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**THE GREEK
ETHNIC MINORITY
IN ALBANIA**

PANEPIROTIC FEDERATION
OF AMERICA

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INTRODUCTION

This book constitutes a general overview of the Northern Epirus issue, of the issue of the Greek ethnic minority that lives in Albania, and aims at the introduction of these issues both in the Greek and mainly in the international environment.

The book is viewed as a contribution of the Panepirotic Federation of America in the support of the rights of the Greek minority that lives in Albania, and, along with all other initiatives by all representatives of Greece, aims at giving this issue its rightful position.

It includes a historical overview of the Greeks who live in Albania, a native ethnic group, which having faced old challenges (establishment of the Albanian state, days of the communist regime of Emver Hoxha) as well as new ones (transitional period), is trying to secure its rights and promote them on the international scene, when those rights are not implemented and when they are violated.

Several big issues remain unresolved and intensify over time. These include the education of the members of the Greek minority, its religious freedom, the return of private, community and church properties to their rightful owners, the non implementation by the Albanian side of their obligations and commitments for human and minority rights, and the systematic use of terrorizing methods against the Greek minority. Indeed, as a result of a nationalistic atmosphere that has been developing in Albania, a series of actions of the Albanian government targeted the Greek minority, aiming at an ethnic cleansing against the Greek population.

The Panepirotic Federation of America believes that the

issue of the Greek minority in Albania should be a dominant issue in the Greek-Albanian relations, in the negotiations between Albania and the European Union, and an issue of improvement or not in the relations with any other European or international organizations (UN, NATO, OAEK).

Consequently, the main target should be the respect and the full implementation of the political, cultural, educational and religious rights of the Greek minority. The ethnic minorities and particularly the Greek minority are not a marginal element in the states of the Balkan peninsula, including Albania, but a constructive part of them. In this framework, the respect of the human rights of the Greek minority is essential, and it is guaranteed by international organizations, conventions and treaties, and the Albanian law as well. Within this framework comes our initiative with the publication of this book, and we hope it will find a lot and significant supporters.

Michael Servos
President, Panepirotic Federation of America
Florida, March 2007

TIME CHART

November 28, 1912

Declaration of Independence of Albania in Avlona.

December 7, 1912

Liberation of KORITSA by the Greek army.

December 20, 1912

Recognition of Albanian independence by the delegations of the Great Powers in London.

February 21, 1913

Liberation of IOANNINA by the Greek army.

March 3, 1913

Liberation of ARGIROKASTRO and KLISOURA by the Greek army.

March 6, 1913

The Greek army liberates TEPELENI and then CHIMARA, KOURVELESI, PREMETI and LESKOVIKI.

May 17, 1913

Cease-fire between the Ottoman Empire and the Balkan Allies.

May 30, 1913

Peace treaty is signed in London. Based on article 3, it is assigned on the six (6) Great Powers, namely ENGLAND, FRANCE, AUSTROHUNGARIAN EMPIRE, GERMANY, ITALY and RUSSIA to settle the borders of the newly founded Albanian state. Unfortunately, the whole region of Northern

Epirus, namely CHIMARA, ARGIROKASTRO, KORITSA, PREMEDI, DELVINO, AGIOI SARANTA etc, areas where the majority of the population was Greek, and actually native over the centuries, was given to the newly founded Albanian state.

The region was named Northern Epirus, and the Greeks Northern Epirotes.

July 29, 1913

The Protocol of the Albanian Independence is signed in London by the six Great Powers.

August 8, 1913

The Protocol of London is signed, which stipulates that the northern borders of Greece with Albania include the district of Koritsa and the coastline up to Ftelia. The borderline between those two points were to be determined by a committee, based on geographical and ethnical factors, the later being the language spoken by the local populations.

December 17, 1913

The Committee issued its ruling, known as the Protocol of Florence.

February 13, 1914

The Great Powers publish the borderline between Greece and Albania, and call Greece to withdraw its army.

February 28, 1914

Declaration of the Autonomous Democracy of Northern Epirus, with the Greek politician Georgios Christakis Zografos as a Prime Minister. The revolting Northern Epirotes issue a proclamation to the Great Powers, expressing their sorrow and disappointment over their rights being ignored.

