

## Attic Chronicle by Phocion

### The dread of San Stefano

*Using the blueprint of the 1877 treaty, Russian designs on the Aegean involve creation of a Macedonian state.*

What Russian imperialism is doing in the Balkans under the supervision of Ambassador Igor Andropov in Athens reminds one of the Russian hegemony temporarily established over the Aegean Sea coast of the Balkans during the short lived San Stefano Treaty of 1877. The current policy of the Russian government is: to reinforce Bulgaria's role as a powerful Russian military outpost; break up the Yugoslav federation; create a Bulgarian-controlled Macedonian state; dominate Greek domestic politics; and, through control of the Aegean, control the Mediterranean Sea.

Last week, Aeroflot, the Russian airline, established daily flights to the city of Thessalonica, the second largest Greek city and administrative capital of Northern Greece. Since no commercial or tourist reasons justify this Aeroflot service, it is expected that some unusually sized "diplomatic pouches" are about to show up in Northern Greece.

At the same time, the Russian foreign ministry requested permission to open a Consulate General in Thessalonica for the purpose of servicing "Soviet interests in the northern provinces of Greece." There are no Soviet nationals nor commercial activities in that part of the country. There is, however, a Russian-sponsored committee for the "liberation of Macedonia" based in Thessalonica, which advocates the formation of a "Macedonian state" composed of pieces of territory torn out of southern Yugoslavia, northern Greece and southwest Bul-

garia, under Bulgarian sponsorship.

The myth of a "Macedonian state" and "Macedonian nation" was concocted during the late 18th and 19th centuries by primarily Venetian intelligence networks in the region working on the problem of dismembering the Ottoman Empire. The present day formulation of the "Macedonian question" derives from the activities of Venetian Count Volpi di Misurata, the reputed inspirer and controller of Italo Bablo, Benito Mussolini, and Italian fascism in general. The only actual "Macedonia" which ever existed was a Greek-speaking state of the fourth century B.C. which was essentially dissolved with the death of its most famous king, Alexander the Great.

Today, Russian diplomacy has revived the myth of Volpi di Misurata. Igor Andropov is pressuring the Papandreou government to enter into a treaty agreement with the "Macedonian Federated Republic of Yugoslavia" for the commercial development of the Vardar River valley as a joint project. The feasibility study for the project has been supplied by some Russian-controlled agency at the United Nations and it proposes the creation of some 25 dams, numerous hydroelectric stations, navigable canals, etc. to be constructed between 1985 and 2005. Ultimately, the entire Vardar River project is to be linked by canal with the Danube River and become part of an ambitious *Russian project for a continuous waterway connecting the Danube with the Aegean.*

The vast political implications of

the project ought to be reviewed under separate cover. Relevant to their scope, however, is the fact that Igor Andropov and his KGB helpers in Athens are applying pressure on the Greek government to conduct negotiations on the project, not with the Yugoslav authorities in Belgrade, but rather with the authorities in Skopje of the "Macedonian Socialist Republic." Favoring the legitimization of the fantastic Macedonian claims is Papandreou's Deputy Foreign Minister Karolos Papoulias, whose brother is Greece's ambassador to Washington, and Papandreou's parliamentary allies, the Communist Party of Greece.

The latter is on record supporting the formation of a Macedonian state and, in its party program since the 1930s, has been a plank calling for the secession of large portions of northern Greece, including the city of Thessalonica, from the present Greek state. It is perhaps the only party anywhere in the world which is allowed to sit in the parliament of a country whose disintegration it advocates.

The claims for a "Macedonian state" are historically unfounded, especially so for the city of Thessalonica, a city founded by Alexander the Great (bearing his sister's name) whose population remained Greek-speaking continuously until the later phase of the Ottoman Empire, at which time it was composed of one-third Greek speakers, one-third Turkish speakers, and one-third Sephardic Jews. The 1922 population exchange between Greece and Turkey removed the Turkish-speaking component; the Nazi occupation of 1941-44 removed the Jewish component. The city's culture became the poorer for this, but never in its 2,300 history was it threatened by the cultural depravity that Igor Andropov now means to impose.