi muftis and included the former and present MPs, leaders of organisations, journalists, local politicians, in short all the prominent minority members. It never became formally recognised by the Greek authorities, and Baskın Oran refers to it as a “de facto” organisation.192 Rodoplu, who held a central position in the “clique”, presents the formation of the AYK as a reaction to the minority’s inability to solve its problems through the Greek parties. This made the minority search for more stable institutions, and it rallied around the muftis. He claims that the formation of the AYK under the leadership of the muftis, was done in a democratic fashion. Both adherents and adversaries had to accept the existence of this assembly, and he stressed that the Greek authorities were not pleased with its existence (Gerçek 384/25.02.1994). In reality, the democratic function of the AYK was to a large degree sabotaged from within the minority, something which we will see in the following.

The Evlalo Land Dispute

The first large scale protest by the minority took place in 1982 in connection with the village Evlalo (İnhanlı) land dispute in the Ksanthi prefecture.193 Hâki would later call 1982 the Evlalo year, as it marked a new page in the minority’s history, and gave

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192 Baskın Oran mentions the basic idea behind the AYK, but refers only briefly to the internal differences which complicated the function of it (Oran 1991: 180–181).
193 For a basic overview of the events leading up to the conflict, see Trakya’nın Sesi 17/26.02.1982; 18/22.03.1982. Consult this for details concerning protocol numbers of legal decisions etc. Baskın Oran has written extensively about this problem, see (Oran 1978; Oran 1984; Oran 1991: 249–260).
an example for a modern struggle (İleri 280/23.12.1982). According to a title deed from 1872 a land area of 2,300 stremma (230 hectares), of which 1,300 stremma were cultivated while 1,000 stremma were used for pasture, belonged to two Muslims. This had later been divided among their heirs and by the time of the protest it belonged to a large number of families. Most of them had relatively small farms and cultivated plots of 20–25 stremma. The ownership of the land became first disputed in 1953, probably in connection with the agricultural reform of Plastiras. However, the plans for expropriation were abandoned in 1956 after local protests. The department of finance accepted a report in 1969, which concluded that the land did not belong to the state. Some circles did not accept this decision and the office of agriculture in the Ksanthi prefecture made a secret report in 1973, and the disputed area became characterised as state land. This was first communicated to the villagers in June 1981, and threatened to deprive them of a large part of their cultivated land.

Baskın Oran has paid particular attention to the legal arguments by the Greek court, which disputed the validity of the original title deed. According to the Ottoman land law of 1858, which was accepted by Greece in 1929, title deeds could only be granted for cultivated land, and not for pasture lands, roads, threshing-floors etc. Consequently, if the land did not have such a status in 1872, the original title deed was invalid and the land belonged to the state. Oran stresses that according to the original title deed the land was termed kıfllak (winter pastures), which according to Ottoman law was considered private property in the same way as cultivated fields, as opposed to yaylak (summer pastures), which were common pastures belonging to one or more villages. Oran concludes that the Greek court interpreted the Ottoman title deed incorrectly, possibly on purpose (Oran 1991: 256–257).

In the following my main concern is not the legal aspect, but the role this case played in the political mobilisation of the minority. The villagers were represented by the lawyer Orhan Hacıibram. The trial in the Ksanthi court of first instance, 15–16 March 1982, resulted in a negative verdict for the villagers. After this decision a gendarmerie unit of 50–60 men went to the village and tried to force the villagers to sign the protocol which prohibited the villagers to go to their fields. It was immediately decided to start a protest action. It is clear that their lawyer, Orhan Hacıibram, regarded the case as primarily a political problem related to the contrivances against the minority hailing back to the junta period (cf. Trakya’nın Sesi 21/03.07.1982). He was instrumental in the organisation of the protest action. Orhan Hacıibram informed the

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194 I have no adequate information about the various heirs and other relevant details related to the transmission of the land after 1872.
195 In an early article Oran links the land dispute to tension in Greek-Turkish relations, but I find this unlikely, cf. (Oran 1978: 22). Andreadis listed 3,200 stremma in Evlalo eligible for the forced expropriation according to law 2185/52 (Andreadis 1956: 32). In this case it could very well be the size of the land which made it eligible for expropriation and not the question of the title deed.
minority leaders about the case at a meeting in the Ksanthi mufti office 7 April. It was decided that the protests would continue and the agenda for the forthcoming protests was drawn up: They would contact the prefect and various ministries, hold a press conference in Athens, start a solidarity campaign among the minority members, etc. (Gerçek 70/13.04.1982).

The villagers of Evlalo staged three successive demonstrations besides the clock tower in the central square of Ksanthi (17 and 22 March, 2–13 April). They had posters with slogans in Greek and Turkish such as: “They drive us away from fields we have cultivated for 120 years”; “The state should distribute land to the landless, not create landless peasants.”; “The land belongs to those who cultivates it, no to extermination.”; “The minority asks for justice and equal treatment from the government of Change”.

This was the first large scale demonstration by the minority, and naturally the lack of experience encumbered its organisation. Looking back on the demonstration some ten years later, Onsunoğlu considered that the Evlalo protests lacked focus. In the resolutions and slogans it would have been beneficial to stress the class and legal issue more than the national. It should also have been connected to the socialist agrarian policy of the new government. However, at first, people had written slogans on banners such as: “The minority wants equality”; “The Lausanne Treaty must be applied”; “We want the recognition of our rights.” Afterwards the co-ordination committee assembled and decided to exclude these vaguely specified slogans, unrelated to the struggle of the Evlalo villagers (Trakya’nın Sesi 446/24.02.1993).

There were also several attempts to influence the central authorities. A committee including the muftis and various minority politicians went to Athens and was able to see various ministers with the assistance of the minority MPs. On 24 May they met with the vice foreign minister Yiannis Kapsis. Hasan Kaşıkçıoğlu pointed out to the minister that it was peculiar that the minority affairs were handled by the foreign department through the “offices of cultural relations”. Kapsis replied that the authority had now been given to the prefects. He assured them that the prefects would solve the minority problems in four days, holding up four fingers to underline his point (Gerçek 72/05.06.1982). However, a year later nothing had happened, and the minority considered it to be empty promises (Gerçek 80/16.04.1983). In an article intended for the Greek public Kapsis would later describe the episodes in Evlalo as a revolt against the expropriation of land which was probably encroached upon, after instigation by the Turkish consulate in order to sound out the Greek authorities (To Vima 03.09.1989). Another committee which went to Athens in connection with the Yaka expropriations met the minister of interior Yiorgos Yennimatas on 3 February 1983. In this connection the minister told them that it had been a great mistake to claim that the fields of the

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196 These and other slogans can be seen in the pictures from the demonstration in (Dede 1988b).
Evlalo villagers belonged to the treasury. Dede remarked that this proved that the villagers were right (Trakya’nın Sesi 53/05.02.1983). It also indicates that the central authorities were aware of the problems involved. The prefect of Ksanthi responded and claimed that Dede had rendered Yennimatas incorrectly. Dede commented that if this was the case he should make a disclaimer in the name of the minister of interior, as he had done during the election campaign (Trakya’nın Sesi 55/19.02.1983).

The demonstrations gave much publicity to the minority’s problems. There were reactions from Turkey, and the case was covered extensively in the Turkish press.\(^ {197}\) It is reasonable to assume that to some extent Greece took the Turkish sensitivity into consideration. From the internal minority perspective the Turkish interest also gave several minority leaders the opportunity to display themselves to the “motherland”. Furthermore, the Evlalo dispute induced the minority to contemplate the possibility of asking for international inquiries about the situation in Thrace. This was related to certain initiatives towards the Council of Europe. The fear about involvement by international organisations could be another factor which restrained the Greek authorities (cf. \(\text{i}l\text{eri} \ 250/09.04.1982\)).

The handling of the Evlalo case led to serious conflicts within the minority, which had repercussions on its organisation and political activity. The MP Ahmet Mehmet claimed in an interview that he had not been invited to the meeting at the Ksanthi mufti office about Evlalo, because it had been organised by the politicians who were only thinking about their own interests. The same politicians who had said that a protest at Evlalo would be a revolt [isyan] against the government, engaged themselves shamelessly for personal benefits after the issue had acquired an international dimension. They were not concerned about presenting the heroic struggle of the Evlalo villagers, but of appearing in photographs published in the local and foreign press. He accused them of opportunism and for not helping the people.\(^ {198}\) Ahmet Mehmet never had a dynamic presence as MP and could not be expected to take the lead in any protest. Nevertheless, it is interesting to notice that he was apparently bypassed completely. What was more serious was that part of the minority leadership created a united front against Orhan Hacıibram who led the protests. Orhan called a meeting in Komotini 14 June on the eve of the appeal trial. In the meeting he favoured the postponement of the trial from 15 June to 2 November 1982. He only acquired the support of Onsunoğlu, but went on and postponed the trial. Afterwards there was much slander against Orhan, which prompted him to make an announcement where he asked Hatipoğlu, Kaşıkgırgı, Cemiloğlu, Rodoplu and the two mufti sons to state the reasons why

\(^ {197}\) Several relevant articles are included in (Dede 1988b).
\(^ {198}\) \(\text{i}l\text{eri} \ 255/14.05.1982\). For another very illustrative case where a villager accuses the leaders, see \(\text{i}l\text{eri} \ 578/22.01.1990\) (translation in, Appendix 5, text 18).
they did not want to postpone the Evlalo trial. Hatipoğlu answered by pointing to Turkey’s interest in Thrace, which made Greece cautious. Any negative development in Evlalo would result in Turkish retaliations. When the Greek foreign ministry spokesman said that there was no reason to worry as the case was still in court, the Turkish foreign ministry spokesman said that “We are waiting impatiently on the verdict of the court.” Hatipoğlu claimed that the issue had surpassed the village, lawyer and minority level and become a bilateral issue between Greece and Turkey. He claimed that Turkey was waiting for a decision, and asked who had given Orhan the authority to postpone the case (Akın 802/21.06.1982). As so often before, Hatipoğlu presented himself as the representative of Turkey in order to increase his prestige. Rodoplu followed up with new attacks on Orhan, accusing him of betraying the villagers’ cause (cf. Gerçek 73/26.06.1982).

In a detailed answer, Orhan maintained that a trial would only cancel the protocols which expelled the villagers and not solve the root of the problem. While the minority had earlier claimed that the case was created by the administration, the administration presented it as a legal problem. After the administration started to approach it as Orhan had presented it, Hatipoğlu presented it as a problem the court had to solve. Orhan believed that the minority should first of all try to solve the problems itself and that the guarantee states could only assist. Finally, it was the judge who postponed the case on the initiative of the state lawyer, something which was also favoured by Orhan. Orhan ended by saying that this was not an answer to Hatipoğlu but to his masters. In his answer Orhan also made a detailed criticism of Hatipoğlu’s role in the early mobilisation. After the trial on 16 March Orhan said that it was not a legal but a political question. He proposed the sit down protest in front of the clock tower 17 March. The police threatened them and tried to dissolve the protest. Hatipoğlu arrived at one o’clock. He did not participate in the protest, but preferred to watch from the café across the street. When the police left, Hatipoğlu approached Orhan:

- What is happening, Orhan?
- The Evlalo villagers began a protest. They have definitely a just cause.
- Is such a thing possible? Are you bringing A NEW CUSTOM TO AN OLD VILLAGE? It is not possible to protest in such a manner.
- So what can we do, Hasan?
- Make a committee from the villagers. Write a memorandum, give it to the prefect and dissolve [the protest] immediately afterwards.
- When the prefect is not there?
- Is not the vice prefect there?
- No he too is not there.
- Does the prefect not have a concierge? Give it to him.

199 Trakya’nın Sesi 19/19.06.1982. Before this Dede had not been able to publish his newspaper for three months. Hatipoğlu had not allowed him to use the Akın printing press anymore, because of what he wrote, and it took time to find another solution. Dede accused some of the prominent minority members of only thinking about their personal interest. If someone said something which did not please them they would try to slander him by calling him Spy, Communist, Sold etc.
Yes, Hasan. If I had listened to you today the prefect’s concierge would have occupied himself with the villagers’ problem, while we have brought it to the level of the prime minister.

Esteemed Hatipoğlu; Your behaviour at the Monday 22 March protest march was very ridiculous. While we walked around the square together with the villagers and shouted at the top of our voices about their rights, you were watching from the coffee house on the opposite side. But when the protest march was over and it was time to take a photograph you went to the first row and took the photograph of the fighter [miicadelectric] Hatipoğlu which you published in your newspaper. It is no shame to be afraid or to be unable to do something. However, it is a great shame to usurp other people’s struggles. It had been appropriate to take the photograph in front of the coffee house and not in front of all the people. What you did was forgery.

Your attitude in the following days was also influenced by this “philosophy”.200

Onsunuoğlu criticised the slander against Orhan and the misrepresentation of the way he had handled the case. It was clear in the Komotini meeting that the majority of those present tried to sabotage Orhan. Onsunuoğlu reminded them of the fact that it was the villagers in Evlalo who bore the brunt of the struggle and the spirit behind them was Orhan. Orhan mentioned that the Ksanthi mufti had seen the prefect before the fourth day of protest. The prefect said that the villagers could return to their houses. Hatipoğlu said that this gave green light for the villagers to return to their fields, and he was supported by the Ksanthi mufti. Orhan argued that there was no green light, the prefect only wanted the villagers to return to their houses so that the protest would end. He was able to keep the protest going and accused Rodoplu for slander when he implicated that Orhan did this on order from others (Trakya’nın Sesi 22/10.07.1982). Later Onsunuoğlu would characterise the attacks on Orhan Hacıibram as the beginning of the “mafia era”. For the first time the “traitor” stamp was openly attached in a way that everybody could see and hear. It was much more serious than earlier mudslinging against minority leaders, as Orhan Hacıibram became the first “certified traitor” (Trakya’nın Sesi 415/30.03.1992).

The verdict from the trial in November was first communicated 18 March 1983. It cancelled the decision to expel the villagers. Not for the reason that it was incorrect but because the protocols did not specify clearly the area involved (Oran 1991: 258). Dede presented the decision as a victory for the minority. It proved that Orhan was not a “traitor” but served the people well by asking for the postponement. However, he reminded that the case was not finished yet and the court could still send new orders to expel the villagers (Trakya’nın Sesi 61/02.04.1983). It is safe to say that whatever the misgivings about Orhan, there was no loss of land which could be ascribed to his dispositions. As has so often been the case in both Greek and Turkish handling of minority affairs no definite decision was made.

There were later some new attempts to dispute the ownership status of the Evlalo villagers. Notably after the declaration of the “North Cyprus Turkish Republic” in November 1983.201 In some cases there were attempts by local Christians to till the

200 Trakya’nın Sesi 21/03.07.1982. It should be mentioned that in contrast to Hatipoğlu, Mehmet Emin Aga participated actively in the protest (cf. Ileri 250/09.04.1982).
disputed area (cf. Gerçek 113/19.03.1985). In early 1988 these attempts intensified and led to clashes between Christian and Muslim farmers. A Greek periodical, which was sympathetic to the minority, displayed concern about the way the case was presented in major Greek newspapers. It questioned if they untied the hands of the state for a final solution? (Scholiastis 61/04.03.1988). At this time the pressure against the minority reached a peak, but the villagers were able to keep the possession of their land. Afterwards there has been no dramatic new developments.

**The Expropriations in the “Yaka” Area for the University**

The second attempt to mobilise the minority to a public protest took place later the same year. This time it was related to the expropriation of land from the “Yaka” villages outside Komotini for the building of the university. Such expropriations take of course place everywhere and could be understood by the minority. However, it was thought that a much smaller area would be sufficient, and that it should not include the most fertile soil. Many families would be deprived of their sole source of income after loosing their land, and this would have grave social consequences. The Muslim villagers though that their land had been targeted on purpose. A Greek diplomat refuses that there was any deliberate “land grabbing policy” by the Greek authorities and points out that while 85% of the land appropriated for the University schools in Komotini belonged to Muslims, 82% of the land appropriated for the equivalent University schools in Ksanthi belonged to Christians (Alexandris 1990). The argument is not altogether convincing since it is not only a question of percentage but the actual size of the area appropriated. The campus in Ksanthi is considerably smaller. It is difficult to prove, but quite possible that in some cases Greece has used Turkish measures in Gökçeada (Imvros) as model. Such measures could of course easily be adapted to another agricultural area, and it would be difficult for Turkey to protests against measures it has adopted itself against the Greek Orthodox minority. A more striking example of correspondence with measures in Gökçeada was the plans to expropriate a large area of fertile land for an open agricultural prison, although they were never realised.

The plans to build a university hailed back to the junta period. At first the authorities wanted 1,000 *stremmas* (100 hectare) for the university but in 1977 they expropriated 3,200 *stremmas* (Akın 810/28.12.1982). The villagers protested but after they lost the case in the supreme court the authorities started to fence in the area with barbed wire on 20 January 1980. After a meeting in the *mufti* office 25 January the minority leaders decided to send a committee led by the *mufti* to Athens to discuss the case with the central authorities. They saw foreign minister Rallis 31 January, and in a new meeting in the *mufti* office two days later Hatipoğlu, who had participated in the

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committee expressed great optimism for a positive outcome of the case. After this the minority leadership was divided between those who followed Hatipoğlu’s line that there was nothing to fear, and those who looked for ways to protest against the expropriations.

Mehmet Müftüoğlu was the lawyer of the case, but he acted in co-operation with all the minority lawyers. In an interview he mentioned that right from the time when PASOK came to power he had been in favour of sending a committee to Athens to see the relevant authorities. He could not understand why Hatipoğlu encouraged the Yaka villagers to find one more lawyer at a time when all the legal procedures were completed (İleri 250/09.04.1982). Both Abdülhalim Dede and Orhan Hacıibram accused Hatipoğlu for sabotaging the Yaka villagers’ desire to protest, and trying to lull their anxieties by saying: “Do not be afraid, your fields will be returned.”

In order to understand how it was possible for those who had all kind of curious arguments to prevail, it is necessary to have in mind the internal dynamics of minority politics. Hâki supplies us with an impressionistic account of the prevailing atmosphere, when he looked back on the event some ten years later. The authorities had first asked the township presidents (kinotárhes) of the area to sell some 20–30 hectares for the university. He thinks that in the beginning it could have been possible to come to an arrangement and avoid the expropriation of a larger area. However, it was not possible for someone to say that the authorities were determined and it was necessary to find a solution. He would immediately be branded as “TRAITOR and SOLD”, and be unable to show his face in the neighbourhood afterwards. The minority lawyers who tried to inform the villagers about the matter also became labelled as “TRAITORS and SOLD”. As a consequence of this many preferred to remain silent. The words “THEY CANNOT TAKE IT” still rang in Hâki’s ears. When people from the town said this, it was thought that they knew something. Any attempt to get into negotiations with the authorities about the size of the area or about the indemnification became blocked by this inflexible attitude.

After 3 bulldozers started to work on the expropriated area in December 1982, a meeting took place in the mosque of the village Thamna (Eşekçili) at noon on Sunday 26 December. All the prominent minority members were invited, but the “clique” did not show up. According to Dede, Hatipoğlu played cards in the coffee house while the others did not come for lack of interest or because they were away. Dede claimed that the circles who had spread the rumour that the land would be given back to the owners

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203 Gerçek 39/20.02.1980. For the petition to Rallis dated 01.02.1980, see Gerçek 41/23.04.1980. The petition was not limited to asking for the reduction of the expropriations, but mentioned all of the problems the minority had suffered since the time of the junta.
204 Trakya’inn Sesi 21/03.07.1982. See also the reference in 282/28.04.1988.
205 İleri 746/18.02.1994; 747/25.02.1994. See also the discussion by Onsunoğlu in Trakya’inn Sesi 402/05.01.1991 (Appendix 5, text 14).
and created an unfounded optimism did not only sabotage the meeting but sling mud at the “real supporters of the minority” who tried to do something (Trakya’nın Sesi 48/01.01.1983). Onsunoğlu mentioned later that Aga and Hatipoğlu prevented the Evlalo villagers to come to the first meeting and display their solidarity. They tried to spread people by saying that it was not possible to organise a meeting when the Komotini mufti was abroad. Onsunoğlu pointed out later that the argument of the “clique” was that the meeting could not take place when the Komotini mufti was in Libya. However, when the mufti came back a week later the “clique” took him to the Yaka villages and used his influence to tell the villagers to stop the protests. The main speakers had been Rodoplu and İbrahim Şerif (Trakya’nın Sesi 417/23.04.1992).

A test protest march with more than 1,000 participants demanded that the land exceeding the need of the faculty building should be returned to its former owner. A committee was formed to organise further protests. It was decided to stage protest marches in all the Yaka villages and in Komotini. A new meeting was scheduled for 02.01.1983 (Trakya’nın Sesi 48/01.01.1983). The first reaction by Hatipoğlu was to project his group as the only legitimate decision centre in the minority. He said that the struggle against the expropriations would continue, and all decisions would be taken by the AYK assembled under the leadership of the mufti. He claimed that 99% of the minority agreed with this and that no other decisions were valid. This was embellished by his usual rhetoric that the case was very sensitive and the smallest mistake could spoil it (Akın 810/28.12.1982). The second meeting on 2 January was led by İbram Onsunoğlu, Mehmet Nuri (kinotárhis of Asomatos in the Yaka area and doctor by profession), and Orhan Hacıibram. Hâki remarked that those who said “Let us not occupy ourselves with non-sense” became compelled by the events to participate in the meeting. The Yaka villagers thought about their fields, while the others thought about their position as leaders. They thought that it would not have been possible to arrange a meeting without them, but now the Yaka villagers had taken the initiative. It was decided in the meeting to demand:

1. That the expropriations for the university should be limited to the area south of the main road.
2. That if it was not possible to prevent the expropriation they should be given land in exchange for the land they had to give.
3. That the expropriations should be reduced to 30 hectare.
4. That the road between Thamna and Komotini should be opened.
5. If these demands were not accepted they would start protest actions. It was determined that the first protest march would take place on Tuesday 18 January and go the 11 km from the Yaka villages to Komotini (İleri 281/07.01.1983).

206 Trakya’nın Sesi 417/23.04.1992. Rodoplu, too, maintained that the meeting should have been postponed because the mufti was away (Gerçek 79/25.01.1983).
Forces both inside and outside the minority were trying to discourage the march. A local Christian newspaper wrote that the Yaka villagers were playing with fire. Dede commented that there were strikes and protests all the time in Greece, so it was quite an exaggeration to portray a small protest march as a rebellion. While these kinds of protests were legal according to the laws, the newspaper tried to intimidate them to abandon the march. The newspaper attempted to hide the reason for the march and was looking for culprits as if the march came out of the blue. Hâki mentions that people from the “clique” held a whispering campaign saying that the initiative was crazy and could be seen as a movement against the state. The result could be disastrous. Hâki insisted that they should not listen to such words as it was their legal right. He encouraged everybody to participate in the march and called it a normal form of protest. The parole should be: “The problems of the Yaka villagers concern all of us” (İleri 282/14.01.1983).

The prefect summoned the Komotini mufti and Mehmet Nuri on 12 January and told them that the protest march had been prohibited. When the minority found this unsatisfactory and decided to go ahead, the gendarmerie issued a written prohibition two days later. On 18 January there was a new meeting in the Thamna mosque led by İbram Onsunoglu. The PASOK MP Vradelis was present. He told people that the expropriation was final. They should accept the indemnification and the land which was not used immediately for the university could be rented back to the villagers for a symbolic sum. The Ksanthi mufti was present, but the Komotini mufti refused to come and was represented by his son in law. After a long discussion it was decided to organise a new protest march on 2 February.

By this time the internal division of the minority had become very apparent. Dede claimed that a section of the foremost minority members took a deep breath and celebrated the prohibition. The reason was that some people could not resist the pressure from the authorities, others wanted to prove their obedience towards the parties and the authorities, others were afraid of the responsibility for the march, etc. He claimed that the authorities used some of the prominent minority members to divide and rule the minority. From 14 January some of the minority leaders acted according to the wishes of the authorities and spread by the grape vine that there would be no march, they also went to the Yaka area and threatened the villagers. There was additional intimidation by the authorities. In the meeting in the mosque 18 January almost all of the minority leaders had tried to persuade the villagers to postpone the march indefinitely (Trakya’nın Sesi 51/22.01.1983).

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207 Comments by Dede to the article in Elefthero Vima 08.01.1983 (Trakya’nın Sesi 50/15.01.1983).
Hafız Yaşar recounted later that he and the Komotini muftı had been summoned by the prefect because he wanted them to stop the Yaka protest. He both threatened and cajoled them. Yaşar said that they had to talk to the villagers who were losing their land, but the prefect insisted on addressing them. He said they should stop the protest march and the meetings in the Thamna mosque. If they had to hold meetings they could do it in the muftı office. The prefect reminded the muftı that he was the leader of the minority and held him responsible for the events. The muftı replied that the meeting had been arranged without asking him and blamed the “Communist and anarchist” Onsunoğlu for being behind. Thus he gave the authorities a name and a target (Trakya’ın Sesi 446/24.02.1993). Hâki also mentioned that in one of the Thamna mosque meetings the muftı had pointed his finger to Mehmet Nuri and screamed: “You are responsible for this business!” (İleri 334/09.03.1984). Dede claimed that the muftı of Komotini was bothered by the meetings in the mosque. He arranged meetings in the muftı office 13 and 25 January with only people from Komotini belonging to the muftı’s circle and no villagers from the Yaka area. Dede stressed that the Yaka villagers should wage their own struggle and criticised the meetings behind closed doors in the muftı office (Trakya’ın Sesi 52/29.01.1983). On 1 February it became known that the authorities had prohibited the march scheduled for the next day, which became postponed indefinitely after a general meeting. Dede maintained that this was not a wise decision as some portrayed it to be. Neither had the authorities taken any positive steps towards the minority. The postponement was the result of fear and pressure and not free will. He criticised the socialist PASOK government for taking precautions to prevent a popular movement. The movement was entirely populist and class based and it was fairy tales to say that it was connected with rebellion and foreign centres (Trakya’ın Sesi 53/05.02.1983).

Many of the intrigues surrounding the Yaka were exposed in the minority press at a much later date. When Onsunoğlu submitted proposals to vote in one of the early meetings, Mehmet Emin Aga approached him and said that he should not do it. Aga looked devastated, and Onsunoğlu understood only later why. He reached the conclusion that in the Yaka case the “clique” had obtained a directive or had taken the decision that the meeting in Thamna had to be prevented at any cost. Onsunoğlu thinks that Aga looked so depressed when he was not able to prevent the meeting and wondered how he would be able to explain it. Onsunoğlu did not know the exact character of the “directive”, but it could come from either the Greek or the Turkish authorities or any organisation associated with them (Trakya’ın Sesi 417/23.04.1992).

After a while the “clique” presented a new scenario in a whispering campaign against those who organised the protest. They claimed that the organisers co-operated with the prefect against the interests of the minority (cf. İleri 334/09.03.1984).
leading member of the “clique” had called a worker in Germany (Mustafa Necip) and told him:

“…We have reached complete agreement with the PASOK government. The expropriation has been abandoned. The fields would be given back. But the prefect and certain circles opposed this. They created trouble and wanted to prevent that the fields were returned to their former owners. In order to create trouble the prefect put İbrahim Onsunoğlu on the case. Do you see what Onsunoğlu is doing! He destroyed the Yaka villagers! He destroyed our case. Ah, Ah! In fact the meeting in Thamna is organised by the prefect” (Trakya’nın Sesi 417/23.04.1992).

In this case, Mustafa passed the information back to Onsunoğlu because he was an old friend and knew that it was slander, but it is difficult to know to how many others this “information” was communicated. The “clique” was always making similar scenarios. In retrospect Onsunoğlu wanted to underline that some of the “clique’s” scenarios and slander could not be 100% their own product. He knows them personally and regards some of the scenarios outside their capabilities. In order to slander people and say that they are sold to the authorities etc., they must have been collaborating with forces outside the minority to get the details right. They took information they had obtained or which was leaked to them from the prefecture, office “105”, the security etc., and created a scenario. Some people did not create scenarios but passed them on to others, first of all to the Turkish consulate. The information that the prefect organised the meetings in the Thamna mosque could not be a 100% “clique” product, it must have been leaked to it from outside, and the “clique” embraced it and embellished on it. This strange co-operation between the “clique” and centres surveying the minority began in 1981 when PASOK came into government and was still operative at the time of writing. As always, Pavlidis was involved, but because he had been exposed some of the local PASOK cadre began to play a central role (ibid.). To get the Turkish consulate behind it, the “clique” reported to Turkey that: “It is the anarchists and communists of the minority together with the Greek Communist Party which arrange and direct the Yaka events.” (Trakya’nın Sesi 444/10.02.1993). The “clique” claimed that the Greek Communist party took the initiative to the Yaka protests to attract minority votes. In reports to Turkey it made the clamour: “Help! The control of the minority gets into the hands of the Communist party!” (Trakya’nın Sesi 445/17.02.1993). This “secret” was also revealed to the Greek authorities in Thrace. Onsunoğlu viewed it as comic, but it worked. The consulate was immediately ready to swallow it, and the Greek authorities also became influenced. They put pressure on circles belonging to KKE to stop the protest. The first person within the minority the police put pressure on was Mustafa Mustafa, who was a member of KKE at the time (ibid.). Mustafa Mustafa had supported the protest, but not as a representative of his party, and no other representative of KKE participated in the meeting. The authorities soon found out that the “clique” had fooled them and that KKE had nothing to do with the protest. They let Mustafa Mustafa go, but
Onsunoğlu was taken in for questioning by the police four times (*Trakya’nın Sesi* 446/24.02.1993). The environment was very fertile for such petty intrigues, because the lack of a Greek-Turkish dialogue enhanced the position of people inside the minority as brokers towards both sides.

The protest committee made several attempts to communicate with the central authorities in Athens. After the meeting in the Thamna mosque on 18 January Onsunuoğlu tried to send telegrams from Komotini about the decisions of the meeting to the relevant departments. The telegraph officials did not accept the telegrams, so the resolutions were sent only later by regular mail (*Trakya’nın Sesi* 51/22.01.1983). Later there came a message from Athens that the government wanted to hear the complaints of the Yaka villagers (*Trakya’nın Sesi* 444/10.02.1993). On 2 February a committee went to Athens which consisted of İbrahim Onsunuoğlu, Sabahaddin Galip, Mehmet Nuri, and İsmail Mehmet. They were assisted by the MPs Hafız Yaşar, Ahmet Mehmet, and Dimitrios Vradelis. The next day they first saw the vice foreign minister Yiannis Kapsis, who brushed them off by saying that it was not a case for his department, and sent them off to the minister of interior Yiorgos Yennimatas. The minister of interior listened to the committee for more than one hour. The minister said that it was impossible to return or reduce the expropriated area. They should accept the compensation given and afterwards they could discuss solutions for farmers who had lost their land. He also promised to come to Thrace soon to look at the situation (*Trakya’nın Sesi* 53/05.02.1983).

There was first a meeting in the mufti office on 7 February to discuss the meeting in Athens. On 13 February there was a new meeting in the Thamna mosque. They decided:

- a) To decline the offer of the minister of interior.
- b) To keep the children away from school two days in protest.
- c) To arrange a protest march from the mosque to the village square.

When they went outside the mosque to march the police came and stopped them. Hatipoğlu, who had not appeared earlier, came with strong threats to make the villagers disperse. After this the villagers returned to the mosque and decided that they would:

- a) Send committees to Athens, Ankara, and the Islamic Union.
- b) Let the minority MPs submit a question in parliament.

Dede mentioned that the villagers were disgusted by the behaviour of the leaders (*Trakya’nın Sesi* 55/19.02.1983). The offer by Yennimatas to provide alternative solutions for villagers who lost their land was never seriously discussed. With the internal divisions of the minority any one who suggested to consider this offer would immediately be branded as traitor.
All through this period Hasan Hatipoğlu tried to portrait the AYK as the only legitimate decision centre of the minority (cf. Akin 812/19.02.1983). Since there had been no democratic organisation of this council, his opponents considered it justifiably a dummy organisation employed as a vehicle for the “clique”. At this point we can observe that important minority leaders, such as Sabahaddin Galip, did not recognise the existence of AYK (Trakya’nın Sesi 54/12.02.1983). However, the “clique” was gradually able to take over the control of the protest. İbrahim Onsunoğlu would later claim that it was more the “defeatism” of the “clique” than the “terror” of the authorities which caused the Yaka protest to come to nothing (Trakya’nın Sesi 444/10.02.1993). He thinks the Yaka resistance was ruined because the villagers were not able to keep the principle “Work yourselves on your problem, do not entrust them to others”, and in the end it was destroyed by the “clique”. In the meeting in the mosque, after the police prevented the march, it was said that “the AYK headed by our sole national and religious leader the virtuous mufti” would take a close interest in the Yaka case and struggle in the first rank. It would take the lead and even work harder than the Yaka villagers themselves. The AYK would hold meetings in the Komotini mufti office until the land was given back to the villagers. This made the villagers agree to hand the struggle over to the AYK and future meetings would be in the mufti office. This was the end of the Yaka resistance, and afterwards no one took an interest in the question (Trakya’nın Sesi 446/24.02.1993).

In an article a couple of year later Hatipoğlu maintained that the minority continued its legal struggle. The case was kept fresh as a social issue and had been noticed even in the international press. He maintained that the villagers should not accept financial compensation even though certain people inside the minority were in favour of this. The expropriation decision should be revoked even at this late date (Akin 863/23.08.1985). This is of course empty rhetoric, and totally unrelated to any endeavour to alleviate the situation of the villagers. However, the unresolved problems served an important function in his propaganda. In this way he could keep the minority problem within the parameters he was used to deal within.

The University Graduates and DIKATSA

Among other protest actions during the 1980s the best known was related to the recognition of University degrees of minority members who had studied in Turkey. It is generally known in the minority as the DIKATSA (Greek institution for recognising foreign university degrees) struggle. During the same period there were also some minor protests related to the appointment of EPATH teachers in villages such as Simandra and Melivia. However, these were minor protests which hardly exceeded the village level.
As a rule, the minority members who went to Turkey for higher education remained there after graduation. However, in the early 1980s more of them returned to Greece and in 1984 DİKATSA stopped recognising the diplomas of minority students. This measure is considered to be inspired by the Greek vice foreign minister Yiannis Kapsis (Trakya’nun Sesi 446/24.02.1993). The graduates had each been examined from 8–12 times without passing the exams. When they protested to the Department of Education they were referred to the Foreign Department and vice versa without obtaining a solution to their problems. Onsunoğlu would later describe the difficulties in the following manner:

We do not speak about the general framework, the bureaucratic difficulties. We speak about the particular regime which is applied for the members of the minority. Which means that someone takes the tests 8–9 times and obtains the degree after 5 years. He writes an excellent exam [but fails] and when he goes to protest the teacher leaves, disappears, shouts to the police for protection. This took place because there was an order from the Foreign Ministry to the professor who was given the job, i.e. to those responsible of DİKATSA.209

Gradually the students who were affected by this measure started a systematic struggle against this discrimination. It is natural that it would take some time before the university graduates became sufficiently organised. As with many other measures, those who were affected by them had no direct knowledge about the nature and extent of the discrimination against them and discovered it only indirectly and gradually over time. Various quarters assured them that there would be a solution, and they probably hoped that the problems would be solved through natural channels. For example, the MP Faikoğlu gave the university graduates hope after he had spoken with Papandreu about their problem. However, it turned out that the 6 doctors who went to Athens in the beginning of July 1986 for supplementary exams had all failed when the results appeared 15.08.1986 (İleri 441/05.09.1986). Likewise, before the local elections of 12 October 1986, a PASOK cadre had promised that the problems with the recognition of the diplomas would be solved, as an act of favouritism in order to attract the minority vote. However, this along with other pre-election promises was not fulfilled. Hatipoğlu asked how long the graduates would have to wait until the problems were solved (Akin 888/17.11.1986).

Shortly after this the university graduates organised a “Struggle committee” which could make an organised effort to combat the discriminatory policy against them. In an announcement about their problems they pointed out that for more than 3 years their diplomas had not been recognised in an arbitrary and illegal fashion. Colleagues who had graduated from the same universities were now performing their vocation all over Greece, as their diplomas has been recognised as corresponding with Greek ones by DİKATSA. They had taken the test several times, but did not obtain a coherent explan-

209 Epohi 25.02.1990: İbrahim Onsunoğlu speaks to Epohi - “The lifting of the discrimination in Thrace is a one way street”, by Iordanis Hasapopulos.
ation of why their diplomas were not recognised. They had not even received an answer to the protests sent to DIKATSA. They remarked that this situation was at least tolerated by the government because the application to the ministers and the initiatives of the MPs had not been answered. This arbitrary action condemned them to unemployment. They appealed to every academic organisation, trade-unions, political parties, and every democratic person, etc. to protest against this unacceptable measure against them (*Gerçek* 152/24.12.1986).

3 February 1987 they organised a protest march in Komotini led by Mustafa Mustafa. When they reached the prefecture building they pitched a tent outside and distributed brochures about their situation. During the march they had slogans like: “I am a university graduate, I am unemployed, I want my diploma to be recognised immediately” and “There must be an end to arbitrary actions and discriminations, our diplomas must be recognised” (*Gerçek* 156/09.02.1987; *İleri* 462/13.02.1987).

Shortly after they sent an open letter about their problems, signed by 37 persons, to the prime minister Andreas Papandreu. In the letter they pointed out again that the universities they had graduated from had been approved previously by DIKATSA. Although the applicants had submitted all the relevant documents, no degree had been approved since 1984. All the efforts to solve the problem were met with a wall of silence by the authorities. DIKATSA did not answer their applications, questions, and memoranda. They were often told that: “In this matter the authorities are others.” On the other hand, when they met the relevant ministers they were told that DIKATSA was an independent institution. They ended their letter by appealing to Papandreu to take an interest (*Gerçek* 158/28.02.1987; *Akin* 899/09.03.1987).

As the protests continued, the authorities gave work permit to the dentist Ms. Nihal Ahmet (*İleri* 466/13.03.1987). Later on they would also give a few permits to some others of the graduates. The minority did usually not interpret this as a slackening of the measures, but as an attempt by the authorities to break the protest by giving permits to some of the individual graduates instead of working out an overall solution. *Rizospastis* (06.05.1988) would later accuse the government of attempting to exploit the problem with favouritism, promoting individual “solutions”.

The university graduates organised a new protest march 16 June 1987, and invited everybody to participate. Before the march they summed up their previous initiatives:

— Repeated complaints to the prefect of Rodopi.
— Complaint to the vice Foreign Minister Yiannis Kapsis on the prefect’s suggestion.
— Applications to the ministers by way of the MPs.
— Open letter to the prime minister.
— A protest march in Komotini 3 February 1987 and a sit down action in front of the Prefecture, and in the end the Prefect promised to solve the issue (Gerçek 169/20.06.1987).

In spite of this, there had been no solution. This made them employ yet another tactic. They invited representatives for various organisations in the area which were engaged in activities related to their problem. In this fashion they broadened their contacts and were able to create an understanding for their problems in a wider segment of the Greek public opinion. Many representatives came and displayed solidarity, signing a memorandum which supported the struggle of the university graduates (Gerçek 169/20.06.1987).

In the demonstration march in Komotini 16 June they had slogans such as:
— Give my father work, so he can buy me a toy.
— To work is a sacred right. The State pushes us towards unemployment, Why?
— Arbitary treatment and discrimination must end, our diplomas must be recognised.
— The State prohibits the university graduates from working. Is this democracy?
— Enough discrimination, enough mockery, we want an immediate solution.

The minority MP Müftüoğlu participated, and he followed the university graduates to the Prefecture where they submitted a proclamation. Many Christians participated in the march and the proclamation given to the Prefect was also signed by student, professional, and political organisations outside the minority. After the march was over they continued the protest with a sit down demonstration outside the prefecture. At 1.30 o’clock in the morning they were removed by a strong police force on the pretext that they were littering the environment. In a statement the university graduates called this an authoritarian obstruction of their legal actions (Akın 910/18.06.1987; Gerçek 169/20.06.1987; 170/23.06.1987). As a reaction to this they scheduled a new march at noon the next day. This march was prevented by the police and the assistant public prosecutor of Komotini, who claimed that the march was illegal. This made the “Struggle committee” call for the assistance of the minority lawyer Hasan İmamoğlu: He stressed that it was not necessary to obtain a permission to stage a protest march, and that a written order was necessary in order to prohibit it. It was claimed that the assistant public prosecutor surpassed her authorities by calling the march illegal, without specifying which law it violated. However, as a result of the intervention by the authorities, the university graduates cancelled the march (Trakya’nın Sesi 248/25.06.1987). Apparently the various protests by the university graduates—which were kept within the legal framework of a democratic country— had by now started to bother the authorities. The university graduates also applied to the state council (Trakya’nın Sesi 249/02.07.1987).

13 September 1987 the YTD held a meeting about the DIKATSA problems. The tactics of securing support within Greece continued. Letters had been sent to a large
number of Greek political and academic organisations, asking for solidarity. Both the minority MP Müftüoğlu and MPs of the Communist party had made questions in parliament, but with negative answers. The graduates were thinking of bringing the matter to international human rights organisations.

As regards Mehmet Müftüoğlu, he presented a question in parliament but was not able to get an answer. At this time he had a meeting with deputy Foreign Minister Y. Kapsis about this subject, and Y. Kapsis told him that the case of the university graduates unrecognised diplomas was included in the packet with the other Minority problems. Kapsis said openly to the MP that the diploma question was one of the many discriminations against our minority (Gerçek 180/22.09.1987).

After it became clear that the lack of recognition of the minority graduates’ diplomas was part of the government’s policy towards the minority, the question about how it could be possible to circumscribe these measures appeared. 16 October 1987 a committee went to Athens and met members of the government, the parties, and professional organisations, such as Greek Physicians’ Association, Greek Lawyers’ Association, etc. (Gerçek 183/22.10.1987). The committee went to Athens again 21–26 March 1988 and was in contact with the political parties, various organisations, and the press. An announcement by the “Struggle committee” of the university graduates dated Komotini 16.04.1988 mentioned the problems related to the “embargo” on minority diplomas since 1984. Several phases of the struggle were presented and the blame was laid squarely on PASOK:

—Because it was the PASOK government which did not pay attention to the appeals in the beginning of 1982 by the EFEE (Greek Students’ Union) and SEPA (Graduates from Abroad Association), which said that we want to abolish the DIKATSA institution and the diplomas should from now on be recognised at the Universities, and on the contrary used such an official-state organisation as a means of oppression.
—Because it was also the ministers of the PASOK government who gave the inappropriate and far from convincing answers to the questions submitted to the Parliament concerning our problem.
—Again it is the PASOK government which has postponed for one year the trial we have brought before the State Council.
—It is the PASOK government which does not pay attention to the memoranda and complaints by various organisations, professional associations, and even its own members.
—It is the PASOK government which added injustice to injustice and had recourse to seemingly BYZANTINE intrigues to break our humanist struggle and divide us from within by recognising the diplomas of 3 of our friends in order to be able to defend themselves and say outwardly—look we recognise their diplomas—and not bring a fundamental solution to the problem.
—In general, it is again the PASOK government which instead of solving the Minority Questions it inherited from the former governments, made them even worse.

While pointing out once more that we did not yield to this treatment and will bring our struggle even further, we condemn the anti-democratic and inhuman treatment of the PASOK government and demand that it recognises our diplomas and brings a fundamental solution to our problem (Gerçek 203/21.04.1988).

The “Struggle committee” remained very active throughout the spring. It sent memoranda to the government and political parties and scheduled a new protest march for 10 May. By this time the university graduates had been able to attract the support of a significant part of the Greek press. Yiorgos Votsis wrote in Eleftherotipia (29.03.1988) that the recent Greek-Turkish rapprochement in Davos did not influence DIKATSA, which insisted on not recognising the diplomas of the minority members.
who had studied in Turkey. In a written answer to a question by MPs of KKE and EAR, the minister of education Andonis Tritsis claimed that DIKATSA looked at every application on the basis of academic criteria. The “Struggle committee” replied that it was not true that DIKATSA applied only academic criteria and mentioned that it had sent documents to Tritsis which displayed the unacceptable discrimination. Votsis mentioned that 19 of the persons involved had applied to the Supreme Court and asked if they would have to apply to the European Court etc.

Several Greek newspapers, usually belonging to the parties to the left of PASOK, presented the case as discrimination against minorities.

Hüseyin Hüseyin, son of Süleyman, inhabitant of Kristali–Rodopi, graduated in 1983 from the Medical Faculty of the Istanbul University. Afterwards Hüseyin cleans carpets to make a living, because DIKATSA has refused 9 times to recognise his degree. DIKATSA has also reserved the same treatment for at least 50 other Muslim Greek citizens, graduates from the Medical Faculties of the universities of Istanbul and Izmir which in the past have been judged with decision by the board of DIKATSA to be equal to the corresponding faculties of the Greek universities. The above graduates have not obtained any answer even though they have bombarded DIKATSA with successive objections.

It is worth noting that recently DIKATSA recognised the degrees of two doctors. These persons took exams where everybody failed according to the results. Protest actions broke out with the participation of local organisations [מגייקס פוריס]. Then on the suggestion of the prefect of Rodopi two graduates went to DIKATSA, where they confirmed that their degrees had been recognised.

The Doctor Union of the Hospitals and Health Centres of Thrace denounce in an announcement the attitude of DIKATSA towards the young graduates as provocatively biased (Avyi 16.04.1988).

*Rizospastis* presented it as a problem of “berufsverbot” (i.e. excluding them from practising their profession), and mentioned that unofficially “national reasons” were referred to as the cause for the discrimination:

Hüseyin tells us that in Turkey they called me “agent of the infidels”. Here in Greece they call me “Turkish agent”? What am I finally, and where am I “instigated” from? Maybe it is the problem which occupies me in itself which instigates me? In the meeting I had with the prefect of Rodopi I had said: I cannot work in Turkey for political reasons. What should I do and where should I go? Of course I got no answer.

Certain Turkish language newspapers of the minority contribute to the attempts of disorientation. In a recent article “İleri” called on the prime minister to make a gesture of goodwill to T. Özal in the Davos spirit, giving a solution to the university graduates of the minority. “Our problem is not at all related to the relationship between Papandreu-Özal, says Nazif Ferhat, a dentist whose degree was recognised before 1981. The problem is the violation of our constitutional working rights, as Greek citizens. We do not have any relationship with the provocative actions of certain circles” (*Rizospastis* 06.05.1988).

The protests against the treatment by DIKATSA climaxed with a hunger strike. Right after the university graduates learned about the results from the DIKATSA exams 19 May, they decided to start a hunger strike in the courtyard of the Komotini Yeni mosque on Tuesday 24.05.1988 (*Trakya’nın Sesi* 285/26.05.1988). About 50 persons had been affected by the DIKATSA problem. 30 of them gave up and went to Turkey or Europe to look for work (*Trakya’nın Sesi* 288/14.06.1988). Eventually, of the 20 persons remaining in Greece 11 persons carried out the hunger strike which was to last for 20 days until 13 June.
The authorities were not pleased about the publicity the hunger strike brought with it. When the strike was over the graduates mentioned that they had obtained large media coverage, even though the authorities had tried to censor them (Gerçek 212/16.07.1988). On the first day of the strike, the prefect had sent a message to the university graduates through the mufti Meço Cemali and the former MP Hafız Yaşar, but his offer had not been accepted. In the beginning of June, Cemali went to Athens and discussed the matter with Yiannis Kapsis, who clearly had the last word on behalf of the authorities (Gerçek 209/13.06.1988). Such a public demonstration of the treatment against the university graduates also made certain anti-minority forces uneasy. The bomb which exploded in a mosque in Komotini a little after midnight on Saturday 28.05.1988 and the petrol which was ignited in another mosque half an hour later, can be viewed as manifestation of this (Ta Nea 31.05.1988).

All the minority newspapers wrote in support of the hunger strike, but it is debatable how whole hearted the support was. Abdülhalim Dede was most outspoken in criticising the minority leadership for lack of support. He wrote that few of them signed the petition in support of the strikers (Trakya’nın Sesi 286/02.06.1988). Dede found it natural that the villagers did not involve themselves in the DIKATSA struggle, but asked what had happened to the great champions in Komotini and Ksanthi, the sole “leaders”, the heroic “nationalists” etc. The two minority MPs Müftüoğlu and Faikoğlu submitted a common petition to Papandreou 2 June, and asked him to take a personal interest to solve the problem. 17 days after the strike started 1,000 persons had signed the signature book and 500,000 drachmas had been collected in support. Dede called these small figures a disgrace (Trakya’nın Sesi 287/09.06.1988). The target of Dede’s criticism was first of all the AYK. He accused these leaders of being more interested in keeping their position than waging a successful struggle against the discriminations. In fact, an eventual successful struggle by the university graduates could diminish their influence, as they did not have a patron-client relationship to them.

One of the most interesting aspects of the strike was that the graduates were able to obtain the support of a large segment of the Christian population against an obvious injustice. In an announcement about the results of the strike the university graduates mentioned:

Considering our conditions, the interest and solidarity displayed was much greater than expected. According to our knowledge, for the first time parties, organisations, and the democrats among the Christians supported openly a minority question (Gerçek 211/30.06.1988).

The media coverage by the Athenian press was no longer dominated by the newspapers to the left of PASOK. We can observe that a large newspaper belonging ideologically to ND covered the progress of the strike. In its reportage it underlined that the Turkish universities in question had already been judged equal with the
corresponding Greek ones and the recognition should normally take 2–3 months (Apoyevmatini 03.06.1988).

An interesting episode in connection with the strike was the way the graduates tried to distance themselves from certain opinions expressed in minority circles. The most striking example is the denunciation of Hâki’s comments in İleri. The behaviour and statements of leading minority figures are often dominated by petty politics, but in this case the statements of Hâki were related to his outlook. He had no personal ambitions as politician and it was not in his interest that the efforts of the university graduates should fail. In contrast, the fact that Akın and Gerçek did not mention the lawyer İmamoğlu’s advice during the protest march is connected to petty politics. Hâki did of course want to play a role in the minority with his newspaper, but I do not believe that it was a fear of being outshone by the university graduates which led to his reactions. In fact, it is part of a pattern which can be noticed in much of his writing. He is a declared Turkish nationalist who is only able to see the problems as a conflict between Greece and Turkey or between Greeks and Turks.

There are of course reasons for this attitude. The minority’s problems had been approached by most of the involved parts as a Greek-Turkish issue, and there was plenty of experience from the past which supported such an approach. For example, I have been told that when the first minority doctor educated in Turkey returned to Thrace in the early 1960s his diploma was not recognised. While waiting for the recognition of his diploma, he worked a couple of years as a shepherd for his father. This was of course a humiliating situation after the efforts and sacrifices he had made to obtain higher education. However, at this time there was still a sizeable Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul, and the problem was solved after Turkey threatened to put 10 doctors of the Greek Orthodox minority out of work if his diploma was not recognised. This, as well as other episodes, can help us understand Hâki’s perception of the problem as a Greek-Turkish confrontation. This was evident already a year before the hunger strike, in connection with the discussion about DIKATSA organised by the university graduates (YTD) 25.05.1987. When reporting from this meeting Hâki reacted against Mustafa Mustafa’s presentation, because he did not mention that they were discriminated against because they were Turks. He did not think that they would obtain their rights by ignoring their national identity, and criticised that Mustafa spoke about the minority without saying that it was Turkish (İleri 478/05.06.1987). In many ways Hâki views the minority as a separate unit outside the Greek society. In this connection the educated minority members who have left Thrace are viewed as the success of the nationalist Greek authorities, while he thinks the minority should have done more to support these graduates.210 Hâki’s tendency to view everything as a

210 İleri 520/03.06.1988. The Greek-Turkish dimension is also hinted at in a reportage by Rodoplu. When the university graduates began their hunger strike he remarked that this should ring in the ear of
Greek-Turkish confrontation, or indeed his inability to employ any other frame of reference, is evident in a comment he wrote when the university graduates decided to lift the hunger strike. He ended the article by presenting the following views:

Like in every community, in our minority, too, there are people with different outlooks. This is normal… And since we have found this normal we have not cherished a grudge nor harboured enmity towards those who are on the left side of the spectrum. On the contrary, we even believed that their existence was necessary for the Minority struggle…

But these young persons were never able to become a Minority left or Minority left-wingers. In whatever they planned to do, they always consulted the Greek communists…

And our young persons never accepted or were not able to accept that: It is impossible to fight injustice only from the left! i.e. the left is not the only road for this job!

For example, we are able to display this maturity: “Let them take whatever decisions they want, but they must take them themselves!” If a Sotiridis-Fakiridis [local Christian members of the communist party] had not been in the meeting that day, we swear… we would not have said a word! We would even have met their decision with respect!

BUT NOW???

The writer of these lines has not had any left wing education. And he is not a left-winger. But he considers everything from boycott to action [direnşten eyleme kadar] permissible [mubah] IN THE STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE. He stepped ideologically and practically into the breach for this STRUGGLE…

These young persons arranged a HUNGER STRIKE for LAW AND JUSTICE. The minority supported them even though the struggle was heavily dominated by left wing views. Their pain and grief reached as far as our border villages…

The circle of support expanded and widened every day…

On the other hand, the authorities, in the real sense of the word and maybe for the first time, came under pressure… They became bewildered about what to do. They even started to gradually accept the reality: THE NECESSITY TO SURRENDER THE RIGHTS…

What did these young persons expect from the Fakiridis-Sotiridis in that last meeting? What did they expect them to say? These young persons do not know that prior to being the left-wingers of the Greek communist left, those people are first of all Greek nationalists to the degree of fascists… Or they are unable to accept this fact… At least, this is their conclusion towards Turks and Turkey… (Let us see if not their apparent support does not have the sense of CONTROL?)

You want the support of the minority, well so why did you not invite the Minority to that meeting? Why did you pay no attention to the MPs?

We were there with a friend, even though it was by coincidence. We are someone who both knew and participated in the protest. Why did you not invite us? Do you not trust us, but Fakiridis and Sotiridis?

Is such a thing, such nonsense possible?

Did you not know that others were prepared to continue the hunger strike for you?

You divided us; You committed HARA-KIRI all by yourself

What a shame… Indeed a great great shame… (İleri 522/17.06.1988).

The university graduates criticised this article by Hâki in a statement after the strike was over, particularly the part which said that some members of a political party (i.e. the communists) directed the action. This was picked up by the nationalist section of the local Christian press Elefthero Vima and Patrida which were said to write in the same style. “The only difference between them is that they accuse our Christian consultants of being ‘Greek enemies’, while he [Hâki] accuses them of being ‘Greek fascists’” (Gerçek 212/16.07.1988).

Hâki’s emotional reaction touches a very central point in the minority’s political life, which is related to the old Ottoman concept of “closed community”. The minority

Papulias who had promised the Turkish Foreign Minister that he would correct this matter (Gerçek 208/04.06.1988).
should not interact in the political life of the country as individuals, only as a unit represented through its leaders. These leaders have to be “above suspicion” in order to deal with the Christian authorities without being “contaminated”, i.e. without being influenced in a way which might threaten the identity of the group. The contact with the authorities always has something suspicious connected to it. There is the suspicion that people will “sell out” the interest of the minority for personal benefits. The notion that you can function as an individual in Greek society and base your action on the state’s respect for civil rights is both a novelty and viewed by the old guard of politicians as naive. There is of course a lot of examples from the past which justify this perception of the state. Consequently, the right approach is to take first a decision as minority and then approach the Greek authorities and start the negotiations, not, as in this case, discuss the tactics of the struggle with like minded (in this case left-wing) segments of the majority. Within this model it is of course not the like minded internationalist left-wingers in the two communities which will be the point of contact. They are just a marginal group. The best people to serve as contact within the traditional pattern are the extreme right wing nationalists. Only they can be above suspicion and speak with representatives of the other community without risking to be accused of being sold out, pro-Greek or pro-Muslim respectively, etc. Nor do these people in any way represent a threat which can break down the established order.

Still, the contact with the Greek authorities can be a very delicate matter even for people of these leanings. Hâki himself, who is a declared Turkish nationalist from his head down to his toes, would not dare to be openly in contact with Greek authorities connected to the minority regime. Even people like Hatipoğlu and Rodoplu tried to portray their meetings with Pavlidis as something which occurred by coincidence. Hâki made a point of that Pavlidis never came to the offices of Aznlık Postası or İleri whether intentionally or by coincidence (İleri 329/03.02.1984; 336/23.03.1984). In another article Hâki made a more reflected criticism of these attitudes. He mentioned that if some poor guy had human or business relations with a Christian, he was immediately branded as agent. However, many minority leaders did all sort of business and no one could say anything about them. These leaders even tried to create the impression that they did it for the benefit of the minority and not for themselves. While the poor fellows who knocked on the door of Pavlidis or Kandas became immediately labelled “sold” or “agent” the people who said this visited them 3–5 times a year and were above reproach (masum)”. Hâki met strong opposition when he criticised this (İleri 335/16.03.1984).

As mentioned above, the contact between Christian members of the Communist party and the minority left resulted in critical comments from nationalist elements in both communities. Besides being related directly to who should have the right to represent or deal with the minority, a side effect of this traditional pattern is that there
are tremendous opportunities for disinformation. The people who are hostile to the minority will write polemically to obscure the measures against the minority. These measures are of course impossible to conceal for people who are in direct contact with the minority as was the case with the left-wingers, but the possibilities of presenting the case incorrectly is very great indeed when you address people who have little contact outside their own community. We can, for example, look at a comment right after the hunger strike was over in a local Christian newspaper:

They say that the degrees they bring from abroad are not recognised. But does the same thing not happen to thousands of Christians, who struggle for years to get their degrees recognised, and are declined for various reasons? (Hronos 15.06.1988).

There are a lot of Greeks who go abroad for higher education, and since the status of the educational institution they attend varies, most people have heard about cases where there have been problems with DIKATSA. For someone who was not acquainted with the particular problem of the minority members the claim in the newspaper may have sounded reasonable. However, the author was trying to conceal the particular problems of the minority members, behind the general problems connected with the institution DIKATSA. A more glaring example of this is that when Mitsotakis promised equality during his visit to Thrace in 1991, a local Christian newspaper wrote that the Christians were afraid of losing their privileges. It created a danger scenario, claiming that Turkey accepted all the minority children for higher education and that they would come back and take over all the jobs now that the problems with DIKATSA had ceased (cf. Akin 1033/14.06.1991).

The problems connected to the recognition of foreign degrees are known in most countries, where the most striking examples often concern immigrants. This could also be seen in Greece in connection with the Pontian Greek immigrants from the former Soviet Union. In a reportage about the unemployment among them it was pointed out that many had a special competence, which however was not recognised by DIKATSA, which said that there was no corresponding university course in Greece (Eleftherotipia 22.02.1995). In this case it is of course not a question of intentional discrimination, but the general difficulty of the bureaucracy to deal with new cases. From the perspective of a minority member, problems with DIKATSA may appear again for natural reasons as long as the minority relies as heavily as it does on Turkey for higher education. Muslims who are admitted to educational institutions which have not been previously recognised by DIKATSA risk to face at least the same problems as Christians with unusual degrees.

Onsunoğlu regarded the DIKATSA struggle to be a good example of how the minority could struggle politically for its rights, and he summed up the lessons learned. He pointed out that even though the graduates were confronted with a new racist discrimination they took care to distance themselves from the chauvinist and
extreme nationalist elements and did not fall in the trap of reactive chauvinism. If they had made it a confrontation between Greek and Turkish nationalism, this would have taken the focus away from the issue. He claimed that the adversaries of the minority tried as always to make it a nationalist confrontation, but the young minority members displayed great maturity in their ability to avoid this. They even went and asked for support from the two greatest leaders of the campaign against the minority at this time, the Metropolitan Damaskinos and the MP Stilianos Bletsas (ND). All the other problems were put aside and the struggle focused on this issue. It was kept continually on the agenda and they did not involve themselves in any other issue. They did not surrender the responsibility to organisations outside themselves and kept full control of their own struggle. They asked for interest, support and solidarity from everybody but distanced themselves from various demagogues (Trakya’nn Sesi 446/24.02.1993). The DIKATSA struggle can be regarded as the most modern political protest by the minority. The graduates approached their problem as a civil rights issue and confronted it first of all in their capacity as Greek citizens. It is interesting to note that this took place almost at the same time as the first trial against Sadık Ahmet, which was the event which more than anything else would turn the minority’s political behaviour back on the old track, and indeed with a certain radicalisation.

The mufti Controversy (Part 1)

In 1985 when the Komotini mufti died, the appointment of new muftis gave rise to a new controversy. Although this appears from the outside as a conflict between the minority and the Greek authorities, it has many other dimensions. Several of the events occasioned by this controversy cannot be understood properly without an understanding of its place in Greek-Turkish relations and in the internal minority rivalry. Because of its later significance, it may be instructive to treat it at length.

The problem concerning the political/religious status of the Muslims in Greece first appeared in earnest, when a significant number was incorporated in the Greek Kingdom after the annexation of Thessalia in 1881. The Istanbul Treaty of 02.07.1881 made provisions for the free exercise of religion, as well as the separate religious administration, of the Muslims of Greece. In this manner Greece sought to demonstrate to the Ottoman Empire and the Great Powers that it granted equal rights and religious tolerance to the Muslims. It further gave Greece justification to appeal for the same treatment to Greek Orthodox Ottoman subjects. The religious tolerance displayed towards the Muslim Greek citizens would also be an important argument towards the Great Powers in allowing future territorial expansion, which seemed likely at the time. The law ALÍ/1882 “concerning spiritual leaders of the Muslim communities” from

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211 All the relevant treaties and laws referred to in this section can be found in (Yeorgulis 1993).
22.06.1882 followed up the general provisions of the Istanbul treaty. It provided for four mufti seats (müftülük) in the newly acquired Thessalia area: Larisa, Farsala, Trikala, and Volos. A fifth was added with the mufti seat of Karditsa in 1910. The mufti of Larisa was considered to be the principle mufti and had a higher salary than the others. The mufti — an official learned in Islamic law who is in charge of religious affairs for a province — was designated as public servant, with his salary paid by the state, and was sworn into office by the responsible prefect. He was consequently firmly under the control of the administrative state authority. As regards his responsibilities, he had a consultative function in legal questions concerning religious matters, inheritance, the Muslim pious foundations (vakıf or wakf), religious institutions (mosque, tekke etc.), and the Muslim schools (medrese).

After the Greek expansion in the Balkan wars and the First World war, the rights of the Muslims were provided for in the Athens Peace Treaty (01.11.1913), and the law 2345/4.06.1920 “Concerning temporary Arch-Mufti and muftis of the Muslims in the state and concerning management of the Muslim Community property”. This law was made a couple of months before the negotiation of the Sèvres treaty (10.08.1920), and was related to the Greek aims at the time. However, with the new political situation created after the Greek defeat in Asia Minor and the subsequent population exchange, much of the basis for the law disappeared. In fact, it was never applied. It is also worth noting that Western Thrace was not a part of Greece when the law 2345/1920 was passed. It has been a matter of dispute between Greece and Turkey which provisions of the old treaties are still valid.

It seems like the Arch-Mufti envisaged in the law 2345/1920 was thought of as having a position somewhat corresponding to that of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch in the Ottoman Empire. His relationship to the other muftis was viewed much like the relationship between the Patriarch and the Metropolitans. At the same time he was clearly considered to be a state servant, and there was also a plan to found a state financed religious college for educating the Muslim religious personnel in Greece. The important question was the delicate balance between allowing the Muslim community to manage its internal affairs and simultaneously making them an integral part of the Greek state apparatus. On a practical level this was not just a question of passing appropriate laws, but also of how to deal with a social practice where the Christians and Muslims had lived their separate lives in their respective “closed communities”. Although the two documents are different in scope, the different approach in the law 2345/1920 and the Sèvres treaty as regards the Muslims in Greece is striking. While

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212 The treaty concerning Greek minority obligations is only one of several treaties signed in Sèvres on this date, which should not be confused with each other.

213 For the different positions, see (Minaidis 1990a: 88–90; Oran 1991: 72–75; Tsitselikis 1996: 277–279).
the law 2345/1920 is looking at the Muslims as a separate community under Greek jurisdiction, the Sèvres treaty put the emphasis on their civil rights as Greek citizens.

The population exchange after the Lausanne treaty (24.07.1923) reduced significantly the extent of the Muslim population in Greece. During the negotiation of the treaty, Rıza Nur Bey of the Turkish delegation was interested in limiting the political importance of the Patriarchate, reducing it to having only spiritual functions, and keeping it firmly under Turkish state control. In this connection he argued that since the general conditions had changed, it was not appropriate to use older treaties as basis (Meray 1969: vol. I.1.2: 241). In addition Turkey had inaugurated a completely new internal policy in the religious sphere. The Kemalist regime was bent on reducing the influence of the religious establishment. This explains partly the lack of interest in the Muslim religious institutions in Greece. In fact, strong support of religious institutions in Greece could be perceived as a challenge to the attempts of secularisation in Turkey. It is worth noting that Turkey did not press the mufti issue in Greece during the extensive negotiations in 1930. Today there are muftis in each of the three prefectures of Greek Thrace, as well as in Rhodes. The mufti seats in Ksanthi and Rodopi, where the minority is most numerous, have the greatest importance.

There was never issued a decree as envisaged by the law 2345/1920 to regulate the details for the procedure of electing the mufti. According to Stilianopoulos, the general governor of Thrace submitted two drafts towards this purpose in the 1920s. However, he later became hesitant fearing that the mufti offices could get into the hands of the Kemalists. Stilianopoulos suggested that the mufti should be elected by the higher religious personnel (müderris, hatip, imam). However, he was clearly concerned about securing the election of conservatives, but in such a way that it would not seem as Greek interference. As has often been the case in Greek-Turkish minority matters, there lacked a clear institutionalised practice, and the issue was handled according to political consideration. In practice, the Greek authorities would discuss the candidates with some of the prominent minority politicians and religious figures before appointing a candidate.

The mufti of Komotini who died in 1985 had a long service behind him. After the death of the previous mufti in 1948, the “leader of the Turkish Community” (Cemaat başkanı) invited the foremost people of the minority to a meeting on 25.06.1948, where they elected Hüseyin Mustafa, the son of the former Ksanthi mufti. Afterwards the minority MPs went to the prefect for approval. However, the appointment did not

\[214\] (Minaidis 1990a: 322). This book has also the most extensive treatment of the legal-theoretical problems related to the law (pp. 318–337).

\[215\] Musío Benáki, Arhío Eleftheriú K. Venizélu 173/53. Report from Stilianopoulos to Venizelos, Athens 13.09.1929. As mentioned earlier the abortive law draft of 13 June 1930 also proposed the election by general (male) suffrage (Tunda-Fergadi 1994: 194).

take place immediately. The minority press of the time mentioned the law 2345/1920, but made clear that it had never been applied and was not really applicable. As the procedure drew out, other persons showed interest in the position and various intrigues took place. However, Hüseyin Mustafa was eventually appointed mufti of Komotini 05.02.1949 (Ömeroğlu 1994: 71). When the mufti of Ksanthi died 11.05.1949, the foremost minority people assembled and discussed who should become the new mufti. There were many candidates and no common decision by the community in favour of one of them. Mustafa Hilmi Aga, brother in law of the late mufti, was constituted as deputy mufti. There had been certain objections and slander against him, which had made the government hesitant about appointing him. After holding the deputy position for some years he was appointed regular mufti only as late as 02.04.1957 (Gerçek 172/14.07.1987). Consequently, both Hüseyin Mustafa who was mufti of Komotini for 36 years and Mustafa Hilmi who was mufti of Ksanthi for 41 years obtained their position in the customary fashion after a bargain between the minority politicians and the local Greek administration.

Nobody had seriously questioned this practice until the death of the Komotini mufti 02.06.1985, and Turkey had shown little interest in the matter. The politician Osman Nuri had the following comment to the established procedure: “Until now our muftis are appointed rashly by the people of the political parties, they are also dismissed by the people of the political parties, and once more appointed in this fashion” (Trakya 402/06.06.1949). He did not hold the mufti institution in high regard and would say without mincing matters: “However, let me draw the attention to this point that the muftis are not persons who are chosen by the people or have a position in a properly regulated religious organisation. The Greek government appoints them directly without consulting anybody, and they are its paid officials” (Trakya 783/09.11.1959). Osman Nuri was not the only one to hold this opinion. During the years with Kemalist–conservative antagonism, the politicians supported by Turkey were in conflict with the mufti institutions and accused them of being backward. This was a reflection of the situation in Turkey.

Later developments in Turkey gradually reached Greek Thrace. The relationship between the secularist politicians and the muftis improved. The Turkish consulate in Komotini abandoned its practice of demonstratively ignoring the muftis. In the name of unity, the muftis and mufti institutions came under the influence of the secular

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217 See Trakya 364/28.06, 366/12.07, 376/11.10.1948
218 See Trakya 400/23.05, 401/30.05, 402/06.06.1949, 470/28.03, 485/04.09.1951. The minority MP Hüseyin Zeybek was instrumental in securing the appointment of Mustafa Hilmi Aga as deputy mufti, according to the information I got from one of his relatives. This is probable, as it corresponds to the usual practice. According to this source, Hüseyin Zeybek wanted to have an election of the mufti. However, when his son Hilmi Zeybek married Lütfiye Aga (daughter of Mustafa Hilmi Aga) they asked Hüseyin Zeybek to ignore the other candidates and promote Mustafa Hilmi Aga. The Greek authorities trusted the MP Hüseyin Zeybek, and Mustafa Hilmi was appointed.
politicians and the Turkish consulate. This development was welcomed by the *muftis* as well (Ömeroğlu 1994: 71–72). Particularly after the 1980 coup in Turkey, the state changed its attitude toward religion. In fact, the new authoritarian regime was willing to use religion politically in a completely different fashion than before. As seen earlier, Hatipoğlu and the “clique” had taken advantage of this to enhance the *mufti*’s position and make him a rallying point, simultaneously questioning the legitimacy of the elected minority representatives.\(^{219}\) The appointment of *muftis* would consequently play a vital role for their power base in the minority.

Two days after the death of the Komotini *mufti* Hüseyin Mustafa, the Greek authorities appointed Rüştü Ethem as deputy *mufti* without consulting any leading minority figures.\(^{220}\) This caused strong reactions within the minority, and he resigned on the following day after pressure from minority circles. His resignation was not accepted by the Greek authorities, but it was clear that it would be necessary to find another solution. After this a committee from the AYK, consisting of old and new MPs and religious personnel, went to the prefect 5 June and requested that the *mufti* should be elected by the Muslim electorate according to the 1913 Athens agreement article 11 paragraph 6 (*Akın* 861/10.06.1985). The *Vaaz ve İrşad Heyeti* (Sermon and Guidance Committee, i.e. the higher religious personnel - VIH) played an active role in the opposition against the appointment and collaborated with the AYK.\(^{221}\) The VIH elected a committee 22.07.1985 consisting of Tevfik Hüseyinoğlu, Meço Cemali, and İbrahim Şerif. They were able to meet the prefect Papadimu and handed over a memorandum dated 15.07.1985 signed by 19 people with higher religious education. They asked for the election of the *mufti* according to the 1913 Athens agreements and the law 2345/1920 (*Gerçek* 121/14.08.1985). The prefect ignored the initiatives by the AYK and VIH and appointed Meço Cemali as deputy *mufti* 16.12.1985. However, this was done after the Greek authorities had consulted prominent members of the minority in the customary fashion. Cemali would later stress that he had been appointed after consultations with the two MPs, two Muslim community leaders, and two religious teachers (*icazetli hoca*) (*Akın* 875/12.04.1986). It is beyond doubt that he was a strong candidate, well qualified for the job. The Greek authorities probably also favoured him because he had his higher education from Saudi Arabia and not from Turkey.

The “clique” opposed vehemently this appointment. In a meeting by the AYK on 18 December it was decided that the MPs Müftüoğlu and Faikoğlu should put forward a


\(^{220}\) According to dependable sources within the minority, it became later known that Ethem Rüştü had been imposed by the Greek secret services (KIP).

\(^{221}\) The VIH is not recognised by the Greek authorities and its organisation is ridden by much of the same problems as the AYK.
question in Parliament to request an election according to the law 2345/1920. The resolution from this meeting was not directed against any person, but against the procedure of his appointment and had the signatures of all parties, including Hafız Yağar, who had supported the candidature of Cemali (cf. Akin 870/19.12.1985; Gerçek 128/27.12.1985). However, gradually the “clique” created a strong front against Cemali and attacked him with all means. This front was made up of the AYK and VIH, which expressed their view through Akin, Gerçek, and Hakka Davet. In the following years these publications would be filled with attacks against Cemali and his supporters. In these attacks they would portray themselves as leading a democratic and just struggle against the illegal and anti-democratic measures directed against the minority. They would in particular attack Müftüoğlu because he as a lawyer did not react against the violation of a law (2345/1920) concerning the minority. The other part of the campaign against Cemali was to slander him both within the minority and to their contacts in Turkey. In contrast to this, the “clique” would portray the Ksanthi mufti as the only legitimate minority leader. This was of course easy to counter by Cemali, because the Ksanthi mufti had been appointed by more or less the same procedure and had also been known for his dubious relations with the Greek authorities. He reacted strongly when the Ksanthi mufti called him a traitor and crook (hain ve sahtekar) in his religious messages (Akin 875/12.04.1986). The “clique’s” response to this was to intensify the slander campaign against Cemali.

Hâki would also criticise the appointment of Cemali, based on his spontaneous opinion that the minority should elect the mufti itself. This caused him to be in an uneasy coalition with the “clique”. However, the “clique” never really accepted him to its ranks (cf. İleri 652/25.10.1991). His opposition to some of its methods is clear from his criticism against them from the same period. It was during this period that the “clique” began to grow strong with the backing of Turkey.

Hâki was angry with the “clique” because of its intrigues against him. In one of his periodic outbursts he lashed out against the “fawners-spongers” (yalamalar-besleme-ler) whom he claimed had exploited both the minority and Turkey for years and played on both sides. According to Hâki, they blinked their eye to both the Greek administration and the Turkish consulate, and duped the people by portraying this sham as service to the minority (İleri 411/06.12.1985). It was common practice by the Greek authorities to nourish divisions in the minority. However, he could not understand why some “motherland” (i.e. Turkey) authorities supported one side and oppressed the other. The Turkish authorities should know that there was nothing to gain by supporting the “loafer-freeloader gang” (haylazlar-hazırlopçular kumpanyası) (İleri 413/20.12.1985). Other people were also critical towards the “clique” in the mufti

222 The instances are too many to mention. For some characteristic examples from the early period, see Gerçek 130/11.02.1986 and Akin 874/19.03.1986.
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controversy. According to Ömeroğlu they demonstrated their ignorance and lack of principle, exploiting the religious sentiments of the people (Ömeroğlu 1994: 80).

A group of politicians and religious personnel who endeavour to portray themselves as being “partisans” of Turkey opposed the appointment of Hafız Cemali, who was on the side of Saudi Arabia. They claimed that this appointment had been done in a fashion which was violating the law 2345. Whereas, the application of this law, or that it would be possible to apply this law, never entered the mind of anybody, themselves included (Ömeroğlu 1994: 74).

Cemali was supported against the “clique’s” accusations by other prominent people within the minority, including the MPs Ahmet Faikoğlu and Mehmet Müftüoğlu, the former MPs, Celâl Zeybek, Hasan İmamoğlu, Ahmet Mehmet, former MP and head of the pious foundations Hafız Yaşar, and some religious personnel (Ömeroğlu 1994: 76). In the minority press he had only Trakya’nın Sesi behind him. We can see that the conflict divides neatly along the political cleavages in the minority, and the religious question became a tool in petty politics. In the light of subsequent developments, it is interesting to note that Ahmet Faikoğlu confronted strongly the Hatıpoğlu-Aga group in his Kurban Bayramı message, dated 16.08.1986:

Recently, certain persons are using the people of our minority and exploiting their innocent sentiments [saf duyguları] by portraying their personal interests as the interests of the community, in order to protect their personal interests and keep their positions. Recently, particularly the messages published with the signature of the Ksanthi mufti, which abound in insults and curses against the Komotini deputy mufti, are in complete opposition to our parole of unity and solidarity [birlik ve beraberlik]. I do not believe that these messages which are corrupting our unity could come from the pen or mouth of our virtuous mufti of Ksanthi whom I know very well personally. But his sons, by exploiting his signature and the seal of the mufti office, are setting the people of our community up against each others because of personal and political interests.

Certainly, the “clique” had a case when they criticised the appointment of the mufti, since the Greek procedure was both authoritarian and questionable. However, the “clique’s” opposition to the appointment was marred by its contradictory behaviour and was never able to surpass the level of internal minority demagogy. The only attempt to resolve the question by challenging the procedure of the Greek authorities was made by the MP Mehmet Müftüoğlu. He submitted a question to the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs (228/15.1.86), and received the answer (436/3.2.86) that the appointment had followed the usual practice since 1919. Without consulting anybody, Müftüoğlu followed up by making an application to the State Council (14.02.1986) where he claimed that the appointment was contrary to article 6. paragraph 1. of the law 2345/1920. He knew that he would get into a quarrel with his party and the government by filing such a complaint, but he acted as a lawyer rather than politician and was ready to face the objections from this front. This application had to be filed within two months of Cemali’s appointment, and could in principle be done by anybody according to the constitution. If the case was lost it would be possible to bring it to the European Court of Human Rights after the legal possibilities in
the homeland were exhausted. However, the reactions to his initiative was not what he had expected:

–[Hâki:] Well, what was the situation within the minority?
–[Müftüoğlu:] What really surprised me was this…
–What?
–The circles which opposed this appointment, instead of being happy and celebrating, the exactly opposite happened… They accused me of playing the game or executing the plan of the government and the dark forces. They hurled themselves on me. Like always they tried to discredit me with superficial and vulgar accusations or tactics…
–What about Hafız Cemali and the circles which support him? What were their reactions?
–They confronted the application silently and with temperance. They did not say “So you both support me and dig a pit behind me. What kind of business is this?” In short, while we expected the real attack to come from here [Greece], the exact opposite happened, it came from the other side [Turkey]…
–After all this…
–After all this I was forced to withdraw the case. I do not speak as a politician but as a lawyer when I say that it hurt me deeply. I still claim and insist that it was wrong to withdraw it. That is the language of the law, that is the command of the law…

Onsunuğlu commented later that the “clique” opposed Müftüoğlu’s application with the “ridiculous” argument that if the case was lost Cemali would be legitimate and it would not be possible to apply the law 2345/1920. He claimed that the “clique” was not afraid that Müftüoğlu’s application would be turned down, but that it would be accepted and render invalid the appointment of Cemali. Because in that case it would not be possible to slander Cemali any more for being “collaborator, sold, etc.” and they would have had to congratulate Müftüoğlu. They put Müftüoğlu under pressure to withdraw his application and claimed that he had done it on the advice of the Greek authorities. His party too put him under pressure when it became aware of the application. ND disapproved because he took an initiative without consulting the party on an issue which was considered part of Greek-Turkish relations and consequently belonged to foreign politics. However, Müftüoğlu said himself that it was the pressure from Turkey which was decisive. Müftüoğlu continued to be critical about the way the question had been handled. He claimed in the autumn general assembly of the YTD (27.09.1987), that none of his adversaries had a proper understanding of the law 2345/1920 (Ömeroğlu 1994: 70). In any case, the law was usually referred to as some sort of slogan, with little reference to its content.

A more detailed look at the demagogy, provides us with valuable insight into minority politics. Hatipoğlu claimed that Müftüoğlu’s application came as a surprise to everybody in the minority because:

In the consecutive meetings by the AYK after Meço Cemali became deputy mufti by an illegal appointment, the possibility of applying to the State Council was examined in detail, and as various drawbacks were noticed it was definitely decided not to undertake such an initiative.

Now we would like to learn: While there existed such a decision by our AYK, where did he as a person obtain the authority to apply to the State Council without telling anybody?

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223 İleri 464/27.02.1987. In contrast to the “clique”, Hâki had earlier congratulated Müftüoğlu for applying to the State Council (İleri 455/12.12.1986).
224 Trakya’nın Sesi 519/31.08.1995. See also (Ömeroğlu 1994: 80).
If the purpose of Müftüoğlu’s personal initiative was to remove Meço Cemali from our mufti office, there would have been no need for such an application. Because:

Meço Cemali made the following statement to the press in response to the reaction by our minority to his illegal appointment:

“—I am ready to resign if the MPs which supported me withdraw their support…”

Consequently, the matter would have been resolved if Mr. Müftüoğlu had withdrawn his support and Meço Cemali had left the mufti office. However, Mr. Müftüoğlu refused to withdraw his support even though it was proposed to him by the Western Thrace Associations in Istanbul [BTTDD]. So why did he apply to the State Council without telling anybody?

We think that there are two possible interpretations of this:

a) Faced with the large and continuous reaction by our Minority against the illegal appointment, this application was made to remove Meço Cemali from the mufti Institution in a legal fashion. While this probability is very weak we hope that it is true.

b) The Authorities and a few persons headed by Hafız Yağar who supported this appointment and thought that the campaign against the illegal appointment of Meço Cemali would end after a short while, became disappointed when their expectations were not fulfilled. Because our Minority’s struggle against this illegal Deputy mufti appointment influenced significantly public opinion both internally and externally, and also attracted the attention of some state personalities.

So this application may have been made with the goal of proving that the struggle had no legal foundation and put an end to the resistance.

In our opinion, this application represents nothing else than the desire to certify Meço Cemali’s position as Deputy mufti. Because if the State Council approve this appointment it will be said that: “So now you see, even the State Council approved this appointment; from now on you cannot raise your voice…” In our opinion this is the real purpose of applying to the State Council.²²⁵

It is an open question whether there ever was such a decision by the AYK as Hatipoğlu referred to. Ömeroğlu was not convinced about its existence and considered it to be just another rhetoric trick. He challenged Hatipoğlu to reveal the minutes of the meeting to the public or else the AYK would be under the suspicion of sabotaging the legal battle of the minority (Ömeroğlu 1994: 80). After Müftüoğlu withdrew his application Hatipoğlu expressed his satisfaction. In order to justify his position he refers to a conversation he had with an official who wanted to “impose” Meço Cemali on the minority:

—“Since you claim that you are waging a legal struggle, why do you not apply to the State Council instead of making people uncomfortable with various meetings, writings and announcements?”

We answered him in the following manner:

—“We, as a Minority, know better than anybody else how to defend our rights. In this matter we do not want to bother the State Council. We want the administration to correct this social mistake as soon as possible. Our minority will definitely elect its religious leader itself according to the law 2345/1920” (Akin 898/28.02.1987).

Hatipoğlu continued by arguing that a negative verdict from the State Council would mean that the Greek authorities would establish the right to appoint the religious representatives of the minority and leave a bad heritage to their children. In this connection, he did not hesitate to refer to Bulgarian practices at a time when the minority was very alarmed about the news it received about the oppression on the other side of the border. In general he portrayed the event as a case where those who were less astute than himself had not perceived the problems correctly:

The MP Müftüoğlu perceived this pitfall a little late, but still in time to withdraw his application to the State Council at the last moment. With this action, an unintentional historical Minority mistake was corrected. We congratulate him sincerely. […] On the other hand, after the case was withdrawn, we observed personally Meço Cemali’s grief about the withdrawal, which has brought the presence of the pitfall related to the illegal Deputy mufti completely into the light. We will return to this subject with the documents in our possession (Akın 899/09.03.1987).

However, as mentioned earlier, the decisive factor for Müftüoğlu was not the arguments of Hatipoğlu, but the attitude of the Turkish consulate. Müftüoğlu later told Ömeroğlu that after the accusations against him he went one day to the Turkish consul Varol Özkoçak to learn about the attitude of Turkey in this matter. He was answered by a question: “If the case is lost in the State Council, what will happen?” (Ömeroğlu 1994: 81). This made it clear that for one reason or another the consul had adopted Hatipoğlu’s arguments. On the basis of later developments there are reasons to believe that this may not only have been related to the mufti issue, but to the backing of the “clique” as “Turkey’s men” in Greek Thrace and the elimination of people elected through the Greek parties, thus preparing the ground for greater Turkish involvement. Consequently, Meço Cemali was not the only target, but also Mehmet Müftüoğlu and Hafız Yaşar, who had supported his appointment.

The main contradiction in the “clique’s” argumentation was that it tried to portray the 1985 appointment as an innovation, and claimed that the law 2345/1920 had been applied before this date. In other words, they claimed that the Ksanthi mufti had been appointed according to the correct procedure, while Cemali had been imposed arbitrarily on the community. The “clique” would now rally around the Ksanthi mufti, whom it called the sole leader of the minority. This group solicited the support of Turkey. The whole issue soon turned into a Greek-Turkish confrontation and reached a deadlock.

Several curious alliances appeared in the wake of this conflict, and among others Cemali also drew the support of minority members with left wing sympathies such as Onsunoglu and Ömeroğlu. They did not agree with the manner in which Cemali had been appointed, but they considered the problem first of all to be a question of democratisation of the Greek administrative structures. However, this support led to strong criticism from Cemali’s opponents among the religious personnel:

You have left us your colleagues after reaching the age of 50. YOU WENT TO FIND A PLACE FOR YOURSELF BESIDES THE MAOISTS AND MARXISTS, YOU WERE NOT ABLE TO SEE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE BEARD OF ALLAH’S PROPHET AND THE BEARD OF MARX, YOU PUT THEM SIDE BY SIDE TO MAKE THEM SUIT EACH OTHER (Gerçek 172/14.07.1987).

226 cf. Akın 901/27.03.1987. For more detailed presentations, see Gerçek 172/14.07.1987; 259/24.05.1990; 262/07.08.1990, which include articles reprinted from Hakka Davet.
Hatipoğlu made an appeal to make Cemali resign where he both implored and threatened him, using Greek-Turkish relations as his frame of reference.

Give up, Yaşar and Hafız Cemali, this blind alley you have entered. Return, as soon as possible to the ranks of our minority’s healthy struggle. Because in the very near future, the desired Greek-Turkish friendship will be established, and then our fatherland will not give room for privileged persons in Western Thrace. This is how it was in the past.227

Meço Cemali came under great pressure, which increased during the following years. In a religious message, the Ksanthi mufti characterised him in the following manner: “Meço Cemali is an occupant and an organ of the occupiers. A man who has kept the Komotini mufti office under occupation for more than three years […]”228

His opponents would try to instigate people against him, and advise them to leave whenever Cemali appeared. The pressure reached the point where he was ready to resign. The story as I know it from an insider is as follows: Cemali was looking for a way to negotiate his resignation. However, when he sounded out the position of the Turkish Consulate it became clear that it would not give him the opportunity to resign in a dignified manner. On the contrary it would humiliate him and add insult to injury. This made him decide to stay on, and he has remained in the position ever since.

Hafız Yaşar also came under pressure to exert his influence on Cemali. They told him that if Cemali did not resign, his son who was a student in Turkey would be thrown out of school. Yaşar went to Cemali and asked him to do him the “favour” (rusféti, i.e. in the Greek sense of the word) of resigning, to avoid that his son was thrown out of school. However, Cemali was not willing to comply with this attempt of extortion. At this time, the most blatant threats had not been mentioned in the minority press yet, and it can be difficult to establish the chronology with accuracy. There is of course also the question of assessing the relative weight of multiple threats. As an indication, Hatipoğlu informed relatively early that Cemali had declared that he would resign conditionally (Akın 874/19.03.1986). A year later he wrote that he was glad to learn that Yaşar has asked Cemali to resign (Akın 28.02.1987).

The intensity of the pressure was related to the increased involvement of Turkey in Western Thrace. However, the fronts were still not drawn up firmly and it was also possible to find different views emerging from Turkey. A very interesting example is an open letter from Tahsin Salıhoğlu, which was printed shortly after in the minority newspaper İleri. Tahsin Salıhoğlu would later become the chairman of the solidarity organisation in Istanbul (BTTDD) and play a leading role in the blockade of the Patriarchate in August 1991 as a protest to the next mufti appointment in Ksanthi. Salıhoğlu stressed that he was against the appointment of muftis by the Greek

227 Akın 884/07.10.1986. In a later article Hatipoğlu stated more directly that soon the Atatürk-Venizelos view of Greek-Turkish relations would prevail, which meant that Cemali would be removed like Hüsnü Yusuf had been in the 1950s (Akın 919/14.09.1987).
228 Akın 975/02.03.1989. For other characteristic messages by the Ksanthi mufti, see Gerçek 223/22.10.1988, Akın 969/17.01.1989; 977/23.03.1989.
authorities and would have preferred that they were elected by the “Turkish community”. He supported the struggle for this. However, he could not approve of that people insulted a deputy mufti. He asked rhetorically what one of those who criticised Cemali would have done if he was appointed himself, or what one of those who were against the mufti would have done if he was offered the second place on the PASOK ticket by Papandreu? Would they accept or not? If they accepted would they be “sold out”? Salihoğlu stressed that the struggle should not be personal against the mufti, but against the illegal appointment by the Greek authorities and asked what was gained by insulting the mufti. If the Greek government proposed to arrange an election it would be wrong of Cemali to oppose this. At the present, even if he resigned it would just result in another appointment, and the minority had nothing to gain by increasing the ranks of those who were “sold out” in this way. He also asked if those who now approved of the Ksanthi mufti had forgotten what was said about him in the past. Those people who now made him their front man, should excuse themselves for what they had said. They should invite Cemali, too, to take part in the struggle for election. It would do nothing good to leave the mufti seat empty until the law was applied. Salihoğlu regarded it a shame if a minority member called Müftüoğlu “sold” (sold-müş). He was MP and should be treated with respect. The minority problem was neither Cemali nor Müftüoğlu. When they had their position the people should support them (İleri 483/28.08.1987). It is interesting to observe that in this letter Salihoğlu adopted a position which was diametrically opposed to what he would express later, and was quite close to the position adopted by the minority left-wingers. This could also partly be related the fact that he was an old school mate of Müftüoğlu. It is also interesting to notice Hâki’s comment that he disagreed with 95% of the letter and would not have printed it if had not been written by Tahsin Salihoğlu. However, the fronts would soon harden even more and Cemali became the target of massive criticism and slander by the “clique” in the minority press. The most glaring example took place when the minority journalist Hasan Mehmet, who supported the independent Güven ticket in the 1989 parliamentary elections, wrote a story that Meço Cemali had been seen drinking in a restaurant in Athens. Cemali naturally pressed charges and Hasan Mehmet was convicted. In Turkey this was portrayed as oppression against the minority and as “the game of the traitor mufti”. It was further stated that Cemali was not accepted by the “Western Thrace Turkish Community”, and that he was known as a “Greek collaborator” (Günaydın 21.10.1989). This is much in line with the way he was generally portrayed in the Turkish press. Another favourite label was “puppet mufti” (kukla müftüsü). By this time the problem had developed into a Greek-Turkish issue and was completely politicised on every level. The repercussions of this conflict had reached the Athens press, where it was portrayed in the following matter:
According to completely confirmed information to “To Vima” from the responsible authorities in Komotini and Ksanthi, the Turkish consul Mr. Kemal Gür behaves in the region of Thrace as if it was a Turkish province. Concretely—and in view of the voting of the law about muftis—he included in the “black list” all the supporters of the mufti of Komotini Cemali who are friendly disposed towards the state authorities, and has prohibited their entrance to Turkey.

The result of this policy is that the supporters of the mufti (who have relatives and property in Turkey) are terrified, while the mufti Cemali himself is thinking about resigning. The “Committee of Theologians, Preachers and Enlightenment” [VİH] is under the complete control of the Turkish Consulate and works (as a kind of para-mufti organisation), while its members are funded by the consulate with monthly allowances! Consequently it is apparent that if Cemali finally becomes compelled to resign, the control of the mufti office in Komotini will go to the committee.

In essence it is a case of political terror against the Muslim element which co-operates with the responsible state authorities, and encouragement of the extremist elements. At the same time, the Turkish consul exerted pressure on the chairman of the Managing Committee of the Muslim Property (vakıf) in Komotini Mr. Mehmetoğlu Yaşar to resign. These direct interferences of the consul (which are not the only ones) constitute a clear violation of the Lausanne Treaty.

Another Greek newspaper could inform that Cemali had been warned by Ankara in the beginning of the month that if he did not resign something bad could happen to him (Pontiki 26.04.1989). All this demonstrates how far the polarisation had reached, and the methods used by the parties involved.

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Conflicts Related to Ethnic Identity

The minority’s identity has often been a matter of dispute. In the 1980s this issue culminated in the protests against the shut-down of the minority associations with the word “Turkish” in their name. It continued to be highly disputed, something which is reflected in the title of an American Helsinki Watch report: “Destroying Ethnic Identity - The Turks of Greece” (Whitman 1990). The question of terminology and the way it has been politicised is central for understanding some of the minority conflicts. It is consequently necessary to view the question in a wider perspective, in order to detect the various factors which are operative in the disputes.

The population of any given area can be divided into various subgroups reflecting ethnic, social, religious, and other differences. The relevance of these divisions varies according to time and space. Before we get involved in the Greek-Turkish dispute it may be instructive to take a look at the way a local Greek historian categorises the population of the Ksanthi prefecture (slightly abridged):

The population of the Ksanthi prefecture consisted of 88,777 inhabitants according to the 1981 census. From the religious point of view they are divided into two large groups: a) The Christians are about 54,000 or 60% b) The Muslims are about 35,000 or 40%.

**The Christians are divided into:**
1) **Descendants of old inhabitants** of the area 9% (all percentages given are in relation to the total population, both Christian and Muslim). The number is relatively small as many left in 1913 and 1940 because of “the danger of annihilation by the Bulgarians”.
2) **Descendants of the refugees** from the “unforgettable homelands” of a) Eastern Thrace and Rumelia, b) Asia Minor, C) Pontos 39%.
3) **People from other parts of the country** 5%.
4) **Sarakatsani**, who lived as nomads until about 1950 when they settled permanently mainly in villages on the plain 7%.

**The Muslims are divided into:**
1) **The Rodopians** (Ahrians or Pomaks), who live mainly in the north-eastern mountain areas 24%.
2) **Gypsies** 5%.
3) **The remaining Muslims** 11%. a) **Descendants of the old Ottoman conquerors** (old agas and beys) less than 0.5% remaining. b) **descendants of other islamized Christians** besides the Rodopians 6%. c) **descendants of various tribes**, coming from Asia (Yörüks, Koniaris, Tartarmongolians, Circassians, Kurds etc.) 3%.
4) **Descendants of slaves from Egypt**, Sudan, and Ethiopia (the Mavrarapades [Negroes] of the area), “who were bought in the slave markets in Egypt and sent to Thrace as slaves or serfs to cultivate the land of the agas or herd their animals (mainly buffaloes) in the swamps and marches for a mess of pottage” 1.5% (Yeorgantzis 1991: 54–57).

The categories above are mainly based on the “origin” of the various subgroups. It would also be possible to add others for both the Christians and the Muslims. For example, while the bulk of the minority belongs to the Sunni-hanife sect, there are also smaller groups of Bektâşi and other marginal groups that I am aware of but not able to map out in detail, cf. (Zenginis 1988). Some of the Muslims are also of Albanian descent, but function as an integral part of the minority and make no claim for separate...
status. Of course, “origin” represents only one way of categorising the minority members, and may be irrelevant to some of the social mechanisms involved.

The most important factor in determining the identity of the minority members has been the attitudes of Greece and Turkey. After opting for the “Muslim” label in the Lausanne negotiations, Turkey wanted the minority to follow the same developments as took place in the republic of Turkey. In particular, from the beginning of the 1950s Turkey took important steps to secure a uniform Turkish education for the whole minority. Education in modern Turkey has been highly nationalist and intended to mould the diverse population elements into a new Turkish identity. As seen earlier, the Greek “concessions” in the 1950s secured the renaming of the minority schools from “Muslim” to “Turkish”. There were always groups that opposed this policy (Christian and Muslim), and when the relationship to Turkey soured attempts were made to reverse the former “concessions”. Greece would try to neutralise Turkish influence, partly by supporting the conservative element and partly by stressing the ethnic diversity of the minority. In recent times the Greek position has been that the minority is made up of (at least) three distinct elements: Pomaks, Gypsies, and those of “Turkish Origin” (Turkoyení). Turkey accuses Greece for attempting to keep the minority weak and fragmented in order to control it. Opposing this is the Turkish ideal of “unity and solidarity” (Birlik ve Beraberlik) under Turkey’s tutelage. Whatever the motives, the Greek position is built on existing cleavages in the minority. The most obvious example are the Gypsies, who have a distinct culture, which is often treated with prejudice by both Muslims and Christians.\footnote{The only scholarly monograph on the Gypsies of Thrace is (Zenginis 1994). Like his book on the Bektâfli it stresses the heterogeneous character of the minority, thus supporting the official Greek position. For a work of more general scope, see (Trubeta 1996).} Part of the Pomaks too may in certain contexts display a distinct group behaviour, for example in connection with elections. It is also possible to observe instances of mutual suspicion, or prejudice towards the Pomaks by those who are of Turkish descent. However, this is something which takes place internally. Outwardly the minority members will say that they are all Turks, and attempts by Greek authorities to emphasise the ethnic heterogeneity make them close their ranks. Partly, this testifies that the old Ottoman Muslim-Christian division is still operative. However, as we have seen earlier, the Muslim identity has gone through a radical “turkification” in republican Turkey. Faikoğlu would criticise the Greek attempts to “divide” the minority, and point out that Greece did not have this policy towards the heterogeneous elements of the Christian population:

Just as much as the Turkish citizens members of the Christian Orthodox minority living inside or outside Istanbul are Greek, just as Greek as the Vlachs, Sarakatsani, Karagunides, Arvanites, Albanian speakers but also the Russo-Pontians who do not speak Greek and have their own dialect, just as much are the Greek citizens Muslims of the mountain areas of Ksanthi, Rodopi,
and Evros Turks. Even though some of them speak their local Pomak dialect, they constitute an indivisible part of the Turkish minority of Western Thrace.\footnote{Declaration by Faikoğlu dated Athens 22.02. 1991 in connection with Greek reactions to the human rights report of the American State Department, in \textit{Akin} 1022/25.02.1991.}

In both Greece and Turkey we see the tension between the old system of organising the population according to national-confessional groups and a modern system based on common citizenship within a sovereign territory. For its own territory, Turkey adheres to a modern civic concept of identity. According to article 66 of the constitution, “all the citizens of the Turkish state are Turks”. A consistent application of this principle would mean that the Muslims in Greece are Greeks, but in this case Turkey insists that they are part of the Turkish nation. Towards the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul Turkey insists outwards that they are Turkish citizens, but has often employed it as an object of retaliation which contradicts the official position. There are frequent attempts to cloud the issue. Turkey employs studiously the old religious denomination \textit{rum}, but will claim to foreigners that this is synonymous with \textit{Greek}. It makes a point of that in contrast to this, Greece refuses to call the minority in Thrace Turkish. However, it is inconceivable for someone to imagine in today’s Turkey a sign with the words “Greek school”.\footnote{cf. the analysis of Iraklis Millas in \textit{Eleftherotipia} 13.04.1990.} For example, in an article where he complained about the Greek courts’ prohibition of the word “Turkish” in titles and on signboards, the Turkish professor Türkkaya Ataöv pointed out that: “The Greek minority in Turkey, however, uses the word “Greek” in all official business. There are in Turkey the Greek Hospital, the Greek Girl’s lycée […]” (\textit{Turkish Daily News} 07.07.1990). In these cases the word employed will be \textit{rum} and not \textit{yunan}, which is reserved for Greeks of Greece. It is of course possible for someone in Turkey to call the Greek Orthodox minority \textit{rum} in good faith, just as it is possible for Greeks to call the minority in Thrace Muslim without ulterior motives. Still, there are also examples where the Turkish side gets out of its way to portray the Greek Orthodox in Istanbul as completely different from other Greeks:

The ‘Rum’ community in Turkey has no kinship whatsoever with Greece. Even a secondary-school student is taught in history courses that the ‘Rums’ of Istanbul come from Byzance, the Eastern portion of the disintegrated Roman Empire. In fact, the Hellenic word for ‘Rum’ is ‘Romeos’, meaning Roman. Through a systematic, costly propaganda, Greece has been trying for many years to introduce itself to the world opinion as the heir to the Byzantine Empire. The only resemblance between the ‘new Greeks’ and the ‘Romans’ is that both communities have adhered to the Orthodox sect; still, they have separate churches (INAF 1992: 40).

The passage above represents a desperate attempt to dissociate the Greek Orthodox of Istanbul from other Greeks. In Greece too, the efforts by super-patriots to deny any link between the minority and Turkey sometimes have peculiar results. In order to avoid the word “Turkish” when referring to the minority a Greek journalist once char-
acterised one of its newspapers as “Islam-language”. It is ironic that in Greece the word “Turk” has traditionally been in more common use among the majority than among the minority itself. This can sometimes lead to odd situations when common practice clashes with the need to be politically correct. In spring 1992 the journalist and former MP İsmail Molla Rodoplu went to Athens to see some Turkish politicians who had come for a convention. On his way from the airport he had a conversation with the taxi driver. When the taxi driver heard he was from Thrace he asked:

—“How are you doing with the Turks up there?”
—“I happen to be one of the Turks.” Rodoplu replied.
—“No you are not a Turk,” said the taxi driver. “You are a Muslim.”

I suppose the taxi driver’s spontaneous reaction, made him blind to the lack of coherence in his position. When Rodoplu said he was a Turk, the taxi driver felt the need to present the official version of his own group in an authoritarian fashion. It is a long standing practice that Greeks call minority members Turks between themselves, but if someone from the minority calls himself a Turk this makes him a Turkish chauvinist and a mouthpiece (feréfón) of Ankara. For example, when some journalists interviewed the Metropolitan Damaskinos, who is renowned for his anti-Turkish and anti-minority attitude, they pointed out that he referred to the minority members as Turks in their conversation. The Metropolitan replied: “Yes. Ordinarily they are Turks. However, they want to call themselves Turks to ask for autonomy tomorrow” (Eleftherotipia 15.02.1998).

It is important to have in mind the political and ideological framework when we look at the controversy surrounding the minority associations. The main difference between Greece and Turkey in this respect is that Greece and the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul never wanted (dared) to challenge the Turkish state when it closed down associations with Hellenic in their names. In Greece on the other hand, the authorities’ attempts to reverse the “concessions” of the 1950s met with various forms of resistance from the minority. The minority’s ability to protest was contingent on two principle factors: the degree of democratisation in Greece, and the backing by Turkey. The controversy was not related to the individual’s right to express his identity, as would be the case in a “civil society”. It took place as a fight between representatives of various ideological and political interests who wanted to impose a label on members of the minority as a whole. This holds good for the behaviour of almost all those involved. Of course, the junta’s attempts to reverse earlier “concessions” towards Turkey also became discredited among the minority by association to other oppressive measures.

234 Rodoplu told me the story himself.
The quarrel between Greece and Turkey about the identity of the minority has continued to the present day, with the mobilisation of the minority itself steadily increasing. A Greek journalist who attempted to probe into the identity questions was told by Celâl Zeybek that “The person is Muslim by faith and has a Turkish consciousness, and we should not oppress this consciousness…” On the same occasion, Orhan Hacııbrahim ascribed the minority’s assertion of its identity as a reaction to Greek pressure:

...Here we reached the point where the dictatorship comes and tells us that we are “Greek Muslims”. Consequently, while earlier when you asked a simple person he told you “I am a Muslim”. Then they came and told them “yes you are Muslims, but of Greek decent” and the person began to ponder… Besides that he was Muslim, he thought, there is also something else. “What am I finally?” he asked himself. And they led him, not to discover it, because he knew, but to declare and demonstrate that he belongs to some nation… They forced him to it… (ibid.)

Sometimes it becomes very obvious that it is not a question of freedom to express your identity, but a conflict between two authoritarian adversaries. In a letter to Akın, Yiannis Kapsis claimed that Hasan Hatipoğlu as a Kemalist did not represent the large group of conservative Muslims. Hatipoğlu responded by writing:

Dear Minister,

In Western Thrace there is only a KEMALIST Muslim-Turkish Community, admirers of KEMALIST ideals, which love the Fatherland [i.e. Greece]” (Akın 885/25.10.1986).

In other words, Hatipoğlu did not allow any margins for ideological diversity within the minority, but identified it completely with the official dogma of the Turkish state. He would criticise strongly any attempt by minority members to “water down” the “turkishness” of the minority by giving it a label which was more palatable to Greek authorities. The quarrel about the identity of the minority often degenerated into endless hair-splitting, where the smallest concessions could lead to dangerous results. It is pertinent at this point to ask about the relevance of the fight. As usual, the Greek and Turkish interpretations are quite different. The Greek version is that Turkey attempts to transform the Muslims from a religious to an ethnic minority. In doing so it will tie the minority closer to Ankara which in turn can use it for its political needs. From being an ethnic minority it will continue to demand rights as an ethnic community, and ultimately it will ask for autonomy. The idea is that Turkey is applying some kind of “salami tactics”, and it is important not to allow them to take the first step which can lead to an ultimately disastrous result as in Cyprus. The Cyprus trauma influenced profoundly the Greek politics in Thrace, although we are dealing with two areas with totally different political status.

235 Eleftherotipia 07.06.1989, “Thrace the ‘other’ elections”, by Yiannis Liapis.
The Shut-Down of the Turkish Associations

The first attempt to take the word “Turkish” away from the name of the minority associations took place in 1972 in connection with the junta’s new law for associations. The prefect obtained a court verdict to close the associations, but it was never applied, and they continued to function (Trakya’nın Sesi 97/10.12.1983). Evidently the Greek authorities later tried to make the associations change their name, but the minority representatives refused (cf. İlleri 139/11.05.1979). With the declaration of the “North Cyprus Turkish Republic” 15 November 1983, the Greek authorities took a new initiative. The reason was allegedly that the name of the associations could provoke tension between Christians and Muslims after the declaration of the NCTR. The court of Rodopi prohibited the word “Turkish” from the name of the association in Rodopi 29 November 1983, and two days later the signs outside were taken down by the police. A week later the same took place in Ksanthi. The associations affected were the “Turkish Youth Union” (Türk Gençlik Birliği) and “Turkish Teachers Union” (Türk Öğretmenler Birliği) in Komotini, and the “Turkish Union” (Türk Birliği) in Ksanthi. These associations had been founded in 1928, 1936, and 1927 respectively, but the degree of activity had varied greatly throughout the years. Dede remarked that the associations were not very active and had lost much of their old vigour. However, when faced with a prohibition, he suggested that the minority should protest to the central authorities (Trakya’nın Sesi 97/10.12.1983). Hâki too, remarked that PASOK had created a new issue by the prohibition (İlari 323/16.12.1983). The minority responded by appealing the court decision (cf. Gerçek 89/21.02.1984). In a later commentary, Dede remarked that particularly after 1974 the Greeks had been possessed by a Turcophobia, and ascribed the closing of the associations to this. He considered it to have been an unwise move. By saying that there were “no Turks only Muslims”, Greece wanted to avoid having an issue with Turkey, but created in reality an issue with both the minority itself and Turkey. Dede claimed that if Greece had not occupied itself with the nationality of the minority, as was the case up until this time, the minority itself would not have created an issue of it. He pointed out that Greece did not have the strength and means to determine the nationality of the minority. The situation was not like Belgium, where everybody independent of religion and language could view themselves as Belgians. There was definitely no Muslim Greek citizen in Western Thrace who considered himself part of the Greek nation and the same held true for the Greek Orthodox of Istanbul as regards Turkey (Trakya’nın Sesi 267/14.01.1988).

In the following years the case went through the echelons of the legal system. It was argued that the term “Turkish” was contrary to the Lausanne treaty. It designated foreigners and could not be used for people with Greek citizenship (Tsitselikis 1996: 236)

236 The episode was covered by all the minority newspapers, see for example Gerçek 83/16.12.1983.
The statutes of the associations were said to create confusion concerning the citizenship of the members.\(^{237}\) It is interesting to notice that in the court of first instance, the lawyer of the Greek administration had proposed: “Add the word ORIGIN besides the word TURKISH in the name of the associations, i.e. change KOMOTINI TURKISH YOUTH ASSOCIATIONS to KOMOTINI YOUTH OF TURKISH ORIGIN ASSOCIATION and we will drop the case…” (Trakya’nın Sesi 268/17.01.1988). The minority lawyers who were inclined to accept this offer were accused of being “traitors” a few days later. Dede criticised this and remarked that if the offer had been accepted the associations would still have functioned (ibid.). Hatipoğlu was quick to counter Dede. He mentioned that it could seem reasonable by the first glance to use the term “Turkish origin”, but this was a “sugared pill” (şekerli hap) and a ruse which would pave the way to break up the minority. If “Turkish origin” was added to the name of the associations, one day the authorities would come and say that others could open Pomak or Gypsy organisations. Hatipoğlu claimed that according to his latest information the authorities extorted the minority to accept the term “origin”, and those who accepted it would fall into a trap (Akın 933/22.01.1988).

The authorities’ intolerance together with the intrigues, manipulation, and hair-splitting arguments within the minority had brought the case to a deadlock. In order to understand the subsequent developments it is necessary to have in mind the general climate. The minority was weary of the discrimination against it and uncertain about the intentions of PASOK. It became alarmed by a statement of the government spokesman, Yiannis Rubatis, who had said that there were no Turks in Western Thrace, only Muslims of various descent. It was thought that when people became used to say that there were no Turks, the next step would be to say that there were no Muslims. These scenarios were partly inspired by the Bulgarian example which had made a deep impression on the minority.\(^{238}\)

**The January 1988 Demonstrations**

When the minority received the news in January 1988 about the final decision by the Supreme Court, this created quite a stir. It was also commented widely in the Turkish press.\(^{239}\) The associations, the Ksanthi mufti, the VIH, and other members of the “clique” made several announcements condemning the decision by the Supreme Court (cf. Gerçek 192/12.01.1988; 193/21.01.1988). Hatipoğlu protested against the denial of the minority’s Turkism and stressed: “The Minority was born Muslim and Turkish and will die possessing this exalted virtue.” (Akın 932/15.01.1988). The old

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\(^{237}\) See the facsimile of the verdict 1729/1987 by the supreme court in Trakya’nın Sesi 268/17.01.1988.

\(^{238}\) İleri 496/27.11.1987. The statement of Rubatis was referred to in several instances, see Gerçek 192/12.01.1988; Akın 936/04.02.1988; İleri 506/12.02.1988.

\(^{239}\) İleri 501/11.01.1988, has facsimiles of many Turkish newspapers.
conservative leader Hafız Yaşar also made a statement where he called the minority members Greek citizens of Turkish descent. The MP Mehmet Müftüoğlu denounced the court decision, but added that he found it sad that the minority had remained passive since 1983 and blamed this on the internal division of the minority (Trakya’nın Sesi 267/14.01.1988). The only one to be somewhat more hesitant to criticise the court decision was the PASOK MP Ahmet Faikolu. In a declaration he wrote that it was difficult to know what the decision to close the associations entailed, as they did not have the document. Consequently he found it premature to comment on it, particularly at a time when there would be a meeting in Davos between Özal and Papandreou which could help the relationship between the two countries. However, he stressed that no one could deny that the minority was Muslim by faith, of the Turkish race, and with Greek citizenship. A decision by the Supreme court could not wipe out the Turkism of the minority (Yankı 9/15.01.1988).

The condemnation of the court decision by minority members did at first hardly surpass the internal level. This made Abdülhalim Dede take the initiative. He thought that the minority had not made a proper reaction to a question of immediate concern. Only the Teachers Association felt the need to make an extraordinary assemble and send a protest note. As everybody remained passive, Dede decided to organise a protest march to display the Turkishness of the minority 26.01.1988. He invited all the minority leaders and members to take part. The march would be with slogans and posters saying “WE ARE TURKS”. Dede pointed out that it was a democratic right to stage demonstration marches, with no need for special permission (Trakya’nın Sesi 269/21.01.1988). It seems that Abdülhalim Dede wanted to stage a protest march modelled on usual patterns of protests in Greek society at large. The march took place as scheduled and some 4–5,000 persons participated. They handed over to the prefect a resolution, which ended with the following demands:

1. The closed associations should be allowed to function again with their historical names,
2. The assaults on the minority’s national roots, and the assaults on the minority because of these roots should stop,
3. The government should recognise definitively the minority’s right to name itself Turkish (Trakya’nın Sesi 271/28.01.1988).

The “clique” made great efforts to prevent the protest march organised by Dede and created a lot of propaganda against it. However, when Dede went ahead with the demonstration and it was well attended, it became hard for the “clique” to ignore it. In the evening of 26 January the “clique” decided to stage another protest march on 29 January. By now people were annoyed by the passive attitude of the “clique”, which was more or less forced to do something to save face. Afterwards the “clique” would say that the decision for the march was made 24 January. Dede said that this was a lie,

240 The following is based on Dede’s account of the events in Trakya’nın Sesi 282/28.04.1988; 409/30.01.1992; 499/26.01.1995; 539/08.01.1996.
and if that had been the case he would have cancelled the march on 26 January. The first march on 26 January was consequently the direct cause of the second march.

The “clique” started now to make propaganda for its own march (Akın 934/27.01.1988; Gerçek 194/28.01.1988). A committee was made from the AYK, the chairmen of the minority associations, and the minority MPs. This became known as the Yürütme Komitesi (Executive Committee-YK) and would present itself as the minority’s highest authority in the following years. In reality it was just a facade for the “clique” and the criteria for membership in this committee remained obscure. At this occasion İsmail Rodoplu was elected chairman of the organisation committee for the march (Gerçek 195/05.02.1988). The appeals for participation in the protest march stressed the need to protect the Turkism of the minority (İleri 504/29.01.1988). In an interview after the protest Mehmet Müfütooğlu said that he had not been informed about anything, although the MPs were allegedly political consultants. People in the villages complained about the fact that none of the leaders came to see them before the march. On the day of the march Müfütooğlu’s office was made headquarters of the YK, and he was going back and forth to the prefecture. He thought the minority lacked political culture, or else it would have made some decisions the night before and posted people at various places to assist those who poured in from the villages (İleri 509/04.03.1988). The “clique” was apparently primarily interested in profiling themselves towards Turkey.

The solidarity associations in Turkey displayed an active interest, and in an interview the leading members Mustafa Rumeli and Tahsin Salihoğlu came with strong complaints about the situation in Greece. This was accompanied by a telephone interview with leading members of the “clique”:

İsmail Rodoplu, the owner and responsible director of the newspaper “Gerçek” which has been published for 11 years in Western Thrace, and the owner of the newspaper “Akın” Hasan Hatipoğlu whom we spoke with on the phone yesterday confirm these opinions completely. The newspaper owners remind that security for life, property, and education is gone, the word Turk can definitely not be mentioned, the Turkish secondary schools and associations have been closed, unfair fines for over 30 millions have broken the back of the shop owners, the expropriations of fields ready to be sown have condemned the farmer to hunger, and their newspapers can be closed any moment. The journalists who point out that the same cruelties which are done to the Turks of Bulgaria have started there too stress that if there is no result from Davos they hold their last hopes in the National Struggle Committee founded under the leadership of the mufti of Ksanthi. The Supreme Minority Committee members say that first they will apply through democratic channels to the Islamic Conference, European Parliament, and United Nations. However, if there is no result they will if necessary start armed struggle saying that “Whatever happens it cannot be worse, it cannot be more oppressive. If the next stop is death, we will die defending our rights.” (Milliyet 28.01.1988).

After the march organised by Dede, it seems that the authorities were uneasy about the prospect of another protest by the minority. Moreover, some of the local anti-minority forces under the leadership of the Metropolitan Damaskinos threatened to stage a counter demonstration:

The co-ordination committee of the Christians in the prefecture of Rodopi [I sintonistikí epitropí ton křistianón tu N. Rodópis] denounces the provocative and audacious provocation of the foreign-incited alleged new-leaders of the Muslim Minority to summon the Muslims of Thrace to
a protest demonstration against the recent decision of the Supreme Court by proclaiming on their behalf that they are TURKS.

According to the Lausanne Treaty, but also to the historical reality which the pseudo-leaders are distorting there are only Greek citizens who belong to different Religions in Thrace, The Christians who are the majority and the Muslims who are the minority.

We the Christians surround the Muslim fellow citizens with love and desire to live peacefully together with them. However, we do not tolerate the existence of chauvinist TURKS and organs of foreign States in our Country. There is no place for TURKS in Thrace, those who feel that they are TURKS can go to the other side of Evros.

For that reason we do not tolerate the provocation and announce that irrespective of the attitude of the official organs of the Greek State, we will react dynamically and not tolerate the continuation of it.

We advice the foreign-incited instigators of their chauvinist outburst to cancel the provocative demonstrations which they are preparing for the upcoming Friday. In the opposite case we will SUMMON the Christians of the Rodopi prefecture to a counter demonstration the SAME DAY and the SAME PLACE to prevent this unacceptable and provocative action.


The demonstration planned by the minority was of course a legitimate way of expressing its grievances in a democracy, but it obviously made several circles uneasy. The Metropolitan represented the traditional authoritarian leader of his national-confessional group, while the secular authorities probably wanted to avoid any publicity which could reveal some of the unsavoury aspects of the minority policy. Within traditional inter-ethnic rivalry, of the type which is most easy to discern on the village level, it also becomes a question of displaying strength and making sure that the opponents know their place. There is a possibility that concurrent interests fostered unholy alliances to prevent the demonstration. This was suggested by a Greek newspaper:

Did the Metropolitan act alone? Our sources are certain that he decided on the counter demonstration in agreement with local authorities, at least. “He summoned the Christians to a counter demonstration so that the police could find a pretext to prohibit both of the demonstrations and make a display of force with the MAT [riot police] which was summoned from Thessaloniki, beating mercilessly the Muslims.”, say the inhabitants of Komotini who are not fanatic (Profi 01.02.1988).

The minority was not ready to back down and on 29 January people poured into Komotini from the villages in a rather unorganised fashion. The strong police forces which had been brought in from Thessaloniki, Kavala, and Aleksandroupoli tried to prevent people from entering the town. The villagers threw stones against the police, and the police tried to halt the villagers using clubs. According to a Greek newspaper five policemen were wounded and several villagers hurt lightly (Eleftherotipia 30.01.1988). People were shouting slogans that they were Turks and the situation seems to have become quite chaotic. In order to avoid a large gathering the authorities wanted to prohibit the Muslims from going to the central mosque (Yeni Cami), but this was rejected by the minority leaders as an encroachment on their freedom of religion. In the end the Greek authorities asked the MPs Ahmet Faikolu and Mehmet Müftü-
oğlu to help calm the spirits. They made an appeal to people and secured their peaceful dispersion. The minority had made a resolution in Greek about its objectives:

Komotini 29-1-1988
RESOLUTION
We would like to proclaim the following with today’s legal and peaceful march:
1. It is the inalienable right of every person to belong to a nation [ethnótita].
2. We the Turks-Muslims of Western Thrace, do not turn against the Greeks-Christians of Greece nor in any way against those who live in our area with our march today.
3. We the Turks-Muslims of Western Thrace recognise, without reservation to everybody the human right to belong to a nation and to feel proud about this.
4. We the Turks-Muslims of Western Thrace respect all the Greeks and consider it natural that they are proud about their descent.
5. We the Turks-Muslims of Western Thrace do not look at the relationship between persons of different nations from any chauvinist point of view. We look at it through the prism of love, understanding, and mutual respect.

WITH THE ABOVE THOUGHTS WE THE TURKS-MUSLIMS OF WESTERN THRACE DEMAND
That our associations which were recognised by legal decision and operated legally for (60) years are not closed, because they have the word “Turkish” in their name.
That the only reality is accepted, the Minority living in Western Thrace according to the Lausanne Treaty is Turkish-Muslim, and is made up of members which have Muslim faith, Turkish descent, and are Greek citizens.
THE WHOLE TURKISH MUSLIM MINORITY OF WESTERN THRACE.

The massive character of the protest led to widespread comments afterwards. In particular there were speculations about if there was any connection to the summit meeting in Davos between Papandreu and Özal on the same day. As is usually the case, the descriptions of the events diverged greatly. For example, a major Greek newspaper wrote that 3,000 Muslims participated in the demonstrations (Eleftherotipia 30.01.1988), while a minority paper wrote that as many as 30,000 took part (İleri 506/12.02.1988). As a rule the Greek press would try to downplay the events, or ascribe it to a small group of provocateurs instigated from abroad.

The government spokesman Sotiris Kostopulos declared that: “The episodes which took place in Komotini had very limited scale and significance.” (Makedonia 31.01.1988). Some people would also call for measures against the organisers of the demonstrations who were said to behave like enemies of Greece. “The Christian population must isolate these particular persons in every way: With economic and social boycott. No money to merchants of Turkish nationalism. No money which tomorrow can become propaganda bullets against us.”

There were also some sensationalist stories which claimed the Turkish Intelligence Service (MİT) to be behind the demonstrations (Kalami 04.02.1988). However, an experienced politician such as Mitsotakis would

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241 The events received massive coverage in the minority press, but space does not permit me to go into details. For some poems written on occasion of the protest, see (Sağlam 1992).
242 Gerçek 195/05.02.1988. The resolution was actually not distributed among the Christian population as planned, because of the circumstances.
243 In particular the local press would cultivate this kind of rhetoric. See, Elefthero Vima, Patrida, and Hronos 30.01.1988.
244 Hronos 30.01.1988, “It is time for them to understand-There are no Turks in Thrace-The Lausanne Treaty is perfectly clear”, by Neofitos Gonatas.
stress that he did not think that the event was controlled by the Turkish government, because it would be illogical at the time Özal was going to Davos (Makedonia 31.01. 1988). In fact, in the first confusion after the 29 January demonstration, Özal would denounce them as unimportant (Thessaloniki 30.01.1988).

This was the first demonstration by the minority to reach such proportions that it received wide coverage in the Athenian press. It is interesting to notice certain mistakes which show that the newspapers did not have first hand knowledge of the events and possibly received information from the same source. For some reason the son of the Ksanthi mufti was consistently referred to as Ali Aga instead of Mehmet Emin Aga. However, the episodes also gave rise to more critical articles which distanced themselves from the authoritarian aspects of Greek politics, and the fact that minority issues were still treated as taboos. An article which was critical to Turkey’s involvement in Thrace, pointed out that the reason for the minority’s discontent was obvious and took pains to spell it out in detail.

The values of Greek society is under trial in Western Thrace: where the Greek citizens, of Muslim religion (and many atheists) and Turks, Pomaks, and Gypsies by descent, do not have the right to repair their roof to warm their sick, elderly, and small children. Where, in the name of nationalism, human dignity is humiliated. The Greek Republic, following the spirit of the chauvinist policy of Turkey, did already in 1964 as retaliation to the sequestration of the Greek property in Istanbul, activate the law A. N. 1366/38 of Metaksas, prohibiting the transmission of real estate to other Muslim Greek citizens.

It prohibited the construction and repair of buildings, and when the illegal houses spring up, the fines are unbearable. Only in the township Arisvi 2,000 applications for construction and repair of buildings are pending at the moment.

- Driving licences for tractors are not issued except in very few cases and for vote hunting reasons.
- The free exercise of vocations which need health control are not allowed, such as restaurants, hairdressers, coffee houses, and even dentist offices.
- The unified management of the pious foundations is not allowed, and in certain cases even the mufti is appointed by the prefect, as happened with the mufti of Ksanthi [sic] Metso Tzalali [sic] which provoked immediately the religious sentiment of the minority members.
- Blatant expropriations are executed as the one for the University of Ksanthi which concerned 4,270 stremma where 90% belonged to the Muslims, and the indemnity is still pending.
- But the most blatant injustice takes place in education. The education of the minority does not only lag behind the developments of the central educational system, but neither the books have changed from the beginning of the 60s. It is characteristic that in primary school the same book has been in use during the four last decades and the pupils read from photocopies. The result is that the number of pupils decreases rapidly and the schools close. In the secondary school “Celâl Bayar” in Komotini there is one (number 1) pupil from a population of 60,000 Muslims! Most leave for Turkey, while very few attend Greek secondary schools. Of course the most striking case concerns the approximately 20 university graduates who wait, for years now, for the recognition of their degrees by DİKATA. The doctors wash dishes in restaurants and the pharmacists weed in the fields, to the glory of equality before the law.

After all this, how is it possible that they search for instigators and provocateurs (K. Iordanidis in “KATHIMERINI” locates the “enemy” in 300 extremists) of the serious episodes in Western Thrace?

Is it not natural (independent of political inclinations) for the minority members to follow “more closely” the politics of Turkey than of Greece, when their economical, cultural, and educational transactions (they buy flats in Turkey, send their children to schools and universities in Turkey etc.) take place through the Turkish state? What national strategy are we talking about

245 See, for example, Makedonia 31.01.1988 and Pontiki 05.02.1988.

246 Scholiastis 60/05.02.1988, “In the shadow of Davos, National manoeuvres in Komotini”, by Mihalis Tremopoulos.
when the Turkish Foreign Department is facilitated and reinforced in many ways to employ the minority as an advanced reserve corps in our very country?

Who will finally relieve us from the arrogant national solecisms, from the peculiar national compliance (from Zurich to Attila and Davos) in summit negotiations, but also from the narrow minded chauvinism towards the minority? Maybe the Left when it decides to disengage from following the digressions, the endless protraction, the unavailing manoeuvres and the secret diplomacy, which was followed by the “charismatic national leadership”.

Enough with Zurich and Davos. Let us sometime busy ourselves with Komotini.247

The author may not have all the details right, but he is in touch with the essence of the minority question and the article is an indication of the fact that the minority’s problems were about to reach a larger audience. However, the Greek authorities were not ready to admit that the minority had reasons to protest, and tried to hush up the affair or to attribute it to other causes.

Hâki was convincing when he wrote that people had had enough of discrimination and oppression and could not take it anymore. They were on the verge of bursting because of the oppressive policy and participated massively in the march in spite of the prohibition and the risk involved. The authorities were wrong when they portrayed it as a provocation against Davos. It was not the action of a handful of persons but had massive support. Hâki countered the authorities by saying that it was the closing of the associations and Yiannis Rubatis’ statement which should be characterised as a provocation (Ileri 506/12.02.1988). In other words, the demonstrations were fuelled by the accumulated resentment against the anti-minority measures and were only triggered by the latest events, which targeted the “identity” of the minority. With the benefit of hindsight it should be said that it was unfortunate that the protests became focused on the name issue. As a result, it took away the attention from the economic and social discrimination and made it easier for those who wanted to create a nationalist confrontation.

The demonstrations played an important role in the internal development of minority politics. After this event the “clique” increased its strength significantly. In a commentary to the demonstrations Dede considered it to be normal that some people would try to blame the events on a few instigators. It was not correct of the two prime ministers at Davos to call the demonstration a provocation, but he was inclined to give them right if they judged on the background of the article in Milliyet 28.01.1988. After Rodoplu and Hatipoğlu had said in a telephone interview that they had founded a “National Struggle Committee” (Milli Mücadele Komitesi) led by the Ksanthi mufti and were even prepared for armed struggle if necessary, the Greeks were right in calling the march on 29 January a provocation (Trakya’nın Sesi 273/11.02.1988). Dede accused Rodoplu and Hatipoğlu of posing as the greatest nationalists of the minority to cover up their faintheartedness. He challenged them to issue a disclaimer to be pub-

lished in *Milliyet*, and not only say that they had been misquoted. This would correspond to what they asked others to do (*Trakya’nın Sesi* 275/25.02.1988). Apparently the “clique” was bent on attracting support in Turkey, which it could use in turn as a leverage against opposition within the minority.

Hatipoğlu was quick to start polemics against Dede’s “private protest march” on 26 January, which he denounced as a provocation. He made a point of the fact that it had not been forbidden by the authorities; “Whereas the authorities prohibited the 29 January Minority Peace March one day beforehand and indeed in writing (*Akin* 937/13.02.1988). The “clique” was quick to monopolise the protest march and to capitalise on it. In a message on the occasion of the religious holiday *Regaip Kandili*, the Ksanthi mufti gave ample space to the protest march and wrote among other things:

> My dear kinsmen,
> As a community on 29 January we carried out the best, most proper, and most effective reaction to the injustices. Everybody took part in the 29 January MARCH as best as they could, none of our people did not participate. Only that some people participated in a different manner. Ten thousands of Western Thracian Turks poured personally out in the streets and passed the barricades, and made an appearance instead of holding a meeting. Some of those who wanted to pass the police barricades were beaten, they were pushed, shoved, and insulted. The people who poured out into the streets excitedly claiming their legal rights, humiliated by the bad treatment they received from the state’s security forces, these people who were claiming their rights are elevated, crowned with honour, and made heroes. I wish with my most sincere feelings that my religious brothers who were exposed to bad treatment will soon be well. I CONGRATULATE THE HOLY WARRIORS, AND SEND MY LOVE TO EACH ONE OF THEM.
> Those of our kinsmen who did not take part in the march, who for some reason could not leave their house Friday 29 January, took part in this historical march with their hearts, they screamed with their hearts their OATH OF ALLEGIANCE TO OUR ISLAMISM AND TURKISM. May God reward them all!^248^  
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Müftüoğlu mentioned in an interview that after 29 January people accused the leaders for dividing the minority. He agreed with this opinion. Some minority leaders broke the unity which had been created after 29 January because of their personal interests, as there was no unity among the leaders. Those who claimed that there was unity did it for political reasons. A number of internal and external forces intervened as well (*İleri* 509/04.03.1988). Müftüoğlu wished that nobody would try to take the credit of 29 January, because it was the success of the minority people themselves, who had now started to involve themselves in their own fate (*İleri* 510/11.03.1988).

However, the “clique” intensified its efforts to portray itself as the only minority leadership. It had various things to show which could promote them as the “representatives” of Turkey. For example, such things as publishing a telegram from Özal to the Ksanthi mufti (*Gerçek* 199/11.03.1988). In a retrospective article about the 29 January demonstration Hâki mentions that the YK grew strong after this date and was able

^248^ Characteristically the message was printed in both *Akin* 938/17.02.1988 and *Gerçek* 197/20.02.1988.
to suppress anybody with different opinions. This was accomplished by threats of sanctions by Turkey (İleri 829/26.01.1996).

The 29 January demonstrations soon acquired a special status. In a review of the year Rodoplu singled out the demonstrations as the most significant event (Gerçek 229/30.12.1988). The next year the anniversary was celebrated with a ceremony where İbrahim Şerif spoke about the importance of standing together as Turks and Muslims (Gerçek 232/03.02.1989). In the following years the anniversary of the demonstrations would in particular be celebrated by those who belonged to the “clique”.

The Greek authorities reacted to the demonstrations by taking a tougher stand against the minority in the subsequent months. Hâki mentioned that many people had been beaten up by the police or punished by various fines. Müftüoğlu expressed the opinion that although there were attempts to establish Greek-Turkish friendship by the central government, the local authorities wanted to take revenge on the minority because of the march. It seemed as if they wanted to sabotage the attempts of a rapprochement (İleri 510/11.03.1988). The minority members’ commented the Greek policy according to their political position. This is very clear in an interview by the periodical of the solidarity organisation in Istanbul. When asked if there had been any improvements for the Turks in Thrace after the Davos and Brussels meeting, the Ksanthi mufti Mustafa Hilmi answered that the oppression now had turned into terror. Müftüoğlu said that the Greek authorities had hardened their policy after 29 January. Faikoğlu began by saying that he hoped that Özal and Papandreu would continue the peace policy initiated by Atatürk-Venizelos. When the journalist pointed out that he did not answer the question, Faikoğlu said that there was no oppression in Ksanthi.

In this case Müftüoğlu presents a straightforward description of the situation, Mustafa Hilmi represents an attempt to exaggerate the situation in order to attract Turkish patronage, while Faikoğlu speaks as a loyal PASOK cadre.

By this time many had of course grown displeased with the manipulations of the “clique”. The kinotárhis Ali Nuri had earlier expressed this clearly in an interview. When asked about his opinion of the AYK, he said that they were only working for their personal interest. He pointed out that most of them had no official position, no one from Evros was invited, there had been no election of its leaders, and they obstructed the democratic development of the minority (Yeni Adım 54/07.09.1987).

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249 For characteristic examples, see: The announcement by the YK on the occasion of the three year anniversary (Gerçek 276/28.01.1991); a presentation of the “clique’s” version in the Turkish press (Cumhuriyet 30.01.1996); a Greek newspaper which dismissed the anniversary as a provocation by fanatical elements (Eleftherotipia 30.01.1993; 29.01.1996); press statement by the chairman of the Western Thracian Turks’ Federation in Europe Halit Habipoğlu dated Witten, 28.01.97, which also supported the “clique’s” version.

250 The article appeared in Batı Trakya’nın Sesi 4/May-June 1988 and was reprinted in Akin 952/15.07.1988.
However, since the “clique” was able to gain the support of the Turkish consul it became an uneven battle. Abdülhalim Dede said straight out that Varol Özkoçak was the worst consul since 1974, which was as far back as he remembered. He had divided the minority and gathered the “clique” around him.\textsuperscript{251} Dede mentions later that when the “clique” began to grow strong, it insulted Müftüoğlu, cursed him, and slandered him to the consulate (\textit{Trakya’nın Sesi} 519/31.08.1995). The resentment against the behaviour of the consul came to a head on the occasion of his farewell reception (16.09.1988) when his term was up. The fact that the consul deliberately did not invite some of the foremost minority members caused a reaction by the minority \textit{kinotárhes}. Ali Nuri called Rodoplu 13 September and asked on behalf of the minority \textit{kinotárhes} who was invited to the farewell reception of the consul. He said he called Rodoplu because he was representing the consulate, something Rodoplu denied he was. Ali Nuri said that the \textit{kinotárhes} had decided not to go because the minority MPs and many former MPs were not invited (\textit{Gerçek} 221/29.09.1988). The reception went as scheduled and was duly reported by the newspapers close to the “clique”, with photographs featuring themselves in company with the consul (cf. \textit{Akın} 959/22.09.1988).

However, this was not the end of the story. Mehmet Müftüoğlu issued a press statement 1 October where he criticised the conduct of the consul. He mentioned that among those not invited to the farewell reception for prominent minority members were the two minority MPs Müftüoğlu and Faikoğlu, 2 of the three \textit{mufis}, 3 of 5 former MPs, none of the three chairmen of the Muslim communities, 3 of 6 journalists, etc. The “clique” was able to monopolise the relationship to the consulate and exclude its adversaries. As a consequence Müftüoğlu reproached the consul for dividing the minority since he was siding with one faction.\textsuperscript{252} It was now clear for everybody that the Turkish consulate was interfering blatantly in the internal affairs of the minority. This gave the “clique” enormous leverage as a consequence of the great prestige of Turkey among the minority, and the dependency.

Hasan Hatipoğlu did not print the press statement, but entered immediately into a strong polemic against its content. As usual, he exploited the national sentiment of the minority and its insecurity within Greek society. He addressed Müftüoğlu directly and asked why he criticised the consulate and not the Greek oppression. A few passages give an impression of the line of argument:

Honourable Müftüoğlu, our Minority has indeed been expecting for years that you as MP would make an announcement by way of the press. However, this first announcement of yours should have been related to the problems of our minority, and not against the defender and guarantor of our community’s rights the General Consul, who represents the Turkish Republic in our city, and consequently against the Turkish Republic. That is what our community expected.

\textsuperscript{251} \textit{Trakya’nın Sesi} 294/15.09.1988. The article was written in response to an article by Enver Kasapoglu in \textit{Yankı} 31/09.09.1988. Dede accused Kasapoglu for hypocrisy since he heaped compliments on the consul in his writing, while he complained about him in private conversation.\textsuperscript{252} The statement is printed in both \textit{Trakya’nın Sesi} 297/06.10.1988 and \textit{İleri} 529/14.10.1988.
This initiative of yours has made our community extremely sad. Because, our community regards your dirty announcement not to be against the Honourable Varol Özkoçak but directly against the Turkish State. For this reason we Reproach you in the name of our community.

Honourable MP Müftüoğlu,

Listen to the Minority people in city and village, in the coffee house and the fields! They are screaming “We struggle, but the one who brings water safely and the one who breaks the pitcher must be separated.”

Finally, it is definitely true, honourable MP, that in the critical political environment the Western Thrace Muslim Turk Minority is situated in, your unfortunate PRESS STATEMENT has made our wounded society very sad; whereas its enemy the dark powers became extremely satisfied.

It will be a great pity if our minority loses the friendship of as valuable a diplomat of the Turkish Foreign Department as Varol Özkoçak because of this great mistake of yours. Your sentiments towards the General Consul Varol Özkoçak in the aforementioned announcement appeared in such an ugly manner that it may bring great damage to our Minority. For this reason we ask you in particular that for the benefit of our community you mend this mistake as soon as possible.

Ali Nuri reacted to the way he and the other kinotárhes had been portrayed by Hatipoğlu and wrote an article to counter the misrepresentation of their position. He accused Hatipoğlu for being a professional slanderer and mudslinger, and for sowing discord within the minority (Trakyâ’nun Sesi 298/13.10.1988). However, in the final analysis there was little they could do to match the weight of Turkey’s influence, and the “clique” was able to carry the day. This was not only related to the action of the consul. It soon became clear that Turkey had decided to step up its interference in minority affairs. We learn that someone from the “clique” could brag that he was able to get a rendezvous with the Turkish foreign minister Mesut Yılmaz, while Müftüoğlu who was MP was not accepted (Trakyâ’nun Sesi 407/16.01.1992). Having no firm place of support, Müftüoğlu became squeezed between the policy of Greece and Turkey. In this connection Onsunolu mentions that Müftüoğlu was clearly more afraid of Turkey than Greece, but tried to cover it up by criticising the Greek authorities (Trakyâ’nun Sesi 482/05.05.1994).

253 Akin 960/05.10.1988. See also Gerçek 222/14.10.1988 for similar comments.
PART THREE

A STAR IS BORN

The Rise of Sadık

It is not possible to get a complete picture of the various political formations within the minority without taking a closer look at the particular role of the late Sadık Ahmet. He is without doubt the most prominent leader in the history of the minority. It may be difficult for a foreigner to conceive the kind of reputation he was able to build in Greece and Turkey. His rise to prominence was meteoric. In the late 1980s he came from out of nowhere to become an overnight sensation and instant success. In fact, most of the minority politics from late 1988 to his premature death in 1995 revolved around the person Sadık Ahmet. It is safe to say that he became a larger than life figure and “world famous” in Greece and Turkey. In Turkey he was hailed as a great leader in the Turkish world, while in Greece he was cursed as an enemy of the state. Given the approach of the Greek and Turkish press on “national” issues in general, and the lack of knowledge about each other, it is no wonder that much of what has been written reflects the stereotypes of the writers rather than knowledge about their subject. It is not my primary concern to debunk the myths that have been built up around Sadık. However, the whole process related to his promotion is very interesting and an accurate description of the events will necessarily present a picture of Sadık that is far removed from the stereotypes that are circulating.

Sadık Ahmet was born in 1947. He grew up in the village Agra (Küçük Sirkeli) about 30 km east of Komotini. Agra is an unmixed Turkish-speaking village, and most of its inhabitants are farmers. After finishing primary school in his village, he continued his education in the “Celâl Bayar” secondary minority school in Komotini where he graduated in 1967. He studied subsequently for one year at the faculty of medicine at the University of Ankara, before he transferred to the faculty of medicine at the University of Thessaloniki in 1968 where he graduated in 1974. When he was a student, there were few signs which pointed forwards to his remarkable political career. In contrast to the other minority students in Thessaloniki, he was completely uninterested in politics. If he happened to pick up a Greek newspaper, it was just to have a glance at the sports pages. His lack of intellectual interest followed him later in life. He was first of all a man of action, strong and energetic, who would take on
difficult tasks without hesitation, where other people would think more than twice. He would embark on such tasks without proper preparation, and reflect little on the result if anything went wrong. His dream in life was to become a wealthy doctor and buy a large estate (çiftlik) in Turkey. This is in short an outline of the young Sadık.

After he finished his studies he did his military service (two years) and his one year obligatory service as rural doctor in the Kastanya village near Karditsa. Upon completion he returned to Komotini and continued with specialisation, as is usual in the Greek system. He chose to specialise as surgeon. This was a bold choice, considering that the times were not favourable for the minority. While other kinds of specialisation lend themselves towards private practice, surgery demands larger facilities and is usually practised in a hospital. In other words, he staked his future on obtaining a position as surgeon in the hospital of Komotini, and felt sure that he would get it. He worked for two years at the Komotini hospital, and two years at the Aleksandrupoli Medical Faculty hospital and finished his specialisation in May 1984. During this period he was not engaged at all in the problems of the minority. He kept a low profile avoiding any action that could make him suspect, and displayed in general a servile behaviour towards the authorities. In the hospital he found himself a protector among the senior doctors. Not a person with liberal attitudes towards the minority, but a nationalist right-winger. I have been told that a Christian doctor who knew him from this period was astonished when he heard that Sadık had become a fierce minority leader and exclaimed in disbelief: That slyboots? (aftí i supiá).

However, Sadık did not get the job he had put all his stakes on. This was the big turning point for him. As Onsunoğlu would say: “Sadık suddenly understood the minority reality for the first time” (Trakya’nın Sesi 09.08.1995). I do not know the exact reason why Sadık was rejected in spite of all his efforts to please his superiors. There were restrictions in force at the time, so he was possibly affected by some central administrative directive. However, I also know that Sadık had taken some unfortunate decisions, which made some of his colleagues negatively disposed towards him on purely professional grounds. It is of course possible that an incompetent Christian would have obtained the job whereas an incompetent Muslim would not, but that is difficult for me to judge. Whatever the reason, I am sure that Sadık blamed the decision on Greek discrimination. His further activities were to a large degree fuelled by his grudge and reaction against the rejection of him. This is when he discovered the minority’s problems and became involved in minority affairs. He became a “junior partner” of the “clique”. He was not able to acquire a prominent position, but served for a while as secretary of the YTD association where Rodoplu was president. As late as spring 1988 he was still a marginal figure, but was soon to start his meteoric climb towards power.
The Signature Campaign

Sadık Ahmet’s rapid ascendance is to a large degree connected to circumstances. He came first to the forefront with the signature campaign. This campaign was the brain-child of Aydın Ömeroğlu, a minority student at the University of Hamburg known for his left-wing orientation, and first presented to the emigrant workers’ associations in Germany. Aydın Ömeroğlu had already in 1983 taken some initiatives toward the Council of Europe and the European Parliament concerning the problems of the minority (see below). Ömeroğlu’s theoretical training made him able to approach the minority issue in a contemporary fashion, according to international developments. He was less adept in adjusting to the reality of minority petty politics and the dominating influence of Greece and Turkey. The Greek members of the European Parliament had successfully brushed off any criticism by claiming that the whole matter was instigated artificially by Turkey. After his first initiatives came to a halt, Ömeroğlu was looking for other ways to approach the issue. At this point Ömeroğlu tried to distance himself from Turkish diplomacy. He stressed that on first view the minority issue could seem like a Greek-Turkish problem, but in reality it was a question of Greek civil rights and human rights. This prompted him to start a signature campaign, which signified that the minority wanted first of all to solve its problems within the Greek political system. The signature campaign was initiated on 27 July 1985 by the Association of Western Thracian Turks in Düsseldorf. The intention was to collect some 10,000 signatures under a petition that was voicing the grievances of the minority, and could be submitted to the Speaker of the Greek Parliament by the minority MPs.

The two main purposes of the campaign was: 1) To attract the attention of the Greek Parliament to all of the Minority’s problems. 2) To achieve the democratic unification of the Greek citizen Turks and obtain an officially recognised organisation (tüzel kişiilik) for them (Yeni Adım 1/October 1988). The signature campaign aspired to be a mass initiative for the democratic rights of the minority. An important point was that the campaign should not be run by a single person, but by a committee embracing all the elements of the minority. It was suggested that the committee included: Current and former MPs; one representative from each of the mufti offices and Muslim Communities; one representative from the YTD; one representative from each of the Teachers and Youth Associations; one representative from each of the minority newspapers.

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1 Aydın Ömeroğlu has written extensively about the campaign himself in his newspapers/bulletins Yeni Adım and Diyalog, as well as in his book (Ömeroğlu 1994). Yeni Adım, which borrowed its name from Mehmet Hilmi’s newspaper of the 1920s, was first conceived as the press organ of the workers’ associations in Germany but ended up by being published intermittently as his own newspaper.
In an open letter to PM Andreas Papandreou dated Frankfurt 27.09.1986, the associations pointed out that they hoped to solve their problems in a democratic fashion and distanced themselves from fanatic nationalism. That was why they embarked on the signature campaign. The purpose of it was summed up in 5 points:

1- We, the whole minority are sincere in our democratic struggle for equal citizen treatment;
2- We do not deviate from the principle of trying to solve our problems with democratic means within the framework of a state of law;
3- We are determined to first seek the solution to our problems in the Greek Parliament and within Greece and [only] later have recourse to our international rights.
4- Our goal is that our minority should not be the source of discomfort in our country and an obstacle in Greek-Turkish relations, on the contrary we are working towards fulfilling our duty to develop it into a bridge of friendship and co-operation between the two countries.
5- It [the campaign] was undertaken to show that we want peace at home and peace in the world.²

The crucial point became how to carry out the campaign in Thrace. Ömeroğlu had stressed that the workers’ associations were not in a position to speak in the name of the minority and run the campaign. They were only in a position to support it (Yeni Adım 31/31.01.1987). Ömeroğlu presented the ideas behind the campaign to the YTD, which forwarded the issue to the AYK. It was discussed in a meeting in the Ksanthi mufti office 24.08.1985. The participants decided unanimously to support the campaign (İleri 397/30.08.1985). Rodoplu, who was present at the meeting, claimed afterwards that there were mixed opinions, but as a principle it was considered beneficial and a democratic right. After that time it was never really discussed in depth (Gerçek 159/10.03.1987). In reality the AYK did nothing to follow up its decision and it was soon understood that the campaign had been put on ice (cf. İleri 401/27.09.1985). Hasan Hatipoğlu, who had also been present at the meeting, did not mention the initiatives by the associations in Germany, but attempted to create suspicion around the matter with an article titled: “Are signatures collected? Let us be careful.” (Akın 871/31.12.1985). To challenge the inertia of the AYK, İleri and Trakya’nın Sesi started to collect signatures from people who visited their offices. Ömeroğlu would later be negative to the Dede’s initiative, because there had been an explicit precondition that the campaign should be run by a committee and not by an individual. This rather shows that Ömeroğlu was out of touch with the situation on the ground in Thrace, since the necessary conditions for a unified effort were absent.

Later, Sadık adopted the idea and started to gather signatures on his own. Both his energetic character and his profession, which often brought him to the surrounding villages, put him in a good position to do so. The collecting of signatures was executed very unprofessionally. Sadık later admitted that in the beginning he had no petition and simply gathered signatures on blank sheets of paper.³ I have been told by minority

² Yeni Adım 2/January 1989. This letter is also referred to in Gerçek 158/28.02.1987. Point 5 refers to one of Atatürk’s principles.
members that he would not only ask people to sign for themselves, but also for friends, relatives, etc. A sign of Sadık’s kind of craftiness, is the way he took advantage of current divisions within the minority. As mentioned earlier, the “clique” had organised a campaign against the appointed deputy mufti Meço Cemali. One day Cemali told Ömeroğlu: “When Sadık Ahmet started to collect signatures, he used the following tactics: He told the villagers who where in opposition to me that he was against me, and the villagers who supported me that he was supporting me.” (Ömeroğlu 1994: 144–145). 19 January 1986 Rodoplu maintained in the general assembly of the YTD that the association should take responsibility for the signature campaign, but no one felt the need to do anything about it. Instead, the leaders of the association told the mayor of Komotini that Sadık was collecting signatures against PASOK. Mehmet Emin Aga said the same in Ksanthi (Ömeroğlu 1994: 145). It is worth noting that at this time the efforts of Sadık were not taken seriously either by the minority or the Greek authorities, although they had full knowledge of his activities. Ömeroğlu accused Sadık of destroying the campaign by acting against its explicit intentions. Sadık visited Germany in early 1986 and after this he intensified his efforts. In spite of knowing about the intent of the campaign, it seems that Sadık Ahmet concealed his knowledge about the initiatives in Germany from prominent minority members, as he was intent on using the campaign as a vehicle for personal ambitions.\footnote{Ömeroğlu 1994: 145. See also Gerçek 160/19.03.1987.} Sadık kept on collecting signatures throughout the spring and most of the summer.

Only a few days before his arrest, the politically experienced Onsunoğlu bumped into him. He was put off by Sadık’s approach and told him that he could not carry out a signature campaign if there was no petition to sign.\footnote{Onsunoğlu told me the story himself. He had used a Turkish proverb when explaining this to Sadık: “Eşek sıkmeninde bir usulu var”, i.e. There is a certain procedure involved when you want to fuck a donkey. For sexual relationships to donkeys in Turkish folklore, cf. (Burrill 1970). For a modern account of contemporary practices, see (İhan and Aras 1988).} Only at this time a petition called: “Grievances and Requests of the Western Thracian Turkish-Muslim minority living within the borders of the Greek Republic” was produced.\footnote{The petition is printed in full in Gerçek 142/18.08.1986; 143/25.08.1986. It was also published later in Akin 926/14.11.1987; 951/29.06.1988 and Gerçek 211/30.06.1988. It is also included in the booklet prepared by Rodoplu (Molla 1988?), and (Ahmet 1989). The same title was also used for a much later paper by Sadık Ahmet (Ahmet 1995).} This petition was written by Rodoplu, as Sadık was not particularly adept at writing. The meaning was that the petition should be in the name of the YTD, but it was never sponsored by the secretariat (Ömeroğlu 1994: 145–146).

It is worth noting that Sadık was not arrested in his city of residence, Komotini, where people knew about his activities. On 9 August 1986 he had crossed into the neighbouring prefecture of Evros to perform a circumcision in a Muslim village. For some reason or other he aroused the suspicions of the police with his activities, and
was stopped and searched when returning from the village. The police found the petition and some 1,300 signatures. After his arrest his wife contacted various minority lawyers and politicians for assistance. Müftüoğlu tried to cover Sadık by telling the prosecutor that the signatures had been collected on his instruction (Trakya’nın Sesi 305/15.12.1988). Sadık Ahmet was accused of calumny; spreading false information and forging signatures. He was set free on 11 August after interrogation, and no date was set for the trial. Dede dismissed the whole affair as a police blunder. The police tried to cover its incompetence by claiming that Sadık had with him brochures with anti-Greek propaganda. Dede considered this to be part of a ploy which aimed at projecting the minority as dangerous to the Greek public. He emphasised that the goal of the signature campaign was to solve the minority’s problems within the framework of the Greek Parliament, as he had written repeatedly during the previous year (Trakya’nın Sesi 211/27.08.1986). Dede also criticised Akın and Gerçek for going out of their way pretending that they did not understand why Sadık was arrested. Even though they knew it was because of the signature campaign, this was not mentioned by a single word (Trakya’nın Sesi 212/09.09.1986).

Following these events Sadık requested the AYK to discuss the signature campaign. A petition with 24 signatures was given to Mehmet Emin Aga, but the AYK did not assemble. 10 September the council of the YTD association disapproved of the irresponsible actions of Sadık, and in reaction to this he resigned from his position as secretary of the organisation (Yeni Adım 1/October 1988). During the general assembly of the YTD 18 January 1987 the signature campaign was characterised as Sadık’s personal initiative, which was not supported by any decision of the association. It is clear that Sadık’s actions were not approved of and he got only 11 (out of 72) votes when the new council was elected. The treatment of the campaign at this assembly shows clearly that the whole issue had degenerated into minority petty politics. When Sadık raised the signature campaign question there was first no reaction before İmamoğlu took the word. He said that it was a sensitive issue because it touched Greek national interests, and it was necessary to take precautions before starting. Rodoplu wanted to make committees to collect signatures in every village, while İmamoğlu thought it was more prudent if it was organised by the administrative committee of the YTD. There were no other comments (İleri 460/30.01.1987; Gerçek 164/29.04. 1987). Hatipoğlu exploited the opportunity to attack İmamoğlu and wrote that it was ridiculous of him to say that the signature touched on Greece’s national interests (Akın 898/28.02.1987). “When we read these words in the press we were lost in amazement. We asked the press organs if there had arrived any oral or written denial of the news and when we received the answer “definitely not!”’, only then were we able to

7 Akın 933/22.01.1988. Later the amount of signatures would be greatly exaggerated.
8 (Ömeroğlu 1994: 148). The year before he had obtained 39 (out of 56) votes.
believe that these words had really been uttered.” (Akın 899/09.03.1987). This was the beginning of a long attack on the “politician” (politikacı) İmamoğlu, where Hatipoğlu claimed that nobody could prevent the legal struggle of the minority, and among the new tactics needed was “the internal minority signature campaign” (ibid.). It is worth noting that Hatipoğlu had made no effort to support the campaign before he could use it to attack İmamoğlu. İmamoğlu tried to counter the attacks in a letter to İleri. However, Hâki also nourished suspicion about his intentions:

We believe that everything here becomes part of the Greek National Interests, i.e. there is no behaviour which does not affect the Greek national interests… Even when the minority sneeze or cough as a minority it affects these interests[Azınlığı'nın, Azınlıkça aksırması-öksürmesi bile bu menfaatlerin içine girmektedir]. So will we not sneeze, since the minority sneezing affects the Greek National Interests? Will we not cough? Esteemed İmamoğlu… until you give a satisfactory answer you will be under suspicion. Do not forget it! (İleri 470/10.04.1987)

When he wrote that İmamoğlu was under suspicion, he was alluding to possible collaboration with the Greek authorities to sabotage the campaign. These kinds of suspicions are not only related to the dubious practices of the leading minority cadre, but also reflects the climate of distrust and slander cultivated by the rivalry among the minority politicians. Anyway, the signature campaign remained dead, and shortly afterwards Hâki complained about the lack of development (İleri 473/01.05.1987).

During this period Sadık made various attempts to profile himself towards the minority in his rather naive style. 25 September 1987 Sadık made a new solo initiative when he went secretly to Thessaloniki late one evening and distributed an English version of his petition “Grievances and Requests of the Turkish-Moslem Minority Living in Western Thrace” to people attending a conference on Democracy and Human Rights. Incidentally, 27 September the general assembly of the YTD discussed the signature campaign and decided not to take the responsibility for running it. Again the energetic Sadık had taken an initiative, where other people remained idle. This event was also mentioned in the Athenian and foreign press, which brought Sadık’s name once more to the forefront. According to Baskın Oran, the public prosecutor of Evros had earlier declared that a trial was not necessary, but he summoned Sadık after this incident (Oran 1991: 198).

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9 For an example of his style at this time, see Gerçek 165/08.05 1987 (Appendix 5, text 19).
10 (Oran 1991: 198; Ömeroğlu 1994: 150). Hâki mentions that Sadık went to a Conference about “Human Rights and Democracy” where foreign scholars participated. He went on his own initiative and distributed a paper about the “heavy oppression of the Western Thrace Turks” to those who participated. He was quickly taken care of by the police. The event reached the international news (İleri 488/02.10.1987). For the petition he distributed, see Appendix 5, text 20.
The Trials

Sadık’s trial was first scheduled to take place in Aleksandrupoli 28 January 1988, but because of the tension connected with the 29 January demonstrations it was transferred to Thessaloniki and subsequently postponed 3 times. It finally took place 22–24 June 1988. Hatipoğlu expressed early on the opinion that the case would come to nothing (Akın 943/06.04.1988). When the trial came up he appealed to all the minority politicians, lawyers, doctors, teachers etc. to be present as defence witnesses (Akın 948/31.05.1988). At first glance this might appear as if Hatipoğlu supported Sadık. However, Dede maintained that the “clique” did nothing to support Sadık in the first trial. The lawyers and the witnesses should have been selected carefully, but the opposite was the case. Sadık did not use witnesses who knew the minority problems well and had an excellent command of Greek such as İbram Onsumolu, Orhan Hacıibram, Hasan İmamoğlu, and Abdüllahim Dede. A few month after the arrest of Sadık the “clique” started a campaign against Müftüoğlu, and he was not even called as witness to the trial (Trakya’nın Sesi 305/15.12.1988). The “clique” would definitely not have any defence witnesses who could outshine their own performance. There is also the question whether the “clique” really wanted Sadık to be acquitted.

A large part of the minutes from the trial were published in a Greek newspaper. This gives us an indication of how the case was presented to the public. Some examples from the cross examination furnish us with an impression of the reigning climate:

Afterwards testified the farmer Mehmet Pencial who said among other things that he has a field of 20 stremma [about 5 acres] that was provided to him by the public. I have also, he continued, 100 sheep myself and my father has another 100. I do not give much [rent] for the field, 1,000 or 2,000 drachmas. I have also a house.
Chairman: Do you have driving licence?
Witness: Yes.
Chairman: Did you get it after taking exams?
Witness: Yes.
Chairman: What other animals do you have?
Witness: Three cows.
Chairman: Do you get subsidies?
Witness: 3–4,000 drachmas for every cow and 800 drachmas for every goat.
Chairman: Does your brother have gun license and a gun?
Witness: He has.
Chairman: Did you sign the protest petition?
Witness: Yes.
Chairman: Your wife?
Witness: I signed for my wife too.
Chairman: What was the content of the petition?
Witness: Our complaints.
Chairman: After what you told us you have in your possession what other complaint do you have?
Witness: I do not have a gun. I am a shepherd and want it for the wolves.
Chairman: Your brother however has.
Witness. They give to some.
Chairman: Do you call that oppression or complaint?
Witness: Oppression.
Chairman: Your brother too is Muslim and has a gun. Did they not want to oppress him?
Witness: I do not know. They probably do not give me because I am a Muslim.
Chairman: Is your brother Christian?
Witness: No.
Chairman: Then why do they oppress, as you say, only you.
Witness: ...
Chairman: Would the township [Kinóita] provide you with a field if they wanted to oppress you?
Witness: ...
Prosecutor (Mr. Katsis): Have you made any application to obtain a gun?
Witness: No!
Prosecutor: How did you then learn that they do not give you?
Witness: Some asked for and they did not give them.
Prosecutor: Did you ask yourself?
Witness: No.
Prosecutor: So you wanted them to come by themselves and give you a gun?
Are there shepherds who have guns without a license?
Witness: There are.
Chairman: In your testimony [to the police] you say that you did not sign a petition which said that your wife, you, your father, and your mother are oppressed by the Greek state.
Witness: They frightened me and I said so.
Chairman: How did the policeman know the facts about your property and other details concerning you? Did you not declare it?
Witness: No. He knows everything.
Chairman: So he occupies himself with how many sheep you have?
Witness: He knew and put it down himself.
Chairman: And did you sign for your brother?
Witness: No he signed himself.
Court member: However, here there are four signatures that are alike. How did that happen? Did not the same hand write them?
Witness: Yes they are the same.
At this point a list is displayed where the witness is not able to recognise his own signature.
[...]
Afterwards the accused defended themselves with Vacip Kanarya first.
Chairman: What exactly happened so that you became accused?
Defendant: I have many problems.
Chairman: You are accused of forgery and spreading false information. Did you sign for other persons?
Defendant: I signed ten times for others.
Afterwards Ali Daldaban defended himself, who answered the same question with “I took the paper and put down two signatures.”
Chairman: Why did you sign?
Defendant: Because they do not recognise our rights.
Chairman: The signatures were put on a blank paper?
Defendant: Yes.
Chairman: How did you justify that to people?
Defendant: I said that Mr. Sadık brought it to get our rights recognised.
Chairman: Had you read what was written in the petition.
Defendant: Yes.
Chairman: Is it true, what it wrote?
Defendant: I do not know.
Chairman: (to Vacip Kanarya). Did you read it?
Defendant: It was blank.
Afterwards doctor Ahmet Sadık defended himself
Chairman: Mr. Sadık, did you write certain things on a paper? Was it true?
Defendant: I would not write it if it was not true.
Chairman: Do you have evidence to prove it?
Defendant: I cannot give concrete evidence because they did not give us the record number, for the applications we submitted. We made written applications and received oral answers. We want the implementation of the law, the Lausanne Treaty, the Greek Constitution and the human rights.
Court member: The authorities maintained that they do not discriminate by providing evidence. Can you counter it by other evidence?
Defendant: I do not have written evidence, I stressed that earlier.
Chairman: You as an educated man should take care of elevating the education level of the Muslim minority so they can obtain driving licences. How is it possible that people want to obtain driving licence without knowing rudimentary mechanics, such as Mr. Mustafa?

Afterwards Mr. Sadık, referring to the bilateral agreement between Greece and Turkey for exchange of schoolbooks, said:

Defendant: It does not interest me what the two countries have agreed. I simply evoke the article 5 of the Constitution and demand my rights.

Court member: Before you address the courts you should gather evidence from the authorities for the truth of your claims and afterwards set the procedure in motion.

Immediately Mr. Sadık claimed that they do not appoint public servants from the Muslim community, neither do they give licenses for taxi, pharmacies, etc.

Prosecutor: You know on which conditions they give permits for taxi?

Defendant: No.

Prosecutor: How many Muslims have degrees from Greek universities?

Defendant: Maybe one.

Prosecutor: How do you then want them to be appointed to the prefecture administration?

Defendant: I do not know.

Prosecutor: Have there been applications for employment?

Defendant: No.

Court member: According to the evidence that has been provided and which you are not able to disprove, do you not think that you should revise your opinions?

Defendant: I am well-disposed, but in sectors like education there are terrible problems, because of lack of books and bad teachers. […] (Makedonia 24.06.1988).

In the published court minutes the prosecutor brought witnesses who gave statements about the agricultural subsidies and social security contributions received by the minority members, the number of vehicles bought, driving licences and building permits issued, teachers employed in the minority schools, etc. For example, the relevant authorities informed that there had been issued 1,500 driving licences for tractor in Rodopi during the last three years. The prosecutor acquitted the Greek authorities of any discrimination and placed the responsibility squarely on the minority itself, particularly its leaders.

The defence was seldom able to rise above the level of slogans usually heard among the minority members. It is of course the easiest thing in the world to convince your friends and family that you are oppressed, but here it is a question of being able to provide evidence which can stand up to cross examination in court. This is certainly not an easy task, because most of the cards will be in the hands of the prosecutor and the authorities. If the minority is not able to present its case in a coherent manner and with proper documentation it cannot hope to win the case. When the minority members speak among themselves there is no problem to convince each other that they are right and the “Christians” wrong, but in court they have to convince the “Christians”.

The conclusion must be that the minority failed to present its case properly. Sadık was sentenced to 2.5 years prison and was set free after he appealed. Kanarya was sentenced to 1.5 years convertible to a fine of 400 drachmas a day, while Daldaban was acquitted.

The accusation contained two parts. Firstly, false allegations which could provoke anxiety and fear to the citizens or disturb the public sentiment and the international relations of the country. This is a kind of loosely formulated paragraph which had
been used before in trials against the minority press. Secondly, they were accused of forging signatures. It was demonstrated convincingly in court that many people had not signed the petition themselves and that signatures were written on a blank paper with no relevant petition attached. A lot of people had written in their statements at the police station that they had not signed the petition, while in their testimonies at the trial they claimed to have signed it. This reached such proportions that it made the judge ask if nobody respected the Koran they gave their oath on (ibid.). The witness’ explanation that he was afraid is simply not sufficient. He may of course have been afraid at the police station, but all the evidence indicate he gave the correct statement. Consequently, someone he was more afraid of or who could offer relevant benefits made him and the others change their statements. This is the logical conclusion from the available evidence, and is also in accordance with what I have heard from minority sources.

In his statement the prosecutor Evangelos Katsis said that he was glad that the case had been brought up, and that it was possible to examine freely the complaints. The Greek administration was far from perfect, but that affected all of its citizens and not a specific group. He also accused the leadership of the minority:

It is good that the opinions of witnesses and accused were heard widely. Of the 51 witnesses 46 were Muslims. The controversial petition with claims about oppression and many other things was referred to. I would like to ask the accused, if any concrete evidence was submitted which shows a conscious oppressive policy by the state organs? Or even arbitrariness of the administrative organs. Not even one piece of evidence was supplied. The only thing conveyed was simply a flowing atmosphere that allegedly there is oppression. Indeed, yesterday when we adjourned after 12 hours procedure, it was heard here that this adjourn was also… oppression. I do not know what procedures take place, what thoughts, and how every action, even the most natural is considered oppressive. I will say what “came out” of the trial. And I dare say it. There is oppression of the minority, and selective oppression, deliberate, by themselves however. Somebody wants to have the minority under control, to pass that message. When someone has the level of the Muslims in Ehinos, you can do whatever you want. He is your… tool. You tell him “stop, because I will bring the Greek bugbear”. That makes it easy for any Muslim leader, whether you call him Sadık or anything else, to pass the message of oppression. That is how they live as masters and the others as slaves. There is oppression, but not by the Christians (Hronos 25.06.1988).

The “acquittal” of the authorities also came as a relief to liberal newspapers which were not hostile to the minority. This is clear from a leading article in Eleftherotipia:

The conviction of the two Muslims from Komotini for spreading false information, brings to the surface a reality which nobody dared touch. The delicate and sensitive relations with Turkey kept far from the light of the public the activities which take place in this religious minority and poison the relations between Christians and Muslims in this border area of our country.

The prosecutor of the court disclosed, on the basis of testimonies and documents, that the leaders of the minority cultivate deliberately and artificially a climate of hostility against the Greek authorities, to keep the Muslims under their own influence, to exploit them economically, and to utilise them to serve their own political ambitions. They are and want to remain the patrons, providing alleged protection to their co-religionists, with the support of Ankara and the Turkish consulate in Komotini.

[...]

The trial and conviction of the two Muslims disclosed the friction which exists in the relations of the religious minority with the Greek authorities. And this friction had manifested itself in the recent past with explosive outbursts. It is a reality we no longer need to pass over in silence. There are no subjects that are taboo. The problems of the Muslims minority are no taboo. We must throw light on them and approach them boldly and with only the aspiration to remove the
causes of the friction, to neutralise the instigators of suspicion and restore a relationship of trust (Eleftherotipia 26.06.1988).

Heartened by the verdict the newspaper decided to send a correspondent to learn more about the situation in the area.

In the minority newspapers belonging to the “clique” the events of the trial were mentioned more like a matter of fact. Hatipoğlu referred to the verdict, and mentioned (incorrectly) that it was Sadik who initiated the signature campaign in 1985, and included the petition people were supposed to sign (Akın 951/29.06.1988).

Gerçek’s report from the trial mentioned that the witnesses of the prosecution said that the minority enjoyed all its rights and that permits, passports, driving licenses etc. were issued freely. Education was free, there were more teachers then the minimum requirement, and secondary schools were opened in the mountains. As for the defence, it simply mentioned that these problems were known by everybody. It was maybe true that everybody knew there was a problem, but there was necessarily widely diverging opinions when it came to defining it in detail. When Rodoplu refers to Sadik’s performance in court he includes the following statement:

“We want our rights granted by laws, constitution, and international agreements. Today there are no publicly employed minority members besides 3–5 garbage collectors. Education is in crisis. If we are given our rights we are ready to shout that we are a happy minority…” (Gerçek 211/30.06.1988).

There is no reason to think that what Sadik said at the trial were his “original thoughts”. Many of the things that have been ascribed to him are in fact slogans which circulate widely among the minority members in their mock arguments with “Christians” who are not present. Sadik could for example collect applause among the minority with the stock phrase: “They say that Greece is the cradle of democracy, but unfortunately she has not come out of the cradle yet.” Akın often published answers to articles in the Greek press which would “reduce them to silence.” Answers which of course the newspapers in question would never be aware of. If he was interested in influencing Greek public opinion he would of course have to address himself in Greek to a Greek audience. However, his answers were clearly intended for internal minority consumption and for Turkey.

Right after the trial Hatipoğlu wrote an “answer” to an article in Eleftherotipia (10.07.1988) titled: “What is Turkey planning in Western Thrace.” Hatipoğlu concluded his polemics against the article by writing:

We tell you so that you will not tire yourself more with questions relating to our minority: GIVE US THE HUMAN RIGHTS WHICH HAVE BEEN TAKEN AWAY FROM US! THEN WE WILL SAY EVERYWHERE IN WRITING AND ORALLY THAT WE ARE A HAPPY MINORITY IN OUR FATHERLAND AND PROVE THAT WE ARE A STRONG AND
HEALTHY COMMUNITY. IF NOT WE WILL CONTINUE OUR LEGAL STRUGGLE IN THE MOST CIVILISED MANNER WHATEVER YOU DO!\textsuperscript{11}

We can see that Hatipoğlu uses the same stock phrase as Sadık about a “happy minority”. Likewise, Hatipoğlu has always presented himself as the champion of the legal struggle of the minority, but there are few things in his behaviour except for the rhetoric which point to a serious involvement in this direction.