May 17, 1914

The Protocol of CORFU is signed, which guarantees the

autonomy of Northern Epirus. The Protocol of Corfu includes the following main points:

1. Northern Epirus is autonomous.
2. It recognizes King Gullielmo Vid as its head of state.
3. It votes for representatives in the Albanian Parliament.
4. The official language of Northern Epirus is Greek.
5. The official language in school is Greek, with the Albanian language as an optional one.
6. Northern Epirus has the right to maintain its own army, with its own officers, and the Albanian government cannot use outside the limits of Northern Epirus.

June 20, 1914

The Great Powers are forced to recognize the Protocol of Corfu.

June 23, 1914

The region of Koritsa is incorporated. The President of the International Committee notifies the government of the autonomous democracy of Northern Epirus that the head of the Albanian state, King Gullielmo Vid and his government accept the Protocol of Corfu in its entirety.

October 1914

The Great Powers order Greece to occupy Northern Epirus again, for security reasons.

April 16, 1915

The city of AVLONA and a surrounding area large enough for its defense is given to Italy, and Northern Epirus to Greece. The 16 representatives of Northern Epirus will participate at the Greek Parliament as of Dec 15, 1915.

October 17, 1918

Cease-fire is signed in MOUDROS. WWI is over. The British ambassador in Athens proposes that Greece receive, in addition

to Northern Epirus, the islands of Dodecanese and CYPRUS.

June 29, 1919

Italy recognizes the new borderline between Greece and Albania, which the Albanians had already accepted. Agreement between Venizelos and Titoni.

January 13, 1920

The Supreme Allied Council approves the agreement between Venizelos-Titoni (Italian Secretary of State). This is also approved by U.S. President Wilson on February 10th and again on February 25th, 1920.

January 14, 1920

The Secretariat of the Supreme Allied Council notifies Southern Slavia (region of the former Yugoslavia), among other things, that Northern Epirus is given to Greece.

May 15, 1920

A treaty between Greece and Albania is signed in Kapistitsa. The Albanians assume responsibilities towards the Greek populations until the decisions of the Great Powers are finalized.

May 17, 1920

The U.S. Senate votes that Northern Epirus, KORITSA not excluded, must be given to Greece, along with the islands of Dodecanese and the western coast of Asia Minor.

October 2, 1921

The delegate of Albania in the League of Nations (the equivalent of U.N. after WWI, headquartered in Geneva), files a proclamation that Albania assumes the obligation to respect the religious and educational rights of the Greek Northern Epirotes.

April 1935

The Northern Epirotes appeal at the International Court

in Hague for violation of their educational rights, and they win.

April 7, 1939

The situation worsens significantly for the Greeks, as Albania joins the Axis forces and fights on their side throughout WWII.

October 28, 1940

Italy issues an ultimatum against Greece, demanding that Greece open their borders and surrender. Greece refuses, and the Italian army, reinforced by Albanian forces attacks the Greek army, but is forced back. The Greek army counter attacks, and liberates Northern Epirus for one more time. Greece becomes the only country to win against the Axis forces, in 1940-1941.

April 6, 1941

Germany attacks Greece through Bulgaria and Yugoslavia and occupies Greece. Hitler was so impressed by the Greek army that he issues an order that no Greek soldiers be taken prisoners, and the Greek officers be allowed to return to their homes, bearing their arms.

June 1942

The Greek government in exile in Egypt issues a statement to the Great Powers USA, USSR and Great Britain, requesting the return of Northern Epirus.

October 12, 1944

The Greek government declares that Northern Epirus is an inseparable part of Greece.

June 1945

The constitutional committee on the external affairs of Greece recommends to the government that Northern Epirus be occupied by the Greek army, so that the rights of the Greek population would not be lost.

January 1946

Proclamation of the People's Republic of Albania. Persecution of the Greek minority. A lot of Greeks are executed, sent to labor camps, imprisoned, and their properties confiscated. That is followed by a systematic persecution of the minority, through relocation in other areas, relocation of Albanians in the Greek areas, and prohibition of all cultural activities. The exile of Greeks was combined by the separation of family members, or the marginalization of the Greek families in their own cities. Falsification of the demographics through false census.

