

THE GREEK CIVIL WAR

COLD WAR

DIVERSE TRAVEL

01/04/1948

The Greek Civil War and the Macedonian Question (1946-1949)

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ΥΒΕΡΝΗΣΗ

ADER: T. SOFOULIS
RTY: LIBERAL
RTAL: ATHENS
OLOGY: CENTRISM
VERNMENT: ELECTED
NTRY: 233,000
UALITIES: 39,000

AREAS UNDER CONTROL

CITIES & ISLANDS

BELLIGERENTS



KINGDOM OF GREECE

SUPPORTED BY



Origins of the Macedonian Question

The “Macedonian Question” started much earlier in the 19th century due to the terminal decline of the Ottoman Empire (“the Sick Man of Europe”)

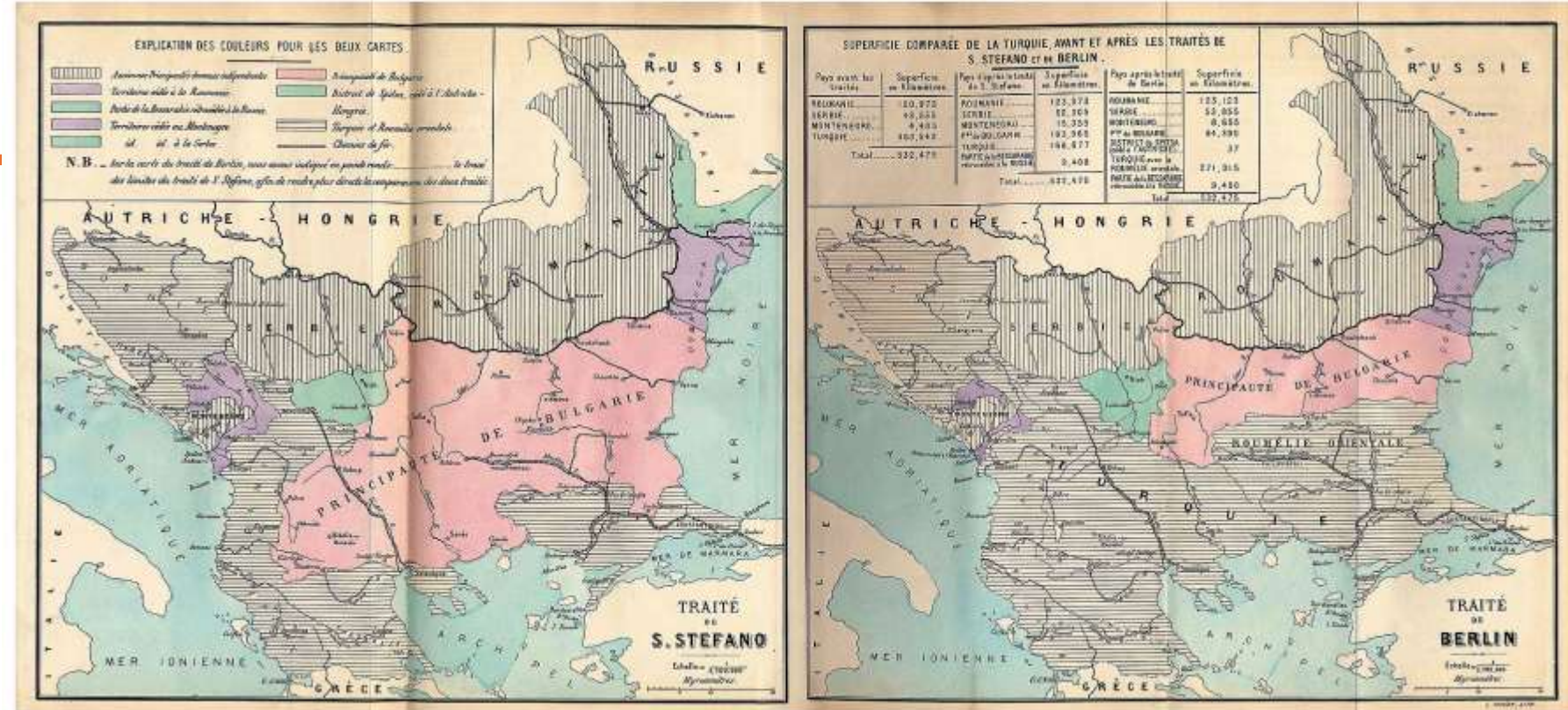
The Bosnian and Macedonian Questions dominated the modern history of the Balkans



