

## *The Ideas of Federalism in the Greek Political Thinking in the second part of the Nineteenth Century*

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From the point of view of the nineteenth century Greek political thinking the join of the Balkan territories to the European trade and in this way to the capitalist development was the determining issue. The Greek economic development was supported by geographical and political factors such as the commercial privileges given by the Ottoman authority<sup>1</sup>. At the end of the eighteenth century the Greek maritime commerce went through under a significant development but at that time the influence of the Constantinople centered fanariots was the strongest. With the consolidation of these groups the social structure changed together with strengthening of the church and the patriarch of Constantinople<sup>2</sup>. In the point of view of the social transformation the most significant current of thought in the nineteenth century, the Enlightenment, cannot be disregarded as it was spread on the Balkan Peninsula by the Greeks who lived in a cultured European diaspora or by means of trading got in touch with it and influenced the birth of those movements leading to the modern nationalism which resulted the striving for independence in the nineteenth century. Parallel to the appearance of the national consciousness of the Balkan nations basically two national policy outlined in the nineteenth century. The one that rooted in the glorious past aimed to establish a great national state – the examples for this are the Serbian's Nacertanije and the Greek's Megali Idea "the Great Idea" presented in the political way of thinking<sup>3</sup> – to take up arms against the expansive foreign policy of the contemporary multinational empires – the Ottoman Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the Russia. The other idea set up from the recognition that a small Balkan nation cannot be a match for the military and economic potency of an empire even the declining Ottoman Empire. Therefore a common,

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<sup>1</sup> The Treaty of Kucuk-Kajnardzsa after the Russian-Turkish war between 1768-1774 entitled the the Greek merchants to trade sailing under the Russian banner on the Black Sea, enjoying significant privileges, and to join in the Balkan trade as ottoman citizens representing the Ottoman Empire until Vienna. It was not a coincidence that as the result of this privilege the first Greek diaspora ,dealing only with commerce, arrived in our country.

<sup>2</sup> The patriarch of Constantinople became the leader of all ortodox Christian religions in the middle of the eighteenth century after the Ohrid-centered Bulgarian and the Pec centered Serbian autocephal church was taken under his authority. See: Barbara Jeleovich: A Balkán története I. (History of the Balkan), Osiris, Budapest, 1996, p. 54. With this his role became more important in the religious life of the Christians living under the authority of the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>3</sup> This ideas will be detailed further in the essay.

organized action can give hope and this led to the conception of the Balkan union and the idea of the federation or confederation. According to the political thinkers urging the federalist reorganization of the Balkan, the conception would have helped not only the liberation and obtaining independence but also the form of a functioning state. The idea of a federation was not an isolated thought in the nineteenth century. Almost every country in Eastern Europe drafted up similar conceptions each applying its own special political and geographical features. Most of the Balkan federation plans admitted the political autonomy of the nations and considering the right of nations to self-determination would have organized the new state. The two state constituent conceptions appeared rivaling, oppressing and sometimes interweaving throughout the nineteenth century. Even in the twentieth century, just before the beginning of the Balkan wars, impressed by the constitutional government of the Young Turk revolution in 1908 the idea of federative union appeared once again.

Rigas Velestinlis (1757-1798) was the first one who tried to apply the principles of the French revolution in the relation of the Balkan and worked out a particular constitution plan for uniting all the Balkan nations. His republic would have based on equality with the participation of all Balkan nations that is the reason why he can be considered as the forerunner of the federative plans and conceptions of the Balkan. Though the dominance of the Greeks appeared in his works which can be explained by the important mediator role of the Greek language at that time as all the orthodox ceremonies were celebrated in Greek and the language of the education was Greek, too. Up to the present days among the researchers it is a controversial question that some of them regard him the forerunner and the father of the panhellenic ideas partly because he called his state Greek republic and because he prescribed the use of the Greek language. On the other hand the other part think that the principles of the equality of all Balkan nations was presented at Rigas, his republic would have based on national sovereignty that is the reason why he was respected as the first representative of the federative ideas. According to Todorov's<sup>4</sup> state Rigas imagined a multinational state form that based on democratic grounds realizing the equality of all nations. In their opinion the interpretation of the word Greek should be treated very carefully because at that time in Europe "Greek" was also the synonym of Eastern orthodox Christian. The ideas of Enlightenment mixed with the old fashioned legitimization rooted in the Greek dominance of Byzantine and Macedonian Empire. The latter mentioned empires showed how long time the people of the East had lived in a multinational state and at this point of view the Balkan had one entity<sup>5</sup> that would have directly continued in the Republic which would not have been realized by a revolution

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<sup>4</sup> Varban N. Todorov: *Greek Federalism during the Nineteenth Century (Ideas and Projects)* East European Quarterly, Boulder, N.Y. 1995, p. 7

<sup>5</sup> This can be proved with the use of the word Greek-Turkish from the 1960s which is a political phenomena and means the interweaving of the Greek and Turkish interests presenting from the eleventh century. On the other hand inside the political phenomena it is a firm idea with the aim of establishing a common Greek-Turkish state. For more details see: Balogh Ádám: *A görög-török együttműködés lehetősége a Balkán háborúk előtt (The Possibility for a Greek-Turkish Co-operation Before the Balkan Wars)*. In *Acta Historica CXVIII*, Szeged, 2003, p. 38-39

overthrowing the Turkish but with their integration. He used the word “Greek” as orthodox, eastern, he did not intend to suggest that the other – not Christian – nation would have been second-class after the Greeks so they would have been lower in the state.<sup>6</sup>