Greeks are forced to adopt Albanian names, and new settlements with purely Albanian populations, of the Moslem faith, are established within areas that are populated exclusively by Greeks. Curfew is imposed, police measures all over the region, electrically charged fences along the borderline with Greece etc. All these, in spite of the expressed will of Greece that the Greek minority be a bridge of good will and friendship between the two nations. The Greek minority is limited to 99 townships only.

May 26, 1946

The Foreign Affairs Committee of the U.S. Senate votes that Northern Epirus and the Dodecanese should be given to Greece. This raises some hope. However, this was only a wish, which was not binding for the works of the peace conference.

May 15, 1946

The British Foreign Minister BEVIN looks favorably towards the Greek request at the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the allies.

June 29, 1946

The U.S. votes for the return of Northern Epirus and the Dodecanese to Greece.

July 21, 1946

The conference of the 21 states on the winning side at the end of WWII starts in Paris.

August 30, 1946

The Agenda includes the request by Greece for Northern Epirus, but it is not brought up for discussion, even though approved, and it is postponed for the next meeting.

September 28, 1946

The issue of Northern Epirus that had been postponed is on the Agenda once again. Due to an interference by the USSR and Yugoslavia, it is referred to the Council of the Foreign Ministers.

November 1946

The issue is up for discussion again, and the USSR agrees with England, USA and France; however, the issue is deferred for a final solution whenever the issue of Germany is settled. The peace treaty between Greece and Italy is signed, and Greece maintains its rights on Albania until the foreign ministers reach a conclusion.

November 1967

Albania becomes an atheistic state. New persecutions of the Greek minority.

May 1971

After an initiative from Greece, diplomatic relations between Greece and Albania are established, which do not lead to any improvement of the living conditions for the Greek minority.

1984-1988

From 1984 through 1988 the Special Committee for Human Rights of the U.N. condemns Albania for violating the rights of the Greek minority. Very similar were the rulings of the U.S. State Department, the European Parliament (resolutions

9/4/1983 and 9/10/1985) and Amnesty International.

August 1987

In a gesture of good will, the Greek government lifts the state of war with Albania, but this does not lead to any improvement of the living conditions for the Greek minority.

February 1990 - March 1991

The communist regime in Albania collapses. The Greek minority is once again persecuted, and a lot of them cross the border into Greece.

1991-1995

New persecutions against the Greek minority. Members of the Greek political party Omonoia (Concord) are imprisoned, prefecture managers are abducted etc.

March 1996

A Pact of Friendship, Cooperation, Good Neighborhood and Security is signed between Greece and Albania in 1996. *“The Greek Ethnic Minority in Albania has contributed and continues to contribute significantly to the social life in Albania, and constitutes a factor towards the development of friendship between the two countries”.*

January 1997

New persecutions against the Greeks, following the scandal with the pyramid schemes, the illegal and unlicensed banks, the collapse of the banking system etc.

1997 - today

1. Thinning out of the Greek minority and increased internal migration of the Albanian population from the northern parts of the country to the south.

2. Insecurity, which is the primary reason for the Greek minority leaving and crossing into Greece.

3. Economic activity comes to a halt. Animals are stolen,

equipment and inventories are stolen from Greek businesses, Greek businessmen are extorted and abducted, and economic activities suffer.

4. Institutions of the Greek minority paralyze, representatives are excluded from participating at any government services. Election results are falsified, and Greeks are not allowed any representation.

5. All special rights pertaining to the expression and development of an ethnic identity are violated; ie, education in the mother language, the self determination of ones ethnic identity, the obstruction of obtaining the Greek nationality, and all such efforts towards altering the identity of the Greek minority as an ethnic local minority.

6. Violation of the rights of the Greek minority, such as the right to self determination, the free and unobstructed cross-border communication, the exercise of ones rights individually or in groups, the establishment of clubs and organizations, the participation in the decision making in issues pertaining to minorities, the recognition and respect of the demographics and the borderlines of the minority regions, the foundation of political parties, the autonomy, cultural rights, religious rights, language rights and educational rights.