In order to obtain a correct grasp of the events it is important to separate the public appearance of key minority members in connection to the trial, from their behaviour behind the scenes. Abdülhalim Dede provides us with an insight into this in his comments related to the appeal trial six months later. He claimed that in 1985 the “leaders” of the minority did what they could to sabotage the signature campaign. They slandered and slung mud at Sadık who “considered it his duty”. When Sadık was arrested in Aleksandrupoli they did not support him, but ignored the incident. Before the trial they got around Sadık and tried to “put him to sleep” rather than prepare the case properly. Dede claimed that more people were pleased than sad about Sadık’s conviction, which would show him how it was to start something without asking them (\textit{Trakya’nın Sesi} 305/15.12.1988).

The emigrant associations in Turkey also took an interest in the Sadık trial. It is interesting to notice that their main periodical did not write anything before the trial which indicates that the massive support of Sadık started afterwards. It was mentioned that almost all of the “Turkish” witnesses employed by the prosecution were from villages far away from the city centres. They had little education and low cultural level. There were complaints that when the defence lawyer Sabahaddin Emin asked the witnesses if they were allowed to build houses etc. and they said they were not, the prosecution interrupted immediately with a shower of questions to confuse the witnesses. It was maintained that in his final statement Sabahaddin Emin mentioned the discriminations against the minority in detail and said that there was nothing new in the petition of Sadık. Among the defence witnesses the statements of Aga and Rodoplu were mentioned in particular. About 100 minority members followed the trial the first day, while the next days the number fell to less than fifteen. In an interview, Sadık Ahmet said that the Greek authorities could not scare the minority with trials and fines.\textsuperscript{12} However, another emigrant periodical had only half a page about Sadık’s conviction (\textit{Yeni Batı Trakya} 63/June 1988). There were still few signs which indicate that the trials of Sadık would be treated in any other way than other occasional trials against minority members.

\textsuperscript{11} Akın 952/15.07.1988. Answers which would “reduce the Greek press to silence” is an old minority genre. See for example (Galip 1998: 254–332).
\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Bati Trakya’nın Sesi} 5/July–August 1988. This report is also reprinted in (İlbeyi 1988)
Outside Involvement and the Promotion of Sadik

The subsequent rise of Sadik was largely due to promotion from centres outside Thrace. The fundamental links in this process were the minority workers’ associations in Germany and the minority solidarity organisations in Turkey. Aydın Ömeroğlu took a number of initiatives involving the minority workers organisations in the early 1980s. In a letter dated Hamburg 12.06.1984, he proposed to create a general secretariat for the workers’ associations. A joint meeting of the associations in Frankfurt 01.12.1984 elected a committee headed by Ömeroğlu to go to the Council of Europe. It also elected a three man committee led by Cafer Alioğlu which would go to Turkey. In the elections for a general secretary there were three candidates, but two withdrew and Ömeroğlu remained the only candidate. At that time Ömeroğlu was not allowed to enter Turkey because of his left-wing activities, so they did not dare to give him the position. However, about a week later he received a phone call from Süha Noyan of the Turkish Embassy in Bonn, who told him that the prohibition against him had been lifted. Later Mehmet Nuri Ezen of the Hamburg general consulate told him that this had happened on the initiative of Kenan Evren and Turgut Özal. In May 1985 he went to Turkey and from this time until 11.01.1988 he had many contacts with Turkish authorities. Throughout this period the “clique” worked actively against Ömeroğlu, primarily in relation to differences about tactics in the mufti issue (Diyalog 14/06.06.1997). The conflicts between the various factions became manifest during the congress by the Istanbul Solidarity association 17.05.1987. Ömeroğlu complained about partiality in the treatment of the minority press. Only Akın was allowed to speak before the election. When the others were allowed to speak, Akın, Gerçek, and Yuva-mız had already left. Ömeroğlu concluded that those who complained about democracy in Greece were not respecting democratic rules when they were in the “mother country”. When Ömeroğlu criticised this discrimination, the chairman Tahsin Salihoğlu threatened him, saying among other things that the borders of Turkey would be closed to him. Ömeroğlu held the opinion that some crafty people from Western Thrace who had become Turkish citizens wanted to appropriate the work done by the associations in Germany, or feigned not to see it, while fooling other people by saying that they were taking, or would take, initiatives which the associations in Germany had done long ago (Yeni Adım 48/26.05.1987).

A little later Ömeroğlu received a devastating blow when the former Turkish ambassador to Athens, Kâmuran Gürün, criticised severely an article from his little bulletin Yeni Adım in a major Turkish newspaper.\(^\text{13}\) In the article Gürün asked rhetorically where Ömeroğlu had found the money to publish his bulletin, which indicates

\(^{13}\) Kâmuran Gürün’s article titled “A strange reaction” appeared in Güneş 02.07.1987 and was reprinted in full in Gerçek 172/14.07.1987.
that he had adopted slander presented to him by the “clique”. Gürün is known to have had contacts with Hatipoğlu, and Ömeroğlu considered the article to be the fruit of his slander. This article was reprinted in Gerçek, at a time when the workers in Germany were on vacation in Thrace, and Rodoplu used it to propagandise against Ömeroğlu. Cafer Alioğlu also used the article of Gürün in a letter he wrote to Ömeroğlu 10.10.1987 (Diyalog 14/06.06.1997). Subsequently it was of course easy for the “clique” to portray Ömeroğlu as “traitor” and themselves as the favourites of Turkey.

20.09.1987 the first Minority Supreme Council (Azınlık Yüksek Şura) took place in the Istanbul solidarity association. Ömeroğlu participated too, and in a comment he disagreed with some points in a statement by the Ksanthi mufti’s sons. After this Tahsin Salıhoğlu attacked him and threatened to get him expelled from Turkey. At this time these tactics were not generally approved of and those present criticised Salıhoğlu for irresponsible behaviour (Diyalog 14/06.06.1997).

In addition to the events already mentioned, Ömeroğlu summed up the actions of Hatipoğlu and his accomplices to keep him out of the administration of the federation of workers’ association in Germany as follows:

- The arrest and interrogation 18–22.09.1987 by the Edirne security police (Edirne Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü 1. Şubesi), after Ömeroğlu had been denounced as terrorist. He was left free when it was understood that the accusation was unfounded.
- 08.01.1988 he was arrested at the Ipsala border post when entering Turkey and subsequently set free again.
- 09.01.1988 at 02.00 am he was arrested in Bursa and interrogated.
- 10.01.1988 he was transferred to Edirne.
- 11.01.1988 he was expelled from the country on orders from Ankara. Ömeroğlu claimed that this happened to the surprise of the police.
- Türkiye 13.01.1988 wrote that Ömeroğlu was expelled from the country on order from the ministry of interior.
- Günaydın 14.01.1988 wrote under the title “A Greek spy was expelled” that Ömeroğlu was expelled and that he was now prohibited from entering Turkey.

Particularly the last incident was exploited to influence public opinion in Thrace and Germany, with the goal of preventing him from entering the administration of the federation (Diyalog 15/13.06.1997). Even much later a Turkish newspaper referred to him as “the Western Thracian Greek collaborator [işbirlikçisi] Aydın Ömeroğlu, who is prohibited from entering Turkey” (Hürriyet 15.03.1995). The views of Ömeroğlu were indirectly supported by Abdülhalim Dede. Dede warned Hatipoğlu after the 29
January 1988 events that it would not be so easy to make a slander campaign against him as it had been against Ömeroğlu.\footnote{Trakya’nın Sesi 275/25.02.1988. With the benefit of hindsight we can see that Dede was proved wrong. When forces in Turkey and within the minority took joint action to silence any opposition, Abdülhalim Dede was put on the “black list” and remained on it until January 1998.}

On a visit to Ankara Cafer Alioğlu and Özkan Hüseyin had seen some Turkish MPs and the head of the Greek desk of the Turkish Foreign Ministry Erhan Öğüt (27.08.1986). This initiative was taken without informing the associations in Germany, which consequently had not approved it. In this connection they had made a report about the Ankara visit, which they submitted to the associations’ meeting in Frankfurt 07.03.1987. The report was written to show that they had Turkey behind them. Those who did not agree with them were accused of being “pro-Greek”, “sold”, “maoist”, “communist” etc.\footnote{Yeni Adım 51/03.09.1987. A facsimile of the report about the Ankara visit is included.}

The conflict between the different factions within the minority reached a peak in March 1988 during the founding congress of the federation of the minority workers’ associations in Germany. The news from Günaydın was displayed and the question of Ömeroğlu’s eligibility for the administrative council of the federation raised. In a vote 25 were for and 31 against which made him ineligible as candidate. After strong arguments first the Stuttgart then the Hamburg associations left, and the congress was about to dissolve:

If the Düsseldorf association’s president Cafer Hasan had not behaved indecisively and Mustafa Necip, who according to what we have learned from the minority press introduced Sadık Ahmet to Çatlı, had not insisted strongly that the Federation should be founded, the founding of the Federation would have been postponed to another date.\footnote{Diyalog 15/13.06.1997. Abdüllah Çatlı is the Turkish Mafioso who was killed in the Susurluk accident.}

Ömeroğlu claims that Hatipoğlu and Salıboğlu secured that Cafer Alioğlu headed the German federation for many years. Before the vote Alioğlu said that “It is desired from high authorities that I become president”.\footnote{Diyalog 14/06.06.1997. This is also mentioned in a letter from Cafer Hasan to İleri (936/19.02.1999). He writes that Cafer Alioğlu was brought to the head of the federation in such a way that it created deep wounds to the relationship between the associations. According to Cafer Hasan, Alioğlu had said: “There is an order from above! It is desired that I become president!”}

This makes Ömeroğlu conclude that by this time the federation was outside the free control of the workers’ associations. He claims that Hatipoğlu and his accomplices used the Turkish state as tool, together with the gangs inside it, to sabotage the democratic struggle of the associations. After this time the relationship between the associations ceased to be cordial (Diyalog 15/13.06.1997). It is interesting to note that when the signature campaign was discussed Cafer Alioğlu said that “we were disgraced” (rezil olduk), something which shows that the leading cadre did not support the campaign (Trakya’nın Sesi 283/05.05.1988). At this time it was necessary to portray the signature campaign negatively,
while about half a year later the same opponents of Ömeroğlu stood behind the promotion of Sadık as the new minority leader, complimenting him on his “initiative” to the signature campaign.

The conflict within the workers’ associations was not necessary easy to distinguish for the people who were not directly involved. Kenan Mustafa visited Germany at the time and wrote a report from the conference. He mentioned that Ömeroğlu claimed that the federation had been founded in an “unhealthy way”. As a result the atmosphere got tense and he had to leave. At the time Kenan did not understand what he meant and thought that it was only something he said because he was not elected president himself. However, he added that it could not be denied that there were various cliques which fought each others and he was sad to see this.18

Ömeroğlu’s own account of the events is often very personal and defensive in style. This is not only a question of his personality, but also testifies to the great strain a minority member sanctioned by the “mother country” undergoes. In some cases his sensibility and self-centred approach may lead him prematurely to interpret some events as conspiracies. However, in this matter time has proved that the same forces which promoted Sadık were able to control the workers’ associations in Germany. Subsequently it was possible to observe that these associations headed by Cafer Alioğlu supported systematically Sadık and the independent MPs. The break between the group which was able to take control by the help of centres in Turkey and those with other ideas about the minority struggle has continued up until today. In many ways it reflects the divisions created by the same mechanisms within the minority in Thrace. When Onsunoğlu participated in a meeting by the federation in May 1997 he took notice of this and mentioned it in his commentary (Trakya’nın Sesi 585/20.05.1997).

Sadık as Front Figure

It became clear from subsequent events that at this time Turkey was looking for a front figure for the minority. As early as 1987 Turkey had been thinking about Sadık as a possible candidate. When the former MP and leader of the conservative wing Hafız Yaşar visited Turkey, diplomats who handled the minority issue asked about his opinions concerning Sadık’s potential as a leader (Trakya’nın Sesi 516/09.08.1995). However, Sadık would eventually draw his main support from other centres than the Turkish Foreign Department. This is difficult to map out in detail because of the complicated political situation in Turkey at the time, but there are many indications. First of all, Sadık became very close to Mesut Yılmaz, of the ANAP party, who was foreign minister under Özal. The ANAP government often took a high handed approach to

18 Trakya’nın Sesi 282/28.04.1988. Kenan Mustafa lives in Komotini and was consequently not informed about internal conflicts in the organisations. He has children living in Germany, and I suppose he took the opportunity to attend the conference while visiting them.
foreign policy which was not necessarily approved of by the diplomatic establishment. Furthermore, Sadık developed close connections to the nationalist organisations which were traditionally engaged in the fate of the “outside Turks” (Diş Türkleri), such as the Aydınlık Ocakları. In the wake of the Susurluk accident (03.11.1996) it became clear that Sadık had contacts with some of the ultra-nationalist mafia bosses who were directly connected to the Turkish secret services (MIT). The details about the connection between state gangs, secret services, and prominent politicians—referred to in Turkey as the “deep state” (derin devlet) or “state within the state” (devlet içinde devlet)—are still under investigation and will probably never be fully revealed.

Whatever the relative strength of the various centres, it is clear that important powers in Turkey were interested in uniting the minority under a single leader. This would make it easier both to direct the minority and to give it a front figure who could be used to promote the minority issue internationally. Sadık had various credentials which made him a possible candidate for such a position. While many of the traditional leaders had at various times supported themselves alternatively on Greek and Turkish authorities, Sadık was a man without a past. His earlier lack of engagement meant that he had not been compromised like some of the other leaders. Another point is that his professional title gave him additional respectability. In all the brochures and articles which originated from Turkey he was invariably presented as Dr. Sadık Ahmet. Another asset for his “employers” was his inability to reflect on the results of his actions. He would be all too pleased to satisfy his superiors without thinking much about the larger consequences for the minority. He was also a person known to have no scruples denouncing other peoples in his entourage, even his closest friends, qualities which are usually treasured by the kind of organisations he was connected to. On the negative side, he was not a person who could present the minority’s problem eloquently. In fact, he hardly had the ability to string five sentences together to make a coherent statement. The combination of abundant energy and little sense of direction also meant that he was always somewhat unpredictable. Ultimately the weaknesses in the method of evaluating and selecting him must be attributed to the Turkish institutions which embraced him. The effort to rally the minority behind a single leader also became easier because of internal developments in Thrace. The old leader of the Kemalist wing Sabahaddin Galip, who had enjoyed the support of the Turkish consulate in Komotini during general elections, died 9 September 1987. If he had still

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19 Hâki mentions that Sabah 07.11.1997 wrote about the close connection between Abdüllah Çathi and Sadık Ahmet in an article where he looks back at the time Sadık was arrested (İleri 899/21.11.1997). In the Susurluk hearings the chauffeur of Abdüllah Çathi, Habib Aslantürk testified to the Court of National Security in Istanbul that on Çathi’s orders he had picked up Sadık Ahmet some times at the airport of Istanbul and brought him to Çathi’s house in Bakırköy (Eleftherotipia 17.12.1997).

20 Personal observations.
been alive during the subsequent elections it is hard to conceive that he could have been totally abandoned by Turkey. His death meant the removal of one more obstacle to the massive and unconditional support of Sadık.

**Sadık’s Trial of Appeal December 1988**

The massive Turkish mobilisation between the first trial of Sadık and the appeal is due to several factors. It is important to have in mind the reigning climate in Greek-Turkish relations, which was characterised by lack of dialogue and mutual distrust. Greece has often taken advantage of Turkey’s poor human rights record, or the problems with the Kurdish minority to level criticism. This was often hard to swallow for Turkey, something which is expressed clearly by the foreign department spokesman İnal Batu in connection with a trial of Turkish communists:

> –We do not accept lessons in democracy from Greece. Before they try to give such lessons to other countries it would be more correct of Greece to stop the illegal oppression which the Turkish minority is confronted with in this country (Makedonia 19.11.1987).

The Turkish involvement in Greek Thrace was influenced directly by events related to the trial against members of the Turkish left wing organisations “Dev Sol” in Ankara. On Friday 04.11.1988, 16 Greeks and 8 Germans from the Movement for Political and Social Rights went to attend the trial. During the first intermission someone erected two banners with the slogans “FREEDOM TO POLITICAL PRISONERS” and “DEV YOL”. The Greeks and Germans were arrested together with two foreign journalists. The Germans and 8 Greek demonstrators were set free after 14–16 hours interrogations, while the four Greeks who held the banners remained in custody. As referred in the Greek press Monday 07.11.1988 the Turkish vice foreign minister Ayhan Kamel declared to the ambassadors of the 11 other EC countries excepting Greece:

> “We are convinced”, he said among other inaccuracies “that the case was constructed and behind the basic protagonists are the Greek mass media and official circles…”!!! (Pontiki 11.11.1988).

*Pontiki*’s exclamation marks are understandable, although it obviously tried to make the most of it. The action is better interpreted as an expression of left-wing solidarity than a Greek government plot. However, the subsequent engagement by Greek politicians to secure the release of the arrested Greeks, with the mayor of Athens Miltiades Evert playing a central role, became too much for the ANAP government and provoked the Turkish involvement in the trial of Sadık a month later (Ömeroğlu 1994: 177).

Sadık was scheduled to appear before the court of appeal in Thessaloniki 20.12.1988. This time the climate was completely different from that of the first trial, and a large scale mobilisation took place in support of Sadık. In Istanbul Tahsin Salıhoğlu was elected president of the BTTDD 30.10.1988. This is viewed as a turning point for
the association. The association immediately put Sadık on the agenda. In Thrace the 
AYK held a meeting 23.11.1988, under the leadership of the Ksanthi mufti where it 
was decided that Sadık’s case was a minority trial The mufti stressed that the issue did 
not only concern the doctor, and that “On the road to claim your rights there is no 
return, only death” (Akın 966/29.11.1988). The meeting was allegedly very well 
attended and the AYK decided unanimously:

• To inform the whole minority with a press bulletin.
• To inform the foreign diplomats and foreign press.
• To tell all the minority lawyers to be present at the trial.
• To close Schools, Mosques, shops etc. on the day of the trial.
• Everyone should go to Thessaloniki and a campaign should be started among the 
whole minority.
• To open a campaign to collect money to cover the expenses and ask again for money 
which had earlier been collected by the Komotini mufti office.
• No one who has been selected by appointment can represent the minority.
• To open the signature campaign again as soon as possible.
• To elect an Executive Committee (Yürütme Komitesi - YK), which can carry out and 
co-ordinate the decisions.
• That the documents in the possession of minority members, who had been unfairly 
treated in matters such as building permits, sales and purchases, etc., should be 
handed over to the YK (ibid.).

It was claimed that it had been decided in an earlier meeting in June 1988 that 
Sadık’s trial was a MINORITY TRIAL and that this was confirmed again in this meet-
ing (ibid.). However, Hatipoğlu did not use this expression when he covered the first 
trial, which indicates that this was only an attempt to project the new interest back in 
time. On the front page of the next issue of his newspaper Hatipoğlu called everybody 
to attend the trial of Sadık Ahmet. He mentioned that Sadık had been convicted in 
spite of the many Muslim victims who spoke about the oppression as the judges only 
listened to the Christian witnesses. The signature campaign was portrayed as a 
personal initiative of Sadık.21

Abdülhalim Dede expressed his great surprise when the AYK—those who were 
pleased about Sadık’s conviction in June—now adopted the appeal trial as a “MINOR-
ITY TRIAL”. Dede asked why they staged this theatre, as it was not possible to intro-
duce new witnesses in the court of appeal. Why did they not support Sadık in the first 
trial when the conditions were better? Dede accused some people of putting the minor-
ity’s interests aside for their personal interests. He asked how much longer they would 
oppose the foundation of a modern Minority council built on democratic principles.

Dede had suggested this since 1982 but to no avail (Trakya’nn Sesi 305/15.12.1988). In fact, after this date the AYK more or less ceased to exist, and was superseded by the YK. The AYK had at least been a forum where people at times had been able to express other opinions, although gradually the “clique” had been able to dominate by its intrigues. On the other hand, the YK became in reality an euphemism for the “clique”, which attempted to present itself as representing the whole minority. It was dominated by Hasan Hatipoğlu in Komotini and Mehmet Emin Aga in Ksanthi. Aydın Ömeroğlu too reacted to the “clique’s” new engagement and asked what they had done in the last three and a half years with the signature campaign. He claimed they had obstructed arbitrarily the signature campaign while now they poisoned the relationship between the minority and the administration and became a burden to Greek-Turkish relations (Yeni Adım 2/January 1989).

The massive engagement by Turkey in the appeal trial is evident by the great interest of the Turkish press. The Turkish attitude to the case was well displayed in an article by Professor Fahir Armaoğlu titled “To our Western friends” After criticising the “exaggerated” interest of the West towards human rights in Turkey, he continued:

But gentlemen, the member of the EU and the European Council and the beloved “protectorate” of some members of the American congress, Greece, is for years carrying out a “human rights murder” in the Western Thrace Area. It has attempted to eradicate the roots of a whole community. The Greek government, which has signed the Council of Europe’s Human Rights and Principal Freedoms Agreement and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, has with its inhuman treatment applied against its own citizens—the Muslim Turkish minority in Western Thrace—violated both the documents it has signed. Please turn your head a little and look towards Western Thrace!

There a “Human Rights Champion” [Mücahit] Dr. Sadık Ahmet, was last June sentenced to 30 months in jail and a 100,000 drachmas fine because he wanted to give a petition, the main points of which you will find in our other columns, called “The Complaints and Demands of the Turkish-Muslim Minority Living in Western Thrace”, to the conference on “Democracy and Human Rights” in September 1987 in Thessaloniki. If he had been able to give the petition to the conference mentioned, we would not have been grieved and concerned. Nevertheless, even though Dr. Sadık Ahmet was removed from the conference area by the security forces without being able to give the petition with 20,000 signatures, he was sentenced to 30 months in prison with the accusations of “disturbing the peace of the people and damaging the country’s international relations”. Now the final decision will be given 20 December at the court of appeal.

Gentlemen! When you prepare yourself for an imaginary task like inquiring about human rights in Turkey, according to the Greek government and the decision of the Greek court, you are disturbing the peace of our country and damaging our international relations. Now you are warned!

Gentlemen! Dr. Sadık Ahmet is there! If you really believe in “human rights”, take up the challenge! The concern you will show for a “Human Rights Champion”, will be the most honourable duty of your life (Tercüman 15.12.1988).

The large Turkish media coverage was to a large degree focused on the person of Sadık. A reportage gave Sadık Ahmet the opportunity to explain his feats:

“The signature campaign we began in 1986, was an action aimed at making known to the Greek Parliament and the world opinion the oppression applied by the Greek authorities against the Turkish minority. After I started to collect signatures, the Greek police threatened me a couple of times. When it saw that I did not pay attention to these threats and that the signatures increased every day it arrested me. The decision is definitely unjust. With this decision, which is completely political, it is desired to prevent, suppress, annihilate an oppressed minority’s possibility to claim its rights based on the Lausanne Treaty, the Common Market’s rules, the International Human Rights, democracy, and expose it to assimilation taking Bulgaria as example.
I am in the position to prove with documents the oppression and discrimination applied for years by the Greek authorities against the Turkish minority. At this moment I invite everybody in Greece and the whole world who believes in democracy to come to Thessaloniki and see how the Greek constitution and human rights are applied to those who are not of the Greek race.”

At this time all the Turkish newspapers had a lot of material on Sadık Ahmet, who was called the voice of 120,000 Western Thrace Turks. The character and extent of the mobilisation under Tahsin Salihoğlu was very evident in the periodical of the BTTDD in Istanbul. Almost the whole issue was dedicated to Sadık’s trial. The BTTDD held a press conference 16 December. After an initiative by Mustafa Taşar (ANAP), 128 MPs from all the parties sent a letter to Papandreu through the Greek ambassador in Ankara 17 December, and reminded him about human rights. 18 December the BTTDD laid down a black wreath at the Greek consulate in Istanbul and gave a letter addressed to Papandreu. In an interview, Sadık claimed that his campaign to disclose the discrimination had caused the Greek authorities to panic. The racist Greek regime became frightened by the sensitivity displayed by the minority and the motherland Turkey in this matter. He stressed that the minority did not try to obtain land like the Palestinians or political power like the blacks in South Africa. It was not a crime to collect signatures in a democratic country. Sadık maintained: “Since I began this campaign after considering every possible consequence, I was never overwhelmed by feelings of fear or desperation. Every moment I experienced the joy and pleasure of making a great struggle. Since I had the help and support of my family and the minority members all the time, I never lost my courage.”

Another indication of the investment in the person Sadık Ahmet was a booklet published before the trial titled: “The Western Thrace Turks are convicted in the person of Dr. Sadık Ahmet” (Ilbeyi 1988) In this booklet each page is headed by a picture of Sadık Ahmet and various aspects of the minority’s grievances are treated. Tahsin Salihoğlu stated in a message that the trial of Sadık had united the western Thracians in Turkey, Germany, and Thrace and that it was a “national” trial.

In Germany 2,000 minority members staged a march and put a black coffin outside the Greek consulate with the inscription “Justice is murdered in Western Thrace”. Cafer Alioğlu held a speech where he called Sadık “our symbol”. He also said:

“Dr. Sadık is our voice. Nobody can remain a spectator to the crushing of the righteous, to the tyrant’s efforts to hold down the oppressed. We call to duty those who speak about law and justice and human rights. We say to the Greek racists, to the national socialists who think that our minority will be silenced with the arrest of Sadık: If Dr. Sadık is imprisoned, thousands of Sadıks will emerge from us. On occasion of the forty year anniversary of the human rights we expect the

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22 Zaman 19.12.1988, Türkiye 19.12.1988 has word for word the same statement except for a few additions. This indicates that they have it from the same source, and that it is not the work of the newspapers’ journalists. It is also highly doubtful that it is an accurate transcription of statements by Sadık.


24 Yeni Batı Trakya 69/December 1988. This periodical has much the same material as Batı Trakya’nın Sesi, including the letters to Papandreu from Salihoğlu and the 128 Turkish MPs.
other member countries to take a stand against Greece, the spoilt children [.spawn çocukları] of the European Economic Community. Damn the unilateral Greek justice and racism. Long live the Western Thrace Turkish minority and people like Doctor Sadık…” (Türkiye 20.12.1988).

In his reportage about the trial Hatipoğlu mentioned the large protest march in Frankfurt by the federation of Western Thrace Turks. The federation had also contacted human rights observers. A German lawyer (Dr. Hans Heltman) representing an Organisation for Protecting Minorities and a representative for Amnesty International (Helena Cook) were scheduled to be present at the trial, but did not arrive because the airport in Thessaloniki was closed. Many minority members went to Thessaloniki in support of Sadık (Akın 968/26.12.1988).

The involvement of the Turkish state became manifest when the foreign minister Mesut Yılmaz brought up the trial of Sadık in connection with the budget discussion in parliament (21 December). He mentioned the signature campaign and Sadık’s initiative when he went to the human rights conference in Thessaloniki, and stressed: “His case has created a justified concern in our public opinion, but the concern of our government in this case does not stand back to that of the public opinion”.25 The trial itself was postponed. This could of course be due to perfectly normal circumstances, but there are indications that it was related to pressure from Turkey. A Greek newspaper would later claim that the government made yet another retreat when it stopped the procedures to bring Sadık to trial, for the only reason that a number of Turkish MPs requested it (Pontiki 05.05.1989). Others tie his release directly to the Greeks who were arrested in Ankara.

According to information he was set free with prescription [paragrafi] of the sentence in exchange for the four Greeks who had been arrested in Ankara. That was the beginning of the projection of Sadık Ahmet. It was followed by the projection of him by the Greek press as “the new Denktaş”—an erroneous expression in my opinion—and the promotion of him by the Turkish Press as a Turkish fighter [agonistis] in Western Thrace. By common assent he was sent to Strasbourg, Riyadh and he took part in all the conferences related to the minority in W. Thrace. All this contributed to make Sadık a hero among the minority. And in this fashion and with these characteristics the phenomenon “Sadık Ahmet” was presented to the minority.26

The release of Sadık created the impression among minority members that Turkey was able to interfere decisively and impose her will on Greece. However, many viewed Sadık’s release just as an incident in the Greek-Turkish controversy and were slow to grasp that Turkey had begun on a sustained effort to promote Sadık. At the time, Hâki did still not take Sadık seriously and had no hesitations about mentioning his weaknesses, something that would be impossible for him just a few months later.27

27 cf. İleri 544/24.02.1989. For a translation, see Appendix 5, text 21.
Turkish Pressure on the Minority - The Black List

Turkey’s involvement was not limited to critique against the Greek treatment of the minority. It sought actively to direct the minority by supporting its “own men”, while sanctioning those who refused to follow is lead. In the late 1980s the sanctions took on a massive character and influenced seriously the social fabric of the minority. There were many factors which made these sanctions possible. From a purely psychological point of view, the prestige of Turkey among the minority members made it difficult to withstand pressure emanating from centres associated with it. From a material point of view the Greek discrimination policy had eliminated many of the bonds which could counterbalance pressure from outside. This gave centres in Turkey unprecedented leverage, which they were prepared to exploit.

It was of course not a new thing that Turkey would take measures against certain minority members. When the old conservative leader Hafız Yaşar died, Dede mentioned that he was on the “black list” for 16 years and not allowed to go to Turkey until 1974 (Trakya’nın Sesi 436/12.11.1992). In late 1988 when he was a man of almost seventy he was put on the black list again and remained there until the day he died. Before this he went often to Turkey to see his children and grandchildren (Trakya’nın Sesi 459/30.07.1993).

It may be difficult to pinpoint exactly when Turkey initiated a new policy towards the minority, but Hâki considered the military coup in 1980 to be the turning point.28 As mentioned earlier, in connection with the 1982 local elections Hâki condemned the threats by minority members, that the consulate would not issue visas to those who did not work for them (İleri 267/24.09.1982). In the early stages it could be difficult to distinguish the reality behind various threats, since it had always been part of certain minority politicians’ repertoire. Onsunoğlu characterised Hatipoğlu as the “spiritual father of the Minority mafia” because of his methods (Trakya’nın Sesi 422/04.06.1992). A characteristic example gives us an idea about the procedure:

...Let me explain how someone else reacted. A gentle and quiet friend of mine. One who has a small business. He gets the word. He does not bend to the mafia. One day I saw him totally upset. What had happened? Hasan Hatipoğlu had remarked: “-In case you didn’t know. I am keeping your file. You are visiting 105 often these days. I have heard about it. Watch your steps...” and similar things. They get into an argument. My friend is well balanced. He leaves the place. But afterwards he becomes overwhelmed by anxiety. He is right about it. He is one who perceives the efforts to establish the mafia, the changes, the things that have been done. Could it be 1984 or 1985, I am not sure at the moment. There is no official Black List yet. But you could start to see the tip of it. More correctly, he was seeing it. Or he was sensing something. I could not understand the anxiety and discomfort of my friend. He was afraid of being thrown in the Minority sewer. The restless days continued. The sensitivity of a Minority person. One day he made up his mind and said: “I will go to the Consulate and complain about Hatipoğlu.” I was laughing secretly of course. But in fact it was nothing to laugh about. This was a manifestation of how our socio-politic culture in the Minority has gone astray because of the mafia and the fear of the Koca Kapı. Anyway, our

friend went to the Consulate and complained about Hatipoğlu. The story continues. Exactly two
days later, our mafia godfather Hatipoğlu cropped up in our friend’s shop. “Oh my dear Ahmet (or
Mehmet, if you like) I heard that you have got some very nice shirts. Let me have two of them.”
Our friend adds: “Until that day Hatipoğlu had never set his foot in my shop. And ten days earlier
we had cursed at each other.”

When the “clique” grew stronger Hatipoğlu would become more explicit. Onsunoğlu
gives another example of the threats and extortion against a friend of him. The
person in question had expressed before the elections his preference for a candidate
who did not belong to the “clique”. This was a bold thing to say under the reigning
conditions, and Hatipoğlu knew how to break him:

Hatipoğlu approached me and took me aside. “Ali” he said (Ali or Veli, whatever, I am not
going to tell his real name here.), “you are opening your mouth a lot. Look, do not say later that
you were not told. I am saying it for your own good. Close your mouth! Zip-fastener! (My friend
makes a motion as if he is closing his mouth with an imaginary zip-fastener.) Zip-fastener! Look
a little further, there is also a Black List, haal!” After this threat all of my friend’s courage vanishes
of course (Trakya’nın Sesi 422/04.06.1992).

It is necessary to understand that for all his dubious tricks, Hatipoğlu still had quite
a bit of discretion and sophistication in his approach. He was always acutely aware of
the political climate and could adjust his approach accordingly. Sadık, on the other
hand, lacked any sophistication and displayed a behaviour which can only be charac-
terised as crude. In his early association with the “clique” he was employed as a thug
to intimidate its opponents. He carried out his task with a dedication which probably
overstepped his mandate. Again Onsunoğlu provides the story:

Sadık had entered the mafia, he is ordered to “take the dog.” They probably wanted him to bark.
But our man, this time too, is ready to add something of his own desires. I call this “adaptation
ability.” They tell him to bark, and he starts to bite. They make him king unknowingly, and first
he gets his father. That is how things go on. They tell Sadık once “take the dog”, and afterwards
one of the first he bites is Hasan İmamoğlu. Another was the MP of the time Mehmet
Müftüoğlu. He is closely related to Müftüoğlu, but that does not matter. He had been ordered to
“take the dog”, and that’s it, then he is going to bite. And then he bit Müftüoğlu. And indeed the
hand that was put forth to help him. Mehmet explains the event as follows: “If I had not been
sick I would have beaten him up. I have reached an age where I cannot raise my hand against
anyone. But that day I was overwhelmed by a desire to beat up Sadık. I was able to control myself
at the last moment. I contented myself with telling him to get the hell out of my office.”

During 1988 the practice of ostracising minority members who did not submit to
the “clique” took on a new dimension because of Turkey’s increased involvement. It
involved a large number of persons and sent shock waves through the minority. While
there has always been name calling and mud-slinging within the minority, this took on
a whole new dimension when one side obtained backing by Turkey:

This social phenomenon [cursing], a question particular to the Minority itself, turns with the
intervention of the mafia into a policy exercised by Koca Kapı. Everybody curse each others
continuously with names like “traitor, informer”. Nobody within the minority has the strength to
make another minority member a “certified traitor”. When the mafia did this, immediately the
“seal regarded to be appropriate” was attached by the Koca Kapı. There you have a “certified

29 Trakya’nın Sesi 415/30.3.1992. “Koca Kapı” (The great gate) is a name used for the Turkish
consulate. “I am keeping your file” is a stock threat from Hatipoğlu’s repertoire.
traitor”. And only the Koca Kapı has the strength to enforce this. In this fashion the Minority was filled and overflowing with certified traitors. We also made a list for them. We named this the Black List (*Trakya’nın Sesi* 416/16.04.1992).

Müftüoğlu who was MP at the time tried to protect the first victims. He tried to strike at the root of the problem and presented it to the Turkish foreign minister Mesut Yılmaz:

Müftüoğlu raised the Black List issue with M. Yılmaz on three occasions. He explains M. Yılmaz’s reactions on these three occasions as follows:

- In the first meeting: “—Such a thing is impossible!”
- In the second meeting: “—Wait a minute, there is probably something we do not know.”
- In the third meeting: “—I will take an interest in the matter.” And Müftüoğlu stood there.

The forth meeting did not happen of course.

The MP of the Turkish minority, M. Müftüoğlu, had not yet learned that at the time of his last meeting with Turkey’s foreign minister M. Yılmaz he had been put on the Black list himself, but the person addressed knew it of course.

By such procedures the road was opened for Sadık Ahmet.31

Those who tried to bring up this sensitive issue were faced with a difficult task.

When Dede criticised the selective application of visa regulations for some of the minority leaders, Rodoplu countered: “Since we did not know such a thing we expect from this newspaper which first made such a revelation to write openly the names of those who need to have visa to enter Turkey. Let us see what you are made of my young lion?”32 It is clear that it was difficult for Dede to take up the challenge because of the embarrassment for the persons involved. Hatipoğlu countered Müftüoğlu in a similar fashion.

Honourable Müftüoğlu, in your Press Announcement you mention that some people have been prohibited from entering Turkey. Please be clear? Who are these people? Our Minority insists that you make clear this matter.

The Turkish State accepts some and refuses others to enter its borders. As foreigners we have no rights to say anything in this matter. However, the great sensitivity you showed in this matter, did you show that when our fatherland Greece stripped the citizenship arbitrarily from thousands of our kinsmen? As MP, what initiatives did you take? Did you send an announcement to the press with your signature? Did you light a candle of hope for the thousands of our kinsmen who have lost their citizenship and struggle for years from abroad to be able to return to Western Thrace? (*Akın* 960/05.10.1988).

Hatipoğlu’s answer displays the confused sense of allegiance he can appeal to when addressing the minority. He plays both on the emotional attachment to the “mother country”, while arguing simultaneously that as foreign citizens they cannot interfere in Turkey’s affairs. There are of course serious flaws in the argument that protests against the black list, mean interference in Turkey’s internal affairs. Turkey did not prohibit the people to enter Turkey for its own protection. On the contrary, the sanction against various people was taken in order to influence the political situation in Greece and represented consequently Turkish interference in another country. On a personal level, those who were put on the black list came in an extremely awkward

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32 *Gerçek* 213/22.07.1988. These kind of attitudes are also mentioned in *İleri* 529/14.10.1988.
position. The personal suffering and the strength of the psychological mechanisms involved should not be underrated. Onsunoğlu describes well the typical reactions of those affected:

Go to Hasan İmamoğlu and ask “– Are you on the Black List?”. He will beat around the bush forever, but he will not say yes. However, he is heading the list written with “unerasable ink”, and he knows it as well as his name. Oh my dear İmamoğlu, what are you afraid of? Those who put you there and those who got them to put you there should be ashamed. And you know too who they are. Why do you not announce it?

For lack of democratic awareness.

The township leader of the village Arisvi [Ircan], Ali Nuri, was lately turned back at the border. I asked about it. He hides it as if it was the greatest shame. As if the mafia will not make sure that the news reach everybody’s ears. Dear Ali, what are you hiding? It is not your shame, but theirs. Go out in the middle of the road and scream!

They detained Orhan Hacıibram at the border. Ask him, dear Orhan, what did they do to you those days, and he pretends not to have heard. He zips up his mouth.

At the celebration of the anniversary of Atatürk’s death a friend was brusquely chased away from the Consulate with pushes and shoves while they said “you are not accepted”. […] During the last years I know the adventures of dozens of people who have been the object of the anger of the Özal-Yılmaz regime and their Shrew within the Minority the mafia. From the point of view of the minority community’s national and social values they admit to have suffered the greatest insults. A feeling of shame and anger (Trakya’nın Sesi 407/16.01.1992).

It was very difficult for many minority members to conceive this new reality. They were not prepared and could not come to grips with it. Onsunoğlu mentioned that a friend told him in 1989. “–Oh, dear doctor, we are confused. We are used to be afraid of the Greek informers [hafiye]. Now, suddenly Turkish informers have emerged. We are more afraid of them, more cautious. By god, we are confused. We are confused about whom to be on the alert against” (Trakya’nın Sesi 422/04.06.1992). Very few were able to stand up against this pressure, and those who did paid dearly for it.

Onsunoğlu, who was among the few who tried to oppose the “clique”, understood perfectly well that people did bend:

Fear is a very human feeling. I do not see anything wrong with it. You ask if I am afraid of the Minority mafia. Is this mafia nothing to be afraid of? One move from the mafia, and suddenly you are not allowed to enter Turkey. They say that on the other side [i.e. in Turkey] they will get your legs broken, and they are broken. Suddenly, the social benefits [from the consulate to unemployed teachers etc.] you receive are stopped. Suddenly, you see that you have been declared pro-infidel. And suddenly, you see that your friends start to look at you in a different way. Suddenly, the customers of your shop are halved… And what did not happen afterwards? You see that unsigned letters circulate through everybody’s hands implying such immorality, including insults and the worst kind of curses against you, your family, and your wife, which cannot even be taken in the mouth. What they diffuse by whispering is another thing… Who said that I am not afraid of the mafia? Of Hafız Aga, Hasan Hatipoğlu, Rodoplu, Sadık Ahmet, Ahmet Faikoğlu, Sabahaddin Emin, İbrahim Şerif, Aydın M. Arif? (Trakya’nın Sesi 407/16.01.1992).

The best documented case of someone who came on the black list belongs to the journalist Hâki. It is clear from his newspaper that among other things he considers himself to be a chronicler of minority events. At times he will end a piece with the words: “for the record” (Kütükte bulsun). He was distressed about the black list from the very start and has recorded faithfully the developments of its application. In a short piece he recounted that he went to Turkey for the national holiday (29.10) with some friends. In the passport control the police checked his name with a list and told him
that he would not be accepted. He had to pass by the consulate in Komotini. Three
days later he went to the consulate, learned the reasons and tried to defend himself
(Ileri 532/04.11.1988). Dede commented dryly:

BRAVO!
The Foreign Ministry of Turkey which tries to enter the Common Market, has put one more
who CRITICISED it on the BLACK LIST.
With this mentality the Turkish foreign ministry authorities have a lot of work to do in order
to enter (Trakya’nın Sesi 300/02.11.1988).

Hâki made a new attempt to go to Turkey around New Year, which he had done
habitually each year. Again he was turned back after they told him that it was forbid-
den for him to enter Turkey. As a person Hâki is very impulsive and this time he was
clearly outraged. He immediately staged a vivid protest by putting up a sign at his
office declaring that he began a hunger strike. It was clear that those who applied the
black list became alarmed by this protest. To prevent reactions both inside and outside
the minority from taking on large proportions, the next day the president of the
BTTDD Tahsin Salıhoğlu told him on the phone from Turkey to quit the hunger strike
immediately and shut up “or else…” Faced with these threats Hâki stepped back and
abandoned his protest (Ileri 539/13.01.1989). When Hâki first recounted the episode
he did not reveal details about the threats. Later, after request from his readers he
found the courage:

Yes, as a human being I experienced the most painful moments of my life after hearing these
words “OR ELSE…” and I regretted, not that I am a writer, but that my mother gave birth to
me…
If he after the words “or else…” had said: “When you pass the Meriç bridge and reach this side
you will be flogged and then hanged”. By God, I wouldn’t have flinched… but, when the
CHILDREN entered the issue… became involved… everything changed… Everything changed…

Yes, after president Mr. Tahsin Salıhoğlu told me “OR ELSE” he added: “Your son who studies at
the Medical Faculty in Ankara can pack his things and go to Thessaloniki; And your girl in
Istanbul can go to Komotini… And believe me my friend, this is not something I made up on my
own!!!”.

We have a little apartment in Istanbul. That was also mentioned:
Even if it had been a whole apartment building, it wouldn’t matter…
But the CHILDREN… To THREATEN some parents to punish their children…
May God have mercy, mercy!
May God never let this happen to anyone!
Neither to Mr. Tahsin Salıhoğlu; Nor to those who made him say so…

After hearing these words I collapsed…
Afterwards I saw my children before me… I was overwhelmed by tears…
My will power which until then had been not only like steel, but like granite, was shaken, it
was shaken and… melted like ice…
I decided immediately that I would abandon the HUNGER STRIKE for my children’s sake…
One hour later I said it to him on the phone.33

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33 Ileri 540/20.1.1989. Hâki was deeply disturbed by the black list, and even wrote a letter to the
Turkish president about it. See the letter in Ileri 629/22.03.1991, translated in Appendix 5, text 22. Hâki
also wrote an open letter to the consul, complaining about that Aga and his gang (taife) was
threatening people mercilessly with the black list (Ileri 649/04.10.1991).
One reason why Hâki abandoned his protest immediately, was that he felt absolutely sure about that the threats were not idle. The high credibility of the threats would in the following years be manifested on several occasions. At this time it seems that the black list had only been applied selectively to people in key positions within the minority. Several factors peculiar to the minority facilitated the execution of this scheme. The prestige of Turkey made it very difficult for a minority member to question anything sanctioned by the “mother country”. In addition, the minority members would tend to regard this as internal affairs which were not to be discussed publicly. In his comment to Hâki’s protest, Onsunoğlu mentioned:

At the time many of us did not react kindly to Hâki’s instinctive reaction. It was commented mostly as a personal question. It was criticised as if Hâki had started a quarrel with the Koca Kapı. We did not want to see that seeds were being sown that would turn into cancer in the Minority. Terrorism and fascism. In fact, even though everything was clear, nobody had yet the spiritual strength to diagnose it.

Now, after five years have passed by, in the aftermath of other events like this, it is better understood how appropriate his action was. It is better understood how disturbed the mafia members became at the time, how the plan they prepared could be destroyed by the noise that started to come out, and how they did not abstain from resorting to the basest of extortion to quench this noise.

(When fascism knocks on your neighbour’s door you should ask what is going on, go out and see, and stand by him. Or else the turn will come to your door.) (Trakya’nın Sesi 460/18.8.1993).

It is important to point out that Hâki’s case became known and reached a wider audience. The treatment of him was criticised and condemned in the Turkish mainstream press. The fact that nothing was done to correct the matter testifies to the strength of the circles which were behind this measure. When the Turkish government changed after the elections 20 October 1991, there were signs that the measures against certain minority members would be lifted. Dede wrote a short notice in his paper:

Aydın Ömeroğlu, Halil Hâki, Osman Selami and a lot of others (on the black list) spent New Year in Turkey…

Some of them met with Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel and other state officials and explained about the intrigues of the MAFIA and Koca Kapı.

With any result?

Look now, how we will witness the mafia members going immediately to Turkey and be all in a fluster about not abolishing the Black List. But what is there to do, ANAP and their unreliable and dirty extensions here have lost their influence. ANAP went… Demirel and İnönü came.

No, no the mafia members should not be afraid, we will not put them on the black list. We will see how they eat their words and that will be more than enough for us (Trakya’nın Sesi 406/09.01.1992).

A major Greek newspaper also mentioned that the Demirel government had abolished the black list and that Hâki and Ömeroğlu had been able to go to Turkey (Ethnos 05.01.1992). Hâki wrote later that his son telephoned him from Ankara 19.12.1991 and said that the problem had been solved. He took a plane to Ankara 28.12.1991: “We had last left our Motherland Turkey 17.8.1988. This means that we

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34 See the article by Öktay Akbal in Cumhuriyet 09.02.1989, which includes two stories from his newspaper İleri, and the article by Yılmaz Akkılıç in Olay 27.01.1989 reprinted in İleri 544/24.02.1989.
entered again after 3 years, 4 months, 10 days etc., or we were able to enter… This was like some kind of return from exile for us” (İleri 661/07.12.1992). However, the problem was far from solved. An incident which took place during the same visit, was recounted much later. Hâkı is an old admirer of the Turkish diplomat/scholar Bilâl N. Şimşir. He used the opportunity to visit him at the foreign ministry. There the following episode took place:

While we drank our tea we started to explain… When we spoke about Western Thrace he interrupted us and said:
– What you are explaining is important and valuable… He who is Responsible for your Desk should hear it…
– And immediately he made his secretary call on him who was Responsible for our Desk. The man who came was Mr. Ömer Zeytinoglu. He introduced us and when Mr. Ömer Zeytinoglu heard İLERI-HALİL HÂKI… he asked: “You are prohibited; How did you come to Turkey?”.
The same moment we understood that this diplomat of ours did not have a good and positive disposition… We answered: Did some part of Turkey crumble because we came?
Of course after this the conversation became filthy; to sit there, too… Because at that time we witnessed that Mr. ŞİMŞİR became humble…
We put this note here as material for history (İleri 742/21.01.1994).

Now and then there were rumours that the black list would be abolished. When the Turkish ambassador in Athens, Hüseyin Çelem, visited Thrace 27.05.1992 two members of the YTD (Hasan Ekrem, Mehmet Nuri) complained to him about the black list. The ambassador promised to look into the matter, but took precautions about those who “worked against the interest of the minority” and mentioned particularly the appointed muftis.35 Right after the ambassador had left Komotini, the journalist Kenan Mustafa was summoned to the Turkish Consulate and allegedly told: “By a decision of the government you are crossed out of the black list from today on. I am happy to give this information personally to you. I did not learn why you were put on the black list, neither do I want to learn it.” (Trakya’nın Sesi 423/11.06.1992). This was considered to be a sign of that the list started to be abolished. Similar news would appear repeatedly in the following years.

All this gives the impression that Turkey was not willing to relinquish the practice, but that it was also concerned about possible embarrassing revelations. It is also difficult to know details about the relative strength of the centres in Turkey which could influence the application of the black list. The list was only abolished gradually and with frequent setbacks.36 The application of the black list became very well known and there are literally hundreds of references to it in the Greek and Turkish press. It is almost funny when a reportage about radio stations in Thrace mentioned somewhat casually that the owner of İŞIK Fm, Abdüllahim Dede, was on the ‘black list’ and not allowed to enter Turkey (Eleftherotipia 28.11.1995). Since the application of the black

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36 Dede claimed that he was the first black list victim in 1987. He was able to visit Turkey again after 11 years in 1998 and considered this a sign of that the black list was abolished (Trakya’nın Sesi 598/27.02.1998).
list reached such proportions, news about it was bound to reach international human rights organisations.\footnote{A Helsinki Watch report mentioned the name of 9 people on the black list, among them Hafiz Yaşar, Ahmet Mehmet, Abdülhalim Dede, İbrahim Onsunoğlu, and Hâki (Whitman 1992b: 7). Ömeroğlu mentioned that he had explained to members of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe about the Black List as applied by the ANAP government (Yeni Adım 13/September–October 1991).} However, the emotional ties with Turkey made minority members hesitant about how to handle this. While Hâki earlier had reacted strongly to something he perceived as a great injustice, “denouncing” Turkey was another matter. Hâki explained his dilemma by alluding to an episode where the Turkish author Aziz Nesin had not been given a passport before the German president had intervened, (without Nesin’s knowledge). He would not have gone if he had known about this and told Mesut Yılmaz later: “I prefer the prohibition of my own government to the freedom secured by a foreign politician!” This inspired Hâki to write an article titled: “In this matter we are of the same opinion as Aziz Nesin”:

Yes, in the days when the Black List was at its height we too received a letter. And indeed from an organisation enjoying international respect… They were asking: You are allegedly not able to go to Turkey… You are allegedly on the Black List… Is this true? Please answer immediately…

We did not answer this letter, i.e. we preferred to be silent rather than to complain about our Motherland Turkey. What we wanted to say is that: Rather than complain to you about Turkey, we would prefer, not one, but a thousand times to stay forever on the Black List… \footnote{İleri 795/07.04.1995. The situation was of course extremely delicate and unpleasant for those affected. On another occasion Hâki mentioned also how unpleasant it was to complain to foreign organisations about the “fatherland” Greece (İleri 784/20.01.1995).}

The black list has influenced the minority profoundly and left deep scars. Some of the further consequences of the black list will be mentioned later at appropriate places. The application of the black list created a climate of fear that would effect decisively the elections in 1989.
Sadık in Action

The Parliamentary Elections 18 June 1989

The general political situation in Greece had changed dramatically since the last elections. After two periods in power the PASOK government was clearly on its way out after the disclosure of major economic scandals. Faced with the prospect of electoral defeat and legal persecution, Papandreou’s right hand Agamemnon Kutsoyorgas drafted an election law which made it very difficult for any party to obtain absolute majority. This cleared the scene for a tightly contested election, with the old rivals Andreas Papandreou and Konstandinos Mitsotakis in the leading roles. Contrary to frequent claims, it is not correct that PASOK’s election law made it easier to elect independent candidates. Just as before, the independent ticket was faced with the difficult task of obtaining enough votes in the first distribution to secure a seat. However, the political situation made the minority vote more important than ever. The competition for the minority vote by the major parties, coupled with the strong involvement of Turkey, brought the minority issue to the centre of everybody’s attention. The Athenian press pursued the matter and published a string of articles from Thrace. The many misspellings of names in the beginning, display that the newspapers had entered unfamiliar territory. But people like Sadık Ahmet and Mehmet Emin Aga would soon become household names to Greek readers. These elections mark the time when the minority issue became widely known outside Thrace.

The Minority Prepares for the Elections

As usual, speculation about minority candidatures began well ahead of the parliamentary elections. There were rumours that there would be an independent ticket in Rodopi consisting of Hasan Hatipoğlu, Molla İsmail (Rodoplu), and Sadık Ahmet. It was thought that Hatipoğlu would play the leading role, regardless of the ambitions of the other two. The secondary goals would be to prevent Müftüoğlu from being MP, or even make Ahmet Mehmet win since he would not prove a serious obstacle to their leadership. Still, Hâki did not think that either Hatipoğlu in Rodopi or Mehmet Emin Aga in Ksanthi would run on an independent ticket if they were offered candidatures by one of the two major parties (İleri 488/02.10.1987). The strength of the various candidates was weighed, and various scenarios were discussed (cf. İleri 490/16.10.1987). Dede mentioned later that Sabahaddin Emin and Hasan Hatipoğlu lobbied intensely to become candidates for PASOK and ND respectively. Without these two, the independent ticket was thought to have no chances to materialise, as Sadık Ahmet
would be alone. Aga, too, was in intense negotiations with ND and PASOK. In other words, the minority leaders were considering the possibility of an independent ticket in much the same terms as in 1985. However, the political climate had changed decisively since the last elections. First of all, the ordinary minority members were exasperated with the discriminations against them, as had already been displayed with the demonstrations in January 1988. The Greek authorities’ attempt to tighten their grip on the minority afterwards only made the situation worse.

Now the independent ticket had come of age. Interestingly enough, the first clear indication about the nature of these tickets appeared in a Greek newspaper. It reported that independent minority tickets would be formed after orders from Ankara, headed by “well-known extremists”, Mehmet Emin Aga in Ksanthi and Dr. Sadık Ahmet in Komotini (Ethnos 01.02.1989). In the following months similar news appeared in several Greek newspapers. Although such news had also been heard by minority members, many had not yet grasped that the scene was set for a strong Turkish interference. The Turkish policy and the behaviour of the consul in Komotini, Kemal Gür, aroused Greek suspicions long before the elections. In early April Yiannis Kapsis made a verbal protest to the Turkish ambassador in Athens. The Turkish deputy foreign minister Nuzdet Kandemir denied the categories and said that the consul was doing his job. He also warned Greece about making any move because Turkey would respond accordingly.

The independent minority ticket in Rodopi Trust (Güven) appeared officially towards the end of April. It was made up of Sadık Ahmet, İsmail Molla (Rodoplu), and Sabahaddin Emin. İsmail Molla “Rodoplu” (1938–) grew up in Simvola (Semetli), a village some 10 km north of Komotini. After finishing primary school in the village he entered the religious college (medrese) in Komotini in 1954. In 1958 he went to Egypt where he first studied at the El Ezher university. Later he studied history at the University of Alexandria. Upon completion he spent one year at the University of Thessaloniki. He served several terms as president of the YTD (1983–6, 1988–9). Rodoplu’s newspaper office in the centre of Komotini functioned as a social gathering place for the “clique”. He has a relaxed laid back style and is not known for his efficiency. Minority sources considered him to be among those best trusted by the Turkish consulate. He had little experience with the world outside petty minority politics and his command of Greek is weak. Sabahaddin Emin (1941–) was born in

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39 Trakya’nın Sesi 292/01.09.1988. See also Hatıpoğlu’s scenarios in Akin 955/10.08.1988.
40 Eleftherotypia 04.04.1989. More concretely the Turkish consul was accused of operating in Greek Thrace as if it were a Turkish province. At this point his initiatives were related to the muftı question. Allegedly he had placed the supporters of the Komotini muftı, Meço Cemali, on the “black list”, and thus prohibited their entrance to Turkey. As a result, the supporters of the muftı with relatives and property in Turkey became terrified, while the muftı himself thought about resigning. Yiannis Kapsis claimed that the Greek side had not been firm enough with Turkey after the Davos détente To Vima 09.04.1989, “New stalemate in the relations with Ankara”, by Yiannis Kartalis.
Komotini where he finished primary school. He proceeded to the Celâl Bayar secondary school and graduated in 1961. After his military service he entered the law faculty of the Istanbul University in 1964, and transferred to the law faculty of Thessaloniki University the next year. He graduated in 1972, worked as an assistant lawyer 1972–74, and as independent lawyer from 1974. He was elected two times to the town council (1978, 1982) on the ticket associated with PASOK. In previous general elections he had been mentioned as a possible candidate, but he had not pursued this goal vigorously.

It is worth to note that there had been no broad discussion among leading minority members before the ticket was introduced. Hatipoğlu had a little earlier stressed that no vital decision concerning the minority could be taken without approval by the AYK (Akin 968/26.12.1988). Dede referred to this statement and asked why the AYK had not been assembled before the independent ticket was announced (Trakya’nun Sesi 313/11.05.1989). Hatipoğlu ignored his professed principle and came with a strong statement in favour of the independent ticket (Akin 979/25.04.1989). In reality, subsequent information made it clear that many vital decisions about the independent ticket had been taken by circles in Turkey. For some time the “clique” and the independent candidates had been promoted systematically by their close relations to Turkey. Several of them were invited to meet Özal when he made an official visit to Athens in June 1988 (cf. Bati Trakya’nun Sesi 5/July–August 1988). During the trials of Sadık Ahmet the Turkish press gave much place to members of the “clique” who acted as lawyers and witnesses. The interest in the minority by Turkish ultra right associations was displayed in the conference “The Western Thrace reality and human rights”, which was arranged by the Aydınlar Ocağı and took place in Istanbul 21 January with participation from the BTTDD (cf. Bati Trakya’nun Sesi 9/March–April 1989). More important, a committee from the minority consisting of Sadık Ahmet, Sabahaddin Emin, Mehmet Emin Aga, Sedat Karadayı, and Hasan Hatipoğlu (he was unable to join because of an operation), was officially invited to participate in the Foreign ministers meeting of the Islamic Conference in Riyadh 13–17 March. In this meeting the Turkish foreign minister Mesut Yılmaz made a speech about the minority’s problems, and a paper prepared in the name of Sadık Ahmet was distributed. After returning to Thrace the independent ticket was able to take the initiative before the parties had announced their minority candidates.

The written propaganda of the Trust ticket claimed that its candidates would be able to voice the minority’s grievances much better than the previous MPs, who had been restricted by the party discipline. It was emphasised that the candidates had no political past nor relationship with the parties, and they would only have to answer to the

41 See the interview with Mehmet Emin Aga in Yankı 52/31.03.1989, and the article by the retired ambassador H. Fahir Alaçam in Cumhuriyet 15.03.1989.
minority. The ticket’s declaration to the voters was a long polemic against the Greek state’s discrimination politics. Particular emphasis was given to the possibility of drawing the attention of international organisations to their problems:

The strong voice which the “TRUST” ticket will bring to parliament, will scream out the rights which the Greek Constitution and the Lausanne Treaty recognise to us, and attract the attention of the free world to Thrace. The clear goal of the Independent “TRUST” ticket is to display the Western Thrace reality in all openness before the international organisations which are against human discrimination and know that right is right and a human being is a human being (Gerçek 241/04.05.1989).

On 27 May the ticket opened its election centre, which was adorned with a large banner above the entrance with the slogan: “INDEPENDENT ‘TRUST’ FOR A HUMAN EXISTENCE.” Its election newspaper engaged in a polemic with the Greek press, which had written that they were playing with fire. The Trust candidates claimed that they were only seeking their democratic rights (Bağımsız Güven 1/no date). Their polemic against the party candidates was particularly fierce. In their election speeches they routinely referred to them as collaborators, sold out, traitors, etc. This created an atmosphere of polarisation, in which the independent ticket was presented as the only legitimate choice.

Hatipoğlu joined the chorus with his formidable rhetoric skill. He was particularly venomous towards İmamoğlu, against whom he had a personal grudge since the 1977 elections. Hatipoğlu claimed that in a meeting of the prefecture committee of ND it was believed that İmamoğlu could not bring many votes to the party because he was not allowed to enter Turkey (Akın 981/17.05.1989). This is a relatively discreet reminder of İmamoğlu’s place on the black list. Hatipoğlu found ammunition for the mud-slinging by digging deep in his archive after episodes which could compromise İmamoğlu (cf. Akın 984/12.06.1989). When some of the minority party candidates warned that the fierce propaganda of the independents could harm the minority’s cause, this was immediately brushed off as threats by the party collaborators and answered in the following manner:

Those who regard it an insult to them when they are called TURKS,
Those who say I feel myself to be a GREEK,
Those who permit one of the greatest insults to our Minority by saying “We the Greek Muslims” in the documents they submitted to the Greek Parliament when they were MPs,
Those who dispersed threats towards our Minority as the voice of the party they are collaborating with,
Those who find the spiritual tie of our Minority members with the Motherland Turkey senseless,
Those who say with the voice of the Greek authorities that if the Independent Tickets are supported, great pain will be inflicted on our people,
Those who regard the defence of our minority’s rights outside the country perfidious towards Greece and those collaborators who know very well whom they serve should bear this in mind:
NEITHER YOU NOR YOUR CHRISTIAN MASTERS CAN ANY LONGER FRIGHTEN THE WESTERN THRACE MUSLIM TURKS!

IN THESE ELECTIONS THE WESTERN THRACE TURKS ARE STRUGGLING FOR TURKISM. NEITHER THE GREEK MASTERS NOR THEIR COLLABORATORS CAN PREVENT THE VICTORY OF THIS STRUGGLE.\textsuperscript{43}

The independent ticket in Ksanthi went further and claimed that the parties had made agreements beforehand with their minority candidates that they would not raise any important questions (\textit{Yankı} 60/03.06.1989).

It became clear from the beginning that the \textit{Trust} ticket had a following (cf. \textit{İleri} 555/19.05.1989). The \textit{Trust} ticket would stress that the campaign took on the character of a mass movement. Its election rallies were greeted by loud enthusiasm, to the degree that it became hard to make out what was being said. “[…] the speeches of our candidates are interrupted so often by continuous applause that the sound of the applause suppresses the sound of the speakers. But people are happy” (\textit{Bağımsız Güven} 3/03.06.1989). The independent ticket had its greatest supporters in the countryside. Particularly in the Aratos (Karacaoğlan) area, because of the rumours about expropriations for agricultural prisons (\textit{Eleftherotipia} 24.05.1989). The person who appealed most to the villagers was Sadık Ahmet. This was related both to his collection of signatures and his later visits (\textit{İleri} 559/30.06.1989).

In this connection it is important to have in mind the cultural and class differences within the minority. The villagers (\textit{köylü}) were on the bottom of the minority’s “pecking order”. They were probably most frustrated with the discrimination policy, and least able to deal with it. More isolated from mainstream Greek society than the urban population (\textit{kasabalı}), and often with poor command of Greek, they had few possibilities to protect themselves from arbitrary measures. Traditionally, they had always relied on middlemen for their contacts with both Greek and Turkish authorities to get their business done. While the villagers could get some help from their leaders, there were also many cases of exploitation. Often the minority leaders only displayed an interest towards them in connection with elections.\textsuperscript{44} As mentioned earlier, in the 1981 elections the frustrated poor urban population rallied behind Ahmet Mehmet. This was a protest against what they perceived as the corrupt traditional leaders—a small “caste” who only thought about their personal interests. However, Ahmet Mehmet staked his future on PASOK and was ultimately unable to deliver what they had expected. In these elections it was the frustrated villagers’ turn to look for a new leader. A traditional leader such as Hatipoğlu, with his secular image and snobbish behaviour, inspired fear rather than confidence among the villagers. Sadık Ahmet, on the other hand, had the ability to speak with them as one of their own. He would join them in mosque for their prayers (\textit{namaz}), and lash out against Greece with simple slogans. He would certainly make an impression on the villagers when he “fearlessly”

\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Bağımsız Güven} 7/15.06.1989. Hatipoğlu employed similar arguments in \textit{Akin} 984/12.06.1989.

\textsuperscript{44} See \textit{İleri} 405/25.10.1985 for comments on the politicians’ relations to voters in the villages.
cursed the police and other state authorities.\textsuperscript{45} He also cursed heavily the minority candidates of the Greek parties. His favourite phrase was “sold out” (\textit{sattılmış}), but he would also use characterisations such as “pro-infidel” (\textit{gâvurcu}), collaborator (\textit{işbirlikçi}), traitor (\textit{hain}), etc.\textsuperscript{46}

Unfortunately, there is no systematic collection of the many bizarre statements Sadık Ahmet made during his campaign, but there are enough references to give an indication of the climate. Dede mentions among other things such statements as: “We will bring Greece on its knees, the Greek oppression has surpassed the Bulgarian, we have lost our nationality [\textit{milliyet}] and we are also losing our religion, I will give Greece three days respite to solve the Minority question, in Greece the Western Thrace Turks were prohibited from performing circumcisions, I will only join the parties on the condition that they make me a MINISTER, I will spill blood…” (\textit{Trakya’nın Sesi} 320/17.06.1989). Hâki mentioned later some of Sadık’s statements during this period:

-When I am elected… I will appoint the muftis!
- I will close down the medreses!
- I will close down the Academy!
- I will arrange elections for the Muslim Community [\textit{Cemaat}]!
- I will correct our education system!
- [...]
- I will explain the minority’s PROBLEMS to foreign countries!
- [...]
- The Greek women will work in the cotton fields! They will become our workers! (\textit{İleri} 712/09.04.1993).

The last statement has a certain “revolutionary” character, i.e. the formerly oppressed should now become the masters. Or as he phrased it on another occasion: “Those we made coffee for until today will now make our coffee” (\textit{Trakya’nın Sesi} 321/23.06.1989). However, these statements did not communicate any political program. It was rather a case of effrontery by Sadık, who—intoxicated by the feeling of force behind him—tried to impress the villagers. The strength which he became imbued with by the support of Turkey, can be seen indirectly in one of his later statements: “The Greeks either they like it or not, will live in the shadow of the giant named Turkey.” (\textit{Eleftherotipia} 24.03.1995).

Sadık was presented prominently in the Turkish press. The largest daily newspaper presented the following scene from one of his rallies:

Dr. Sadık Ahmet, a candidate from the Western Thrace independent Turkish list bellows: “I will give the Greek government three days respite from the 19th of the month. The Human Rights conference in Paris will last until the 23th of the month. If the Greek government does not put the

\textsuperscript{45} When the police came to monitor his election meeting he would cry out “Look, the donkeys are coming!” (personal communication). For some examples of his “boldness” toward the Greek police, see also \textit{Eleftherotipia} 09.06.1989.

\textsuperscript{46} \textit{İleri} 555/19.05.1989. Hâki, who otherwise supported the independent ticket, reacted to these excesses by Sadık
situation in order in Western Thrace I will go to Paris... I will explain the situation in Western Thrace to Mitterand in French.”

This touches upon the question of internationalisation, which was a prominent issue in the campaign. It was particularly emphasised that as independent MPs the parties would not be able to control them any longer. However, Sadık’s statements about international initiatives displayed little knowledge about political procedures. In his rallies he said in turn that he would go to Bonn and see Helmuth Kohl, to London to see Margaret Thatcher, to Washington to see George Bush, etc. (Trakya’nın Sesi 321/23.06.1989). In this fashion he claimed that he would be able to solve all the minority’s problems in a matter of days.

The Independent Ticket in Ksanthi

In Ksanthi the independent ticket took the scene much later than in Rodopi. There were several discussions about possible strategies. After the third meeting in the mufti office (14.05.1989), Mehmet Emin Aga said he would run as independent, and those who wanted could join him (Yankı 58/20.05.1989). The fierce competition for votes between the two big parties, meant that they were eager to attract strong minority candidates. According to Dede, Aga had been assured to be candidate for ND. He would have liked to use this opportunity, but could not withstand the pressure from the Komotini “clique” which he was a part of himself (Trakya’nın Sesi 314/18.05.1989). In other words, the initiative for an independent ticket in Ksanthi was this time subordinate to developments in Rodopi.

Mehmet Emin Aga headed the independent ticket Good Fortune (Ikbal), and was joined by Kadir Yunusoğlu (teacher and chairman of the “Ksanthi Turkish Union”), Mustafa Hasanoğlu (secondary school teacher), and Rasim Murcaoğlu (farmer from the plain area). Mehmet Emin Aga belonged to the established leadership, and had been a candidate several times earlier, sometimes for parties on the extreme right. He was very experienced in petty politics and in dealing with the Greek authorities. Towards the minority voters he had a tough authoritarian leader style. When I discussed minority issues with him, he was careful about what he disclosed, but not particularly eloquent in presenting his political position. In an interview by a Greek newspaper, Aga gave the following reasons for founding Good Fortune:

–The ticket was founded because up until today we did not see any development in our issues from the parties. After the junta of 1967 all the rights of the minority, the humanitarian, all were abolished, they did not leave us any rights, neither in the schools nor in the mosques, even in religious affairs. Consequently, we decided that an independent MP would be able to explain in the Greek Parliament about his complaints and that our human rights are violated. If we are not

47 Hürriyet 15.06.1989. Dede remarked wryly that Sadık did not know enough French to explain anything (Trakya’nın Sesi 323/06.07.1989). For a reportage by a western correspondent from a rally in the village Kalamokastro, see Reuters 16.06.1989, “Greek Moslems could win first independent seats in election”, by Stephen Weeks.
48 Personal observations.
listened to, we will go to Europe and to the humanitarian organisations [ta anthropistiká], as they are saying, those who take an interest in human rights in the United Nations. Because we are not people without any foundation. We have our roots, our national convictions.\footnote{Eleftherotipia 16.06.1989. For the official announcement of the ticket’s program, see Yankı 60/03.06.1989.}

His ideological position was somewhat flexible. His adversaries accused him of being an anti-Kemalist and of only having a following among the conservatives. When asked about this, he answered: “–How to perceive Kemalism and anti-Kemalism is an issue for others to judge. We are neither Kemalists nor anti-Kemalists. We are Turists, Islamists. I suppose that Kemal Atatürk, too, was a Turkist and an Islamist” (Eleftherotipia 16.06.1989). Once more the identity issue would play a prominent role in the election campaign. This time it took place in the shadow of the Bulgarian efforts to “rename” its Muslim population, which would lead to its exodus to Turkey during the summer.\footnote{The Bulgarian “assimilation politic” was condemned strongly in both Rodopi and Ksanthi, and used as terrifying scenario for what could happen in Greece. Ksanthi with its large Pomak population was particularly receptive to such propaganda. See characteristically: Bağımsız Güven 4/05.06.1989, İleri 558/09.06.1989, Eleftherotipia 16.06.1989.}

\textit{Party Candidates}

The candidates for the mainstream Greek political parties were determined much later, at the end of May. The tickets contained a mixture of old and new names. In Rodopi PASOK kept its regular candidate Ahmet Mehmet and added the unknown Sabri Huseyin. The greatest changes took place on the ND ticket. Mehmet Müftüoğlu was not accepted—probably because of his initiative in the mufti issue—, which finally opened the door for Hasan İmamoğlu who had tried so hard to be accepted in the past.\footnote{In a declaration where Müftüoğlu summed up his work as MP, he mentioned briefly that he was not a candidate because ND did not want him (İleri 57/02.06.1989).} He was joined by İbrahim Onsunoğlu, which came as a surprise to many because of his left-wing leanings. Sinaspismos was represented by Mustafa Mustafa who functioned as a regular party cadre. In Ksanthi Ahmet Faikoğlu had flirted with the independent ticket, but eventually he remained with PASOK (cf. Trakya’nın Sesi 314/18.05.1989). Orhan Hacıibram completed his turn away from PASOK and joined Celâl Zeybek on the ND ticket. Dede may be accused of bias, but he was probably right when he predicted that Faikoğlu and Adem on the PASOK ticket had no chance of being elected. Oran and Celâl were thought to have a chance if the Christian candidates did not obtain too many votes. Aga’s candidature would as usual only contribute towards dividing the minority vote and leaving it without MP (Trakya’nın Sesi 316/01.06.1989). Sinaspismos was represented by Nazif Ferhat, who like Mustafa Mustafa, had many years of political work behind him.

The most interesting new candidate was undoubtedly İbrahim Onsunoğlu (1948–). He was born in the Kırmahalle of Komotini. His parents divorced when he was a
small child and he was raised by his mother in great poverty. His mother is quite a character, who had problems with adjusting to the role of a Muslim woman. After completing the Celâl Bayar lycée he studied for a year in Turkey before transferring to the Thessaloniki Medical Faculty. He married a Greek Christian woman and has two daughters with her. Both his upbringing and his marriage give him an unusual family background in the minority context. Onsunoğlu should rank as the foremost intellectual in the minority. He is well schooled politically, has a very good command of both Greek and Turkish, and has written extensively in both languages. Like Orhan Hacıibram he belonged to the minority members with left-wing leanings who had great hopes in PASOK after 1974. However, just like Orhan, he was later bitterly disappointed by PASOK’s minority policy. Onsunoğlu had participated in most of the minority’s political struggles and often played a leading role, as was the case in the Yaka protest. Although he had most sympathy for the left, he viewed his candidature in ND as an opportunity to have a voice near the centres of decision. In his early election propaganda he was primarily occupied with the opportunities and advantages the minority had because of Greece’s membership in EC. He hoped that this would bring democratisation, and gradually break the minority’s isolation (Denge 1/26.05.1989). Ideologically, he represented a modern approach, and worked for the democratisation of his country as a Greek citizen. In this connection he took on the difficult task to redefine the minority’s ideological orientation, and place it within a modern framework. In short, he viewed the minority members as Greek citizens of Turkish origin, and not Turks who just happened to be in Greece. Besides the minority members role as Greek citizens, he would like them to cultivate their own culture. In this connection he acknowledged fully the cultural and emotional attachment to Turkey, but only as one influence among several and not as something to be adhered to blindly and uncritically. He met the critique of the independent ticket and stressed that the parties could not silence their minority MPs (Denge 2/01.06.1989). He maintained that the minority’s struggle for equal rights had first of all to be waged within the Greek political system (Denge 4/05.07.1989).

Onsunoğlu’s problem was to a great degree that he wanted to play the political game according to the rules, while most of the others involved treated it as a special case or clung on to traditional structures. His position did not differ much from that of the young minority left-wingers on the Sinaspismos ticket. However, partly because Onsunoğlu was a more direct rival as a candidate for a major party, partly because of his dynamic personality, he would take the brunt of the confrontation with the independent ticket. He was also a former classmate of Sadik Ahmet. Since he was well

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52 His wife died from cancer a few years after the 1989 elections.
aware of Sadik’s weaknesses, he was concerned about the harm he could do to the minority cause.

**Interference - Threats - Intimidation**

As mentioned briefly before, the determining factor in these elections was the interference from Turkey. In order to obtain a proper understanding of the mechanisms involved it is necessary to have a closer look at the extent and nature of this interference. The exploitation of the dependence on Turkey had started way ahead of the elections. It was of course attempted to keep many aspects of this policy secret, but more than enough leaked out to give us the general picture. Particularly the use of the “black list” became well known, and was mentioned in both the Greek press and by some minority newspapers. Hâki and Dede denounced it strongly. Onsunoğlu claimed that he could see the same fear in the eyes of the minority members before the elections as he saw in July 1974 when the people were terrified after the Cyprus invasion (*Trakya’nın Sesi* 317/05.06.1989).

On the eve of the election, Dede made a strong attack on the behaviour of the independent candidates in the previous couple of months. They had said:

“THOSE WHO DO NOT VOTE FOR US THE INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO GO TO TURKEY.”

And we [Dede] ask: Why the THREATS AND TERROR?

AS IF THE SCARING AND INTIMIDATION POLICY The Western Thrace Muslim-Turkish community has seen and suffered from the Greek authorities, Particularly during the last twenty years, DOES NOT SUFFICE, WHAT IS NOW THE MEANING OF BEGINNING TO SCARE AND THREATEN OURSELVES? WHAT IS THE GOAL?

And who will account to whom for the TERRIBLE moral question created by using our ONLY support Turkey as a TOOL in this scaring and threats?

AND WE ASK OPENLY, BOLDLY, AND COURAGEOUSLY THE INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES? WHOAM ARE YOU SERVING? You do not SERVE the Western Thrace Turkish minority as you are claiming. Because you are applying the tactics the authorities have used for twenty years, and even in a worse fashion. You are SCARING the Western Thrace Turk.

You are THREATENING the Western Thrace Turk. You are not EMBARRASSED or ASHAMED to say that “we will serve” this community which you scare and threaten (*Trakya’nın Sesi* 319/14.06.1989).

These tactics would continue in the following years, and as people like Abdülhalim Dede grew increasingly exasperated by the situation, the criticism became more explicit. In an article he mentioned that people were afraid to approach Onsunoğlu during the elections because of the consulate. He summed up the reasons for the fear as follows:

Afterwards they would break your legs. They would make you feel sorry. They would take you out of the protocol and not invite you for receptions [at the consulate]. They would put you on the black list. They would prohibit your entrance to Turkey. You would not be able to visit your kith and kin in Turkey, friends, the house which your father bought for you with a lot of difficulties. You would not be able to send your children to Turkey for studies. The scholarship would be cut, the social aid [to teachers educated in Turkey etc.] would be cut. There would be threats that your

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53 For characteristic examples, see *Eleftherotipia* 24.05.1989, *İleri* 555/19.05.1989; 557/02.06.1989, *Trakya’nın Sesi* 316/01.06.1989.
child which you had sent to Turkey for studies would be expelled. They would expel you from the country one day, they would roughen you up a little. You would also be taken in for interrogation when visiting Turkey, you would have an experience you never would forget, if you were among the lucky ones who had not been taken in for interrogation yet. They would give you a lesson. If they were so disposed they would be quick to declare that you were “pro-infidel, man of the Greek Administration, collaborator, KIP agent, Greek spy, national traitor, etc.” Your Turkish [minority] customers here [in Greece] would immediately stop to come. And you had no Christian customers. Your friends would start to avoid you and change their direction if they met you in the road. They would raze you to the ground. They would show you. Just like they had shown so many people. Or again just like they had elevated so many people (Trakya’nın Sesi 477/17.02.1994).

The independents were reinforced in various ways from Turkey. It had been usual that Turkey sent some preachers (vaiz) to serve the religious needs of the minority during Ramadan. This year they arrived in April and started to propagate in favour of Sadık’s candidature. This was clearly a breach of the agreed terms, but Greece hesitated to react because of the elections. Teachers and other persons within the minority who were subsidised by Turkey came under pressure to campaign for the independents. Some would also get behind the independent candidates on their own initiative. The chairman of the German Federation of minority workers’ associations, Cafer Alioğlu, endorsed strongly the independent ticket (cf. Gerçek 242/23.05.1989; Akın 982/26.05.1989). The same was the case with the solidarity associations in Turkey. The chairman, Tahsin Salihoglu was known to have made literally several thousand telephone calls to people in Thrace, threatening them to make them vote for the independent ticket. Right before the elections the independents’ newspaper announced that the former MPs Hafız Yaşar and Mehmet Müftüoğlu also supported the independent ticket (Bağımsız Güven 8/17.06.1989). The circumstances behind this support became known much later:

The declaration announcing his support for the “independents” before the elections in 1989 (which was later signed by Müftüoğlu too) did not express Hafız Yaşar’s own opinions and belief. Nor was this declaration an attempt to offer his services to the Koca Kapı. It was the product of a very mean extortion. If it had been a threat and extortion directed straight at his own person he would have had withstood it. But the threat was directed against his children who had settled in Turkey. “If your father does not announce his support for the independents, get ready. Pack up your things immediately and return to Greece!”

They came rushing from Turkey saying: For goodness sake, daddy, whatever happens save us.

In the last years of his life Hafız Yaşar was forced to give in for some similar cases of extortion (Trakya’nın Sesi 459/30.07.1993).

The independent candidates would monopolise the minority’s natural sensitivity about the relationship with Turkey and exploit it excessively, particularly in their oral propaganda. At some occasions they would not refrain from hurling sordid threats against the party candidates. In the Polianthos (Narlıköy) village Sadık said about two

54 See (Kapsis 1990: 145–148, 302), and the reference to them in the message of the Ksanthi mufti (Gerçek 241/04.05.1989). Later Hâki mentioned in an article that the preachers from Turkey had been used politically (İleri 630/29.03.1991).

55 Personal communication. A Greek newspaper also mentioned that immigrant associations in Turkey asked their members to phone their relatives in Greece and make them vote for the independents (Eleftheros Tipos 14.06.1989).
party candidates: “Let them go to Turkey and I will get their legs broken.”\(^{56}\) In his obituary to Sadık, Onsunoğlu mentioned another episode which is indicative of the climate in this election:

In the 1989 elections a last event, an event I could not forgive, became the reason that I stopped greeting him. Only two days earlier we had met in the street, he was a candidate I was a candidate, we jokingly wished each other good luck. Two days later, a Friday, in the courtyard of the Sappes [Çapçı] mosque, Sadık with his cohort sent from Turkey and Germany by his side attacked me and dispersed the crowd that was listening to me… If I had moved one step I would have got a thrashing. Typical fascist “thuggery” without any previous quarrel (Trakya’nın Sesi 516/09.08.1995).

As mentioned briefly, the nationality issue or the “turkishness” of the minority played a prominent role in the independents’ election campaign. They attacked previous minority MPs for having used the term “Greek Muslims” about the minority, and in particular they attacked Konstandinos Mitsotakis after his speech in Komotini. This incident displays the nature of the (lack of) communication between the various parties, or more precisely the manipulation that was possible because of the way the minority functioned in Greek society. Mitsotakis was eager to attract the minority vote, and in his speech he wanted to present himself as someone who would treat the minority fairly. In the pro-ND press he was presented as someone who endorsed a liberal policy towards the minority: “The position of the leader of ND Mr. Mitsotakis was absolutely correct when, during his speech the day before yesterday in Komotini, he asserted that ‘they are Greek citizens’ and as such not only should they not be subjected to any discriminatory treatment, but enjoy the same rights and obligations as the other (99%) citizens of our country” (Mesimvrini 03.06.1989). However, his speech was presented in a totally different fashion in the independents’ election newspaper. They had attacked Mitsotakis from the beginning of their campaign, and after his speech in Komotini the rhetoric against him reached new heights:

Mitsotakis in his speech yesterday in the town square, showered one of the greatest insults over the Western Thrace Muslim Turkish Community.

The New Democracy leader Mitsotakis who denied the national identity, the TURKISM of the people of our community, looked the minority party candidates straight in the eyes and called us “GREEK MUSLIMS”. […]

According to New Democracy and Mitsotakis the Western Thrace Muslim Turkish Community consists of GREEK MUSLIMS…

Esteemed Mitsotakis we are not Greek Muslims. Our religion is ISLAM, and our national roots are TURK SON OF A TURK.

In our 65 years of minority existence, never has any political leader had the audacity to call us GREEK MUSLIMS before the elections. You will definitely find the response to your audacity on the 18. of June! In Western Thrace none of our kinsmen who knows himself to be TURKISH MUSLIM will VOTE FOR you! Because you deserve this punishment. It is the indisputable legal and constitutional right of the Western Thrace Turkish Community to give this punishment.

After the leader of the New Democracy Party Mitsotakis denied our national identity, our Turkism by calling us “GREEK MUSLIMS” we have the following appeal to [minority] candidates of the New Democracy party:

If you do not agree with Mitsotakis’ words, IF YOU DO NOT FEEL YOURSELF TO BE A GREEK MUSLIM, RESIGN IMMEDIATELY FROM THE PARTY AND YOUR CANDIDATURE FOR PARLIAMENT, THUS YOU WILL BECOME THE FIRST REACTION

\(^{56}\) Birlik 5/29.06.1989. The episode is also mentioned in Denge 4/05.07.1989.
IN THE NAME OF OUR COMMUNITY TO MITSOTAKIS WHO INSULTS THE 150 THOUSANDS STRONG MUSLIM TURKISH COMMUNITY.

IF YOU DO NOT RESIGN AND REMAIN IN THE PARTY NEXT TO MITSOTAKIS WHO SHOUTED FROM THE CITY SQUARE LOOKING YOU STRAIGHT IN THE EYES THAT OUR COMMUNITY IS GREEK MUSLIMS, it will be regarded as you too accept the name “GREEK MUSLIMS” (Bağımsız Giyven 2/01.06.1989).

Honourable Mitsotakis, You felt that you were in Bulgaria and spoke to our Community with the mouth of Zhivkov! Our Community is not Greek Muslim like you say, but TURKISH Muslim TURKISH! [...] the main opposition ND leader Honourable Mitsotakis who spoke in the square of our city 31 May concerning the 18 June 1989 general elections, was not able to hide his great allergy against the Western Thrace Muslim Turk Community and vomited venom against our Turkishness. In addition, he showed his rotten teeth towards our community threatening openly and thus denigrated the democracy of our country reminding us of the junta period (Akin 983/04.06.1989).

The independents exploited the nationality question to such a degree that Mitsotakis found it necessary to make a statement about what he had meant in his speech: “It has come to our knowledge that there has been an abundance of negative exploitation in the local minority newspapers of the expression “Greek Muslims”, which was used by the leader of New Democracy Mr. Konstandinos Mitsotakis during his resent speech in Komotini. When Mr. Mitsotakis was asked he made it clear that with this expression he meant the Muslims with Greek citizenship and did not refer to the descent of the aforementioned Greek citizens.”57 According to Dede, the expression “Greek Muslims” became the most used “weapon” of the independent ticket. He pointed out that the hullabaloo related to the ethnic identity of the minority was not directed towards the authorities but the “Turkish minority candidates” for the parties. In fact, the independent candidates had earlier used the expression “Greek Muslims” themselves in a petition to foreign embassies where there were no restrictions on terminology (Trakya’nın Sesi 320/17.06.1989). Onsunoğlu tried to explain that Mitsotakis used the expression “Greek Muslims” in the meaning “Muslim Greek citizens”. He did not touch the nationality question, which meant that he consented tacitly that people were what they declared themselves. On the other hand he stressed that Papandreu, who “served the independents”, had said in the newspapers (13.06.1989) that the minority was of Greek descent and had thus taken the same line as Zhivkov had in Bulgaria (Denge 3/15.06.1989).

It is correct that at this time Papandreu and Zhivkov co-operated against what they perceived as Turkey’s attempt to stir up problems with the Muslim minorities in their countries. At a time when Bulgaria took very repressive measures against its minority, it asked the Greek government for diplomatic support on the level of the Council of Europe.58 On the other hand, there were also strong rumours about collusion between PASOK and the independent candidates. Pro ND newspapers would claim that the

57 Trakya’nın Sesi 318/10.06.1989, Statement by Mitsotakis dated Athens 05.06.1989, which was published in all the newspapers of Rodopi and Ksanhti.
Turkish involvement in Thrace was part of a deal between Papandreu and Özal from their recent meeting in Brussels with the goal of weakening ND in Ksanthi and Rodopi (Eleftheros Tipos 08.06.1989). A more neutral newspaper would stress that there were no proofs of a deal between Özal and Papandreu, but there were plenty of indications. For some reason Özal preferred Papandreu as premier (Pontiki 09.06.1989). International sources also stressed that Turkey seemed to prefer Papandreu, both because of the contact between Papandreu and Özal, and because Papandreu was not too popular in EU circles (Reuters 15.06.1989). Mitsotakis did not refrain from accusing Papandreu of having reached a “secret agreement” with Turkey on the question of Thrace (The Daily Telegraph 16.06.1989). On the local level there was also indication of collusion between the independents and local PASOK cadre. Hâki mentioned well ahead of the elections that the independent ticket in Ksanthi tried to attract support from PASOK, as had been the case in Rodopi in 1985 (İleri 554/05.05.1989). The ND minority candidate in Ksanthi, Orhan Hacıibram, said that he could not say anything about a possible deal between Papandreu and Özal, but the collusion between PASOK and the independents was evident on a local level. Aga had continuously secret meeting with PASOK. The minority candidate for PASOK, Ahmet Faikoğlu, declared in all the villages that “if you do not vote for me, vote for the independent ticket.” (Eleftherotipia 16.06.1989). In the case of Faikoğlu, there is of course the question of how representative he was of his party. There were also various indications of collusion in Rodopi. For example: “On the eve of the expiration date for submitting party applications to the Supreme Court [Arios Pagos], an important administrative member of PASOK informed the Trust ticket that their application had to be submitted to the Supreme Court and not to the local court of first instance [protodikío].” The rumours about collusion are most credible on the local level where much was dictated by petty politic concerns. It is clear that many central PASOK cadre were strongly against the independent ticket.

There were several reactions by the Greek authorities against the high handed election campaign of the independent ticket. They tried to restrict the candidates by traditional authoritarian methods. After the promotion of Sadık by Turkish radio, Greece started to jam the broadcasts from Turkey (Pontiki 16.06.1989). The authorities did not grant permission to the Trust ticket to visit the mountain villages in the controlled zone for election propaganda (Gerçek 242/23.05.1989). Sadık tried to circumvent this by applying for permission to go and perform a circumcision. When he was refused by the Greek authorities, he presented this to a major Turkish newspaper as if circumcision were prohibited and mentioned in addition that a new mosque

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had not been allowed to open. In a telephone interview with the newspaper he said among other things:

"With their oppression the Greeks will soon surpass the Bulgarians. This cannot go on. Who can claim after these actions that there is democracy in Greece? The Muslim Turks of Western Thrace are pushed to the brink of bursting. In the following days thousands of Turks will start hunger strikes. We inform all the human rights organisations about this oppression and invite competent authorities to come to Western Thrace."

Dede, who had attended the opening ceremony of the mosque together with thousands of other Muslims, asked why the independent ticket made Sabah write such lies? There was more than enough to complain about and what was needed was a sober and well documented presentation. Dede pointed out that after such exaggerations Human Rights organisations could think that the other problems were false as well (Trakya’nın Sesi 316/01.06.1989).

Soon the Greek authorities took other measures. It was rumoured that the authorities did not issue passports to minority members, that there would be strict control of minority voters coming from Turkey, and that there would be tax controls and other well tried measures (Trakya’nın Sesi 318/10.06.1989). Attempts by the traffic police to intimidate the participants of election rallies fell flat on their face. The procession of twenty cars accompanying Sadık arrived about one our late to a village because of police control, but everybody waited patiently (Eleftherotipia 09.06.1989). Stronger measures failed even more:

The superficial measures turn out not only to be ridiculous and ineffective, but they also rally the Muslim population even more around the “independent”. For example, suddenly the traffic police of Komotini began to “write down” for illegal parking the cars which constitute the great procession of Sadık (candidate for Rodopi). Sadık took in public all the tickets and declared to his followers that he would pay them and that no one should fear because “we have strong support”. The choice of Ankara was made a hero by the Greek authorities… (Eleftheros Tipos 14.06.1989)

Or as another would put it: The tickets which were given by the traffic police to vehicles of adherents of Trust were regarded as “honorary certificates of the Turkish struggle” (Eleftherotipia 25.06.1989). These kinds of spasmodic measures also provided the independent ticket with material to present to international organisations. As part of its tactics, Trust had sent letters to various international organisations asking for foreign observers during the elections. One paragraph reads:

We want to draw to your attention that pressure and intimidation is applied to prevent votes for the Turkish Minority Ticket, so that they are given to PASOK and NEW DEMOCRACY instead. On the other hand, the political parties have again put persons who are collaborators on their tickets, while they did not include persons who were not ready to collaborate with them and who would defend sincerely the rights of the Turkish Minority.61

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60 Sabah 29.05.1989. Quoted in Trakya’nın Sesi 316/01.06.1989.
61 Bağımsız Gıven 4/05.06.1989. A Greek newspaper mentioned that the request for observers was sent via Turkey (Eleftherotipia 07.06.1989).
The initiative above should be seen as part of the great efforts by Turkish diplomacy to attract international attention to the “plight of the minority”.62 It is ironic that at the same time the great campaign by Turkey to coerce the minority to vote for the independents was easier to conceal. When a Greek journalist confronted Mehmet Emin Aga with the accusations against the independent ticket, he brushed it away in characteristic fashion:

You are accused for having voters because of threats and promotion of your candidature by Turkish mass media.

–The voters are here. Let someone step forward and say that he has been threatened by someone. As regards the Turkish television I have not seen anything. They told me that they have showed the independent candidates. That happened after the declarations of Mitsotakis in Komotini, that Turkey should stop that movement.

Nobody instigated us from Turkey. That is rubbish. What does Turkish television do? It has its own program, it is independent, it can bring news from the whole world. Here we are neighbours, we have common interests, it is natural that it has great interest also for the parliamentary elections in Greece, not only for Western Thrace (Eleftherotipia 16.06.1989).

When Mehmet Emin Aga said that those who had been threatened should step forward he must have been 100% sure that nobody would respond, for the simple reason that the minority members were more afraid of Turkey than of Greece. The Greek deputy foreign minister, Yiannis Kapsis, described the situation as Turkish terrorism. He mentioned in particular the activities of the Turkish consul in Komotini, Kemal Gür. Kapsis had made a forceful representation about this to the Turkish ambassador in Athens, who displayed surprise and asked for more concrete evidence. Kapsis was very frustrated since he was not able to display any evidence, for the simple reason that the Muslim Greek citizens who had made the complaints feared retaliations by the Turkish consul: “It was exasperating. A Turk… terrorised, and indeed officially, Greek subjects within the borders of the Greek state…” (Kapsis 1990: 147). Kapsis wanted to take measures against the Turkish consul, but was unable to get the government behind him in the difficult pre-election climate. A hawkish newspaper wrote, under the heading “The Turks are creating a new Cyprus and we are sleeping”, that the authorities were at odds about what to do with the consul (Pontiki 09.06.1989). It is worth to note that prior to all previous elections, the practice had been that the consul went away on vacation as an act of courtesy (Pontiki 22.10.1989). The consul must clearly have been close to the circles in Turkey which had selected Sadık Ahmet as front figure for the minority. Greek newspapers connected him to Turkish intelligence (MIT), since he had earlier been director of the Office for Anti-terrorism in the Turkish Foreign Ministry.63 At this time Kapsis was correct in asking for measures against the unacceptable activities of the consul. One of the reasons why he was unable to draw support is probably that he had destroyed his credibility by previously screaming up

63 Eleftheros Tipos 14.06.1989. A Turkish left-wing periodical claimed that MIT was involved with a separate network in Thrace (Ikibin’ e Doğru 18.06.1989).
about the “Turkish danger” in season and out of season. The same Kapsis had also indirectly prepared the ground for the Turkish intervention, by undermining the minority’s existence in Greece. When the minority found itself with Turkey as its only support, Turkey was ready to exploit this within the overall diplomatic tug of war with Greece.

The minority party candidates were critical of the activities of the Trust ticket, but in the beginning this took the form of an internal minority critique. Onsunoğlu appealed strongly to them to be more careful, as they damaged the interests of the minority (Denge 1/26.05.1989). He maintained that the Greek opinion was positive after the January demonstrations in 1988 and did not consider it a provocation. However, now the thoughtless behaviour of the three independents had opened the way for such accusations which could damage the minority’s further struggle. Onsunoğlu pointed out that the Athenian press wrote all kinds of nonsense against the independents, but they did not disclaim anything. This created the question: If they were not able to defend themselves against the Athenian press, how would they defend the rights of the minority on an international level? (Denge 2/01.06.1989). However, it was a totally different matter to condemn them to the Greek public. When a Greek journalist spoke with the minority candidates for ND and PASOK on 4 June, they denied categorically that the independent candidates were directed from Turkey. They only made use of their constitutional rights to elect and be elected as Greek citizens. The journalist concluded that “The most important element in the declarations above—and of all the Muslim politicians we met for this investigation—is that: NOT EVEN ONE expressed EVEN AN ALLUSION to the detriment of the independent tickets!”

The local Christian politicians refrained from criticising the independent tickets for vote hunting reasons. The journalist mentioned that typically they all said in private conversation that the “independent Muslim tickets” were supported by Turkey and directed by the Turkish consulate in Komotini, but refused categorically to make a public stand (ibid.)

Immediately after this, things took a dramatic turn because of the intensified propaganda in favour of the independent ticket on Turkish radio and television 3 June. These broadcasts also asked the ND minority candidates to resign, but did not mention the PASOK minority candidates. The four ND minority candidates went to Athens 5 June where they first tried to complain to the Turkish embassy without success. They proceeded to the party centre and discussed the situation with Mitsotakis. Eventually they decided to resign, but their resignation was not accepted by Mitsotakis. In a common declaration, the four candidates stressed that they had faced several similar unpleasant events earlier, but preferred to remain silent out of fear of hurting the interests of the Minority and the Greek-Turkish friendship. They now appealed to the

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64 Eleftherotypia 07.06.1989, “Thrace, the ‘other’ elections”, by Yiannis Liapis.
65 For more details about the broadcasts, see Ethnos and Eksormisi 08.06.1989.
independent ticket to disband because of the harm their irresponsible behaviour did to the minority’s interests. The event created a stir in the Greek press, and diplomatic protests. Konstandinos Mitsotakis made the following declaration:

I point out with deep concern the undisguised and raw interference of the Turkish government through the Turkish consulate and Turkish radio and television in the Greek elections in the prefectures Ksanthi and Rodopi, where there is exerted undisguised psychological pressures on Greek citizens of the Muslim minority to compel them to vote for the independent tickets, and at the same time there is exerted terrible moral extortion on the candidates of New Democracy to make them resign their candidature.

On a local level the Turkish consul of Komotini directs the whole operation. We have reached the point where there is created a climate of fear and threats on Greek territory by Turkish diplomatic personnel. And the Greek government does nothing about it (Eleftheros Tipos 07.06.1989).

Turkey was not willing to accept the Greek critique, but claimed that Greece reacted to news which were composed according to the rules of free journalism and did not contain any elements that could provoke the sensitivity of the Greek government. It was only natural that Turkish radio and television, as well as other mass media, followed closely the election campaign in neighbouring Greece. The Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman, Ambassador Inal Batu, was very clear in his rejection of the Greek protest:

Batu pointed out that the importance Turkey attaches to the principle of non-interference in [other countries’] internal affairs and the meticulousness it displays on this matter are well known. He noted that Turkey, which does not tolerate the interference of other countries in its own internal affairs and which is determined not to allow this to happen, does not even entertain the thought of engaging in such action against Greece or any other country.

Indeed, the Turkish Foreign Ministry did not refrain from alluding to Greek irregularities in the elections, and ended the announcement by stating: “We express the sincere hope that the election campaign in Greece, as in every democratic country, will be carried out with absolute respect for the basic principles of democracy so that the elections will constitute the expression of the free will of the Greek people” (Eksormisi 08.06.1989). This led to the following response from the opposition leader Konstandinos Mitsotakis:

With today’s announcement the Turkish government adds an unnecessary and harmful provocation to the undisguised interference in internal Greek affairs. Instead of finally apologising and rectifying the damage (as the Turkish ambassador said sensing that there was no excuse he could put forth), it declares in clear terms that it will continue the same tactics by means of the “independent” Turkish radio and television, and indeed it also undertakes to give us lessons in how free and fair elections are carried out.

I call upon Mr. Andreas Papandreou to draw his conclusions and to do what the national duty compels him to do (ibid.).

Back in Thrace the independent minority candidates were unimpressed by the ND minority candidates’ calls for them to resign. They countered by saying that the ND
candidates should give their resignation to the people and not to Mitsotakis. There was no need to go to Athens (Bağımsız Güven 5/09.06.1989). The independents received further boosting when the Turkish press rendered the press conference by the 4 ND candidates as “the press conference of the collaborators and sold outs.”68 The climate in Thrace was now reaching fever pitch. This was fuelled further by an anti-Greek proclamation issued by someone who called themselves “Headquarters for the protection of the Turkish population in Western Thrace.”69 This was not any known organisation and could very well be a provocation. Sober minority voices such as İbрагим Onsunoglu and Nazif Ferhat both said that the two declarations were pure provocation by centres which wanted to exploit the tension between the two elements (Eleftherotipia 08.06.1989; Proti 10.06.1989). In the meantime “unknown” persons broke into the office of the independent Muslim ticket in Komotini. The news about it appeared first in Turkish press and radio (Ethnos 10.06.1989). As tension grew, unknown persons also broke the windows of minority coffee houses in the Kırmahalle quarter (Trakya’nın Sesi 318/10.06.1989).

Until this time the confrontation had primarily taken place within the minority, but now the Christian “patriots” joined the game. The “committee for the struggle of the Christians in the Rodopi prefecture” urged all the Greek Christians in the prefecture Rodopi to take part on 14 June in the protest gathering against the independent ticket that would take place in the Metropolitan church of Komotini under the leadership of the Metropolitan Damaskinos. The appeal mentioned among other things: “The provocation of the extremists of the minority and the cadre of the Turkish consulate have reached the end of their tether. They created an independent ticket with autonomist tendencies led by persons convicted by the Greek Justice. They terrorise the law-abiding Muslims, who refuse to follow them” (Eleftherotipia 10.06.1989). The Metropolitan declared before the gathering: “The church defends. The Church sees that they started to speak about a new Denktaş and the Church hears that this new Denktaş says he whets the knives and swords, and they spread carpets and banners in front of him. The Church will react, peacefully but with determination. I guaranteed personally for complete order. The rally is peaceful and meant to ease the situation” (Eleftheros Tipos 12.06.1989). A PASOK candidate in Ksanthi tried to rally the Christians with nationalist slogans: “I will work towards the right direction if I am elected. I will not become a refugee in my own country…” (ibid.). A Greek newspaper considered that extremist elements on both sides would attempt to create episodes for pre-election

68 Bağımsız Güven 8/17.06.1989. See also the comment in Denge 3/15.06.1989.
69 Eleftherotipia 08.06.1989. See Appendix 5, text 25 for full translation. These text and a few more are included in (Soltaridis 1990: 42–55). The author is a journalist based in Komotini, so he was able to follow closely the events.
exploitation, but also to serve “various centres” which were active in the area (Proti 14.06.1989).

The four ND minority candidates decided later to continue their activities, which they justified with the following declaration: “We refuse to take the political responsibility for the last developments and henceforth the consequences of them. We suspend the support of our candidatures, but continue the struggle. In spite of our endeavours, contacts and initiatives it was not possible to prevent things from reaching this point. We have the deepest distress and concern…” (Eleftherotipia 10.06.1989). It is clear that Onsunoglu was particularly concerned about possible violent reactions from the majority. He said explicitly that he had more or less given up vote hunting and was working to reduce the harm done by the independent ticket. His election campaign was spent extinguishing the fires the independents had lighted (Eleftherotipia 09.06.1989; Denge 3/15.06.1989). In an interview to a Greek newspaper he presented his opinions about the independent ticket:

“I am not against independent tickets or independent candidates. I am specifically against this independent ticket. The reason is that it had recourse to such a politic, such a propaganda, extremely chauvinist, untenable, unsubstantiated, based mainly on the bitterness of the minority members against the Greek administration, on anger and disillusion.

Disillusion, anger and hate are not good guides. I recognise that they have a following. However the greater their following the worse for the minority. And I will appeal to them, both separately as a person, but also the four of us together will appeal to them to resign.

I had made a decision not to promote danger scenarios when I started the election campaign, but now I do it consciously, but it is not the usual danger scenario because if I did not do it I would regret it afterwards.”

What is the element of danger?
“I am afraid of retaliation.”
- By whom, by the Christians?
  “Indeed.”
- Do you believe that the situation has come out of control because of the ticket?
  “Let us not hide behind our finger. The area where the democratic procedures work the least [in Greece] is the area of Thrace. If we do not see this fact, and we do not adjust to this fact, and do not adjust our actions to this fact, we are out of touch with reality. Well, yes, I fear outrages by the Christians. And what is bad is that when there were outrages other times there was no justification. Now there is a plausible justification. And I fear the 19 June” (Eleftherotipia 08.06.1989).

Onsunoglu’s fear was related to the balance of power between the two population elements. When asked if there were forces on both sides which tried to exploit the tension between the two elements, he stressed:

“The minority cannot provoke, because it has no power. Those who provoke at the moment, do not constitute any danger. The danger is the answer to the provocation. I do not believe them to be capable, they are not capable of provoking episodes. They simply showed that they are capable of provoking pretexts for episodes. With the first problems they will pack their things and leave, while we will remain to defend the minority” (ibid.).

The minority candidates for Sinaspismos were also concerned about the tense climate. Particularly in the villages the atmosphere was explosive and both Christians and Muslims seemed to be afraid. This contributed towards polarisation, which could only benefit the large parties and the independents. PASOK and ND cadre told people
that if they did not vote for them they could not tell what would happen after the elections. Sinaspismos tried to appeal to “reason and self-possession.” The minority cadre were critical to the independent candidates’ methods and lack of political culture. As Mustafa Mustafa phrased it:

> On the one hand, the independents touched the existing problems of the minority, but they have no program, no political proposition, no perspective. Even if they get a MP they will not be able to do anything. They exploit the bitterness and anguish of people. They tell people, putting them under psychological pressure, “do not let a single vote go to the parties.” We as Sinaspismos go to the Muslim villages, and they tell us: “We will listen to you because you struggled for us and because you have morals”. The responsibility for the situation rests to a large degree on PASOK and ND because they left the problems of the minority unsolved. On the other hand, there is clearly Turkish intervention, too.\(^7\)

In an interview on the eve of the elections Nazif Ferhat and Mustafa Mustafa presented their views about the independent ticket. Naturally, their analysis is coloured by socialist jargon, but it also represents an early attempt to name the forces in Turkey which were behind the independent ticket.

> Many things have been said about the “independent tickets”, and many things will be said. There were also independent candidates in earlier elections. However, in the independent candidatures of those times, election calculations, personal objections, or economic interests prevailed. It is necessary to investigate the “independent” movement in these elections more deeply and from many points of view. In order to shed light on the political events it is necessary to find what is unspoken and hidden behind the lines, besides what is said in the public squares and with large letters in the newspapers. The question is not only the MP candidates, this is only one aspect. In the last years it is clearly seen that the extreme nationalist, pan-Turkist, Islamist movements and organisations which extend their roots to foreign countries increase their efforts to influence the minority’s socio-political life. This is gradually displaying itself in the political life. The “independent” movement is not the extension of a community which is not politicised, but an extension of the efforts of the forces mentioned above.

Undoubtedly these forces found a suitable environment. A community with low political consciousness, low literacy, which for 25 years is confronted with discrimination and restrictions in every field of its economic and social life and experience 1,001 problems, is a fertile environment for these forces. This kind of forces cannot find a fertile environment in a community where most people are educated, mature, politically conscious, but in communities like ours.

> These forces exploit religion and nationality of communities like ours which lack political consciousness, and try to carry them along with unbalanced slogans (Aile Birlik 3/15.06.1989).

The minority candidates for Sinaspismos knew from the start that they had no chance of being elected MP. But as opposed to the other candidates, who had a much looser relation to the parties, they participated in their party on a regular basis. This gave them much more continuity in their political work.

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\(^7\) Proti 12.06.1989. See also the announcement by the Rodopi prefecture committee of Sinaspismos, which is close to the view of its minority candidates (Proti 10.06.1989)
The Election Results in Rodopi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sadık Ahmet (Trust)</td>
<td>15,894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>İsmail Rodoplu (Trust)</td>
<td>1,376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabahaddin Emin (Trust)</td>
<td>821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified (Trust)</td>
<td>7,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmet Mehmet (PASOK)</td>
<td>1,908</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sabri Hüseyin (PASOK)</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasan İmamoğlu (ND)</td>
<td>924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>İbram Onsunoglu (ND)</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mustafa Mustafa (Sinaspismos)</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mustafa Ahmet Çolak (DIANA)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>28,609</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total votes cast 76,932 (ekloyikó métro 19,233). Total for independents 25,131. The following MPs were elected: Dimitris Tsetines (PASOK), Nikolaos Salikas (ND), and Sadık Ahmet (Trust). In addition to the votes above there were 3,028 invalid minority votes. Before the elections Turkey tried to increase the number of voters for the independent tickets, by putting pressure on minority members who had settled in Turkey and Germany, and make them go to Greece and vote. Hatipoğlu mentioned well ahead of the elections that the arrival of minority members from Germany and Turkey would increase the amount of “Turkish votes” (Akın 982/26.05.1989). There was a massive influx from Turkey, but this was partly neutralised by a strike at the border crossings in Evros, which can be interpreted as a spasmodic countermeasure by the Greek authorities. According to Hatipoğlu this prevented 5,000 from crossing the border to vote (Akın 986/26.06.1989). There were rumours that PASOK would bring in more soldiers from as far away as Kozani to change the analogy of the votes. Finally only the local troops and two navy crews voted.

The election result was very impressive for the Trust ticket. It received almost 90% of the votes cast for minority candidates. It had dealt a devastating blow to the minority candidates of the large parties. The main victims were the candidates of ND, who were thought to have had the best potential before the elections. A sober evaluation leads to the conclusion that the Trust ticket obtained the kind of results which can usu-

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71 These are the official results (Apotelésmata ton vuleftikón eklogón tis 18is Iuníu 1989, Athina 1992, Ipyério Esoterikón). Relatively accurate results with comments were published in Trakya’nın Sesi 321/23.06.1989; Akın 986/26.06.1989; Ileri 559/30.06.1989. For a social science type of analysis of the minority’s behaviour in the 1989–1990 elections, see (Dodos 1994: 29–70).
72 Scholiastis 78/July 1989. See also (Dodos 1994: 68, n. 21).
73 Scholiastis 78/July 1989. Greek soldiers do not vote in their home district, but wherever they are serving. This gives some leverage to employ them for electoral engineering.
ally only be found in totalitarian states. The primary factors were the climate created because of the discrimination, and the coercion by Turkey.

The lopsided distribution of votes repeated itself within the Trust ticket, where Sadık Ahmet obtained the lion’s share. The candidates on the Trust ticket were not a team, but rivals who had joined forces to make possible the election of an independent MP. All of them had thought that they would obtain most votes, but only Sadık knew. Rodoplu and Sabahaddin Emin had been given the impression that everyone on the ticket would be treated equally by Turkey. However, it soon became clear for everybody that they were merely supporting cast for Sadık. Sabahaddin Emin was the first to react against the “unfair” treatment by Turkey and withdrew from the ticket shortly after.74 As it turned out, Sadık Ahmet was easily elected and could indeed have succeeded alone.

**The Election Results in Ksanthi**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mehmet Aga (Good Fortune)</td>
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<td>Kadir Yunusoglu (Good Fortune)</td>
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<td>Mustafa Hasanoglu (Good Fortune)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unspecified (Good Fortune)</td>
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<td>Ahmet Faikoğlu (PASOK)</td>
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<td>Adem Adem (PASOK)</td>
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<td>Celâl Zeybek (ND)</td>
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<td>Nazif Ferhat (Sinaspismos)</td>
<td>162</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hami Mustafaöglu (DIANA)</td>
<td>137</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muzaffer Kosoğlu (KKE M-L)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>18,173</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total votes cast 61,938 (ekloyikó métro 15,484). Total votes for independents 9,030. The following MPs were elected: Panayiotis Sguridis (PASOK), Yeoryios Pavlakakis (ND), and Evangelos Kurtidis (ND). Dede reckoned that some 7,500 minority votes had gone to Christian candidates (Trakya’nın Sesi 322/30.06.1989). The independent ticket in Ksanthi did not obtain such overwhelming support as in Rodopi, but still obtained about 45% of the votes cast for minority candidates. Mehmet Emin Aga boosted the votes from his regular election clientele with the support emanating from Turkey. The two other candidates on the Good Fortune ticket received a reasonable amount of votes, if we consider that they had no political background. However, in order to elect

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74 See Eleftherotipia 28-29.10.1989. Sabahaddin has mentioned this publicly several times, also to me.
an independent MP the ticket would have had to almost double its votes. Ahmet Faik-
oglu had increased his following significantly since 1985, but the internal balance on
the PASOK ticket had changed, which left him absolutely no prospect of being re-
elected. The great losers were again the ND minority candidates, who were considered
to have had the greatest potential under normal circumstances. As a result, the minority
remained without parliamentary representation in Kсанði.

The Consequences of the Election Results
There were probably few who were able to grasp the significance of the new
political minority landscape. From the Greek side it was often stressed that the new
MP was outside the control of a party. It is ironic that many of those who earlier
worked against the acceptance of minority candidates on the party tickets, now
considered the election of an independent MP a scandal. Other people found the
outcries against the ticket exaggerated, or considered it to be related to petty party
interests. Hatipoğlu portrayed the elections as a great victory for the minority. The
independent ticket had broken the monopoly of the parties, which brought an end to
their practice of giving (false) promises which enabled them to divide and rule. He
stressed that in spite of the “terror” and “intimidation” against the minority it had been
able to elect a MP. The high number of invalid votes was particularly mentioned (Akin
986/26.06.1989). Rodoplu commented the victory in an article titled: “The Western
Thrace Turkish minority acquired personality! After nearly fifty years of crawling it
stood up on its feet for the first time. Now it must learn to walk!” (Gerçek
243/03.08.1989). He criticised Onsunoglu for writing unnecessarily about dangers
and for acting cowardly (ibid.).

On the other hand, the dangers the minority faced was spelled out by Dede during
the election campaign:

I wonder about the sanity of those who say that nothing will happen.
The tax control (Eforiya) will put pressure on the shop keepers…
The traffic police on the car drivers… On the tractor drivers…
The passport police at the Greek borders on the Western Thracians returning to Greece from
Turkey… Fine upon fine (it is an easy thing to find faults. Who among us has their tax booklets
in order? Who among us has the medicine box and CHALK which is required in the car?)
And we ask;
YOU, my tobacco growing kinsman, whom will you sell your tobacco to?
YOU, my tomato producing compatriot, whom will you sell your tomato to?
YOU, my maize producer of the plain, whom will you bargain your maize with?
YOU, my wheat producing villager, whom will you deliver your wheat to?
YOU, MY FRIENDS THE FARMERS, IF YOU ARE NOT ABLE TO SELL YOUR
PRODUCE FOR A YEAR, OR MORE CORRECTLY IF THEY WILL NOT ACCEPT IT,
WHAT WILL BE YOUR CONDITION? Then the independents who now recite heroic ballads to
you will not even approach you, and if they do they will say “SUCH THINGS HAPPEN
DURING SOCIAL STRUGGLE”. But what they say will NOT HAPPEN TO THEM, but to
you. Sadik will take ten thousand drachmas for a circumcision, Sabahaddin will take two thousand
drachmas for writing an application, and master Rodoplu “WILL CONTINUE TO COLLECT HIS
SALARY SHAKING HIS HEAD DOING NOTHING”.

THE MUSLIM MINORITY OF GREEK THRACE
However, YOU my dear farmer kinsman, will not be able to sell, they will not buy, the produce you have harvested from the earth by a year’s hard work and toil by the whole family, because of THEM. Just like it happened in Ksanthi in 1985, YOU, my comrade who work at the factory, what will you do IF THEY SACK YOU FROM YOUR WORK? Whom will you apply for work to? To Sadık, Sabahaddin or Rodoplu who is unemployed himself? Or to Hafız [Aga]? Will you leave your family and children and go to seek work in Athens because of these three adventurers so-called politicians’ vulgar exploitation of your national sentiments, to satisfy them, because of their caprice? (Trakya’nın Sesi 319/14.06.1989).

These were the immediate dangers which every minority member could understand. However, on another level the situation raised questions about the political direction of the minority. The strong reaction by Onsunoğlu was probably little appreciated at the time, but later developments proved how pertinent it was. His political experience, intimate knowledge of Greek society, and personal acquaintance with Sadık convinced him that the minority had taken a wrong course. He was not guided by petty political considerations related to the rivalry for leadership, but by a deep concern for the well being of the common minority member. Onsunoğlu repeated after the elections that it was necessary that the independent MP resigned, because of the damage he would do the minority’s political struggle. He congratulated the independent ticket with all the votes it had obtained to the degree that it represented the free will of the minority, which however he doubted that it did (Eleftherotipia 30.06.1989). His position was founded on the basic perception that the minority is the weaker part in the relation with the Greek majority, and that the solutions have to be worked out in understanding with the majority. After the elections he summed up the experiences made in the following fashion:

The Greek authorities have during the last ten days of these elections once again trampled on the human rights of the Minority because of the ‘independent’ candidates. But this time it was others who came first in not respecting human rights. It was the ‘independents’ and their company. The authorities came in second place. […] By this fait accompli, within the reality of the area we are living in, we do not accept that we are producing danger scenarios by saying:

1. That the minority struggle turned from the approved line of being a “defence against oppression and discrimination and securing of equality”, and degenerated into a situation which can be falsified as “aggression and provocation”;

2. That trumps were given to the anti-minority powers; That claims that the minority was directed and made up a national danger were haunting; That the doors were left open for all kinds of slander and provocation against the minority;

3. That at a time when we hoped that the division between the two national elements in Western Thrace was beginning to close, it will now widen and this will only be harmful to the Minority;

4. That the Minority will lose the sympathy and understanding it has won for the first time on a Greek national level, and even here in Thrace, by the equality struggle it has carried out against the unjust and discriminatory practices; That the possibility of using this sympathy and positive public opinion as pressure against the authorities on the way to abolishing the injustices will be lost; (The general sympathy created by the hunger strike carried out by the young ‘Dikatsa’ victims, the protest marches on 26 and 29 January etc., will be wiped away and wrapped up because of 18 June.)

5. That from now on the authorities will find pretexts showing themselves ‘justified’ in increasing vehemently all kinds of oppressive measures against the Minority;
6. That the Minority which stands with one foot on each side of the river [the Greek-Turkish border] will not be able to carry this whole load and that it will facilitate it putting the other leg too on the opposite side of the river.

7. That it will fan the flames of the Turkish danger and the Turkish danger philology in Greece and increase the anti-Turkish chauvinism.

8. That it will plant the seeds of a new crisis that can influence the minority’s position in Greek-Turkish relations in a most negative way (Denge 4/05.07.1989).

Onsunoglu represented an attempt to solve the minority’s problems by generally accepted political procedures. He had the ability to present the minority’s problems clearly and argue convincingly for his position. His lack of success was partly a result of that the major players in Greece and Turkey were not interested in approaching the problems in this manner. However, the Greek authorities and public were clearly uneasy about the developments. This led to a series of newspaper articles which tried to come to grips with the situation.75

The Political Situation in Greece After the Elections

Not surprisingly the elections resulted in a hung parliament with Sinaspismos holding the balance. The Parliament had the following distribution of seats:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>(44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PASOK</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>(39%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinaspismos</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>(13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIANA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sinaspismos was wooed by both socialists and conservatives for a coalition government. Because of the corruption scandals surrounding PASOK, Sinaspismos came in the unusual position that it made a government coalition with ND led by Tzannis Tzannetakis. This was not considered by anybody to be a permanent arrangement. It was formed with the limited mandate to investigate the corruption charges against the outgoing PASOK government and arrange for new elections. Mitsotakis was clearly embittered by the impasse, which was related to PASOK’s election law. He also lashed out against what he called “an orgy of abuse of power” by Papandreu to influence the voters (New York Times 20.06.1989).

The Parliamentary Elections 5 November 1989

Sadik started his election campaign well ahead of the elections. He continued in his usual fashion and displayed his “courage” by hurling threats against the Greek state (cf. Proti 12.10.1989). He was very active touring the villages, where he could stir up his audience by his “bold” slogans. From a political point of view his campaign lacked

75 For some examples of this, see Appendix 5, texts 26–30.
substance. Onsunoğlu challenged Sadık to meet him in a radio discussion, but Sadık refused. This was a natural reaction, since Sadık must have known that he would not do well in such a setting. Sadık was joined on the ticket by Rodoplu and the preacher (vaiz) Ibrahim Şerif who took the place of Sabahaddin Emin. The text of the announcement of their ticket would cause some controversy and later lead to legal prosecution. They addressed themselves to their voters in the following manner:

ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE MUSLIM-TURKISH VOTERS OF RODOPI PREFECTURE

On the insistent demands of the Muslim-Turkish voters in the Rodopi Prefecture, we—Journalist İsmail Molla (Rodoplu), Doctor Sadık Ahmet, and Theologian [İlâhiyatçı] Ibrahim Şerif—have decided to participate in the upcoming general elections 5 November with the Independent TRUST Ticket again.

Because like in the previous 18 June elections the Western Thrace Turkish Community—after the bitter experiences it suffered within the parties particularly since 1974—relied heartily on TRUST to become master of its own identity, its own cause, and elected its trusted representative and sent him to Parliament, 5 November too it is resolute and determined to send its trusted representative to Parliament again with the same belief and same goal.

After the great and historical success in the 18 June elections the Turkish voter of the Rodopi Prefecture does not want by any means to return to the parties and experience those bitter and oppressive days again.

In fact even today our people are observing and suffering from the parties’ creation of a terror climate in the city and villages in order to deprive the Western Thrace Muslim–Turkish voter of his vote which is as precious as his honour to him.

It is even more painful that some adventurers [i.e. the minority candidates for the parties] who had the audacity to stand up in front of our honest and upright people and ask for votes are still walking around among us, who appeared as one of our people and claimed that they were supposedly defending the rights of the Western Thrace Muslim–Turkish Community.

However, no power will be able to stop the Western Thrace Muslim-Turkish Community’s righteous and legal struggle which has no other request than living under human conditions in this fatherland where he was born and raised, and is only struggling to obtain this goal.

We do only trust in GOD first and then in the honest and conscientious Turkish-Muslim voter who believes in the justice of our cause.

The Turkish voter of the Rodopi Prefecture who believes in his own cause and has made the principle “one for all and all for one” his symbol, will rely on TRUST and stand up honourably before friend and foe on 6 November.

God helps the just.

JOURNALIST İSMAIL MOLLA (RODOPLU)
DOCTOR SADIK AHMET

The minority candidates for Sinaspismos and Onsunoğlu continued to be those who presented the problems of the minority for a Greek audience. Nazif Ferhat stressed in an interview that the minority wanted a government which did not discuss the minority’s problems behind closed doors or with ministers of foreign countries, but which would initiate a dialogue with the people of the area. In a national meeting for party cadre Nazif Ferhat asserted that the situation that had been created was to a large degree the result of the Greek discrimination policy. He presented the situation in Thrace as first of all “a question of democracy” (Proti 12.10.1989).

Onsunoğlu continued to be concerned about the terror against the minority voters. After the elections he condemned strongly their behaviour: “That group [Trust] does

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76 In “Announcement I” by Onsunoğlu before the November 1989 elections (no date).
not respect anything and does not recognise any moral barrier. They are possessed by a populist fascism and attack in every direction, razing everything within the minority in their desire to be the only legitimate power.” (Eleftheros Tipos 18.11.1989). He was again concerned about the risk that the provocation of the independent ticket could lead to an “explosion” (Kathimerini 22.10.1989). In a longer interview he voiced his concerns very frankly:

– As I have stressed other times as well, I am not against independent minority candidates or tickets. Besides, that is everybody’s right. But the ticket in question is neither independent nor belonging to the minority. I am now in the position also to declare unconditionally something else: It did not and does not even endeavour to solve the problems of the minority… Let’s face it, there is a hard reality in Thrace. Two national elements live side by side here, the dominant Christian and the minority Muslim. And each of them carries its own historical and cultural burden, which to begin with creates conflicts, different attitudes, or also lines of separation. Together the two elements can easily be transformed into an explosive mixture. And if there is an explosion, no doubt, the certain victim will be the minority. However, the most pressing problem of the minority is something else. It is the discrimination which exists from 1965 and onwards. The measures of the administration not only do not alleviate, but sharpen the existing oppositions—economical, social, educational—and of course to the detriment of the minority. And they widen the gap between the two cohabiting elements. Consequently, the goal of our struggle is to attain equal rights and the abolition of the discrimination and injustice… Now the so-called independent ticket appeared, and as it became abundantly clear, not to struggle against the discrimination and contribute towards solving the existing problems. But by acting provocatively (Turkism will inundate Thrace…) and raising non-existing problems (the Greeks prohibit circumcision) and with extremely chauvinist behaviour (the party candidates [from the minority] are traitors, vote for us to prove that you are Turks…), they achieved other goals, which they must have pursued on purpose. They accomplished to incite the racist reflexes of the Christian element. The administration intensified the restrictive measures… And they put fire to the “explosive mixture” we mentioned earlier. Fortunately there was no explosion. The harm I was afraid of did not happen. Many people contributed towards this. Allow me just to mention the name of Mitsotakis… However, I myself was a total failure as candidate.

[...]– [journalist:] What direction did the minority issue take after the elections on June 18?

– A bad one. I will point out two things. You know that when democracy set out from Athens it suffers many losses before it reaches Thrace. I am afraid it might be blocked completely somewhere at the river Nestos or drowned in the Vistonida lake. And the second: After 18 June the minority issue has developed into a purely Greek-Turkish issue. Nobody reckons the minority itself any longer. I have the feeling that they treat me like a ping pong ball. And I am worried. I am very worried when I ascertain that the slogan of the independents before the elections—“We want population exchange!”—was no coincidence. And I became even more worried when I read the declaration of the person in charge at the Turkish Foreign Ministry who said that in the case of forced migration of the Western Thrace Turks, we will settle them in North Cyprus.

As you can realise, the game is getting rough again in Western Thrace. So before it gets out of hand, it should be dealt with. For the reason that so much has accumulated over the years. It is time for us to change course (Eleftherotipia 08.10.1989).

The election campaign took a curious turn when Sadık Ahmet and İbrahim Şerif were ruled out of the elections when a lower court decided that they had failed to properly fill out the candidacy forms. A protest to the court of appeal was turned down (Reuters 26.10.1989). A process-server (dikastikós epimelítis) at the court had filled in the applications for all them, but only Rodoplu’s application included the phrase that he was not a candidate in any other constituency (election law §32) (Soltaridis 1990: 125–128). This caused strong reactions from the supporters of the independent ticket. The Turkish foreign department spokesman claimed that the Greek court based its decision on formalism and violated the basic political rights of the minority (ibid.).
Sadık’s wife said in an interview that “The move was deliberate so that the voice of the Turkish minority will be silenced” (Reuters 26.10.1989). There were many scenarios which attempted to explain the occurrence of the mistake in the applications. The most likely explanation presented by people who were close to the events, was that it happened because the process-server was told to make the mistake by one of the services which supervised minority affairs. On the other hand, the independent candidates should have been more careful. Abdülhalim Dede posed the pertinent question: Why did they not write the simple application themselves and why did they not control it? He commented dryly that Sadık, who has screamed about all the languages he knew, should learn Greek (Trakya’nın Sesi 336/26.10.1989). As it were, Sadık supported the only remaining candidate on the Trust ticket, Rodoplu, but there were already signs of strain in their relationship.

In Ksanthi the situation was less clear. The Trust ticket had been the priority of the forces in Turkey, while the Good Fortune ticket lagged behind in organisation. It had not reached its full potential yet. It was also a much more difficult task to elect an independent MP in Ksanthi because of the fewer minority voters. Mehmet Emin Aga who headed the Good Fortune ticket had his fanatical adherents, but others were strongly against him. Háki thought that there was hope for the independent ticket if Aga stepped down and new people came in (İleri 567/06.10.1989). Ahmet Faikoğlu made a striking turn towards the independents. He first notified the central organs of PASOK that he would withdraw if he were not the only Muslim on the PASOK ticket. He tried to pass the message to his voters that he did not intend to become “water bearer” for the Christian candidates (Kathimerini 22.10.1989; Yankı 67/01.11.1989). However, a sober evaluation would reach the conclusion that PASOK could not hope to elect more than one MP from Ksanthi, and Faikoğlu trailed far behind Panayiotis Sguridis who had been elected in June. Consequently, Faikoğlu’s manoeuvres were no doubt influenced by this fact, while the composition of the ticket was a pretext. Before the elections he endorsed strongly the independent ticket and even went to the villages to make propaganda for it, while he attacked Celâl Zeybek and Orhan Hacıibram who ran for ND (Yankı 67/01.11.1989; 68/04.11.1989).

After the elections Onsunoğlu summed up the situation as follows: Faikoğlu became the “star on Turkish television” after he announced his support to the independent ticket. Celâl Zeybek stopped his campaign well ahead of the elections. It was expected that he would endorse the independent ticket, but he “refused to become a star”. Even Hasan İmamoğlu thought about supporting the independents, while Orhan Haciibram and Mehmet Müftüoğlu “refused angrily to become stars” (Denge 16/24.11.1989). After the elections Aga commended Faikoğlu to the solidarity organisations in Turkey because of his support to Good Fortune (Bati Trakya’nın Sesi 13/November–December 1989).
Once more Turkey put strong pressure on the minority before the election. The most serious measure was the black list (cf. Trakya’nın Sesi 334/12.10.1989). Turkish television continued to promote exclusively the independent candidates. A Greek journalist confronted Rodoplu with this after the elections:

- How do you comment the fact that the Turkish television showed you continuously before the elections?
- I do not think that the presentation of a candidate by Greek or Turkish or German television is an important issue which has to be discussed, because the real event is the election. It is something natural. During the American elections for example I saw continuously Dukakis who is of Greek descent and not Bush. So should the American government say to Greece: Why are you always advertising for Dukakis? That is something I cannot understand. What is important is that certain mass media, within the free democratic framework, evaluate certain events according to their own standards. So I do not see anything strange in that. Anyway, we do not see Turkish television because they make obstacles [jam it] (Eleftherotipia 12.11.1989).

The Greek enthusiasm towards Dukakis, which was often mentioned in this connection, is not a particularly relevant analogy. The relationship of the two countries in question is very different, and the systematic projection of the independent candidates by Turkish television should be seen in connection with the other measures applied.

The chairman of BTTDD, Tahsin Salihoglu, was very active before the elections. As mentioned earlier, he hurled threats at the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Istanbul. When the Greek customs officers went on strike again before the elections, Salihoglu organised a demonstration at the border crossing. He claimed that they struggled for democracy in Greece (Batı Trakya’nın Sesi 14/January 1990). Onsunoğlu referred to another of his slogans: “They [the Greek authorities] closed the border so that the Western Thrace Turks living in Turkey would not be able to go to Greece and vote for the independent candidates” (Denge 16/24.11.1989). When it was convenient Salihoglu would hide himself behind slogans about democracy, but in this connection it would be natural to ask how he knew that everybody who came from Turkey would vote for the independents?

Greece tried again to neutralise the Turkish interference with spasmodic measures, including the strike at the border, jamming of television transmissions, fines, confiscation of passports, bussing in soldiers, etc. A Helsinki Watch report gives in fact a more detailed overview over Greek measures to influence the minority vote than the minority press (Whitman 1990: 29–30). It is clear from the preface (p. iii) that all the author’s minority informants were close to the independent candidates. She included very specific information about technical matters which she obviously had not checked herself, nor understood properly. A couple of examples will suffice:

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* There were 231 ballot boxes in Turkish districts for the June 15, 1989 elections, but only 190 for the November elections, forcing some ethnic Turks to travel between one and two hours to vote;

[...] 

* No votes at all for Turkish candidates were listed in the village of Sofular, a Turkish stronghold.

In the first case it would be more correct to say that the number of ballot boxes decreased from 231 to 190 in the Rodopi prefecture, which of course is a “district” with a mixed (about 50-50) Muslim and Christian population. It should be noticed that the number of ballot boxes in Ksanthi remained steady at 184. In the second case it would be interesting to know why she refereed to the village Askites only with its obsolete Turkish name Sofular, and why she made it into a “Turkish stronghold”. This area has a mixed population while there are many other districts with only minority voters which it would be more natural to characterise as minority “strongholds”. There is also no way of asserting the vote in a particular village when the smallest electoral unit is the polling station which includes a larger area. In any case her information that there were no votes for minority candidates is positively wrong. The official results give the following picture:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election date</th>
<th>18.06.1989</th>
<th>05.11.1989</th>
<th>08.04.1990</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Votes cast</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invalid/blank</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>12 (12)</td>
<td>17 (17)</td>
<td>39 (39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>145 (0)</td>
<td>216 (0)</td>
<td>205 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PASOK</td>
<td>75 (3)</td>
<td>113 (1)</td>
<td>102 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinaspismos</td>
<td>2 (0)</td>
<td>24 (0)</td>
<td>7 (0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be stressed that the various measures by the Greek administration to influence the vote had hardly any practical consequences. The official figures for the 3 elections give the following picture:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefecture</th>
<th>Rodopi</th>
<th>Ksanthi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Election date</td>
<td>18.06.89</td>
<td>05.11.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inscribed</td>
<td>104,822</td>
<td>113,806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total votes</td>
<td>79,960</td>
<td>87,059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>valid votes</td>
<td>76,932</td>
<td>84,674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>invalid votes</td>
<td>3,038</td>
<td>2,385</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A left wing Greek periodical remarked that of the 80,000 votes in the June elections, 10–12,000 were not permanent inhabitants of Rodopi but soldiers and public

79 These are the official results for the “3. polling station of the Maronia township”. The minority party candidates’ share of the votes is given in parenthesis. For the 18 June elections the same figures are given in Batı Trakya’nın Sesi 10–12/May-October 1989, p. 62. It should be noted that this area had a mixed population before the area came under Greek rule. According to the Turkish delegation in Lausanne, the population of Sofular in 1913 was 155 Turks and 278 Bulgarians (Dalègre 1995: Vol. II, Fiche II.1 village 61).
servants. The invalid votes were reckoned to be from the minority. In November the presence of more soldiers increased the number of votes cast from 80,000 to 87,000 (Scholiastis 82/December 1989). In order to elect an MP in the first distribution it was necessary to obtain $\frac{1}{4}$ of the valid votes. Hypothetically, this means that in order to neutralise the independent ticket, even in November the number of valid votes would have needed to increase by at least 13,838 to reach 98,512, which is 4 times the 24,628 votes obtained. In April the number of valid votes would have had to increase by the tremendous amount of 34,745 votes to reach 118,492, which is four times the 29,623 votes obtained by the independent ticket. It should also be noted that even in April the 29,623 votes for the independent ticket were 12,249 votes short of the 41,872 votes necessary for a second mandate. In other words, the vote balance in Rodopi made it difficult for the authorities to intervene in a decisive manner to influence the result. On the other hand, in April it would have been sufficient to raise the amount of valid votes in Ksanthi by a mere 1,144 in order to neutralise the independent ticket. It is ironic to ascertain that the strongest measures against the independent tickets took place in Rodopi where there was no realistic chance to obstruct it, while the situation in Ksanthi was neglected.

The Election Results in Rodopi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>İsmail Molla “Rodoplu” (Trust)</td>
<td>18,766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified (Trust)</td>
<td>5,862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmet Mehmet (PASOK)</td>
<td>1,637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabri Hüseyin (PASOK)</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mehmet Müftüoğlu (ND)</td>
<td>1,307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>İbrahim Onsunoğlu (ND)</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mustafa Mustafa (Sinaspismos)</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>28,237</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total votes cast 84,674 (ekloyikó métro 21,168). Total votes for the independent ticket 24,628. The following MPs were elected: Dimitris Tsetines (PASOK), Nikolaos Salikas (ND), and İsmail Molla “Rodoplu” (Trust).

The election result confirmed that the independent ticket was in complete command. The substitution of Rodoplu for Sadık made hardly any difference. It also became evident that Rodoplu was meant as nothing more than a stand-in for Sadık. Tahsin Salıhoğlu made a statement before the elections where he stressed that Dr. Sadık Ahmet was the leader of the Western Thrace Turkish Community. This had become clear in the 18 June elections (Bati Trakya’nın Şesi 14/January 1990). As Hâki would

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say it, Rodoplu became elected with Sadık’s votes (İleri 572/10.11.1989). Reputedly there were attempts to tamper with the result to prevent the election of the independent MP, but eventually nothing came out of it. The prospect for the party candidates remained bleak. Onsunoğlu said after the election that: “As long as there are independent Muslim candidates who are nominated by Ankara, or get the inviolable sacred mandate as they say, no party will be successful [among the minority] in the prefecture of Rodopi” (Proti 08.11.1989).

**The Election Results in Ksanthi**

Mehmet Aga (*Good Fortune*) 7,957  
Kadir Yunusoğlu (*Good Fortune*) 1,930  
Rasim Murcaoğu (*Good Fortune*) 1,007  
Mustafa Hasanoğlu (*Good Fortune*) 961  
Adem Adem (PASOK) 969  
Orhan Hacıibram (ND) 2,555  
Celâl Zeybek (ND) 400  
Nazif Ferhat (*Sinaspismos*) 283  
Total: 16,062

Total votes cast 64,402 (*ekloyikó métro* 16,100). Total votes for the independent ticket is listed as 11,732 but the individual votes add up to 11,855. The following MPs were elected: Panayiotis Sguridis (PASOK), Yeoryios Pavlakakis (ND), and Evangelos Kurtidis (ND).

In Ksanthi the result was not quite as extreme as in Rodopi. The *Good Fortune* ticket increased its vote by 2,702 (or 2,825), which must to a large degree be ascribed to the support of Ahmet Faikoğlu, and there is an analogous decrease in the total votes of PASOK. However, it should be noticed that the increase in votes for the independent ticket was significantly less than the 4,285 votes Faikoğlu had obtained in June. Still the independent ticket was far short of obtaining the necessary votes to elect an MP. ND increased its overall share of the votes, but suffered a loss of minority votes. The increase in the votes for Orhan Hacıibram is related to that Celâl Zeybek more or less withdrew from his election campaign.

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81 This has been referred to earlier in connection with the 1981 elections. A Turkish newspaper wrote: “After agreement between PASOK cadre and İsmail Molla that the latter would not support an ND government, the PASOK cadre prevented some kind of falsification of the election result, so that finally at 2 o’clock in the morning it became clear that İsmail Molla was elected MP” (*Milliyet* 07.11.1989), quoted in (Soltaridis 1990: 132–133). Discussions between Haris Dimitriadis of PASOK and Rodoplu about the problems related to his election are also mentioned in *Mesimvrimi* (07.11.1989).
The Political situation in Greece After the Elections

The elections resulted once more in a hung parliament with the following distribution of seats:

- Nea Dimokratia: 148 (46%)
- PASOK: 128 (41%)
- Sinaspismos: 21 (11%)
- Ikol.-Enal.-OOEO: 1 (.6%)
- Trust: 1 (.4%)
- Independent: 1

With this result the minority MP, İsmail Molla (Rodoplu), came in a decisive position. The combined power of PASOK and Sinaspismos, together with the independent MP Apostolos Lazaris who had been supported by these two parties, amounted to 150 seats, which was one short of absolute majority. This opened up the possibility of a government supported by Rodoplu.

Rodoplu declared from the start that he would not collaborate with ND, but only with PASOK on certain conditions (Eleftherotipia 10.11.1989). PASOK and Sinaspismos gave Lazaris the task to sound out Rodoplu. Rodoplu issued a declaration which read: “I am a deputy, member of the Greek Parliament, elected by the vote of the people of Rodopi and I will make clear my position within the framework of the Constitution. I will support the front of the Progressive Democratic powers PASOK-Sinaspismos.” (Eleftherotipia 17.11.1989). In the tense political situation it was a delicate matter to form a government depending on the vote of a minority member, who was regarded by many to be under Turkish influence. The leader of Sinaspismos, Harilaos Florakis said that “If the independent MP Molla Rodoplu declares that he is a representative of the Turkish minority in Thrace I will not discuss with him. If however he declares that he is a representative of the Muslim minority there is no problem” (O Politis 102/December 1989). In other words Florakis wanted Rodoplu to comply with the official Greek position and use the terminology of the Lausanne treaty. The nationalist rhetoric in both the minority and majority made it difficult to find a mutually acceptable position. Ekrem Hasan asserted that some people in the minority intentionally distorted the declaration by Florakis to hurt Sinaspismos. Florakis spoke only about the official status of the minority not about its roots when he called it Muslim. According to Hasan Ekrem Rodoplu refused to see Florakis in any other capacity than “MP of the Turkish minority”, while in his telegram he had referred to himself as independent MP “elected with the votes of the people of Rodopi” (Aile Birlik 14/20. 12.1989). However, there were also Greek intellectuals who reacted against the
hypersensitivity and hair-splitting arguments of the political establishment. The left wing maverick Angelos Elefantis warned against the “inherent chauvinism and racism” in the attitude towards the minority MP Rodoplu after the elections, and that they did not treat him as part of the parliament:

Nobody considered this person to be a Greek subject, fellow citizen, citizen of a country with constitutionally safeguarded rights just like all the other citizens, for nobody his political rights were the same and equal with the right of any other citizen, Muslim, Christian, Jew, atheist or Protestant in this country. For everybody, and in the conscience of the Greek people as it seems, a government who is supported with a narrow margin by a “Turk” would only be a government of national underbidding [miodosia], no one of the unprincipled political leaders had the moral courage and political uprightness to recognise the parliamentary attributes of Mr. Rodoplu, the holy and inalienable as the constitution says. Indeed the municipality council of Ksanthi, warned with a decision against forming a government supporting itself on the vote of the Muslim. Not, of course, that the leaders were obliged to support and agree with the Muslim MP. I suppose that each and everyone had many reasons both to disagree and to refuse any political co-operation with him. However, nobody within the framework of the orderly function of the democratic institutions, had the right to refuse his existence. Everybody had the duty to meet him, to recognise formally his existence, and afterwards to disagree a thousand times. But they did not have the courage to undertake the political cost of such a gesture in the savage vote hunting battle. Indeed, Mr. Florakis, leader of the Left and the left-wingers, asked him no more no less than to declare repentance, like the one which the national-minded [ethnikofrosini] demanded from himself and all the left-wingers. “Declare that you are not a Turk” and afterwards we can talk about things…

The strongest reactions against the possible participation of Rodoplu in a government came from local “nationalists” and adherents of ND who were embittered about that the parliamentary majority had eluded them once more. The Metropolitan of Maronia and Komotini, Damaskinos, was very active. Already towards the end of September he had gathered many people in significant positions from all over Thrace. They wrote a memorandum with a number of suggestions to the central authorities, including the need to carry through the trial against Sadik, and to restrict the activities of the Turkish consulate. Before the elections Damaskinos tried to rally the Christian element again in a message dated 29 October (Soltaridis 1990: 128). The news about a possible government supported by Rodoplu led to strong reactions in Komotini from people and organisations of all political inclinations (Eleftherotipia 18.11.1989). It was stressed that he was supported by the consulate and Turkish mass media during his election campaign and expressed the line of the Turkish foreign ministry. A representative article depicts the local reaction in the following manner:

The attempt by extremist circles of Ankara and their organs in Komotini to see the capital of Thrace be transformed into Beirut, with groups of Christians and Muslims fighting between them, seems to come to nothing.

82 Politis 102/December 1989, “The Muslims and us”, by Angelos Elefantis. Similar views are expressed by Professor Thanos Lipovats in his article “Ethnic identity and the problem of minorities” (Konomikos Tahidromos 03.05.1990).
83 The whole memorandum is included in Gerçek 248/30.09.1989. See also Trakya’nın Sesi 334/12.10.1989. For more details about the activities of the metropolitan during this period, see his book (Damaskinos 1989).
84 Eleftheros Tipos 18.11.1989. “Komotini is a cooking caldron - Storm about the Turkish crouch towards Andreas [Papandreu]”, by Alekos Fanfanis. Fanfanis is the editor of the local Hronos newspaper which have often featured articles which fan up anti-minority sentiments.
The Christian population of Komotini is inclined to react vigorously to the various kinds of provocation, but without committing outrages.

A large gathering at 10 o’clock on Friday evening of 1,500 persons, took place in front of the Metropolitan church where the co-ordination group of the city had a meeting.

In a resolution published at midnight in co-operation with the senior archimandrite Aristarhos Tsalparas it is stressed: “It is unacceptable that a mouthpiece of Ankara becomes lever for the political developments in our country, and gives Mr. Özal the possibility to provoke problems not only to the function of the institutions, but indeed also to our position [stási] as Greek nation. We demand the abandonment of any tasteless and dangerous plan and urge those who inspired it to finally calculate the national and not the party interests.”

On a national level the opposition against a government supported by the vote of Rodoplu was more related to party adherence, although the national dimension loomed large in the rhetoric. The authors of the danger scenarios had little credibility, because they had cried up so many times before.

Within Greece a whole para-political staff seems to have interest in cultivating the tension with danger scenarios and disinformation. State and para-state representatives apply themselves to an activity of “national awakening”, with the assistance of personalities from the central political scene. The local press projects systematically, exaggerated, an anti-Greek activity by Muslims with unknown real dimensions: suspicious provocative proclamations, savage “beating” of peace loving Greek citizens, arson etc., incite tension and cultivate hatred and fear.

The question of the relationship between the independent ticket and PASOK also had a tendency to drown in the din of partisan outcries. Again there are many indications, but no conclusive evidence. Rodoplu began his polemics against Mitsotakis early in his campaign (Gerçek 246/16.09.1989). After the elections he declared: “Our task [görev] was to take one seat away from Mitsotakis and we succeeded.” Greek commentators also remarked that while PASOK had a very nationalist policy, it was hard not to view as political that the lawyer and well known PASOK cadre Har. Dimitriadis defended Sadık in the court of appeal (Scholiastis 82/December 1989). Abdülhalim Dede stated that: “It is not necessary to say that Turkey instigates the “independent” Muslims in Thrace, when a Greek political party supports them… I declare it clearly, I denounce it and can also prove it” (Kathimerini 02.02.1990).

Eventually PASOK must have abandoned the thought of supporting a government on the vote of Rodoplu. The political cost was bound to be great as a consequence of the uproar in the press. On 21 November after four rounds of haggling, the three parties agreed to set up an all-party cabinet of politicians and technocrats. It was headed by the 85-year-old ex-governor of the Bank of Greece, Professor Ksenofon Zolotas. This would get the country through until April, when another election became

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85 Tipos tis Kiriakis 19.11.1989, “In vain the attempts to provoke tension in Rodopi”, By Alekos Fanfanis. The resolution was sent to the president, Hristos Sartzetakis.
88 Denge 16/24.11.1989. Rodoplu also declared this to the Turkish press, see APE 10.11.1989.
unavoidable because parliament had to choose a new president of Greece, which required a three-fifths majority.\textsuperscript{89}

**Sadık on Trial Again (November 1989-January 1990)**

After Sadık Ahmet’s first stint as MP came to an end he had no longer parliamentary immunity and his appeal trial was rescheduled to take place in Thessaloniki on 29.11.1989. The same forces which supported him the previous December were mobilised again. The AYK/YK decided 24 November in Ksanthi that the trial of Sadık was a minority trial, and asked the whole minority to be present. The YK also proposed a three days school boycott as a protest (\textit{Gerçek} 249/28.11.1989; \textit{Güven} 13/25.11.1989). Sadık issued an announcement:

**WESTERN THRACE TURKISH MINORITY**

On 29 January 1988 you went out in the streets because they refused your turkishness. You protected your dignity [\textit{benlik}] in front of thousands of policemen. On 18 June 1989 you voted for the first time for yourself and elected an MP who represents you and only you. You made your presence known to the whole world. While they wanted to extinguish you, you proved that you exist. The obstacles and the pressures made you stronger and reinforced you. You recovered your personality [\textit{benlik}]. Now you have learnt what it means to be a community [\textit{toplum}], now you have learnt what it means to demand your rights as a group. I know very well that from now on you will not hesitate before any obstacle.

My dear co-nationals [soydaş]: The conditions by which we took part in the elections on 5 November are well known. We know what kinds of games were made to make us dissolve. But we, the Turkish community in Western Thrace, instead of dissolving, we swore an oath both at the time of voting as well as earlier never to dissolve, and attained these happy days. Now You have once more the opportunity to teach a lesson 29 November in the Thessaloniki Court to those who did not learn a lesson from 29 January 1988, 18 June 1989 and 5 November 1989. I am sure that you will once again make known to the whole world what we are and what oppression we suffer.

My Co-nationals: We are no longer alone. The whole world, as far as they believe in humanism and human rights are with us.

My Co-nationals who go from success to success: We are together again in Thessaloniki 29 November. Our goal is Thessaloniki.

We no longer recognise any barrier in our struggle. Success belongs to us.

22 November 1989, Dr. Sadık Ahmet\textsuperscript{90}

The trial was very well covered in the Turkish press. In a demonstration in the Taksim square of Istanbul, covered by Turkish television, a representative of the solidarity organisation (BTTDD) said: “With the success of Sadık Ahmet, the just voice of the Western Thrace Turks was heard all over the world.” (\textit{Eleftherotipia} 23.11.1989). The solidarity associations (BTTDD) mobilised and protested by laying down a black wreath at the Greek consulate. It was said that “29 November a lesson will be given to Greek justice” and “150,000 Turks are sentenced in the person of Sadık Ahmet” (\textit{Türkiye} 28.11.1989). A Greek correspondent reported from Istanbul that with small gatherings which were promoted systematically by the Turkish state mass media certain circles tried to make the trial of the former MP Sadık Ahmet into an

\textsuperscript{89} See, \textit{The Economist} November 25, 1989

issue. Three Turkish MPs came to attend the trial: Cemal Özbilen of ANAP, İrfan Gürpinar of SHP and Yaşar Topçu from DYP (Eleftherotipia 28.11.1989). There were also international observers present: Helena Cook of Amnesty International, the German lawyer Dr. Hans Heltman representing an organisation for protecting minorities, and the lawyers Ursula Baudner and Dr. Rudolf from the German Green party (Rizospastis 28.11.1989). They had been mobilised by the solidarity associations in Germany (Güven 13/25.11.1989). About 500 Muslims came with busses from Komotini and flooded the courtroom. The trial itself was postponed. A Greek newspaper reported that Sadık “behaved provocatively” at the trial. He declared: “We regard ourselves and we are a Turkish minority. Every person has his descent, we have too, and nobody can change it neither with signatures nor laws…” The three Turkish MPs declared that they had heard about the problem of Sadık and came on their own initiative to defend the human rights which were violated in his person (Kathimerini 30.11.1989).

In the wake of the trial we see various attempts at soul searching by commentators in Greek newspapers. In a leading article in Proti (02.12.1989), Spiros Kuzinopoulos took a critical look at the developments. His article raised two problems: 1) The open attempts by Ankara to foment a minority problem in Greece which he compared to what happened in Bulgaria. 2) The “serious to criminal mistakes” by the Greek governments in their treatment of “about 120,000 of our compatriots of Muslim descent and religion.” In the last part of the article he was quite explicit in his criticism of the way the minority had been treated:

Why, as we mentioned earlier, did the two large parties of the country which alternated at the steering wheel of power for the last 15 years commit serious to criminal mistakes, which led the minority problem of Thrace to this sensitive point. Mistakes which the Greek economy will pay very dearly today and which the country may be will pay for tomorrow if there is no change of attitude, free from opportunist nationalism.

Let PASOK and ND reflect now. Was it right of them that for years did not allow the Muslims of Thrace to improve their living conditions? When they prevented them not only from buying Houses and land, but even agricultural machines? And whom did this attitude finally benefit, when because of the above treatment almost all the Muslims send the money they can spare to Turkish banks? And only the valuable currency which it transfers to Turkey is an incentive which should trouble all those who behaved narrow-mindedly and thoughtlessly towards the minority.

And what did they accomplish in the last analysis with their attitude: To give the possibility of Ankara to do its demagogy on this issue, spreading butter on her bread. Who is it who is struggling for the human rights of the Greek Muslims? The Turkish Government. Which for decades did not give a damn about their fate, which haggled with them in various Davos meetings, but which also suddenly “remembered” them to have them as balance against the pressures of the Greek side regarding the occupation of North Cyprus.

If this mistaken policy had not been applied by the Greek governments up until today, the various political adventurers who attempt to cut the Muslim element off from the Greek political parties and turn them towards the alleged “independents” would not have been able to find fertile ground and to have the minority as a puppet for the aspirations of the Turkish foreign policy.

92 Eleftherotipia 30.11.1989. According to Güven (14.05.12.1989) there were thousands who went to Thessaloniki for the trial.
That is why the government and the parties must immediately and collectively look at the issue of our Muslim fellow citizens. Who are entitled of assistance and concern and are in the position to isolate any of Ankara’s mentors.

The perception of how Turkish policy had changed was well presented in an article by the Greek Istanbul correspondent Alkis Kurkulas titled: “Turkey ‘made official’ the provocation, The Minister of Defence speaks openly about oppression of the minority in Thrace…” This represents the view of Greek diplomatic sources in Turkey.

Ankara insists on creating an “issue” around the Muslim minority in Western Thrace, continuing its interference in the internal affairs of Greece, while she seems now to connect the development of the Greek-Turkish dialogue with the acceptance of her demands around the issue of the minority.

With declarations by the Defence Minister Safa Giray, the Turkish government is now putting itself openly in charge of the campaign it has started lately in the state mass media about alleged “oppression” of the Muslim minority of Western Thrace. This campaign promoted opinions on the state owned television and radio which until today were promoted by extremist groups.

Diplomatic circles in Ankara point out that the campaign concerning Western Thrace which was developing underground during the last year, has particularly intensified after the election of the two so called independent MPs of Western Thrace in the last two elections, and they are worrying about the course Turkish policy is taking now.

Diplomatic sources point out that the demands projected by the Turkish mass media, have purely political character and do not have any relationship with the measures foreseen by the Lausanne Treaty for the protection of the Greek minority in Istanbul, Gökçeada and Bozcaada and the Muslim minority of Western Thrace.

“The way in which Ankara set about to create a Western Thrace issue puts in danger even the small things we have accomplished in our relations up until today”, is the estimation of diplomatic sources.

“Our government is determined to protect the rights of our co-nationals [omoethnís] in Western Thrace, in the most efficient way”, declared the Turkish Defence Minister Mr. Safa Giray, answering a question of parliamentary control which the opposition addressed.

“I assure in front of the parliament”, said the Turkish minister, “that we will continue our solidarity towards the minority of Western Thrace and we will continue our attempts both with Greece and in international fora”.

The Turkish minister called finally on Greece to comply with the responsibilities deriving from the “Lausanne Treaty, from international agreements and the European Community” (Kathimerini 06.12.1989).

Further trials of Sadık Ahmet were scheduled to take place 25.01, 08.02, and 15.02.1990. The strong engagement of Turkey was now evident to everybody. In early January Sadık Ahmet visited Ankara and met with the president of parliament Kaya Erdem, foreign minister Mesut Yılmaz, SHP leader Erdal İnönü, and DYP leader Süleyman Demirel. In this connection a Turkish journalist hailed him as “The symbol of the Western Thrace Turkish minority.” It was claimed that his only crime was that he had called the minority Turkish.93 This echoes the arguments used by the press organ of the Trust ticket, which claimed that its only crime was to call the minority Turkish and inform the public about the discrimination. Before the trial Sadık continued with his slogans about the Turkish character of the minority. He mentioned that the judge in the first trial had said that part of the minority had Turkish origin, but that there were also Pomaks. Sadık stressed that in Thrace there was only a Turkish min-

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93 Milliyet 08.01.1990, “Plaintiff from Athens”, by Sema Emiroğlu.
riority (Güven 19/16.01.1990). He claimed that the Greek authorities could not deny the minority’s race, and this would be proved 25 January (Güven 20/23.01.1990).

The trial on 25 January 1990 was related to the behaviour of the candidates of the Trust ticket during the campaign before the November elections. Sadık Ahmet, İbrahim Şerif, and İsmail Molla (Rodoplu) were all charged, but Rodoplu avoided prosecution because of his parliamentary immunity. They were accused of slander and misinformation, since they had said that the minority candidates for the Greek parties had created an atmosphere of terror, and of dividing the population and disrupting the public peace. The prosecution against them was related to the proclamation they circulated before the elections. A local newspaper presented their offence as follows:

This piece, according to the accusation, was written with the goal of creating mutual discord between the two cohabiting elements, invoking false events of discrimination and oppression against the minority, using the term “Turk”, “Turkish minority”, “Turkish community”, referring to the Muslims as Turks and not as Greeks, as is anticipated by the Lausanne Treaty (Hronos 23.01.1990).

Again there was great mobilisation before the trial. A significant number of Turkish politicians and lawyers, Turkish press, a German lawyer, as well as a Dutch television team came to observe the procedures. By now, part of the Christian element also became active. A local newspaper referred to Sadık as “anti-Greek” and “troublemaker”, and the scheduled rallies as the work of extremists (Hronos 24.01.1990). On the day of the trial a large number of Muslims had come in from the villages (according to Greek sources 5,000 while according to minority sources 10,000), including women in traditional Muslim robes. They surrounded the court building and shouted “We are Turks” (Hronos 25.01.1990; Güven 21/28.01.1990). The trial took place in a very tense atmosphere. The Muslims were exasperated by the discriminatory measures they had been subjected to, while part of the Christian population had become agitated by the provocative behaviour of the independent ticket. Helsinki Watch, which makes use of the report of the President of the Istanbul Bar Association, gives a very negative picture of the Greek judges’ behaviour. At times it employs a highly suggestive language such as: “The presiding judge viewed this turmoil [of the crowd in the courtroom] calmly, with a smile on his face”. Or as a Turkish publication phrased it: “The

94 For details see (Siesby 1990), and (Whitman 1990: 18).
95 The proclamation as reprinted in Geück 252/23.12.1989, has been presented earlier in connection with the November elections.
96 Geück 257/24.04.1990; 258/09.05.1990. More specifically, among those present were the president of the Turkish bar association Önder Sav, the president of the Istanbul bar association Turgut Kazan together with board members, the president of the Ankara bar association Erzan Erzurumluoğlu, the German lawyer Hans Heltman, the Turkish MPs Cemal Özbilir (ANAP), Yaşar Topçu (DYP), and İrfan Gürpınar (SHP), and the Turkish General Consul Kemal Güür.
97 (Whitman 1990: 19–20). Turgut Kazan would later say in a televised round table discussion that the trial of Sadık and Şerif looked like a play from the middle ages, and not the work of a serious state (Anonymous 1990).
98 (ibid.). In a later Turkish publication this has been given additional colour: “As to the presiding judge, he watched this turmoil calmly, with a sarcastic smile on his face” (INAF 1992: 46).
ugly mimics in their faces and their despising manner of speaking with Sadık Ahmet and İbrahim Şerif were pointed out in the reports of the observers” (INAF 1991: 9).

The Helsinki Watch report termed the trial in January 1990 as “perhaps the most egregious Greek action denying the ethnic identity of the Turkish minority” (Whitman 1990: 17). It mentioned further that: “When the defendants told the court that they were of Turkish origin, the judges shouted back, ‘Then why don’t you go to Turkey.’” (Whitman 1990: 19). In this case, Helsinki Watch has picked up a Turkish misrepresentation. In the trial the defendants used every opportunity to stress their Turkish descent (Eleftherotipia 26.01.1990). The judge asked Sadık Ahmet if he was a Greek citizen (éllinas politis), with Greek citizenship/nationality (ellenikí ithayénia). Sadık was not a particularly reflected person and must have been confused about the implications of the terms, so he answered no. Sadık was also able to gain some support from Christian witnesses. The politician Nikos Fakiridis (Sinaspismos), said in his testimony that the independents’ declaration was within the framework of exaggerations in a pre-election period. It was false but not dangerous (Hronos 25.01.1990). The four defence lawyers (all from the minority), withdrew because they were not able to change a judge whose integrity they questioned (Gerçek 258/09.05.1990). Sadık Ahmet took over the defence himself, while Ibrahim Şerif had to settle for a secondary role because of his poor command of Greek (İleri 582/02.02.1990).

Eventually, both men were found innocent of slander and misinformation, but guilty of promoting discord and hostility between the two cohabiting elements under the Penal Code, Article 192. They were sentenced to 18 month in prison and the loss of political rights for 3 years. After the trial they were sent immediately to a prison in Thessaloniki to serve their sentences.

The conviction led to strong reactions from Ankara which called the trial a parody and a “political trial” (Makedonia 31.01.1990). The Turkish Foreign Minister, Mesut Yılmaz, described the conviction as the action of the Greek state and not the Greek judiciary (Makedonia 27.01.1990). He summoned the Greek ambassador in Turkey and protested about the trial. The Greek side perceived this as interference in its internal affairs, and as an attempt to create a crisis between the countries (To Vima 28.01.1990). Some 30 persons of the BTTDD demonstrated outside the Greek Consulate in Istanbul with Turkish mass media present (Makedonia 27.01.1990). There were also protests from the İpekçi organisation against the conviction.

Although Greece would not accept Ankara’s protests, there were many critical voices. Authoritative circles in PASOK considered Sadık’s sentence to be exaggerated (Niki

99 *Hronos* 25.01.1990. It should be noted that Erik Siesby too mentions in his report that the defendants had called themselves “Turkish nationals” in court (Siesby 1990).

100 *Proti* 29.01.1990. The İpekçi organisation, named after the editor of the Turkish newspaper *Milliyet* who was assassinated, includes members from both countries and tries to further Greek-Turkish friendship and co-operation.
A Greek journalist blasted the conviction for surpassing every limit of strictness and found it strange if not absurd. He advocated that the three judges should be removed from the sensitive area of Thrace.\footnote{Prot\"i 29.01.1990, “Greek butter on Turkish bread”, by Spiros Kuzinopulos.} In a summit meeting a few days later, the prime minister and the political leaders concurred in their estimation that the severe sentence and imprisonment of the two Muslim candidates was wrong \cite{Eleftherotipia 01.02.1990}. The involvement of top rank politicians in both Greece and Turkey shows that the trial of Sadık and Şerif became politicised on every level in both countries.

The “Mini-Pogrom” of 29 January 1990

In Thrace the situation continued to be tense. A local Greek-language newspaper described the atmosphere after the trial in the following manner:

A little later there were episodes by the offices of Güven and Akın where 500 hot-blooded Christians cried slogans “This is Greece”, “Turkism will not pass here”. During the episodes a Dutch cameraman cursed Greece and Greek democracy and was chased by indignant citizens.

The decision of the court was accepted with satisfaction by the public opinion and strengthened the belief in the state apparatus in an area where the confidence and sense of security of the inhabitants had been shaken \cite{Hronos 26.01.1990}.

The large assembly of Muslims present at the trial of Sadık and Şerif was perceived by many Christians as a display of strength by the minority. The minority had undoubtedly legitimate grievances, but its leadership opted for an approach which by most of the majority Christian population could only be understood as a provocation within the cultural context of Thrace. The minority’s behaviour was partly a reaction to Greek discrimination and refusal to accept the Turkish character of the minority, partly related to the internal power struggle in the minority, which made some politicians attempt to surpass each other in Turkish nationalism. The minority leadership in charge had very little experience with Greek politics. Since Turkey had turned into the determining force, it also became more important to communicate with Turkey than Greece. Another factor was of course the erratic behaviour of Sadık. There was no longer any sincere attempts of communication with the Greek authorities, but confrontation and provocation. The fact that there had been no dynamic reactions earlier, must be ascribed to the lack of contact between the two population elements. Ibram Onsunoglu had of course warned repeatedly in the past. Knowing the situation from the inside he was able to detect at an early stage that the minority’s political struggle had taken a dangerous course.

By now tension had built up in the Christian population element and the stage was set for a belated reaction. At this time there was also an unfortunate incident at the public hospital in Komotini. A 49-year old Muslim farmer, Hasan Salih, got involved in a heated argument about the trial with a 52 year old customs officer, Angelos
Solakidis. In the end the farmer hit Solakidis several times on the head with a metal stool (Eleftherotipia 29.01.1990). Solakidis fell into coma.

The AYK had decided to commemorate the demonstrations of 29 January 1988. In reaction to this a group, which have never been heard of either before or after, named “Thracian Pacifists” (Thrakes irinistes), announced a gathering on the same day and in the same location. An obvious attempt to counter and neutralise the scheduled gathering.

“Greek Christians and Greek Muslims, the organs of Ankara are planning on 29 January 1990, on the occasion of the religious ceremony mevlit, a meeting in the Old Mosque [Eski Cami] (across the public market), to…celebrate the anniversary of the anti-Greek demonstration of 29 January 1988. We invite:

All the Christians and Muslims to a reconciliatory gathering and participation in the holy ceremony. Let us all together struggle for unity and the isolation of the agents of the Turkish Consulate, who attempt to sow discord and hatred.

Let the Old Mosque which the Greek Administration restored to Islam on 18 July 1913, since the Bulgarians had transformed it to a church, become the symbol of unity-reconciliation and information of the misled Muslim brothers.

All Greeks to the Old Mosque in Komotini Monday 29 January 1990, 5 o’clock p.m. Long live Greece. Long live Thrace. THRACIAN PACIFISTS” (Hronos 27.01.1990).

As early as 10 o’clock in the morning of 29 January a group of Christians gathered outside the Old Mosque and tried to plant a Greek flag on it. They were prevented by the police (Kathimerini 30.01.1990). In the afternoon between 6 and 7, when the Muslims had gathered for the mevlit, the Christians were told that Solakidis had died (he was clinically dead, but expired a few weeks later). After this, violence broke out, and some people started to break shop-windows belonging to Muslims. They shouted slogans like “Everybody in Athens is unworthy”, “This is Greece”, “They are bums in Athens”, “All the party leaders are cowards”, etc. Some people continued to destroy shops and were aggressive towards journalists (Eleftherotipia 30.01.1990). There are serious reasons to question the integrity of the Greek press reports of this event. The reports are slanted, portraying the affair as a spontaneous outbreak of violence, and play down the extent of the damages.102 The main exception to this was a reportage in a left wing periodical.

If we had not gone to Komotini a few days after the episodes, if we had not seen the damages and spoken with the eye-witnesses to the events on 29 January, we would have had the impression that it was a brawl between extremist “Christians” and “Muslims” which was dissolved by police intervention. That was the content of all the dispatches and reports in the Greek mass media.

However, in reality what happened in Komotini was something completely different. The “thousands of provocative” Muslims who came in from the surrounding area were in reality less than 300, who dispersed quickly when they were confronted with a superior number of Christian nationalists [ethnikofrones]. The counter demonstration was organised by the ghost-organisation “Thrachian pacifists” and was supposed to be a “meeting of reconciliation”. The confrontation between the two groups was limited for the simple reason that the Muslims quickly dispersed and there was no “opponent”. Some of them found refuge in the building of the Muslim youth association. Passing easily through the police cordon, the gathered Christians flooded the area

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102 For typical examples see the reportage “Restless night in Komotini”, by Simeon Soltaridis in Eleftherotipia 30.01.1990, or “Bloody episodes in Thrace, Clashes between Christians and Muslims in Komotini-Intervention by the riot police”, by Melahrini Martidu, in Kathimerini 30.01.1990. Both journalists live in Komotini.
around the offices of the youth association. The Turkish market with its small shops are exactly behind. The “common anger” did of course not delay the breaking of unprotected shop windows. With the general slogans “leave”, “they should learn to lift their head” [na máthun na sikhónun kefáli] and other similar ones, a few groups of ultra right nationalist elements destroyed until the afternoon the small shops. Known party cadres, people close to the Metropolitan, and “important staff” [iperesiaki parágyentes] of the ministries observed and took part in the wretched procession.

The others, the real mob, followed the protagonists without hesitation. The destruction was in many cases accompanied by pillage. The pillage made no discrimination: from jewelers, to kiosks and snack bars. The attitude of the police underlined the nightmarish picture of the city. Police and MEA [special units] from Komotini, Ksanthi, Kavala, Serres, Drama, Aleksandropoli and Athens (excuse us if we forgot somebody) did not only restrict themselves to following discretely and protecting the vandals, but in many cases they encouraged the hesitant to participate!

The fact that this enormous police force was unable to save even a single shop from the destructive fury, together with the fact that the destruction spread to the whole city and lasted many hours confirms the hypothesis that the “mini-pogrom” (as the Muslim politician ‹bram Onsuno lu called it) took place if not by the order, at least with the tolerance of the Greek authorities.103

It was clear that the events had been planned in advance by the fact that the shops belonging to Christians had stickers with the Greek flag on the shop-windows. Those who did not have a sticker had written “Greek” on a piece of paper. Other had sprayed the window blue-white or put an entire flag in a visible spot. All the shops belonging to Christians were untouched while all those belonging to Muslims were damaged (Scholiastis 85/March 1990).