With the break out of the Greek war of independence<sup>7</sup> and the form of the independent Greek state – February, 1830, London Contract – gave the conception of the federalist transformation a new stimulus. From 1830 the independent Greek kingdom and the attained Serbian autonomy opened the way to emancipation of the other nations of the region. At this time the idea of federalism appeared parallel with the idea of national liberation<sup>8</sup>. Then again in the conception of federalism ideas there was a withdrawal compared to the ideas of Rigas at many authors. One of these plans was in connection with the Greek Kingdom in April, 1821 worked out and published by Pavel Ivanovich Pestel, which imagined the federation consisted of ten autonom regions. The ten regions would have been: Vallachia, Bulgaria, Romania – Rumelia –, Serbia, Bosnia, Macedonia, Thessalia, Albania, Levedia, Morea. Moldavia would have belonged to Russia, and Constantinople in neutral, external status would have been the center of the federation or as an integrated part the capital<sup>9</sup>. At the establishment of the independent Greek state the most marked problem was the national question. The new state included only the some parts of the Greek or inhabited by Greek majority territories<sup>10</sup> and millions of Greeks remained outside of the borders. Furthermore those who lived outside the borders, under the authority of the Ottomans were economic and cultural ascendancy, lived in the commercial centers of the Turkish Empire – Thessaliniki, Constantinople, Smyrna. Therefore after Athens became the capital in 1834 many of them considered temporary and waited for the moment when Constantinople took over this role. In this atmosphere the Megali Idea was born. The expression was first used on 14<sup>th</sup> January, 1844 when Joannis Kolettis<sup>11</sup> outlined it in front of the National Assembly. With this he drafted a new program: the realization of the national union, the liberalization of the Greeks living under the Turkish authority and their integration into a great Greek state. In this period it was only a slogan a program without appropriate strategy and without the means necessary for the realization. In it the propaganda encouraging the Balkan union mixed with the

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<sup>6</sup> Todorov p. 9

<sup>7</sup> The beginning of the war of independence is regarded to the symbolic act of Germanos, the Archbishop of Pathras, who set up the flag of the uprising to the top of the church of Pathras on 25<sup>th</sup> March, 1821.

<sup>8</sup> Χασιωτης, Α.: Η Ανατολική Ομοσπονδία: δυο Ελληνικές φεντεραλιστικές κινήσεις του 19ου αιώνα, Βανασ, 2001, (Hasziotisz: The Eastern Association: Two Greek Federalist Plan in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century), 9–15. ο.

<sup>9</sup> Todorov: p. 19

<sup>10</sup> The territory of the Independent Greek Kingdom was about 500,000 square kilometers – on the Peloponesos Peninsula and around Athens – had 700,000 – 800,000 inhabitants. The population of Athens were 8,000 – 10,000 comparing to the population of Constantinople which was 700,000, including 200,000 – 300,000 Greeks.

<sup>11</sup> Between 1835-1843 Kolettis lived in Paris as Greek Ambassador then between 1844-1847 the Prime Minister of Greece.

elements of Greek nationalism arising at that time. More and more the latter swelled out: an attitude of union with Greek supremacy and oppressing the other nations became the determining element of the idea until its existence, the Greek – Turkish population exchange in 1923. The Megali Idea was a nationalist idea which aimed that the Greek state conquered the eastern and western coast of the Aegean Sea enlarging with the city of Constantinople. Its system of arguments stood on three pillars: on historical, which emphasized the several-hundred-year-old Greek past of the Byzantine Empire, on ethnic, which exaggerating the importance of Greek presence<sup>12</sup>, and on the security strategy of Greece according to it the security of the country could be guaranteed only with the Greek control over the eastern and western costs of the Aegean Sea.<sup>13</sup>

As in many parts of Europe on the Balkan the nationalist ideologies neutralized the attempts of the different nations for peaceful cooperation and forming a federative state organization. This duality led to the form of the temporary unions of the Balkan Peninsula and to pursue a policy of disintegration<sup>14</sup>. After Greece gained its independence Thessalia, Epiros, Macedonia, Crete and other isles on the Aegean Sea went on their fight for independence, the former rebels arranged armed bands and crossed the Turkish borders. Many secret organizations, committees and brotherhood societies formed with anti-Turkish aims. One of them was Janis Makrijanis' organization, "For the Liberalization of the other part of Turkey" or the other one was the "Philortodox Organization"<sup>15</sup> led by Georgias Kapodistrias, the younger brother of Joannis Kapodistrias who was the first governor of the modern Greece. The flare up of the eastern crisis between 1839-1841 was a good opportunity to solve or at least to attempt to solve the Greek national question. At this time Alexandros Rangavis tried to unite the Greek conceptions with the intention of reciprocal agreement among the Balkan people and became the representative of the Balkan Federation. His ideas were similar to Rigas', in a proclamation he also turned to all "Greek outside" who lived in Thessalia, Ipiros, Trachea, Macedonia and also to the Albanian Christians and all the Muslims under the rule of the Ottoman Empire to unite for fighting for freedom. The fight would have struggled for forming a sovereign state on the Balkan of which citizens would have been equal apart from their national and religious affiliation<sup>16</sup>. The two conditions, to make the orthodox religion official and to introduce Greek language would have resulted Greek dominance in the state. It can be clearly seen

<sup>12</sup> At the end of the nineteenth century 2,5 – 2,7 million Greek lived under the authority of the Ottoman Empire. Except for the European territories most of them could be found in Constantinople and its surroundings, in Smyrna and its surroundings and on the southern costline of the Black Sea. As to the whole territory of Asia Minor the rate of Greek population was lower, it was not even close to the relative majority that was the reason why the exaggeration of the real facts was needed.

<sup>13</sup> For more details about the Great Ideas see:

Διμήτρι Κιτσικι: Σηγκροτική Ιστορία Ελλάδας Τουρκία στο 20.ο αιώνα, Αθήνα, 1978, (Dimitri Kiciki: Compiler Greek-Turkish History in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century), pp. 135-145.

Έλλη Σκοπετέα: Το Προτυπο Βασίλειο και η Μεγάλη Ίδεια, Αθήνα, 1988, (Elli Skopotea: The 'Type Kingdom' and the Great Idea), pp. 249-361.