Albania has not materialized on their commitments and obligations that stem from the Constitutional Chart of the United Nations (1945), the Ecumenical Declaration of the Human Rights (1948), the two International Accords of 1966, the International Accord for the Individual and Political Rights that came into effect in 1976 and the International Accord for the Economical, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948), the Declaration for the Obliteration of all Racial Discrimination (1963), the International Convention for the Obliteration of all Racial Discrimination (1965), and the Accord

for the Rights of all people who belong in National, Religious or Language Minorities (1992), and the Accord - Framework for the Protection of Ethnic Minorities (1995) of the Council of Europe, the Final Act of Helsinki (1975), the Copenhagen Resolution on the Human Dimension (1990), the Paris Chart for a New Europe (1990), the Text of Helsinki (1992), the institutional framework of the European Union for the Protection of Minorities (The European Union signed a Connection and Stabilization Accord with Albania on June 12, 2006, as the first step towards the accession of Albania in the E.U.).

Several reports by foreign governments (USA) and international organizations (Amnesty International) refer to the violations of the rights of the Greek minority.

1. The Northern Epirotes. A native ethnic minority in Albania

The Greeks of Northern Epirus had been the focal point of the Greek-Albanian relationships from the establishment of the Albanian state until today. Epirus, also known as Apirus, means “the mainland” in ancient Greek, and that is most probably the name that the residents of the Ionian islands gave to the region¹. According to Stravon, the boundaries of Epirus extend, from the mythological times, from Amvra-kikos Bay in the south all the way to Genousos (Skoubi) River in the north, while Thucydides defines them from the Corinthian colony of Epidamnos² (modern day Dyrachio) in the north, and from the coastline of the Ionian going east all the way to the peaks of the Pindos mountain range.

According to ancient Greek and Byzantine writers, Epirus was considered the birth-place of the Greek nation. In mythology, Epirus was the sister of Pentheas, grand-daughter of Kadmos and Armonia - king Kadmos of Thiva took his last breath on Drinos River³. Aristotle calls it “the Ancient Greece”, while Stravon, the biggest geographer of the ancient times, writes: *“On the sides of that road, which starts from the cities of Epidamnos and Apollonia, on the right side we have the nations of Epirus, which extend from the Sicilian Sea down to Amvrakikos Bay, and on the left side we have the mountains of Illyria,*

¹ Homer’s *Odyssey*, p. 83.

² Nicolaides C, *History of Ancient Epirus*, Ioannina 1995.

³ Demetropoulos C, *The Issue of Epirus*, Thessaloniki, SAE 2003.

which we already went through, and the neighboring nations”⁴. The road that Stravon refers to is Via Egnatia, which follows the direction of the Genousos River valley. Stefanos Vyzantios, in his book “Ethnika” (“About the Nation”) writes that “*Ecateos from Militos calls Orikon (a colony of Evoia in the bay or Avlona) the Port of Epirus towards Europe*” while Claudius Ptolemeus writes “*Greece starts from Orikon, and Epirus is the birthplace of Greece*”⁵. Prokopios mentions “*They are Greeks, and they are called Epirotes, starting from the city of Epidamnos, which is built by the water*”. Furthermore, Prokopios writes “*the first Greeks were the Epirotes*”⁶.

According to Theopompos (4th century), the Epirotic tribes were 14, while Stravon mentions 11, with several subdivisions, all Greek, which all participated at the Trojan War⁷. The Epirotic tribes were the **Molossoi** and the Selloi - Ellopeoi (Dodoni area)⁸, the **Thesprotians** and the Cassopians (from the Kalamas River down to the Amvrakikos Bay), the Chaones and the Kestrinoi (from the area of Avlona down to Kalamas River), the Athamanes, the Dryopes, the Paraveoi (Aos River valley), the Amvracians, the Atintanes, the Tymfeoi, the Paroreoi, the Aithikes, the Talares (Pindos mountain range), the Agreoi, the Apodotoi, the Orestai and the Eordeoi (in the Moschopoli area)⁹.

⁴ Stravon, *Geography* 7.74.

⁵ Claudius Ptolemeos, *Geographical Narration*, Book C, Ch. 13.

⁶ Prokopios, *Book V*, Ch. 15, sec. 24.

⁷ Homer’s *Iliad*, B 747-750, and *Odyssey* p. 417.

⁸ The tribe of Selloi were the residents of Dodoni, where the famous Oracle was located. The tribe of Selloi gave the first Priests to the Oracle. At that location they worshiped the Goddess Earth, and later on they also worshiped God Zeus of Dodoni and Goddess Dioni.