Evolution of the Macedonian Question

The Treaty of San Stefano (1878) resulted in a “Greater Bulgaria” across Macedonia under Moscow’s patronage

However, the Congress of Berlin (1878) rectified this





Evolution of the Macedonian Question

The Macedonian Struggle (1904-1908) witnessed a bellum omnium contra omnes as guerrillas by Greece and Bulgaria fought against one another and against the regular Ottoman troops



Fast Forward to WWII

Before WWII, a sizable Slav-speaking minority existed (between 170,000 and 200,000 people) in Greek Macedonia

This minority was considered a “fifth phalanx” of Bulgaria inside Greece and various measures were undertaken in the inter-war period to “neutralize” it

ΠΙΝΑΞ				
Έργοντες εις εθνογενεάς της ης θρησκείας				
Έλληνες τών εθν. ατόν, δε καί τας				
Έλληνες λεγομένους τοιαύτας καί χωρί				
τῶν Εργ. Έσονται μὲν ΓΕΝΙΤΕΩΝ -				
ΕΛΛΗΝ.				
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Υπηρεσιακές στατιστικές του 1924 και του 1945, με τα «ξένα στοιχεία» της ελληνικής Μακεδονίας που έπρεπε να απομακρυνθούν ή να «εξουδετερωθούν» | ΑΡΧΕΙΟ Κ. ΚΑΡΑΒΙΔΑ

Fast Forward to WWII

Western Macedonia in Greece was involved in a war within a greater war between 1941 and 1944

Bulgaria under Tsar Boris, Yugoslavia under Tito and the Communist EAM under Siantos vied for the hearts and minds of the Slav-speakers

In 1944 the minority was caught in the crosshairs of a vicious war between the EAM and anti-EAM camp



The Greek Civil War (1946-1949)

The Communists started its armed uprising in Northern Greece due to the proximity to the three Soviet satellites (Albania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria) and the pre-existence of armed diehards in the region after the Treaty of Varkiza (1945)

Tito, upon Stalin's instructions, readily supported this uprising so as to advance his own geopolitical ambition (aka Thessaloniki)