Naturally, nobody was willing to take responsibility for the outrages afterwards. There were also widely diverging accounts of the role played by persons in central positions. For example, the Metropolitan Damaskinos, who views himself as the leader of the Christian reaction to the “hecklers of Ankara”, and has become a rallying point of the anti-minority forces. On 29 January he was the main speaker to the crowd of Christians. A reportage in a major newspaper mentions only that Damaskinos was called to calm the spirits when the situation got out of hand (Kathimerini 30.01.1990). However, the left wing periodical stressed that the cassette with the events, as it was transmitted “live” by a local radio station gave a different version. Here the Metropolitan was heard to egg on the angry nationalists. Afterwards he brushed off the event as nothing important: “Maybe somebody went and broke some shop window to blow off steam but without pillage and without breaking the head of any Muslim” (Scholiastis 85/March 1990). There is no question that the Metropolitan viewed the Muslims as a foreign element which ought to disappear, and he did not hesitate to give the “prescription” to the journalists: “They should go little by little, and that would be the end of them. The Christian element in Turkey has decreased, it must decrease here, too…” (ibid.). However, Damaskinos represented only the tip of the iceberg. The journalists stressed that: “The slogan ‘out with the Turks’ which those gathered in Komotini shouted does not only affect extreme nationalist tendencies but is the innermost (not admitted) or admitted goal of the dominant political forces” (ibid.). The journalists also

questioned the role of several persons in key positions: “Anyway, the presence of the state with all its mechanisms was apparent on the eve of the episodes, it was indeed sealed with the hasty visit of the minister of public order Mr. [Dimitrios] Manikas and higher police officials. The content of the meetings the Foreign minister Mr. [Andonis] Samaras had during his visit to Thrace on Saturday 27 January remains unclear. […] It is difficult for us to believe that the Foreign minister visits an area which “smells gun powder” (according to the newspapers), two days before a critical confrontation only to occupy himself with cutting the pie [political adaptation of a New Year’s Eve custom] in the local ND youth organisation” (ibid.). Within the minority, there were in particular suspicions concerning Samaras’ role.104

As for the actual destruction, there are no authoritative figures available. A Greek newspaper mentioned that about 200 Muslim shops had damages. 20 persons were arrested and prosecuted, mostly Christians.105 Right after the events, Turkey claimed that 19 people from the minority were injured (Reuters 30.01.1990). According to the Helsinki Watch report more that 400 businesses belonging to minority members were damaged and 21 people were injured (Whitman 1990: 20). In the case of the injured it is of course difficult to have exact figures, since some people who were hurt may not have received medical treatment. However, it seems that there have been no really serious injuries.106 According to Helsinki Watch, the government said that it would reimburse the shopkeepers for the damages, but nothing happened (Whitman 1990: 21). However, when the Turkish foreign ministry raised the question of indemnities it received the answer: “The Greek law gives every Greek citizen, without exception, the right to take his case to court to correct damages he may have suffered. And the verdict of the courts, according to the constitution, is always carried out by the Greek state” (Eleftherotipia 02.03.1990). In this connection Hâki mentioned later that only 7 of those who had their shops destroyed took their cases to court. The others “forwarded their cases to Sadik and God” (Ileri 864/24.01.1997).

After the events several leading politicians in Athens began to question seriously what was going on in Thrace. Most notably, a group from the Sinaspismos party, led by Maria Damanaki, decided to visit Thrace and take a look at the situation.107 The episodes which took place in connection with this visit indicate the power of the local anti-minority forces, the insecurity of the Christian population, and its mistrust of

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104 See the article by Mehmet Nuri in Ileri 716/07.05.1993, which also deals with later visits by Samaras.
105 Ta Nea 31.01.1990. Neos Fileleftheros 3/March 1990 has many photographs of the damages.
106 Among the more serious injuries it could be mentioned that Mehmet Emin Aga was struck on the head. There is a much published photograph of his head after the incident (INAF 1992: 47). The Helsinki Watch report refers to the incident when he was hurt, but calls him “Aga Mehmet Muftiya” (Whitman 1990: 21).
107 The group consisted of the vice-speaker of parliament Maria Damanaki, The MP Fidias Velikis, and a leading Sinaspismos cadre from Thessaloniki, Stelios Nestoras.
central authorities. In the morning of 31 January the Sinaspismos group visited the Muslim shops in Komotini and asked about the damage they had suffered. This led to the reaction of Christian inhabitants who told her “to look first at the abandonment of the area, the arbitrary policy exercised by the state in Western Thrace, and to visit the dying Angelos Solakidis who was hit by a Muslim, and only then investigate the problems of the Muslims” (Hronos 31.01.1990). Rumours circulated that Damanaki had come to speak in a meeting in favour of Sadik. When the Sinaspismos representatives crossed the central square of Komotini for a meeting with local politicians, a group of 20–30 people followed and hurled base curses at them saying “We only want Papadopoulos” (the junta leader), “Only Papadopoulos looked after us”. There were slogans such as “Maria Damanaki, you sell out Thrace”, “Maria Damanaki, you betrayed Thrace”, and someone came with a black ferace (Muslim woman garment) with the inscription “Maria Damanaki, a gift from Thrace”. During the meeting with the local politicians a mob gathered outside the town hall, and staged a loud demonstration:

Through the duration of the riots they shouted “only the junta looked after us”, they cursed them [the Sinaspismos group] basely, threatened them and succeeded in mobilising 2–3 thousand inhabitants (among them two priests) who surrounded the town hall, screaming and throwing eggs, stones and other objects against the windows, damaging the building and creating an explosive atmosphere in the centre of the city (Eleftherotipia 01.02.1990).

Outside the town hall rumours circulated that in the morning Damanaki had gone around the market embracing the Muslims while crying and promising indemnification (Rizospastis 01.02.1990). The Sinaspismos group had to literally flee from the town hall after the meeting, under police protection. The local influence of the Metropolitan Damaskinos is evident from what happened in the wings. When the episodes against Damanaki started, Christians called Damaskinos and asked for the permission to ring all the church bells to rally the Christians and drive Damanaki to Athens. On the other hand, the police also asked for his help to calm down the crowd. “The Metropolitan, at ease in his office, recommended composure in every direction, however without neglecting to speak about the “provocative” presence of Damanaki (Eleftherotipia 01.02.1990).

In an announcement afterwards Sinaspismos denounced “the organised episodes of para-state groups.” It expressed its deep concern about the activities of these groups, which with chauvinist slogans and provocative behaviour strove to undermine the peaceful coexistence of Christians and Muslims, serving those circles on both sides which cultivated the tension and fanaticism. Finally, it stressed that the interest of the people of the area lay in fraternisation and economic development. The Sinaspis-

108 Rizospastis 01.02.1990. This episode made the newspaper write a leading article titled “One way street”, which besides blaming Ankara also attempted some self criticism concerning the developments. For a translation, see Appendix 5, text 31.
109 Kathimerini 01.02.1990; Eleftherotipia 01.02.1990. Estimations suggest that the hard-core nationalists make up 25–30% of the Christian population in the area.
mos MPs proposed to prime minister Zolotas that a group of ministers should go to Thrace immediately and take a look at the situation.

Afterwards, in an interview to a local radio station, both the Metropolitan Damas-kinos and the mayor Andreas Stoyannidis reacted to the way the Greek state television (ET-2) portrayed the events. In particular, Stoyannidis could not swallow the fact that those who assembled outside the town hall had been characterised ultra-right and para-state groups. He stressed that he found this characterisation unacceptable.

The mayor of Komotini, Mr. Stoyannidis, said among other things: “I, too, was informed about the characterisations. The approach of the broadcast was not correct. It was unacceptable, and it is not permissible to inform in such a manner. The persons were neither ultra-right, nor anarchists, nor alienated. They were shop owners, family heads from all walks of life, from all parties.

Particularly adherents of PASOK and ND, who came here not to condemn Mrs. Damanaki, but to condemn the procedure. Of course the indignation consisted of many other physiological traumas, disillusion etc. and Mrs. Damanaki and her followers happened to be there and became the target of their frustrations… […]

We are peaceful people, and look, now they tell us that we have even para-state organisations. A tragic mistake. They have no idea either about the atmosphere which prevails here, or how the people are living, or the particularities, or the conditions… I have been mayor for twelve years and have never been asked about my opinions on the minority issue. They never asked us” (Eleftherotipia 03.02.1990).

Similar views are expressed by a “concerned citizen”:

The subject of Thrace does not allow for the slightest wrong movement. Those who appear in the fashion of Mrs. Damanaki and attempt to make Democracy lessons play with fire. The people of Thrace is democratic and some gentlemen who saw ultra-right elements in the protest in Komotini must be blind. They were simple people, who defended their rights independently of their political or party position.110

These examples do not only display a peculiar sense of democracy. They also display the lack of trust and the communication problems which exist within Greece. In such an atmosphere is it easy to sabotage any attempts at a serious discussion by setting out rumours or staging all sorts of provocation.

The events in Komotini also led to an important initiative by the highest political leadership. Two days later, 31 January, the prime minister Ksenofon Zolotas convened for the first time a conference about the minority issue with the leaders of the three parties represented in parliament (Konstandinos Mitsotakis, Andreas Papandreu, and Harilaos Florakis). The defence minister Tzannis Tzannetakis and foreign minister Andonis Samaras were also present. Two bureaucrats presented proposals for a new minority politic (Notaras 1995: 53). In the meeting it was also agreed that the problems of Thrace could first of all be solved by a rapid development of the area (Notaras 1995: 54). This became soon the catchword on everybody’s lips. The proposals about the minority were approved by all the political leaders. The document-agreement

The Muslim minority of Greek Thrace was not published officially, but was later leaked to the press. The suggestions of the document represented a certain liberalisation of the minority regime. Among the more striking features was the abolishment of the “administrative harassment” of the minority. However, this was not proposed because of any principal objection to the method, but because it had not brought the desired results. On the other hand, much of the document was characterised by the authoritarian features which have been part and parcel of Greek minority policy. It was primarily concerned with controlling the political activity of the minority, limiting the Turkish influence, and limiting the population growth and land ownership of the minority. This attitude to the minority was duly criticised by a Greek journalist, who ended his comment as follows:

As for the secrecy surrounding the meeting of the 3 leaders and the non-publication of the document-agreement, we would like to point out that this, too, follows the wrong track. Fortified behind the argument that any publicity of this national issue can become the object of exploitation by the other side, it basically takes the claims and historical development of a group of Greek citizens out of the rules of the democratic game. And if Turkey, as a kind of parliamentary dictatorship of the generals, is in a position to handle with a similar medieval fashion its own minority problems, we think that there should not in any way prevail “envious” feelings and even more “tendencies to copy” this Turkish model in Greece.

The episodes also led to new diplomatic tension between Greece and Turkey. The Greek Foreign Department and the political leaders rejected the strong criticism of Ankara and replied that it should consider its own responsibilities. At the same time Turkey tried to internationalise the issue. 31 January the Foreign Minister, Mesut Yılmaz, sent a letter to the UN and other international bodies urging them to help protect human rights in Thrace. In addition, Yılmaz warned the Greek ambassador in Ankara, “if the episodes do not stop immediately, there will be retaliations against Greek property in Istanbul and even against the Patriarchate” (To Vima 04.02.1990). In Greece, the activities of Ankara were perceived as an attempt to take advantage of the episodes by trying to establish a relationship of “protection” towards the minority (Kathimerini 31.01.1990). When the Turkish consul in Komotini stepped up his activities, Athens requested from Ankara to recall him on 1 February. Ankara refused, and he was expelled the next day. Turkey retaliated by expelling the Greek consul in Istanbul.

According to the Helsinki Watch report: “Following the violence, the Turkish consul in Komotini, Kemal Gür, was declared persona non grata and expelled from

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111 The document first appeared in Scholiastis 85/March 1990, with extensive comments. It was later republished in the major newspaper Eleftherotypia 02.03.1990. See Appendix text, 32 for full translation.
112 Dimitris Psarras in Scholiastis 85/March 1990.
113 Pontiki 02.02.1990 has the full announcement by the Turkish Foreign Ministry, which blamed the Greek government for the attack against the minority. For an overview of the events, see Pontiki 09.02.1990. See also Reuters 30.01.1990; 31.01.1990, and Xinhua News Agency 31.01.1990. These and subsequent events were covered quite extensively by the international press.
114 See Reuters 31.01.1990. The aspects related to internationalisation will be dealt with in detail elsewhere. The letter was reprinted in (Yılmaz 1990).
Greece for referring to the Turkish minority as ‘our kinsmen’” (Whitman 1990: 21). This does not make much sense if it is not seen in context. The subject should be treated more carefully, especially since this was the greatest diplomatic crisis related to the minority. The Greek side reacted to a letter by the General Consul to the prefect of Rodopi, which was allegedly composed in a provocative style. On the one hand he spoke about his “kinsmen”, on the other he rendered the Greek authorities “responsible for his safety” in the event of episodes during the visit he announced he would do to the damaged minority shops. A more precise account of the Greek concerns—within the logic of Greek-Turkish diplomatic relations—is given by a Greek journalist:

This letter by the Turkish general consul raised first of all fundamental questions of principle and order. What happened in Komotini was clearly an internal Greek matter and belonged to the exclusive jurisdiction of the Greek State, as it concerns Greek citizens (i.e. persons with Greek citizenship) and consequently there was no foundation for the right of intervention by an official representative of a third country (as no citizen of this third country took part in the riots). And only Mr. Gür’s representations, with a letter, constituted in itself an illegal and unacceptable intervention in the internal affairs of Greece, in violation of international law.

Besides this, the term “kinsmen” [omoyenís], which the Turkish consul used, was illegal and unacceptable because the Lausanne Treaty speaks of Muslims, using religion as exclusive criterion. Justifiably, because a large part of the inhabitants of Thrace with Muslim faith had never any national or racial relationship with the Turkish nation. Using the term “kinsmen”, the Turkish general consul attempted on the one hand to “register” the Muslims of Komotini as having “Turkish descent”, on the other to create a precedent, with the obvious goal to lay the foundation for, be it “customary”, the possibility of intervention by the Turkish state in the internal matters of our country and its “tutelage” of the Muslims in Greek Thrace, in the form of quasi “Capitulations”…115

In other words, Greece did not expel the consul mainly because of his destabilising activity against Greece, but to confirm its sovereign right and its intention to stick to the letter of the international agreements.116 Greece did not want to escalate the confrontation and considered the possibility of not proceeding to the expulsion of Kemal Gür if only he would rectify the two inadmissible points in his letter to the prefect of Rodopi concerning “kinsmen” and the provocative “warning” to the Greek authorities.

However, the developments which took place after Friday noon [02.02.1990] convinced that the goal of Ankara was not to ease the crisis by finding compromise solutions for the sake of appearances, but to humiliate the Greek government which is supported by all the Greek political parties. Those were the reasons which made the government decide to expel Mr. Kemal Gür.

Authoritative sources in Athens point out that the Greek government should not back down if there is further escalation of the diplomatic dispute with Turkey, because experience has proved that the Greek consulates in Turkey only conserve some historical memories while the corresponding Turkish ones are centres of internal de-stabilisation of Greece.117

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115 Kathimerini 11.02.1990, “More active stand against Ankara”, by Kon. P. Kalligas. Or, as another journalist would phrase it: “The diplomatic crisis of last week was provoked by the attempt of Turkish diplomacy to enact and register its essential conquests in W. Thrace. After imposing its own political leadership on the minority last June, Kemal Gür came to claim the recognition of his success by the Greek administration” (Kathimerini 11.02.1990, “With the minorities as weapons”, by Alkis Kerkulas).

116 As mentioned earlier, Kapsis had wanted to expel the consul because of his behaviour before the June elections. He called the expulsion a correct but belated decision (Kapsis 1990: 147). See also the statement by Kapsis in Ethnos 05.02.1990.

The Greek Foreign Minister, Andonis Samaras, made the following declaration:

“From the meeting of our ambassador in Ankara with Mr. Yılmaz and from the subsequent announcement by the Turkish Foreign Department, it is clear that Turkey insists on characterising the minority members as “kinsmen” [omoyeniís] or—with the equivalent term as “citizens belonging to the Turkish nation” [polites turkikú yénus].

This position constitutes a crude violation of the Lausanne Treaty, which recognises only the religious character of the minority and for that reason calls it Muslim.

This action peaks the unacceptable interventions of Turkey in the internal matters of our country. For this reason the Greek government is compelled to proceed with the expulsion of the general consul of Turkey in Komotini” (Eleftherotipia 03.02.1990).

The word the consul had used for the minority was soydaşlarım, i.e. “my kinsmen”. The international press rendered this as “fellow countrymen” and “citizens of Turkish origin”. The Turkish ambassador in Athens claimed that the reaction against the consul was based on a translation mistake. He said that the word Turks use for “kinsmen” proved to have a different meaning in Greek (Reuters 02.02.1990). This is not the case, as soydaş corresponds well with the Greek omoyeniís. Besides its primary meaning “stock, descent, lineage, family”, the word yénos is used in Greek to render the historical term millet. If we look beyond the formalism of diplomatic language, from a cultural point of view the core of the problem is the unresolved tension between the old social organisation based on confessional-national groups and the modern system of citizenship based on territorial sovereignty.

With the benefit of hindsight, it is possible to say that the diplomatic incident displayed the strength of the nationalist groups which had become a state within the state, and were later exposed in connection with the Susurluk accident. It marks a turn away from traditional Kemalist dogma, which concentrated on the internal development of Turkey, and a move towards Pan-Turkish ideals, cultivating systematically the Turkish national sentiment of the various Muslim minorities in areas formerly belonging to the Ottoman Empire. Greek warnings against these developments often lacked the precision which could distinguish it clearly from the usual rhetoric against Turkey. However, a Greek correspondent in Turkey was quite explicit in his characterisation of the forces which now took the lead: “Internally in Turkey a different campaign of national-religious solidarity which is very close to an irredentist campaign is organised. […] the more permanent and serious consequence of Ankara’s movements is that they put in motion mechanisms which are now controlled by the insatiable Islamic-nationalist complex which today claim the leading role in public life.”

There were voices in Turkey which called for a more sober approach. A distinguished journalist warned about possibly dangerous developments in Greek-Turkish relations. While there was a real problem of Greek discrimination, exaggerations and distortions of the events by Turkish mass media constituted the other side of the coin.

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118 See for example To Vima 11.02.1990, “Ankara annuls Lausanne”, by Yiannis Kartalis.
119 Kathimerini 11.02.1990, “With the minorities as weapons”, by Alkis Kurkulas.
This could excite the Turkish public opinion and create a situation which would be difficult to handle. Referring to Sadık, he also asked what kind of reactions it would provoke in Turkey if a member of Parliament declared he was Greek? He stressed that it was important for the minority to claim its rights as Greek citizen. The involvement of nationalist circles would only further complicate the situation.\textsuperscript{120}

In the case of the consul, Kemal Gür’s connection to nationalist circles was displayed after his return to Turkey. He appeared in meetings by solidarity organisations of Balkan Turks, where he spoke in a manner that was not usual for diplomats (\textit{Kathimerini} 08.03.1990). The power of the nationalist forces in Turkey was mentioned in connection with the change of the Turkish Foreign Minister later the same year: “Well informed sources point out that Mr. Yılmaz did not only lack the power to impose or even resist the choices and the recommendations of the bureaucracy, but the needs of his political career forced him to identify with the ‘most nationalist’ aspects of the administrative proposals.”\textsuperscript{121} An interesting episode took place when prime minister Yıldırım Akbulut was asked about what Turkey would do to secure the treaty rights and human rights of the “Turkish minority” in Greece—if soldiers would be sent to the border to make a display of strength? He answered that they preferred to solve the disputes peacefully. However, if the living conditions became intolerable, Turkey would of course open its doors and “share its soup” just as it had done with the refugees from Bulgaria.\textsuperscript{122} This triggered an immediate response from the main opposition leader, Süleyman Demirel, who said that people did not need soup, but to have their rights protected. The minority should stay in Western Thrace and keep up its presence there. To invite them to Turkey carried the meaning that they should give up their rights.\textsuperscript{123}

The voice of the minority itself almost drowned in the squabble between Greece and Turkey. Naturally, the vandalism was a hard and demoralising blow. The minority newspapers were quite outspoken in their criticism. Hâki claimed that the “pogrom” was executed jointly by the state and the para-state. He called it the “Church’s historical task against Turkism” (\textit{İleri} 582/02.02.1990). Dede, too, stressed that the minority was subjected to terror by organised Christian groups which acted according to a premeditated plan (\textit{Trakya’nın Sesi} 346/08.02.1990). Subsequently, the reaction from the minority followed two separate courses. One group, centred

\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Milliyet} 09.02.1990, “The situation is getting out of control in the Komotini events…”, by Mehmet Ali Birand. This article was also referred to extensively in Greek newspapers. See \textit{Kathimerini} 10.02.1990; \textit{Eleftherotipia} 10.02.1990.

\textsuperscript{121} \textit{Kathimerini} 01.03.1990. See also, \textit{BBC Summary of World Broadcasts} 22.02.1990.

\textsuperscript{122} \textit{Güney} 09.02.1990. See also \textit{Kathimerini} 09.02.1990.

\textsuperscript{123} \textit{Türkiye} 10.02.1990. A Greek comment to Demirel’s statement stressed that this reflected the official Turkish policy “which prevented in every fashion the Muslim minority of W. Thrace to settle in Turkey and ‘used’ it as a lever in the Turkish policy against Greece. The Muslims of Western Thrace obtain Turkish citizenship with great difficulty.” (\textit{Kathimerini} 10.02.1990). In other words, Turkey placed greater emphasis on its political position than on its living conditions.
around the deputy mufti of Komotini Meço Cemali, protested to the Greek authorities, while members of the “clique” addressed themselves to Turkey.

Cemali condemned the events and asked for a meeting with the leading politicians. He issued a written memorandum in Greek which he handed to the prime minister and the political leaders, whom he met in succession:

I condemn what took place on 29 January against the Minority Population in Komotini.-
I condemn the actions of the organised persons who acted according to a plan.-
Who spread terror.-
Who proceeded with assault of citizens and vandalism of shops.-
They put aside any sense of order and civilisation.-
They upset the peaceful coexistence of two religions and the cohabitation of two religious groups in Thrace.-
They crushed us and humiliated us.-
I also condemn the passivity of the authorities.-
There is no way to justify the lack of preventive measures and actions to avert the episodes since this was possible and there was a sufficient police force present.-
The theory of foreign instigation is not sufficient in itself to explain the unrest in the Minority.-
The Minority asks for the restoration of equal rights.-
I hope that those who suffered damages from the vandalism will be indemnified.-
That measures will be taken to avert similar episodes in the future.-
That the injustices will be lifted and equal rights restored so that there will be social peace and tranquillity in our area.

This initiative was not looked kindly on by the “clique”. Right after the event it also disapproved of Cemali’s protest telegram to Athens, and claimed that “he has no authority to do so” (Cumhuriyet 19.04.1990).

The MP Rodoplu, declared to the Turkish mass media that “We are entering a dark night of unknown destiny. We have no one to trust except you [Turkey] and God.” Naturally, the Greek press commented negatively on this open bid for Turkish patronage. It was claimed that Ankara attempted to take advantage of the episodes by trying to establish a relationship of “protection” towards the minority. Rodoplu’s telephone conversation with Yılmaz on this occasion was seen as a display of the new political leadership’s dependence on Ankara (Kathimerini 31.01.1990). Within the minority, Abdülhalim Dede criticised Rodoplu for his passivity. Rodoplu did not go to the prefecture and police to protest when the vandalism began, nor did he send a telegram to the prime minister and other ministers in the evening. He declined an invitation to speak on Greek television, due to his insufficient knowledge of Greek. Dede pointed out that he had tried to warn that the initiatives of the independents could lead to such events, and held Rodoplu morally responsible together with Damaskinos (Trakya’nın Sesi 346/08.02.1990). In a later interview by a Turkish journalist, Onsunoğlu voiced his concern about the wrong course the minority’s struggle to obtain its rights had taken. He pointed out that the minority had not been able to pose its problems as a

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124 Trakya’nın Sesi 346/08.02.1990. The memorandum was referred to in most Greek newspapers. See for example Kathimerini 01.02.1990. Since the multi’s does not speak well Greek, the memorandum must have been written by Abdülhalim Dede or İbrahim Onsunoğlu.

125 Milliyet 30.01.1990. Rodoplu featured prominently in the Turkish press after the events.
human right and democracy issue within a modern concept, related to Greece’s obligations as an EC member.

"It is difficult for us to find a solution as long as certain of our leaders have been imposed on us, and we do not cease to continuously search for a ‘mother country umbrella’. The mentality which has gone as far as looking to the sky after the 29 January events saying ‘When will the Turkish fighter jets come?’ has brought us to the place we are today. When I read in a local Greek newspaper that ‘Turkey will probably not indicate an independent candidate’ [in the upcoming elections] I was at loss about what to say. Look, they give the best trumps to the Greek authorities. We have all sorts of problems. People who take up positions which make useless even Turkey’s legitimate interest and initiatives within the framework of official agreements, must not be made leaders of the Turkish minority.”126

With all the demagogy, and the lack of proper communication between the various sides, there was no lack of conspiracy theories and far-fetched scenarios to explain the events. A Greek journalist mentioned that some people maintained that there had possibly been an intentional provocation against certain Christian elements, so that Turkey could use the damages in its complaints against Greece on an international level.127

This presentation represents an attempt to run away from the responsibilities, or explain away the violent actions committed against the minority, as if Turkey could organise the Christians to beat up the Muslims. However, there was no less demagogy within the minority to explain away what had happened. Onsunoğlu made later a strong criticism against those in the minority who should consider their responsibilities:

The Turkish Minority of Western Thrace could be reproached for not having experienced a retaliation pogrom corresponding to the 6–7 September [1955] events. 29 January 1990 came and we experience a pogrom. To say that “fanatic nationalist Greeks, attacked bloodthirstily the Turkish Minority” is only one side of the coin. The other side bears the Minority mafia picture. The free loaders [löppeciler] who say that the pogrom was to the advantage of the Minority, are deluding people foolishly. It is not a difficult matter to let the minority experience a pogrom. If you like, I can prepare such a pogrom scenario right here. The Minority is experiencing Orwell’s “1984” through this mafia. To say about the 29 January pogrom that “it was good, in the end the Minority profited from it, we revenged 6–7 September (!), the Turkish community [türklik] was victorious,” because we heard such foolishly deluding words from the mafia members, yes, to say something like this means that the pogrom must have been intended. After having opened the road for Greek chauvinism to attack the Minority, they try to deceive the Minority by saying shamelessly “it was good for us, the Minority profited from it” to cover their guilt. Was the 29 January pogrom realised by unexpected attacks against the Minority by a self-incited Greek chauvinism, or did some persons and forces within the minority, i.e. the mafia, do what they could to facilitate it? One day, after Mehmet Müftuoğlu had talked to one of the foremost mafia members—he concealed the name for me—and the shrewdness of them must have really opened his eyes, he said the following to me: ‘“Believe me Ibrahim, these people were expecting murders on 29 January. They are sorry because no murder took place... After hearing this I was astonished.”128

126 Cumhuriyet 19.04.1990, “Gripes on the other side of the border”, by Zafer Arapkirli. In this article the journalist presented both sides. He mentioned that Onsunoğlu had been characterised as a Greek collaborator in the 1989 elections. Onsunoğlu’s statement was criticised severely by Hatipoğlu for exposing the minority (Akın 988/25.04.1990).
128 Trakya’nın Sesi 414/19.03.1992. From what I have learned later, the “mafia member” in question held a leading position in the BTTDD. See also Onsunoğlu’s long satirical story of the events in Trakya’nın Sesi 412/29.02.1992.
The Parliamentary Elections 8 April 1990

By now the preparations for the upcoming elections had begun. The most conspicuous question was what would happen with Sadık Ahmet. In many ways the Greek authorities had put themselves in a difficult situation because of the severe and poorly argued conviction of him. The situation became even more difficult to untangle because the Turkish Foreign Ministry demanded the release of Sadık and Şerif. A hawkish newspaper commented that Sadık and Şerif were tried correctly as any Greek citizen would have been, but it was done too late and after various delays, some indeed after intervention by Ankara. The worst thing would be to back down on the conviction and release them because of Ankara’s demand. That would be the last blow to the dignity of the Greek state (Pontiki 02.02.1990). In Komotini part of the Christian population were upset about rumours that Sadık and Şerif might be (temporarily) released. New proclamations circulated (Hronos 06.02.1990). The next day the newspaper wrote: “The Court of Appeal in Thrace gave its verdict regarding the application for freeing the two Muslim instigators Sadık and Şerif this morning under unprecedented security measures and the gathering of a crowd of Christians with posters writing ‘let justice rule’, ‘The Turkish consulate out of Thrace’, ‘imprison Sadık and Şerif” and singing the national anthem.” The appeal was declined.

The next trials (08 & 15.02.1990) took place far away from Thrace, to avoid rallies. The case took a new turn when Andreas Politakis of the Athens “İpekçi prize committee” visited Sadık and Şerif in prison. They “gave him” a hand written declaration which tried to clear up the controversy about their national and ethnic status:

I wish to declare publicly and clarify before the Greek people, so that no false or spurious impressions are created, that the exact phrasing and meaning of what I said before the three member court of first instance in Komotini during my trial 25 and 26 January 1990, in relation to my status as citizen of this country, is the following:

I am a Greek citizen, of Muslim faith, and Turkish descent.

Just as the Greeks of Turkey are Turkish citizens, of Christian faith, and Greek descent, as the Greeks of USA are American citizens of Greek descent etc.

And this status (which I have declared from the time I was very young, when I started to become conscious of myself) cannot be disputed in any fashion.

Any other interpretation, any other phrasing or attempt to portray my status as citizen of this country differently from the way it is indicated above does not represent me.

I agree completely with the above declaration.

İbrahim Şerif

THESSALONIKI PRISONS 16-2 1990

Dr. Sadık Ahmet

129 Hronos 07.02.1990. For more slogans and descriptions of the climate see Eleftherotipia 08.02.1990. The result of the trial was also reported by Reuters 07.02.1990.

130 The excessive local reactions aroused critical comments in the Greek press, too: “[…] the administration must literally ‘scatter’ the Christian rascals who cry up from a safe spot and crave to drink ‘Turkish blood’ with every opportunity” (Pontiki 09.02.1990). From the minority, Hâki commented that until recently the minority had trusted the judicial system in Greece, but this has been shaken now, as it was clear that the conviction was political (İleri 584/16.02.1990).

131 For a facsimile of the hand written declaration see Thessaloniki 17.02.1990, Trakya’nın Sesi 349/30.03.1990, or (Soltaridis 1990: 187). See also (Siesby 1990). For the position of Andreas Politakis see his “open letter to the Turkish people” in Avyî 15.03.1990 and (Politakis 1988?).
By usual standards this should be a pretty mundane declaration with little chance of being disputed by anybody, but not so in Thrace. Several minority members have said later that Sadık changed after this, i.e. he watered down his wine. This attitude can be seen in a later article by Hâki, in which he claimed that Sadık’s struggle for the Turkish character of the minority was ruined by Politakis (İleri 775/04.11.1994). The reasons behind this attitude becomes clear from a comment by Dede. From the time of the controversy surrounding the closure of the Youth Associations with the word “Turkish” in their name, the demagogues had said that nobody was going to deny our “turkism”: “we are not Muslims of Turkish descent but Turks.” Those who said that they were “Greek citizen of Muslim faith and Turkish descent” was immediately declared traitors. This had been the program of both Sadık and Rodoplu in the 1989 elections. Dede asked ironically whether Sadık had become a traitor now that he said that he was of “Turkish descent.” (Trakya’nın Sesi 349/30.03.1990). On the other hand, Sadık’s statement was not sufficient to please the PASOK MP for Ksanthi, Panayiotis Sguridis. In an interview he claimed that the Christians and Muslims wanted to live harmoniously together, and the only problem was that some people were hired by Ankara to create trouble. They wanted to create a national minority, and had halfway succeeded because of the bad policy for Thrace. When asked about the nationality question:

Q: How do you really judge what certain people are saying, such as the “great” Sadık, that they are Greek citizens, Muslims by religion, and of Turkish descent. Is it so?
A: No it is not. They are Greek Muslims (Eksormisi 25.02.1990).

It goes without saying that many people were not really interested in resolving the problem, but used it for demagogic purposes.

The question surrounding Sadık’s candidature in the upcoming election had now become urgent. It was clear that Sadık became increasingly concerned about the possibility that the spoils of office could elude him. This induced him to make the following declaration:

“—Rodoplu was elected by my votes, not his own. If I am obstructed myself, I will make my wife MP this time. There will be no more alms [sadaka] to anybody else from Sadık. If I cannot be MP, my wife will be. And indeed by a landslide.”

It was clear that the relationship between the former “independent” comrades-in-arms was not the best. Since Sadık was the favoured candidate, there was not much for Rodoplu to do, and he chose not to participate in the elections. When the

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132 Personal observations.
133 Trakya’nın Sesi 347/15.02.1990. This issue contains a long analysis of the development in minority policy during the last year, particularly in relation to the influence of the “black list.” Concerning the possible candidature of Sadık’s wife, see also Aile Birlik 39/28.11.1991.
134 There was no explicit declaration by Rodoplu, but it is telling that he did not issue his newspaper Gerçek during the period 20.01–24.04.1990. It is hard to imagine that this was only due to damages in the January events. When asked by a Greek newspaper, he said that he did not want to participate on the Sadık ticket for “entirely personal reasons” (Proiít 26.03.1990). The developments were not
candidatures were determined 23 March, Sadık was joined by the preacher Ahmet Haci osman, and the teacher-journalist Mustafa Hafız Mustafa. They were obviously only supporting cast to Sadık. Incidentally, the “independent” tickets were announced by the Turkish Foreign Ministry with a special information memorandum to foreign correspondents (To Vima 25.03.1990). The question if Sadık would be able to run remained. In the trial in Patras 30 April, attended by three Turkish MPs and a six-member committee of Turkish lawyers, the sentence was converted to a fine. This made Sadık eligible for the upcoming elections, and he was certain to prevail.

There were equally radical changes to the independent ticket in Ksanthi. As mentioned earlier, Mehmet Emin Aga and Ahmet Faikoğlu were injured in the 29 January events. They were first hospitalised in Greece, and went afterwards to Turkey for further treatment. In Turkey they made the most out of their injuries, which provoked a reaction from the Greek hospital:

The Director and all medical staff of this clinic are amazed at the development of the case of Mr. Ahmet Faycoglu [sic] and Mr. Ahmet [sic] Aga, who were treated in our hospital. Although their light injuries would not justify a stay in the hospital for more than 24 hours, we agreed to prolong their stay in the hospital, in our conviction that, in this way, we would contribute towards appeasing and smoothing the situation. We are disconcerted to see that the above mentioned gentlemen, who were released from the hospital in good health and shape and with a high morale, were not ashamed to pretend, when in Turkey, that they were in great pains and went so far as to lie on stretchers, in an obvious effort to serve the purposes of a foreign Government.135

The declarations to the Turkish press were equally striking. Faikoğlu said:

“We have experienced 3 attacks since 29 January. The last of the gradually more furious attacks even entered the mosques. In the third attack we were wounded inside the Old Mosque. There are many injured in Komotini. Everybody has swellings large as oranges in their heads. There are knife wounds. Nobody goes to hospital because they are afraid. They are not permitted to speak with their relatives” (Tercüman 03.02.1990).

Faikoğlu was thus gradually building a reputation in Turkish circles. Things took a new turn when the 89-year old mufti of Ksanthi, Mustafa Hilmi, suffered a stroke. He was moved to the hospital in Keşan, and was later transferred to Istanbul. Doctors in Ksanthi stressed that he should not be moved because of his serious condition, but his family insisted (Eleftherotipia 07.02.1990). He died 12 February and his coffin was brought to Ksanthi where he was buried. His son Mehmet Emin Aga and Ahmet Faikoğlu returned for the burial. The Greek prefect constituted Mehmet Emin Aga deputy mufti. When Aga took up the position as mufti, Faikoğlu declared that he would join the Good Fortune ticket and not “carry water” for the Christians (Yanki 79/17.03.1990). Faikoğlu thus became the new front figure of the Good Fortune ticket.

easy for minority members to follow. A newspaper in Ksanthi, which supported the independents, mentioned that people were surprised that Rodoplu and Şerif withdrew from the Trust ticket (Yanki 79/17.03.1990).

135 Statement by the director of the Aleksandrupoli Hospital dated 03.02.1990. See also, Eleftherotipia 03.02.1990. For conspicuous pictures of them on stretchers, see Güneş 02.02.1990 and Hürriyet 03.02.1990. There were many other articles about them in the Turkish press at this time.
Ömeroğlu mentions a conspiracy, according to which the Hatipoğlu-Aga-Faikoğlu troika would mutually support each other in order to impose their control on the minority. According to the plan Hasan Hatipoğlu would lead the AYK, Mehmet Emin Aga would be mufti, while Faikoğlu would be elected MP again, but this time as “independent” (Ömeroğlu 1994: 85–95). Whatever the details of their agreement, it is a fact that the three co-operated closely in subsequent years. It is worth to notice that while the election of Sadık Ahmet was considered certain, few outside commentators believed that Faikoğlu had a chance of being elected.

In the meantime, the climate among the minority candidates of the major parties was highly anomalous. In mid-February it became clear that these candidates did not want to participate in the upcoming elections. It was difficult for them to withstand the pressure from the independents who had the backing of Turkey, and at the same time they lacked a framework of co-operation with the Greek authorities which could make it possible to solve their problems. The Christian candidates’ possibilities to offer services of petty patronage undermined further the Muslim candidates’ possibilities to obtain votes. Orhan Hacıibram complained that: “The Muslims are the objects of patronage exploitation [rusfetoloyik ekmetâllevsi] by the Christian candidates, with the result that besides the votes of their co-religionists they also get a large part of the minority votes. “In the last elections [in Ksanthi]—he stressed—the independents got 12,500 [minority] votes and the Christians 10,000 votes. So how can we defend the rights of the Turco-Muslims? We are part of a game which is not determined by us, which we do not participate in, and which is detrimental to us”. Politicians who had earlier led an active struggle against the Greek discrimination, were now very critical of Ankara’s role:

[...] other sources in the minority, which for obvious reasons wanted to keep their anonymity, proceeded to a deeper analysis of the situation and in particular the responsibilities of Ankara. The interference of Turkey, they told us, is decisive and cannot be justified only by the social situation and the discriminations against the minority.

The will of Ankara which is transmitted as a sacred command, is a decisive factor in the development and attitude of the minority.

Now, this command orders the Muslims to vote for the independents. The simple citizen has no margins for opposition. “Since Ankara says it, since the consul says it, what can we do?”, he answers you.

The fear which is cultivated to prevent the possible violation of the command, is real, and indeed lately it has taken on dimensions of terror. Threats and extortion are launched, that if disobedience by someone is ascertained, there will be sanctions against his work and his life, while they will expel the children of those who study in Istanbul from the universities and other schools. The people themselves will never be able to go to Turkey again and the stigma of traitor will haunt them all their life.

A known candidate admitted to us: "If someone considers what is going on in Thrace, we regard ourselves heroes. I was always among the first in the struggles of the minority. But now, because I belong to a party, no one greets me any longer. Everybody is afraid. You only succeed if you are

nominated by the consulate. Rodoplu does not know Greek and he received all those votes. But even if he was a log, a blockhead he would still get the votes. It is a question of command...

He cannot understand the policy of Ankara in this field. It reinforces the nationalist element, while it is necessary to understand that the only solution is the creation of conditions for the integration of the minority in the Greek reality and not the isolation of it. […]

Now when things in Greece are more democratic and the problems of the past can be solved normally, Ankara leads the minority into self-isolation. “It is wrong”, he stresses (ibid.).

When asked directly, Onsunoglu declared that he decided not to participate in the elections because he regarded the people of the minority to be “trapped” by order of the “mother country”, and consequently it made no sense to act as a “Don Quixote” (Kathimerini 13.02.1990). When Müftüoğlu was asked by Dede: “What is this? Is it a strike, and against whom? Or have they brought you to into line?”, he answered wryly: “Neither the one nor the other. I just have no more blood left for the vampires to suck.” (Trakya’nun Sesı 347/15.02.1990). Hâki was clearly concerned about the situation and wondered who would now represent the minority towards the Greek authorities. In the same issue he also mentioned that the upcoming elections would take place under the threat of the “black list” (İleri 587/09.03.1990). As a result of this the major parties had to include some marginal figures. In Rodopi Yaşar Halil (ND) and Ali Hasan (PASOK) were both from the Gypsy quarter (Ifestos) outside Komotini. They carried no prestige in the minority and were probably included only to fill up the ticket (Eleftherotipia 25.03.1990). Sinaspismos was less affected, and kept its candidates.

The election campaign proved to by a dull affair, since the minority candidate for the parties had been more or less been neutralised beforehand, and the independents had no interest in creating further tension.138

The Election Results in Rodopi139

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sadık Ahmet (Trust)</td>
<td>29,051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmet Hacıosman (Trust)</td>
<td>491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mustafa Hafız Mustafa (Trust)</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasan Ali (PASOK)</td>
<td>598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmet Mehmet (PASOK)</td>
<td>486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mehmet Bekir (ND)</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yaşar Halil (ND)</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mustafa Mustafa (Sinaspismos)</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>31,365</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total votes cast 83,747 (ekloyikó métro 20,936). Total votes for the independent ticket is given as 29,547, but the individual votes add up to 29,623. The following MPs were elected: Nikolaos Salikas (ND), Paschalis Konstandinidis (ND), and Sadik Ahmet (Trust).

The result was a total victory for the independent ticket. Trust obtained 37% of the votes in Rodopi and surpassed both the major parties. PASOK was even deprived of parliamentary representation. In reality there was no competition within the Trust ticket any more. Mustafa Hafiz Mustafa and Ahmet Haciogman made a declaration that they did not want any votes for themselves, everybody should vote for Sadik.\textsuperscript{140} It was stressed that the only way to save him from future trials was to elect him so that he could benefit from the parliamentary immunity (Eleftherotipia 08.04.1990). There were messages from villages that Sadik did not even need to campaign there since everybody would vote for him anyway.\textsuperscript{141} All the other Muslims candidates obtained only an insignificant number of votes. It is worth to note that Mustafa Mustafa of Sinaspismos had a small but stable following which seemed less influenced by the fluctuations related to the independent ticket.\textsuperscript{142}

\textbf{The Election Results in Ksanthi}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ahmet Faikoğlu (Good Fortune)</td>
<td>10,668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kadir Yünusoglu (Good Fortune)</td>
<td>3,393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rasim Murcaoğlu (Good Fortune)</td>
<td>1,334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified (Good Fortune)</td>
<td>1,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mustafa Hasanoglu (Good Fortune)</td>
<td>950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molla Hasan Nuri (PASOK)</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orhan Hacibram (ND)</td>
<td>956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nazif Ferhat (Sinaspismos)</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>18,927</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total votes cast 64,656 (ekloyikó métro 16,164). Total votes for the independents 16,450. The following MPs were elected: Panayiotis Sguridis (PASOK), Yeoryios Pavlakakis (ND), and Ahmet Faikoğlu (Good Fortune).

When Faikoğlu perceived he had no chance of being elected on the PASOK ticket, he must have seen the Good fortune ticket as a window of opportunity. Although he had been considered to have slim chances, he was able to prevail with the narrow

\textsuperscript{140} Milliyet 05.04.1990, “The votes to Sadik Ahmet”, by Hülya Emin.
\textsuperscript{141} Günaydın 06.04.1990, “The Turks are fused together”, by Muammer Elveren.
\textsuperscript{142} See (Dodos 1994: 45,48, 53–58), who looks in detail on the fluctuations in Sinaspismos’ election results. However, he draws his conclusions on a very small statistical material. It should be kept in mind that some of the votes for Sinaspismos in Muslim villages (in November and April) may well have been cast by soldiers. Methodologically it is probably best to look at the personal votes to Mustafa Mustafa in the three subsequent elections which amounted to: 397-399-348.
margin of 286 votes. His election became clear only after the two last ballot-boxes had been counted, 8 o’clock in the morning the following day (Hürriyet 10.04.1990). This meant that ND lost a seat in Ksanthi, just as PASOK had lost a seat in Rodopi because of the independent ticket. The increase in votes for the independent ticket was also at the expense of ND. Like in Rodopi, the minority candidates on Greek party tickets were reduced to mere bystanders.

The Turkish press had been greatly concerned before the elections about possible Greek schemes to influence the election result, such as strike at the border crossings, soldiers voting, and invalidation of minority votes on the slightest pretext (Cumhuriyet 05.04.1990). Ahmet Faikoğlu protested to prime minister Zolotas and requested measures to prevent a new strike at the border crossings with Turkey (Güney 05.04.1990). When the elections were considered “relatively free of violations”, this was attributed to the presence of foreign observers.143 The observers were particularly critical of the soldier’s role, which was also a prominent theme in the Turkish press. It was mentioned that Erik Siesby became upset about all the soldiers that were bussed in, particularly to Rodopi. He noted that the soldiers voted first and very slowly so that the Muslims had to wait. He was reported saying: “This shows clearly that the minority was obstructed in the elections. Because there is a candidate like Ahmet Sadik, who bravely defends the minority. We think that they are trying to increase the limit so that he will not be elected.”144 Yvo Peters did also comment negatively on the presence of armed soldiers in the polling stations (Eleftherotipia 10.04.1990). They were of course there to protect the ballot-boxes as specified by the election law, but it is understandable that such outdated regulations were striking to a foreign observer. Turkey must have requested the observers in order to limit Greece’s possibilities of manipulation. Turkey could of course not control the observers, but they worked clearly to the advantage of the independent ticket. First of all, since Turkey complained about certain irregularities, it was natural that the observers would pay attention to these. It was also inevitable that the observers would be negative to some of the authoritarian aspects of the way the elections were carried out.

The other side of the coin was of course Turkey’s attempts to influence the election result in various ways. This was not so easy to perceive for foreign observers. Well beforehand, Athens communicated discretely that the voluntary vacation of the consul, as had been the practice earlier, would help convince that Ankara was not intervening

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143 (Whitman 1990: 30). The observers were Professor Erik Siesby and Bjørn Cato Funnemark of the Danish and Norwegian Helsinki Watch committees, and the Belgian Yvo Peters from the Council of Europe.
144Cumhuriyet 09.04.1990. Siesby said much the same to a Danish newspaper. Here he claimed that in the previous elections the soldiers’ votes had raised the limit for the first distribution from 17,500 to 28,500 votes (Politiken 10.04.1990, see also the articles on the election on adjacent days). This reflects the inadequacies of his sources as the limit was 19,233 in June, 21,168 in November 1989, and 20,936 in April 1990.
in the elections (Kathimerini 01.03.1990). However, this did not happen. Moreover, Turkish radio and television propagandised strongly for the independent candidates on a daily basis (Kathimerini 22.03.1990; Epikerotita 26.03.1990). The Turkish Foreign Ministry also took special care to inform the foreign press (To Vima 25.03.1990).

There were attempts by the minority organisations in Turkey (BTTDD) to control information from Greece. Hâki criticised the fact that Tahsin Salihoglu instructed newspapers about whom their journalists should talk to. He wondered why the journalists who came to Thrace could not see everybody? (İleri 588/16.03.1990).

Hâki learned about these instructions by coincidence because of his personal relations with a Turkish journalist. This is just one of several incidents which give a glimpse of the Turkish apparatus behind the independent tickets.

As mentioned earlier, pressure was put on minority members living in Turkey to make them go to Greece and vote. This was not only an initiative by the BTTDD, but had backing from the highest quarters. A Greek newspaper could reveal:

A confidential document sent by the Turkish Foreign ministry to the Turkish ministry of Public Order and Security, asked for “facilitating” about 6,000 to 7,000 adult Greek Muslims who live in Turkey but have voting right in our country.

This “facilitation”, according to the document signed by the assistant foreign minister Mr. Ali Bozer (former minister for matters pertaining to EEC), are mainly related to the respite for about one month of the fines imposed on those who violate the residence permit in Turkey.145

Before the elections, most of the attention was focused on the situation in Rodopi because of the independent ticket’s previous success. Few people seemed to have perceived that the toughest contest would be in Ksanthi. Greek journalistic sources claimed that PASOK, too, supported Faikoğlu, without considering his election possible (Makedonia 11.04.1990). Dede had also little belief in Faikoğlu’s chances, and claimed that he ran as independent to assist PASOK rather than the minority (Trakya’nın Sesi 353/06.04.1990). During his stint as PASOK MP, Faikoğlu had been involved in various economic scandals. Right before the elections, Dede printed a document signed by Faikoğlu, in which he asked the authorities to give a passport valid for only one year to a minority member, instead of five years as it should be (Trakya’nın Sesi 352/05.04.1990; 353/06.04.1990), presumably to enhance his own position as middleman. This could of course ruin Faikoğlu’s reputation and the reaction came immediately. Allegedly even “independent commandos” went to the villages to collect the newspaper before the content became known.146 Two days before the elections the alarm reached ANAP. Turkish television (TRT) made a special program which presented the independent candidates as “heroes”. The same day the windows of Faikoğlu’s office were broken. This was covered by Turkish newspapers

146 İkibin’e Doğru 06.05.1990, “Behind the curtains of the elections in Western Thrace—TRT got Faikoğlu elected”, by Andonis Zikas. See also Aile Birlik 88/02.12.1993.
and television which reported about terror and oppression in Thrace. The newspaper articles were sent by fax from Turkey and distributed to the villages to create a favourable opinion towards Faikoglu and help him win the elections.\footnote{ibid. In my, admittedly incomplete, collection of press clippings from the period, I have seen nothing like the headlines after the January events, but the “attacks” against Faikoglu’s property are reported in Milliyet 07.04.1990 and Hurriyet 08.04.1990.} In Greece there were strong protests and demands that the election of Faikoglu should be repealed because of the excesses in his campaign. There were accusations of:

- a) Inside the mosque the free will of the Muslim population was violated with the threat that it was God’s will that every good Muslim should vote for Faikoglu who was presented as chosen by Allah.
- b) In the coffee houses, Faikoglu’s people extorted the Muslim population and threatened that if they did not vote for the INDEPENDENT Muslim they would take the property they have in Turkey. In addition they would not let their children study in Turkey, and when the mother country Turkey embraces Thrace again they will be punished hard.
- c) On Saturday evening organised groups of Faikoglu adherents went to the Muslim villages, forced the inhabitants to open their houses, took all the ballots they had from other parties and gave Faikoglu’s, threatening to punish them if they did not use the ballots given.\footnote{Niki 19.04.1990, “Kollatos asked for the repeal of the election of Faikoglu”. See also the article in Fileleftheros, 13.04.1990, which refer to what was written in the local Greek-language press.}

It can be difficult to assess accurately the extent and effect of the various measures used to put pressure on the minority voter. However, in a later comment Hakı expressed clearly the opinion that Sadık Ahmet, Ismail Molla (Rodoplu), and Ahmet Faikoglu would not have been elected if it had not been for the threat of the black list.\footnote{ileri 723/25.06.1993. See also Ena 11.12.1991, “Sadık and Faikoglu were elected with terror…”, Exclusive interview with Meço Cemali- Mufti of Komotini, by Iordanis Hasapopulos. Translation in Appendix 5, text 33.}

The election of the two independent MPs created great enthusiasm in Turkey, and a corresponding dismay in Greece. The Turkish newspapers had headlines such as “Turkish victory in Greece” (Hurriyet 10.04.1990). Faikoglu declared to a Turkish news agency that after the January episodes the “Turkish” minority realised that “for the Turk there is no other friend than the Turk” (Proti 12.04.1990). He also declared to a newspaper: “The results show that the Western Thrace Turks can elect their own MPs according to their national conscience [Milli şuur]. This people wants to live here according to the Lausanne Treaty with Islam, humanism, and first of all Turkism [İslamlık, insanlık, Türklik]” (Cumhuriyet 10.04.1990). Faikoglu thus completed his transformation from ardent PASOK adherent to flaming Turkish nationalist—he sure knew how to push the right buttons.

Both the independent MPs stressed that the word Turkish could not in any way become the subject of negotiations in their consultations with the Greek political parties (Hurriyet 12.04.1990). The emphasis on “proving” that the minority is Turkish was evident in a commentary:
In fact, for sensible people, the Western Thrace results display tendencies in the Greek elections which nurture “optimism”. This time, by electing an independent Turkish candidate from Ksanthi besides the one in Komotini, the Western Thrace Muslim Turkish minority has given the answer to put an end to the identity discussion even among the greatest fanatics.

Here I underline the word “Turkish”. Dr. Ahmet Sadık and Ahmet Faikoğlu were elected because they are Turks, not because they are Muslims. Up until today the minority has elected many “Muslim” candidates. In the June 1989 elections Sadık Ahmet was elected as the first “independent” candidate. The existence and need to take part in the elections with the independent Trust ticket in Komotini and the independent Good Fortune ticket in Ksanthi, were based on the object to prove the identity to the Greek policy which denied their “Turkish” identity.

Independent equals Turk… In the last elections the minority’s feeling of identity was displayed in an indisputable fashion. Oppression, assaults, detentions are supposed to deny the “Turkish” identity… Very well, the result?

The result is that in Komotini Sadık Ahmet’s votes increased further and in Ksanthi an independent “Turkish” candidate was elected for the first time…

The quotation above is of course just as much related to Turkish public discourse as to the developments in Thrace. Many Turkish commentators have very hazy ideas about Greek political life. Particularly in the nationalist section of the press stereotypes abound, as can be seen in the following comment to the Greek election campaign:

In Greece, every election means to create a crisis and to accuse Turkey. Each party accuses the other of not taking sufficient precautions against the Turkish threat. Papandreu had for a long time used hostility towards the Turks and the Turkish danger as the main material for his election campaign. Now the New Democracy leader Konstandinos Mitsotakis too is doing everything he can to prevent the election of an independent Turkish candidate (a Turk) from Western Thrace. Everywhere he goes he begins his speeches by attacking Turkey and ends his speeches by attacking Turkey like and automatic robot. Papandreu is lagging behind Mitsotakis. The frequent elections in Greece are gradually leading Turkish-Greek relations into a dead end. The politicians are not displaying a single alternative for the welfare and comfort of the Greek people in their election campaigns, and touch on no other subject than enmity towards the Turks. It has been proved by Western historians that today’s Greeks have no blood relationship with the ancient Greeks and that they are the cross-breed of at least 10 nations. The Christian West and the Orthodox Fener Church [the Ecumenical Patriarchate] inoculated the Morea [Peloponnese] people with “Greek consciousness” [Yunanlılık suuru]. When Europe established Greece in 1830 to separate the Ottomans from the Balkans and the Aegean, they built the basis of this state on the foundation of hostility towards the Turks, Orthodoxy, Greek nationalism, and imperialism. And not ending with this, they gave her [Greece] a 10 paragraph Megalo ‹dea in her hand. Greek public opinion which has been channelled by the guiding of the Christian West, has been forged with hostility towards the Turks from the cradle to the grave. Television, schools, military barracks and above all the church are the evil sources nurturing the hostility towards the Turks.

On the other hand, an article which reflected Greek diplomatic sources displayed the Greek concerns about the developments:

What Ankara certainly wants to underline with its comments and presentation of the developments in Western Thrace is that the support, and to a certain degree the establishment of a separate political expression by the minority has picked up pace. Mr. Ahmet Faikoğlu was clear in this matter: “For the Turk there is no other friend than the Turk” he declared, and underlined that “the problems of the minority cannot be solved when you are subjugated to the political parties.”

The absolute and inalienable right given by Greek law and the opportunity given by the election

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151 Türkiye 06.04.1990, “The Greek elections”, by Mustafa Necati Özfatura. The author is a regular columnist in the newspaper. For other examples of his nationalist outbursts, see (Demir 1995). Among the many stereotypes it could be pointed out that Turkish nationalists will often stress that the Greek population is racially mixed, just as Greek nationalists will say the same about the Turkish population. This is one of the standard arguments used to undermine the “legitimacy” of the opponent. Megalo Idea is the established Turkish misspelling of Megali Idea, which was the Greek irredentist programme in the 19th century.
law, do not deprive the so-called leadership of the Muslim minority and partially Ankara of the
tremendous political responsibility for the deadlock they have obstinately and methodically led the
minority to.

It is not easy for someone to grasp why Ankara gloats over the election of MPs outside the
framework of the Greek national political life. Does the separate political expression and
representation contribute to the integration of the minority into the complex of the national
political life? Does it maybe help the minority utilise better the political system to solve
whatever problems it may have?

That is however the least of concerns for Ankara. Ankara is satisfied because in the long term
it creates the preconditions for real interference in Greek affairs and she gains a lever she believes
she can pressure Greece decisively with. In the short run she thinks that she has gained a “card” to
dispel the showers she receives from everywhere not only for the hopeless situation of the
minorities that live in Turkey, but for the whole picture of human rights.152

It was clear that the situation in Thrace had become a headache for the new ND
government under Konstandinos Mitsotakis. The backing of the independent candi-
dates by Ankara was considered to be a stumbling block to any attempt to normalise
Greek-Turkish relations and start a dialogue.153 Mitsotakis was also hampered by his
weak parliamentary basis.

On a national level the election gave the following distribution of seats in
Parliament:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nea Dimokratia</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PASOK</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinaspismos</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents154</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIANA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ikol.-Enal.-OOEO</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Fortune</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In other words, after three successive elections Mitsotakis was finally able to
prevail with the slimmest of margins. He controlled exactly half of the seats in
parliament, so he came up one vote short of having a majority. A few months later
(19.07.1990) the DIANA MP, Theodoros Katsikis, joined ND to give it the much
coveted parliamentary majority. With such a slim majority, there was not much
elbowroom for any controversial initiative towards Turkey.

The Power Relations Within the Minority

There was much confusion about what the new minority leadership represented,
something which can be seen even in a Greek specialist study. It displays high
proficiency when dealing with the statistical material from the elections, but comes to

with the West and dialogue with Ankara”, by Yiannis Kartalis.
154 These were elected from single seat constituencies (Monoedrikón), and joined later PASOK or
Sinaspismos.
the wrong conclusions—due to lack of familiarity with the historical development of minority politics—when maintaining that:

The establishment and success of the TRUST ticket in particular, and of GOOD FORTUNE—after the changes made to it—revealed the existence of a new leading group in the minority. It bypassed the traditional leadership of the “minority co-ordination committee” [AYK-YK]. The new leadership group won the battle of representation for the minority. This group, which gathered mainly young and educated minority members, succeeded to reach all the social layers, so that its influence runs perpendicularly through all of the minority, a fact which provides it with great facilities for initiative against the traditional leadership of the minority, but also against the consulate.

The only ideological bond—at least until now—of this group is on the one hand the projection of strong irredentist proclamations towards the minority (which are disclaimed outwardly and characterised as exaggerations), and on the other its close relationship to the Turkish party ANAP. This party’s visions of the revival of the Ottoman Empire and its short-term aspirations to dispute the Greek sovereignty in Western Thrace and renegotiate the status quo in the region, are undoubtedly served by the activities of this group (Dodos 1994: 59).

I have earlier referred to the group which came to power to as the “clique”. This group could hardly be said to represent the young and educated. There was no age difference between the younger candidates on the party tickets and on the independent tickets: Orhan Hacıibram (born 1946), Sadık Ahmet (1947), Ahmet Faikoğlu (1947), or İbrahim Onsunoğlu (1948). Key figures such as Mehmet Emin Aga and Hasan Hatipoğlu were indeed part of the old political establishment. The independent tickets represented no breakthrough as regards education—that had already happened in 1977. Sadık Ahmet and Sabahaddin Emin were the only ones with a higher education from a Greek university. The other educated candidates on the independent tickets had mostly graduated from Turkish teachers colleges in the 1960s (Kadir Yunusoglu, Mustafa Hasanoglu, Mustafa Hafiz Mustafa) or from Turkish religious colleges (İbrahim Şerif, Ahmet Haciosman). Dodos’ remark that the new leadership had bypassed the traditional leadership of the “minority co-ordination committee” is highly misleading. It would be more correct to say that it had usurped it. In the late 1970s the Supreme Minority Council (AYK) was first conceived as a broadly based council which could discuss democratically the minority’s political choices. The “clique” appropriated its name while it sabotaged its democratic function. That was why it later was not recognised by several leading minority figures, including Sabahaddin Galip. In order to tighten its control the “clique” established the group which it called the Executive Committee (YK) of the AYK. Only members of the “clique” participated in this committee, and there had been no democratic procedure of selection (see above). Faikoğlu kept a certain distance to this group as long as he was MP for PASOK, but after the elections he appeared as its warm supporter. In fact, after the elections both Sadık and Faikoğlu declared to the Turkish press that the two of them would cooperate and that they would consult and discuss their moves with the AYK (Cumhuriyet 10.04.1990; Hürriyet 12.04.1990). Later on Sadık would break with the AYK because of his personal whims and megalomania. Faikoğlu was invariably
connected with the AYK, first of all with Mehmet Emin Aga, Hasan Hatipoğlu, Rodoplu, and İbrahim Şerif. It is not correct that this group had much leverage towards the consulate. They all supported themselves on forces in Turkey, which is why their opponents referred to them as “the dependent independents.” The one who had most “independent” behaviour towards the consulate outwardly was Sadık Ahmet. This was due partly to the fact that he was supported by ultra-nationalist circles in Turkey which were more powerful than the foreign department (!), and partly to his erratic behaviour.

When the “clique” gained strength it was able to sanction and almost eliminate everybody who had different opinions. This had direct implications for the minority press. Dede mentioned later that in 1988 his newspaper had a circulation of 3,000 copies. When he opposed the policy of the independent tickets, he lost 2,500 of his subscribers within two months after intervention by the consulate (Trakya’nın Sesi 556/15.07.1996). Hâki was subjected to the same treatment. A villager described the pressures and intimidation of his neighbours by the adherents of Sadık to make them return Hâki’s newspaper (İleri 793/24.03.1995). Under these conditions Dede stood firm on his position, while Hâki faltered. He tried to placate the “clique” to make them lift the sanctions against him, to no avail, but could not help letting off steam with angry outbursts from time to time. Hâki mentioned later Onsunoğlu’s attempts to act as “breakwater” against the negative effects of Sadık’s actions, particularly in regard to the negative image of the minority created in the Christian population. It was considered unfortunate that the minority could not muster enough support behind him (İleri 772/14.10.1994). So the “clique” remained without serious opponents.

However, very soon serious differences broke out within the “clique” itself. This was not always clear outwardly, particularly towards Turkey, where it presented itself as an idealistic movement of “unity and solidarity” against the oppressive Greek politics. The discrepancies between the projected image and the actual politics became amply apparent already in the subsequent local elections.

**Local elections 14 October 1990**

The tension created by the independent tickets encouraged the anti-minority forces to create new danger scenarios long before the local elections. It was claimed that Ankara had masterminded a plan which would secure Muslim mayors in Komotini and Sappes as well as in the larger villages. An important part of the plan was supposedly the strategic migration to Komotini from adjacent minority villages. The minority press featured familiar topics. People should not be fooled by petty favours before the elections (Akın 999/24.06.1990), and they should not vote for Christian candidates.

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Christians should vote for Christians and Muslims for Muslims (*Akın* 1006/03.10.1990). 

The election campaign was particularly fierce in Komotini. The local ND tried to launch another candidate than the incumbent mayor, Andreas Stoyannidis, but he threatened to participate with a separate ticket, which would mean that there would be two candidates close to ND (*Akın* 1002/16.08.1990). According to Dede, when it seemed that Stoyannidis would not become candidate himself, he thought he should make it difficult for the candidate who would be sponsored by ND. He expropriated a few pieces of property belonging to the minority *vakıf* s. As a result the mufti, Meço Cemali, sued him. However, when he became candidate with the support of ND, contrary to his expectation, he tried to correct his mistakes. He included the associate of Sadık, Ahmet Hacıosman, on his ticket, but the minority was not fooled by this move (*Trakya’nın Sesi* 363/18.10.1990).

The election newspapers appealing to the minority voters were heavily influenced by the climate created during the last year, and contained much mud slinging. The supporters of Yiorgos Papadriellis (PASOK), pointed to Stoyannidis’ close relation to the Metropolitan Damaskinos, who was resented by the minority because of his negative attitude towards it. It was further claimed that Stoyannidis did nothing to support the minority after 29 January. He said in the trial of Sadık that there were no Turks in Thrace and that Sadık was instigating people. Consequently, the minority should give Stoyannidis and his close friends a lesson because of what happened 29 January (*Yeni Hareket* 6/09.10.1990). Later 4 named persons on the Stoyannidis ticket were accused of having directed the mob 29 January or participated in the protest against Damanaki (*Yeni Hareket* 7/10.10.1990). Stoyannidis’ election newspaper portrayed itself as a warm supporter of Sadık Ahmet to benefit from his prestige. It pointed to the success of Sadık’s initiatives towards the authorities. It further claimed that Hatıpoğlu and Kaşıkçıoğlu (supporters of Papadriellis) had first opposed the formation of an independent ticket for the parliamentary elections, but changed opinion when they saw which way the wind blew. Rodoplu was said to support PASOK in order to pay back his debt from the parliamentary elections (in November). To smear PASOK, it was mentioned that Papandreu had met with the Bulgarian head of state, the “murderer Zhivkov” (*Yeni Dönem* 4/10.10.1990). Stoyannidis tried to explain away his poor performance as mayor as the result of opposition by the central authorities, particularly under PASOK. His election newspaper maintained that PASOK had organised the 29 January events and claimed that there were no Turks in

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156 *Yeni Hareket* 2/03.10.1990. Election newspaper for the *Nέa Πορία* (New Course) ticket in Komotini, headed by Yiorgos Papadriellis and supported by PASOK and *Sinaspismos*.

157 *Yeni Dönem* 1/05.10.1990. Election newspaper for the *Ενοσί Topikών Δίναμεν* (Union of Local Forces) ticket in Komotini. Headed by Andreas Stoyannidis and supported by ND. See also the reference to some of the propaganda of this newspaper in *Pontiki* 11.10.1990.
The Muslim Minority of Greek Thrace (Yeni Dönem 55/12.10.1990). Stoyannidis had no scruples about emphasising the Turkish character of the minority. In his appeals to the minority he addressed them as “My esteemed Turkish compatriots” [Saygıdeğer Türk hemşerilerim] (Yeni Dönem 3/10.10.1990). In many ways the election propaganda picked up on the rhetoric the independent ticket had employed in the parliamentary elections.

Stoyannidis’ election propaganda culminated in an issue on the eve of the elections. Its front page was dominated by an alleged statement by Sadık where he said that it was necessary to support the ticket which was close to the central government, i.e. Stoyannidis. This issue also mentioned Osman Nuri’s position in the 1960s, that the minority should follow the party in power (Yeni Dönem 6/13.10.1990). Unfortunately for Stoyannidis, Hâki had telephoned Sadık and asked him about his position because of the attempts to associate Sadık with ND and make it appear as if he supported it. Sadık said that the important thing was the benefit of the minority community not the party it voted for. He did not take a stand for either of the parties, and said that the minority should use its vote consciously to elect the most competent candidates (İleri 609/12.10.1990). The candidates on Papadriellis’ ticket were obviously alarmed by Stoyannidis’ claim that he had the support of Sadık, and reprinted the interview by Hâki in a prominent place (Yeni Hareket 10/13.10.1990). In the election Stoyannidis obtained most of the Christian votes, but suffered a crushing defeat among the minority voters.

The local elections in Komotini gave the following results (Yeni Hareket 11/17.10.1990):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Results</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Papadriellis</td>
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<td>Stoyannidis</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>“Turkish ballot boxes”</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Papadriellis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoyannidis</td>
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<tr>
<th>“Greek ballot boxes”</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Papadriellis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoyannidis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This led to the election of 6 minority members from Papadriellis ticket, and 1 from Stoyannidis ticket.\(^{158}\) It is clear from the result that Papadriellis owed much of his success to the minority voters. Stoyannidis’ defeat was first of all related to his con-

\(^{158}\) Yeni Hareket 11/17.10.1990. Those elected were: Cahit Ramadan, Hasan Kaşıkçıoğlu, Mehmet Bağdatlı, Ali Mertoğlu, Faik Faik, and Sabri Ismail from the Papadriellis ticket, and Mehmet Hasan from the Stoyannidis ticket.
nection to ultra-right circles which had played a prominent role in the 29 January events, and put effectively an end to his career as mayor, as he was never reelected.

Stoyannidis proved to be an extremely bad loser. While he in previous elections had been criticised for his relation to the minority, he now took the nationalist stand himself. After the defeat he declared to a local radio station that: “He won the election with the national votes, but lost it with the Muslim votes. This was caused by the ‘adventurer’ Hatipoğlu and his friends who should be struck at wherever they were seen…”\(^\text{159}\)

Hatipoğlu argued convincingly that Stoyannidis’ defeat was not due to “influence from abroad”, but to his bad record. Interestingly, Stoyannidis visited Hatipoğlu twice before the elections in search of votes, and was told that he had no support in the minority (ibid.). Stoyannidis also threatened to take Mustafa Hafız Mustafa to court for lying about him in the election campaign. This time Mustafa Hafız Mustafa had written Papadriellis’ election newspaper, just as he had written Stoyannidis’ election newspaper in 1986 and earlier (İleri 621/25.01.1991). Mustafa Hafız Mustafa certainly did not hold anything back in his election propaganda, but he was also a person who weighed his words carefully and would not write a direct lie.

There is no indication of much Turkish interest in the local elections. Characteristically, the periodicals belonging to immigrant circles largely ignored them. However, in the conspiratorial climate of Thrace it was easy to hurl accusations in every direction. Hâki remarked that the Christians who lost in the elections blamed Ankara, while the Muslims who lost in the villages said that the prefect or “105” (Office of Cultural Relations) were behind their opponents (İleri 611/26.10.1990).

There is less information about the areas outside Komotini. In Sappes the minority supported overwhelmingly Yiorgos “Corci” Polihroniadis who won for the third time (Gerçek 267/31.10.1990). In his election propaganda he presented himself as a great “friend of the Turks”. He claimed that people (Christians) were mad at him because he prevented the 29 January events from spreading to Sappes. In his message to the voters he called them “Turkish compatriots”. He also claimed that he gave money for the repair of mosques at a time when it was impossible to obtain permit to repair roofs.\(^\text{160}\) On the other hand, his opponent “the friend of Turks” Dimos Kristallis, claimed to have helped the minority to obtain building permits, while Polihroniadis had denounced building activities of Muslims to the authorities.\(^\text{161}\) In Ksanthi the ticket of Filippos Amiridis, which was supported by ND, won the election. The only two minority members to be elected to the municipality council, İbrahim Alioğlu and


\(^{160}\) Yeni Hareket (Néa Poría, PASOK) 1/18.10.1990. Election newspaper for the Allayí (Change) ticket in Sappes. Headed by Yiorgos Polihroniadis and supported by PASOK. He had earlier enjoyed the support of ND.

\(^{161}\) Birlik 20.10.1990. Election newspaper for the I Enotita (Unity) ticket in Sappes. Headed by Dimos Kristallis and supported by ND.
Hamdi Hasanoğlu, ran on this ticket (Gerçek 267/31.10.1990). Thus the minority’s representation in the municipality council went down from 4 to 2.\textsuperscript{162} Outside the cities 13 minority members prevailed in rural townships (kinótites) in Rodopi, and 10 in Ksanthi (İleri 610/19.10.1990).

In Rodopi only one Muslim candidate, Kara İsmet, lost to his Christian opponent. This happened in Amaksades, although the great majority in this township were Muslims. Kara İsmet protested against the result claiming there had been fraud (Trakya’nın Sesi 363/18.10.1990). Dede followed the trial and was convinced about the correctness of Kara İsmet’s allegations. The main evidence was a small difference in the appearance of the stamps on the envelopes from the ballot box. This showed that two different stamps had been used, instead of one which it should have been according to regulations (Trakya’nın Sesi 366/08.11.1990). However, the court found no irregularities and approved the result. Dede stressed that he could not criticise a court verdict, but expressed the opinion that those who decided must have been deaf and blind (Trakya’nın Sesi 367/15.11.1990).

One of the striking aspects of the election campaign was the involvement of the minority politicians who were standard-bearers for the independent tickets, in the petty politic games between the major parties. This was pointed out by Dede. Sadık supported Stoyannidis in Komotini, while in Ksanthi Faikoğlu and Aga supported PASOK in various ways. Rodoplu, Hatipoğlu, and others supported Papadriellis. Ahmet Hacıosman, who had been such an enemy of the parties, had joined the Stoyannidis ticket. Dede wondered what had happened with the independent struggle, and if they had become traitors now that they supported the parties? (Trakya’nın Sesi 362/11.10.1990; 363/18.10.1990).

After the opponents of the “clique” had been eliminated in the parliamentary election the internal differences emerged in full. Since the differences were not ideological, they manifested themselves mostly as slander. Hatipoğlu commented that Sadık made one of his declarations after he had been in the prefecture for more 2 hours.\textsuperscript{163} Hâki was quick to point out that this was Hatipoğlu’s way to insinuate that Sadık acted on instruction by “the dark forces” (İleri 615/23.11.1990). Dede also pointed out that now the “clique” had started to characterise each other with the same epithets they had used for the party candidates in the parliamentary elections. Hatipoğlu had called Sadık “collaborator”, “pro-infidel”, “sold out” etc. (Trakya’nın Sesi 365/01.11.1990). The other side of the coin was the Greek political parties’ willingness to embrace the adherents of the independent tickets. This was of course done after the principle “whatever brings votes”. The Turkish-language election newspapers of the tickets

\textsuperscript{162} Trakya’nın Sesi 364/25.10.1990, has the most detailed results for Ksanthi.

\textsuperscript{163} Akın 1008/24.10.1990. The article, which is an insidious attack on Sadık, continues in the next issue (Akın 1009/31.10.1990).
supported by both PASOK and ND were heavily influenced by the rhetoric introduced by the independent ticket a year or so earlier, which indeed had been prosecuted by the Greek judiciary.

Left-wing minority politicians such as Mustafa Mustafa have tried to have a consistent position concerning the minority’s identity and allegiance. Mustafa Mustafa stresses their primary allegiance as Greek citizens, without renouncing the Turkish influence on their cultural identity. He has mentioned episodes before elections in which Christian candidates for the major parties were accompanied by minority members who made speeches in Turkish full of nationalist rhetoric. When asked if they understood what was said the Christian candidates answered invariably: “Well, we have elections.” As a consequence there are two parallel discourses in Christian and Muslim election propaganda with no common ground between them. Christian politicians have adjusted to the minority rhetoric in pre-election periods for the sole purpose of obtaining votes and with no sense of further commitment.

The pre-election excesses are sometimes condemned in the Greek press. An article commented pertinently that during the election campaigns the Greek state violates the rules it has set itself. However, the article condemned the pre-election favours (rusfétia) as unacceptable concessions to the minority from an authoritarian point of view, without questioning the minority policy in a wider perspective.

The Independent MPs’ Work in Parliament

Sadik’s First Term

Before the June 1989 elections, the prospect of independent minority MPs in the Greek parliament aroused alarm in the Greek press, and exaggerated expectations in minority quarters. A Greek commentator presented characteristically the worries as follows:

And if we accept that the minority candidates of ND and PASOK are controlled by the central administrations of the parties (consequently they cannot deviate from the national line), the same is of course not the case with the independent minority ticket in Rodopi, which is controlled directly by the consulate in Komotini.

All this means that there exists the very unpleasant possibility — from a national point of view — that one, or maybe even two, fanatical Muslims (directed by Ankara) will be MPs in the new Parliament and in this official capacity they will detonate the alleged “minority problem” of Thrace — which Turkey deliberately cultivates internationally during the last years — on a national and international level.

On the other hand, in its election propaganda the Trust ticket pointed out the great opportunities of an independent ticket:

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164 Kathimerini 21.02.1993, “The local party leaders provoke national damage; In order to be re-elected they indulge in overbidding of promises and concessions to the minority, which ask for more and more”, by Stavros Liyeros.
165 Ta Nea 31.05.1989, “In the shadow of Ankara”, by Kostas Hardavelas.
THE MUSLIM MINORITY OF GREEK THRACE

Until now the Minority MPs who have been elected by votes given to the right and left parties, have been assimilated by the party discipline. They have been victims of the party interest and used as a vehicle for continuing the injustices against us.

We the architects of the “TRUST” ticket say NO! to participating in the party ranks, to being crushed in the party cogs, and to being effaced in company with those who want to cut us off from our land. We say YES to overcoming the obstacles which prevent us from living humanly, to standing up against the injustice, to entering with resolution a civilised struggle by democratic rules.

The strong voice which the “TRUST” ticket will bring to parliament, will scream out the rights which the Greek Constitution and the Lausanne Treaty recognise to us, and attract the attention of the free world to Thrace. The clear goal of the Independent “TRUST” ticket is to display the Western Thrace reality in all openness before the international organisations which are against human discrimination and which know that right is right and a human being is a human being (Gerçek 241/04.05.1989).

In the Greek newspaper above the minority issue was confronted in an authoritarian manner as a question of control. By considering the control of the MPs as most important, it ignored the difficult social and political situation created by the discrimination policy. Even though there were forces which attempted to take the minority out of the political game, it was not possible to bypass democratic institutions and ignore its problems completely. On the other hand, the independent minority ticket presented the minority’s problems as the result of the timid behaviour of minority MPs under party control. This was far from the truth. Very recently Müftioğlu had presented boldly the problems of the minority, but could not of course win over the Greek establishment alone when there was no political will. As we have seen earlier, Müftioğlu had been prevented from doing his job not so much by the Greek authorities, as by the “clique” which criticised him for his timidity.

Now it was Sadık’s turn to try to change the policy of the Greek authorities. In an interview to a Greek newspaper shortly after his election, Sadık explained the problems of the minority with his usual lack of eloquence:

–In the Greek Parliament besides that I have Turkish descent and represent the minority, I am pleased to be able to inform the Parliament about what is happening in Thrace. With first hand knowledge, so they will know, so they will become acquainted with the main problems, the main problem that exists in Thrace so the laws can be enforced. To inform them about what is happening up here. […]
• So what is happening?
–The laws are not applied, nor is the Greek Constitution applied for the minority, who are Muslims with Turkish descent. Just as you say the Greek minority in Constantinople, we say the Turkish minority in Thrace. So the laws are not applied. There are laws to protect us, however they are not applied. At this moment both before and after the elections many services in Thrace say to the Muslims who apply to them: Go to Sadık and let him do it for you. I am not the government. If they think I am the government they are mistaken. These services should not send the citizens to me. There must be good intentions to solve all the problems. The laws must be applied. There are many ways. But I prefer to solve the problems first of all in parliament and with those who are responsible before I go outside, to EEC which Greece belongs to.
• To what point will you go to achieve your goals? To which instances do you take them?
–Look, for the rights of the minority I will inform the responsible ministers, I will analyse to them, explain to them about the prohibitions, about the events, about the oppression, so it can be abolished and the laws can be applied. The moment when I see that they are no longer applied, knowing about all that oppression, justifiably I will apply to international organisations about the international treaties pertaining to Greece. I prefer, however, that the problems are solved according to the human rights and the Greek laws, within Greece. I do not prefer to go immediately abroad and say “do you know gentlemen, the Turkish minority is suffering and
Greece is…” My place today is in Parliament, in the Greek Parliament. I do not prefer to go abroad as a member of the Greek Parliament and accuse Greece, without having tried to solve the problems within the Parliament. […] When I go to Athens I will visit the ministers and I will pose questions. Within the prescribed time, according to the rules of Parliament, they must inform me. The moment they will not inform me or will not solve the problems, afterwards I have all the rights to apply to Mitterand, and Thatcher, and Strasbourg.\(^{166}\)

Sadık’s behaviour was strikingly different before and after the elections. He abandoned his fierce rhetoric for a while, and became a passive spectator to the events. Of course, the work in parliament required totally different skills than shouting slogans to illiterate peasants.

Sadık had many advantages when he began his work. He had been elected by an extraordinary amount of votes, and the strong backing by centres in Turkey meant that he had added possibilities to build a team around him. However, he must have been seriously hampered by his lack of political experience, and at first he seemed at loss about what to do. Dede mentioned that when the parliament was sworn in, Sadık had nothing to say to the many foreign journalists, and avoided to give any statement to the press by saying: “I will not say anything. I have no intention to do anything for the moment. As you can see the government which has been formed is temporary. I will wait.” (\textit{Trakya'nın Sesi} 324/13.07.1989). Sadık did not make use of his right to speak in the three days of discussions in parliament, before the new government obtained a vote of confidence. He gave his vote of confidence to the New Democracy led coalition which, before the elections, he had accused for calling the minority Greek Muslims (ibid.). It is clear that many in the minority were puzzled about Sadık’s sudden change, which made it necessary for him to make a statement in his newspaper:

\begin{quote}
- Esteemed MP, would you explain to our kinsmen why you said "yes" to the Government?
- "With pleasure. First of all it is beneficial to explain this matter. This is a Government constituted by the esteemed Mr. Tzannetakis and not a Government from a specific political party. Among the four political parties represented in parliament three supported this government.

As for why I said "yes": When Ath. Kanellopoulos who comes after the Premier in the government protocol explained the Government Program he said: “Equal treatment of citizens will be secured”.

Is this not the only matter our community wants from the governments? Being an independent MP without concealed intention, I thought that it would be beneficial from our community’s point of view to say "yes" to a government with these views. In fact, when it is opportune we can say with more authority “Why do you not apply the government programme?”

Another effect of me saying “yes” to the government is this: The government, if I may say so, is a CONCILIATION government bringing together fifty year-old enemies under the same roof [the left and the right]. We are a community with the position that the two elements living in Western Thrace should live together in an environment of harmony and peace. We hope that the Conciliation principle of the Tzannetakis government also holds good for W. Thrace. I wanted to demonstrate this hope of ours by the “yes” vote I gave (\textit{Bağımsız Güven} 11/12.07.1989).
\end{quote}

Sadık mentioned that in the beginning of his term he had many official and unofficial meetings with various ministers which gave him the opportunity to bring up several of the minority’s problems, such as: The chronic problems with obtaining

building permits, the many parking fines against Güven supporters in the election campaign, fines and pressure against Muslim shop owners after the elections, the problem of minority members losing their citizenship etc. (Güven 1/04.08.1989). In the discussion in parliament 4 August, which included much about the Turkish policy in Thrace, Sadık displayed his lack of acquaintance with the procedures when he asked to have the word for personal reasons, because Mitsotakis mentioned the independent ticket.\(^{167}\)

On 16 August Sadık gave a 8-page memorandum consisting of 29 paragraphs to all the ministers and MPs and asked for their assistance to solve the minority’s problems. Apart from this, Sadık also submitted a memorandum about minority education and the petition he had used for the signature campaign.\(^{168}\) The next day he was informed that his letter and two memoranda were returned so that he could correct his wording “Turkish-Muslim minority” and write “Muslim minority”, which was the official terminology according to the Lausanne treaty. Sadık responded by writing a long polemic in his newspaper about the name and identity of the minority (Güven 4/05.09.1989). Another minority newspaper claimed that the memorandum was not accepted because it contained the word Turkish (Gerçek 247/23.09.1989). The Turkish prime minister Turgut Özal would later ask Konstandinos Mitsotakis about why the memorandum was not accepted. Mitsotakis informed him that it was returned for formal reasons, because Sadık called the minority Turkish.\(^{169}\) There was of course no way that Sadık could impose his terminology on the Greek bureaucracy, or create a precedence in such a matter. At best he could demonstrate to the minority and Turkey that he kept the banner of Turkism high. However, Sadık would state shortly after the 29 paragraph memorandum had been returned, that the time had come for Europe. In particular, he would go the Council of Europe meeting in Strasbourg at the end of September (Güven 5/12.09.1989). According to a Greek diplomat, his visit coincided with that of the Turkish Prime Minister, and he was accompanied by various Pan-Turkish, Thracian and Cypriot organisations operating in Turkey and Germany.\(^{170}\) Sadık’s other work in parliament consisted of submitting a proposal for changing

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169 Pontiki 22.10.1989. There would also later be instances where questions by Sadık and Faıkoglu were returned because they labelled the minority Turkish, see Akın 1023/04.03.1991; 1025/26.03.1991; 1041/04.09.1991. At one point Sadık and Faıkoglu sent a letter to Mitsotakis where they used various arguments to “prove” that the minority was Turkish (Akın 1021/21.02.1991).
170 (Alexandris 1990: 10). The characterisation of the organisations is basically right, but by now these organisations tried to adapt to the language of human rights’ organisations, which is evident in the memorandum to the members of the European Council by the Federation of Western Thrace Turks’ Associations in Germany dated 25.09.1989 (Alioğlu 1998: 138–139).
article 19 of the citizenship code, and a question concerning “minority education in Western Thrace”.  

Sadık’s newspaper always stressed the added possibilities of the independent MP. However, his lack of contact to the established parties also led to a certain marginalisation. This was clear when the minister of Justice and minister of Macedonia-Thrace visited Rodopi to look at the situation and participate in meetings. Sadık Ahmet was not invited to the meetings at the prefecture, and complained about this since the MPs are representatives of their prefectures no matter what party they belong to (Güven 8/03.10.1989). At this time the new elections were announced, which marked the end of Sadık’s first period in parliament.

**Rodoplu in Parliament**

With the election of İsmail Molla (Rodoplu), another independent MP was given a chance to present the minority’s problems. Rodoplu has a very different personality from Sadık. He is easy going and fond of discussions. His office functioned as a social gathering place for the “clique” and the circle around it. While Sadık was known for his abundant energy, Rodoplu has a reputation for being lethargic. He was educated in the medrese as was usual among the conservative section of the minority which enjoyed the support of the Greek authorities (see above). Afterwards he continued with higher education in Egypt. For a while he was close to Hafız Yaşar, but turned against his old benefactor when he obtained a central position within the “clique” (cf. İleri 536/09.12.1988). On the whole, Rodoplu can be characterised as a more reasonable and rational interlocutor than Sadık, which explains why he reputedly was preferred by the Turkish consulate. However, he has a poor command of Greek and was not well equipped for politics outside the small realm stretching from his office to the Turkish consulate. A Greek diplomat, who stressed the minority’s need to integrate into the Greek society, mentioned that otherwise there would be repetitions of the “sad phenomenon” which took place when the MP Rodoplu was “unable to table properly a question in the Greek parliament because of serious problems in handling the Greek language.” (Alexandris 1990: 7).

As in the case of Sadık, Rodoplu’s behaviour changed radically after he was elected. Dede, who was the most vocal opposition in the minority press, questioned the tactics of the independents. After assembling all their ammunition against the parties in the election campaign, they gave their vote of confidence to the same parties in parliament. Dede wondered why Rodoplu behaved as if he had been elected for PASOK, and what he had asked for in return? (Trakya’un Sesi 338/23.11.1989).

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Rodoplu started his career as MP by asking the minister of interior about the intensified passport control and by submitting a question in parliament concerning minority education (Güven 16/19.12.1989). Rodoplu had distributed a 20 page memorandum to the MPs before the question was treated. His speech in parliament was rather vague and ended with an appeal for understanding after stressing that it should not be regarded as an excessive demand that the minority wanted to “live as an entity, keeping its particular identity, with its culture, with its religion, with its language and with its customs, within the bosom of the Greek People. I think that the magnanimity of the Greeks has been demonstrated in this issue, and that their conscience do not allow them to act differently.”172 The minister of education, Vasilios Kondoyiannopulos, countered Rodoplu point by point, stressing that the education took place according to the Lausanne Treaty and the Education protocol signed with Turkey in 1968. Rodoplu displayed no ability to press his points. He would only add:

Thank you very much Mr. minister, but you see the books our children are using in school today.

(At this point the MP displays a book to the minister).

That is sad. They are the same for 20 years. No new ones have been printed.

For the religious schools [medrese] which we mentioned. Those who graduate from those do not obtain a secondary school diploma [yimnásio-liko]. That seemed strange to us. Thank you very much (ibid.).

The Vakıf Issue

Rodoplu also tried to raise the vakıf issue (see above). It may be instructive to treat this issue more fully, in view of both previous and later developments, in order to see the intervention of the MP in its proper context. To recapitulate a little. The vakıf question has largely been dependent on Greek-Turkish relations. Until 1949 the committees which managed the schools, mosques and vakıfs in Didimotiho, Aleksandroupoli, Komotini and Ksanthi, were appointed by the prefect. The improvement of Greek-Turkish relations paved the way for the elections of the minority vakıf committees in both countries.173 The gradual worsening of Greek-Turkish relations led to a tightening of government control, but elections continued until the junta took control in 1967. It is important to have in mind that the vakıf issue was treated as a bilateral Greek-Turkish problem where the minorities played a subordinate role. Onsunoğlu learned at a much later date that until PASOK came to power in 1981 the Greek and Turkish foreign ministries held discussions about the vakıfs of the two minorities. At

172 Praktika Vulis, Session 16 - 12 January 1990, pp. 343–344. For Rodoplu’s speech in Turkish translation, but not the answer by the minister of education, see Gerçek 256/20.01.1990. See also the reference to Rodoplu’s performance in Thessaloniki 13.01.1990.

173 cf. Akin 920/24.09.1987. The elections were carried out according to the royal decree published in the Efimeris Riverniseos 164/29.07.1949. The first election in Thrace was actually carried out in 1951. For a concise overview of the vakıf issue see (Oran 1991: 156–159, 270–276).
the time the minorities were neither asked nor informed (Denge 13/06.10.1989). Onsunoğlu stressed that the problem could only be settled by an agreement between the two states. This was not a pleasant situation from a minority viewpoint, but it had to face the realities and act accordingly (Denge 14/13.10.1989). The situation became further complicated with the breakdown of the Greek-Turkish dialogue in 1981, which in reality left the whole issue in limbo.

While the elected committees had been dominated by the Kemalist section of the minority, the junta appointed the conservative leader Hafız Yaşar as head of the committee in Komotini. In Ksanthi the junta appointed Şevket Hamdi, son of the politician Hamdi Bey. After the junta fell, several minority MPs pointed out the need to elect new committees for the vakıfs. The Greek authorities replied that they were preparing a new law which would regulate the issue according to contemporary standards (Galip 1998: 132). The minority was alarmed when the content of the law draft became known, but when the MP Celâl Zeybek tried to organise a meeting to discuss the matter central figures such as the Aga family (father and son) and Şefket Hamdi refrained from participating (İleri 144/21.09.1979). Later a meeting of the foremost minority members was organised by the Komotini mufti 1 October where it was decided to inform the authorities that the minority could not accept the law draft (Gerçek 34/08.10.1979). The criticism of the new law was centred on that it would fragment the vakıfs and the administration of them to the degree that they would become unmanageable. Among other things, there was also scepticism towards article 9, which stated that even after the law was passed its articles could be changed or abolished by simple presidential decrees.\footnote{In the discussion in parliament before the law was finally passed (12.11.1980), the MP of KKE Kostas Kappos was deeply critical to the authoritarian character of the law and gave the minority right in many of its complaints. He was particularly critical to the fact that the law was explicitly based on the principle of reciprocity in relation to the Turkish treatment of the Greek Orthodox vakıfs in Istanbul. This could pave the way for all kinds of arbitrary actions. In this connection he mentioned that the minority’s vakıfs were subject to property tax, something which was not applied to other foundations in Greece.\footnote{Parliamentary Proceedings as cited in Aile Birlik 9/31.08.1989 and Trakya’nın Sesi 535/28.12.1995. For Turkish views on reciprocity in this period, see (Oran 1978: 34). (In spite of the date of the journal, Oran’s article was written in June 1982).} In this connection he mentioned that the minority’s vakıfs were subject to property tax, something which was not applied to other foundations in Greece.\footnote{Trakya’nın Sesi 454/16.06.1993. In this connection Dede mentioned that the vakıf was taxed regularly until 1971. Afterwards the tax was estimated but not collected. As a result the vakıf became “mortgaged” (Trakya’nın Sesi 455/25.06.1993).}
when they had leave from parliament and their voice had not been heard (İleri 195/05.12.1980).

The new law led to strong reactions from the minority and from Turkey (Oran 1991: 272). Several meetings were held in the Komotini mufti office, where it was decided to protest. All the leading minority members were against the law, including the conservative leader Hafız Yaşar. Within the framework of minority petty politic games, there were attempts to portray the minority MPs as responsibility for the new law (İleri 203/13.02.1981). Because of personal differences, the Ksanthi mufti office also tried to exclude the MP Celâl Zeybek from some later meetings in the Komotini mufti office (İleri 205/27.02.1981). However, at this period the “clique” was still under formation and had not the strength to impose its preferences.

In fact, the Greek authorities chose not to implement the law. At the time, Baskın Oran interpreted this as related to the Greek fear that the matter would be brought to the UN and/or the European Human Rights Commission, to the Islamic Conference, and to the signatories of the Lausanne Treaty (Oran 1978: 34). This probably reflected perceptions in the Turkish Foreign Ministry rather than Greek concerns. Later İbrahim Onsunoğlu argued more convincingly that the law was not intended to be applied, but to be a factor in the tug of war with Turkey. In this connection, Greece was also interested to preserve the bilateral aspect in order to have a say about what happened with the Greek Orthodox vakıf in Istanbul. Turkey was quite comfortable with the situation, since the vakıf in Istanbul were much richer than those in Thrace. However, Onsunoğlu pointed out that the law was like a Damocles sword above the head of the minority, and that the minority should not make its struggle rely on Turkey’s ability to retaliate (Denge 14/13.10.1989; Aile Birlik 58/28.05.1992). Again we have the problem of a fluid situation, dependent on Greek-Turkish relation and the whims of those who handled them, instead of a clear legal framework. For the day-to-day management, the junta-appointed committees continued their work as before. The questionable institutional framework and the stigma of the junta, meant that the members of the committees were open for attacks by their adversaries within the minority.

A position in the management committees of the vakıf was attractive for several reasons. First of all it provided prestige and influence, which could help to fulfil political ambitions. On the other hand, some people would look for ways to exploit the economic assets of the vakıf property for personal gain. Hâki mentions that in Ksanthi and Yenisea many had sold out vakıf property, transferred the money to Turkey, and settled there themselves later. There exists no documented study on the

178 İleri 472/24.04.1987. The practice of considering the vakıf property as “up for grabs” is expressed in the title of a more extensive series of articles about the vakıfs named “Yağma Hasan’ın Börceği”. (İleri 919/28.08.1998–929/06.11.1998).
management of the vakıfs, but there is great agreement in minority sources that the vakıf property in Ksanthi had been mismanaged and sold out for personal benefits, while in Komotini the vakıf was revitalised through Hafız Yaşar’s honest and successful management. However, in 1981 Yaşar lost the right to represent the vakıf in court. This paved the way for all sort of abuse by people who were renting vakıf property. Hafız Yaşar was uncomfortable with the situation, because he feared the vakıf controversy could lead to mutual retaliation between Greece and Turkey with the vakıf as the ultimate victim. He had informed Turkey that he was ready to resign, but neither Greece nor Turkey wanted him to leave his position.

In the mid 1980s the vakıf issue was influenced by the internal power struggle in the minority. As the “clique” gained momentum, it would also try to take control of the vakıf property. The main target was the vakıf property in Komotini. Hasan Hatipoğlu played the leading role in criticising the work of Hafız Yaşar. He accused Yaşar of having used the minority vakıf as his “private farm” since the time of the junta without giving account to the minority. Gradually the critique would include predictions about Yaşar’s resignation. It is clear from minority sources that Hatipoğlu sought to put pressure on Yaşar and wrestle the management of the vakıf away from him. Allegedly, at one point Hatipoğlu had even proposed to his old adversary that they could manage the vakıf together. It may seem strange that there was no critique against the mismanagement of the vakıf in Ksanthi by Şevket Hamdi. This proves once more that it was not a question of principle, but of personal relations and interest groups. In this connection it should be remembered that not only Şevket Hamdi but also the Aga family had a dubious reputation, and it is highly probable that they had earlier worked in collusion. When Hâki wrote an article about the exploitation of vakıf property, Hatipoğlu responded by writing that he should blame Yaşar and called Aga one of the minority’s heroes. Another point is of course that the larger assets of the better managed Komotini vakıf made it a more desirable object of contention. The issue was further complicated by the situation surrounding the Greek Orthodox vakıfs in Istanbul. Abdülhalim Dede suspected that there were forces in Turkey which were interested in creating tension in Thrace in order to use the problems related to the minority and its vakıfs as pretext for usurping Greek Orthodox vakıfs in Istanbul.

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180 Aile Birlik 88/02.12.1993. In this article İbram Onsunoğlu recapitulates the development of the vakıf question.
181 Akın 879/26.06.1986. This is part of a longer “anti-Yaşar” series.
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(Trakya’nın Sesi 320/17.06.1989; 339/30.11.1989). Later a Greek newspaper mentioned that attempts to put the Greek Orthodox vakıfs in Istanbul in order had come to a halt because of interference by the Turkish mafia (Ta Nea 17.12.1994). Besides the diplomatic tug of war, some people benefited from that the vakıfs were in disarray. It should also be kept in mind that although possible retaliation would be detrimental to the normal functioning of the vakıfs, there were interest groups both outside and inside the minorities which could profit from it.

It is against the background sketched out above that we must view the attempts by the independent MPs to take control of the Komotini vakıf. After extensive pressure Hafız Yaşar submitted his resignation to the prefect on the morning of 8 August 1989, along with the other two members of the managing committee. The campaign against him had been led by Hasan Hatipoğlu, who wanted to take over his post. Some of the intrigues surrounding the resignation of Yaşar became known later. According to Sadık Ahmet, Yaşar had said several times before the June 1989 elections that he would let the elected MP take care of the vakıf. After the elections Hatipoğlu had told Sadık to keep quiet, and that he and some other minority member would take care of the vakıf. On 6 August Sadık discussed the matter with some prominent minority members and they concluded that the prefect should appoint the minority members in the town council to manage the vakıf until an election was announced. Everyone seemed to agree except for Hatipoğlu, who was opposed to this idea. Hatipoğlu reacted strongly to Sadık’s statement and wrote that it had nothing to do with the truth. On 4 August 1989 Yaşar had said that he would resign and Sadık assembled some prominent minority members to discuss the replacement. Hatipoğlu claimed that he refused to be part of the committee in spite of the fact that many insisted on his participation, but agreed to assemble a list of possible candidates. Then Sadık changed his mind and thought that the committee should be made up of the municipality minority members, “which surprised everyone”. At this point Hatipoğlu had recourse to a much used device in order to discredit Sadık. He claimed that this idea must have originated from someone else than Sadık, who changed his mind after a meeting in the prefecture with the Greek authorities exceeding two hours. On the other hand, Hatipoğlu denied that he had any ambition to administer the vakıf himself. When Greek newspapers wrote that Hafız Yaşar had resigned after pressure, he replied in a statement that this was not the case, but that it was something he had thought about for a long time because the legal foundation for filling the post was

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186 cf. Akın 1008/24.10.1990. This was one of Hatipoğlu’s standard devices. Also in connection with parliamentary elections Hatipoğlu would try to portray it as if he had no personal ambitions, but someone had to do a sacrifice for the minority and do the difficult job. An expression he would use was: kimse domuzu bataktan çıkartmalı, “someone has to drag the swine out of the mud.”
weak, and he was not able to fulfil his duty sufficiently (Gerçek 244/18.08.1989). He could of course not say publicly that he had been pressured to leave his post. After this the AYK, headed by Sadık Ahmet, made a bid to take over de facto the management of the vakıf. The AYK assembled in the Ksanthi mufti office in the evening of 7 August. In the meeting it was decided to assign the management of the vakıf property to the members of the municipality council of Komotini, who had been elected by ballot, and let them manage it for six months until new members could be elected according to the law 2345/1920. The MP Sadık Ahmet was assigned to announce this decision to the prefecture.\textsuperscript{187} When Yaşar resigned he was told by the prefect that there would be a control of the vakıf’s assets by the revenue inspection, and he was asked to be present. When Sadık and his henchmen tried to enter the vakıf office there was a small episode and the employees of the revenue inspection asked for the protection of the police. Ahmet Haciosman claimed that the minority reacted to the revenue inspection and the police because the mufti office was a holy place.\textsuperscript{188} The local authorities were clearly unprepared for the situation. The chief of police declared that: “Mr. Sadık asked me to remove the police. Unfortunately, they put us in a very difficult position. It is not an issue for the police, but for the Foreign Ministry. It is a delicate question” (Eleftheros Tipos 12.08.1989). Officially, the Greek authorities stressed that it was an internal question that would be dealt with according to Greek laws (Proti 10.08.1989). Naturally, the Greek authorities would not allow the AYK to take possession of the Komotini vakıf in this fashion and the situation came to a deadlock. For the next month or so the revenue inspection controlled the books, while the entrance was guarded by the police (Gerçek 246/16.09.1989). There was also issued a presidential decree, which postponed for a year the implementation of certain articles of the law 1091/1980.\textsuperscript{189} This gave the Greek authorities some breathing space to sort out the situation now that there was no managing committee.

At this point the MP Rodoplu sent a memorandum to the Foreign Minister and Minister of Education concerning the vakıf question. He complained that the vakıf had not been able to fulfil its function after the committee resigned. Furthermore he pointed out that the law 1091/1980 had been passed in spite of the strong opposition of the minority, and asked for the return of the law 2345/1920, which was satisfactory for the minority (Gerçek 252/23.12.1989). If we disregard all the commotion surrounding the independent ticket, it is hard to see that Rodoplu did anything else than the previous minority MPs in this matter, nor that he had any more success. The heavy involvement of Turkey in favour of the independent candidates increased Greek

\textsuperscript{187} Gerçek 244/18.08.1989. Sadık also sent a telegram to the Minister of Education and Religious affairs, Vasilios Kondoyiannopoulos, requesting the announcement of elections (Güven 2/11.08.1989).
\textsuperscript{188} Elefterotipia 14.08.1989. See also the description of the episode in İleri 560/18.08.1989.
suspicions. In the meeting of the Greek political leaders 31 January 1990 it was stressed that a united administration of the vakıf revenues would be a very strong weapon in the hands of the Turkish consulate if it was able to control it (Eleftherotipia 02.03.1990). Later Ahmet Faikoğlu and Sadık Ahmet would both raise the vakıf question towards the Greek authorities. They would take a more high handed approach referring in particular to the junta’s role. Faikoğlu asked how long the decisions of the dictatorship would be in force in Thrace, while Sadık characterised the lack of elections as a continuation of the junta’s tactic. At this point it is of course an open question if the initiative was intended as an attempt of dialogue with the Greek authorities.

When the attempt to assign the management to the minority members in the city council failed, the vakıf was left without administration. This created problems with the payment of salary to teachers and religious personnel and with the acquisition of equipment to schools. After Meço Cemali was appointed regular muftı in May 1990, he tried to sort out the problems related to the vakıf. The income of the vakıf had fallen drastically after 1980. Some tenants tried to avoid paying rent, while in other cases the rent had not been adjusted to inflation. Cemali gave Abdülhalim Dede the task to restore the income of the vakıf. Dede’s work was complicated by the fact that he did not only face the resistance of the tenants, but also of the group that opposed Cemali. When Dede took to court those who refused to pay their rent, some people generated a lot of gossip against Dede, particularly circles close to the Ksanthi muftı office. To counter this, Dede published the income and expenditures of the vakıf. The income rose in the following manner 1989-23 million drachmas, 1990-42 million, 1991-52 million (Trakya’nın Sesi 411/20.02.1992). In 1992 the income reached 75 million drachmas. Dede claimed that the Greek authorities, too, wanted the vakıfs to be in disarray. When he tried to put the vakıf in order they became uncomfortable and put pressure on Cemali to dismiss Dede, and he had to leave his post.

In the meantime the political games related to the vakıfs continued. Andreas Stoyannidis tried to exploit the issue before the municipality elections in October 1990. He said that the Muslims who were elected to the town council from his ticket would be appointed by the prefect (ND) to manage temporarily the vakıf until elections could take place (Yeni Dönem 2/08.10.1990). The prefect did not disclaim this statement, but Stoyannidis’ political opponents were quick to point out that the prefect did not

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190 Question from Faikoğlu to the Minister of Interior and the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs 30.11.1990. Letter from Sadık Ahmet to prime minister Konstandinos Mitsotakis dated 09.06.1993.
191 Trakya’nın Sesi 460/18.08.1993. Dede reprints an article from Zaman 04.08.1993, “The situation of the vakıfs in Western Thrace”, by Mesut Erişen, where he himself must be the source.
192 Trakya’nın Sesi 527/26.10.1995. Dede suggests that it was the Foreign Department which was behind this pressure.
have the right to make such an appointment (*Yeni Hareket* 6/09.10.1990). In January 1991 a new law was passed, which envisaged the election of the *vakıf* committee by general suffrage of adult Muslims.\(^{193}\) The AYK met on January 19 1991 and protested against this law, and the law from 24.12.1990 concerning appointment of mufti (*Akin* 1017/22.01.1991). In practice nothing changed. Abdülhalim Dede commented later that it seemed as if the laws in Greece were passed to exist, not to be applied, since no election had been announced. He stressed that Cemali had contributed toward the better organisation of the *vakıf*, but that is was not a task for one person. There was imminent need for election since there should be a 5–7 man committee in order to do the job properly (*Trakya’nın Sesi* 443/ 28.01.1993). Later the MPs of KKE Yiannis Katsaros and Stratis Korakas asked a question about the *vakıfs* in parliament. The foreign minister Karolos Papulias answered that the law from 1991 secured their democratic management. The appointed committees had been asked repeatedly by the prefectures in charge to submit reports about the management of the *vakıfs* so that elections could be announced. However, this procedure had not been completed since most of the committees had not responded and it had not been possible to announce elections (*İleri* 796/14.04.1995). Papulias’ statement is not confirmed by other information.\(^{194}\)

The mufti Cemali was not comfortable with managing the *vakıf*. Dede wrote in May 1994 that for the last three months there had been attempts to form a managing committee. Several people had received proposals to participate, but they were hesitant because of the political implications (*Trakya’nın Sesi* 483/19.05.1994). Again it seems that the issue continued to be handled in the customary fashion, while the law remained inactive. Dede criticised the authorities for not handling the *vakıf* issue according to the laws, but according to secret circulars and directives (*Trakya’nın Sesi* 527/26.10.1995).

New developments took place when the authorities strengthened their grip on the *vakıf*. They told the tenants to pay their rents not to the *vakıf* but directly to the revenue office. There were also problems with the status of some *vakıf* property (ibid.). Meço Cemali reacted by sending a memorandum to the prefect of Rodopi (25.07.1995), where he complained about the situation. He asked for the announcement of elections to solve the administrative problem.\(^{195}\) When there was no response he resigned from his position as supervisor of the *vakıf* by a letter to the prefect

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\(^{193}\) *Akin* 1017/22.01.1991; 1018/23.01.1991. These issues include a translation of the law which appeared in *Efimeris tis Kiverniseos* 1/03.01.1991.

\(^{194}\) In 1993 there were rumours that a managing committee would be appointed, and not elected. However, it seems that the authorities hesitated because the “clique” was ready to protest (*Trakya’nın Sesi* 456/02.07.1993).

\(^{195}\) *Trakya’nın Sesi* 530/16.11.1995. The memorandum was written by the mufti office’s lawyer Sotiris Pupuzis.
Cemali also threatened to resign from the mufti position if the most urgent problems were not solved (İleri 821/10.11.1995). Within the framework of minority politics, Dede remarked that the developments reminded him of the previous experience with the “Turkish” associations. Prominent minority members did not comment on the problems and were waiting for a sign from Turkey (Trakya’nın Sesi 541/21.02.1996).

At this point the two MPs of KKE made a new question in parliament. They asked: 1) When there would be election for the managing committee; 2) How the status of the vakıf would be guaranteed; 3) If the vakıf law would be changed. They complained about the vague answer to their previous question, and mentioned that the memorandum by Cemali from 25.07.1995 had received no answer (Trakya’nın Sesi 544/14.03.1996). Soon a new presidential decree was issued that would be effective for a 3 year period. On the positive side it secured the status of the vakıf property. On the other hand it did nothing to implement the provisions about elections, but gave the district governor (periferiárhis) the right to appoint the managing committee. Soon a five man committee was appointed with Sabri Boşnak as chairman (Trakya’nın Sesi 555/09.07.1996). This led to a reaction from the minority and for the first time in about ten years there was an assembly of the AYK (02.07.1996) which included a large cross section of the minority. More than 200 representative from all three prefectures participated. They criticised that the committee was appointed in an arbitrary fashion and not elected. There had not been any dialogue with the minority about the matter (ibid.). Although there had been no broad dialogue with the minority the authorities must have sounded out the mufti’s opinion about candidates. However, the mufti was quite clear about his preferences when it came to the procedure of selection. In an interview Cemali stressed that the vakıf committee should be elected and that he had always reminded the Greek authorities about this (Trakya’nın Sesi 556/15.07.1996). In a declaration about the vakıf issue written in both Greek and Turkish Meço Cemali stressed that the mufti office had worked for years against the negative effects of the law 1091/1980. This law had prevented the proper functioning of the vakıfs. The mufti office was not against the appointment of a temporary managing committee according to the presidential decree 91/1996, which was necessary for the urgent administrative needs. However, the minority wanted a solution based on democratic procedures, which would secure a unified administration of the vakıfs’ religious, educational, and social mission. The mufti thought that it was time to modify the law 1091/1981 and revert to the old system (Trakya’nın Sesi 557/05.08.1996).

Again we see that the independent MPs took a high handed approach, and tried to create the impression that they could fix anything immediately. In reality, the handling

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196 Trakya’nın Sesi 553/12.06.1996. There is a translation of the presidential decree which appeared in Efimeris tis Kiverniseos 74/30.04.1996.
of the vakıf issue as part of Greek-Turkish relations, displays the impotence of both minorities.\footnote{In regard to the case of he Greek Orthodox vakıfs in Istanbul, Alexandris writes: “Since 1967 an increasing number of community institutions are controlled by official Turkish caretakers (Kayyım), while a three member government appointed committee has for the last twenty years administered, in an arbitrary manner, the wealthiest of the Greek communal institutions in Istanbul. The long awaited communal elections promised by Turgut Özal have not materialized” (Alexandris 1990).} After the independent MPs first dynamic appearance they were curiously absent from any initiative surpassing the minority petty politic level. In many ways they contributed towards making the situation even more confused. Unfortunately, it is difficult to imagine that the issue will be untangled from the mesh of Greek-Turkish differences in the foreseeable future. In many ways the vakıf controversy is a prime example of the priorities and power balances in minority matters.

**The Two Independent MPs’ Work in Parliament**

The independents’ first spells in parliament took place under special conditions, because of the unresolved political situation. The April 1990 elections finally produced a viable government, which would last for 3.5 years. This gave the two independent MPs, Sadık Ahmet and Ahmet Faikoğlu, more normal working conditions to the degree that this was possible.\footnote{I have a much better overview over Sadık Ahmet’s work as MP for the simple reason that when I asked if I could get a copy of the documents he had sent to official authorities he kindly obliged. As a result I have a “Sadık file” of 243 documents ranging from petitions by his voters, to letters addressing the prefect and responsible ministers.} The Greek political scene always tended to treat the independent minority MPs as something anomalous, and the suspicion against them was further nourished by their open relationship to Turkey.

Like Sadık, Faikoğlu toned down his rhetoric after his elections. In an interview to a minority newspaper, the former PASOK MP Faikoğlu stressed that he would have more possibilities as an independent MP to present the minority’s problems. He would try to find a solution to these problems within the country and not create a question for Greece. However, if he could not find a solution within the country, he would look to international human rights organisations as a last resort (\textit{Yankı} 80/21.04.1990).

During the discussion in parliament before the new government obtained its vote of confidence both of them made use of their opportunity to speak, and mentioned some of the minority’s problems. Sadık had more of a “conciliatory” approach and mentioned the positive features of ND’s programme.\footnote{Praktika Vulis, Session 6 - 26.04.1990, pp. 77–79.} The ND government would finally obtain a vote of confidence by 152 votes; 150 from ND 1 from DIANA and the vote of Sadık Ahmet. Faikoğlu abstained. 4 May 1990 both the independent MPs would vote for Konstandinos Karamanlis when he was elected president for a second term (\textit{Trakya’nnn Sesi} 355/10.05.1990). Again there was some confusion in minority circles about why Sadık would vote for ND, although some considered it to be
In an interview to a Greek newspaper Sadık gave the following reasons for his vote of confidence to the Government:

– I saw that the outline of government policy had reasonable positions. In addition there was reference to human rights, to a just state, to equality before the law, to equality in the matter of non-discrimination of citizens, to respect of the Lausanne Treaty, to friendship between the states. That is why I gave my vote of confidence. Now, as regards the minority issue some of those responsible had told me that there are indeed problems, which “we will try to solve”. Consequently there was nothing left for me to do but to give my vote of confidence (Eleftherotipia 03.06.1990).

Whatever reasons Sadık had for supporting the government, it could be tempting to ask which government would not refer to issues such as “a just state” and “equality before the law”. His support of the government could of course be seen as an attempt to approach ND in order to start a dialogue about the minority’s problems. However, it is difficult to detect a consistent effort towards this goal, so it would be more correct to label it as one of Sadık’s sporadic attempts to woo ND. For the term in parliament as a whole Sadık tended to vote together with ND, while Faikoğlu tended to vote with his old colleagues in PASOK.200

The independent MPs were able to discuss the minority’s problems with leading politicians. In a message on the occasion of the religious holiday Kurban Bayramı, Sadık mentioned that he had met Prime minister Konstandinos Mitsotakis after the election and spoken with him about the mufti issue, the vakıfs, education, houses built without permission etc. He claimed to have received positive answers from the prime minister (Gerçek 261/29.06.1990). In June Faikoğlu met with the government spokesman, Viron Polidoras, and spoke with him for about 40 minutes. He mentioned particularly the need for mufti election (Akın 997/29.06.1990). Both Sadık and Faikoğlu submitted many questions related to the minority’s problems to relevant ministers, particularly, in the beginning of their term. Some questions were related to the larger minority issues, while others were related to problems of individuals. For example, they presented questions related to education (the minority’s right to select their own teachers, the need for contemporary books, why the children in the controlled zone were not allowed to attend the minority secondary schools, why the exchange teachers did not arrive in time), vakıfs, loss of citizenship by article 19 of the citizenship code, building permits, legalisation of illegal buildings, indemnification of minority shops broken in January 1990, driving licenses for tractors, permissions for building mosques, the need for land to landless peasants, problems in the villages related to electricity and telephone, people who had not received title deeds after the redistribution of land [anadasmós] in 1982 and other problems with title deeds (unrecognised title deeds tended to be recognised if the land was sold to Christians),

200 I do not have a complete overview of all the votes they participated in, but the tendency is sufficiently clear in the many references related to their work in parliament. This pattern was also mentioned by Mitsotakis in an interview (Ikonomikos Tahidromos 19.08.1993).
difficulties with transferring their voting rights to other townships, fines to minority members because of unpaid tax, etc.\textsuperscript{201} The minority press which was close to the independent MPs promoted strongly their work. Characteristically, Hatipoğlu would write several times that they continued their “shower” of questions and proposals in parliament (Akın 1025/26.03.1991; 1031/23.05.1991). Hâki felt the need to remind that previous MPs had also posed many questions. However, at that time the “clique” would criticise them and say that it was not possible to mend the minority’s problems with questions in parliament. In addition it tried to instigate the minority against them and some were called traitors and sold (İleri 626/01.03.1991).

\textit{The Pharmacist Controversy}

In practice, the independent MPs came up against the same problems as previous minority MPs. Even in simple clear cut cases it was very difficult to get through the red tape, as the forces which wanted to obstruct the minority had ample opportunities to intervene. A case in point is the attempts by minority members to obtain a permit for opening pharmacies, which had to face the resistance of both the “minority regime” and powerful local economic interests. All the pharmacies in Thrace had Christian owners, who were afraid to lose a significant share of their Muslim customers if someone from the minority would open a pharmacy. One of the best known cases concerns Yüksel Nurioglu (1952–) from Ksanthi, who gave the following account of his problems to a Turkish newspaper: He graduated from the Pharmacy Faculty of Ege University in 1979. His diploma was recognised in March 1980, right after his return to Greece. In early 1982 he passed the additional exams and obtained the permission for operating a pharmacy which was stamped with “A business may be opened in any prefecture of the country”. Nurioglu sent first an application to the Ksanthi Health Office 20 October 1982. For a long time there was no answer and he started to contact the Health Office every day to ask about the case. He was not given the protocol number of his application in spite of his insistence and they told him it was prohibited. He activated the minority MP, went to Athens, but everywhere he was confronted with silence. In 1985 the Health Office informed him that his file “was lost”. After his third file had been lost, he applied for the fourth time through a lawyer 18 January 1988. When no answer was given within three months, as the laws stipulate, Nurioglu’s lawyer took the case to the State Council 29 April 1988, where the case was postponed twice because the relevant files had not been sent from Ksanthi to Athens. Nurioglu now believed that it would be impossible to open a pharmacy in Ksanthi. He withdrew his application, and decided to apply in Komotini instead 25 May 1990.

This time he spoke to the minister Miltiadis Evert, who promised him that the case would go through if Nurioğlu contacted the administration. However after six months nothing had happened and his lawyer applied again to the State Council. While waiting for an answer, Yüksel Nurioğlu characterised his situation as follows:

“I have completed all the procedures according to the law” […] “It was the official authorities that violated the laws. In Greece which is a constitutional democracy and where I am a citizen, my constitutional rights were violated. Although I have fulfilled all the obligations laid down by the regulations, I am not able to open a pharmacy. If this attitude by the state institutions towards me is not a violation of human rights, what is it?”202

There were later detailed references to the case in the Greek press. Nurioğlu’s application to the State Council against the Prefect, and the latter’s negligence to proceed to the action prescribed by the law and to make a decision, received the following treatment:

From the State Council the application was first termed for hearing on 29 November 1988. On the eve of the hearing the court reporter [isîyiţîs] of the case Mr. Haralambidis informed the advocate of Mr. Yüksel Nurioğlu that the discussion had definitely to be postponed, because the services of the Prefecture had not sent the file of the case. A new day of hearing was set for 18 April 1989, in other words five months later.

“This omission”, stresses Mr. Y. Apostolidis, lawyer of the case, “constitutes in itself a disciplinary offence”. After this the president of the State Council could have demanded disciplinary persecution of the responsible employees. If it indeed had been ascertained that this was done intentionally, the consequences would constitute a serious criminal offence.

On 18 May 1990 and after the Prefect made a declaration that the file had been lost, Yüksel Nurioğlu submitted a new application for licence to open a pharmacy. The application included once more all the requested supporting documents (copy of diploma, copy of permission to execute the pharmacy vocation, certificate of birth and Greek citizenship, excerpts from criminal record, certificate from the Public prosecutor’s office that he is not under prosecution, certificate of [army] recruiting situation, copy of election booklet, authorised declaration concerning Law 1599/86, and deposit of 10.000 drachmas to the Treasury of Trusts and Loans).

However, the Prefecture continues until today to avoid sending the file of the case to the State Council with the result that the trial is continually postponed. The last date for trial has been termed at the end of March.

In the meantime, a few days ago, new unprecedented and rather sad events are added to the already crude violation committed against the personal and civil rights of a Greek citizen.

Openly supporting the fight for discrimination and joining side with the Prefect is the Pharmacy Association of Rodopi. With its announcement issued on 5 March 1993 it urges the Prefect to insist on ignoring the case and to not grant permission for pharmacy to Yüksel Nurioğlu. In its announcement the association points out that Yüksel Nurioğlu did not submit the supporting documents requested by the law within the stipulated period. Thus, for this reason:

“We request that you accept our intervention aiming at the rejection of the annulment application by the adverse party pharmacist and that he is sentenced to pay all the court expenses”.

The whole spirit of the piece is characterised by intolerance, ill-considered passion and agony for the conservation of the client superiority of the member of a scientific—and this is the sad point—association.

“Yüksel Nurioğlu was judged, criticised and condemned by his colleagues as a dangerous competitor. And not only this. It is hard to believe that the religion of the young pharmacist did not play a decisive role in the decision of the association.”203

The attempts by Sadik Ahmet to challenge the authorities’ treatment of the minority pharmacists must be seen on the background outlined above. Throughout his period in

202 Cumhuriyet 28.05.1991, “The Turks have not the right to open pharmacies”, by Yavus Baydar.
203 Avyi 21.03.1993, “No, to Nuri Oglu Giuzel” by A. Psilopulos. This reportage presents the developments after January 1988. In the Greek documents and newspaper articles the name of Yüksel Nurioğlu is usually rendered Nuri Oglu Giuzel, or Nuri Oglu Giuksel.
parliament Sadık complained repeatedly to responsible ministers about the treatment of Nurioğlu. In reality he was not able to do anything about the matter. There is no evidence of any systematic attempts by Sadık to exhaust the legal possibilities within Greece in order to bring the case to international institutions of appeal, as he had mentioned so often during his election campaign. When the matter proved more complicated than anticipated, Sadık posed the following question to the ministry of interior in his somewhat awkward and cheeky style:

Mr. Minister,

I have by now lost numbers of the questions I have submitted to you regarding the permit to the pharmacist Mr. Yüksel Nurioğlu, but you have not grown tired of giving me negative answers. Now you answer me that some document is missing, now that the file is missing, in the end I am much afraid that you will answer me that the pharmacist himself got lost and then instead of the permit we will look for the person. It is enough, Mr. Minister, do not look for other pretexts. You are asked, Mr. Minister:
1) Will you issue the permit so that he can open a pharmacy or not?
2) Until when will you refuse?
3) With the full integration of Greece in the European Common Market, how will you justify it?

This question, too, had no apparent effect, and Sadık received the predictable answer:

In answer to your document referred to above, we inform you that the Rodopi Prefecture told us that it has not yet received the necessary supporting documents required for obtaining a permit from the person in question.

The first minority pharmacist to obtain his permit was Cahit Çingur. He submitted all the relevant documents for his application 06.05.1991. When he encountered problems, he did not have recourse to the minority MP, but tried to solve them through ND party patronage. He was assisted by Orhan Hacıibram and the government appointed mufti Meço Cemali. According to Dede, the mufti presented the problem to the prime minister during their meeting in September 1991, and received a satisfying answer. However, the permit was never issued because it became “blocked”, like in so many other instances, by local people of influence. Cahit Çingur wrote to the prime minister 21.01.1993 and complained. The manager of the political office of the prime minister, Petros Papayeoryiu, forwarded his letter to the minister of health, D. Siufas, and vice foreign minister, V. Tsuderu. Çingur sent separate letters to the two ministers 18.03.1993. Tsuderu answered immediately and blamed the problem on the
usual weaknesses of the Greek bureaucracy. The reportage in the Greek newspaper stressed that she did not mention the paradox that it was the foreign ministry which handled the application for operating a pharmacy in a Greek city.\footnote{Eleftherotipia 18.09.1993. Tsuderu was known as a “hard-liner” in the minority issue. She presents her views in (Tsuderu 1992).} Reputedly the government became very embarrassed by the newspaper article, and ordered the prefect to sign Çingur’s permit, which he did in the beginning of October 1993. However, he could not open a pharmacy without being a member of the local pharmacist association. When he applied to this association he encountered further difficulties, which led to new prosecutions (\textit{Trakya’nın Sesi} 465/22.11.1993). After a series of protests and complaints to several ministries, he finally acquired his permission from the Ksanthi prefecture in late January 1994 (\textit{Trakya’nın Sesi} 476/10.02.1994).

By the end of 1994 five minority members had obtained permissions to open pharmacies. However, this does not mean that their problems were over. The board of the Rodopi Pharmacist Association resigned in protest, when the minority pharmacists obtained permits (\textit{Trakya’nın Sesi} 523/28.09.1995). They attacked the minority pharmacists through the press and mass media and complained to the minister of health to make him revoke the permissions. Since the minority pharmacists did not become fully accepted by the local pharmacist association, they could consequently not benefit from participation in the rotation of pharmacies on duty outside normal opening hours (\textit{İleri} 820/03.11.1995).

Similar attitudes can be observed in other questions of economic interest. Sadık Ahmet made a question to the minister of Transport and Communications asking why taxi permits were not granted to minority members. Not even one of the about 600 taxis in Thrace belonged to someone from the minority.\footnote{Question 2180/22.11.1990. This is also referred to in \textit{Akın} 1013/14.12.1990.} In 1991, even a large unmixed Muslim mountain village such as Ehin os had only one taxi permit, which had belonged to a Christian for 25 years. This went against the established practice of granting the permits only to permanent residents of a village.\footnote{Paratiritis (periodical of the radio station in Thessaloniki - no date). The reportage “Ehin os, the Ankara of Thrace” was made after a visit to the village in January 1991.} When for the first time the prefecture granted a taxi permit to someone from the minority mountain village Miki, there were strong protests. 119 drivers from the Ksanthi taxi association surrounded the prefecture on 23 March 1998 at 6 o’clock in the morning and demanded that the licence should be revoked. In his commentary of the event, İbrahim Onsun-oğlu stressed that this was an open protest and easy to see, while it was more difficult to know what happened behind closed doors (\textit{Trakya’nın Sesi} 599/31.03.1998).
Questions about Education

The MPs had of course a much more difficult task when it came to complicated issues such as education, which like the vakıf issue was entangled in the meshes of Greek-Turkish relations. In addition, apart from the educational aspects, it was heavily influenced by the ideological outlook of the various parties involved. What the independent MPs wanted, was in reality to return to the system which had been agreed upon during the Greek-Turkish rapprochement of the early 1950s. That would mean the hiring of teachers educated in Turkey and increased Turkish influence over the curriculum. Apparently, the desire for Turkish patronage played a much larger part than purely educational considerations. On the other hand, Greece had tried to reverse “the mistakes of the 1950s” for at least the previous 25 years, and was not at all disposed towards accepting a greater role for Turkey again.

Ahmet Faikoğlu referred to the problems in minority education already during the discussions of the government programme. He criticised the “policy of assimilation” towards the Pomaks in the mountain area where there was no secondary education in Turkish, and continued to argue as follows:

Since our national and religious origin constitutes an indivisible whole, the only thing we ask for is that this human right is respected, which is related to the preservation of our national and religious entity. The Turkish language teaching has been paralysed by the implementations of the authorities, which are contrary to the article 40 of the Lausanne treaty. The governments stopped completely the appointment of teachers who were educated in Turkey and with this attitude they deprived the minority of teachers who know well Turkish and are capable of giving our children our traditional education. A special pedagogic academy was founded in Thessaloniki, which accepts the graduates of the old style religious and anachronistic schools (medrese), which are deliberately financed by the government. Finally these are appointed, in a manner of speaking, teachers to the schools with education in Turkish.

As known, Turkey had imposed religious freedom [aneksithriskía] on all the schools of the Turkish Republic and had closed all the medreses of the country in the 1920s. The Greek government did not apply these reforms, with the purpose of creating a chasm between Turkey and the minority in Greece. While the minority shouldered the expenditures of its schools, the Greek governments preferred to fund these anachronistic medreses.

Contrary to the wish of the minority community, the governments granted scholarships to these schools, which educated only incompetent, religious persons. The graduates of these anachronistic schools are accepted in the academy in Thessaloniki. After one year of school, these people who have been deprived of a contemporary education and adequate knowledge of Turkish, are regarded to be ready for appointments in the Turkish schools.

An important part of the sum which according to the claims of the representatives of every government, is allotted to minority education, is in reality spent on the academy and these medreses, which our community is against. In the mountain area with Muslim population, the authorities had founded Greek secondary schools and compel our children to attend these schools where the education is exclusively in Greek.

With the establishment of entrance exams to the two minority secondary schools in Komotini and Ksanthi a limited number of pupils are admitted to these schools, in spite of the clear formulation of the article 16 of the Constitution about obligatory education.

Our children who graduate from the primary schools with Turkish education, are subjected to exams to be admitted to secondary schools…212

212 Praktika Vulis, Session 6 - 26.04.1990, p. 78. Faikoğlu was reminded several times by the Speaker that the discussion was about the government program [programmatikés dilósis] and not the
Faikoğlu sums up well the complaints of the Kemalist side, in the fashion they were usually expressed within the minority. He even reproduces some of the inherent contradictions in the Kemalist position. When he claims that the minority has not been able to give its children its “traditional education”, he means in reality that it has not been subjected to the Kemalist “revolution”. On the other hand he is correct when he points out that in its zeal to limit Turkish influence, the Greek state has not been able to provide a viable alternative from an educational point of view.

Faikoğlu would later make a question to the ministry of education, which accused the Greek policy in strong words, but lacked any precise description of the education problems. When the question was treated in parliament it was summed up in the following manner:

“In Western Thrace both primary and secondary education present a picture of shame for our Country which is celebrated as the cradle of civilisation and science. The Minister of Education and Religious Affairs is asked about which reasons led the Government into disrespecting the Lausanne Treaty etc.”

The minister, Vasilios Kondoyiannopulos, reacted first to the tone of the question. He pointed out that the near disappearance of the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul showed which state did not respect the Lausanne Treaty. He added that the Muslims should of course reap the fruits of the Greek government’s attempts to improve education. While he admitted that there were surely problems, as was the case with every minority, he blamed Turkey for not sending books and delaying the arrival of the exchange teachers which came on a basis of reciprocity. He further asserted that it was incorrect that the special secondary schools [yımñasia] in the area were not accepted by the minority, and it was in accordance with international practice to provide education to children which would help them become integrated in the country where they lived. Faikoğlu repeated his accusations and stressed that: “The authorities do not allow us even to appoint teachers to our schools with our own money. You however, send those Trojan Horses whom you educate contrary to our manners and customs” (ibid.). Faikoğlu’s accusations led to loud protests in parliament. Without disregarding the difficulties of the MP’s task, there are reason to question whether Faikoğlu tried to get into a dialogue with the Greek authorities or display his efforts to present Turkish positions. When Hatipoğlu referred to his work in parliament he stressed that Faikoğlu had called the EPATH teachers Trojan horses and said that he was a Turk (Akitn 1011/23.11.1990). Rodoplu, too, would emphasise the reactions against Faikoğlu when he had said that the minority was Turkish (Gerçek 269/24.11.1990).
The two MPs would continue to pose several questions about education throughout their period. Most frequently they mentioned the lack of textbooks in Turkish (see below), and the problems related to the appointment of teachers. Sadık and Faikoğlu wanted the appointment of graduates from Turkish teacher colleges, which had stopped after 1967, instead of the EPATH graduates. According to Faikoğlu, more than 140 graduates from Turkish teacher colleges were waiting for appointment. In his answers the vice minister of education, Vasilios Bekiris, would say that the reactions of Sadık and Faikoğlu were unjustifiable and made to create impressions. He evaded the question about appointments by saying that the positions for Muslims teachers \(\text{organikés thésis}\) had recently increased from 150 to 250, and pointed out other positive measures by the state. However, all these positions were of course for EPATH graduates. On an earlier occasion, when Sadık complained about teachers who had not been appointed, the minister of education, Yiorgos Suflias, answered that the teacher-pupil rate was very satisfying (1:12.5). The independent MPs and the government were of course speaking about two different things. Comments in the Greek press would seldom present the difference in approach, but simply take the side of the Greek government. For example, in a comment to answers by the vice-minister of education, Vasilios Bekiris, to a question by Sadık the previous day, a newspaper would write that: “He countered all the accusations by the MP about alleged discrimination against the minority pupils with irrefutable data” (Makedonia 30.11.1991).

In many cases the controversies about the minority schools were related to different perceptions of their status. The minority would often complain that the Greek authorities would treat the minority schools as public when hiring teachers and private when there were appeals for government subsidies. In reality, there is much contradictory behaviour in the minority as well. When Sadık requested the enforcement of 9-year obligatory education for the minority children and the abolition of the entrance exams to the minority secondary schools, he used in reality the Greek public schools as model. On other occasions Sadık would guard jealously the special status of the minority schools: “We and only we are responsible for the education of our children. We

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214 See characteristically the question from Faikoğlu to the minister of education and religious affairs 4819/26.04.1991.
217 Answer XVIII/105/28.02.1991 to question by Sadık 3249/07.02.1991. Sadık asked again about the appointment of teachers in his question 3479/06.11.1991 to the ministry of education (Sadık file).
218 Sadık made the point about subsidies in a question dated 15.05.1991 to the ministry of education (Sadık file).
will protect our children and their rights. We do not trust you because we know you very well. Until today it has been proved how harmful the protections of the Greek state was to the children of the minority.”

When the government took initiatives to upgrade the minority schools, this caused new friction. A Greek newspaper reported that minority school buildings had been repaired, and furnished with various items in spite of the fact that they were private. Books had been printed and the prefectures furnished with special funds to meet expenditures of these schools (*Makedonia* 24.01.1992). Hatipoğlu criticised this initiative and claimed that the minority schools had been repaired to deceive the outside world and undermine the agreements. He further claimed that of the 22 million allegedly spent for the repair of the school in Ehinos, only 5 had been used for this purpose (*Akın* 1069/10.04.1992). He later criticised the repair of minority school buildings because it should have been done during the summer holidays. And most important, he claimed that the money from the EU should be given to the minority school trustees according to existing treaties (*Akın* 1074/20.11.1992). The AYK-YK would accuse the prefectures for repairing the minority schools without consulting the minority. It claimed that the only reason for the repairs was that the authorities wanted to usurp the minority’s rights over the schools.

Needless to say, a Greek newspaper had a totally different version:

Indignation prevails in Thrace over the provocative petition to the prime minister by the two Muslim MPs regarding the repairs of the minority schools in Komotini and Ksanthi.

Sadık and Faikoğlu are doing no less than protesting over that the Greek State did not leave the minority schools to fall into ruins and dared to repair them, to paint and furnish them with computers etc., depriving in this way the minority MPs directed from Ankara from taking foreign journalists around to the villages to complain “about the neglect of their schools by the Greek governments.”

It is incredible but true: The prefect of Komotini Mr. Karahalios and the prefect of Ksanthi Mr. Kapatçoglu disposed of correspondingly 170 and 130 million drachmas from the prefecture budgets for the repair of the minority schools, which are private institutions neglected—deliberately—by Ankara, which does not even send the Turkish language schoolbooks. At this point it must be stressed that the Greek state has even printed schoolbooks in Turkish so that the children of the minority can follow regularly their lessons instead of having recourse to photocopies. However, all this bothered the leading circles of the minority, who invoke the violation (!) of the Lausanne treaty in this particular matter.

According to a Christian teacher, it was the teachers and parents who had asked for the repairs, because they were indignant about the condition of the minority schools (ibid.). In such conflicts between the minority and the authorities, the different versions invariably contain omissions and distortions. These conflicts are not only based on ideological difference, but are also heavily influenced by petty politics.

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220 Letter from Sadık to Mitsotakis dated 02.02.1993 (*Sadık file*).
222 Mesimvriini 17.12.1992, “Sadık-Faikoğlu want the minority schools to fall into disrepair”, by Liana Aleksandri.
Attempts at Exploiting Greek Inconsistencies

The inconsistencies in the Greek position became apparent later in relation to the policy toward the Greek minority in Albania. The desire for more rights for a related (Greek) minority abroad than Greece is willing to grant to minorities on its own soil, is of course not particularly a Greek problem. However, when the Greek foreign ministry stressed to its Albanian counterpart that the national Greek minority in Albania had the right to have a Greek education, Sadık was quick to point out that this was exactly the same as the national Turkish (ethnikí turkíkí) minority in Western Thrace requested. 223 Greek attempts to support the minority in Albania soon provided new opportunities for comparison. Specifically, a statement by Mitsotakis made detailed references to what was desired for the Greek minority in Albania:

1. Archimandrite Chrysostomos must be allowed to resume his duties to his parishioners in Argyrokastro (Gjirokastro), all church property and sacred religious articles taken during communist rule must be returned to their communities: and Orthodox Christians must be allowed to practice their faith freely, including the free use of the Greek language in the liturgy wherever parishioners want it.
2. The Albanian Government must allow the establishment of Minority schools, both public and private, and must offer Greek language instruction in existing schools at all grade levels and in all areas where there is a number of ethnic Greeks and not just in arbitrarily designed “minority zones”.
3. The Albanian Government must permit the free development and operation of political, educational, cultural, and community organisations of the Greek community and must return all property of the Greek communities seized by the former Communist regime, including schools, libraries, and cultural centres.
4. The Albanian Government must end the harassment and arbitrary dismissal of members of the Greek minority in public service and offer equal opportunity in the state administration to all minorities as well as substantial access to the state media.
5. The Albanian Government must make it possible for families forced to leave their homes in Northern Epirus since 1944 to return to them and must help them reclaim their property and re-establish themselves in the communities they were compelled to abandon.
6. The Albanian Government must end all interference with the right of Albanian citizens to declare whatever ethnic identity they wish according to international principles and must institute programs that discourage prejudice and hostility towards ethnic Greeks and other minorities. 224

Mitsotakis also accuses Albania for double standards because: “At the same time that the Tirana Government has been suppressing the rights of the ethnic Greeks in the country, it has been demanding full rights for the Albanian minorities in Serbia and Skopje. Furthermore it has been noisily seeking international support to win these rights, especially for the Albanian community in Kosovo” (ibid.).

The Albanian president, S. Berisa, rejected the 6 points and accused Mitsotakis of exercising dangerous politics, while the next day Sadik and Faikoğlu declared that they requested the premier to grant to the Muslim minority in Greece what he had requested from Albania (To Vima 18.07.1993). Among the requests mentioned specifically were: Minority education on all levels in the areas where the minority was

223 Question from Sadik dated 09.02.1993 to the foreign ministry and the ministry of education referring to an article in Eleftherotipia 06.02.1993 (Sadik file).
in majority or constituted an important part of the population; obligatory education in
the mother tongue in other parts of the country where the minority lived; the same
school books that were used in Turkey; the teaching of Turkish history and culture; the
right to fly the Turkish flag along with the Greek on national holidays. The Greek
government reacted by stressing that the “religious minority” in Thrace was fully pro-
tected. The incident displays the clash between two ethnocentric nationalisms which
have little ability to see beyond their own group. In the final analysis, the minority
MPs’ comparison with Greek demands in Albania was little more than an easy way to
create impressions, and not an attempt to do something within the Greek political
framework. In the minority, Abdülhalim Dede expressed the most mature position. In
a comment, he stressed that the minority should be careful about its demands to avoid
becoming part of dirty and irresponsible political games (Trakya’nın Sesi

The “Fearless” Sadık and the Agricultural Prisons

In his election campaign Sadık had stressed repeatedly that he would force the
Greek authorities to comply with his demands. This was of course easier said than
done, but he tried to create the impression that he forced the Greek government into
concessions. This is very evident in an interview to a Turkish newspaper. He claimed
that there was a lot of pressure on Greece because of his actions. As a result, Greece
was no longer able to keep up the oppression in Thrace. “The Turkish minority is no
longer what it used to be. When oppression set in we can instigate people to rise in
protest [ayaklandırabiliriz] any moment we like. But we would prefer not to choose
this path. Of course if we are not forced to it. We are eager to keep the struggle for our
rights struggle continuously on the political agenda and bring it to international fora.
We are quite effective in this matter ” (Milliyet 19.08.1991).

There was an interesting episode when Sadık was able to at least create the
impression that he forced the government to retreat. In October 1988 a decision was
made to build agricultural prisons in Thrace, possibly in imitation of previous Turkish
politics at Gökçeada. This would involve the expropriation of large areas of farmland
belonging to minority members, who were greatly alarmed by the consequences it
would have for their livelihood. The decision was never realised. According to a
Greek newspaper the candidates of the two major parties had politically exploited the
threat. On the eve of elections they used to go to the Muslim villages and promise that
they would secure the cancellation of the plan, if they obtained their votes. This game

225 Letter by Faikoğlu dated Athens 15.07.1993, as reprinted in Turkish translation in Akin
1096/24.07.1993. See also Turkish Daily News 16.07.1993. Comparisons with the Greek minority
in Albania did also reoccur later in the minority press, see Gerçek 377/01.11.1993.
236/10.03.1989; 237/18.03.1989; 238/23.03.1989.
was played repeatedly by both the Papandreou and the Mitsotakis governments. In 1992 prime minister Mitsotakis decided finally to cancel the plan, in spite of the fact that the vice foreign minister V. Tsuderu, who was responsible for minority affairs, insisted on retaining it. Circles within ND brought their preferred minority politicians, Hasan İmamoğlu and Ali Nuri, to Athens with the purpose of letting them reap the political benefit of being the ones who announced the decision of the cancellation. However, Sadık ruined the performance by threatening that blood would flow if the agricultural prisons were established. In the continuation of this the retreat of the Greek state was attributed to his threats and he was able to create impressions. As so often in minority affairs it is difficult to ascertain precisely the cause and effect relationship. However, it seems that a key role was played by the mufti of Komotini, Meço Cemali, and the circle around him. 27 September 1991 Cemali spoke with Mitsotakis for two hours. He explained in detail about the problems the agricultural prison would create. Mitsotakis replied that if this information was correct he would surely abolish the plans (Trakya’nın Sesi 475/03.02.1994). A Greek newspaper also mentioned that it was believed that a solution had been reached when Cemali saw Mitsotakis (Epohi 29.09.1991). Evidently rumours were sizzling in the minority that the plans for agricultural prisons had been abandoned. However, when V. Tsuderu attended a meeting in Komotini 23.12.1991, she said that the question about agricultural prisons was under scrutiny, and that no decisive decision had been reached yet. In any case it would not be a prison for the kind of hardened criminals like those who had scared the Greek Orthodox population away from Gökçeada (Aile Birlik 42/26.12.1991).

Further developments took place when the minister of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, Hatzinikolau, visited Thrace 23.05.1992. He spoke to the villagers in the area which would be affected by the expropriations. Hatipoğlu made some interesting comments in this connection. At this time the relations between Sadık Ahmet and the “clique” had become strained. Some of Sadık’s adherents held up posters in protest against the expropriation plans during the minister’s visit. Hatipoğlu suggested in his comment that this was not really a protest, but a scheme they participated in after encouragement by the prefect (Akin 1058/09.06.1992). Hâki regarded this to be the typical kind of “clique” slander, and the same weapon it used in connection with the Yaka protest in the early 1980s (İleri 680/19.06.1992). Hatipoğlu continued his rhetoric against anybody who could possibly be credited for the abolishment of the plans. In an article he asked “Can we really believe that the open prison project has

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227 Kathimerini 21.02.1993, “The local party leaders provoke national damage; In order to be re-elected they indulge in overbidding of promises and concessions to the minority, which asks for more and more”, by Stavros Liyeros. Hatipoğlu also refers to a statement that Sadık allegedly made to the Turkish newspaper Hürriyet “Greece is playing with fire by deciding to make expropriations in Western Thrace. However, we will not allow it. Blood will flow” (Akin 1047/05.03.1992).
been dropped?” As long as it was not stated in writing, it still hung like a sword above the villagers’ heads (Akin 1061/06.07.1992). He also pointed out that although some minority politicians made propaganda about that the open prisons had been abolished because of their work, he had read in the Turkish press that Turkey first abolished the forbidden zone and removed the open prison from Bozcaada, which now would be made into a tourist paradise (Akin 1062/16.07.1992). In other words, the decision depended on Greek-Turkish relations, and not the initiatives of Hatipoğlu’s political rivals. Finally, Ahmet Faikoğlu would submit a question in parliament asking for the written cancellation of the open prison plan.228 The case gives a good display of Hatipoğlu’s political tactics, and can be summarised in the following manner: 1) He slanders his political rivals and their initiative; 2) he sows doubt about if the Greek authorities have made a decision; 3) he sows doubts about the effectiveness of his political rivals’ initiative; 4) he takes (by proxy in this case) the “correct” initiative himself.

There was still much confusion about what was going on. A year later a Turkish newspaper had a reportage, including statements by Sadi̇k Ahmet, which wrote that: “The Greek government’s withdrawal of its decision to confiscate farm land mostly belonging to minority Turks in Komotini, Western Thrace, was met with joy in the minority group” (Turkish Daily News 02.07.1993). However, when Rodoplu visited the lawyer of the villagers, Hasan İmamoğlu, he could inform that the case was still pending and that the trial scheduled for 26.11.1993 had been postponed to 11.01.1994 (Gercek 378/10.11.1993). The whole situation is bizarre, when we consider that the final decision had been made earlier the same year. According to Abdülhalim Dede, Konstandinos Mitsotakis had forwarded a message to Meço Cemali already in September 1992 through the MP of Rodopi Nikos Salikas. In his message he said that after investigating the case he had found that the creation of an agricultural prison was a wrong decision and he had decided to abolish it. Cemali telephoned Mitsotakis, who confirmed the news. Shortly after, Cemali was summoned to Athens by vice foreign minister Tsuderu, who told him:

“The foundation of agricultural prisons has been abolished. The prime minister decided to abolish them after you explained the problems to him. In return for this good deed you should write a letter of gratitude to him. To make it easy for you we have prepared a letter in your name, here you are, sign it” (Trakya’nın Sesı 475/03.02.1994).

Cemali, who does not have a good command of Greek, said he did not understand everything in the letter so he would have to take it with him and read it carefully before signing. However, Tsuderu would not give it to him and Cemali returned to Komotini. After this Tsuderu was so angry with the mufti because he had not signed the

letter, that she waged an undeclared war against him and Dede whom she considered responsible. It reached such proportions that she did everything in her power to keep secret the annulment of the agricultural prisons which was published in the Government Gazette.\textsuperscript{229}

In the meantime the independent MPs had protested abroad about the prison plans. The Greek foreign department declined the complaints and referred to the decision in the Government Gazette. Dede criticised the independent MPs for not keeping themselves informed about what was written in the Government Gazette, which should have been one of their primary tasks. Instead they were busy with their “turkism refrain” and made a fool of themselves as a result (ibid.). The whole affair is a good example of the confusion, contradictory information, wrong perceptions etc., which reigns in almost everything related to the minority.

\textit{The Vote on the OTE Bill}

There were only a few instances when the independent minority MPs had any possible leverage to influence the vote in parliament. The best known case was related to the controversial bill about the privatisation of the Greek Telephone Organisation (OTE).\textsuperscript{230} When it became clear that it would be a very tight vote, Faikoglu attempted to strike a deal with the governing party. The day before the bill was to be discussed in parliament he revealed that he was bargaining his vote on the OTE bill with a representative of the prime minister, and that he had sent a letter with demands to Mitsotakis. The government said that the demands were immediately declined. The news about Faikoglu’s initiative aroused strong critique from the opposition, which accused the Muslim MP for attempts of extortion (\textit{Eleftherotipia} 12.08.1993).

In his letter Faikoglu was basically asking for that Mitsotakis should fulfil all the demands of the independent MPs, beginning with issues such as abolishing the law 1920/1991 about religious personnel and sacking the appointed mufti.\textsuperscript{231} It is hard to imagine that Faikoglu had absolutely any belief in the possibility that Mitsotakis would comply with his demands. The most logical interpretation is that Faikoglu did not make his demands for the purpose of negotiating his vote with the government, but in order to create impressions within the minority and towards Turkey. At this time the relations between Sadik and Faikoglu were very tense, and it is probable that Faikoglu made his demands as a means to strengthen his position in the internal minority rivalry. However, the discussion in parliament revealed the difficulties the independent

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{229} ibid. The official decision was made 02.03.1993, and published in \textit{Efimeris tis Kiverniseos} 262/19.03.1993. The official reason for withdrawing the bill was that there had been no decision about the size of indemnification within the legal time limit.

\textsuperscript{230} There was much opposition to this bill within ND, and when Andonis Samaras brought down the government he cited this bill along with the policy on Macedonia as his reasons.

\textsuperscript{231} \textit{Gerçek} 367/20.08.1993, has both an interview of Faikoglu and a Turkish translation of his letter to Mitsotakis dated 10.08.1993.
\end{footnotesize}
MPs were up against. Partly because of the attitudes of nationalist Greek politicians, partly because the independent MPs had compromised themselves thoroughly by their open relationship to Turkey, any attempt to rely on their vote would lead to accusations of treason by the opponents of the bill. Before the discussion in parliament a Greek journalist asked Faikoğlu if it was moral to bargain his vote in this matter. Faikoğlu replied that everybody was doing it, and mentioned the problems of the “Turkish minority”. The journalist countered:

Q: And what are you? Greek or Turkish MP?
A: We are Turks with Greek citizenship. And if they want to let all the MPs unite, as they did some other time, to muzzle the voice of the minority in Parliament and to expel us from the Parliament. If something like that happens, I will have succeeded in uniting the MPs of all the parties, so I will have helped them… (Eleftherotypia 12.08.1993).

During the discussion in parliament the independent MPs were accused of making dubious deals. Faikoğlu responded by complaining about the way mass media portrayed the independent MPs. When they voted in favour of a bill they were accused of being directed and when they voted against a bill they were also accused of being directed. He stressed that the MPs had to vote according to conscience, and denounced what had been said against them. He continued by saying that it was unacceptable that they considered the problems of the minority to be bargaining chips. In his letter to the prime minister he had only asked for the same he would have asked all the parties. The independent MPs did not extort the government or any party when they asked for the minority’s rights to be respected. Faikoğlu asked if the socialist and communists who cared about human rights had not seen that the community (vakıf) in Ksanthi was managed by those appointed by the junta. In any case, ND did not accept to bargain with them.232 When Mitsotakis was asked to comment on the vote of the Muslim MPs on this occasion and the reactions related to it, he said:

The Muslim MPs have certainly the right to have opinions and vote. However, their vote, like the vote of the Muslim minority in general, can never be allowed to become the object of transactions in issues related to our foreign politics. ND, in contrast to others, kept completely this principle and will keep it in the future. When this is said, I have a question to pose to PASOK: Are the Muslim MPs good when they vote with them and bad when they happen to vote for the government? Anyway, in today’s parliament one is usually voting for the government and the other against. That is also what happened with the OTE bill.233

The controversy surrounding the behaviour of the independent MPs on this occasion demonstrates that they were totally isolated, and had little chance to influence the political choices of the government. The problem was not simply to present the minority issues in Athens, as they had claimed in their election campaigns. That had been done by previous MPs. The problem was rather how to enter a meaningful dialogue with the authorities, which would make it possible for the minority to have a say in

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232 Praktika Vulis, Session 35 - 12.08.1993, pp. 1322–3. See also Praktika Vulis, Session 37 - 13.08.1993
233 Ikonomikos Tahidromos, 2050/19.08.1993, Interview of Konstandinos Mitsotakis by Yiannis Marinos and Andonis Papayiannidis.
matters which concerned it. This was certainly not an easy task, but it is safe to say that the independent MPs made no progress in this direction. On the contrary, by their behaviour they contributed towards cementing the minority problems as a Greek-Turkish issue. It is also clear that by now the behaviour of the independent MPs had taken the patience of many Greeks to the point of exhaustion.234

The Independent MPs and Mass Media.

In this connection it is time to take a closer look at the independent MPs’ ability to present their problems to the Greek public. After the minority issue found its way to the Greek mainstream press, the minority obtained new opportunities to present its plight to the Greek public (see above). However, many actions by the independent MPs did not help towards making its problems understood, but exposed the minority to new attacks. There was an instance when Sadık Ahmet appealed to the prefect of Rodopi to cater for an open discussion covered by the mass media, so that the representatives of the minority could present its problems to the Greek public. A journalist, who was admittedly hostile towards Sadık, remarked that: “It is worth noting that Mr. Sadık has been asked to take part in public discussions many times in the past but he always avoided it. For this reason it can be deducted that Mr. Sadık makes his proposal to make an impression before announcing his [new] party.”235 In this case I believe the journalist was essentially correct. Both Sadık and Faikoğlu declined many invitations to participate in discussions about the minority, and when they appeared they did not fare particularly well. First of all because they were not up to the task, and secondly because it was not a high priority for them. They were more concerned about the fight for power within the minority and about their standing in Turkey. This is evident in the case of a press conference at the Athens Hilton hotel on the initiative of Faikoğlu, where he was accompanied by, among others, Rodoplu, Hatipoğlu and the lawyer Adem Bekiroğlu. At this time Sadık was founding a party to strengthen his grip on minority politics, which made the Faikoğlu wing respond in order not to be overshadowed.236 The next day a newspaper close to ND presented Faikoğlu’s efforts in the following manner:

The independent MP of Ksanthi Mr. Ahmet Faikoğlu gave a recital of provocation and excessive effrontery yesterday with his declarations, insulting the country he was born in and the Greek parliament he is a member of.

He said that Greece limits the religious freedom of the minority of Western Thrace with the appointment of mufti and the refusal to allow the building of mosques and called the minority constantly Turkish. Mr. Faikoğlu declared provocatively that the mufti was just as important as the Patriarch in Constantinople, not recognising the ecumenical character of the Patriarch

234 For a characteristic example see Eleftherotipia 15.08.1993, “The Bazaar of Sadık and Faikoğlu”, by Kira Adam. Translation in Appendix 5, text 36.
236 The rivalry between Sadık and Faikoğlu was emphasised in the Thessaloniki newspapers (Makedonia 28.09.1991, Thessaloniki 28.09.1991). This is also well known from minority sources.
Dimitrios. He also called Constantinople Istanbul. In front of the protest of the journalists who followed his interview, he did not hesitate to say that he is from Iskentze (!) [sic, i.e. Iskece] which made a journalist from Komotini shout indignantly, that Iskentze does not exist, only Ksanthi.

But Mr. Faikolu did not stop with this. When asked for what reason he ventured to see the premier of Turkey Mr. Yılmaz before he meets the Greek premier in Paris, Faikolu declared provocatively: “Yılmaz is not a foreign premier for the minority. He is premier of the country which signed the Lausanne treaty, the country which has a direct relationship with the minority. Because we are of the same race [filî].”

When asked if he would have made a similar move to meet Mr. Mitsotakis, he answered no.237

The press conference attracted negative comments from the whole Greek press. Some of the reactions are related to the fact that Faikolu presented Turkish positions and rhetoric in a Greek context. A moderate newspaper remarked that he supported exactly the Turkish position regarding the Patriarchate.238 As regards his overall performance, a newspaper which is generally positive to the minority remarked that he answered “sometimes with generalities and sometimes with evasion the questions on substantial matters.” (*Epohi* 29.09.1991). A more nationalist newspaper wrote that:

In the press conference, which lasted 3 whole hours, the independent MP of Ksanthi attempted in a very provocative manner to win the war of impressions by turning upside down the picture of today’s reality.

Faikolu received a hail of “hot” questions by the journalists and was forced to literally swallow his tongue.

“You are outside the subject. Other questions…” was the… “answers” he gave to the successive questions by the journalists. Indeed, at one point Faikolu said to a representative of the press: “I could have answered you, but that would take a lot of time. It would be better for us to… have a cup of coffee one day, and discuss it calmly!!!”

And the culmination of the difficult situation the MP of Ksanthi came in: He broke suddenly off the press conference, when a journalist from a local newspaper in Komotini posed him a “tough” question about the minority… “Gentlemen, we have finished. We are already way on overtime…” were the last words of Faikolu.239

In reality the press conference was not held to communicate with the Greek public, but to promote Faikolu within the minority and towards Turkey. Consequently, Hatipoğlu made a reportage afterwards where he praised Faikolu’s efforts. He stressed that Faikolu had said that the minority was one and Turkish, that Turkey was not a foreign country to the minority, and that he had presented the problems relating to the muftis and the vakıfs etc. (*Akın* 1045/30.09.1991).

Faikolu appears in a totally different and conciliatory fashion in a later interview. He has of course always been something of a political chameleon. He would go in and out of different roles with the greatest ease. This time he was probably trying to

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improve his image towards the Greek public, in order to make it possible to secure a place on a party ticket in the next election.\textsuperscript{240}

The Greek press featured a great number of hostile articles against the independent MPs. One of the most conspicuous appeared in the periodical \textit{ENA}. In this article Sadik Ahmet was characterised as an unsuccessful doctor, whose superiors did not entrust with even the simplest treatments. Many called him the “mad doctor” (\textit{\"{T}relo\i\uyatr\ors\")}. When he did not obtain a position in the hospital he made operations in his office without the necessary equipment and sanitary conditions with the result that a patient got infections and died. It was mentioned that Sadik’s Mercedes was a gift of the Western Thrace Solidarity Association in Germany, and that he was blamed for misusing funds collected by the minority. In the case of Faiko\text{"{g}lu}, the article mentioned his former role as middleman, against handsome rewards, for minority members who wanted to obtain driving licences and building permits. There was also much about a land fraud near Thessaloniki, where Faiko\text{"{g}lu} had been involved by providing a forged Ottoman title deed. Allegedly, when the public prosecutor of Thessaloniki had asked for the lifting of his parliamentary immunity in 1987 “he had good relations with most of his colleagues and was not regarded to be an extremist Muslim element.” Finally, the article was spiced up with some of Sadik’s and Faiko\text{"{g}lu}’s inflammatory statements.\textsuperscript{241} These accusations were not mere fantasy, but cases that were widely known both inside and outside the minority. However, the tone of the accusations made it obvious that the article was only a narrow minded attempt to defame the independent MPs. On the other hand, the article had no trace of criticism against the systematic discrimination which provided Faiko\text{"{g}lu} with the “opportunity” to act as middleman. Likewise, there was no attempt to look at Faiko\text{"{g}lu}’s role in the land fraud within the wider context, and in connection with the others who had been involved. It was only used as a vehicle to slander Faiko\text{"{g}lu}. In this connection the question of lifting the parliamentary immunity of Ahmet Faiko\text{"{g}lu} had been treated earlier, but only the MPs of ND were in favour (\textit{Kathimerini} 17.07.1990).

Another interesting case involving Faiko\text{"{g}lu}, took place when someone leaked to the press that he had been a double agent for the Greek and Turkish secret services. The Greek government spokesman did not disclaim these news (\textit{Eleftherotipia} 26.02.1991). The Greek ultra right weekly newspaper \textit{Stohos} printed documents which revealed that Faiko\text{"{g}lu} had been a Greek agent with the code name “Iperidis” from 1972 to 1980. He informed about what was going on in the mufti office where

\textsuperscript{240} \textit{Ethnos} 10.01.1993, “Ahmet Faiko\text{"{g}lu} the independent MP of Ksanthi, in an unexpected interview, declares that he will not aspire for the Turkish flag to wave in Western Thrace - I am proud that I was born in Greece”, by Marianna Polihroniadu. See Appendix 5, text 37.

\textsuperscript{241} \textit{ENA} 23.10.1991, “Two (anti) Greeks with Turkish passports”, By Titos Kondopulos and Anna Grimani. The land fraud has been referred to many times, also in the minority press. See \textit{Trakya\text{"{n}}n Sesi} 360/30.08.1990, \textit{Ileri} 737/19.11.1993.
he worked as secretary, particularly about its relationship with the Turkish Consulate in Komotini, and “anti-Greek” activities by religious personnel. Again, the article appeared to slander the independent MP Faikoğlu. There is no trace of criticism against the politics and methods of the Greek authorities, which are equally compromised. On the other hand, Hatişoğlu defended vividly Faikoğlu, and attacked Stohos and the minority newspapers which presented the news.

There were also articles and interviews in the Greek press which were guided by a sincere interest to learn more about the minority and its problems. In such cases it became clear that Sadık was not very adept at presenting the minority’s case to a Greek public. This was related to his overall lack of political training and weak grasp of the conceptual framework he needed for his arguments. In a typical interview he answered mostly with one or two sentences and displayed no ability to develop a point. At the best he answered with some slogan-like phrase he must have remembered from earlier. There were also instances where he did not grasp the question properly or answered out of context. On the whole his performance was very unsatisfactory. As a consequence of this, he seems to have gradually avoided Greek mass media, or at times he could become aggressive when confronted with difficult questions.

Pan-Turkism and Sadık’s Contacts in Turkey

Sadık was not only a phenomenon of domestic politics. His appearance in Greece was only one side of the coin. The other side was his relationship with Turkey. In Turkey he had two main centres of support: 1) The Turkish government, 2) Turkish nationalist organisations. The military coup in 1980 regarded the left as the main danger, while the ultra nationalist right was not only accepted but increased its influence. The increased interest in the “Turks” of Greek Thrace can partly be ascribed to the ascendancy of ultra right forces in the state apparatus, partly to the diplomatic tug of war between Greece and Turkey.

242 The document appeared in Stohos 421/15.07.1992 and was reprinted in Trakya’unu Sesı 428/23.07.1992. The news also found its way to the Turkish newspaper Günaydın 26.07.1992. Stohos has regularly “revealed” such kinds of secrets, which shows that it has some comrade(s)-in arms with access to classified documents.

243 Akın 1065/02.09.1992. A little earlier Hâki had written a parody titled: “He was screaming in the streets of Ksanthi: ‘Leave me alone! I too will become an agent!!!’” (İleri 682/21.08.1992). The minority politician İbrahim Onsunoğlu expressed in an interview his discomfort with the provocative behaviour of Sadık and Faikoğlu. He accused them of providing continuously pretexts to anti-minority cycles to cultivate the negative picture of the minority. Enmity against the minority had increased because of their behaviour. However, statements by the MPs were sometimes misrepresented, so the strategy of tension did not only belong to their side (48 Ores 23.12.1991).

244 Interview in Avyı (on Sunday) 10.03.1991, “The Greeks love us, but their leaders do not”, by Despina Makrinu. See Appendix 5, text 38. The interview seems to have been recorded, and Sadık expressed himself in a typical manner. For comparison, see the interview with İbrahim Onsunoğlu two weeks later by the same journalist, which also reflects well Onsunoğlu’s style: Avyı (on Sunday) 24.03.1991, “The future of the minority is unpredictable”, by Despina Makrinu. Appendix 5, text 39.
The early 1990s witnessed scores of more or less “official delegations” to Turkey by “Western Thrace Turks” who visited the Turkish president, prime minister, leaders of political parties etc. This raises the question, why did Turkey decide to play the Western Thrace card so flagrantly? The answer must to a large degree be related to Greek diplomatic initiatives. In order to corner Turkey, Greece attempted to attract attention to Turkey’s weak spots, i.e. human rights and minority rights. In this connection, Turkey was very sensitive to initiatives related to the large Kurdish minority. There are several indications that Greece played consciously the Kurdish card to put Turkey under pressure. For example, after the Gulf war the foreign minister Andonis Samaras mentioned in a large interview that Greece was the first state to raise the issue of protection for the Kurds and spoke openly about their need for autonomy. He could also reveal that a high level diplomat had been in Damascus and held secret meetings with the Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani. Greece concentrated in this connection on the need for humanitarian aid, but it is clear that Turkey must have been alarmed about the possibility of further implications. Turkey accused Greece repeatedly throughout the 1990s of supporting “Kurdish terrorists”. This culminated with the crisis between Greece and Turkey, when the leader of PKK, Abdüllah Öcalan, was abducted from Kenya in spring 1999 after having sought refuge in the Greek embassy. Since Turkey was well aware of the human rights problems in Greek Thrace, it must have decided to put this on the agenda to embarrass Greece. Turkey’s initiative involved several members of the “clique”, but it was Sadık Ahmet who was the undisputed star. Sadık’s many “exploits” were duly reported by both the Greek and the Turkish press.

Sadık’s close relationship with Turkey was apparent even before he became elected. Greek newspapers noted that the independent candidates were invited to the meeting of the Islamic Conference in Riyadh in March 1989. In May there was a meeting in Istanbul featuring “Turks” and “Macedonians” from Greece (Kathimerini 20.05.1989). The linkage of “Turks” and “Macedonians” shows that Turkey was interested in exploiting Greece’s “minority problems”. When Sadık appeared in the Turkish press, it was usually with one of his slogans such as: “This is Greece… i.e. a democratic, free country… In addition the cradle of democracy… But she is somehow not able to get out of the cradle and grow up…” (Milliyet 17.04.1990). The strong involvement of Turkey was clear before the Greek elections when the Turkish MP for Tekirdağ declared that: “God willing, we will elect our 451. MP in Komotini on 8 April.”

245 To Vima 12.05.1991. Hatipoğlu later made some critical remarks about Samaras’ human rights concerns for the Kurds. This is done within a Turkish nationalist framework, but he points out correctly the stark contrast to Samaras’ negative attitude in Thrace (Akın 1077/12.12.1992).
246 İkibin’e Doğru 06.05.1990. The Turkish parliament has 450 members.
It may be instructive to take a concrete look at the kind of contacts Sadık Ahmet would have in Turkey. When he visited the country in August-September 1990, he spent the first week seeing people from the solidarity organisations. He also spoke in a meeting organised by the chairman of the Istanbul solidarity organisation, Tahsin Salıhoğlu. The second week was spent in Ankara where he met Prime Minister Yıldırım Akbulut, Foreign Minister Ali Bozer, Minister of Education N. K. Zeybek, Minister of Finance Adnan Kahveci, and former Foreign Minister Mesut Yılmaz. In addition, he met the director of higher education İhsan Doğramacı to find solutions for the minority students who had not passed the university entrance exams. He also had separate meetings with the party leaders Erdal İnönü (SHP), Süleyman Demirel (DYP), and Bülent Ecevit (DSP).247 In other words, Sadık had direct access to the highest political quarters. There are some more colourful episodes, such as when Sadık participated in a television program together with the Turkish Minister of Labour “who presented the MP of Rodopi as representative of oppressed and hungry Turks. And rounding off the discussion the Turkish minister said addressing the Turkish viewers: ‘And you demand [wage] increases and rights’…” (Kathimerini 06.02.1991).

Ahmet Faikoğlu was never able to obtain the same status as Sadık, but that was not for lack of trying. When Mesut Yılmaz succeeded Yıldırım Akbulut as Prime Minister (16.06.1991) Faikoğlu sent him a letter of congratulation where he wrote among other things: “The oppressed Turks of Western Thrace, who love you and whom you love, followed closely the events which led to your election” and “The Turkish people of Western Thrace are happy because of the election of a dynamic and young Prime Minister who knows well our problems.”248 Another letter from Faikoğlu to Mesut Yılmaz (09.09.1991) before his meeting with Mitsotakis in Paris, was also referred to in the Greek press. Here Faikoğlu had allegedly said such things as: “We the Turks of W. Thrace are born and raised here, but the only thing which separates us from you is the border”, and “After God and religion comes our fatherland Turkey”.249

Sadık Ahmet’s close relationship with the Turkish ultra nationalist right became apparent on many occasions.250 He participated already in January 1989 in a seminary titled “The Western Thrace reality and human rights”, which was a joint arrangement

247 Ileri 605/14.09.1990. For other visits see Eleftherotipia 05.01.1991 and Akın 1027/15.04.1991. In the last instance he spoke at two conferences in Istanbul and was the guest of Mesut Yılmaz at an iftar meal (which takes place at sunset during Ramadan). See also Eleftherotipia 03.12.1991, which reported that Sadık had been received in Ankara by Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel.
249 Ethnos 14.09.1991. It is reasonable to believe that Faikoğlu’s original had “motherland” (anavatan) and not “fatherland”.
250 For a concise introduction to the ultra nationalist right’s role in Turkey, see (Ağaoğulları 1987).
by the “Hearth of Intellectuals” (Aydınlar Ocağı) and the “Western Thrace Turks’ Solidarity Association” (BTTDD) of Istanbul.251 This shows that Sadik’s human rights engagement was closely linked to a Turkish nationalist outlook. The “Hearth of Intellectuals” had strong connections to the extreme right movement led by Alpaslan Türkeş. In the 1980s it became known for its attempts to bring together the Islamic and the ultra right pan-Turkish movement, when it facilitated the election co-operation between Refah and MHP. Sadik participated in other meetings and conferences organised by the “Hearth of Intellectuals”, such as in Istanbul 04.05.1991 (Akin 1029/09.05.1991). In a meeting 30.11.1991, Sadik was quoted to have said: “We have the responsibility that the ezan [Muslim prayer call] continues to be heard in the Balkans. The Turks must struggle wherever they are to become masters of their lands.” (Eleftherotipia 02.12.1991). Allegedly, a former Turkish diplomat was critical to that Sadik was flirting with the issue of Turkish unity within a nationalist context: “Naturally, the fact that these initiatives appears from the “Hearth of Intellectuals”, the former Turkish diplomat concluded, will possibly have negative consequences both for Turkey as well as for the minority itself.” (ibid.). There were often high ranking politicians present when Sadik participated in nationalist meetings. When Sadik was honoured at the third general assembly of the “Turkish hearth” (Türk Ocağı) in Ankara, 12.03.1990, this took place in the presence of the Turkish state minister Vehbi Dinçeler.252 When Sadik participated in a pan-Turkish meeting in North Cyprus in August 1992, which included representatives from former Yugoslavia and former Soviet Union, the Turkish party leaders Mesut Yılmaz (ANAP) and Alpaslan Türkeş (MHP) were present. Allegedly, Sadik spoke about “future autonomy and secession”, but for the moment the struggle should be concentrated on human rights.253 Sadik’s “struggle in the Greek Parliament and the EU to protect the rights of the ‘Turkish’ minority in Western Thrace” also earned him a honorary doctorate at the “Black Sea Polytechnic University” (Pontiki 13.05.1993). A reportage from the ceremony in the “Atatürk Centre of Culture and Trade” (20.05.1993) referred to Sadik’s speech about “Greek oppression”, which included some of his stock phrases such as the usual: “Dr. Sadık Ahmet reminded that the Greeks display themselves as the cradle of civilisation and said: ’And I am saying when confronted with this

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251 Batt Trakya’nın Sesi 9/March-April 1989. The close relation between the BTTDD and the “Hearth of Intellectuals” is also evident by other joint meetings, see for example Batt Trakya’nın Sesi 15/February 1990.