<sup>14</sup> Hasiotis: p. 20

<sup>15</sup> Todorov: p. 33

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p. 35

that although officially these plans would have been realized on the basement of national and religious equality the Greek leading role was not questioned. The Big Brotherhood was established in 1843 with the intention of the liberation of the people of the peninsula and creating the Balkan federation. The organization activated again during the revolution wave of 1848 to realize the federative state of all Christians living in the Balkan and this would have been orthodox. The anti-Muslim attitude is shown in the motto of the organization: Ortodoxia against Islam – cross against the half-moon, and its emblem the Saint Grail holding by two hands symbolizing the unity of the Greeks and Serbians<sup>17</sup>. The Brotherhood of the Announced existed between 1849 and 1853, its aims were similar to Rigas' Declaration of Human Rights but in the ways of realization it was much more radical than Rigas, according to it the liberation of the people of the peninsula was considered to achieve with weapons. From 1851 special armed corps were set up, called the "Battalion of the Immortals"<sup>18</sup>. Their aim was to attain the freedom of all Greeks, but it was not determined who belonged to this "all Greeks" group. Probably it meant the whole Balkan so "Greek" was a geographical definition. Many Eastern European emigrant, who arrived in Greece after the revolution of 1848-1849 was defeated, joined to the organization. In that way Middle Eastern European federalist ideas had a direct effect to the Greek political thinking such as Giuseppe Mazzini or the idea of the Danubian Federation.

Summing up it can be said that the federalist ideas of the first part of the nineteenth century had general deficiencies and weakness for example they did not clearly define the geographical borders, the ethnic structure of the federation and the geographical terminology was mixed with those one that related to national, besides they did not determine who would have been equal in the state. All the Greek federative plans of the 1840s thought that the Greeks had the right to obtain the role of leaders over the united nations of Balkan<sup>19</sup>. The 1850s was a turning point in the Greek policy, after the Greek king Otto I and the highest diplomats oriented to Russia, thanked to the activity of the "Russian Party"<sup>20</sup> coming to power in 1848. Since that point the realization of the Great Idea came to front, the Greek press and essay writers wrote about the rebirth of the Byzantine Empire that was justified with "historical facts", such as the continuous presence of the Greek since the ancient times up to nowadays.

The direction of the Greek policy offered neutrality in wars and with the help of the Western European great powers tried to realize a great Greek state which would have

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid. p. 37

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p. 43

<sup>19</sup> So they failed to realize the Greek leadership based on the legitimization of the Byzantine Empire and the Macedonian World Empire of Alexander the Great and which, at this time, was combined with the Greek dominance of the orthodox religion and the important role of the Greek language in education and liturgy.

<sup>20</sup> After the establishment of the sovereign Greece the country had three protectors – Russia, Great Britain, France – who could intervene in the home affairs and put pressure on the political and economic life. Until the War of Crimea the political parties formed around the consulates of the three great powers in Greece – Russian Party, English Party, French Party – and with the help and the support of the three great powers tried to come to power at this time.

replaced the Ottoman Empire. Although with different background the conception would have given an answer to the Southern Slavic and Russian problems, too. The federalist ideas of the 1850s wanted to stop the Russian and Southern Slavic European expansion with the restoration of ancient Greek glory and empire. Of course it combined with the assurance of the Greek hegemony on the territories of the Ottoman Empire and the solving the Eastern Question. The proclamation published nameless in 1854 in the periodical *Ellinismos* with the title 'The Greeks and the Russian Dominance'<sup>21</sup> was a good example for this. Despite Russia, at least until the War of Crimea, was considered as the orthodox supporter of the Greek territorial demands, the enemy of the Ottoman Empire more and more the Russian foreign policy sharply thought that its Balkan influence could be increased with supporting the Balkan Slavs – Serbs, Bulgarians – so it took up the position against the Greek spreading<sup>22</sup>.

The common features in the conceptions of the '50s that without any condition they believed in the mission of civilization and history of the Greeks in Southeastern Europe at the expense of taking away the own national identity of other nations. Rattos' plan belongs to this groups of conceptions, he would have formed an Eastern Confederation uniting twelve kingdoms with Constantinople as free city in the center<sup>23</sup>. The twelve kingdoms are: the Turkish Empire – with Syria, Palestine, the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt, Tripoli, Tunisia, with Cairo or Alexandretta in the center – the Eastern Confederation – which unites the emergent small Minor Asian territories with Armenia – the Kingdom of Greece – Greece, Albania, Thessalia, Macedonia – the State of Moldova and Vlach – with sovereign prince – Serbia – with a sovereign prince; Bosnia-Herzegovina in one or two states with one or two princes; Montenegro, Bulgaria and Rumelia; Kingdom of Armenia with Erzurum; two small Greek kingdoms in Minor Asia: Pontus and the coastline of Minor Asia.

<sup>21</sup> Probably written by Konstantinos Dosios. See Todorov p 49

<sup>22</sup> The most important, continuously in phocus Russian foreign policy was the aspiration for gaining and possessing a warm see harbour and control over the Straits to assure its hegemony on the Mediterranean Sea. Under the reign of Tzarina Catherine II 1762-1796 managed to get the harbour of Kerc on the Crimea Peninsula winning the Russian – Turkish war between 1768-1774 . The Peace Treaty of Kucuk-Kajnardzsa they gained a warm sea harbour and its right of the Russian ships crossing the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, and its protectorate over the ortodox living in Ottoman territory was recognized. This policy went on in the nineteenth century, in 1844 in London Tzar Nicholas I offered the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire to England – of course the Straits would have been possessed by Russia – and repeated it in 1852. After refusing the latter offer the War of Crimea broke out and Russia had an active Balkan foreign policy. For more about Russian foreign policy see: Gecese Gustáv: Bizáncról Bizáncig. Epizódok az orosz pánszlávizmus történetéből (From Bizanc to Bizanc. Pages from the History of the Russian Panslavism), Interetnica, Budapest, 1965, pp. 15-114.