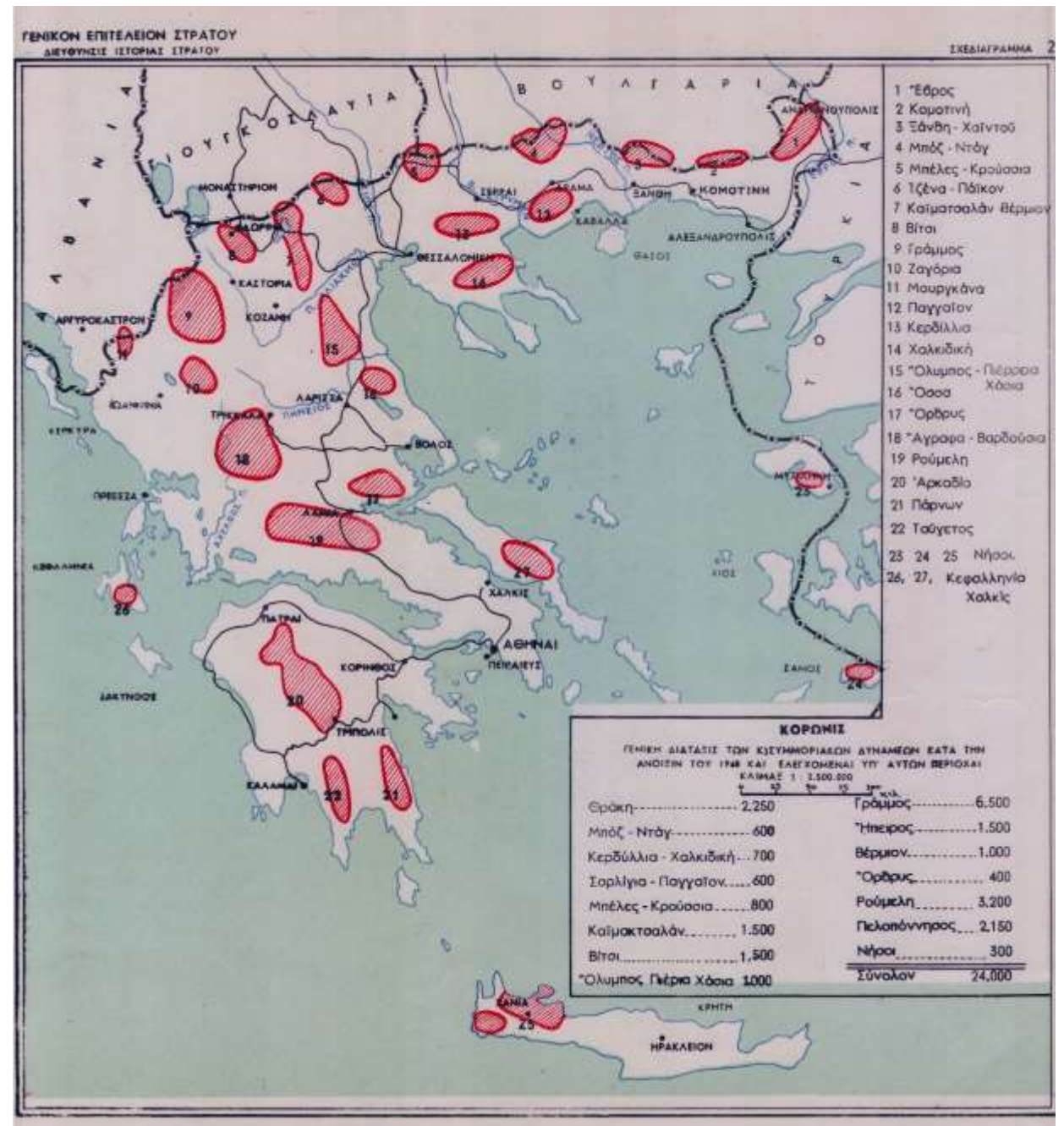


The Greek Civil War (1946-1949)

The Communists strove from the outset to co-opt the peasantry and the minorities in Northern Greece, namely the Muslims in Thrace, the Slav-Macedonians in Macedonia and the Albanian Chams from Epirus.

The Slav-Macedonians proved by far the most willing volunteers.

The Communists under Zachariades envisioned a “Free Greece” with Thessaloniki as its capital as per the Plan “Limnes” (Lakes) in 1947.



The Greek Civil War (1946-1949)

Little did they know that Tito nurtured his own plans for Macedonia.

In the Bled Summit in 1947, Tito and Dimitrov (Bulgaria) agreed a principio in a Balkan Federation where Yugoslavia's Republic of Macedonia would include the territories of Greece, Bulgaria and Northern Macedonia

That explains – in part – why Tito established the Republic of Macedonia as a constituent part of the Yugoslav Federation in the first place





The Greek Civil War (1946-1949)

Greece was fully aware of these plans and depicted the ongoing conflict in the national media and international for a not as a civil war but as foreign-led land-grab against Greek Macedonia

This propaganda resonated strongly with the nationalist public opinion in Greece and undercut the Communists' popularity

After all, Macedonia was the “big prize” of the victorious Balkan Wars



The Final Act of the Drama (1949)