252 Kathimerini 13.03.1990, “The chauvinism of Sadik was honoured”, by Alkis Kurkulas. The Türk Ocağı was first founded in 1911. Kemal Atatürk shut it down in 1931 and replaced it with the Peoples Houses (Halkevleri) which were affiliated with his Republican People’s Party (CHP). It was again legally recognised in 1976.

253 Tahidromos 09.09.1992. There are also references to meetings between Sadik and Türkeş in the minority press, as when they saw each other in Germany (İleri 746/18.02.1994).
inhuman behaviour, what is the use of a child who remained in the cradle.” (Ortadoğu 22.05.1993).

Other times Sadık participated in nationalist rallies which did not enjoy the support of the Turkish governments. Notably, 13.02.1993 he participated in a solidarity rally for Bosnia at the Taksim square in Istanbul, which represented the Islamic-nationalist part of Turkish public opinion. The rally was considered to be related to the Turkish president Turgut Özal’s demagogy about Turkey playing a more active part in the Balkans, while government circles and the army commander distanced themselves. This event attracted widespread comments in Greece, partly because of the damages inflicted on the offices of the Greek airlines “Olympiaki” in episodes after the rally.

The Greek government spokesman, V. Manginas stressed: “The Greek government regards as unacceptable [aparádektos] the presence of an MP of the Greek parliament in the rally in Istanbul which has the goal to provoke the outburst of Islamic fanaticism that may lead to further clashes and extension of the instability in the area” (Makedonia 16.02.1993). There were reactions to the fact that Sadık and the BTTDD appeared in the rally with the flag of the “Turkish state of Western Thrace”. His statements to the BTTDD in Bursa were also referred to: “Greece, by not respecting international treaties, interfere with the rights of the ‘Turkish’ minority in Western Thrace”, and “Thanks to Turkey’s strength, the issue of Turks abroad was always present. There was support on an international level to our problems. Turkey is guarantor of Western Thrace. Western Thrace is the only minority which is recognised in this area by the Lausanne Treaty [sic]” (Eleftherotipia 16.02.1993). Sadık was hailed as a hero in Turkish nationalist circles, and there appeared many articles in the Turkish press which cultivated this image.

Certainly, outside a Turkish context Sadık’s open relation with nationalist ultra-right circles did not harmonise with the human rights perspective. This was pointed out by Van Coufoudakis when the issue was discussed in an international context:

Dr. Sadık who ran into some problems has not perhaps told you all the things. Did he show you the flag that was in his office? Did he show you the maps that he had in his office about a united

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254 Eleftherotipia 13.02.1993. For a reportage by the BTTDD, which also participated, see Batt Trakya’nın Sesi 47/February 1993.
256 Eleftherotipia 15.02.1993. This is the flag of the short lived “Turkish state of Western Thrace” from 1913.
257 For a typical example see Türkiye 19.02.94, “Dr. Sadık Ahmet” by Prof. Dr. Aydın Taneri, which is an example of the “hagiographic” literature on Sadık in Turkey. Translation in Appendix 5, text 40. For an example of Sadık’s performance before a Turkish nationalist audience, see Türkiye 04.04.1994, “Sadık Ahmet evaluates the Greek oppression: ‘The ascension of Turkey scared the West’”, by Hasan Tekin– Necati Kaba in Hannover (Appendix 5, text 41). Sadık could also say the opposite to another audience. For an attempt to exploit this by a “smart” Greek journalist, see To Vima 20.06.1993, “Message of hope from Thrace”, by Yiannis Marinos (Appendix 5, text 42).
Thrace, an independent Thrace? And did he tell you about statements he had been making that he was the 451st member of the Turkish Grand National Assembly?258

However, in these instances one has the feeling that neither the international organisations nor the critics of Sadık had any clear grasp of the nature of his activities, but reproduced to what they had been told by various interest groups.

Reactions Against the Independent MPs’ Immunity

The “anti-Greek” activities of the independent MPs led to strong reactions in the Greek parliament and several proposals to lift their parliamentary immunity. 23 MPs from all parties asked Sadık to resign for treason after he had said in an interview that it would be difficult to choose side in case of a Greek-Turkish war. As a result, Sadık declared that the minority did not identify with Turkey and denounced categorically every opinion which supported the sedition of W. Thrace and its union with Turkey (Eleftherotipia 17.11.1990). One cannot be sure if Sadık had been quoted correctly, but it is not a difficult task to find statements by Sadık with diametrically opposed viewpoints. New proposals to lift their parliamentary immunity led to the intervention of international human rights organisations on their behalf.259 It is clear that many were exasperated by the behaviour of the independent MPs. The MP of Ksanthi, Yeoryios Pavlakis (ND), made a new proposal to lift the parliamentary immunity of the two independent MPs. He said that: “The behaviour of the two MPs have unfortunately exhausted every measure of patience and tolerance. Their opinions transcend the limits” (Ethnos 28.11.1991). The other MP from Ksanthi, Panayiotis Sguridis (PASOK), joined in: “Once more the direct relationship between the movements of Ahmet Faikoğlu and Sadık Ahmet and the interests of Turkey has been proved clearly. After a long silence during the election period of the neighbouring country, these otherwise talkative gentlemen acquired a voice with the acquisition of [a new] government in Turkey” (Eleftherotipia 28.11.1991).

At times there were loud quarrels in the Greek parliament involving the independent MPs. These could sometimes be quite peculiar. Particularly when they involved MPs with a Greek ethnocentric attitude:

It all began when the MP of PASOK El. Konstandinidis, referring to the oppressed Greeks of the Pontos [Turkish Black Sea coast] and Istanbul, said: “They do not have the right to worship their religion. And here we have two alleged colleagues, traitors of this country who go and cry out how much their minority is oppressed.”

Ahmet Sadık: I am not alleged MP. I am MP.

258 (United States Congress - Commission on Security and Co-operation in Europe 1996). Just a little digression. I wonder when Coufoudakis visited Sadık’s office, or where he has his information from?

El. Konstantinidis: You may be whatever you want. However, you cannot be called Greek, when you go and speak.

Ahmet Sadik: You cannot call me alleged MP.

El. Konstantinidis: You should speak to your compatriot [simpatriótes] Greeks who live in the Pontos, who do not have the right to worship their religion. Tell me how many schools, what Greek schools, exist in the Pontos.

Ahmet Sadik: You do not have the right to call me alleged MP.

El. Konstantinidis: You are shameless! You are shameless! (applause from all wings)

Ahmet Sadik: I am from a recognised minority. You cannot call me alleged MP.

El. Konstantinidis: You are shameless! I am sorry [i.e. for you]!

Ahmet Sadik: I know my status and I know my descent [katagoyí].

The presiding (D. Frangos): Mr. Sadik, I beg you.

Ahmet Sadik: … (Inaudible). (note: the MPs at the desks next to him claims that he said: “I am a Turk”.)

M. Yikonoglu: If you are a Turk you should go to Turkey. Here there are only Greeks!

Understand it! Here you cannot speak as a Turk. This is the Greek parliament. (Noise in the room)

Yikonoglu: You are a traitor!

Ahmet Sadik: … (inaudible).

E. Zafiropulos: Expel him from the room, Mr. president.

F. Konstandinu: Expel him, Mr. president.

V. Papadopulos: If he is not Greek, he should leave the room.

E. Zafiropulos: Expel him from the room, Mr. president.

The presiding (D. Frangos): I beg you gentlemen.

M. Yikonoglu: It is a shame for the Parliament, that there are such MPs.

V. Papadopulos: The Greek MPs, ladies and gentlemen colleagues, are representatives of the nation [éthnos]. And the Greek nation—for the Muslim colleague, I say this so he can hear it—consists of the Greeks who are within the country, within Greece and of the Greek Orthodox Christians who live in Turkey and other parts of the world. And you have the duty, too, as serving the nation, to defend those Greeks who belong to the nation, as I analysed it for you. Provided…

Ahmet Sadik: However, we have also rights.

V. Papadopulos: The Greek nation, Mr. Muslim colleague [kírie sinádelfe musulmáne], the Greek people [láos] and the Greek parliament expect from you that you would sometime step forward in this room and say at last that you are a representative of the Greek nation. That is your place, otherwise you have no place in the Greek parliament according to the Constitution, according to international rules, according to the law. This is the reality. (Applause from all the wings).

Ahmet Sadik: I will not answer you.

Yikonoglu: Mr. president, Mr. Papadopulos is speaking about a serious issue. Someone should learn sometime that there can only be Greeks in here [i.e. in parliament].

Ahmet Sadik: We are Europeans.

Yikonoglu: Europeans and Turks have no rights here…

Ahmet Sadik: I do not leave Thrace. I am Thracian [thrakiótis] […] 260

The discussion continued. Some criticised the “pan-Turkish politics of Özal”, while vice finance minister Yiatrakos stressed that Greece respected the minority, but would not accept Turks as representatives and especially in parliament. Sadik issued later a written statement where he accused the PASOK MP Konstandinidis of being provocative since he had called Sadik alleged MP. He also wrote: “I do not grant anybody the right to occupy himself with my descent [katagoyí] nor with the descent of the minority which I represent. The minority is one and Turkish.” 261 On this occasion a Greek commentator stressed that in spite of Sadik and Faikoğlu’s actions the parliament would not take away their immunity and did not regard it right to prosecute them. He also made a comparison with Turkey, which is a common practice in the Greek press:

261 Ibid. I also possess a copy of Sadik’s declaration dated 20.12.1991.
“It is impossible not to mention the confession of the great Turkish journalist Mehmet Ali Birand that the behaviour displayed by Mr. Sadık and Faikoğlu in Greece would have been inconceivable to be displayed by MPs-representatives of minorities in Turkey, where they would immediately have been confronted with the National Safety court… with the consequences thereof.”

A month later the question of taking away the parliamentary immunity of the independent MPs was discussed again in parliament, after Ahmet Faikoğlu had been accused of anti-Greek activities and calumny according to article 141 of the criminal code, while Sadık had been accused according to article 183 of the criminal code for instigating citizens to disobey the law with his statements that “blood will flow in Thrace”. The independent MPs were criticised severely for they anti-Greek activities, but none of the MPs from each party who presented the issue [isiyítés] recommended the removal of their immunity. Soon the question of Sadık and Faikoğlu’s parliamentary immunity was brought up again because of their statements to the Turkish press, but the government spokesman V. Polidoras said that no Greek MP would lose his immunity. He added that Sadık did not at all behave like a Greek MP.

A few week later there was a more serious attempt to lift the parliamentary immunity of Sadık and Faikoğlu after pressure by MPs from all parties, particularly those who came from border areas. In the parliamentary committee 27 MPs voted against, 4 in favour, and 10 blank in the case of Sadık, while 25 voted against, 4 in favour, and 12 blank when it came to Faikoğlu. However, this was not binding for the voting in the plenary session of parliament and the parties were afraid that many MPs would not obey the expressed desire not to lift the immunity of the independent MPs. There was an episode in the parliamentary committee when the MP Stratis Korakas (Sinaspismos), who was against lifting the immunity, spoke about several instances of discrimination and oppression of the minority. Some MPs for PASOK and ND responded by calling Korakas “traitor” and “sold out”, while he in turn called them “nationalism exploiters” (Hürriyet 21.03.1992).

The parliamentary immunity of the independent MPs was not lifted, but the criticism against them continued. In early 1993 the criticism against them reached new heights in the Greek press in connection with the schoolbook controversy.

Characteristically:

The indescribable Sadık, unaccountable because of his parliamentary position, provokes everybody in Rodopi. He threatens and extorts the poor Muslims with the “punishment of mother-Turkey”. He breaks the law openly, curses Greece, declares that he is a Turk, he abuses the

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262 *Kerdes* 22.12.1991, “The two Muslim MPs of Thrace should appreciate the tolerance of the citizens before it is exhausted”, by Dimitri Hatzidimitriu.
263 *Thessaloniki* 15.01.1992. See also *Eleftherotipia* and *Ethnos* from the same date.
265 *Kathimerini* 20.03.1992 and *Eleftherotipia* 20.03.1992.
institutions and laws. And he is left undisturbed in his criminal propaganda against our country on all the international fronts.

The MP of Rodopi for ND, Nikos Salikas, accuses Sadık for being simply a mouthpiece of Ankara who “is articulated” through the renowned Turkish consulate in Komotini. And he stresses:

- “It is a shame. The Regulations of Parliament must definitely be amended—someone who turns openly and repeatedly against our fatherland must immediately cease to be MP. […] This concrete person is a pure organ of Ankara—and dangerous, because he “murders” daily the peaceful coexistence of Christians and Muslims resorting to blatant provocation and episodes. To make his name heard and to secure support for his next plans. Which is to be elected to the European parliament…”266

In spite of all the clamour, the parliamentary immunity of the independent MPs was never revoked. It seems that the government favoured the tactic of ignoring the activities of the independent MPs to avoid giving them more publicity:

Even though the subversive activity has taken on dimensions, the Greek authorities limit themselves to rhetorical denouncements, without proceeding to actual measures to contain this activity. For the moment, Athens avoids to prosecute him [Sadık] for the legally punishable acts, to avoid creating noise and making him a hero.

In addition, Athens does not at the moment desire to create obstacles in Greek-Turkish relations. However, the impunity of Sadık Ahmet creates precedence and reinforce the Turkish propaganda, according to which Turkey has the power to check the Greek reactions.267

The Election Law

While the government avoided to take direct action against Sadık and Faikoğlu, it had obviously thought about ways to avoid the future election of independent MPs controlled by Ankara. Greece has a tradition for changing the election system frequently. Usually the party in power would devise a new system on the eve of elections which was tailor-made to the political situation. There appeared early rumours about the introduction of a 3% cut-off point on votes cast nation-wide to eliminate independent tickets (Avriani tis Vorias Elladas 21.01.1990). When a new election law was voted through in parliament 23.10.1990, this was one of its conspicuous features.268

The 3% cut-off point, which corresponded to almost 200,000 votes, targeted both the small parties and the independent Muslim candidates. It appeared for the first time and represented an innovation in Greek election systems. The measure was not comparable to cut-off points in other European countries, since in these countries they were not valid for the first distribution of votes or for single constituencies. The Greek election specialist Ilias Nikolakopulos warned in his comment both against possible international reactions against this excluding effect, and against the possible emergence of minority parties.269

266 Niki 04.02.1993, “Uneven fight… The Turkish consulate extorts and terrorise the Muslims of Thrace - Interview with Nikos Salikas”, by Margo Kumanaku.
269 ibid. For similar reservations see (Dodos 1994: 61–62).
Sadik Ahmet reacted to the new law by withdrawing his support for the government (given on his own initiative), and accused it of violating the rights of the “Turkish minority”. The government spokesman responded that the government had never relied on the support of Sadik. Consequently his withdrawal was of no significance. However, the government reacted to his use of the term “Turkish” for the “Muslim minority” (Ta Nea 06.11.1990). There were strong reactions to the new election law from Turkey. Typically, the Greek foreign minister Andonis Samaras criticised his Turkish counterpart, (15.12.1990), the Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Kurtcebe Alptemocin, for intervention in the internal affairs of Greece after the Turkish minister had said that “he cannot accept the Greek election law, because ‘it creates obstacles only to one side’, having in mind the ‘independent’ MPs of the Muslim minority of Thrace who are directed by Ankara.” (Kathimerini 28.11.1990). Greece would also point to the 10% cut-off point in the Turkish election law, which had excluded large parties such as the Democratic Left Party (DSP of Ecevit) with 8.5 % and the Welfare Party (Refah of Erbakan) with 7.25 % in the 29.11.1987 elections (Eleftherotipia 09.11.1990). The Greek Prime Minister Mitsotakis used this argument when the Turkish PM Mesut Yılmaz complained to him about the 3% cut-off point (To Vima 15.09.1991). A later briefing under the auspices of the Helsinki Commission saw more or less a repetition of these arguments. Bekiroğlu and Bahcheli argued that the 3% cut-off point should not apply to independent candidates. On the other hand Coufoudakis mentioned that cut-off points were applied in both Germany (5%) and Turkey (10%), and that the minority had not been deprived of parliamentary representation but simply had to run for a party. He also made a strong point of the fact that Turkey had interfered on behalf of the independent candidates, and pressured other candidates not to join the major political parties.270 There was no finer analysis of the overall framework of the election law and the role of the 3% limit within this context.

Since the political representation of the minority had turned into a pure Greek-Turkish issue, the possibility of independent minority candidates was presented as a national danger. The 3% cut-off point was consequently later introduced also for the Euro-elections. A probably not unintended side effect was that it would also effect the small parties, which may explain why the Euro-MP of Sinaspismos, Kostas Alavanas, was negative towards it (Eleftherotipia 24.03. 1993).

New danger scenarios appeared later in connection with the law concerning the second degree local self-government (2. vathmós topikís aftodiikisis). This could lead to the election of a Muslim prefect in Thrace. An article maintained that while the Muslims were Greek citizens, their leaders declared everywhere that they were Turks, and Turkey strove for the “Cyprification” of Thrace. Turkey exploited the international

public opinion about minorities and would some day ask for autonomy of Thrace for later incorporating it into the “motherland”. The “danger” was most conspicuous in the Rodopi prefecture where the Muslims were in majority. However, it was stressed that the issue had to be handled in a way which did not expose Greece internationally. And further:

If the law is ratified as it is, then the same mistake which took place with the election law of 1988 will be repeated, which made possible the election of two fanatical Muslims, Messrs. Sadık and Faikoglu (who presented themselves as pure Turks), with the result that they created a lot of unacceptable problems.

The various party expediencies cannot prevail over the national interests. 271

The article above represents the predominant opinion that the minority had turned into a national problem, which the state had to use all available resources to confront. It is profoundly authoritarian, and was greatly assisted by the very actions of the independent MPs. These kind of opinions are put in relief by critical comments from a marginal left-wing group, which of course has its own agenda and is without much influence among either majority or minority:

The “3%” abolished directly and immediately the political rights of the Turkish minority of Thrace, which has the right to elect whoever it wants for its MP (after all, Mr. Sadik is not worse than Mr. Andreulakis or Mr. Kammenos) and surely the more it is oppressed by Greece the more it will turn towards the “Mother country” Turkey. The Greek state does not exclude Sadik because he is ultra-right and “Turcophile”—it would do the same if he were a progressive and independent representative for the minority—but because it wants to exclude the Turkish minority from the “national body”.

[...]

There are two solutions for the minority of Thrace: Either recognition of its peculiarities and the safeguard of its rights or the perpetuation of the barbarity. The Greek state has long ago decided for the second choice. However, for those who are interested in the first it is necessary to distance oneself from both the common opinion, which regards the minority to be a puppet in the hands of Ankara, and from the refined [opinion] which promotes a policy of benefits and social rights for the minority to “prevent it from falling into the arms of Turkey”. This way of thought, 100% Greek-centred, continues to be racist in spite of the fact that it appears more democratic. The rights of the minority are regarded as means to obtain pacification and to deprive the “enemy” of allies and not as the obvious rights of a population group. 272

The critics of the independent MPs within the minority opted for a much more unpretentious and practical approach. It was clear that with the 3% limit the election of independent MPs had become a thing of the past. The nationalist rhetoric of the independents had attempted to portray any relation with the major parties as illegitimate. In relation to this, Abdülhalim Dede criticised the independents for having led minority politics to a dead end. He wondered if they would call future candidates on the party tickets traitors, collaborators, sold etc., or what they would do themselves if they had the opportunity to run on a party ticket? (Trakya’nun Sesi 365/01.11.1990). Eventu-

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272 Allilengii No. 1. Jan.–Feb. 1994 (“Solidarity” Irregular bulletin of the Antirwar-Antinationalistic Campaign of Greece). Andreulakis and Kammenos, who are referred to in the article, belong to the ultra-right wing of ND. They are known as supporters of the ex-king and close to the junta, and are what the left in casual speech would call fascists or quasi-fascists (fasistoidís). The authors display a real internationalist spirit by disregarding the different environment the persons operate in, i.e. that the above are Greek “fascists” in Greece while Sadik is a Turkish “fascist” in Greece.
ally Sadık Ahmet would found his own party, but this did not play any important role in Greek politics. It had a much greater significance for the internal developments in the minority, and will be treated later in connection with this.
Examples of Popular Mobilisation

As can be remembered, there had earlier been demonstrations and protest marches in connection with the Yaka expropriations, the closing of the associations etc. (see above). During the tenure of the independent MPs, there were two events that had some resemblance with earlier attempts of popular mobilisation. The first was connected with the appointment of muftis, while the other was related to the publishing of schoolbooks in Turkish. These two incidents will be treated in much detail since they are quite instructive for comprehending the role of the various forces involved and the complexity of the issue. It should be kept in mind that while I try to display the whole range of viewpoints, most of the people involved were only exposed to, or did only have access to, some of them.

The mufti Controversy (part 2)

The “clique’s” rhetoric against the appointed mufti in Komotini, Meço Cemali, continued unabated. For example, a message by the Ksanthi mufti, Mustafa Hilmi, on the occasion of the religious holiday Berat Kandili condemned that some “sold out” correspondents tried to display Meço Cemali in Turkish newspapers as legal and as someone who worked for the community. Mustafa Hilmi repeated his accusations against Cemali, calling him an occupant and an organ of the occupiers (Akin 977/23. 03.1989). This had also resulted in episodes, as when the people of the Mega Pisto (Büyük Müsellim) village had made a petition signed by 185 persons, asking Cemali for a new imam, because they were dissatisfied with the one they had. This was granted by Cemali, with the result that the old imam went to the “clique” for support. When the head secretary of the Ksanthi mufti office, Mehmet Emin Aga, went to the village—which is not within the jurisdiction of the Ksanthi mufti office—to reinstate the old imam, the villagers turned their back to him (Trakya’nun Sesi 342/21.12. 1989). In this case the confrontation between the leadership had trickled down to the ground level.

The situation took a dramatic new turn when the 89-year old mufti of Ksanthi, Mustafa Hilmi, died 12 February 1990. On the same day the VIH assembled and decided:

1. It was expected that the mufti election anticipated by the law 2345/1920 would be announced for the vacant Ksanthi mufti office.

273 cf. what has been mentioned earlier in connection with the 8 April 1990 election.
2. An illegal appointment would definitely not be accepted.

This quick reaction anticipated the customary bargains, as it was rumoured that the oldest son of the mufti, Mehmeth Emin Aga, would be appointed deputy mufti (topotiritís). As mentioned earlier, according to rumours the Hatipoğlu-Aga-Faikoğlu troika had made a deal. It is considered that the decisive support from Turkey was secured when Faikoğlu and Aga went to Istanbul for treatment after the episodes in Komotini 29.01.1990. When the foreign minister Mesut Yılmaz went to visit them in the hospital, they obtained the approval of Aga as mufti and Faikoğlu as MP (Ömeroğlu 1994: 88). The late mufti of Ksanthi, Mustafa Hilmi Aga, was buried 15.02.1990. The funeral service took place at the Fatih Cami in Istanbul and was shown in Turkish TV (TRT 2). According to a local Greek-language newspaper of Ksanthi, it made an impression on people that the coffin was covered by the Turkish flag (Foni tis Ksanthis 17.02.1990). When Aga and Faikoğlu returned from Istanbul with the coffin, the Turkish consul in Komotini, Deniz Bölükbaşi, headed the procession together with them. There were warnings that the minority would react dynamically if the new mufti was not elected by the Muslims, but appointed by the government like the undesired Cemali (Proti 16.02.1990). On 17 February there were rumours that Mehmet Emin Aga would be appointed deputy mufti, and he responded by saying that he would not accept the appointment if it was offered to him. In the afternoon of the following day the news arrived from the prefecture that Aga had been made deputy mufti, and the prefect appointed him on the same day (Ömeroğlu 1994: 86). In reality, Mehmet Emin Aga had been running the mufti office for the last ten years, as his elderly father was no longer able to take care of business. There were strong reactions to the appointment of Aga by the Christians of Ksanthi, partly because of pre-election rivalry.

So the agent of Ankara, Mehmet Aga, is officially from the day before yesterday the new mufti of Ksanthi!

In the meantime there were strong reactions to the choice of Mehmet Aga in the New Democracy party.

Mehmet Aga who is regarded to be the strongest adversary of ND locally (many accuse him of being a “crutch” for PASOK!), was PROMOTED very suddenly and ill advisedly (Adesmefti 17.02.1990).

Aga took over the mufti office and as a consequence he accepted his appointment by the Greek authorities. This made many Muslims, angry as he was seen to sell out their struggle for personal benefits (Hronos 20.02.1990). The appointment of Aga as mufti was problematic to the AYK, as its acceptance would also indirectly mean the acceptance of Cemali’s appointment. Aga said to a Turkish newspaper that he could not accept the position before he had discussed it with the VIH (Tercüman 18.02. 1990). Rumours that he would accept caused the VIH to assemble. Those from

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274 Yeni Hakka Davet, June 1990: 20. The VIH is considered to be under the influence of the Turkish consulate. However, it is by no means a streamlined organisation and the rivalry between the members run high.
Ksanthi wanted to accept the appointment, while those from Komotini did not because of Cemali. They reached the following decision:

1) It is against Muslim law that a non-Muslim prefect appoints a *mufti* without consulting specialists.
2) Aga should not accept his appointment.
3) Election should be announced on the basis of the law 2345/20, article 6, in all the *mufti* seats, and the *muftis* of Komotini and Didimotho must resign for this reason.275

The *Yürütme Komitesi* (Executive Committee-YK) first made an announcement in which it was said that the law 2345/1920 should be applied. Later the YK made a statement that it was not reasonable to demand a *mufti* election from the Greek government which was preparing for the April general elections, and the appointment of Aga as *mufti* substitute was accepted until there was a firm government in control. Hatipoğlu wrote that the YK had recommended people to accept the appointment of Aga (*Akin* 1003/30.08.1990). After this recommendation Aga accepted the appointment in a letter to the prefect dated 01.03.1990.276 In other words the troika which first said no, later said yes to the appointment. When people’s reactions against Aga’s acceptance of the appointment did not calm down, Hatipoğlu led the defence calling him a minority hero (*kahraman*) and champion of Islam (*mücahid*) (*Akin* 988/25.04.1990).

In early February, the Greek government had decided to make the deputy *mufti* of Komotini permanent, with the common consent of the three political party leaders (*Ta Nea* 06.02.1990). Hafız Cemali was appointed *mufti* of Komotini 30.03.1990 by the Ministry of Education and Religious affairs. This triggered many of the reactions which were to come. The independent MPs, Sadık Ahmet and Ahmet Faikoğlu, would later play a key role in staging the irregular *mufti* elections. Faikoğlu declared immediately after his election that his first task would be to see to that the law 2345/1920 was applied for the election of *mufti*. Faikoğlu had made no attempt to get the law applied during his 4 years as MP for PASOK (1985–1989). He had even called the group which demanded the application of the law provocateurs who served foreign powers i.e. Turkey. While previously he was heading the group supporting Cemali, he had now become protagonist for the opposite cause. Ömeroğlu considers that he changed his position for the following reasons: To be elected MP again, to pay services to Turkey, and to prevent his son and brother from having to do military service. (Religious personnel is exempted). Faikoğlu worked earlier in the *mufti* office and he, his brother, and his son are all imams. However, it is disputed if they have the qualifications and if they fulfil their duties. A new *mufti* could take away their status.

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275 *Eleftherotipia* 21.02.1990, “Conflict and stalemate for the *mufti* of Ksanthi”, by S. Soltaridis

276 (Ömeroğlu 1994: 87–88). The YK was supposedly the “board” of the AYK. However, if we look at the way this committee was run in those days, it was just an euphemism for Aga and Hatipoğlu.
(Ömeroğlu 1994: 89–90). Faikoğlu’s new line is an indication of his adaptability, or opportunism if you like. Faikoğlu’s change should not be interpreted as a change in outlook, but simply as a change of master.

Meço Cemali was sworn in as mufti 03.05.1990 by the prefect of Rodopi, Dionisios Karahalios, after serving as deputy mufti for four years. Persons belonging to the mufti office were present, together with the politician Ahmet Mehmet as representative of PASOK.277 Cemali’s appointment turned the balance and made Aga’s position untenable. He was no longer able to defend his position, and 09.05.1990 the YK assembled with Aga as chairman. He announced that he would resign from his position as substitute mufti in protest against Cemali’s appointment. Aga submitted his resignation to the prefect 10.05.1990. He protested against the appointment of Cemali and said that he had only agreed to be appointed temporarily until the elections anticipated by the law 2345/1920 could be applied (Ömeroğlu 1994: 91–92). Interestingly enough Sadık appeared conciliatory and opposed mildly the leadership and the theologians who forced Aga to resign. In a meeting with them 11.05.1990 he reputedly said: “I am the leader, I have 30,000 voters and I express the will of Ankara and not you who should shut up…”.278 Sadık said that when Cemali was first appointed deputy-mufti it had been accepted by the minority’s political leaders. The VIH and the AYK wanted to issue a protest, but this did not happen because of Sadık (ibid.). Greek diplomatic observers had the opinion that certain circles in Turkey tried to create an artificial issue around the mufti office of Komotini. The chairman of BTTDD in Ankara, Bedri Uçar, asked for the resignation of the mufti of Komotini with the accusations: “he has a strange attitude. He uses expressions implying that he is not reckoning Turkey.” Greece was accused of being no better than Bulgaria (ibid.).

The VIH took a new initiative 25.06.1990 to prevent the candidature of Aga in Ksanthi. They said that “It would be both a mistake and a sin to make Aga a candidate for the Ksanthi mufti office” (Ömeroğlu 1994: 93). Hatipoğlu wrote that the Ksanthi village heads and religious personnel insisted on Aga as candidate (Akın 997/29.06.1990), instead of supporting the three qualified candidates with higher religious education which the VIH had chosen from its own ranks.279 Faikoğlu, too, supported Aga in his Bayram message (03.07.1990). The AYK assembled 03.08.1990 under the chairmanship of Hatipoğlu, and 07.08.1990 Faikoğlu announced the mufti election (Ömeroğlu 1994: 93).

277 Eleftherotipia 04.05.1990. Cemali was appointed by the ministerial decision A 3/19/30-3-90 (Efimeris tis Kiverniseos 61/6-4-1990).
278 Kathimerini 12.05.1990. “The Turks make the mufti of Komotini and issue”, by Alkis Kurkulas, and a report by Melahrini Martidu in Komotini. The information seems very plausible, but one may wonder how the journalist Martidu can have information from a meeting among the Muslim religious personnel.
279 These three were Sedat Karadayı, Sabri Hacı Hüseyin, and Sabri Tevfik.
Aga was elected 17.08.1990 during the Friday noon prayer in the mosques. There were four candidates and people showed their preference by raising their hand. According to Akın 6,000 raised their finger for Aga (Akın 1007/09.10.1990). After Aga took up his responsibilities (23.08.1990), Hatipoğlu wrote:

In the voting after the Friday noon prayer on 17 August 1990 Mehmet Emin Aga was preferred by more than 80% of our kinsmen and since according to the saying “THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE IS THE VOICE OF GOD” the religious leader not only for the Ksanthi prefecture, but for the whole minority was elected (Akın 1003/30.08.1990).

Later, preparations began for elections in the neighbouring Rodopi prefecture. The VIH met 15.12.1990 and selected three candidates from their own ranks: İbrahim Şerif, Hasan Paçaman (son-in-law of the late mufti of Komotini), and Aliosman Osman (Akın 1014/20.12.1990). The next day they announced the mufti elections. After the committee had visited Sadık, he too supported the election. İbrahim Şerif (1951–) was elected mufti 28.12.1990 by the raising of hands in the mosques. The “clique” presented the election as a great success. According to Hatipoğlu 95% of the 12,000 who raised their finger in the election were in favour of İbrahim Şerif (Akın 1016/01.01.1991). These figures were reflected in the Turkish press, which also focused on Greek countermeasures. According to the journalist Reha Muhtar, 132 mosques were surrounded by police, which prevented 6–7,000 persons from participating in the election. Greek journalists had told him openly that the new law for appointing muftis had been made to check extremist groups within the minority and to render the influence of the independents void. Muhtar argued that the Greek side had forgotten that these people were representing a very great part of the Western Thrace Muslim Turkish minority. Any decision against them, would also be a decision against the minority. He stressed further that Turkey had rights over this community because of the Lausanne Treaty.²⁸⁰ According to Cemali, who should have no interest in exaggerating the numbers, only 20% of the Muslims participated in the elections, while according to the Greek authorities it was only 10% (Epohi 06.01.1991). The more nationalist Greek newspapers were eager to portray the election as a fiasco, and accused Ankara for attempting to create a new Cyprus conflict in Thrace. One newspaper claimed that Ankara, the Turkish consulate in Komotini, and Denktaş had started to make efforts to get the Muslim minority in Thrace included in the “League of non-recognised nation-states”. Now Turkey was worried because their candidate İbrahim Şerif only obtained 28% of the Muslim votes in spite of the campaign for him (Fileleftheros 04.01.1991). In an interview to a radio station in Thessaloniki the representative for the mufti, Abdülhalim Dede, spoke of relations between Aga and the Greek government behind

²⁸⁰ Milliyet 29.12.1990. “New days of crisis”, by Reha Muhtar. The leading journalist was the newspaper’s correspondent in Athens at the time.
the scenes and asked rhetorically: “What kind of qualities has Aga, to make the interest of Greece and Turkey focus on his person?” (Adesmefti 01.01.1991). He claimed that Cemali had not put pressure on the imams to prevent them from reading the proclamation for the election, but had asked for the Muslims to put pressure on the state for secret elections where he would be a candidate himself (ibid.). However, according to another newspaper, Cemali put pressure on the imams so that they would not participate in the election of a new mufti (Epohi 06.01.1991). It was certainly natural for the mufti to use his authority to counter the attacks on him.

Generally speaking, everybody presented the events according to their audience, and there was little or no communication between the groups. Questions of principle took second place, while the emphasis was put on the contest between Greece and Turkey. Even in this contest, we must draw a line between the rhetoric and the petty politics games behind the scenes. It is interesting to note that the Greek authorities simply ignored the election of Aga, and reacted first when the procedure was repeated in Rodopi. The elections in the mosques were carried out in a way that did not even remotely resemble the procedure stipulated by the law 2345/1920 which was appealed to. First of all, according to the law it is the prefect who is supposed to announce and organise an election by secret ballot. The open vote also made it easy to put people under pressure to vote for specific candidates. An acquaintance in Ksanthi told me that people voted for Mehmet Emin Aga out of fear. It should be remembered that this was during the heyday of the black list. As mentioned earlier the government had already appointed Meço Cemali as mufti for Komotini. The “elections” in Rodopi consequently challenged directly the Greek authorities. Meço Cemali was generally respected and enjoyed a substantial degree of support in minority circles. The government’s reasons for appointing Meço Cemali are obvious. Meço Cemali is a doctor of theology educated in Saudi Arabia and has no direct links with Turkey. It is of even greater importance that he has not been engaged in political activities, and is considered a religious man. İbrahim Şerif has exactly the opposite characteristics. He was educated in Turkey and excelled as a political activist. He had recently been convicted for spreading propaganda about the minority being Turkish in co-operation with Ahmet Sadık who became independent MP.

The New Law

The mufti issue had been pending for a long time and apparently the Greek and Turkish foreign ministries watched each other’s steps. Almost two years before these events the Turkish Foreign Ministry gave the message that “it follows the issue with interest and that Greece will have to consider seriously the opinions and reactions of our co-nationals [omoethnís]” (Eleftherotipia 23.03.1989). Turkish press followed suit and wrote that Athens was preparing a law which allowed the Greek government
to appoint the mufti in Thrace alone. This was said to be contrary to Greek-Turkish agreements (*Milliyet* 27.03.1989). According to Greek sources, “information that Sadık and Ankara prepared an election coup for the mufti (appealing to a law from 1920 that has never been applied) reached the government last August”. At that time the prime minister, Mitsotakis, ordered his staff to work out a new law that would replace law 2345/1920 (*To Vima* 30.12.1990). The Greek press supported completely its government in the “contest” with Turkey. It claimed that the new law gave a democratic procedure for the election of mufti, while Sadık tried to manipulate the minority to follow his line by producing various arguments against it (*To Vima* 30.12.1990).

A look at the law itself shows that the mufti is appointed according to a public procedure where everyone with the necessary qualifications can apply. The law is formulated so that it is possible for the Greek authorities to be in firm control of the selection process. To be more concrete: The general secretary (yenikós diefthintís) of the region assembles a 11-men committee of leading Muslims, who will voice their opinion about the candidates (article 1.5). This implies that the general secretary himself can control who will be in the committee. Head of the committee is the prefect. Even if the other members of the committee do not show up the prefect alone can give his opinion about the candidates. It is also clear that the authorities do not necessarily have to accept the candidate proposed by the committee. The minister of Education decides finally which candidate is to be appointed. Article 8 of the law also announced the foundation of a special university department for educating the Muslim religious personnel. This indicates once more that the Greek authorities did not want the religious personnel to be educated in Turkey. On the other hand, it also shows that the authorities were willing to set up institutions which could serve the religious needs of the minority. The law was issued in great haste by presidential decree 24 December 1990, and without any dialogue with the minority.281 The AYK assembled 19 January and called for the abolition of the decree and the application of law 2345/1920.

When the law was finally debated in parliament 22.01.1991, the fronts had already been drawn up. Faikoğlu complained about the fact that the law had been proposed without consulting the minority it concerned. Both independent MPs claimed that the minority did not accept the present mufti in Komotini, Meço Cemali, who had been forced upon them by the authorities, while “the minority itself” elected İbrahim Şerif by raising hands in the mosque. The debate dealt mainly with the validity of the law 2345/1920. Sadık presented some of the stock minority arguments. Although the part

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281 According to Article 44 paragraph 1 of the Greek constitution: “Under extraordinary circumstances of exceptionally urgent and unforeseen need the president of the republic may, after suggestion from the council of ministers, issue an act with legislative content (*práksi nomothetikú periehoménou*).” This must later be approved by the parliament within 40 days after it has assembled or it will cease to be valid. Before the law was introduced the prime minister called the leaders of the two major opposition parties to his office. The urgency was of course connected with the announcement of the elections by the VIH.
of the law concerning election of muftis had not been in use after the second world war, the part concerning vakıfs had been in use until the dictatorship abolished it in 1967. Moreover, the muftis were elected for life, and when the mufti was appointed in 1948 the country was in a state of civil war. His appointment was consequently conducted under unusual circumstances. The spokesmen of the three major parties claimed that the law 2345/1920 had never been applied and pointed out that this law was passed when a totally different situation prevailed in Greece, before the population exchange and the treaty of Lausanne that regulated the affairs of the minority. Besides, the Greek parliaments have the power to pass new laws when needed. According to the second line of argument, the law was in accordance with the laws for electing muftis in Muslim countries including Turkey, and according to a Fetva (mufti’s opinion on a matter involving the Islamic religious law) the executive power in a non-Muslim country may appoint the mufti on the condition that the state does not interfere with the religious practice of the Muslims. It was further pointed out that in a protest that Sadık forwarded to the parliament only 39 out of 170 imams, muezzins and other religious personnel in Rodopi signed, and it was also questioned under which circumstances they signed. Faikoğlu remarked that if Greece had been a Muslim country there would of course be no objections, but a religious leader cannot be appointed by someone who belongs to another religion. Both sides hurled accusations against each other. Faikoğlu and Sadık said the new law for appointing muftis infringed on the religious freedom of the minority, and Faikoğlu added that they compelled him to take the issue abroad to Turkey and Hague. Konstandinidis (ND) mentioned that less than 15% of the Muslims participated in the elections, while Papathemelis (PASOK) characterised the position of Faikoğlu, who had been named the 451. MP of the Turkish parliament in a political meeting in Istanbul, unacceptable. Both sides stuck close to their positions, and there was no room for dialogue.

It must have been quite clear for everybody that the “independent” MPs were speaking with “their master’s voice”, and the whole debate was treated as a foreign policy issue between Greece and Turkey. While the slogan “the people itself should elect its own mufti” was used as a tool for petty politics in Western Thrace, it should be noted that the internal debate in Turkey followed different lines. The Head of Religious Affairs, Mehmet Nuri Yılmaz, said in an interview: “The religious services have been directed by the state from the establishment of Islam until today. The idea to leave it to the congregation is taken from Christianity, i.e. this is under the influence of

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282 It is clear that when the Greek authorities worked out the law they modelled it on current laws in Muslim countries. A country like Turkey has never been willing to let their religious organisations be outside the control of the state.

283 The whole discussion is found in the Parliament Proceedings (Praktika Vulis), Session 118 - 22.01.1991, pp. 5441–5449.
Christianity.” The Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel would also call on religious officials to keep distance to political interest groups, and to prevent mosques from becoming political platforms. He also cautioned the muftis that the government would not stand by and watch if some of them tried to “divide the people.” In reply Necmettin Erbakan, the leader of the pro-Islamic Welfare Party (Refah), claimed that “certain political circles” had been using the concept of secularism to target Islam. He said that Demirel was in no position to give advice to muftis “who are hundred times smarter than him. [...] He [Demirel] has been telling them to keep away from politics. They are entitled to inform the public within the holy principle of our faith. You cannot limit their freedom by preventing them from speaking on various topics” [...] (Turkish Daily News 22.02.1993).

Repercussions Related to the Application of the New Law

The curious game continued in which Sadık and the “clique” tried to impose their muftis not only on the minority, but also on the Greek authorities. A week later Sadık Ahmet gave an “ultimatum” to the prefect of Rodopi Karahalios: “On 28 December in all the mosques in the prefecture Rodopi, the minority elected by raising hands the theologian Ibrahim Şerif as mufti for Komotini. Please provide for that he can take up his office” (Kathimerini 29.01.1991). It was through actions like this that Sadık became known to the Greek public. When he was given a fair chance to present his opinion, he was hampered by his lack of eloquence, as in the following interview:

-What do you aspire to, both you personally and the minority you belong to?
-We want to live as human beings. We want our rights. That everybody will have what they need to live. We want to be able to build our houses, mosques, and elect our own muftis. The Greeks state cannot designate which mufti we will have. In Muslim countries where there are Greek minorities, they elect their bishops themselves. However, when I said so in parliament, Mr. Suflias gave me the example of Muslim countries where the mufti is appointed. But that is different, it is not a foreign country.
-How important is this for you?
-It is very important. How can he who is appointed represent me? (Aydınlık 06.11.1993. Quoted in (Ömeroğlu 1994: 111).

The real confrontation came when a new mufti for Ksanthi, who would take the place of Aga, was appointed according to the new law 1920/1991. When the prefect of Ksanthi announced for applicants to the position, people close to the Sadık-Faikoğlu group did not apply because they did not recognise the law, while Mehmet Aga said that he was already mufti. The Greek press expected that the “extremist elements”, and surely the independent MPs, would try to create problems in defiance of Greek law (Kathimerini 09.05.1991). Mehmet Emin Aga was presented as a leader of extremist elements and organ of Ankara (Pontiki 10.05.1991).

The Turkish press had a different story. The chairman of the VIH, Ahmet Hacıosman, gave the following statement: “In Western Thrace there are two puppet muftis
in the Didimotiho and Komotini mufti offices. A third person is sought for Ksanthi, but it will not be possible to find a third person to be the instrument of the Greeks in Western Thrace.” It was added (incorrectly) that Turkey did not interfere in the election of Patriarch in Istanbul, and Greece should reciprocate (Türkiye 19.05.1991).

Soon the Greek press reported that Muslim theologians controlled directly by the “hard-liners” had taken action to elect mufti in Didimotiho (Kathimerini 22.06.1991). Faikoğlu sent a letter to the prime minister 17.07.1991 about the mufti seats which contained indirect threats. He described the new law to be a parliamentary coup which the minority did not and would not accept, and expressed the hope that the minority would not need to create unnecessary episodes with such dimensions that they would hurt Greece on an international level. “The people constituting the minority are determined not to accept such arbitrariness against them because it regards the mufti seats of Thrace as the apple of their eye.” (Eleftherotipia 18.07.1991). This led to an answer from the PASOK MP of Ksanthi, Panayiotis Sguridis, who among other things said that: “The increasing audacity from this gentleman shows that he interprets the Greek tolerance as a sign of weakness (ibid.). The Greek anxieties were clearly displayed in another comment to this letter.

Having the appointment of the new mufti in Ksanthi in mind, Faikoğlu came with threats to remind that he himself, Sadık, the [Turkish] consulate in Komotini, the Turkish secret services and in reality Ankara, have decided to bring on resistance in this matter!

Why? The mufti exercises by his position, but also because of the Muslim element’s—of which the overwhelming majority are illiterate—almost blind obedience to him, an enormous influence over the Muslims. And such a person must, in their opinion, be under complete control (Pontiki 25.07.1991).

When the time for making the appointment arrived, the advisory committee was assembled. It consisted of the prefect of Ksanthi and ten prominent Muslims as the law prescribed; 4 township presidents (próedros kinótitas), 1 town council adviser (dimotikós símvulos) and 5 religious personnel. The whole procedure was surrounded by utter secrecy and objective information about what was going on was scarce. The following quotation from the Greek press constitutes an exception:

4 August the deadline expired, but the names of the 7 candidates were not announced out of fear that they would be pressured to resign. Even the members of the advisory committee were informed about the names of the candidates only on the morning of 14 August, i.e. the day they gathered to decide. Six members of the committee expressed themselves in favour of Sabri Boşnak and only one in favour of Mehmet Emin Şinikoğlu, who, however, was finally appointed by the minister.

This information did not reach the Athenian newspapers, but of course it became known in minority circles. The result was that it became clear that the Greek government did not take into account the position of the committee it had assembled itself, and that it belittled the part of the minority which resisted the divisive proclamation of the independent MPs.285

285 Eleftherotipia 31.08.1991. According to Hatipoğlu, Alosman Osman received most votes, with Sabri Boşnak second, and Mehmet Emin Şinikoğlu third (Akın 1039/24.08.1991). Mehmet Emin Şinikoğlu was born in 1937 in the village Ehinos in the prefecture of Ksanthi. He had completed Islamic studies at the University of Medina and post-graduate studies in Islamic law at the University of Baghdad. He had served as imam for 15 years in the Ksanthi and Rodopi prefectures.
THE MUSLIM MINORITY OF GREEK THRACE

The appointment of Mehmet Emin Şinikoglu 22.08.1991 marked the end of Mehmet Emin Aga’s stint as deputy mufti. The same day the VİH declared that it did not recognise the appointment of Şinikoglu (Ömeroğlu 1994: 99). The first reactions had also some colourful elements. Mehmet Emin Aga started a hunger strike outside the mufti office, while Faikoğlu led the crowd. Soon “extremists” gathered around the mufti office and shouted slogans. After two hours of hunger strike Aga had dizzy spells and was brought to hospital (Eleftheros Tipos 23.08.1991).

From this point on all the different forces became active. In addition to the actual mufti issue, there was a propaganda war between the interested parties. In Ankara the Turkish vice foreign minister Sanberk protested to the Greek consul about the appointment. On the morning of 23 August, hundreds of Muslims sat down in front of the mufti office in protest. Muslim theologians of Ksanthi forwarded a written protest against the appointment of Emin Şinikoglu as mufti for Ksanthi. They declared that they did not acknowledge him and that they denounced the Muslims who would do so (Eleftherotipia 24.08. 1991). Faikoğlu led the crowd and repeated many times the slogan “We do not want a mufti-traitor. We want Aga” (Rizospastis 25.08.1991). He also provoked the public sentiment (kíno ésthima) by saying “The mother country (!) stands by us” (ibid.). “At three o’clock on Saturday morning [24.08] about 250 ‘indignant’ Christians attacked (singing the… national anthem) those gathered with the result that 13 Muslims where injured and brought to the Ksanthi hospital” (ibid.). They were sent home after first-aid, and the rest of the crowd dissolved too. “The allegedly indignant Christians destroyed with stones and beams the windows of several Muslim shops (the police says 3, but it is considered to be 15 damaged shops)” (ibid.). Two Christians who were accused of breaking three windows in Muslim stores on Saturday morning were interrogated and were to be prosecuted.286 This marked the end of the protest outside the Ksanthi mufti office.

The events generated a lot of articles in both the Greek and Turkish press. The part of the Greek press which looked at the events mainly as a conflict with Turkey stated that the episodes were planned so that the protagonists would have something to show abroad [i.e. Turkey]. It was mentioned that Sadık and Faikoğlu together with others were in meetings at the Turkish consulate in the late afternoon 25.08 (Epikerotita 26.08.1991). The protagonists of the events were slandered. Allegedly the Turkish language minority newspaper Akin wrote “yesterday” that they would strangle

286 Eleftherotipia 26.08.1991. It is always difficult to ascertain the exact details in connection with events of this kind, because of the various interests involved. A local newspaper, clearly hostile to the minority, wrote that most of the demonstrators came from the neighbouring Komotini. The injuries happened when 10–15 persons started to throw stones at those assembled and continued with this for 5–10 minutes (Dikeoma 4/August-September 1991). A weekly newspaper published by the Turkish Foreign Department claimed that: “A group of some 40–50 persons tore through the police cordon and attacked our kinsmen with stones, sticks and iron bars injuring 36 members of the minority, one seriously” (Newspot 05.09.1991).
Şinikoğlu if he insisted on keeping his position and asked him to resign (*Epikerotita* 27.08.1991). Hatipoğlu is capable of quite astonishing demagogy when addressing the minority. However, there was no issue of *Akın* on the day referred to, neither was there any such statement in adjacent issues. The closest I can find is the following:

Mehmet Emin Şinikoğlu may have taken possession of the Ksanthi mufti office chair under police protection. However, just like he who was among us like an amber for years, burned us and involved our community in new adventures, will this chair which he today sat down in under police protection burn Şinikoğlu too in the near future.

Resign Mehmet Emin Şinikoğlu! Resign, to escape the curse and anger of 120,000 Western Thrace Muslim Turks!287

My point in mentioning this is to display the lack of accuracy of the newspapers. There is no reason to believe that the journalist had found the information himself. He most probably had it directly or indirectly from one of the services which monitors the minority. As a result there are great possibilities of distortion, depending on the channels the news have passed through. This is more or less known by all parties, which means that the words have little authority because one can never know if they are correct. In fact, the argument Hatipoğlu used within the minority was that Aga should be mufti because he had been elected by Turkey. In the funeral service in Istanbul for the late mufti of Ksanthi, the minister of Religious Affairs had patted Aga on his shoulder and told people that here was their next mufti. When addressing the Greek press, Hatipoğlu chose another language:

> “The minority defends itself legitimately against the attempts by the authorities to downgrade the role of the mufti in the person of Şinikoğlu”, said another representative, Mr. Hasan Hatipoğlu, editor of the local Muslim newspaper “Akın”, in Komotini. He stressed that the election of mufti is exclusively an internal matter of the minority and denounced the methods of the Greek government concerning the issue (*Kathimerini* 01.09.1991).

The Turkish press indulged in long reports about the episodes, while accusing Athens for downplaying the events. It portrayed the events as Greek terror in Western Thrace (*Milliyet* 25.08.1991). Another newspaper had the title: “The fanatic Greeks who attacked houses belonging to Turks, made rehearsals for 6–7 September—A night of terror in Western Thrace.”288 It was stated that more than 150 fanatical Greeks cursed the Turks, and insulted Turkey and the Turkish flag with the police’s tolerance. The Greeks first threw soda cans and later stones (ibid.). Both the independent MPs, Dr. Sadık Ahmet and Ahmet Faikoglu, stated that: “The last event proves once more that the Turkish minority has no longer security for life and property (*Anadolu Ajansı* 25.08.1991). This became a recurrent theme, which Faikoglu also mentioned to another Turkish newspaper:

> Unfortunately the security of life and property, language, usage, customs, and the continuation of tradition guarantied by the constitution and our minority rights are today in danger. We are

287 *Akın* 1039/24.08.1991. It should also be mentioned that Hatipoğlu mentioned explicitly the names of some people who were on the committee to recommend candidates for the mufti office. This was done to display that he had “filed” them, in order to deter others from stepping out of line.

288 *Hürriyet* 25.08.1991. 6–7 September were the dates of the 1955 “September events” in Istanbul.
confronted with the danger of their annulment. Addressing the free world we are expecting support (Cumhuriyet 29.08.1991).

The news about these events also reached the international press. The Turkish spokesman, Murat Sungar, said that a stone-throwing, club-wielding crowd attacked about 500 ethnic Turks staging a “quiet sit-down protest” against the Greek government’s dismissal of a local Muslim official (Reuters 24.08.1991).

Turkey had “strongly condemned” Greece for dismissing the mufti of Xanthi, Mehmet Emin Aga, the religious leader of Turkish Muslims in Greece, the Turkish agency reported (in English) on 22nd August. The Greek authorities had replaced Emin Aga with Mehmet Emin Şinikoğlu, “a person not well known to the ethnic Turkish Muslim community”, the agency said.

Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman Murat Sungar was cited by Turkish Radio (Ankara) as saying on 24th August that some 500 ethnic Turks who had staged a “peaceful sit-in in Iskeçe [Ksanthi] to protest against the appointment of a mufti by the Greek authorities” had been attacked by a group of “thugs”; 10 of the Turks had been injured, one seriously, the radio said.

Representations had been made to the Greek authorities to demand that measures should be taken to prevent such incidents, and the Greek government had given its assurance that all measures possible would be taken so as to ensure order and tranquillity in the area and protect the lives and freedoms of residents there. “We hope that this quick reaction on the part of the Greek authorities and the comprehensive assurances we were given will constitute a positive beginning and approach towards the problems of the Western Thrace Turkish minority.,” Sungar said (BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 27.08.1991).

Within Greece the protest continued in a rather curious way. The religious personnel in Ksanthi decided 26.08.1991 to protest against the appointment of Şinikoğlu, “which obliterated freedom of religion and conscience” by not reading the prayer call (ezan) and not praying in the mosques between 27.08 and 11.09. The YK assembled in Ksanthi 31.08.1991 under the chairmanship of Aga and decided to close the mosques in Rodopi, too, between 6–11.09 “to secure the instalment of the freely elected İbrahim Şerif into the mufti office” (Eleftherotipia 28.08.1991). On the other hand, the new mufti, Şinikoğlu, declared that he was not willing to start a dialogue with the irresponsible religious leaders who tried to prevent their co-religionists from praying in the mosques. He also refused to receive a letter from Faikoğlu and five others (ibid.).

The decision to close the mosques was based on a fetva by the Turkish head of religious affairs Prof. Dr. M. Sait Yazıcıoğlu.289 Prof. Dr. M. Sait Yazıcıoğlu argued in his fetva that basic human rights such as personal safety, freedom of religion and worship were not respected in Western Thrace, and that it was permissible for the Muslims not to go to the mosque when their life was endangered. His direct reference to the importance of making this known to public opinion, and indeed the “world opinion”, revealed his propagandistic approach to the issue.

The Komotini mufti, Meço Cemali, responded with an announcement (03.09.1991) which mentioned that there was no historical precedence for the closing of the mosques, and warned religious personnel against taking part in this demonstration. He also wrote a letter to Yazıcıoğlu (06.09.1991). He pointed to the meeting of the VIH in

289 Batı Trakya’nın Sesi 33/August 1991. The whole fetva is included in Appendix 5, text 43.
Komotini (04.09.1991) where the fetva by Yazıcıoğlu was used as a document to persuade the religious personnel to carry out the boycott decision of the AYK. Cemali stressed that the information of the Turkish director was “one sided” and pointed out that there were “personal and political interests” involved. He called for a new announcement from Yazıcıoğlu regarding the issue, otherwise he would pass into history as the director of Religious Affairs who advised the closing of the mosques in W. Thrace. Cemali added that in the 70-year history of the minority the mosques had never been closed, in spite of various intrigues by the Greek authorities. He accused the organisers of this action and called the appeal to security of life a pretext (bahane). According to him, this action could only please the fanatic Christians (haçlılar) (Ömeroğlu 1994: 101–103). Later this was indirectly supported in an open letter from the former mufti of Edirne, Burhanetin Babayakalı, to the Turkish-language newspaper Tünel of Komotini, where he criticised the VIH and the minority political leadership, who exploited religion for political purposes. The former mufti had stayed in Western Thrace during Ramadan, executing religious ceremonies and preaching. Concerning the VIH he wrote: “what a shame that those people under this name are representatives for discord and segregation, instead of being representatives of unity. Those individuals […] encouraged the Muslim MP of Ksanthi Ahmet Faikoğlu, who came to my lodgings one night and spoke to me in a way that I will never forget and will never ever forgive”. Addressing himself to the Muslim preachers and to the minority leadership, he characterised them as “coarse”, and accused them of being the reason why the mosques in W. Thrace remained closed, by interpreting the announcement of the director of religious affairs in Turkey in their own way. He accused them directly of slandering Turkey, just as they did with many other Muslims, and pointed out that with the subterfuge of prohibiting their entrance to Turkey many Muslims were threatened by this committee (ibid.).

By now, the situation had calmed down in Ksanthi, but some local newspapers and radio stations tried to incite the Christian population. Among Muslims and Christians alike there are certain elements which thrive on these conflicts, and use them as means to promote themselves. The Metropolitan of Komotini, Damaskinos, has been such a figure.

The position of the Metropolitan [Damaskinos] has in the past often been characterised by certain circles as extreme and inflammatory. Some accuse him indirectly that he provokes the episodes, rallying groups under his influence. He himself stresses categorically: “We denounce

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290 Eleftherotipia 30.11.1991. A minority newspaper referred to a similar episode. In the middle of Ramadan Ahmet Faikoğlu and Mustafa Hafız Mustafa went to the Fillira village and told the visiting preacher to return immediately to Turkey. They said that the presence of a Turkish preacher there would obstruct the minority’s politics. Sadık reacted to the fact that Faikoğlu involved himself in things that were going on in his village. Among other things he said that it was not the job of a Gypsy to handle the minority affairs. As a result the preacher stayed (Aile Birlik 17/02.05.1991). Those who asked the preacher to leave probably wanted to show the lack of religious freedom in Thrace.
violent actions. Those who provokes the episodes act uncontrolled.” And he warns: “The situation will soon get out of our control, because of the tolerance and inertia of the authorities. There must immediately be taken Draconian measures, to remove the extremist elements which rouse the minority and to close the Turkish Consulate, in order to achieve the peaceful coexistence of Christians and Muslims.”

However, when the journalist spoke with Christians who were members of various local organisations, few of them were favourable to the proposals of the metropolitan. Some said that the anti-Muslim campaign of Metropolitan Damaskinos had the opposite effect.

According to representatives of these organisations, the first step which must be taken is to staff [properly] the public services with state officials, in the whole sensitive area of Thrace. The correct organisation and the interest on behalf of the state would if nothing else, reinforce psychologically the Christians of Thrace, who today feel clearly neglected. At least, it would remove the indefinite fear which is deeply rooted in them even today, and check the wave of flight from areas which need to be reinforced with people.

And, on the other hand, certain extreme attitudes are not lacking: “The area will not have peace if not all the Muslims leave”, some inhabitants of Komotini told us. Others regard the minority as responsible for the retarded development of Thrace. Finally, certain people justify completely the cases of violence and the vandalism of mosques and shops of Muslims, they regard it as the minimum retaliation against the continuing Turkish provocation (ibid.).

Faikoğlu and some imams continued to keep the mosques in Ksanthi closed, but the patience of the believers was beginning to wear thin. This had caused angry remarks like: “The mosques have never been closed, not even during the [World War II] occupation” (Pontiki 29.08.1991). Even more important, Faikoğlu and Sadık had started to quarrel because of their rivalry for the leadership. Sadık had founded a new party which threatened to monopolise minority politics, while Faikoğlu enjoyed the support of the “clique” under the cloak of AYK-YK. In the meantime, the mosques had opened up again in Rodopi, while they remained closed in Ksanthi. It had been decided to suggest to the AYK to close the schools for a month and organise a large protest march. Faikoğlu declared that he “would stand by the religious leaders in all actions until the struggle was won” (Eleftherotipia 14.09.1991).

The YK had a meeting in Komotini 13.09.1991 where it decided to start a signature campaign in favour of removing the appointed muftis from office. Mehmet Emin Aga made an announcement, signed “the mufti of Ksanthi”, calling the Muslim religious personnel to have a meeting on 2 October (Kathimerini 21.09.1991). The large meeting in Komotini was attended by Hatipoğlu, Faikoğlu, the two “elected muftis” and many religious personnel. Most of the imams had come from Ksanthi and expected solidarity from Rodopi. Representatives of the Union of Muslim Organisations, which is active in England and Ireland, were present in the persons of President Dr. Said Aziz Paşa and General Secretary Dr. Zülfikar Han. Sadık had not been invited on purpose because of the internal conflicts (Ömeroğlu 1994: 104). A Greek newspaper had the following information concerning the discussion about a signature campaign:

The former officer of the Greek Army and leading cadre of the minority, Hasan Hatipoğlu, stressed in his declaration that: “The gathering of signatures will terrify Greece. With the signatures of the Turks we want to stir up the relations with Turkey and we will win whatever we want, because Turkey is a great power, and Greece is afraid of her” (*Kathimerini* 04.10.1991).

However, because of the internal rivalry Sadık Ahmet opposed the proposed signature campaign. In a loose-leaf he reminded about the fact that when he initiated his earlier signature campaign he was met with suspicion. He now regarded his earlier initiatives to have been justified. Sadık declared in his announcement that “we have no longer use for signature campaigns”, and was thus able to prevent the campaign, which had been carried out successfully in Ksanthi, from extending to Rodopi. This made it difficult to keep up the campaign in Ksanthi as well, and Aga announced (12.10.1991) that the mosques would open again: “Seeing that the message we wanted to give with our actions has reached the world opinion and that everybody has accepted that we are right, it is proposed that the mosques are opened for worship again” (Ömeroğlu 1994: 104). After this the mosques which had remained closed were opened again.

**Demonstrations at the Ecumenical Patriarchate**

Besides the demonstrations in Western Thrace, a “second front” was opened in Istanbul to put pressure on Greece. In Turkey the *mufti* issue was presented as being a problem since 1985. The chairman of the Western Thrace Turkish Union [in Ankara], Bedri Uçar, said that the *muftis* appointed by the Greek government were definitely not accepted by the Turkish community and they had a salary from *Rabita*. On Sunday the 25th of August, at 10 a.m., about 60 members of the “Western Thrace Turk’s Solidarity Association ” (BTTDD) started a blockade of the Ecumenical Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Istanbul by sitting down at the entrance. The number of demonstrators later increased and stabilised at about 100. The blockade started with a press conference where the leader of the union, Tahsin Salıhoğlu, announced that: “We will prohibit the enter or exit from the Patriarchate until the *mufti* of Ksanthi, Mehmet Emin Aga, is reinstated in service” (*Eleftherotipia* 26.08.1991). He threatened to resort to tougher measures if the demands were not complied with. He also threatened to occupy the Patriarchate if the Patriarch did not answer the following questions by Thursday: “Why does the aeroplane the Patriarch use for travel carry the Byzantine flag and how are the metropolitans of Istanbul appointed?” (ibid.). The Chief of police in the Fatih district of Istanbul, where the Patriarchate is located, declared that there would be no question of removing the demonstrators in front of the Patriarchate, because “They are waiting for their demands to be fulfilled” (ibid.).

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Tahsin Salihoğlu used his position as president of the BTTDD as springboard for a political career in ANAP. He later became mayor in the large Avcılar municipality in Istanbul and reputedly had the ambition to become MP. I have chosen to quote at length his arguments in a press conference because it is a tour de force in Turkish stereotypes. Characteristically, the newspaper article bears the title: “The Western Thrace Turks want the intervention of Turkey.”

Tahsin Salihoğlu, who had organised a press conference concerning the events that had been going on for three days in Western Thrace, pointed out that it was no coincidence that the episodes [in Ksanthi] took place before the planned 4-way Cyprus summit and said that “The Greeks are not the kind to come to reason by diplomacy and civilised behaviour”.

Salihoğlu, who pointed out that in Greece the megalo-idea and church were still ruling, said that they tried to assimilate the Turks. Salihoğlu continued in this fashion:

“In Greece the success of the politicians is tied to speaking against Turkey. These oppressive authorities must be stopped in a sharp manner [net bir tavırla]. Turkey should use its Lausanne rights. The Council of Europe, the European Community countries and the countries which have signed the CSCE [charter] should take action. The Greek puppets bought with money, who are occupying the mufti offices, should be removed and the occupation ended.”

**Fanatical Greeks**

Salihoğlu, who explains that at the time of the episodes [in Ksanthi] more than 2,000 people were praying [namaz] in the streets, said that: “The Greek radio incited the fanatical Greeks and invited them to attack the Turkish minority. If this matter is not promptly corrected by the Greek and Turkish governments, the Greek government will be responsible for the episodes created in the aftermath of this. The Greek state must return the Western Thrace Turks’ human rights, freedom of religion and consciousness. While this is regarded permissible behaviour towards us, we are justifiably disturbed by the fact that the Patriarchate in Istanbul is operating very freely. Tomorrow (today), I will visit the Patriarch in his office, obtain his opinions in this matter and make them known to the world” (Sabah 25.08.1991).

In a letter to the Patriarch Salihoğlu wrote: “It is not our purpose to harass you (taciz etmek). We want to believe that you will assist us in order not to make our work complicated. We want you to assist us as a citizen of the Turkish Republic” (Türkiye 27.08.1991). The way Salihoğlu poses the problem exposes brilliantly the ambivalent attitudes to the relationship between nationality/citizenship. Salihoğlu extorts Greece with the Patriarchate because it is “Greek”, and wants the Patriarch to assist in this extortion because he is a “Turk(ish citizen)”. At the same time, he is only able so see the minority in Western Thrace as part of the Turkish nation and ignores their relation to Greece and their position as Greek citizens. As a reaction to the blockade, the holy synod of the Patriarchate made a statement where it expressed its confidence in the authorities of “our country” that they would wish immediately to restore legal order, since it violated the rights of the law-abiding citizens of Turkey. The Patriarch was to forward this statement to president Özal, premier Yılmaz and the Mayor of Istanbul (Eleftherotypia 29.08.1991).

The blockade of the Patriarchate led to hectic diplomatic activity between Greece and Turkey. The Greek ambassador in Ankara, Dimitris Makris, delivered a protest to the Turkish Foreign Department in Ankara and Turkish authorities promised to intervene. The following day, however, the Turkish authorities claimed that they had
not received any Greek protests, while the Greek ambassador insisted that he had met the Turkish vice foreign minister Sanberk. In addition, the Greek foreign minister protested to international organisations about the blockade of the Patriarchate. After Monday afternoon, when the demands of Salihoğlu became known, there were some measures of security. Six buses with policemen were present to control the situation (Eleftherotipia 27.08.1991). The Turkish foreign minister Safa Giray declared the following day that he would present the grievances of the minority in Western-Thrace on an international level. He accused Greece of violating the rights of the minority, as guaranteed by the Lausanne treaty.293

The blockade of the Patriarchate was finally lifted in the afternoon of the fifth day (Thursday 29.08) without any declaration by the Patriarch. It is reasonable to believe that the authorities could not tolerate a lengthy action against the Patriarchate, but some Turkish intellectuals had also arrived and urged the demonstrators to lift the blockade. When it was finally lifted the leader of the demonstrators, Salihoğlu, declared that “a continued blockade of the Patriarchate may be detrimental to the interests of Turkey, and we must also stop in order not to endanger the security of our ethnic brethren in Western-Thrace” (Eleftherotipia 30.08.1991). The lifting of the blockade was reported in the following way in the international press:

Turks in Western Thrace, protesting at incidents involving their cousins in Greece, ended a five-day blockade of Istanbul’s Greek Orthodox Patriarchate building on Thursday saying they wanted peace. “We have decided to end our protest considering the future of the Western Thrace Turks and Turkey’s interests and also to avoid any extreme incidents that would turn up trumps for Greece,” said Tahsin Salihoğlu, leader of the Western Thrace Turks Solidarity Association.

Flanked by women and children, the few hundred ethnic Turks burnt a Greek flag before ending their sit-in protest outside the Patriarchate in an old quarter of Istanbul. Salihoğlu vowed to restart the blockade if there was no improvement in Athens’ attitude towards the minority rights of ethnic Turks living in Greece.

“We came here to make our case heard worldwide. And we managed this in a very civilised manner,” he added (Reuters 29.08.1991).

The representatives of the minority in Western Thrace reacted to the blockade of the Patriarchate in the following manner. The independent MP Faikoğlu tied the incidents in front of the Patriarchate to the events that had happened in Ksanthi, because the events “created excitement” (Eleftherotipia 27.08.1991). Two days later the other independent Muslim MP, Sadık, sent a telegram in which he thanked the demonstrators for the support they had given in the mufti affair (Ta Nea 30.08.1991).

A letter from the Turkish embassy in Washington (10.09.1991) gives Turkey’s official version concerning the blockade of the Patriarchate. The protest co-ordinated by the BTTDD had as goal to make the Patriarch support the minority’s free election of muftis, and secure the same rights to the Turkish minority in Thrace as the Greek Orthodox community in Turkey enjoys. The Patriarch, as an elected religious leader,

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293 Eleftherotipia 28.08.1991. This also reached the international press. cf. Xinhua, 26.08.1991; Reuters 27.08.1991.
is in a position where he can exert influence concerning freedom of religion. The letter stressed that the protest was peaceful and the strong presence of Turkish police secured both the democratic right of the demonstrators as well as the security of the Patriarchate. It further accused extremist and fanatical elements for exaggerating and dramatising the peaceful demonstration at the Patriarchate to overshadow the event which provoked it (Pontiki 10.10.1991).

The co-ordination of the demonstrations in Greece and Turkey is described in a long article in a Greek newspaper, including details which indicate that it must be based on information from Greek intelligence. The journalist claims that the episodes in Thrace and Istanbul were organised by the Turkish state and the Turkish prime minister Mesut Yılmaz himself with the goal of exploiting it in the election campaign and undermining the Greek-Turkish dialogue. Yılmaz went to Istanbul 21 August and met secretly “The Greek MP for Rodopi, Sadık Ahmet”. On 23 August Tahsin Salihoglu was in a meeting in Ksanthi where the demonstrations were co-ordinated before he returned to Istanbul. 24 August Sadık met with the MP of Trabzon Eyüp Aşık, chairman of “the human right committee” in the Turkish parliament, which undertook to promote the mufti issue in Turkey and internationally (Eleftheros Tipos 01.09.1991).

The tactic of using the Patriarchate as a lever against Greece was not unproblematic. The Turkish Foreign Department said to the press that it would not retaliate against the Patriarchate because of the mufti question (Milliyet 27.08.1991). Surely, Turkey would have to take into consideration possible negative reactions to a harsh treatment of an institution with the international prestige of the Patriarchate.

The Greek government condemned the Patriarchate sit-in protest and took measures to brief such organisations as the World Council of Churches, the Council of Europe and foreign governments such as the “foreign ministers of the 34 CSCE member states, which include the EC, NATO countries and the Soviet Union” on the events in Istanbul.294 The Greek Foreign Minister Andonis Samaras said before his departure for a meeting of EC foreign ministers in Brussels. “It is a national imperative that the world public learns about the unacceptable events taking place at the ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul”, adding that he intended to remind his EC colleagues about the issue during his trip to Brussels (BBC 29.08.1991). In New York, the primate of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, Archbishop Iakovos, protested against the blockade which he deemed “unacceptable because it restricts the exercise of religious freedom on the part of those wishing to enter and exit from the premises of the Patriarchate” (The Boston Globe 01.09.1991). Following reports that the blockade had ended Thursday, the bishops of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese

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294 Reuters 27.08.1991; BBC 27.08.1991.
issued a statement expressing "relief and satisfaction" and thanking US political leaders and other churches for supporting the Patriarchate (ibid.).

To Greece the interest several countries and organisations took in the blockade of the Patriarchate showed that it was respected as an international organisation. The events also showed clearly that the Greek government did not insist on regarding the Patriarchate as its exclusive concern. Consequently it would be difficult to use the Patriarchate as a "hostage" any more. A Greek newspaper concluded that rather than yielding to Turkish pressures, Athens was inclined to "sacrifice" the last "remnants" of Hellenism in Istanbul (Kathimerini 31.08.1991).

In times of tension the Greek press usually refer to the Cyprus experience. An attempt by Turkey to say anything regarding the minority is viewed as part of a bit by bit strategy to secure right of intervention in Thrace. Ankara was not considered to be really interested in who was mufti:

However, Ankara wishes to submit a “de facto” condominium and joint administration of Western Thrace, with ulterior goals the creation of an autonomous area or also later a miniature state which is completely dependent on her. And the neutralisation of every possibility to exert influence—through the consulate in Komotini of course—in the election of new muftis constitutes surely a blow and obstacle to the completion of her plans.²⁹⁵

It should be noted that many of those who want to limit the Turkish influence also want to improve the Greek policy towards the minority. This does not necessarily mean that they are informed about what is going on in the area. Typically the commentator in Kathimerini wrote that Mehmet Emin Şinikoğlu was elected among 7 candidates after recommendation from a committee, and was probably unaware about the work of the committee. He had the following remedy for neutralising Turkish pretexts to intervene.

At the same time it is vital to impose with every sacrifice, even with the enforcement of severe measures, equal rights and upright administration in the area, so that the brainless provocateurs of the Christian side cannot in any way create episodes against the Muslim fellow citizens.

However, besides all this, first of all the Turkish consulate in Komotini must be closed (ibid.).

The complexity of the political game and the many different opinions expressed, can make it confusing for an outsider to sort out the “facts” in the mufti dispute. In addition the “clique” tended to monopolise the minority’s reactions to the law. It was of course difficult for anybody within the minority to oppose the “clique”, because of Turkey’s support to it. However, the methods of the “clique” together with the blockade of the Patriarchate had clearly bothered Onsunoglu, and he decided to speak out. He made a substantial and convincing critique of the “clique’s” behaviour, which reveals what happened behind the scenes. Onsunoglu was very critical to the blockade of the Patriarchate. While the blockade exposed Turkey, it was even more harmful to

²⁹⁵ Kathimerini 31.08.1991, “Equal rights must be enforced”, by Angelos Stangos. The reference to Cyprus in connection with Turkish aims in Thrace was also expressed in To Vima 01.09.1991, “Games of Ankara behind the blockade”, by Yiannis Kartalis.
the minority. He stressed the necessity of supporting the minority struggle on modern democratic methods. By “retaliating” against the Patriarchate, the minority would “cut of the branch it was sitting on”. He felt that the actions of Tahsin Salıhoğlu was a conspiracy against the minority and its legitimate struggle.296 As for the “elections”, they are presented as a parody where everything was rigged by the “clique” after authorisation by the Turkish consulate.

They cannot fool anyone. Let Hasan Paçaman reveal how they staged this so-called election. I have said this before, Hasan Paçaman, who was a candidate in that election parody, has complained that İbrahim Şerif was quite openly favoured. By whom? By the Koca Kapı [Turkish consulate] of course. The election of Hafız Aga in Ksanthi was an even greater scandal [rezalet]. I am angry with Paçaman who is more mafioso [has more of a mafia mentality] than the mafia. That day I applauded him because he stood up against the injustice, even in a timid fashion, and showed his anger. Afterwards I grabbed Rodoplu and said: -Paçaman was right in complaining.” Rodoplu: “-I know. He is right in complaining. But what is there to do, İbrahim? I am also complaining. Am I not just as right as him?” Paçaman complained because the blue bead was given to İbrahim Şerif [i.e. he was favoured]. Rodoplu’s complaint was about the MP position. We all knew that the blue bead had not been given to Rodoplu, but to Sadık. By whom? By the Koca Kapı. It is a question of rank within the mafia hierarchy. We discussed the mufti question. I was asking: Where does the quarrel within the Minority about the mufti stem from? The mufti problem is an open question for the minority. Until a democratic law is issued, the muftis who are serving now must be accepted as temporary muftis. Until this law is issued, these institutions cannot remain empty. If this is the situation, what is the quarrel within the minority about? Let me say it: Because today’s temporary muftis are not mafia members. It is the mafia that creates the trouble. Because mafia means discomfiture and provocation. And in the Ksanthi protest exhibition the Minority mafia did all it could to provoke an attack on those who were assembled there. And finally they succeeded. And what was Faikoğlu, Rodoplu, Sadık, Hatipoğlu, and the head of the teachers association not saying! It was disgusting! What demagogy, what big mouths, what cheap provocation, and what turkishness peddling! And thus, because of the mafia, the Greek hooligans could once more attack the Turks, beat up some people, and destroy some Turkish shops (Trakya’nın Sesı 414/19.03.1992).

As for the protest in front of the Ksanthi mufti office, Onsunoğlu had the following to say:

…after Şinikoğlu was appointed mufti in Ksanthi, the mafia arranged a display there. I want to make this clear: Of course I cannot say anything against the kinsmen [soydaş] who protested against the way the mufti was appointed. But the mafia put on this show to display their strength. And the purpose was not only to protest against the newly appointed mufti, at the same time it was also a support for the formerly appointed [as mufti] and now dismissed mafia boss Hafız Aga. The Minority mafia, using the Koca Kapı as stick after authorisation, can at any moment gather between 500 and 1,000 persons. And those who were gathered there cried “We want Hafız Aga.” That was what happened in Ksanthi that day. Now I am claiming the following, which everyone in Ksanthi knows: If Koca Kapı declared: “I am not intervening in the mufti question. Let the Minority do whatever it wants. Let them struggle with the authorities any way they want. They are free”, then ten thousand would have gathered in Ksanthi. With the difference that those ten thousand would gather to celebrate the fact that the mufti office had got rid of the Aga family (ibid.).

In the past Aga had of course been associated with the most reactionary forces. Earlier he enjoyed the support of people in Greece who had an authoritarian approach to the minority, and now he enjoyed the support of authoritarian forces in Turkey. It is correct that many people in Ksanthi were exasperated by Aga, but he had also a steady following in the mountain villages. Although he had run the mufti office for the last

296 Aile Birlik 33/26.09.1991 “We are cutting the branch we are sitting on with our own hands”, by İbrahim Onsunoğlu.
ten years because of the advanced age of his father, he would usually title himself a politician (politikacı) and not a religious servant. Onsunoğlu stressed that Aga was someone in the “clique” with whom he had no personal differences, but that there were substantial reasons which made him ineligible for the mufti post:

If an election of mufti was announced according to the law 2345/1920 and Aga was a candidate, I could not have voted for him. For the following reasons:
1. Because I cannot see that he has the necessary qualifications to be mufti.
2. Because he is someone who indeed exploited the Ksanthi mufti authority for years, made a lot of [shady] deals which are contrary to Islam and traditions and could never answer the criticism and complaints in this matter, he did not defend neither himself nor the [mufti] institution and caused people to lose the respect for the Ksanthi mufti office.
3. Because he considered the mufti office to be ‘his father’s property’ and founded a ‘dynasty’ there.
4. Because he did not refrain from and was not embarrassed to use repeatedly the mufti office as his personal election campaign office [for parliamentary elections].
5. Because he exploited the revenues of the mufti office, and while it was expected that he as a simple employee should have been poor, he became rich.
6. Because he is responsible for squandering the communal property [vakıf] in Ksanthi.
7. Because he did not react to the tearing down of the Tabakhane mosque as he should have done.
8. Because he became a member of the gang’s [kumpanya- i.e. “clique”] masonic lodge.
9. etc. etc., and with all this in mind, while there are so many qualified candidates at hand, he displayed the insolence to be mufti candidate.

[...]—You say the reasons why Hafız Aga cannot be mufti, but Aga claims that ‘the people elected me’.
—That is what the whole ‘gang’ claims. But Aga can neither be mufti candidate nor be elected mufti for both formal and substantial reasons. An election committee made up of independent and free religious servants, would reject Aga’s candidature under normal conditions. This is something everybody knows. If nobody says so, it is because our freedom has been taken away.

Let us begin with the beginning. The struggle by the ‘gang’ in the mufti issue, or more correctly the noise it generates, was never sincere. Let me first point out a theoretic contradiction. To elect its own religious leaders, is among the Muslim minority’s most democratic rights. A deeply anti-democratic and fascist disposed group, could not carry the struggle by democratic methods. It is contrary to its nature. It can only generate noise. And that is what it does until today.

That is why the ‘gang’, with the support and encouragement of an immoral government in Turkey, has screamed and screeched and made a lot of noise up until today, thrown the Minority into confusion and crisis, but not made any comprehensive critique and proposal about how the new mufti election or new selection of mufti should be done according to principles which are most appropriate to Islam. One of the first victims of the ‘gang’, Aydın Ömeroğlu, stood up, and we heard about this [problems of principle] from him.

The most frequent, but baseless, slogan which we hear from everybody is:
- The Christian prefect cannot appoint the Muslim’s mufti!
- If the prefect is Christian, is the prefect’s religion something which can designate us?
- ... (Silence).
- Are you in conflict with the prefect because he is Christian, or because he represents the authorities?
- ... (Silence).
- i.e. if the prefect were Muslim could he appoint the mufti?
- ... (Silence).
- Just like in Turkey?
- Turkey is not a foreign country. There he can be appointed. (!) (Sadık Ahmet).
- So Greece is a foreign country to you?
- ... (Silence).
- If we defend the Muslim community’s right to elect the mufti by general election, does not our struggle [for democracy] against the secular government of Christian Greece in one sense include the secular government of Muslim Turkey?
- We cannot interfere in the internal matters of Turkey. That is a foreign country. (!!!) (Sabahaddin Emin)
THE MUSLIM MINORITY OF GREEK THRACE

-But was it not you who said a little while ago that Turkey was not a foreign country?
-... (Silence).

In this imaginary dialogue, two answers really came from the mouth of two ‘gang’ members. I understand very well the rage the sincere Islamist Osman Selami feels against the slander of the religious servants by the clique.
—What do you think about the method of electing mufti by raising the finger in the mosques.
—I will tell you. But first I want to say something else. The ‘gang’ does not want elections. Do not be fooled by what they say they want. They avoid democratic procedures and elections like Satan avoids prayers [salavat]. “I want elections, but on condition that Şükri Tufan supports us from Ankara and scares those who do not support us with the ‘black list.’” I [i.e. Onsunoğlu] want ELECTION. The ‘gang’ wants LIVELIHOOD and SUSTENANCE.

They cry out for the election, but the goal of the gang is to place a member in the mufti office who has been determined by them beforehand. If this is realised by appointment, what is then the need for election, and the need for election is forgotten.

In Komotini Hafız Rüştü was appointed deputy mufti, he was not a member of the gang and the gang reacted immediately. Afterwards Hafız Cemali was appointed, immediate reaction, because he too was outside the clique. They were screaming. “We want election!” And then Hafiz Aga was appointed in Ksanthi. Hushhh. Towards one of the gang’s ring-leaders, Aga, it was as if our brawlers had swallowed their tongue. Not only that, they even dictated a support and congratulation telegram from the University Graduate Association [AYT], which I am member of. This is not the kind of gangs which you are acquainted with, this is mafia, the Minority’s mafia, my brother (Aile Birlik 33/26.09.1991).

The contradictory behaviour of the “clique” displayed clearly the nature of their protest. Onsunoğlu mentioned the example of a village imam who had taken the struggle for election seriously. After the “clique” did not oppose the appointment of Aga, he went to Rodoplu and complained about the change in course: “-İsmail I believed you, I made a fool of myself in the village.” “-What can I do, my brother.

Look, there is not a sound from THE OTHER SIDE [i.e. Turkey]” (ibid.). Onsunoğlu also condemned strongly the attacks of the VIH on the Komotini mufti Cemali, which continued unabated. He claimed its members used the authorities its members had obtained from the consulate as a scourge against the minority people. They had become completely corrupt, forgotten their duty, and turned into terrorising people with the black list. The committee had become a part of the “mafia” and indeed its striking force. As a consequence Onsunoğlu said he had lost his respect for this committee (Aile Birlik 44/16.01.1992).

Further Developments

From the time the demonstrations broke down until today the Turkish policy has been twofold. Firstly to impose de facto “the elected muftis” in Thrace, secondly to promote the issue internationally as Greek restriction on religious freedom. Turkey had in the past complained to the United Nations, the European Community and human rights bodies over Greek treatment of the minority. Now Turkey chose to address the EC again:

Turkey asked the European Community on Tuesday to investigate Greece’s treatment of ethnic Turks in Western Thrace, saying they were “in fear of their lives”. “During the last few days, the systematic and massive violation of the rights and freedoms of the minority by the Greek authorities and fanatic elements have reached new heights,” Foreign Minister Safa Giray wrote in a letter to his Dutch counterpart Hans Van Dern Broek. “The minority members today live in fear of their lives and under the constant threat of fresh attacks against their persons and property,” Giray said.
in the letter, which was circulated by the Foreign Ministry. He asked Van Dem Broek to raise the issue at the EC Council of Ministers, of which he is the current president. He suggested that the EC send a fact-finding mission to Western Thrace and urge Greece to respect Moslem minority rights.

Giray’s complaint followed weekend clashes in the northern Greek town of Xanthi between hundreds of Greeks and ethnic Turks protesting at the appointment by the Greek authorities of a new mufti or Moslem religious leader. Thirteen people were hurt. Giray accused the Greek police of failing to prevent attacks on the Turkish community in Western Thrace and warned of the danger of further violence in the region.

[...]

Greece says it has the right to appoint Moslem religious leaders in its territory, but Turkey disagrees. “That these massive and persistent violations can take place in Greece, an EC member and a CSCE participating state, is impermissible and should no longer be allowed,” Giray wrote (Reuters 27.08.1991).

Turkey also solicited support from the Islamic Conference, and was able to obtain a statement which adopts fully the Turkish position.

The ICO Secretary-General, Dr Hamid al-Ghabid, has called on the appropriate Greek authorities to respect the rights of the Turkish Muslim minority in Western Thrace including its right to freely choose its religious leaders.

In a statement issued today [4th September] by the ICO, His Excellency has stressed that the recent reports indicate that the case of this Muslim minority is in fact heading towards a deteriorating situation, and that Muslims of Western Thrace no longer have any right to freely choose their religious leaders as was the case in the past. He said that to remove the leaders, who were legally elected by Muslims in Western Thrace and replace them by officials who were unilaterally chosen by the Greek authorities, represents a clear example of this situation in which the Muslim are living there. In this connection, he indicated that the 20th Islamic conference of foreign ministers that was held in Istanbul last August had expressed its concern regarding the continued violation of and denial of the basic rights for the Muslim minorities in Western Thrace.

Dr Ghabid has stressed that the ICO strives that Muslims all over the world would enjoy their full, practical and basic political, economic, social and cultural rights in accordance with international treaties (BBR 06.09.1991).

The Turkish Foreign Minister followed up at the CSCE conference in Moscow a few weeks later and accused Greece of “oppressing” the Muslim minority in Greece, which Greece flatly denied (Eleftherotipia 12.09.1991). Sadık Ahmet was also involved, which was reported in a Greek newspaper under the title: “Turkish propaganda from Sadik in CSCE” (Eleftherotipia 14.09.1991). According to Sadik his goal was to “analyse, and present the minority’s problems” to the representatives of CSCE. In a telephone interview with the Turkish newspaper Hürriyer he declared: “We want everybody to know about the disgraceful conditions of the Turkish minority. I will show with documentation how Greece oppresses the Turkish minority in Western Thrace. I will show before the eyes of the whole world the inhuman and disgraceful actions of Greece” (ibid.). The Greek weekly newspaper Pontiki presented a letter with the title “Oppression in Western Thrace” dated 10.09.1991 from the Turkish Embassy in Washington to its American counterparts complete in Greek translation. According to the letter, the systematic violation of the Muslim-Turkish minority in Western Thrace’s rights and freedoms had reached new heights recently. The situation was tense because of the authorities’ discrimination and continuous attempts to revoke its legal status. The latest instance of violence took place on 23 August when about
5,000 (sic) Turks sat down in a peaceful demonstration in Ksanthi, in protest against the Greek authorities’ decision to appoint a mufti after the minority’s right to elect him was abolished by a governmental decree which gave the non Muslim authorities the right to appoint the religious leaders. The demonstrators were attacked by armed gangs. The police did nothing to stop them, even though they were more numerous then the gang members. 36 members of the minority were injured and a large number of shops belonging to ethnic Turks were destroyed. The latest events were only the last in a long chain of violations of the rights and basic freedoms of the Muslim -Turkish minority both as a group and as individuals. Violations which had been recorded by international organisations like “Helsinki Watch” and the reports from American government sources such as the State Department. The Turkish embassy condemned the events as violations of the Lausanne treaty as well as other treaties Greece has signed. They were also violations of the principles concerning minorities laid down by CSCE. “The fact that these massive and continuous violations are done by Greece, a country which is member of the EC and participates in the CSCE process, cannot be accepted and can no longer be tolerated to take place openly” (Pontiki 10.10.1991). These kinds of complaints have been lodged regularly up until today and examples abound. Ömeroğlu mentions that the ANAP MP Engin Güner raised the mufti question in the Council of Europe 24.01.1994 (Ömeroğlu 1994: 109). It is evident that the case has become a political card which is played for what it is worth. It is possible to detect a gradual embellishment of the events. Since what is going on in Thrace is often obscure for outsiders, and the competence of international organisations is limited, there are large possibilities for manipulations. For example, in the case of the Turkish Embassy in Washington there are several factors which influenced the way the letter was formulated. First of all, the information, which made up the raw material of the letter, must have passed through several channels (“clique”-consulate-foreign department) before it reached the embassy. Secondly, the letter must first of all have been formulated according to the diplomatic priorities of Turkey, while the religious needs of the minority took a second place.

The “elected” mufti soon started to represent the minority abroad in international organisations. İbrahim Şerif took part in the Council which the Muslims of the Balkans organised in Vienna. A Turkish newspaper mentioned that in the first meeting of the Council of “Muslim people of Eastern Europe and the Balkans” the participants included the arch muftis of Albania, Rumania, and Bulgaria. Representatives of Muslim communities in Eastern Europe, the religious leader of the Muslims of Yugoslavia, Yakup Selimovski, and the “mufti” of Komotini İbrahim Şerif. Halit Eren was elected administrative councillor (Türkiye 26.10.1991). The participation of Şerif provoked commentaries not only from the circles of the official mufti of Komotini but generally in the area. Later, in the summit meeting of the Islamic Conference (Dakar, 9–12 De-
cember 1991), the minority was represented by the muftis İbrahim Şerif and Mehmet Emin Aga, together with the two independent MPs Sadık Ahmet and Ahmet Faikoğlu. They travelled together with Turgut Özal in a private jet (Ömeroğlu 1994: 109).

Locally the skirmishes between the official muftis and the “elected” muftis went on. When the mufti of Komotini did not allow the VİH to keep a part of the library in the mufti office which they had appropriated, this led to protest from the Turkish Foreign Ministry. It was claimed that the mufti of Komotini held his office irregularly. (Eleftherotipia 17.12.1991). A little later a Greek newspaper accused the “extremist theologians” [VIH] of making “new provocations”. The committee asked the Muslims of the city to leave the mosques when the legal mufti of Komotini, Cemali, appeared (Thessaloniki 31.12.1991).

Less than two years later the situation was described in the following manner by a large Athenian newspaper:

Revealing is also the picture in the field of religious leadership. Turkey and its consulate not only do not recognise the two legal muftis, Mr. Meço Cemali in Komotini and Mr. Mehmet Emin Şinikoğlu in Ksanthi, but attempt with every means to impose de facto Mr. İbrahim Şerif in Komotini and Mehmet Emin Aga in Ksanthi.

The last one, son of the former mufti and chief secretary of the mufti seat from 1971, has indeed succeeded in controlling the vast majority of the about 110 imams (priests) of his region. It is significant that last Friday the vice prime minister of the Turkish government, Mr. Erdal İnönü, during his visit to Athens, met the two pseudo muftis together with the other members of the unofficial minority co-ordination committee [AYK] and not the legal ones. The same practice was also followed by all Turkish leaders who visited Athens in the past. It is noteworthy that the local Greek authorities do not do everything they could to reinforce the authority of the two legal muftis, that they have appointed themselves, according to the law (Kathimerini 14.02.1993).

The skirmishes continued on many levels of Greek-Turkish relations and the official representatives kept up the rhetoric. The Greek vice minister of Foreign Affairs, Viryinia Tsuderu, answered a letter from Halit Eren of the BTTDD concerning religious personnel. She stressed that the religious needs of the Muslim minority in Greece were fully covered and continued:

However, in accordance with a long-standing practice, six preachers, invited by the muftis of Komotini and Xanthi, came to Greece from Turkey this year for the holy month of Ramadan. The “four Turkish preachers” mentioned in your letter were not expelled, but requested to leave the country following agreement between them and the Greek Authorities; they had come to Greece without the requested visa, holding Turkish special service passports and were invited by persons usurping the Authority of the muftis of Xanthi and Komotini. Their behaviour, during their short stay in Greece, contravened their status as visitors, with possible disturbances of the Greek public order.297

Halit Eren gave the Turkish version in a reply to this letter:

Concerning the muftis of Komotini (Gümülcine) and Xanthi (Iskeçe) mentioned in your letter, please note that these officials were nominated by a government decision which ignores and denies the Muslim minority’s right to freely choose the muftis, a right established by international conventions. Therefore, it is rather the persons appointed by the Greek administrations who are usurping the authority of the muftis elected by Muslims. With this policy, the Greek administration is acting both against its international commitments and the principles of the

297 Letter from Viryinia Tsederu of the Greek Foreign Department, Athens 18 June 1993, Ref. 4.1/AS 1354, to Halit Eren of the BTTDD.
Islamic religion. We do hope that it will soon realise the moral and legal responsibility ensuing from such practice and recognise the minority’s right to elect its muftis. Otherwise, we shall spare no effort to claim our legitimate rights through all the existing and eventual means and mechanisms.

As to the fate of the four Turkish preachers, who had no other purpose than to provide spiritual guidance, no word but “expelled” can properly describe their being called to the police station, told that they were persona non grata and then deported.298

The debate above has nothing to do with democracy, but is the controversy between two authoritarian centres about the right to impose the candidates of their choice. Within this framework Greece will not allow a hostile foreign power to impose and control the religious leaders of the minority. In reality, the politic of Turkey is an obstacle to a possible democratisation of the procedure for selecting muftis. As for the preachers from Turkey who were not allowed to stay, this should be seen in connection with earlier experiences of visiting preachers who involved themselves in political propaganda.299

The relationship between Turkey and the “elected” muftis was later formalised. Mehmet Emin Aga and İbrahim Şerif were put officially on the staff of the Turkish Religious Affairs Directorate. Ömeroğlu warned that as long as this was not based on bilateral agreements between Greece and Turkey this meant that they had made a state within the state in Western Thrace, which might have repercussions on the status of the Patriarchate.300 The Religious Affairs Directorate, which appoints the muftis in Turkey, is directly affiliated to the State Ministry. It employs 83,000 personnel, 850 of whom are working outside Turkey to provide religious services to the 2.5 million Turks outside the country (Turkish Daily News 22.02.1993).

The Trials

The “elected” muftis continued to behave like official muftis of the minority. There was no immediate reaction from the authorities, but gradually they were faced by a series of trials. Interestingly enough, these trials often took place on private initiative. The state did not display any zeal towards prosecuting the muftis, but had to follow up the complaints of others.

İbrahim Şerif was taken to trial 21.05.1993 accused of usurping office (antipíisi arhís), but the trial was finally postponed. Sadık, Faikoğlu and other Turkish MPs were there to support him. The Turkish foreign ministry expressed regrets about the case, and said it did not help the relationship between the countries. The spokesman of the foreign ministry, Volkan Vural, declared that: “Based on the Athens agreement of 1912 [sic], the muftis take up office after elections, but after 1984 [sic] Greece applies

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299 This has been mentioned earlier in connection with the election in June 1989. See (Kapsis 1990: 147–148).
a system of appointing the muftis, a fact which has provoked vexation in the minority” (*Eleftherotipia* 22.05.1993). He accused Greece of violating the agreements it had signed, which did not only concern Turkey but also other countries (ibid.). The trial got wide coverage in the Turkish press (21–22.05.1993). Greece was accused of double standards, and it was claimed that nobody accepted the “puppet mufti” (*Sabah* 21.05.1993). After his return from Greece, the chairman of the Parliament’s Human Rights Commission Sabri Yavuz, said at a press conference that the trial of İbrahim Şerif was not juridical but political.

He condemned Greece for what he saw in Western Thrace as human rights violations. Yavuz gave information about his trip at the conference, adding that he went to Western Thrace with Üğur Aksöz and Eyüp Aşık, who are also members of the commission.

Yavuz added that Turkey had not interfered in the election of the Greek patriarch in Istanbul, while Greece did not even recognise the election of Western Thrace’s mufti and were replacing him with their own man. Yavuz found the trial highly amusing because the witnesses were Christians and did not appear at the trial. He compared this to selling refrigerators to Eskimos.

Şerif was found guilty of using mufti authority when he was not recognised by the Greek authorities. The trial was postponed to June 24, 1994 because the witnesses did not appear. Yavuz said they had investigated the situation in İskeçe, Gümülcine and Dedeaç, all Turkish minority places. In these places they found the Turkish minority were being oppressed and the Greeks were trying to intimidate the people, he said (*Turkish Daily News* 25.05.1993).

The other “elected” mufti, Mehmet Emin Aga, was also subjected to a series of trials. We can take a closer look at one of them. The Greek press started to write about the trial well in advance. The trial against the “pseudo mufti” was set for Monday 23.01.1995 in Larisa after he had been charged by the journalist Haralambos Ellinidis from Ksanthi for usurping authority and contempt of court. More specifically he was accused of “publishing religious messages where he urged the Muslims of Thrace to commit illegal actions. He criticised the bestowal of justice by the courts of Ksanthi and passed it on to the international press, slandering Greek Justice” (*Eleftherotipia* 19.01.1995). The trial was a peculiar affair. My impression is that the Greek authorities wanted to acquit Aga, while Aga wanted to be convicted. Characteristically, a newspaper commented that Mehmet Emin Aga was imprisoned as he wanted, refusing to pay the fine of 10 months prison. (In the court of first instance he had been sentenced to 23 months). More specifically:

In the court of appeal in Larisa, where the trial took place, he appeared provocative and did everything to be imprisoned such as:

— He appeared without lawyer in court, in spite of the fact that he was accompanied by (the lawyer [sic]) Ahmet Faikoğlu.
— He refused to convert his sentence to a fine (paying 1,500 drachmas a day [i.e. about $5]).
— He did not produce a document, which would show his blank criminal record and thus succeed in obtaining a suspended sentence (*Eleftherotipia* 25.01.1995).

The newspaper has several inaccuracies. It is correct that he appeared without a lawyer and dealt with the court in a high handed fashion. Faikoğlu is not a lawyer. On the other hand, Aga’s younger brother (Hüseyin) is a lawyer, and in any case it would present no problem for Aga to be represented properly in court. The fine was not very high and the normal practice would be to pay it. Aga certainly had the money to do so.
The fact that he did not pay the fine, indicates that he wanted to go to prison. The question about his criminal record is also an interesting detail. When I asked Aga later about the matter he said that he had been convicted earlier, but the Greek authorities wanted to give him a document which showed that he did not have a criminal record in order to acquit him. However, Aga won the thug of war and was able to go to prison as he wanted. This set off the usual chain of reactions.

Turkey made official representations and later demonstrations commenced outside the Greek consulate in Istanbul led by Taner Mustafaoğlu, chairman of the BTTDD. They shouted slogans like: “The Christians cannot choose the mufti of the Muslims, freedom to the mufti of Ksanthi.” Mustafaoğlu asked for retaliation against the Patriarchate (Eleftherotipia 28.01.1995). Turkey stepped up its diplomatic protests vis-à-vis Greece. The Turkish ambassador in Athens gave a note where he stressed that the Greek government did not respect the religious rights of the “Turkish” minority in Western Thrace. He called for the immediate release of Aga (Logos 29.01.1995).

BBC presented a news story from the Turkish state television about the matter which displayed clearly the Turkish rhetoric:

The Foreign Ministry issued a statement today [24th January] in connection with the ruling of the Larisa appeal court sentencing the mufti of İскеçe [Ksanthi], Mehmet Emin Aga, who was elected by the Turkish minority in Western Thrace, to 10 months in prison for usurping the title of mufti. The Foreign Ministry statement stressed that the Greek authorities had hindered the İскеçe and Gümülcine [Komotini] muftis in the performance of their duties, although they were elected into office in line with the 1913 Athens agreement and the Lausanne Treaty. The statement expressed regret over the situation. The Foreign Ministry statement continued: Punishing a clergyman for performing his duty does not comply with the principle of freedom of religion and faith. This approach, which will negatively affect our bilateral relations, also violates contemporary and democratic practices as well as human rights, which are guaranteed by international agreements. The statement noted that the Greek ambassador to Ankara was summoned to the Foreign Ministry in connection with the matter and asked that the necessary moves be undertaken in a bid to release İскеçe mufti Mehmet Emin Aga immediately (BBC 26.01.1995).

The game continued with an official protest from the Turkish president Süleyman Demirel to Greek President Konstandinos Karamanlis:

Demirel expressed regret that, “contrary to international agreements, muftis chosen by the Turkish community... are thus prevented from officially performing their religious duties.” [...] On the eve of the Moslem holy month of Ramadan, which begins on February 1 or 2, Demirel also demanded that Moslem clerics be allowed to travel from Turkey to western Thrace to fulfil the needs of the Moslem community there.302

In his letter Demirel had also mentioned that the minorities should constitute a “bridge of friendship” between the two countries. When the Greek president Karamanlis responded to the letter he wrote: “Both the Moslem minority in Greece and the Greek-Orthodox minority in Turkey can help lead the two countries to a lasting and honest friendship, on the condition that their members respect and obey state laws”

301 I have come across several earlier instances of convictions in the minority press.
302 Reuters 28.01.1995. See also BBC 31.01.1995.
The Turkish Foreign Ministry issued the following statement today regarding the sentencing of Mehmet Emin Aga, the elected mufti of Xanthi, to ten months in prison. The Foreign Ministry also expressed deep concern about the violation of the rights of the Turkish minority in Western Thrace.

"The Turkish government depletes the imprisonment of the elected mufti of Xanthi, which represents yet another attempt by the Greek Government to diminish the internationally recognised status of the Turkish minority in Western Thrace."

"The decision Tuesday by the Larisa Court of Appeals to imprison the mufti of Xanthi for assuming his religious duties is incompatible with basic principles of freedom of religion and conscience and violates norms of democracy and human rights."

"We demand that Greece abide by its obligations under bilateral and international agreements and that its government respect the rights of the Turkish minority of Western Thrace, including those of the muftis duly elected by the minority. Failure to do so will only adversely affect relations between the two countries."

"The imprisonment of Mehmet Emin Aga on charges of 'usurping the title of mufti' is part of a deliberate attempt by the Greek Government to systematically obstruct the work of the elected muftis of Western Thrace. The Athens Agreement of 1913, which allows the Turkish minority to elect muftis, was the law in Greece. The Lausanne Treaty had also guaranteed the rights of the Turkish minority. However, Greece abrogated this law in 1990 by decreeing that Greek authorities must appoint muftis."

"In protest of the Greek court’s decision, Acting Undersecretary Ambassador Unal Unsal called the Greek Ambassador to Ankara Alexandre Philon to the Foreign Ministry today and told him that Turkey expects Greece to immediately release Mehmet Emin Aga." 303

Turkey’s insistent lobbying brought results, and there were soon statements by the US in her favour. A Greek correspondent in Washington (D. P. Dimas) wrote that “The American government called Greece to respect the international rules of human rights in the case of the former mufti Aga who was sentenced to 10 months of jail.” This was characterised as an unpleasant episode for Greece. 304 Greece immediately rebuffed the criticism, while Turkey continued its complaints. 305

In Greece the mufti issue was interpreted as part of Turkey’s attempt to keep Thrace on the international agenda. Sadık had contributed with a letter to the European Parliament. It was also thought that Ankara utilised the issue as a lever against pressures related to the Kurdish issue (Pontiki 02.02.1995). A Greek journalist claimed that Turkey was promoting Thrace to its third front against Greece (i.e. after Cyprus and the Aegean). He mentioned that at the trial of Mehmet Emin Aga, Faikoğlu came with two busses full of adherents. He screamed in court “we will islamise all of you, we will circumcise you" (Eleftherotipia 05.02.1995). Faikoğlu followed instructions from personnel of the Turkish consulate in Komotini and left in a car with diplomatic licence plates afterwards (ibid.).

Greece was clearly on the defence in this propaganda war. This even resulted in apologetic articles in the Greek press. Simeon Soltaridis had a long article about the procedure for appointing mufti. He claimed that a committee of Muslims elected the

304 Eleftherotipia 01.02.1995. See also Reuters 30.01.1995.
305 See Reuters and BBC 31.01.1995.
mufti, who was afterwards appointed by the Greek state, and called this procedure entirely democratic.\(^{306}\) Soltaridis has written a doctoral dissertation on the muftis of Thrace, and should know better, but in this case “Greek patriotism” weighed stronger than scholarly accuracy.\(^{307}\) The mufti controversy also led to new danger scenarios. A Greek commentator interpreted the developments after the trial of Aga as a Turkish attempt to transform the muftis from religious personnel to political leaders. There would be created a special institution for representing the minority which anticipated its political autonomy. After demands for autonomy there would later be demands for self determination. The commentator also wanted to limit the existing judiciary functions of the mufti.\(^{308}\)

After spending 6 months in jail, Mehmet Emin Aga paid for the remaining 109 days and went to Turkey for treatment. He had been hospitalised for an ulcer and did not want to return to prison for health reasons. President Süleyman Demirel sent a get-well message to Mehmet Emin Aga, where he said that he had received the news of Aga’s release with pleasure, and added: “Your treatment has brought the issue of human rights violations targeting the ethnic Turkish minority in Western Thrace to the attention of the international community. Your struggle will contribute to improving the living conditions of the minority there” (Reuters 09.08.1995). A Greek newspaper reported that:

In an interview to a Turkish newspaper he [Aga] claimed that Greece puts economical, religious, and cultural pressures on the Muslims of W. Thrace, whom he called “Muslim Turks”. “It is the international conviction that Greece is democratic and humanist. We try to prove that she is not”, said Aga and added: “Turkey displays sensitivity towards us. Schools our children. Takes care of our schools, repairs our mosques and gives pensions to those who were teachers. If it were not for the moral and material support of Turkey, we would have been finished long ago” (Eleftherotipia 16.08.1995).

Soon it was İbrahim Şerif’s turn to face legal persecution. This was more or less a repetition of the previous trial against Aga. Turkey claimed that Şerif was the lawfully elected mufti of Komotini in full accordance to Greek treaty obligations. It further condemned Greece for its repressive policies and lack of respect for religious freedom. Turkey also asked human rights organisations to send monitors to the trial.\(^{309}\) The trial was postponed because the key witness, the official mufti of Komotini Meço Cemali, did not turn up. The court proposed a new trial to be set for February, but the defendant and his lawyers requested a later date, and the trial was set for 30 April 1996.

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\(^{307}\) See (Soltaridis 1997).

\(^{308}\) Eleftherotipia 01.03.1995, “Let us look again at the authorities of the muftis”, by Hristos D. Vrustis (lawyer). For another article in the same genre, see Kathimerini 25.03.1995, “Pseudo muftis: the cloak of Turkish expansionism”, by Petros Makris. Ömeroğlu, who wanted to solve the minority’s problems within a modern democratic framework, also concluded that the mufti issue had now become completely politicised (Diyalog 1/03.02.1995).

\(^{309}\) Press release by the Turkish embassy in Washington DC, 19.05.1995.
Three members of the Turkish National Assembly’s committee on human rights, who came to Thessaloniki for the trial, described the decision to postpone it as “a political torture.” “This action is against human rights,” they said, adding that “such things do not happen in Turkey” (ANA 25.05.1995).

After some further delays, İbrahim Şerif was finally found guilty of usurpation of religious authority and convicted to 6 months in jail 21.10.1996.

According to the accusations against him, the pseudo-mufti appeared as the legal mufti of Komotini and performed religious ceremonies in the period from January 17 to February 26, 1991 without being officially appointed as the region’s mufti, a position legally held by Meço Cemali (MPA News 21.10.1996).

İbrahim Şerif used the option to pay a fine (1,500 drachmas for each day), and was released (ibid.). By now Human rights organisations had become seriously involved. The Greek Helsinki Watch condemned the conviction of Aga and Şerif as a violation of religious freedom, as it was not the state’s responsibility to meddle in the religious affairs of the Muslim community. The case was compared to similar conflicts among bishops of the Greek Orthodox Church vying for the same dioceses.310

The trials against the “elected muftis” continued, and in February 1998 Amnesty International considered the possible adoption of Mehmet Emin Aga as prisoner of conscience if he was convicted in upcoming trials.

Amnesty International takes no position on the procedures to be followed for choosing religious leaders and has no view on who is, or who should be, the legitimate mufti of Xanthi. The organisation’s concern in this case is based solely on its belief that by sending leaflets with religious messages to the Muslim inhabitants of Xanthi, which he signed as the mufti of Xanthi, Mehmet Emin Aga was exercising his right to freedom of expression.311

The Turkish Foreign Ministry continued its strong criticism, and called on Greece, “a country which claims to be a modern democratic state, to grant the Turkish minority in Western Thrace its basic human rights” (Turkish Daily News 07.11.1998). İbrahim Şerif later forwarded his case to the European Court of Human Rights (Cumhuriyet 27.01.1999). The Greek Helsinki Watch followed up the case and termed the prosecution of Mehmet Emin Aga as “certainly the most outrageous recent case of violation of the human rights of an individual in Greece.”312

To this day, he has been convicted to over 100 months in prison by the First Instance Courts, sentences reduced to some 70 months by the Appeals Courts. He has spent six months in prison and has bought off the balance, at considerable financial cost (ibid.).

For the time being, the mufti controversy has culminated in a judgement by the European Court of Human Rights in the “Case of Serif v. Greece” 14.12.1999, which

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310 Statement by the Greek Helsinki Watch 23.10.1996.
312 Press release by the Greek Helsinki Watch 13.02.1999, titled: “Continuous prosecution of Mehmet Emin Aga violates freedoms of expression and religion”. The press release includes “The dossier of the prosecution of Mehmet Emin Aga”, which sums up the trials against him (http://www.greekhelsinki.gr/). See also the press release by the Greek Helsinki Watch 24.02.2000 “Freedom of religion and expression on trial — the case of Mehmet Emin Aga, Mufti of Xanthi”. The press release’s presentation of Mehmet Emin Aga’s career is unfortunately slanted and highly misleading.
stated that in the case of İbrahim Şerif Greece had violated “Article 9 (freedom of thought, conscience and religion) of the European Convention on Human Rights.” The same judgement awarded indemnification to Şerif.\textsuperscript{313} Basically the verdict stated that in a pluralistic society Şerif and his followers had the right to assert the opinion that he was mufti. As a consequence the verdict indicates the Greek courts’ inability to argue their case in a way which stands up to international scrutiny.\textsuperscript{314} From a legal point of view it can be argued that the Muslims in Greece could use their rights of religious freedom and of association, which are granted to them by the constitution and international agreements, to make religious associations and elect their religious leader, i.e. mufti.\textsuperscript{315} He would of course not have the juridical competence of the appointed muftis.

However, for all practical purposes the question has not been that anybody should be allowed to call himself mufti. It has been a fight for the control of the mufti offices in Komotini and Ksanthi. The “spirit” of the controversy on the ground, has been very different from the “spirit” expressed in the verdict by the European Court of Human Rights. For example, Aga’s behaviour had little to do with “freedom of expression.” In reality he had been called upon by Turkey to play a particular role, in order to embarrass Greece internationally. As a result, the mufti controversy is first of all a Greek-Turkish issue, where the minority members play a secondary role. Under normal circumstances the mufti issue should be a very low priority compared to many other problems of the minority. The reason why it has gained such prominence must partly be related to the fact that “religious freedom” is such a catchword on the international human rights scene that it lends itself to exploitation.

While there are reasons to criticise the Greek authorities’ authoritarian approach to the appointment of muftis, the initiatives by the “clique” for the “election” of muftis have not contributed the least towards a constructive dialogue about the methods of selecting religious leaders. On the contrary, it has cemented the fronts, and Greece will of course not let Turkey impose religious leaders whom she can use as a tool for political extortion. The strong rivalry between Greece and Turkey in this matter has in the last instance damaged the mufti institution itself. The polarisation and the attempts to undermine the appointed muftis have also weakened their possibility to play a constructive role towards the Greek authorities. Whatever they did was bound to be criticised, ignored, or misrepresented by the “clique”. For someone who knows what has been going on in minority politics, it is hilarious that Amnesty International

\textsuperscript{313} See the press release by the Greek Helsinki Monitor 14.12.1999. The judgement is available on the internet site of the European Court of Human Rights (http://www.dhcour.coe.fr)

\textsuperscript{314} See the discussion of the verdict by (Tsitselikis 2000).

\textsuperscript{315} The lawyer Tsitselikis, who is expert on Greek minority legislation, discusses this point in connection with the Muslims’ possibility to found additional mufti seats outside Thrace (Tsitselikis 1999: 310–311).
considers to adopt one of the most unscrupulous leaders, Mehmet Emin Aga, as prisoner of conscience. He should of course have a fair trial according to international standards, but there is no need for human rights organisations to adopt some of the Turkish myths about him.

It should be noticed that there is also a great difference in behaviour between the two appointed muftis. Meço Cemali in Komotini has tried to keep up the minority’s integrity when dealing with the Greek authorities. He has still a significant following, partly because of his own prestige, and partly as a reaction to the excesses of the “clique”. Mehmet Emin Şinikoğlu, on the other hand, has gradually been abandoned by everybody. This is related to his serious personal flaws. Soon after his appointment, a Turkish newspaper wrote that he had been caught in Izmir in 1975 for smuggling “white products” (i.e. refrigerators, stoves, washing machines etc.), and served a 2 year sentence in the Buca Prison (Sabah 16.09.1991). There were many similar stories. Hatipoğlu called it incredible that someone who had been convicted for smuggling furs and served time in jail had been made mufti (Akın 1048/10.03.1992). Ironically, earlier when the local Greek newspaper Hronos had written that Şinikoğlu was caught in the Turkish customs for smuggling 1,400 kilos of tea while leading pilgrims overland to Mecca, Hatipoğlu commented that it was improbable that someone smuggled such a large quantity of tea (Akın 955/10.08.1988). However, this was before Şinikoğlu had been made mufti and he was still close to the groups supported by Hatipoğlu. Dede had first supported Şinikoğlu because of his difference with Aga and the “clique”, but distanced himself later. He complained that Şinikoğlu did not engage himself in any of the minority’s problems, and the only thing left for him to do was to resign and leave the mufti office open for someone else (Trakya’nın Sesi 573/07.01.1997).

A curious episode took place later when the local newspaper Hronos featured an article which claimed that the attacks on Şinikoğlu were in vain, as the imams in Ksanthi had been paid. This article was written as a defence of Şinikoğlu against alleged accusations in the Turkish press and by Mehmet Emin Aga. Dede’s immediate reaction was to ask why Hronos defended Şinikoğlu against non existent accusations in the Turkish press. While there was much critique against Cemali, Şinikoğlu was treated as a forgotten person. This case was again related to the tug of war between Greece and Turkey for control of the religious personnel. Apparently the Greek foreign ministry was angry with Şinikoğlu because he had not distributed the money for the imams they had given to him. Two imams revealed on a local radio station in Ksanthi that Şinikoğlu had pocketed the money he should have paid them. When he was caught he threatened to resign, and the foreign ministry told him to go ahead.

316 cf. Akın 974/25.02.1989, where Şinikoğlu signed an attack by the VIH on Cemali and Yaşar.
Dede concluded that the defence of Şinikoğlu was not related to attacks from the minority, but to the fact that he was out of favour with the foreign department. Those who according to their values favoured him as mufti, portrayed it as if he was under attack from the minority to save him from the scolding of the foreign department (Trakya’nun Sesi 595/21.08.1997).

Şinikoğlu has been used repeatedly by the centres which have an authoritarian approach to the minority issue. Typically, he participated in a ceremony which gave awards to 6 soldiers who had voluntarily given blood to Muslim patients. This was orchestrated to show that there were no problems between Christians and Muslims. In his speech Şinikoğlu said among other things that:

We are GREEK Muslims and we have absolutely no problems and no complaints against the Greek state and our Christian brothers in the area.
What is said by some people and which some people try to exploit is PURE PROVOCATION. They intend to upset the excellent relations between us and to create problems where there are none to benefit somebody.”

It is obvious that Şinikoğlu has not written his speech himself. While other interest groups in Greece normally will present their demands and problems to the state organs, the minority is supposed to only express its gratitude, and Şinikoğlu is called upon to fulfil this role.

Another case which involved some of the same forces took place in July 1999, after the 3 minority MPs had signed a petition by the Greek Helsinki Watch chairman, Panayiotis Dimitras, demanding that Greece should sign the convention for protection of “ethnic minorities.” In the Greek press the petition was portrayed as the MPs’ initiative and created strong reactions. A little later the Greek authorities went to the appointed muftis and asked them to sign a statement flattering the Greek state, which was related to the 25 year anniversary of the return of democracy after the fall of the junta. The Athenian press portrayed the statement as a reaction by the muftis and others to the minority MPs. Dede commented that this reminded him of the totalitarian measures of the junta period (Trakya’nun Sesi 630/25.08.1999). A few days later, Manolis Kottakis wrote an article in Apoyevmatini (30.07.1999), where he said that the muftis had been threatened by the Turkish consulate because they had signed the declaration against the minority MPs. Cemali wrote a disclaimer to Apoyevmatini and sent a press statement to all the newspapers, which said that he had been tricked by the ready-made declaration by the representative of the authorities, and that he had no intention to condemn the MPs. Dede claimed that by directive from the foreign department, Cemali’s disclaimer was not printed in the Athenian and Thessaloniki press. However, it was printed in the local Greek-language press, which apparently had not received the

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directive.\textsuperscript{318} The examples above display the delicate position of the official \textit{muftis}, and also the typical responses to this challenge of both Şinikoğlu and Cemali.

**The Schoolbook Issue**

One of the most important rallying points for the minority during the early 1990s was the schoolbook controversy. This is a case which illustrates the political difficulties involved in any decision affecting minority education. Schoolbooks from Turkey according to the cultural agreement only arrived for the school year 1955–56. A minority source informs us that the “Western Thrace Turkish Teachers Union” prepared some textbooks in the mid 1960s. After a series of bureaucratic formalities, they were approved and were still in use some twenty years later. However, they were not up-to-date and there was also need for other books. It was also a problem that the minority schools did not have sufficient libraries. One of the reasons for this problem were the bureaucratic formalities which could not be easily surpassed; on the other hand, he thought that the minority had not done enough to surpass them (\textit{İleri} 363/23.11.1984). There have also been some efforts by the minority to write supplementary material, but in spite of all appeals the educational periodical \textit{Arkadaş Çocuk} could only find 1,500 subscribers (\textit{İleri} 311/23.09.1983). This was probably partly due to internal rivalry between the teachers (\textit{İleri} 899/21.11.1997). Greece and Turkey are accusing each other for the impasse, i.e. Turkey says it has sent books but Greece will not distribute them to the minority schools, while Greece says that the books sent are unsuitable because of Turkish nationalist content and that Turkey is not responding to Greece’s demands for revision of the disputed parts.\textsuperscript{319}

The independent MPs presented the schoolbook problem to the authorities on several occasions.\textsuperscript{320} The Ministry of Education responded by saying that the schoolbooks were about to be renewed.\textsuperscript{321} Prime Minister Mitsotakis promised during his visit to Thrace in May 1991 that if Turkey did not send acceptable books, the Greek state would provide modern Turkish readers for the minority. Soon afterwards news about the schoolbooks reached the minority press. The prefect of Rodopi, Karahalios, invited the 10 minority township presidents (\textit{kinotárhes}) to the prefecture building on 21 June 1991. He spoke about minority education and the modern school-

\textsuperscript{318} \textit{Trakya’nın Sesi} 630/25.08.1999. As a surprise to everybody, in this case Şinikoğlu co-signed the disclaimer.

\textsuperscript{319} Dalègre displays a page from an English textbook produced in Turkey. Here the words Turkey, Ankara, and Istanbul are replaced by the words Greece, Athens, and Kavala. However, the rest of the text is intact, with the result that there are sentences such as: “Kavala’s population has exploded from one million to seven million. That is why a lot of slums, factories and warehouses mushroomed along the shores of the Golden Horn” (Dalègre 1995: Tome 2, Document 5).

\textsuperscript{320} See \textit{Akın} 1011/23.11.1990, question by Sadık dated 06.02.1991 and question by Faikoğlu 4819/26.04.1991 to the Ministry of Education.

\textsuperscript{321} Answer from the Ministry of Education dated 28.02.1991 to question 3249/7-2-1991 by Sadık.
books which would be distributed. There were some reactions from the township presidents who said that the books had to be distributed according to the 1951 and 1968 cultural protocols between Greece and Turkey. Rodoplu emphasised in his newspaper comment that exactly because of those protocols there was no need to ask the township presidents.\footnote{Gerçek 290/26.06.1991. Karahalios tried to circumvent the AYK-YK by introducing the books to the mayors who are part of the Greek administrative system. The mayors were uneasy about taking a position concerning the schoolbooks, while Rodoplu was trying to be the spokesperson of Turkey.}

In connection with the distribution of the books, there were strong reactions from the part of the minority which is close to Ankara. Sadık Ahmet made an announcement in the name of his DEB party, which claimed that the book had been imposed on the minority school teachers on 12 February 1992 in Ksanthi and Komotini. The books should be provided according to the 1968 educational agreement, and could not be prepared by someone who was not a Turk. He called on the teachers and parents to collect the books and return them to the authorities (DEB Partisi Gazetesi 2/18.02. 1992). Dede opposed their views and mentioned that there had been no reaction from Turkey or the independent MPs when Mitsotakis announced in May 1991 that Greece would make a book to the minority. When the book was first distributed, it was only Sadık who reacted. The members of the “clique” accepted the book and opposed Sadık. They joined Sadık in order not to be outdone by him in heroism and one year later they competed with Sadık in gathering most books to return to the authorities. It was no longer a book or education issue, but had turned into a leadership struggle between Sadık and the AYK-YK (Trakya’nın Sesi 437/19.11.1992).

The AYK-YK soon followed up with a statement against the schoolbooks. Hatipoğlu took recourse to his usual rhetoric. He called the books an assimilation attempt, a sugared pill, and suggests that if the minority accepted the books the authorities would say that there was no need for books from Turkey (Akın 1046/25.02.1992). Another characteristic example can be found in the “elected mufti” of Ksanthi Mehmet Emin Aga’s message on occasion of the religious holiday Mevlit Kandili.

Dear brothers,
We will enter the 1992–1993 school year in one week. Since you all know the situation of the Western Thrace Turks’ education question, I find no need to speak about it at length here. However, I find it proper to pause with the last stage which is the efforts to impose by various tricks on the Western Thrace Turkish Primary Schools the First Grade Book which a professor named S. Zenginis prepared last year.
A “Primary School First Grade Primer” was prepared by taking parts from a Turkish author’s book and the name Zenginis was put on it as name of the author. Those who want to poison someone, try to make him eat poison put inside honey. The book prepared for us resembles this.
What is important here is not the content of the book, the real intention is to undermine the cultural agreements and protocols which have been signed formerly between Turkey and Greece, afterwards they will try to make us accept it by hitting us constantly on our heads and present views like their claims that “There are Muslim Minorities in Western Thrace and these minorities have different roots” and break up the Western Thrace Turks who are a whole in the name of “Greek Civilisation” and “Greek Democracy”, and by inventing different cultures they will proceed...
straight to realising their assimilation policy thinking that as a result of this they will annihilate us.323

The University Graduates Association (AYT) took a somewhat different position after it had assembled on 16 February 1991 to discuss the schoolbook issue. It sent a letter to Mitsotakis and Demirel dated 17.03.1992, signed by the chairman Ali Kam-
ber, asking to be informed if the 1951 Cultural Agreement and the 1968 Cultural Protocol were still in force. Kamber also made an internal criticism as he pointed out that the minority was not prepared to react as a community when Mitsotakis declared in May 1991 that the Greek state would provide books if no books come from Turkey (İleri 666/13.03.1992; Akın 1050/27.03.1992).

Faikoğlu sent a letter to the prime minister where he claimed that the government used “police measures to impose the use of a Turkish textbook written by a Greek teacher on the pupils of the minority schools.”324 The protests against the book culminated when a 51-person strong committee went to Athens on 12 November 1992 and returned the books to the Ministry of Education with full Greek television coverage. The independent MPs asked the ministry to withdraw the book because it had not been approved by the Turkish Foreign Ministry. The vice minister of Education V. Polidoras made it clear that the 1968 protocol contained suggestions and not obligations. He continued by saying that the book was of very good educational quality and had been distributed to improve minority education.325 Turkish television referred to an accompanying letter which stressed that the children were exposed to religious and linguistic assimilation by the new schoolbooks. Dede pointed out that there was no such statement in the letter. He asked the YK members why they said to the minority that the books were not accepted because they were against the cultural agreement with Turkey, while to Turkish television they said that these books were made to assimilate the minority children. He further accused them for trying to fool the minority and guide it like a sheep flock, and pointed out that there were no official Turkish reactions to Polidoras statement that Greece had full right to print the books. Further, he criticised Turkey for not treating the minority seriously (Trakya’nın Sesi 437/19.11. 1992). During the visit to Athens Faikoğlu, who had called Sadık a catamite (pust) and leaders of catamites, and Sadık, who had called Faikoğlu a KIP (Greek secret police) agent, posed side by side to display the unity of the minority (Trakya’nın Sesi 438/26.11.1992). In reality there was no co-operation between them at this point, and their positions were completely dominated by petty politics.

When the second book was about to be distributed the fronts had already hardened.

A Greek newspaper reported:

Provocative once again, the Muslim MP Sadık Ahmet created episodes yesterday outside the prefecture, hindering, threatening, and cursing Muslim teachers who went to collect the new books for the second grade of primary school.

The prefect Dion. Karahalios went outside and told Sadık to stop disturbing Greek citizens and obstruct them in their right to come to meetings related to their profession. It seemed like the episode stopped, but Mr. Sadık met the teachers in a nearby coffee shop and continued to threaten them.

This was the start of intensive protests from the fanatical Muslims who react to the new Turkish language schoolbooks (grammar and reading book), because they have been written by Greek pedagogues knowing Turkish under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. These books were distributed this year, because Turkey did not send books and the Muslim children used photocopied books.

First the unofficial AYK, in reaction to these books, asked the parents not to send the children to school this week until Friday. Sadık went even further, and asked the parents to occupy the schools and to prevent the entrance of teachers and children that wished to go. He also asked the teachers not to accept the new books.326

The episodes were commented widely in the Greek press.327 Some of the more noticeable protests against the new books took place in the mountain villages. 3 parents who had removed the books from the school building in Ano Drosini (Küçüren), were convicted to 17 months prison 10 September 1992 (Balkan 29/15.09.1992; Turkish Daily News 03.02.1993). When the second book appeared there were further episodes in the village Miki (Mustafçova). “Seven Muslims broke into a minority school in Ksanthi and took away the reading books, because, as they said, they were against the distribution of the book by the ministry of education. The Muslims were noticed by neighbours who informed the police, and they were taken as they went out of the minority school having 43 reading books in their hands” (Eleftherotipia 12.02.1993). The perpetrators were obviously people of lower working-class background, who had been in contact with Sadık (Makedonia 12.02.1993). Sadık’s newspaper could report that after the 7 men were arrested in Miki on 10 February, women from the village came with the books and hurled them at the entrance of the police station. Two days later the 7 men were convicted to 17 months prison each (Balkan 50/16.02.1992). These cases would later go through several appeal trials. Furthermore, 14 minority teachers would be dismissed for participating in the boycotts, and they were not able to get the decision revoked (Zaman 20.11.1995). The general secretary of the DEB party, Ahmet Haciosman, was also later convicted to 7 months for his role in the collection of schoolbooks (Hürriyet 20.06.1996).

326 Eleftherotipia 02.02. 1993, “Sadık did not allow the books to be distributed”, by Simeon Soltaridis. The episodes were covered extensively in the Greek press on this and the following days.
327 For some of the more elaborate reactions, see Pontiki 04.02.1993, “Sadık lost control”. Kathimerini 07.02.1993, “Western Thrace: The books were only a pretext… - Ahmet Sadık has been transformed into a ‘strike-force’ of Turkey in the area”, by Stavros Liyeros. Epohi 21.02.1993, “Everyone are satisfied when there is unrest in Thrace”, by Ibraim Hasan (all included in Appendix 5, texts 44, 45, and 46).
Gradually Turkey’s involvement became more serious too. The Foreign Ministry spokeswomen Filiz Dinçmen said: “It is our hope that Greece will … refrain from unilateral and arbitrary acts regarding the textbooks for the Turkish minority and cooperate with Turkey on the issue in accordance with present agreements and protocols.”\textsuperscript{328} She complained further that the Greek officials had given “numerous excuses” to delay the approval of the books sent by Turkey and that no textbooks had been sent to the region for a long time. “No approval has come from the Greek authorities regarding books sent from Turkey to the Turkish minority in Western Thrace in October 1991” (ibid.). The Greek Foreign ministry spokesman, D. Avramopoulos, said that the 1968 protocol between Greece and Turkey involved no obligation but simply gave the governments the possibilities to exchange schoolbooks, and continued: “We invite Turkey to comprehend that the appeal to non-existing violation of minority rights or the deliberate misinterpretation of international texts does not benefit the minority it allegedly supports, but on the contrary may create general damage to Greek-Turkish relations” (\textit{Makedonia} 03.02.1993). It is clear that Greece was extremely sceptical about the Turkish initiative and feared that there were dubious ulterior motives.

The Turkish tactics—according to information of “\textit{To Vima}”—became evident during the recent discussion of the Greek ambassador in Ankara with Mr. Uluçevik after invitation from the latter. The Turkish diplomat presented to Mr. D. Makris a series of episodes to the detriment of the Muslim minority (which later turned out to be fabrications) for thereafter asking for the start of unofficial discussions so that the two countries could co-operate in appeasing the climate in Western Thrace!

At the same time the Turkish diplomats concentrated their attention on the demand of stopping the distribution of Turkish schoolbooks by Greek authors and to use pedagogical material of Turkish origin, even if this is not yet ready nor has it been submitted to Greek authorities for approval. The essence is consequently that Ankara, with pretext the educational and fabricated episodes, asked from Greece to legalise the Turkish policy of intervention in Western Thrace…\textsuperscript{329}

The most substantial internal criticism of the minority’s attitude in this matter was made in Abdülhalim Dede’s newspaper \textit{Trakya’nın Sesi}. Hatipoğlu countered him by writing that it did not matter if Dede said that the schoolbooks were not bad, because he did not represent the minority (\textit{Akın} 1082/13.03.1993). However, Dede’s treatment of the issue gives a valuable insight into the internal minority intrigues. It should be noted that Dede was not uncritical of the Greek authorities. He claimed that after Mitsotakis had promised new schoolbooks, this was organised by the Foreign Department and the Department of Education without contacting relevant people in the minority. The Komotini \textit{mufti} Cemali later heard by chance about Zenginis’ book and saw that it had a lot of mistakes.\textsuperscript{330}

\textsuperscript{328} \textit{Turkish Daily News} 03.02.1993. “Turkish government urges Greece to abide by international agreements”.
\textsuperscript{329} \textit{To Vima} 07.03.1993, “ Between the Greek minority in Albania and the Muslim in Thrace -The two fronts of Athens”, by N. Marakis.
\textsuperscript{330} \textit{Trakya’nın Sesi} 434/29.10.1992. Pinelopi Stathi who was the author of the second book writes that she tried to co-operate with local minority teachers, but they declined (Stathi 1997: 65–67).
İbrahim Onsunoğlu made an elaborate attempt to analyse the reactions to the school-books. He used the following argument to portray the attitude of the authorities: The prevailing Greek policy was to make the minority go to Turkey, not to assimilate it. The first condition of this anti-minority policy was to keep the minority question within the framework of Greek-Turkish relations. Assimilation, which was not probable anyway, could only take place if the minority became integrated in Greek society. The printing of Turkish text books in Greece meant that either the administration was starting to change the minority policy, or it was a tactical mistake. More proofs were necessary to accept the first possibility. The second possibility was more plausible. According to Onsunoğlu’s information from behind the scene, the printing of the books was Mitsotakis’ personal initiative, which some circles inside and outside the government considered a mistake. Because of the problems with books from Turkey, the minority was left without schoolbooks and was inclined towards sending their children to Turkey for education. Now that new books were printed it would be easier for them to go to school in Greece. These circles tried to correct Mitsotakis’ “mistake”, and did everything they could to sabotage the new books (Trakya’nın Sesi 448/21.04.1993).

Onsunoğlu argued that the minority should accept the book and the way he presented his views at the general assembly of the Association of University Graduates (AYT) can be summed up in the following manner:
1. It is first of all the duty of the Greek state to provide text books in Turkish for the minority schools, since the minority members are Greek citizens.
2. The books were made without asking or informing the minority, by a person who did not have Turkish as his mother tongue and did not know “children’s language”. This displays the insecurity and bad intentions towards the minority. However, this is not reason enough to reject the books, as no state in the world prepares school-books by referendum after informing the people.
3. The books can only be criticised for their content. They could be rejected if there is something offensive to Islam, Turkism, or minority culture, but this is not the case. They could also be rejected for pedagogical reasons.
4. It was racist and disgraceful for the minority to say that “we cannot give a book to our children written by a Greek.”
5. The slogan: “We do not want a book printed in Greece, we want a book printed in Turkey”, is a disquieting example of how much it has become a fashion to protest. It is the book itself which is important, not where it is printed.
6. It is claimed that the books should be prepared according to the cultural protocols between Greece and Turkey. This is not convincing. It was Turkey and not the

However, at this time the issue was probably already so politicised that the local teachers did not dare to co-operate out of fear of becoming the target of the forces which opposed the books.
minority which signed the protocols, and consequently it is Turkey’s task to protest if there are violations of the agreements.

It could take a long time to wait for Greece and Turkey to exchange books. From the minority’s point of view the problem was to get suitable schoolbooks. The books could only be rejected if they were unsuitable from a pedagogical point of view, and not because they were not in accordance with the protocol. Otherwise it would be impossible for the minority to explain its problems to people outside it.

Onsunolu claimed that by rejecting the books the “minority mafia” had co-operated with the Greek state and para-state circles which considered it to be a national mistake to distribute the Turkish readers. The “mafia” had made a fool of itself and stirred up anti-minority feelings in Greece by not making a critique of the book on its educational merits, but by producing the following slogans:

1. We will not let our children use a book written by a Greek.
2. We want books printed in Turkey, not in Greece.
3. They want to make us infidels (gâvurlaştırmak) with this book.

Onsunolu concluded that there was no basis for rejecting the Turkish reader, and that the minority would never be able to influence its fate if it wanted everything to be regulated by Greek-Turkish agreements (Trakya’nın Sesi 449/28.04.1993; 450/05.05.1993).

After this time the schoolbook issue lost its urgency. There were still trials against people who had participated in the actions against the books, and the issue appeared from time to time in the minority press. In some way it seems that everything went back to the situation before the schoolbook was distributed. When a delegation from the minority went to Turkey in 1996 it used the same arguments which were in vogue before 1991:

A high-level delegation of ethnic Turks of Greece rapped Greece on Monday for violating Turks’ rights and forcing an “archaic education” on the Turkish community. “The books Turkey has sent (to be used at the schools in Western Thrace, where ethnic Turks live) are not accepted by Greece. Education in Western Thracian schools is archaic with books which date back to from 20 to 25 years ago,” Şerafettin Şerif, the head of the Western Thrace Teachers’ Association, complained to Turkish Education Minister Turhan Tayan. Two years ago, Turkey sent new books for the Turkish community in Greece, as it is entitled to do under the Treaty of Lausanne [sic], but Greeks, who are empowered to examine the books first, have not distributed the books. A Greek attempt to urge the schools to use books written by a Greek national was boycotted by teachers and was declared “a violation of the Lausanne Treaty” by Turkey (Turkish Daily News 01.03.1996).

As usual, petty politics considerations took priority to educational needs.

Schoolbooks continued to be a problem, but with the improved climate in Greek-Turkish relations new readers have recently arrived from Turkey (cf. Gündem 155/25.01.2000).
Reorientation of the Greek Minority Policy

Critical voices related to the treatment of the Muslim minority had mounted both inside and outside Greece. As mentioned earlier, the political leaders had found it necessary already after the “mini-pogrom” 29 January 1990 to revise the minority policy. After this the new catchword for solving the problems of Thrace became “development”, and a parliamentary committee was given the task to examine the situation. After the end of the Greek civil war, Thrace had been a neglected area for nearly three decades. The minority had become an excuse for not channelling funds to the area, under the pretext that the general development of the area would mainly benefit the minority. This led to a “selective development”, which left the minority outside, and resulted in the overall underdevelopment of the area (Notaras 1995: 52–53). The turning point for the minority was Mitsotakis’ visit to Thrace 13–14 May 1991. A former expert in the Greek Foreign Department stressed that this initiative had not emerged from the bosom of ND, but was the product of many years’ attempts by certain people in the department staff who were finally listened to. Mitsotakis had decided in August of the previous year to initiate a program for the development of Thrace, while his visit was planned two months in advance (Eleftherotipia 11.05. 1991). The purpose of the trip became known well ahead. It was clear that the government was wary of Turkey’s role, but that it was now willing to admit the discrimination against the minority:

This new policy has the goal to guarantee the equal rights and equal treatment of Greek citizens in order to put an end to the complaints of the past.

In this sense the discussion the Prime Minister will have with the representatives of the minority in Thrace is a strictly internal Greek matter and cannot in any sense constitute a subject for dialogue with Ankara, which aspires to play the role of protector with the apparent goal to transform the Muslim minority to Turkish community, so that a second Cyprus will be created in the area.

[...] It is true that the work of Ankara was facilitated by Athens’ inability to formulate a concrete minority politic accepted by all the parties, which would have as goal to integrate the Muslim

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1 The conclusions of this initiative was published in (Zolotas, Angelopulos et al. 1995).
minority into the broader national body instead of isolating it and making it a prey for the Turkish propaganda. Certain of the Muslims’ complaints are undoubtedly just and must be solved.3

While before the complaints of the minority had been referred to mainly in marginal left-wing publications, now they were clearly acknowledged in a major newspaper by a journalist who reflected the government’s official line. This represents a clear break with the practice of the past, and was bound to provoke reactions. Many journalists knew that there were problems in Thrace, but it was not easy to admit it officially. The standard procedure had been to simply deny the existence of the problems, instead of trying to solve them. An opposition newspaper was quick to underscore the dangers, now that Mitsotakis took steps to do something with the situation:

One do not need particular knowledge to point out that the Mitsotakis government plays with fire when it falls into the trap which the various “friends” of Greece have set up for a long time. On his own initiative he is about to create an immense problem and provoke international discussion on a strictly internal issue, something which not only no Greek government has ever accepted in the past, but which opens the bags of Aeolus for arbitrary interpretations to the detriment of our national interests and territorial sovereignty.4

The impending visit of Mitsotakis was widely discussed in the Greek press. Those who warned against the “dangers” were helped by Sadık’s participation in ultra nationalist meetings in Turkey, where he was hailed as the Denktaş of Thrace.5 Government sources stressed that Mitsotakis’ visit was not made particularly for the Muslim minority, and mentioned the development plans which would be to the benefit of all the inhabitants (Eleftherotipia 11.05.1991). Mitsotakis’ visit was also followed closely by the Turkish press.

The new policy towards the Muslims was announced by Mitsotakis in Kсанthi on 13 May. In his speech he mentioned that the Muslim minority included people of various ethnic backgrounds: those of Turkish origin, the Pomaks, and the Gypsies. He stressed that the Greek state was determined to secure equal rights for all the inhabitants of Thrace, Christians and Muslims. However, there would also have to be equality as regarded the obligations to the state. He admitted that there had been mistakes in the past, but claimed that this was not in any instance due to a conscious choice by the various governments. The persecution of the Greek Orthodox in Turkey and the Cyprus invasion had created a negative climate which had repercussions on Muslim Greek citizens. However, Greece had never shared the logic of retaliation and it was now time to look to the future. Mitsotakis warned against co-operation with foreign powers which tried to exploit the minority issue, but stressed Greece’s

3 To Vima 05.05.1991, “The reason why the prime minister is going to Thrace…”, by Yiannis Kartalis.
4 Eksormisi 05.05.1991, “They want Turkey as ‘guarantor’ for Western Thrace too [i.e. after Cyprus]!”’, by N.K.
5 See Kathimerini 10.05.1991, Eleftherotipia; Kathimerini; Naftemporiki; Epikerotita; Rizospastis; Fileleftheros 11.05.1991.
commitment to international treaties and the Helsinki agreement. As seen above, part of Mitsotakis’ agenda was to redefine Greece’s attitude towards the identity of the minority. The earlier practice had been to insist that it was a religious minority and avoid any characterisation other than “Muslim”. Now the Turkish identity was at last acknowledged, but only for that part of the minority which was characterised to be of Turkish origin (Turkoynís). It seems that Mitsotakis’ first concern had been to give an answer to the frequent “provocation” of the Turkish president Turgut Özal and to respond to international pressure. Many questions still remained unanswered in regard to what exactly would have to change in the relationship between the state and the minority.

There had clearly been careful deliberations about the new policy before Mitsotakis’ visit:

The prime minister’s attempt to take a new line in the Muslim issue yesterday evening, by specifying the composition of the minority, referring also to the element of Turkish origin, is a movement that has been contemplated for a long time by both himself and the Foreign Ministry. In a series of meetings which took place at the building in Vas. Sofias street [i.e. the Foreign Ministry], the opinion has been expressed that if Greece does not want to be isolated internationally as regards minorities, it should—without ceasing to base its policy on the international agreements which determine the minority, and without ceasing to confront the minority as a strictly internal subject—redirect and adapt its political and diplomatic tactics on the basis of modern international perceptions regarding the definition of minorities.

The need to redirect the Greek politics in the issue of the minorities was brought forth by the tendency of isolation in international organisations where there are broad discussions and binding decisions are taken for the policy towards the minorities (as for example in OSCE, EU, the Council of Europe, the UN etc.). The basis of this policy is the new concept of defining the minorities as ETHNIC GROUPS, i.e. persons with a particular national identity, cultural and linguistic, who nevertheless are active citizens of the country where they are born and live.

Another serious reason which urged the government and the Foreign Department to re-examine their policy in the question about the minorities, was not only the Human Rights report of the US Congress that were very negative for Greece, but also the recent attacks which the Prime minister received in the Council of Europe.

In addition, with the modernisation of the minority policy, Athens hopes also to check Ankara’s aggressive and expansionist politics towards Greece, with the minority issue as a pretext, and in the final analysis to lead Ankara into isolation.

Mitsotakis would also stress that the minority should be a “bridge of friendship” between Greece and Turkey (Makedonia 15.05.1991). Most of the Greek press was positive to the new minority policy, and supported fully the view that the minority should not be discriminated against. However, there were also words of warning. Characteristically, one newspaper accused Mitsotakis for initiating a nationally dangerous policy by accepting Ankara’s claims about discrimination (Dimokratikos Logos 15.05.1991). Another called the trip an incredible blunder after pressure from Ankara, and continued:

First mistake, that the prime minister of Greece himself went to Thrace to have a “dialogue” about the minority there! Now if he wants to have a dialogue about that issue he has ministers and

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6 Eleftherotipia 14.05.1991. For a translation of the whole speech, see Appendix 5, text 47.
7 Eleftherotipia 14.05.1991, “We will not tolerate the exploitation of the minorities - Answer of Mitsotakis to Özal from Thrace”, by Kira Adam.
8 See, characteristically, leading articles in Ethnos and Kathimerini 15.05.1991.
prefects? Why should he go there in person? Has no one perceived at last that in this fashion Greece recognises the “gravity” of an issue that we have every interest in “normalising” quietly and not emphasise it with the extraordinary presence of the prime minister himself?

And then, with whom would he have a dialogue? If he were speaking with today’s minority MPs he would turn them into “privileged interlocutors”, while our goal should be that as long as they insist that they are “Turks” they are in conflict with the existing international treaties and we ignore them!9

The passage above highlights the delicate problem of how to make a convincing dialogue with the minority when its elected MPs were so clearly under the influence of Turkey. To a certain degree, we can observe a preferential treatment of the “moderate” elements which did not depend on Turkey.10 Of course, Mitsotakis did not go to Thrace to “negotiate” with Faikoğlu and Sadık. However, they were both invited to his presentations (in Ksanthi and Komotini respectively) of the new minority policy and the receptions afterwards, along with the minority township presidents, the official muftis, and minority politicians associated with ND. Faikoğlu took a strong stand after Mitsotakis’ speech. However, in this connection it is also important to have in mind that Faikoğlu still had some relations with PASOK locally (Epohi 19.05.1991):

Immediately after Mitsotakis’ speech in Ksanthi, Faikoğlu reacted by not coming to the reception and made further a statement only in Turkish. In his statement Faikoğlu repeated his claims that the minority in Western Thrace “is and will remain Turkish” and accused the Prime minister of attempting to divide the “Turkish minority” by referring to three ethnic groups within the minority. In addition he characterised the Prime Minister’s speech of being a “provocation”, and his interest in the development of the area of being “superficial” (Eleftherotipia 15.05.1991).

The next day when the Prime minister visited Komotini, the minority township presidents had the opportunity to give him a long memorandum concerning the particular problems of the minority.11 The appointed mufti in Komotini, Meço Cemali, also asked for respect towards the minority’s peculiarity when he saw the Prime minister.12 Sadık displayed a more conciliatory attitude than Faikoğlu. He considered Mitsotakis’ initiatives to be positive, but added that it remained to be seen if they would be implemented (Eleftherotipia 15.05.1991).

There was greater openness towards the minority’s problems after the visit, which made it possible for the minority politicians who wanted a dialogue with the Greek state to voice their grievances in the Athenian press.13

9 Ikonomikos Tahidromos 16.05.1991, “Mr. Özal provides us with weapons to fight him!”, by Hrisanthis Lazaridis.
10 This point is well presented in Epohi 19.05.1991.
11 The content of the memorandum was referred to in the Greek press (Eleftherotipia 15.05.1991), and a summary was also included in the Rizospastis 26.05.1991, “This is how things are, but they should not continue in this way”, by Panayiotis Nestoridis. The full version was printed in Trakya’nın Sesi 387/23.05.1991. (See Appendix 5, text 48, for a translation).
12 See transcript of the mufti’s statement in Makedonia 15.05.1991.
13 See in particular Eleftherotipia 04.06.1991, “What does the Muslim minority in Western Thrace expect, after the recent visit of the prime minister”, by Ekrem Hasan, Dentist, Member of the Prefecture Committee of Sinaspismos (op. cit. for translation see Appendix 5, text 5). For another good presentation, see Eleftherotipia 17.08.1991, “What do the Muslims of Thrace expect”, by Mehmet Nuri.
It was clear that the government was serious in its intention to alter radically the Greek minority policy. The supporters of the new policy, in the Foreign Department as well as in all the political parties, would stress that it was time to abandon the notion that 1% of the population was a “threat” to the state when it secured equal rights for everybody. As part of the new drive there had also been serious considerations to abolish article 19 of the citizenship code.14

Naturally, the Christians were first of all concerned about their own place within the new political framework. On the other hand, they were clearly receptive to the idea that it would be good for the area to develop under a regime of equality to the benefit of all its inhabitants.15 Minority members displayed cautious optimism when the new policy began to manifest itself, and most of the Christian inhabitants also expressed satisfaction about the changes.16 It had now become easier to buy and sell land, obtain permits, etc. However, there were no signs of a well-scheduled overall program for the confrontation of the complex problems of the area. This led to several suggestions from the main opposition party which centred on the integration of the minority in Greek society, and the limitation of Turkey’s influence.17

On the other hand, there was still resistance by various groups when their personal interests were at stake. We have seen above the reactions against minority pharmacists, because the Christian pharmacists did not want to lose part of their market. The same mentality prevented the issuing of permits for small businesses, taxi permits, etc. Those who wanted to keep a monopoly, disguised this in the phrase “national policy”.

The political manoeuvring of the “clique” in connection with Mitsotakis’ visit is most clearly revealed in the Turkish and the minority press. In this connection the great discrepancy between the minority politicians’ behaviour towards the Greek and the Turkish press should be noticed. The “clique” displayed its distrust towards Mitsotakis well before his arrival. Rodoplu criticised Mitsotakis for not having scheduled a meeting with Sadik, who was the “minority’s official representative”. The AYK-YK, YTD and the two independent MPs made statements criticising the prefect’s request from 18.04.1991 to dissolve the associations with the word “Turkish” in their name, and that none of the minority MPs had been included in the 29 member strong parliamentary commission which would study the development of Thrace. They claimed that this showed that Mitsotakis had no good intentions, contrary to what he had said in Strasbourg and Athens (Gerçek 285/08.05.1991).

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14 Eleftherotipia 02.06.1991, “A good move on the chessboard”, by Kira Adam.
16 Eleftherotipia 22.06.1991, “Satisfaction among the minority with the end of the injustice”, by Sim. Soltaridis.
17 For some typical examples, see the suggestions of the PASOK prefecture committee of Ksanthi in Pontiki 05.07.1991, “Thrace, the program of the government is still only on paper. There is a need for a national strategy” and Thessaloniki 27.07.1991, “Thrace: Development - armouring and cohesion of the populations”, by Petros Sfikakis (member of the central committee of PASOK).
The day before Mitsotakis’ arrival Faikoğlu said to a Turkish newspaper: “Mitsotakis is not sincere in the minority issue. He does not ask us about the minority’s problems. If Mitsotakis wants dialogue he must speak with Turkey. The minority is not a vagabond [başıboş] here. Turkey is the state which has guaranteed the continuation of this minority’s religious and national presence.”18 After the first day the Turkish press pointed out that Mitsotakis had admitted mistakes, but his sincerity was questioned.19 Faikoğlu and Sadik said: “By not meeting the MPs of Turkish descent he [Mitsotakis] shows that in reality he did not come to find a remedy for the minority question.”20 They also condemned the fact that Mitsotakis would see people who were “not accepted by the minority” (Milliyet 13.05.1991), alluding to the appointed mufti Meço Cemali. The “clique’s” response was related to its attempts to monopolise the representation of the minority towards both the Greek authorities and Turkey. Abdülhalim Dede accused the “clique” of having deceived the semi-official Turkish Anatolia News Agency. In a report which obviously originated from the “clique” it was mentioned that Mitsotakis would not meet the real leaders of the minority. The AYK held a meeting in Komotini on the eve of Mitsotakis’ arrival where it decided unanimously that the persons Mitsotakis would meet in Thrace did not represent the minority. In the meeting it was also decided that in case Mitsotakis did not invite the independent MPs Sadık Ahmet and Ahmet Faikoğlu to discuss the minority’s problems, the minority township presidents and minority ND politicians would not go to the meetings and receptions during the visit. In a statement the “mufti of Ksanthi”, Mehmet Emin Aga, wrote that Mitsotakis displayed what kind of good intentions he had by not holding a meeting with the “independent MPs and muftis, who had obtained their position after being elected by the Turkish minority”.21

Dede attempted to put the record straight about what had happened. The AYK had held a meeting in Komotini before Mitsotakis’ visit. However, none of the minority township presidents from Ksanthi participated, and only three from Rodopi. No decisions were taken in the meeting before it dissolved, so the information of the news agency was totally fictitious. During Mitsotakis’ visit, all the minority township presidents of Ksanthi (10) participated in the reception. Faikoğlu’s protest took place on his own initiative and was not based on any decision by the AYK or YK. The next day all

19 See Cumhuriyet; Türkiye; Tercüman; Güneş; Günaydın; Sabah 14.05.1991.
20 Milliyet 15.05.1991, “Eyewash from Mitsotakis”, by Reha Muhtar in Athens and Hülya Emin Tanpınar in Komotini. See also the press statements of the independent MPs as printed in Akın 1030/17.05.1991. For translation, see Appendix 5, text 49. Mitsotakis was in particular criticised for his statement that the minority was made up of three groups. The independent MPs and the AYK stressed that the minority was one and Turkish (Akin 1030/17.05.1991; Gerçek 286/21.05.1991. See also Tercüman; Milliyet; Güneş; Cumhuriyet 15.05.1991).
21 Dede has reprinted an undated (probable date 15 May) facsimile of the news from the Anatolia News Agency (Anadolu Ajansı) in Trakya’nın Sesi 388/30.05.1991. This agency is an important source for the Turkish press, which can be seen in connection with Mitsotakis’ visit.
the minority township presidents of Rodopi (13) participated in the reception, where they presented Mitsotakis with the memorandum about the minority’s problems which he accepted. This was something which the minority MPs could very well have done, too. Sadik was present and listened to Mitsotakis’ speech and participated afterwards in all the official ceremonies. Mitsotakis received the Komotini mufti, Meço Cemali, for five minutes along with the mayor and the Metropolitan according to protocol.22

Besides the outright lies, the “clique” tried to cultivate a climate of suspicion towards the intention of Mitsotakis. This was sometimes done in a subtle manner such as pointing to the fact that the Greek administration had also maintained earlier that there was no discrimination, so that it was not possible to know if it would be true this time.23 In a message to his voters in connection with a religious holiday (Kurban Bayramı), Faikoğlu wrote that Mitsotakis tried to create the impression that he wanted to solve the problems, while in reality he was adding new ones (Yankı 82/21.06. 1991). This statement does not correspond to the realities on the ground, as it is clear that the initiative of Mitsotakis brought results. Dede mentioned soon afterwards that it had been possible to buy property, repair houses, obtain loans, obtain driving licences, etc. (Trakya’nın Sesi 390/13.06.1991). A year later the mufti of Komotini, Meço Cemali, declared that the fruits of Mitsotakis promises were showing (Eleftherotipia 25.07.1992). In contrast to this, the “clique” tried to keep up its former rhetoric. Hatipoğlu claimed that some inexperienced politicians had created great damage to the minority’s struggle for its rights, by saying that the minority had started to obtain its rights after the promises of Mitsotakis on 14 May 1991, and this had been written in the international press (Akın 1062/16.06.1992). He criticised strongly the Turkish newspaper Zaman, when it wrote that there had been some improvement in Thrace (kısımsı rahatlama) and claimed that this was destroying the legal struggle of the minority. Hatipoğlu presented this struggle with his usual clichés:

Thirty years ago the Western Thrace Turkish Muslim Minority became exposed to the danger that the minority and human rights would be taken officially away from it by the authorities. In this situation there were three choices. Either to be silent as a minority and be extinguished in the long run, or leave the land you were born and raised in, or start a legal battle for the return of the usurped rights to be able to live in W. Thrace as Turks and Muslims. And we chose the road of legal battle… (Akın 1068/30.09.1992).

Later the AYK-YK made an announcement where it claimed that there had been no improvements for the minority in spite of the fine promises by Mitsotakis on 14 May 1991, but rather the contrary.24

Many of the central figures in the “clique” were people who tried to cultivate and maintain an atmosphere of distrust, insecurity, and suspicion between the Christians

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22 Trakya’nın Sesi 388/30.05.1991. Dede’s account is in accordance with other available sources.
23 For a good example of this approach, see the article by Mustafa Hafız Mustafa in Akın 1031/23.05.1991. This is followed up in Gerçek 287/31.05.1991 and Akın 1032/07.06.1991.
and the Muslims. They would be quick to exploit any incident which could serve this purpose. Sometimes they were assisted by the negative policy of the Greek authorities, while in other instances they tried to make the most of some incidents. For example, if there was some vandalism inflicted on a Muslim graveyard in Greece, the instinctive reaction by the minority was that it had been done by the Christians, while the majority would consider it a Turkish provocation. Similarly, when there was some vandalism on a Greek graveyard at Yeniköy (in Istanbul) in the autumn of 1994, a western Thracian with a high position in the BTTDD said to me that it could only be a Greek provocation to distract the attention from Thrace, because Muslims would never do such things. There is no demand for exact information by the parties involved and everybody interprets it according to their disposition.

We can take a closer look at such an incident which was of sufficient importance to reach the national press, in order to become more familiar with the mechanisms involved. A “mysterious fire” broke out at 2.30 o’clock in the morning of Saturday 13.10.1993 in a mosque in Aleksandrupoli. The intervention of the fire brigade prevented its total destruction, but it suffered extensive damages. The fire broke out four hours after the departure of the faithful from the mosque. The reaction from Greek authorities was swift, and the government spokesman Vasilis Manginas made the following announcement:

It is not impossible that the fire is due to negligence. If, however, it turns out that it is due to arson provoked by people who render services to unnamed interests, they should know that they will be legally prosecuted and severely punished. The Greek government considers that those who intentionally provoke disturbance of the harmonic cohabitation of Christians and Muslims can only be characterised as enemies of Greece. Independent of the discovery and conviction of possibly guilty suspects, order has already been given by the Greek government to finance the complete restoration of the damages (Eleftherotipia 14.03.1993).

In this case, it is evident that the Greek authorities wanted to eliminate immediately any reason for complaint. Aleksandrupoli is in the border prefecture Evros, and has relatively few Muslims (mainly Gypsies). Its minority population is seldom heard of in the news and has limited contact with the main body of the minority in Komotini and Ksanthi. While such an episode was unwelcome in any case, the question of the location played an important role in an article by Pontiki. The article presents us with a provocation scenario which draws parallels between the fire in the mosque of Aleksandrupoli, and the preamble to the pogrom in Istanbul in September 1955. Allegedly, the Muslims of Evros lived in peaceful co-existence with the Christian population. However, Muslims from Ksanthi and Rodopi had settled in Evros under directions from the Turkish consulate, which gave them incentives. The goal was to gradually corrupt the local Muslim element. Among the Muslims who had settled in
Evros were also extremist elements directed by the [Turkish] secret services with the concrete role of “enlightening” and inciting the locals.25

Most of the reactions were more subdued. Both Athens and Ankara tried to keep a low key response. The foreign minister of Turkey, Hikmet Çetin, declared that “such episodes should not influence negatively Greek-Turkish relations”, but added that “developments such as the recent expulsion from Greece of four [visiting] Turkish muftis, create tension” (Eleftherotipia 15.03.1993). The day after the fire the two independent minority MPs Sadık and Faikoğlu declared that “from what they hear it could maybe be arson. In addition they declared that they were satisfied, as the Greek government would restore the damages soon.” (ibid.).

Some days later, the verdict of the official investigation issued appeared. According to the experts, the fire had in all probability been caused by the wood-stove, which had in fact been suspected from the beginning. The technical services in the Evros prefecture estimated that it would take 5 million drachmas to restore the mosque. The stove was forgotten when the imam, Hacı Hüseyin Yusuf, fell ill and was hurriedly taken to a doctor. Afterwards the imam visited the prefect of Evros and spoke with him for several hours. The imam agreed with the proposals of the prefect and was grateful that the state would restore the mosque. Ahmet Sadık, too, met the prefect; although he had first said that it was arson, he now changed his stand and declared “that he would accept the conclusions of the committee of experts as regards the cause of the fire, and that the state did well in taking on the responsibility of restoring the mosque.”26 Ahmet Faikoğlu soon differentiated himself from Sadık and took a tougher stand on the issue. He made a statement to a TV channel that the fire was arson and the perpetrators aimed at the religious assimilation of the minority. The Greek newspapers regarded this as a provocation (Eleftherotipia 16.03.1993). While Sadık accepted the final inquiry, Faikoğlu insisted that it was arson and wanted to call in experts from abroad (Eleftherotipia 20.03.1993).

For an outsider this may seem like a fairly simple case, which had been adequately resolved by the state. There are, however, many parameters that are not so easy to distinguish at first glance. One can sense that the authorities and the Christians in general were anxious to portray it as an accident. On the other hand, certain people from the minority had an interest in portraying it as arson. Further more, the official

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25 Pontiki 18.03.1993, “Dangerous stories! Ankara involves the Gypsies too in her satanic plans for W. Thrace…”
26 Eleftherotipia 18.03.1993. The technical services of Evros later estimated the repairs to 14 million drachmas. The mosque is of course the property of the Muslim community. The offer to restore it is consequently an act of good will by the Greek authorities. This mosque had been burned down for the first time by the Bulgarians during the Balkan Wars. It had then been restored by Greece in 1913 at a time when it tried to make the Muslim population favourably disposed towards it. I could read the inscription about this on the wall when I visited the mosque in June 1991. The Greek authorities carried out their promise of restoring the mosque.
The Muslim minority of Greek Thrace inquiry would not necessarily convince the minority. It would be much easier to convince them if some of their leaders accepted it first. Consequently, the Greek authorities would like the independent MPs to accept the conclusions of the official investigation. Such an acceptance could secure them goodwill or other benefits from the authorities. However, it was also risky for minority MPs to say that it was not arson, because this could make their opponents accuse them of having “sold out” to the authorities. In many ways the MPs were in a kind of “bargaining” position, and could accept or reject the conclusion of the inquiry on behalf of the minority as a whole. It was a question of how much importance the authorities placed on the consent of the independent MPs, and what they could offer them in return. There was also the question of how much leverage the independent MPs had to comply with the wish of the authorities without losing credibility. This was particularly prominent in this case where the minority representatives had opposing opinions.

It should be noted that there was nothing in official Turkish comments which pointed to a desire to portray the incident as arson. This means that the independent MPs probably did not feel compelled to take a tough stand because of Turkey. However, there is always a possibility that some other Turkish connections would prefer them to take a tough stand. Personally, I believe that the most important factor at this stage was the internal minority rivalry. This becomes clearer when we look at how the events were commented on the local level. A few days after Sadık had accepted in front of the prefect that the fire started by accident, he returned to his first opinion and made statements denouncing the incident as arson (Dikeoma 22/March 1993). As far as I know, it did not pass on to the national press that Sadık later changed his opinion again. It is very possible that Sadık would try to satisfy the Greek authorities one day, and then change completely position the next day if he felt the need to excite people with some nationalist rhetoric. Besides his personal disposition, he must also have felt the pressure from the opposition within the minority. Faikoğlu, on the other hand, by opposing the official inquiry took an “exemplary” stand of defiance towards Greek authorities within the framework of the national stereotypes. Faikoğlu’s position was well expressed by his comrade-in-arms Hasan Hatipoğlu in an article about the fire which was a tour de force in petty politics and national stereotypes. He stated immediately that the newspaper held the opinion that it was arson. He pointed further to the unlimited tolerance of the Ottoman Empire, and contrasted it with the bad behaviour of the Balkan nations where “The Muslims Turks [he means the Bosnian Muslims] are murdered in front of the eyes of the civilised world.” He interpreted the fire as part of the plan of extinguishing the Western Thrace Muslim Turkish minority. The AYK had assembled immediately and went to the scene of the event to provide moral support to the minority. He doubted the official explanation about the wood stove, and came with several examples from the past of mosques which had been damaged or destroyed.
The same issue included an announcement where the AYK-YK expressed its opinion on the matter.\(^{27}\)

Sadık’s newspaper from the same date covered the fire in much the same way as Akitn. The main difference was that it featured Sadık and the DEB party and not the AYK-YK (Balkan 54/16.03.1993). In the next issue it became clear that Sadık had been under fire because he accepted the conclusions of the investigation and needed to restate his position. The article “Who said that ‘Dr. Sadık accepts that the fire started from the stove?’”, countered the attack by asking how it was possible to trust what was said about “our leader” in the Greek press? It referred further to a letter from Sadık dated 15.03.1993, where he said it was arson. It was claimed that the “other side” [i.e. the Christians] tried to make the press write that according to Sadık it was not arson in order to serve their own interests. Now some circles within the minority tried to slander Sadık for this reason. It was followed up by another statement by Sadık which claimed that there can be no fire from a stove that is not burning (Balkan 55/23.03.1993). Sadık had now taken a diametrically opposite position from the one expressed to the Greek press a few days earlier. Given the climate of suspicion and the fact that some people had the minority gossip and newspapers as their sole source of information, the leverage for manipulation was considerable.

As a curiosity, I could mention that the various people who became concerned about the burning of this “important historical mosque” could not agree on such a simple thing as the name of it. One explanation is that people in Komotini are not so well informed about Aleksandrupoli which is some 60 kilometres away. Another explanation is that the Muslim Gypsies that now live in the area have not been there for more than a couple of decades. There is also the general lack of knowledge and accuracy. Indeed, this was the concern of Hâki. He became distressed when first the Turkish Television channel interSTAR reported that the Selâhadîn (name of person) mosque had burnt. The correct name should be Selâtîn mosque (the mosque of the sultans, i.e. Arabic plural of the word sultan, with Turkish orthography). In larger cities it was usual to call the mosque the Sultan’s mosque just as many mosques in Istanbul had their name after sultans. Other minority papers used names like Selahaddin, Selahattin, Selahaddin, Salatin (İleri 710/26.03.1993). A more sober, and religiously devote, acquaintance of mine also mentioned that Hatipoğlu did not say that someone from the minority (within the same faction as Hatipoğlu) had put his signature on a paper that gave the authorities the right to demolish the Tabakhane mosque for city planning purposes.

Abdülhalim Dede tried to set the record straight and summed up the events. According to an eye-witness there had been noise in front of the mosque’s door.

\(^{27}\) Akitn 1083/16.03.1993. See Appendix 5, text 50, for a complete translation of the article.
Sounds of broken glass were heard, and afterwards the mosque was in flames. The official inquiry said it was the wood stove. He immediately stated that he was not in a position to know which version was correct and unlike the others he left this question open. This does not mean that he has not been critical of earlier attacks on mosques.\(^{28}\) However, his main concern was the fear of provocation, which could turn the area into a Bosnia or Lebanon. It should be mentioned that Dede had just visited Bosnia and was appalled by the situation. He criticised further those among the Christian majority who tried to portray the minority as the number one enemy, instead of working for reconciliation and brotherhood. He criticised the Metropolitan of Komotini for his role and accused the police of not doing its job. Dede did not spare “the provocateurs named AYK-YK” (Trakya’nın Sesi 448/21.03.1993). Their only concern was to put in an appearance (boy gösterisi). He asked people to behave more responsibly, because the minority would have to pay if the situation came out of hand, and not those who put in an appearance.\(^{29}\) Another category of people who behaved irresponsibly were those who had left Thrace to become citizens of another country. When they visited Thrace they wanted to appear as “heroes” by behaving provocatively. Of course, they risked nothing by their display of manly toughness, but left the permanent residents to deal with the tension they created. As for the events preceding the official Greek reaction, Dede made it clear that the mufti of Komotini, Meço Cemali, had played a key role. When he heard the news he immediately called Mitsotakis, who promised that the mosque would be restored by the state and the work had already begun. This led up to the delicate question: “Where is the money collected for the mosque in Aleksandrupoli in the campaign initiated by the AYK-YK? In whose pocket? And who will spend it where?” (ibid.).

Abdülhalim Dede credited Mitsotakis and Cemali for solving the problem. It is no secret that he was close to both of them, but I do not find his account excessively partisan. On the other hand, the fact that the Greek state reacted swiftly and constructively was downplayed or overlooked in the rival newspapers Balkan and Akın. In spite of their great outcries, these papers seemed primarily occupied with capitalising politically on the event rather than nurturing any concern for what happened to the mosque. If we look at the event from this point of view their reaction was not conditioned by what they felt themselves about the event, but by whom they attempted to influence or manipulate with their writings. In this particular case it was a fight for influence within the minority and for acceptance by various centres in Turkey.

\(^{28}\) See, for example, the long article in Trakya’nın Sesi 286/02.06.1988.