<sup>23</sup> Todorov: pp. 55-58

The blockade of the great powers at Pireus prevented Greece from profiting from the Crimean War<sup>24</sup>, but because of the effects of this war the Hatt-I Humajun introduced in February, 1856 gave the right of citizenship to the Greeks living in the territory of the Ottoman Empire, after it in the field of economy they came to leading position on the Balkan. The federalist conceptions of the 1860s – 1870s followed the contemporary European tendencies as in this period many theories like this was born, especially in the Habsburg Empire, in Italy and on the Balkan, where the nationalist endeavors appeared very strongly such as the federative theories of Lajos Kossuth.

Since the end of the 1860s with the help of Garibaldi a group of the Greek rebels arranged different committees all over Greece and in the regions under the Ottoman Empire. The nets of these committees were established on the Ion Isles and had connections with Montenegrin and Hungarian groups<sup>25</sup>. At the beginning of the 1860s Ilija Garašanin<sup>26</sup> and the Greek nationalist thinkers had a conversation about a probable cooperation to form an Eastern, Christian state. The state would have consisted of four kingdoms: Greece – with Thessalia, Epiros, Macedonia and the isles of the Aegean Sea – Serbia – with Bosnia, Herzegovina, Upper Albania and Montenegro – Bulgaria – with indefinite borders – Deacon Kingdom – with Wallachia and Moldavia. Of course the controversies of the nationalist doctrine of the two partners made the negotiations difficult and finally the plan was not ratified<sup>27</sup>. The Serbian policy wanted to achieve a strong Serbian state on the Balkan territories of the Ottoman Empire, which could have been appeared against the exaggerated influence of the great powers. To realize it the agents continued their propaganda and their secret diplomatic activity in the Balkan provinces. Every act taken in order to realize this plan was against in one hand the spreading Greek policy and on the other hand the intention to form the Balkan Confederation. “The Serbian state was established, but it has to strengthen and spread. The roots of the state, the firm basis can be found in the Serbian Empire of the thirteenth and fourteenth century and in the rich and glorious historic past. It is well known from the Serbian history that the Serbian emperors started to break the rate of progress of the Greek empire and almost managed to defeat it. If it would have happened the a Serbian – Slavic Empire had replaced the destroyed Eastern Roman Empire. The great Tzar Dusan<sup>28</sup> took over the coat

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<sup>24</sup> After the Crimean War the political parties which connected to the consulates of great powers in Greece were divided when the war proved that the great powers would not support the Greek aspirations to enlarge its territory.

<sup>25</sup> Todorov p. 64

<sup>26</sup> Ilija Garašanin 1812-1874 was the most significant politician of Serbia in the nineteenth century. In 1837 he became the chief commander of the Serbian army then he was the Minister of Interior between 1843 – 1852 and the Minister of Interior and Prime Minister between 1860 – 1868. In 1844 – in the same year when the Greek Great Idea was drafted – he introduced the secret documentary of Serbian national and foreign policy called The Plan – Načertanije.

<sup>27</sup> For more see later.

<sup>28</sup> Under the reign of Stefan Dusan 1331-1355 the Serbian state achieved its largest medieval expansion and its golden age. He managed to expand his reign to the Albanian territories, Macedonia, Ipiros, Thessalia and Serbia grew the largest state of the Balkan in this period. In 1346 he was crowned the Tzar and Emperor of the Serbians.

of arms of the Greek Empire. The turn up of the Turkish this change came to grief and for a long time this progress was slowed up. But now after the power of Turkish collapsed, it can be said destroyed, the same spirit must be revive and demand its right and the interrupted progress must go on."<sup>29</sup>

The federalist idea based on the cooperation of the Balkan nations, with the aim of gaining independence. In this time both Greece and Serbia admitted that separately they were not strong enough to against the military potency of the Ottoman Empire and they needed for the help of the other Balkan nations. The failure of the uprising on Crete between 1866-1869 led the official Greek policy toward the living peacefully side by side with the Ottoman Empire – just like during the Crimean war – and the tendency of confrontation with the Turkish Empire was pushed into the background<sup>30</sup>. This tendency was strengthen by since 1870s worse and worse relationship with Bulgaria. When the Bulgarian exarchate was established in 1870 it put an end to the religious dispute and led to the total break off of the Greek – Bulgarian relationship. Most of the Greeks were convinced by the official Greek foreign policy that the Great Idea only can be realized with the help of the Turkish, keeping the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire against the Slavic and Bulgarian endeavors. From this moment the Great Idea did not meant the reorganization of the Byzantine Empire but, first of all on the part of those conservative groups who lived under the Ottoman authority, to form a Greek – Turkish dualist state. It was considered as the most effective way of solving the problems of the Greeks<sup>31</sup>. Such a conception was the plan of Cleantis Scallieri, a banker of Thessaloniki, who imagined a multinational state from the nations of the Ottoman Empire, to be built on the principles of a Greek-Turkish integration and democracy.<sup>32</sup> The uprising in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1875 did not change the tendency of the Greek foreign policy and the Greek press continuously emphasized that the Greek interests wished to cultivate good relationship with the Turkish Empire and completed and supported this policy with an anti-Slavic campaign. In the point of view of the whole Greek society the Bulgarian uprising in April, 1876 and the declaration of war sent from Serbia and Montenegro to the Turkish Empire had bigger effect. Then the Greek press encouraged the revision of the Greek foreign policy and the rapprochement to Slavs demanding the participation in the anti-Turkish struggle. The reasons of the political change was that on the Greek side more and more people thought that the anti-Slav policy excluded Greece from the revolutionary events of the Balkan, and in the case of a Balkan triumph it would be impossible for Greece to realize its ambitions in the region. Because of these effects the official Greek policy had to maneuver between two tendencies. While King George I and the Greek

<sup>29</sup> Načertanije. A szerb nemzet- és külpolitika titkos dokumentuma (Document for the Serbian Secret Ethnic and Foreign Policy), Documenta Historica, Szeged, p. 13, Translated by Szajcsán Éva

<sup>30</sup> This peaceful living side by side with the Turkish Empire served the interest of the British foreign policy as the British wanted to keep the status quo on the Balkan and to protect the territorial integration of the Ottoman Empire first of all to stop the southeastern Russian expansion.