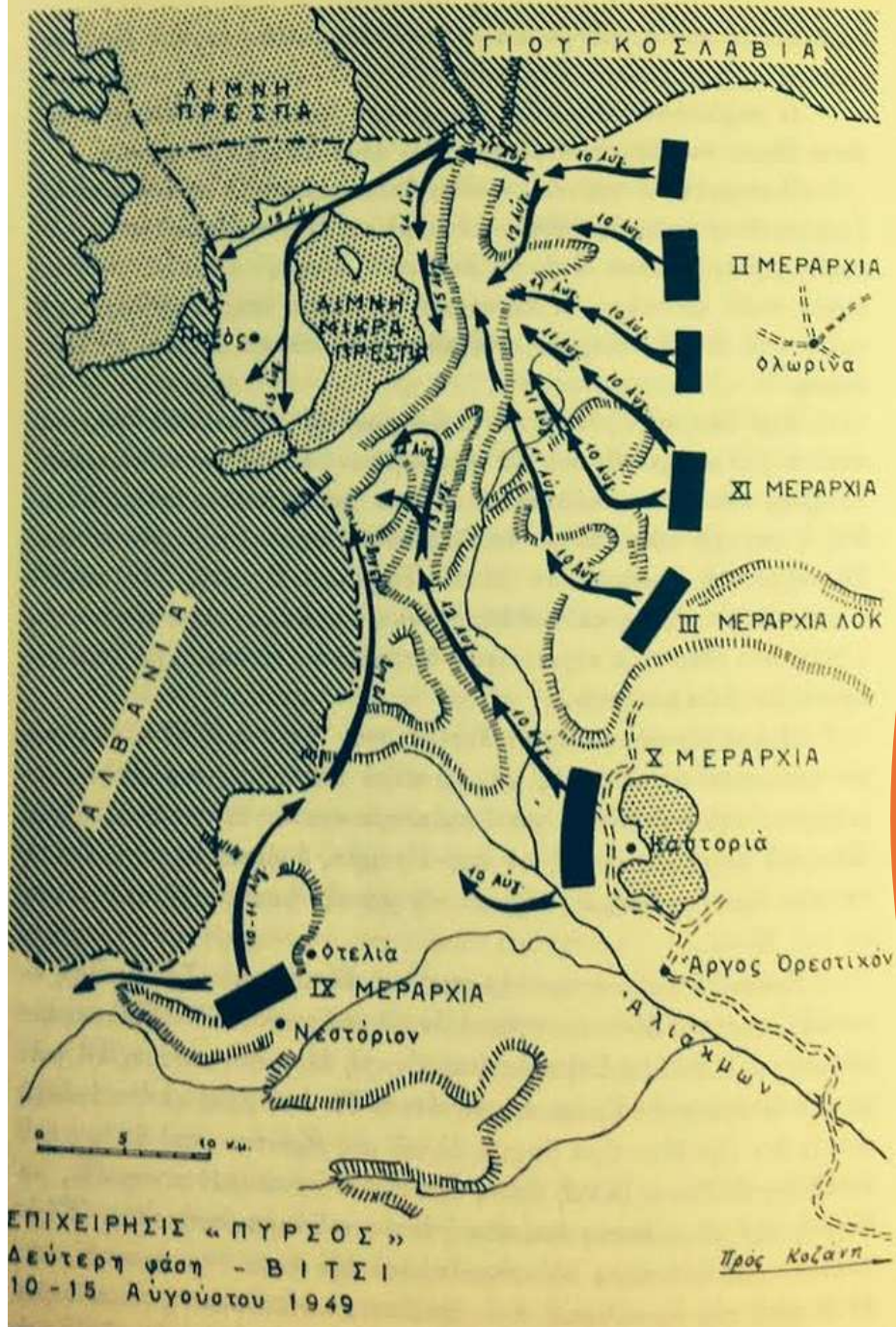
The final blow to the Communists' legitimacy was the KKE's 5th Plenum in early 1949.

The Communists officially promised the Slav-Macedonians a separate state in case of victory in return for their military support.

At the time, the Slav-Macedonians accounted for 50% of the guerrillas' forces because the scarcity of recruits and volunteers.

However, this Faustian Pact did not work out as planned





The Final Act of the Drama (1949)

The political parties and people of Greece were outraged by this so-called “treason”.

It was the nail on the coffin for the insurgency.

When in August 1949 the Greek Army stormed the Communists’ twin strongholds in Grammos and Vitsi, Tito sealed the border and, thus, fate of the insurgency.

By September 1949, the insurgency and minority in Greek Macedonia was no more.



The Final Act of the Drama (1949)

The Greek Army thus killed two birds with one stone:

- a. the communist insurgency was defeated
- b. the alien minority was “cleansed”

In the span of few months, a century-old problem was resolved once and for all for Athens.

From the four minorities within its border before WWII, only one remained (aka the Muslims in Thrace) after 1949.

Thank you for your time!

Any questions?