\(^{29}\) To exemplify the kind of irresponsible behaviour that could be observed by some people, Dede pointed to an incident one month earlier. A BBC correspondent had been in Thrace and spoken among others to one of the independent MP’s (Sadık in all probability) asking the following question: “What will be the situation of the Western Thrace Minority if war breaks out in the Balkans?” He had answered: “God willing it will break out. Because in such a situation our minority will profit !!!!!!! (?) from it” (ibid.).
In order to understand the “clique’s” reactions, it is also necessary to look at some other factors which conditioned its attitude. This was partly due to traditional minority structures, and partly due to structures established because of the discriminations. The vast majority of the Muslims worked as farmers or had small shops. The “public sector” was altogether insignificant and weak. Besides politics, this sector was mainly made up of teachers and religious personnel. The minority’s own financial strength derived from the traditional pious foundations (vakıf). The resources of the vakıfs were of course insufficient to fulfil the functions taken care of by a modern state. Besides, their operation was marred by the interference of the state and the influence of Greek-Turkish relations.

We have seen above that Turkey would support financially the teachers educated in Turkey, while Greece funded the graduates of EPATH. A similar regime was valid for the religious personnel. Some of the “salaries” were official, while in other cases they were distributed from secret funds according to fluid criteria. This distribution was influenced by the lack of institutionalisation and the Greek-Turkish rivalry for influence. As a result, the minority members who benefited from these “unofficial” sources both lacked the legal protection of people with normal jobs, and were in keen competition for the available funds. Häki mentioned that traditionally there had been three categories in the minority: Some obtained benefits from the fatherland (Greece), others exploited the motherland (Turkey), while others “ate” from both the doors. The last ones were considered to be the most intelligent. Around 1980 a new category was added which “ate from the Arab door” (İleri 317/04.11.1983). This was funds from the Saudi organisation Rabita to some religious personnel.\textsuperscript{30}

It is of course very difficult to know in depth the various intrigues and what happens behind the scenes, but I have, for example, heard of an imam who had been able to receive money regularly and simultaneously from the Greek authorities, the mufti office, and the Turkish consulate. Apparently, all three sources thought that the imam was “their man”. It is important to acknowledge that there were “opportunities” for those who were able to accommodate to the situation. Within this framework, to be an “informer” can be regarded as a job which some people would guard as jealously as any industrial worker would guard his. There were people within the minority who had an interest in the preservation of the system because it served them politically, socially, or economically.\textsuperscript{31} In the case of the “clique” it is clear that its main concern

\textsuperscript{30} Häki mentioned an episode when the ambassador of Saudi Arabia visited Komotini. There was a meeting where the mufti and people close to the mufti office, who were educated in Arab countries, criticised Cemali and Şiniçoğlu. This had to do with the fact that Cemali and Şiniçoğlu had a big monthly salary for promoting Islam. Others who had studied in Arab countries were jealous, and would like to have some Arab money too (İleri 321/02.12.1983).

\textsuperscript{31} Häki tried to put the focus on this phenomenon in a long article series called “The oppressive regime suited the business of some of us”. This series in 16 parts appeared in İleri 606/21.09.1990–623/08.02.1991. This article focus mainly on the role of the teachers, the religious personnel, and the
was to be the only recognised voice of the minority. The leading members needed the problems to keep their position, and although on the surface they argued against the discrimination, they were in reality opposed to any solution which would alter the balance of power. As a result, the initiatives of the independent MPs became a civil rights struggle only in name.

There were some extraordinary business opportunities related to the minority regime. Among the best known are transfer of money and real estate transactions. Since there were restrictions on foreign currency, minority members who wanted to invest in Turkey or who settled there faced certain obstacles. There were various solutions to this problem. One of them involved the impeccable co-operation between members of the Muslim minority in Thrace and the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul. Since there were also people in Istanbul who wanted to transfer money to Greece, networks developed which secured the mutual transfer of money. This meant that no money passed the border, and a Muslim who gave the network a sum in Greek currency in Thrace could cross the border and pick up the corresponding sum in Turkish currency. A Muslim minority friend of mine mentioned that when he transferred a sum earlier he obtained a good price because there was more money flowing in the opposite direction. When I mentioned the network to a Greek friend with roots from Istanbul, he said that at the time there was more money flowing to Turkey. It is impossible for an outsider to know the extent of this business. Those involved would of course have no interest in publicity around these transactions, but it is known that some people were able to have a considerable income from them.

Some Muslims would also benefit from the infamous practice—which began during the junta period—of giving generous “national purpose” loans to Christians who bought Muslim property. The Bank of Agriculture gave long-term credit—no instalments for the first 5 years and after that it was paid back over 20 years with 5% interest at a time with high inflation. Often the person who bought a field would not cultivate it, because he was not a farmer but a public servant, etc. He would buy it as an object for speculation and rent it back to the Muslim he had purchased it from. The Muslim would invest the money from the sale in Turkey. This was essentially an anti-minority measure, but the transactions would necessarily involve minority members.

Hâki wrote a story which illustrates the possibilities this gave to crafty minority members. In this example a Muslim took contact with some of his former neighbours who had settled in Turkey, and offered to sell their real estate remaining in Greece for a moderate commission. The trick was that he would sell the property to a Christian for a higher price than he declared to his neighbour, while the Christian would pay less

politicians within the system. For an article which looks more specifically on the problems and dilemmas Hâki has encountered as journalist, see İleri 670/10.04.1992, “Entering our 18th year of publication” (Appendix 5, text 51).
than he declared to the bank that provided him with a loan on highly favourable terms. Since Muslims and Christians lived in “separate worlds” it would be very difficult to uncover the swindle.\textsuperscript{32} Those who profited from this kind of shady deals would react against any attempt to change this practice. Hâki mentioned an episode which took place when the banks wanted the Christians to start paying back the instalments on the cheap government loans for buying minority land. This led to loud protests from those who had benefited from the loans.\textsuperscript{33} In other words, on one level there was co-operation between the Christian and Muslim elements, which had an interest in the preservation of the discriminatory regime.

Abdülhalim Dede warned immediately after the visit of Mitsotakis about the groups which were known as \textit{mionotikodíeti}, \textit{turkodíeti}, or \textit{musulmanodíeti}. These compound words are made up of the words \textit{minority}, \textit{Turk}, and \textit{Muslim} together with the word (people on) \textit{diet}, and refer to the mafia-type groups which were “fed” by the minority regime. These groups existed among both the Christians and Muslims. They would try to prevent the implementation of equal rights and were ready for provocation any time.\textsuperscript{34} Someone like Onsunoğlu, who was committed to democratic solutions and wanted the minority regime to end, pointed to some of the same problems when he was asked if the announcements of the prime minister about the minority were carried out in practice:

One observes a slacking, sometimes small, other times greater and more important, of the administrative measures that were carried out to the detriment of the minority. What is important is that there is a central decision. A political will. If this continue, it is a question of time before it will pass on to the lower levels of the administration. 10–15 years ago, simplifying things, we said that the solution of the minority problems depends on only a telephone call from the Prime Minister. Let us not be naïve. The abolishment of the discrimination touches an establishment which has matured during the last 30 years within the administration as well as outside of it. It touches organised interests which depend on the continuation of a policy of discrimination. This establishment provokes and will continue to provoke resistance. But the important thing is that there is political will. But this is not enough in itself. Further measures must be taken. It is imperative to abolish the various autonomous services in Thrace which administrate the minority affairs. You cannot, on the one hand, declare equality before the law and on the other conserve services and mechanisms which were founded exactly to apply the opposite policy which is now abolished. The existence of these services provokes cruelly the meaning of equality before the law. And finally let it [the government] start a dialogue with the minority.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{32} \textit{İleri} 726/03.09.1993, “Look, this is how I became rich!” The story is fictional, but based on real events. For a translation see Appendix 5, text 52. Such kinds of relations are also mentioned superficially in \textit{Eleftherotipia} 02.02.1990: “It will take time for Christians and Muslims to look each other in the eye…” , by Grigoris Rubanis.

\textsuperscript{33} \textit{İleri} 262/20.08.1982. These loans have been commented on several times in the minority press. See \textit{İleri} 512/01.04.1988; 525/09.09.1988; \textit{Trakya’nın Sesi} 524/05.10.1995. The KKE committee of Eastern Macedonia-Thrace condemned this practice in its memorandum from December 1988 (Appendix 5, text 10). This was later commented in the Turkish newspaper \textit{Cumhuriyet} 19.01.1989, “Western Thrace, Oppression of the Turks admitted for the first time”. Criticism against this practice by the local Greek press is also referred to in (Oran 1991: 239).

\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Trakya’nın Sesi} 387/23.05.1991. The term \textit{turkodíeti} is well known in Thrace, and I have heard it used several times. It is also mentioned in the special study on Thrace, see (Notaras 1995: 47, n. 23).

\textsuperscript{35} Hand-written manuscript dated 12.11.1991, consisting of the written answers by Onsunoğlu to an interview which was later published by the periodical \textit{ENA}.
A Greek journalist with a hawkish attitude to the minority also condemned the dubious practices which had been established because of the discriminations. However, his main concern seems to be that the corruption created loopholes which eroded the “national” policy towards the minority. Another point is that the uneven distribution of corruption opportunities created jealousy among Christians:

Until 1991, the Greek authorities applied various restrictions, in an attempt to keep the situation more or less under control. It was a kind of “aspirin cure”, which of course did not counter the problems at their root. In addition, it had controversial side effects. The bribing of public servants—as well as various people with political influence—to enable business transactions has assumed vast dimensions, with the result that the national sensitivity on this issue degenerated to becoming a source of enrichment for many shrewd persons. The corruption has poisoned the atmosphere. The result is the prevalence of a general distrust, which, on the one hand, prevents the execution of an effective policy by those who try as best they can to keep hold of the situation on the “Thracian mine-field” and, on the other, cater for mutual accusations among the Christians for games in favour of Turkey.

The various forces which had benefited from the old regime would try to undermine the new policy in various ways. The main tool was to play on nationalist feelings, fear, and ignorance. The Metropolitan of Komotini, Damaskinos, lost no time in spelling out the dangers. He led the committee Agónas, which represented the reactionary forces in the Christian population. In letters to major newspapers he would paint a gloomy picture of the Christians’ situation, and ask for measures against the Muslims. This kind of outcries, consisting of exaggeration and distortion of the situation—generally known as kindinoloyía (danger mongering)—continued to appear with great regularity in the following years. Sometimes they were dismissed as the exaggerations of marginal groups, while other times they found receptive ears in the highest quarters. When the development of Thrace was discussed in Parliament on 22 January 1993, Anastasios Peponis (PASOK) claimed that “non Greek factors, directed from a neighbouring country, made attempts for the direct or indirect acquisition of Greek businesses in Thrace” (Eleftherotipia 23.01.1993). This kind of rumours circulated widely at the time. There were also claims that the Muslims purchased houses selectively to concentrate the minority population in certain areas as well as land from Christians who were leaving the area. There is a difficulty with official statistics from this period, but my impression is that most of the purchases were simply previous unofficial transactions between minority members which became registered after the discriminatory measures had been lifted.

36 Kathymerini 21.02.1993, “They abandon Thrace to ‘Turkification’… Last cry for help, from the Christian population, that worries because of the criminal carelessness of the official state”, by Stavros Liyeros.
37 See his letters to Makedonia 09.08.1991 and Kathymerini 06.11.1991.
38 For a typical example, see Eleftherotipia 10.02.1993, “Turkish economic invasion of Thrace”, by Mih. Kurmusis.
39 For a good example, see Logos 29.01.1995, “Save Thrace, orgies of purchases by Muslims with the blessings of Mitsotakis.”
There were persistent rumours that the Muslims “bought up Thrace” with money provided by the Turkish consulate in Komotini. A minority politician stressed that in reality there were few purchases, in most cases, educated people who bought themselves a house, or farmers who bought small plots of land. Abdülhalim Dede made the following comments in his newspaper:

Do you know where this new but widespread provocation against the minority stems from? From the time of the junta until today generous “national purpose” loans were distributed to influential Christians so that they could buy Muslim land. This was done to facilitate the elimination of the minority.

At that time the Greek State gave us [the Christians] money to buy Muslim property, why would not Turkey do the same for the Muslims so that they buy Christian property? Look, the provocation originates from this perfect logic.

Of course, everybody knows that this is not the case, that the Turkish leaders have not become that stupid yet. However, this is unimportant.

The important thing is that by screaming that Turkey is giving money to the Muslims, which in reality does not happen, they can say to the Greek Ministry of Finance “you too should give us money."

This is the essence of the provocation. This is where it stems from. At the moment no one can stand up and say, “Turkey is not doing this, it cannot do so.”

Because the reaction is ready: What do you mean, are you defending Turkey?

These are the traps of a chauvinist logic. The socio-political life of Greece is full of such traps. Those who have received loans will try to use these traps to secure benefits for themselves. For this reason, as long as they are not given loans, they will attempt to use this provocation against the minority (Trakya’nın Sesi. 513/12.07.1995).

A reportage by a marginal left-wing Greek newspaper provides us with an insight into the dubious patterns of exploitation which were hard to eradicate:

The conflicts displayed, point out another picture of the reality. Those who think that life and relations between Christians and Muslims unfold quietly and naturally, without real problems, are refuted now. The testimonies are shattering. In the bottom of the souls of the Muslims, the oppression, fear, discord, and exploitation are ruling in all their grandeur. With apparent indignation Abdülhalim Dede bursts out: “The madness, the national and religious fanaticism clog the brain. Why? Because there are rackets. In the last 25 years, certain circuits [kiklómata] had grown used to putting 1–1.5 million in their pocket each month from the rackets [kombínes] which take place for all the affairs of a Muslim. To get a driving license, I think he gave 100,000 drachmas. At the moment a Muslim pays for the special permit needed to buy real estate 50,000–100,000”. […] “He pays the middlemen. Why? Because both in the prefecture and in any other service which is responsible for the affairs here, there are special files for the applications of the Muslims and special files for the applications of the Christians. The applications of the Christians are signed on the same day. The applications of the Muslims pass through an investigation, and this investigation may end after two days or it may end after six months. And when the Muslim sees that his case is stuck, he starts to look for middlemen. Then some middleman arrives and says: I will fix the job, give me hundred thousand.”

These middlemen exist all over Western Thrace, Abdülhalim reveals. And they belong to all the political parties. And they even block the orders of the prime minister. […] Abdülhalim Dede is categorical when he is asked about the middlemen: “You ask about certain things which no one can answer you. Neither can I. Because the moment I say it to you it will become an open accusation. And for it to be an open accusation, I must have evidence. I have evidence, but I do not have witnesses. No witness will come to support me. Do you understand, do you understand me?” and he concludes: “Because of fear. Certainly because of fear. But that is how the whole system works...”.

Indeed, the Muslims hesitate to speak about the problems they are confronted with. They are afraid of the independent MPs, the consulate, Turkey, but even the Greek state.41

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40 Eleftherotipia 08.12.1996, Interview of Mustafa Mustafa (MP of Sinaspismos), by Yeoryia Dama.
It goes without saying that it is very difficult to estimate the extent of these practices. There was an incident in 1997 when a Muslim baker, who had worked for years in Athens, decided to return to his village (Miki) and open a bakery. An employee in the urban planning office tried to extort him for 1.5 million drachmas to make the final approval of the building. The Muslim township president of the village had also been involved in setting up the transaction. However, the baker notified the authorities, and the two persons involved in the extortion were convicted. The prefect of Ksanthi announced that people who confronted similar problems should notify the authorities. On the other hand, the nationalist circles tried to cover up the event with the usual propaganda.\footnote{42} In this case the Greek state was able to assert its authority and secure protection to the minority member. In addition, the conviction sent a message to those who exploited the minority.

Nevertheless, it has proved difficult to eradicate many of the practices which became established over several decades. When the Minister of Defence, Yerasimos Arsenis, visited Thrace 17–18 May 1995, he went to the controlled zone in the mountains above Ksanthi and announced that the restrictions in force for this area would be lifted. One of the interesting side effects of the visit was that it displayed the opposition between the state and anti-minority “para-state” networks which tried to oppose the official politics, sabotaging the de-ghettoisation and integration of the minority. For the first time, these networks became condemned officially. The “para-state” networks responded in turn by intensifying the nationalist and anti-minority propaganda:

The most important result of the recent visit by the Minister of Defence Yerasimos Arsenis was the exposure of the opposition between the state and the para-state in Thrace. For the first time the existence and activity of an idiosyncratic para-state—anti-minority and racist—was denounced officially. It happened exactly with the following wording: That it has spread its tentacles everywhere on all the levels of government mechanisms and society in Thrace and sabotages the de-ghettoisation of the Minority, it opposes furiously the integration of it \[the minority\] in the Greek reality and exerts intense anti-Turkish pressure [\textit{turkofayıkés piésis}].

The para-state in Thrace is a genuine child of the State. Its ever greater reinforcement transformed it gradually into an independent and uncontrolled centre of para-authority. To the degree that it can now contend with its parents.

During Arsenis’ visit it appears that things came to a head and the confrontation must have been fierce with the result that it became public, and exposed a chronic wound in the social body of Thrace, which for long has developed into gangrene.

Many must have been surprised. The para-state would not leave the challenge unanswered. It started the counterattack in the fashion it knows: Anti-minority statements, anti-turkism, danger philology, nationalist demagogy, racist confrontation.\footnote{43}

The restricted military zones were established on Greece’s northern border during the Metaksas regime by the law 376/1936. The controlled zone by the Yugoslav border was abolished around 1990. The zone which covered the mountainous area of Thrace,
populated exclusively by Muslims (mostly Pomaks), proved to be a more difficult case. Outsiders needed a special permit to enter this area, and the check point for the entrance to the furthermost part of it was closed with a bar from midnight to 5 am. Turkish nationalist circles have portrayed this zone as the largest open air prison in the world.\textsuperscript{44} Besides the obvious propaganda purpose, this description is misleading because the main problem was to get into the area and not out. The restrictions must to some degree have been related to attempts to limit Turkish influence and propaganda among the Slav-speaking Pomaks. The greatest problem of this area is the general isolation and economic underdevelopment. However, the additional restrictions facilitated the authoritarian behaviour of the Greek authorities towards these people.

On 16 November 1995, Arsenis went to the check-point 21 kilometres north of Ksanthi and announced the abolishment of the controlled zone under much publicity.\textsuperscript{45} The Turkish foreign ministry responded by calling the Greek move “insufficient”, while Athens denounced this as Turkish distortions within the framework of foreign politics.\textsuperscript{46} My impression is that Turkey disliked the fact that it had lost one of its stock arguments against Greece, while on the other hand there were forces in Thrace which tried to undermine the decision.

A few weeks after Arsenis’ visit Dede mentioned that the “schizophrenic” status of the minority continued. One the one hand the old measures had been officially abolished, while on the other the forces involved in the surveillance of the area remained intact (\textit{Trakya’nın Sesi} 533/12.12.1995). The authorities continued to have an ambiguous behaviour in this matter. For example, in September 1996 I asked a policeman in Ksanthi if it was permitted to go to Ehinos, because I wanted to listen to the minority candidate Birol Akifoğlu who was going to hold an election speech there. He told me that there were no restrictions, but after I had listened to the speech a policeman in Ehinos told me that I had to leave because I was not allowed to be there. Gradually it became clear that the administrative circulars and provisions on the restricted zone in Thrace remained in force, contrary to government declarations. There was no longer a visible check-point, but only Greek citizens had the right to enter freely.\textsuperscript{47}

In the minority press it was Abdüllhalim Dede and İbrahim Onsunoğlu who took the lead in criticising the role of various centres which they referred to as the “para-state”. These anti-minority centres had a vested interest in keeping up the old regime. Some

\textsuperscript{44} For a typical example, see (Anonymous 1983a: 21). See also \textit{Balkan} 69/06.07.1993. See also the article on the Turkish Foreign Ministry web page: http://www.mfa.gov.tr/GRUPF/I62.htm.

\textsuperscript{45} \textit{Trakya’nın Sesi} 531/28.11.1995 refers to Arsenis’ speech on this occasion. In fact, there had originally been three check points. The first (a few kilometres north of Ksanthi) was abolished in 1979, while the second (9 kilometres from Ksanthi) was abolished in 1993 (\textit{Eleftherotipia} 17.11.1995).


\textsuperscript{47} See the press release of the Greek Helsinki Monitor 10.12.1997. For an example of the police’s behaviour towards visitors, see \textit{İleri} 881/30.05.1997.
could be engaged because of ultra-right or nationalist leanings, but there were also serious economic benefits at stake. The Greek Foreign Ministry disposed of secret or “discretionary” funds which were outside regular control. It seems that these funds gradually got outside almost any control and Prime Minister Mitsotakis found the need to make an investigation about the matter. This revealed among other things:

1. In the period Andonis Samaras was foreign minister the secret funds allocation showed a great increase and reached 8 billion drachmas.
2. A significant part of the money is earmarked for newspapers and means of communication which serve “national causes”. Among the newspapers supported by the Foreign Ministry is also “Stohos” which is in the vanguard of racist nazi ideology.
3. The newspapers, radio, and television stations in Thrace are among those who receive the greatest share of the discretionary funds.
4. The names of the journalists who receive money in the form of salary or payment are not revealed.

(As the minority question is accepted to be a national cause, the following is confirmed to us: For every broadcast and article against the minority a specific amount of money from the discretionary funds is received.

The same can be said about actions presented as being favourable to the Minority, which perform the service of provocation and which in reality are directed openly against the Minority.

Lately the greatest service to the national cause was to leave the Minority without representation in parliament. [10.10.1993] We leave to the Minority Turks’ power of imagination to find out how many millions were allocated from the discretionary funds for this service and whom these millions were distributed to.)

This can at the first glance look like an instance of minority paranoia, but the abuse of the secret funds had reached such proportions that it aroused the interest of the Athenian press:

However, the most important point concerns the secret funds issue. It is a question of enormous sums. According to the author, in 1991 and 1992 A. Samaras had about 1.5 billion drachmas to his disposal while the funds for information exceeded 900 million. In the relevant chapter with the title “Secret passages”, Th. Skilakakis quotes the correspondence of the Prime Minister with the Foreign Minister (20/8/1992 to 14/9/1992) which shows:

a) That Messrs. Kalamidas and Veros—who kept written records—refused to give the data about the management of the funds to the vice Foreign minister of the time Mr. Tzunis, who had the personal authorisation from the prime minister to investigate the matter.
b) That Mr. Samaras himself refused, in spite of the fact that he was pressured by the prime minister himself, to give account about the management of the funds in front of trustworthy and authorised personnel of the ministry.
c) That he refused to reveal in writing to the Prime Minister himself, about the funds he had disposed calling upon reasons of “national safety”.
d) That he finally avoided to reveal even orally to the Prime Minister the receivers of these enormous sums.

Besides the “ready money” from various dubious funds, the whole economic structure in Thrace had been influenced by the policy after 1965 to isolate the minority from the economic, political, and social life. When Athens started to slacken the discrimination, those who saw their interests threatened came into open conflict with

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48 Trakya’nm Sesi 510/14.06.1995. This issue has also a translation of an article by Theodoros Tsikras in the newspaper Logos 28.05.1995. This article mentions that the para-state sabotaged the efforts by the government, because of economic interests.
the central decisions (Trakya’nın Sesi 512/28.06.1995). In other cases the local anti-minority establishment was able to exploit “soul mates” in central positions. Allegedly, there had been attempts to sabotage new contacts between the two population elements within the framework of the local administration. After the former vice Foreign Minister Viryinia Tsuderu visited Thrace, she would state that: “The Christian Greeks of Thrace were the targets of Turkish terror, they were exposed to oppression, and this was done by means of some Muslim township presidents” (Trakya’nın Sesi 515/26.07.1995). This is exactly the kind of language used by those who resisted the change of the old regime.

Dede wrote an extensive critique of the activities of these forces in an article titled “Casablanca”. As a result he was sued by one of the groups that had been the target of his criticism. Onsunoğlu appeared as witness for Dede in the trial and explained what was meant with this phrase. In his testimony he said that para-state mechanisms could be found in every state. The question was not if they existed or not, but how strong they were and to which degree they were tolerated by the state. Democratisation would restrain the power and the activities of the para-state mechanisms. In the case of the minority regime in Thrace there was a great question about democracy and transparency. There was a kind of void, and this void was filled by the para-state. Dede would later mention that prominent Greeks had at various times complained about the “para-state” mechanisms in Thrace: The Dean of the Thrace University Yiannis Panusis in 1993, the Defence Minister Yerasimos Arsenis in 1995, and the prefect of Rodopi Stelios Stavropulos in 1997 (Trakya’nın Sesi 578/19.02.1997). Dede accused the para-state circles for trying to silence those who pointed out that there were many problems left to solve:

It seems that some circles try to “prove” that in Thrace everything is fine with the much celebrated “equal rights” and those who spoil this by revealing the para-state mechanisms must be stamped out and “molested” morally and materially so that they do not raise their head again.

Another target of the para-state circles were those who worked for dialogue and better understanding between the population elements and between Greece and Turkey. The 3. annual Greek-Turkish meeting organised by “Journalists of the Aegean

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50 Trakya’nın Sesi 538/30.01.1996. For another description of some of the same events, see Eleftherotipia 13.01.1996 “An Association in Komotini, State… within the state”, by Simeon Soltaridis.
51 Trakya’nın Sesi 592/17.07.1997. The same issue presents more complaints about these forces. For other critical articles about this phenomenon by the same newspaper, see 547/11.04.1996 and 594/14.08.1997.
52 ibid. Cultural note: The phrase “raise the head” is common in both Greek (sikóno kefáli) and Turkish (baş kaldirmak), and has a specific connotation. It signifies a lack of respect for the established order or power relationship. It belongs ultimately in an authoritarian framework, and signifies someone who refuses to accept discipline or control from parents etc., or someone who revolts against the authorities.
and Thrace” was supposed to take place in Komotini in February 1999. An exasperated journalist explained why it had to be postponed until March:

Because the local nationalist-ecclesiastical lobby, with its well-known connections, threatened all and everybody to accomplish the cancellation of it. And because our incredible state was not able to organise the protection of the meeting. At the same time, in Aleksandroupoli “unknown persons” burned the car of the Thracian journalist Yiannis Laskarakis, who is a supporter of dialogue. And a few days ago other “unknown persons” (they call them “hawks”) tried to destroy the Turkish consulate in Komotini with a bomb. If there is humiliation somewhere, in Thrace it ascertains itself also against democracy and the laws.

Thrace is not a barren island like Imia. Who governs there?53

The journalist in question, who is a member of PASOK, spoke about the problem during a party convention under the title: “The para-state of nationalism is a threat to Thrace”.54

The authoritarian attitudes of those involved in the minority regime makes it only possible to describe the events in black and white. That is why Onsunoğlu was asked in court if the para-state existed or not. While all democracies have their weak spots and areas where there is room for improvement, in Thrace the situation had to be described as perfect and those who challenged this image silenced. As a result, it was very difficult to have a normal democratic dialogue about the problems which exist in the area. Parts of the Greek press have served the role of upholding this image of a “perfect world”. A series in Ileri presents us with many examples of this. It mentions a reportage by Yiannis Maris in Apoyevmatini after he visited the area at the end of 1975. The reportage was full of mistakes and distortions, as if some people whispered the same tune in his ear: “The minority in Western Thrace is very happy. Only a small group of chauvinists within the minority wants to create events to serve others…” (Ileri 336/23.03.1984). At various times these kinds of statements were orchestrated. Particularly after the appearance of news in the international press that some of the minority’s rights had been violated. There could sometimes be statements such as: “We the Greek Muslims inform about our gratitude to the Greek government…” (Ileri 341/27.04.1984), which resembled the practice during the first years of the junta.

Sometimes there were signature campaigns to display that no problems existed (ibid.). Hatipoğlu reacted to statements by the former Dean of the University of Thrace, Stavros Savvidis, who claimed that the minority was “happy” (Akin 944/23.04.1988). Similarly, Hâki reacted when Theodoros Pangalos—the leading PASOK cadre and later Foreign Minister—also made a statement that the minority was “happy” (Ileri 583/09.02.1990). Or as the metropolitan Damaskinos expressed it in an interview: “If the Muslims were not happy here they would have left…” (Akin 996/22.06.1990). In

53 To Vima 14.02.1999, “The humiliation of democracy”, by Rihardos Someritis. Some explanatory notes: The journalist uses the word “humiliation” in allusion to the comments in the Greek press after the dispute with Turkey about the islet Imia in early 1996. The “Hawks of Thrace” is a well known nationalist organisation in Thrace. “Who governs there” recalls the word of Karamanlis after the murder of Lambrakis in 1963, and is a usual way of alluding to “para-state” mechanisms.

54 Trakya’ın Sesi 613/28.03.1999. The article is taken from Avyi, but no date is given.
other words, the options are either to be happy or to leave, with no legitimate place in-between to express dissatisfaction politically. The word “happy” does not appear by coincidence. It is in fact the same word which is used to describe the situation of domestic minorities in both the Greek and Turkish discourse (eftihisméni and mutlu respectively), and displays the same kind of attitude. A characteristic example of an orchestrated reply by minority members who displayed their “happiness” to the outside world, appeared when the human rights report of the US State Department had some critical remarks about Greece’s treatment of minorities:

The two minority politicians Yaşar Halil and Abdüllah Abdüllah give a hard slap to Sadık, Faikoğlu and the agents of the [Turkish] Consulate in Komotini.

The first, with his telegram to the US ambassador Mr. Sotirhos [in Athens], stresses that the minority was very happy and pleased about the information that the US government will proceed to refute the untrue data in the section of the State Department report to the Congress, which concerns the Muslim minority of Greek Thrace. We respect—it is stressed—the sensitivity of the US government towards human rights issues, but we believe that the writers based it on erroneous data which did not reflect the reality and in addition created problems. The Lausanne Treaty and the Greek legal order provide the possibilities for the solution of all our problems, and we assure the government of USA that we are the happiest minority in the Balkan peninsula in opposition to the minorities living in Turkey, whose situation is described eloquently by the aforementioned report.55

The minority politicians in question were known as poor unemployed workers from the Gypsy quarter, who consequently could be given incentives to play this role. In an interview Sadık Ahmet complained about this farce, in connection to that they had also been put on television as representatives of the minority (Avyi 10.03.1991). It is the same kind of circles which have called on the Ksanthi mufti Mehmet Emin Şínikoğlu to fulfil this role, whether it is a question of participating in ceremonies or signing declarations. The same role was previously performed by Mehmet Emin Aga, until he “changed camp” after 1974. This profoundly authoritarian behaviour towards the minority is a serious obstacle to any normal political dialogue about its problems. However, the circles which champion this approach are helped by the sensitivity of the issue and the perfectly normal reaction of trying to save face when confronted with awkward situations. It is much more convenient to maintain that everything is all right, than to face up to the problems. In addition, since the critique in most cases originates from Turkey, it triggers certain reflexes related to the fate of its Greek Orthodox minority, the Cyprus invasion, etc. The fact that Turkey’s interest is perceived to be insincere and part of its foreign politics strategy, hardens the Greek attitude. On the other hand, the exaggerated focus on Turkey’s role has obscured the many negative effects of the minority regime on Greece’s political and social life.

The networks involved in the minority regime thrive on the insecurity of people and try to cloud the issues by various well tried devices. There is a tendency to cultivate every news or rumour which can be portrayed as a danger for the area. One of the best

known examples from the last years was a certain NATO scenario which anticipated the “partial autonomy” of Thrace. Abdülhalim Dede connected the appearance of this scenario to the forces which resisted the abolishment of the controlled zone (Trakya’nın Sesi 532/05.12.1995). In other words, he did not consider it a coincidence that it appeared after Yerasimos Arsenis announced that the controlled zone would be abolished, but before it was made official. One of the largest Greek newspaper revealed the “serious national issue” which was portrayed as an open provocation against Greece. Allegedly, a NATO staff exercise in July 1995 examined as working hypothesis a scenario which envisaged population movements, creation of homogeneous ethnic zones on the model of Bosnia, and a “peace proposal” which included the “partial autonomy” of Greek Thrace. This theoretical exercise coincided supposedly with unrest in the Muslim minority which had since been sustained by the support of external forces. Greek officers had been excluded from the exercise, and the scenario was interpreted as an indication of a comprehensive attempt at destabilising the wider area and dispute the present national borders of the Southern Balkans.56 This scenario was able to occupy large parts of the Greek press for a while, while NATO disclaimed angrily that there were any scenarios for Thrace (Eleftherotipia 17.10.1995). Onsunoğlu commented the scenario as one of the provocations against the minority after the measures against it were slackened in 1991, by the forces which wanted to portray the minority as a danger in order to reintroduce the discriminations. The economic interests involved played a larger role than chauvinist attitudes (Trakya’nın Sesi 526/19.10.1995). In an interview to a Greek newspaper he said the scenario originated from the para-state circles in Thrace and it was not the first to appear. A couple of months earlier local newspapers wrote that the Americans promoted the foundation of a Christian–Muslim parliament in Thrace, but this was not taken seriously.

These scenarios have basically the minority itself as goal. While there are attempts to normalise the situation, they try to provoke disturbances with such stories. The last false scenario about autonomy or semi-autonomy for Thrace, damages the Muslim minority. Because how can someone defend the minority at a moment when official lips make accusations that there are plans to break up the Greek state with the minority as basis. This is the message the average Greek citizen gets.

[...] Our voice, belonging to the sensible, the peace loving, those who support the coexistence, the cohabitation, those who support the non-negotiability of borders, is the significant majority of the minority. I do not speak in demagogic terms. It is really like this.57

There was later a real scenario, in a strategic study for the American Air Force by the Rand Corporation, which envisaged a Greek-Turkish clash sparked by a difference

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56 To Vima 15.10.1995, “NATO plan for the autonomy of Thrace”.
over the Greek treatment of the minority. There is of course no reason to pay any attention to such superficial fantasies by modern day soothsayers. And indeed, this scenario did not attract nearly as much attention as the “NATO scenario”, probably for the simple reason that it did not originate from within the circles which would otherwise have protested most loudly.

I do not believe that these kinds of scenarios are taken seriously by people with a knowledge about the situation. They do however contribute towards cultivating xenophobia and the impression that foreign powers are constantly intriguing against Greece. In this respect, I have seen myself that many local Christians are wary of foreigners because of the rumours that are circulating. And it can of course be difficult to know if there is any truth in a rumour. In a climate of quick allegations, intrigues, and dubious rumours it is sometimes a relief when you are able to get hold of some trustworthy information. I will therefore refer to an episode where I had the good fortune to have inside information, for the simple reason that it affected myself. When I say good fortune, I would like to stress that I have never had the desire to feature in such episodes. On the contrary, I have always tried to inform the relevant authorities as well as the public in general about what kind of research I am doing, to avoid creating unnecessary confusion. I know about the sensitivity of the area, and openness is one of the cornerstones for building confidence. When sometimes journalists or human rights activists who wanted to visit the area asked me about whom to see, I have always stressed that they should by all means contact the relevant Greek authorities, inform about their project and ask for their opinions. Greece is of course a democratic country and they can see whomever they want, but this should happen in openness and without creating unnecessary commotion in a sensitive area. When this is said, that does not mean that the persons in question necessarily get good or relevant information from the Greek authorities, but they have at least had their chance… The episode in question took place when I went for my first longer visit to Komotini in February 1993. The day after my arrival I could read the following news in a local newspaper:

A retired Turkish officer, presently employed by the Turkish Ministry of Interior and a Norwegian Lawyer who meddles with human rights organisations, were in Komotini as late as yesterday and stayed in a hotel in our town. They arrived on Monday, stayed in adjacent rooms and followed the gathering in front of the Church of the Holy Virgin [Ieró Naó Kimíseos tis Theotóka]. This information defies disclaimer… And do not ask why they came to Komotini and who invited them… (Elefíthero Víma 12.02.1993).

This spurred me to seek out the newspaper in order to correct the “inaccuracies” in their notice. I told them that as far as I knew I was the only Norwegian in Komotini at the time and consequently the news was probably meant to be about me. I could

inform that I was not a lawyer, that I was not dealing specifically with human rights, and that I had come alone and knew nothing about others who were staying in the hotel. In fact, the day I arrived I first went to another hotel, but as it had no vacancies the receptionist helped me book a room in another hotel, which was where I was staying when I read the news. Because of the inaccuracies in the statements and because the notice could disquiet people, I found it highly appropriate with a disclaimer. The journalist who had written the news was not in at the moment, but he had also been looking for me. A little bit later he came to the hotel with a camera team and asked for an interview for a local television station. That gave me at least the possibility to try to straighten out the “misunderstanding”. My impression of the journalist was that he attempted to trap me by asking questions about how I would characterise the minority, i.e. the old “Muslim or Turkish” minority trick. He was not too convinced about my version of the story and said that he had been informed from a very good source. However, when I asked from what kind of sources he had been informed he kept silent. It is of course difficult for somebody to admit that he has been set up, but I am inclined to believe that he had the news from someone he considered a good source. Personally, I did not pay much attention to the incident, but I remember when I recounted it afterwards to Onunoğlu his immediate response was that it had not been a mistake or coincidence and I am inclined to give him right. Although this time I was in a privileged position to evaluate the correctness of the news, most people were not. They were left to wonder about what was happening and if the “foreign finger” intervened again. It is difficult to know about other rumours in circulation about me, since usually the last person to learn about rumours is the one they refer to. However, as mentioned earlier, I have heard that some people in the Christian population called me an “agent”, while a rumour that my mother was Greek circulated among the Muslims.

It is much more difficult to check the detailed information which sometimes appears about events taking place within the minority. A case in point was the unsigned article from the periodical *Amina ke Diplomatia* (Defence and Diplomacy) September 1995, which “disclosed” certain recent events. This was later commented on by *Trakya’nın Sesi*. One problem was the general style of presentation and that the events were portrayed as if they belonged in a spy thriller. The news about an episode where the Turkish consul of Komotini visited the “pseudo-mufti” Mehmet Emin Aga secretly in the middle of the night in Ksanthi was brushed off as a stupidity. Someone who knew the situation would naturally ask: If the consul needed to see Aga, why did he not ask him to visit the consulate during the office hours as he usually did? Dede was however disturbed and puzzled by the news that after the Iraq operations there had been collection of money for a *Mehmetçik Vakfı* (foundation for Turkish soldiers) among the Muslims of Thrace. The money collected was given to families of soldiers who fell fighting the Kurds. Allegedly, the MIT (Turkish Intelligence) team in Komotini was
responsible for organising the collection, while graduates from Turkish teacher colleges took hand of the actual collection under the disguise of various organisations. Dede considered it to be evident that this article has been prepared by the Greek Foreign Department and Intelligence Service together. Dede has a very good network and regarded it to be impossible that such a collection of money could take place without his knowledge, particularly because after the collection of money to the Bulgarian Turks during the exodus in summer 1989, which the “Mafia Group” within the minority divided among themselves, the minority had an aversion towards collection of money for “solidarity” purposes (Trakya’nın Sesi 536/04.01.1996).

The news about the Mehmetçik Vakfı would probably have remained as just another piece of mysterious information about Thrace if it had not cropped up again later in an article for the periodical Nitro.59 The article included a facsimile of a “very secret” Document of the Greek Foreign Department sent from the office for minority affairs in Kavala 22.06.1995. In short, this document said that MIT officers connected to the General Turkish Consulate in Komotini organised a collection of money to the benefit of the Turkish army through the “Turkish Union” of Ksanthi. The amount collected was unknown, but it was supposedly for the families of Turkish soldiers who were killed in recent operations in Iraq. In the document the representative for the Greek Foreign Department had the following interpretation of the event: “The collection of money constitutes yet another attempt to attach the minority to the wider Turkish national body, by reinforcement of the psychological ties with the symbol par excellence of Turkism which is the Turkish Army” (ibid.). This document revealed enough details to put Dede on the track of the source of the news as we shall see later. The main subjects of the article was: The magnitude of Turkish influence in Thrace; how Turkey had a diplomatic campaign going on to internationalise the problem; and how foreign diplomats in Greece were overstepping the rules of diplomatic conduct in their dealings with the minority. The article was sprinkled with facsimiles of various secret documents to prove the point. To be more specific: A document dated 31.01.1996 stated that the Turkish embassy in Athens had sent a letter to foreign embassies titled “The January 29 declaration of the Turkish Minority of Western Thrace”. The journalist considered it to be no coincidence that this had happened on the eve of the Imia crisis. He claimed that the consulate was a state within the state in Thrace and that the Muslims were preparing for an uprising on indication from agents of MIT. The demonstrations in January 1988 (see above) were claimed to have happened on indication by MIT to put pressures on Papandreu at Davos. A former foreign minister said that: “Unfortunately the Turks can create enormous problems for us in Thrace at

59 Nitro 5/March 1996, “Confidential, Nitro reveals with secret documents Ankara’s plan to rouse the Muslims and the suspicious role of the American diplomats. Thrace will become another Bosnia!”, by Themos Anastasiadis.
any moment. It is only a question of which moment they desire to do so depending on their choice of strategy and timing” (ibid.). Turkey was preparing for the Bosnification of Western Thrace with a diplomatic campaign towards USA and countries of EU like Great Britain. British and American diplomats residing in Greece were on their side travelling all over Thrace, without even notifying the Greek authorities. They reproduced Ankara’s propaganda about the oppression of Muslims of Turkish descent and were encouraging the most extremist elements of the minority. Turkey was going to ask for international observers and promote self-administration for the minority. To prove the point there was a facsimile of a letter from Faikoğlu dated Ksanthi 16.10.1995 to “Hulyath Wods Nois” of the US State Department, who had been in Greece to collect information for the yearly State Department report, where Faikoğlu thanked American diplomats for their interest and particularly David Schuller who was vice consul at the American Consulate in Thessaloniki. Schuller was said to have been visiting the Muslim areas often, spoken with people who everybody knew were agents of MİT about their problems, and conveyed this to the likewise active consul Miriam Hughes. In the course of a few months Schuller went three times to Thrace without notifying the Greek authorities as he ought to. While the general consul Miriam Hughes visited the area two times, but she had been more careful in her statements.

The activities of the “Turcophile” 2. secretary of the British Embassy in Athens, Helen Walker, were criticised in detail. Facsimiles of documents from Greek authorities that were critical of the activities of American and British diplomats were included. The journalist of Nıtro pointed out that: “Greek foreign policy and our diplomats have neglected incredibly the field of ‘human rights’, which today is regarded as the foremost tool for exercising foreign policy” (ibid.). Greek diplomats were also criticised for not informing foreign diplomats systematically about the truth in Thrace. This is of course another way to say that the Greek positions were not able to prevail.

I will first return to the problems surrounding the news about money being collected for Turkish soldiers. Dede also read the article in Nıtro, which he characterised to be of the “national danger” variety. He had tried to track down the story behind the collection of money for the Mehmetçik Vakfı ever since it first appeared, but with no success. The article in Nıtro gave him the necessary clues. It was supposed to have taken place in connection with the Festival of Sacrifices (Kurban Bayramı) celebrations organised by the Turkish Union of Ksanthi 03.06.1995 at the Sminthi (Dolaphan) village. The amount collected was unknown according to the Greek sources. Dede could inform that the money collected was 78,500 drachmas (about $350) and was given to the children who participated with folk dances in the celebrations. This is a tradition and on this occasion Dede too gave 2,000 drachmas so that the children should have some money to spend for the holidays. Naturally, Dede wondered if this
was just some silly mistake or an intentional and planned provocation against the minority (Trakya’nın Sesi 542/29.02.1996).

Abdülhalim Dede had now maybe discovered enough to satisfy his own curiosity, but the perceptions created in Greek society at large is a much bigger issue. People will remember the “revelations with secret documents” by a big Athenian periodical, and not be aware of the corrections by a little provincial Turkish-language weekly newspaper. Fortunately there is sometimes communication between representatives of the two communities, which makes these kind of events known to a larger audience. The subject about the collection of money for the Mehmetçik Vakfı appeared again in a televised discussion programme (Makedonia TV 01.03.1996), where Onsunoğlu represented the minority. The programme co-ordinator attempted to use the story revealed “with documents” in Nitro as a trump. This made it possible for Onsunoğlu to say that it was without foundation and to present the story behind the story. (Trakya’nın Sesi 543/07.03.1996). In the beginning it was a little difficult to convince the programme co-ordinator that it was possible to refute the massive evidence of the secret documents, but this case should be clear enough for everybody to understand. Unfortunately in many instances people become easily misled by the conventional prestige of some sources. Documents and archives are surrounded by an exaggerated respect, while the quality of these kind of reports are of course dependent on the quality of information obtained by the person who wrote it and his ability of interpretation.

At this point I would like to return to the question if this was just a silly mistake or a planned provocation. This is very difficult to know in each individual case, and for methodological reasons I would prefer to treat it from a slightly different angle. If we look at this concrete example there were several steps involved: 1) Some person gathered the information, either directly of through some informer. 2) This was conveyed to the minority office in Kavala, possibly through one of the affiliated offices in Thrace. 3) A report was made and sent to Athens. 4) The report along with other reports was leaked to the press. It goes without saying that there can be many sources of unintended or intended errors along the way, depending on the quality and interests of the persons involved.

I will concentrate on the fourth step, i.e. the more or less systematic leaking of secret information from the Foreign Department and the Secret Service to certain parts of the press. In this respect the periodical Nitro is a newcomer. The most prominent example is probably the weekly newspaper Stohos. This newspaper benefited both from secret funds of the Foreign Department during Samaras’ tenure and government advertisements. This did not necessarily take place with Samaras’ knowledge. However, it is clear that the newspaper must have had very close relations with circles inside the Department. It is also clear that many such super-patriots, who could encourage to violence against the “national enemies”, were tolerated or supported by
the political establishment. Stohos did not only contain vociferous nationalist rhetoric, but published regularly “top secret” documents which obviously had to originate from the Foreign Department. I have no reason to doubt that many of the documents published in Stohos are authentic, although it is not a newspaper that I would characterise as trustworthy. It cultivated an extreme nationalism and had no scruples about publishing provocative articles. Theodoros Pangalos, who later became Foreign Minister, must have felt it to be a serious problem since he reportedly was determined to stop the leakage of secret documents to the press. Such leakage could of course have been done by lower administrative personnel, but the investigation indicated that part of the diplomatic staff itself was involved.

Until recently the suspicions of the political leadership of the Department tended towards the branch of teleprinter operators. Now, however, the general secretary of administration, Kostas Zoras, accuses in name a “network of ultra right-nationalist employees of the diplomatic branch” (Eleftherotipia 03.11.1996).

Funnily enough, Stohos also commented on the article in Nitro. It usually presented itself as the paper which knew everything and apparently felt the need to distance itself from the “competitor”. It claimed that EIP (Greek Intelligence Service) disclaimed immediately the part of the Nitro article which wrote that Turkey was preparing for war tomorrow. To prove the trustworthiness of Stohos, it was pointed out that what it wrote two months before the Imia crisis was not disclaimed. The difference between Stohos and Nitro was not only limited to the fact that Stohos could not be disclaimed. “Nitro” has “connections” which promotes its issues while “Stohos” is passed over in silence by everybody both left and right. And this is natural: If everybody had learned about what “Stohos” is writing, how could the others behave as if ONLY they know everything or copy the news [from Stohos] months or even years later?

This little quotation gives us a glimpse of the symbiosis between certain parts of the press and people in state services. It also discloses that this is by no means a uniform group. However, while Stohos has other connections than Nitro, there are no reasons to take seriously its claim of being above all interests, left or right. This was just the image it liked to promote, together with the image of having an omnipresence knowing about everything that was going on, something which was of course impossible for a small newspaper like Stohos. It could rather be said that it knew some things which were not generally available.

There is no reason to think that Stohos criticised Nitro because of concerns about the correctness of its text. This can easily be seen by Stohos’ own treatment of the alleged collection of money to the Turkish army. A few weeks after the article in Nitro, Stohos had a picture on its front page of an advertisement concerning the campaign to

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61 Stohos 610/28.02.1996, “What is the difference between ‘Stohos’ and ‘Nitro’?”.
support economically the Turkish army, with a comment which began in characteristic Stohos fashion:

Collection of money to support the Turkish armed forces is carried out by the Mongols in OUR still Liberated Thrace.

The collection, which is supported by ALL the Turkish newspapers with advertisements like the one seen above, has been undertaken by agents of the Consulate, Teachers, and Imams, so in every house there are posters which invite the Turks to aid their army (Stohos 611/06.03.1996).

Although there is a small possibility of ambiguity concerning what is meant by Turkish newspapers, the impression created is that this is going on in Greek Thrace. Of course, at this time there was a campaign going on in Turkey to support the army, and the picture is probably taken from an advertisement in some Turkish publication. I follow closely the minority press and have not seen this advertisement in any minority newspaper, nor have I seen it used in any other connection in Thrace. This kind of news is obviously a provocation against the minority, and the reputation of Stohos probably contributed towards making this clear for most people. However, one should bear in mind the old rule that if you throw enough mud, some of it will stick. This is probably as true here as it is in other cases. In this respect Stohos represented the extreme end of negative publications directed towards the minority. It is in some cases difficult to interpret if negative articles are written out of prejudice, bad faith, lack of information etc., or if they just are well founded critical articles. This problem does not arise with Stohos. There is, however, the problem of knowing when an article in Stohos is based on some official document and when it is totally fictitious.

All the peculiar relations and combinations of interest, have made it very difficult to sort out the various problems of Thrace. The nationalist stereotypes have also made it difficult to come to grips with the essence of the problems. However, it became clear recently that high level Greek authorities are aware of the complexity of the issue and acknowledge the power of the networks involved:

The top secret memoranda of the Greek Foreign Ministry detects as a very important problem the creation of a “network of interests”, including various prominent local persons (Greeks and Muslims), agents of secret services (in many cases not only Greek), but also people who are involved in organised crime, particularly smuggling of narcotics, gold and leather. Within this peculiar atmosphere the authorities, and in particular the secret services (EIP, DIKA etc.), adopted for years a very repressive attitude towards the minority. The situation was aggravated by the fact that the same officials had been in Thrace for a long time (almost 20 years), and were not able to perceive the changes which took place. The obstructions by the network of local interests complicated the problem of making the necessary readjustments to the minority policy.62

**Article 19 of the Greek Citizenship Code**

The problems with changing the minority policy, and the power of the forces which opposed it, is amply demonstrated in the controversy over the infamous article 19 of the Greek citizenship code (ND 3370/1955). According to this article:

62 To Vima 08.08.1999, “What has really changed in the policy towards the minority”, by Nikos Marakis.
A person [Greek citizen] belonging to another nation, who leaves Greece without the intention of returning may be declared as having lost Greek nationality.

A Greek lawyer interprets the law in the following manner: a) It has to be “someone who belongs to another nation” (alloyenís). This is contrasted with the term omoyenís i.e. “someone who belongs to the same nation”. The alloyenís is considered to not be of Greek descent, to not have “Greek national consciousness” (ellinikí ethnikí sinídisi), and not to behave like a Greek. Consequently, although he is a Greek citizen, his relationship with the Greek nation is considered to be vague and fragile; b) he must have left Greek soil; c) there must be no intention of return. This is considered to be the case if the person has sold his property and left Greece with his family, terminated his professional relations, and in particular if he does not take contact with the Greek consular authorities in his country of residence, thus displaying no interest for Greece. The decision of stripping someone of his citizenship is ultimately taken by the Greek Ministry of Interior, on the initiative of the Citizenship Council (Simvúlio ithayénias).

It should come as no surprise that such a legal oddity came into contradiction with other parts of Greek legislation, in particular Article 4 of the Constitution concerning the equality of Greek citizens. However, its legal validity was also explicitly covered by the Greek Constitution of 1975, article III, Paragraph 6, which states that “The provisions of article 19 of ND 3370/1955 ‘concerning sanctions of the Greek Citizenship Code’ continue to be valid until abolished by law”.

Article 19 is very interesting from a historian’s point of view, because it illustrates some of the problems related to the transition from the traditional social organisation of the Ottoman Empire to a modern notion of citizenship. The terminology as well as the conceptual framework resembles in many ways the Ottoman millet system. The traditional organisation based on national-confessional groups prevails over the modern concept of citizenship based on territorial sovereignty, which implicates that the Muslims belong to another nation. However, there is little reason to believe that the law from 1955 was originally intended for the Muslims. Although they were considered a foreign element, at this period Greek-Turkish relations were good and the balance with the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul still operative. Consequently, the article must have targeted the Slav speakers who had left Greece at the end of the

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63 See the legal discussion of this article in (Papasiopi-Pasia 1987: 106–109). For a brief treatment in English from the human rights point of view, see (Whitman 1990: 11–13).

64 Eleftherotipia 24.04.1994, “Without citizenship”, by Ios. Ikonomikos Tahidromos 20.08.1992, “Discrimination in force to the detriment of those of other ethnicity”, by Yiorgos Apostolidis. Apostolidis is a lawyer who has handled many cases of people who have lost their citizenship. He has published several interesting articles about the problem in the Greek press. For a few other examples, Ayyí 24.08.1995, “Stalemate and danger created by article 19”, by Yiorgos F. Apostolidis; Ayyí 13.10.1996, “Hostages of the Foreign ministry in Thrace”, by Yiorgos Apostolidis; and the previously mentioned Eleftherotipia 18.07.1989, “We will speak seriously about Western Thrace”, by Y. F. Apostolidis, Lawyer, Athens (translation in Appendix 5, text 54). I have also translated the article he refers to: Eleftherotipia 03.07.1989, “Time that we speak about the minority of Western Thrace”, Pandazis Terleksis, professor at the university of Crete (Appendix 5, text 53).
civil war. As mentioned earlier, the term “Greek national consciousness” was exactly what distinguished “Bulgarian-speaking Greeks” from Bulgarians, “Albanian-speaking Greeks” from Albanians, etc., when the Greek Orthodox millet started to break up in the 19. century. In other words, the key terms used for the interpretation of article 19 are related to the old religious classification *millet* (Greek: γένος), and to the somewhat fluid category “Greek national consciousness”, fluid, not only because it is a question of personal choice, but also because in an authoritarian system you are what others declare you to be.

Turkey struggles with many of the same problems. Although we have seen that the Turkish constitution tried to surpass the old framework by declaring that all Turkish citizens are Turks, this has not been so easy to realise in practice. In Turkey it is hard to consider someone to be Turk who is not Muslim, just as in Greece it is hard to consider someone as Greek who is not Orthodox. In the Turkish administration this is reflected by terminology such as “foreign Turkish citizens” (*Türk vatandaşları*, yabancı), which from a Western point of view sounds like a contradiction in terms. This ambiguous attitude is also present in the relationship to the Muslim minority in Thrace. To put it schematically, Turkey insists that they are Turks as long as they stay in Greece, but insists that they are Greek citizens when they want to immigrate to Turkey. For example, when Mesut Yılmaz was Foreign Minister he once declared: “The Western Thrace Turks are at least as much Turks as us. The only difference between them and the Turks of Turkey is that at this moment they must live within Greece. […] We, as Turkey, still struggle on every level to protect the rights of these kinsmen of ours” (Akin 976/16.03.1989). The Greek Orthodox who left Turkey have encountered similar attitudes, and have had great difficulties in obtaining Greek citizenship up until recently. On the other hand, in Thrace Greece insists that the minority members are Muslim Greek citizens when Turkey wants to intervene, but treat them as a foreign element in many other situations.

The same ambiguity is present in the minority’s attitude towards Greek and Turkish authorities. For example, Hâki thought that it was fine that foreigners paid 5 times the university tuition fee of Turks, but that the “outside Turks” should be treated as Turkish nationals. They should also be treated like Turkish nationals when they wanted to buy real estate in Turkey: “It is not good that the Outside Turks, in spite of all their Turkism, are treated like foreigners [*yabancı asıllı gibi*]!” (İleri 371/25.01.1985). In connection with the problem of buying land in Turkey, he exclaimed on another

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65 *Trakyâ’nın Sesi* 598/27.02.1998. This is referred to in connection with a paper by Prof. Roan Aybay at the “Minorities and Lausanne” conference in Istanbul.

66 See *Eleftherotipia* 10.02.1995, “Both Greeks and Constantinopolitans”, by Anna Steryi. This article referred among other things to a 54-year old man who had lived for 32 years in Greece. He had applied for Greek citizenship the last 5–6 years because the ministry did not accept such applications earlier.
occasion: “HERE [in Greece] WE ARE FOREIGNERS, let us at least not be FOREIGNERS THERE [in Turkey]” (İleri 464/27.02.1987). When the minority started to buy property in Turkey massively after 1974, many of them did it with false ID cards, or in the name of others. There was a particular problem for Izmir which was defined as a border area, which made Hâki comment:

The Western Thracean pure Turks who pray five times a day for the material and moral development of Turkey are not able to buy property in Izmir… i.e. they are not given title deeds… They take recourse to irregularities to obtain title deeds… They makes others property owners, by issuing the title deed in their name… (İleri 471/17.04.1987).

A later example also give evidence to the minority’s problem with defining its position in Greek society. In an interview to the periodical Yineka, the minority MP Mustafa Mustafa (Sinaspismos) had stressed his primary allegiance as Greek citizen, and the minority’s need to learn the official language of the country, Greek, together with the mother tongue Turkish. This led to strong reactions from Hâki and Hülya Emin, who would have liked him to stress the Turkishness of the minority (Gündem 34/25.02.1997; İleri 868, 28.02.1997). An interesting episode took place in 1981 when Turkish television presented the news that those who had a Turkish mother or father could obtain dual citizenship, i.e. Turkish citizenship in addition to their first citizenship. This created great hopes and excitement among the minority in Thrace. People wondered if it was valid for them. Hâki could understand that they became exited, since they had been “fooled and deceived for years” (İleri 205/27.02.1981). However, this initiative was of course not intended for the “Turks of Western Thrace”. Turkey has, on the other hand, pressed hard to make it possible for the Turkish workers who went to Germany to hold dual citizenship. In this case it was desired so that they could both keep their ties with Turkey and obtain full political rights in Germany—possibly to form a Turkish lobby. Similarly, Turkey would like those from the minority who had settled in Turkey to have dual citizenship so that they could keep their rights in Greece, but not the minority living in Thrace to have dual citizenship if this facilitated immigration. The immigrant associations in Turkey consider the difficulties with obtaining residence permit to be one of the greatest problems of the minority members. It is not so easy to leave Turkey every three months for people who have a steady work, or for old people with children who are Turkish citizens, etc. They would like Turkey to issue residence permits for 1 year or 6 months at a time, or that it would possible for them to become Turkish citizens without loosing their Greek citizenship.67

There is a tension between the traditional primary allegiance to the national-confessional group and the modern primary allegiance based on citizenship. As a consequence the intuitive behaviour of the minority does not correspond with the

conceptual framework of modern human rights organisations. There is an interesting example, involving an attempt by the American professor Kemal Karpat to instruct leading members of the solidarity associations in Turkey (BTTDD) how to behave and argue in order to be effective towards the international system of minority protection:

After arriving to Turkey people want to become Turkish citizens immediately. I think that they must keep their Greek citizenship. The Greeks will take away their citizenship. Then they must apply to the United Nations. They should get a particular document intended for those who have lost their old citizenship without obtaining a new. The Stateless [heimatlos] document. This is how it must be done. As soon as he becomes a Turkish subject, he counts as a Turkish citizen. When you speak about what happens in Greece as a Turkish subject, you project the Turkish opinions. The issue is to project the opinion of the Turkish minority. For example, this is what happened in Cyprus. Cypriots were not granted citizenship [in Turkey]. Here they were given all the rights, such as work permit. The same goes for Western Thrace. Since it is the case of a struggle, there will be some suffering. The government can grant work permit, residence permit, there cannot be created problems with all the rights [i.e. the rights you need to live and work in Turkey], this is a separate question. However, when this man (5–10 persons) is before the Helsinki Committee he must be able to immediately present his passport, look I have been expelled from Greece, or I fled, Greece took away my citizenship, I lost my rights, I am wandering about stateless. He must say that: I still feel like a Western Thracian. These are important things. Yes, I am of Turkish origin, but not from Turkey, from Western Thrace. Greece discriminates against me because of my language, religion, and nationality. This must be stressed. It must be said that there is discrimination. This is important in the eyes of Europe (Batı Trakya’nın Sesi 1/Nov-Dec 1987: 15).

In the case above we have to do with people who for all practical purposes have become Turkish citizens, but keep a nominal relation to Greece in order to play a particular political role. Consequently, from a pragmatic point of view the controversy concerning article 19 has two primary aspects. Firstly, it is related to the problem that minority members are not accepted as equal Greek citizens. Secondly, it is related to the problem that those who want to “merge” their ethnic identity and national allegiance, i.e. become Turks of Turkey, are pawns in the tug of war between Greek and Turkish minority politics. Within this framework we have both those who have lost their Greek citizenship involuntarily, and those who have lost it voluntarily but are not able to obtain Turkish citizenship as they desire.

Article 19 does not seem to have been a major problem for the minority before the 1980s. It is possible to register discontent in the minority press when the Greek authorities started to step up the application of the article. Hâki mentioned that it created great alarm among the minority workers in Germany when some of them lost their citizenship (İleri 353/14.09.1984). There are many other examples from the minority press, such as that of a university student in Turkey who went to the Greek consulate to renew her passport only to learn that she had lost her citizenship (Akın 897/19.02.1987). Abdülhalim Dede gives a good insight into the dilemmas the minority was faced with. According to him the number of people going to Turkey reached unusual proportions in 1987. Turkey had already in late 1986 initiated a very strict policy to make it more difficult for minority members to settle in the country. Some of those who lived and worked in Turkey held Greek passports (10–20,000
persons), while others were stateless (30–50,000 persons, according to very uncertain estimations). For those with Greek passports the 3 months residence limit was now enforced strictly. If necessary, they would be accompanied by the police to the border. Allegedly, Turkey took this measure to prevent the application of article 19 by Greece. Those who were stateless were faced with the threat of compulsory resettlement (meburi ikamet) to remote places in eastern Turkey. This concerned people who had been in Turkey for years and had found a way to make a living for themselves and their families in the Istanbul, Bursa, Izmir, and İzmit areas. A “deportation” of the family bread-winner could lead to a desperate situation, and people were very alarmed about this new measure (Trakya’nn Sesi 255/02.10.1987). The Turkish Ministry of Interior warned people that they would be subject to compulsory settlement (according to law 5633 paragraph 23), if they turned in their Greek passports to the Consulate and became stateless for no reason. The Greek authorities were interested in decreasing the minority and would readily give the “annulment document” (ıskat belgesi). On the other hand, it was said that those who came from Greece could stay as long as they wanted if they obtained residence permit in normal fashion.68 This testifies to the practice that minority members had of turning in their passports to Greek consular authorities, in order to obtain Turkish residence permit more easily. Hâki has a vivid description of this practice:

In the last 15–20 years some of our people even went to the [Greek] Township Secretary and begged him on their knees to take away the citizenship of their son who went to Turkey with passport… Because at that time this suited his INTERESTS. In Turkey there were also people who applied to Greek Representatives…: “Take away my citizenship…” Because this suited this person… i.e. at that time and in that climate… When he had lost his citizenship, he would go to the Motherland authorities as a great hero and say: “[… was such a great TURKISH NATIONALIST in Thrace… I WORKED so hard for TURKISM… That finally the infidel became afraid of me and took away my citizenship…]” Usually he would add: “Since it is so… You know that… Let me obtain TURKISH CITIZENSHIP immediately!” i.e. they use the DEPRIVAL OF CITIZENSHIP as a STEPPING STONE to become Citizens of the Mother country.” (İleri 757/06.05.1994).

In spite of the precautions by Turkey, Greece continued to strip people of their citizenship. People who returned from Turkey would be told on the border that they had lost their citizenship. Their passports were confiscated, but they were allowed to enter Greece. However, they were now in a precarious situation, and at loss about what to do. The minority MP Mehmet Müftüoğlu had raised the issue in parliament to

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68 Tercüman 01.09.1988, reprinted in Akin 958/13.09.1988. I have such a document written in Turkish concerning the loss of Greek citizenship:

Greek General Consulate
Istanbul 22/5/1991
No: 567

It is certified that Fatime ALI BASI daughter of Huseyin born 1932 in Ksanthi Greece, has lost her Greek citizenship by the decision number 50276/II-7-1986 of the Greek Department of Interior. This document is issued on her own request for all kinds of legal purposes.
The Greek General Consulate in Istanbul
C. Lazaris, Consul
no avail. Those who had lost their citizenship were told to take their cases to court, but very few took recourse to this procedure as it was both expensive and time consuming. For those who had their investments in Turkey and few bonds with Greece, the easy solution was to return to Turkey illegally. They could cross the border without problems as the Greek soldiers turned their back to this. Since their entrance was not registered, they were also able to evade the compulsory settlement threat. Dede accused Greece of treating the minority members as enemies, and Turkey for treating them as pawns. Some people who had lived for years as stateless in Turkey were not given citizenship, on the pretext that this would serve the Greek policy. On the other hand, some people received preferential treatment and could settle in Turkey without problems.69

The most striking features of article 19 were the fluid criteria, the arbitrariness in the application of it, and the secrecy coupled with disinformation which surrounded this procedure. After an attempt by Greek journalists to play down the discrimination against the minority, an experienced lawyer, who had handled many cases involving loss of citizenship, tried to set the record straight:

The article 19 determines that the \textit{alloyénis} (write Turk or Pomak or Gypsy), but not the \textit{omoyénis}, who left Greek soil without intention to return “can be declared to have lost the Greek citizenship”. Theoretically, according to the law this is judged by the ministry of the interior, after conforming opinion by the Citizenship Council. In reality, for members of the Muslim minority, the decisions are taken by the falsely named “Offices of Cultural Affairs” in Ksanthi and Komotini, which are subjected to the foreign ministry and make up a supra-authority in W. Thrace for issues concerning the Muslims (Greek citizens). The procedure is carried out with confidential documents, without the decision of the Minister of Interior, and the interested person is usually informed much later, when he wishes to return or visit Greece.

The removal of citizenship takes place without a previous hearing of the interested, in violation of article 20 paragraph 2 of the constitution, with decisions which are usually collective and unjustified, which simply refer to article 19 and sometimes to article 20 of the Greek Citizenship Code.

The article 19 was applied for thousands of “alloyénis” and not only for persons who had really no intention of returning, but also for persons who according to the judgement of the above “offices” were undesired, like students in Turkish schools or universities, with declared intention to return to Greece, where their families live. Legal protection against this expulsion is in reality non-existent, as all the applications to revoke the decisions of the minister are declined (usually two or more years after they have been submitted), while the application to the State Council for annulment, even when it is not overdue, is both time consuming and expensive.70

The semi-official justification that those who lost their citizenship were working against Greek interests from abroad, both reminded of similar decisions by the junta and was unconvincing since there were 8–9-year old children among those who had lost their citizenship in this fashion.71 In other cases it could include people who were

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69 \textit{Trakya'nın Sesi} 255/02.10.1987. For a concrete example of someone who had lost his citizenship and went to Turkey in this fashion, see \textit{Trakya'nın Sesi} 293/08.09.1988.

70 \textit{Ikonomikos Tahidiromos}, 20.08.1992, “Discrimination in force to the detriment of those with other ethnicity”, by Yiorgos F. Apostolidis (Part of a letter to the editor).

71 \textit{Eleftherotiopia} 21.07.1990, “The Muslims in Thrace and the ‘Athenian State’”, by Panayiotis Dimitras. This is a long article concerning many aspects of the minority’s problems. It was originally written in March 1990 as a report after an investigation by the Association of Ecologists and
doing their army service, or people who had gone to work in other places of Greece. For example, Ali Hoca Mehmet, who worked in the dockyards at Skaramangas outside Athens, learned that he had lost his citizenship one day when he returned to his village Ehinos and wanted a certificate. He had done his military service and paid his taxes. When he asked for more information from the responsible Ministry of Interior, they would not tell him, and he had to resort to a special request from the Public Prosecutor (isangeliki parangelia) to finally obtain (10.08.1992) the information that by decision “F. 2532/2569/sin. 1190” from the Ministry of Interior, which was issued 08.02.1991, he had lost the Greek citizenship with the explanation that he had left Greek territory without intending to return. The same decision also stripped 56 other person of their Greek citizenship, all from the Ksanthi prefecture and belonging to the Muslim minority. Ali Hoca Mehmet had a wife and four small children who were all Greek citizens, and had applied to the State Council to get back his citizenship.

Some journalists portrayed the difficulties with obtaining information about the application of the article in the following manner:

CONFIDENTIAL,

We asked about further information from the township president of Arisvi (in the Rodopi prefecture) about the continuing “phenomenon” by the Ministry of Interior, of stripping people of the township of their citizenship from time to time.

“The loss of citizenship—writes Mr. Musa Nuri Ali [Ali Nuri] to us—creates serious family, economy, but also health problems among the minority of W. Thrace. It is a policy between two countries. It worries us and troubles us as human beings. We fear about our future. The relevant documents of the township are confidential.

Many tried in their own way to involve me. I lost my confidence in the people around me and I do not want to become involved. If you should ask me again to have it in writing, I am not sure at the moment if I would be able to send you the documents you want. I was not able even to give those documents to the people of the minority because they are confidential.”

No comment?

When asked by a Turkish newspaper after 239 persons from the minority lost their citizenship in early 1991, Ali Nuri said that 12 had lost their citizenship in his township. He had complained to the Komotini prefecture about it (Türkiye 20.03.1991).

It is difficult to obtain an overview of the practice since it was not visible in any statistics, and outside public control. Consequently, we are only left with scattered news. Hatipoğlu published a list from the government gazette which contained the names of 119 who had lost their citizenship (Akın 1006/03.10.1990). From the names and ages it is evident that there were many families. Sadık Ahmet sent a letter to international organisations where he mentioned that 544 “Western Thrace Turks” had lost the citizenship against their will only in February 1991. According to Sadık, 3 of

Alternative Organisations. It was this article which propelled the later chairman of the Greek Helsinki Watch to the forefront.

72 Akın 1025/26.03.1991. See also (Whitman 1990: 12).
73 Eleftherotipia 05.09.1992: “He demands to get his citizenship back”, by Pandelis Zagorianitis.
them were still living in Greece. Information from the Ministry of Interior shows that these people had lost their citizenship by the decisions 2529/2566/8.2.91 (affecting 239 Muslims from Rodopi), 2532/2569/8.2.91 (248 Muslims from Rodopi), and 3396/3477/26.2.91 (57 Muslims from Ksanthi). According to the ministry, everybody had really left Greece many years ago, they did not have valid Greek passports, and they had settled in a foreign country without intention of return. Of the 544 persons in question: a) 244 left 5–10 year ago, b) 103 left 5–15 years ago, c) 69 left more than 15 years ago, d) 128 left during the years 1987–1989. These people did not have valid passports. In the cases of 80 persons they had made applications while living abroad to lose their Greek citizenship, while 32 had left the country illegally without papers.

Sadık countered this with a new question (4711/24.04.1991) where he said that he did not speak about those who lost voluntarily their Greek citizenship, but about those who had their property in Thrace and Greek passports valid for 5 years. Those with a passport valid for only one year had it by no fault of their own, but because the prefectures refused them a regular passport valid for five years. These people, who had never been asked themselves, were open to harassment by the police and public administration. In its answer (81698/30.05.1991) the Ministry stressed that the law had been observed scrupulously. It could not answer Sadık’s question because it had been posed in an unclear fashion, but stressed that the Ministry was inclined to investigate every concrete case according to the law.

Of individual examples mentioned in the Greek press, it is possible to mention the pharmacist Süleyman Mustafa who won his case in the State Council, but one year later the Ministry of Interior had not given him back his citizenship. A Pomak, Ahmetçik Mehmet, had lived in Greece without citizenship for 24 years because he spent 5 months looking for work in Turkey in 1969 (Eleftherotipia 24.04.1994). One of the best known cases concerns Yakup Kurt. He is from the Pomak village Miki, and a graduate of EPATH. When there were demands for better education at this school in 1981, he came under pressure to reveal who were the central persons in the protests. He refused to co-operate, without imagining the consequences. Afterwards he continued his education at the University of Ankara. He lost his citizenship in 1984 and regained it only after 10 years of difficulties. In a letter to Foreign Minister Yiannis Kapsis in October 1988, Kurt inquired about the reasons why he had lost his citizenship. He never received an answer. However:

The answer to his questions is found in a service document from the Office of Cultural Affairs in Kavala (which is under the Foreign Ministry). The document which is termed “strictly confidential” has the signature of the director at the time, Manolis Kalamidas. Name, age, and village of origin of all the cases are published in Batı Trakya’nın Sesi 30/May 1991. See also the interview of Sadık in Cumhuriyet 25.05.1991, “The oppressed minority in Western Thrace”, by Yavuz Baydar.

75 Name, age, and village of origin of all the cases are published in Batı Trakya’nın Sesi 30/May 1991. See also the interview of Sadık in Cumhuriyet 25.05.1991, “The oppressed minority in Western Thrace”, by Yavuz Baydar.

Councillor. It has the record number APF 1614/214/AS/1066 and was sent to the consulate in Ankara, the Office of Political Affairs A2 in the Ministry of Interior and A3 in the Foreign Ministry.

In this extraordinary document, the diplomat of the Foreign Ministry recommends to take away the citizenship from Kurt, his wife and three year old daughter because as the document says “we tried to win him over to us [proseteristhúme, i.e. make him a Greek agent] without success” and “He is educated and bright and may become a leader”.

Most of the time the reasons for stripping someone of his citizenship were less conspicuous. There are many examples of the arbitrary mechanisms involved in this procedure:

As known, the Greek administration may take away the citizenship of a Muslim who is absent for some period. According to information to us from the Muslim side, in many instances individuals who play the role of double agents are involved in the cases of taking away the citizenship.

They suggest, for example, that the citizenship is taken away from some individuals with the accusation that they are dangerous and organs of the consulate, while it is the case of some poor and illiterate workers. And thus in their village they say “Why did they take away the citizenship of poor Taksim?”

In fact, in many cases the procedure was even simpler. According to Sadık Ahmet, many lost their citizenship because a neighbour they had a dispute with told the police they had left the country. The MP for Ksanthi Panayiotis Sguridis (PASOK) has more or less the same version, but with a Greek twist to it. He would say that the minority itself was guilty when the Greek authorities took away the citizenship, because it happened after their relatives or neighbours said that they would not return. On another occasion, he dismissed the matter as a conspiracy against Greece:

The citizenship question is very characteristic of the manner problems are invented. According to the law, if someone leaves the country for years he loses the Greek citizenship. The Turks avoids systematically to give citizenship to any Western Thracian. These people without citizenship, all of them poor, pass illegally the river Evros and live and work in Western Thrace “wandering proofs of the Greek’s harshness”. However, the following questions are posed: How does the pre-eminently lethargic Greek bureaucracy discover them if someone does not denounce them, and who is that? Why do they always belong to the category of simple Muslims and not to the category of the fanatic hecklers [enkáthetos] of the Consulate whom it would be to the benefit of Greece to strip the citizenship from. The logical answer to the questions indicates with certainty the Turkish mechanisms in force.

Sguridis was correct in pointing out that the main victims of this policy were the poor who were not protected neither from the Greek nor the Turkish side. However, he has a curious notion of the responsibilities of the Greek state. Should serious matters such as deprivation of citizenship be contingent on gossip by neighbours, or

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77 Eleftherotipia 29.08.1997 “They copied the Turkish methods”, by Takis Mihas. This case has been referred to repeatedly in the Greek press. For an early presentation, see Eleftherotipia 26.09.1988, “Short-sighted”, by Yiorgos Votsis.
80 Trakya’nın Sesi 598/27.02.1998, which refers to the televised discussion in “New Channel” 18.02.1998.
81 Ikonomikos Tahidromos 2050/19.08.1993, “The aims of Turkey in Thrace”, by Panayiotis Sguridis, in the series: “The MPs have the word.” See also (Sguridis 1999: 59–60).
the result of clearly defined administrative procedures where the people affected have possibilities to protect themselves from arbitrary decisions? The cases of people who lose their citizenship because of political activities are few and far between. The best known case is probably the editor of Azınlık Postası Selahaddin Galip who lost his citizenship by article 19, won it back in the State Council, for only to lose it later according to article 20.\textsuperscript{82} However, the practical consequences for him were relatively small, since he had already settled in Turkey and enjoyed full support from the authorities. We can look at another example reported by the Turkish press:

A Turkish rights activist from the Greek province of Western Thrace has been stripped of his Greek citizenship, the Anatolia News Agency reported Wednesday.

Ali Ayazmali, a spokesman for the Western Thracian Turks Solidarity Association who is resident in Germany, lost his Greek citizenship for organising meetings and demonstrations, Anatolia reported from the German city of Cologne.

Ayazmali, who has been working in Germany for the last 30 years, described his loss of citizenship as “unjust” and vowed to continue campaigning for the rights of the Turkish-speaking minority in Northwestern [sic] Greece.

He pointed out that he was born and bred in Western Thrace and that his real estate was in Western Thrace, but added, “Property is not important to me… I am proud to be a Turk.” In a statement understood to imply he would accept the decision and immigrate to Turkey, Ayazmali said “From now on I will continue my life in the paradise of my homeland.”\textsuperscript{83}

In the case above it is evident that the person had not intended to return to Greece after retirement. The loss of citizenship simply gave him some publicity, which would make him a “hero” in nationalist circles.

One of Sadık Ahmet’s first initiatives in Parliament was to submit a proposal for the change of article 19 (Gerçek 245/09.09.1989). He had as little success as previous MPs. There are signs that he started to make systematic attempts to register people who had lost their citizenship. In an announcement he asked people who had lost their citizenship to bring all papers which displayed their connections with Greek authorities, such as: 1) Passport, 2) Identity card (taftótita), 3) Election booklet, 4) OGA booklet (payment to agricultural pension fund), 5) Receipts of pension from OGA, 6) Pension cards, 7) Electricity receipts, 8) Water receipts, 9) Receipt for tax payment, 10) Any kind of receipts or official papers with their name written on it (Akın 1032/07.06.1991). This seems like just another abortive initiative, because there are not really any tangible results. However, the pressure against the use of this anachronistic law mounted because of the efforts by Turkish diplomacy, human rights organisations, and other international organisations. For example, the executive director of the American Helsinki Watch Committee, Jeri Laper, sent a letter to Mitsotakis protesting against the decision which deprived 239 persons of their citizenship in February 1991.\textsuperscript{84} The law was in reality indefensible, which led the

\textsuperscript{82} For a short presentation of his case, see Gerçek 230/19.01.1989. Article 20 concerns those who have been involved in activities detrimental to the interests of Greece.

\textsuperscript{83} Turkish Daily News 25.06.1993 “Turkish rights activist loses his Greek citizenship”.

\textsuperscript{84} A Turkish translation of the letter from 4 April 1991 is printed in Bati Trakya’ın Sesi 30/May 1991.
Greek authorities to retreat. They stressed that the citizenship had been taken away by a legal procedure, but that they were inclined to revise article 19 (*Kathimerini* 29.03.1991). The Prime Minister Mitsotakis pledged publicly that he would amend article 19 when he visited the Council of Europe (23.04.1991), when he visited Komotini (15.05.1991), and when he met his Turkish counterpart in Paris (13.09.1991). The Turkish side did not only ask for the abolishment of the article, but that the decision should have retroactive effect. This was refused by the Greek diplomats.\(^\text{85}\) However, the pledges to abolish article 19 resulted in strong reactions from centres in Greece which presented new danger scenarios.

 [...] deep concern and speculation reign among the Christian element regarding the modification or abolishment of article 19 of the citizenship code because if something like this happens thousands of Western-Thracian Muslims who act anti-nationally in Europe and Turkey and are today deprived of their Greek citizenship will have the right to return to Thrace as Greeks. This issue which has great consequences for the border district Thrace, was put forward by the former ND MP of Rodopi St. Bletsas, who characterised it openly as a mistake by the government which by an outrageous logic would pass a regulation that is dangerous for the numerical balance in the Thrace district (*Kathimerini* 21.09.1991).

As a result of the various internal pressures against the weak ND government, Mitsotakis never got around to abolish article 19.\(^\text{86}\) The only discernible development was that its application seemed to decrease. However, the minority had no guaranty that it would not be put to use again and continued to live in uncertainty. The minority took some initiatives to resolve the problems of the stateless, but did not accomplish any breakthrough.\(^\text{87}\)

In August 1995 there were signs that the authorities had started to apply article 19 more vigorously again. This conclusion was reached by the lawyer Yiorgos Apostolidis. He mentioned 3 concrete cases. One of them concerned a woman from Yenisea-Ksanthi who had worked in Germany since 1988. She used the Greek National Bank for her savings and had bought a house in her home district in 1993. She had just learned that the Ministry of Interior had stripped her of her citizenship by decision F.35962/24790/7-1-94. As a result her Greek passport became invalid, while she herself became stateless and unable to return to her house.\(^\text{88}\) During the hearing by the Helsinki Commission in April 1996, Van Coufoudakis maintained that 72 persons from the minority had lost their citizenship in 1995 and in 45 of the cases this had happened on their own request. He claimed further that no person had been left stateless as a result of deprivation of citizenship, and compared the Greek practice with German legislation: “in Germany today if the German government finds out that the

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\(^{85}\) *To Vima* 15.09.1991; *Ta Nea* 31.10.1991.

\(^{86}\) For some comments in the minority press to such danger scenarios, see *Trakya’nın Sesi* 476/10.02.1994; *Ieri* 821/10.11.1995.

\(^{87}\) See, *Ieri* 771/07.10.1994 and 804/16.06.1995, involving in particular Orhan Haciibram and Mustafa Mustafa.

\(^{88}\) *Avyi* 24.08.1995, “stalemate and danger created by article 19”, Yiorgos F. Apostolidis. See also *Trakya’nın Sesi* 519/31.08.1995.
German citizen applies for the citizenship of another country, that person automatically loses his or her citizenship without a hearing. That is under German law, and Germany is the heart of the European Union. So let us not just single out the Greeks and say those kinds of things.”

This statement is highly misleading, because his claim that no person had been left stateless is contradicted by other available evidence as seen earlier. Neither is the comparison with Germany very appropriate. The problem was not that Greece did not allow double citizenship, but that the procedure for stripping people of their citizenship was carried out in a highly arbitrary fashion.

However, it became clear that efforts by Greek authorities to improve its minority policy together with increased international pressure had made the time ripe to finally abolish article 19. During 1997 the initiatives against the article intensified. Both the MPs Korakas and Panayiotu of KKE and Mustafa Mustafa of Sinaspismos took separate initiatives in parliament for the abolishment of the article. The article was condemned explicitly in the yearly reports of the US State Department and Helsinki Watch, while the Greek press featured many articles which were critical of the practice. The Council of Europe, too, began to take a determined interest, and a committee headed by the leader of the Human Rights commission, Lydie Err from Luxembourg, went to Thrace to look at the situation on the spot. At the same time, signs that article 19 was about to be abolished led to new reactions and danger scenarios, particularly in the local press, where the circles around the metropolitan Damaskinos took the lead. It was claimed that 450,000 Muslims would return to Greece if article 19 was abolished. Reputedly there had also been a meeting in Ksanthi by the minority “co-ordination committee”. In a declaration it asked for the abolishment of article 19 to have retroactive effect so that 300,000 people could regain their citizenship (Eleftherotipia 08.12.1997). When the government seemed to falter, the Greek Helsinki Monitor and Minority Rights Group-Greece increased their efforts to contest the controversial article. The leader of these organisations, Panayiotis Dimitras, had discovered that Greece was obliged to issue identity papers to the “stateless” in accordance with Law 139 of 25.08.1975 (article 27) that ratified the 1954 UN Convention on the Status of Stateless, and made an announcement 18.10.1997 asking people in this situation to contact two minority lawyers who would assist them with

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89 (United States Congress - Commission on Security and Co-operation in Europe 1996). A Turkish newspaper wrote that “according to Human Rights Watch figures, 42 Turks [sic] lost their Greek citizenship in 1995 after they travelled abroad” (Turkish Daily News 05.20.1996, “Ramadanoglu loses citizenship; Mufti sent to jail”, by Ugur Akinci).

90 See Ileri 865/31.01.1997 and Trakya’nun Sesi 588/12.06.1997

91 For an overview of the initiatives, see Trakya’nun Sesi 597/13.01.1998.

92 Gündem 58/30.09.1997 mentions the trip scheduled for 7–8 October and the role of the Solidarity Associations in Germany in informing her. The trip was based on a motion from 17.02.1997.


the relevant application to the Greek authorities. This would bring these people out of their “ghost existence”, and secure them the right to go to school, have social security and health care, receive pensions, have work permits, obtain driving licences, etc. and also to obtain documents valid for travel abroad. Their ultimate goal was of course to regain full citizenship rights, but this measure would resolve some of the immediate problems and make their existence more tolerable.

The Greek Helsinki Monitor continued to keep up its pressure on the Greek authorities. This culminated in a press conference in Athens 10 December 1997, on the occasion of the international day of human rights. This was covered widely in the Greek press and obtained a lot of publicity. The problems created by article 19 were personified in the presentation of 20 year old Aysel Zeybek’s drama. She had lived in Greece as stateless for 13 years after her entire family, from the village of Ehinos, had their passports and ID cards confiscated after going on a trip to Istanbul. Aysel Zeybek told about all the problems she encountered as stateless. She could not even get married, since she had no papers. Panayiotis Dimitras said that at least 7,000 people had been made stateless since the law was passed in 1955, including about 50 new cases in 1997. About 500 families or 2,000 persons living in the area were believed to be living in limbo after losing their identification papers. Aysel Zeybek would later say that she felt as if she was born again when she obtained the document which showed that she was stateless and meant that her “ghost existence” had come to an end (Eleftheriotipia 18.12.1997). It should also be kept in mind that these people who had no formal rights were in a precarious situation and liable to exploitation by the local authorities.

It finally became clear that the Greek government would in fact abolish article 19. In a comment to this, Dede maintained that the problem was not so much the article itself as the way it had been practised and the anti-minority attitude inherent in it (Trakya’nın Sesi 598/27.02.1998). It was abolished in parliament 11.06.1998, but without retroactive effect. Consequently, there is still the question of resolving the situation of the

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96 See Greek Helsinki Monitor press release 04.11.1997, “The government’s tergiversation on article 19 continues” (This includes the letter to Prime Minister Kostas Simitis from 24.10.1997), and the press release 10.12.1997, “Appeal to the Greek Government for the abolition of article 19 of the citizenship code and other discriminations”.
98 This point is mentioned several times by Hâki. See İleri 882/06.06.1997; 910/17.04.1998. Within the minority there was a controversy between the old comrade-in-arms Abdülhalim Dede and Orhan Hacıibram. Orhan was critical of the possibility of obtaining papers as stateless and claimed that this could jeopardise the procedure for regaining full citizenship. Dede, on the other hand, stressed that there was no conflict between these two things and condemned Orhan for thinking more about his own interests as lawyer than the interests of the victims (See the detailed polemic in Trakya’nın Sesi 599/31.03.1998 and the comments in İleri 909/03.04.1998).
stateless persons. The inflated figures that are sometimes presented by Greek and
Turkish nationalists, each for their own reasons, have no real substance. People who
are well established in Turkey have no real interest in returning. Neither do most of the
workers who have settled in Germany with their families. It is first of all the question
of the stateless persons living in Greece, some of the workers in Germany, and
students etc. in Turkey who want to return to Greece. When the problem of the
estimated 300 persons who had not regained their Greek citizenship was presented to
the Minister of Interior, Vaso Papandreou, during her visit to Thrace, she said that the
stateless would have to take recourse to the legal procedure and make applications
themselves in order to be naturalised (*politografó*).\(^{100}\) Looking back on the many
difficulties encountered in the past by those who wanted to regain their citizenship, and
the many broken promises, it would be desirable that the Greek authorities choose a
more assertive approach for returning the citizenship to the stateless living in Greece.
Otherwise there will be a perpetuation of histories in the press relating to the personal
dramas of the relatively few remaining cases of stateless people. The minority MP
Mustafa Mustafa (*Sinaspismos*) made a question in parliament about the victims of
article 19. He was glad that the article had been abolished, but stressed the need to
solve the problems for the people who were still stateless.\(^{101}\)

In this matter I hope sincerely that international human rights organisations will
pursue the issue relentlessly until the last poor ignorant farmer who lives as anybody’s
victim has regained his full citizen rights. Greece’s handling of this matter will be a
real test of the politicians’ ability to fulfil their expressed desire of taking back the
initiative in human rights matters. Instead of dragging their feet, promising to make
changes without following it up in practice, or waiting to the last possible moment and
consequently allowing various reactionary forces to set the agenda.

\(^{100}\) See *Trakya’nn Sesi* 620/16.05.1999; 622/31.05.1999.

\(^{101}\) *Gündem* 148/30.11.1999. The question was said to have been recently, but the date is not
specified.
Internal Minority Developments After 1990

The internal political situation had changed significantly after the 1989–1990 elections. We have already seen glimpses of this in connection with various other minority issues, but it requires a more systematic treatment. The “clique” was now firmly in power. Important established politicians like Mehmet Müftüoğlu, Hasan İmamoğlu, Orhan Haciibram, and Celâl Zeybek had been put aside. Müftüoğlu was vulnerable for pressure since his children were students in Turkey at the time, while İmamoğlu had reputedly some investments in Turkey which could be under threat. Others who opposed the “clique” were susceptible to various threats, of which the best known is the “black list”. However, the absolute power of the “clique” was challenged by internal conflicts. More precisely, Sadık Ahmet, who wanted to be the sole leader, came into conflict with the rest of the “clique”.

The AYK–YK held a meeting 3 August 1990 under the chairmanship of Hasan Hatipoğlu. Right after this meeting Sadık attacked Hatipoğlu and contested his “leadership aspirations”. Hatipoğlu responded by promoting strongly the virtues of the AYK–YK (Akın 1002/16.08.1990). He was backed up by Rodoplu: “Above all, our friend Sadık must put aside as soon as possible the distrust he has often made conspicuous towards our Executive Council [AYK-YK] based on reasons he cannot explain, and he must find a remedy for the accumulated problems of this community in co-operation with his colleague Ahmet Faikoğlu and the Executive Council” (Gerçek 263/29.08.1990). At that time Sadık had the advantage towards the minority’s public opinion that many of the leading members of the AYK-YK had compromised themselves in various ways in the past, while he was more of an unknown quantity himself. Consequently, ordinary minority members looked at Sadık’s attack on the “clique” with a certain sympathy. Hatipoğlu countered by writing that he had always worked for the community without thinking about his personal interests. Sadık continued his offensive by trying to muster leading people outside the “clique” behind him, minority members in various elected positions, shopkeepers, etc. He invited them to participate in two meetings at the “Turkish Youth Union” in Komotini 11–12.09.1990. Before these meetings took place, there had been rumours that the AYK-YK would be dissolved (Gerçek 264/20.09.1990). Hatipoğlu had recourse to his usual methods to slander Sadik. He would for example insinuate that Sadik made one of his declarations after he had spoken for 2 hours with the prefect (İleri 615/23.11.1990). By this time the

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102 See the response by Hatipoğlu in Akın 1003/30.08.1990 after Hakka Davet03.08.1990 also had criticised the AYK-YK. As mentioned earlier, this was one of Hatipoğlu’s stock arguments.
103 İleri 603/31.08.1990. See also the following issues.
relationship between the two independent MPs was not good. Rodoplu would soon ask why they did not collaborate, but took separate initiatives and did not put their signature under the same papers (*Gerçek* 269/24.11.1990).

The ratification of the new election law with the 3% cut-off point led to further developments (see above). There were soon rumours that Sadık would respond by founding a party, which he claimed could gather 60,000 members. This created concern in Greek political circles, because he would be able to go abroad and speak as leader of a political party without anybody to oppose him in the way it was possible to do in parliament.\(^\text{104}\) Political analysts also pointed to the possible negative effects of the 3% cut-off point. This meant that a party would require a minimum of 200,000 votes nationally. If the party was able to pass this limit, it would, however, obtain 6 MPs. This could be a strong incentive to start activism among Muslims in Evros and the Dodecanese and create “new problems” where there were none. There was also a question about which coalition partners the party could possibly find. And finally, even if the measure was effective it could expose Greece to criticism from international organisations, and also undermine Greece’s support of the minority in Albania (Dodos 1994: 60–62).

There must have been some intrigues by the Greek services in the area to counter possible initiatives from Sadık, because soon there were rumours that a Gypsy party would be founded and possibly a Pomak party (*Kathimerini* 29.01.1991). Sadık Ahmet made a declaration where he stressed that the founders of the Gypsy party, Yaşar Halil and Abdülah Abdülah, represented no one else than themselves.\(^\text{105}\) Later the people who had signed the petition for a Gypsy party said that they had been tricked into signing it (*Akım* 1023/04.03.1991). Sadık spoke in the “Turkish Youth Union” on 10 April 1991 about the necessity of founding a party after the new elections law. This would gather the minority under one umbrella and enable it to make its voice heard better internationally. At this time Hatipoğlu was positive to this initiative (*Akın* 1027/15.04.1991). However, Sadık soon fell out with Faikoğlu and Aga and said that he would not collaborate with them (*İleri* 634/26.04.1991). The “Friendship-Equality-Peace” Party (*Dostluk-Eşitlik-Barış Partisi*-DEB) was founded officially 13 September 1991. It became clear that the party would be a personal vehicle for Sadık and put the “clique” in the shadow. The two independent MPs now came into open confrontations that are also recorded in the Greek press. Faikoğlu accused Sadık of putting aside the minority’s traditional leadership, the AYK-YK:


\(^{105}\) *Akın* 1022/25.02.1991. The Gypsies constitute a marginal group within the minority. This has also resulted in a different electoral behaviour, mostly related to petty patronage by the major parties. For details, see (Marantzidis and Mavromatis 1999).
“Sadık proceeded alone,” stressed Ahmet Faikoğlu, “without the consent of the Supreme Committee [AYK-YK], risking the unity of the Muslim element in Thrace because of his personal ambitions.”

“Today”, he added, “the natural leadership of the minority for us the Turkish Muslims is the Supreme Committee.”

Sadık on his part countered Faikoğlu’s reactions with racist slurs when he announced the foundation of the party in the village Evlalo-Ksanthi, saying “He is not of Turkish descent, he is a Gypsy” (ibid.). It is significant that Sadık announced the founding of the party in a village of the Ksanthi prefecture which was Faikoğlu’s home turf. This displays clearly that Sadık tried to impose himself as the only leader. He would further try to expand his electoral base by touring the Dodecanese, the Evros prefecture, as well as the areas of Athens inhabited by minority workers. He was also in contact with the Macedonian minority activists Hristos Sidiropulos and Anastasios Bulis for possible electoral co-operation (To Vima 17.01.1991; Yüvamız 77/January 1993).

The “clique” tried to curb Sadık’s bid for dictatorial powers by boosting the prestige of the other independent MP. This is the background of Faikoğlu’s press conference in Athens, where he said that he did not recognise Sadık’s party (cf. Makedonia 28.09.1991; Ileri 649/04.10.1991). As mentioned earlier, because of the internal conflict Sadık sabotaged the “clique’s” protests against the appointment of the Ksanthi mufti. Sadık had an additional reason for opposing the proposed signature campaign on this occasion. The new election law had closed his prospects for re-election, and he was afraid that Faikoğlu would use the signatures to display his vote potential, so that PASOK would accept him on its ticket in the next election. On the other hand, Sadık harboured hopes for himself to be accepted by a major party. This is just another example of Sadık’s lack of realism. The independent MPs had excluded themselves by their behaviour, and there was reputedly an informal agreement between the three major Greek political parties not to accept them on their tickets (Pontiki 14.11.1991).

The climate between the independent MPs became increasingly uglier and they hurled strong accusations against each other. When Faikoğlu called people traitors, Hâki remarked that he had difficulty not laughing and asked ironically if Sadık would be put on the black list now. Sadık, on the other hand, claimed that it was Aga and Faikoğlu who had organised the attack against the protest outside the mufti office in Ksanthi (23.08.1991) in collaboration with Greek secret services.

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108 Ileri 650/11.10.1991. It is possible that those who opposed Sadık gained courage when the Motherland Party (ANAP) led by Mesut Yılmaz, who was known as Sadık’s patron, lost the Turkish elections 20.10.1991.
Other minority members watched in amazement the unseemly quarrels between the “clique” and Sadık. Onsunoğlu would remark that: “The Minority mafia is at each other’s throats exactly by using mafia methods.” Hatipoğlu, too, whom Sadık had called the greatest traitor of the minority, was clearly uncomfortable with the developments. Hatipoğlu was known for his mud-slinging, but always kept a very proper facade. He disapproved deeply of the vulgar behaviour of Sadık (cf. Trakya’nın Sesi 410/13.02.1992). Since the “clique” and Sadık had the same ideological basis, the rivalry soon manifested itself in Turkish nationalist overbidding. Aga and Faikoğlu, with their problematic past, had most catching up to do. This puzzled Greek commentators: “However strange it may seem, Faikoğlu and Aga seem to overbid in extremism, while Sadık favours a somewhat moderate tactic, contrary to the first two who promote frontal clash and confrontation with the Christian element and the Greek state on every issue” (Pontiki 14.11.1991). Hatipoğlu played on Turkism as usual, and found an opportunity later when the ultra-right Turkish political leader Alpaslan Türkeş visited Macedonia:

Türkeş did very well by congratulating the MACEDONIAN TURKISH PARTY. Because it is a Turkish party. On the other hand, to whom does the FRIENDSHIP-EQUALITY-PEACE Party belong? It is nothing else than the unconscion product of hysterical ambition. If it had been called a Turkish party, Türkeş would have sent a congratulation message here, too. Why is not the name Turkish used in this party? Our political strength which we developed by great efforts was “squandered” [“hararı bozup çuval dahi olmadı.”]. […]

Yes, the personal party founded under the name Friendship-Equality-Peace is an infirmity [sakatlık] appearing on our community’s political scene and an illness which we will cure quickly. Our cold blooded and intelligent people, who distance themselves from meaningless excitement, will not fail to understand this matter.110

Hatipoğlu would also point to the slim election chances, and exclaim: “If you can get milk from a billy-goat, this party will elect MP” (ibid.). Sadık was able to cross several initiatives by the AYK-YK. Nothing came out of the aforementioned signature campaign, although it had been announced publicly. When the AYK-YK proposed a meeting to commemorate the 29 January 1988 events, Sadık’s opposition resulted in the cancellation of it (İleri 665/06.03.1992). The Greek press would remark that only 15 persons met up for the meeting in the village Arianna (Makedonia 30.01.1992). As mentioned earlier (see above) Sadık was also able to prevail over the AYK-YK in the school book issue.

Now that the relationship between Sadık and the AYK-YK had grown completely sour, it became necessary to create a new team around him. The team emerged in earnest when Sadık started to publish his own newspaper named after his party.111

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109 Trakya’nın Sesi 414/19.3.1992. See Appendix 5, text 55 for a longer translation of Onsunoğlu’s comments to Sadık’s behaviour. As is often the case, Onsunoğlu chose to parody the events.
111 cf. DEB Partisi Gazetesi 1/11.02.1992. This newspaper changed its name to Balkan after the 6. issue.
The central persons in his team were the young preacher and politician Ahmet Hacıosman, and the experienced journalist Mustafa Hafız Mustafa (1945–1996), who had joined his ticket in the April 1990 elections. The people of his team had little in common and must have joined forces because of external incentives or pressure. Hâki mentioned later the strange circumstance that Mustafa Hafız Mustafa, whom Sadık had called the man of the Greek secret services, was made editor of his newspaper and followed Sadık to Ankara, where he met the leading Turkish politicians. Ahmet Hacıosman had cursed Sadık and his family 1–2 years earlier. He was now made general secretary of the DEB party and responsible for the newspaper. Hâki asked if they had no sense of embarrassment for their 180-degree turns, and remarked that Hacıosman put on a straight face and acted as if everything was fine (İleri 718/21.05.1993).

Mustafa Hafız Mustafa played a very important role, and was considered to be the brain of the team. He wrote nearly all the articles of the newspaper, also those signed by Sadık. Mustafa was born and raised in Komotini and had his higher education from a Turkish teacher college. He never had any leader ambitions of his own, but was very active in the wings. He had a long apprenticeship from several minority newspapers. He started as assistant in Selahaddin Galip’s Azınlık Postası. After this closed, he worked with Hâki until he was lured away to the rival Akın. Now he went almost straight from Akın to Sadık’s camp. In one of our conversations he gave the following account of his past experience: From Galip he had learned to behave like a gentleman (kibarca), from Hâki he had learned to earn money, and from Hatipoğlu he had learned to do dirty tricks (puştuk, i.e. literally to behave like a catamite). Mustafa’s abilities as a writer were widely acknowledged, and he was the first choice among Christian candidates in local elections who wanted someone to write a newspaper which could attract the Muslim vote. The Balkan newspaper was first of all a propaganda vehicle for Sadık. Mustafa was well aware of his role, and I have heard him refer jokingly to himself as the Goebbels of the party. He would soon claim that the party had 10,000 members (DEB Partisi Gazetesi 4/10.03.1992). This would later be increased to claims that tens of thousands, or the whole minority, had embraced the party (Balkan 28/08.09.1992).

The first party conference was set for 11–12 April 1992. In the conference Sadık said: “All my struggle will be directed towards the return of the civil, minority, and human rights of the Western Thrace Muslim Turkish Community; from now on the only official voice of our community is the DEB party.” Mustafa promoted

112 For more information about Mustafa Hafız Mustafa, also known as Bacaksız, see the obituaries in İleri 840/12.04.1996 and Batt Trakya’nın Sesi 76–77 March–August 1976.
113 Balkan 9/14.04.1992. For the Statutes of the DEB Party, see the series which begins in İleri 672/24.04.1992. For an overview of the internal organisation, see Balkan 13/19.05.1992. See also Sadık’s article series about the goals and purposes of the DEB party, which starts in Balkan 53/09.03.1993.
unabashedly Sadık as the great leader and compared his efforts with the National struggle of Atatürk (ibid.). The many congratulation messages from Solidarity Associations in Turkey, Germany, and England give an indication of his support outside Thrace (ibid.).

_Balkan_ was dominated by a limited set of themes. Besides promoting the “great leader”, there were polemics against the AYK-YK, complaints about Greek discrimination, and complaints about the “undemocratic 3% cut-off point” in the election law. The word “complaint” is used deliberately, because Mustafa did not really take a political initiative towards the Greek authorities. He tried rather to cultivate the minority’s suspicion against the authorities and the “Greeks” in general, in an effort to keep up the stereotypes and rally the minority more effectively around Sadık. 114 Onsunoğlu would later sue Mustafa Hafız Mustafa for one of his articles, and accuse him of being among the chief responsible for cultivating fascism in the minority. However, he would add that Mustafa did not believe in what he wrote himself and was rather an opportunist than a fascist, because even to be a fascist you needed personality (Aile Birlik 93/17.02.1994).

The conflict between Sadık and the AYK-YK continued unabatedly. Hatipoğlu and the “clique” would promote the virtues of the AYK-YK, displaying it as indispensable for the minority, and stress that the party could not replace it. 115 The truth was of course that the attempts to organise the minority democratically around 1980 in the Supreme Minority Council (AYK) had been systematically sabotaged by the “clique”, and when it was able to prevail in 1988 under the misleading name “The Supreme Minority Council’s Executive Committee” (AYK-YK) it did not function democratically at all. This had weakened the legitimacy of the AYK-YK in people’s eyes. Sadık challenged the AYK-YK using its own methods, but in a more extreme form. On the other hand, some people with left-wing leanings were also critical of the way the “clique” had usurped the AYK. Ekrem Hasan (Sinaspismos) proposed that the AYK should be organised in a democratic fashion. He wanted to re-establish it on a broad basis, incorporating local minority politicians, associations, etc. (Aile Birlik 52/26. 03.1992). This was of course not in the interest of neither Sadık nor the AYK-YK and consequently not feasible at the time. In the assembly of the YTD it appears that many of the members were critical of the AYK-YK, in particular because of the way it had exploited the black list. Ali Kamber accused the AYK-YK of not being democratic, and asked what was the business of Hatipoğlu there. In this way he pointed out indirectly that Hatipoğlu had no institutional basis for his position. When Onsunoğlu

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114 For two examples of his style, see Appendix 5, texts 56 and 57.
115 This was the central theme during this period. For a characteristic example, see Akin 1049/20.03.1992, “Is it so that the creation of ‘Inter-Party Unity in Thrace’ which is desired will be directed against our community?” Partly translated in Appendix 5, text 58.
said that the assembly of the AYK was sabotaged, Rodoplu replied that this was because Sadık did not recognise Aga and Faikoğlu, and refused to be in the same place as Hatipoğlu (İleri 689/09.10.1992). In reality neither Sadık nor the AYK-YK wanted the AYK to assemble in a democratic fashion. Later Aydın Ömeroğlu tried to look at some of the fundamental problems in the organisation of the minority. The AYK had never been recognised officially by the Greek authorities. He proposed to take initiatives to obtain legal status for it, and called it a scandal that the AYK did not assemble to discuss vital issues. He accused some members of the AYK-YK and the leader of DEB for neglecting the minority problems and only being occupied with their internal quarrels. The criticism was valid, but the people who launched it did not have the power to challenge seriously Sadık and AYK-YK.

The mutual accusations between Sadık and the AYK-YK took on ever more extreme forms. Mustafa Hafız Mustafa engaged in polemics against Faikoğlu who had said that most DEB members were police informers, and Hatipoğlu who insinuated that DEB was doing the job of the Greek authorities since it was against the AYK-YK (Balkan 10/21.04.1992). When Sadık participated in a conference in Kütahya-Turkey, he accused Faikoğlu publicly for collaborating with the Greek government and the secret services. Sadık later made a statement that he had been quoted incorrectly. This is unconvincing considering Sadık’s record of “reckless statements”, and probably reflects that he had been asked to disclaim such a compromising allegation. The AYK-YK had also visited Turkey at this time, and the members distinguished themselves by accusing each other in front of state authorities of being traitors, collaborators, sold, Greek agents, etc. (Trakya’nın Sesi 419/14.05.1992). In his religious message on the occasion of the Festival of Sacrifices (kurban bayramı), the “elected mufti” of Ksanthi, Mehmet Emin Aga, referred to Sadık as “brainless” (beyinsiz). Hatipoğlu would refer covertly to Sadık as “mentally ill” (ruh hastası) (Akın 1063/28.07.1992). The relationship to Turkey was put on display in all its glory for reasons of prestige. Hatipoğlu presented a trip to Turkey under the title: “The second Ankara visit of our Executive Committee, our minority’s sole Decision Organ, was very successful” (Akın 1061/06.07.1992). As mentioned earlier, the rivals were able to put their differences aside for just a moment and pose together in the name of “unity and solidarity” when they returned the school book to the Ministry of Education in Athens 12

117 Günaydın 03.05.1992, “Sadık accuses Faikoğlu of collaboration with the Greeks”, by İhsan Tunçoğlu. Facsimile in Trakya’nın Sesi 419/14.05.1992. It was also referred to in Günaydın 02.05.1992.
118 Balkan 12/12.05.1992. This is also referred to in Akın 1068/30.09.1992, in support of Faikoğlu and Aga.

It is often difficult to get an insight into the finer points of minority politics. The minority is by nature secretive, and there are many things going on behind the scenes which remain far from public scrutiny. However, Sadık was not a sophisticated conspirator and could blurt out the most incredible kinds of information which compromised both himself and his environment. His occasional disclaimers were not so much related to misquotations as to inability of acknowledging what he in fact had said. In the case of the conflict between Sadık and the AYK-YK, the situation got so out of hand that it laid bare many “minority secrets” that would otherwise never have been revealed. People said things in the heat of the moment that they later regretted. Mustafa Hafiz Mustafa told me after Sadık’s death that it would have been easy for him to find a modus vivendi if he had given some concessions to the “clique”. However, Sadık’s obsession with being the only leader left the others with their back against the wall. Consequently Sadık, who was a person without scruples, took on extreme confrontations with persons who were veterans of minority intrigues. Furthermore, the excesses of Sadık and the “clique” finally became too much for those who were their first victims. They had been faced with the problem that it was difficult to oppose somebody who had behind him the enormous prestige and power of the “motherland”, and that the first impulse of minority members was not to let the problems get outside their own community.

Onsunoğlu had, of course, reacted to the excesses of the “clique” already in the 1989 elections. A careful reading of his statements displays that he was very concerned about the situation. When the excesses of Sadık and the AYK-YK became rampant, it reached a point where he felt the need to call to account those who were responsible for the “moral crisis” which had befallen the minority. The final straw were the unseemly intrigues surrounding the burial of the old conservative leader Hafiz Yaşar Mehmetoğlu in early November 1992, something which was repeated when Celâl Zeybek died 8 months later. The “clique” and the Turkish Consulate decided to boycott the funeral. Later the Consulate even boycotted an arrangement by the YTD, because it had published a condolence letter to Hafiz Yaşar in a minority

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120 Hafız Yaşar Mehmetoğlu died 03.11.1992. See the obituaries in Trakya’nın Sesi 436/12.11.1992; İleri 694/13.11.1992. For Celâl Zeybek, see the obituaries in Trakya’nın Sesi 452/26.05.1993, which includes Onsunoğlu’s speech at the burial (translation in Appendix 5, text 59), and İleri 719/28.05.1993. The most detailed description of these events appeared later in Trakya’nın Sesi 460/18.08.1993; 461/08.09.1993, “Some Minority Questions in the Aftermath of Hafiz Yaşar” (Part 22–23), by İbrahim Onsunoğlu (translation in Appendix 5, text 60).
newspaper (İleri 696/27.11.1992). Onsunoğlu started immediately a series in Trakya’nın Sesi under the general heading: “Some Minority Questions in the Aftermath of Hafız Yaşar”, where he criticised the degeneration of minority politics and the methods applied. This series treated many of the recent episodes within the minority and provides us with valuable insight into the serious minority intrigues which took place during this period.

The Parliamentary Elections 10 October 1993

After the new election law with the 3% cut-off point had been enacted in 1990, it became clear that the political game had changed decisively. The repeated complaints by Turkey and the independent MPs brought no results. Consequently, everybody had to adjust their tactics accordingly, since there was no realistic possibility to elect an independent MP. Early elections were announced after the break away ND politician, Andonis Samaras, brought down the government 8 September 1993. The behaviour of the independent MPs would now decide the minority’s possibilities to elect any MPs. They would also be a deciding factor for the overall distribution of votes in the Rodopi and Ksanthi prefectures. Hatipoğlu mentioned already a couple of months earlier that the parties were looking for candidates for the general elections and had started to distribute “blue beads” to some minority candidates who “allegedly” represented the minority. He warned the parties that they should know whom to put on their tickets if they expected votes from the minority, and that it was important for the minority to keep the present MP personalities.¹²¹ This was probably more of a warning to potential minority candidates than to the parties. According to rumours, there had been an agreement between the parties so that Sadık would be a candidate for ND in Rodopi and Faikoğlu for PASOK in Ksanthi. According to a second scenario, the two MPs would not be accepted on the party tickets but the parties would nominate candidates indicated by them. There was the usual speculation about possible candidates which included people both inside and outside the “clique” (Trakya’nın Sesi 459/30.07.1993). There were reports that Mitsotakis had met secretly with Mehmet Emin Aga during his tour of Thrace 19 September and asked him to channel votes to ND. Both Sadık and Faikoğlu had tried to make deals with ND and PASOK to be included on their tickets, but this failed because of strong protests from other candidates (Kathimerini 03.10.1993). There were also signs that Sadık prepared for a possible confrontation with the parties.

The adherents of Sadık or the leading DEB cadre say that: “Everything is done in order to make Sadık MP. We need an MP like Sadık. If Sadık cannot become MP nobody else should be either…”

¹²¹ Akın 1096/24.07.1993. This is the last issue of the newspaper.
Afterwards they add: “Every method, every political game which can make Sadık MP is legitimate (helâl). It is all right that he is candidate for ND. It is all right if he is candidate for PASOK. Even if he should be a candidate for SINASPISMOS it is all right…” Some people even swagger and threaten, “If ND does not accept him on its ticket, we will show them…” These threatening words are also used towards the other two parties…

Hâki was very critical of this attitude which could leave the minority without MP. The relationship between Sadık and AYK-YK continued to be sour, and it became clear that the parliamentary elections would entail a show-down between them. With the announcement of early elections, each part jockeyed for position. Mustafa Hafiz Mustafa had written earlier that in the 1989-1990 elections the minority elected independent MPs and at the same time a leader. This leader was indisputably Sadık Ahmet, and the leadership question was in reality closed (Balkan 66/15.06.1993). Hâki countered this claim by pointing out that after the 1980 coup Turkish politics became topsy turvy. ANAP had the support of this regime. In the first normal elections (October 1991), the old politicians came back in power. Hâki claimed that if the Consulate treated everybody equally and fairly one would see who were good journalists, politicians, and leaders in the minority. He doubted if Sadık Ahmet, Faikoğlu, or Rodoplu would have been elected without the black list (İleri 723/25.06.1993). The intrigues between the AYK-YK and Sadık became increasingly mundane, as can be seen from some of the arguments in a polemic against Sadık:

We read one more section from the Balkan newspaper 24 august 1993 signed by Dr. Sadık Ahmet:

“If my announcements have a low level [seviyəziz] and are incoherent [ipe sapa gelmez], this accusation can also to some degree be considered to be said against the voters who support me, who know me very well, and who brought me to the position I am in today. I leave it up to my kinsmen to consider what is needed to be done and to evaluate these words by Fevzi Tanpınar, who accuses the great majority of the Western Thrace Turkish community of electing a ‘low level’ person as representative. Because if I have a ‘low level’, this does also in some way imply that my voters have a low level.”

Look at what he is saying (!)

-This means that also the voters of Ahmet Faikoğlu who was elected independent MP with thousands of Muslim Turkish votes in the Ksanthi (İskçe) area are “rendering services to KIP, sold out, deceivers,” according to Sadık Ahmet.
-Also when Mehmet Emin Aga, who again according to Sadık Ahmet is sold out, was elected our mufti by the votes of the Muslim people in the same area, this means that according to the same criteria, those who elected him carry the same attribute.
-This means that when the honourable Sadık Ahmet went from village to village speaking against our elected mufti İbrahim Şerif, he used the same expressions about İbrahim Şerif’s voters. This means that when Sadık Ahmet says that he does not recognise the Executive Committee which is made up by the participation of leaders of our Clubs and Associations, he thinks the same about the members who gave our leaders of the Clubs and Associations in question their position.
-This means that when the honourable Sadık Ahmet was able to say about the two official muftis of the Turkish republic who went to the Tihiron (Bulduklu) village during Ramadan “I do not recognise them”, he does not recognise all the mechanisms of the Turkish Republic.

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122 İleri 724/20.08.1993, “Dangerous games”, by Hâki. The same issue has also a wonderful parody of Sadık written as a dialogue between Karagöz and Haçivat.

Gerçek and Akın had also been behind this criticism. They wanted to dethrone Sadık, but this proved impossible as it became clear that he still enjoyed strong support from centres in Turkey. Rodoplu had accused Sadık of making Balkan a New Democracy election paper and Hâki commented: “Sadık is going through a crisis because he is afraid he will not be able to become candidate for ND… The clique is going through a crisis because it is afraid that Sadık will become candidate for ND…” (Ileri 727/10.09.1993). Rodoplu addressed himself directly to Sadık with his complaints: “During the last three years we were all at each other’s throats. Above all you, my honourable friend, were not pleased with anybody else than yourself” (Gerçek 368/07.09.1993). He accused Sadık of having used the last three years to break up and disperse the AYK-YK, in spite of the fact that it supported him during his trials, and called the establishment of the AYK-YK for the greatest achievement of the minority (ibid.). However, it was no easy task to confront the formidable force Sadık had evolved into. Hâki commented an article in a Turkish periodical which claimed that Turkey had created a monster in Cyprus with the one leader-one hero-policy of “Denktaşaşım”. Hâki remarked that the same had been attempted in Thrace by ANAP. By propagandising for Sadık on Turkish radio and television from morning to evening a “Sadıkism monster” was created. 124 As usual, the solidarity organisations in Turkey and Europe were firmly behind Sadık and the independents. 125

After the elections were announced the DEB party made the following decision: DEB would definitively participate in the elections and was open for collaboration with all the other parties. Any party which was interested in discussing collaboration with DEB must a) respect fully the minority’s rights, b) accept Sadık Ahmet as candidate in Rodopi and someone indicated by the DEB party as candidate in Ksanthi. If DEB was not able to agree on collaboration with another party, an independent ticket would be formed (Balkan 77/14.09.1993). With this declaration, Sadık distanced himself from the AYK-YK, which had paid a visit to Sadık’s office and proposed co-operation as the independent tickets were prepared. The AYK-YK now took the initiative and made a declaration that it would participate in the elections with the “Trust” ticket. 126 None of the parties accepted Sadık or Faikoğlu on their tickets. Although both PASOK and ND could recognise their vote potential, it was also necessary to have in mind the possible reactions against the inclusion of such controversial candidates on the party tickets. In the overall account they would surely be more of a liability than an asset. ND had proposed that Sadık could suggest some other candidate from his party who was less controversial, but Sadık refused (Trakya’nın Sesi 473/13.01.1994).

125 See Batt Trakya’nın Sesi 54/September 1993 and Almanya’dan Batt Trakya 4/September 1993 (Organ of the Western Thrace Turkish Federation in Germany, editor Cafer Alioğlu).
After he had been rejected, Sadık made the statement: “If the parties do not want us in the Greek parliament, we will elect our deputy and send him to the WORLD PARLIAMENT.” (Balkan 78/21.09.1993). He claimed that although this time the minority would not elect a MP, the only thing it would lose was the MP salary. Apart from this it was impossible to enumerate all the minority would gain. As a leader he would be more respected throughout the world than a simple MP. The minority should rise above looking for petty interests such as being represented in the Greek parliament and send a representative to the World Parliaments (ibid.). In this connection Sadık was presented as a new Arafat who would go all over the world and continue the struggle until the minority had obtained all its rights. When it became clear that he would not be accepted on a party ticket Sadık joined Rodoplu, probably after pressure from Ankara. In Ksanthi, Ahmet Faikoğlu and Rasim Murcaoğlu were joined by Niyazi Avcı who represented Sadık’s DEB party. It was clear that Sadık had teamed up with Rodoplu and Faikoğlu only for the elections, and that he saw the elections as a contest where the marks of preference would show who was the leader of the minority. In other words, the scene was set for a show-down between Sadık’s DEB party and the AYK-YK. There was of course also a faint chance that there would be a ruling against the 3% cut-off point provision. The independent candidates stressed that they would contest the 3% provision in the State Council and if necessary forward it to the European Court of Justice. In this way they tried to reassure the voters who feared that the minority would remain without parliamentary representation.

In their election campaign the independent candidates would again keep the banner of “Turkism” high. In a polemic with Mitsotakis, who had said that Turkey should not interfere in Greece’s internal matters, Faikoğlu wrote: “There is only one minority in Western Thrace, and that is the TURKISH MUSLIM MINORITY AND THIS MINORITY’S NATURAL PROTECTOR AND LEGAL GUARANTOR, IS THE MOTHER COUNTRY TURKEY” (Gercek 371/25.09.1993). In his election speeches Faikoğlu would claim: “They say that we will remain without MP. That we will be orphans. No, we are not orphans. When we have Süleyman Demirel as father and Tansu Çiller as mother we will never be orphans.” Sadık said in an election speech:

127 Balkan 81/28.09.1993 “The 40-year struggle of Arafat must be an example! As the result of 40 years of struggle Arafat the leader of the Palestinian people obtained the right to become a state.”
128 See Eleftherotipia 22.09.1993, “Ankara pressures the vote of the Muslims”, by Simeon Soltaridis, which reflects credible information circulating in the minority at the time. For a more in depth account of the relationship between Sadık and Rodoplu during this period, see İleri 731/08.10.1993.
129 See Gerçek 371/25.09.1993 (which includes a message from Faikoğlu dated 24.09.1993) and Balkan 85/06.10.1993.
130 Eleftherotipia 31.10.1993, article by İbram Onsunoğlu featured in a larger reportage by "O Ios". I heard Faikoğlu use this argument repeatedly, when I followed him to several villages during his election campaign. Here Faikoğlu had recourse to an analogy he had also used in 1989 when he said that “Minority without MP resembles an orphan child” (cf. Öğür 2/12.07.1989).
“We elect the leader of the minority for the world parliament, and not MP for the Greek parliament. I want all the votes. Then, as the only leader of the minority, they will accept me in the Greek parliament either they want it or not. The Greeks are afraid of me. Today we have beside us the MPs and ministers of the Mother Country Turkey who wish the victory to be great” (ibid.). None of the independent candidates had any problems with taking big words in their mouth. However, they were not able to obliterate the concerns about what would happen with the parliamentary representation.

Hâki was greatly alarmed by the situation. He would, as usual, stress the importance of voting for minority candidates. All the votes should go to the minority candidates even though the leaders were corrupt, and not a single vote to Christian candidates because the Christians would never vote for the Muslims. However, he also wrote a letter to the Turkish prime minister which mentioned that the Consul was behaving in such a way that the minority could not elect MP and acted against the minority’s interests. The Christians were already celebrating that there would be no minority MPs.¹³¹

Hâki also repeated his pleas to the Consulate for neutrality in the elections:

1. There should be EQUAL BEHAVIOUR towards the minority candidates,
2. Some candidates or known persons will again display that they have the General Consulate behind them; this must not be allowed,
3. The people at the General Consulate must not take this or that politicians BY THE ARM and stroll through the market place,
4. An EXTORTION like the BLACK LIST THREAT must not be allowed.
5. TRT [Turkish state television] should be neutral…¹³²

There were other incidents which revealed the Consulate’s involvement or the abuse of the Consulate’s name. A minority radio station announced that it would do commercial spots for minority candidates and issued a price list. The Consulate reacted and asked it not to accept propaganda for the party candidates. When Faikoğlu visited the shops in Ksanthi he told the owners that: “I have greetings from the Consul, you will vote for the independents in the elections” (Aile Bırlik 84/30.09.1993). Hâki sent a letter to the Turkish Consulate in which he implored it not to make the minority remain without MP. In this connection he took a look at the Consulate’s relation to various MPs after 1974, which can be instructive to recapitulate.

According to Hâki, in 1974 the Consulate had some sympathy and trust in Sabahaddin Galip because of Karapaça, who worked in the Consulate, but none in Hafiz Yaşar. The Consulate had no trust in the MPs elected in 1977 and 1981. In 1985 the Consulate had no trust and liking for Mehmet Müftüoğlu, but it did have some for Ahmet Faikoğlu who later turned out to have been paid agent for the Greek secret services. In this matter, Faikoğlu had been more successful in exploiting the Consulate than the other way around. In 1989–1990 Sadık and Rodoplu were elected. The General Consul worked reluctantly for Sadık because of the pressure from ANAP, but

¹³² Ibid. He wrote almost the same in İleri 728/17.09.1993.
never liked or trusted him. This became apparent when there was a change of government in Turkey in 1991. The General Consul had his sympathy and trust in Rodoplu. Hâki’s comments are plausible, and should be kept in mind when we look at the election result. Later Sadık even accused the Consulate of intervening against him in the 1993 election (Trakya’nın Sesi 502/13.04.1995). Sadık was of course quick to hurl accusations against anybody who did not support him 100%, but it is evident that his relationship with the Consulate was far from harmonious.

With these developments, the only minority candidates with a realistic chance of election would be those who ran on the party tickets. Now they became the main targets of both the independent candidates and Greek nationalist circles. In some cases they came under the fire of the adherents of Christian candidates, who could only be elected if the minority failed to elect representatives from its own ranks. In practice, this led to an unholy alliance between the independent candidates and Christian nationalists. When we look at the minority candidates of the two major parties, the most striking aspect is the appearance of marginal persons, who have not been heard of either before or later, such as Hasan Ali and Mehmet Baş. The established politicians who participated in the election campaign were Ahmet Mehmet (PASOK) and İbırm Onsunolu (ND) in Rodopi, and Orhan Hacıibram (ND) in Ksanthi. In Rodopi KKE and Sinaspismos were represented by candidates with long ties to the parties, Faik Faık and Nazif Ferhat, while in Ksanthi the candidates were little known. Mustafa Mustafa obtained a place on the “honorary” ticket (epikrattas) of Sinaspismos.

As usual the minority press has most detailed information about Rodopi. Ahmet Mehmet was the inevitable candidate for PASOK. It would be difficult for PASOK to neglect him, but also difficult for Ahmet Mehmet to let his party down because of his long time and deep affiliation with it. The question of who could be the second minority candidate for PASOK was more open, and in the early phase the contenders were Hasan İmamoğlu, Adem Bekiroğlu, Sabahaddin Emin, Rodoplu, Hasan Kaşıkçıoğlu, and Hasan Hatipoğlu. At this stage İmamoğlu was mentioned as a possible candidate for PASOK, because the local ND cadre had opened a campaign against him (Trakya’nın Sesi 459/30.07.1993). It was striking that PASOK later avoided to include its long-time member Hasan Kaşıkçıoğlu, who had been a candidate already in 1981. This could be related to the fact that Kaşıkçıoğlu had been relatively close to the independent candidates in 1989–1990, and, on the other hand he could be a more serious rival than Ahmet Mehmet to some of the Christian candidates. Whatever the reasons, it is striking that PASOK opted for the marginal Hasan Ali as its second candidate from the minority. Hâki remarked that this was also suitable for the DEB

party and the AYK-YK, because if Kaşıkçıoğlu had been elected he could be MP for a long time (İleri 730/01.10.1993).

Onsunoğlu provides us with a more detailed account about what happened in the ND nomination process. Onsunoğlu had no relations with the local ND cadre, but all the decisions regarding the minority came from Athens. Before the elections they contacted him and asked about possible candidates from the minority. Onsunoğlu was reluctant to run himself, but proposed the names of 4 people whom he considered suitable candidates. Later he agreed to be the 5th alternative if it was not possible to find anyone else. When ND contacted some persons in Komotini nobody gave a straight answer. Everybody had their eyes on what they would say in Turkey and asked for a few days respite to sound out the situation. Some gave immediately a negative answer. It became clear that the Consulate would not leave the minority free to decide for itself, and nobody could say yes to a candidature for ND without the approval of Turkey. As mentioned earlier, Sadık had made strong efforts to become accepted by ND, but in vain. Later it became known that ND would not accept a candidate imposed by Turkey. Onsunoğlu claimed that he finally accepted to become candidate, in order to not allow the “mafia” to silence everybody in the minority. İmamoğlu had also received an offer, but declined after much thought. When Onsunoğlu spoke to İmamoğlu, he was congratulated for his courage. Onsunoğlu stressed that while some people would call İmamoğlu’s attitude realism, he himself considered it to be a question of terror against the minority (Trakya’nın Sesi 473/13.01.1994). Another strong prospect had been the township president Ali Nuri. When he received the proposal to become candidate for ND, he did not dare to accept it as he did not belong to those who were approved by the Consulate. Instead, he suggested to ND that Sadık Ahmet should be accepted.134 Greek newspapers would also report that Sadık-Faikoğlu and the Turkish Consulate threatened the candidates of the established parties (Pontiki 23.09.1993). In other words, the anomalous situation from the 1989–90 elections repeated itself.

As mentioned earlier, the independent candidates held a high “Turkism” profile and tried to ridicule the ND and PASOK candidates as lackeys of their parties and the Greek authorities. Mustafa Hafız Mustafa would point to the past sins of PASOK and ND, and stress that the minority candidates for these parties could not say publicly that they were Turks (Balkan 79/25.09.1993). The same themes were presented in a passage from one of Sadık’s election speeches, neatly presented under a picture of him together with Süleyman Demirel: “On the morning of 23 April, during the breakfast I had with President of the Turkish Republic Demirel, he told me: ‘Unfortunately, in every society there are people who only think of their own advantage, collaborators, and traitors. They do not only exist in minorities, they are also here in Turkey. But the

134 Trakya’nın Sesi 482/05.05.1994. I have also heard a detailed account of the negotiations around Ali Nuri’s candidacy from a high ranking local ND cadre.
majority of the people, who understand what is the truth, do not allow these people to do much damage!” (Balkan 82/30.09.1993). Those who blamed Turkey for interfering in the elections, were accused of dirty games (ibid.). Rodoplu played on the old notion of minority unity. He wrote that some people promoted “their master’s voice” and tried to sow “seeds of discord” by not joining the independent tickets (Gerçek 371/25.09.1993). Both Orhan Hacıibram and Ahmet Mehmet tried to counter this kind of propaganda by stressing the Turkish descent of the minority in their election propaganda. This had of course always been a well-used device during election campaigns and tacitly approved by the parties. Orhan Hacıibram had two posters at his election office. One in Greek and one in Turkish. On the Turkish one he stressed his Turkish descent, as he had done in former elections. On 25 September Haralambos Ellinidis and others from the “Hawk of Thrace” (Yeráki tis Thrákis) came and created episodes. After this “reaction”, Orhan was summoned to the chairman and secretary of the ND prefecture committee and told to take down the second poster, which he refused categorically. It was consequently the local ND leadership which told him to take down the poster, allegedly as the result of popular pressure. On 29 September the PASOK prefecture committee forced its candidate Ahmet Mehmet to take down his poster because he, too, stressed the national character of the minority. There was also pressure on ND to revoke the candidacy of Onsunoğlu. This gave new arguments to the independent candidates. Rodoplu and Faikoğlu would stress the insults against Orhan Hacıibram, and his election banner (Gerçek 372/29.09.1993). Sadik declared: “Do the parties which do not accept the Turkism of their own candidates accept the Turkism of our Community? For that reason let us gather all the votes for the independent tickets! (Balkan 80/27.09.1993). Mustafa Hafiz Mustafa asked rhetorically what would happen if a “puppet MP” was elected for the parties. Would he be able to say that he is a Turkish MP? (ibid.).

These events ruined the election campaigns of Ahmet Mehmet and Orhan Hacıibram. Both of them relinquished their candidacies, although Orhan later changed his mind again. Ahmet Mehmet now tried to make a new move. In his resignation, addressed to the AYK-YK (30 September), he wrote that he withdrew because members of the prefecture PASOK committee made him take down posters with the text “The only choice of a Turkish MP for the Greek parliament” from his election centre. He said he would become independent and act according to the AYK-YK if he was elected on the PASOK ticket, which was the only way of electing someone from the minority because of the 3% limit. This initiative led nowhere, but both Ahmet Mehmet and Orhan Hacıibram had been put in a difficult situation because of the actions against them by their own parties. As seen before, in previous elections none of the major

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135 Eleftherotiopia 31.10.1993, by O Ios
136 Eleftherotiopia 30.09.1993; Gerçek 373/02.10.1993
parties had problems with playing the “Turkism” card for vote hunting purposes. However, now they humiliated their minority candidates who used this device. Thus they directed the Muslim vote towards the independent candidates, who had no chance of election. The independent candidates knew how to exploit this “gift”, and increased their propaganda against the party candidates. This left in reality Onsunoğlu as the only serious candidate who had not been compromised, and he was the next to bear the brunt of the assaults on the minority’s parliamentary representation.

A Greek ultra-right newspaper had the uncertain, but not improbable, information that Greek intelligence (EIP) had “persuaded the extremists” to run as independents in Ksanthi and Komotini for a large fee. Consequently the “dangerous Onsunoğlu” was excluded from election. The newspaper maintained that at the moment Sadık and Faikoğlu worked for Greece, and that the Greek patriots in Thrace should encourage Muslims to vote for the independents (Stohos 06.10.1993). In his election propaganda Onsunoğlu had opted for a sober approach. He would try to remind people that it was an election for parliamentary representation in Greece, not for the “World Parliament”. He was strongly critical of the anomalies in the minority culture which had developed after the election of the independent MPs in 1989, and stressed the need for greater internal democracy (İleri 730/01.10.1993). He was also able to obtain support from part of the Turkish press—mainly the newspaper Zaman—, which was critical of the Turkish Foreign Ministry’s handling of the minority issue. It was pointed out that the independent candidatures of Faikoğlu and Sadık were not positive for Greek-Turkish relations, and that they could deprive the minority of parliamentary representation. It was also mentioned that Sadık and Faikoğlu had formerly been elected because of the black list and the threats. In an interview Onsunoğlu stressed the importance of the normalisation of Greek-Turkish relations, and Mitsotakis’ more relaxed relationship to Turkey. He was critical of the fact that neither Greece nor Turkey wanted to deal with the minority issue outside the framework of Greek-Turkish relations. It seemed that the minority too was most comfortable with this approach, and even if it had wanted something else it lacked the strength. He characterised the Turkish policy in 1989–1990 as a mistake which provoked Greek chauvinism and awakened Turcophobia. As a result the minority had now lost the alternative of electing an independent MP, without really having used this card in any sensible way (Zaman 29.09.1993).

On the eve of the elections Onsunoğlu would stress that the election of the minority candidates who ran for the parties was obstructed. He made the point that since the

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138 See the commentaries by Mustafa Yazgan in Zaman 03.10.1993, and Mehmed Doğru in Zaman 08.10.1993. Commentators in Zaman would subsequently consider Onsunoğlu as the only possible alternative, and lay the responsibility of developments in Thrace on the Turkish Foreign Department.
independents could not be elected the votes for them would in fact elect Christian MPs, and asked the independents to resign.\footnote{\textit{Ileri} 731/08.10.1993. Nazif Ferhat also asked the minority to vote for the party candidates, so that it would not be left without MP (ibid.). There were signs that the minority had become alarmed by the prospect that it would not elect its own MPs, but there was no way to curb the force of the independent candidates. See \textit{Eleftherotipia} 08.10.1993, “Turmoil in the Muslim minority - concern about the independent tickets”, by Simeon Soltaridis.}

Because of his intellectual capacity and good command of Greek, Onsunoğlu was able to ward off the attacks on him by part of the local Greek press.\footnote{For the beginning of the debate, see \textit{Elefthero Vima} 03.10.1993, “He wants adjective specifying the ethnicity of the minority!”, which contains Onsunoğlu’s first answer to the attacks against him with comments by the newspaper. (Translation in Appendix 5, text 62).} These attacks on Onsunoğlu were also influenced by petty party politics. One of his adversaries suggested: “I would propose, so that the Greeks do not forget, that your newspaper publishes the letter of Mr. Onsunoğlu in a black frame with frontispiece the emblem of the party which hosts him. Every day, at least until the elections. Unless in the meantime his party renounces and expels him.”\footnote{\textit{Elefthero Vima} 07.10.1993, “The Onsunoğlu phenomenon is extremely dangerous”, by Zafirios K. Mekos. The newspaper supported PASOK.} The newspaper claimed that the silence of ND showed that it adopted Onsunoğlu’s position, and accused Onsunoğlu and ND for playing a “dirty game” with the minority.\footnote{\textit{Elefthero Vima} 08.10.1993 “ND adopts the opinions of Onsunoğlu.”} However, when some of the more obstinate nationalists continued their attacks on Onsunoğlu after the elections, the newspaper \textit{Elefthero Vima} allegedly refused to print them because the editor said that Onsunoğlu was basically right, and they would make fools of themselves.\footnote{See the discussion in \textit{Trakya’nın Sesi} 463/07.11.1993, which includes two of Onsunoğlu’s letters and the attack on him by Zafirios Mekos in \textit{Elefthero Vima} 12.10.1993.} Onsunoğlu made a spirited defence of the minority’s right to freely express its identity. He pointed out the strong cultural and emotional attachment to Turkey, but stressed that many in the minority disagreed with the policy Turkey had initiated 7–8 years earlier. They condemned it as opportunist, amoral, and not serving the interest of the minority. After the elections, he placed the sole responsibility for leaving the minority without MP for the first time on the centres in Turkey which determined the minority policy.\footnote{\textit{Trakya’nın Sesi} 464/14.11.1993, which reprints the letter to \textit{Elefthero Vima} dated Thessaloniki 18.10.1993.} In other words, Onsunoğlu was able to defend the minority successfully towards Greek opinion, but could not cope with the centres in Turkey.
The Election Results in Rodopi\textsuperscript{145}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sadik Ahmet (Trust)</td>
<td>24,956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>İsmail Rodoplu (Trust)</td>
<td>1,031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified (Trust)</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmet Mehmet (PASOK)</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasan Ali (PASOK)</td>
<td>651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>İbrahim Onsunoglu (ND)</td>
<td>545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mehmet Baş (ND)</td>
<td>517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferhat Nazif (Sinaspismos)</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faik Faik (KKE)</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Friderikos Aral\textsuperscript{146} (Enosi Kendroon) 4

Total: 28,476

Inscribed voters 108,931, total votes cast 81,601, invalid votes 1,528, valid votes 80,073 (\textit{ekloyikó métro} 20,018), total votes for independents 26,228. The following MPs were elected: Dimitris Tsetines (PASOK), Haralambos Damianidis (PASOK), and Paschalis Konstandinidis (ND).

Trust succeeded in becoming the largest “party” in Rodopi. The relative strength of the parties was as follows: Trust 32.75\%, PASOK 31.04 \%, ND 28.47\%, \textit{Politiki Aniksi} 3.67\%, Sinaspismos 1.54 \%, and KKE 1.37\%. No Muslim MP was elected, and the Christian candidate who came second on the PASOK ticket owed his election indirectly to the independent ticket. It should be noted that Andonis Samaras’ \textit{Politiki Aniksi} did not have candidates from the minority on its tickets in either Rodopi or Ksanthi. This could be an attempt to appeal to local nationalists. In any case, Samaras was extremely unpopular in the minority since he was considered to have been involved in the preparation of the episodes of 29 January 1990. \textit{Sinaspismos} was not able to surpass the 3\% cut-off point on a national basis and became consequently its other victim. This was also a loss for the minority, since its Muslim candidates were well integrated in the party and provided a model for normal participation in Greek political life.\textsuperscript{147}

The most striking feature of the result was the independent ticket’s ability to keep its strength, in spite of the fact that it had no chance of electing an MP. Another feature

\textsuperscript{145} The results are taken from \textit{Balkan} 87/13.10.1993.
\textsuperscript{146} Friderikos Aral is a borderline case since he is a Muslim from the minority who has converted to Catholicism. The minority considered it a great mystery who had voted for him apart from himself. Earlier under his original name Hasan Aral he had also served as president of the “Turkish Youth Union”. He has since changed his last name too, from Aral to Dragumis.
\textsuperscript{147} \textit{İleri} 732/16.10.1993. The declaration is translated in Appendix 5, text 63. See also the article by his political colleague and kindred spirit Ekrem Hasan, in \textit{İleri} 733/22.10.1993. The candidate Nazif Ferhat was naturally disappointed with the result. In a declaration after the election, he stressed the necessity of fighting for a modern and democratic approach to the minority question.
was the almost total elimination of the Muslim candidates on the party tickets. The independent candidates presented the result as a great victory for Turkism, which was also the view presented by the Solidarity Associations in Turkey (cf. Batı Trakya’nın Sesi 55/October 1993). The independents would stress that the small decrease in votes for them was due to the fact that fewer voters living abroad (Turkey, Germany) came for the elections, while their adversaries would claim that it was due to an increase in the votes for the Christians. There is probably some truth in both claims, but there is no reliable statistical evidence available to specify the numbers.\textsuperscript{148} Within the independent ticket the result signified a crushing defeat for Rodoplu. Characteristically, in the first presentation of the results Rodoplu mentioned only the votes for each party and not for the individual candidates (Gerçek 375/14.10.1993). Sadık, on the other hand, would present the results as a victory for the DEB party, which was obtained “in spite of all the disadvantages”. In a message to the voters he stressed that from now on only DEB represented the minority inside and outside Western Thrace, and nobody should take any initiatives without consulting it (Balkan 87/13.10.1993). He also announced that he would protest to international organisations since he was not elected because of the 3% limit.\textsuperscript{149} In spite of the overwhelming victory it was clear that Mustafa Hafiz Mustafa was bothered by some of the criticism in Turkey, in particular by the well known commentator of interSTAR TV, Engin Ardiç, who had pointed out on the eve of the elections that the minority should not be left without parliamentary representation. Mustafa countered this with a strong attack on his person, including rumours that the mother of his boss was Greek Orthodox (Balkan 88/19.10.1993). It was one of Mustafa’s usual devices to play on bigotry.

On the other side a Muslim politician had the following characterisation of the large parties’ approach: “The parties have not done anything to be able to persuade the minority. They have not made any political infrastructure to create Muslim politicians. It is now time for the parties to approach the minority and not only contact it when they want its votes [proeklogiká-psifothiriká]. The nation must get in direct contact with the minority without the brokerage of persons like Sadık.[…]”\textsuperscript{150} This stands in stark contrast to the usual Greek accusations, that the tactics of Sadık and the Consulate, together with other groups in the Turkish administration, was to cut the minority off from Greek political life and create a ghetto dependent on a foreign country.\textsuperscript{151} As

\textsuperscript{148} According to one estimate, 10–11,000 of the 37,000 Muslims votes in Rodopi, and 11,000 of the 24,000 Muslim votes in Ksanthi went to Christian candidates (Eleftherotipia 31.10.1993). An article in Zaman (12.10.1993) had the title: “22,000 of the 65,000 Muslim Turkish votes went to the Christians, W. Thrace the victim of the Foreign ministry.”

\textsuperscript{149} See Eleftherotipia 15.10.1993, “Protest by Sadık with foreign support”. However, it was only much later that he took the first initiative which was to bring the case to the Greek election court (Balkan 108/15.03.1994).

\textsuperscript{150} Eleftherotipia 14.10.1993, “The minority: without Trust to …Good Fortune”, by Simeon Soltaridis. The politician is not named.

\textsuperscript{151} Kathimerini 17.10.1993, by Alkis Kurkulas (reflecting Greek diplomatic sources in Turkey).
usual, both Greece and Turkey contributed, each in its own way, to the ghettoisation of the minority.

The Athenian press seemed to ignore the minority in these elections. On the other hand, there were some strong reactions locally to the results by both Christian and Muslim politicians. The Prefect of Rodopi, Konstandinos Siatras (ND), declared in an interview:

The problem which by now have become increasingly clear is the plans and aspirations of Turkey in Thrace. The large number of votes for Sadık in this and previous elections does not surprise me. What I have to declare is that it is not the votes of free people, because a dark terror was and is carried out in the area, which compels those people to conform completely with the commands (Hronos 11.10.1993).

This was not the usual kind of danger mongering, but the reaction of someone who was exasperated after witnessing the terror against the potential ND candidates during the nomination process. Hâki was very disappointed with the election result. He is a person who surely has not displayed any lack of “fighting spirit”, but he now felt the need to stress the negative effects of the independent tickets. He pointed out that the actions of the independent movement in the 1989 elections instigated the Christians and the authorities against the minority. It was time for self criticism, as part of the minority’s behaviour had been provocative (İleri 733/22.10.1993). Dede parodied the choices the minority made by its own “FREE will”. In 1989–90 it proved its Turkism three times. In the last elections it elected deputies for the world. In the coming election it could elect deputies for space, and afterwards for heaven and hell. In fact, with their “FREE will” the Muslim-Turkish voters elected Christian-Greek deputies (Trakya’nın Sesi 462/31.10.1993). There were some scenarios about secret agreements between Greece and Turkey of supporting the independent candidates in order to prevent the parliamentary representation of the minority. This is again not improbable, but difficult to prove.

Onsunuoğlu presented the following argument: Turkey left the minority without MP because the PASOK politicians had accused the Consulate of directing the minority and asked for the closing of the Consulate. Now it displayed its goodwill towards PASOK by not letting the minority elect MP. If the minority had elected two or three MPs the cries for closing the Consulate would rise from the PASOK cadre after the election victory. Thus, the minority representation was sacrificed for Greek-Turkish relations. The message was also that Turkey would leave alone the Turks in Thrace, so that Greece should leave alone the Kurds. Whatever the reason, the Consulate decided that the minority should be without MP and imposed this on the minority which did not dare to resist. The minority was used as a card, and afterwards the election result

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152 The minority was only mentioned in passing by the major newspapers. The first real comments appeared in Pontiki 12.10.1993 and Eleftherotipia 14.10.1993, “The minority: without Trust to …Good Fortune”, by Simeon Soltaridis, who is quite pertinent on this occasion.
was presented absurdly as a “victory.” (Trakya’nın Sesi 476/10.02.1994). Onsunoğlu also made the most substantial criticism of the minority electorate. He regarded the elections as connected to the “national identity” of the minority. The swearing into parliament of minority MPs, made manifest the existence of the minority. In the elections the overwhelming majority of the minority used their vote not to elect MPs, they voted for the independent or the Christian candidates. In this way the minority adversaries succeeded in one of their most important goals since 1974, and indeed democratically and with the minority’s own hands. The electoral behaviour of the minority was first of all determined by fear, which originated from the Consulate and procedures carried out in its name. Those who voted for the “independents” gave in for their pressure, those who voted for the Christians gave in for pressure by the other side. Against them 4,000 voters in both prefectures withstood the pressure. Between the two groups which denied their identity or were made to deny their identity this small but conscious group preserved the identity of the minority. Onsunoğlu asked rhetorically if the minority elected MP? If the answer was no, which seat remained empty in parliament? The claim before the elections that this time the minority would not elect MP was senseless. What should be said was that: “This time the minority would not elect an MP among themselves.” Or, even more correct: “This time the Minority would elect only Christian MPs.” Some people would maybe protest and say that they were praising Turkism and the Motherland, how could you say that they were “pro-infidels”. But this was the trick: To display one thing while you did the other. There had been overbidding in Turkish nationalism, with the result that they elected three Christian MPs. Onsunoğlu divided those who voted for Christians in two groups. Those who had usually done so, who were very few, and those who started after 1989 and particularly in 1993. On 10 October 1993 this group increased like a landslide and reached more than 25% in Rodopi and 40% in Ksanthi. This was a side effect of the value anarchy, and confusion of terms. He summed up the various arguments for voting for the independents, which displayed the turmoil and fear among the electorate. The 1993 election would later be characterised as a great great scandal (Trakya’nın Sesi 572/26.12.1996).

154 This criticism was printed successively in İleri 735/05.11.1993; 736/12.11.1993; 737/19.11.1993; 739/03.12.1993; 740/10.12.1993.
The Election Results in Ksanthi

Ahmet Faikoğlu (Good Fortune) 7,874
Rasim Murcaoğlu (Good Fortune) 1,018
Niyazi Avci (Good Fortune) 3,240
Unspecified (Good Fortune) 326
Mehmet İmam (PASOK) 470
Orhan Hacıibram (ND) 893
Cemil Kehaya (Sinaspismos) 60
Cemil Katunlu (KKE) 150
Total: 14,031

Registered voters 88,044, total votes cast 67,198, invalid votes 1,051, valid votes 66,147 (ekloyikó métro 16,536), total votes for independents 12,458. The following MPs were elected: Panayiotis Sguridis (PASOK), Nikolaos Lambadaris (PASOK), and Evangelos Kurtidis (ND).

It should be noted that for the first time PASOK (24,437 votes-36.94%) surpassed ND (24,215 votes-36.61%) in Ksanthi. It is quite possible that the attack on Orhan Hacıibram’s election centre cost ND a seat. The Good Fortune ticket displayed a significant loss of votes and would not have been able to elect an MP even if the 3% provision had not been in force. The party candidates were unable to gather a significant amount of votes, and the minority votes for Christian candidates increased. It also became clear that the relationship between Niyazi Avci, who was connected to the DEB party, and the other candidates on the Good Fortune ticket was far from harmonious. Mustafa Hafiz Mustafa accused Aga and Faikoğlu’s people of going from door to door in the mountain area to destroy the ballots distributed with the name of Niyazi Avci marked. There was also mud slinging and intimidation against his supporters. Mustafa asked rhetorically if this was done because they were afraid of Sadık’s following (Balkan 87/13.10.1993; 89/26.10.1993). It was clear that in addition to his crushing victory in Rodopi, Sadık had made important inroads into Faikoğlu’s electorate in Ksanthi. There are reasons to believe that the primary motivation of the Good Fortune ticket in these elections was to oppose Sadık’s bid for power. Hâki asked the question: how was it possible that no one with more than primary school participated on the Good Fortune ticket. He answered himself that it was because the “clique” wanted strict discipline and not someone who might have his own opinions (İleri 732/16.10.1993).

On a national level the elections provided PASOK with a comfortable majority of 171 seats, against ND 110 seats, Politiki Aniksi 10 seats, and KKE 9 seats. Sinaspismos remained outside parliament after receiving 2.94% of the votes. This result signified an impressive come back for Andreas Papandreu after his government went
down amidst scandals in 1989. It also meant that PASOK would handle the relationship to Turkey.

**Internal Developments after the Elections**

Sadık exploited the victory to continue his onslaught against the AYK-YK. He claimed that the result had decided the leadership question once and for all. Sadık Ahmet had represented DEB in the election while Rodoplu presented himself as the candidate of the AYK-YK. Consequently the votes for Rodoplu could be considered to be the votes for the AYK-YK. Since Sadık obtained 96% and Rodoplu 4% of the votes this displayed clearly who was the leader. In a series of leading articles, Mustafa Hafız Mustafa presented Sadık’s position. Sadik claimed that the AYK-YK had outplayed its role in its present form. Now there was the DEB party with a leader elected by the people. He promoted DEB as the only leadership of the minority and asked everybody to become members. Significantly, the Solidarity Associations in Turkey also presented the election as an election for leader, and presented Sadik as the single and indisputable leader (*Bati Trakya’nın Sesi* 55/October 1993). The clash between DEB and the AYK-YK had now seeped down to the village level with opposing adherents who were at each other’s throats. According to a villager, the internal division had never been worse (*İleri* 739/03.12.1993). Sadık was able to prevail and he dissolved the AYK-YK. In front of the party convention of DEB 19 January 1994, DEB was said to be the only official voice of “Western Thrace Turkism” after the 10 October election (*Balkan* 98/28.12.1993). Sadik as leader of the DEB party now organised the various minority associations and leading persons in an entity he called the “Consultation Council” (*Danışma Kurulu*-DK). It was said that DEB would make its decisions about minority issues after consulting the DK (cf. *Balkan* 99/11.01.1994). In reality Sadık was now in full control. Rodoplu criticised Sadik for only doing things after his own head and not paying attention to the AYK-YK which had supported him for years. He wrote that those who made the AYK-YK disperse in 1993 held a heavy responsibility. Like the responsibility of Talat Paşa or whoever dispersed the 1913 independent Western Thrace Republic. Democracy required many voices and the AYK-YK should be revived (*Gerçek* 384/25.02.1994). The old leaders of the AYK-YK clearly resented what had happened and waited for an opportunity to get even with Sadık.

The exact character of the Turkish support to Sadık is difficult to map out in detail. This is connected to the confused political situation in Turkey where various ultranationalist networks had been able to extend their influence to the highest quarters. As already mentioned, part of this was uncovered later, when it became clear that Sadik Ahmet had been close to the “idealistic” (*ülkücü*) mafioso Abdüllah Çatlı who was killed.

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in the car accident at Susurluk 3 November 1996. At the time it was written in the minority press that the strength of both Sadık and the AYK-YK derived from “fascist groups” in Turkey which influenced the government (Aile Birlık 77/22.04.1993). However, they did not always enjoy the support of the same groups. Looking back with the benefit of hindsight, many incidents suggest that the Turkish Foreign Department was never really comfortable with Sadık, but had to conform to the wishes of other decision centres. Reputedly, even the Consul Kemal Gür had said that: “Sadık is an imbecile, but we must support him. There is an order from Turkey.”

Sadık had not been invited and the minority was confused about what was happening. The AYK-YK claimed triumphantly that Sadık had been put out in the cold and was finished (İleri 675/15.05.1992). However, this was clearly a premature judgement. Both Sadık and the AYK-YK appeared at the farewell reception of the Consul Önder Alpman, although the two groups were not on speaking terms (Aile Birlık 65/03.09.1992).

The next Consul, Hakan Okçal, did not have cordial relations with Sadık. The situation came out of hand when Sadık became angry at the Consul after he had attended the trial of the “elected mufti” Mehmet Emin Aga in Ksanthi 12.04.1994. Sadık must have felt—not unjustifiably—that the Consul was favouring Aga more than himself, and lost his temper. Allegedly, after Aga was convicted the Consul said to the MPs who had come from Turkey to attend the trial: “Let us eat lunch at Aga’s house.” Sadık responded: “No, there will be no meal at Aga’s house, let us go to a restaurant.” The Consul repeated: “There will be a meal at Aga’s house.” Sadık became upset and said. “You are always taking sides. I will take care of the guests and we will eat at a restaurant.” When the Consul repeated that they would eat at Aga’s house Sadık said: “Who are you to interfere in our business?” Consul: “I am the representative of the Turkish republic.” Sadık: “I am the elected leader of the Western Thrace Turkish minority. You are an appointed bureaucrat and cannot speak like that to me.” Consul: “We are going to Aga’s house, you can do whatever you want.” Sadık (screaming): “I will show you. I will get you sacked from the Foreign Department. I will send you back to your village. You have to obey me, I am the elected leader, leader.”

This episode sent shock waves through the minority, and it could have taken a much worse turn if the Consul had not kept his composure (İleri 756/29.04.1994). People were particularly upset about the way Sadık had insulted the Consul publicly in front of the police and the “Greeks” in general (İleri 757/06.05.1994).

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156 Ikbin’e Doğru 17.12.1989, “Those who speak against Ankara are on a black list- Consulate extortion of the Turkish minority”, by Andonis Zikas.
157 Trakya’nın Sesi 483/19.05.1994. Dede was not present himself during the episode, but refers it as he had heard it from a trustworthy source.
There followed strong written condemnations by the minority teacher, youth, and religious associations which were close to the Consulate, as well as by Sadık’s political opponents. These vehement condemnations were not just a reaction to Sadık’s impertinence towards the Consul. They rather reflect the accumulated resentment against Sadık’s behaviour. Now his rivals found the opportunity to attack him, because they thought he was about to be abandoned by Turkey. However, Sadık still had his centres of support. Dede assessed the situation correctly when he wrote that the Consul won the first round, but Sadık would win the second, and those who condemned him would return to the fold as meek lambs (Trakya’nın Sesi 484/02.06.1994). When the Consul held a Festival of Sacrifices reception 21 May, Sadık asked for a special rendezvous as leader and had a personal meeting with the Consul after the general reception (ibid.). The leaders of the AYK-YK were later invited to the Consulate and compelled to accept Sadık as leader (Trakya’nın Sesi 485/16.06.1994). This “reconciliation” was the result of massive efforts to save the situation by the forces which supported Sadık. The conflict had reached such dimensions that the intervention of Ankara became necessary. One of Prime Minister Tansu Çiller’s advisors, Mustafa Kahramanyol, visited Thrace heading a 6-man delegation. Afterwards Hüseyin Çelem came to Thrace from the Turkish Embassy in Athens 13 June and stayed for four days. The “reconciliation” was displayed in an announcement by a reorganised “Western Thrace Turkish Community Consultation Council” (DK)—led by Sadık, but now also including some of the former leaders of the AYK-YK—in support of İbrahim Şerif asking people to be present at his trial in Thessaloniki. Significantly, the Solidarity Associations in Turkey wrote that on 8 June “national unity” (millî birlik) had been secured in Western Thrace. The members of DK had “put all their conflicts behind them, and opened a new page” (Bati Trakya’nın Sesi 63/June 1994). This represents the real foundation of the DK as an institution transcending the DEB party. Dede

158 For the condemnations by the associations see İleri 759/20.05.1994 and Gerçek 387/16.05.1994. A translation of one such condemnation and the condemnation by Rodoplu is included in the Appendix 5, text 64. Mehmet Emin Aga condemnation of Sadık in his message to the faithful on the occasion of the Festival of Sacrifices is a tour de force of nasty minority rhetoric (reprinted in Gerçek 388/20.05.1994). The same can be said about Ahmet Faikoglu’s message on the same occasion. (I have the leaflet that was originally distributed, but it was also reprinted in full in Trakya’nın Sesi 484/02.06.1994). For a translation of both messages, see Appendix 5, texts 65 and 66. See also the comment on these messages in İleri 760/27.05.1994.

159 Trakya’nın Sesi 487/14.07.1994. The announcement from Balkan 28.06.1994 is included. The DK was led by Sadık Ahmet in his capacity as elected representative and chairman of the DEB party. It also included the “elected mufît” Mehmet Emin Aga and İbrahim Şerif, former independent MP of Ksanthi Ahmet Faikoglu, a DEB party representative, the University Graduates Association (YTD), the Western Thrace Turkish Teachers Union, the Medrese Graduates Associations (MMMMC), the Graduates of the Academy in Thessaloniki (EPATH) Association, Komotini Turkish Youth Union, Ksanthi Turkish Union, and the Sermon and Guidance Committee (VİH). The obvious loser after this reorganisation was Rodoplu, who was among the more moderate members of the old AYK-YK. It should also be noticed that Hatipoğlu had no position any more. Hatipoğlu’s newspaper Akın had ceased it publication already the previous year (1096/24.07.1993), and his long political career was definitely on the wane.
pointed out that the DK was headed by the same politicians who had just cursed each other. He summed up the accusations they made against each other and remarked that they were all true (Trakya’nnn Sesi 487/14.07.1994). These events give us a rare glimpse at some of the forces behind Sadık. Mustafa Kahramanyol is considered to have played a central role in this respect, and to have been one of the architects of the black list. It made a great impression on the minority when he was later put out in the cold because of reactionary religious activities (irtica faaliyetleri) (Trakya’nın Sesi 596/04.09.1997).

**Euro-Elections 12 June 1994**

There was little discussion about the elections beforehand, possibly because of the internal turmoil and general confusion in the minority during this period. The 3% cut-off point was introduced for the Euro-election too. This excluded once more the possibility of electing an independent candidate. There had been some hesitation about tactics, but after the reconciliation on 8 June the 5 leading members of the DK made an announcement asking the minority to vote blank. Mustafa Hafız Mustafa wrote that since the parties did not want representatives from the minority in the European parliament, the minority should vote blank in protest (Yüvamiz 94/June 1994). On the other hand, in an announcement Hasan İmamoğlu called the 1993 elections a mistake and encouraged the minority to use its vote (İleri 762/10.06.1994). In this way he openly defied the DK. Nazif Ferhat presented Sinaspismos’ position in his announcement and stressed that all the parties were not alike. He maintained that a strong Sinaspismos was to the advantage of the minority and asked people not to listen to the propaganda for blank vote (ibid.). Onsunoğlu was also given an opportunity to present the minority’s problems in front of a Greek audience at a Sinaspismos rally in Thessaloniki 9 June.\(^\text{160}\) The elections gave the following results:

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\(^{160}\) His whole speech is printed in Trakya’nın Sesi 490/25.08.1994.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Invalid or blank</td>
<td>12,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PASOK</td>
<td>20,898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Nea Dimokratía</em></td>
<td>17,213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Politiki Anaksi</em></td>
<td>5,098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sinaspismos</em></td>
<td>3,378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KKE</td>
<td>2,428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIANA</td>
<td>1,332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kinisi Politon</em></td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lefko</td>
<td>942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Parties</td>
<td>6,744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td>70,514</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Invalid</td>
<td>2,789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blank</td>
<td>4,703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PASOK</td>
<td>18,168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Nea Dimokratía</em></td>
<td>20,021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Politiki Anaksi</em></td>
<td>5,549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sinaspismos</em></td>
<td>2,607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KKE</td>
<td>1,509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kinisi Politon</em></td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Parties</td>
<td>7,335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td>62,834</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The small parties on the left, in particular *Sinaspismos*, received an important increase in votes. The DK’s call for blank vote attracted a significant number of votes, but it was still a loss of about 60% compared with the independent candidates’ result in the 1993 election. This signified a sharp decrease in the influence of Ankara, and Dede remarked that it would be difficult to put all these people on the black list (*Trakya’nın Sesi* 486/30.06.1994). The result was also the first clear sign of discontent with the choice in the 1993 election. The reaction to Sadik expressed itself strongest among the urban population.162 On the other hand, when assessing the votes for the large parties, which did not include minority candidates, it is necessary to have in mind the traditional mechanisms of influence at their disposal. This was stressed in a comment by a marginal left-wing newspaper:

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161 The results are taken from *Trakya’nın Sesi* 485/16.06.1994; 486/30.06.1994.
In the Rodopi prefecture part of the minority voted for PASOK, of course not for its… anti-nationalist politic. The minority has fallen into a bad economical situation, unemployment threatens many households and the promises of accommodations given by PASOK as the party in power, influenced many (Epohi 19.06.1994).

**Local Elections 16 October 1994**

Right after the parliamentary elections in 1993 Mustafa Hafiz Mustafa began preparations for next year’s local elections. He maintained that DEB should participate alongside ND, PASOK, KKE, etc. If the minority pooled all its votes to the DEB party, it would become the largest party in Rodopi, where the Muslim population was slightly larger than the Christian. The other point was the plans for increased local authority to the regions (defterováthmia topikí aftodiíkisi). The prefects had hitherto been appointed by the government, but would now be elected locally. This could increase the influence of the minority. For the same reason the local Greek language press had started to write danger scenarios. The Athenian press was also perceptive to Sadık’s plans for the local elections (cf. Eleftherotipia 20.01.1994). There were soon plans to solve the “problem” by gerrymandering. The prefecture elections would be carried out according to the new units Evros-Rodopi and Ksanthi-Kavala-Drama (cf. Balkan 106/01.03.1994). This would in particular neutralise the influence of the strong Muslim presence in Rodopi. A Greek commentator presented the standard argument that the Muslims were Greek citizens, but their leaders declared everywhere that they were Turks, and Turkey strove for the Cyprification of Thrace. Turkey exploited the international public opinion about minorities and would some day ask for the autonomy of Thrace to incorporate it into the “motherland”. Something had to be done about Rodopi where the Muslims were in majority, but the issue should be handled in a way which did not expose Greece internationally:

If the law is ratified as it is, than the mistake of the election law of 1988 will be repeated, which made possible the election of two fanatical Muslims, Mr. Sadık and Mr. Faikoğlu (who displayed themselves as pure [akrefiš] Turks), with the result that they created a lot of unacceptable problems.

The various party expediencies cannot prevail over the national interests.

By now Sadık’s influence in Komotini town was clearly on the wane. Leading minority politicians claimed that the minority was left without parliamentary representation because of Sadık’s egoism, and they were afraid of a repetition on the local level. In Komotini the minority had better possibilities to elect representatives for the town council through the party tickets, than through an independent ticket sponsored by Sadık. Sadık could possibly wield more influence in the villages. Allegedly the Turkish Consulate played an active role to try to influence the Muslim voters, and put forth the usual threats. Sadık was also very active, but it proved difficult for him to

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164 To Vima 22.05.1994, “The new threat in Thrace”, by Yiannis Kartalis.
establish an independent ticket for the prefecture elections and to influence the formation of tickets in the villages in order to unite the minority vote. The conclusion was that attempts by Sadık and the Consulate to put on a display of strength could backfire and result in embarrassment.\textsuperscript{165} Dede concluded that Sadık vanished in the local elections, and even abandoned his close collaborators (\textit{Trakya’un Sesi} 492/27.10.1994). Hâki mentioned later that the minority was left free by the Consulate, even if it happened at the last moment (\textit{İleri} 782/23.12.1994). Now that the adherents of the independent ticket had to approach the parties, Abdülhalim Dede remarked sarcastically:

\begin{quote}
We are happy that the people who called us TRAITOR-PRO INFIDEL-MINORITY ENEMY-SOLD—because we for six years have advocated a policy we believed to be in the interest of the minority—TURNED TO OUR POLICY, EVEN IF IT HAPPENED AFTER SIX YEARS. AND OUR HAPPINESS IS TWOFOLD SINCE THESE PEOPLE HAD TO EAT THEIR OWN WORDS.\textsuperscript{166}
\end{quote}

\textbf{Rodopi}

The municipal elections held few surprises. In Komotini Yiorgos Papadriellis of the “Nea Poria” ticket (PASOK) was re-elected with a comfortable margin (59.9%), and six of the minority members on his ticket were elected to the town council (Hasan Ahmet, Cahit Ramadan, Ali Mertoğlu, Ekrem Hasan, Mehmet Bağdath, and Sabri Topçu). His main opponent, Hristos Rubyidis of the “Dimotiki Anayennisi” ticket (ND), faced a grave defeat (33.2%) in spite of the fact that he had Mustafa Hafız Mustafa on his team, and none of the minority members on his ticket was elected. Nikos Fakiridis of the “Dimotiki Allayi” ticket (KKE) had also little success among the minority. The minority vote had the following distribution:\textsuperscript{167}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Papadriellis</td>
<td>5,973</td>
<td>86.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubyidis</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fakiridis</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6,884</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In their campaign the minority candidates for both Papadriellis and Rubyidis addressed themselves to the “Turkish” voters. However, the Rubyidis ticket’s attempt to play the “Turkism” card failed because Christian candidates on his ticket had previously been negative to the minority in the town council.\textsuperscript{168} The re-election of Papadriellis

\textsuperscript{165} See \textit{Eleftherotiopia} 20.09.1994, “They turn their backs to Sadık”, by Simeon Soltaridis; \textit{To Vima} 02.10.1994, “The Consul in Komotini behave as party leader”.
\textsuperscript{166} \textit{Trakya’un Sesi} 491/22.09.1994. The Turkish equivalent to “eat their words” (tükürdüklerini yalamak) is quite rude, and means literally “to lick up what they spat”.
\textsuperscript{167} The most detailed results are printed in \textit{Trakya’un Sesi} 492/27.10.1994 and \textit{İleri} 774/28.10.1994. 772/14.10.1994.
\textsuperscript{168} See the polemics in their election newspapers, which was reprinted in \textit{İleri} 771/07.10.1994;
shows that there had finally come some stability into local politics. The lifting of the discriminations in 1991 made it possible to treat the minority more fairly, and there had been allocated funds to education, culture, sports, and infrastructure for the minority quarters. The minority politicians on his ticket were also better integrated in the overall political activities. They now had a vested interest in their position. This meant a move away from the earlier practice of bargaining the minority vote on the eve of elections. 13 minority members were elected township presidents in the municipalities, which was the same number as in the previous election.

Hâki would later write a critical article concerning the nationalist overbidding in the election propaganda. Those who wrote the election newspapers would say that they served Turkism by making the Greek candidates call the minority Turkish, while the Greek nationalists close to the metropolitan Damaskinos would scream up about Turkish propaganda and the games of Ankara. Hâki concluded that none of them were right, those who made the agitation were simply filling their own pockets (Ileri 776/11.11.1994).

In the prefecture elections Stelios Stavropulos (PASOK) prevailed with a narrow margin in the second round. Five of the minority members on his ticket were elected: Ahmet Mehmet (6,596 votes), Muzaffer Mehmet, Mehmet Mustafa, Halit Çavuş, and Nuri Ali. Four minority members on Kimon Kaldirimtzis’ ticket (ND) were elected: Ali Nuri (6,164 votes), Emine Tahsin, Ahmet Emin Ahmet, and Hüseyin Çerkez. Most of the minority members with higher education and left-wing leanings supported the ticket of Sotirios Pupuzis (Sinaspismos). No minority member was elected from this ticket, even though Mustafa Mustafa received as much as 5,921 votes. This was due to the overall result of this ticket. The ticket of Kostas Kambas (KKE) attracted small support from the minority. The minority vote had the following distribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stavropulos</td>
<td>29,261</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaldirimtzis</td>
<td>23,536</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupuzis</td>
<td>20,709</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kambas</td>
<td>1,399</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>74,905</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Except for the left-wingers, the minority members with higher education were extremely passive in the prefecture elections. When Hâki asked Stavropulos in a press conference before the election why he had no educated candidates on his ticket, he answered that he waited until the last moment to submit the list of candidates. He had begged those with higher education to join his ticket, but to no avail. It was clear that the fear of sanctions by Turkey had not disappeared yet, and the minority lost a great opportunity to strengthen its representation (Ileri 776/11.11.1994). In the prefecture
council, the veterinarian Ali Nuri (ND) was the only minority member with university education. Ms Emine Tahsin had graduated from a Turkish teacher college, and Ahmet Emin Ahmet from EPATH. The situation was better for the town councils in Komotini and Ksanthi. 6–7 university graduates participated and were all elected. In both prefectures Mehmet Nuri was the only township president with university education, and only a couple of others had secondary education (İleri 774/28.10.1994). Dede would soon raise the question that as a result of the minority’s large support to PASOK, Ahmet Mehmet had earned the right to become deputy-prefect in Rodopi (Trakya’nın Sesi 493/30.11.1994). This did also happen in 1995, but the minority would complain that although he was given the title he wielded little real influence.