<sup>31</sup> The dualist idea was not the unique idea of the Greeks, at this time the Bulgarians also introduced a plan for a Bulgarian Turkish state.

<sup>32</sup> Todorov p. 88

government insisted on the western orientation, neutrality and good relation with the Porte, could not have left the demand of the Greek society to join to the Balkan revolution movements and to realize the Great Idea with armed clashes out of consideration. Therefore the Greek government, although it was not committed in a war against the Turkish Empire, supported the secret revolutionary organizations and their armed activity outside the borders of the country.

The federative conceptions of the 1860s-1870s appeared as the possible solution of the Eastern Question. After its founder plan in 1865<sup>33</sup> the secret organization, the Democratic Eastern Federation was formed in Belgrade with the similar aims. The aim of the organization was to found the federation of Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, the Turkish Empire and Armenia. The organization was founded after the conceptions of Guiseppe Mazzini, probably with his personal participation in Switzerland, where a period was published with the same title<sup>34</sup>. The period in June, 1869 published the official program of the organization and that took it. The aim was to establish an Eastern Confederation and it could be possible not with revolutionary, armed way, but with the natural democratization of the society<sup>35</sup>. The idea of the Balkan federation and generally all conceptions of European federation was very popular in the second part of the nineteenth century in Europe. Good example was the Paneuropean Congress in Lausanne in 1869 where the first article of the program drafted that creating a European United States was the only alternative to make peace on the continent. The Democratic Eastern Federation maintain relationship with Pasha Midhat<sup>36</sup> and in order to propagate his aims Panagiotis Panas founded the "Rigas Society"<sup>37</sup> in Athens in 1875.

In the last third of the nineteenth century the Greek foreign policy, adjusting to the possibilities of the new international circumstances, many times tried to approach through diplomatic channels to the other Balkan small nations<sup>38</sup>. Harilos Trikupis the Minister of Foreign Affairs of this period and Ilija Garašanin the Prime Minister of Serbia on 14<sup>th</sup> August, 1867 signed a treaty between Serbia and Greece about a possible division of the territories of the Ottoman Empire. In accordance with this treaty Serbia would have got

<sup>33</sup> Hasiotis p. 21

<sup>34</sup> Todorov pp 102-103

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. p. 103

<sup>36</sup> Pasha Midhat 1822-1883 helped to work out the new Ottoman administrative law in 1864 and during his second great *vezir*-ship the Constitution of 1876 was introduced. For more see: Csombor Erzsébet: *Kísérletek az Oszmán Birodalom megmentésére a 20. század elején* (Attempts to the Survivorship of the Ottoman Empire on the Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century). In *Limes*, 2000/2-3, p. 245

<sup>37</sup> Panagiotis Panas 1832-1896 was the most influential member of the Democratic Eastern Federation and published a period called Rigas to propagate his national ideas. For more about the Rigas Society see: Todorov: *Greek Politics in the '70s of the Nineteenth Century and the Idea of the Balkan Federation* pp. 108-110; Hasiotis pp. 24-31

<sup>38</sup> For more details about the foreign political attempts see:

Λαζαράκις, Σ. Θ.: *Διπλωματική Ιστορία της Ελλάδος, 1821-1914*, Αθήνα, 1947. (Lazarkis: *Diplomatic History of Greece 1821-1914*) pp. 120-215.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, while Greece Ipiros and Thessalia<sup>39</sup>. A complementary protocol was also signed as Crete would join to Greece. This was the first time when the Christian states of the Balkan tried to realize their national endeavor with joining their forces. According to the treaty the war against the Ottoman Empire should have been started in March, 1868. Trikupis thought that a war like this would activate the Bulgarians, too, so a Greek-Serbian-Bulgarian alliance could be formed against the Turkish. And this alliance could be enlarged with Montenegro and Romania. In 1867 the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs traveled to Bucharest in order to negotiate about a possible alliance but he did not succeed. The reconciliation with Serbia was much more successful, in February, 1868 a Greek-Serbian military treaty was signed, although the Serbian king, Michael I changed his mind soon and did not wish to cooperate with the Greeks any more.<sup>40</sup> In the 1890s Trikupis as a Prime Minister<sup>41</sup> continued his policy started in the 1860s, tried to realize the Greek-Serbian alliance but to compensate the anti-Greek activity of the Bulgarians. At that time Serbia had serious territorial claims, and he expressed it when Trikupis visited Belgrade in 1891. On the negotiations Serbia recognized the rights of Greece to the city of Thessaloniki and its surroundings but demanded Monstir, Bitola and Castoria in exchange for it.<sup>42</sup> The Serbian king, Alexander I visited Athens in 1896 but at this time there was a change in the Greek policy, for Delijannis, the Prime Minister and for Alexandros Skouzes, the Minister of Foreign Affairs the Cretan question had priority and they did not have the opportunity of making an alliance with Serbia with which they let the opportunity of the settlement of the Macedonian territories. After the beaten Greek-Turkish war in 1897 Skouzes changed his foreign policy and tried to make a Greek-Turkish alliance, which had real result, in 1903 the two countries signed a commercial contract.<sup>43</sup> To have closer relationship with Serbia was prevented by the change of the inner and foreign policy, as after Milan Obranic was killed Karadjordjevic came to power, who was against the Greek interests with his Russian friendly policy and made the rapprochement difficult between the two countries. At this time Greece tried to get as much support as it was possible and to set conflict with negotiations so in this context there were negotiations with Romania, too. The Romanian-Greek rapprochement came to its realization in 1900 with signing a commercial contract and in May, 1901 George the

<sup>39</sup> Treaty of Voslau, Lazarkis pp 121-122 Both partners moderated their claims for territories, later they aimed to gain new territories.