⁹ Evangelidis D, *The ancient residents of Epirus and other studies*, Ioannina 1962, Publication of Society of Epirotes Studies.

The kings of Epirus believed that they traced their roots back to Aiakos and the grand son of the mythological hero Achilles. According to the local tradition, the son of the later, Pyrrhus, fathered Molossos, the patriarch of the tribe that bears his name. During the 5th century b.C., kings Admitos and Tharypas established Molossoi as the dominant tribe, uniting all other tribes under them. It is believed that ever since that time, only the Molossoi had a king, while the other tribes had just a “tribe leader”. Princess Myrtali, which later on adopted the name Olympias, traces her roots from the tribe of Molossoi. She got married to King Phillip B’ of Macedonia, and their son was Alexander the Great.

From the cities in southern Greece, the residents of the region of Elia (Ancient Olympia) were the first ones to establish colonies in Epirus during the 8th century b.C., followed by the Corinthians. They built the cities of Apollonia, Anaktorion, Epidamnos (modern day Dyracchio) and Amvrakia, while also significant cities were Nicopolis, Antigonía, Vouthroto, Antipatria etc. During the Persian Wars, the Amvracians sent 7 ships to the naval battle of Salamina and 500 soldiers to the battle of Platees.

Since the 6th century b.C., the city of Corinth had managed to secure the financial control over the Epirotic tribes. This situation remained unchanged until the beginning of the Peloponnesian War (431-404 b.C.), when the Molossoi, under King Tharypas, became allies of the Athenians. Under the leadership of the Molossoi and King Tharypas, starting towards the end of the 5th century b.C., some radical changes took place: bigger settlements, establishment of a parliament and elected officials, use of a local currency, adoption of the Greek alphabet and dialect used in Attica etc. Another initiative taken by the Molossoi tribe was the establishment of the “Molossoi Commons”, the first ever political federation in the

region. After the violent expulsion of the Aiakides and the broader adoption of Democracy, a new Commons, that of the “Common of Epirotes” was established (232-168), which was a much broader federation, which included all the Epirotic tribes. The most well known personality in Epirus was King Pyrrhus, who became known for his campaign in Southern Italy (3rd century b.C.) in support of the Greek cities of the region. Through King Pyrrhus, Epirus gained for the first time a recognition way beyond its own borders. Pyrrhus united all the Epirotic tribes, took Epirus out of its isolation, expanded its influence all over Greece, turned against the Romans, and built cities, bridges, temples and theatres. However, his campaign in Italy was disastrous, because it thinned out the army, and caused a lot of pain and suffering later on, when the Romans invaded, victorious, after the battle of Pydna¹⁰.

The most significant and flourishing cities in Northern Epirus were Epidamnos, Finiki, Vouthrotos (close to modern day Agioi Saranta), Orikos, Apollonia (Pogiani - Fieri), Amantia (Avlona) and others. According to the mythology, the last four cities had been founded by the Argonauts. The Greeks of Northern Epirus, like all the rest of the Epirotes, had the Oracle of Dodoni as their main religious center. Statues of Dodoneos Zeus have been found all over Northern Epirus. A multitude of archaeological findings and historical documents prove that they participated in the Olympic Games, they believed in the same twelve Gods as all Greeks, their public life was the same as the other Greeks –gymnasiums, stadiums, theaters, marketplaces– and they spoke the Greek language. In 167 b.C. Epirus was occupied by the Romans, with immeasurable

¹⁰ Vakalopoulos C, *History of Northern Greece*, Epirus and Thessaloniki. Kyriakidis Brothers Publications 1992.

damage and destruction to its cities. However, about a century later,

the cities of Epirus flourished once again, until the end of the ancient times, when most of them ceased to exist, as a result of various raids. During the Roman times, Epirus adopted Christianity. Until the end of the 2nd century A.D., the whole region had adopted the new religion, and had added its own martyrs to the list of Christian martyrs. Among them were also several Northern Epirotes, such as St. Asteios, St. Donatos, St. Ermias etc.

Later on, as Epirus becomes part of the Byzantine Empire, religious arts will prosper, and Epirus will show its own influence in church architecture and iconography. It is very important to note that all signs and scriptures were always in Greek language. After Constantinople fell in the hands of the Crusaders, in 1204, the State of Epirus was founded by Michael Angelos Comnenos, which acted as the guardian of the Byzantine traditions and culture, and the starting point for the ousting of the Crusaders. This state included what is nowadays Northern Epirus, all the way to Dyrrachio.