Ksanthi

In the elections for the Ksanthi town council the ticket of Filippos Amiridis (ND) won easily with a record 69% of the vote. Although he obtained almost all the minority votes, only Birol Akifoğlu was elected among the minority candidates. His closest rival Yiorgos Huliaras (PASOK) received a mere 21.4% of the vote, and none of his minority candidates was elected. The minority vote had the following distribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amiridis</td>
<td>2,609</td>
<td>84.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huliaras</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other tickets (3)</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,099</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The massive support to Amiridis is another indication of a more stable voting pattern by the minority. In the prefecture elections the minority vote was spread more evenly between the tickets of Panayiotis Salturos (PASOK) and Lakis Stilianidis (ND). The winning ticket of Salturos elected 3 minority members: İhsan Kahya, Hüseyin Hasan Molla, and Hasan Ömer. The minority vote had the following distribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salturos</td>
<td>14,938</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stilianidis</td>
<td>12,727</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other tickets (3)</td>
<td>1,211</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28,876</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

İhsan Kahya obtained most votes of the Muslim candidates and earned the right to become deputy-prefect. In Ksanthi 10 Muslim township presidents were elected, just as in the previous elections.
The Death of Sadık Ahmet

The new unity, sanctioned by Turkey and signified by the reorganisation of the DK, could not last. The differences were too big to bridge. There were also signs that Turkey would not tolerate Sadık’s erratic behaviour any more, in spite of the huge investment made in his person and the influence of people who had their personal interest connected to his position. Hâki mentioned that Sadık did no longer have the influence to solve even petty problems of minority members either in Greece or Turkey (İleri 765/26.08.1994). It was also noticed that Sadık Ahmet was not invited for the reception at the Turkish Consulate 29 October on the occasion of the anniversary for the declaration of the Turkish Republic. These invitations had usually signified who were “Turkists” and who were “anti-Turkists”, and led to rumours that Sadık was finished as a politician (Trakya’nın Sesi 493/30.11.1994). By this time Sadık had “fired” Mustafa Hafız Mustafa from his team, with the result that the Balkan newspaper folded. Sadık must have been distressed with the situation, something which is evident from an interview on the Turkish television channel TGRT, 5 March 1995. Sadık had the usual problems with expressing himself, but it is clear that he refers to his personal concerns and not those of the minority. He came with open accusations against the Consul in Komotini, claiming that he had made false reports about him, and also hurled accusations against his political rivals in the minority. Well-informed sources have told me that around this time Sadık was taken aside during a visit to Turkey by his former sponsors, scolded severely, and told that he was finished. It was finally realised that he had become more of a liability than an asset. Turkey wanted to eliminate him from the political scene, but was at loss about exactly how to enact his downfall because of the enormous prestige connected to his name, the prestige which ironically to a large degree was the responsibility of Turkey. Finally the problem resolved itself with Sadık’s tragic death in a car accident near the village Sosti (Susurköy), 27 July 1995. He had gone for a circumcision ceremony, and collided at high speed with a tractor. His funeral was attended by a large Turkish parliamentary delegation of high-ranking Turkish politicians with Mesut Yılmaz as the most prominent, and condolences were expressed from the highest quarters:

Turkish leaders expressed deep sorrow over Ahmet’s death. “Sadık Ahmet was a prominent figure who was known for his leadership in the struggle of our kinsmen in Western Thrace and his works for human rights both in the Greek parliament and at international platforms,” Prime Minister Tansu Çiller said in a statement. “We have been deeply grieved by the untimely loss of Sadık Ahmet who has done an outstanding job as the unforgettable leader of the West Thracian Turkish Minority,” Foreign Minister Erdal İnönü said in a message of condolence he sent to

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Ahmet’s wife. President Süleyman Demirel and several other Turkish officials also released messages of condolence.\footnote{Turkish Daily News 26.07.1995. For more details about Turkish participation in his funeral, see Batı Trakya’nın Sesi 73/June–August 1995.}

There was of course no reason to tarnish the Sadık myth after his death. In addition, the interest in his funeral and support to his family was a signal to the minority that Turkey was standing by. The Greek government also expressed its condolences.

What makes it difficult to write about the Sadık legacy and the circumstances around his death, is not so much related to the person Sadık as to his widely diverging public images and the dynamic relationship between them. I was thinking when I started to take an interest in the Sadık phenomenon, that it would be hard to portray a “living legend”. It is not an easier task to portray a dead one. We must have in mind that to the Greeks he was a villain while to the Turks he was a hero. As an extension of this, your classification of Sadık would inevitably cast you in one or the other camp. The impression of Sadık by people who knew him personally, would also differ greatly from the image cultivated in the press.

Sadık’s wife, Işık Ahmet, accused the 61-year-old driver of the tractor which collided with their car of having hit them deliberately (Turkish Daily News 26.07.1995). This was possibly said in shock and anguish after her husband’s death, but there is little to substantiate this claim. I visited Komotini about 3 weeks after the accident and spoke with his close collaborator Mustafa Hafız Mustafa. When I asked him if he thought there had been foul play, he replied: “That old man could not have managed such a job” (O ihtiyar öyle bir iş beceremez). A minority member from the same village, who had spoken with the tractor driver in the field just 5–10 minutes prior to the accident, also told me that there was no way that he could have done it on purpose. On the other hand, after the death of Sadık Ahmet the Greek police wanted Mustafa Hafız Mustafa to say publicly that it was an accident. This was of course a totally different matter, and he refused since this could have led to accusations of being a “traitor” or “Greek servant”, etc. Consequently, because of the widespread inclination towards conspiratorial interpretations, the overwhelming majority of the Muslims in Thrace thinks that Sadık was murdered. The same holds true for the emigrant milieus in Germany and Turkey. It certainly also served the interest of his leading followers to present him as a “martyr” (şehit), who died for his people.

The same kind of mechanisms are in effect when it comes to assessing the Sadık legacy. This is evident already in the obituaries. The most precise and informed evaluation of Sadık’s career was made by İbrahim Onsunoğlu.\footnote{Trakya’nın Sesi 516/09.08.1995, “Will we miss Sadık?”, by İbrahim Onsunoğlu. Translation in Appendix 5, text 67.} His criticism of Sadık
and the forces which supported him is certainly pungent, but not malignant like the
many anti-Sadık articles which had appeared previously in the Greek press. If it had
been his point to emphasise Sadık’s negative sides, he had a lot more material to draw
from. Since I was in Komotini at this time I asked Sadık’s close collaborator Mustafa
Hafız Mustafa if he had read Onsunoğlu’s obituary. He said yes, and added “all of it is
correct” (hepsi doğru). Mustafa Hafız Mustafa had written an obituary where he
praised Sadık Ahmet as the greatest man the minority had fostered, even comparing
him to Atatürk.\footnote{Yüvamız 109/September 1995, “I cannot say that ‘Dr. Sadık Ahmet died’!…”, M. H. Mustafa.
Translation in Appendix 5, text 68.} He had of course written an obituary which corresponded to his
role in minority politics, and could not have done otherwise. This obituary played on
the Sadık myth which was cultivated in Turkish nationalist circles. After his death
many streets, parks, squares etc. in Turkey have been named after Sadık Ahmet. It is
no coincidence that the street in front of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Istanbul
was immediately named “Dr. Sadık Ahmet Street” (cf. İleri 808/04.08.1995). The
Solidarity Associations in Turkey (BTTDD) would stress their dedication to keeping
alive the ideas of Sadık. Fortunately, they did not engage in the ungrateful task of
expounding these “ideas”. They also instituted the “Sadık Ahmet Peace Prizes”.
Among the first recipients were his wife İşik Ahmet, the “elected mufti” Mehmet Emin
Aga, and the Turkish minister and government spokesman Yıldırım Aktuna (cf. Battı
Trakya’nın Sesi 74/September–December 1995). When the “Dr. Sadık Ahmet Peace
Prizes” were awarded for the second time the recipients included president Süleyman
Demirel and the leading politicians Deniz Baykal, Alpaslan Türkş, and Mümmtaz
Soysal (cf. Battı Trakya’nın Sesi 76–77/March–August 1996). This reflects BTTDD’s
search for political patronage. However, Turkey’s engagement in Western Thrace has
clearly been on the wane in the last years, something which maybe signifies a certain
weariness after the excesses related to Sadık Ahmet.

In Greek Thrace Sadık’s death opened up again the political scene within the
minority. Some voices warned Turkey about not repeating the kind of irresponsible
engagement which had taken place with Sadık:

Ömeroğlu says: “We hope that both Greece and Turkey will learn a lesson from the
phenomenon Sadık. […] Let us leave the minority alone and let it be represented by the healthy
democratic forces.” A leading minority cadre says: “The minority must stop being the prey, and
area of conflicts about choices and tactics, of the Turkish Foreign ministry and the Turkish secret
services.”\footnote{Eleftherotipia 19.08.1995, “Minority: the scenery changes after Sadık”, By Simeon Soltaridis.}

As a result of his death both the DEB party and the Consultation Council (DK) were
left without leaders. His wife was able to become elected chairwoman of the DEB
party, and tried to obtain support from some of Sadık’s former sponsors. She had no
particular political experience nor qualifications, but tried to retain what she could from
her husband’s “estate”. The following year she was re-elected chairwoman, but was succeeded in 1999 by Sadık’s former collaborator Ahmet Hacıosman. The party has never shown much activity, nor has it been a political force to reckon after Sadık’s death. After Sadık’s death Ahmet Faikoğlu was made the new chairman of the DK. He was succeeded by Adem Bekiroğlu who represented the minority in the hearing by the Helsinki Committee in Washington DC, 26 April 1996. The DK continued to operate according to unclear criteria, lack of internal democracy, and Turkish guidance.

The Parliamentary Elections 22 September 1996

During the last years the leader of PASOK, Andreas Papandreu, had been a shadow of himself. Finally his frail health compelled him to resign, and the PASOK MPs had to select a new party chairman. In a sharply contested election between the leading party cadre, Kostas Simitis prevailed and became the new prime minister 18 January 1996. It was a question of time before he would try to secure his position by a mandate from the people, and later in the year he announced early elections.

The minority was now faced with several dilemmas. It was clear that the independent tickets had outplayed their role, and had no other function than to exclude the minority from parliamentary representation. On the other hand, several minority politicians had painted themselves into a corner with their strong Turkish nationalist rhetoric and demagogy against the Greek political parties. There was also the question of whom the Greek parties would except as candidates, and on what conditions. The leader of Politiki Aniksi, Andonis Samaras, said in a press conference in Athens 30 August, that he would not have Muslims on his ticket. He pointed to the experiences with Sadık and Faikoğlu and the use of propaganda material in Turkish in the election campaigns. This was criticised by the main opposition leader Miltiadis Evert (ND) who said that this could lead to the formation of a minority party which was worse for Greece (Gündem 10/04.09.1996). When news that the word “Turkish” had been used in the election campaign reached Athens:

Mr. Samaras said that the concern of his party, which has excluded Moslem candidates from running [on its ticket] in the elections on September 22, had been vindicated. He also accused ND leader Miltiadis Evert of ignoring the “sensitive” problem of Thrace for petty party considerations.

Stressing, however, that “the issue does not concern the vast majority of our Greek Moslem brothers of Western Thrace,” Mr. Samaras said “it concerns those who are guided by Ankara and are being used by New Democracy and PASOK as a Trojan Horse” (ANA 11.09.1996).

The other parties criticised him for his attitude. Maria Damanaki (Sinaspismos) was particularly cross, and called his decision to not have candidates from the minority nationalist racism.175

In Rodopi the negotiations about minority candidates for the two major parties continued right up until the final deadline for submitting the party tickets 3 September. Since it was unclear if the two large parties would accept minority candidates, there had been some contact with OAKKE (a marginal party dominated by left-wing intellectuals) and the “Rainbow” party (*Uránio tókso*-dominated by activists of the “Macedonian minority”) with the view of joining forces on a common ticket for the election. This caused alarm in Athens and some right wing newspapers wrote about the danger of an “Ankara-Skopje front” in the elections. This “co-operation danger” paved the way for certain candidates in Ksanthi and Rodopi, who became subsequently accepted by the two large parties. In other words, the major parties preferred to handle the minority as a Greek-Turkish issue, rather than risk that “uncontrollable” left-wing forces would take the lead. Part of the procedure was revealed by an ultraright newspaper:

The question of who were to participate on the election tickets was determined in agreement with the Consulate [of Turkey in Komotini] with Adem Bekiroğlu and the prefect Stelios Stavropoulos as “middle-men”—and it was decided to exclude Faikoğlu, Rodoplu, Aga, Şerif, İmamoğlu, Onsunoglu, and Hacıibram. Some of them because they were not desired by Ankara and others by Athens.

As a consequence Ankara could exclude some of the previous party candidates who had opposed strongest her opportunistic politic with the independent ticket, and influence the parties’ choice of candidates. Athens could count on Ankara to exclude some of the most stigmatised “independent” politicians, and channel the minority votes to the two large parties. In the agreement Turkey made the concession that the party candidates would not only abstain from “Turkism demagogy” in their election propaganda, but from using the words “Turk” or “Turkish minority”. This was accepted in order not to provoke the nationalists in Thrace, because the ultimate goal was to elect MPs. It is impossible to make an adequate discussion of the possibilities of the various candidates without having the above in mind.

In Rodopi, Ahmet Mehmet was considered to have had the best chance of election for PASOK before the nomination process began. He had the problem that he would have to prove to the minority voter that he could be more assertive, while he owed his place in PASOK exactly to his obedience. His stable relationship with PASOK and timid behaviour towards the independent ticket secured his candidacy. Hasan

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176 This was “revealed” later in *Trakya’nın Sesi* 562/21.09.1996, which also printed the joint election statement of the “Rainbow” party and OAKKE. See also the comments in *Pontiki* 05.09.1996 and *Eleftherotipia* 05.09.1996, after it had been clear that they would not co-operate with the minority.

177 *Stohos* 638/11.09.1996. In this case all the evidence indicates that *Stohos* had access to official sources.

178 *Trakya’nın Sesi* 560/09.09.1996. If nothing else is mentioned, this is also the source for my discussion about the candidates. This time, too, I was able to follow the campaign the week before the election. This gave me the opportunity to visit the candidates’ election offices, and attend their election speeches.
Kaşkçıoğlu was considered as the second candidate for PASOK, but fell out of the picture because of the deal with Turkey. He had also been considered as a possible candidate for KKE, but finally decided to abstain. The deal with Turkey paved the way for Galip Galip (1946–) as the second PASOK candidate. He is the son of the former MP Sabahaddin Galip and belongs consequently to an old political “dynasty”. After completing the minority secondary school in Komotini, Galip went on to study architecture at the Istanbul Polytechnic where he graduated in 1972. He was a person who was likeable, had shown interest for the minority problems, but lacked political experience and had yet to prove himself outside a small circle. İmamoğlu seemed to be the most obvious candidate for ND in Rodopi. However, he allegedly set the condition that Nazif Şakir should not be accepted on the ND ticket, as this would split the Muslim vote. When this condition was not met, he accused ND for acting unfairly and withdrew on 1 September before any nomination took place. It is quite possible that İmamoğlu “panicked” because he was afraid that Şakir would have the DEB party behind him. It is even more likely that he withdrew to avoid an embarrassing defeat when he understood that Galip would be sponsored, and used the opportunity to settle some old scores with the local ND, which had treated him badly several times in the past. He made an announcement 18 September that he withdrew to secure parliamentary representation for the minority. Hâki was sceptical about his motives, and wrote that it reminded him of Hatipoğlu’s move to save face in 1974.\(^{179}\) ND sounded out a dozen of other candidates including Adem Bekiroğlu, Sabahaddin Emin, Ahmet Hacıosman, Hasan Ahmet, Ali Nuri, Galip Galip, Hüseyin Macır, etc. Several of these had been associated with the independent tickets, without playing leading roles. ND finally settled on the somewhat unlikely choices of Nazif Şakir and Aydın Uzun. Nazif Şakir (1952–) was born in the Filakas village. He had graduated from a vocational school in Thessaloniki in 1974. He was elected to the board of the prefecture agricultural co-operative in 1990 and was a founding member of the DEB party. ND obviously speculated that he would be able to draw support from the DEB party. Aydın Uzun was young (around 30), inexperienced, and not considered a serious contender by anybody.

In Ksanthi the nomination process was simpler. Here PASOK and ND would have 1 Muslim and 3 Christians on their tickets, instead of 2 and 2 as in Rodopi. For PASOK İhsan Kahya (1962–) was able to secure the nomination in competition with Mehmet İmam after his good result in the prefecture elections. İhsan Kahya was born in the mountain village Pahni. He started to study at the medrese, but found it insufficient and continued his education in various schools in Turkey. After one year of

\(^{179}\) Hâki did not leave İmamoğlu much of a chance in the election, but his judgement is probably influenced by the deterioration of their personal relationship (cf. *İleri* 857/04.10.1996; 858/11.10.1996).
university studies in Turkey, he transferred to the Thessaloniki Law faculty, from which he graduated in 1991. In ND the possible candidates were Orhan Hacıibram, Hüsnü Serdarzade, and Birol Akifoğlu. Before these elections ND made no contact with either İbrahim Onsunoğlu or Orhan Hacıibram, although Orhan applied officially to become candidate. This is another indication of the deal between Greece and Turkey. Orhan, who has always been very ambitious, was naturally bitter about being let down by his party. He had been candidate for ND 4 times under very adverse conditions, and now he had been embargoed when the conditions were good. In reaction to this he supported Sinaspismos and Nazif Ferhat in the election. This paved the way for the relative inexperienced Birol Akifoğlu (1960–). He was born in Ksanthi, and after completing the minority secondary school he studied medicine at Istanbul University, from which he graduated in 1984. He had been involved in the DIKATSA struggle, but had not entered regular politics before the local election in 1994.

Sinaspismos was not influenced by any of the considerations of the large parties, because they had minority politicians who were well integrated in the party organisation. It was represented by its previous candidates Mustafa Mustafa (1955–) in Rodopi, Nazif Ferhat (1954–) in Ksanthi, and included the dentist Ekrem Hasan (1958–) on the “honorary” ticket (epikratias). Sinaspismos hoped to follow up the success of the prefecture elections. The election law provided the party with a realistic chance of electing an MP from Thrace if it could attract sufficient minority votes. This MP would in all likelihood be from the minority, and the party used this in its propaganda. The candidates of KKE, Faik Faik (1954–) and Esat Mustafa (1946–) in Rodopi and Hüseyin Gazi in Ksanthi, had no realistic chance of election. The same holds true for Ali İbrahim in Ksanthi, who ran for Dimitris Tsovolas’ DIKKI (a splinter group from PASOK). The former independent MP, Ahmet Faikoğlu, advocated an independent ticket outwardly but made at the same time energetic attempts to be included on a party ticket. However, his advances towards Tsovolas proved futile and he was finally turned down.

The election campaign was carried out in a good atmosphere. The minority voters felt free, and seemed determined to face up to attempts of internal terror. For the first time there was a strong left inclination in the minority. However, a minority newspaper which is considered to be close to the Consulate stated that the position of the minority which after 1989 supported the independent ticket was clear. It would now support the candidates on the party tickets, since the 3% provision made impossible the election of independent candidates (Gündem 10/04.09.1996). It would also suggest that the minority should unite around certain candidates of the large parties in
order not to split the minority vote (Gündem 11/10.09.1996). Hâki was less discreet, and wrote that the votes should be pooled to Galip in Komotini and Birol in Ksanthi (İleri 855/13.09.1996). Onsunoğlu would later criticise Turkish television’s (TRT) claim that, according to “non existent opinion polls”, the minority favoured one candidate in Rodopi and another candidate in Ksanthi. This was an effort to direct the minority vote. However, while he criticised this interference, he observed that PASOK and ND expected such a support (Trakya’nın Sesi 564/03.10.1996). A Turkish periodical belonging to immigrant circles in Turkey mentioned that the Turkish Foreign Department considered the election very important, and TRT made a great effort to secure the election of Galip Galip and Birol Akifoğlu for weeks before the election. This meant that Turkey did not only sponsor these two persons, but PASOK in Rodopi and ND in Ksanthi. The new party candidates did not distance themselves from the former independents. On the contrary, in interviews both Galip and İhsan said that they would not have run for the parties if there had been an independent ticket (Gündem 12/17.09.1996). However, they kept a low “Turkism” profile. In their election propaganda İhsan Kahya (PASOK) and Birol Akifoğlu (ND) only promoted their personal qualifications. Apart from some mud-slinging against ND, Galip stressed the importance of parliamentary representation, saying that he would struggle for the minority within the framework of Greek laws and international agreements. These candidates all displayed a certain awkwardness in expressing their position, because of the “ban” on promoting the “Turkish identity”. In these elections it was Nazif Şakir who kept a high “Turkism” profile, besides stressing his connection to Sadık through his position in the DEB party. However, this was clearly a solo initiative, and since he did not have any real force behind him it hardly surpassed the level of the colourful. Nazif Şakir had apparently made his arrangement with ND without discussing it with Sadık’s widow, and on 14 September the DEB party made an announcement that it did not participate in the elections because of certain conditions. It did not support any party or candidate but left the voters free to decide for themselves. İşık Ahmet could of course not do otherwise, once there were candidates sponsored by Turkey.

Some local nationalist thugs assailed the election offices of İhsan Kahya and Birol Akifoğlu in Ksanthi 12 September. These events had no real effect on the result,

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182 Yeni Batı Trakya 140/September–October 1996. It should be mentioned that the “official” organ Batı Trakya’nın Sesi ignored the elections completely.
183 I have some small unpretentious brochures from the election offices of both of them.
184 See his election newspaper Yeni Dönem 1/06.09.1996; 2/11.09.1996. His critique against ND was not very accurate, as he sometimes accused ND for things which took place when PASOK was in power.
186 The whole announcement is printed in Gündem 12/17.09.1996.
because of the completely different conditions from the last elections. An ultra-right newspaper described the events in the following way:

The Muslim candidates proceeded with the Turkification of Ksanthi, flooding the city with banners and announcements in Turkish—with the toleration of their Greek mayor who is only concerned about votes.

In spite of the protests of many inhabitants nobody took the necessary measures, which obliged the Greek minded [ellinópsihos] Yiorgos Sinanidis to pull down and tear the banners (in other words he did what the very authorities together with furious Greeks did in Florina when they took down the banner of the “Rainbow party”).

The national actions of Sinanidis roused the indignation of our own politicians [politikántides]—“not to spoil the quiet climate” which undermines Greece—The local Authorities were quick to issue a warrant for his arrest—(something which had not happened in Florina, when the offices of the Bulgaroskopians were burned).187

As usual, Ahmet Mehmet presented himself as the “man of the people”. He warned that Sinaspismos and the other small parties would not obtain enough votes to elect an MP, and that the split of the minority vote might lead to an MP from the party of the “minority enemy” Samaras. This was not exactly an “objective” presentation, but played on the minority members’ fear of wasting their votes on candidates with no chance of election. However, in contrast to the other candidates of the large parties he would also present his views on issues such as education, vakıfs, article 19, administrative problems, etc.188 The candidates of Sinaspismos were more issue-oriented. Ironically, they could also refer to the problems with the Turkish identity (in a non-chauvinist fashion), where the candidates supported by Turkey kept quiet. In its campaign towards the minority it made an effort to demonstrate, with examples from earlier elections, that the present election law would give the minority a very good chance of electing an MP from Sinaspismos. The election campaign continued in a quiet atmosphere except for a few smaller incidents on the eve of the elections.189

187 Stohos 639/18.09.1996. See also the comments to these events in Gündem 12/17.09.1996. Sinanidis had distinguished himself earlier by stabbing Faikoğlu with a knife, and threatening minority township presidents.
188 I have two issues of his election newspaper Halkın Sesi (no date). See also Diyalog 11/12.09.1996.
189 A week before the election Onsunoğlu published an article in Greek, where he conveyed that there had been rumours about fraud in previous elections. In Rodopi and Ksanthı the votes from some minority ballot boxes were usually sent to the prefecture instead of directly to the court of first instance as the election law prescribes. Here they were kept for some time and later handed over to the court of first instance. That was why the results from these ballot boxes were delayed. The newspaper printed these news with every possible reservation, and reminded that the authorities were obliged to bring the sealed ballot boxes directly to the court of first instance. Anything else would constitute a violation of the law (Trakya’nın Sesi 561/16.09.1996). This article indicates that he sought to forestall any attempt to tamper with the results, by displaying that the minority was on its guard.
**The Election Results in Rodopi**

Galip Galip (PASOK) 10,512  
Ahmet Mehmet (PASOK) 3,420  
Nazif Şakir (ND) 3,958  
Aydın Uzun (ND) 1,326  
Mustafa Mustafa (*Sinaspismos*) 7,655  
Mustafa Esat (KKE) 494  
Faik Faik (KKE) 410

Total: 27,775

Inscribed voters 111,304, total votes cast 77,014, invalid votes 2,408, valid votes 74,606. The following MPs were elected: Dimitris Tsetines (PASOK), Galip Galip (PASOK), and Mustafa Mustafa (*Sinaspismos*). The relative strength of the parties was as follows: PASOK 45.3%, ND 32.9%, *Sinaspismos* 11.8%, *Politiki Aniksi* 3.1%, KKE 2.9%, DIKKI 2.4%, others 0.7%.

**The Election Results in Ksanthi**

İhsan Kahya (PASOK) 2,809  
Birol Akifoğlu (ND) 9,459  
Nazif Ferhat (*Sinaspismos*) 1,142  
Hüseyin Gazi (KKE) 1,180  
Hasan Delioglu (EPEN) 57

Total: 14,031

Inscribed voters 95,193, total votes cast 68,294, invalid votes 2,266, valid votes 66,028. The following MPs were elected: Panayiotis Sguridis (PASOK), N. Lambadaris (PASOK), and Birol Akifoğlu (ND). The relative strength of the parties was as follows: PASOK 36.1%, ND 48.7%, *Sinaspismos* 3.8%, *Politiki Aniksi* 3.5%, KKE 3.2%, DIKKI 2.6%, others 1.1%.

On a national level the election gave the following result:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PASOK</td>
<td>41.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>38.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KKE</td>
<td>5.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sinaspismos</em></td>
<td>5.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIKKI</td>
<td>4.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Politiki Aniksi</em></td>
<td>2.94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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190 In the minority press *Gündem* (13/24.09.1996 and 14/01.10.1996) published the most detailed results.
The election law was created to provide absolute majority in parliament for the largest party. We can observe that a mere 41.5% of the votes gave PASOK 54% of the seats in parliament. All the other parties obtained a lower percentage of seats than their percentage of the votes. As regards the minority, the result signified an unprecedented success. For the first time since 1974 it elected as many as 3 MPs. Besides this success, Onsunoğlu was pleased to notice that there had been very little of the mudslinging and black list threats, which had marred the previous elections and created deep “national, social, and psychological wounds” (Trakya’nın Sesi 565/10.10.1996).

The most conspicuous feature of the result was that for the first time the minority voted massively for a candidate of a left wing party, and indeed of the kind which was persecuted in Turkey. It was in fact the first candidate of a party left of PASOK to be elected in the area. This came probably as a surprise for many in both Greece and Turkey. The perplexity was apparent in a comment by a Turkish TV Channel: “The Turkish minority of Western Thrace elected two MPs for the Greek parliament. Mr. Galip Galip of PASOK in Komotini and Mr. Birol Akifoğlu of ND in Ksanthi. Mr. Mustafa Mustafa was also elected from the Sinaspismos ticket” (Trakya’nın Sesi 564/03.10.1996). Because of the features in the election law it became clear that Mustafa Mustafa would be elected quite early after the voting was completed. Many of those who voted for him were people who had no relationship with the left, but represented a reaction to the excesses of Turkey and the “clique” during the previous years. This included, among others, people who were close to the mufti Meço Cemali. The fact that Mustafa had proved himself with his previous political activity, and was a person who inspired confidence, certainly also played a role.

Mustafa represented an innovation in minority politics because he was well integrated in his party. He could consequently count on the support of his party when taking political initiatives. On the other hand, he also represented a commitment to the general work of his party, which was unusual for minority politicians. It was a totally different role from that of minority politicians who had previously been elected for small parties. These had usually been engaged in opportunistic alliances with ultra right parties on the eve of elections. The last example of this kind was İmamoğlu’s election in 1977. In those cases it was tacitly understood that Christians and Muslims had no common political platform, and the “collaboration” involved no commitment from either of the parties. On the other hand, this kind of “collaboration” did not challenge the mechanisms which kept Muslims and Christians apart in their respective communities, and the people who ideologically or politically based themselves on this division. In an interview right after his election Mustafa Mustafa said among other things: “We must look at things differently, and approach them with the reasoning which regards the minority as a cultural wealth for the country, which we really want to integrate in the Greek reality and society, surpassing racist and isolating
perceptions, so that there will be development and an equal society for both Christians and Muslims”.\footnote{Kathimerini 24.09.1996. See also his statement in Avyi 24.09.1996.} This seemingly moderate statement signifies in reality a radical reorientation of the minority issue, which would challenge the ingrained stereotypes.

It is interesting to observe the various reactions to this attempt at surpassing the old divisions. A Christian friend of mine from Komotini told me that someone asked her before the election if she would vote for Sinaspismos and contribute to the election of Mustafa. After thinking for just a second, she replied that she would of course vote for Sinaspismos as usual. Consequently, her political commitment weighed more than “racial” considerations. This seems to be the general trend, since the votes for Christian Sinaspismos candidates in Rodopi increased from 1993 to 1996 (647 to 670), while in Ksanthi they nearly doubled (473 to 922). On the other hand, a local newspaper belonging to the nationalist right reacted to the result by writing that for 100 coupons it would offer a fez and a ferace to the Christian voters of Sinaspismos.\footnote{See facsimile of the announcement from Patrida in Ileri 857/04.10.1996. Many Greek newspapers offer various items, such as books, to their readers who collect coupons printed in the newspapers.}

Hâki responded immediately by writing that for 100 coupons he would give a cross and a church bell to the Muslims who voted for Christian candidates (Ileri 858/11.10.1996). This is of course the kind of language which Hâki understands. He has more difficulties with adapting to the political style of Mustafa Mustafa. After Mustafa had participated in a debate, Hâki criticised him for acting like a Christian and admonished him to be the MP of the minority (ibid.). Hâki feels proud of Mustafa because he is from the minority and appreciates his upright character, but has little patience when he occupies himself with issues that are outside the narrow scope of minority politics.

Galip Galip came second on the PASOK ticket, and was eventually elected. After his election he declared that: “With the support of PASOK I intend to solve the existing problems and I will try to make the minority a bridge of friendship between Turkey and Greece” (Eleftherotipia 24.09.1996). His election meant that ND was left without representation from Rodopi. This was a hard blow for the party and in particular for Evripidis Stilianidis, who had received more personal marks of preference than any other candidate (14,612). He now lashed out against the minority candidates of the other parties and their relationship with Turkey. In the case of Mustafa this was totally out of place, and the Sinaspismos prefecture committee of Rodopi responded with a written statement which mentioned:

If someone should be called to account for the behaviour of the minority candidates, then it is himself [Stilianidis] and his party ND. They should explain to us how they reacted when they found out that the minority candidate who was elected MP in Ksanthi for ND was supported by Turkish mass media (Gündem 14/01.10.1996).

The same statement also mentioned that Stilianidis did not react although he knew that a ND candidate in Rodopi (Nazif Şakir) had been supported by an ultra right
Turkish TV channel. It further asked if the accusations were made to cover up the guilt of ND and PASOK, which had minority candidates openly supported by Turkey (ibid.). After the elections KKE claimed that PASOK and Sinaspismos had shared the votes of the former independent “Trust” ticket. Onsunoğlu called this a shameful comment and petty politics. The minority was grateful for KKE’s policy towards the minority, but now KKE was jealous because its former cadre Mustafa ran for Sinaspismos. There would never have been such accusations if Mustafa had run for KKE (Trakya’nın Sesi 565/10.10.1996). There were also strong attacks against Birol Akifoğlu who was elected MP for ND in Ksanthi. Here the three Christian candidates together obtained more than twice as many votes as Birol, but Birol obtained most marks of preference with a mere 288 votes advantage over number two. Although ND received significantly more votes than PASOK, the election law favoured PASOK, and after the final adjustments ND did only obtain one MP. This was hard to swallow for Evangelos Kurtidis who came second, and he protested against the result. People in the minority were afraid of a repetition of what happened to Orhan Hacıibram in 1977, but after several protests Birol’s election was confirmed.193

It is important to note that the criticism against the support of minority candidates by Turkish television only took place after it became clear that three MPs were elected from the minority. In the case of Mustafa Mustafa this criticism was totally out of place. During the 1993 election campaign there had been much more propaganda from Turkey, but at that time Greek nationalists had been satisfied because no MP was elected from the minority. They even encouraged the minority to vote for those who were openly supported by Turkey for this reason. The conclusion is that the Greek parties have no problems with propaganda from Turkey as long as it is to their benefit. It is only when they loose that they become upset and have recourse to criticism based on nationalist arguments. We have earlier seen the same pattern in the local elections.

**Later Developments**

The developments after the 1996 parliamentary elections will only be treated summarily. Since at the time of writing the MPs elected in 1996 are still serving, it is too early to evaluate their work. It can just be mentioned tentatively that it is to a large degree influenced by the way they were elected. The Turkish support for Birol Akifoğlu and Galip Galip would necessarily influence their work in parliament as well as their general behaviour. Their election has contributed towards conserving the minority question as primarily a Greek-Turkish issue. The combined pressure of Turkey and the political parties which they represent, coupled with their political inexperience, have curbed significantly their possibility to take initiatives for the

193 For more details about the protests and accusations against Birol, see Trakya’nın Sesi 564/03.10.1996 and Stohos 641/02.10.1996.
minority. It has also made them vulnerable for attacks by the Greek press, which would find a “Turkish finger” behind even perfectly reasonable demands. Mustafa Mustafa represents the great innovation in minority politics as he participates in the political work of Sinaspismos as a regular party cadre. His election and political conduct has improved the image of the minority in the eyes of the Greek public. He also continues to be well respected within the minority. However, his ability to influence is of course restricted by several factors. Firstly, he represents a small party outside government. Secondly, his commitment to the party means that to a certain degree he is restricted by the ideological and political limitations of Sinaspismos. In addition to the activities of the minority MPs, it should be mentioned that KKE has continued to take several positive initiatives in issues pertaining to the minority.

The new political situation after the election also influenced the internal organisation of the minority. There was an attempt to reorganise the DK in a meeting 15.12.1996 under the chairmanship of Ahmet Faikoğlu. Significantly, only the minority MPs for ND and PASOK participated. A draft for new statutes was presented which would be put to vote in a larger meeting by the AYK 06.01.1997. İbram Onsunoğlu launched a devastating critique against this initiative. He recognised the need of organising the minority in an umbrella organisation, but reminded about the negative experiences of the past when the “mafia” tried to silence everybody who was not in their group. He maintained that the 22 September election should signify the end of the “mafia era” and that the minority MPs should take the lead in organising the AYK. He called the draft statutes of the DK for a provocation, made by the “mafia” to secure its power. 100 of the 150 members of the AYK were present in the meeting on 6 January. 95 participated in the vote for the new statutes which gave the following result: 49 for, 25 against, while 21 abstained. Mustafa Mustafa voted against while the other two MPs abstained. All the members of the DK voted for (İleri 862/10.01.1997). Afterwards, it was claimed that the new DK statutes had been approved (cf. Gündem 27/07.01.1997). Onsunoğlu argued that the “conspirator” statutes had not obtained enough votes since it was necessary with a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority (100 out of 150 votes), and it had in fact not even received simple majority (76 votes). He also stressed that none of the MPs had voted in favour of it (Trakya’nın Sesi 574/16.01.1997). Obviously, many were uneasy about the meeting. It is clear that those who voted for the statutes did not exceed those who were under the influence of the old DK. The meeting did not signify a new start for the organisation of the minority, but exposed clearly a shift of power. Logically the “clique” could not oppose the MPs of the large parties as before, since they had been “approved” by Turkey. At the same time these MPs had to find a balance with the old leadership which previously had the “approval” of Turkey. In the

194 Trakya’nın Sesi 572/26.12.1996. Besides the critique of the initiative, there is a long article which look back on the history of the AYK. The complete draft statutes of the DK are also included.
first meeting of the DK under the new statutes on 23 February, Adam Bekiroğlu was elected chairman for a year. He was subsequently succeeded by Galip Galip and Birol Akifoğlu. The DK abandoned the excesses of the past, but it never evolved into the kind of democratic umbrella organisation for the minority which it presented itself as. Its dependency on various forces also prevented it from gaining any momentum as a driving force in minority politics. Characteristically, Aydın Ömeroğlu complained that the democratic and legal struggle of the minority had always been sabotaged from within. He questioned how the DK could be the highest organ of the minority, as some people claimed, when it was indifferent and inactive (Diyalog 1/02.01.1998).

İbram Onsunoglu would also point out that when the serious discrimination came to an end in 1991, both the internal Greek situation and the international framework provided the minority with hitherto unknown possibilities to solve its problems. He warned that nobody had any longer plausible excuses to shrink from their responsibility of doing something. In the final analysis the minority’s lack of activity was both connected to the negative experiences of the previous internal conflicts, and to the fact that the minority had still not been able to gain any momentum on its own, but was dragged behind the policy of the two states it was attached to.

In closing, a few words should also be said about recent elections. In the local elections of 11 October 1998, the trend from the last local elections continued. However, the results are not always directly comparable because of the administrative reforms which have rearranged the units of local government. In Rodopi PASOK continued to have a strong grip on the minority voters. The easy victories of Stelios Stavropoulos for prefect and Yiorgos Papadiellis for mayor of Komotini both owed much to the minority. In Sappes the young Dinos Haritopulos (independent) succeeded in attracting the minority vote and won with a clear margin over the previous “minority friend” Yiorgos Polihroniadis. As usual, the parties would have recourse to exaggerations in their appeals to the “Turkish minority” in order to attract votes. ND distinguished itself in this respect, but since it had neglected the minority beforehand these efforts became nothing more than spasmodic efforts on the eve of the elections. PASOK was relatively restrained in its propaganda, but owed its success more to its connections with minority politicians. Mustafa Mustafa remarked that in the prefecture elections the DK, which claimed to represent all of the “Western Thrace Muslim Turkish Minority”, in reality worked as a branch of PASOK. Politicians who did not follow them were accused of “separatism”. In short, a “clique” tried to direct

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195 For more details, see Gündem 34/25.02.1997; 17.02.1998; 120/02.03.1999.
196 Trakya’nın Sesi 596/04.09.1997, “The misfortune of our generation, and our inability to exploit the suitable conditions in order to find solutions for the minority questions.” by İbram Onsunoglu.
197 This reform is known under the name “Kapodistrias”
198 For a good range of examples from the election campaign, see Eleftherotipia 07.08.1999, “Yiorgos and the new era for the minority”, by Simeon Soltaridis.
the minority into the governing party fold. Mustafa remarked ironically that they wanted everybody to accept the maxim:

Oh Western Thrace Turk,
praise our prefect.
trust your leaders,
work for PASOK (Atılım 14/June 1999).

Mustafa Mustafa was candidate for Sinaspismos, while Sabahaddin Emin (who was on the Trust ticket in the June 1989 election) ran for KKE. Both with only moderate success. After the elections, Hâki mentioned that there had been spent a lot of money this time. There were also some attempts to threaten people who worked for other parties. They were told in anonymous phone calls that they would not be able to go to Turkey or that their children would not get education visas. They could also be characterised by well used epithets such as “pro-infidel” (İleri 931/20.11.1998). This displays the lack of democratic culture in the minority, but had limited effect as long as there was no real involvement from Turkey. In Ksanthi, Filippos Amiridis won the municipality election once more in a convincing fashion. In the prefecture elections Panayiotis Salturos (PASOK) had to give way for Yiorgos Pavlidis (ND). Salturos, who had much support in the minority, obtained slightly more votes than Pavlidis in the Ksanthi prefecture (53% to 47%), but lost because of the co-ordination with Kavala and Drama.

The European Parliament elections 13 June 1999 was only met with moderate interest by the minority since there were no great interests at stake. On a national level the election was a success for ND, which obtained 36%, some 3% ahead of the second party, PASOK. As regards Thrace, PASOK prevailed in Rodopi and ND in Ksanthi. PASOK’s ability to rally the minority is exemplified by an announcement in a township with a Muslim president:

Saturday 15 May 1999 8 o’clock in the evening, Prime Minister Kostas Simitis will make an important announcement at the Komotini town square which is also of interest to the Western Thrace Turkish minority. We would ask all the minority members to be present at the town square.
With respect, Arriana municipality council.
Note: Our buses will bring our people from the villages to the town square and back. 199

Mustafa Mustafa commented that he was not opposed to the township presidents becoming party members. On the contrary, he was positive to the political organisation of the minority. However, they could not publish such an announcement in the name of the township council. That was against the law. In his own propaganda he wrote about the importance of EU within the framework of a democratic contemporary policy for the minority (ibid.). Dede advocated that the minority should vote in protest against the large parties which had not condemned the latest anti-minority outburst of the

199 Cited in a critique by Mustafa Mustafa in Atılım 14/June 1999.
metropolitan Damaskinos in an interview to the nationalist periodical *Nemesis*. Instead, he proposed that the minority should vote for OAKKE or *Fileleftheri*. The call had limited success, but Dede claimed that 90% of the 691 votes for *Fileleftheri* and 556 votes for OAKKE came from the minority (*Trakya’ının Sesi* 625/20.06.1999). The reason why he encouraged the minority to vote for this rather odd couple—OAKKE is on the far left and close to the “Macedonian minority” activists, while *Fileleftheri* of Stefanos Manos is a liberal party on the right—is that both of them have clearly formulated policies which are positive to the minority. In the case of Manos it is simply the case of a straightforward liberal party, which has been able to stay clear of a nationalist bias which could confuse its principles. In general, minority politics has come a long way since the heyday of the independent ticket, but it still has its own peculiarities in comparison with other tendencies in Greek politics.

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200 *Trakya’ının Sesi* 621/23.05.1999. The interview is reprinted in *Trakya’ının Sesi* 622/31.05.1999.
Internationalisation of the Minority issue

It may be pertinent to have a more systematic look at the attempts to attract international attention to the minority issue. The international involvement in the fate of the minority was limited after the first years of friction in the aftermath of the Lausanne treaty. In the case of Thrace this is natural as it would be difficult for foreign observers to keep in touch with what was happening in such a relatively remote area. Consequently the fate of the minority became dominated by the ups and downs of Greek-Turkish relations, which for years represented the framework of “internationalisation”. After the Greek Orthodox minority has all but vanished, Turkey’s patronage of the “Muslim minority” in Western Thrace have taken on a new character. Since the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul can no longer be used as leverage, there has been a growing tendency to apply to international organisations. The minority too became aware of the possibility to appeal to international organisations. Sometimes the appeals to international organisations were co-ordinated with Turkish diplomatic efforts. Finally we have the question of the international organisations’ ability to follow up the situation in Western Thrace with consistency and integrity.

Minority Initiatives

The initiatives by the minority itself to promote its problems internationally, can be roughly divided them into three groups: The initiatives by those from the minority who have remained in Greece, by those who have emigrated to Turkey, and by those who live in other countries. The last group comprises those who live more or less permanently abroad as foreign workers or students, mostly in Germany. Each group has its peculiarities, depending on a number of factors.

The Émigré Groups in Turkey and the Turkish State

This is in many ways the easiest groups to deal with. They are represented by a number of “Western Thrace Turkish Solidarity Associations” (Batı Trakya Türk Dayanışma Dernekleri - BTTDD), with the largest association based in Istanbul. The first of these organisations was founded in 1946 under the name “Western Thrace Emigrants Aid Association”, and was in the beginning mostly directed towards helping the emigrants from Western Thrace who had begun to arrive in large numbers during the summer of 1941 in connection with the foreign occupation of Western Thrace (see above). It functioned more or less as an interest group or lobby which tried to influence the Turkish government in matters connected to their settlement in Turkey.
Gradually they expanded and are now represented in many larger and smaller cities with an emigrant population from Western Thrace. They displayed no serious initiatives to address themselves to international organisations until after 1974. In some cases I would question whether their main concern is what happens in Western Thrace. Several leading cadres have had political ambitions and used their positions in these organisation as a springboard for careers in Turkish political parties.

In the late 1970s, the solidarity organisations issued various pamphlets in English such as the various incarnations of a pamphlet named “How the West Thrace Moslem Turks are Annihilated” (Anonymous 1975; Anonymous 1976; Anonymous 1979). These are not very well written, and include chapters with titles like: “The Greek racialism and discrimination race” and “Fanatic racialism how swallowing the rights as a machine” (1976). The 1979 edition includes a copy of two letters from 1978 to the General Secretary of the United Nation, Mr. Kurt Waldheim. They are somewhat awkward in style and do not give impression of a professional effort. They are more or less direct translations of the emotional Turkish discourse on “outside Turks”. A letter dated 09.01.1978 started in following fashion:

As Western Turkish Thracians, under the Greek Administration, who are deprived of both their legal and human rights and left to their fate of torture and pain by today’s Greek society, we would like to make a direct appeal to your exalted person who is the competent authority of the United Nations which, with international treaties and laws, have assumed to defend those who were segregated for their beliefs, race, and nationality and to blame the nations and their rulers who deem proper the inhuman oppression on the minorities (Anonymous 1979).

The situation changed radically after the military coup in Turkey in 1980. Gradually the new regime started to take a greater interest, both when it came to influence the situation in Western Thrace and promote it internationally as a problem. There are still signs of the old style rhetoric, as in the publications by the Solidarity Association of Cyprus and Western Thrace Turks which was founded in late 1981 (Anonymous 1982a; Anonymous 1982b). There is a marked change in style in a publication from June 1982 titled “Human Rights Violation in Western Thrace” (Anonymous 1982c). Even though it is published by the BTTDD, it is clear from the approach and the quality of presentation that it has been written from someone outside the émigré circles. The same can be said about a publication from December 1983 titled “The Drama of the Moslem Turkish Minority in Western Thrace”, which was co-published by the BTTDD and the solidarity associations in West Germany (Anonymous 1983a). The traditional Turkish nationalist approach has now given place to a human rights profile. The booklet ends with the following statement:

As the Moslem Turks of Western Thrace, we have no purpose other than to request respect for our minority and human rights. We believe that this is the natural right of every human being. The Greek Government should put an end to its oppression of the Moslem Turks in Western Thrace. The denial of the existing oppression and discrimination will not benefit either Greece or the Moslem Turks in Western Thrace. At this point, what matters is that this inhuman course in Western Thrace should be reversed (Anonymous 1983a: 40).
The shift from an “Outside Turks” approach to an emphasis on human and minority rights is clear from many publications in the early 1980s. On the scholarly level this new tendency had its foremost exponent in the books and articles of Baskın Oran.

The BTTDD showed a marked increase in activities during this period. It organised a round table discussion at the Marmara Etap hotel in Istanbul on 28.06.1986, which was hailed as a turning point in the minority struggle. The participants were: Prof. Dr. Ahmet Mumcu, Prof. Dr. Mümtaz Soysal, journalist Ergun Göze, journalist Mehmet Ali Birand, Prof. Dr. Kemal Karpat. The discussion was opened by the chairman of BTTDD Dr. Mustafa Rumeli, and was attended by selected persons from all of Turkey, Turkish television, BBC and German television. In the discussion it is possible to discern the tension between the traditional “outside Turks” approach and modern initiatives based on international developments in human rights. Göze said that it is not a Western Thrace question, but a TURKISH QUESTION, while Birand advocated a more cautious approach. The experienced diplomat Kâmuran Înan said that it should be a state policy to protect the existence of the outside Turks (Akin 880/10.07.1986; Gerçek 141/30.07.1986).

In late 1987 the BTTDD started to publish a new periodical Batı Trakya’nın Sesi. It has an advisory board of 12 scholars, headed by Kemal Karpat. The first issue featured an interview of Kemal Karpat by Halit Eren of the BTTDD where among other things he asked about how to promote the issue in international fora. He gave very specific advice on how to present their problems:

H.E.: […] There is also the problem of the Western Thrace Turks, who today are our particular subject among the Balkan Turks. Although Greece claims to be a democratic country, there is economic and political oppression against the Turks which is not supposed to exist in a democratic country. There are ways of oppression which are not seen anywhere in the civilised world. What methods are needed to explain this to the world, America, and Europe. What is your advice?

K.K.: It is necessary to have an organisation of three or four people to work for this purpose. from the Western Thrace Muslim Turks themselves

H.H.: Such an organisation exists.

K.K.: There is such an organisation, but you need 3–4 people to act in the name of this organisation or such an organisation. It is an advantage if they are able to retain their Greek citizenship when they embark on this. Because, they will say that we speak as Greek citizens. If they act as people from Western Thrace who have obtained Turkish citizenship, they should say that we act as citizens who fled because of injustice against us in Greece and we have the following problems. This can be organised as a committee. At least one or two of these people must know [foreign] languages. You need people who can take part in discussions, who command the Western intellectual framework and can express their thoughts fluently. We always make the propaganda for ourselves. Our writings and speeches are generally made as if we were going to address our own people. Whereas the committee I speak about must direct all its efforts to the outside world. For example in America there is the organisation of the Balkan Turks. It is headed by two diligent friends who work quite well. They were even able to make the problems of the Bulgarian Turks heard in the American Congress. They go and they talk. For example, the memorandum given to the members of Congress by the former MP İbixoğlu who came from Bulgaria was printed in the Amnesty International report. For example, what these people can do is to apply and write to Amnesty International, to go to the European Parliament and complain

201 Kemal Karpat is one of the most distinguished scholars of Ottoman and Turkish studies. Originally a Muslim Turk from Rumania, he became a US citizen and worked as professor at the University of Wisconsin. He has kept in close touch with various nationalist groups in Turkey.
about Greece there. To meet the chairman of the European Parliament, tell him that this is our situation, you made Greece a member country, she does not grant us our rights. At this stage the target of the Western Thrace Turks is not the broad masses, such as speaking on the radio, this is useless. Clear and effective targets will be selected. It will go to Amnesty International, the European Parliament, OECD, the American congress, there is a committee which controls that the Helsinki Conference is applied, the Helsinki Committee. It will write memoranda and explain the situation. In my opinion this is the first step. I see that Turkish journals are published. This is something which you and I read. It makes no sense to make any effort to convince me about this cause. […] It is also a prerequisite that a few Western Thracian Turks are in America. Greek Orthodox are in America in the same fashion. They must contact them and interfere with them, look this is happening that is happening etc. They have Greek organisations to support them. In a meeting by the Greek Americans who occupy themselves with human rights where there are Americans present, you stand up and say: I am a Greek citizen, a Western Thrace Turk and Greek citizen, I could not hold out the oppression and came here. This must be said. Struggle is made by deeds. It is made by creating events. Not by sitting at the table exchanging thoughts. In fact, this is what we always do. O God how nice, we take great decisions about some matters and then we return to our old jobs. This will not do. This job needs the sacrifice of time, energy, and money (Batı Trakya’nın Sesi 1/Nov-Dec 1987: 13–14).

Kemal Karpat is speaking as someone who knows how the international system works. However, his suggestions belong to a level that people from the minority had not been able to operate on before. The greatest problem with this plan was that the minority lacked persons with the qualifications Karpat envisaged. However, it gives us a clear picture of the role they tried to groom Sadık Ahmet for in the subsequent years. The solidarity associations in Turkey were not in a position to have an independent policy in this matter. They could work as pressure groups towards the Turkish government, as well as being utilised as part of Turkish foreign policy. The initiatives by these organisations reflect to a great degree the priorities of Turkish authorities. The following years marked the height of their activity. The necessity of co-ordinating their efforts with Turkish foreign politics make them different from regular kinds of human rights activist organisations. This is of course known by Greek authorities, who may exaggerate this aspect. There had always been some kind of symbiosis between the émigré associations and Turkish authorities, but from the late 1980s the efforts of BTTDD became clearly subordinate to state initiatives.

When Turkey stepped up her campaign against Greek discriminations, this was soon commented on in the Greek press. A Greek journalist (Kira Adam) with good contact to diplomatic circles drew the attention to the following:

From January to April 1988 there has until now appeared from five (!) different places of origin letters-accusations and recently also an appeal concerning the Greek government’s “violation” of the human rights of the Muslims minority in Western Thrace to international FORA which are occupied with human rights (Eleftherotipia 10.07.1988).

The main part of the article pointed to a document which came into the hands of the Greek government from a country in the Middle East:

According to a decision by the Turkish government, in May 1982 a council was formed to determine the general directions and principles of Turkey’s future policy on the issue of Turkish minorities in other countries.

The council consists of representatives from the National Security Council, the National Intelligence Service, the Department of Interior, the General Staff, the Foreign Department, the
Security Council, the presidency, the Department of Culture, the Department of Trade, the radio and television, the directorate of the paramilitary forces.

This council made guide-lines concerning the principles for the general and particular policy with the goal of securing the Turks in other countries (ibid.).

An *ad hoc* committee was formed for the implementation of the policy sketched out above, and from the autumn of 1982 all the activities concerning Western Thrace followed these particular guide-lines. The first priority was to present the various problems of the minority in various international fora, and great efforts were spent towards this goal.

Their goal is to present the problems of the minority as unresolved and controversial, with the perspective of beginning negotiations, so they can reach the ultimate goal following the Cyprus example. The associations of the Western Thrace Turks in Western Germany serve this goal very well.

The (note: Turkish) embassy in Bonn directs the activities through Adem Ademoğlu. With orders from Ankara, these associations submit accusations and appeals concerning acts of oppression against the Turks of Western Thrace by the Greek authorities and send them to various international organisations (ibid.).

During the autumn of 1988 the Turkish foreign minister, Mesut Yılmaz, referred constantly to the Western Thrace issue. He claimed that a Greek-Turkish dialogue could only be meaningful if the problems of the Aegean and the respect of the rights of the minority in Western Thrace were included (*Eleftherotipia* 30.11.1989). The insistence on Western Thrace was viewed by Athens as a step in the development of a the new policy by Ankara (*Kathimerini* 30.11.1988). By the next year this new policy was in full bloom. This created warnings in the nationalist part of the Greek press, comparing the Turkish policy in Thrace to the experience in Cyprus.

And tomorrow we will have the same in Western Thrace which is going on in Cyprus, where it also started with Turco-Cypriot minority, to reach today’s Turco-Cypriot community or Turco-Cypriot state!

Simultaneously Ankara is saying left and right with the audacity of a thousand monkeys:
• That the “Turkish” minority in Greece is oppressed,
• She attempts to present the issue for discussion in some CSCE, within the framework of human rights, and to abolish de facto the Lausanne Treaty (*Pontiki* 03.03.1989).

On the other hand, it was pointed out that Ankara was not bothered about everything she was accused for, because “the wet does not fear the rain” (ibid.), and the escalation continued. A Greek article looked in retrospect at the development of Turkish propaganda. The article was spurred by the recent “provocative questions towards Mitsotakis from foreign diplomats”. Among the early examples we have the following:

The activities of the Turks on the minority issue which they audaciously name “Turkish”, are among others the following:
• Common accusation by the MUSLIM WORLD LEAGUE and the mufti of Ksanthi in 1982 towards the Human Rights Committee of UN. The content of the accusation was so mendacious and provocative that it was put in the archives.
• Accusation by the WORLD MUSLIM CONGRESS (1984) to the Human Rights Centre of UN about the oppression of the “Muslim Turkish population” of W. Thrace. The accusation was accompanied by a report by the “Organisation of Western Turkish Thrace” which has its seat in Istanbul.
Petition to the Committee for Regulating Petitions to the European Parliament in 1983 by Aydin Ömeroğlu, Muslim Greek citizen, living in W. Germany, concerning violation of the rights of the “Turks” of W. Thrace.

The same year (1983) the English Euro-MP Mr. Taylor— for unknown services in exchange— submitted a proposal to be voted upon about the oppression of the Muslim minority of W. Thrace. The vote was declined, but when voted upon three other Turkophile European MPs were in favour of the vote.

In May 1984 a proposal by 18 MPs, concerning the “violations of the rights of the Turkish Muslim minority of W. Thrace”, was submitted to the chairmanship of the Council of Europe (Kathimerini 05.05.1991).

The author (Od. X. Zulas), who was on a mission to Western Thrace, set out to prove that the situation was entirely different from the way it was depicted abroad. And of course he succeeded in this, as he appealed to the internal Greek public opinion which was not difficult to convince.

We can see the contours of the struggle for influencing international opinion. It was dominated by a few features. First of all the ignorance about the situation. Anyone could come with whatever allegations he wanted, because there were not many people who could verify the allegations. Consequently, the problem was not so much to say something correct, but to say something credible. It was clearly effective to mobilise international organisations and opinions to put pressure on Greece. Greece would not be very sensitive about the criticism of Turkey. However, as Greek foreign policy was based on respect for international law, as opposed to the Turkish method of military force as in Cyprus, it was effective to criticise Greece for violating her obligation as a democratic country. Consequently, any mistreatment of the minority in Western Thrace provided potential ammunition to the Turkish propaganda.

The main problem for Turkey in exploiting this situation was the lack of credibility since she did not really espouse the principles she criticised Greece for violating. Any criticism of Greece could easily be turned around and directed at Turkey’s deplorable human rights record. Turkey tried to avoid this pitfall with the tactic of putting Greece in a different category. It should not be tolerated that Greece behaved in this fashion, as a member of the European Union, while Turkey should not be criticised because she had special problems and was not a member of the EU.

Since Greece at first did little to mend the problems in Thrace, the main effort was concentrated on fighting Turkish influence in international organisations. If we look at the internal situation in Western Thrace, there was not much difference between 1975 and 1985. A natural question is: Why should the international community suddenly start to care now? One factor was that the general international climate for launching minority rights campaigns had improved. Another factor was that in 1975, with the Cyprus invasion fresh in mind, it would be much more difficult for Turkey to embark on such a campaign. Since there was little knowledge about the actual situation in Thrace, and the minority issue itself was not the first priority of Turkey, the issue
turned into a tug of war in international organisations more or less independent of the local problems.

Turkey used the trials against Sadık Ahmet to profile the problems of the minority internationally. This culminated with the trial in January 1990 and the subsequent “mini-pogrom”. Right afterwards the Turkish foreign minister Mesut Yılmaz sent a letter to international organisations and asked them to draw attention to the “grave situation which has developed during recent days in Western Thrace, Greece, where a Turkish Moslem minority is living under the protection of the Lausanne Peace Treaty of 1923 and naturally of many modern instruments of the protection of human rights.”202 The letter included a detailed criticism of the verdict against Sadık and the behaviour of the Greek authorities towards the minority. The appeal at the end of the letter displays that Turkey by now had placed the diplomatic tug of war with Greece squarely within a human rights framework;

At a time when human rights and democratic norms are so decisively gaining ground in Europe and elsewhere, I am confident that you will not wish to fail to contribute to the protection and promotion of the same values in Western Thrace. I hope you will take an active interest in the human rights problems in this region of Greece and assist our efforts to impress upon the Greek Government the urgent need to deal with these problems peacefully within a humanitarian and enlightened context (ibid.).

It is interesting to note that the young Greek Foreign Minister (with an American university education), Andonis Samaras, responded in a very traditional fashion to this letter. He drafted a letter in response where he proposed that a UN committee should go to Greece and Turkey and investigate how the Lausanne treaty has been applied in the two countries. The committee should look at the living conditions for the two minorities from 1923 to today, and the number of Greek and Turkish citizens who had settled in Turkey and Greece respectively. However, the political leaders reacted (in particular Andreas Papandreu and Harilaos Florakis) and stopped this initiative. A Greek nationalist newspaper with good connections with the Foreign Department summed up in its own blunt style the reasons why the initiative was unfortunate:

An internal problem is internationalised and it is not possible to control:
• The constitution of the committee.
• The pressures which will be exercised on it.
• What the various hecklers will say who will be called to witness.
• What questions the committee will ask, which might be others than the ones we propose as “the object for the investigation”.
   It is forgotten that:
• Ankara is not bothered by findings which say that it literally “fucks” its minorities.
• That the “international opinion” does nothing for Cyprus.

202 For the full text, see (Yılmaz 1990). The letter was sent to “the UN Secretary-General, NATO Secretary-General, Chairman and Secretary-General of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, the Chairman of the European Parliament, Secretary-General of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and 35 foreign ministers of the Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) member countries.”
• That we will speak about the past, while Ankara will make its hecklers speak about the present to the UN committee.203

Consequently the Greek government avoided to suggest an independent investigation, but preferred to answer Turkey with counter accusations. In his letters to international organisations Samaras stressed that:

The Turkish government directs and supports the convicted Ahmet Sadik and İbrahim Şerif, who had as goal to instigate religious-racial hatred and provoke confrontations between Muslims and Christians in Western Thrace (Kathimerini 14.02.1990).

On the international arena the mutual accusations between Greece and Turkey has continued with various force up until the present. It is outside the scope of the present work to give a detailed account of these initiatives. Suffice to say that it has often been difficult for international organisations—as we have seen, for example, in the discussion of the mufti controversy and article 19—to sort out the many confusing and contradictory allegations. Soon there would be efforts to investigate the situation by independent human rights organisations, such as Helsinki Watch (see below), but these commendable attempts faced a difficult tasks.

The Workers in Germany

People from the minority started to go to Germany from the 1960s to look for work, just like the Christians of the area who could not find employment locally. The first who went there were usually interested in saving up some money and return as soon as possible. However, gradually their number increased. They made their social clubs were they met after work with other Western Thracians. When I stayed in Munich in the autumn of 1995 I frequented quite regularly one of the two rivalling clubs there. Most of them are people with little education, or education which they cannot apply in Germany, who do manual work. Earlier, when the labour market was better, many of them found work in the factories of BMW and MAN, while those who came when I was there had to wash trains, etc., in other words, the kind of menial work it was difficult to find Germans to do.

In a longer perspective, the sojourn in Germany exposed the minority members to a different society and they were able to enjoy civil rights and social benefits they had not experienced in Greece. This in turn influenced their way of thinking and their approach to the Western Thrace issue. As they became better integrated in German society they also started to make use of the opportunities available to present their problems. One of the main figures was Aydın Ömeroğlu, who studied economy in Hamburg in the early 1980s. He has also written his own account where he tries to

203 Pontiki 09.02.1990, “Samaras and Thrace—A letter (which fortunately stayed…) in the drawer!”
explain the intentions and aims of “the Western Thrace Turk’s legal struggle”. He viewed it as part of a general effort towards democratisation in both Greece and Turkey. The initiatives in Strasbourg were directed towards:

1. Securing foreign support for the legal struggle of the minority in Greece.

**Council of Europe (CE)**

In the early 1980s there were 5–6 organisations of minority emigrant workers from Western Thrace. (Today there is close to 20.) Ömeroğlu sent a letter to the solidarity organisations in Germany on 22.08.1983 and suggested to organise a campaign to present the minority to people in Europe. He contacted some friends in the Düsseldorf association and a committee consisting of Şükrü Hüseyin, Hasan Düdük, and Aydın Ömeroğlu was elected by the association to go to the CE in Strasbourg 04.10.1983. He had contacted the German parliamentarian Wilfried Böhm beforehand and had a meeting where the committee presented the minority’s problems. In the evening they participated in an open meeting in the CE titled: “Is democracy a luxury, or an obligation?”. In this connection Ömeroğlu made a short speech in German about the necessity of protecting minority rights, and solve the problems of the minority within a democratic framework. In a meeting 10.05.1984 the CE decided to look closer at the problems of the minority in Western Thrace. The contact between the CE and the minority associations continued, and Ömeroğlu points out that they were involved in various discussions on minority rights in the CE which led to the “European Charter for Regional or Minority languages” on 22.06.1992. This represents the first attempt by minority members to make use of European institutions to solve their problems.

**European Parliament (EP)**

The first initiatives in the EP concerning Western Thrace were taken by two British parliamentarians, John Taylor and Ian Paisley. They submitted a short memorandum (Document 1-1362/82) in March 1982, which mentions briefly problems of discriminations against the minority. It was discussed on 25–26.05.1983, and the Greek parliamentarian Gondikas was put in charge of investigating the matter. In the Greek press this initiative was portrayed as part of the Turkish propaganda (Kathimerini 05.05.1991). Apparently the initiative of the two conservative British MPs was connected with a motion related to Northern Ireland which Greece had voted

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204 The most complete account is in his book (Ömeroğlu 1994). For the initiatives directed to the Council of Europe and the European Parliament see pp. 129–140. He has also touched upon the issue repeatedly in a small newspaper he has published intermittently, first under the name Yeni Adım and later Diyalog. If nothing else is specified the various dates concerning correspondence with the CE and EP etc. are taken from this book. Later, the part of the workers’ associations which was closely linked to Sadik published many documents related to their initiatives (Alioğlu 1998).
in favour of.\textsuperscript{205} In return these two MPs tried to put pressure on some weak spot in Greece and utilised the minority for this purpose. From there on it is natural that they would ask Ankara and people from the minority to contribute with “ammunition”, just as they would leave the issue aside if Greece responded to the pressure. K. Gondikas submitted his report 14.09.1983.\textsuperscript{206} The report has the standard Greek arguments of the time such as: The mosques are enumerated as a proof of the freedom of religion. There is said to be no restriction on private property. The Muslims are able to dispose of their property in the same way as the Christians according to the laws. It is correct that there are certain restrictions on buying property in the border areas, but these are the same for Christians and Muslims. In cases when the person who possesses \textit{de facto} the land has no documents to prove it, there may be certain restriction imposed. It is a problem throughout Greece that private persons usurp public land. The Muslims are treated in the same way as the Christians in such cases. It claims that there is no restriction on travel for the Muslims. The conclusion stresses that there is no “Muslim community” in Western Thrace, only a Muslim minority.\textsuperscript{207}

The initiatives by the associations in Germany at this time were completely independent of the initiative by Taylor and Paisley. On 10–11 October 1983 Aydın Ömeroğlu and the chairman of the Düsseldorf Association, Cafer Hasan, went to Strasbourg as the second committee of the associations in Germany and informed members of the EP about the minority. 18.10.1983 a meeting between all the Western Thracian minority associations in Germany was held in Frankfurt, and it was decided to submit a petition to the EP. This petition was submitted officially on 29.10.1983. At this point the associations in Germany tried to involve minority members living in Greece in their work directed at the EP. They contacted the Western Thrace Minority University Graduate Association (\textit{Yüksek Tahsilliler Derneği} -YTD) on 12.11.1983 and proposed to collaborate on the issue. The choice of the YTD as a partner was natural. It was one of the few minority associations officially recognised by the Greek authorities, and it included all the minority members with higher education. On 14.12.1983 the petition to the EP from the associations in Germany was accepted. On 30.12.1983 the YTD gave a positive answer to the proposition of collaboration,

Meanwhile, the chairman İsmail Rodoplu and secretary İbrahim Şerif of the YTD had already been in contact with Taylor and Paisley. They sent a letter of thanks for their initiative 06.09.1983. They continued to correspond, but Rodoplu and Şerif hid

\textsuperscript{205} Ian Paisley is the well known Protestant leader from Northern Ireland. Later the Greek Cypriot press revealed that John Taylor had economic, business, and property interests in the occupied North Cyprus (Alexandris 1988: 527).
\textsuperscript{206} European Parliament, Legal Affairs Committee, Working document on the Motion for a Resolution No. 1-1362/82 by Mr. J. TAYLOR and Mr. Ian PAISLEY on the situation in Western Thrace, Rapporteur: K. Gondikas, 14 September 1983, PE 86.494 (Ömeroğlu 1994: 137).
\textsuperscript{207} Ömeroğlu published a facsimile of the Gondikas Report in Turkish translation with his own criticism in \textit{Yeni Adım} 1/October 1988.
part of this correspondence from the other members. In a letter from 09.12.1983 Taylor asked Rodoplu to give his opinion as soon as possible on the working document by Gondikas. I do not know how Taylor got in contact with Rodoplu. An article in the Greek press concerning various Turkish campaigns against Greece, mentions that Rodoplu made contacts with Ian Paisley and John Taylor on orders from Ankara to promote the case in the EP (Eleftherotipia 10.07.1988).

On 09.01.1984 Rodoplu and Şerif sent a letter to Taylor to answer the working document of Gondikas. This letter criticised the Gondikas report for distorting the facts. It claimed among other things that Gondikas had used data which did not reflect the reality, and he had not been in contact with anybody from the minority. The reporter went out of his way to avoid saying that the minority’s language was Turkish. Nothing was mentioned about the loans given to Christians to buy minority land. The expropriations were not covered properly. Many people were not given passports so that they could travel outside the country. Everything was done so that those who went to Europe as workers would not return. Article 19 of the citizenship code was used for this purpose. The letter concluded with the remark that it was unfortunate that the task had been given to a Greek parliamentarian, as the report was based on wrong information and had been written with prejudice.

In the regular annual general assembly of the YTD on 22.01.1984, Hasan İmamoglu and Sadık Ahmet wanted the working document of Gondikas to be read aloud. Rodoplu claimed that the document had not been examined yet and that they would have to discuss it. After a vote it was decided not to read it up. As a consequence Ömeroğlu accused them of sabotaging the legal battle of the minority. Ömeroğlu continued to pursue the issue in the EP. On 08.06.1984 he received an answer from the EU Commission which in reality referred their complaints to the national institutions. After it had been treated several times the application commission (Dilekçe Komisyonu) decided on 23.10.1985 that the matter has been treated sufficiently with the Gondikas “working document” (Ömeroğlu 1994: 139). In the autumn general assembly of the YTD 23.10.1984 neither Rodoplu, Şerif, nor Hatipoğlu said a word about the decision against Ömeroğlu’s petition. In the annual regular assembly on 20.01.1985, Rodoplu mentioned some of the things he had kept hidden for the

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208 (Ömeroğlu 1994: 136). A facsimile of Rodoplu’s letter to Taylor/Paisley 06.09.1983 is published in Yeni Adım 1/October 1988. In the letter they basically thank for the interest and say that their problems have remained the same since 1966, and enclose a “document-memorandum” which they have sent to the embassies of the countries which have signed the Lausanne Treaty. Some subsequent correspondence is also given in facsimiles.

209 Rodoplu included the 15 pages long letter-memorandum in (Molla 1988?). It could not have been written by himself or Şerif for the simple reason that none of them know English. It is more than likely that they were assisted by Turkish diplomats. A Turkish version of the letter is printed in Yeni Adım 1/October 1988.

210 (Ömeroğlu 1994: 138). Ömeroğlu bases his presentation on the minutes from the general assembly of the YTD.
members one year earlier concerning the initiative of Taylor and Paisley. He said that
the two English parliamentarians had raised the question which led to the Gondikas
report. The EP had looked at the matter, but did not make any decision which said that
the minority was badly treated.211

One of the main problems during the first initiatives in the EP, was how to counter
Greek claims that the initiatives by the workers’ associations in Germany were insti-
gated by Turkey. At the time this was Ömeroğlu’s first concern. He tried to state his
intentions in an article written in Greek:

Every person has the right to make a petition so that his complaints are heard and others
occupy themselves with them. The claim that the minority supposedly is “instigated” by Turkey,
cannot in any way be characterised as sincere and responsible, because our minority exercises this
right within the framework of peace and legality. The Muslim Minority is determined to defend its
recognised rights in a legitimate way, both inside and outside Greece, because we respect the
Lausanne Treaty, the Greek Constitution, the Constitutional State [Krátos Dikéu], and Human
Rights.

Concerning the so called “internationalisation”, this too makes up an arbitrary contrivance,
because the Muslim Minority always asked for its problems to be solved by the Greek Parliament
and generally within Greece, a fact which can be accepted. However, lately our minority was
compelled to have recourse to the Council of Europe and the European Parliament.

[...]

The restriction of basic rights of the members of the Muslim Minority, which is “justified” by
unacceptable accusations, contravenes justice and the national interests of Greece. The Muslim
Minority hopes that the Courts, the government, the Opposition parties, and the Country will not
remain passive observers to the actions of certain local and central officials, who aim towards the
intimidation and debasement of the minority members. The unequal treatment cannot be the
national policy of the Greek Constitutional State.212

When the work in the EP came to a halt, Ömeroğlu took the initiative to the signa-
ture campaign. His intention was that the minority should initiate a democratic struggle
as Greek citizens and for that reason it was important for him to keep some distance
from Turkey. In reality he became squeezed between Greek accusations, on the one
hand, and the intrigues by the minority members who enjoyed the support of Turkey,
on the other. As mentioned earlier, the signature campaign was usurped by Sadik
Ahmet, and the associations in Germany came under the leadership of Cafer Alioğlu.
Afterwards these association were closely connected to the movement behind Sadik.
Cafer Alioğlu would try to take some initiatives within the framework of European
institutions, but these initiatives had little substance.213 He soon acquired the reputa-
tion of going to Strasbourg only to have his picture taken as a sign of his accom-
plishments (İleri 776/11.11.1994). When the new chairman of the Western Thrace
Turks’ Federation in Europe Halit Habiboğlu complained that the Europeans who

211 Ömeroğlu points out the following results of the initiatives by the associations in Germany: In
the Council of Europe it speeded up Greece’s acceptance of the Europe Human rights Agreement’s
article 25. In the European Parliament the commission mentioned that the minority was of “Turkish
origin”. He insists that the work in Strasbourg was done professionally, and not “gropingly” as
claimed by the Turkish scholar Baskın Oran (Ömeroğlu 1994: 140).
212 Yeni Adım 02.10.1984. Reprinted in Diyalog 1/24.07.1996. He mentions in particular the
213 This is easy to see from his own account (Alioğlu 1998).
criticised infringement on human rights in various parts of the world seemed to turn a
blind eye to Western Thrace, Ömeroğlu claimed that the sad reality was that they did
not take seriously anymore the “directed” Federation (*Diyalog* 14/06.06.1997).

**Initiatives by Minority Members Living in Greece**

As the minority was unable to find the solution to its problems within the Greek
political framework, it is natural that the possibility of making petitions to international
organisations would be resorted to. Bringing accusations against their homeland was
of course a delicate matter, particularly for those who had ambitions as politicians, and
wanted to be accepted on a party ticket. The thought of bringing the issue to inter-
national organisations was maturing, but it was the workers associations in Germany
which took the lead in this matter.

As mentioned earlier, problems arose when the workers organisations tried to co-
ordinate their effort with leading minority cadre in Western Thrace. This had to do
with the internal minority rivalry at the time and the principles for selecting representa-
tives to present their problems abroad remained shady to say the least. To get an im-
pression we can have a look at a concrete example. When the associations in Germany
sent a letter to the Komotini mufti office in the beginning of 1985, they asked for the
constitution of a committee which could participate in the meetings which would be
organised “in Europe”. They even specified by name the two muftis and the two MPs,
or people elected by the AYK who could go in their name. The muftis did not assem-
ble the AYK. The information from Germany was kept secret, and the scheming
began. Hâki telephoned the foremost minority politicians, but they did not know
anything about it so they had clearly been ignored. The result was that a few persons
who based their position within the minority on support from Turkey were able to
settle things among themselves, excluding other prominent members of the minority.
The committee came to consist of:

The Son of the Ksanthi mufti Hafız, the Komotini mufti first raved about his son in law Hasan
Paçaman and finally decided on Sabahaddin Galip. And the third Molla Ismail…

And what will they now say or what have they said to the Chairmen of the Associations in
Europe: What can we do, no one else could come… So we came!

And so, before leaving Mr. Molla Ismail wrote the following in his newspaper *Gerçek*: “Our
two MPs did not have time to come, but they informed the mufti that they wished the committee
good luck.” This is an outright lie. They say “The quick thief, confuses the house owner” [*Çabuk
hırsız, ev sahibini şaşırtır*, i.e. he bluffs his way out of trouble]; this article is an example of
this…

Or else our MPs lied to us on the telephone (*Ileri* 372/01.02.1985).

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214 Hasan İmamoğlu, who was elected MP in 1977, said during the election campaign that he would
bring the problem to the UN. This was more of a slogan in the heat of the election campaign, playing
up to the frustration of the minority, than a carefully planned initiative.

215 Hâki praised the initiatives towards the Council of Europe and the European Parliament in 1984,
and considered it an important beginning (*Ileri* 370/18.01.1985).
Hâki criticised strongly this procedure and said that it was impossible to create unity and solidarity within the minority when the two muftis behaved in this way. However the hopes that international pressure would correct the situation in Greece remained high. In an article signed “A.” titled “The Council of Europe’s Legal commission and the question of the oppression against the minority”, we get an impression of the expectations of the minority. It deals with the difficulties the minority has had with presenting its problems to an international public, and after listing up the various grievances of the minority, it concludes:

It is seen clearly by the way the authorities have treated the minority, that they have contravened the minority status clearly specified by the Lausanne Treaty, on the other hand they have also restricted the minority’s civil rights. The various initiatives by minority representatives and committees directed towards the government authorities remained continuously without results, none of the rights taken away were returned.

It was after this that the minority people started to look for a way to explain to some international organisations that their constitutional rights were violated. This was not done to create a Western Thrace question as the brawling [yaygaracı] press [i.e. Greek press] claimed; it was done to secure the return of the minority and civil rights of the Muslim-Turkish minority living in Western Thrace, which the authorities had violated at a time when we are approaching the 21st century.

In this manner, the Minority Committee by stressing that the aim of their requests and complaints to the Council of Europe’s Legal Commission is essentially a matter of human rights, it is clearly displayed that the minority people want nothing else than the return of the minority and civil rights taken away from them. All the comments and accusations about other aims than this is nothing else than trying to bluff one’s way out of trouble [cabuk hursız ev sahibini şaintégr], counter propaganda to deceive public opinion, and attempts to display the inhuman treatment as correct to facilitate the continuation of the oppression mentioned against the minority.

Now the complaint by the Western Thrace Muslim-Turkish Minority concerning the authorities’ oppression against it has been forwarded to the Council of Europe and the issue is put on the agenda. Now the task will be to explain to the other part with documentation to which degree this oppression is real. At this time, this is the most important question.

Really, the oppression applied against the minority is so evident that you can say “you do not need a guide for a village in sight” [Turkish proverb, i.e. it is obvious], this is true but throughout history those who are oppressed have difficulties explaining their problems to others. Both the forces within the minority and the Council of Europe’s Legal Commission must have this reality in mind and work accordingly so that the realities are displayed objectively and justice can be applied (İleri 377/08.03.1985).

Naturally, the results were slow to come. These kinds of organisations do not work particularly fast, and it was also a difficult and often confusing problem to handle for outsiders. In the 1985 general elections the internationalisation issue appeared again. Hatipoğlu wrote that unfortunately the minority had not been able to secure the return of its natural rights with its petitions inside the country. It would now move its struggle outside the borders, to the European Community and the Council of Europe. He promoted the independent candidates as the real representatives in this struggle. He claimed that the minority MPs had earlier been encouraged to go to Strasbourg, but they did not dare to do so because they were tied to the parties (Akın 860/31.05.1985).

When phrased in this fashion by Hatipoğlu, the question of internationalisation was very much connected to the internal minority rivalry. As seen earlier, the internationalisation issue was very prominent in the 1989-1990 elections. It was again closely
connected to the internal rivalry, but by now the game had changed. Both the involve-
ment of Turkey and the international situation in the aftermath of the cold war meant
that the question of internationalisation had come to age. Turkey had been looking for
suitable persons within the minority, who could be used as front figures in promoting
the Western Thrace issue internationally, and the choice fell on Dr. Sadık Ahmet.
Human rights organisations had already been involved in the trials against him, and he
would soon become a household name in human rights circles.

**International Organisations**

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to treat the work of international organisations
in detail. The emphasis will be on those initiatives which made themselves noticed in
Thrace and on the interaction between international organisations and the people of the
area. As mentioned earlier, Greece has always been sensitive to critique by internatio-
nal organisations. The first international initiative after 1974 which seems to have
created some concern locally was the appearance of the State Department’s Human
Rights Report to the American Congress. This report owed its existence to the person-
al initiative of President Jimmy Carter, and did not reflect priorities of American
diplomacy. When it was heard in Greece that the report had mentioned violations of
the rights of the Western Thrace Muslims, this resulted in an instant response by local
authorities, using well proven authoritarian methods. The minority MP reacted by
writing an open letter to the newspaper *Gerçek*, in which he warned the minority
politicians about the pressure exerted on them:

> After the recent publication of news and declarations in both the Greek and foreign press, which
take a serious interest in our minority and may play a great role in determining its future, several
Christian secretaries of our townships [κινότιτες] were seized by panic. Rolling up their sleeves
they went to work again. According to what I heard today, these efficient secretaries went from
village to village with a paper they had prepared beforehand in their hands, visiting the Turkish
presidents and members of the township councils, wanting each of them to sign it. And indeed
without mentioning anything to them about what was written on the paper, or saying things
which had no connection with what was written, they tried to make them sign. They even forced
some presidents and members of township councils who cannot read or write Greek to sign the
paper they brought.

Honourable kinsmen, members and presidents of township councils, do you know what is
written on this paper you signed and the reason you signed it? How can you sign something
without knowing what it attests and why? According to what I have heard, the paper they made
you sign mentioned that our community is living very well in Western Thrace, enjoying all the
rights, that all rights which are recognised to us, the Western Thrace Turks, by the constitution
and international agreements are respected, that there is no oppression against Western Thrace
Turkism, that there is no difference between us and our Christian compatriots, i.e. that we have
the same rights as them, that there is no difference between the treatment of us and them, that we
are living in comfort and plenty [güllük gülistanlık], in short that we have no complaints
whatsoever. In other words, in the name and on behalf of the Western Thrace Turks, the persons
who come pretending not to see the injustice we are exposed to, or who even knowingly disrespect
our rights, want your signature on the paper which they have intentionally prepared, honourable
kinsmen presidents and members of the village councils. […]

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Interesting as it may be, this report was really only an episode and did not initiate a sustained political effort. In the words of Yiannis Kapsis: “after 1982 the infamous reports of the State Department did not dare to speak about discrimination.” In the subsequent years the State Department’s human rights reports did not play a prominent role in the affairs of the Muslim minority of Western Thrace. In fact, gradually the report began to be used by Greece as an alibi, to refute any accusation of mistreatment. The Greek press was pleased to note that the State Department human rights reports mentioned no indication of systematic oppression of the Muslim minority, nor a deliberate policy of bad treatment of them by the Greek government.

In 1991 everything changed. It should be remarked that about half a year earlier the American Helsinki Watch issued a report about the minority, which gave an indication about what was to come. However, Greece was not prepared for such a move, and diplomats maintained that it created yet another problem between Greece and Turkey.

This year’s report adopts for the first time all the Turkish positions regarding the Muslim minority of Western Thrace, while on certain points it surpasses the claims projected officially by Ankara to adopt positions which consisted of propaganda material by extremist nationalist organisations. […] Diplomatic sources described to KATHIMERINI the American move as potentially destabilising, stressing that a) the procedure of espousing the report about human rights does not leave doubts about the “political message” underlined by the American move, and b) the report will not only have momentary influence but it will constitute the basis of Ankara’s further policy in the area.

It is no coincidence that the yearly American reports rejected systematically until today the claims projected by Turkey regarding the Muslim minority. […] The most dangerous side of the American move consists of the fact that accidentally or intentionally the change concerning the issue of the Muslim minority of Thrace coincides with the analyses which the Turkish Foreign Department attempts to project to the West. Referring to the course of Turkey’s relations with Bulgaria, Ankara now claims that the improvement of the Turkish-Bulgarian relations is due to that Bulgaria has been stripped of the feeling of protection offered by the power of the Soviet Union. Ankara thus wants to underline that “if you do the same with Greece, i.e. take away your protection, the Greek-Turkish relations will ‘improve’ automatically.” This resembles desperately with the extortion which says “leave us now that we have power to impose our opinions” (Kathimerini 13.02.1991).

It was natural that Greece would react to this radically new orientation of American human rights politic. The report created an uproar in the Greek press, although at this point the problems of the “Muslim minority” were overshadowed by the reference to “Macedonian minorities” which was the most burning issue at the time. This reached such proportions that some newspapers found it necessary to exert a sobering influence. In a leading article Kathimerini summed up brilliantly the mood.

According to the prevailing conviction, in a large part of public opinion—which, however, is cultivated systematically—and a significant part of the country’s leaders, the “foreign centres” do

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218 Makedonia 12.08.1988, and several other papers. For the two subsequent years, see the comments in Ta Nea 09.02.1989 and Eleftheros Tipos 20.02.1990.
219 I have earlier written a more complete account about how these reactions were articulated (Aarbakke 1991).
only want us ill. And they aspire for it so much, that they occupy themselves systematically with
the strategy and tactics for our annihilation (Kathimerini 05.02.1991).

It also pointed out that this report was not published as a hostile action against
Greece because the Foreign Minister A. Samaras was in Washington, but because it is
published every year in the beginning of February (ibid.). This testifies to the attempts
of petty politics exploitation by the opposition parties. Turkey was pleased and the
Spokesman of the Turkish foreign department declared: The State Department report
about human rights “confirms the Turkish criticism of the violation of human rights in
Western Thrace” (Kathimerini 07.02.1991).

In Western Thrace the reactions against the report followed well beaten paths. The
Co-ordination Committee for the Associations of Constantinople, Imvros and Tenedos
came with a statement where they denounced that the persecutions of the Greeks in
Turkey were repeatedly passed over in silence by all American and Western govern-
ments, and pointed to Turkish crimes of the past (Adesmefti 06.02.1991). A resolu-
tion was passed in Ksanthi signed by leading public figures such as the metropolitan,
mayor, dean of the university, etc.:

**RESOLUTION**
The people of Ksanthi denounces the false, unethical, and misleading report of the State
Department, where undisguised falsification of the truth and the ancient history of Greek Thrace is
attempted.

We appeal to the sinister writers and collaborators of the report (apparent and not apparent ones) to
come and see if they can find on the spot even traces of the falsehoods they put forward.

It is evident that the report has been compiled under guided conditions and under the influence of
expansionist tendencies, the kind of tendencies that the world community tries to avert today.

Finally, it does not escape our attention that in the same fashion it is attempted to falsify the
history of Macedonia and indeed in a co-ordinated effort.

The people of Ksanthi proclaims that it is aware of and on its guard against such kinds of
conspiracies (ibid.).

This resolution is a good example of the lack of communication. It is highly
unlikely that those who wrote the resolution had read the State Department report.

While in the beginning the report was referred to as the State Department Human
Rights reports, it soon became the “known” State Department Minority report, or the
despicable (katáptisti) State Department report. The report had of course nothing to do
with history, so in the resolution they really only addressed their own concerns. It
provides us first of all with certain prevailing images in Greece concerning “foreign
interference”. In this connection we can also see that certain Muslims were mobilised
to react against the report. The hodja and member of the community council in
Didimotih, Muhamer Hasan, declared:

“The report of the State Department saying that the Muslim minority of Greece is oppressed is
false. The Muslims of Evros do not feel any oppression, on the contrary the state offers us every
kind of assistance.” […]

“We the 500 Muslim families who live in Didimotih are Greeks. Religion and nationality are
two different things. The Turks live in Turkey, that is why I wonder what Sadık and Faikoğlu
want when they declare themselves to be Turks. I do not know what goes on in Komotini and
Ksanthi, but I do not understand what they demand from the Greek state declaring that they are
The Muslim Minority of Greek Thrace

Turks. We are brothers with the Christians and we do not have anything to separate us from anybody. We are born and live here, and if it is necessary we will take up weapons and defend Greece. In Evros our mosques operates freely, just like the Muslim schools. We are 15–20 teachers for the same number of schools, which have 50–60 pupils each.” […]

The great uproar against the report did not mean that it said anything strikingly new, the new thing was that the Americans said it. The human right activist and scholar Panayiotis Dimitras said in an interview that the State Department report only repeated things which had already been published in Greece. When asked if the minority was oppressed, he replied that all the politicians and scholars had to a greater and lesser degree expressed that there was a problem in Thrace (Avyi 17.02.1991). The popular mobilisation is more a result of political culture in Greece where people rally against the “foreign threat”. However, the reactions surpassed by far what the Americans had expected. That was particularly evident with the diplomatic personnel in Greece. The American ambassador in Athens, M. Sotirhos, was surprised by the strong reactions and said in a letter to the Greek Foreign Ministry that the US was willing to correct any inaccuracies in the report and that it supported the integrity of Greece. The Greek government—but not the opposition parties—expressed its satisfaction with these assurances. The first reaction of Ankara was that the US retreated because of Greek pressure, while later she claimed that the letter did not correct the content of the report and that “Athens could not relieve herself of the heavy responsibility of violating human rights.” (Eleftherotipia 21.02.1991).

It became clear that this time the American criticism was not a mere episode, but part of a new policy which must be seen in connection with the changes in Eastern Europe and new developments in minority rights within the CSCE framework. A few months later, a Greek correspondent in Washington wrote that the American State Department had taken the offensive regarding minority questions in Greece, partly in collaboration with the American Helsinki Watch Committee. The Greek journalist had no illusions and claimed that it seemed like minority and human rights would be used as a “battering ram” for American interests in the Balkans in the near future (Eleftherotipia 30.05 1991).

1991 was a very busy year internationally as regards the “Muslim minority”. Turkey continued its campaign. The permanent representative of Turkey in the UN, Mustafa Aksin, presented for the first time the Thrace issue in this organisation saying that “individual rights of the Greek Muslims were violated” (Fileleftheros 25.05. 1991). Later the same year the Turkish representative at the UN, Burkuoğlu, raised the Thrace issue again. He said that the rights of the minority were violated systematically.

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220 Kathimerini 08.02.1991. Much of the same is included in Adesmefti 09.02.1991. When the Greek prime minister, K. Mitsotakis, visited Didimotio later in the year there are more of the same declarations by Muhamer Hasan. The mutfi of Didimotio Mehmet Damatoglu agreed with him. See Ta Nea, Meseimvriini, Makedonia, Kathimerini, Epikerotita, and Eleftheros Tipos 25.10.1991.

221 The whole letter in Greek translation is published in Eleftherotipia 19.02.1991.
and complained that the elected mufti of Ksanthi had been removed by force (*Eleftherotypia* 23.11.1991).

Sadık Ahmet went to Washington in late June after invitation from the organisation of “Oppressed Turkish minorities in the Balkan peninsula”, which was considered the spear head of the Turkish lobby. He was able to meet David Ransom, who was responsible for the south Europe section of the State Department, and people from the Human Rights Office. The Turkish embassy in Washington made efforts to arrange meetings between Sadık Ahmet and members of the Congress who were occupied with human rights issues. It was claimed in Turkey that these contacts increased the US interest in Western Thrace (*Ta Nea* 25.06.1991; *Cumhuriyet* 04.07.1991). Sadık complained in a letter to the UN that 544 “Turks” had lost their Greek citizenship, and asked for pressure against Greece (*Cumhuriyet* 03.07.1991). The chairman of the BTTDD, Tahsin Salıhoğlu, followed suit and sent a letter to Bush complaining about the Greek oppression right before his visit to Greece. He mentioned particularly the 544 who had lost their citizenship (*Cumhuriyet* 18.07.1991). This indicates the selected promotion of certain issues which lent themselves to propaganda purposes.

I can only speculate about how Sadık presented the problems of the minority in his meetings with human rights officials, but fortunately there are minutes of a press conference where he was assisted by the Turkish human rights activist/lobbyist Ahmet Sandıkçıoğlu. 222 Sadık Ahmet began the press conference by reading up a statement about the minority’s situation. Afterwards he answered questions, or in many cases it was Sandıkçıoğlu who tried to give him a lead. Sadık could surely not have prepared this statement himself. 223 The question is rather if it had been prepared directly by Turkish officials or by the intermediary Sandıkçıoğlu. Sadık mentioned some of the problems of the minority and referred to the Helsinki Watch report to substantiate his assertions. However, what he mentioned was more related to Turkish foreign policy aims than the situation in Western Thrace. This is clear from the following excerpt from his opening statement:

I regret to say that a policy of discrimination and intimidation against Turkish minorities and their leaders are on the increase. These must be stopped immediately with the help of the Western allies of Greece. I came to the USA to ask the Congress and government representatives to exert their influence on Greece to resolve these tragic human rights issues as soon as possible (op. cit.).

This was barely two months after the Greek prime minister Mitsotakis went on his trip to Western Thrace where he expressed regrets about past mistakes and initiated a

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223 This can be inferred by anybody with just a casual acquaintance with Sadık and the situation. Sadık did not have the ability to formulate it himself and he was all to pleased to serve his masters in Turkey.
new policy towards the minority. There were certainly still several problems for the minority to voice. However, contrary to Sadık’s statement there had recently been a significant improvement of the situation, and the Greek prime minister had just promised that the minority members would be treated as equal citizens. The assertions above were consequently an attempt to serve Turkish interests. When asked questions about the situation in Western Thrace, Sadık Ahmet responded in a fashion which could hardly have been intelligible for anyone without an intimate knowledge of the situation:

Q Now, one of your wishes is you want equal rights in business and in civil jobs. What happens — let’s say you try to open a business or you apply for a government office. What exactly happens if you are a Turk? And how do they know you’re a Turk?

MR. AHMET: If you are from a Turkish minority, everything is forbidden in Greece, in Western Thrace, only in Western Thrace. There is a pharmacist. Ten years now, he cannot open a pharmacy. He cannot take permission to open. And for other (members ?), also, everything is forbidden. When they see your name, they say “tomorrow,” and tomorrow, “tomorrow,” and you spend years and years to take the permission, maybe (infinitely ?), you cannot take. There are others who obtain their driver’s license 25 years after. They wait 25 years, 20 years, at least. You cannot open pharmacy, job, factories. Everything is forbidden for us.

Q So you apply for a driver license, and they keep you for 25 years —

MR. AHMET: Twenty-five years, yeah, yeah. Twenty-five years. You wait 25 years, at least, to obtain it.

Q And what do they say for 25 years?

MR. AHMET: Half your life.

Q I mean, do they say, “Come back next year,” “Come back next year”?

MR. AHMET: Come back, come back tomorrow, many times. And sometimes, two or three years they don’t call you.

MS. SPALDING: Are you able to practice surgery?

MR. AHMET: They didn’t accept me. In 1984, I graduated in surgery, and they didn’t accept me as doctor in the government and hospital in Komotini. There was only one place and one application, and it was my application. They didn’t accept me.

MR. SANDIKCIIOGLU: Well maybe, you know, I can ask this question, as well. You know, you are saying that there are about 140,000 ethnic Turks or Muslims in Greece, and you are one of the most prominent leaders of that group. How do you put the Greek minority -- Turkish minority in Greece within the Constitution, where some of the time you are accused by the Greek press of being for the Turkish, on the Turkish side. You know, many, many accusations, though, of course, they are just accusations. Well, aren’t the Turkish minority in Greece — you know, they are loyal citizens of Greece within the Constitution. How do you feel about it?

MR. AHMET: They accepted it first as Turkish minority, our minority, because in 1928 created the Turkish Association of Komotini, and in 1936, the Turkish Teachers Association of Western Thrace accepted it, and then they said many, many times there is a Turkish minority in Greece. In 1954, there is a government journal who speaks for Turkish minority for Turkish elementary schools, they decide about anything which says Turkish minority, there is a Turkish minority; but then they forget, they won’t change, as Bulgaria, the Turkish minority, as Muslim minority, and insisting to say you have Greek origin, not Turkish origin. But now, two months ago, Mr. Mitsotakis accepted again there is a Turkish minority. We changed our — they change our origin from year to year. Maybe next time we have Jewish origin. (Laughs.) Anything is —

MR. SANDIKCIIOGLU: Is there a law —

MR. AHMET: Anything is possible in Greece.

MR. SANDIKCIIOGLU: Is there a law that you cannot call yourself Turkish?

MR. AHMET: There isn’t law; there isn’t law. We have equality before the law in the Greek constitution. But there isn’t equality and something without agreement on the practice. The laws give us our rights in the Greek constitution, but there is Article XIX, the Greek nationality law, which is against our minority. There is something for -- apartheid, it’s South Africa, only you must lose the Greek nationality or you have other origins, not Greek origins. This is discrimination.

MS. SPALDING: Thank you all for coming. Thank you very much for coming (op. cit.).
Sadık Ahmet was certainly able to increase his prestige within the minority with his trips abroad. However, making his voice heard had not been so easy as he had anticipated. On his return he spoke to about 200 Muslims in the premises of the “Turkish Youth Union” in Komotini. Allegedly he said that Greece was the greatest enemy of Turkey and that Greek propaganda had been so successful in Europe that he could not “convince anybody in Germany and France that the minority was ill treated.” He put half of the blame on the former Muslim MPs who did not know their work properly and did not inform the foreigners (Kathimerini 25.07.1991; Cumhuriyet 26.07.1991). On 18 September Turkey brought the issue to the Council of Europe. Prof. Dr. Yılmaz Altuğ presented the Turkish complaints about W. Thrace (Eleftherotipia 19.09.1991; Cumhuriyet 20.09.1991). The issue had taken the path it would follow in the subsequent years.224

When the preparations of the State Department’s report for the following year was well under way, it became clear that the change in American policy had come to stay. This led the more nationalist parts of the Greek press to believe that Ankara had convinced Washington to adopt its positions after a great and successful campaign in international organisations about the “human rights” of the “Turkish minority” (Pontiki 24.10.1991). Or, as another newspaper saw it:

The unacceptable report “about human rights”, which the State Department circulated in the beginning of the year, with the blind acceptance of the Turkish claims for the Muslim minority of Western Thrace and the adoption of the spurious [psevdeigrafo] characterisation “Turkish”, proves now that it was not a coincidental lapse by the services of the American Foreign Department, misled by some Turcophile clerk (Niki 27.10.1991).

As the Americans stepped up their inquiries about the “Muslim minority” they caused considerable displeasure in Greece. The tension generated when the old approach had to give way to new practices is very evident in a newspaper belonging to the Greek Communist party. Here the scepticism against foreign intervention is coupled with anti-Americanism.

It is a fact that the profile of our country, towards the outside, is today influenced by the state’s behaviour towards the Muslim minority in Thrace. It is also understandable that Greek-Turkish relations influence its [the minority’s] relation with the rest of the population. Finally, it is no secret that the governments of the neighbouring country and NATO allies are no mere spectators to the life of the Muslim minority in Thrace.

However, in no instance, whatever its problems and living conditions are, can these constitute the object of discussions or negotiations with other countries including Turkey. It is even more necessary to decline the logic which gives the right to representatives of other countries or international organisations (for example USA, UN) to visit Thrace, to write and publish reports about the living conditions of the Muslims in Thrace. The US State Department report from the beginning of the year is known, just as the visits by such representatives in September ’91 and a few days ago in Thrace were not secret (Rizospastis, 29.11.1991).

224 It is not possible to mention all the complaints which now continued on a regular basis. Among the better known efforts there is a letter by Sadik Ahmet to the Council of Europe, which was printed in Pontiki 28.05.1992.
In particular there were reactions when US diplomats met the independent MPs inside the Greek Parliament building without informing Greek officials. This led several PASOK deputies to repeat their call for removing the parliamentarian status of Sadıkoğlu and Faikoğlu (Turkish Daily News 18.12.1992).

The foreign interest has continued up until the present. The most high-profiled briefing about the “ethnic Turkish minority of Greece” took place in the United States Congress hosted by the Commission on Security and Co-operation in Europe (Helsinki Commission) on 26.04.1996. From the part of the nationalist Greek press with good connections to the Foreign Department, the hearing was seen in advance as a piece in the diplomatic tug of war between Greece and Turkey. There had been strong pressure to stage such a hearing from the Turkish Embassy in Washington, and from people who had previously done lobbying for Ankara. “...Thrace is a point where they can play—and to a large degree they aspire to do so at various times—both Ankara and the great capitals which wish to put us under pressure!”

The hearing itself was a rather drab affair. Adem Bekiroğlu was the only one who in reality had firsthand knowledge of the minority’s situation. However, his English was not quite good enough for the occasion, and he would probably be hesitant about expressing anything which had not been approved by Turkey. Nesrin Habiboğlu may have been born in Western Thrace, but she appeared to be out of touch with the situation, and the German associations she represented were known to be under Turkish tutelage at that time. This connection was correctly pointed out by Coufoudakis, but with the wrong arguments. In his introduction Christopher Panico of the Helsinki Commission was

225 Pontiki 25.04.1996. It should be noticed that there had earlier been a briefing in the same forum about the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul, Gökçeada, and Bozcaada (Imvros and Tenedos).
226 I have used the internet version myself, but the briefing has also been published (United States Congress - Commission on Security and Co-operation in Europe 1996). The members of the panel were presented in the following fashion:
“Tozun Bahcheli, Senior Fellow at the United States Institute for Peace and professor of political science at King’s College. Adem Bekiroğlu an Attorney and leader of the ethnic Turkish community in Komotini, Western Thrace. (Nesrin Habiboğlu, General Secretary of the European Federation of Turks of Western Thrace, did also attend). Van Coufoudakis is Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs at Indiana University/Purdue. Irene Laganis is a lecturer at the Law School of Democrats University, Western Thrace. Christopher Panico, a Research Associate at Human Rights Watch/Helsinki who monitors implementation of OSCE principles in Greece and Turkey, moderated the panel.”
227 For Bekiroğlu’s possibilities to express independent opinions, see the discussion below in connection with the treatment of the Helsinki Watch reports. Adem Bekiroğlu (1939–) is one of the few of his generation who knows English, and is, generally speaking, a moderate and reasonable person. He must have been selected by the Turkish Consulate for the job. This is impossible to prove, but obvious for anybody who knows the situation at the time. The Turkish Consulate was able to control the voters when he was elected president of the DK. For comparison, Bekiroğlu failed dismally when he ran for president of the Fillira township in the 11 October 1998 local elections. Hâki remarked that his opponent was very fortunate. “Mr. Adem can be appointed mufti; appointed chairman; or even appointed prefect; but yet he will never become a politician…” (İleri 926/16.10.1998).
clearly influenced by the Turkish line of argumentation and the question arises whether the Helsinki Commission was able to assert its principles towards the Balkans or if we witnessed the “balkanisation” of the Helsinki Commission. When Panico spoke about the Turkish and the Greek side, Coufoudakis had to point out that Bekiroğlu was after all a Greek citizen. The discussion was dominated by Van Coufoudakis and Tozun Bahcheli, who are both experienced debaters and well acquainted with this kind of audience. They spent most of the time bickering with each other, as Bahcheli represented the position that the minority is one and Turkish, while Coufoudakis stressed its ethnic diversity. Bahcheli made the most of his visit of “no more than two days” to Thrace in June 1993. He tried to give his presentation more weight by referring to his “firsthand” knowledge, but his account was mainly impressionistic. To pretend that this visit put him in a privileged position to assess the situation is of course an insult to serious research. With this background he was not able to give an accurate description of the problems, or documenting his views about discrimination in the places where had a point. The matter was made worse by a question from the audience, which accused him of “elective sensitivity”. In a recent presentation on the situation in Turkey, Bahcheli had not observed anything related to political prisoners disappearing, killings, burned down villages, etc., while in the presentation of the situation in Greece he suddenly became very sensitive and observant. When Irene Laganis tried to make a point, Bahcheli did not respond to her argument but made the remark: “Are you denying the veracity of reports produced by this very Commission itself, the Helsinki Commission, the State Department reports and so on about the problems that this community faces?” In this connection I find it pertinent to emphasise that the time has not yet come to “canonise” the reports of the Helsinki Commission, and they should not be above discussion.

There is no need to make a detailed comment about all the points raised in the hearing, because I have covered these issues elsewhere. However, it is striking that widely diverging opinions existed on matters which should be regarded as factual knowledge and quite simple to verify. A trivial case in point: Laganis stressed that the minority had full access to its own Turkish language newspapers which numbered more than ten, as well as to radio, television and other written media coming from Turkey, regardless of their content. This number was later repeated by Coufoudakis.

228 He has had some presentations in Canadian newspapers where he follows the same line of argument:

“...I must say it was rather unnerving, as a Canadian citizen, to be tailed by Greek civilian policemen during my trip through Komotini and Xanthi, the two towns in Thrace with the largest Turkish communities. Nonetheless, I was able to speak to quite a number of Thracian Turks, and their stories were as fascinating as they were disturbing” (The Ottawa Citizen 24.08.1993, “Discrimination against the Turkish community: Greece doesn’t even acknowledge the problem”). “I visited Western Thrace last June and witnessed first-hand the Greek government’s discrimination against the Turkish minority there” etc. (The Toronto Star 26.02.1994, “Thracian Turks rarely allowed to repair homes”).
Nesrin Habiboğlu interrupted and said that there were local newspapers, but no newspapers from Turkey. However, Coufoudakis insisted that “all the Turkish newspapers are widely available throughout Greece […] regardless, and I want to emphasise regardless of their content. Now that’s very significant because the kinds of stuff that are being published in printed media in Turkey, let alone in some of the Western Thrace newspapers, would have been considered to be seditious in a country like the United States. And we know what happens in this country over seditious speech. You have a long history on that topic” (op. cit.) Bekiroğlu supported Nesrin Habiboğlu and said that you could find Turkish newspapers in Athens, as well as in Thessaloniki, but not in Thrace. He had experienced himself that customs officials had taken away Turkish newspapers from him at the border. This made Laganis reply that she has seen people having Turkish newspapers with them without encountering problems. I know that Laganis does not read Turkish and it would be interesting to know where she had the information about the minority press from. In all probability it must have been from the same source which was used in a Greek newspaper article two years earlier.\(^\text{229}\) Besides the inaccuracies in this article, many of the newspapers mentioned had since been discontinued. In reality, at the time of the hearing there were three minority newspapers issued regularly (weekly or almost weekly): Gündem, İleri, and Trakya’nın Sesi. Interestingly enough, nobody corrected Laganis’ outdated information. On the contrary, its repetition continued. Hâki reacted later because Nesrin Habiboğlu had mentioned that there were 10 Turkish language newspapers in Thrace during a hearing about the minority in Vienna (November 1996). He remarked that if she had read İleri regularly she would not have deceived “world opinion” with such mistakes (İleri 864, 24.01.1997).

The total confusion about simple factual information makes it necessary to clarify the question of Turkish newspapers in Greece. You could find the German editions of various Turkish newspapers in the larger cities like Athens and Thessaloniki. More specifically: Hürriyet, Türkiye, and Özgür Politika.\(^\text{230}\) I suppose that these newspapers are imported by purely commercial criteria. For example while Türkiye belongs to the nationalist right wing, Özgür Politika is left-wing and pro-Kurdish. The reason why they are imported from Germany is a reflection of the way commercial relations between Greece and Turkey have been influenced by the difficult political climate between the countries. In Greek Thrace you could not buy newspapers from Turkey commercially. As it looks like an obvious market, there are reasons to ask why. In this

\(^{229}\) Kathimerini 04.04.1993, “The Turkish language Press in Thrace, guided [Katefthinómeno] organ of MÎT”, by Hristos Vuzas. This article mentioned 10 weekly (Akin, İleri, Gerebek, Balkan, Ortam, Trakya’nn Sesi, Gorus, Tunel, Aile Birlik, Diyalog) and 5 monthly organs (Yuva’miz, Yeni Hakka Davet, Arka’das Çocuk, Pinar Çocuk, Şafak).

\(^{230}\) They later started to bring Milliyet to the news-stand I use in Athens, beginning with the issue 22.12.1997. After the recent improvements in Greek-Turkish relations, Turkish newspapers began to be sold commercially in Thrace from April 2000 (cf. Gündem 165/18.04.2000).
connection the crucial question is if anybody has tried to import newspapers and if they have encountered any problems in the process. A minority friend of mine mentioned that he had thought about importing newspapers, but did not think it would be profitable. Personally, I do not know of any serious initiative to import newspapers from Turkey. When this is said, I would regard it as likely that any news-stand which sold newspapers from Turkey would suffer verbal attacks from Greek nationalists, and this could even lead to episodes. However, travellers were bringing newspapers with them from Turkey on a daily basis and you could usually see some copies on the tables of the minority coffee houses—most prominently in the Türk Gençlik Birliği and Çukur Kahve. These were newspapers which people who have travelled to Turkey took with them when returning. It is quite usual for the minority newspapers to publish facsimiles of articles from Turkish newspapers. To which degree they are “seditious”, as Coufoudakis claimed, is a matter of discussion. There have been several instances of trials against minority newspapers, and if he thinks that there should have been more he should put the blame on Greek legal practice. I cannot say to which degree there are problems in the customs with these newspapers, but the minority is not always presenting this matter in the most objective fashion. I remember once that İbram Onsunoğlu was annoyed with the way İşık Ahmet (Sadık Ahmet’s widow) had given a vivid account on Turkish television of the Greek customs officers “inhuman” treatment of her, who had taken some books away from her for inspection. Onsunoğlu regarded it as a simple procedure, and told me that some books he had with him from Turkey recently had been taken away for inspection and sent to his home address a few days later.

Coufoudakis utilised to the fullest the card of pointing to Turkish interference, particularly through the consulate in Komotini. This led to protests by Bekiroğlu who denied repeatedly the truth of these accusations. He pointed correctly to the way Greek authorities had used this to divert the attention from the discrimination in the area. However, as the Turkish Consulate had interfered so blatantly and openly in the previous years his protests did not have any credibility. Of course, he could not speak freely about the situation because of the consequences he would face.

**Human Rights Reports**

The reports by the US State Department have already been mentioned. USA has a large and well staffed embassy in Greece. Its resources put it in a much better position than the various foreign NGOs to have a qualified opinion about the human rights situation in Greece. Still, it should be remembered that Thrace is a long way from Athens, and has many peculiarities which are difficult to grasp. The main problem with the State Department’s reports is the inconsistency in American diplomacy’s human rights engagement, which takes second place to *realpolitik*. This makes also
questions about the integrity of the reports much more pertinent. It was quite natural
that Greece questioned the political motives behind the report issued in February 1991.

The NGOs which wanted to make reports about the minority faced many pitfalls
when they tried to orientate themselves in the foreign environment. The minority is a
hotbed of intrigues, and foreigners who visit the area will necessarily be entangled in
them directly or indirectly. A simple example: In May 1984 a German television team
from the ZDF channel visited Thrace to make a reportage about the minority. Hâki was
surprised when they asked for an interview, because the “clique” had in the past been
successful in monopolising foreign visitors and tried to keep them away from him.
Hatipoğlu responded by promoting the mufti and the “clique” as the natural leaders
who had not been consulted. He stressed that the minority did not recognise any
person who made improper statements to the Greek and foreign press. He further
claimed that the “dark powers” had sent the television team to Thrace to portray the
situation as positive in order to counter the motion about Thrace in the European
Parliament. After presenting a long conspiracy scenario, Hatipoğlu concluded that the
reportage did not give a truthful picture of the minority’s situation and that it should
not be sent (Akın 828/24.05.1984). Hâki remarked that Hatipoğlu and the mufti made
the fuss because they resented the fact that the television team saw İleri. A few months
after the television crew’s visit, the “clique” would claim that the program was not sent
because its protests had been taken into consideration, and as a consequence İleri
would be continuously unjustly blamed. However, when the reportage was sent
31.08.1984, many of the minority workers in Germany phoned Hâki to congratulate
him. They told him that the “clique” had slandered him a lot in Ankara, too, because of
this program and wondered what they would say now (İleri 354/21.09.1984). A few
days later Hatipoğlu wrote that after his protest the program turned out the way the
minority wanted it (Akın 843/05.09.1984). In response to this Hâki made the pertinent
question if the dark forces, which had previously been so vividly described, had been
brought to their knees by a couple of telephone calls from Hatipoğlu (İleri

The Helsinki Watch Reports

Human rights reports about the minority in the 1990s have been dominated by the
efforts of Helsinki Watch. None of the foreigners who have written reports for
Helsinki Watch are area specialists. However, because there are few who are able to
check their contents, and the explanations offered by the countries which are directly
involved often offer little credibility, these reports obtain a kind of authority which far
exceeds their merits. I have no intention of making a detailed critique of their findings,
because I prefer to treat the relevant issues within my own framework. On the other
hand, it could be instructive to look at the circumstances surrounding the gathering of information about the minority in Thrace.

The first Helsinki Watch report on the minority was written by Erik Siesby (Siesby 1990). He is professor Emeritus from the University of Copenhagen and chairman of the Danish Helsinki Watch Committee. He had earlier criticised Turkey for its treatment of the Kurds. His first visit to the area took place when Turkey wanted to draw attention to the trial against Sadık Ahmet, who was in prison convicted of “dividing the population and disrupting the public peace”. He visited Greece on 11–15 February 1990 right after the January episodes in Komotini. He first saw Sadık Ahmet in prison, and later went to Komotini to look at the situation of the minority. In Komotini he was assisted by Adem Bekiroğlu, who acted as guide and translator, and İsmail Molla (Rodoplu), who was MP at the time.

We visited together with a Turkish television team the section where Turkish owned shops and Moslem mosques had been attacked during the anti-Turkish riots on January 29th. Afterwards I was interviewed by the television team of Turkish TV. The case against Dr. Sadık I characterised as a violation of the freedom of expression guaranteed by the European convention on Human Rights.

Together with Mr. Bekiroğlu and Mr. Rodoplu I visited several sections of the town and surrounding villages in order to see the—striking—difference between the standard of living of the Turkish and Greek populations (ibid.).

He also visited both the Turkish consulate and the Prefect of Komotini. The usual grievances of the minority were mentioned, but it is obvious that Siesby did not have the ability to view them in their cultural and historical context. The Greeks probably only made their case worse by presenting their usual rhetoric.

When I mentioned to the Greek officials the complaints of the spokesmen of the ethnic Turkish population the reaction can be either: “There are no Turks in Greece!” or “The Turks have treated Greeks in Turkey with barbaric cruelty….”. These reactions seem to me to be revealing. For obvious historic and political reasons the Greeks are prejudiced against everything Turkish.

The Turkish population in Western Thrace live an isolated life in rather unfriendly surroundings. Consequently they tend to keep to themselves. There are for instance almost no cases of intermarriages.\(^{231}\)

The last paragraph reveals clearly Siesby’s lack of acquaintance with the traditional relationship between different confessional groups in the Balkans. The different confessional groups have always lived in separate quarters, and certainly no Muslim would “give” his daughter to a Christian. These are totally irrelevant issues in the present socio-political situation. Siesby ended his report on a positive note and stated that:

The Greek authorities were very open and offered me all assistance. Because of this attitude I believe that a useful dialogue concerning the conditions of the Turkish speaking minority will be possible between Greek authorities and a delegation from the International Helsinki Federation (Ibid.).

\(^{231}\) Ibid. The characterisations mentioned in the report below were also referred to in the Turkish press, \(\text{Güneş} 23.03.1990\).
Siesby continued to follow the fate of the “Muslim minority of Western Thrace”, and it was included among the subjects at the joint Danish Helsinki Committee-Minority Rights Group conference in Copenhagen on 30.03–01.04.1990. Likewise he went to Western Thrace as an observer for the 8 April general elections, when Turkey had asked for international observers.

Siesby was clearly used as a card in the diplomatic games between Greece and Turkey, which at the time were not characterised by sincere attempts of dialogue but rather attempts to “outsmart” each others. However, the visit must have had some effect, since Greece is concerned about her international reputation. Whatever the quality of the report, I consider it to be positive that the outside world takes an interest and that there is some kind of discussion about local practices. While it is natural that Turkey would try to exploit the trip, there is no reason to question the sincerity of Siesby. It can also be seen that when he visited the area again in September 1996 he recognised the improvements (MPA 10.09.1996). He has also visited the area later on several occasions.

In August the same year the American Helsinki Watch published a much more comprehensive report.232 This is the human rights report most often referred to in connection with the minority. Its size and quality reflects the larger support apparatus involved. Lois Whitman spent only a couple of days in Thrace and could hardly have carried out any meaningful research there. Some of her contacts in the minority must have handed over a packet of material prepared for her in advance and showed her around a little.233 She did not have much time to move around on her own and inquire about the situation from diverse sources. In fact, even the minority members who wanted to tell her their side of the story could not obtain access to her. Her guides would take her to the Greek prefect and mayor, but screened her effectively from anybody in the minority who might have other opinions than themselves, or whom they simply wanted to exclude from obtaining any part in the “prestige” of being mentioned in the report. Also people from the majority who tried to contact her had problems with getting access to her. For example, a journalist of a local newspaper tried repeatedly to meet her during her second visit, and wrote about his frustrations (Dikeoma 6/November 1991). In addition to her visit to Thrace, I expect that she could count on the assistance of the American diplomatic representatives in Greece, and possibly some Greek human rights activists. This must have supplied her with the basic corpus of material for the report. In addition, she had the advantage of belonging to a prestigious organisation in the world’s foremost state, with good connections to

232 Lois Whitman wrote four reports about minorities in Greece or related to Greece (Whitman 1990; Whitman 1992a; Whitman 1992b; Whitman 1994).
233 The only material in English by the minority which had circulated before the visit of Whitman was a collection of articles (Molla 1988?).
Greece and Turkey. In practice, this has put her in a privileged position when it comes to obtaining additional information from the diplomatic representatives of these countries. It is clear from the report that she has taken advantage of this, but often without obtaining satisfactory answers.

From the minority’s perspective the report mentioned much of the discrimination against it, presented within a Turkish ideological framework. Whitman was only in contact with persons who belonged to—or were under the control of—the “clique”. Consequently there was selective reference to the victims of discrimination, carried out in such a way that the members of the “clique” were able to promote themselves. These people would of course be unable to say anything that was contrary to Turkey’s wishes. On top of this, they were also anxious to keep their position as Turkey’s favourites and monopolise the benefits that accompanied this position. For the “clique” this aspect was more important than presenting the problems of the minority in a comprehensive and objective manner. The report was able to perceive the obvious problems the minority was facing, but could not grasp the more obscure mechanisms involved. It was quite obvious that the Greek state had been discriminating against the minority in various ways. Following usual practice, the primary job of the committee was to criticise the “host country” of the minority, which in accordance to established practice and modern conceptions of sovereignty is the foremost responsible part in securing proper living conditions for the minority. Following this line of thought, it is also common to view the “host country” as the strong part that is oppressing a weak minority. Consequently the problem facing the investigator was to find someone who was brave enough to dare to criticise the strong part. This impression was in particular conveyed successfully later to Mr. Funnemark of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee, i.e. that some minority members are controlled by the Greek authorities, while others are truly representing the minority independently.

In reality the picture is much more complex. This presentation was not merely a simplification of the actual situation, but a way of keeping up certain stereotypes which preserve the present power structures affecting the minority. To the defence of the Helsinki Watch committees it must be said that it is not always easy to discover these power structures, and that they are not the only ones who have been fooled.

Bjørn Cato Funnemark of the Norwegian Helsinki Watch Committee visited Thrace for three days in June 1991. I do not know what kind of preparations he had done beforehand, but he had the same contacts as the representatives of the other Helsinki Watch Committees. He was even more crudely exploited by these contacts than had happened in the previous cases, or one could say that he was careless enough to

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235 See his report (Funnemark 1991).
include allegations against other minority members that he did not or could not cross-check. It may be instructive to look at a concrete example. Mr. Funnemark wrote in his report that the newspapers Akın and Gerçek represented the minority, while Trakya’nnı Sesi and İleri were supported financially by the Greek government and played a different political role. There is no way Funnemark could have invented this information. He could only have obtained it by someone close to the newspapers Akın and Gerçek. In a political climate that is both influenced by minority experiences and ethnic stereotypes, one of the worst accusations that can be levelled against another minority member is that “he is aiding the Greek oppressors”. Because Hâki as owner of a newspaper could be a competitor in obtaining press support from Turkey, and because he has levelled criticism against persons within the group who are known to obtain such support—which they would rather have kept secret—he was a natural target. After Funnemark had completed his report he sent a copy back to his contacts in Thrace. When Akın wrote that according to the Norwegian Helsinki Watch Committee the newspaper İleri took economic support from the Greek government, this was only a method of obscuring where the information had come from in the first place and at the same time endowing it with more authority. In other words, it was a way of “laundering” their own lies. Instead of helping the foreign observer with collecting relevant data about the minority, they exploited him as a pawn in their internal rivalries. Naturally, Hâki reacted strongly and sent a furious letter to Funnemark.236 The “necessary answer” to his minority rivals was mainly centred on their “base behaviour”. Besides his misgivings about the Norwegian report, he also voiced his grievances about certain aspects of Baskın Oran’s work and he added: “After we saw the Helsinki Watch Report. This thing written by Lois Whitman. We became disgusted at these things they call reports…” (İleri 695/20.11.1995).

It was clear that the Greek society was not prepared for this involvement by foreign human rights organisations. This is easiest to trace in declarations by nationalist politicians. The PASOK MPs Panayiotis Sguridis and Stelios Paphamelis submitted a question in parliament 15.11.1990 about Helsinki Watch. Foreign minister Andonis Samaras answered 06.12.1990 and characterised the organisation as non-governmental and assured that: “The government requests that a similar report is made for the Greek minority in Turkey.” In a letter to a local newspaper, the Ksanthi MP Sguridis was more explicit:

The known HELSINKI WATCH Committee with its report about the Muslim minority of Thrace, attempts with inaccuracies and mendacity to serve the Turkish propaganda and the Turkish interests (Adesmefti 09.02.1991).

When Lois Whitman returned to Thrace for a follow up report, the press was ready for her. Her conclusions in the first report were characterised as mistaken. The prefect

236 The letter is included in Appendix 5, text 70.
of Rodopi, Dionisios Karahalios, declared in anticipation of the meeting that he wanted
to believe that Whitman’s first report was only the result of bad or inadequate inform-
ation, and that it would be possible to correct the mistakes for the new report. “Regard-
ing the possibility that Mrs. Whitman—who is married with a Turk— would see the
independent Muslim MP, the prefect of Rodopi mentioned that he did not want to com-
ment on her movements.”\(^{237}\) It was claimed that Sadik used Lois Whitman, who was
known for her anti-Greek viewpoints, as his organ.\(^{238}\) These kinds of attitudes and
accusations were even more present in a Komotini news bulletin, which is usually
firmly behind the more nationalist tendencies of Greek politics:

Seeing only the names of the extremists but also the inaccurate, unsubstantiated (as well as
anonymous) testimonies of the report, anyone could claim that Mrs. Whitman fell victim to
conscious disinformation by these declared extremist elements, or at least any well intended
observer would leave the possibility that she had been victimised. However her recent visit to
Komotini, dissolved all these clouds which surrounded the interest in the Muslim minority,
proving that she was and continues to be fully aware of her actions and her contribution to the
attempt by Turkey and her organs to imbue the international public opinion with slander which
serve only the militarists of Ankara and their expansionist policy.\(^{239}\)

Unfortunately, attempts at discussing seriously the minority issue took second
place. Most of the comments expressed doubts about Lois Whitman’s motives and
intentions, and criticised her first report of everything from well founded reservations
to ludicrous accusations.\(^{240}\) A sober attempt to describe the work of Helsinki Watch
was presented by the journalist team “O Ios”. This included an interview with Lois
Whitman who gave a straightforward presentation of the organisation’s work. The
journalists ridiculed the Greek reactions. They stressed that the Greek public seemed to
take little interest in the actual content of the reports, but was only concerned about
whether the reports were positive or negative.

By their nature, the reports of foreign (government or non-government) organisations about
human rights in our country were always confronted not only as “an unacceptable interference in
our internal affairs”, but also as the tangible material of proof which certified the international plot
hatched against us. If ten years ago the press promoted triumphantly every “report–catapult
[katapéltis]” which recorded the crimes of the Turkish junta against its own people, the gradual
occupation with minority issues by the organisations mentioned —and the concomitant
involvement of our country in the whole matter—produced the exactly opposite emotions
(\textit{Eleftherotipia} 02.05.1992).

\(^{237}\) \textit{Kathimerini} 26.10.1991. Half a year later Lois Whitman made it clear to the same newspaper that
her husband is not Turkish (\textit{Kathimerini} 29.03.1992).
\(^{238}\) \textit{Ethnos} 27.10.1991, “Lois Whitman, the mysterious American who exposed us to the State
Department is in Thrace again - Plan by Sadik with female agent.”
\(^{239}\) \textit{Dikeoma} 6/November 1991, “Lois Whitman and Helsinki Watch - the commercialisation of
minority rights”, by Hristos Hatzipemou.
\(^{240}\) As a contrast, it is interesting to see the reactions when the Helsinki Watch report about the
Greek Orthodox minority in Turkey was published. This report was widely covered in the Greek press. See
\textit{Kathimerini} 29.03.1992; \textit{Eleftherotipia} 31.03.1992; \textit{Ethnos}, \textit{Avyi}, \textit{Thessaloniki} 01.04.1992; \textit{Ta
The relationship between Helsinki Watch and Greek society has continued to be somewhat uneasy, and many are not ready for a more sober dialogue on minority rights.

There have also been developments within Helsinki Watch since the first reports. The most important has been the establishment of a Greek Helsinki Committee in 1992, under the chairmanship of Panayiotis Dimitras. He is in the position to follow the developments much closer than the foreign committees, and has taken several important initiatives. Most notably concerning article 19 and the issuing of papers to the stateless. Ironically, the first advisor to Dimitras from the minority was Abdülhalim Dede, who had been the main adversary of the “clique”. In many ways he was a natural choice since he is both well connected within the minority and articulate in expressing the problems. Still, I have the feeling that the Helsinki Watch’s understanding of internal minority structures is often inadequate. This was also the case with a recent report from the central Helsinki Watch (by now called Human Rights Watch). For example, it has a very inaccurate understanding of the late Sadık Ahmet’s role, and labels him quite inappropriately as the leader of a civil rights movement (Panico 1999).

Human rights have become a catchword among the minority. Human rights rhetoric featured very prominently in the election speeches of Sadık and Faikoğlu. It comes of course as no surprise that the minority has discovered human rights, but what is interesting from my perspective is what kind of intent was put into it and what was the function of the rhetoric within the minority. Sadık was no democrat at heart, but he used the human rights issue for what it was worth.

Serious discussions of developments within human right practices rarely featured in the minority press. It usually repeated the same old complaints about their fate as an oppressed minority and about that their human rights were not respected. It should come as no surprise that the minority did not always grasp the meaning of human rights and the developments in international practices. It was however negative that the human rights issue and the interest of human rights organisations have been exploited so ruthlessly in the internal struggle of power in the minority. This was connected with the lack of democracy within the minority and it obstructed the possibilities of developing a really democratic struggle for their rights. While international human rights groups may have been unable to grasp fully the intricacies of minority politics and in the relationship between the minority and Turkey, there are several indications of that they are aware of that something “fishy” is going on. Ultimately the minority has lost credibility because of the attempts to manipulate human rights groups, and this can easily hamper more serious efforts in the future.

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241 Onsumoğlu mentions negative impressions on Siesby (Trakya’nın Sesi 561/16.09.1996).
CONCLUSIONS

When looking at the Muslim minority’s place in Greek society, there are several peculiarities which must be taken into consideration. First of all, the socio-political organisation of the Ottoman Empire—that was the point of departure for both Christians and Muslims—had many features which were radically different or even incompatible with the organisation of modern states. Some of the practices related to the traditional organisation of society have to a certain degree survived up until the present. This is not only related to the multi-ethnic character of the empire. The emphasis on corporate groups, which dealt with the state through their leaders, meant that individual rights and obligations took second place. Furthermore, vestiges of the organisation of the population in confessional groups (*millets*), has competed with and even overshadowed the notion of citizenship.

The minority in Greek Thrace has a very different point of departure from other Muslim minorities in the Balkans because of the explicit and tacit logic of the Lausanne Treaty. The explicit protection of the treaty gave the Muslim minority members special privileges in addition to their rights as Greek citizens. However, the fact that the minority remained in Greece after a population exchange, and that it was seen as a balance to the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul, has been of much greater significance than the treaty itself. This balance meant that Turkey was able to put significant pressure on Greece, as long as the Greek Orthodox minority in Istanbul was considered to be more important than the Muslim minority in Greek Thrace. Turkey’s ability to intervene in the handling of the minority was reinforced by Greece’s greater sensibility about its international image. After 1950 this sensibility was in particular connected to the Cyprus questions.

If we look at the power relations within the triangle Greece-Turkey-minority, the minority was always the weakest part. It did not have a sufficient political, cultural, and economic strength to carry much weight on its own. In the cultural sphere the power relations display themselves clearly in questions related to education. Local traditions were primarily related to the need of socialising the minority members into their confessional group. They could not cater for the demands of modern education to prepare them for a profession. For reasons of tradition, it was difficult for them to attend the schools of the Christian majority. Consequently, the models for modern education came almost exclusively from Turkey. Since Turkish education had
undergone a “revolution” we witness early a tension between traditional religious education and Turkish nationalist education. At the same time, because of the general lack of an educational tradition among the agricultural population, Kemalist education made its presence felt mainly in the more urban areas.

Greece would support alternately the Kemalist or religious education depending on its relationship with Turkey. In reality, neither the Kemalist nor the traditional education prepared the minority for a career within Greek society, nor was such a option pursued vigorously by the minority. In addition, the Kemalist education resulted in migration to Turkey of persons who were outside the small elite which made up the minority leadership. This was particularly prominent during the period of free migration in the 1950s. Until about 1960, education was of limited importance for the society at large, since both the Christians and the Muslims shared the same, mainly agricultural, occupations. After this time, the progress in the education of the Christians has contributed towards widening the cultural gap between the two population elements.

The Muslims were not able to enjoy the same developments in education for several reasons. First of all, there had never been a real consensus between Greece and Turkey about the educational needs of the minority. When Greek-Turkish relations soured in the 1960s, Greece would no longer tolerate the imposition of Kemalist education on the whole minority. There are also reasons to question if any of the countries had a clear concept about what should be the goal of minority education. Generally speaking, Greece has been too narrow-minded about the Turkish component and Turkey too narrow-minded about the Greek component of education. We have seen that even the leading politician Osman Nuri, who took a genuine interest in education, had problems with striking a balance between educational needs for developing professional skills and education as an ideological tool to keep up the separate social entity of the minority.

After 1974 the conditions were not favourable for solving the educational problems. With successive laws the Greek authorities sought to gain greater control. The main instrument to implement this policy has been the teachers’ academy in Thessaloniki (EPATH). This institution represents an attempt to give the minority an education which respects its religious and cultural difference, but separates it from the ideological mechanisms of the Turkish state. While the Turkish model has prepared the minority members for a career in Turkish society, the Greek model has not prepared the minority sufficiently for a career outside the narrow confines of the minority itself. All the more so, since Greece tried to recruit the teacher corps from people who were conservative religiously, and without Turkish as their mother tongue (i.e. Pomaks). It should be noted that the polarisation has in many cases prevented minority members from applying to EPATH because of the social cost.
CONCLUSIONS

In the conflict between the two concepts of education, the few minority members who have tried to voice their own opinions have not been taken seriously. Consequently, the ordinary minority members have had few opportunities to discuss educational strategies, but faced the dilemma of choosing side. Many of the protests concerning education have not really targeted the system, but been a way to declare allegiance to the Turkish camp and seek Turkish patronage. The protests against the schoolbooks in 1992–1993 are a good example of the way educational issues are lost in petty politics squabbles.

The Greek attitude to minority education has improved considerably in recent years, particularly after 1996. This is displayed in the program for improving the Greek part of the education and the special 0.5% quota for entrance to higher education. Greece has also taken a less negative attitude towards the Turkish part of the education, but there are still many thorny questions which need to be resolved. In this connection it is time that the educational needs of the minority members take priority over diplomatic considerations and local petty politics. For the education system as a whole, the real test will be the ability to serve all the minority children, and not only the small elite which has always been able to find solutions for itself.

Turning to the minority’s political life, there was great stability in the parliamentary representation in the period before 1967, and the minority did not have complaints about the way the system functioned. It should be noted that this stability was not related to any real integration of the minority politicians in the political life. On the contrary, they were considered as middlemen for a separate group on the fringes of Greek society. After 1974 there were several significant developments. These developments are mainly related to the anomalous situation created by the discriminatory policy of the junta. The tension with Turkey also made many consider the minority to be an undesired and potentially dangerous group. The rivalry among the minority politicians to enter the tickets of the major parties took on new dimensions because of the lack of understanding between Greece and Turkey, and the parties’ attempts to exclude certain candidates. Although the arguments for the exclusion would be “national”, they could just as well be related to petty politics. Since the elected minority MPs were not able to influence the policy of discrimination, they came under intense criticism and lost their legitimacy among their electorate. This was of course exploited by their political rivals. Since it became impossible for the minority politicians to find a balance between the demands of their parties and the demands of their electorate, there were massive movements of voters between parties and candidates. It should be noted that in the beginning the minority’s approach to politics displayed little innovation, the important new factor was that the framework had changed. The traditional approach to politics was clearly manifest in the local elections. It was the case of a few middlemen who could broker the vote of the minority. Orhan Hacıibram was the first minority MP
who tried to break with this pattern in 1977. His failure was mainly due to the fact that the Greek authorities were not ready to handle the minority issue democratically.

The policy of discrimination did not weaken the minority members’ position as middlemen towards the Greek authorities, but it weakened seriously their legitimacy in the eyes of their electorate. As frustration and disillusion with the old leadership built up, the first attempt to “revolt against the old “corrupt” politicians took place in 1981, when the underprivileged urban population rallied behind Ahmet Mehmet and PASOK. However, he could not in any way fulfil their expectation, and evolved into a typical middleman of petty services himself.

It should be noted that up until 1988 the minority looked mainly to Athens to solve its problems. Besides the work of the MPs, the minority sent several petitions and delegations related to specific problems. Although the minority benefited to some degree from the general trend of democratisation which followed the PASOK regime, their basic problems remained unresolved. The situation was also to some degree aggravated by new discriminatory measures initiated by the extreme nationalist deputy foreign minister Yiannis Kapsis.

Before 1985 it had not been a serious alternative for any minority politician to run as independent candidate in parliamentary elections. The independent candidatures were looked on as a last resort and mainly related to the internal rivalry among the minority politicians. Such candidatures, which would split the minority vote, were also favoured by local Greek party cadre and services. When PASOK understood before the 1985 parliamentary election that the party had lost its influence among the minority, the encouragement of independent candidates became a way to damage ND’s election result. In Rodopi, the strong minority politician Sabahaddin Galip, who had a grudge against ND since he had not been accepted as a candidate, was utilised for this strategy. Mehmet Emin Aga, who headed the independent ticket in Ksanthi, was well acquainted with petty politics games before elections. The minority politicians behaved thus mainly as middlemen and without any particular ideological motives. However, it was natural that the independent candidates would play on Turkish nationalism in their election propaganda to distance themselves from the candidates of the discredited Greek political parties. Although the Greek parties and services could favour an independent ticket if they considered it beneficial for the overall result, they would be strongly against the actual election of independent MPs. The opportunist alliances of 1985 were consequently based on some very fine balances. They were ad hoc arrangements to reduce the effect of the minority’s frustration on the election results.

The minority continued to be represented by MPs elected for the major parties, but these would now come under increased pressure. Firstly, because no solution was found to the discriminatory measures, and secondly because of new power relationships within the minority. In the late 1970s there were attempts to create a broadly
based democratically organised minority council (AYK), which could make co-
ordinated efforts to influence the Greek authorities. Such an organisation would not be
looked kindly upon by either Greece, or Turkey, or some of the foremost minority
middlemen.

One of the leading figures among those who sabotaged this effort was the former
MP Hasan Hatipoğlu. Since he was no longer able to become MP himself, he tried to
undermine systematically the legitimacy of the elected MPs. Instead he promoted
himself and a small group of accomplices, who became known as the “clique”, as the
“natural” leaders of the minority. They rallied around the Komotini and Ksanthi mufti
offices, undermined the democratic function of the AYK, and appropriated its name
for their own group. Hatipoğlu had always based his position on an extreme Turkish
nationalism. He would exploit the existing stereotypes and the prestige of Turkey as
“mother country”. It was a question of “us” the Turks, against “them” the Greeks, and
any critique of his position would be labelled as treachery against Turkism. The at-
tempt to portray himself as the representative of Turkey and Turkish ideals had mixed
success in the beginning. However, the increased influence of ultra-right groups with-
in the Turkish state apparatus after the 1980 coup would gradually be felt in Greek
Thrace. When Mehmet Müftüoğlu was elected MP for ND in 1985, he became the
main target of the “clique”. His initiatives to find a solution to the minority’s problems
were sabotaged, and his person slandered.

It should be noted that the “clique” was never able to play a significant role in the
attempts to organise democratic protests against the Greek authorities. Here the lead
was taken by some of the younger minority members with political experience on the
left. It is possible to mention Orhan Haciibram’s role in the Evlalo land issue, İbram
Onsunoğlu’s role in the Yaka protests, and the university graduates role in the DIKAT-
SA conflict. Even the much celebrated 29 January 1988 demonstration would probably
never have taken place if Abdülhalim Dede had not taken an initiative three days ear-
lier. Hatipoğlu lacked the experience, was not adept, and probably had no confidence
in his own ability to take on open confrontations with the Greek authorities within a
democratic framework. Many of the open conflicts, such as in the mufti issue, can be
characterised as mock confrontations which had nothing to do with the declared intent.
It was not a political struggle for a cause, but a way to improve his political position as
middleman, exploiting the escalation of tension between Greece and Turkey.

In the triangle Greece-Turkey-minority, Turkey had evolved into the strongest pole.
Or, in other words, Turkey had both the largest stick and the largest carrot when it
came to influencing the minority. In practice this meant that some people would
criticise Greece’ treatment of the minority according to what was expected of them
from Turkey or according to what could bring them benefits from that side. The timing
and extension of their protests would largely be conditioned by the Turkish factor. At
the same time, it was impossible for them to criticise Turkey’s choices even when they were uncomfortable with them. They had not the strength to challenge Turkey in open confrontation, but could at best influence her indirectly by manipulation. Those within the minority who had their main interests in Greece, or some kind of position connected with the Greek administration, would also criticise Greece. They would do this openly, but in a more moderate tone than the first group and also more related to the actual situation. The last group also had great difficulties in criticising Turkey openly. This was connected to concrete threats against them as expressed, for example, in the “black list”, and the emotional attachment to the “mother country” Turkey because of the existing stereotypes. The ease by which they criticised Greece was to some degree a reflection of the greater degree of democracy. In comparison it is interesting to note the almost total absence of open critique against Turkey by the Greek Orthodox of Istanbul. With the backing of Turkey, the “clique” was gradually able to eradicate all the internal opposition, and the few puny voices who spoke up against its excesses paid a heavy price.

It is within this political framework that Sadık Ahmet rose to prominence. He had showed no interest in the problems of the minority until he failed to obtain the position he set his eyes on at the Komotini hospital. After this disappointment he began his political career as a “junior member” of the “clique”. His energetic and rash behaviour brought his name to the forefront at a time when ultra right forces in Turkey were looking for a front figure to promote the minority issue internationally. The choice of Sadık reflected to some degree the priorities of those who promoted him, but the decision was possibly made prematurely in retaliation to the Greek interest in Turkish human rights problems. On the eve of the 1989 parliamentary elections, the independent candidates were consequently in a totally different situation than previously. The new factors were not assessed correctly even by many of those who were quite close to the events. They thought rather along similar lines as in 1985. Besides the support from Turkey, Sadık benefited from the frustration of the minority with the continued discrimination. To some degree he was able to head a popular reaction against the discrimination of the Greek authorities and the “corruption” of the old minority politicians. This resembles the situation of Ahmet Mehmet in 1981, but it was now the rural population that rallied behind Sadık. As a result of these combined factors, Sadık won the elections with a landslide. Spasmodic measures by the local Greek authorities to obstruct his election, only contributed towards reinforcing his image as a hero of Turkish nationalism. In any case, these measures were no match against the Turkish apparatus involved in compelling the minority to vote for Sadık.

It is easy to be deceived by labels. In reality the independent ticket did neither represent an “independent” minority initiative, nor a radical new approach to minority politics. However, the dual dependence on Greece and Turkey was now expressed in
a new form. This is even easier to observe in the case of Sadık’s fellow independent MP, Ahmet Faikoglu. When the balance of power between Greece and Turkey changed, he made a swift transition from being a passionate supporter of PASOK to becoming a fervent Turkish nationalist. Basically, both Faikoglu and Sadik functioned according to the traditional framework of being middlemen, within the new balance of power between Greece and Turkey.

In spite of the superficial impression created by some of the protests against the discrimination, the independent MPs never evolved into leaders of a civil rights movement. The independent MPs’ efforts to internationalise the minority issue were tailor-made to Turkey’s diplomatic initiatives and reflect most of all their Turkish patronage. The international focus compelled Greece to do something with the most obvious aspects of the discrimination, and in May 1991 the Mitsotakis government attempted to initiate a new minority policy. Because of their dependence and their political orientation, the independent MPs were in a very poor position to make use of this opening. The whole matter had evolved into a purely Greek-Turkish issue, and there were no longer any credible minority leaders in a position to represent the minority towards the Greek authorities. Nor can the initiatives by the independent MPs towards Greek authorities be characterised as serious attempts at dialogue. By now the negative aspects of the independent MPs were reinforced by the intense internal rivalry between Sadık and the rest of the “clique”. Sadık’s megalomania had made him bent on becoming the sole leader of the minority. This led to the most incredible petty quarrels. The fight for leadership put any other goal in the background.

The Greek authorities made the election of independent MPs impossible with a new election law, and the confusion of values reached a high point in the 1993 parliamentary elections, when it was presented as a great victory that the minority did not elect any MP. The confusion, the rhetoric, and the blinkers imposed by nationalist ideology made it very difficult for all parties involved to make a sober assessment of Sadık’s work. He had become a symbol of Turkish nationalism for both Greeks and Turks alike. However, by 1995 Sadık’s erratic behaviour had put him out of favour even among his former protectors, and his public fall from grace was only prevented by his untimely death.

Since the internationalisation of the minority issue featured so prominently in the rhetoric of the independent MPs, it is necessary to look at some central problems with the involvement of human rights organisations. As seen in connection with the early initiatives in the European Parliament and the Council of Europe, the minority did not possess the know-how and organisational ability to successfully promote its problems. Nor did the European Parliament possess the competence to deal effectively with the problem. More serious attempts took place later, when Helsinki Watch became involved with fact-finding missions. Unfortunately, these missions were strongly
influenced by Turkish diplomacy which tried to use them for its own purpose. In this connection, it should be mentioned that Turkish diplomacy was greatly assisted by the behaviour of some of the local Greek services. The way civil policemen tailed the fact-finding missions is mentioned in every report. On the positive side, Helsinki Watch was able to point out some of the obvious discrimination against the minority. On the negative side, its reports came to support the most undemocratic forces in the minority. The reports by Helsinki Watch lack integrity, not because of any bad intention, but simply as a result of insufficient knowledge about the cultural and political situation. It is easy to trace the influence of some of the minority’s “professional manipulators”. More seriously, Helsinki Watch has not always been able to pinpoint the fundamental minority problems and involved itself in some of the issues which are related to petty politics and rivalry for Turkish patronage.

The emphasis on internationalisation has to some degree taken the attention away from the need to improve the dialogue about minority issues within the Greek political framework. After Sadik’s death there has been a gradual normalisation of the minority’s political life. The most gregarious examples of internal terror and the heavy-handed involvement of Turkey have been on the vane. Still, many of the fundamental structures are intact. The parliamentary elections in 1996 displayed that both Greece and Turkey are basically handling the minority as a bilateral issue. This has hampered the normal integration of the minority into the Greek political system, within a modern European framework.
## Appendix 1. Parliamentary representation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interwar Years</th>
<th>Komotini</th>
<th>Ksanthi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 November 1920</td>
<td>Müderris Hafız Salih Mehmetoğlu Müderris Hafız Ali Galip Arif Zade Arif Bey</td>
<td>Hasan Abdürrahimoğlu (Büyük Hasan Bey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 December 1923</td>
<td>Mustafa Ağa (Deveci) Hoca Mestan Efendi (Ahmetoğlu) Emin Beyzade Hasan (Dimetokalı)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 November 1926</td>
<td>Müderris Hafız Ali Galip Mustafa Ağa (Deveci)</td>
<td>Şükru Mahmutoğlu Fehmi Bey Haşimzade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 August 1928</td>
<td>Müderris Hafız Ali Galip Cezayirli Muhtar Ali Rıza Efendi</td>
<td>Niyazi Mumcu Halil Hüseyin Karaçanlı</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 September 1932</td>
<td>Müderris Hafız Ali Galip Mustafa Ağa (Deveci) Hatip Yusuf</td>
<td>İbrahim Demir Serdar Zade Hasan Abdürrahimoğlu (Büyük Hasan Bey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 March 1933</td>
<td>Müderris Hafız Ali Galip Mustafa Ağa (Deveci)</td>
<td>Hasan Abdürrahimoğlu (Büyük Hasan Bey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 June 1935</td>
<td>Hatip Yusuf Mehmet Mustafaoglu</td>
<td>Niyazi Mumcu Hamdi Hüseyin Fehmi (Hamdi Bey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 January 1936</td>
<td>Müderris Hafız Ali Galip</td>
<td>Hamdi Hüseyin Fehmi (Hamdi Bey)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Senate elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Komotini</th>
<th>Ksanthi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21 April 1929</td>
<td>Müderris Hafız Salih Mehmetoğlu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 September 1932</td>
<td>Müderris Hafız Salih Mehmetoğlu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 April 1934 [epanaliptiki ekloyf]</td>
<td>Hatip Yusuf after the death of Hafız Salih Mehmetoğlu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Candidate 1</td>
<td>Candidate 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 March 1946</td>
<td>Osman Üstüner Faik Engin</td>
<td>Osman Nuri Fettahoğlu Hüseyin Zeybek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 March 1950</td>
<td>Osman Üstüner Fehmi Otmanlı</td>
<td>Osman Nuri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 September 1951</td>
<td>Osman Üstüner</td>
<td>Osman Nuri Fettahoğlu Hamdi Hüseyin Fehmi (Hamdi Bey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 November 1952</td>
<td>Hasan Hatipoğlu Molla Yusuf Hasanoğlu</td>
<td>Osman Nuri Fettahoğlu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 February 1956</td>
<td>Osman Üstüner Molla Yusuf Hasanoğlu</td>
<td>Osman Nuri Fettahoğlu</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 May 1958</td>
<td>Osman Üstüner Molla Yusuf Hasanoğlu</td>
<td>Osman Nuri Fettahoğlu</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 October 1961</td>
<td>Hasan Hatipoğlu Molla Yusuf Hasanoğlu</td>
<td>Osman Nuri Fettahoğlu</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 November 1963</td>
<td>Hasan Hatipoğlu Molla Yusuf Hasanoğlu</td>
<td>Osman Nuri Fettahoğlu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 February 1964</td>
<td>Hasan Hatipoğlu Molla Yusuf Hasanoğlu</td>
<td>Osman Nuri Fettahoğlu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post 1974</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 November 1974</td>
<td>Hafız Yaşar Mehmetoğlu Sabahaddin Galip</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 November 1977</td>
<td>Hasan İmamoğlu</td>
<td>Orhan Hacıbıram/Celal Zeybek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 October 1981</td>
<td>Hafız Yaşar Mehmetoğlu Ahmet Mehmet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 June 1985</td>
<td>Mehmet Müftüoğlu</td>
<td>Ahmet Faikoğlu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 June 1989</td>
<td>Sadik Ahmet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 November 1989</td>
<td>İsmail Molla (Rodoplu)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 April 1990</td>
<td>Sadik Ahmet</td>
<td>Ahmet Faikoğlu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 October 1993</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 September 1996</td>
<td>Mustafa Mustafa Galip Galip</td>
<td>Birol Akifoğlu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In some of the early elections Komotini (Rodopi) and Ksanthi formed at times a single constituency. For details, cf. (Nikolakopulos 1990–1991a). Thanks to Rıza Kırlidökme for correcting some names.
Appendix 2. Governor Generals of Thrace

General Administration of Thrace

1. Haralambos Vozikis 1921–1922
2. F. Theofilaktos 1928–1929
3. Yeoryios Kakulidis 1929–1930
   U 1. Nikolaos Tzermias 1930
4. Ioannis Kaloyerias 1930–1932
5. Dimitrios Florias 1932
6. Nikolaos Leondidis 1932–1933
7. Yeoryios Zervos 1933
8. Miltiadis Mandas 1933–1935
9. Dimitrios Londos 1935
10. Yeoryios Aryiropulos 1935
11. Athanasios Suliotis 1935–1936
   U 2. Evangelos Kalantzis 1939–1941
13. Konstandinos Kotzias 1941

General Administration of Macedonia/Thrace

U 3. Aleksandros Papathanasis 1945
U 4. Haralambos Ruhotas 1945
U 5. Mihail Mavrogordatos 1945–1946

I have only indicated the year(s) they served and not the exact date of their tenure. The Governor Generals of Thrace had sometimes the rank of minister, sometimes the rank of under-secretary (U). After 1949 although referred to as Governor Generals they had only the rank of secretary, as was the case with G. Fessopulos who served in 1954–1955. I do not have a complete list of these secretaries. The lower status after 1945 is connected to the foundation of the Ministry of Macedonia-Thrace. For more details, see (Tziovaras 1996).
### Appendix 3. Community leaders in Komotini

The list below is taken from (Eren 1997: 69–70), with some corrections indicated to me by Rıza Kırlıdökme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Leader Name</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Müderris Mehmed Efendi</td>
<td>1903–1908</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hâfız Salih Efendi</td>
<td>?–?</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hafız Hasan Efendi</td>
<td>?–?</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hâfız Hâlim Efendi</td>
<td>31.10.1932–11.07.1933</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Baydar Mehmed Efendi</td>
<td>08.10.1933–01.01.1936</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Keresteci Münir Efendi</td>
<td>09.01.1936–08.05.1936</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Değirmenci İsmail Münir Efendi</td>
<td>09.04.1937–11.08.1939</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Basmacı Kamil Efendi</td>
<td>11.08.1939–21.11.1939</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Hayrullah Ağa</td>
<td>17.12.1939–12.05.1942</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mehrikozlu Mustafa Efendi</td>
<td>12.05.1942–06.11.1942</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Hafız Ali Reşat</td>
<td>06.11.1942–12.09.1944</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Hüsnü Yusuf</td>
<td>18.09.1944–25.09.1944</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Hâfız Ali Galip Efendi</td>
<td>27.09.1944–18.11.1948</td>
<td>Own initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Keresteci Münir Efendi</td>
<td>13.11.1948–09.05.1950</td>
<td>Appointed</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Basmacı Kâmil Efendi</td>
<td>09.05.1950–30.11.1953</td>
<td>Elected</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Raifzade Mehmet bey</td>
<td>30.11.1953–01.08.1957</td>
<td>Elected</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Sabahaddin Galip</td>
<td>01.08.1957–11.10.1963</td>
<td>Elected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Rahim Tabakoğlu</td>
<td>11.10.1963–17.04.1965</td>
<td>Substitute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Faik İbrahim</td>
<td>27.04.1966–16.10.1967</td>
<td>Substitute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Hafız Yaşar Mehmetoğlu</td>
<td>16.10.1967–08.08.1989</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 4. Muftis of Thrace

### Komotini:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bekir Sıtık Efendi</td>
<td>1917–1920</td>
<td>Removed by GR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hacı Ahmet</td>
<td>1920–1922</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Şevki Babalaki</td>
<td>1922–1924</td>
<td>From Crete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Nevzat Hafız Mehmet</td>
<td>18.03.1924–03.06.1935</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Hafız Hasan Efendi Hilmioğlu</td>
<td>03.06.1935–15.01.1941</td>
<td>Removed by BG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Arif Hoca</td>
<td>15.01.1941–14.01.1942</td>
<td>From Bulgaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Halil Mustafaoğlu</td>
<td>14.01.1942–16.09.1944</td>
<td>From Bulgaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Hafız Hasan Efendi Hilmioğlu</td>
<td>16.09.1944–23.06.1948</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Yusuf Efendi Sabrioğlu</td>
<td>23.06.1948–05.02.1949</td>
<td>Deputy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Hacı Hafız Hüseyin Mustafa</td>
<td>05.02.1949–02.06.1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Rüştü Ethem</td>
<td>03.06.1985–13.12.1985</td>
<td>Deputy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information about the muftis is based on (Soltaridis 1997: 111–117). See also İleri 423/14.03.1986 which has some differences.

### Ksanthi:

The Ksanthi mufti office was established in 1927.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Şevki Babalaki</td>
<td>1927–15.01.1930</td>
<td>From Crete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hafız Hüseyin Hüsnü</td>
<td>17.01.1930–04.03.1935</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ali Fehmi Efendi</td>
<td>21.03.1930–15.12.1941</td>
<td>Removed by BG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Arif Beyski (Kamen Bolyarski)</td>
<td>1941–1944</td>
<td>From Bulgaria?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Hafız İlyas Efendi</td>
<td>04.10.1944–17.03.1945</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ali Fehmi Efendi</td>
<td>06.04.1945–07.12.1946</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sabri Efendi</td>
<td>09.12.1946–28.03.1949</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mustafa Hilmi Aga</td>
<td>20.06.1949–13.02.1990</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mehmet Emin Aga</td>
<td>15.02.1990–1991</td>
<td>Deputy (resigned)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mehmet Emin Şinikoğlu</td>
<td>22.08.1991–</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Didimotiho:

After the Mufti office of Aleksandrupoli was abolished 01.06.1927, the mufti office of Didimotiho was considered to be the mufti office of the Evros prefecture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hacı Veledin</td>
<td>1927–1935</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Mehmet Nevzat</td>
<td>1935–1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hacı Veledin</td>
<td>1939–1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mehmet Halil</td>
<td>1952–1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>İbrahim Adikoğlu</td>
<td>1953–1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mehmet Hoca Halil Haliloğlu</td>
<td>1959–1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ahmet Mehmet</td>
<td>1962–1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>İbrahim Adikoğlu</td>
<td>1965–1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ahmet Şerif Damatoğlu</td>
<td>1974–1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mehmet Şerif Damatoğlu</td>
<td>1986–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5. Translated Texts

Overview of Texts:
1. Two texts concerning the harassment of local minority population in the first decades of this century.
2. Ileri 711/02.04.1993, “The point to really be sorry about”: Hâki writes about the fear he felt for certain books.
3. Denge 8/04.08.1989, Onsunoğlu expresses his views on the strategies of the minority in questions of education.
4. Sinhrona Themata 63/April–June 1997, Article about the education problems of the minority, where Onsunoğlu attempts to explain them to a Greek audience.
5. Eleftherotipia 04.06.1991, The local socialist party (Sinaspismos) cadre Hasan Ekrem writes to a Greek audience about the problems of the minority after the visit of Mitsotakis when he promised a change in the state policy towards the minority.
9. Se Fondo Kokkino 1/Summer 1988, “Greece-Turkey, Acquaintance with the “non-Turks””. Critical article to the Greek handling of the minority.
12. To Vima 03.09.1989, “The Turkish game in Thrace to the detriment of Greece”, by Yiannis Kapsis. An example of Yiannis Kapsis' rhetoric when presenting the situation in Thrace.
14. Trakya’nın Sesi 402/05.01.1991, “Conversation with Onsunoğlu, part 5”
15. İleri 728/17.09.1993, “Our Imam is the police station’s informer”.
18. İleri 578/22.01.1990, Reader’s letter in connection with the minority leaders’ behaviour.
19. Gerçek 165/08.05 1987, Sadık addresses the minority about his “philosophy”.
20. Gerçek 16.11.1987, The piece in English distributed by Sadik to the conference about democracy and human rights organised within the framework of the Council of Europe.
22. İleri 629/22.3.1991, Letter From Hâki to the Turkish President about the “Black List”.
23. Gerçek 241/04.05.1989, Declaration by the “Trust” ticket when it was founded
24. Trakya’nın Sesi 318/10.06.1989. The common declaration of the four minority candidates for ND when they resigned.
25. Eleftherotipia 08.06.1989, The proclamation by the “Headquarters for the protection of the Turkish population in Western Thrace.”
31. Rizospastis 01.02.1990, “One way street”, (leading article)
32. Eleftherotipia 02.03.1990, “New policy towards the Muslims”. The three leaders about a new policy in Thrace (also in Scholiastis 85/March 1990).
34. Letter from Sadik dated 27.08.1992 to Prime Minister Mitsotakis.
35. Eleftherotipia 19.9.1993, A letter from the mufti Meço Cemali included in the article by “Ios tis Kiriakis” about the problems encountered by a Muslim pharmacist.
37. Ethnos (on Sunday) 10.01.1993, “Ahmet Faikoğlu the independent MP of Ksanthi, in an unexpected interview, declares that he will not aspire for the Turkish flag to wave in Western Thrace - I am proud that I was born in Greece”, by Marianna Polihroniadu.
38. Avyi (on Sunday) 10.03.1991, “The Greeks love us, but their leaders do not”, Interview of Sadik by Despina Makrinu.
39. Avyi (on Sunday) 24.03.1991, “The future of the minority is unpredictable”,
    Interview of İbram Onsunoğlu by Despina Makrinu.
40. Türkiye 19.02.94, “Dr. Sadık Ahmet” by Prof. Dr. Aydın Taneri.
    ascension of Turkey scared the West’”, by Hasan Tekin– Necati Kaba
42. To Vima 20.06.1993, “Message of hope from Thrace”, by Yiannis Marinos.
43. Batt Trakya’nın Sesi 33/August 1991, Announcement by the Religious Affairs
    Presidency concerning the temporary closing of the Western Thrace mosques.
44. Pontiki 04.02.1993, “Sadık lost control”.
45. Kathimerini 07.02.1993, “Western Thrace: The books were only a pretext… -
    Ahmet Sadık has been transformed into a ‘strike-force’ of Turkey in the area”, by
    Stavros Liyeros.
46. I Epohi 21.02.1993, “Everyone are satisfied when there is unrest in Thrace”, by
    İbraim Hasan.
48. Trakya’nın Sesi 387/23.05.1991, The problems of the minority which occupy
    seriously the Elected Leaders [Eretí Arhontes] of the Minority.
49. Akın 1030/17.05.1991, Two press statements by the independent MPs in relation
    to Mitsotakis’ visit to Thrace 13 and 14 May 1991.
50. Akın 1083/16.03.1993, Article about the mosque which burnt in Aleksandrupoli.
52. İleri 726/03.09.1993, “Look, this is how I became rich!”
53. Eleftherotipia 03.07.1989, “It is time that we speak about the minority of Western
    Thrace”, Pandazis Terleksis, professor at the university of Crete.
54. Eleftherotipia 18.07.1989, “We will speak seriously about Western Thrace”, by
    Y. F. Apostolidis, Lawyer, Athens
    the attitude of Sadık.
57. Balkan 117/24.05.1994, “Leader, organisation, cause”, by Mustafa Hafiz
    Mustafa.
58. Akın 1049/20.03.1992, Polemics against Sadık.
59. Trakya’nın Sesi 452/26.05.1993, Onsunoğlu’s speech at the cemetery before the
    burial of Celâl Zeybek.
60. Trakya’nın Sesi 460/18.08.1993, “Some Minority Questions in the Aftermath of
    Hafız Yaşar”, Parts 22–23.
61. Gerçek 369/17.09.1993, The first announcement by Rodoplu in favour of the
    independent list at the 1993 elections, followed by the decision by the Executive
    Committee.
The stories about atrocities is a genre of its own. Some publications are made for propaganda purposes against the opponents, some are made to strengthen internal cohesion, and some odd stories just turn up for no apparent reason. Both Greece and Turkey issued various accounts about the other’s atrocities after the First World War. These were meant to influence western opinion and the great powers and were written in this spirit. The two pieces below are from the internal discourse.

The first piece is about the persecution of Turks in Western Thrace after the arrival of the Greek refugees. I asked Hâki about his sources. The talkative old man in the story had thought that the carpenters were Christians, but they were from the minority and recounted the incident later to Hâki. He wrote it down more or less as he heard it from them, but the story also bears some marks of Hâki’s creative talents. Later when Hâki was put on the black list and refused entry to Turkey, the journalist Oktay Akbal criticised this decision in Cumhuriyet (09.02.1989) and reprinted this story. There is a tendency that Turkish accounts of this period are stereotyped and undocumented. Unfortunately most Muslim villagers of the time were illiterate and the first-hand sources are rare. Fanari is located near the shore in an area with sparse population.

Other sources tell us that the refugee settlement commission constructed a village there

1 For some examples, see (Agathangelos 1914; Carnegie Endowment for International Peace 1914; Anonymous 1914b; Anonymous 1915; Anonymous 1918; Papadopoulos 1919; Soteriades 1919; Anonymous 1919a; Anonymous 1919b; Anonymous 1919d; Delta 1919–20; Peyiadis 1920; Anonymous 1920c; Toynbee 1921; Anonymous 1921a; Anonymous 1921b; Anonymous 1922a; Anonymous 1923a; Anonymous 1945a; Batibey 1971; Batibey 1976; Mourellos 1985; Miletic 1987).
and settled 78 families consisting of 312 persons. Population statistics give 79 persons for 1920 and 226 for 1923 (Dalègre 1995: 241, 243). A local Turk is of the opinion that the Muslim population of Fanari left during the migration wave in the 1950s (Batıbey 1976: 165). Of course, the village Fanari was in a more exposed location than the areas with compact Muslim settlements.

The second piece is an excerpt from a book by a Greek refugee from Eastern Thrace. He took part in the Greek community administration and had also good contact among the Ottoman authorities. Consequently, he was well informed and recounts in detail about the events. The persecutions against the Greeks generally started with the Young Turk regime in 1908 and their final expulsion was confirmed by the Lausanne Treaty in 1923. The book is full with accounts of threats, violence, and last but not least pillage. The part I have translated describes the situation after the First Balkan War in 1912, and I included it because of the similarities with the first piece as regards the methods of the times. It also helps explaining the background of the refugees we encountered in the first piece.

İleri 540/20.1.1989 [original in Turkish]:

How did the Turkish village Fener become the Greek village Fanari?

While the carpenters attached the door and windows, old Dimu recounted:

- “We settled in this village after leaving Asia Minor in 1922… We occupied forcefully one of the Turk’s two rooms… Only the room? Whatever was there, whatever he had… It all became common property…

- “We first came to an understanding with the local administration, and let loose the wind of fear: Whatever the Turk had outside… we broke, spilled, burned, and plundered… Once in a while we fired a shot to scare them…

- “Because the administration had taken the following decision: The Turks should be cleared from the Fener village, whatever the price… And indeed, this should be accomplished, not in five, but in three years at the most…

- “In the beginning they held out quite a bit; they persisted… But they saw they had no one to help them except for Allah and started to dissolve willy-nilly… This was in fact what we wanted… We increased the pressure a little bit more and then… We made the TURKISH village Fener into FANARI…

- “But today’s Greek youth do not know anything about all this!”

Kontandinos G. Luizos, “Istoría Kallipóleos Anatolikís Thrákis”, Thrakiká 1956. pp. 72–73 [original in Greek]:

However, the devastating outcome of the Balkan Wars for Turkey increased, as was to be expected, the fury of the Young Turks against the Greek element.
After the transfer of Fahri Paşa to Ankara, where he died, various pressures and persecutions started. The persecutions started in Northern Thrace and extended gradually everywhere. To succeed in driving the Greeks out of their homeland they had to create such unbearable life conditions, so that this would give the result they desired.

They organised armed bands, which swooped down on the villages unexpectedly and during the night. They would strike terror and panic in the Greeks because of the frequent and repeated firing and some murders.

Turks, allegedly friends of the Christians, or the Turkish gendarmerie too, advised the villagers to leave for Greece, because if they stayed they would run the risk of being butchered. In addition the Government would enlist the Christian Thracians between 23–45 years of age. The sorry result of all these combined efforts was inevitable flight. The Greeks would find it impossible to stay on further in their hearths and would try to flee to Greece, saving at least their lives and leaving by necessity their property to the Turks. A higher government official informed confidentially the writer [i.e. Luizos] about the programme to extinguish the Greeks.

Text 2.

İleri 711/02.04.1993, “The point to really be sorry about” [original in Turkish]:

I was spurred by an article published in MILLYIYET 7.3.1993…

The author of the article was ZEYNEP ORAL. She tells about a recollection: Years ago she got stuck on the road at the ALTAY MOUNTAINS [in Mongolia]… because the car broke down. She had a friend with her, a Russian woman; but with the profession TURCOLOGIST. Suddenly a few local women approached them. The turcologist woman spoke to them, and pointing to Zeynep Oral she said: She is a TURK like you… from Turkey… The women could not believe it. She said this and that, without convincing them… Finally: Since you say that she is a TURK, let her recite a NAZIM HİKMET poem so we can see…

Zeynep Oral recites and then they believe that she is a TURK… In other words, Zeynep Oral proves her TURKISHNESS with Nazım Hikmet, to the plain TURKISH WOMEN of Altay…

* * *

In 1954/55 we went to Konya, and when we started to understand a little bit about what was going on around us we saw that it was DANGEROUS to read some books and newspapers… To mention them too… And I returned to Thrace [6–7 years later]

---

2 Well known communist who was persecuted in republican Turkey
without having been able to read NAZIM HİKMET because of the fear of what this danger could bring…

This goes for the VARLIK PUBLICATIONS as well…

And for how many other books and articles…

* * *

I did the last 16 months of my military service in Thessaloniki. My passion and addiction to books is known. Every time I go to town I definitely stop in front of a book store, and look… I have no money for buying of course. Poverty-ridden…

One day when I stand looking in front of such a book store window in the VARDAR STREET, my eyes catch the name NAZIM HİKMET… Yes, I was not mistaken. It is written: “POEMS BY THE TURKISH POET NAZIM HİKMET” on the cover of the book. This means that the poems of Nazım Hikmet are translated into Greek; They are sold in Thessaloniki…

Now, whether you believe it or not, the Konya fear, THAT FEAR which penetrated me, overwhelmed me in front of the shop window! [Konya’daki o korku, hani içimizde sinek O KORKU camekân önünde de debreştii!] I said immediately to myself: O god, let them not see me here when I look at this book!!!

A Turk became frightened by looking at the book of a Turkish poet in a shop window! How come? Where? In Thessaloniki! Why? Because of the FEAR which penetrated me or was made to penetrate me when I was a student…

In 1961 we left Turkey; 1962/64 we did our military service. Someone had taken our Nazım, read him, liked him and translated him so people could read him; it was printed and sold in book stores… Even putting the words TURKISH AUTHOR on the cover…

* * *

Those who have injected this BOOK FEAR in the brains of the Sublime Turkish Nation, whoever they may be, have done the greatest HARM in history to the Turkish Nation!

The following day, i.e. every time I left the camp, I always passed by that book store and read lovingly the name NAZIM HİKMET, while being penetrated by fear… If I was not able to buy and read it, there were three main reasons for this: 1- Fear. Because it had still not left me. 2- Poverty, 3- Insufficient knowledge of Greek… (at that time).

You may laugh or cry, but I only started to read Nazım HİKMET after 1975… Borrowing it from friends. Even at this moment I have no poetry book by Nazım Hikmet in my bookshelf. Neither any of the works written about him.

* * *

“I do not know who remembers the name of those who signed the decision to deprive Nâzım Hikmet of his Turkish Citizenship 42 years ago. But wherever you go
on the face of the earth, even if there had been thousand decisions, the world knows Nazım Hikmet as a ‘TURKISH POET’.”

I heartily agree with those words by Mrs. Zeynep Oral… And unfortunately no other TURKISH POET or ARTIST is known throughout the world such as Nazım Hikmet… The point to really be sorry about is this and this matter…

The instance called up the memory. Cordial love and greetings from Western Thrace to Mrs. Zeynep Oral… And congratulations for this fine article…

Text 3.
The following is the whole text as it appeared in Denge 8/04.08.1989 [original in Turkish], where Onsunoğlu describes the problems of mobilising the minority politically to improve its education in Greece. It represents an attempt to persuade the minority to struggle for its rights within the Greek political framework:

After our article where we explained what kind of initiatives we would have to take to abolish the entrance exams to the two Minority secondary schools, we spoke with some of the pupils’ fathers. Our conversation confirmed this saying to us: When a new adaptation towards a chronic problem has become established, it will work against the removal of the problem. Because the removal of it will create a new problem, and the need for a new adaptation arises. In other words: When a mistake has become established it takes on the state of a moral rule. However, this state does not mean that it removes the wrong and harmful effects of the mistake. On the contrary, it will spread them. For this reason the mistakes must be corrected before they become the rule and spread.

Anyway; we spoke with a few of the pupils’ fathers. The conclusion: Many parents of minority pupils, maybe most of them, are at this time not in favour of the removal of the entrance exams to the secondary schools. Strange but true. Sad but true. Maybe even a little bit funny.