<sup>40</sup> The importance of the treaty, despite it was not realized, was that it first put a contract between two nations down and the endeavors are similar to the pre Balkan War diplomatic manoeuvre on the Balkan. Lazarkis pp. 187-188

<sup>41</sup> Harilaos Trikupis (1832-1896) was the Prime Minister of Greece seven times: 1878; 1880; March, 1882 to April, 1886; May, 1886 to November, 1890; 1892; 1893-1895. In his program he emphasized the inner development in opposition of his rival Theodoros Deligiannis. The British government supported Trikupis policy, which was based on the status quo. Deligiannis 1826-1905 was the Prime Minister of Greece between 1885-1887; 1890-1892; 1902-1903; 1904-1905, his program based on foreign political activity, he aimed the territorial growth and the realization of the Great Idea.

<sup>42</sup> Lazarakis pp. 187-188

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. p. 204

King of Greece and Charles the King of Romania discussed the improvement of the bilateral relationship. Unfortunately it was not successful because there was a strong Vlach propaganda in Macedonia with the support of Romania. Because of the Vlach conflict Romania abrogated the commercial treaty of 1900 and Athens broke off the diplomatic relations with Bucharest.<sup>44</sup> So by the end of the nineteenth century, at the beginning of the twentieth century in spite of every diplomatic trials the Greek diplomacy was isolated and came up against the foreign political endeavors of the other Balkan nations, and these facts made the revision of the foreign policy necessary.

At the end of the nineteenth century the most urgent task of the Greece foreign policy was still to set the national affair, which concentrated in the Macedonian question and led to draft many political programs in the Greek political thinking. After the Greek leaders recognized that they cannot defeat the declining but still strong Ottoman Empire, many possibilities and policies turned up as alternatives in the Greek political thinking. It was one possibility to bide the its time when the change of the policy of the great powers in the Eastern Question would help the realization of the Greek national interests. The thought of approaching to one great power emerged and that great power would support the change in the status quo of the Balkan Peninsula, certainly with taking consideration the Greek interests. Finally one possible solution cooperation with the other Balkan nations omitting the great powers would have set the ethnic questions in the region. Up to the international situations and adjusting to the international balance of forces one or the other policy came to the front, was emphasized. In the consequence of the Congress of Berlin<sup>45</sup>, 1878 and the unambiguous policy of the great powers to remain the integrity of the Ottoman Empire the Greek policy propagated the reconciliation with Turkish. Parallel with it in the 1880s, 1890s the conceptions in connection with the great idea was still the part of the official Greek policy. The ideological elements of the idea went through changes and it did not mean the establishment of a Byzantine Empire replacing the Ottoman Empire any more as it was mentioned above, but it worked out a limited program concerning on Athens and region around Aegean. This also meant that with drawing up a more real national aim the support of the idea increased significantly. The policy of forming the Balkan federation were never been able to capture as much support and popularity as the great idea, thus it influenced some parts of the Greek society, first of all the intelligentsia. The new circumstances after the crisis of the mid 1870s impressed the representatives of the federation and they reshaped the content of the theory. There was no connection between the movement of national-liberalism and the followers of the federation any more. The establishment of the sovereign Bulgaria changed the situation, the thought of the union, the fight against the "public enemy" disappeared. It can be seen clearly from the above

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid. p. 208

<sup>45</sup> The conference after the Balkan Crisis 1877-1878 got together first in San Stefano in March, 1878 where the establishment of Great Bulgaria was announced. With the establishment of the southern Slavic state the influence of Russia woul have increased in the region therefore in July, 1878 another conference got together in Berlin where the former treaty was revised and Bulgaria was divided into three parts. Even the possibility of the establishment of a southern Slavic state evoked violent feelings in Greece and strenghtened the rapprochement to the Porte.

mentioned facts impressed by the actual foreign political constellations and change of balance of forces the Greek foreign policy reacted immediately, so it is possible to talk about official foreign programs and endeavors but these appeared together and it is difficult to draw a dividing line between them. In opposition with Greeks living in the Greek Kingdom the Greeks who lived on the other side and had democratic attitude supported the idea of the Balkan federation, because they saw the solution of the Eastern Question in it. In this relation the most significant organization of the end of the nineteenth century was founded in Paris with the leadership of Pavlos Argyriades called Federative League of the Balkan<sup>46</sup>. The league would have condensed Greeks, Bulgarians, Romanians, Serbs, Albanians, Armenians. The aim was to overthrow the Ottoman Empire on Balkan and in Minor Asia and form a sovereign Eastern Federation consisted of nine federative states. The nine states were: Greece with Crete; Bulgaria; Romania; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Montenegro; Albanian-Macedonia; Trachea with Constantinople as a free city and the capital of the federation; Armenia; Minor Asia with the coastline. According to the thinkers of this theory a federation like this would be able to protect the sovereignty and political autonomy of the states of the Balkan and Minor Asia from an expansion from the west or the east. They expected the solution of the ethnical conflicts from this federation. That is the reason why they would have formed a sovereign Albanian Macedonia of which division would turned the neighboring nations and countries against each other but it seemed to be avoidable if it was a sovereign state and the other nations could gather around it. They emphasized the principles of equality, each state would get own inner autonomy and own government while the common problems would be solved in Constantinople by a common body of delegates sent by every states. The main role of this body of delegates would be to maintain the relationship among the states and to protect from the intervention of the foreigners. The league did not existed for a long time and did not influenced the policy of the Balkan states as it popularized the idea of the Balkan federation in Western Europe.

The form of the Albanian-Macedonian<sup>47</sup> state as the sovereign, equal member and core of a federative union was also imagined by the most important society of the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the Oriental Confederation with Dimitrios N. Bocaris<sup>48</sup>, presidency and Leonidas Voulgaris' influential activity. The society was founded in

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<sup>46</sup> Todorov, 1995: pp. 117-119

<sup>47</sup> After the Congress of Berlin of 1878 the ethnic questions of the Balkan were partly solved – the establishment of the Bulgarian Principality, the emergence of Serbia and Romania, the territorial growth of Greek with Thessalia and some parts of Epiros in 1881 – therefore ethnic conflicts could become more acute in connection with the territories under Ottoman authority waiting for the liberation such as Macedonia, Trachea, and the Albanian territories. The peaceful division of the mixed populated Macedonia seemed unimaginable that was the reason why the conception of sovereignty was born. The Balkan politicians fought in two fronts: on one hand against the Ottoman authority and on the other hand against the other Balkan state for the forming and gaining sphere of influence based on ethnic, language and religion. The latter led to bloody events on the Balkan at the beginning of the twentieth century.

<sup>48</sup> Previously Bocaris was the Minister of War and the king's aide-de-camp.

Athens in August, 1884<sup>49</sup> and for more than one decade it had been the most remarkable representative and supporter of the Balkan federation. About the foundation of the society first people could read in the *Ustavnost*<sup>50</sup> a Serbian period of Belgrade, which in the issue of 13<sup>th</sup> September, 1884 informed about the publication of a period of Athens called the *Oriental Confederation*<sup>51</sup> and some days later it wrote about the foundation of a society with the same name. The rules of the society was accepted on 29<sup>th</sup> October, 1884. The central committee resided in Athens presided over a big, general organization, over the *Oriental Confederation* which would unite small societies similar to this in Greece, on the Balkan and elsewhere. The first article of the constitution defined the aspirations of the society: "The total agreement with other similar societies, the cooperation in efforts to found an *Oriental Confederation* society among the states of the Balkan against foreign authority".<sup>52</sup> The society would like to realize its aims without uprisings and clashes, to diffuse its conceptions with publishing and distributing issues and declarations. The president of the society was Dimitrios N. Bocaris, the seal of the society was an eagle holding a snake in its talons and a ribbon in its bill which said "In Union There Is Strength".<sup>53</sup> The leaders were active, influential Greek intelligentsia having political past and did not support the aggressive policy of the economically important groups which intended to solve the home and foreign political problems with power. The society had influential Bulgarian, Montenegrin, Serbian and Romanian politicians among its members, too<sup>54</sup>. They would have liked to solve the Balkan conflicts from above with convincing through the press: the second step with developing an agreement among the governments of the Balkan states the treatment of the ethnic, national and territorial questions could be executed. Their final aim would have been to form a Paneuropean federation:

"You, Greeks, Albanians, Serbs, Romanians, Bulgarians, You, Greek, Slavic, Latin, Tartar People who live on the lands bordered by three seas – the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Adriatic Sea – and are dispersed from the Alps and the Carpathians to Crete and Cyprus, Unite!"<sup>55</sup>

The society was in contact with among others influential Serbian, Bulgarian, Romanian and Montenegrin politicians. The society sent agitators to the Albanian, Macedonian territories to popularize its program focused on Balkan union and to distribute its issue. The actual Prime Minister Harilaos Trikupis distanced himself and the official Greek policy from the *Oriental Confederation* of which members, in his opinion, tried to form an anti-Turkish alliance turning to, above all, Macedonia and Albania. The

<sup>49</sup> Hasiotis p. 52

<sup>50</sup> The period was published from 1884 to 1886 edited by Sime Popovic. For more information see: Todorov, Varban: *The Society „Oriental Confederation”* p. 532

<sup>51</sup> Todorov, 1995: p. 120

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* p. 121

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* p. 122, Todorov: *The Society „Oriental Confederation”* p. 530

<sup>54</sup> For example the Serbian Prime Minister, Nikola Pasić 1845-1926 and the Romanian Prime Minister Ion Bratianu 1860-1910 were the members. Hasiotis p.55

<sup>55</sup> Todorov: *Greek Politics in the 70s of the Nineteenth Century and the Idea of Balkan Federation*, p. 107

Porte as a subversive activity banned the publishing and the distribution of its issue in the European province. Meanwhile in December, 1885 H. Rumbold the English Ambassador in Athens sent an information to his government about the meeting of Vulgaris, the leader of the society and Theodoros Deligiannis, the Prime Minister of Greece and their negotiation about a campaign of forming an alliance of Greece, Bulgaria, Montenegro against the Turkish Empire.<sup>56</sup> The Prime Minister of Greece denied it and the report were not confirmed from other sources so it was forgotten. In many speech and declaration the society emphasized that the Eastern Question was getting farther and farther from the solution because the problems were set with wars and dynastic ambitions. In their opinion the solution would be if a Balkan federation was realized which assured freedom and sovereignty to the small Balkan states.<sup>57</sup> The great Balkan federation would be a match for the expansion of the great powers and would force back their expansive policy in the region. They saw it very clearly that their plan could be easily impeded by determining great powers of region, like Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the Turkish Empire, Russia that was the reason why in their each issue they endeavored for emphasizing their aggressive, offensive with the interest of the Balkan states and nations policy. Among the great powers the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy was considered the most dangerous because of its Balkan interests. The article published in 1885 proved this as it reminded of the imminence threatening the members and the sympathizers of the society – persuasion and the arrestments – from not only the Ottoman Empire but showed the difficulties that revealed from Austria and the certain groups of Greece against the society.<sup>58</sup> It refused the attacks of the Austrian and Greek press which stated that the society prevented from the realization of their successful Balkan policy. The article ended with an appeal “every noble thinking and freedom loving people” to join to the society and to support totally the Balkan federation.<sup>59</sup> The society was in need of supporters as its ideological and political program was frankly against the aspirations of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire conflicting endeavoring to consolidation and enforcement on the Balkan. It was not a coincidence that the period of the Oriental Federation was banned by the Ottoman authorities in Macedonia and Albania after three issues.<sup>60</sup> Parallel with it the Greek government circles sharply criticized the activity of the society. They had ambivalent attitude in connection with the Ottoman Empire on one hand they openly condemned the policy of the Porte which excited the conflicts among the nations of the Balkan on the other hand in a declaration the society turned to the Turkish Empire offering cooperation and assuring its position in the alliance if it changed its policy. In their opinion in the alliance the Turkish Empire could assure its sovereign existence while