The following monologue is not imaginary.
“`I am the father of a pupil who succeeded in the entrance exams to the Celâl Bayar secondary school. You may think that I was happy because my son succeeded. On the contrary, I am very worried. All my plans were turned upside down. Many other parents who had successful children are in the same situation as me. They are worried too. I took great pains to make my son not succeed in the exams. I advised him not to answer the questions and deliver a blank paper. Even though he did so, they passed him. I am confused. Let me start from the beginning. Just like you wrote, the prevailing conviction in the Minority opinion and among the pupils’ parents is: The Minority education has collapsed and it cannot be saved. Above all the situation in
Celâl Bayar! With the prevailing situation you must be unfair to send your child to study at Celâl Bayar. If you want your child to suffer and to become sick yourself, register it at the Celâl Bayar. Neither teacher, nor textbook, nor course of lessons, what has remained of Celâl Bayar? And besides, do they not fail the pupils on purpose! [so that they do not pass on to the next grade] How many pupils begin, how many pass their class, how many graduate? Knowing all this, why should I send my child there? With all this in mind I did my preparations one year previously. I found a private school in Istanbul and registered my son. I put aside money for the school, lodging and expenses. Everything was ready so that he would continue there. But they did not give him education visa. The condition for giving education visa was the inability to pass the entrance exams here. Considering that he may pass by a mistake, as I told earlier, I advised my son to leave the questions unanswered at the exam. Many persons take recourse to this. But what I feared happened to me. They said that our son passed the exams. Of course, you cannot complain asking: why did you pass him? I still wanted the education visa. They said it was impossible, your son passed. I know that the children of some people got a visa, but what can you do. There are many parents whose children succeeded in the entrance exams who are in the same situation as me. Those who did not succeed are very happy. They can obtain education visa from the Consulate. And now you stand up and say that the entrance exams should be abolished. For heavens sake, do you realise what you have done! You are clashing with public opinion. They will curse you. If you really want to help us, you should work for that our children obtain education visas without conditions and obstructions…”

One must certainly have in mind the situation of the kinsman who adapts to an existing injustice and contrive according to the presence of this injustice. However, it is nobody’s right not to want opposition to this injustice, to the detriment of the general interest.
The Minority Education viewed with the eyes of a Minority Member, by İbrahim Onsunoğlu

The Legal Framework and the Political Will

The education of the Turkish-Muslim Minority of Western Thrace is determined by the Lausanne Treaty (of 1923) where it is defined as private and “semi-autonomous” with important administrative authority of the minority community itself. It is further regulated by the two Greek-Turkish educational agreements (of 1951, but mainly 1968) which recognise, make official, and give a concrete content to Turkey’s role in the minority education, as well as the corresponding role of Greece in the education of the Greek-Orthodox minority in Istanbul. The education provided, both in elementary and secondary school [yımınasio-likio] is bilingual, Greek and Turkish.

The remaining poor internal legal framework is made up of three laws (two from 1977 and one from 1995), some decrees and ministerial decisions.

There is however a large body of internal correspondence, orders, and circulars, unpublished in its entirety and unknown to the public, which includes all those tools par excellence for the handling of the minority education which have little or no relation to the spirit of Lausanne, the content of the educational agreements and the provisions of the laws and decrees in force. They express the “political will”.

This political will is not founded in the needs of the minority education, but in the Greek-Turkish confrontation, and is drawn up within this framework, often impulsively and unavoidably vindictively obeying to the demands of the chronic bilateral conflict and the rules of reciprocity or retaliation. It resembles the “wolf who guards the sheep”. And the result is evident.

The Particular within the General Ill

This fate is not destined and not limited exclusively to the education sector. It concerns the whole presence of the Minority.

The traces have not been obliterated entirely from the walls of the Thracian cities of that slogan pregnant with significance which summed up a dilemma: “Minority: Expulsion or Assimilation?” And which was written again for many years until recently. However, in reality it was not a dilemma, as the choice of expulsion had been taken long ago.

Now why the measures proved insufficient and the goals were not accomplished, while they were productive on the other bank, that is another story. In any case it is
not due to less or more humanism and respect and other such high-sounding words which are appealed to self-complacently. It is the class structure of the minority. Besides, the urban class, the class of the intellectuals and the rich, who sold up all its belongings and hurried to settle in Turkey, dissapeared just as fast, if not faster. Those who remained were the poor workers of the cities, the landless and small plot farmers, the animal husbandry of the Rodopi mountains.

In short, the 75 years of minority life did not manage to diminish the original population of the Minority so that in 1996, it numbers about 120,000 persons, as much as in 1920–23 at the time when Western Thrace was incorporated into Greece. But with tremendous upheavals [anakatatáksis] in the class structure of the population which also contributed to the marginalisation and ghettoisation of the minority.

The degradation and general downgrading of the border area Thrace the first 35 years was general and common and concerned everybody, Christians and Muslims. And maybe more the Christians, as the largest share of the arable land of the then exclusively agricultural Thrace belonged still to Muslims and a significant part of the Christians were refugees. While the last 35 years the poverty is an exclusive privilege of the Muslims thanks to the policy which was applied with great consistency until 1992.

The consequences of this policy and the accompanying administrative measures was the creation of the minority (social, economic, political, and educational) ghetto in Thrace and the cultivation of the deep conviction among the minority that it is undesired. The consequences on the minority education were particularly hard, within the general degradation, this was the first which was emasculated, marginalised and downgraded so much that it was turned into a “mechanism which produced illiteracy”.

Retaliation by Providing Illiteracy

The teacher N. Andabufis, well acquainted with the subject, when referring to the minority education speaks of “provided illiteracy” [parehómeno analfavitismó]. About the same sad conclusion was reached by the few experts and other interested parties which the last 2–3 years started timidly to investigate for the first time objectively and scholarly the education provided to the Turkish-Muslim Minority and to publish the conclusions of their study. (See the reports by the “Society of Friends of Nikos Raptis” in Ksanthi (1995–1996), the conclusion of the recent Symposium in Aleksandrupoli, with the subject “Minority and Transcultural Education” and the relevant references in isolated articles). The incredible “degradation” of the education which has lasted for decades has only recently started to attract the attention of some specialists when they became free to take an interest after the announcements in 1991 about “equal rights” which were expressed by Mr. Mitsotakis and repeated by Mr. Simitis in his recent journey to Thrace.
The situation which reigns in education can be regarded as part of the more general plight of the Minority, but also something more. A particular parameter should be pointed out. The minority education is perceived as the field of Greek-Turkish conflict par excellence within the broader minority issue. In this field Turkey claims a voice and a role invoking the Lausanne treaty and the bilateral education protocol, and here the desired victory over Turkey pass through the defeat of the minority education.

The first loss of the minority education was its “private and semi-autonomous character”. All the responsibilities and the relevant institutions which supposedly are executed by the minority communities are in reality powerless. Everything is under stifling state control and the whole minority education is a pure state concern where the minority has no voice, and does not participate. The state control in itself would be no problem if it was not always exercised in a negative manner to insert obstacles to development, to prevent every attempt of renewal and improvement and impose the backwardness and degradation. This “control”, for example, will not look kindly to the addition of a classroom to village minority school to satisfy increased needs with the expenses of the inhabitants themselves and the relevant application will be pending for years without ever being approved. In another minority village it will not be allowed to end the contract of a proved incapable—to say the least—teacher who some years ago had been imposed by the “control” itself and to approve the hiring of another who according to the estimation of the community is competent, and it will attempt again to impose its choice in spite of the general outcry and general resistance of those interested which will lead to the closure for 4 years of the only primary school [in the village]. And all the small pupils to continue their “studies” in Turkey (the case of Simandra, Ksanthi).

It transcends the limits of the present paper to describe the numerous similar instances which abound in the last 35 years of the Minority education which demonstrate the authoritarian, reactionary, but also paranoid manner the education issue is confronted with. And they explain how we reached to the present misery, which is not so present, but hails back to the beginning of the 60s. The otherwise private and semi-autonomous minority education issue, has become a sheer state concern and sometimes the object of inter-state reciprocity, where the Minority is limited to the role of a passive observer, and is used as a pawn to triumph over the “Turkish aggressiveness and expansionism”. A Turkish proverb says that “The hungry cat when it wants to eat its kittens views them as mice.”

We will insert here a passage from a careful criticism by N. Andabufis (it was read at the Zappio in May 1995 at the three-day meeting [ekdilόsis] by the PANIFE) who makes pertinent points, but attempts simultaneously, for obvious reasons, to take the edge off the impressions and to avoid penetrating to the depths. “The Greek state has not occupied itself with the essence of the minority education in spite of its importance,
but contents itself with the administrative control of the education procedure. The most important is that it has not desired to view the minority education as a “particular” kind of education, but only as an educational procedure which functions under “particular conditions” insisting on the so-called national point of view disregarding the particular social conditions within the minority… The restoration of parity to education would constitute one of the decisive factors for the regular integration of the children of the Muslim minority of Thrace into Greek society. Today’s situation is mainly due to the intentional indifference of the Greek state. The change of attitude demands political will and sincerity towards the minority, so that the initiatives can be accepted by the minority, and not be doomed in advance.”

An objection: It is of course not the case of “intentional indifference”. If it was such it would be compensated by the “interest” of the Minority. On the contrary it is the case of vivid and strong interest, though negative and so strong that it neutralises any other positive interest.

\textit{Education: The Most Important}

Under these conditions it was unavoidable for the Minority to lose its faith in minority education. “They do not learn (teach) anything (to) our children in the school”, is the permanent complaint of the parents. An off-handed gallop poll points out education as the most important problem confronted by the Minority.

To justify the sorry state of the minority education the often promoted claim that the Muslims of Thrace constitute a backward community which is indifferent about the education and learning is a fabricated racist myth which is refuted by the real situation.

Today the number of minority pupils enrolled in Turkish schools [in Turkey] in primary and (mostly) secondary education amount to about 4,000.

That must be about 1/4 of the total number on children within school age, a not at all negligible amount. It is the misery of the minority education, but also the “passion” of the parents to educate their children which has led all these small children abroad, far from their families with enormous economic and emotional costs. Let it not be supposed that this is happening because of encouragement from Turkey, on the contrary. It is known that Turkey discourages, for obvious reasons, the minority members to send their children to primary and secondary schools in Turkey because that means as a rule immigration as well.

\textit{The Desperation of the Minority}

The minority members are despaired when faced with the plight of minority education, incapable of reacting, to fight against the will of the state is beyond their powers. A father does not have many alternative solutions. He knows that he is encouraged to choose the public schools. But this seems very difficult to him, if not impossible, particularly for primary education. In Thrace there was always the segregation, the Turkish schools for the Turks and the Greek schools for the Greeks. He was educated
in a Turkish school himself, and wants the same for his child, irrespective of the fact that the same school is now called “minority”. To attend a minority school, particularly the primary, is regarded as an indispensable procedure to complete his identity. That is where he will perfect his Turkish, that is where he will be taught religion and the Koran. No, he will not entrust his child to a Christian primary school. For that reason he would prefer the minority school of his village or neighbourhood in spite of that he knows how downgraded it is. But after all the evil is general. If he now had dreams for his child to go to university (and who has not, however here in Greece it is very difficult to realise) and also had the economic possibilities or if he planned to emigrate to Turkey in the future, he could send it there immediately.

The result: Very few minority pupils attend public primary schools in Thrace, less than hundred. Quite a few attend primary school in Turkey.

After primary school the minority parent is in worse despair. He would prefer to send his child to a minority secondary school. But in Thrace there are only two such. And every year they only accept only a very small number of pupils by lot, while earlier it was done with entrance exams.

Here the nine-year mandatory education is not in force. From 1952, when the minority secondary schools started to function, after the blooming they knew in the first years, they finally developed into a persecuted institution which remains dwindling with very few pupils and an incredible downgraded level of studies thanks to the administrative measures which are taken every time, where among others there is also the keeping of the entrance exams to these secondary schools or the selection by lot of the limited number of pupils admitted. In this fashion for the school year 1996–97, 65 pupils were admitted by lot to the secondary school of Komotini, while 45 for the secondary school in Ksanthi. (Note: While the formerly mentioned numbers of pupils were originally admitted by lots, they were increased especially this year to 115 in Komotini and 124 in Ksanthi). It is literally the case of persecution of minority secondary education where the anti-educational fury reaches its peak. It is impossible for the human mind to understand what happened and happens with the two minority secondary schools [yimnásio-líkio], the extent and dept of the state arbitrariness, to keep between 200 to 400 the total number of pupils at these two secondary schools, when the total number of pupils who attended the minority primary schools was 16,000 in 1970, while it is 8,000 today.

The minority parent could send his child to a public secondary school on completion of primary school, But with what equipment? After 6 years in the minority primary school his child is barely able to read Greek, incapable of understanding Greek schoolbooks. It is really impossible for someone to explain how something like this is “accomplished”. For the minority pupil it is very difficult to manage in the state secondary school [yimnásio], to compete with the Greek speakers. The first years
constitute a real trial which often ends in failure. In spite of all this the orientation towards the state secondary schools is on the increase. There is also the solution of Turkey. The orientation towards the secondary schools of Turkey was intense and continuously increasing until two years ago, to achieve possibilities of continuing the studies also in higher education in the neighbouring country, and was reinforced by the strong migration current.

This orientation is expected to decrease significantly as the migration current has stopped after 1991–92 (after the lifting or softening of many administrative measures which were applied against the minority population) and since after 1996 the minority pupils have for the first time been offered the possibilities of access to higher education in Greece with the establishment of a special quota of 0,5%.

The result: The number of pupils who study in the two minority secondary schools is about 400. Those who study at state secondary schools in 1991 were 500 while today the number must have tripled. The main body studies in secondary schools of Turkey, the number of them is estimated to some thousands. The remaining minority pupils, i.e. more than half of them, do not continue their studies and are limited to primary school. There must also be a quite significant number of children who do not finish primary school or do not go to school at all.

There is not even one minority student who studies in Greek universities. This year with the establishment of the special quota it is expected that about 150 students will be admitted to Greek institutions of higher education [AEI and TEI]. (Note: Finally only 66 minority students participated in the admission procedure, as lack of secondary school graduates made it impossible to cover the quota.)

Until now the minority members studied almost exclusively at the Turkish universities where their number is close to 2,000.

They say that something changed in the approach to the minority problem. They say that something changes in the handling of the minority education.

**Text 5.**

*Eleftherotipia* 04.06.1991, “What does the Muslim minority in Western Thrace expect, after the recent visit of the prime minister”, By Ekrem Hasan, Dentist, Member of the Prefecture Committee of *Sinaspismos* [original in Greek]:

The announcement of the Prime Minister during his visit in Thrace about “equal rights [isonomía ke isopolitía] for all the inhabitants” are definitely positive.

Just as his admission that “there were mistakes in the past” was sincere, it is realistic that “the equality cannot be applied only for the rights but also for the
obligations”. The violators of the obligations but also the equal rights must confront the consequences of the law.

However, these announcements must become reality and the “mistakes of the past” must be solved.

**A. Education**

The illiteracy which plagues the minority must be eradicated. The basic 9 years of education must be obligatory for the minority children too. From the new school year the entrance exams to the minority secondary schools [yimnásia-lıkia] should be abolished.

The quality of the lessons and the teaching personnel should be upgraded, the curriculum in all the schools should be restructured, also in those with minority pupils, primary and secondary schools [dimotiká, yimnásia, lıkia]. These changes must secure: In dimotikó, yimnásio and lıkio the learning of the mother tongue but also the learning of Greek, which is necessary so that the pupils can continue with higher education.

In the minority yimnásia-lıkia general education and vocational specialisation should be provided, so that the children of the minority too have the possibility of continuing their studies in higher education.

The books which are in Turkish should be modernised and distributed in the beginning of the school year. (The Prime Minister has already announced it).

The language in which some of the main lessons are taught should be reconsidered, with the criterion to make it easier for the pupils to continue their studies in the higher grades of education.

The command 640/6-3-84 which imposes that in the entrance exams for the Lycée, and for university, the pupils are examined in Greek for lessons which are taught in Turkish should be withdrawn.

The education of pupils from the minority in public gymnasiums and lycéées makes necessary the introduction of special lessons in Turkish for them (language and religion).

The need of teaching personnel should be covered. Measures should be taken to educate the teachers who are not graduates of Pedagogic Academies or Institutions of higher education [AEI].

The particular regime for the minority schools does not relieve the state from the obligation of generous economic subsidies to the schools. With different management of the pious foundation funds, it is possible to secure an essential subsidy of the schools. In this way it is possible to end the economic burden on the parents.

The character of the religious seminaries in Komotini and Ksanthi should change. They should be schools extending on the 9-years obligatory education, for the religious clergymen of the minority.
The Special Pedagogical Academy of Thessaloniki should function temporarily to cover the needs of the schools, with an essential upgrading of the level of studies and with high school graduation obligatory for those who enter. In a longer perspective to create a special section on university level, for minority teachers in the Higher Pedagogical Section of the Democritos University of Thrace.

B. Housing

The restrictions which exist for members of the minority to obtain housing must be abolished. To consolidate, as for all Greek citizens, the right to building or repair permits, with measures taken in cases of infringement. To stop the favouritism phenomenon [rusfetolyikó fenómeno] of informal approval by a section of the Ministry of Interior which is asked by members of the minority in order to obtain building permits. To allow members of the minority to buy building plots, housing, or work places, as for all Greek citizens. To have a general or local regulation to legalise the thousands of arbitrary [afthéreta] buildings in the prefectures of Thrace. The permits which were approved to legalise arbitrary buildings which are kept back exclusively for election campaign purposes should be given immediately.

LEGAL TRANSACTION OF REAL ESTATE

The application of the Metaksas law 1366/38 did in practice end up with prohibiting and restricting the acquisition of real estate by members of the minority. This prohibition is essentially infringing on the Greek citizens’ constitutional right of ownership. In addition it paves the way for speculative rackets in purchase and sale. These prohibitions and restrictions should be abolished.

The ownership of minority members which they have by inheritance or with Ottoman title-deeds, or which they bought legally without the possibility to obtain title-deeds should not be doubted. There should be regulations in issues of this kind as is the case for all Greek citizens. The title-deeds which are held back after redistribution of land with anadasmós in the municipalities of the area should be given to the persons entitled to them.

C. Administrative measures

The restrictions on acquiring professional license, license for tractors [ádia kikloforias trakter], agricultural and professional cars should terminate. (I want to believe that something is happening in this sector to the better). These restrictions served exclusively the acquirement of election clients.

The telephone connection should not take place on the base of population composition but equally and corresponding to the needs existing. Particularly for the countryside, for the villages, there must be more sensitivity. It is inadmissible today that there are settlements without telephone.

In re-allotment of land [anadasmós] which takes place, objective criteria should be applied and the members of the minority should not be unfairly dealt with.
Agricultural electricity should be provided equally to everybody entitled and particularly to the members of the minority.

D. Mountain area

There is immediate need for measures to improve the living conditions in the mountain area of the Rodopi and Ksanthi prefecture. To push forward works of communication infrastructure [i.e. transport], electricity and telecommunication. To create health centres and rural clinics. To staff these with doctors and health personnel as well as those which already exist. There should also be created veterinary clinics, post offices and slaughter houses. Measures should be taken to support the husbandry in this region.

The controlled and forbidden zones in the Rodopi and Ksanthi prefectures should be abolished—and not extended—, so that the movement of all Greek citizens is free. An additional reason to abolish these zones is the disappearance of the “danger from north” [i.e. Bulgarian/communist danger].

However all these measures must also include the necessary measures for the normal cohabitation of the whole population in Thrace and for strengthening the cooperation and mutual respect.

Text 6.

Adesmefi 18.07.1990 [original in Greek]. The following piece is taken from a local Greek language newspaper which is very hostile to the minority. The educational level among the members of the worker associations in Germany is not very high and the letter expresses populist views on “necessary measures” against the Muslims and Turkey:

The Union of Thracian Associations’ proposals concerning the informers of Ankara - Take away their Greek citizenship

In a letter to “Adesmefi”, the Union of Thracian Associations in W. Germany and W. Berlin put forward proposals for the minority in Thrace.

These proposals were framed in Hannover 28 May 1990 and mention the following:
1. Concerning the minorities there should always exist and be implemented a UNITED NATIONAL policy, all-party, according to our long term national interests and not with the short term interests of the parties.
2. The Turkish consulate in the town of Komotini should be abolished and closed, as well as the one in Thessaloniki. It is very evident what is their aim and role on issues pertaining to the Muslims.
3. Persons who promote antihellenism in the area should be deprived of their Greek citizenship and expelled from Greece
4. The turcophone mass media should be closed and the Turkish language prohibited.
5. The Greek government should make efforts, so that the minorities at least obtain state consciousness [kratíki sinídisi].
6. In the minority schools the lessons should be taught in Greek, and any other languages should be taught later.
7. The Associations with the name “Turks of W. Thrace”, which are active in W. Germany and co-operate closely with cadres of the Turkish services, should be investigated. Their members should not be allowed to enter Greece and be deprived of their Greek citizenship, because they promote anti-hellenism in Germany. These persons do not have any relationship with Greece and Thrace. They are also assisted by the independent MPs of Thrace.

Text 7.
The following letter to the editor of a major Athenian newspaper stresses the minority members’ rights as Greek citizens and represents one of the not too frequent criticisms against the calls for retaliatory measures against them.
Kathimerini 24.09.1988 “They are Greek citizens” by Aristotelis N. Gavriliadis [original in Greek]:

In the issue of “K” from 16 December 1988 I read a letter by Mr. Ioannis Kitsolambros regarding the application of reciprocity towards Greek Muslim citizens of Western Thrace, as answer to the often unacceptable actions of the Turkish government towards Turkish Christian citizens in Istanbul.

First of all, from a legal point of view the principle of reciprocity, a principle which in my opinion is outdated in regard to the humanitarian character of contemporary International Law, is applied to aliens. However, in the case of the Muslims in Western Thrace, Mr. Kitsolambros seems to forget that it concerns Greek citizens, who fulfil all their obligations towards the fatherland, including military service. Consequently from a purely legal point of view, the application of the principle of reciprocity is inadmissible.

From a moral point of view, the application of the principle of reciprocity is just as inadmissible for the following reasons:

1) The Muslims of W. Thrace have no responsibility for the often inadmissible activities of the Turkish government towards the Christians of Istanbul.

2) The Muslims of W. Thrace are from an ethnological point of view not only of Turkish decent, many of them are Pomaks.

3) Greek civilisation has always been characterised by its tolerance towards every other race, religion etc. Consequently the proposed expulsions and retaliations are completely foreign to its political and cultural tradition.
Text 8.
Scholiastis 85/March 1990, “The rights of the minority”, by A. G. [original in Greek]:

The largest part of the political world, which accepts that there exist limitations on the minority’s rights, ascribes them to the underdevelopment of Thrace as a whole (which however is due to anything else than lack of funds) or to the authoritarianism of the public servants and the bureaucratic procedures of local people of influence in the administration. A relatively methodical classification shows us that there are not only these sources of the evil:

A: ECONOMIC RESTRICTIONS

1) The Law 1366/38 “About prohibition of legal transactions in border areas”. A law from the Metaksas period which had the communists as its original target, is utilised now to obstruct with bureaucratic impediments the acquisitions and investments of the Muslims. This obstruction can only be lifted after legal actions and again not for the whole minority.

2) “Loans for national purpose” which are granted by the Agricultural Bank for “acquisition of Muslim real estate”. These are loans with a three-year period of remission, 20 year repayment and 6% interest! In these cases it is very usual with the trick that a “Christian” agrees with someone from the minority to buy his real estate (worth for example three million) for four million, as long as he will sign papers that he bought it for seven! Thus the “Christian” gets a loan of seven million, of which he has a surplus of three. In this fashion, while there is an influx of capital to Thrace it does not “show”, either because the minority member who is unable to invest the profits of the property sale must transfer it abroad, or because many “Christians” have made these transactions into a lifestyle.

3) Most of the minority fields are hereditary with Ottoman title deeds, so it is usual that the administration regards them as usurped. In addition, the phenomenon of “change of the characterisation of the land” is often observed simultaneously with its sale. The minority member sells a field as agricultural plot to some “Christian”, which becomes mysteriously recognised as building plot immediately after the transaction!

4) Another case of tying up capital are the expropriations which take place often (and naturally in “Muslim” areas). Vast stretches of land are bound with symbolic price and remain unused for decades and more. Maybe the only goal of these expropriations was to take away the fields of the minority and not the “development” works?

B. POLITICAL RESTRICTIONS
1) The very existence of the Office for Cultural Relations, a branch of the Foreign Ministry. A mechanism which handles the fate of the minority in all sectors. It is a case of a supra-centralist service, which controls the minority members’ access to the Public administration and—depending on their “co-operation” allows them or not to enjoy “basic” rights (driving licence, hunting permit or building permit etc.).

2) The Greek authorities have the possibility to deprive “non-ethnic Greeks [alloethnís], who leave the country with the purpose of settling permanently abroad” of the citizenship. Of course the criteria are very flexible and it happens that a simple journey to Turkey costs the loss of Greek citizenship to some “Muslim”. Sometimes it is not even necessary for someone to leave the country to lose his citizenship.

3) In addition (as the rights of the minority are not only threatened by the Greek side) the Turkish customs dispose of a “black list” for minority members who are prohibited to enter Turkey. The majority of these names are those “Muslims” who opposed the foundation and activity of the independent tickets.

C: CULTURAL RESTRICTIONS

1) Teachers: The greatest proportion of the minority teachers who studied in Turkey, on the basis of the reciprocal agreement of the two countries, remain unemployed. The teachers who have graduated from the minority pedagogical academy in Thessaloniki, are regarded as highly insufficient. The educational material, which should be sent by Turkey according to the agreement, is sometimes judged “propagandistic”, sometimes it does not arrive, and sometimes it is in a poor state. Naturally the Greek state, beyond the distribution of photocopies of Turkish readers, does not attempt to print its own Turkish language books “respecting the Lausanne Treaty” in a rather self deluding fashion.

2) Turkish language newspapers and radio stations. The attempts to establish a minority radio station have not been able even to start properly and as for the two-three newspapers of the minority, the Greek services and people of influence [forís] do whatever they can to undermine and isolate them. A characteristic example is the case of “Trakya’nın Sesi”, a two-page weekly newspaper of Ksanthi, where the proprietors of the provincial Press want to expel its owner from their union because it is foreign language and “they cannot control if what is written is according to the principles of their union!”.

Text 9.
The following article was printed in the first issue of the Greek left-wing periodical Se Fondo Kokkino 1/Summer 1988, and reprinted in Trakya’nın Sesi 285/26.05.1988 [original in Greek]:

Greece-Turkey, Acquaintance with the «non-Turks»
The Turks of Western Thrace, or the Muslims, as the official Greek state impose on us to name them, are according to the constitution and the laws equal Greek citizens. They have in addition certain rights concerning religious and educational self-organisation.

Geographical distribution of the minority population. The Muslims live in the three prefectures [nomós] of Thrace, in towns and villages, in the mountain and on the plain, spread all over the area of Thrace, and constitute the main population of the settlements in the Rodopi mountain range. Most of them are found in the prefecture Rodopi, they are somewhat fewer in Ksanthi, while very few remain in Evros.

Population. The Muslim population of Thrace is estimated to number about 120,000. In reality it is much smaller. Because included in this figure are 1) thousands of minority members who have emigrated to Turkey, live and work permanently there, but still keep their Greek citizenship, either because they have something pending in Greece, such as close relatives, a second job, property etc., or because it is no easy matter to obtain Turkish citizenship. These people usually come regularly to Greece, necessarily once every 6 months, as well as when there are elections to vote, out of fear that they might have their Greek citizenship taken away. The minority members in Turkey with no citizenship after being stripped of their Greek citizenship make up some ten thousand. 2) There are also the approximately 15 thousand minority members who have settled in Western European countries, mainly in Western Germany, where none of them have the intention to return to Greece with the measures that are applied against them here. 3) Here we should also mention those who have left Thrace for good to seek a better fortune, and are spread in various larger cities of Greece as workers. A trend that is reinforced by the government in recent years by a particular program that offers incentives, such as finding work, with the only precondition that they are deleted from the municipal rolls in Thrace. 4) A particular category of minority members, reckoned to be about 30%, are those who have bought houses in Turkey and attempt to create all the conditions that will make their settlement there less painful. They plan patiently the future emigration of themselves or their
children. They are ready to go and make up the reservoir of the constant emigration stream.

**Ethnic origin.** The Muslims of Thrace are differentiated into Pomaks, Gypsies and the… rest. The Pomaks who mainly live in the mountain villages make up about 35–40% of the population and speak a Slavic dialect. Most of them also know Turkish well. The youth, however, disclaim the Slavic dialect and thus more and more Pomak children speak only Turkish. The Gypsies make up about 7–8% of the population and are turcophone. The remaining Turkish tribes are also turcophone.

The national consciousness of the minority population is Turkish. The Pomaks describe themselves as Pomak Turks. The Gypsies who are the most oppressed of everybody, will usually also name themselves Gypsy Turks. The homogeneous consciousness of the minority is an indisputable fact and was forged by the uniform policy of discrimination. In Thrace the Muslim religion is identical to Turkish ethnicity.

**Organisation of the minority**

It is difficult for someone to speak about an organised community of Muslims in Thrace. Institutions, foundations, associations, societies, cultural activities, education, everything is in chaotic condition or dissolved.

**Mufti institutions:** There are three, in Komotini, Ksanthi, and the forgotten one in Didimotiho. Each one is headed by a Mufti who corresponds somewhat to a metropolitan bishop with mainly religious responsibilities, but also for civil and inheritance matters. The mufti is appointed by the prefect [nomárhis], in spite of the fact that the relevant law provides for his election. This law has never been applied. Thus the appointment of the new mufti in Komotini has been contested strongly by the Muslims, but the government insists not to apply the law and refuses to proclaim elections.

**Vakıf:** This is the appellation of the various properties, places of worship and schools, that have been donated from time to time by Muslims and function as public welfare institutions. They are managed by administrative committees that are elected. There has, however, been no election since 1967 when the junta dismissed the elected committees and appointed its own. The management of the Muslim vakıfs is the only one of the junta’s appointments which remains without change until today. The various governments refuse to apply the law.

**Associations and societies:** They do not exist any more. There is only an association of «Minority university graduates» which functions. The other three have been dissolved by juridical decision, after appeal by the prefect because of the epithet «Turkish or Turk» which they had in their title. «There are no Turks in Greece.»

**Education:** «The education of the minority is a mechanism set up to produce non-education». 
I think a semi-official admission reflects the situation: «Our greatest mistake in the minority policy was to allow the founding and function of the secondary school Celâl Bayar in Komotini. We awakened the Turkish bastards [turkaládes]. But the mistakes can be corrected… Really, with the various measures which at times are applied against the two minority secondary schools in Komotini and Ksanthi they are on their way to closure. From the 600 and more students each of them had until 4 years ago they now work with only 30–40 students. Next year maybe with none. According to constitutional command [sintagmatikí epitayí] the obligatory schooling is 9 years. But after primary school the minority pupils enter the minority secondary schools only after exams. The figures for those who succeed the entrance exams to the minority schools are 8–12%.

The primary education is offered by the primary minority schools that are regarded as private and the lessons are in Greek and Turkish. The primary education has also taken an analogous downward course.

Formerly the minority went to Turkey only for university education. While now with the prevailing situation in the minority schools, the number of pupils who go to secondary education, but also to primary education in Turkey is steadily increasing. The number of pupils in [Greek] public schools is also increasing.

**Political life:** The Muslims elect 2 to 3 deputies. At the moment there are two, one for N.D. and one for PA.SO.K.. They elect totally about 20 township presidents [kinotárhes] in all of Thrace and many town councillors [dimotikí símvuli].

**Press:** 6 weekly newspapers and 3 monthly periodicals circulate in Turkish. Their circulation is however not regular. Three newspapers are stable. Each of them sells 1,000–2,000 copies.

**Administration of the minority:** It is administered directly by the Greek Foreign Department and through employees of this department who staff the responsible bureaux in the prefecture buildings of the three prefectures of Thrace. The prefects are responsible and do often get into difficult situations. «For a case of tobacco cultivation permission, I asked for audience by the then foreign minister Mr. Bitsios», said a minority deputy. Three years ago when a committee of Muslims went down to Athens to protest about some fines the revenue office [eforía] had imposed on the Muslims tradesmen, they went directly to the vice foreign minister Mr. Kapsis.

**The carefully planned social degradation…**

The minority lives in the most downgraded neighbourhoods and the most downgraded villages. In two neighbouring villages, e.g. one Christian and the other Muslim, for the Christian the road that unites the village with the highway [ethnikí odós] is asphalt, while the adjacent Muslim has a dirt road [homatódromo]. In another mixed Christian-Muslim village the asphalt proceeds to the Christian quarter and
surrounds it and stops precisely at the point where the Muslim quarter starts. The same thing happens with the various public services.

The Muslims are mainly farmers with small holdings or they are landless. For this reason most of them cultivate tobacco and indeed the most difficult variety. It is a necessary adjustment. They are also workers or seasonal workers in Thrace, but also in other areas. The minority as it continually loses the land it cultivated becomes more and more proletarian.

There are some stock raisers, several store owners and tradesmen, several peddlers, no big tradesman, no factory owner, no great landowner, very few craftsmen.

There are several hodjas, but all of them are workers, farmers, store owners, private employees. There is no organised hierarchical clergy.

The teachers must necessarily have also a second more bread-winning job. Except for the 50–60 graduates from the special pedagogical academy for Muslims who have status as public servants.

There are also the university graduates, less than 100, some of them exercise their profession, others do not. 25 of them have been fighting for the last five years to get their diplomas [from Turkey] recognised and to obtain permission to exercise their profession.

All the porters [hamális], most of the petty salesmen [mikropolitís] and those who do various errands are Muslims. Several are waiters, cleaning women, private employees.

The Muslims of Thrace have the smallest per capita income in all of Greece. The fewest cars and professional vehicles. The most horse-carts and bicycles. The fewest telephones and televisions. They consume the least electric power and petroleum.

They surely work more and are the most underpaid workers, complain less, and for that reason they are also preferred by the employers.

They are most often brought to court and pay the most fines in all Greece.

They have the highest rates of tuberculosis and mental illnesses in Greece, and the largest infant mortality.

They have the fewest pupils in secondary education, no students in Greek universities, the fewest college graduates, the fewest graduates from secondary education. And we mean 5, 15, 20 times fewer.

The Muslims have no rural constables [agrofilakas], no public servants in any service, no gendarmes [horofilakas]. They have however a whole lot of informers [hafiés].

Oppression and discrimination...
The problems. «There are many problems, the minority problem however is one».
«The minority problem is a problem of equal civil rights».

The discrimination against the minority includes all the sectors of the economic, social, cultural, political, and religious life. It concerns work, education, freedom, and rights. Naturally it is not a matter of small or large problems, grievances, misunderstandings or mistakes which can occur everywhere, generally about matters where the authorities, within the framework of the rules of the game they have imposed, can articulate some more or less convincing reply to reject some claims. Here we are talking about raw discrimination, vertical and horizontal. And the force is completely naked without wearing even a fig leaf.

Discriminations, usually with some exceptions which are used as a safety valve to control the indignation and to short-circuit the fighting spirit, but also to buy off the conscience of people and cultivate informer mentality [hafiedísmós].

The most undisguised use is the vote-hunting. «Give me ten votes, and I will take care of that you get a tractor driver’s license».

Prohibition against buying real estate: From 1965 the distorted and abusive application of the Metaksas law no. 1366/38 has been put in full use, and it is not allowed for minority members to buy real estate (houses, fields, shops, building plots...).

Loans of «national expediency» to Christians: The minority member can only sell the real estate in his possession. He is reinforced by all means and in every way to do so. Toward this goal, loans of «national expediency» [ēthnikí skopimótita] are supplied to Christians with the only precondition that the real estate they are going to buy belongs to Turks. These loans were first provided during the junta and continue to this day with fluctuations. It will maybe never be known to how many grasping persons [aetoníhides], how many such loans of «national expediency» were given, neither the related scandals, again because of national expediency. The most usual racket with these loans was the following: You agree with a Muslim to buy some property of his, even for 2 million drachmas. You declare that you agreed on 4 which you get loan for, and in this way in addition to the property you obtain you put 2 million in your pocket.

And further measures: Building permits are not issued to Muslims. The same is true for repairs or expansion of buildings. Some of these measures do also touch existent inheritance laws.

For 30 years the towns of Thrace, which formerly had none, have been filled with apartment buildings. Of the thousands of apartments in new apartment buildings not one, not even a tiny little apartment, belongs to a Muslim.

The result of all these measures is that the Muslims ended up with living in the most neglected [ipovathisméná] houses. The people exist, and life continues torturously.
In the meantime, infinite numbers of sales have taken place between minority members. All unofficially, usually with preliminary contracts which have also been abolished during the last years. Numerous shanties have been raised in the towns, and generally everything related to granting some right, and which depends on the approval beforehand by the administration, is prohibited. The measures tense or loosen according with the sadistic disposition of some unknown person or tyrant in charge. Here we can mention the following:

During the junta it was not allowed to buy cars, tractors, professional vehicles etc. Afterwards they started to allow it. They did however not grant driving licences. This measure continues until today. It is very loose for cars, but continue to harass hundreds of farmers who are not able to obtain driving licence for «agricultural tractors». Others are continuously failed at their test, while others are not called to do the test for two or three whole years.

There can be no greater administrative harassment than the one to a Muslim who wants to open some sort of shop.

At one time, hundreds of minority members could not obtain passports. And this during a democratic regime. Afterwards this measure was abolished. Recently they started to issue passports to some minority members that are only valid for one year and for only one journey, instead of the regular passports.

Under these conditions naturally the tax office, the police, informing [hafiedismós], squealing [rufianía] are rampant.

Everyone can use the minority to satisfy whatever perversion they may have.

It is possible to mention a lot. Shortly, in Thrace there are Greeks and Turks in the most obscurantist and racist sense of this division [diahorismós] to the detriment of the Turks.
The proposals of the KKE committee of Eastern Macedonia-Thrace
CONCERNING VARIOUS PROBLEMS OF THE MINORITY.

The KKE committee of Eastern Macedonia-Thrace, as regards the issue of the Muslim minority, takes as its point of departure that the situation which was created by the Lausanne treaty constitutes a reality which must be accepted and respected by everybody.

The spirit of the resolution by the recent Conference of Balkan Countries in Belgrade, was that “the minorities should constitute a bridge for understanding and development of friendship between peoples.”

This spirit can contribute to the consolidation of peace and co-operation in the area. It is necessary that the problems of the minority—i.e. the Greek subjects who are Turks, Gypsies, and Pomaks by descent and of the Muslim faith—are dealt with in such a spirit, within the framework of the treaties concerning the minorities.

In the past decades and particularly the last 20 years, the problems of the Minority became more complicated than ever. Today they embrace all the sectors of economic and social life. Up until today, the governments of both ND and PASOK were and are unable to deal with the problems with their policy.

The aggravation of the problems combined with the action of chauvinist circles created a climate of tension at certain times. This harmed the necessary climate of understanding, co-operation, and mutual tolerance which is necessary for the cohabitation of the population in Thrace.

The KKE committee of Eastern Macedonia-Thrace appeals to the whole population of the area with our party’s proposal for a new kind of development of our country to the benefit of the workers. This is the only positive course open for the country and the people, within a framework of a policy towards the change to socialism. Within the framework of such a development the “particular” problems of the Minority too may find their place and path towards solution.

KKE supports in its entirety a policy of substantial and formal consolidation of the Minority’s rights which will integrate it as equal in the productive and social procedure. A policy which will satisfy its needs for employment, health, housing, education, and culture. A policy which will respect its religious needs, its customs and traditions. Only such a policy can “extinguish” the prejudice, create a barrier against chauvinism, “break” the bonds and influences by circles and centres who hypocritically take and interest in its problems, while they exploit it for other purposes.

Today there is an urgent need to promote solutions to acute problems which concern the minority. In regard to these problems the KKE committee of Eastern
Macedonia-Thrace puts forth its proposals with the belief that only the struggle of the workers, with the support of KKE and the united Left, can obtain solutions which will give relief to this part of the people.

1) KKE supports, within the framework of its proposals for a progressive education reform, the acquisition of equality in education for the children of the Muslim minority. Towards this purpose it is necessary to take measures such as:
   a) To obliterate the illiteracy which plagues the minority. To implement the obligatory education of the pupils in Public primary and secondary schools, which are also undermined by the entrance exams to the secondary schools. These exams must be abolished from the new school year. A particular program against illiteracy should be scheduled and implemented by the committee for adult education, which will also consider the needs and particularities of the people.
   b) To upgrade the level of the lessons and the teachers, to reform the curriculum in all the schools, including those with children from the Minority: Primary, Gymnasium, Lycée. The necessary changes must secure:
      - In the Primary school and Gymnasium the teaching of the mother tongue, but simultaneously the teaching of Greek which is needed so that the pupils can continue with higher education.
      - All the Lycées, also those of the Minority, must provide general education, professional specialisation, and the possibility of continuing with higher education which today in reality does not exist for the children of the Minority.

Within this framework it is necessary to take care of:
- The books, particularly those in Turkish, should be modernised and given in the beginning of the [school] year.
- To reconsider which language is used for teaching certain main subjects with the criterion of making it easier for the pupils to continue their studies in the higher levels of the education system.
- Until this happens the law 640/6-3-84 should be withdrawn, which imposes that in entrance exam for Lycée and higher education, the pupils are examined in Greek in lessons which have been taught in Turkish.
- The attendance of Minority pupils in public Gymnasiums and Lycées will make it necessary to introduce special lessons in Turkish (i.e. Turkish language, religion) for these pupils.
- To cover the need of education personnel. To provide measures for further training of the teachers who are not graduates of Teachers Academies or institutions of higher education.

2) The peculiar institutional framework of the Minority schools do not exempt the state from the obligation to grant generous economic support to them. With different administration of the vakif funds, it would be possible to secure a substantial funding
of the schools. This would make it possible, as it should, to put an end to charging the parents.

d) It is necessary that the medreses in Komotini and Ksanthi change their function. That they build on the 9-year obligatory education and educate only the religious personnel of the Minority.

- The Special Pedagogical Academy in Thessaloniki should function temporarily to cover the necessities of the schools, with upgrading of its level by accepting Lycée graduates. In a longer perspective there should be created a special department on university level for Minority teachers in the Highest Pedagogic Department in the Democritos University of Thrace.

- Further delays of the recognition of the diplomas by DIKATSA [recognition of foreign degrees] of the minority degrees are unacceptable. It is a problem which today is ripe for solution by the state.

2) Concerning the right to secure a dwelling:

   KKE proposes a housing policy (sufficient interest-free loans, construction of modern dwellings etc.) which would make it possible for the workers to obtain comfortable and cheap housing. Within the framework of this policy, the KKE committee of Eastern Macedonia-Thrace supports the need to abolish the restrictions which exist for obtaining housing pertaining to the Muslims.

- To safeguard, just as for other Greek citizens, the right to obtain permits for building or repairing houses and take measures against the cases where this right is violated.

- To put an end to the informal [άτιπος] approval by an office under the Ministry of Interior, which is demanded from the Muslims so that they can obtain a building permit. A measure which in practice also lead to cases of favouritism [ρυσφετολογία].

- To allow the Muslims to buy real estate like all Greek citizens on the basis of the proposal for legal transactions which we mention in the following.

- That there is general or local regulation of the thousands of unauthorised buildings in Rodopi and Ksanthi.

- To issue immediately the permits which legalised unauthorised buildings and which are kept in abeyance only for expediency in connection with elections.

3) The population’s need of housing, of land acquisition for the thousands of Muslim smallholders, stumbles at the obstacles which are connected to the execution of legal transactions.

- The implementation of the Metaksas law 1366/38 did in practice result in the prohibition of buying real estate by the Muslims. In essence it runs counter to the Greek citizens right of ownership. It opens the road for the operation of profiteering networks in [real estate] transactions.

- KKE claims, within the framework of its proposal for modifying the law 1366/38 which will be discussed in parliament, that:
There can be no prohibition against any kind of legal transaction by Greek citizens. The state’s authority to control cannot lead to the abuse of this right.

- KKE supports a policy which respects the validity of the old Ottoman title-deeds.
- KKE will be against concrete attempts to contest the possession of property by Muslims who have inherited it with Ottoman title-deeds or who have acquired it legally without having the possibility to obtain title-deeds. It supports the need for regulating these questions in the same way it is done for all Greek citizens.
- To issue to those entitled to it, the title-deeds which are held back after redistribution of land [αναδασμός] in the communities of the area.
- To stop the practice of granting the infamous loans of [national] expediency by the Greek Agricultural Bank for the acquisition of Muslim real estate.

4) KKE believes that a series of unjust restrictions concerning the acquisition of licences for performing a profession, licences for tractor, professional vehicles etc. must stop. The fact that until now the governments confronted and confront such problems as a way to obtain an election clientele, displays on the other side that there are no reasons for retaining such kind of discrimination against Greek citizens.

5) KKE supports the need to take immediate measures for improving the life conditions in the mountain zone of the Rodopi and Ksanthi prefectures. With more intensive promotion of works to improve transportation and telecommunication. With staffing of health centres and the installation of doctors in the villages.

The KKE committee of Eastern Macedonia-Thrace addresses itself to all the workers, to all the progressive persons and personalities of the area. To all those who see that the development of the area presupposes also the confrontation of the overdue problems of the Minority.

It invites them to a constructive dialogue about the proposals it puts forth. To a common action within the people’s mass organisations.

The strengthening of KKE, the promotion of the Left coalition, is the only solution to improve the lot of the workers. To open the road to change and socialism.

December 1988

The KKE committee of
Eastern Macedonia-Thrace
Orhan Hacıibram:

Mister President, since my colleagues who spoke before me have covered me to a large degree, I would like to point out certain practical points in the forest policy which has been exercised until now and continues to be exercised by the government.

First of all we would like to declare that we are not opposed to having forests. On the contrary we are in favour of the protection of every forest area, but the forest area must be protected correctly and not in such a fashion that the inhabitants, particularly in the mountain areas, get in a difficult position and confront the danger of losing their fields passed down to them through their ancestors. Because indeed, in the mountain areas the protocols of administrative expulsion, and legal charges in continuation of this, is a common phenomenon in the courts and it takes place in such a way that while the Law permits the execution of caveat against the protocols of administrative expulsion, the Penal Courts judge the cases even before the decisions of the caveat are issued, and so the farmer who started to cultivate his field again after years of leaving it fallow, is in need of declaring before the courts that he resigns from every possession [nomí ke katohí] of his field, and recognises the ownership of the Public. Because in the opposite case there is the danger that he is punished with a not negligible punishment of 6 months and more.

We think that there should be a land-planning study, particularly for the mountain areas. That they determine precisely what is forest, what is animal husbandry, and what is agricultural area. Because today we have neither forest, nor animal husbandry, nor purely agricultural areas.

And we see all these kinds of areas go over into each other, influence and extinguish each other.

We think that the fundamental problem lies in the constitution of a correct land registry. Because neither a correct forest policy is exercised, when it proves detrimental to the agricultural policy, nor if this forest policy is exercised to the detriment of the animal husbandry production can we speak about a forest policy. Because unfortunately in our country there is no forest where it ought to be, because people destroy it, and where there should be people there are not because the forests force them out. We cannot exercise a forest policy which ends up with forcing out the farmers or the inhabitants of the mountain areas. Whatever assistance we may give to these people, the effort will be in vain because we will have forced them out, and
indeed not to conserve the forest but to conserve a few green areas which are insignificant.

We think that they should take drastic measures, so that the protection of the forest does not take place through the destruction of the people occupied with agriculture or animal husbandry. Some time the correct measures should be taken, so that the forest can coexist with people and people can coexist with the forest.

Mr. President, I would like to stress that in this question there is a popular meeting in Litohoro on Thursday because a large part of the agricultural land has been characterised as communal forest area—and this does not only happen in Litohoro but also in other areas of Greece, and for this reason we must very soon take the necessary measures. (Applause).

Text 12.

To Vima 03.09.1989/Ikonomikos Tahidromos 23. 11.1989 [original in Greek]:

The Turkish game in Thrace to the detriment of Greece, by Yiannis Kapsis.

We do not know how much attention the article of the deputy foreign minister Mr. Yiannis Kapsis in “To Vima” 3 September attracted, and to which degree it was utilised correctly. And only the extraordinary clipping he inserts from the Turkish newspaper “Tercüman” ought to provoke shudders and concerns all over Greece, if our national reflexes work even rudimentarily. We regard the content of this article as particularly important and we republish it in full, advising all our readers to pay particular attention to it:

“The infidel’s obstinacy sustains for three days….” This Turkish popular saying constitutes dogma in the policy of Ankara, at least as regards the “minority issue”. And when I heard a couple of days ago the chairman of ND Mr. Mitsotakis refer to the “minority issue” I could not avoid a thought which they surely had on the other side of the Aegean as well: This infidel is obstinate today… but how long will it last?

The following lines do not constitute a significant critique or defence of one policy against the other, and even less do they intend to spark recriminations around this important issue. Because if there is a demand for a “minimum” of consent between the political parties in national issues—even a limited foundation for common [diakommatikó] policy—, as regards the ”minority issue” the word minimum has no place. We must replace it with “necessary”. It is an indispensable condition for the protection of our territorial integrity in Thrace. Because that is the crux of the so-called “minority issue”.

There is an even greater need for the comprehension of the problem to its last detail. Because if there exists—and to the degree there exists—a minority issue, that is due to
a series of mistakes by the Greek administration—mistakes which hail back to the 30s. And to avoid even the least misunderstanding: with the term “mistakes” I mean unjustifiable, unacceptable, occasionally disastrous, concessions during periods of détente, and because of the détente, in Greek-Turkish relations. In other words, during periods when the “obstinacy” of the “infidel” retreats.

The tactics of Ankara present a suppleness and flexibility, an ability to adjust which is worth envying. It rushes to exploit the smallest concession and retreats when any strong resistance is declared. But it does not forget its purpose. And it waits for the “obstinacy of the infidel” to pass.

About 25 years ago—in 1965 [sic, actually it was in 1959]—when I wrote, as the result of a close investigation on the spot, a series of articles with the general title “Thrace is under threat”, the most serious reactions which I confronted were… ironic smiles. It was the same reaction I had met 10 years earlier when I had dared to warn the political leadership of the Foreign Ministry at the time about the events which were planned in Istanbul. “For heavens sake—they had told me. Do not write anything… Menderes must be elected.”

And however… the tumults in Istanbul broke out. The Greek colony and the minority was exterminated. And today the instigators of the “minority issue” do not speak about “Muslim” or even “Turkish minority”, but about “Turkish community”. They do not speak about minority rights but “self-government [aftodiíkisi]”. It was with exactly those two critical terms Denktaş started his campaign in the 60s to create today’s pseudo-state.

A parenthesis: Do not let the other side claim that it is the case of persons and associations which are not under control of the State. Because even during the toughest period of the military regime, when even the last line published had to have the stamp of the military censorship, the association “YENI BATI TRAKYA” did just so, sending thousands of copies of the periodical with the same name—which had the stamp, i.e. the approval of the censorship—to the inhabitants of W. Thrace.

(There is of course the declaration by Özal, who in reference to the Greeks of Istanbul said: “And why do they not return…” It is the case of a serious argument—as serious as the saying by… Karagöz, who when they asked him how the herring can be green, answered: “So why don’t you paint it…”).

There is the dominating view—mistakenly—that Turkey has the right to show interest—and correspondingly Greece has obligations—which derive from the Lausanne Treaty. And it is true that this Treaty, under the title “protection of minorities” dedicates 9 articles to the protection of the corresponding minorities—i.e. the Muslim” and the “Greek” of the two countries. There is however an interesting “detail”: The articles 37–44 describe the obligations of Turkey towards the Greek Minorities (of Istanbul, Gökçeada, and Bozcaada). And only article 45—the briefest
The article of the Treaty—refers to Greece as follows: “The rights conferred by the provisions of the present Section to the non-Moslem minorities of Turkey will similarly be conferred by Greece to the Moslem minority in her territory.”

The international treaties are applied and interpreted—on the basis of the Law of Treaties—with the term reciprocity. In the Lausanne Treaty the reciprocity appears in its strongest form—under the form of condition. Under the condition that Turkey will fulfil the obligations, then—and only then—Greece too will act accordingly. And Turkey has breached this condition in the most provocative and crude fashion—she has destroyed politically, economically but also even physically the Greek minorities in Istanbul, Gökçeada, and Bozcaada.

That does not mean that Turkey has no right to show interest for the Muslims of Western Thrace. She has—but not on the basis of Lausanne. She has the right on the basis of the international agreements on human rights. Just in the same way as Greece has the right to take an interest in the Kurds, the Armenians and much more the Cypriots of the occupied areas. In one way the reciprocity in International Law corresponds to the Christian “let the blameless throw the first stone.” And to ascertain the… “blameless” a comparison of the two minorities should suffice: The Greek minority after the exchange amounted to 250,000 Greeks with particular economic vigour. Today it barely reaches 4,000—or it is mainly very old people who insist on dying in the place they were born. The Muslim minority consisted of 86,000 wretched farmers. Today they reach 120,000 and their economic strength is at least equal with that of the Christians. It is an unanswerable argument, which nevertheless gives a very pale and faded picture of a systematic and uninterrupted persecution which continues even up to today (see chart).

At the same time the attempt of Turkification of the Muslim character [of the minority], mainly the attempt by Ankara to direct it, is very old. It starts a few years after the population transfer with subsequent fluctuations. The intensification of this attempt corresponds always, with mathematical accuracy, with the periods of détente in the relations between the two countries—it is the “ticket” which they must pay so we can come to the negotiation table.

A characteristic—not exhaustive—enumeration: In 1930 with the interference of Ankara the Greek government expels all—everybody—of the old Turkish leadership, religious and political, leaving the ground open for the Kemalists of Ankara. The minority split up immediately in “old-Turks” and “new-Turks”. The last ones were a small minority which survived only because of the material and political support of the consulate. The great mass of the minority sees the Kemalists as traitors of Islam. The Muslims of Thrace insist stubbornly, in spite of the pressures by the consulate, to wear turbans [ṣarīkī] and the women ferace, to have polygamy and use the Arabic script (note: in Vuliagmeni Mr. Yılmaz made austere remarks to the son of the Mufti of
Ksanthi, the infamous Aga, because he presented himself before him in turban. And in
spite of the fact that he was the docile organ of the line of the Turkish consulate, he
had no following during the last elections).

In 1952 there is a new period of détente in the relationship between the two
countries, and because of the détente the known agreement between Papagos-Celâl
Bayar is signed, by which the secondary school with the same name is founded in
Komotini which was to constitute a hotbed of anti-hellenism. The children of the
minority are taught only Turkish and are soaked in the conviction that
they are Turks who live, only temporarily, under Greek administration.

But this time the obstinacy has vanished completely. The Field Marshall [Papagos]
gives orders that all the titles, all the signs, all the epigraphs which refer to “Muslim
community”, “Muslim association” etc. should immediately be changed. The terms
“Muslim” and “Islamic” become “Turk” and “Turkish”. There is indeed an instruction
by the general governor of Thrace at the time, Fessopulos, which imposes sanctions
against a township president \[kinotárhis\] who had refused to change the sign on the
township store. If there are occasions of oppression against the minority this is the
most blatant: We have a forced Turkification of the minority by the Greek
government. The events of ’55 shocked the Public Opinion. Our reaction—in its
totality—provokes shame even today. And then we lost even one more opportunity: Of
course not to expel, by force, the minority—for which there were many suggestions
and even plans—but to announce the chapter on “Protection of Minorities” in the
Lausanne Treaty to be in abeyance, to cut the umbilical cord between Ankara and the
minority.

The Greek-Turkish dialogue, on the level of general secretaries of the two Foreign
Departments broke off in 1981. It is disputed who is responsible for the break, and if
it ought to be broken. But only the issue which the two general secretaries discussed
during their last meeting would justify the break. Their subjects were the vakıfs and
the regime for land ownership \[idioktisiakó kathestós\] in Thrace. It was a factual
recognition of a right which does not belong to Ankara. And here we have another
fallacy: We do not discuss the minority issue—is claimed repeatedly by many sides—
but certain aspects which derive from the Lausanne Treaty. But if these “aspects” do
not constitute the minority issue, then… what is the minority issue?

The episodes in Evlalo of Ksanthi in 1982 (when Muslims instigated by the
consulate revolted against the expropriation of land which was provably encroached
upon) was among other things also a sounding. Had the “obstinacy of the infidel”
flared up again”? A few months later, the then Turkish ambassador Mr. Alaçam
attempted one more such sounding: He attempted to put “certain minority issues”
before this writer. The reaction was immediate, absolute, categorical—“perpendicular”
according to… the modern progressive terminology: I rose up from my seat, telling
that our conversation had ended. **And I informed him about that, if he attempted to bring up the minority issue in the future, I would… be a speaker in a Kurdish meeting in the Constitution Square.**

A few days later Mr. Alaçam came back: this time to—“after instructions from his government”—excuse himself, and to invite me for a reconciliatory meal. Ankara always knew—and knows—how to adjust to the varying conditions.

The meal never took place, because in the meantime Mr. Alaçam gave place to Nasmi Akiman. The latter avoided studiously to press, even indirectly, in all the meetings we had, the minority issue. (Now… there was obstinacy again). Only once, he asked for the permission of 4 theologians, public servants of the Ministry of Vakıfs (corresponding to the ministry of Religion) to visit Thrace, during the period of Ramadan, for the religious needs of the minority. The permission was granted (mea culpa) under these conditions: The 4 theologians should not interfere in the local problems, and particularly not show preference for one or the other party—those who were friendly or not friendly towards the consulate. These conditions were violated provocatively: The 4 theologians preached, sometimes, also from the Koran. However, mainly they involved themselves in political activity.

This violation of the agreement gave this writer the right and the cause to object officially, through the ambassador in Ankara that during this year’s Ramadan we would not want them to send 4 theologians because of… their former provocative behaviour. But Ankara knew—and had concrete evidence—that for one more time our “obstinacy” had dissolved. She sent the 4 theologians, violating indeed a sovereign right of Greece: that we may not allow the entrance to our country of anybody we consider undesired. She sent them, and we did not stop them at the border because of—once more—the détente. Thus the Ramadan gave the opportunity for a broad election campaign of the “4” (note: a more suiting description… is the view of Th. Pangalos about the “gang of 4”) in favour of Sadık, today MP of the minority. It was a fact which was also admitted, indirectly, by Mr. Yılmaz who justified himself by saying that the 4 theologians did not support Sadık but Sadık exploited them in the election campaign; travelling constantly together with them to the minority villages.

It should be noted that the request for sending the theologians was only dared in ’88—that is when a new period of détente prevails within the framework of the “Davos spirit”. Ankara, knowing that our reactions will be restrained, launches simultaneously a great international publicity campaign for the minorities. The Turkish consulates, in the areas where there are Kurdish immigrants, establish “bogus-associations” for Western-Thrace, MPs, Euro-MPs, professors and even students are instigated (and the Turks know well how to… instigate) to show interest for and study the “minority issue”†. And even Sadık secured the support of the consulate only when he, by forging and usurping signatures of his co-religionists, submits an appeal to the
Council of Europe “about the oppression of the Turks of Thrace”. Then and only then, it was decided to send the 4 theologians to support him.

However, maybe the role of the “4” has been overemphasised. A much greater—and more effective—activity was carried out by the Turkish consul of Komotini. He was literally rampant—spending enormous sums of money, exerting unbearable pressure, prohibiting the entrance to Turkey of many minority members (who have interests and relatives there) because they did not succumb to his desires. A detailed report is not possible without revealing the sources. We protested intensely. But Ankara evidently anticipating the election result, ignored us. It was followed by the three-day—the last three days before the elections—provocative interference of Turkish TV in the Greek election campaign, and the not at all mild decline of our protests by Mr. Özal.

The last events are—more or less—known. What remains unknown is a characteristic detail. A distinguished internationally known Turkish journalist—who exactly because of his international projection retains a considerable degree of independence—took part, before the elections, in a meeting in the consulate in Komotini. And as soon as the information was over, he answered to the great surprise of everybody: “What is this?… I refuse to write it… if the Greeks of Istanbul had demanded only 1/10 of what you are saying, they would have thrown them in the ocean”.

In the former Greek Parliament there were two minority MPs. In today’s there is one: Sadık who is supported by the consulate. It is a phenomenon which should trouble us—a development no one can evaluate with certainty if—and to what extent—it is due to; the tolerance of the activities of the consulate, to the trip of the theologians or to… the violent Turkification of the minority, the recognition of Turkey’s right to “supervision” based on the Lausanne Treaty, the discussions by the general secretaries about the Vakıfs. In the minority issue, nobody is justified as prosecutor. We all risk to be defendants with the conscience of our People as prosecutors.

The election of Sadık may however have beneficial results. To help towards the understanding of the problem and to the mapping out of a common long term policy which will allow the minority to get rid of the exploitation by the “super-nationalists”. However, mainly to the understanding of the minority issue: I would not like the successor of Mr. G. Papulias, to taste the surprise—and the indignation—which I tasted when I received the… recommendations of a wildly politicised [politikologúsis], highbrow [kulturiáras] progressive woman public servant, the time when she gave me the… solution of the minority issue: “It will be solved—she said very seriously—only with intense cultural interference… We must pass the message of Brecht and all the progressive intelligentsia to the Muslims”. Poor Brecht…
There will maybe be many who disagree with the concerns these lines express. Before, however, they express their disagreement, they should read “Tercüman” which wrote: “If the Greeks are not careful… there will in the future exist neither South Cyprus… nor Western Thrace… nor Aegean… nor continental shelf…”.

Notes:
†. The “interest” of foreigners—and in particular officials—with the minority issue is not something new. At least two consulates in Thessaloniki maintain contact with the anti–Greek group of the minority. And in the known report of the president of the USA “on the situation of minorities” there has been, in the past, many unpleasant hints. The situation improved when I protested to Sterns and warned him that—if these improprieties were repeated—I would submit a report in Parliament… on the situation of the Puertoricaens, Mexicans and Indians of the USA.

[Two inserts]:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The persecutions of the Greeks</th>
<th>The ethnic constitution of the minority</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The persecutions of the Greek minorities of Turkey were systematic, persistent, and unfortunately effective. The main methods: 1. Abolishment of the special regime for Gökçeada and Bozcaada. The Greek inhabitants were summoned to “sell” for 2 drachmas a stremma [1000m²] their fields for the creation of agricultural prisons. Ali Birand writes that “we transformed Gökçeada and Bozcaada into an open prison”. The Greek inhabitants of the two islands started to trickle into Greece. 2. In 1941, when Greece was still fighting against the Nazi invasion, the work battalions are set up, where Greeks from the age 18 to 45 are summoned to enlist. The work and living conditions are inhuman and succeed in the annihilation of thousands of Greeks. 3. 1942: Greece is under Nazi occupation, Ankara is flirting with Berlin. The infamous “Varlık” tax is imposed, which has as basic result the sequestration of Greek property. 4. The shocking events of 1955 follow and the riots, vandalism, and expulsions organised by the Turkish administration. 5. The secret decision of 1964 is put in force, which deprived the Greeks of Istanbul of their actual rights on property. The secret command was finally repealed in '88, but the results remain. 6. Kurds, informers-criminals, which are persecuted by their neighbours, have been moved to Gökçeada and Bozcaada. They terrorise the few remaining Greeks, seizing their houses and damaging the graveyards.</td>
<td>The Muslims of Thrace are distinguished according to their descent in three categories: 1. Turkish origin: 51,917 or 49% of the total of the minority. They live mainly in the prefecture of Rodopi.</td>
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Text 13.

To Vima 07.02.1993, “Who are oppressing whom in Thrace?”, by Yiannis Kapsis [original in Greek]:

And however it is oppressed. Both Thrace and the Muslim minority are oppressed. Mainly however—as paradoxical as this may seem—the Christian majority of Thrace is oppressed, whose eventual—very probable—reactions should not be underestimated.

The moment when the national attention is directed toward the threat from Skopje, a contemporary nightmare attempts to stab the country and the people it fostered in the back. But Sadık’s provocation is so exasperating that there would be no need of any serious comments if the Turkish propaganda—confirming the dogma of Goebbels “to slander… to slander… something always remains”—did not spread the seed of doubt even among well-disposed commentators who involuntarily become assistants of it [i.e. the Turkish propaganda]. A doubt that even reached the point of being expressed during a television discussion. Consequently, this makes necessary a synoptic, comparative enumeration of the “oppression”.

1. Pomaks: Much is said, mingled with hazy ideological-theoretical progressive doctrine, about “mistakes” that threw the non-Turkish Pomaks into the arms of Ankara. And if we are speaking of the “mistakes” of the junta, they are not the only ones. There exist even worse, as those that gave 38% of Cyprus to the Turkish occupation. But the junta as a part of international fascism cannot—and particularly the junta of Papadopulos-Ioannidis and CIA—be accounted for by the Greek administration.

On the contrary, after the re-establishment of democracy and especially after 1982, the racial and cultural particularities of the Pomaks were recognised and thanks to a broad and flexible multi-level program the development of their language and cultural traditions was reinforced. And it is not a coincidence that today, in many Pomak villages, Mr. Sadik does not dare pay even a simple visit.

2. Education: Only during the school year 1983–1984—in addition to the general expenditures for education—the sum of 500 million drachmas was allotted for special needs of the minority schools. All the schools have Muslim directors and teachers, without any lack of personal or any irregularity. And in the following years the building of 6 secondary schools [yimnásia] and 2 dormitories were completed, while the teaching is mainly in Turkish.

It is no coincidence that the infamous secondary school Celâl Bayar remained (at least in 1988) almost without pupils. The Muslims preferred the minority schools. In the same period:
There was not even a million allotted to the Christian majority of 67% nor were any new schools built. And the lack of educational administrative personnel was enormous.

**In the same period:**

The Turkish authorities, invoking a law from 1967 which imposes Turkish assisting directors on the Greek schools, refused to renew the appointments, with the result that the Greek schools closed one after another, with blatant—and foremost—example the School of Heybeliada [Hálki].

**Today** nearly 300 minority schools function in Thrace with Muslim teachers and free books, while in Istanbul 6–8 schools are malfunctioning, with very few teachers who are forbidden to teach Greek. And the “secret school” is revived.

3. **Administrative measures:** The Sadiks of the time were screaming, protesting and propagandising about “oppression” because the Muslims had, relatively, few tractors, cars etc. And they were forced to buy them in the name of Christian fellow citizens. This was a de facto “discrimination” based on the fact that the Muslims, not knowing Greek well, did not pass the exams for obtaining driver’s license.

   In the second quarter of 1984, special groups with special orders—with responsibility and… expenses covered by the Foreign Department—**gave** irregularly—licence to **everybody** without exception. The result: 36% of the Muslims have today—according to estimations—at least 1,500–2,000 more tractors and other farming machines than the 65% large Christian population.

4. **Other measures:** One of the “points” in Sadik’s propaganda was the lack of telephones and licences for hunting weapons. What is happening today:

   After 1985 there is not a single minority village without a telephone centre. And all the licences for hunting and possession of hunting weapons were approved collectively, even without the preconditions that the law anticipates. And not a single Muslim was ever punished for the possession of weapon without licence, with the result that they do not bother to obtain it.

5. **Taxation:** Under the “terror” of protests about… “oppression” the Muslims stopped paying taxes too! An investigation by the Ministry of Finance in 1986 discovered **many hundred** tax evaders. But again possible measures were put on ice.

   During this period, thousands of Christians were dragged to court as tax evaders.

   It is no coincidence that after 1982 the infamous reports of the State Department did not dare mention discrimination. And, however, mistakes have occurred and occur.

And the restricted space makes it necessary for us to come back to this.
You put your finger on one of the social wounds that has befall a minority which is exposed to ethnic discrimination. This is a wide topic. The relationship between the minority and the authorities. What is the structure of this relation? Why has the minority lost its confidence in the authorities? What kinds of side effects have been created by this lack of confidence? What are the prejudices which make it difficult to approach each other? Do the authorities really want to create an atmosphere of confidence? …Certainly I am not able to analyse and comment on all this here. One aphorism or prejudice is valid for the relationship between the minority and the authorities. We say that: This thing would not have happened if the Greek authorities did not profit from it. In that case what was the compensation for your conscience? Or more bluntly how much did you sell it for? What kinds of the minority adversaries’ desires did you give in to? And some with a paranoid disposition who are in a state of panic and without self confidence take recourse to the epithets: Pro-infidel! [Gâvurcu], Agent! Spy!

The suspicious state of the minority can to some degree be explained and justified by their experiences. But what I would like to point out here is that a prejudice, “bad faith”, suspicion that transcends the normal, and sometimes becomes pathological, blocks the minority psychologically. It has put a hobble on their feet. The authorities are everywhere, they can confront everybody everywhere, and you can be the target of accusations anytime. If you wanted to take an initiative, if you had completed a work or had some success, if you had obtained something that was rightfully yours, woe on you brother! Sometimes this has not even a direct relationship to the authorities. But afterwards they can suddenly slander you, and that is what you fear. Do you know what became of him? Sold out! Friend of infidels! …Our life is really difficult. Sometimes we make it more tiresome and suffocating ourselves.

We make easily accusations. Justly or unjustly. Necessarily or unnecessarily. Without thinking. “He complied with the authorities.” Some people have made this aphorism their possession. Such that it is our principal social and ethnic trauma. We are poisoning our own life.

The extreme suspicion in the relationship with the authorities is reflected in the relationship with the majority Christians. In fact there are few friendships among the two elements, everything is getting lost. The circles among the Christians that are promoting hostility and suspicion toward the minority see how easy their work has become.
I remember Mehmet Bağdatlı. When he worked in Kavala he said: “When I cross over to this side of the Nestos river I get immediately depressed.” A kinsman [soydaş] friend of mine who works in Germany said the following after the vacation was over and he was leaving his native Komotini: “I was suffocated by the atmosphere within the minority. Everybody is accusing each other of being traitors. Next year I will not come to Thrace.” I remember Şükrü Tufan among the former consuls. He tried to sort out the mud slinging and traitor accusations between minority members. Finally he was also infected with paranoia or found it profitable to adopt the informer [hafiyeliğ] theories.

As you know the Yaka³ protests started on the villagers’ own initiative. Some of us supported it, while the Minority mafia sabotaged it. The sabotage was successful because they resorted to these same accusations. “The prefect is organising the protest meetings in the Thamna [Eşekçili] village.” The mafia spread these rumours among the Yaka villagers. At this time a group of ministers was visiting Komotini. We asked for an appointment with them through Muncura Ahmet [Ahmet Mehmet] who was deputy. In the capacity of Yaka committee we complained again to the ministers about the expropriation for the university campus. We requested the expropriation to decrease from 3,000 to 500 dönüm, which should be sufficient for the actual needs and explained the economic questions, unemployment etc. which would result from it. People from the Yaka, the township president Mehmet Nuri, Müftüoğlu, and I were in the committee. Yennimatas was heading the ministers. Kapsis was also there. The ministers listened carefully to us while we explained. At one point the Minister of Interior Yennimatas turned toward the head of village Mehmet and made the following proposal. “- You said that the expropriation would create unemployment in the villages of the area. I will immediately give an order to the employment office here. Make a list of the unemployed villagers as fast as possible and bring it. Let them be on priority for work.” Our township president became confused. He could not answer. The minister repeated his offer. Neither yes nor no. The minister insists, Mehmet is silent. It was a difficult moment. At last Yennimatas’ offer remained in the air. I know very well why Mehmet could not say “all right”. The first thing he would hear when he went out the door would be an accusation: You have something cooking with the authorities. You sold the Yaka. Traitor! In fact if it is absolutely necessary to show someone who sold out, let’s abandon that expression, if we were seeking someone responsible, the responsible is the Minority mafia that sabotaged and was finally able to stop the meetings that started up in the Thamna mosque. They used every trick in the book and were able to stop the Yaka protest. Maybe we also gave up too easily? But whom can you take recourse to? Much later I learnt some details about the sabotage against the

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³ Villages on the end of the plain where the mountains start to rise.
Yaka protest. What informing, what reports, what dirty tricks, what treachery [hafiyelikler, raporculuklar, dizenbaşıklar, ihanet]. No, my friend, this job is no joke. The first thing that is necessary in order to straighten out the minority matters is to dissolve the mafia. I remember Şükrü Tufan again. When the former consul touched these matters he said that “with the minority I have graduated from a faculty that cannot be found in any university.” So he said, but finally he was ploughed in the exam. Why? To rule is to control. The easiest way to gain control is through the use of reporting. Reporting is a method of control that no government has relinquished. And when it comes to a government that is not democratic it is one of its pillars it cannot do without. Did you notice, the democracy question popped up again before us. In every case such a question awaits an answer: well, how can you control the reports? I have a report in my possession that was prepared by the Minority mafia about Refika Nazım and submitted to Şükrü Tufan. Until today I have always resisted the temptation to reveal this report. Stalin’s KGB is nothing compared to it.

Text 15.
İleri 728/17.09.1993 [original in Turkish]:

“OUR İMAM IS THE POLICE STATION’S INFORMER”

They lean their back against the Club wall as they explain:

–I think it was Sadık who first applied the pro-infidel [gâvurculuk] label in his newspaper, on Fevzi Tanpnar who published the photography of Mitsotakis to benefit ND, wasn’t it? Look it must have been that issue, from 24.8.1993. In that issue the famous chief writer [Mustafa Hafız Mustafa], there is none more famous in the Minority, wrote an article named “RESEMBLANCE…” This famous chief writer also wrote in his article that: The local and Greek Press in general attack, hurl upon Sadık. Eh, just like Fevzi Tanpnar did…

–Is this not one dirty trick [puştça] resembling another?

-This most famous of famous chief writers did he not work for a while next to our master and brilliant patron Hasan Hatipoğlu? Was he not also chief writer and chief manager of AKIN? He has snatched this tactic from Him… That is where he has learned it…

- Haaa… now it is clear!

-However the style smells a bit of Selahaddin Galip!

-That is possible. What is it Fevzi Tanpnar is saying in this very special issue of his? In the article he wrote, or had written for him, under the heading the “SADIK AHMET FIASCO?”: He says “LIKE THE GREEK PRESS…” In short, as soon as I came to Western Thrace the local and Greek Press in general… started to attack me.
Was I not from Cyprus; Did I not carry English passport… and so on… Sadık also said such things about me… It happens in the same fashion.

- In short he too is a pro-infidel [gâvurcu].
- That is the easiest type of accusation!
- That is the fate of being a minority!

- I do not know why people become like that? He slanders immediately a person in this way when he gets angry with him for some reason. Do you remember ten years ago we had the YAKA FIELDS QUESTION. Some meetings also took place in our village. As imam I was in front of the neighbours heading the community. Was it now that we as imam started to head the community? All right! The security police [emniyet] started to put the shop under surveillance. The police [karakol] sergeant started to come to the shop now and then… He always had a glance and left. One day, a Tuesday he came again to my shop. Inside were some people from our village… We were speaking once more about the expropriation issue. Because that was what bothered us. The sergeant also came, he put on an appearance again and left…

- Mind you? [sakin]

- A few years later, I came into conflict with one of those who were present in the shop that day. Because of a personal question. He spread the words among the neighbours in the village: “Our imam is the police’s informer [karakolun hafiyesi]! If that sergeant didn’t get something from Him, he wouldn’t go to his shop!”

- That is right… Once we had also written something similar in the newspaper. He who wrote it was probably once more that famous writer: Mr. Pavlidis, never leaves the offices of the Gang! One time about the office of AKIN, another time about the office of GERÇEK! How does this happen?

- Just at their Achilles’ heel [Nasılrılarna basılmış]!

- But does Hatipoğlu loose his wits? As soon as this was attached to him he came with the answer in next week’s issue: “That’s right: but Soltaridis comes to your office!”

- What an irrelevant comparison [Nerde Halep, nerde Şam]? But how can people know?

- Like small children, that’s how it is… Say something, a mistake, and immediately they talk about it; no, they don’t talk they stick the slander to you: “What have you been doing [Ama sen de derede Yangöz’lerin Eşref’le şöyle yapıyordun]!”

- This is politics: Those who enter politics must have strong nerves… Else they go crazy…

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They would have talked a bit more. However, they spread left and right as it became time for the one o’clock news…

***
Note: Now we ask: How many of our virtuous religious officials do not get on well with the police and townships in Western Thrace?? Or muftis?? To know the right answer to this question the monthly salary from the secret allocations is hundred fifty thousand drachmas!

From which of the secret allocations? There is no need for this question… Now, the secret allocations of the Greek Administration have also gained IMMUNITY (LEGITIMACY) [bağımlılık (helallık)]…

Does anybody disagree?

Text 16.

[original in Greek]:

Komotini 14/5/1983

MEMORANDUM

TO

The honourable Prime Minister

Mr. A. G. Papandreou

Mr. Prime Minister

On the occasion that you are with us to celebrate, everybody together, the liberation of our town, we the members of the Minority of Western Thrace, would like to mention the following to you:

As is known, we are Greeks [i.e. Greek citizens] by birth and live here by virtue of the Lausanne Treaty. This treaty, as well as the constitution protect our social and political rights. We have the same rights and the same obligations as the Christians towards the State and must be regarded as equal in the eyes of the Law as determined by the article 4. Paragraph 1 of the Constitution. “The Greeks are equal in the eyes of the Law”.

However, after the enforcement of the dictatorship in the year 1967, many of our rights started to be violated systematically, of which the most important are:

1) The right to acquire real estate outside inheritance. Unfortunately there exists the law A. N. 1366/38 of the Metaksas dictatorship, which is applied negatively to the extreme in our area, when there is a question of transferring real estate to a Muslim Greek citizen, as if we constitute a sudden danger for the public safety.

2) Building or repair of houses is generally not allowed to the members of the Minority. Many applications by Muslims to build or repair houses, even Muslim temples (places of worship) are not replied to. Besides these applications there are also many inhabitants who want to build or repair houses but do not submit applications because they know that they will not obtain a permit and they do not want to go to useless expenditures.
3) Except for a few exceptions driving licences for tractors are not granted. There are cases where holders of driving licences for cars and even trucks fail the exams to obtain driving license for tractors. There are also many who were not called in for exams for two years and in spite of this they are convicted by the penal courts because they drive tractors without driver’s license.

4) The exercising of vocations which require health control is not free, such as restaurants, hairdressers, coffee shops, and even dentist offices. At this period it happens that the prefecture doctor does not control such businesses in order to grant the relevant operation permit.

5) There is also legal differentiation towards the members of the Minority regarding citizenship. While according to the Constitution the preconditions for forfeiting any Greek of his citizenship is limited, the provisions of the article 19 of the citizenship code, allow the Minister of Interior to dispossess the Greek citizenship from the non-ethnic Greek [alloyenís] citizens (i.e. from us) and it is believed that they left Greece for good. And this provision is kept in force by the section III of the Constitution, in spite of the fact that Greece is bound by the UN convention for abolishing laws containing racial discriminations. With this provision many members of the Minority have been dispossessed of their Greek citizenship.

6) The law 1091/1980 for the administration and management of our Vakıfs, takes basically the right of management away from us, breaks the vakıfs up into very small property units that are unable to meet the management expenses with the consequence that they will dissolve themselves, it gives extraordinary powers to the Prefect, and in addition it can be modified with a Presidential decree, i.e. without parliamentary control.

7) With the deliberate expropriations by the right-wing governments a large number of landless were created in the Minority, consequently also a serious social problem which awaits its solution in your person.

8) And the most important issue is our education. With the laws 694/1977 and 695/1977 there has been created chaos in the education of the Minority children, these laws are contrary to the Lausanne Treaty and the protocol signed by a mixed Greek-Turkish committee in 1968 regarding the education of the two Minorities. As an example we mention that the Minority School of the village Simandra of Ksanthi remained closed for 6 months this year because the inspector insisted to impose a totally incapable teacher, with knowledge corresponding to primary school level, without the possibility to hire another teacher which they are entitled to according to the Lausanne Treaty. For this reason episodes took place with the result that a very large force of gendarmerie seized and closed the school, and that the gathering of more than three persons was prohibited. While it was a problem which could have been solved with good will, nobody knows what will happen from now on.
We will inform you and the responsible minister more fully about the serious problems we confront in education in another memorandum.

Mr. Prime Minister

We want to stress that you take over a bad inheritance from the Junta and the right-wing government. However, unfortunately the problems did not cease to exist with the Socialist government of change, and there is consequently a lack of correct information.

We believe that your government will obliterate these problems of ours not only because 70% of the minority voted for you, but because this is you ideology according to your Contract with the People.

Finally we believe and wish that you will embrace our minority with love and concern as the Prime Minister of all Greeks.

With respect

Signed by 80

Text 17.

OPEN LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER ANDREAS PAPANDREU

Mr. Chairman [i.e. party leader],

An open letter to the responsible ruler of our country is surely not the advisable way to communicate with him.

And if it is not intended to provoke emotion with eulogies and acclamation, or the opposite with unfounded complaints and disapproval, then the choice of this unorthodox way of communicating stems from a more serious and deeper need. Maybe also from inability and confusion. But with the courage of opinion as motto and the sincerity of the intentions of the writer:

The reason is the minority issue, Mr. Chairman. A problem-taboo which is covered with the veil of silence, a wound which under its flimsy bandage develops into gangrene for all the citizens belonging to the so-called Muslim or Turkish Minority in Thrace.

Mr. Chairman,

The minority issue developed into a problem with tendencies of further aggravation when this too started to be regarded as a link in the chain of Greek-Turkish conflicts where it was finally added with forced welding, and this is how it is confronted today, i.e. as a problem of foreign politics or in the extension of this as a national issue. Sometimes not admitted and covered, other times openly and cynically.

Thus the minority issue is not only confronted as imposed by foreigners, as if some unclear foreign powers imposed it on us contrary to our wishes and placed it here on
the land of Thrace as a permanent irregularity. But as the distorting fantasy gallops unbridled and unrestrained, it is still regarded to be instigated from abroad and hostile, regulated by foreign centres which strive for the satisfaction of their hostile appetites.

The permanent, by now, and daily misunderstanding, Mr. Chairman, has made the life of the minority an ordeal.

It is not only the propaganda, which would not have any consequence without the general attitude of the State and its organs which reinforce this misunderstanding. It is the actions of the Administration and mainly those which contributed to consolidating them.

How can you otherwise explain the introduction into the legislative acts of the term “reciprocity” (read retaliation), and its various applications. The function of services in Thrace independent of the local administration with supra powers over issues concerning the Muslims. The confidential circulars and commands which harass the minority people. The crude restrictions on the minority members to develop freely their personality…

Every contact of the Muslim with the authorities ends up as an ordeal for him. The whole attitude of the Administration emits the following message: “The Muslims are not only misunderstood citizens, they are mainly downgraded citizens.” and worse. It is impossible that this does not also influence the Christian element, when indeed the friction with the neighbouring country is by now a daily phenomenon. With the consequence in recent years that if the former regular and brotherly cohabitation of the two elements in Thrace has not been upset, the relationship has cooled off a lot and the Minority has been isolated.

Mr. Chairman,

The Minority was happy about the victory of the democratic forces in the last Parliamentary elections and surmounting its conservatism it supported fanatically the Change. It had the hope that the government of Change both wants and can lift the spectre of distortion and misunderstanding which hangs over the minority. And that it will apply the principle of equal rights in Thrace to all the citizens regardless of religion and ethnic descent.

Mr. Chairman,

We are now in the unpleasant position to admit that until today at least these hopes were denied.

Mr. Chairman,

The minority issue is not a complex problem, but a simple one. It is complicated only because it has dragged out and it will become more complicated if it is left this way. A command by you to the organs of the Administration is enough to “solve” it. EQUAL RIGHTS. The details are easily adjusted with dialogue.

Welcome to Thrace!
Text 18.

İleri 578/22.01.1990 [original in Turkish]. Reader’s letter in connection with the minority leaders’ behaviour:

Honourable editor,

In the 577/15.12.1989 issue of your newspaper: Somewhere in the article titled “Once again the land question” you say that “… neither the mufti, nor the deputy wept” for the fields that were taken and lost.

We put aside the crying. 2–3 years ago while our Christian neighbours from Sakarkaya (Lefkopetra) ploughed the pasture land of our village GÖKÇELER-SELERON under the protection of riot police [MAT] with clubs, while the Ksanthi mufti head secretary Hafız and the responsible editor for AKIN and former deputy Mr. H. Hatipoğlu who had arrived were talking to each other, at one point Hafız turned to Hatipoğlu and said smiling: “WE ARE EXPERIENCING OUR FINEST DAYS!” Hatipoğlu too replied laughingly: “YES, WE ARE EXPERIENCING OUR HAPPIEST DAYS!”

Honourable İLERİ,

Even if it is late we would like to ask these gentlemen through your newspaper: GENTLEMEN, what were you referring to? While in those days our villages, which you were present in, were crying blood...

Please explain…

Or are you making fun of our villagers?

Please explain…

Note: Honourable editor, I do not want you to reveal my name out of fear of the BLACK LIST…

İLERİ: Our senior colleges [ağabey] were laughing, because they HOPED to gain POINTS in ANKARA’S view, that is why!

Because they would say that they had gathered the people there…

Afterwards they would go to the Consulate to give such reports…
Text 19.

Gerçek 165/08.05 1987 [original in Turkish]:

Unity - Solidarity - Support

Everyone knows very well what these three words are supposed to tell. But do we or don’t we apply their meaning in our daily life? Let us examine and explain this:

1) Unity and solidarity in bad actions and lies.
2) Unity and solidarity in good actions and truth.

It is not possible to continue our communal life without unity and solidarity. As everybody knows, in the past it was impossible to speak of communal life. Some people find ways to exploit this fragmentation. Not to unite the community and make it live at ease, but to annihilate it. These are the persons or institutions that are foreign to the community or are pursuing petty personal benefits.

Each day every Minority member confronts a big question: «Why is there not unity and solidarity among us?». The answer to this question is both very simple and very difficult. By taking recourse to my own experiences I can easily say that there is unity and solidarity among the people. However, among the section called Leaders this is very difficult. This is what makes people uneasy. When the people become aware of where this difficulty stems from it will easily solve it.

Esteemed readers; as I made clear above, we are obliged to live in unity and solidarity. Let us suppose that from now on both the leader section and the common people will live in unity and solidarity. Are more leaders (those who represent the people) a good thing or a bad thing? Is this to the advantage or disadvantage of the minority?

Let us first have a look at the first model:

The Minority is not a Turkish Minority. Let us not invoke the rights of the Minority which come from the Constitution and International agreements. Let us not make known the oppression against our minority to the outside world. Let us leave our children ignorant [uneducated]. Let us become weaker economically. Many more things. Let us also do all we can to help those who want to annihilate the minority and stand besides them.

The second model:

The Minority is a Turkish Minority. Let us definitely preserve the rights granted by the Constitution and International agreements. Let us make known the oppression against it to the whole world and organisations. Let us work so that the minority can live suitably. Let us not leave the children uneducated. Let us definitely work to improve the economical situation. Let us confront united and together those who want to annihilate the minority.
Esteemed readers, I will refrain from criticising anybody here. Let everybody be his own critic. Let me say sincerely that I prefer the second model both in my thoughts and my past and future actions. Let those who represented the minority in the past, and are still representing it, declare sincerely to the minority which model they prefer and then apply it. Let them criticise themselves. Why they do not explain the answers to the questions to our people. Let them present a clear program to the minority and let them apply it. Let them not utter phrases to the people like «Others do not support me. There is not unity and solidarity among us». There is unity and solidarity among the people of the minority. All of us know this very well. The minority is always supporting some of us and indeed with hope and reliance. But where are these persons who enjoy the support of the minority? Are they standing by it or are they depending on others.

Unity and solidarity is clear, not from the words that fall from our mouth, but from our actions. Even if we are not able to explain the full meaning of it here, the answer to the question if the representatives who are supported with unity and solidarity by our people are applying the first model we explained above, or the second, will in due time be given in a very nice manner. Think about it! You too will find the answer.

Those who represented the people, are representing it and want to do so: Come and let us stand by the minority. The Minority is our Minority. We are no strangers to them, and they are no stranger to us. Let us forget small personal accounts. A little courage and sincerity is sufficient. We have prepared and are in the possession of a text expressing all the wishes of the people. It was published in the newspaper GERÇEK. Those who want it can come, and we will give it to them so that they can examine it. I am always ready to co-operate with those who want to work sincerely for the Minority. We request those who are not sincere not to become obstacles. Enough is enough. The minority people always supported those who thought in this manner, and they are still waiting ready to support them. Let us not let the Minority wait any more.

7-4-1987
Doctor Sadik

Text 20.
Gerçek 16.11.1987 [original in English]. The paper distributed by Sadik to the conference about democracy and human rights organised within the framework of Council of Europe. He had read about the conference in the newspaper Macedonia and went with an updated English version of the paper he had when he was arrested in Evros. He was congratulated by Rodoplu for his initiative:
APPENDICES

Grievances And Requests Of The Turkish-Moslem Minority Living In Western Thrace Greece

I. A Brief History of the Turkish-Moslem Minority in Greece.

The conflicts and regional confrontations after the World War I necessitated a comprehensive exchange of population between Turkey and Greece. In accordance with the Treaty signed between the two states, the ethnic Turks in Greece and the ethnic Greeks in Turkey were subject to an obligatory exchange of population and millions of people mutually changed their places. Exception to this exchange were the Greek-Orthodox Minority in Istanbul and the Turkish-Moslem Minority in Western Thrace.

The rights of these two Communities as “minorities” have been guaranteed under the “Section III” of the Treaty of Lausanne, signed on 24 July 1923. According to the provisions of the Treaty, the Minorities should, de jure and de facto, enjoy the same treatment and the same guarantees as other citizens of their countries, and they should be entitled, in particular, to establish religious, charitable and social institutions, schools and other establishments for training and education at their own expense, to run and supervise them, and to use their own languages freely in those institutions.

In the same Treaty it has been explicitly stated that the Articles 38 through 44 of the Section mentioned above should be recognised as fundamental laws, and no law, regulation, nor any official action should conflict or interfere with these stipulations nor should any law, regulation, nor official action prevail over them (Article 37).

Greece by putting her signature under the Treaty of Lausanne pledged to recognise all the rights of the Minority as envisaged in the said Treaty (Article 45).

With a view to determining the number of people who could benefit from the special rights extended to the Minorities, the Ninth Mixed Commission for the Exchange of Population issued an official document of “établis” to every member of the minorities, which was jointly signed by the Turkish and Greek delegates.

By the foregoing we have explained the solid foundation upon which the Turkish-Moslem Minority with its historical existence and legal status was based.

II. Injustices Toward the Turkish-Moslem Minority in Western Thrace:

All the members of this Minority in Western Thrace, as citizens of the Greek State, we have serious complaints about the attitude of the Greek authorities toward us. Because of the deliberate policies of the consecutive Greek governments we remain deprived not only of our special Minority rights which stem from an international Treaty, but also of the rights of normal citizens, even of the basic human rights. In the mountainous regions (which are sealed off under the pretext that they are militarily important border areas) the ethnic Turks are subject to a policy of assimilation. Their children are denied the rights to go to the Turkish speaking secondary schools for example. And the ethnic Turks who are living at the other parts of Western Thrace are
THE MUSLIM MINORITY OF GREEK THRACE

confronted with a systematic policy of forced emigration. All of our representations to the highest State and political organs and personalities for stopping these injustices has always come to nothing for the last twenty years. Most of the written applications of ours have remained unanswered, and the existence of injustices has been negated in all of the official answers.

For these reasons we have decided to convey our grievances and requests to international organisations. They are brought to your attentions in the following six articles:

1. Despite our well-known historical background, our religious belief, our Turkish origin, our mother tongue (Turkish), our ethnic traditions, which are undeniable facts, several written and oral statements of the Greek statesman and highest officials try to allege that we are not Turks but merely “Moslems”. This shows their intentions to reduce us into a religious group by denying our ethnic entity. (This also shows a striking resemblance of the attitude taken by the Bulgarian authorities toward ethnic Turks). As a vivid example of this official attitude a letter sent to one of our Associations by Mr. Alevras, Speaker of the Greek Parliament is presented herewith. The authorities in this area took this same attitude and prohibited the use of the adjective “Turkish” in the titles and signboards of the “Turkish Teachers Associations”, Komotini Turkish Youth Association” and “Xanthi Turkish Association”. Even the Greek courts (court of first and second instances) decided for the closure of these Associations claiming that there are no Turks in Western Thrace, and “Turkish” only stands for the “citizenship of Turkey”. We are expecting the final verdict of the High Court. But the previous court decisions disrupted the activities of our cultural associations.

We only request that our ethnic identity and our religious belief form an inseparable entity and this basic human right of preserving one’s own ethnic and religious identity should be respected.

2. Because of the arbitrary practices of the Greek authorities the education in Turkish language became totally ineffective, contrary to the Article 40 of the Treaty of Lausanne:

A) The Greek government stopped giving employment to teachers who graduated from schools in Turkey, thus depriving this Minority of the teachers who know correct Turkish and capable of giving our children the traditional ethnic culture.

A special “Academy” in Thessaloniki was established and the recruits from the old style religious schools (Medrese) which are deliberately financed by the Greek government in spite of their outdated situation, are enrolled to this Academy, eventually to become “Ersatz Teachers” in Turkish speaking schools.

As will be remembered Turkey secularised all of the schools in the Republic of Turkey and closed all of the Medreses in the 1920’s. Greek government intentionally
did not go parallel with these reforms in order to create a schism between Turkey and the Turkish minority in Greece. And while the Turkish Minority have been financing their schools Greek government chose to finance these outdated Medreses for this special purpose.

Contrary to the wishes of the Turkish community they provided scholarships to these “fundamentalist” religious schools and only the graduates of these anachronistic schools are accepted to the “Academy” in Thessaloniki, there after two years of some “training”, knowing no correct Turkish, and having no contemporary culture they are “ready” as teachers to Turkish schools. Turkish community reacted very strongly to this plan, but to deaf ears. The Academy in Thessaloniki was established as a “Trojan Horse” within the Turkish Community, and not all good intentions.

Most of the money that the Greek government spokesman claims they are spending “for the education of the Moslem minority” are in fact appropriated to these “Medreses” and to the “Academy” which the Turkish Community loathes.

B) The government is establishing Greek secondary schools (gymnasiums) in the areas inhabited by the Moslem-Turks in the mountainous areas and forcing our children to attend these schools in which Greek is the only language.

On the other hand an entrance exam was introduced to the two Minority Secondary Schools (in Komotini and Xanthi) so only a limited number of students are being accepted every year. Despite the clear provision of Article 16 of the Constitution emphasising the obligatory education as nine years, our children graduating from primary Turkish speaking schools are forced to take the entrance examination to get enrolled in the Turkish speaking secondary schools. The same students, however, are accepted to the Greek secondary schools without any examination.

C) For secondary education of the Turkish minority, which has a population of 100,000–120,000, there are only two secondary schools. Another intentional blow came from the Greek authorities when a special examination in Greek language for the subjects studied in Turkish during the school year was introduced. In other words, in the Minority school, the courses taken in Turkish during the year had to be passed in Greek language at the end. as a result of this practice there has been a very dramatic drop in number of the students in Turkish speaking schools. As can be seen hereunder, the number of students in the Turkish Lycee of Xanthi was 227 in the academic year 1983–1984, and in the Turkish Lycee of Komotini 305. These numbers dropped to 85 and 42 respectively during academic year 1986–1987, thank to the deliberate measures of the Greek authorities:
Academic Years

Number of Students

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Xanthi</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Komotini</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>42</td>
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In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights it is stated that “the right to select the manner of education for their children belong to the parents.” As can be seen we are completely deprived of this basic right in Western Thrace.

We demand the abolition of these unjust and deliberate practices immediately.

3. We present for your information some regrettable injustices aiming at the economic collapse of the Minority:

A) The purchase of a real estate in our region is subject to the permission from the Greek authorities. Nevertheless, this permission is issued to all of the citizens but the Turkish-Moslems with the exception of some “selected” people who conveniently cooperate with the authorities.

Although in the Article 17 of the Greek Constitution it is stated that “the property right is under the protection of the State, no one shall be deprived of their right”, we, the members of this Minority, are deprived of this right to buy any immovable property.

B) By the confiscations [expropriations] executed in our region the most valuable land which belongs to the Minority are confiscated intentionally.

C) In case the old title deed (which have not been renewed by the Greek state) of the centuries old immovable properties, inherited from our ancestors, for some reasons cannot be presented, our lands are taken away from our hands under the pretext that “they belong to the state.”

D) Again under inconsistent pretexts heavy fines are imposed to the Turkish business owners, artisans, even to the teachers of Koran courses, huge amounts ranging from five million to ten million Drachmas, literally impossible to pay.

E) None of us is accepted into the public services. Our chemists are not permitted to open pharmacies even if they completed all the legal procedures. There is no single pharmacy opened by a Moslem-Turk in all over Western Thrace, despite the high number of chemists belonging to the Minority.

F) Obtaining a driver’s license is, if not totally impossible, extremely difficult, for the members of the Minority.

4. The Moslem Turks in Greece have not been able to obtain permission to construct anything for some twenty years. Even simple repairs of old houses are not permitted. As a result of this while the quarters in which the Greek Christians are living are comfortable and modern buildings, those in which the Moslem-Turks are
living present the panorama of people living in a different, backward country, with their half-century or nearly one-century old, unrepaird, dilapidated houses. This is a clear proof that there are two classes of people in Western Thrace: First class citizens are the Greeks, second class citizens are the Moslem-Turks.

5. Article 5 of the Greek Constitution reads: “Everyone’s life, honour, freedom is under complete protection regardless of nationality, race, language and religion or political beliefs” (Paragraph 2), “Every Greek citizen’s” freedom for going abroad and returning into his country, travelling and settlement within the country cannot be restricted” (Paragr. 4).

Yet the practices of the Greek authorities against the Moslem-Turks in Western Thrace have been as follows:

A. Contrary to the explicit provisions of the Constitution so many ethnic Turks have lost their nationality under the pretext that they have stayed too long abroad. Since this is done behind their backs and when their passports are perfectly valid, they only get to know the situation at the Greek frontiers when they are denied the entry to the country. In certain cases some of them are allowed to enter, but their passports are confiscated. For this reason they are most of the time forced to leave the country without any document.

We would like to draw the attention of the world public opinion to the Article 19 of the Greek Nationality law:

“A PERSON OF NON-GREEK ETHNIC ORIGIN LEAVING GREECE WITHOUT THE INTENTION OF RETURNING MAY BE DECLARED AS HAVING LOST GREEK NATIONALITY.”

As can be seen there are two categories of Greek citizens: 1) THE CITIZENS OF GREEK ETHNIC ORIGIN, and 2) THE CITIZENS OF NON GREEK ETHNIC ORIGIN.

Even this notorious Article 19 of the Greek Nationality law, which is a disgraceful evidence of discrimination is interpreted freely and arbitrarily, without taking into consideration if the Moslem-Turk in question left Greece with the intention of not coming back, or he simply went abroad for a temporary period. As it was already mentioned people are being denied entry when their passports are valid.

As a consequence of this when a Moslem-Turk travels our of Greece he is never sure of entering the country when he comes back.

B. Normal passports which are valid for five years are not given to every ethnic Turk. Some have to contend with passports valid for only one year, and some are given passports with one single exit only, without any return.

C. We are faced with a new practice which is aiming at dispersing the Minority members to the various districts of Greece so that there will be a drop in the number of members of the Turkish-Moslem Minority, in Western Thrace.
The public service officials are implementing this plan: They contact with poor and unemployed Ethnic Turks in our villages and cities. They try to uproot them from our Community by promising employment and wealth and lead them to other regions of Greece. However, once they leave Western Thrace they are forced to transfer the official registrations of all the members of their family from their municipalities to the towns in which they are employed. The ones who accept this pre-requisite by the employers are forced to send their children to the Christian schools and eventually they see the intention that they change their names too. Those who do not comply with such conditions are simply dismissed. Some Turks who were working in mines for many years, when they did not transfer their official registration to the municipalities where they were employed in order to send their children to the Christian schools, were sacked by their companies.

6. In accordance with the Greek legislation in force, our Mufti who are the supreme religious leaders, and the Chairman and the members of our Turkish-Moslem Community Board should be chosen by elections. Despite the explicit provisions of Law No. 2345 dated 1920 concerning this matter, the practice by the Greek authorities have been as follows:

When the Mufti of Komotini died on June 2-1985 the Greek governor hastily appointed a religious man contrary to the Law No. 2345/1920. Having taken into consideration of the strong reaction of the Community toward this appointment, the person who was appointed by the Governor immediately submitted his resignation.

Six months later a second appointment was made, again without taking into account of the will of the Minority. Contrary to the strong opposition against this appointment the authorities try to legitimise the nomination of the “Acting Mufti” who is in office now nearly two years. By appointing an unwanted “Acting Mufti” to the Turkish-Moslem Community of Komotini, explicitly in contravention of the legislation in force, Greek authorities are aiming at depriving the Moslem Turks of their religious leader. This caused a deep disquiet and anxiety among our Community. For that reason, in the elections of a new Mufti to the vacant post in Komotini with Moslem Turks’ votes has the priority among our urgent problems.

7. Our Community Boards in cities were used to come to office by elections in accordance with the provisions of Law No. 2345/1920. The military junta which took the power in 1967 ousted our elected Community Boards and designated other Boards and Chairmen. In 1974, after the fall of the junta, and in spite of the re-establishment of a democratic rule, the nominated Boards of our Communities have not been altered, constituting a unique exception, and we are not entitled to elect the new Community Boards. It is neither compatible with human rights, nor with democracy that we are deprived of the elections of our Muftis and Chairmen and members of the Boards of our Communities.
In view of the afore-mentioned injustices we would like to draw the attention of all the democrats and of those who respect human rights upon the following reality:

We, the Moslem-Turkish Minority in Western Thrace, are victimised by the anti-democratic policies in this neglected part of Greece. We openly declare to all the representatives of international organisations and institutions that we are confronted with a multi-faceted oppression in Greece. We demand the protection of our basic rights by all of these international organisations which are the defenders of democracy, freedom and human rights.

**Text 21.**

*Ileri* 544/24.02.1989 [original in Turkish].

*Hâki had written in 542/10.02.1989 that the minority needed an official leader and that Rodoplu was probably the best choice. In the present issue he prints a letter from some of Sadık’s adherents who say that he wrote this to hurt the latter. This made him write the following answer:*

**A FEW WORDS…**

The letter published in the 1. column was by Mrs. İbrahim Baltalı, Salih Muezzin, and Ahmet Adalı from the Likyon-Kurcalı village. If their names did not appear under their letter it was for lack of space. I apologise to our readers and the young men.

We want to touch briefly on some points in the letter. It is said that: “Doctor Sadık has proved this [i.e. his leader qualifications] by his former active involvement.”

As far as I remember, Mr. Doctor Sadık Ahmet joined us after 1976. Because it was in the aftermath of 1974 [Cyprus invasion], it was years when the minority suffered horrible oppression. Until 1984 this minority was not witness to any ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT from Doctor Sadık Ahmet. On the contrary, he was utterly possessed by the DESIRE to earn quick money… the Minority knows it, The whole world knows it…

As for the collection of signatures.

This was on the INITIATIVE of our brother-workers in West Germany. In other words, the Signature Campaign initiative did not originate from Sadık. Its ideological father was Mr. Aydın Ömeroğlu. More generally, our kinsmen in Europe… After the Minority Council had approved the signature campaign… some of our journalists and Council members sabotaged it, and after this Doctor Sadık started his collection. However, Mr. Ab. Dede had started to collect signatures earlier. (In his office).

You see that Doctor Sadık became active with minority matters by collecting these signatures, and he really assessed this question well. He went to villages for signatures, where until this time he had only gone for circumcisions and check-ups.

This is the truth.
Let us get to the second point. If Ankara had not arrested the four communists and Greece had not made an outcry about it, Turkish Radio and Television would have never made such an issue of the Doctor’s trial…

Just as, during the earlier hearings of the same case there had been no reaction from Turkey…

The Turkish Administration used the event of the Doctor’s trial as RETALIATION towards Greece, which roused the world because of four communists… It was also because of this that we heard for weeks on radio and television abundantly the words “Doctor Sadık Ahmet, the leader of the Western Thrace Turks…”

This is how history will record this event…

	xxx

Let it for God’s sake be said, what action was Doctor Sadık Ahmet pioneer and leader for?

	xxx

Let us now come to the MP question…

While the Doctor was collecting signatures, everybody knew that he would use this later for personal benefits in politics… But as I am not a politician, this subject does not interest me. Let whoever God brings win…

We as İLERİ have nothing to gain or lose in the MP issue. We publish this newspaper all alone, and sell it all alone. We walk around from village to village, and get our subscribers. We depend on the Minority; not on MPs.

Before elections we have in fact always experienced our greatest losses.

Consequently, those who desire strongly the Doctor in this capacity should consider his MP ambitions…

	xxx

In our LEADER proposal and article, no obstacle was put in front of anybody’s desire to become MP, including the doctor. On the contrary, it was meant to facilitate the work…

I thank the young men once again…

Hâki

Note: In this matter our columns are open for everybody…
TO THE EXALTED PRESIDENCY OF THE TURKISH REPUBLIC:

Ankara

HONOURABLE PRESIDENT,
We will not go too much into details, because that would make a long story…

HONOURABLE PRESIDENT,
Here in Western Thrace there is a BLACK LIST CALAMITY walking around like a nightmare causing great misfortune, and even entering our dreams…
Here, ever since the Consulate was founded, one part of us have settled so firmly in the consulate environment that if you step a little bit on their tail, touch their interests, you will immediately hear the following words…:

- Don’t go any further or we will not let you go to Turkey!
- Don’t go any further, you have a child who studies in Turkey… He will find himself here [in Greece] later!
- Don’t speak too much, you have property in Turkey! We will sequestrate it!
- And there is also a whole lot of other THREATS! As if Turkey was the farm of their father…

DEAR PRESIDENT,
At this moment there are hundreds of us in the Minority, whose hearts beat wildly when we are approaching the Meriç Bridge [on the border] on our way to Turkey… Why? Out of fear of being TURNED BACK! Because every now and then it is heard that: So and so was turned back.
In addition, those of us who have settled down in the Consulate environment, whom we here call the RAPACIOUS GANG [Hazırıyıciler kumpanyası], will immediately whisper about it, spread it within the Minority, and attempt to destroy-extinguish the person materially and morally as well as his reputation within the community…
In this way they think they SERVE (!) our Minority…
The actions have reached such ugly and base proportions, Honourable President…
At this moment who is not on this BLACK LIST, who is not? From journalists and former MPs to municipal mayors, shop keepers, and it has even been extended to villagers…
And also, doctors and lawyers!
All these, Honourable President, are not there because of the exalted interests of Turkey; no, no, if that was the case we would gladly sacrifice ourselves, all this has developed for the daily petty interests of the RAPACIOUS GANG…

The secret allocations of our Consulate, Honourable President, are not only a livelihood for these people, they are an object of speculations… And in addition a way to strike against their rivals within the Minority!

HONOURABLE PRESIDENT,

The sad side of the matter is that our Consulate does not ADDRESS the people on the BLACK LIST in any way. As if they were leprous… As if these peoples had fired shots against Turkey…

They are not invited to the REPUBLIC CELEBRATION on 29 October. On 10 November [commemoration of Atatürk] they are undesired at the Consulate… If they should happen to come… They are turned away at the entrance of the Consulate…

Is this not sad?

Why all this?

Honourable President, if all this is not OPPRESSION what is?

HONOURABLE PRESIDENT,

Because this problem interests thousands, we beg you for the love of HUMANITY and the TURKISH COMMUNITY [türkülük], and the high interests of our Minority that you show interest in this BLACK LIST PROBLEM, and order its abolishment…

Kinsmen of the MOTHERLAND cannot be treated in this way… In fact, we are unable to understand it. It is incomprehensible to us! The Greek Administration divides and splits us up more than enough, let us not be divided by the MOTHERLAND. Let us not suffer such a blow.

This is the last recourse, you are the last HIGH INSTANCE which can abolish this OPPRESSION and TORTURE, Honourable President… Yes it is you, and we want you to cut this off so it can heal without risking gangrene [bu yaraya, iyicene kangrene karmadan, neşter vurmanızı istiyoruz]…

Nine million Greek Orthodox, come and go to Turkey swinging their arms during Easter Holiday, nine TURKS cannot go to Motherland Turkey during the Ramadan Bayramı in this way… Because they will be turned back at the Turkish Border Post…

It can almost make you crazy!

Please put an end to this OPPRESSION and TORTURE…

Cordial greetings, love and respect from Western Thrace…

İLERİ

Note: I have given the relevant information on this subject to your current Minister of State Mr. Mehmet Keçeciler in 1988 during the pilgrimage.
2- Before the dinner of King FAHT, the person who addressed you in the conference hall with “hail you PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD TURKISH COMMUNITY!” was the writer of these lines and... he is on the BLACK LIST...

3- We have thought for a long time to ADDRESS you in writing. However, we also thought: You will see that the problem will solve itself... And while we were Hoping, suddenly we learn that one of our elderly former politicians was turned back... Indeed last week...

It saddened us and we decided to write...

Text 23.
Gerçek 241/04.05.1989 [original in Turkish]. Declaration by the “Trust” ticket when it was founded:

Declaration to the voters of Rodopi

We who have signed below, Lawyer Sabahaddin Emin, Doctor Sadık Ahmet, and journalist İsmail Molla (Rodoplu) decided to participate with a three-man strong Independent Turkish Ticket which we called “TRUST” in the general Parliamentary election which will take place in our country Greece on 18 June 1989.

The suffering of the Western Thrace Turkish Community which basically intensified with the 1967 military junta, continued systematically up until today within the multi-party democratic system which was reinstated in Greece in 1974. No matter if right or left-wing parties were in power, every party entered a race to uproot and expel the Western Thrace Turk from the land he had inhabited for centuries. The utilisation of people taken from us as tools and fall guys, such as Ahmet Mehmet, in these extinguishing plans for the Western Thrace Turk, pushed the Western Thrace Turk to search and find his own voice and own conscience.

The Minority voters of the Rodopi prefecture, which believe that they must fight with their own power and own voice against the oppression, discrimination, and injustice which has accumulated for years, will feel proud about the foundation of the INDEPENDENT TICKET and support it with all their might.

Because, all of us know very well the inhuman and illegal practices applied to the Western Thrace Turkish community in the 7 years when New Democracy was in power from 1974 to 1981, and from 1981 to 1989 when PASOK was in power. But what a pity that confronted with these practices the Minority MPs put their fear for the parties and the party interest above the interest of this suffering community, and the Minority members had their trust in the candidates who would take part on the party tickets shaken and razed in its foundation.

Because the Western Thrace Turkish voter has no need for MPs who set out by saying “I will speak about your problems in Parliament and before the people of the
free world” and unfortunately after becoming MPs they look more after their own personal interest and the political party they belong to than the suffering Turkish community they are representing.

For more than 20 years the Western Thrace Turk has been treated as a stranger in his country where he was born and raised and has duly fulfilled all his duties as a citizen, his rights have been violated, his dignity and honour have been crushed and he has virtually been turned into an undesired community.

Our people has seen much of the protection accorded by the 1923 Lausanne Treaty, the rights the country recognises to all its citizens, and finally the way today’s people ought to be treated as human beings… [ironic]

We three children of the Minority, three friends, honourable and with pure hearts who see all this harsh reality, and feel in the heart this suffering along with our community, decided to set out, relying first on GOD and then on the support and TRUST of you our dear kinsmen whose hearts whirl with islamism and turkism, and found the Independent Ticket “Trust” to represent our community rightfully.

With the permission of God and your support we determined to make known this inhuman treatment which the Administration unjustly has burdened us with for more than twenty years, first to the highest authorities of our country, later to the highest organisations of the free world, and invite them here to display the contrivances of our Administrators.

We set out belonging neither to a party nor a master, drawing our strength only and only from being people who believe in the justness of our cause and trusting you and only you.

God helps the righteous.

LAWYER SABAＨADDİN EMİN
DOCTOR SADIК AHMET
JOURNALIST İŞMAİL MOLLĂ (RODOPLU)

**Text 24.**

*Trakya’nın Sesi* 318/10.06.1989 [original in Turkish].

The ND candidates resign. Onsunoğlu, İmamoğlu, Zeybek and Hacıibram went to Athens 5 June. First they visited the Turkish embassy and notified the embassy about the new developments. Afterwards they visited Mitsotakis in the party centre. After discussing the situation they decided to resign. This was not accepted by Mitsotakis. The four candidates came with a common declaration (in Turkish):

ANNOUNCEMENT by the Western Thrace Turkish Minority MP candidates of ‘New Democracy’

*****
The broadcasts on Saturday 3/6/1989 by Turkish radio and television with repercussions on the Western Thrace Turkish minority in the 18 June general elections, became for us the last drop that made the cup spill over.

When we earlier faced several similar unpleasant events and situations, we preferred to remain silent out of fear of hurting the interests of our Minority and the Greek-Turkish friendship.

However, while the broadcasts in question propagandised and advertised openly in favour of the candidates from the independent Minority ticket, we the Minority candidates of New Democracy were called upon to resign from our candidatures. On the other hand it was remarkable that the candidates for Papandreu’s PASOK party were excepted from this appeal.

It is well known that the Turkish minority of Western Thrace always follows the broadcasts of Turkish radio and television with care and interest. The messages conveyed in the broadcasts in question were commented on by the candidates on the Independent Ticket in the fashion that “The Motherland Turkey supports us, it does not want the other candidates”. This is just what happened. After all this there is no need to describe the uneasiness and confusion in the Minority opinion.

After this the Independent candidates did not refrain from saying that later similar messages in favour of them would come from Turkey. We became worried about Turkey’s open preference for the Independent candidates, which paid no attention to the Turkish Minority’s interest nor the harm that could be done to the Greek-Turkish friendship. From where did these persons get the audacity for this abuse?

Our concerns have reached their limits. Because, we repeat, the propaganda executed with Turkey as shield took on various shapes.

In reaction to this the four candidates came together and decided to appeal to the representatives of Motherland Turkey in Greece. We wanted to inform about the concern we felt regarding the last developments and these kinds of irresponsible abuses in the name of Turkey by one group of Minority candidates.

What a pity that we found the doors of Turkey’s representatives closed. Either they did not accept us, or if they did they refused to listen to us.

Afterwards we visited the leader of New Democracy, Konstandinos Mitsotakis, and submitted our resignations. He did not accept them.

At this point we consider it our duty to announce that Mitsotakis told us many times about his concerns for the harm it would bring to the Turkish Minority and Greek-Turkish relations.

To dispel the confusion brought forth by our resignation we would like the Independent Ticket to disperse immediately. Because of the possibility of tensions brought forth by the irresponsible behaviour of those on the Independent Ticket, the only service they can do to our minority and Greek-Turkish relations is to resign.
Sir, you are part of a committee which has the intention to defend the Greek interests. You position is good for the Greek people. You defend “your” sea, “your” islands, you want to militarise Limnos, to liberate Cyprus from the Turkish “invaders” and “colonists”. You din the ears of the world with Attila raising his sword again above your heads and whimper in front of the democratic Europe for sympathy and solidarity.

We would not have any objection to your position if you within this framework also included our interests. You want the Turkish population of Cyprus to be obliterated from “your” beautiful island and vanish in the abysses of Anatolia. Because furthermore, some of you attempt to prove that the Turks in Cyprus and the Turks of Western Thrace are forcibly turkified local population. Why do you not, honourable sir, show some, just a little bit, interest in the hundreds of thousands of Turks who have the misfortune to live in your present pseudo-state created by the Lausanne treaty in 1925? Why do you not take an interest in the fate of Ahmet Sadak [sic] who roused the anger of the central administration which presents itself to the outside world as humanitarian? Are we too maybe not citizens of the Greek state which is governed by a constitutional government?

Why did you close our associations in Western Thrace, as is the case in the village Kalamokastro? You who shed tears for the Pontian population, half of which has Turkish national conscience, why do you extinguish the Turkish population of Western Thrace, why do you not protest against the fact that you obligate our children to learn the Greek language, which is foreign and loathed by them?

You publish various books by which you attempt to fool the world saying that the Turkish army in Cyprus desecrate the Christian churches and graveyards. You should come and see how they destroyed our graveyard in the village Arriana, how the gendarmerie enters our mufti office. So we ask you, who among you will defend our interests? We know what is our mother country, we know our nationality [ethnikótita]
and our religion. The situation today is a volcano that will explode and send you back to Peloponnese from where you came.

For you personally, we will take care that very soon your tongue will stop to spread its venom against our mother country. The tears of the Turks in Western Thrace are already whetting our knives and flood the hearts of our fighters with resolve. We are a great power which day by day becomes an avalanche, which will sweep away all those who beget our devastation.

The Turks of Thrace will settle the scores with you. We are millions and Allah is with us. The time for nemesis is approaching. You have little time left to think. So stop your disgusting campaign against our fatherland, Turkey.

You should know and remember well - Western Thrace was and will become Turkish.

[The same declaration is included in Pontiki 09.06.1989. Here Sadık Ahmet was called Ahmet Sadan]

This was answered by a Greek text:

To the Headquarters for the protection of the Turkish population in Western Thrace:
You live and exist thanks to the humanitarian sentiments of the Greeks of Thrace. Do not provoke them. Thrace was and will remain Greek. Just as Asia Minor was and will become Greek. And we are not scared by that you are many as we have showed you in 1821… Muslim jackasses. Long live the Greece of two continents and five oceans.

Text 26.
I Proti 10.06.1989, “Dangerous game in W. Thrace”, by K. Angelopulos [original in Greek]:

The developments around the issue of the Muslims in W. Thrace, the activities of the Turkish consulate in Komotini and the policy of Ankara to make an issue of the “Turkish minority” did not of course come out of nowhere. For years—particularly the last three—it is known by the Greek authorities what Turkey pursues in W. Thrace, where it promotes systematically the plan from the times of Kemal of a gradual “turkification” of the area which would give, at the right historical moment for Ankara, the possibility to create an “inter communal” issue—an issue that would give her the “right” to intervene in Greek affairs in W. Thrace. With pretext the protection of the rights of the “community”. These expansionist plans of Turkey are not taken out of the air. They are connected with the strategic plans of Ankara to expend to the West, to strengthen her European “limb” with central goal the exclusive control of the
The pressure on the Aegean and Thrace is co-ordinated. And it is not a simple question of diplomatic bad faith the fact that Mr. Özal strengthened the systematic works of the Turkish services in Thrace immediately after “Davos”—i.e. as soon as he had secured from the Joint Statement of this meeting the prospect of a political dialogue “on all issues”. Which also provided for the registration of the problems. It is clear that Ankara, benefited by the crying weakness on the internal Greek front but also by the chronic weaknesses of the Greek foreign policy (which reached its zenith in Davos), “strikes” today at the W. Thrace issue with the goal of forcing Athens to include it in the bilateral political dialogue which Mr. A. Papandreu began last year.

The last few days the Greek government follows perplexed and alarmed the developments. It follows them unable to react, for the simple reason that with both its own responsibility and the responsibility of its predecessors there is no concrete policy on this question. The Greek post-war governments watched inertly as Turkey repealed unilaterally and in a provocative fashion the stipulation of the Lausanne Treaty for the minorities. And they never took the effort to work out a policy for the development of W. Thrace—a policy which if it had been implemented in time would not have left space for the “extremist” Muslims directed by Turkey to realise the goals of the “mother country”.

Things have been left to chance for many years in W. Thrace. The “distortions” [paramorfósis] took root, the racket of “godfathers” [nonós], who are exploiting in co-operation with the directed Muslims the local population, gained strength. The large Greek parties let themselves be dragged into games of petty politics, for the hunting of Muslim votes, by irresponsible local party bosses who showed an unprecedented lack of responsibility towards the established fact that Ankara was working systematically to create a “Turkish community”, which would emerge internationally at some moment as “oppressed” by the Greek state. With skill, the people of Ankara left for a long time everyday arbitrariness and “squeezing” by dishonest and uncontrolled public officials to manifest itself, which gave the other side the possibility to collect “material” for proper use today. Athens received indifferently the reports of diplomats and other services which pointed out irregularities and stupidity which could some day cost very dearly.

On an international level, the Greek governments never reacted against the Turkish policy in minority issues. In spite of the dramatic events of 1955 and the later events in Izmir and Cyprus, the Greek governments confronted the Turkish provocation and the expansionist plans of Ankara as “a necessary evil”, subjected to the Atlantic logic of keeping up “good relations” between Greece and Turkey, valuable allies of USA and NATO for confronting the “danger for the North”. What was more natural for Turkey than to exploit to the extreme this position by Athens. Which by the way also promoted the logic of the “danger from North” in the service of its anti-communism.
And even today, when Ankara shows without disguise that it has no intention to change its position regarding the Muslims of W. Thrace (and recommends with audacity Greece to carry out... correct and free elections) nothing has changed in Athens:

–The Papandreu government keeps a “low” profile, tied to its political complex towards “Davos”, which has sentenced it to diplomatic aphasia.

–The main opposition party wakes up on the eve of elections and demands in a loud voice “to be done what is deemed necessary nationally”, irritated mainly by the fact that the operation of threats and extortion which were unleashed in W. Thrace by persons of the Turkish consulate cause damage to its tickets. A sudden shift from apathy to anger.

–In the Greek Press the “greens” and the “blues” have already started to exchange accusations to “exploit” the Muslim issue.

And it is natural that all this rambling should take place, because as we have said there never was, nor is there a central POLICY for the issue of W. Thrace. The policy of Ankara in W. Thrace leads to a dramatic reality which will lead to a new national catastrophe if it is not taken care of by the Greek governments. It is not a case of an “episode”, nor a simple case of “pressure” against Greece. Limnos, Samothraki, W. Thrace is a whole, with very concrete strategic interest for Turkey. Ankara is by now sending its “message” written up. It is only possible for idiots not to able to read it.

Text 27.
I Epohi 11.06.1989, “What is going on in Thrace?”, by G. Gonis [original in Greek]:

On the fringes of the election climate which dominates, certain questions appear which take our attention away from the whole repulsive scene. Not the scandals, bribes and bedrooms, but Thrace and what is happening there. The event which drew the attention was of course the participation in the elections of the independent Muslim tickets in the prefectures of Ksanthi and Rodopi. It is, however, an event that does not constitute lightning from a clear sky, because a lot of other things anticipated this development.

This choice disturbed, if even only temporarily, the indifference of the parties concerning what happens and what is developing today—but also from yesterday—in Thrace. They were however of course not disturbed, if even belatedly, by genuine interest, but because the number of votes and the election percentages must triumph.

This interest is repeated systematically every four years, when almost all the parties remember the minority, give promises, include candidates on their tickets, representatives of the minority.
These dealings, as everybody is acknowledging by now, are outside ideologies, principles, programs and obligations. They concern on one hand the masters of the political scene, and on the other, a caste of prominent persons within the minority (politically, religiously, and economically), which they have elevated to legitimately and permanently expressing and managing the needs, thoughts, and dispositions of all these people.

The result of this policy is that this caste can dominate the majority of the minority and accordingly offer it each time to parties from the extreme Right of EK-ND to PASOK and ND.

This scene was not repeated this year and that is happening for very concrete reasons, among others:
a) Because no party, whether in power or not, did keep its promises towards the minority and its representatives.
b) The minority is losing continuously its faith in the Greek state and the Greek parties, just as of course the choices of the dominating caste change its relationship with them.

Indicative of the above is the absence of parliamentary activity of the MPs who represent the minority, and irrespective of which party supported them.

This new situation allows for the rallying of the minority on a national basis—maybe even a nationalist?—and that “we are a Turkish minority” is something that has been heard by everybody in recent years. Consequently the finely balanced relations on a social, political and economical level seems to move toward a new expression, which again leads to divergence between the Greek and the “Turkish” element.

A divergence with tremendous consequences for the society of the area and its future, fed by nationalist and extreme tendencies and behaviour.

With what has been said there is of course no question of contesting the right of the minority to express itself in this manner. However, the situation which we described has no perspective, or rather the only perspective it has is the future sharpening and maybe intense oppositions within the society of Thrace. […]

The only strategy which continues to exist, is lost between the offices of the secret services and the rackets which are comfortable exploiting the minority (we are meaning economic and political rackets). […]

What should be the content today of the Left’s proposal about the problems of the society in Thrace and more specifically the minority?
a) Abolishment of the institutional and legal mesh which keeps up the inequality and the injustice to the minority.
b) Respect for its culture and its cultural heritage.
c) Promotion of the freedom of social organisation and expression, so that the particular caste will stop managing carte blanche its fortune, so they can express their needs and the various interests.

d) A change of the educational system, which was built by agreement between Greece and Turkey and reproduces illiterates in both languages. Of course this change must meet the approval of the minority.

e) Measures to confront the economic and social inequality and exploitation, which exists by the business networks and the employers.

f) Finally, and maybe more important, systematic ideological-political confrontation with the nationalist tendencies wherever they may come from.

Text 28.
The following two partially translated texts are of interest because they are written by the prefect at the time, who also had past experience from the area. It should be remembered that people said there was no discrimination in Ksanthi during the second half of 1989 in contrast to Rodopi. The mayor of Ksanthi, Filippos Amiridis, considered the new prefect very successful. Because of his knowledge of the situation he had been able to bridge the differences with the Muslims and isolate the independent candidates (Kathimerini 22.10.1989).

Eleftherotipia 30.06.1989, “The responsibility of the state towards the Greek Muslims”, by K. Thanopoulos, lawyer and former prefect of Ksanthi (1975–1979) [original in Greek]:

[…]  
2. Turkey is a factor in and regulator of the problem. While the political tradition (Kemal Atatürk) is against and hostile to Islam, which was considered responsible for the social and economic backwardness of Turkey, its political practice today is to exploit the religious sentiments of the people internally, but also to “protect” the Muslim religious minorities which exist in its neighbouring countries which formerly belonged to the mighty sultans’ empire...

It baptises as “Turks” all the Muslims of the areas of the sultans' welter and declares itself “protector” of them. In this fashion, having a means of pressure against the countries where these Muslims are living, it draws benefits, and extract exchanges in areas where it has interests.

3. In the post-war period our national life revolves around the problems Turkey creates for us, one behind the other. The neighbouring country had always the possibility to “retreat” from “problems” it had created itself, to obtain essential exchanges which it
was not entitled to with a tactic of “haggling” and “compensations”, which is characteristic for its diplomatic activities.

Corresponding factors for conserving the problems from the Greek side are:

a. The ignorance of the problem by the political leadership and most of the cadre of the political parties who take on responsibility for the departments.

b. The exploitation of the problems by certain political parties to achieve benefits for the party.

c. The dilettantism and bad organisation of the state services, which are involved in the solution of the problem.

Commenting on the third “factor”, I would simply point out that our state services in this matter too cannot be expected to be better than in other matters. Unfortunately, however, the complexity of the problem “exposes” and “stresses” to a greater degree the weaknesses of the state mechanism and the administration.

For the other two factors I will refer to a recent pre-election discussion on television with representatives of the PASOK government and the opposition parties (Pangalos, Nianias, Samaras etc.) where unprecedented inaccuracies about Thrace and the political life there were heard, from politicians with many years of “experience” without any reaction or correction…

[…]

B. In spite of the fact that the “problem” appears as a problem of “foreign policy”, because a foreign country creates it for us and sharpens it, it should however be confronted with measures of internal politics.

It is naive and unfounded to exaggerate the influence of the Turkish consulate in Komotini and its ability to mislead and beguile the Muslims of Rodopi and Ksanthi into actions which serve Turkish politics.

It is a mistake to “donate” the Muslims of this area to Turkey…

There are surely certain people who because of ambitions cultivate the turcophilism as a step in their social and political projection. There exist also certain others who because of economic benefits execute professionally that work. Finally, part of the Muslims are subjected to extortion by the Turkish authorities because of the relatives they have in Turkey and the need to communicate with them.

However, the overwhelming majority of the Muslim population are law abiding and peace loving citizens. They want to live peacefully on the land of their fathers and to contribute to their prosperity and progress. They perceive that they become organs of the Turkish politics. They know however what is happening in Turkey and they are able to compare the life of their relatives there with the life they have in Greece.

The Greek state must address itself to them. To show interest and care for them, to solve their social and economic problems, and develop the area where they are living. To break the ice which the Turkish policy conserves artificially.
These Greek citizens have no responsibility either for actions of Turkish politics, or for the selfish treacherous behaviour of a small number of their fellow-citizens.

The Greek State with the generosity, politeness and tolerance which characterise our civilisation, must show to our Muslims fellow-citizens that they are equal with the other Greek citizens, surround them with trust, care, and interest and expect to be met by the same sentiments by them. The circumstances help towards it, but they also impose it as a national necessity.

Text 29.
The following article was written as a response to an article by P. Dimitras (Eleftherotipia 21.07.1990, “The Muslims in Thrace and the “government of Athens…”).
Eleftherotipia 16.08.1990, “The Muslims of Thrace and the Greek state”, by Kon. D. Thanopoulos, Former prefect of Ksanthi [original in Greek]:

In any case the [minority] problem exists today, and two elements suffer its consequences:

A. The Greek state which is accused by Turkey (!!!) for violation of the Lausanne treaty, but which is also controlled by international organisations and other states whose ambassadors visit the area frequently to verify if the Muslims are oppressed or not!!!

Turkey which dissolved and enslaved the Hellenism of Istanbul, Gökçeada and Bozcaada, organised Attila [Cyprus invasion] and spared no right from violation, is now appearing as judge!!! and misleads unfortunately other states and organisations to accept—sometimes—its “accusations”!!!

The international organisations—recent visit by representative of “HELSINKI WATCH” in Thrace—do not want to correlate the treatment of the Constantinopolitan Greeks with that of the Muslims of Thrace, because it does not interest them. They do not want the slightest inequality for the minorities. However, today it is the easiest thing in the world to present the usual demands which the citizens of an area have towards the state (infrastructure, subsidies of products etc.) as unequal treatment because of a “minority policy”!!! (See the recent question of the MP Sadık in Parliament and the answer by the under-secretary Tsiplakos). So in this fashion the Greek state appears to be accused of violating the Lausanne treaty by the country which left nothing which was not violated…

B. The Muslims of Thrace are the other victims of this situation. Because they were never asked if they liked the protection of Turkey which was established by the Lausanne treaty and its terms. Particularly the Rodopi mountain populations, but also some on the plain. The mountain populations had to learn Turkish from teachers who came from Turkey, together with the official language of
the state (Greek), but also Arabic (for learning the Koran), and their mother tongue…
Nor is there anything to prove that those on the plain wanted the protection of Turkey, particularly since among them there were races which have no relation with Turkey (Circasians, Gypsies etc.). The only ones who benefited from the protection were the Muslim notables and the large land owners of Thrace who tried to keep their privileges in the area—just as they had before—and who directed the population. They made up the link between the consulate and the Muslims and made up—in the first decades—their political leadership. They sent their children to Turkey for studies—and became thus an example to others—creating in this way a channel of communication and influence by Turkey to the detriment of the minorities.

The civil war strengthened the stream of Muslims to Turkey (for reasons of safety, but also for investments and placement of money), while the “Northern danger” slackened our caution against the Turkish infiltration in Thrace. The consulate created a network with thousands of paid agents in all of Thrace and is now enforcing the policy of Turkey on the Muslim populations with EVERY MEANS. So today the Muslims of Thrace—and this is the truth:

a) Are largely controlled through the network of the Turkish consulate, which ensures that the wishes of Turkey are enforced.

b) In cases where they refuse—because they see that this policy goes against their interest—they are threatened and pressured. Everybody knows about the “black list” of the consulate. Here the names of those who do not comply are recorded and they are not granted “visas” to Turkey, i.e. to go and visit their children—who study there—or their relatives, or to take care of their property there. However, the “black list” is the least. During the recent election (April 1990) there were exercised unprecedented threats and violence against the Muslims to make them vote for the independent tickets supported by Turkey... The Greek state had unfortunately no possibility to control the situation.

In Thrace Turkey makes use of the principle “the thief screams to frighten the house owner” and unfortunately it works, because it is considered credible not only by foreigners, but also by Greeks, because more people control the Greek administration rather than pointing out the infringement of human rights by Turkey, not only in its own country but on foreign soil...

Since it can be taken for granted that Turkey will continue and intensify its efforts to make the Muslim minority into a problem for Greece, which it can employ at some opportunity as a “bargaining chip” and will ask for something in “exchange” to “sell” it, those who are affected by it should take their precautions.

A. The Greek state must redirect its policy as regards the Lausanne treaty in relation to the following issues.
a. The protection of the Greeks in Istanbul does not interest us any more because they became an almost “extinct species”... Those who remain are better protected by international agreements and human rights than by the Lausanne treaty.

c. The protection of the Patriarchate—which we all respect and love—is not secured by the Lausanne treaty or by good relations with Turkey, because in practice the Patriarchate serves Turkey. Turkey wants more than anybody to have it in Istanbul because it is a source of foreign currency. The threats which are regularly levelled against it are hypocrisy.

d. We must clarify our policy towards the Muslim minority in Thrace under the prism of our international obligations, but also the constitution’s principle of equality for all the citizens, so that there is no doubt by any Muslim Greek citizen that he will be protected and can live like his Christian fellow-citizens.

e. The administration of Thrace must be restructured and modernised on all levels and have clear directions for the policy which is implemented.

f. There must be implemented development programs in all of Thrace, so that the Thracians benefit equally with the other Greeks from the economic and social progress of the Greek state.

B. The Muslim citizens of Thrace must:

a. Perceive that they and their children live and will live within the borders of the Greek state. It is not in their interest to look or glance in any other direction. Those who do so, inflict great damage to themselves and their country and are totally unrealistic!

b. They must isolate and remove certain of their political leaders who mislead and deceive them... They are playing Turkey’s game, because they have secured “compensation” from that side. They have made fortunes—by playing this game—and they bear no cost of any legal persecution of their law infringement, because they have secured themselves a life in abundance... There are honest and serious citizens [Muslims], particularly in the local administration, and they must turn their confidence towards them. The latter must—as political leaders—take responsibility toward people and say the plain truth without fear.

c. They must approach the Greek state with their real and honest leadership and demand anything they need. The Greek state possesses and is in the position to offer them everything to secure the welfare and progress of its citizens. However, it is necessary to be certain that there is mutual trust.

d. Based on what was mentioned above it must be demanded that the Muslims in Thrace become cut off from the... stifling protection of the Lausanne treaty. The Muslims were not asked to become the object of protection. If they do not do this there will come a day when... their protector Turkey will sell them (!!!) like any protector of
its kind, as long as it finds good compensation. Does the mountain population with its age old presence in Thrace, or the poor farmers on the plain, think about this?

e. They must gradually—and with the assistance of the Greek state—improve the quality of their education (education of the children) and their economy (investments—deposits) must be directed towards Athens, so that the umbilical cord which ties them to Turkey can be cut! Then they will have nothing to fear from any “black list” or threats from the Consulate and its agents. Even if it seems that some of these proposals can only succeed in the long run, they are necessary and must start to be implemented.

f. Finally they must take the problem in their own hands. Because it is something which concerns their own future. Let them regard things realistically and let them be informed—if they do not know—how the Turks, but also the Bulgarians treat their religious minorities… Nobody will search their soul to judge them for their individual sympathies, but it is the Greek state which will offer them protection, work, social care, progress, but which also demands from its citizens to understand this.

[...].

Text 30.

*O Hronos* 28.09.1989 [original in Greek]:

In Komotini today 27 September 1989, Wednesday at 6 o’clock p.m. in the conference room of the holy metropolitan church of Maronia and Komotini a conference was took place attended by his reverence the metropolitan of Maronia-Komotini Mr. Damaskinos and the metropolitan of Aleksandrupoli Mr. Anthimos, representatives from the Local Administration and of mass organisations [mazikón foréon] in the prefectures Evros, Rodopi, and Ksanthi. The main issue of the conference was the national problem of Greek Thrace, as it is fashioned by the expansionist policy and diplomatic activity of Turkey, which attempts, as is known, to instigate the Muslim minority of the area to anti-national activities.

In the general discussion which lasted for 2½ hours and was carried out in an atmosphere of agreement and national unity, many of those who were present took the word, the seriousness of the issue was generally acknowledged and the immediate necessity of drastic measures from the Greek Government to prevent a series of threatening new national adventures.

Finally those who took part in the conference decided unanimously to submit the following proposals to the government:

1. To create in Thrace, with Komotini as its seat, a General Secretariat for religious minority matters, staffed with a Minister Plenipotentiary as its leader.

2. To bar the free circulation of Turkey’s agents, who also spy and instigate the Muslim Greek citizens into doing illegal actions.
3. To take the legal steps to limit the Turkish Consulate in Komotini strictly to its assigned duties.

4. To promote the procedure for carrying out the trials of those Muslims who carried out illegal actions during the incidents in January and May 1988.

5. To complete the procedures for judging at the court of appeal the case of the MP Sadik Ahmet, who was tried in the court of first instance to imprisonment of two years and six months for spreading false information and forgery.

6. To make a co-ordinated attempt by the responsible state services in co-operation with local prominent persons-institutions [parágontes] of the three prefectures in order to inform the international public opinion about the unequal treatment between the demographically increasing Muslims of Thrace and the expatriated Christians of Constantinople and the islands Imvros and Tenedos, a fact which constitutes a breach from Turkey’s side of fundamental conditions of the Lausanne Treaty.

7. To reinforce demographically the region of Thrace with the expatriated Greeks of Constantinople, Imvros and Tenedos and our brothers who are returning from Russia.

8. That the Ministry of Culture in co-operation with the Church and the cultural and educational institutions of Thrace takes an interest in order to succeed in the cultural development of the region with the discovering and utilisation of the abundance of archaeological sites of Thrace which proclaim its pre-Christian Greekness and its Greek-Byzantine character.

9. That the Greek State makes a general attempt to apply in practice a special development program for the three prefectures of Thrace, to encounter the existing unemployment and to stop the internal and external migration.

It was also decided unanimously:

1. In case there are no practical governmental measures to meet the above demands there should be an organised general mobilisation of the Christian population of the Thracian prefectures.

2. To submit the present resolution to the leader of the Government, the Foreign Minister, and the Minister of Macedonia-Thrace.

3. To publicise their present resolution in the newspapers in Athens, Thessaloniki, and Thrace.

4. To authorise the reverences the metropolitans to sign the present resolution on behalf of all those present.

DAMASKINOS, of Maronia and Komotini
ANTHIMOS, of Aleksandroupoli and Samothraki.

Text 31.

*Rizospastis* 01.02.1990, “One-way street” (leading article) [original in Greek]:
Turkey of the tens of thousands political prisoners, Turkey of the illegal communist party, Turkey of the imprisoned communists Kutlu and Sargin, appeared yesterday as the herald of human rights in Thrace, undertaking an “international campaign” in international organisations and third countries! Only the declaration of the Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman that the issues of human rights today “transcend the borders” could be regarded as a joke. It could be taken for a farce, when inside the borders of the Turkish state Ankara has displayed what respect of human rights means! However we had this too in store! We had in store to see the heirs of Evren in the role of guards of human rights for the Muslim minority of Thrace. We had in store to see the culmination of a systematic tactic of exploiting, generally, the minority issues by Ankara—an not only by her—as a means to unsettle the wider area. We had in store to see, finally, the danger provoked by the general raising of minority issues by certain international circles, which for years tolerated and encouraged either the “pan-turkism” of Ankara, or the most extreme and frantic nationalist leanings in other parts of the planet—not excepting Greece!

Let us speak clearly. Ankara does her job. To be more precise, she found an opportunity and exploited it. Supporting herself on a frantic minority of the Muslim element which exploited a series of existing minority problems, she cultivated systematically a climate of tension, unwrapping day by day the tangle of provocation for quite a while. Afterwards the “heavenly gift” appeared. The attempt to confront the problem with the logic of force. And the worst: A cultivation of a climate of nationalist excitement followed, by extreme right, reactionary circles which appeared as the protagonists of the sanctities of the Greek race. Because it was “a gift from Allah” for Ankara when extreme right elements of the Christian community attacked like assault battalions the Muslim property, threatening with revenge! Because it was “a gift from Allah” the cultivation of a climate of psychosis, which ended up in the known uncontrolled situation. Because as much services as agents of a foreign power and the chauvinist elements of the Muslim minority offer, just as dangerous, finally, just as much servants of “foreign patrons” are objectively those who instigate from the other side the most extreme nationalist elements, in demonstrations of bigotry and conflict with the Muslim minority.

We will end with what is maybe the key to finding solutions to the complex problems of the area! First should come the removal of obscurantism and its practices, the disbanding of and decisive denouncement of the climate of tension and fanaticism from wherever it is cultivated. Second, and more important: The confrontation of the underdevelopment and the dramatic neglect of the area. Today Thrace is the most neglected area of the EEC. The neglect and abandon—also the work of certain prevailing policies and practices—makes today its imprint in the most dramatic fashion on the explosive problem of the area, an area forgotten by both Christ and Allah! Its
development, its economic democracy, the defence of human rights for all the citizens of the area, the transcendence of whatever discrimination and artificial separation, has now become a one-way street. It is time for everybody to understand it. It is the only national policy…

**Text 32.**
*Eleftherotipia* 02.03.1990 [original in Greek]:

**New policy towards the Muslims**

The official policy towards the Muslim minority in Thrace (that has been unaltered for decades) has been radically revised.

The basic elements of this new policy is included in the proposal that was approved unanimously by the Prime Minister Ksen. Zolotas and the three political leaders K. Mitsotakis, An. Papandreu, and Har. Florakis at their meeting on 31 January.

It is reminded that in the meeting that took place two days after the events in Komotini, the Minister of Defence Tz. Tzannetakis and foreign minister And. Samaras, had also been invited and participated.

The proposal-document is published in today’s issue of the periodical “Scholiastis”.

The official text (with its wording and orthography) is as follows:

**A. Noticed dangers:**

1. Change of the population composition to the detriment of the Greek element. Already in the Nomós Rodopi the Muslims make up 54% of the population and their birth rate is larger than that of the Christian population, which, besides this, migrates.

   Establishment of continuous land between Turkey and the area inhabited by the minority. Already in the former purely Greek Nomós Evros the Muslims make up 7% (in Alexandretta 30% was enough and in Cyprus 18% to create precondition for annexation). It has been observed settlement of Pomaks in the north-eastern part of the prefecture and Muslim Gypsies in the area of Aleksandrupoli.

2. Imposition of united administration of the Vakıf revenues, which if controlled by the Turkish general consulate would be a very strong weapon in its hands.

3. Consolidation of the separate political entity of the Muslims. The independent Muslim candidates could be transformed to a minority party and maybe be able to elect a second candidate through the mechanism of the remaining votes. In any case they will prevail in the mixed townships [*Dímos/Kinótita*] where the Muslim element is in majority.

**B. Policy to implement:**

1. Keep up and if possible improve today’s population ratio through:

   a. Implementation of special development program in the area, which on the one hand will improve the living standard of the minority (higher living standard decreases
the birth rate) and on the other hand would keep the Greek element and maybe attract
new inhabitants.

b. Settlement of Pontian refugees, particularly in the prefectures Rodopi and Evros.

2. Consistent implementation of the policy of buying Muslim farm land and
encouraging the urbanisation of the minority (city population is more mobile than the
farmers) through a series of measures as improvement of the educational level,
employment in certain government services, employment in industry outside the
minority area etc.

3. Democratic administration by elected committees of the local Vakıf
property, to obstruct the control by the consul.

4. To strip the Muftis of their judicial duties pertaining to personal matters and
transfer of their responsibility to the Greek courts which however will always judge on
the basis of the holy Muslim Law, obeying strictly to the Lausanne Treaty.

5. Abolishment of the administrative harassment that not only showed to be
ineffective, but resulted in the opposite results of the desired and also expose us
internationally.

6. Reinforcement of the presence and authority of the state.

**Text 33.**

*Ena* 11.12.1991, “Sadık and Faikoğlu were elected with terror…”, Exclusive
interview with Meço Cemali- Mufti of Komotini, by Iordanis Hasapopoulos [original in
Greek]:

The mufti of Komotini who for the first time decides to speak to the Press, is a
wise, composed leader of the Muslim minority. A man with enormous response in his
flock, who have the conviction that the problems of his co-religionists, their improved
living conditions, as is the case also for the Christians of the area, will not be solved
with the delirious statements and the policy of alienated expediency of the
“independent” MPs Sadık and Faikoğlu. Indeed, he does not hesitate to say that both
of them serve organised interests and that they exploit the minority in the worst
possible fashion. The Mufti in his exclusive interview with “ENA”, touches another
great issue, which Turkey exploits lately. The rank of the Ecumenical Patriarchate
compared to the mufti office. Meço Cemali is categorical: The Patriarchate and the
Mufti office are two different things.

An old Muslim proverb says that “the water of the flood leaves, but the sand
remains”, and the mufti of Komotini, Meço Cemali, used it many times in our
conversation, a frozen morning last week, in his office in the border [akritiki] capital
of Rodopi to characterise the minority situation today.
In his person the Muslims found a religious leader whose decisions and actions are governed by mildness and moderateness, to the degree that in recent years they appeal to him even in matters which are not related to religion.

—Your most learned excellency [sofoloyiostate], for most Greeks who have not visited Thrace, the impression has been created that there is a continuous tension between Christians and Muslims in the area and that the minority constitutes “an open wound” for Greece. How do you answer as religious leader of the minority.

—I do not want to claim that the relations between the two religious elements are on the most ideal level at this moment. On the contrary. However, there are often great exaggerations or distortions in the picture presented to the public opinion. I do not know to which degree this expresses the inmost desires of someone. Anyway, we should not allow the balkanisation of Thrace. We on our side, will do whatever possible to efface whatever misunderstandings and prejudices may exist at the moment and forge the peaceful co-existence of the two elements. The Mufti office of Komotini is working out a plan-proposal towards this purpose.

The minority is not a “wound” or a headache for Greece. It can however be regarded as a field of challenge for exercising democracy and Europeanisation. To let the minority population live, express itself, and invest freely, without limitations and discrimination.

I would say that the minority problem tends to adjust to the new reality which has emerged. We would like this adjustment to take place without strong bumps, without the fear and danger of rupture or break down in the structure.

We the peace-loving faithful to the calls of the peaceful Islam are not responsible for the bumps. It is our desire to pass smoothly to the new phase, which we hope will be characterised by peaceful cohabitation and creative co-existence of the religious and cultural mosaic in our homeland Thrace.

As a minority intellectual is saying, the twofold demand of the minority is: equal rights and respect for its religious-ethnic-cultural particularities.

—However, since you say that the minority wants to live peacefully, why does it give vote of “confidence” to the two independent MPs who follow a policy of tension, which most times serves the interests of Turkey?

—The minority does not serve the interests of Turkey. It has the ambition to serve the Greek-Turkish friendship, but it was never given the opportunity to prove it. Others who were much more powerful destined it for the opposite role, without the minority desiring so.

I would like to refer to the relations of the minority with Turkey, without it being regarded as a “crime” or provocation, but as an impression of the reality, paraphrasing the line of the poet: “If half the heart of the minority is here, the other half is in Turkey.”
As regards the “independent” minority MPs, I put them in inverted commas because they are neither independent nor belonging to the minority. And I assure you, without playing with words, that the minority did not vote for them. The “vote of confidence” was a vote of terror and pressure.

—What are your own relations with the independent MPs?
—Non existent. I am independent. They are dependent.
—How do you see the future of the independent MPs?
—The water of the flood leaves, while the sand remains. The future of the two MPs ends the day new elections are proclaimed.
—When the new mufti of Ksanthi was to be elected Mr. Faikoğlu claimed that the institution of the Patriarch is the same as that of the mufti. In your view is there such a relation?
—Islam has five pillars. A popular proverb, paraphrased, refer to a sixth pillar: “Know your limits.” I do not occupy myself with people who endeavour to calumniate Islam and the minority. It is my opinion that with political criteria there is correlation. But with religious criteria there is not. The institution of mufti corresponds with that of metropolitan.
—The new law regarding muftis which the government passed, has created the impression that it is anti-Islamic. What do you say?
—Indeed, the ignorance about Islam, the lack of dialogue by the state with the responsible minority members and the Greek fears concerning external factors, particularly at this moment, led her to replace suddenly and without given notice the law 2345/1920, which stipulated the election of mufti with general election [election by all Muslims], a procedure which has never been implemented. The new law reflects the weaknesses and fears of the state. It gives complete control of the procedure to the prefect, it leaves an open window so that unsuitable individuals may put forward their candidature and acquire the dignity of mufti.

These weaknesses, after indeed the election of Patriarch in Istanbul without problems, will according to rumours that are circulating be included in the State Department report for human rights in 1992. This law needs immediate modification, and improvement with the right kind of dialogue.
—You have from time to time met the Prime Minister Mr. Mitsotakis. How are your relations with him?
—The best possible. I would like to express my deep respect for his person.
—Did the same take place with Mr. Papandreu?
—Yes, I had the fortune to meet the chairman of PASOK too, when he was Prime Minister.
— Were your visits from time to time to the Prime Minister formal calls? Because there is the impression that they were directed towards solving minority problems which were “on ice”.
— The Prime Minister always gives me the opportunity to display the problems of our area, and particularly of the minority.
— Is it true that after your latest visit to the Premier influential local persons [parágontes] were displeased?
— If you are thinking of those in administrative positions, unfortunately yes. The “dubalkanisation” of the local persons of importance is a painful procedure for them and we expect resistance. Around the old minority affairs establishment there have been organised interests and conceptions, but also behaviour which will not easily allow the realisation of renewal and reforms. A different kind of expedience provokes resistance from organised interests also within the minority.
— Do you know of examples of organised interest functioning against the minority?
— I will answer you with a saying. “It’s a public secret” [o kósmos to ehei túmbano ki emís krifó kamári]. I am not the suitable person to make exposures. I refer you to the declarations of vice-minister Ms. Tsuderu, who accuses the actions of exactly these organised networks. As a simple example, I will tell you that no pharmacist from the minority was able to get permission to open a pharmacy.
— However, you speak about rackets within the minority. Why would a Muslim want to exploit his co-religionist.
— It is natural that also some people from the minority should adjust to the old minority regime. They do now desire, consciously or unconsciously, the perpetuation of the old order. They worry about the changes, the reforms, even though they proceed with the speed of a turtle. For this reason they co-operate with the declared opponents, screaming, provoking in an attempt to lead things to a dead end. That is why they provoke with their two spokesmen.
— You consequently assert that the two independent MPs are expressing the organised interests and in reality do not want the solutions of the minority’s problems?
— I maintain that they are the spoilt children of the anti-minority circles. It is not possible to explain otherwise the extreme publicity enjoyed by every statement or movement by them, which has always the same goal: to provoke the public opinion against the minority. They have become the main alibi for not realising the announced reforms to the minority regime.
— Which problems did you present lately to the Prime Minister?
— In our last meeting 27 September, he had the patience to listen to my opinion about all Mr. Prime Minister announced would be solved in the spirit of equal rights and which is the essence of the minority issue.
The reinstatement of equal rights goes with a slow pace. Lately I presented mainly
the question of the agricultural prisons which are scheduled to be established in the
plain of Komotini. The establishment of agricultural prisons is not public works, it is
anti-public works. And for that reason I asked the Prime Minister to reconsider the
question. The expropriation of the specific areas of about 10,000 stremma, will
essentially disinherit 14,000 Muslim farmers, 12 villages. So it is the question of an
enormous social problem which can be avoided, since the prisons may be built in a
different areas of the Rodopi prefecture. I was promised by the Prime Minister that he
would re-examine the question and freeze it for the moment.

Later of course, came the unexplainable decision of the prefect to proceed with the
expropriation. Today, after a new intervention by me to the Prime Minister’s office,
the prefectural decision appeared [about the abolishment].
—Why, however did Sadık declare that blood would be spilled in Thrace for the
expropriations?
—Everyone works according to his level. The pledge to spill his blood for the
minority cause could have been sacred, if he did not repeat it so often and for
insignificant matters, like the pseudo-threats and pseudo-suicide attempts by hysteric
little girls in love. However, he has not spilled it yet, nor does he have the intention to
spill it.
—From time to time the various Turkish governments mention the minority in Thrace.
Do you believe that Turkey has a saying in the minority issue and how do you
comment on her policy up until now?
—I myself would be the last to have anything good to say about the minority policy of
the former Turkish government, to which I was among the first victims. However,
Turkey has a legitimate right to take as much interest in the minority of Thrace, as
Greece does in the minority in Istanbul and the Patriarchate.
—Which role do you believe the Turkish consulate in Komotini play and what is your
opinion about the demand expressed by local people of influence to close it?
—The consulate in Komotini is not an autonomous institution. It represents Turkey
and its role is determined by the Foreign Ministry of Turkey. I do not agree to that it
should be closed, but I ask it to change its behaviour towards the minority. And this
does again depend on the Turkish government. Now that it changed, I hope that there
will be a change in the minority policy too.
—Your most learned excellency, in closing I would like to ask you about the content
of the plan-proposal you mentioned earlier and which according to your opinion would
de-escalate the tension in the area?
—First of all, economic development of the area. Dialogue with the government on
one hand and with our Christian fellow citizens on the other, for the registration of the
problems, the submission of common proposals and their implementation. It is easy to restore a climate of confidence which does not exist now.

—So you believe that the Greek state does not recognise your problems?
—Many times I have had the impression that the centre is not well informed, or misinformed. Let us remember that there are also local centres of decision and management of the minority policy.

Text 34.
Letter from Sadik dated 27.08.1992 to Prime Minister Mitsotakis [original in Greek. The letter is badly written which makes the translation difficult]:

To the Prime Minister
Mr. K. Mitsotakis.
Honourable Mr. Prime Minister,

I have decided to disturb you again, because the Ministers in charge are without authority in the minority issues. The only competent and responsible are you.

As you know, I listened very carefully to your announcements three months ago in the Rodopi prefecture about equal rights, and to the discrimination which continues, correction of the past mistakes, and harmonic cohabitation of the two elements (Turks and Greeks).

However, what are you doing now Mr. Prime Minister? Greater and more mistakes so that the country is exposed again abroad. When we report it to You we present with irrefutable evidence, they regard us to be anti-Greeks. How do you regard those who apply the undemocratic and inhuman system? As heroes!!

Honourable Mr. Prime Minister
We are at the end of the 20th century. The human and minority rights, religious, educational, individual freedom unfolds rapidly around us and particularly in the EEC where also our country is member. For example a simple itinerant fisherman is not able to obtain his permit so that he can care for his family, because the Prefect of Rodopi takes it away from him after 10 years when he had it and at the same time he issues a permit to another fellow citizen because he is of Greek descent. When a university graduate is not able to open pharmacy, business [hóros ergásías] or is not accepted in public services only because he is member of the Turkish Minority and the Government Minster leaves the question which I submit to him unanswered or answers me completely differently than what is needed. About 5,000 illegal buildings which belong to the Turkish minority are pending and await legalisation (you know very well why they are illegal) only in the Rodopi Prefecture. Thousands of applications for hunting permits are pending. Our children are waiting for the approval by the Ministry of Education of the Turkish schoolbooks which are at the Ministry and
study without schoolbooks. My son takes entrance exams for the Celâl Bayar secondary school when there exists an obligatory education law for 9-year basic education and you are personally breaking the law. (In a few days you will once more personally break the law by carrying out the entrance exams for our two secondary schools). We are oppressed in various ways to accept the religious leaders appointed by the Government displacing recently by force the Mufti of Ksanthi, contrary to the desire of the minority even though there are muftis elected by the minority population who wait to take up their office. Simultaneously we are asked to conform with the ghost-law \([\text{nómos fántasma}]\) concerning “Muslim religious Personnel” which only serves the non-Muslims and violates vehemently the Lausanne Treaty, the human rights, and the religious freedom. You take away the Greek citizenship without any justification and court decision from those who are not of Greek descent. Even though these too have Greek citizenship and serve in the Greek Army, they work in another prefecture outside Thrace, from students, from farmer so that he loses his property to the public treasury, from the elderly to avoid giving him pension, not to let them obtain Greek citizenship even though they live in Thrace for 50 years, only because they are of Turkish descent. When the Committees for Land-redistribution \([\text{anadasmós}]\) behind the idea of “Improving the agricultural income” aim to take away the fertile land from the members of the Turkish minority in quality and quantity and regard as public or waste land the land they have inherited from their ancestors. When the Greek Parliament votes through a law on Your initiative with a 3% limit for independent parliamentary candidates on a national level so that Greece will again have the first place in Europe and internationally at a time when the democratic West votes through new laws so that their minorities are represented in their Parliament (Rumania), which are not able to elect MP, because of the small number of their members. You will remember very well the Danish minority in North Germany which numbers about 25,000, but sends representative to the local federate Government, and is in a key position every time in the Government. If I will not be re-elected as MP do not think that I will stop to claim the rights of the Turkish minority, demanding more intensely.

Honourable Mr. Prime Minister,

When so many trials befall the Turkish minority in Western Thrace and the Turks in Kos are without Turkish primary school, elimination of the right of free choice for the education of their children after primary school in the forbidden zone in Thrace. After this how can the Government speak about good life, equal rights, enjoyment of wealth \([\text{apólavsi agathon}]\), free education and religion in Thrace. If these people and we their representatives will not cry out who will cry out? It is not sufficient with big words at the Council of Geneva about protection of minority rights and during Your visit to Thrace. When there is such a competent Prefect in my prefecture who applies the opposite of the announcements of his Prime Minister and even puts pressure on our
village leaders [próedros] wanting us to concede the few small holdings and land pious foundation lands belonging to the Turkish minority to the Pontians which you intend to settle in the Prefecture, for reasons of expediency, instead of conceding it from the Greek element which have waste areas of land.

Honourable Mr. Prime Minister,
The minority policy in application at the moment is also wrong. Different nationalities cannot coexist and live together in our age and in the future with the mentality of the past. We have rapid developments in all sectors. First of all in the human rights, individual freedoms, and minority rights. It is necessary that we conform to them. Otherwise the position of our country in the European and international field will be much more difficult.

The idea to decrease the number of the minority, to cause economic decline, the attempt not to educate our children will not be realised in our century. All the countries and international organisations knows about the life of the Turkish Minority in Western Thrace, about Greek Democracy and whether the human rights are respected or not.

The only thing which remains Honourable Mister Prime Minister is that you appoint a humanist [anthropistís] Prefect to the Rodopi prefecture and to realise Your announcements which you made here in Western Thrace. Because no one can accept just the obligations [tis ipohreósis ep’ápiron] without obtaining his rights too.

Athens 27 August 1991
With Respect

Independent MP
Rodopi Prefecture

Sadık Ahmet Sadık
Text 35.

Eleftherotipia 19.9.1993, A letter from the mufti Meço Cemali included in the piece by “Ios tis Kiriakis” about the problems encountered by a Muslim pharmacist [original in Greek]:

Meço Cemali: There are invisible obstacles…

To the honourable
Mr. President of the government, Athens
Mister President,

On 27 September we had a personal meeting in Athens, and I made you aware of various issues which concern my district.

Among those were the request of the pharmacist Cahit Çingur who today lives in Ksanthi and is the son of a near friend, who submitted on 6 May 1991 all the legal supporting documents and the application (I enclose a photocopy) for permission to found a pharmacy in his name.

After that, in spite of his written application, his personal representations to the prefect of Ksanthi and the Bureau of Health, it was impossible for him to obtain the above permission. The answer from the latter service was firm, “the prefect does not sign it”.

During my personal contact with you, you showed understanding when I exposed to you the question, and assured that all the minority issues would be confronted within the framework of the laws in force, and equality before the law for all Greek citizens.

After I returned here, I assured the interested party that his problem was encountered within the framework of the above spirit and the granting of permission was certain.

Mr. President,

In spite of this, only two days ago it became known that he will not be given the aforementioned permission.

I am sad to ascertain that in our endeavours for equality before the law, and indeed for persons where no one can find faults, it appears that they encounter shoals and invisible obstacles, whose existence sabotage the above attempts, perpetuates a situation which has developed so negatively in the area and decreases the authority of the government, the President and me as religious leader.

In expectancy of you intervention
praise the Lord

The Mufti of Komotini
Text 36.
*Eleftherotipia* 15.08.1993, “The Bazaar of Sadık and Faikoğlu”, by Kira Adam [original in Greek]:

Last week the Greek parliament was turned into an immense and murky bazaar, as all sides, in order to vote for or against the important draft law for OTE, surpassed with ease all the codes and principles for parliamentary rules and methods.

The sad picture presented by the Greek parliament could “simply” have been recorded on the worst pages of its recent life, if it was not marked by an important “side effect”, which appeared for the first time, but will continue to occupy Greek political life in the future.

The serious “side effect” which appeared last week in parliament is the elevation of the independent Muslim MPs Mr. Sadık and Faikoğlu to regulating factors in the political affairs of the country.

But still. The government and opposition, for diametrically opposed reasons, of course, did whatever they could to elevate these two professed and extremist independent MPs into arbiters of the developments.

The government, knowing beforehand that in this 2nd summer session of parliament it presented a clear minority picture, resorted to all means, from compromise to extortion, in unending deliberations in the wings, to pass a law draft of immense importance, such as the one of OTE.

The doddering government knew right from the start that in this critical phase it was confronted with the problem of the votes of the two independent MPs, who have repeatedly declared and proved that, while they are part of the Greek parliament, they take instructions and act on the basis of Ankara’s orders.

So the government ought, right from the start, to declare that it would support itself on its own, marginal of course, votes, to pass its policy which was also under internal attack. In this matter it would have closed immediately the issue of the Muslims and because of the circumstances it would impose party discipline and give it the character of internal vote of confidence for the government.

On the contrary, the government used double standards, opening in this fashion the bags of Aeolus inside and outside parliament.

The government was not bothered by the “beneficial” vote of the two Muslims for the renowned article 8, as until the last moment and in spite of the stormy reactions by the opposition, it did not dare to say loudly that it would not support itself on Sadık and Faikoğlu to vote through the law draft for OTE.

The whole opposition in its attempt to accomplish the heaviest and most opportune blows possible to the deeply shaken government, applied to the extreme the “dogma” “the goal justifies the means” and helped to magnify exceedingly the problem with the
vote of the two Muslims. As if the opposition did not know that in this manner it contributed greatly to open “the issue of Western Thrace”, something which certainly everybody does not wish to happen, but nobody did anything to prevent it in this concrete instance.

“Fiery” declarations inside and outside parliament, even led the Press to frenzied headlines and publications about the vote “of the Turks”, “of the Muslims”, “of Allah”, which of course Ankara could like to frame and put it in a conspicuous spot within the framework of the politics which she follows towards the minority in Western Thrace.

It would be completely unreasonable for someone not to expect that the two Muslim MPs who are steadily instigated by Ankara would not grasp the “golden opportunity” which was generously offered them, and that they too with the greatest ease would busy themselves in an eastern style bazaar with the Greek authorities—on the highest level, government and parliament—and with what they project as concerning “their” minority.

The two independent Muslim MPs, who do not lose the opportunity to inveigh against Greece in international organisations and fora—after first visiting and taking evident directions from Ankara—had no scruples in bringing the same tactic within the Greek parliament, since in reality both the government and the opposition “impelled” them to do it.

It has little significance if the memorandum with the 17 demands by the “Turkish-Muslim” (!) minority, which they submitted both to the government and the Parliament, was rejected by the government or if it constitutes proof of “a transaction” as the opposition insists stubbornly.

The crux of the matter is that for the first time the two (we will say it again) independent MPs directly instigated from Ankara submitted officially and publicly to the Greek government and inside the Greek parliament the same demands with which they use to slamed the country internationally as “accountable” for its minority politics and “transgressor” of minority rights.

What took place last week in the Greek parliament, with the full responsibility of the Greek MPs and their parties, constitutes in reality the vaulting-horse of Ankara towards the responsible international organisations, to claim with well-founded basis by now, since there exists the officially submitted memorandum, that indeed there is a “Western Thrace problem” in Greece.

The country has in the past been beleaguered with claims about infringement of minority rights and many times in the past the breath of the latest governments has been cut by the various “reprimands” for its minority politics, by the reports of the State Department, Helsinki Watch, representatives of CSCE etc. Until now Athens
was able, always at the last moment, to avert the very negative consequences for her of the organised campaign of Ankara against the country.

After last week, within the delirious raving and base party strife, many have the right by now, to turn proudly their palm toward their face [this refers to a contemptuous and insulting gesture known as múndza] for the manner in which they exploited sensitive national issues for internal political strife and consumption.

**Text 37.**

*Ethnos* 10.01.1993, “Ahmet Faikoğlu the independent MP of Ksanthi, in an unexpected interview, declares that he does not want the Turkish flag to wave in Western Thrace - I am proud that I was born in Greece”, by Marianna Polihroniadu [original in Greek]:

Maybe somebody would expect that an interview with the MP of Ksanthi and one of the two representatives of the Muslim minority in Greece, would necessarily take place on a black and white background. However, since in journalism—as in other places in life—nothing is only black and white, the MP of Ksanthi Ahmet Faikoğlu, in an exclusive as well as unexpected interview to “Ethnos on Sunday”, speaks for the first time about everything.

About Greece and Turkey, about the problems of the Muslim minority in Western Thrace, about Cyprus and Macedonia which is only Greek, but also about the foreign finger and about coffee which is completely Brazilian, just as about the foreign interests which are also “Brazilian” and almost desire the two countries to be in turmoil with the concealed intention to involve them in a Balkan clash with the ulterior goal of selling weapons.

–Are you a Greek citizen or Turkish?
–I am a Turk with Greek citizenship. [Imai Ellinas politis Türkos]
–I.e. as we say neither fish not meat?
–No, both fish and meat. Everybody belongs to a race, has a descent. So I am of Turkish descent with Greek citizenship, however my citizenship is going through a crisis.

–Why is it going through a crisis Mr. Faikoğlu?
–Because a society for guarding constitutional rights and supporting the Constitution and one of its members—great Greek nationalist [ellinópsihos]—filed a suit against me and the Minister of Interior because he does not apply the article 19 or 20, since I said during my speech in Parliament that those who live as a minority in Thrace are Turks.

–Do you not know Mr. Faikoğlu that according to the international agreements the minority which lives in Western Thrace are not characterised as Turks but as Greek Muslim citizens?
–I know that there are no Christian Turks belonging to the minority which lives in Istanbul [Constantinople], they are called Greeks of Istanbul.
–What does the official Turkish state say about this?
–The same as the Greek. But let me tell you what I say. That the Greek minority of Istanbul are Christians by religion, of Greek descent and Turkish citizens. Just as we are Muslims by religion, of Turkish descent and Greek citizens.
–As Greek citizens you ought to accept and apply the laws of Greek Justice.
–Of course. We vote for the laws and we accept them.
–Since you vote for them and accept them, why are you so often revile against Greek Justice?
–Look, we have taken recourse to Justice for all the issues in abeyance to the detriment of the minority and all the issues where the laws are not enforced.

Just today I have prepared a petition against the prefect, who has proceeded with actions overstepping his duties.

**The treaties**

–Where has the prefect of Ksanthi overstepped his duties?
–I will tell you. As anticipated by the laws as well as the Lausanne treaty, the prefect should have invited the responsible persons of the minority and tell them: “Gentlemen, the Greek state will grant you a sum of money. This sum comes partly from the Greek Public and partly from the European Community”. Instead of doing something like this the prefects of Rodopi and Ksanthi (according to the articles 40 and 41 of the Treaty which says that if the Greek state disposes of money, they should be given to the committees of the minority), they neglected completely our existence and have become contractors themselves and administer this sum. Do you understand where the money of the Greek state goes…
–Regarding the issue of the books, which I do not understand, can you explain me why you protest vehemently?
–Certainly. Because those books which are in Turkish according to the educational protocol of ’51 and ’61, came earlier from Turkey. Afterwards an inspection here found that they harm Greece nationally, because these books contain photos of Atatürk or have the national anthem of Turkey and the Turkish flag.

I have no objection to that. Let the Foreign Ministry or the responsible persons take these books, let them take away these parts and replace them with the Greek flag, the Greek national anthem, the photo of Karamanlis, whatever they want. That does not bother us.
–So what is bothering you Mr. Faikoğlu.
–It bothers us that Greece should allow the distribution of these books sent by Turkey.
–What makes finally these books so good that you need them so much, do they have such a great value from an academic point of view?
–Let me tell you something. Let us look at the matter from the Greek point of view. The Greek state endeavours to cut off every contact or relation of the Greek citizens who make up the Turkish minority of Western Thrace (with) Turkey. However, since the Greek state went and contracted bilateral agreements—before I was even born—by the signing of the educational protocol, why do they now want to cut me off from Turkey? Can you cut some Greek Christian off from Greece.