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<sup>56</sup> Todorov, 1995: p. 125

<sup>57</sup> It cannot be left out of consideration that the political thinking of the nineteenth century thought only the large expanded states viable. That is the reason why in the period there were so many federative conceptions which would guarantee the appropriate expansion and also the sovereignty and the autonomy of the nations.

<sup>58</sup> Todorov: The society „Oriental Confederation” p. 531

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. p. 531

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. p. 535



in other case it could get under the influence of Austria and the other great powers whose aim was to control and divide its territories. In 1888 the society appealed in which the idea of agreement of the Serbs, Romanians, Greeks, Bulgarians, Albanians, Turkish was emphasized to solve peacefully the Macedonian question. In their activity they laid stress on avoiding any Balkan states becoming dominant. When they were talking about the federation of the Balkan states the nations living under the Ottoman authority did not escaped their attention, their conception was not restricted to only the independent states of the Balkan. The society supported the freedom movements of any nations inside the Ottoman borders.<sup>61</sup> Following the political developments of the contemporary Europe the Balkan federation was not only an idea but also a drawn up political program. All the states would have preserve its national character and would have had a political autonomy in the federation. It would have been possible to follow its own tendency in foreign affairs but the federation would have functioned as a military union, too. In the structure of the future federation the states would have been politically independent with inner autonomy and only the common "incomes and outcomes" would have determined with common decision.<sup>62</sup> The Committee established local offices all over the Balkan – Sophia, Belgrade, Bucharest, Athens – and arranged regular meetings in the capital where they discussed the constitution plan of the federation and they got to the model of the system of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy as an example to follow with common parliament but with the assurance of the preservation of the national identity and the political autonomy.<sup>63</sup> Although the Oriental Confederation made difference between "state" and "nation" but it did not use these definitions unambiguously and the official deed of foundation talked about the federation of the states of the Balkan but in their social appeal it talked to the nations of the Balkan.<sup>64</sup> The role of the Turkish Empire could come up if it could be acceptable as the member of the federation, or its leader and it is a question of which an unambiguous answer is difficult to give, but the Turkish nation participated in the appeal as a possible member. The destiny of Macedonia was also problematic as it was

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. pp. 532-533

<sup>62</sup> Todorov, 1995: pp. 129-130

<sup>63</sup> Todorov: The Society „Oriental Confederation” p. 532

<sup>64</sup> The society took consideration those Balkan nations which lived under the Ottoman authority not only the independent ones. Using these definitions it cannot be left out of consideration that at the thinker of the nineteenth century – at least in this region – some definitions such as „federation” and „confederation” were mixed, were not clearly divided.

Federation: alliance of states which memberstates established a new states. They independently conduct their home affairs, justice, education and taxes but gave up their sovereignty as their foreign, war and financial affairs get under common conduction. The citizens of the federated states are the citizens of the federation and not the members of each state.

Confederation: the allied states keep their sovereignty, the executive branch is made up with members delegated by the memberstates and not confederative government above all memberstates. The people who live on the territory of the confederation are not citizens of the confederation but the citizens of their own sovereign states. Cf. Mérey Gyula: Föderációs tervek Délkelet-Európában és a Habsburg Monarchiában 1840-1918 (Federative Plans in South-Eastern Europe and the Hapsburg Monarchy 1840–1918). Kossuth Kiadó, Budapest, 1965, p. 14.



the source of conflict among the nations of the federation. The conceptions emerged one with a common agreement about the division of Macedonia and another with integrating Macedonia as an equal member.<sup>65</sup> The first conception would sharpen the oppositions of territorial interests of the Balkan states and easily led to war that was the reason why the latter one was supported in order to avoid the possible conflicts. In the 1890s the Balkan union of the Oriental Confederation was welcomed on Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania and the Turkish Empire. Its political program was worked out by the Greek intelligentsia who were against the nationalist policy of the Greek government and also against the expansive Balkan policy of the great powers. They wanted to assure the political stability in the region with a viable, large territorial state. They were aware of the ambitions and plans of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy and the Turkish Empire that was why under the certain political conditions the society could not achieve political leadership even in the context of the Balkan and generally the European reality of the end of the nineteenth century the planed could seem utopistic. Anyway, the it fits in the contemporary political way of thinking which considered the realization of the survive and assurance of sovereignty of the small nations with federative or confederative change against the ambitions of the states which were large territorial, politically and economically ranked among great powers and had active and expansive foreign policy and were determining in Middle and Southeastern Europe.

The beginning of the twentieth century created a new situation in the relation of the Balkan. The deadlock of the Macedonian question and the bloodier and bloodier appearance of it laid stress not on the federative form. The situation changed with the triumph of revolution of the Young Turks in 1908 and with the introduction of the Turkish constitution of 1876 again when for the last time once again the possibility of the union above the nations emerged with the reform of the Ottoman Empire. Unfortunately the in-depth study of this question exceeds the course of this essay.

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<sup>65</sup> The latter would have meant the establishment of a sovereign Macedonian-Albanian state as it was mentioned many times previously, around which the other states would have gathered.