Protest
–However, many Greek Christians were compelled to be cut off from Greece for much graver and substantial reasons than you refer to.
–Look, if Greece believes that Turkey does not apply the educational protocol, let the one responsible from the Greek side step forward and denounce the Turkish government because it is not applying the educational protocol it contracted with Greece.
–Are you speaking seriously now, Mr. Faikoğlu, are these substantial matters to occupy the two states? Historic changes take place here, ships disappears here… Soon you will tell me that it is a problem what Mr. Sadık invoked too, i.e. that the prefect of Rodopi should know and correspond in Turkish. Really, do you agree with his opinion?
–The more languages a prefect knows, the better. But I do not regard it a necessity that he knows Turkish. Maybe the prefect of Evia knows French and English for example…
–You Mr. Faikoğlu as well as your colleague Mr. Sadık, create often the impression that you demand some things—-independent of whether the demands are justified or not—in an extremely provocative fashion. Do you believe that this is how the Greek-Turkish relations are normalised?
–This takes place because they do not judge correctly what we say. And often what we say is misinterpreted. I think that even though we are characterised as provocative, our way of working has helped the Greek state. Because a Greece known for its democracy should not be slandered in the European countries, because it deprives the Greek citizen in Western Thrace of his legal rights. We contributed because we compelled Mitsotakis to come with the exhortation of other MPs as well and we achieved that the Muslims too have the right to build and buy houses.
The... Coffee

–Recently, Mr. Faikoğlu, Mr. Randsom visited you and Mr. Sadık—formally—as you characterised it. Since I am unable to understand the reason behind this formal visit, maybe you can analyse it a little?

–The State Department has issued a special announcement some time ago, which said that an ethnic identity is getting lost in Western Thrace and referred specifically to the Turkish minority. However, later, after certain things had intervened during that time period and with the pressure of many MPs of the Greek Parliament and with the visit by Mitsotakis in Western Thrace who promised some benefits on the basis of equal rights, maybe these people wanted to ascertain on the spot too if there really have been certain changes!…

And since there is only one minority in Greece, they considered it meaningful to visit us who are its representatives. But there had also preceded a “formal” visit by Mr. Sadık to America where he had met personally Mr. Randsom. When he came here, he expressed his thanks (?), we discussed, and treated him a coffee…

–Greek or… Turkish?

–Brazilian (laughs). And of course we were not able to orient him about all the issues but we promised that we would see each other again. It was a formal visit, he was doing his job.

–Once we are referring constantly to minority issues I would like to hear your opinion about the large Kurdish minority in Turkey. You, and particularly your colleague Mr. Sadık, who have excessive sensitivity in minority issues, we have not seen you to express similar sensitivity about the genocide of the Kurds in Turkey.

–I will answer for myself, I do not know about Mr. Sadık. Recently I visited Turkey after invitation by Demirel, taking part in a committee which went to the South-Eastern part of Turkey, where the Kurdish issue is prominent. And I was flabbergasted because I ascertained that in this sensitive area of Turkey-Syria-Iraq where there is a question about Kurdish and Turkish ethnicity [katagoyl], Turkey has done the greatest irrigation works. And I ask myself if Turkey has done such works, why should not Greece too. Because these works will be enjoyed by those who are ethnic Kurds.

–How will the Kurds enjoy these works you are mentioning, Mr. Faikoğlu? To “enjoy” something, you have to be alive. And the scenes we watch taking place there, and the accusations by the Kurds, do not convince us about something like this.

–Look, things are not like they present Them. There is foreign manipulation [eksoterikós dáktilos] by people who want to partition Turkey by using some Kurdish extremists.
I do not speak…
–So there is no violation of the Kurds’ rights in Turkey at the moment, according to your opinion?
–When someone endeavours to partition a country, many things may happen. But it is not proper to my position as member of the Greek Parliament to speak about the issues of other states.
–So let us return to our own things. I will pose you an undisguised “raw” question, Mr. Faikoğlu. You personally as MP of Ksanthi who represents the Muslim minority of Thrace, would you desire to make up an independent state with the remaining Eastern Thrace or to unite with Turkey?
–No, neither up until now nor in the future do I intend to strive for, because I am an ethnic Turk [Türkos stin katagoyl], the Turkish flag to wave in Western Thrace or that the Western and Eastern Thrace become a separate state.

I respect the borders of the country I am living in, I belong to the peace lovers and accept what Atatürk said, that Turkey should not have expansionist ambitions towards Greece. But that does not mean that I will not speak about the problems we confront as minority.
–However, the fashion in which you present those problems certain times creates the impression that we other Greeks have a racist behaviour against the Muslim Greeks of Western Thrace. And sincerely I am asking myself if for example such instances of racial violence which are taking place lately in Germany against the Turks and against the other immigrants had taken place in our country, what magnitude would it take on in the Turkish Press…
–Look, let us not compare things that are incomparable. The Greek spirit cannot be compared with that of the Germans. Greece may face problems, but it is a civilised country, a country with 2,500 years of democracy behind it. For this reason, I too who am born here, in the country of Democritus and Aristotle, am proud that my country is the cradle of civilisation.
–Are you satisfied with the “cohabitation” of Christians and Muslims in your area, do you have any problems between you?
–No, we do not have problems, the behaviour of the Greek Christians towards the Muslims cannot be compared to that of the Germans. I will give you an example, our best friend is an ethnic Greek neighbour. At the house of my father we have a vegetable garden which we keep open, we have not fenced it in so that Mrs. Marika can pass by freely and we to Mrs. Marika.
–I would like you to tell me as Greek MP, how do you view the problem of Skopje and activities of the Skopians against our country.
THE MUSLIM MINORITY OF GREEK THRACE

All the actions of those people are to be condemned. **Macedonia is one and Greek!**

In the case that we have unilateral recognition of this state with the name Macedonia by foreign states, including Turkey, would you condemn such a thing?

**Clearly, I would condemn it.** We should not confuse our issues with issues directed against the territorial integrity of our country. It is completely different. Those people try to falsify the history and hide their territorial ambitions behind all this.

**The war**

Mr. Faikoğlu, you live in a sensitive area, do you fear the entanglement of our country in a Balkan clash?

We are going through a very difficult period for the Balkans. Our country must be careful not to become entangled in this “snare”, because I am afraid that some people want to involve her.

Who concretely? Would you name them?

It is better not to name them. A general world crisis is reigning and the only country which is peace loving and have no expansionist ambitions is Greece. I hope that things will go well and that logic will prevail in the end.

Because today when we have started as a country to progress and we too as a minority hope for better days, it would be a catastrophe if Greece got involved in a conflict.

Could Turkey too be behind these countries which we do not name which want our country involved in a conflict?

Turkey and Greece both because of history and because of neighbourhood are “condemned to live peacefully” and they should co-operate and not let the foreign interests separate them.

With the contact I had recently with Mr. Demirel, whom I know personally and is an intelligent person, I ascertained that there is good intention also by the Turkish side.

However, I fear the foreign factor which exploits them, creating disturbances in the two countries with the obvious intention to sell weapons.

What you are saying, Mr. Faikoğlu, is very interesting, but do you not think that the relations between the two countries would have been a lot better if it were not for the “thorn” named Cyprus?

Look, I would like not to speak about this issue because of my particular position, but since you insist I will tell you my opinion.

I am tired of seeing all these years the one (Turkish Cypriots) and the other (Greek Cypriots) travelling around carrying with them a whole staff of diplomats and not finding a solution.

What are your opinions about the Ghali proposals? Can they be realised?
Look, if the Ghali proposals can be realised or not has no significance if those who live there, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots respectively do not want to apply them.

In my opinion the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots should sit down together and try to find out what serves them, because that is the only way to find a viable solution, and at the same time putting an end to that the relations between Greece and Turkey too are poisoned because of them.

—Mr. Faikoğlu, we are approaching elections. In closing I would like you to tell me that if the election result depended on one MP, and PASOK were in the position N.D. was in [in 1989–1990], would you support it?

—Yes, because I believe that it is more mature now and would not repeat mistakes of the past.

**Text 38.**

*Avyi (on Sunday)* 10.03.1991, “The Greeks love us, but their leaders do not”,

Interview of Sadık by Despina Makrinu [original in Greek]:

Ahmet Sadık is in the news almost daily. Every move, every word by him is commented upon and he often attracts reactions from the government. A doctor who studied in Thessaloniki, from a family who lives in Greece from 1350, MP for Rodopi elected with 30,000 votes by the minority. He declares himself to be Greek citizen, of Turkish origin and Muslim by religion. The minority, however, is Turkish—he insists—and there is no other minority in the area. He claims that “I never met anyone who said that he was Pomak or anything else”.

And the minorities in Turkey? Their treatment? He does not comment on them, he declares “Let us first solve our own problems”... Mr. Sadık speaks about all this in “Avyi on Sunday”.

—Mr. Sadık, a little while ago, the report of the State Department which mentioned Slavo-Macedonian and Muslim minorities which are oppressed in Greece. Do you agree with this report?

—The report does not speak about a Muslim, but a Turkish minority. Everybody has a descent and the report speaks clearly about a Turkish minority and about the oppression and discrimination which takes place to the detriment of this minority.

—So you agree.

—Of course I agree. Today the human rights are not in force, nor the laws, neither the Greek constitution as regards the minority.

—Do you have any particular point to single out.
-There are many. I have personally written a text which I have distributed to everybody, where I write analytically about all the problems.

-Last year, you had declared personally that you are a Greek citizen, of Turkish descent and Muslim by religion. Do you insist today on that definition.

-Of course I insist because that is how it is. Everybody has a descent. The Greek prime minister speaks of a Greek minority in Istanbul.

  Why should the minority here not be Turkish?

-However, you are a Greek citizen.

-Nobody denies that.

-When did your forefathers come to Greece?

-Around 1350. The manners and customs, the religions, everything is like it was then.

-Do you speak Turkish at home?

-Yes, of course. We have also Turkish primary schools for our children, although they have been very neglected.

-So you insist that the minority is Turkish?

-But since these people are Turks, what can we do about it?

-However, the Lausanne Treaty defines the minority as Muslim.

-The Lausanne Treaty speaks about a Muslim minority in Thrace and a non-Muslim minority in Istanbul.

-Do you agree or disagree with this definition?

-The religions gradually change to nationalist dogmas. However, since these agreements took place between Greece and Turkey, they were mutually accepted. The descent does not change, the religion may change over time. What is significant is that all this is not valid any more, recently in Paris at OSCE, it was decided that everybody could declare what they believe and feel and that it should be respected. The other day Mr. Kirkos had said this very clearly in Parliament.

-How do you comment on the fact that in the census that is to take place 17 March, there is no paragraph referring to this, which would naturally assist in recording what people feel to be?

-It should be included so that we would know eventually how many they are. This is another negligence by the State.

-What do you aspire to, both you personally and the minority you belong to?

-We want to live as human beings. We want our rights. That everybody will have what they need to live. We want to be able to build our houses, mosques, and elect our own Mufti. The Greek state cannot designate which Mufti we will have. In Muslim countries where there are Greek minorities, they elect their bishops themselves.
However, when I said that in parliament, Mr. Suflias gave me the example of Muslim countries where the Mufti is appointed. But that is different, it is not a foreign country.

-**How important is this for you?**
-It is very important. How can he who is appointed represent me?

-**However, Mr. Sadık, your Mufti is not approved of by the whole minority if I am not mistaken...**
-Who has said that? On the day of election about 10,000 people voted by raising their hand. You have to bear in mind that the women do not vote so the 10,000 becomes automatically 20,000.

-**How many people do the Muslim minority consist of today?**
-How can we know? Have they ever made a census?

-**How do you comment on the treatment of minorities in Turkey?**
-That is an issue for Turkey and not for me. I have never investigated it. Turkey knows clearly about those things, we do only know about our own problems. I do not comment on this issue at all. Others will comment on it.

-**However, should you not be able to comment on it?**
-We must first solve our own problems.

-**You as a minority, do you have any contact with other groups from the population of Thrace which in some way make up minorities?**
-No we do not. If there are other minorities, naturally... All those you refer to are part of the Turkish minority, there is no difference. Independent of whether they try to separate them or not. I have travelled all over Thrace, and I never met anybody who told me that he is a Pomak or anything else.

-**With the settlement of Pontians in Thrace do you have any further problems?**
-They do not even know Greek, how are they Greeks? Anyway, we do not have any problem with those people. The State will have the problem.

-**Do you have problems with the other inhabitants of Thrace?**
-At the moment the relations between us are not good at all.

-**What would you be satisfied with Mr. Sadık?**
-We would like to have the same rights as the others of Greek descent.

-**However, you do not accept that you are of Greek descent.**
-Why did they leave me in Greece then? Why did Greece accept me? Since she accepted us, she must give us the same rights as the others.

-**It has been written that you make preparations for a new party. What will be the character of it?**
-At the moment I do not know, because nothing has happened yet. However, it will be announced in a little while. We have almost prepared the statutes. There will definitely also be other changes, we do not know yet.
-Do you not believe that the founding of such a party will aggravate the already difficult situation?
-It cannot become worse.
-Have you ever thought of collaborating with one of the already existing political parties?
-Our problems were and are the same, in spite of the fact that today’s government was yesterday the opposition and today’s opposition was the government. No government has the will to solve our problems, because on top of the governments there are other forces, stronger, which direct the governments.
-From the beginning of our conversation, I noticed a personal bitterness towards the political world and the parties. Why?
-I feel bitter towards the political world because even though they know the problems the minority is confronting, they do not try to do anything. At the same time they go out and trumpet forth that we live well and that we are happy. Indeed, sometimes they also put some poor worker, unemployed Halil or Abdüllah from Ifestos or Didimotiho on television, that they allegedly represent the minority. I cannot explain and of course not excuse the attitude of the State which leads to such solutions. Does he represent the minority at the time that he got only 130 votes while I got 30,000?
-The day before yesterday it was published that there were episodes in Ifestos with those two that you mentioned, where you were protagonist. What did really happen?
-It is not worth speaking about those two. They are two poor devils. There were no episodes. We only told them that they cannot represent us. The State used them to cover certain problems.
-So there were no episodes?
-No, no, we only went there to talk. Somebody told me to do something, but I did not want to. They are two poor devils that no one pays attention to. But when the prefect goes there in the afternoon and insists that you are of Greek descent, you understand how things become tense. That prefect should be changed immediately.
-Finally, Mr. Sadık, what do you think will happen?
-We will get our rights. This oppression will stop one day. Until then we will continue the struggle. We will not refrain from anything.
-When do you plan to establish your new party?
-Maybe at the end of the month.
-After you announced the foundation of your party, the Pomaks and Gypsies too announced the foundation of their own parties.
-Nobody announced anything. If they want to, let them tell us. Most of the journalists who write such things are directed [katefthinómeni], excuse me for saying so, but unfortunately it is true.
Do you not believe that they will do it?
-If they exist in principle, let them do it.

-Will you take part in the upcoming election with your own party?
-I do not know if we will run in the election. Anyway, with this party we will have the minority united.

-You hope...
-We already have them. Because they want us, not because we want it.

-If the government decides to take some measures in favour of the minority, would you support it?
-A committee of 25 MPs was formed in parliament to investigate and determine [prosdiorízun] what must be done in Thrace. They did not tell us anything. You can imagine how they will solve those problems, when we who represent the minority do not participate. They do not accept us. In this fashion it will not be possible to solve the problems of Thrace. Even if they set up chairs at the university, and build factories, they do not help us at all. We know the language anyway. Thrace, however, has one and only perspective for development. If they give us the possibility to make investments, there will be development in Thrace. If they do not give us those opportunities, Thrace will never develop. Whatever money the government may dispose of.

-And a last question. How do you feel? Mostly Greek or mostly Turk?
-If I answer they will begin to shout again. It is better that I do not answer.

-I would like you to tell me the truth.
-I am a Turk. My fatherland is Greece, because we live here, we are also MP in the Greek parliament. Greece does not love us at all, because if she loved us, she would not treat us like this. To be clear, the Greeks, as a people, love us. The leaders do not love us. The reason for this they can only know themselves.
Text 39.

Avyi (on Sunday) 24.03.1991, “The future of the minority is unpredictable”,
Interview of İbrahim Onsunoğlu by Despina Makrinu [original in Greek]:

“The relation of the minority with Turkey is governed by a dogma with two 
aspects. The first aspect is that Turkey takes an interest in the minority, supports and 
helps it. The second aspect is that Turkey does not interfere in the internal matters of 
the minority, does not divide it, does not direct it. Until today the first aspect of the 
dogma was kept. The last two years the second aspect is not respected” declares the 
Muslim politician İbrahim Onsunoğlu, who lives in Komotini and works in a 
psychiatric clinic in Thessaloniki.

Doctor İbrahim Onsunoğlu, formerly candidate for parliament with Nea Dimokratia— 
left-wing by conscience, as he declares himself—speaks to “Avyi on Sunday” about 
the problems of the Muslim minority and disagrees. He disagrees with the two Muslim 
MPs and their behaviour in parliament—he regards both of them to be ridiculous—, he 
disagrees with but respects the characterisation given to the minority by the Lausanne 
Treaty, he disagrees with the attitude of the Greek state concerning the minority 
problems and claims that the only solution is the acceptance and integration of the 
minority in the Greek reality. He disagrees with the attitude of Turkey towards the 
minority, while he finally assesses that “the minority, when it is faced with the 
dilemma Turkey or Onsunoğlu, prefers Turkey and not Onsunoğlu”. That is the reason 
why he was not elected to parliament in the last elections.

-Mr. Onsunoğlu, do you agree with the State Department report which 
was published recently and refers to the Muslim minority of Thrace?
-I will give you an indirect answer. First of all, I was surprised by all the fuss around 
the report. At least as regards the place which refers to our own minority, the Muslim-
Turkish. For the reason that there was nothing that has not been heard earlier in the 
report, no accusation which has not been made earlier. All the data in the report are 
widely known and there is no one in the minority which can disclaim them. So what is 
the fuss about!!!

The content of the report, to the degree that it may be considered interference in the 
internal matters of Greece would be something to condemn.

The internationalisation of human rights and minority problems must be considered 
an achievement of humanity and it is positive that it takes on the dimensions it does.

The corresponding reaction in Turkey against the content of the report [refering to 
Turkey] should have been much greater. Maybe even a break of the diplomatic 
relations with Washington.

-Mr. Onsunoğlu, how do you characterise the minority?
-The official designation of the minority, according to the Lausanne Treaty is “Muslim minority”. Nobody can contest this. However, when this is said the treaty is not everything.

I do not have the right to define myself as nationality [ethnótita]. If I had this right, I would define myself as “Muslim-Turkish” minority. Anyway, the official designation is Muslim and I respect it. We are not in the position to alter the Lausanne Treaty. However, beyond this, no one can contest my right to define myself and characterise myself as Muslim-Turkish.

The minority MP Ahmet Sadık speaks about a Muslim minority of Turkish descent. How do you comment it?

-Those gentlemen (he means Sadık and Faikoğlu) would not know and would not be able to provide even such a simple definition. I would even regard them to be incapable of making such a definition themselves. The definition belongs to Politakis.

-How do you characterise the minority issue?

-The minority issue is a problem of equal rights. For the Greek politicians, while it is an internal problem—that is anyway what everybody claims it to be—they confront it in practice as an issue within the nexus of the wider Greek-Turkish dispute. Consequently, the minority issue with the contribution of the Greek state ends up with being a Greek-Turkish problem.

This creates a great contradiction.

From the Turkish side, there exists a legitimate interest, because the minority is a remnant of the Ottoman Empire, it is the result of the Lausanne Treaty which has been signed by the two countries, it is finally the result of the bilateral agreements between Greece and Turkey. From the Turkish side there is of course also the theory of the umbilical cord—a term which at least I learned from Papandreu. There is a dogma with two aspects, which governs the relation of the minority with Turkey. The first aspect: Turkey takes an interest in the minority, supports and helps it. The second aspect: Turkey does not interfere in the internal matter of the minority, does not divide it, does not direct it. Until today the first aspect of the dogma has more or less been kept. The last two years the second aspect is not respected.

-The first aspect is kept?

-The second aspect transgresses the first one and consequently there is no question about its existence.

-What are the problems the minority encounters today?

-Let us start, like in presentation of ideas, with speaking generally. The minority exists, and its problems will also exist. When I speak about the problems of the minority I do not refer to the self-evident problems, but to those which involve discrimination and constitute the essence of the minority issue. That which not even the officials can admit, even though they know it very well and are responsible for it.
Let us look at the official documents which are statutory, from which the discrimination originates. There are very few such statutory ones. One such is for example the provisions of the Greek Citizenship Code, which allow for the easy removal of the citizenship from the non-ethnic [alloyenís] Greeks. This provision is applied excessively and abusively to the detriment of members of the minority. Another similar document is the law from 1939 for acquiring real estate in the border areas. This law has been modified lately. However, I think that it has not been abolished yet, something the European Community is also pressing for. Lately the limitations on minority members when it comes to acquiring real estate have been eased. Anyway, up until now this law has been applied extensively. However, I assume that as it has not been abolished, it can be put in use again tomorrow. It consequently depends on the political will and not on the principle of equal rights. The same is naturally in force for the building permits. Consequently it cannot be foreseen by anybody if an administrative measure is eased or abolished or come back or a new one is added, at least as regards the minority. And that is because those responsible do not have to give accounts to anybody. However, the greatest problems originate from the secret instructions [mistikés enkiklíus].

The governments manage the minority issues with these secret instructions. I will refer to one example. Until a few years ago there existed a secret instruction, which must have been abolished today and which prohibited the Muslims from acquiring driver’s license outside the place they descended from. I have suffered personally from the application of this concrete instruction. In Kefalonia where I was a rural doctor [i.e. mandatory service after completing the degree], I was not able to get a driver’s license. When the mechanic realised that I was from Thrace he told me: “You must go to Komotini, we will ask the prefect of Rodopi to allow you to take the exams and get a driver’s license”. For example a Muslim farmer who lived for five or ten years in Larisa and wanted to get a driver’s license for car or tractor, had to go to Komotini. Should I tell you some other preposterous incident? The administration of the affairs — any affairs — of the Muslim Turks is not the responsibility of the prefects of the area, the services of the prefecture, but of the special services, which are branches of the Foreign Department. Formerly the administration of the minority belonged to KIP [secret services]. That makes it possible for someone to imagine how Faikolglu became elected.

Let me tell you something else. The case of DIKATSA [the organisation which approves degrees from foreign educational institutions], which after a secret order by the deputy Foreign minister of PASOK [Yiannis Kapsis] who was responsible for the minority affairs, did not approve the university degrees of the minority graduates for five consecutive years. At that time the graduates took exams three of four times a year without passing. This measure was abolished lately under the Tzannetakis
government. It is a fact that lately there is a tendency to relax the administrative measures. However, everything remains unpredictable. Nobody can know if this relaxing will continue or even expand or if we will have retrogression. Everything is likely and unpredictable because at this moment, just as in the past, there is absolutely no dialogue with the government. No communication, no contact.

-And the existence of two Muslim MPs in Parliament?
-That is not contact, that is… squabbling, provocation by the two and corresponding reactions by the ministers.

-Mr. Onsunoğlu, let us start with the beginning. How were the problems with the minorities created.
-I can explain and interpret how these problems were created, but I cannot justify them. The eternal dispute between Greece and Turkey, this unending hostility, the eternal rivalry. The Cyprus issue. The problems of the Greek Orthodox minority in Turkey. The Turcophobia in Greece. The anti-Turkish chauvinism. All of these constitute reasons for the misfortune of our minority. However, as I said, all these interpret the phenomenon but do not justify it. Nothing can justify that we are classified as second-class citizens or as undesired citizens, a part of the country’s population, a group of Greek citizens who cannot be blamed for anything. And this is where we have the great contradiction. The Greek government must get rid of the ambiguous feelings which characterise its attitude towards the minority. On the one hand it does not want it, but on the other it is not in the position to expel it violently, to extinguish it like Israel did with the Palestinians. Consequently, there is no other solution than to accept the minority, to de-ghettofy it and integrate it in the Greek reality, which of course does not mean the assimilation of it.

-How do you characterise the behaviour of Turkey towards the minorities which exist on its territory?
-What I would like for my own minority, equal civil rights and respect for my ethnocultural particularity [isopolitia, isonomía ke sevasmó stin ethnikopolitismikí mu idieterótita], I would like to be valid for all the minorities in the world. That is my answer.

-Is there some kind of cooperation between your minority and the other population groups that exist in the Thrace area?
-If you mean co-operation between us, the recognised and existing minority, and the others unrecognised i.e. non existing, there is no contact and co-operation.

-How do you view the party which Mr. Sadık will establish towards the end of the month?
-With derision. You know, sometimes the distance which separates the serious from the ridiculous is not wide. I am sorry that the journalists have not realised long ago that with those people we have surpassed the serious and entered the ridiculous. The
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founding of a Turkish party is not news. The founding of an independent parliament would have been news. For us these are usual things, because we have to do with big-mouthed, unrealistic declarations approaching paranoia. Declarations which cannot succeed. If I will have the opportunity sometime, I will make a psychogram of the gentleman, whose name I will not even mention. Maybe I will do it some day, because it has to do with an anomalous situation, which however the Greek journalists were not able to understand and they took him seriously. The case does only create irony.

-Mr. Onsunoğlu, why do you not run for office?
-I have run earlier, but I was not favoured. I was a candidate with Nea Dimokratia, although I am left-wing by conscience, because of the circumstances, because I knew what kind of provocation is lurking against the minority. I believed that I would be able to make up another obstacle, another pole of attraction, but unfortunately, when the minority is faced with the dilemma Turkey or Onsunoğlu, it prefers Turkey and not Onsunoğlu.

Text 40.
Türkiye 19.02.94. The article by Prof. Dr. Aydın Taneri which was presented under the general heading “In the limelight” (Aydınlıkta), is an example of the “hagiographic” literature on Sadık in Turkey [original in Turkish]:

Dr. Sadık Ahmet

Ahmet Erbaş who is a graduate of the History Department - History, Geography, and Language Faculty, my dear student and son of Erol Erbaş, a personality I appreciate from the Yerköy notables, recently organised a meeting which I consider very valuable. This meeting was in honour of the Western Thrace Turks’ leader Dr. Sadık Ahmet. In the meeting the Niğde province’s great son, and MP for Niğde, Rıfat Yüzbaşıoğlu, was also present. Yüzbaşıoğlu is at the same time executing the duty of presiding over the Turkish Parliament Group and the World Turk Council.

Today, in this connection I am introducing Dr. Sadık Ahmet to you.

The 120-thousand strong Western Thrace Turk community that was left under Greek protection by the Lausanne Treaty, has been exposed to various injustices and oppression all the way from 1923 until today. So far successive Greek governments have not honoured their Lausanne signature, and view our kinsmen [soydaş] as second class citizens.

As a result of this inhuman treatment by the Greek administration, today our kinsmen in Thrace have reached a state where they cannot elect their religious leaders, the muftis, they cannot carry out the education in their schools according to the treaties, they cannot acquire real estate, they cannot become public servants, and they
cannot carry out import-export. Besides this, it is considered an offence to say “we are Turks” and the associations with “Turk” in the title are closed.

The Western Thrace Turks have always struggled against all this unjust treatment. However, until 1989 the Turkish Minority members who were able to enter the Greek parliament could not make the voice of the Western Thrace Muslim Turk minority sufficiently heard, because they were members of Greek parties, and usually the party discipline was strict.

With this sad situation in mind, Dr. Sadık Ahmet started a campaign throughout Thrace all by himself. He started to gather signatures from our kinsmen in Western Thrace to make known the various discriminations and injustices against the minority, first to the official Greek authorities and afterwards to the world opinion.

The Western Thrace Turk who experience these issues, joined this campaign whole heartily and believing in his good intentions rushed to his assistance.

In August 1986 when the signatures gathered were close to 15,000, Dr. Ahmet Sadık was arrested by security forces, and sent to court for intending to damage Greece’s international relations and falsifying signatures.

After the trial had been postponed a couple of times Dr. Sadık Ahmet was sentenced to 30 months in jail by the “three-judge court of first instance in Thessaloniki” even though many of the prosecution witnesses came with statements in favour of him. According to the Greeks it is an offence to say that “they oppress, discriminate, and are unjust” towards the Western Thrace Turks. It was an even greater offence to inform the international opinion about this injustice with a signed statement. Consequently, Dr. Sadık Ahmet had to be punished for gathering signatures and placing Greece’s international relations in jeopardy by addressing our kinsmen as Turks.

With this jail sentence, instead of silencing Dr. Sadık Ahmet, the Greeks made his voice even more heard. In fact, just like he gained a place in the hearts of our Western Thrace kinsmen, gradually he also started to win fame throughout the world.

At this point, the 18 June 1989 general elections were announced. It was time for Dr. Sadık Ahmet to enter the Greek parliament. Immediately he became independent candidate for the elections.

An election campaign that had never been seen before was staged in Thrace. Going from village to village and coffee shop to coffee shop he explained that as independent MP he would be the real voice of the Western Thrace Turks in the Greek Parliament and in the world.

The election result was a victory for the Western Thrace Turks: for the first time they succeeded to send an independent Turkish MP, Dr. Sadık Ahmet, to parliament.

The elected government did not last long. New election was declared for 5 November 1989. Dr. Sadık was independent candidate once more. However, in his
application a sentence was supposedly written incompletely and his candidacy was
annulled. But, Dr. Sadik Ahmet did not step back. This time he worked hard to secure
the election of his friend who was running on the same ticket, Ismail Rodoplu, as
independent MP.

At this point, he was brought to trial for addressing the minority as “Turkish” in an
election proclamation and, in a farce of a trial, he was sentenced to 18 months in
prison and sent to the Dudullu prison in Thessaloniki.

It is not in Dr. Sadik Ahmet’s character to bend to pressure. Oppression just stimu-
lates him and makes him only more bent on assisting his community. The new election
was scheduled for 8 April 1990. This time he took recourse to legislation and declared
his candidacy from prison, and his friends who struggled for the same cause started
the election campaign in his name. The only slogan was “From prison to parliament”.
The Greek administration saw that this was going to happen, and in order not to come
in disrepute in world opinion once more, they bring Dr. Sadik Ahmet to the Court of
Appeal in the Peloponnesian city Patras, and the conversion of his previously allotted
18-months sentence into a fine gives him the opportunity to get out of prison.

The election result was a new victory for the Western Thrace Turkish Community
[Türklük]. Dr. Sadik entered the Greek Parliament for the second time with a record
high amount of votes behind him.

In Parliament Dr. Sadık continues to be a headache for the Greeks. He gets on the
rostrum on every opportunity, and just like he shouted that the national identity of the
minority in Western Thrace was Turk[ish], he never became tired of enumerating the
various injustices, discrimination, and oppression applied to the minority.

By now Dr. Sadik Ahmet is a person of international fame. Organisations related to
human rights all over the world invite him to meetings and conferences. Dr. Ahmet
Sadik is working day and night, going from America to the former Soviet Union,
from the Islamic countries to Scandinavia, explaining with documentation the inhuman
treatment of the Turkish Muslim Community in Western Thrace.

The Greeks who are at a loss by the activities of Sadık are considering to lift his
parliamentary immunity or taking away his Greek citizenship as remedy. Innumerable
times initiatives toward this goal has been taken in Parliament. However, calculating
that reactions against this throughout the world will be great, they finally do not dare to
take such a step.

Even though Dr. Sadik Ahmet is a man of great fighting spirit, who has a very
modest personality, I have not written anything about the Western Thrace issue until
today. I asked him to forgive me for this. I said I was ashamed of it. As can be
understood, personalities like Dr. Sadık Ahmet, Rauf Denktaş, Elçibey should serve
as examples for us all.
Text 41.
Türkiye 04.04.1994, “Sadık Ahmet evaluates the Greek oppression: ‘The ascension of Turkey scared the West’”, by Hasan Tekin– Necati Kaba in Hannover [original in Turkish]:

- In a speech by the Western Thrace former Turkish MP Dr. Sadık Ahmet in the Hannover Türk Aileler Birliği Yunus Emre mosque last night he said: “I will attempt to explain to you the distress that the Balkan and Western Thrace Turks have suffered for years. The Western Thrace Turks moan under oppression for 70 years.”

Sadık Ahmet who after invitation addressed a crowded gathering of compatriots [vatandaş] in Hannover, pointed out that Greece took recourse to all kinds of torture [ıskence] and meanness [alçaklık] to extinguish the Turks and spoke in the following manner: “How many Turks have lost all their property there and have been paralysed by their sadness. If there had not been oppression, the number of Western Thrace Turks today would not have been 150,000 but should have been 1,600,000. Whereas even at the time when the Ottomans made the world tremble they treated people humanely, they approached them with compassion, they provided law and justice, they recognised religion, language, usage, and customs, in short they taught humanity to people. The Westerners plugged their ears and closed their eyes in order not to understand this. Look, here you still carry out all your usage and customs, you speak your language, you perform your religion. This is an unchangeable moral quality inside the children of the empire. Undoubtedly the world Turkism [dünya Türklüğü] is today climbing straight towards the highest rank which becomes it. And one day it will definitely reach it. The ascension of our mother country Turkey in the last years has made the Christian world uncomfortable, as can be seen by all the attention she has attracted. But whatever happens the whole Turkish World is approaching quickly its goal which is to become one fist. Now the Turkish communities in every area or continent are aware of each other.”

“TO BE A MUSLIM MEANS TO BE A TURK”

Dr. Sadık Ahmet who stated that Turkey was confirming its leadership of the Islamic World representing it in the finest manner and that when the word Muslim was used the Turks came to mind, concluded in the following manner:

“The Turks, who have embraced Islam way back in history and brought it with them until today, will surely bring the same holy exalted religion with them until eternity. Never in history did our
forefathers change the religion or language of foreigners with force. If they had changed them, today there would be no other nations from the Balkans to Vienna than Turkish and Muslim. Those who claim anything else, say it because they fear the strength of Turkism, the growth of Turkism, and that the Turkish World will dominate the surroundings. If Turkish blood is shed in many places of the world today, if the Turks are oppressed, it is because Europe is caught up in the fear that the Turks and not them will rule the four continents. With the Greek oppression the place we were born and raised is in trouble. Is this humanism, is this civilisation, is this law and justice, what can you compare it to?”

**Text 42.**

*To Vima* 20.06.1993, “Message of hope from Thrace”, by Yiannis Marinos [original in Greek]:

[...] In closing I will ask you to read carefully the following declaration: “In the last two years the equality between Christians and Muslims has been restored. (...) All the rights of the Muslims have been restored. (...) The relations between Greece and Turkey are good, within a spirit of friendship and understanding, and this contributes to the solution of the problems of the minority.”

Who is saying this? But it is the independent MP of Rodopi Mr. Ahmet Sadik. i.e. the up until now number one accuser of the Greek state to all the international organisations for blatant violations of the human and political rights against the Muslim minority in Greece; which goes to show how untenable are the accusations against our country by Turkey, various international organisations, who adopt so readily whatever is coming from Ankara, but also the domestic (i.e. Greek) supporters of the alleged wronged and suffering minority. And however, this sensational declaration which overturns radically the negative picture of Greece internationally and makes useless every pretext of Ankara to declare her alleged philanthropic interest in the co-religionist or Turkish-origin Muslims of Thrace, was lost in the small types of the news in the newspapers, while it should be front page and top story.

Let us hope at least that even belatedly the Foreign Ministry will make use of it immediately submitting a corresponding memorandum to the UN, the State Department, the CSCE, the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, Amnesty International and every other organisation which, in good faith or not, have accused and continue to criticise the Greek state for the alleged bad treatment of the Turkish minority.
Because to secure as your overpowering defender your formerly main opponent, Mr. Sadık, is surely the most unexpected argument to enlighten the misinformed and silence those with bad intentions.

**Text 43.**

*Batı Trakya’nın Sesi* 33/August 1991 [original in Turkish]:

**Announcement by the Religious Affairs Presidency Concerning the Closing of the Western Thrace Mosques For a While.**

It is known that our Muslim kinsmen who live in Western Thrace have for a long time been the victims of cruelty and oppression [*zulûm ve baskı*]. This oppression has reached the point where the mosques have been bombed, people who go the mosques are disturbed, and instead of the legitimate mufti elected by the support of the people according to the treaties, a mufti has been appointed by political decision. For this reason our kinsmen cannot go safely [*can güvenliği ile*] to the mosques.

This violation and ignoring of basic human rights such as personal safety, freedom of religion and worship, in a country which is our near neighbour and we are tied to with treaties, is a disgraceful development in milder political climate the world has come to today. This makes it necessary for our kinsmen to close the mosques for a certain period as a protest against this appointment and make it known to the world opinion.

The Muslims prayer which takes place five times a day, and have clear stipulations, is one of the most important religious duties. It is without doubt more virtuous to perform this prayer in the mosque with the congregation. However, if necessary and particularly when your life is in danger [*can güvenliği tehlike girdiğinde*] there is no religious objection against performing the prayer in another suitable place instead of the mosque. The attention of the world opinion will be drawn upon this cruelty by the Greek society and administration, that our kinsmen living in Western Thrace on account of a just reason have been forced to perform their worship outside the mosque.

Cruelty is never enduring. The interest of the two neighbouring countries is that the two communities live together in peace.

I submit this respectfully to the attention of public opinion.

Prof. Dr. M. Sait Yazıcıoğlu

Turkish Head of Religious Affairs
Ahmet Sadik ventures to set up his own vilayet [Turkish word for province] in Thrace, as he is also taking advantage of the mistakes—the heaps of mistakes, if we are to be honest—from the Christian side. For exactly a week he has raised his standard [bayráki], in an attempt to fanaticise and rouse the peace loving Muslims as part of a strategy that circles adhering to Ankara started to shape with the events that take place in the Balkans as motivation.

On Friday he imposed the reading of a communication in the Mosques to his co-religionists despite of the fact that the Mufti in Komotini was against it, in which he establishes, as he says in his inflammatory “essay”, 29 January (the day when he earlier attempted to rouse the Muslim element with pretext the Supreme Court’s rejection of his application to found “Turkish societies” in Western Thrace) as a …national holiday.

In his communication, which the machinery of the consulate, but also of Sadik, imposed on the imams to read in the Mosques, the Muslim boarder [trófimos] in the Greek parliament in his religious ravings never stops to underline that “we are Turks” and to foment animosity towards the Christian element. He preaches about the events in Bosnia-Herzegovina and threatens that “mankind will learn in the 21th century what is Islamic justice and Islamic equality” and that “those who wish to suffocate Islam will suffocate themselves”.

He announced that the children would be absent from all the Muslim schools in Ksanthi and Komotini from Monday, threatening with gods and demons that no teacher should go and fetch the grammar and 2nd class primary school reader which the ministry printed in Turkish to be distributed in the schools of the Muslim element. The amusing part is that he does not disagree because of the content, but because it is issued by Greece and not by Ankara as he wants himself.

In fact, on Monday he had taken position himself outside the building of the Prefecture to spy on and prevent the entrance of any teacher who wanted to get the books. Of course, those who know the structure of the Muslim community and the invisible machinery of Sadık and the consulate, are able to understand why there were no brave Muslim teachers.

Naturally, Sadık could not care less if the children of his co-religionists learn to read and write. For him and his likes what comes first is the fanaticism of his co-religionists and naturally obscurantism…

His newspaper-organ “Balkan” that he publishes in Komotini, “pours” in every issue ever more poison to the detriment of the Christians in the area, speaking about
“the beastly gaze of the Christians” and similar things, while he does not pause to remind about his rally in 1988.

In his tours to the villages and city quarters, he proclaims hatred against the Christians and threatens with gods and demons the Muslims that may dare doubt or not comply with his decisions and choices…

Finally he throws his nets also outside Western-Thrace as he tries to make “bridges” to the Gypsies and others in various counties, even as far as …Attica. The extremely disquieting, of course, is that all this is happening while the Turkish consulate in Komotini has been transformed to virtual headquarters for the Muslim MP. In spite of the fact that little time has passed since Demirel announced that Turkey is able to protect the “Turks” of Western Thrace if it should be necessary.

Apropos, when will Athens stop to suck the lollipop of “understanding” towards Ankara and put all this unbelievable and unacceptable on the table of political co-operation with the EEC? What is it that Mitsotakis is waiting for?

**Text 45.**

*Kathimerini* 07.02.1993, “Western Thrace: The books were only a pretext… - Ahmet Sadık has been transformed into a ‘strike-force’ of Turkey in the area”, by Stavros Liyeros [original in Greek]:

The provocation centred on the new schoolbooks, organised by Mr. Sadık and the Muslim circles directed from Ankara, constitutes a new link in the long chain of Turkish activities to infiltrate and control the minority and finally to destabilise the Greek sovereignty in the area of Western Thrace. The setting for this scene of the play differed only in form from similar provocations in the past.

The facts are generally known: On 29 January, in most mosques an inflammatory message from Sadık was read, referring to the decision of the supreme court in 1988, which prohibited the function of associations which with their charter and their title attempt to transform the Muslim minority into Turkish, referring to the “Turkish Youth Union in Komotini”. It should be noted that Ankara never allowed the constitution of associations characterised as Greek. The last of such associations was the “Greek Philological Association of Constantinople” which was forbidden in 1925.

Three days later, last Monday, the Muslim MP pressured and prevented the co-religionist teachers from participating in a ceremony presenting the new schoolbooks prepared by the Greek state for the primary schools of the minority. This resulted in a four-day absence from the schools by teachers and pupils.
The MUSLIM MINORITY OF GREEK THRACE

Intervention by Ankara

The next day, Ankara intervened with the evident goal of escalating the pressures. It accused Greece of “insisting to mould the identity of the minority” and that the actions of the Greek authorities contradict the “treaties and protocols currently in force between the two countries as well as the current conceptions of minority rights”.

Answering the Turkish claims, the spokesman of the Greek Foreign Department laid the responsibility on Turkey, underlining that “the protocol of 1968 in no way anticipates an absolute obligation, but simply provides the possibility of the two countries to exchange books for the use of their minority pupils”. In fact it warned Ankara beforehand that “appeals to non existing violation of minority rights or deliberate misinterpretation of international treaties do not benefit the minority, for which it supposedly works, but on the contrary endanger to provoke general damage to Greek-Turkish relations”.

It is worth noting that even Ankara’s puppets within the minority have no objections to books themselves, but strive to enforce Turkish tutelage on minority education. And this, in spite of the fact that many pupils have to resort to photocopies of Turkish books, which it should be stressed are outdated from a pedagogical point of view.

The protocol

The protocol Kitsaras-Bilgen of December 1968, which Ankara calls upon, was one of the negative results of the Greek-Turkish rapprochement which the then Prime Minister Pipinelis undertook on American recommendation. This educational agreement resulted not only in the imposition of Turkish education, but also in Turkish tutelage with the arrival of Turkish teachers to Thrace. The ostracism of the Greek Muslim teachers and further the dwindling of the traditionalist Muslim leadership, who did not have close ties with Ankara, was a decisive step towards the promotion of the process of turkification of the minority, even of the Pomaks and the Gypsies who have no relation to the Turkish nation. However, Athens could appeal to the reciprocity provided for, in order to be released from the obligations of this protocol, which is now only working unilaterally.

The argument of those who signed it was that in this way the Greek population in Constantinople would be retained. Actually, however, it was only artificial respiration to someone who was already “clinically dead”. It is worth noting that Mr. Moliviatis, who was then head of the section for Turkish matters, had informed in writing that this protocol would work to the detriment of the Greek side, which it actually did. Besides, the protocol did not include anything about the education of the Greeks on Imvros and Tenedos, a fact that contributed to their annihilation. Neither, of course, did it prevent the Turks from closing, in 1971, the Theological School of Halki and to force the Greek children to say every day the oath “I am a Turk, I am happy that I was born a Turk”!
Spearhead

Turkey uses the Muslim minority as a spearhead of the expansionist pressures it exerts on our country. The Turkish consulate in Komotini has been transformed to headquarters and Mr. Sadık to “strike force”. Within Turkey, the burden of carrying out the propaganda has been undertaken by the “Association for Solidarity with the Turks of Western Thrace” and its offshoots, particularly in Germany. The Turkish invasion of Cyprus, in 1974, and the declaration of the pseudo-state, has reinforced the scope of the slogan that sooner or later the Cyprus operation will be carried out in Thrace.

The developments in neighbouring Bulgaria, which elevated the party of Mr. Doğan to regulator for forming government and “fifth column” for Turkish penetration, also played an important role in consolidating the Turkish domination of the minority. It is not accidental that Mr. Sadık lately attempts to form a network of relations and alliances with elements which are active in other areas to create a wider political movement, using human rights as a pretext, which will gather all the anti-Greek elements.

Within the same framework we have the letter which the well known agent Mr. Sidiropulos sent to the Muslim MP several months ago, were he asked to be hired in his office so they could co-operate in promoting the interests of the “Turkish” and the “Macedonian minority”. Mr. Sidiropulos, who has undertaken as contractor to propagandise in CSCE and wherever he can the existence of a ”Macedonian minority” and that the rights of it are violated, had meetings with Mr. Sadık for the purpose of electoral co-operation in the parliamentary elections as well as the Euro elections.

Rhetorical accusations

In spite of the fact that the subversive activities of Mrrs. Sadık and Faikoğlu have assumed dimensions, the Greek authorities are in fact restricted to rhetorical accusations. The matter would not have particular significance if this activity stemmed from the plans of a fanatical nationalist. The problem is that it makes up the “visible tip of the iceberg” of the penetration and destabilising activities of Turkey in this sensitive area.

The Greek authorities are in an impasse. On the one hand they do not desire to dismiss him for criminally punishable activities, fearing that this would provoke international uproar and would hurt the Greek-Turkish relations, on the other, the impunity he enjoys creates precedent and consolidates the conviction of the Muslim element that Turkey has the power to neutralise any Greek reaction. Within this climate, the extremist actions of Mr. Sadık and the instigation of the Turkish consulate finds fertile ground, elevating to ever higher levels the smouldering autonomy pressures.
In the cloudy Tuesday afternoon the eleven-year-old son of Emin went enthusiastically home from School, holding his little brother by his hand. Emin and his wife had laid the table and waited for the children so they could eat.

- Anne (mother), the teacher at school said that they would give us new Turkish books next week.

She turned and looked at her husband. Emin in turn took his son in his arms and asked him:

- Who told you that?
- The teacher, answered the little one. Now, right before he dismissed us.
- Where will the books come from? Asked Emin again.
- From Athens, he told us, answered the little one and continued: Why, my dear daddy, cannot we too have new books? For years we have had photocopies of old ones.

Emin was the leader of the township (Kinótita) of a small Muslim village in the mountainous area of Ksanthi.

When his wife set the food on the table, he started to eat quickly. When he finished he stood up, went out of the house and to the office of the Township. The secretary had just finished work and entered the car of the teacher so they could go to their homes in Ksanthi together.

- Kostas - Yorgos it is you that I am looking for, shouted Emin.
- What is it, what is happening, leader? The two others asked him.
- They are going to bring books from Athens for the children and you have not told me anything?
- We would have told you, leader, but it simply did not happen. The Teacher answered.

- You are always like that. You never asked us. Emin seemed angry.
- Don’t be angry, leader, let us go to the coffee house, have a coffee, and discuss it. The teacher made a sign to the secretary. The two of them went out of the car and together they went to the coffee house where they sat down.
- Well, I hear you, said Emin abruptly.

- The Ministry informed us last week that the books for the minority schools are ready and that they would send them. Indeed they said that they would invite all the teachers and you leaders to the Prefecture to hand them over.

You see it is the first book that society has made for the children of the Muslims.
- Well why do they do it like this? Without asking us? There may be mistakes in the books. What will the children learn? Said Emin bewildered.
- Which mistakes, dear Emin. Are you not glad that the children will get rid of the photocopies. For twenty years you have been crying: we want books, the children are not properly educated and now that the Ministry decided to print them, you act as if you did not want them.

    Emin started to be convinced by the words of the teacher.
- And when do we have to go to the Prefecture so they can give them to us, he asked?
- Next week, they will probably inform you from the Prefecture, the teacher answered, while the secretary only listened.

The information from the Prefecture reached Emin two days later. “The Prefect has the honour to invite you to a special ceremony of handing over the new books for the minority, that will take place next Tuesday at 10 o’clock in the morning in the auditorium of the Prefecture council,” said the invitation.

That evening Emin turned worriedly in his bed. He could not sleep. He did not know which position he should take. If he went to the ceremony of the prefect he would face the misgivings of the independent Muslim MPs, who had issued a Firman many days ago. “Those who are Turks should not go to the ceremony where the Prefect will hand over the books,” Sadık had announced. On the other hand, he could not avoid to go because they would accuse him of breaking the laws.

With the thought that “let’s see what tomorrow will bring,” he turned around and closed his eyes.

The next day he said he would go to Ksanthi for shopping. In town, in an old coffee house beyond Platano he met a friend from Komotini.
- What is happening, dear Birol, in Komotini with those books? he asked him.
- Don’t ask, dear Emin. For so many years we screamed for those books and now it seems like we don’t even know what we want. You ask the consulate, and it tells you that they printed and sent books from Turkey. You ask the Prefecture here, and they tell you that Turkey has not sent anything, that is why the Ministry printed the books and gives them to you.
- Are the book all right? Have you seen them?
- Well, what do you expect. They have some mistakes, but the most serious were corrected after some of ours intervened.

    It wrote, you see, that the Christians go to church on Sundays, the Jews on Saturdays, and the Muslim on Fridays. Are we serious? Five times a day we go to the mosque and they present us as atheists.

    Emin sat down and listened.
- What are Sadık and Faikoğlu saying?
- They say that our children cannot learn Turkish from Greek teachers. Don’t mind them. They look for opportunities to exploit it politically to exhibit themselves.
- The Prefect has invited us today to present the books to us. I didn’t go.
- Most of us didn’t go. In Komotini Sadik was outside the Prefecture, wrote down the names and chased them away.
- I will give your names to the consulate, he cried.
- And what will now happen, asked Emin anxiously.

  Birol’s face became even more serious, he turned the chair towards Emin and lowered his voice.

  - Look, the teachers will bring the books to the schools in the villages anyway. I have heard that the henchmen of Sadik will go and take them from one minority school with the pretext that they do not agree with the content and throw them away. The police will certainly know this and maybe there will be some trouble to impress people. Don’t worry, however, there are other reasons for this.
  - What so you mean? Emin could not understand what he heard.
  - When there is unrest in Thrace, everyone is happy.

  Turkey speaks of oppression of their brothers Muslims in Thrace. Consequently their position in the Balkans is upgraded. Mitsotakis hides the tricks he does with Skopje, referring to the Turkish threat.

  The ND adherents in the area, cry that the Turks will eliminate us and that they are subsidised with ever more money. The PASOK adherents in order to have an opposition policy to Mitsotakis, also cry: “Look, he sells the factories to the Turks”. Sadik and Faikoğlu are satisfied because they are shown on television and consequently people will vote for them again. And in this way, my friend, everyone is satisfied. Poor us. That is why I say that you should not bother.

  Ibraim Hasan

  P.S.: This story is dedicated to all those “ingenious” colleagues who make missions to the peripheral Thrace attempting to present its problems and finally describe conditions we have known about for ten years.

  And for those who were burdened with the task of going on mission-research to Thrace, the recipe is old and time-honoured.

  First you find the representatives of the productive class, who say that the area is sensitive and needs development.

  Afterwards you speak with representatives of the local administration, who depending on their party orientation, speak for or against the government. Finally, if you do not have other material to finish the two or four pages, you speak with a representative of the political youth organisations that you like or with the president of the labour centre of the town, or with representatives of the agricultural associations.
Do not forget to refer in your essay to Sadık and Faikoğlu so you can justify the title of your special report or research, which either you want it or not will refer to them.

**Text 47.**
*Eleftherotipia* 14.05.1991. Mitsotakis’ speech in Ksanthi 13.05.1991 [original in Greek]:

Prime Minister **Mitsotakis** said the following concerning the Muslims in Ksanthi:

Ladies and gentlemen, it is necessary that I also mention another important issue in your district. Your area has a particularity, usual in the Balkans. It is inhabited by a minority of the Muslim religion. It is certain that this minority is made up of three clearly different ethnic groups. There are those of Turkish origin, the Pomaks and the Gypsies. Every one of those groups has its peculiarities, with different traditions which must be respected by everybody, as is stipulated by the Lausanne treaty as well as the Greek laws.

Greece, as its constitution commands, is determined to consolidate equal rights *[isonomía ke isopolitia]* for all the inhabitants of Thrace, Christians and Muslims.

And when I refer to equal rights, I mean complete equality, which naturally cannot only be valid for the rights. It is also valid for the obligations to the Greek state, which also cares, as you have seen, with such warm interest to create the proper foundation for the development of the border area Thrace in all sectors. Development and prosperity which everyone will enjoy together.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have no difficulty in repeating—I have said it before too—that there have been mistakes in the past. But that was not in any instance due to a conscious choice by the various governments. The Lausanne Treaty—which we all know—is built on the principle of reciprocity. The relentless persecution of our brothers in Istanbul, Gökçeada, and Bozcaada, the undisguised violation by neighbouring Turkey of her treaty obligations, but also the unprovoked invasion of Cyprus, created a negative climate which inevitably—I have said it before, when speaking in your town—had repercussions on Muslim Greek citizens.

Some circles outside Greece attempted to exploit these conditions, to succeed with their unmentionable aims. Our country, with deep democratic traditions, never shared the logic of retaliation. Let us today look to the future.

Today’s government, with the consent of all the Greek political parties, inaugurated from the time it came to power, a co-ordinated policy to obliterate possible injustices towards our Muslim fellow citizens. As I said formerly, referring also to the obligations, this policy is tied to the demand by the state that they too respect the Constitution, the laws and the justice of their country.
And that they do not co-operate willingly or unwillingly in activities directed against their country, Greece. When it comes to respecting the legal order of our country we will be unyielding. Just as we will be unyielding also in granting equal opportunities and possibilities for all the inhabitants of Thrace, Christians and Muslims.

Our country plays an important role in the Balkans today. We have restored our national credibility. We are the only Community country, country of the European Community, in this area and have taken certain initiatives for confronting the minority problems in the Balkans.

The Balkan peninsula was in the beginning of the century, for many years the “powder keg” of Europe. The fall of socialism and the establishment of democracy and free speech should not become the reason for new trials for the Balkan peoples. Today’s borders cannot in any instance be re-negotiated. And every religious and ethnic group must be respected, by the authorities of the country where it lives as well as by the other Balkan countries. This is our credo, this constitutes the solution of the problems of the minority members in all of the Balkans.

Our compass must be the Helsinki agreement. And we will not in any instance tolerate the exploitation of these new principles by individuals or other states to promote their narrow nationalist aims. Whoever cultivates conflicts, exploiting for their own purposes the argument of respecting human rights, undermine the peace in the area. And we will not allow this to anybody.

Text 48.

Trakya’nın Sesi 387/23.05.1991, “The problems of the minority which occupy seriously the Elected Leaders [Eretós Arhontas] of the Minority” [original in Greek]:

1. The loss of citizenship by our citizens [dimótis, i.e. citizen of a certain municipality or community], provoked indignation among the Minority and created serious human problems to our citizens [dimótes]. On the one hand we make sacrifices to receive people from Georgia-Russia, Albania etc. and on the other we cross out the locals. It is at the least unequal treatment and indeed it takes place without the knowledge of the Local Administration. Pertaining to this subject we sent you [Mitsotakis] through the Prefect of Rodopi a document signed by Township Presidents [Próedros Kinótitas] on 30-3-1991 without receiving an answer. We submit once more a photocopy and expect that you will take an interest in it.

2. The settlement of Pontians from Russia in Rodopi will increase the problems of the area. The most neglected Prefecture of the EEC with many and serious problems of its own, without suitable infrastructure, will not stand up to it. If the purpose is to change the population structure it is not worth the trouble, because due to great internal and external migration the composition has already been changed.
3. The subject of Agricultural prisons and the establishment of them is a very serious issue, 90% to the detriment of the Minority. Other border areas are reinforced in various ways and get tax relief. However in Rodopi the chain of expropriations has exhausted the Minority people. If this last expropriation will take place it will be a Matter of life or death for the Minority. We hope that common sense will prevail.

4. When it comes to housing we do not cry for a second house or a beach bungalow. We are going to marry off our children and it is a shame to sleep in the same room. For years building permits were not given, and if they are to be given our small economic means do not endure the enormous charges on the permits. Faced with this dilemma some of us built without permits and are paying fines all our lives, which is worse than paying rent. We are more than 3,000 family heads-offenders. We ask for legal and economic accommodation for the serious issue of first house in the border area.

This is the most serious damage which man causes to his fellowman. It is a great neglect by the state. When the prefecture doctor cries out and I tremble because of this issue. For 9 years we tried with all legal means to be spared of it. We postponed the great demonstration march and the closing of the roads that lead to the waste area. Your visit is our hope. We pray that the events in Ioannina will not be repeated for our drinking water.
Regarding this issue we also submit a document signed by the afflicted Township Presidents of the Rodopi Prefecture.

The old competence [armodiótita] of granting building permits up to 60 m$^2$ should be returned to the Townships. In addition for the first and last time to pardon the 3,000 fines for illegal building together with the legalisation of them. Some Townships obtained competence for granting building permits up to 20 m$^2$. This constitutes unequal treatment of the Townships.

7. Loans and other development incentives should be given to the Minority people too.
We reject the opinion which says that the presence of the minority in our area constitutes or can constitute factors leading to underdevelopment [ipovátmisi].

8. To allow acquisition of real estate in the border area also for the local Minority population, because tomorrow also the Europeans of the EEC will seek it.

9. The situation of the minority education is unforgivable in our century. We have tremendous problems with the primary and secondary education. School buildings, books, educational programs, well educated teachers, teaching material, content of studies, methods of exams etc. Substantial measures in co-operation with the teachers of the Minority are indispensable, to improve the level of education, to
enforce the 9-year mandatory education, limitation and obliteration of illiteracy and the vocational education.

10. Telecommunication.
Organisations of common benefits such as O.T.E [Greek Telephone Company] should not discriminate between settlements because of the population composition. Many telephones in one village and none in the one next to it does not help local development. There is still a township in the Prefecture without telephone at Kehros.

11. The health situation has deteriorated. The doctors of the Health centres and Rural Clinics get work at Hospitals. Elderly people with canes and handicapped with crutches frequent the roads and places where cars stop with the purpose of finding some doctor further away.

Application by minority youths for football teams are not approved. The unofficial teams are bothered by the police during their improvised gatherings. When there are no official teams it becomes impossible to support economically the athletic installations by the Townships and by the Public grants.

13. The majority of the minority is occupied in the agricultural sector. However, it is not able to buy land, it cannot buy storage houses and barns. We cannot expect development of agriculture in a 100-year old barn without light and a courtyard. And the animals there are destroyed by rheumatism, sterility, and blood diseases, because of lack of light. Facilitation of building permits, storage, stables for sheep and cattle and other agricultural installations would remove the animals and the smelly manure to outside the settlement.

14. It would be good if the factories also accept people from the minority as workers. The farmer who lost his land from the chain of expropriations and dispersion of land through inheritance should at least be able to get a piece of bread from the factory.

15. The redistribution of land [anadasmós] always wronged the Minority people, and in spite of the fact that it is a good measure these people are against redistribution. The farmer has lost his confidence in the services.

16. When executing works of reforestation in the mountainous area of Rodopi the opportunities for pasture or husbandry should be kept in mind. On this issue the Townships always had differences with the services. As if the services wanted to expel the Minority people from their village, their area. In the mountainous area of Rodopi the only income is secured by husbandry.
17. Important works should be done to exploit the Forest resources. In addition, for reforestation, protection, improvement and exploitation of the forest, locals from the mountainous area of Rodopi should be the workers.

18. For the exploitation of mineral wealth in the mountainous area of Rodopi the locals should again be preferred as workers. These people leave their area because of unemployment and they do not return. However, they constitute the natural guards of our northern borders.

19. The roads between settlements and the provincial roads should have asphalt. In the areas of Minority settlements the practicability of the roads is neglected.

20. The farmers of the Minority should also benefit from agricultural electricity.

21. The services of the Administration should serve equally the people from the two population elements and from all the parties. With excuses, pretexts, and delicate screening [leptokosínímatá] they find opportunity not to serve us, and trouble us with the delays. However, this is not the case with all the employees. This matter even obstructs the work of the Prefect.

22. Issuing of driving licence for tractors and agricultural cars [pick-up trucks etc.] are two gratifying actions which relieved our farmers. It is also a good message that permits will be given for erecting buildings.

23. The freedom of the Press damages the interests of the Prefecture. It propels the two population elements to an unproductive confrontation. It occupies and destroys the good people’s peace of mind [psihagóyía], something which distracts them from their work. It does not contribute to local development.

The mountain area of Rodopi.

It constitutes the northern half of the Rodopi prefecture. It is the most neglected area and is inhabited by people of the Minority. If someone with knowledge of the situation in the Prefecture makes a comparison between the northern and southern part he realises immediately the great injustice and indifference of the state towards this area. The improvement of the road network of the Prefecture is necessary, with asphalt towards Organi and Kehros. Telephone lines to the whole area such as the Kehros Township, health centres, rural clinics, veterinary clinics, pharmacies, post offices, banks, slaughter-houses, improvement of forest road construction and supply of electricity to settlements, are among the primary demands of the people in the area. Fences, water reservoirs, opening and improvement of pastures, factories for exploiting the underground wealth and forest produce would definitely contribute to the development of the area. Improvement of primitive water supplies would contribute to prevent contagious disease.

We must take particular care of these people and this area.
They are the natural guardians of our northern borders. However, they are leaving. In today’s situation some of us are not able to stay in this area even with donation from an MP. Because without doctor, medicine, telephone, television, electricity, refrigerator, controlled meat, and chlorinated water, life is difficult.

With Respect

Township Presidents of the Rodopi Prefecture:
1. Amaranta Küçük Mehmet
2. Aratos Salioğlu Mehmet
3. Arisvi Musa Nuri Ali
4. Asomati Emin Hakki
5. Gratini Mustafa Hüseyin
7. Kehros Abdurrahim Mehmet
8. Mirana Murtaza Mustafa
9. Organi Yakup Mehmet Mustafa
10. Polianthos Mustafaoğlu Mustafa
11. Sosti Arifoğlu Remzi
12. Filira Kâşif Hakı Hasan

Text 49.
Akin 1030/17.05.1991, Two press statements by the independent MPs in relation to Mitsotakis’ visit to Thrace 13 and 14 May 1991.

Press announcement by Ahmet Faikoğlu dated Ksanthi 13.05.1991 [original in Turkish]:

Prime Minister Mitsotakis’ statements to the European Community countries when he came to Western Thrace, concerning an interest in the problems of the Western Thrace Turkish Minority which is deprived of its legal and constitutional rights, are totally fictitious. The fact that the economic aid to be secured from Europe will be used to annihilate the Western Thrace Turkish Minority appeared in all its nakedness. When Mitsotakis mentioned our Minority in his speech he divided our community into three parts by describing it as consisting of Turks, Pomaks and Gypsies, and thus he proved that he did not come to solve our problems but to create problems. The Western Thrace Turk has no need to ask for ethnic identity [etnik hüviyet] from either Prime Minister Mitsotakis or his Government. Just as our Minority was Turkish yesterday, it is Turkish today, and will remain Turkish tomorrow.
While asking Prime minister Mitsotakis to respect the human rights and ethnic consciousness [etnik vicdan hüviyeti], and reminding him that he has forgotten the signature he has made to the OSCE Agreement, I protest and condemn strongly in the name of Western Thrace Turkism his provocative speech here this evening.

For this reason, in order not to participate in Mitsotakis’ zeal to divide our minority, I declare that I will not participate in the dinner given in his honour in Ksanthi this evening although I have been officially invited.

Press announcement by Sadık Ahmet dated Komotini 14.05.1991 [original in Turkish]:

The Honourable Prime Minister Konstandinos Mitsotakis also mentioned our Minority in his speech today (14 May 1991) in the Rodopi Prefecture. The Honourable Mitsotakis said that he knew the problems and the previous injustices against the minority, but from now on it would be treated equally, adding that “However, just as the minority has rights it has also obligations.”

As a minority community we only feel and felt our obligations up until today… God willing from now on we will also feel the existence of our rights.

When the Honourable Mitsotakis mentioned the Minority education issue in another part of his speech his approach was rather unfortunate. Because the relevant decision of the European Commission related to the Protection of Minority Rights says the following: “The minorities’ right to protect and develop their nationality, religion, culture, and own language will be respected. Any initiative to extinguish their existence will be opposed.”

According to what I have heard, the Honourable Prime Minister said in his personal meeting with the Metropolitan Damaskinos: “You are a religious leader, please do not get involved in politics.” Yet, when our minority has an official political representative, it is a clear contradiction to what you said to the Honourable Metropolitan to receive in the name of the minority Meço Cemali whom you want to impose on our community as mufti. I condemn in the name of our community these double standards of the Prime Minister.

As for the nationality of our Minority and the claim that it consists of three different ethnic groups, it will suffice to remind you of the Paris Stipulations which you signed in the name of the Government in November 1990: “According to International Human Rights, a person has the identity of the nation he feels he belongs to himself.” When this is the reality we know very well what we are and feel no need to ask others about national identity [milli hüviyet].

In closing, the days before us will show to what degree the Honourable Prime Minister Mitsotakis’ words—“We sponge off the mistakes of the past, from now on the Minority people will be treated as equal citizens”—will be applied.
Text 50.

Akin 1083/16.03.1993 [original in Turkish]:

The Historical Selâhaddin Mosque in Aleksandrupoli-Dedeağac Burned on the Night of 12 March

The Minority Executive Committee made an Extraordinary Meeting in Dedeağac the Same Day

We are of the Opinion that the Historical Selâhaddin Mosque was Burned by Arson

The temples of worship are among the most sacred possessions of mankind from the time it began a social life up until today. Neither scientific evaluation nor barbaric power have been able to abolish the influence of attachment and esteem embedded in every class of people towards these spiritual supports, beginning in the age of idolatry, and passing through various transformations up until our time, continuing with mosques, churches, synagogues etc., nor will they be able to abolish it.

For this reason, sensing the importance of these very delicate feelings and beliefs for mankind, the first instructions which military commanders of world-conquering magnitude gave to their armies before their campaigns were: “to avoid provoking and insulting, the houses of God used for worship in the areas you occupy should not be touched…”

* * *

When Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror took the capital of the Byzantine Empire Istanbul on 29 May 1453, he recognised special privileges for the churches and left them under the Patriarchate of the Orthodox world and these privileges continue to be recognised in many matters to this day.

The Ottoman State, which until the last moments of the Empire put great emphasis on equality and justice for its subjects, regardless of differences in religion, race, and colour, is considered one of the longest living empires in history.

In the Ottoman Empire, the key positions of the Foreign and Economy departments, which were the most sensitive units of the empire, were left without hesitation to be administered by Greek Orthodox, Armenians, and Jews. The non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire, where freedom of religion was limitless, were virtually possessing their own living environment administrating themselves in the area where they lived. These explanations are the summary of the opinions of today’s Greek historians. And furthermore it is stressed according to these opinions that “…if the Balkans had not been occupied by the Muslim Ottomans, these areas would have been occupied by the Christian German Empire and all the Christians would have been Germanised and nothing would have remained of today’s Greeks, Serbs, and Bulgarians.”
However, today the number of tragedies which have befallen the nearly eight million Muslim Turks throughout their minority history, who by the events of history were left in a minority situation spread out in the Balkan states, are forgotten. Above all the events which have been experienced these last years in the supposedly “modern” Europe’s history have become shameful pages that will not be forgotten.

The Muslim Turks are massacred before the eyes of the civilised world. It is desired to drive them away from their homeland where they are born and raised, rape their girls and women in front of their men and children. The old, the helpless, and the children are left to die from hunger. And their only guilt is that they are Turks and Muslims. We are speaking about our kinsmen [soydaş] and co-religionist [dindarş] Bosniaks. We speak about our people who today are left without house, property, mother and father.

What should be said about the drama and suffering our kinsmen in Bulgaria have experienced step by step for years!.. And in the news about the Kosovo (Üsküp) Muslim Turk minority, the cries for help are disquieting.

It is seen that in the areas of the Balkans inhabited by Muslim Turks a wolf-dog belonging to obvious masters is wandering about. At this moment the dog’s eyes are wrapped up in blood in Bosnia-Herzegovina, it dismembers the Muslim Turks sucking their blood, tears them to pieces and throws them away...

Perceiving very well that the Western Thrace Muslim Turk Minority is also on the list of minorities within the Balkan states which are planned to be extinguished; we continue our conscious and legal struggle that we have kept on for the last ten years. However, the disquieting events, which have followed one after another up until today have not managed to result in anything.

Lately, while we continue the struggle regarding our education problems and the other difficulties, the dark forces think they are displaying supposed skill by changing the tactics of their assaults by putting more tragic events on the agenda. They spoil the Blessed month of Ramadan for us, by expelling for no apparent reasons four honourable religious officials who came as guests to our minority. And as if this was not sufficient, a new event chills not only our community, but everybody inside and outside our country.

The night of 12 March around two o’clock the sole mosque of the Aleksandrupoli area, the Selahaddin Mosque, burns and becomes ashes. The events stir up various comments with lightning speed among the 170,000 Western Thrace Muslim Turks. After these news, our minority’s EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE members went immediately to the place of the event to examine the calamity on the spot and make an
extraordinary assembly about the matter with our kinsmen [the local minority members of Aleksandrupoli]. At this moment the 100 kinsmen who participate in the assembly were morally supported by a general discussion.

According to our evaluation regarding the events, the historical Selâhaddin Mosque was first drenched completely inside with petrol and then set fire to. According to our information a thudding explosion from the mosque was first heard. This sound was the explosion of the evaporated petrol that was set fire to. As it was told that the fire brigade came immediately, this is the reason why the fire could not be extinguished. If the fire, as it is claimed, had started from the stove, the fire brigade would have had been able to save some part of the mosque unharmed.

Thus, in the days of the Blessed Ramadan the wild dog of the Balkans peed on our minority’s mosque and disappeared. However, the event left a mark on a world scale, just as the other ones.

Up until today, among the many attacks against our holy places of worship there are:

In Ksanthi (İskeçe)
- In 1985 the Aşağı Mahalle Mosque was bombed. In 1972 the Tabakhane Mosque was razed to the ground by bulldozers. In 1987 an explosive substance was thrown into the Hürriyet Mahallesi Mosque.

In Komotini (Gümülcine)
- Someone wanted to put the Aşâ Mahallesi Mosque of Arsakion (Aşâköy) on fire by putting bottles of petrol under its roof. Someone wanted to burn the Kırma Mahalle Mosque of our city by throwing a flammable substance into it one evening, which extinguished while burning on its carpets. The Tabakhane Mosque of our city suffered great destruction inside and around it when a bomb placed in front of its door exploded one night. The other mosques and mescits [small mosque] of our town have continuously their windows broken.

Among the events we have enumerated only one perpetrator is known. That is the Authorities which tore down the Tabakhane Mosque in Ksanthi (İskeçe). Even though the Authorities when they realised their mistake promised to build up the mosque again, they have not fulfilled their promise yet. None of the other perpetrators has yet been found.

The event of 12 March is extremely disquieting. Our newspaper AKIN has recently stressed that we would be confronted with new serious events. And this time the wild wolf-dog peed on our mosque in our very holy month of Ramadan. However, no matter how well our Selâhaddin Mosque, which the dog has peed on is restored, it will remain a temple of shame in the area.
Apart from that, we cannot end without stressing this proverb; “A dog whose time to die has come, pees in the mosque courtyard” [Eceli gelen köpek, cami avlusuna siyer].

Hasan Hatipoğlu
Former MP

Remarks:
The usual form of the proverb is “A dog whose time to die has come, pees against the mosque wall” i.e. A person who provokes or insults others is asking for trouble. Consequently, the proverb contains a certain threat. We see that the writer uses the picture of the dog rhetorically throughout the article to lead up to this proverb. Hatipoğlu is not known for his religious sentiments. He is not a person who frequents the mosque as he belongs ideologically to the secularist section of the minority. However, here he uses the incident for what it is worth in order to play on the religious sentiment of people. The four preachers who came from Turkey were expelled because they were not officially invited and there had been recent incidents where such preachers had been used to make propaganda for the section of the minority which relied on Turkey.

Text 51.
İleri 670/10.04.1992, “Entering our 18. year of publication” [original in Turkish]:

Our generation is the generation of CONTRADICTORY YEARS. Let us explain…:
Graduating in 1961, we are confronted with the coup against the renowned MENDERES administration: The 27 May 1960 coup…
We return here [to Greek Thrace]. The winds of democracy are blowing. Yeoryios Papandreu rouses the Greek People in the name of democracy…
But this does not last very long. While our Mother country is gradually relieved of the revolutionary government, our Fatherland is put under the pressure of revolt: The 21 April 1967 coup takes place…
We who are brought up in the Menderes spirit become very confused in the revolutionary storm… Everything we write is censored of course… How many times, how many times did we stand at ATTENTION in front of the 21 April 1967’s censors…
From 1964 to 1974, for TEN YEARS, our generation knows nothing about elections… We are deprived of this experience…
After 1970 ECEVIT WINDS start to blow in our Motherland Turkey… Apart from this, the Turkish Nation which from the second Vienna Defeat until today has receded, approximately from 1700 until today, we refer to the wars, turns in 1974 for the first
time outwards… It sends soldiers to Cyprus. Just like the Internal Turks the External Turks also…

There is no need to finish the sentence. It is evident…

We start our writing vocation in those ECEVIT WINDS… Our moral is high, our pride in the sky… But the Greek administration is at us… As if they are taking revenge for Cyprus on us…

While democracy gets out of hand in the Mother country, the OPPRESSION rises to the sky under the name of democracy in the Fatherland…

In 1975, we publish İLERİ in the Motherland spirit. Write, daddy, write! Trials and sentences follow one after the other…

We get to 1980. Suddenly!… A coup in Turkey! As if the knob is in the hand of someone who once presses here, once there…

After 1980, Andreas Papandreou the son of Yeoryios Papandreou ascends with tremendous speed in Greece; he gets into power… He truly gives freedom to the press. While democratic winds blow in the Fatherland… we speak from the point of view of the press, in the Motherland it just so happens that freedom becomes restricted…

The Minority writers must know how to balance these two weights well…

We are writing. There is freedom of press in the Fatherland. But while we are writing within this freedom… In the Motherland, in the head of those in the Motherland who say “LONG LIVE” the coup… And the rapacious gang here which relies on these heads… Even with an article containing the slightest criticism-comment they have the sentence ready to disgorge: He is opposing Turkey! Consequently, throw him out of the protocol! Cut his social rights! Did he not come to his senses, put him on the BLACK LIST! Let him look at Turkey with binoculars!

For TEN YEARS, and the Minority will not forget how it has suffered from this matter!

The brains in the Minority were frozen between 1980 and 1991… Even our most fearless writers kept silent! Because of the BLACK LIST…

What a time!

What a disgraceful thing, not for the Minority but for TURKISM!

* * *

While the Greek oppression spurred on us writers, the Anavatan Party Motherland oppression…

We suffered the greatest blow, mortal blow, between 1980 and 1991 from the rulers of our Motherland…

From time to time we loathed both journalism and writing; we became disgusted…

Very well, those who ruled Turkey between 1980 and 1991, where did they bring the Motherland? Or what point did they bring it to? The situation is clear, we see it…
Very well, those who depend on the support of this order, i.e. the rapacious gang here, where did they bring the Minority? Or what point did they bring it to? This is also clear… If they are satisfied with this SITUATION, please let them continue with their politics!

But the verdict of history for the last ten years will be: EMPTY YEARS… UNPRODUCTIVE YEARS… THE RULING YEARS OF THE BLOCKHEADS…

*[kof kafalilar]*

***

We brought İLERİ to where it is today, inside this CONFUSED ORDER… But let them come and ask about how we brought it there… Very few villages in Western Thrace where we have not spoken inside the coffee house, tavern, community chamber [cemaat odasında] or mosque… We have travelled over every inch of Western Thrace from Evros to Nestos… Also our abandoned villages! For obtaining not for ten, that is a lot, but one subscriber we have spoken for hours… If it had been within the power of the Rapacious Gang, İLERİ which is growing in importance inside and outside Western Thrace would have been extinguished; devastated!

Of course, this goes for the other opponents too!

-“They pressured me a lot to make me return İleri but… I did not have the conscience to do so… Because I know you, I know İLERİ. You gave us the fighting spirit, the love of Turkism, the love of Turkey was given to us by you!”

- The phrase “OUR MOTHERLAND TURKEY” I read first in İLERİ…”

-“In our village they put pressure on us to return İLERİ, they made a great effort but… had no success…”

-“Their greatest weapon was this: “Yes he is a good writer but… Why was he turned back at the Turkish border?” Look, at this point we, too, can only remain silent… We cannot defend you…”.

-“Oh dear friend, if you could only go once to Turkey, then we, too, would say a thing or two to our big-mouths but… If you could only go once to Turkey!”.

***

Our spiritual loss because of the fact that we were unable to go to Turkey during the last three and a half years, cannot be measured nor repaired, our material loss is more than ten million drachmas! The Greek oppression could not break us with its trials but… Nor could it bring us to our knees but… but this oppression from our side and our people… we did not die, but we staggered…

Why did the PATENTED collaborators, those who are intimate friends with the Greeks [çorbacı], those who have made denouncement a family business… swagger towards us… What can I do?? Because they are on the WHITE list, they are going to Turkey…
For this reason, we had greater HOPES than anybody else for the 21 October 1991 Motherland elections… Finally, luck was smiling… After three and a half years, we visited our highly beloved Motherland Turkey… We came home… From that day our ailing health started to improve.

But if they had the opportunity, if they had been able to, they would have thrown us out of Turkey handcuffed…

- “My friend, you are the sole target… What is on their mind is to get you! The other ones they do not even reckon… But İLERİ…”.

But let us say this, and indeed frankly: If ANAP had won the 21 October 1991 elections: We would have feared Turkey!

* * *

After us, i.e. after 1975, many publications appeared within the minority. We would like to take a look at the FUTURE of the Minority Press, even if it is only a couple of lines:

Within the minority, like today, TOMORROW newspapers depending on two sides will appear: A - Those which are supported by us, B - Those which are fed by the Greeks [çorbacı]… They will instead of producing THOUGHTS, rather CONTAIN PROPAGANDA. They will never attack each other… Because they will understand the importance of mutual ALTERNATIVES… They will only DEFEND. In the regular fashion of course. They will not be worried about subscribers etc.… The address is clear: THE COFFEE HOUSE OF SUCH AND SUCH VILLAGE [Here he uses Greek like one would for the postal service]… Let them read my things or not… they will say. They will wrap up and send three, five, or sometimes ten newspapers according to the village… At the end of the month they will go and collect their wages… They will show their expenses…

Today too this is how it works for some…

- “Newspaper A, is sent to our village with the village name attached to it…”.
- “Newspaper B, has never collected a penny from the time it first appeared until today! If I return it, it is still sent to me!”.
- “No one makes as much fuss about the subscription as you! Find a door you too, and enjoy yourself! Do not bother people!”.

Look, it has started now, and tomorrow none of our newspapers and journalists will bother the people… Our newspapers will be stereotyped; our journalists will be like officials…

Let us now say to ourselves… To complete OUR TWENTY FIFTH YEAR with all our determination and enthusiasm and the support of the people… If it happens it happens, if not the trowels remain hanging on the wall…

Everyone must look after oneself; our forefathers said…
But let me say once more: This Minority needs WRITERS… TOMORROW we will need even more those who are thinking like us, those who have healthy thoughts…
DEAR MINORITY PEOPLE, let us support this youth…

* * *

In closing, we would only say that: In the course of the last 17 years, we have written in the way we wanted to, the way our heart commanded us… Indeed we have written such articles that the influence of them remained for months and years by the readers… Few writers in the Minority have heard what we have heard: “This article of yours… Your sad article… Was read in the community chamber [cemaat odası], and the whole community listened…”.

For this reason, we are saying slowly to ourselves: As a writer, and indeed for İLERİ, we wrote articles to such repletion that, if we die we will have no regrets! We will not die disappointed!

We wish that Allah will grant this satisfaction to all our writer friends…

Consequently, we wish from our heart that: Our 18th year of publication will be good and beneficial for İLERİ, and most importantly for the Minority…

Text 52.
İleri 726/03.09.1993 [original in Turkish]:

“LOOK, THIS IS HOW I BECAME RICH!”

The fishing net had been thrown to the ground, and the men sat on the concrete bank resting and telling stories. After the greetings they showed me a place, and told me to sit down…

The turn to talk had come to the one with the hat. However, the one with glasses summarised what they had been talking about so I could take part and said:

-“The three persons you see here have become rich in the last 15–20 years. How we became rich, that is what we were explaining to each other. For example I became rich from transferring money. The fat guy you see here, from commissioning fields and plots… Of course from the Turks to the Greeks… Now it is Molla Sait’s turn to recount; he will explain how he became rich… If you have time, you, too, can listen… You should look into it; It is good for your business. Because you are a writer. You have never been able to make much of a living as a writer but… If you do these jobs you will… You will make more than a living…”.

-All right then, let’s listen…

Before starting to talk, Molla Sait gathered himself in the following way; he kneeled as if he was going to read a prayer [Mevlit]; he coughed lightly and started to speak with a little religious formula [besmele]…:
“You know, just as you have war profiteers you also have people who profit and get rich from a BROKEN DOWN ORDER… I saw that some avaricious ones had made it, and were making it, and said to myself: In this dim weather, you too should be able to make it, Sait!”.

And in fact, that is what happens!

“After the Cyprus Peace Operation in 1974, the pressure on the Minority reached zenith. As a result of this pressure, people escaped to Turkey. We noticed this. In this way, many neighbours from our village or surroundings fled to the Other side… They fled but… Their possessions and property remained here… Without a master”.

-Unfortunately that is what happened…

“One day after ritual cleansing [abdest], on my way to the Mosque a thought struck me; I said to myself: What if I became an agent for this property… At once a lightning flashed through my brain. I went straight to Turkey and started to visit my acquaintances one by one. I was able to become an agent for a lot of property. Whether it was to be sold or rented!”.

-They don’t call you Smart Sait for nothing!

“So when I entered the Kipi Border Post, i.e. on this side, I had taken on a lot of property. Eh, the Greek bosses [çorbacılar] were also circulating amongst us those days with government money to buy fields and plots, and what a bargaining took place! Sell whatever you can! If the property was ten million at the time I told the owner it was five million! My expenditures were also included in this!”.

-Very well, why did you sell to the Greeks?

“For this reason: the Greeks, besides buying, were also looking for easy profit. Thus, they bought the property for ten, but wrote fifteen on the papers. They warned me: Don’t say a word! In turn I would tell them, I declare five on the other side, don’t say anything you either!”

-An agreement was made… If you had sold to Our people…

“If we had sold to Our people, we couldn’t have done this monkey business; If we had done it, it would have leaked out. They go to Turkey and, maybe even only by coincidence, they would see the property owners… They may see them… Well, there is such a probability…But if you sold to the Greek…”.

-Then both the Greek and you are guarantied!

“What is it they say: If you go for a walk in the snow, you should not make your tracks clear!” Afterwards I invested this money in land in Turkey. Once again I sold to our compatriots from Western Thrace, i.e. I cheated them you will understand… Now what do I not have, if you want a correct answer I don’t even know myself…”.

-May Allah increase the abundance!

“Look, that is the story of my affluence… That is how I became rich…”.

* * *
As I parted from the place by the fishing net, I was staggering…

Text 53.

_Eleftherotipia_ 03.07.1989, “It is time that we speak about the minority of Western Thrace”, Pandazis Terleksis, Professor at the university of Crete [original in Greek]:

Nationalism, in many instances turned out to be a factor more decisive even than the class struggle for the formation and development of social structures. For instance, all the national and nationalist movements in the Balkan area surpassed at some point, as regards popular violence and social consequences, the class and social clashes which followed the national uprisings.

And while the time of bloody contest among the different national and religious groups, for the organisation of the nation-state and the consolidation of the politics of sovereignty is a thing of the past, in certain areas and under certain circumstances, purely nationalist estimations, myths and beliefs, revive and turn into decisive forces of social relations and foreign policy.

This is the case of Western Thrace, which with the recent parliamentary elections as cause, carried into the open the long smouldering situation between the two population elements living in the area, totally circumstantially, but in an alarming manner: the Muslim (ethnic-Turkish) population of the formerly Turkish held area of today’s prefectures Ksanthi and Rodopi and the Orthodox population of the religious and ethnic political group in power, which always regarded the area as an indivisible part of the Greek world.

I would not want at this point to fall into the trap of stereotype disorientating reasoning, which usually appears every time when demands or complaints of minority groups are framed towards or against the group (other-ethnic) in power. The trap is set up by the fact that the complaints or claims by minority groups (directed from native or foreign centres), are confronted by the political (ethnic) ruling groups almost always with a covert or manifest inner-ethnic logic, which sets in motion chain reactions, with certain victim the concrete (outer-ethnic) minority.

The dominant (nationalist) answer, independent of whether it is right or wrong, effective or fruitless, is almost always unbearably arrogant and emotionally loaded. It relies more on symbols of honour and stereotypes of prestige, on parchments of historical glory and commands of the good lord and less on existing events and rationalised associations of events and situations which are related to the real security, prosperity and progress of the community as a whole. And exactly because it is a dominant answer, it is usually angry in speech, to the point of actually being vindictive. Thus, under government manifestos and military proclamations like “the prestige of the nation was trampled on”, “inalienable national rights are betrayed” or
“for the honour of the weapons”, the most terrible genocides in history have been carried out and the most useless holocaust of nations has been justified.

For this reason, at this moment it would not be advisable for someone to take heed of the otherwise provocative activities (of Turkish inspiration or not) of the “Headquarters for Protectors of the Turkish Population in Western Thrace”, nor to the official answer, in the form of resolute or brash protests (according to the party affiliation of the one who criticises) of the Greek government. I think it would be more substantial for us to turn toward that which in my opinion determines the probable turn (or deviation) of things in similar instances: i.e. to the reactions of the dominant national element, in this case the Christians, towards the real or fictitious threat by the national minority of the Muslims, in the northern prefectures of the country.

The immediate answer given to the “Protectors of the Turkish Population in Thrace”—and which, unfortunately, within the election fervour of the last days was not commented upon widely either by the daily press, or by the spiritual leadership of the country includes the following:

You live and exist thanks to the humanitarian sentiments of the Greeks of Thrace. Do not provoke them. Thrace was and will remain Greek. Just as Asia Minor was and will become Greek. And we are not scared by that you are many as we have showed you in 1821... Muslim jackasses. Long live the Greece of two continents and five oceans. (Eleftherotipia, 8 June 1989).

Few pieces in contemporary history could render so eloquently and succinctly the religious bigotry, the racial confrontation and the undisguised chauvinism which can be latent in one nation towards another, as the above manifesto of national fever pitch. Here the pathos and myth, the pain and hate, abound.

And the dire question which poses itself to many of us who live in this country, on the eve of the European unification, in which we supposedly are playing a leading part, is: Do these words and perceptions reflect the feelings of the great mass of the Greek people? Or is it a case of an outburst of national-religious paroxysm by a small part of the cohabiting Greek element, which manifests itself within the confusion of the election period? I think that the question cannot remain unanswered, no matter how simplistic or mannered it may sound to some people. Because it is not only the case of scholarly curiosity concerning national self-knowledge, but a major issue of social justice, human rights and foreign policy, about the real essence of civilisation.

If it is the case of an isolated local incidence, then the problem has to do with insufficient or also prejudiced economic, social, and educational politics of the local authorities or certain government agents. However, in the case that the phenomenon is not restricted to the narrow confines of the two prefectures, nor concerns simply administrative practices and insufficient planning, but is diffused in one form or another to the anonymous mass of the population, than the matter is surely much more serious than we suspect. And it is more serious because future developments
concerning the national issues, which seem to be unavoidable and imminent, will possibly surpass the limits of moderation and reason and pass into the sphere of spontaneous reaction and fanaticism which often happens in such cases.

The line of the Greek governments both now and in the past, is and was: the less we speak about such matters, the better. In the name of “internal security”, of “diplomatic manoeuvres”, and of “responsible handling of national issues”, the Greek people remains in reality uninformed about the situation of the minorities in our country. We all suspect that around such matters the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Public Order, the Security Police, the KIP, and the army act sometimes dynamically and other times with restrain. Beyond this there is silence and strict secrecy. In such a climate of under- or also dis- information, secrecy, and self-delusion, rumours circulate easily and even more easily attitudes are reinforced which do anything else than advancing sentiments of friendship and good neighbour relations between the peoples.

However, for reasons which we will not analyse presently, we cannot believe that the issue of the Greek Muslims in Western Thrace will stop when the elections are over. On the contrary, everything must be re-established on new foundations, particularly because of the last events in the area. The responsibility and at the same time the opportunity for the political leadership in the matter is great, indeed in combination with the new developments in the Cyprus issue, and the Middle East, and within the European Community.

A more sober and responsible handling should, in my opinion, start by ascertaining some bitter facts and by definite actions such as:

**FIRST**: The Greek world (structures, culture, history) was not devoid of interracial confrontations and inter (or endo) religious recriminations. I do not think that the attitudes of the leading groups and the people towards national minorities such as the so called Arvanites, the Muslims, the Pomaks, the Gypsies, or the religious dogmas and “heresies” such as Jehovah’s Witnesses, the followers of the old calendar etc., have been recorded honestly and sincerely by contemporary historians and the researchers of our social life.

**SECONDLY**, the whole truth around the issue should be told to the people. All the data concerning the problems which all sorts of minorities in our country confront should become known. The superficial knowledge and fear fed xenophobia in the in-group and foment the aggressiveness towards the out-groups. And here I do not mean simply that certain conventional frameworks for the government policy, such as the Lausanne Treaty or Davos should become known. What should become known are the daily activities of government organs and agents, through administrative acts and secret orders to official administrative and police organs, on a local level, through budgets and development programs and through more general assignments by party
leaders, political movements, and church organisations, for the concrete minority problems of our country. They should discuss once more the guaranties of the Greek State towards those of different descent and other faiths, as well as our labour policy and practice towards the aliens from outside the EU, as becomes a country with our cultural tradition. The social peace and consensus in our country will evolve from such kind of information and not from the secrecy and silence on issues of human dignity and social justice.

THIRD, the hot confrontations in the area, both because of the chronic lack of a Cyprus settlement and the particularities of the Aegean, is not something we can avoid with impunity. Consequently our contribution towards the minimalisation of emerging dangers must be urgent, long-term and multi-level. With all this in mind, the handling of the minority problem cannot be transitory and of limited scope. It concerns in a wider sense our ideological-philosophical and cultural attitude and behaviour, with which we are integrated in the European Community of peoples and cultures.

FOURTH, probable solutions to the minority problem in Western Thrace can and must be provided within the constitutional framework of the Greek state and according to the more general principles of social justice. This should be made actually and indisputably known to Ankara and other centres of destabilising actions. And by this I do not mean verbal declarations with no content and diplomatic protests of the national boasting variety. I mean mainly the immediate application of certain measures to upgrade the Muslim population, based on human rights and constitutional requisitions, with extensive economic (and not only) programmes of reorganisation of the whole area, aiming at the consolidation of a regime of equal opportunities for the whole of the population in Western Thrace. Attempts of this kind constitute part of the wider social and cultural modernisation which all of us demand for our country.

FIFTH, racism is not only active, but also passive. Indeed, what we do not do and what we pass over in silence, when we should act and help, can be more painful than what we do and declare, to enforce or prevent situations. The attitude of toleration is often the sign, and maybe the most characteristic one, of racism. Because racism is not only the execution of the Jews. It is also the social speechlessness, to which many of us take recourse to get along. Racism is also the evasion or the silence and the indifference to the muttering, the whispering and the distorted truth, which concern social or religious groups “inferior” to us. Racism is the striking absence and the arrogant indifference of our intelligentsia towards issues concerning minorities and cultural subgroups, who live in the same social environment as us. For this reason, to the great words which are heard so often recently about democracy, human dignity and peace, we should add, at last, if we are sincere, great actions too.
Text 54.

Eleftherotipia 18.07.1989, “We will speak seriously about Western Thrace”, by Y. F. Apostolidis, Lawyer, Athens [original in Greek]:

The significant article by the Professor of the university of Crete, Mr. Pandazis TERLEKSIS in “Ε” 3.7.1989, “Time to speak about the minority in Western Thrace”, should puzzle the Ministry of Interior and especially the Foreign Ministry, whose policy during the last twenty five years to a large degree is responsible also for the recent crisis in W. Thrace.

Unfortunately, our interest in the problems of the minority and the general national problem of W. Thrace is always declared a day after the fair, when some resistance is noticed, which we easily and offhandedly attribute to “Turkish chauvinism”, we speak of “provocation by the minority which enjoys the same equality and freedom as the Greek element” and as a rule some three-day journalistic “mission” to W. Thrace (as if it was a matter of expedition to the North Pole), takes on the task to inform us about what happens in this distant country, with of course predetermined conclusions.

I cannot forget the editor of a newspaper, in 1982, with the events of Evlalo in Ksanthi, who in response to my protest against that he did not publish an answer by the interested parties to the official allegations, declared to me that “I will publish what the Foreign Ministry tells me”.

Mr. Terleksis is right when he speaks about “under- or dis-information, secrecy, and self-delusion”, a tactic which continues from the period of the dictatorship until today, and when he proposes “what should become known are the daily activities of government organs and agents, through administrative acts and secret orders to official administrative and police organs, on a local level, through budgets and development programs” etc.

I wonder how we expected that there would not appear reactions—which naturally would be exploited by Turkish foreign policy—when for decades there is unjustified mass removal [αφέρεσις] of Greek citizenship, which the interested part is informed about afterwards, when members of the minority only as an exception obtain a licence to buy real estate, for construction, for driving a car or tractor, when the spirit of hostility even reaches DIKATSA [organ for recognising foreign exams] toward the university educated—members of the minority, who want to make a career in the area where they were born, and when rudimentary rights are under the immediate control of the infamous “offices for cultural relations”, which constitute supra-powers in the prefectures of Ksanthi and Rodopi? This is something which the metropolitan of Maronia of course never protested against.
As a lawyer in Athens, born and raised in Ksanthi, where I go several times every year, I have taken care of many cases of wronged Muslims in the State Council which as a rule were decided in their favour.

I could have referred to shocking instances of violation of rudimentary rights of law-abiding Greek citizens—Muslims, who could be characterised as anything else than “chauvinists” and “agents of Ankara”. It must finally be realised that the members of the minority are Greek citizens, and every time their rights are offended, which derive from the Greek constitution and the Greek laws, the Greek legal order is put to test.

As an example of the offhandedness by which the Greek administrative services confront the relevant problems, I could refer to a decision of the Citizenship council, a rejection, of an application by F.A. for revoking a decision by the Ministry of Interior, which took her citizenship away when she was only five (5) years old. She lives from 1969 in the district of Ksanthi and is married to a Greek citizen. As justification for rejecting her application, the Ministry stated among other things that she is “not ethnic Greek of Pomak stock, married to a Greek citizen…” and that “from a general evaluation it is clear that a. she has not adapted herself to the Greek reality as concerns manners and customs, ethnic and religious traditions (!!!), b. she has not embraced the official Orthodox Christian religion but insists on the Muslim dogma (SIC), she does not speak Greek, she is married to a Greek citizen (but) Muslim, she has settled in a sensitive Greek area—a border area (where of course the Pomaks have lived for centuries).

…and for all these reasons the Citizenship council, in the year 1986 insists on its consultatory response from the year 1970, to take away her citizenship (when she was only five years old).

It is consequently time that we speak seriously, about our interests. That we invite the representatives of the minority to speak about their complaints in open dialogue. That we learn and accept the truth. If we do not do it, the problem will get more complicated and the crisis will multiply, with unforeseen consequences.

Text 55.

Trakya’nın Sesi 414/19.3.1992, “Conversation with Onsunoğlu, part 13” [original in Turkish]:

[…] You see, the ugly side of events under mafia direction gets always the upper hand. Without exception. You cannot show a single event that did not turn into a catastrophe for the minority. That was also what happened with the demonstration in Ksanthi. Now look in particular at those claims by the deputy Sadik Ahmet. He says that Faikoğlu and Hafiz Aga created the events in Ksanthi after making a deal with
KIP (!). As if he, too, were present when the deal was made, the blessed blockhead [mitbarek patavatsız]!.. The Minority mafia are at each other’s throats exactly by using mafia methods.

**T.S.: How do you comment on Sadık Ahmet’s attitude?**

**Onsunoğlu:** - When he says that Hasan Hatipoğlu is the greatest traitor the Minority has fostered, I laugh so that I have to hold my stomach. When he screams out to the general assembly of our association [of university graduates-YTD] that Faikoğlu is an agent of the Greek Secret Service; when he “reveals” in the coffee-house of the Melivia [Elmalı] village that he is the vice president of KIP I burst out laughing. When he accuses Hafız Aga of arranging the protest demonstration in Ksanthi in collusion with KIP so that they could beat up the Turks, I roll over [i.e. from laughter]. When he screams Rodoplu right in the face, in front of everybody, saying: “Did you not make a plan with Pavlidis to get me out of office?” [in the 05.11.1989 elections], I cannot keep myself from giggling. When he reports that the president of the Western Thrace Association in Ankara [Bedri Uçar], who is a Turkish citizen but from Thrace, is a “Greek agent”, I become delighted. When he declares that “It is necessary to put thousands on the black list for the Minority to progress”, I beat time saying ten thousand, twenty thousand…

I marvel this guy’s adaptation abilities. While he was living among the Greeks and securing his livelihood from them, his attitude was to strive to be the greatest pro-infidel. “This people of ours are used to being ripped off. That is why you must rip them off [kazıklamak]!” (Easy now, do not think that this is slander, Ali Nuri is my witness.) That is how he spoke and behaved. Afterwards he came to the Turks, and became the greatest Turkist [türkçü]. “We were born Turks, we will die as Turks. I will shed my blood for the minority…” He did not shed his blood for the Minority, but shit on the Minority cause. Anyway we can say that he shed something. And lastly he entered the mafia, he was even promoted to mafia godfather. And he was able to surpass all the former mafia members in mafia methods. “He is pro-infidel, he is a traitor, he is a Greek agent, they are KIP agents…” Leave the rest, he was even able to enter the mafia from below and come out on top. As I said I marvel the adaptation ability of this guy.

There is only this discord with İbrahim Şerif, which I do not know what it will lead to. Sadık took 7 million of the money collected for those from Bulgaria [money collected among the minority to send to those who came to Turkey from Bulgaria under the great exodus in the summer of 1989]. İbram Şerif got only 4 million. Now there is no money left because other mafia members spent it gradually. But İbram Şerif wants 3 million more as his share. In fact, 3 million three or four hundred to be correct. But a few hundred thousands is nothing to talk about. When he absolutely wants the 3 million, give him the rest as well. And he decided that he wanted it from Sadık because he
became MP. I would say that we should open the handkerchiefs in the Mosques again. This people is generous, they would not collect 3 million, but 30 million…

Text 56.

*Balkan* 95/07.12.1993, “‘World Parliaments’”, by Mustafa Hafiz Mustafa [original in Turkish]:

“World Parliaments”

The general secretary of the Friendship Equality Peace party [DEB] and elected leader of the Western Thrace Turkish Community, Dr. Sadık Ahmet, must have held a meeting last Friday with authorities from the Foreign Ministry of the United States of America in Washington. (Since we have not been able to get in touch with our Leader at the time of writing we say “must have held a meeting” according to his planned program.)

The citizens’ possibility to send their favourite politicians to Parliament as their representative is one of democracy’s essential blessings. With this in mind, the Western Thrace Turkish Community had certainly wanted to make its own voice heard in Parliament. But “its own voice”… Others said to it [the Community]: “Look this is going to be your voice!” and not the voice or voices that you want!…

Since the authorities of our country were uncomfortable with the fact that the Western Thrace Turkism’s real voice represented it in Parliament, they closed the doors of Parliament for this voice with the anti-democratic law paragraph they issued. Those who do not want to accept this fact, or it is understood that it does not serve their personal interest to accept it, are very adept in presenting such nonsense as “the minority was forced to elect a Christian MP…” and shed their “crocodile tears” because they are distressed by the fact that our community elected a representative instead of a “dependent MP”… My words to those who claim to speak in the name of the minority are that they should know that Western Thrace Turkism is very pleased by their vote and the result of the 10 October election. It is known very well in whose name or names those people are worried.

We said before the election that: If the Parliament in Athens does not want us, we will send a representative to the World Parliaments!” Some people, who did not even have the ability to satirise this slogan, presented questions such as “So what is the World Parliament?”

Now the time has come for us to explain to these poor people with a few examples what the World Parliaments are… Even though not even two months have passed since the 10 October election, the elected representative of Western Thrace Turkism Dr. Sadık Ahmet has represented our community with the power he obtained from his voters first in parliaments or state organs of Germany, afterwards Turkey, and last
USA. In addition, the various results of Dr. Sadık’s initiatives in institutions such as the European Parliament, Helsinki Watch, and the Turkish parliament could also be mentioned in this connection. Is it now understood what was meant by the expression “World Parliaments”?

We were reminded of the developments outlined above by Dr. Sadık Ahmet’s meeting in the name of our community last Friday with the authorities of the American Foreign Department.

**Text 57.**

*Balkan* 117/24.05.1994, “Leader, organisation, cause”, by Mustafa Hafız Mustafa [original in Turkish]:

**Leader, organisation, cause**

Last week we and our elected representative Dr. Sadık Ahmet had a conversation in the room of the National Action Party’s [MHP] General Secretary Alpaslan Türkeş in the Turkish Grand National Assembly with one of the MPs from this party, Surgeon Dr. Seyfi Şahin.

The esteemed Turkish nationalist [Öztürk], says at one point: A state or a community needs to possess the following three elements in order to keep itself continuously on its feet: a) Leader, b) Organisation, and c) Cause (Nationalism).

And the esteemed Turkish nationalist gives the following example to illustrate his point: Let us look at England. No matter how democratic or republican [cumhuriyetçi] this country may be, the leadership of the kings is undisputed and all the political parties respect this leadership. It cannot be disputed that England has a lot of organisations both inside and outside the country. The presence of international organisations such as Rotary or Lions should not be forgotten. England has also a nationalist cause. The Englishman sets his nationalism above anything else. For this reason England, which was once known as the country where the sun never set on its lands, still has a significant place in the world even though it has been confined to an island… We could also use Japan as an example of this…”

My first “teacher” of journalism Selahaddin Galip taught me to look at every event in the perspective of our community. Taking this as a point of departure, let us try to evaluate the example above from our community’s point of view.

During the last years the Western Thrace Turkish Community has a leader in the person of Dr. Sadik Ahmet and this cannot be disputed. Of course there may emerge some people who object to this, but it is another reality that those who object are not even able to influence 10% of our community. As for the organisation, this point has been taken care of by the officially established Friendship Equality Peace [DEB] party which has created an organisation throughout Thrace. The “cause” or “nationalism”,
which is necessary for the healthy perpetuation of the community’s presence, exists in over-abundance in Western Thrace Turkism. The overwhelming majority of our kinsmen feel pride when saying “I am a member of the Western Thrace Turkish Community.”

Consequently, there is no reason for the Western Thrace Turkish Community not to look positively towards the future. Of course, this does not mean that we have not many important and urgent problems which need a solution. But these problems cannot stop us from continuing our presence as a community. It is necessary not to forget the examples of Mandela and Arafat. One after 20 years in jail and the other after his country had been in captivity for 27 years, were able both to liberate their countries and become the countries’ official presidents. This is why we must have hopes for the future, as long as we do not spoil our unity!

Text 58.
Akin 1049/20.03.1992 [original in Turkish]:

Precious kinsmen,

Our sublime UNITY which these idealist and self-sacrificing leaders provided is today going through a disquieting crisis. The main questions of our community have been put aside and remain idle. Today, in particular some of our younger men have the urge to go in the wrong political direction, with plans which will not bring any practical benefit to our community either now or tomorrow. However, if these plans leave them disappointed tomorrow, who will take responsibility for the resulting sin of opening a wound in our community?

The continuation of the great political mistakes, which for a long time has become the reason for justified complaints within our community, does not only distress our people but virtually crushes them! What is the motive of those within our community who want to achieve today, what the dark forces which struggled to abolish the Executive Committee of our Supreme Council for years were not able to achieve? And again, what are some people who today are attacking the Executive Committee with the most ugly and unfounded accusations earning by insulting our exalted Committee?

Yes, at this place it is useful to stress this matter once more. The MP office is not permanent, and this is very natural. Only that when people are wearing the MP title they must strive not to make mistakes involving the whole community. In case they do so, this mistake will follow the MP like a shadow throughout life.

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Precious kinsmen,

This point must be paid very well attention to. In the history of our minority’s struggle only the Supreme Council and its extension the Executive Committee will live
together with our Minority. The Western Thracian Turk must protect these constructive units forever like the apple of his eye.

* * *

There is no place for malice and bloodthirstiness in politics. People can sometimes become the slaves of feelings which flutter to bring him in a state of mad and unlimited ambition. However, the influence on individuals of this unnatural event must be temporary. In this case the unconscious [şuur diştr] mistakes are quickly mended. People may take whatever decision they want in their private affairs. They may undertake whatever enterprise they want. However the decisions relating to community issues are investigated very meticulously [sık dokunur ince elenir]. The enterprises are well planned. In short, every step taken in relation to our Minority’s questions must be made while calculating very carefully what plus and minuses, benefit and damage it will provide for our community. Not like street urchins who say “come on let’s go”! Nor “I will break and burn”! We will carry on with a determined policy providing consultations which protect the honour and dignity of our Minority’s legal struggle. Our consultation centre is the Supreme Council and the Executive Committee. With the decisions originating from this [centre] our community’s struggle to obtain its rights, which it commences in the best possible manner, will be won.

**Text 59.**

*Trakya’nın Sesi* 452/26.05.1993 [original in Turkish]:

**Onsunoglu’s speech at the cemetery at the burial of Celâl Zeybek.**

So we have lost Celâl Zeybek, too.

Such a sudden death… What an untimely loss! What a great pain!

How can you control the feelings that overwhelm you? Your sobs? Your tears?

We are mourning. We have lost the great Celâl.

We lost a friend, a comrade-in-arms, a companion.

Celâl had always a place in our plans for political initiatives. In our calculations for the future we always put Celâl first. We would go to Athens; with Celâl. We would send a message to Turkey; with Celâl. And now?…

Now we must make those plans and calculations over again. And we must necessarily content ourselves with less. With the death of Celâl Zeybek our expectations concerning the Minority’s abilities diminished.

We lost an honest, open-hearted, brave, fearless Minority member.

The beautiful sonorous baritone voice which matched his oratory skills was like a reflection and extension of the beauty of his heart and character.

He was a good family head. A good and auspicious child. A good father.

“I learned Ottoman manners from my family,” he used to say and felt proud of it.
But in fact he was a child of the republic. He attended secondary school [ortaokul-lise] in Turkey during the 1950s. Celâl Zeybek’s abilities, social interests, and determination, became apparent already at the time when he was a pupil. For a while he was chairman of the Democrat Party’s youth organisation in Manisa. When Celâl Zeybek returned to Ksanthi he led the Ksanthi Turkish Union during its most difficult period. He was a person who loved his people and his religion and was prepared to sacrifice himself for the Minority cause. He was a person who sacrificed himself.

The great Celâl! The great Pomak! The great Turk!

“We are the remnants of the Kumans and Petchenegs, part of Ottoman civilisation” he used to say. The fierce Turkish nationalist Celâl . “If you open my heart and look inside you will see Turanism” he used to add. He who was the most tolerant towards foreigners, most open-minded, and most internationalist in the minority. Celâl possessed a most rare personality, who had succeeded to separate completely his Turkism, and indeed his fierce Turkism, from vulgar nationalism, xenophobia, and racism.

Celâl always gave to the Minority throughout his short life. He never took. “I will die poor,” he used to say. And he practised what he preached.

We have lost a Minority giant. We trusted his character, we admired his sacrifices. We envied his abilities.

He served as MP during the severest period of tyranny, when everything was prohibited to the Minority. At a time when even the smallest affair of a Minority member could drag on for years.

Celâl did not accept to use his MP status to even obtain a driving licence for himself.

-As long as my people are not given driving licences, I cannot use the position I have won with their votes to obtain a driving licence for myself.

And he turned back the ready-made driving licence which was handed to him.

He drove a shabby old East-German car without driving licence.

-According to the regulations we are people who break the law. For that reason, the illegal actions we make according to these regulations challenge this order and are legitimate, he used to say.

Death is God’s command. If it were not untimely. If only the thing he said that “if I am not able to do it, it will be left undone” [Yapamazsam gözüm arkada kälir] could be realised.

Celâl used the expression “If I am not able to do it, it will be left undone” when he visited me in Thessaloniki and told me about his last dream.

-Mitsotakis promised the Arab ambassadors that he would give permission to build a mosque in Athens. But for various reasons this promise was not fulfilled. I am afraid that if this matter is left to the Arab embassies, nothing will happen. Today there are
more than 7,000 Muslim kinsmen in the Athens area. They do not even have a single mosque there. We must take the initiative to build a mosque as Greek citizens. That is the only way to realise this task. Let us make an association which can take the responsibility for building the mosque in Athens. You can think about the statutes for the association. After the mosque is finished we can turn it into a pious foundation [vakıf]…

Celâl Zeybek was not able to realise his last dream. If an association founded by Minority members can realise the building of a mosque in Athens according to his plan, I propose already now that the name should be the Celâl Zeybek mosque.

**Text 60.**

*Trakya’nın Sesi* 460/18.08.1993, “Some Minority Questions in the Aftermath of Hafız Yaşar” (Part 22), by İbram Onsunoğlu [original in Turkish]:

A reflection of the threats and extortion directed against Hafız Yaşar and his family appeared with his burial.

The Mufti Hafız Cemali Meço proposed his burial in the small cemetery [mezarlık-şehitlik] of the Yeni Cami Mosque yard as a sign of respect. First his family accepted this offer. The small cemetery in the yard of Yeni Cami had not been used for a long time. It was investigated if there would be any kind of legal or administrative obstacle. None was found and everything was agreed on. The first preparations were done. Hafız Yaşar would be buried in the yard of Yeni Cami with a modest ceremony. But afterwards there came news from his family that “no, we find the Kırmahalle-Mestanlı cemetery appropriate, he will be buried there. And that is what happened.

I asked myself:
- How come the Kırmahalle cemetery was preferred? The Yeni Cami yard would be a place of respect and honour for Hafız Yaşar. As there was no last request by himself on the matter, maybe it was the sense of local ties that ruled. Hafız Yaşar was born and raised in the small Mestanlı quarter that was originally a part of the large Kırmahalle. I thought that the family choice was connected to the area. But if you had asked there, Hafız Yaşar would maybe have belonged more to the Yeni Cami milieu than the Mestanlı.

I got the following reply from the Mufti spokesman Abdülhalim Dede:
- No, it is not local ties as you thought. It is out of fear.

At first I could not understand this explanation. I did not want to accept it. Sometimes I thought, oh we are exaggerating.

- This was no exaggeration. Nor an allegation. This was the truth. Hafız Yaşar would not be buried in the yard of the Yeni Cami, because his family feared the anger of the Minority mafia. It is believed that to show such respect to the Black Listed Hafiz
Yaşar would be looked upon as a provocation by the mafia that would not be left unanswered. That is what they are afraid of. A quiet burial ceremony is desired. In addition, that this respect for Hafız Yaşar was proposed by the mufti Hafız Cemali who is like a red cloth for the mafia, increased the fear even more…

This explanation came one day before. The next day in the burial ceremony I witnessed with astonishment the correctness of all that had been said.

What do you think, doctor. Do you know how they made us suffer? How cruelly they behaved? Some of these people are even religious personnel, preachers, elected mufti, etc. But they are in fact godless people. They will do anything. I am afraid. We have now settled on the Other side. Family, children, house, work. How could we face returning [to Greece]?

One of the first things we are taught in our profession [Onsunoglu is a psychiatrist] is to behave sensibly and sensitively towards fear and scared people, however extreme, senseless, or out of place it may seem to you. It had been decided that I should speak in front of Hafiz Yaşar’s coffin. I looked around and saw that what I had planned to say would really lay bare this fear. I thought that this was not right of me and refrained from saying it.

Trakya’nın Sesi 461/ 08.09.1993, “Some Minority Questions in the Aftermath of Hafiz Yaşar” (Part 23), by İbram Onsunoglu [original in Turkish]:

I felt it to be a moral debt to ourselves, and a social and national duty, to bear witness to what had happened with Hafiz Yaşar after his death. Both because I loved and respected him as one of our elders and one of the great Minority personalities, and as a reaction on the one hand against the insulting and blasphemous behaviour of the Minority mafia at his death which runs counter to our social traditions, and on the other hand the antidemocratic, discriminatory, and cruel conduct by the Koca Kapı which did not refrain from punishing him even at his death.

To the question addressed to the congregation by the Imam after the burial prayer [cenaze namazı] “What kind of a man was he?” everybody was shouting with one mouth “he was a good man”, and our hearts felt relieved. It repressed the whispering that Koca Kapı attempted to sizzle between us “no, he is bad, if he were not bad I would not have punished him, boycott his funeral just as I did.” And it left the mafia conspirators, who were outside the mosque during the prayer, standing there.

After Hafiz Yaşar had been buried at the Kırmahalle cemetery, I walked back with some friends and we talked together for a while. Celâl Zeybek, Orhan Hacıibram, Nazif Ferhat, Mehmet Nuri, the dentist Ekrem, the physician Hüsamettin… All of us were angry at the Consulate for having boycotted the burial ceremony of Hafiz Yaşar.
Orhan:- Oh my God! [İyi be vallahi] The Other side [i.e. Turkey] has divided our living ones in two. From now on they will also divide our dead in two groups. Those who are buried with the consul attending and those who are buried with the prefect attending. (The Rodopi prefect was present at Hafız Yaşar’s burial ceremony)… But your situation in Komotini can still be considered good. That so many people had the courage to attend the burial. You are just fine. If this had been in our Ksanthi, it would have been impossible to find people to lift the coffin from the ground. They would have thrown stones instead. With this development the Minority will soon experience such events.

Celâl Zeybek, explained the mafia’s unseemly intrigues in the burial of the Komotini mufti Hafız Cemali’s old mother in Ehinos. The following instructions were forwarded to the neighbours in the village: “-Tell Hafız Cemali not to come to the burial. If he insists on coming, you should know that we will pass the order so that no one in the village will take part in the burial.” “-So let him not come! But you should also know that only the sons, sons-in-law, brothers and nephews transcend 150 persons. And you cannot scare them… And who do you think you are who prohibit a son to go to the funeral of his mother!” “- We warn you that if Cemali comes to Ehinos there will be incidents!” He added, we had taken precautions for all possibilities when Cemali went to the burial in Ehinos. The mafia people went from door to door in the evening to prevent participation. Celâl did not refrain from mentioning names: “It was all Aga and Aga’s men.” In spite of all the efforts by the mafia the participation was great. The congregation was more than a thousand said Celâl.

The great Celâl! Eighth months later he himself would shut his eyes for the last time. What he had said repeated itself in his burial. This time the mafia used one of his nearest relatives.

- Will Şinikoğlu and Hafız Cemali come to the burial?
- How can I know. May God reward them if they come.
- You will not let them come.
- …
- Look, if you don’t do it and those two come noone else will turn up for the burial. You are warned.
- If they do not turn up they do not turn up. If only we two brothers remain we will carry [the coffin of] our father alone.
- I have told you. Don’t be sorry later.
- Look, uncle. Our father had a last request. We were not going to grant it, but now the time has come. If I die, he repeated, for your sake don’t let him [i.e. his older brother who is married with Aga’s sister] come to my burial. He must have been right. Let anybody who wants come, but not you. This conversation takes place in front of Celâl Zeybek’s coffin.
Text 61.

Gerçek 369/17.09.1993, The first announcement by Rodoplu in favour of the independent ticket at the 1993 elections, followed by the decision by the Executive Committee [original in Turkish]:

WHY INDEPENDENT?

Our minority which continues its struggle until the end without yielding to any kind of injustice and oppression, will display this resoluteness also in the early general elections which will take place 10 October 1993.

Our minority starts a new struggle as one body in these elections, to regain the right “to elect Independent MPs” which has been taken away from it. Despite of the 3% election limit intended towards our minority by the Mitsotakis government, in these elections our minority will again participate with independent tickets to show once more its unity and power both to the [Greek] administration and the world.

Our minority will not disregard its pride and honour in order to elect MPs.

Our minority has no need, nor will it have the need, for an MP in the Greek parliament which the parties can play with like a puppet…

No to the Parties…

Because until today all the Greek political parties and governments have exposed the Western Thrace Muslim Turkish minority to oppression and injustice.

Because no political party displayed the will to take interest in our minority’s question in a sincere way. They only tried and try various approaches in order to grab the votes of our minority from election to election…

Because the political parties which were not able to come together for many vital questions, were able to come together when confronted with a question concerning our minority and were able to take many unanimous decisions against our minority. In addition, the parties in question which did not only content themselves with practices like this, said also yes to an anti-democratic election law with a 3% limit and abolished our minority’s right to elect independent MPs.

Because no party solved our minority’s problems which exist until today, nor gave back its rights, and as usual [the parties] competed against each other to add new problems to our many already existing ones.

To sit down and negotiate with the political parties which draw up such a dark picture and to hope for help from these parties means to drag our minority into darkness.

NO to the parties for these reasons…
To run behind the parties for personal material and moral benefits [maddi ve manevi menfaatler] and to follow those who are running with our eyes closed, is not good for anything else than to open deep wounds in our minority.

NO to the parties for these reasons…

We cannot accept that they receive the votes of our minority and afterwards take new initiatives in parliament to stab us in the back.

NO to the parties for these reasons…

Today more than ever our minority needs unity and co-operation and will undoubtedly secure as always this unity [tek vücutluluk].

YES to unity for these reasons…

To prove once more that we are a proud and dignified minority and to continue our struggle to secure a bright environment for the coming generations living humanly [insanca yaşıyorak gelecek nesillere de aydınlık bir ortam sağlamak için mücadeleımız sürdüreceğiz].

YES to unity for these reasons…

We will realise by supporting until the end the historical decision taken once more by the Supreme Minority Committee’s Executive Committee [AYK-YK] which gathers our minority under one roof, which always stands upright, which is our minority’s signature in all our glorious struggle and resistance, and which is our minority’s only and indisputably supreme organ of decision.

YES to unity for these reasons…

Our minority must once more announce with loud voice the injustice it is exposed to in the elections and its votes potential to the whole world.

YES to unity for these reasons…

WE STRESS ONCE MORE…

✓NO TO THE PARTIES, YES TO UNITY.

✓NO TO PUPPET MPs, YES TO A PROUD STRUGGLE.

✓NO TO PERSONAL BENEFITS, YES TO THE BENEFITS OF THE MINORITY.

✓NO TO ELECTION LIMITS, YES TO THE INDEPENDENT TICKET.

✓NO TO THE PARTIES’ DECISIONS, YES TO THE A.Y.K. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.
HISTORIC DECISION

1 - The Greek political parties’ only aim in changing the election system by introducing the 3% limit, was to deprive our Minority of its right to elect independent MPs. Just like with any right which has been usurped from our minority, it is also determined to make every kind of legal struggle to get this right back. This struggle is won by insisting on the independent tickets and making this injustice known to the world.

2 - It is not possible to co-operate with any of the political parties which took away our right to elect independent MPs, nor to support the candidates to be included on the tickets of these parties whoever they may be. Because such a situation will mean that we approve the injustice.

3 - For this reason the AYK-YK decided to make internal consultations in the minority for the immediate creation of independent tickets and the Trust ticket which was first created and supported by the AYK-YK for this purpose in the last elections headed by the Former Independent MP Dr. Sadık Ahmet.

4 - The AYK-YK laid the responsibility on Former Ksanthi Independent MP Ahmet Faiçoğlu, Mufti of Ksanthi Mehmet Emin Aga, and President of the Western Thrace Minority University Graduate Association [YTD] İsmail Rodoplu to make these consultations, make a decision in the name of the Committee, and announce these decisions to the press.

5 - The result of the contacts to be carried out by these persons in the name of the AYK-YK will be to create as soon as possible independent tickets in the prefectures Ksanthi, Rodopi, and Evros and take part in the elections with these tickets.

NO TO THE PARTIES, YES TO UNITY!

WESTERN THRACE MUSLIM TURKISH MINORITY SUPREME COMMITTEE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Former independent MP: Ahmet Faiçoğlu
Mufti of Ksanthi: Mehmet Emin Aga
B.T.A.Y.T.D. President: İsmail Rodoplu
Ksanthi Turkish Union President: Kadir Yunusoglu
Vaaz ve İrşad Heyeti President: Sabri Haci Hüseyin
M.M.M.M. Birliği President: Asım Çavuşoğlu.
B.T.T.Ö.B. President Adnan Raif
For the Komotini Mufti İbrahim Şerif: Ahmet İsmail
Former MP: Hasan Hatipoğlu

Text 62.
Here is what İbrahim Onsunoğlu claims

Provocative letter to our newspaper

With his letter to our newspaper the Muslim MP candidate of Nea Dimokratia in Rodopi, İbrahim Onsunoğlu, reveals his dubious and provocative thoughts regarding the “naming” of the Muslim minority and takes recourse to an unprecedented abuse of our newspaper and the minority policy in force.

No more no less, our newspaper is “provocative” (evidently because we revealed the tactics of Onsunoğlu).

And the policy of our country towards European development is in the …“anal phase” (commonly “of the a”[rse]…) because we do not specify the ethnicity of the minority.

The most provocative letter by Onsunoğlu to our newspaper is as follows:

“To the newspaper ‘Elefthero Vima’, Komotini.

Ms manager

I will not leave unanswered your publication in the issue 1/10/93 of “E. V.” which refers to the minority candidates. At least as regards my person.

Not such deviousness! Enough! It does not convince. Except if it is regarded paranoid. Which however it is not. For this reason it is also a provocation. “…they managed to enter the tickets of the parties to play their dirty game.” (!!)

To make clear once and for all the term Muslim (or Turkish or Turco-Muslim) Minority. With this fixation on the “anal phase” of the European development. With this permanent Greek political ankylosis and national self-trapping.

‘The name is our soul’ [Greek slogan concerning the name “Macedonia”].

The Minority claims steadfastly also the official recognition of the right to add an adjective to its name which specifies its ethnicity. This right of national self-definition is non-existent in a European democracy [i.e. in Greece]. And the Minority defines itself as ‘Turkish-Muslim’. And that does not depend, it cannot depend, on any party commitment or national position.

When this is said: I would be astonished if Kostas Ioannu was presented as the ‘GREEK parliamentary candidate of Rodopi for the Party of Progress’ and I would feel that it had an aggressive character against me—and he does well not to do it. And I do not present myself as the ‘TURKISH parliamentary candidate of Rodopi for N.D.’, even though in my position that would have a defensive character.

With respect

Onsunoğlu İbrahim, parliamentary candidate for N.D”
**Answer by our newspaper:** From reading the letter, it is immediately clear who is the provocateur. Surely, and it was not our newspaper which revealed the tactics of Onsunoğlu but himself. His position regarding “claiming the right to add an adjective to its name which specifies its [the minority’s] ethnicity,” however, is neither paranoid nor provocative. It is treacherous! Because this is the only way to characterise claims which run counter to International Treaties, the Lausanne Treaty, and our righteous national issues.

Otherwise, the letter of Mr. Onsunoğlu has (besides the treacherous) also paranoid and provocative elements (which he obviously acquired from the environment where he lives…) [As a psychiatrist, he works in a mental hospital].

Eh, no mister Onsunoğlu, will our country progress in its European development and its policies get away from this …“anal phase” if the minority is recognised with an adjective which specifies its ethnicity! Eh, no!

If the minority characterises itself as “Turkish-Muslim” and that “does not depend on any party commitment or national position” the only thing we would expect was the answer of Nea Dimokratia as the party which hosts you on its ticket. (We remind you that there is only one national position on the issue. The minority is one and it is religious, Muslim. This position happens to be the position of PASOK).

The rest, concerning “Greek” or “Turkish” parliamentary candidates for Rodopi, we will not comment! Because if we comment on it, we risk… turning crazy from the provocative opinions of Mr. Onsunoğlu… Eh, not that we need a psychiatrist after all, when he should do his own psychoanalysis by a team of doctors from N.D. who put him on its ticket!
Text 63.
*İleri* 732/16.10.1993 [original in Turkish]:

Declaration by Nazif Ferhat:

THANK YOU

With the 10 October elections we enter a new period. With a very small margin *Sinaspismos* was not able to enter parliament. This result is an important deficiency from the point of view of political life inside and outside parliament.

We were not able to fulfil the goal we had set us in the Rodopi prefecture. If we had been able to obtain a couple of thousand votes from the minority as we had wanted, both our party would have been represented in parliament and the minority would surely have elected an MP.

As a candidate I take responsibility for the part of the failure which befalls me.

Those who aim to distance the Minority from the political scene of the Country and leave it without MP, by serving a policy which is not related to the real interests of the minority but their personal whims and ambitions, will one day and maybe very soon be called to take responsibility for it.

I acknowledge my debt of gratitude to the few friends who supported me and who worked together with me under difficult conditions and to the voters who demonstrated their trust by voting for me.

I am determined to continue the struggle together with those who want to work for a more democratic Greece, the extension of human rights and freedom, and the application of a modern, democratic, humanist minority politic.

Dentist NAZİF FERHAT

*SINASPİSMOS* MP CANDIDATE

Text 64.
*Gerçek* 387/16.05.1994, “No reason can justify you! — Mr. Sadık you should not have brought the matter this far,” by İsmail Molla (Rodoplu) [original in Turkish]:

In the seventy years of the Minority’s history no man [*Allahın kulu*, i.e. slave of God] has made openly such a great insult to a representative of the sixty million strong Motherland Turkish Republic, and in front of Security and press personnel in the court room. A minority member who carries just a mote of Turkism feeling [*Türklik duygusu*] in his soul cannot keep himself from screaming out against your behaviour. Above all, we are unable to understand that you behaved so boorishly in spite of the warning by the Honourable T. [Turkish] R. [epublic] General Consul who said most
politely according to the rules of diplomacy that “…this is not the place for these kinds of discussions Mr. Sadık, we will speak about this in another place.”

If you say you did this as the representative of the Western Thrace Turks pointing to the 25 thousand votes you obtained, you should know that no Western Thrace Turk elected you for this and he will never approve of what you did. This community elected you only for the reason that you should defend its rights towards the Greek authorities which have deemed it appropriate to expose it unjustly to oppression and discrimination for seventy years.

You have no right to display such a behaviour towards the representative of the sixty million-strong Mother Country, which you could not even display toward a rural guard [tarla korucusu].

Since the day we were left here as a minority there remains nothing our administrators have not done to us to extinguish us from this fatherland where we have lived for centuries because we are Muslims and Turks. They deprived us of the most elementary civil rights and even our human rights. Finally they threw us in prison because we said WE ARE TURKS.

It is not clear what more they will do…

In these our most difficult days did we not expect help first from God, and then from the MOTHER COUNTRY which is the sole guarantee of our existence? Did we not run to the door of the MOTHER COUNTRY, when the fatherland authorities closed all the doors to our complaints?

When the Greek security officials bothered thousands of our kinsmen in front of the Consulate door, did we not continue to go saying: “did you leave any other door for us to go to?”

When we were unable to make our administrators listen, who thrust our schools and education into ruin with open eyes [göz baka baka], did we not run to the Motherland door the T. R. General Consulate to save thousands of our children from ignorance? For more troubles than it is possible to enumerate here, did there remain any other door for us to go to than that?

[...]

Text 65.
Gerçek 388/20.05.1994 [original in Turkish]:

The KURBAN BAYRAMI MESSAGE of the Ksanthi Elected Mufti Mehmet Emin Aga

Honoured religious brothers;

Our religious feast days have a great importance from the point of view of giving us a new religious zeal and a new impetus in our worldly endeavours, providing a new
brightness to the light of faith in our hearts and clamping together and consolidating the Islam brotherhood further. For this reason in the days of the religious feast those who are angry at each other reconcile, friends consolidate their friendship, relatives visit each other, the hands of mother, father, and elderly are kissed, questions are asked about the condition of the family, conciliation is made, children are given presents and become pleased. Poor, destitute, weak, orphans, sick, defective… are visited so that these days are joyful to them too.

Inside this feeling of unity and solidarity, let us not leave any kind of opportunity to those who want to spread the seeds of intrigue opening up the road of disorder and discord. Because disorder breeds discord, and discord becomes the cause of a nation’s destruction. How beautifully our national poet Mehmet Arif Ersoy phrased this.

Where discord does not enter an enemy cannot enter the nation,
Hearts which beat together, cannot be crushed.

[Çılgınlık, gürgünrendirmez,
Toplu vurduktu yüzler, onu top sindiremez.]

Precious Muslim Turkish brothers;

You remember that I mentioned two years ago in one of my messages which joined our religion and national identity in a sound fashion, while referring to some dubious [ne idüğü belli olmayan] kind of people who had been placed there by the dark forces to spoil the repose of the Western Thrace Muslim Turkish Community, I said that a new marionette toured our villages trying to break our unity and solidarity, or more correctly he was put there to try it, however just as such traitors could not break the unity of the Western Thrace Turks up until today they will not be able to break it in the future.

The famous (!) leader Dr. Sadık Ahmet who for four years has tried to introduce every kind of disorder and intrigue to damage our unity and solidarity, wanting the Western Thrace Turkish Community to break each other, provided the last drop which made the cup overflow with his action on 12 April 1994 and displayed in all nakedness whom he serves. That day I was sentenced because of the messages I signed (as Mufti of Ksanthi) and was sentenced to 23 months. However, when I went to the second floor of the court building to appeal the sentence, the circumcision doctor showered insults on our Mother Country’s Western Thrace representative T.[urkish] R.[epublic] Komotini General Consul Honourable Hakan Okçal in front of many civil and uniformed policemen, most of whom know Turkish, and in the presence of the parliamentarians from theT.[urkish] G.[rand] N.[ational] A.[ssembly] Human Rights Examination Commission who came to follow the trial, many local and foreign journalists, and also our kinsmen representatives from Komotini and Ksanthi, which created great indignation among both our parliamentarians who had come to follow the trial and the Western Thrace Turkish Muslim Community. When I came down into the
court-room I saw that everything was in a flurry [tuzbuz]. In this confusion I was not able to ask what had happened. I took with me the General Consul and the guests and went home. The shameless doctor was not embarrassed by his contrivances in the court-room and followed us to my house. After I had taken care of my first obligation to show hospitality to the guests, I inquired and learned about Dr. Sadık Ahmet’s ugly insults and actions against our General Consul in the court-room.

We witness that since that day everybody protests and condemns with aversion this attitude and behaviour which created great confusion among our people. It has become the subject of curiosity how far this dubious famous (!) leader [Bu ne idiği belli olmayan meşhur(!) lider] will bring this matter which he has now embarked on openly. However come and see that this man on whom our destitute community [yen içinde kırık kol misali cemaatimiz] relied and whom it supported for years, running in thousands to trials in Thessaloniki and Patras without being put off by the depths of winter, elevating him with their own votes and sending him to the Greek Parliament as independent MP, by standing up and hurling this kind of insults at one of our General Consuls—whoever he may be—who is the leader of the Western Thrace Turks and has been deemed suitable by the President of our Motherland, it becomes evident what kind of destruction it will pave the way for as concerns our community.

**Dear community;**

The Western Thrace Turk has experienced many sadıks-liars [sadıks, kazips, i.e. a play on words as the name Sadık means honest and kazip means liar] and will continue to do so. Even if Sadık’s contrivances which transferred to the dark forces fifteen years ago ended today, they would find new Sadıks. Because this is their persistent method to disarrange the Western Thrace Muslim Turk and consequently assimilate him. Look, this is how the Mr. Sadık fraud appeared, who yells and tours the Western Thrace villages like a lame louse with the intervention of the dark forces, with two-three boors, artificially distinguished Don Quixotes, at their side.

It is understood clearly that he works with the dark forces since on the one hand, in order to cajole the pure Western Thrace Muslim Turkish Community he prays hypocritically in the front row of the mosques, on the other hand in his speeches and lectures he stands up and says indifferently without shame that all the harm which befalls Western Thrace come from the religiously devout, the religious personnel, and the pilgrims. Because in order to realise the aim of his transformation, he has reached the opinion that it will only happen if he plays openly, in one of our remote villages he visited lately he had the audacity to say that it was necessary to close the Koran Courses. The necessity to close the courses was allegedly that the education was given in Pomak and Greek. However, this circumcision doctor has for three years, and indeed in the mountain area of the Ksanthi district, carried out secret activities against these Koran Courses which are our select institutions [güzide kuruluşlarımız]. While
the Western Thrace Muslim Turkish Community which has occupied itself with the Koran Courses cause since 1983 still continues its work, they will now be closed by the famous (!) leader Sadık Ahmet. Because these courses of ours do not comply with the services he imagines he is doing. For this reason he says openly that he tries to close them and will try to close them at any cost.

We extend our challenge to him. After this he can meet us face to face wherever he wants, and we declare that we are ready to say openly all we have heard from Ahmet Hacıosman and Mustafa H. Mustafa whom he takes along with him in his various contrivances, and discuss who is a traitor, who sold the vakıfs, who did what, what did he do in Athens after he was elected MP in 1989 etc…. In closing we address our circumcision doctor once more!

The Western Thrace Turk will not forget the insults you made to the T. R. General Consul and he will give you the necessary lesson. There should be no doubt about this. Enough is enough…

Text 66.
[original in Turkish]:

Ahmet Faikoğlu’s Kurban Bayramı Message

Honourable Western Thrace Turk,

At a period when the many problems of our Minority have had new ones added to them, the toil of the Turk farm-labourer have been mercilessly exploited, and our tobacco growers are overwhelmed by pessimism, the days of Bayram celebrations have started. How suffering and anxious we may be, we will try to get our share of the joy brought by the religious duty of our Bayram holidays. On 21 May 1994 the Western Thrace Muslim Turkish Minority will commence Kurban Bayramı together with the whole Muslim world.

May our Kurban Bayramı be joyful and auspicious for the great Turkish Nation and the Turkish Minority which is an inseparable part of it.

As a person who has been elected deputy by the dear votes of the Western Thrace Turkish Minority, and having served our minority for a long time, I have always considered it my duty to publish a message on the occasion of such sacred days in order to enlighten the people of our community about all events.

In this Bayram message too, I will not refrain form touching on some community problems which interest you, my dear kinsmen [soydaş].
Dear kinsmen,

We know very well that the administration takes an effort in arranging various intrigues in the field of education, just as in every other field, with the purpose of annihilating the minority. We all see that the administration, aiming particularly at making our kinsmen who live in the mountain area, which functions like an open prison, forget their customs and traditions, and making the minority education degenerate by its illegitimate desire, in violation of international treaties, to open “Gymnasiums” in this area in an effort to distance these people from Turkish culture.

The last example of these desires took place on 19 May 1994 in the Ksanthi Public Theatre, when the Turkish students at Sminthi [Dolaphan] Gymnasium were also obliged to take part in the ceremonies in connection with the commemoration of the Greek writer Katerina Veiku Seremetli. That the administration arranged this particular ceremony on 19 May, which the Greek Parliament has declared as the Pontos Genocide memorial day, has clearly laid bare the real intentions of this false ceremony. However, noone should doubt that our small Turkish children know very well that 19 May was the day when the great leader Kemal Atatürk started the national struggle. The Christian bosses [çorbacılar] who attempt to falsify history will soon learn that they in no way have cut off our children from their roots and they will see with their own eyes that whatever they do “the leopard cannot change his spot”. (According to the news I got as my message was delivered for printing, the children were dancing in the aforementioned theatre hall, and in the program distributed the word “Pomak” was used. These activities were observed first of all by the prefect and the mayor as well as metropolitan [sic] Şinikoğlu.) I protest strongly against this dirty action on behalf of my community.

Dear Western Thrace Turk,

You know that just as in the last four years Sadık Ahmet has introduced a hysteric leader crisis within the minority, also abusing the good intentions of certain circles in Turkey, I too have been the target of his attacks in all directions. In the same fashion Sadık Ahmet and his lickspittlers preferred to curse me through the mouth of the dark forces, instead of answering the thoughts I put forth in my message at the Ramadan Bayramı. Never mind, how is the saying? “The dog barks, but the caravan moves on” [Turkish proverb]. This Don Quixote behaviour only shows his own inability. In the message I published last Bayram I declared that the party and his own actions served the secret Greek aspirations and I also provided some proves of this. I pointed out that he went about in an erratic way, was involved in the Byzantine intrigues of the administration towards the minority, setting aside all values, and opening the road for destruction within the minority that would be hard to repair. Simultaneously, because I perceived it beforehand, I have stressed that from the start I have avoided to have any relation with his party, which he founded to satisfy his personal greed.
I want to tell Sadık, who still wants to see me as a PASOK deputy. It is true that I completed four years as a PASOK deputy. This is recorded by history. I too wrote history with my accomplishments. In this matter I do not want a letter of appreciation either from Sadık Ahmet or his accomplices. However, in our Minority’s first national protest 29 January 1988, while he just walked around, the PASOK deputy Ahmet Faikoğlu directed the people shouting to the whole world that the national roots of the Western Thrace Turkish Minority would not be the subject of negotiations with the historic speech he made from a balcony to the people. Yes, Mr. Sadık Ahmet, Faikoğlu did this consciously as deputy of a Greek political party, facing all the implicit dangers. You should have no doubt that one of the main reasons that I am still involved in court cases is because of my actions at that time. While you were studying at the university, I was serving as secretary [katip] in the Ksanthi mufti office. Your dear brother in law, Ali, who today conduct prayers and work as muezzin behind Şinikoğlu, came to me at the time and wanted a poverty document. With this document your brother-in-law, who was studying at the Teachers’ college in Athens, would eat without paying. I gave this document to him on his demand. You know that it is the custom in this country to make the Minority pay for everything that goes wrong. After the Cyprus operation in 1974, I was thrown in prison because of this document without having seen the face of my unborn daughter Ayşegül yet. The deputy of that period, Sabahaddin Galip, may God have abundant mercy on his soul, came to the court and saved me with his personal testimony.

Honoured Sadık Ahmet, the fraud I might have committed with the document I gave to your brother-in-law, corresponds to the fraud I committed by selling 120,000 dönüm public land (!) in Thessaloniki. You just keep off my business and account for how you and your family personally squandered the Minority’s hard earned millions. Explain openly to our innocent people how the main dispute between us is that I questioned your unlimited expenditures. Account for the court expenses and family support to Hüseyin Salih from the village Pisto [Müsellim] who was a martyr for the Minority. Explain how I paid all lawyer and court expenses for the martyr Hüseyin Salih, while you were calculating how you could obtain a more luxurious living for yourself and your family. Account for how you put 700,000 drachmas in your pocket and cheated the elected mufti İbrahim Şerif and the current president of the Western Thrace Turk Teachers’ Association. Yes, my dear DEB party president, grab your pen or let your famous writer whom you accused of being informer do it, and show our people the sources of your storeys, yachts, factories, and recently acquired luxurious apartment. Because our kinsmen who shed their sweat on the fields, and whom you consider uneducated, know very well that you could not acquire it with your deputy job and by performing circumcisions. As for the allegations that I have no title, I was in due course given an appropriate title both from our Minority and the Motherland...
Turkey. I am grateful for this. However, you forgot very quickly that what made me into me and you into you was the Motherland the Turkish Republic. You acted just as the Greeks wanted to. As I have pointed out earlier, you played the game of the Greek administration very well, displaying all your insolence.

On 12 April 1994, in the auditorium of the virtuous Ksanthi mufti Mehmet Emin Aga’s court sitting, you revealed your whole personality by attacking his excellency the Komotini Consul Hakan Okçal before the eyes of Greeks, as well as Turkish deputies. If we consider that your principle is not to do anything you do not profit from, we wonder what bonuses you obtained by this action.

However, you and your kind should never forget how compassionately the Motherland Turkey has embraced the Western Thrace Turkish Minority during its 70 years existence, and that the people of the minority know and appreciate very well to what degree the Turkish Republic’s Komotini Consulate and Foreign Department have been a source of security to its loyal children [i.e. the minority politicians] who are serving the community in knowing how to ensure the living conditions of the minority within the framework of their rights based on international treaties.

For this reason, any attack against the Turkish Republic’s Komotini Consulate and Foreign Department representatives, wherever it comes from, will be confronted by the approximately 150 thousand Western Thrace Turks standing in first line as a single body.

Ksanthi 19 May 1994

AHMET FAIKOĞLU

Faikoğlu’s message was printed in full in Trakya’nın Sesi 484/02.06.1994 with the comment if this could be the same Faikoğlu who wrote the following declaration [original in Greek, apparently from a trial in December 1984, with underlining added by the newspaper]:

I believe in the justice of my fatherland.
I believe in the justice of this country that gave birth and fostered Solon and Aristides.
I believe in Greece because this part of the earth has been sung as the fatherland of the good and decent, of virtue and justice, by my co-religionist Nazim Hikmet.
I regard this place the fatherland of fatherlands, where I was born, live, have family, and hope to die an honest man just as I have lived as an honest man until today.

The defendant

Ahmet Faikoğlu son of Faik
Text 67.
Trakya'nın Sesi 516/09.08.1995, “Will we miss Sadık?”, by İbrahim Onsunoğlu
[original in Turkish]:

DEATH, DEATH WHICH LEVELS EVERYTHING

-Master [aga]! Sadık Ahmet lost his life in a traffic accident tonight…

I became overwhelmed by tears. My ears felt so heavy that I could not hear the voice of Abdülhalim Dede in the telephone.

-This evening at 8 o’clock he hit a tractor when he was on his way to Ksanthi. His wife and children too are injured, but their condition is not so serious. Sadık died on the spot. The accident took place on the Komotini-Ksanthi road, at the Sosti [Susurköy] junction. It was definitely the tractor driver’s fault. A Greek Orthodox from Sosti. He came in the opposite direction with the tractor, and when he wanted to make a turn to the Sosti road he came in front of Sadık’s Fiat. I saw the car, the driver’s side was wrecked. If he had taken the Mercedes instead of the Fiat, he would have been saved…

Abdül explained. The distance between Thessaloniki and Komotini began to widen in my mind… Komotini became gradually smaller and more distant in my imagination. Afterwards it disappeared completely. I could not visualise it any more. I could not hear Abdül’s voice in the telephone any more. I felt completely alone in Thessaloniki.

A month earlier Mehmet Çolak had drowned. We had been unable to renew our friendship from the 1970s. I had not even been able to go to his funeral.

Now Sadık had lost his life in a traffic accident.

I felt a grudge against Thessaloniki which kept me far from Komotini.

Mehmet Çolak and Sadık Ahmet; people of my generation around 45 years old. Whereas one year earlier, I had thought that I would be the first to go from this generation [he had a heart attack].

Existential crisis. Death; death which levels everything.

The negative feelings towards Sadık which had accumulated inside me in the last years disappeared.

Death; death which levels everything. How easy it is for us to forget that. One of those who forgot it most was Sadık.

Today I will maybe talk about Sadık for the last time. Do I have the right not to mention the facts that I know because of death?

I WAS UNABLE TO GO TO THE BURIAL

-Master, will you come to the funeral?

Of course I would go. I had not been on speaking terms with Sadık since 1989. It was the last chance to reconcile with him.
We knew each other since childhood. We were classmates at the Celâl Bayar secondary school, and sat besides each other for years in the same row. In Thessaloniki we were room-mates. I would do my last duty towards him. My duty as friend, human being, and Muslim.

In addition, for me there was also another important detail. It was important for us to show that we did not think and act like the mafia group. The mafia group, including Sadık Ahmet, boycotted the funeral ceremonies of the two great minority personalities Hafız Yaşar and Celâl Zeybek, who had served as MPs and rendered services to the minority, because they were on the black list. They also tried to prevent the people under their influence from participating. They introduced one more ugly new custom to the minority. Burial boycott. Because of this ugly custom, and because when he was alive Sadık Ahmet had made a name for himself as champion of the Black List which had created new division and strife in the minority, it was necessary that all of us on the black list should participate in his funeral.

It was first announced that the funeral would take place on Wednesday. I arranged my schedule at the hospital in Thessaloniki according to this. I postponed my duties on that day to Thursday. When the funeral was postponed to Thursday, I could not go to Komotini.

That day I had to content myself with a prayer for his soul in Thessaloniki. May God accept it.

OUR FIRST ACQUAINTANCE

I first got acquainted with Sadık in the courtyard of Celâl Bayar secondary school on the day school started in 1960. Both of us were new students. I remember best the peculiar pronunciation of his Şapçı plain dialect: ‘Aldırâyı, aldirmâyı’… He remembered better the details of our first meeting, he told me about it a couple of times.

At that time I had a childhood nickname, which even I had forgotten. Sadık would use this nickname even recently when he got angry: “İbicik! —Don’t they call you İbicik? So you are İbicik!”

Whatever İbicik meant?…

Since then 35 years have gone by. For many years we saw each other. We knew each other well.

SADİK WAS A DIFFICULT PERSON

Did we become close and sincere friends?

What is sincere friendship? Is it something continuous? Or is it the time fragments that remain when we subtract the fights and anger, lack of interest and contact which come between?

Sadık was a difficult person.
He was a man of action. Vigorous, industrious, stubborn, and avaricious. He seemed to be bold, self-reliant and obstinate, but he was ready to bend when confronted with power and force.

He always searched for a “protector” and found them too.

During such periods he became amenable, serious, dignified, in short another Sadık. After he had secured a “protector”, there was nothing he deemed himself not capable of doing with the power he received from him, whether it was real or imagined. He came to, all his accumulated acrimony appeared, he broke and spilled everything around him, and he did not refrain from fighting with persons or take on problems he did not have the power to fight, or undertake works where he could not be successful.

He was a man of action. And he did not like to think. The fuel of his engine consisted of avarice and grudge. If you deprived Sadık of these two things he turned into a normal person. His most productive periods were the periods with most avarice and grudge. Of course, what he produced was his kind of produce.

Sadık did never even once in his life laugh sincerely from inside. His smile remained on his lips, and did not go deeper. Noone heard him break out in sincere laughter. Niceties and jokes were completely foreign to him. He was not a person to tell anecdotes.

And Sadık never felt regret for any of his actions or deeds. He did definitely not allow doubts to be born. To ask questions like: did I do the right thing or do not let me make a mistake, he would interprerte as weakness . In all his actions he was decided, unhesitating and ruthless. The feeling of compassion was not well represented. In his heart he had no feeling of compassion or obligation. He did not know the meaning of pangs of conscience. In his lifetime he never said he was sorry to anybody.

**IF YOU SAID WALK, HE WALKED**

Give him a pickaxe and tell him to level the hill opposite you. He would break it up and level it.

He had no fear of consequences. If you said walk, he walked. He did not know what it meant to be tired.

But if on the other hand you asked: Sadık, you are levelling this hill, but why? You are walking, but where? He would have difficulty to answer… Afterwards, if you took a look he would throw the pickaxe to the ground when you least expected it. He would stop walking and this time he would start to walk in the opposite direction.

Because he avoided to reflect upon and examine the subjects, he found it easy to reduce them to something simple. In Sadık’s eyes the most complex subjects became very simple, the most difficult very easy. I will do it, I will make it. He made his endeavours. If he succeeded it was excellent. When it was not sufficient to swagger. When he understood that he could not succeed, he silently abandoned his task
immediately. After that, who knows whatever it was about. He forgot quickly what he
had said earlier. You could never make him admit that he had been mistaken. Nor
would he admit that he could not succeed in something.

If we did not enumerate one more of his peculiarities his portrait would be
incomplete. His peevishness when securing material gains. Sadık had a rare ability to
turn his political struggle into personal profit.

HE WANTED TO BE THE ONE AND ONLY

He would classify persons and events without effort into two categories: White and
black. And again with the greatest of ease and without feeling the necessity to
substantiate it, he would not hesitate to declare what he had called white yesterday to
be black today or vice versa.

When he started to use the authority he had been “nominated” for, particularly after
he had become MP, his inclination to slander everybody developed further. He did no
longer only aim at his opponents. He did not leave anybody among his followers,
helpers, collaborators, and closest friends whom he did not insult, slander, threaten
with the Other Side [i.e. Turkey], and accuse most gravely.

He also made the mafia topsy-turvy. They got in trouble with Sadık.

He said he would close the newspaper Akın, and closed it. He said he would close
the newspaper Gerçek, and closed it.

He strove to make the newspaper Balkan, which Mustafa Bacaksız issued in his
name, the only remaining. He trusted those who supported him on the Other Side in
this matter. Like always, these events too blew out of proportion, and excesses
followed. With his blind ambition and energy noone could prevent him. He let M.
Bacaksız, whom he had earlier referred to as agent of the Greek Secret Services in
front of everybody, flatter him in the most repulsive way in the newspaper Balkan and
became enraptured by it. One leader, one newspaper, one voice… A “base” fascism
was established in the minority.

Sadık was saying that Koca Kapı [i.e. the Turkish Consulate in Komotini] supports me and proved it every day in every matter. The order within the minority—
to the degree that there was any—was spoiled, values were turned upside down.

As for the newspapers which were able to manage by themselves, İleri and
Trakya’nın Sesi, they had in fact for years been the aim of the mafia. Sadık tightened
the noose around their neck. İleri was the sole income of its owner and in spite of the
fact that he was very careful and sometimes bent for the wind, he was long on the
verge of collapsing. Because of Sadık.

HE DID NOT KNOW HIS LIMITS

Then Sadık Ahmet would clash with the Consul in Komotini and the Ambassador
in Athens. This was not a political clash over ideology, procedure, and principles.
What lay under was complaints like “why do you not support me as much as earlier, why do you not support only me”.

Finally the newspaper Balkan was closed.

The doors on the Other Side, too, began to close in his face.

Sadık was now quarrelling with Koca Kapı. Like always he did not know his own limits.

But his main protector on the Other Side also withdrew his support.

Three months ago at the Conference in Istanbul they took Sadık aside one evening and spoke to him in a language he would understand… That evening Sadık must have remembered the words he had used about Orhan Hacıibram ten years earlier, when these events [the heavy handed involvement of Turkey] had recently burst out. “Orhan went to the Other Side, did you hear what happened to him”?

—He went but they shook him up a little [gitmiş ama biraz silkmişler]!

**THE OLD TRICK BECAME REALITY**

Now both of them are deceased. In 1987 one day on the Other Side they asked Hafiz Yaşar—after telling him that they had decided to make Sadık MP and leader—what he thought about it.

—Sadık is like a BMW without brakes. It is impossible to say where he will go, what he will hit, where he will stop. Do not make the minority enter this car.

And Koca Kapı, using all its possibilities, silencing every opposing voice, created the Sadık fable with a campaign which has never been seen before, made him MP and planted him in the minority.

I must end this article as I have no more space to write.

I know that formerly quite a few people in the minority evaluated this event [Sadık’s elevation] positively. But the overwhelming majority had the simple thought “whatever Turkey wants” and behaved accordingly. Those who wanted to oppose retreated.

They made us who constituted the puny voice of opposition pay dearly, but we tried not to bend.

**IT IS NEVER TOO LATE**

Sadık Ahmet was a friend who until 1984–85 did not show much interest in the Minority issues. He admitted cynically: “is there any money for me in it?” When he did his specialisation in surgery his goal was to become appointed at the Komotini hospital. A normal and legitimate goal.

He did not understand that it was very difficult to be appointed to the hospital during the years when the minority was oppressed and discriminated against most heavily, he did not want to understand. Because he was very sure of himself, because he reduced everything into being simple and easy… But he also knew not to walk barefoot on a thorny road. Because he made the necessary preparations and agree-
ments, found his protector and convinced himself that he would be appointed. Until that time he had not been in any open conflict with the authorities. He tried to appear as a docile minority member, his file was completely empty, his name was not involved in any Minority struggle, earlier he had made his friends at the hospital and by his industriousness or his ability to adapt to the environment he gained sympathy. His work went smoothly.

First and foremost the appointment of Sadık to the hospital seemed “unproblematic from a national viewpoint”… But Sadık was not appointed. Everywhere a minority member is left without protection. And Sadık suddenly understood the minority reality for the first time. He had made such an emotional investment in being appointed to the hospital, and he was so sure that he would be appointed that he was never able to stomach it. His career was in jeopardy, because surgery is a profession that can only take place in a hospital, not in a private office.

He made a turn, he spit fire against the authorities, he discovered the minority, and began to take an interest in Minority questions.

THE LAST CANDIDATE

I did not take Sadık seriously because I knew him very well. Even if I did not need to take him seriously I was taught that I would have to take the new developments within the Minority much more seriously.

In the 1989 elections a last event, an event I could not forgive, became the reason that I stopped greeting him. Only two days earlier we had met in the street, he was a candidate I was a candidate, we jokingly wished each other good luck. Two days later, on a Friday, in the courtyard of the Şapçı mosque, Sadık with his henchmen sent from Turkey and Germany by his side attacked me and dispersed the crowd that was listening to me… If I had moved one step I would have got a thrashing. Typical fascist “thuggery” without any previous quarrel.

An event I said I did not forgive, but now after Sadık’s death it does not mean much any more.

Now, we who are left alive need the forgiveness of our dead.

They have completed their register. We continue committing sins.

Text 68.

Yuvamız 109/September 1995, “I cannot say that ‘Dr. Sadık Ahmet died’!…” , by M. H. Mustafa [original in Turkish]:

I cannot say that “Dr. Sadık Ahmet died” !…

Being the journalist who has written the most about “Dr. Sadık Ahmet” in Western Thrace, and having worked to make known to the world his activities on four
continents either through the press or television, I would never have dreamt that I would write such an article. But fate has also such in store…

During a summer vacation we once took a trip with a yacht in the Mediterranean. We stood out like a spot in the milk, because the yacht was full of youth no more than thirty years of age. Suddenly a young university student approached me and asked: “Where are you from, uncle [amca]?” When he heard my answer, “I am from Western Thrace,” he said, “Oh… so you are from the home place of Dr. Sadık Ahmet…”

Another day I made a traffic mistake close to the Taksim Square and the police approached me. To his question, “Why did you do that mistake?”, when I answered, “Because I did not know the way and I was in a hurry; Dr. Sadık Ahmet is waiting for me in the hotel opposite…” the police officer immediately said: “I am at your service, sir”, stopped the cars and let me squeeze in against the traffic…

The coffin of the late president Turgut Özal was put on a catafalque in parliament and the official procedure of paying respect began. Just after the current premier, vice premier, and head of parliament, the master of sermons made a sign to Dr. Sadık Ahmet and said that it was his turn in the order of honour. Thus Dr. Sadık Ahmet came before a lot of ministers in rank of honour.

After invitation, together with Dr. Sadık Ahmet, we visited on various occasions prefectures of Turkey, such as Kütahya, Adana, Niğde, Edirne etc. Convoys made up of hundreds of cars met the precious guests many kilometres away from the city centre. The centres of the cities were full of Dr. Sadık Ahmet posters everywhere. He was visiting the mayor and prefect and similar offices in every city he went to. It was easy to understand from the expressions and gestures of those who were sitting there that they were maybe experiencing one of the happiest moments of their life. They submerged their distinguished guests with plates and other gifts. In short the opportunity to pay respect to a community leader made them overwhelmed by joy.

* * *

On the anniversary of the Lausanne Treaty, Sunday evening 24 July, I was in the tailor shop in our town. Suddenly the telephone rings vehemently. The voice in the other end: “Dr. Sadık crashed with a tractor at the Sosti [Susurköy] junction on his way to Galini [Yalanca] and lost his life!…”

No, impossible! Dr. Sadık Ahmet cannot die just like that! He cannot be killed like that!

Dr. Ahmet Sadık was a friend of ours who by starting a signature campaign for the benefit of the Western Thrace Turkish Community succeeded to make the voice of our community heard throughout the world for the first time. Only by this action the name of Dr. Sadık Ahmet will be fresh and alive in our memories, on our tongues, and in our hearts as long as the world order exists and the current status of our minority continues.
One day in the 80s, Dr. Sadık Ahmet went to Thessaloniki without anybody knowing it and by distributing a paper about the suffering of the Western Thrace Turks to the Human Rights representatives who had come to a conference there, he draws the attention not only of the Greeks but of the whole world. Because of him every time Human Rights are on the agenda, and it will be on the agenda as long as the world exists, Dr. Ahmet Sadık’s name will be remembered.

Dr. Sadık Ahmet was the first deputy in the 70-year history of our minority who succeeded in entering the Greek parliament as “Independent Turkish deputy”. We can say that he was the first of our deputies who proved in person that our kinsmen [soydaş] can elect an independent deputy. It is not possible to forget the name of a political personality such as Ahmet Sadık whose peer can rarely be met, who in June 1989 got the whole Rodopi prefecture on its feet, from the mountains to the plain, from village to town, who in spite of the tickets given by the police created car convoys of several hundred volunteers. As long as our community exists, Dr. Sadık Ahmet’s name will exist as well.

Dr. Sadık Ahmet was a personality who, from the signature campaign he started in 1985 to this day, visited innumerable countries and cities on the European, Asian, American, and African continents. In his meetings with the officials of these countries and representatives of international organisations as well as in the speeches he made at the international conferences that were organised there, he worked hard to explain that in a corner of Greece, which is considered the cradle of civilisation (however, in his words, it had not yet been able to get out of the cradle), called Western Thrace, there was living a Turkish community, and this community had certain problems concerning human, citizen, and minority rights. A personality who has accomplished such great deeds and successes in a short perishable life cannot die! In any case, in his transition from the perishable life to immortality he wins a special place in the heart!

Dr. Sadık Ahmet, as a political man who believed sincerely in the political rights of the Western Thrace Turkish community, as well as for any community, founded the first political party in the history of our community and was elected the first president of this party called the “Friendship-Equality-Peace Party”. You can never know the fate of the political party he founded, but Dr. Sadik Ahmet will be remembered as the leader who founded our first political party as long as our status in Western Thrace continues.

Lately, in order to improve the economic lot of the Western Thrace Türklük, Dr. Sadik Ahmet was involved in or leading a lot of initiatives to secure both work and livelihood opportunities to our kinsmen and took the first steps towards organising [business] companies. Although fate did not allow these steps to lead to results, noone should doubt that the seeds that have been sown will take root.
Yes! I cannot say that “Dr. Sadık Ahmet died!” I have used these words in a November issue for the great leader of the Turkish nation Atatürk. Because that great man conquered the hearts with what he did for the Turkish nation and has settled in a special unforgettable corner of it until judgement day.

I use the same title for Dr. Sadık Ahmet who was the hardest struggler, the boldest, most energetic and most popular child raised in the 72 year history of the Western Thrace Turkism [Türklük], as I used for the great Father. Because;

The tragic collision on the 24th July around 20 o’clock in the evening, caused by the tractor driven by a 61-year old Greek named Arabatzis Zisis, set only a period for the perishable life of Dr. Sadık Ahmet. Whereas, as thousands of our kinsmen shouted with one mouth on the day of the funeral, “Dr. Sadık Ahmet cannot die!” At the very most people such as him pass from mortal life to immortality [the original text has the opposite, probably by mistake] and create a throne for themselves in the heart of those who love them and neither an Arabatzis nor anyone else have the strength to depose them from this throne.

At this time let us say a few words about the accident. Was it really a simple accident or was it done on purpose?

This question did crop up in the mind of at least 150 thousand of our kinsmen as soon as they heard the news about the accident.

Just as we stated in our answer to the large television channels Mega and Antenna, we are not an expert who can give a certain answer on this question. Let the experts answer this question; But we would here like to state that we support the following statement given on this matter by the Turkish State Minister Responsible for Human Rights Algan Hacaloğlu to a similar question: “Let the experts investigate if the crash was a plot or not. However such a serious probability has settled in peoples mind. This means that the country’s administrators have handled this matter in a way that such a probability has dawned on people, and have not inspired trust. This is really the important matter…” Is it possible not to agree to these words said by Minister Hacaloğlu at the entrance of the Public Hospital of our city?

* * *

Certainly, the funeral of the greatest man fostered in the 72-years history of the Western Thrace Turkish Community would be in accordance to his name and fame.

As soon as the news of the death came out this painful incident became the top story in all of the press both in our country and in our Motherland.

In our Motherland Turkey, as soon as they heard the painful news, the President, President of Parliament, Prime Minister, Vice Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, the leaders of political parties, many ministers, mayors, representatives of societies and foundations and businessmen sent condolence letters to the family of the deceased to share the great pain.
Also the Government Spokesman Venizelos announced that they were sorry about the accident and that he would be given the honour which becomes a former deputy at the funeral ceremony and this promise was carried out when the Christian deputies of our prefecture took official part in the funeral ceremony on behalf of the Parliament and laid down a wreath. In addition, the Prefect, the mayor of our city and Şapçı, the District Secretary and the General Prefect were present at the sermons.

The funeral ceremony carried out on Thursday the 27th January immediately after the second namaz was carried out in a way that has never been seen before. Since around 20 thousand of our kinsmen were personally present in the funeral ceremony it is unnecessary to explain more about it. That day life stopped not only in the city but in the whole area, and the last obligation was carried out to our great loss.

We only want to add for the sake of history that: To take part in the Funeral Ceremony a deputy committee led by Minister Algan Hacaloğlu, representing the National Assembly, two deputies representing Prime Minister Çiller, the General leader of ANAP Mesut Yılmaz and two deputies from the party, some local administrators etc. came from Turkey to our city.

We wish mercy on our representative Dr. Sadık Ahmet who was buried in the Kahveci graveyard of our city and health and fortitude to his wife Işık and his children Levent and Funda who were heavily injured in the above mentioned accident and narrowly escaped death.

May the Western Thrace Turkish Community be safe and sound!

Note: It is certainly not possible to reach peace of mind and fulfil one’s obligations by writing just one article after the death of Dr. Sadık Ahmet, the greatest politician, struggler and Turkism fighter raised by the Western Thrace Turkish Society. Particularly as someone who stood right beside him in most of his struggles during the last six years it is impossible to squeeze in everything there is to say in one article. However, on the other hand it is not necessary to write a lot about our great loss. Because not only does the Western Thrace Turkish Community know about his struggles and his personality, the whole Turkish world most certainly knows it as well to the extent that is can serve as example to other communities who struggle for democracy.

We terminate this first article after his death by adding the words by which the Consul of the Turkish Republic in our city Hakan Okçal who has not spared anything to support the family of the deceased since the accident became known, answered a question by the press by saying “a monumental grave will be made for the deceased!”
When we are speaking about freedom within the minority, I would like to explain one more event. It is small, but interesting from the viewpoint that it demonstrates certain things. There is this Helsinki Watch report about the minority. All those who assisted with the preparation of the report and gave information, 15 persons, were all from the mafia or under its control. How and by whom was this pureness secured? Take notice. Prominent people and minority politicians are included in the report. They are there, but among the former MPs Hafız Yaşar is absent, İmamoğlu is absent, Orhan is absent, Zeybek is absent, Muncura [Ahmet Mehmet] is absent, Müftüoğlu is absent. The mafia is included, but noone else. Newspapers are included, journalists are included, the lawsuits against the journalists are included. For example, even Ögüt and Yankı are included, but İleri is not there, Trakya’nın Sesi is not there, Birlik is not there, and Denge that was still in circulation at the time is not there. There is nothing about the lawsuits against Hâki and Dede. Religious personnel is included, Hafız from Ksanthi is there, Hafız Cemali is mentioned, but there is no statement by himself. The problem about the university graduates who could not get work permit is included, but it does not mention any of the 15 youths who organised the protest action against DIKATSA. Because those who did the DIKATSA protest actions pulled it through in such a mature and conscious way that they did not fall under the direction of the mafia.

I carried out an investigation. The author of the report did neither ask for nor see any of them. Or was prevented from seeing them. Some ran after her in order to be able to see her, but she avoided them [kaçmış]. Or she was kept away from them. They wanted an appointment, and the woman author did not go to the appointment she had agreed to. The lawyer Adem Bekiroğlu is one from the minority who acted as her guide. I explained this scandal to Adem. I am definitely against revealing what is said in private conversations and let it pass on to the newspaper columns. Now I am even breaking this principle. Because Adem who in these matters is as pure as a virgin, has now been promoted to associate member of the mafia and is up to his throat in shit .

Adem is one of those who were the target of Kapsis’ tax terror in 1983. In the report he explains this as police oppression. He says that “—Seven police officers came into my office, searched it for 8 hours, even confidential papers.” And he does not say that “In those days my colleague Müftüoğlu was exposed to the same

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4 This information should be put in proper perspective. Ögüt was Faikoğlu’s election newspaper and appeared with only a few issues—4 as far as I know—during 1989, while İleri is the newspaper that has appeared with the greatest regularity since 1975 and is still in circulation having reached a total output of almost 1,000 issues after 25 years.
oppression. They gave him a ten million fine. Come, and I will bring you to him so you can hear the story from his own mouth.” And he does not say, “They threatened to give me a heavy fine, but anyway I was able to make them cancel it. Müftüoğlu who was an MP was not able to make them cancel it and is still in trouble because of this unjust fine.” Now the detail I would like to pay attention to is something else. I experienced personally this instance of pressure upon Adem Bekiroğlu. I discussed with Adem the dirty tricks [puştluk] and restrictions on free expression within the minority. I said, “—Adem, there is a mistake in the report. Maybe it is unimportant from one point of view, but from another it can be regarded as important. It was not the police that oppressed you, but the revenue office.” “That is right, I did not say the police, but that is what the woman wrote.” “—Maybe so, but police harassment is one thing while revenue office control is another thing. There is a large quality difference between the two. Do not be surprised if you become the target of a libel accusation.” “But I said it right, they wrote it wrong.” “Anyway, could you come with a statement that corrects this mistake?”

There is no reason to say anything more about our conversation or how we argued. I posed the same question, i.e. “Adem, could you make a statement to correct it?”, to maybe more than ten people after telling them this story. Everybody had the same answer: “No, Adem cannot make a correction.” “Why?” “Because he is afraid.” “Who is Adem afraid of?” He is not afraid of committing libel against the Greek authorities (even if it was a mistake). He is afraid of correcting this mistake because of the mafia.
Text 70.
Facsimile of letter from Hâki to Bjørn Cato Funnemark of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee [original in English]:

Dear Mr. Funnemark,

The Newspaper AKIN on it’s 1071‘th number and 29.10.1992 date issue published the third part of NORWAY HELSINKI REPORT. In the section of the “NEWSPAPERS and BOOKS” of this part, there has been written that the Newspaper ILERI takes economic support from the Greek Government.

When I read the Newspaper BALKAN (Number:36, date of issue 3.11.1992),I learned that this REPORT has written by you.

We examined very carefully this subject on 20.11.1992‘th date and 695 numbered issue of ILERI and we gave the necessary answer.Meanwhile,we are talking about you and we are saying the following:“You vile man! One side because of the internal competition,slings mud at the other side and slanders;shouldn’t you search,ask and listen the other side? What kind of reporter is this?

Dear Mr. Funnemark,

ILERI is eighteen (18) years old. It never took economic support from the Greek Government. How can you contented with this result by listening only one side and how can you wrote it? Please, we are expect from you to send us an explanatory inscription and we are waiting for it.

Yours sincerely

Salih Halil

[signature]

PS.:This letter will publish in ILERI on 27.11.1992 and 696 number of issue.

My note:

The owner of the newspaper Ileri, Salih Halil (Hâki), does not know English, and the letter above is a translation of the Turkish original by his son who studied medicine in Ankara at the time. I have made an exact facsimile of the typewritten letter he sent to Mr. Funnemark including the mistakes. This has been done to accurately illustrate the problems involved in communication, and not to belittle Hâki for his inadequate knowledge of English. It was not a natural language to learn for a man of his generation and cultural background. If someone gets caught up in the details there are
of course many things that could have been expressed more smoothly, i.e. when he
calls Mr. Funnemark: You vile man!, it is a translation of the Turkish: Behey alçak
herif!, which in more idiomatic English could be rendered as: You lying son of a bitch!
However, in spite of the language difficulties, I think that Hâki’s letter expresses very
well what he feels about the report.
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