2. Northern Epirus in the days of the Ottoman Empire

Around the middle of the 15th century A.D. Epirus was occupied by the Ottomans. During the same time period, the Ottoman attempt to also conquer Albania. The leader of the people's resistance was Georgios Kastriotis or Skenderbeis, who is a national hero in Albania. His roots, however, are not Albanian with any degree of certainty, as there are plenty of witnesses who say he was Greek. Ahmed Mufit, the biographer of Ali Pasha, wrote that "in 1443 the Greek leader Kastriotis escaped from the ottoman prison camp of Morava". Marini Marleti, who was the first biographer of the hero, calls him "the Prince of Epirus" and the "Leader of the Epirotes". Kastriotis himself had said that "our forefathers were Epirotes, and they gave birth to King Pirrhus, whose strength and bravery the Romans were barely able to resist"¹¹.

During the long centuries of slavery to the Ottomans - Turks, the biggest support of the Greeks were the monasteries, which acted not only as religious centers, but also as schools and cultural centers. The clergy also played a very important role, as they made every possible attempt to resist the mass forced conversions to the Moslem religion, the raids, persecutions, and the mass settlement of the area, in order to alter the demographics of the region. There was a lot of cultural activity in cities in Northern Epirus during the centuries of the Ottoman occupation, with several cities hosting libraries, schools,

¹¹ N. Hammond, *Epirus*, Athens 1985.

academies, and all kinds of cultural and educational establishments. Among those cities, Moschopolis played a prominent role, and developed into a prospering center of Greek culture. In that city, which was widely called “the Athens of the North”, the “Greek Academy” was founded, which was later renamed to “New Academy”. It was in that city, also, where a Greek press was established, the second one in Greek grounds, after the one in Constantinople. The citizens of Moschopolis also participated actively in the revolution of 1770, also known as “Orlofika”, and experienced the wrath and the vulgarity of the Ottoman reprisals.

During the centuries of the Turkish occupation, 30 revolutionary movements took place in Northern Epirus. Northern Epirotes also participated in the naval battle of Nafpaktos (Lepante - 1571), the movement of Dionysios the Philosopher (1611) and the “Orlofika” (1770). Last, but not least, in the days prior to the outbreak of the Greek Independence War, there were 30 members of the “Filiki Etaireia” who traced their roots in Northern Epirus.

With the outbreak of the Greek Independence War in 1821, Northern Epirotes rushed to the support of their Greek brothers, and also to gain their own freedom. The first attempt for a general uprise against the Turkish occupation in Northern Epirus took place in 1821, when the residents of Chimara attempted to join lead the Epirotes in fight against the Turks, just like their brothers in Greece were doing. Equally massive was the uprising of 1854, when the Epirotes tried to take advantage of the Russian - Turkish war and win their independence, with plans to unite with Greece being among their top priorities.

The first Greek government, and later on the first Governor, Ioannis Kapodistrias, did not exclude Northern Epirus from what they dreamt Greece would one day become. Meanwhile, Northern Epirotes, in spite of their limited resources, continue

to revolt for their freedom, each time paying a very heavy toll (1854, 1878). At the same time, wealthy Epirotes benefactors make substantial and continuous donations and contributions to the newly founded state of Greece, and contribute greatly to its foundation (Apostolos Arsakis, the Sinas brothers, the Zappas brothers etc).

3. The establishment of the Albanian State and the Greek minority

The Ottoman Empire, being in a state of collapse and realizing they had no means of maintaining its territories in the Balkans, in a desperate attempt to prevent the distribution of those territories among the Christian orthodox states of the Balkans in accordance to the Treaty of St. Stephanos (March 1878), tried to establish an Albanian state, thus giving a national existence to the Albanians for the first time. In the days prior to the Convention of Berlin, with the support and the encouragement of the Turks and the help of Italy, the “Albanian Union for the Rights of the Albanian Nation” (“Prizren League”) was established in Kosovo, with the Fraseri family¹² taking the lead role, and headquartered in Constantinople. Gradually, it expanded its activities south all the way to Ioannina and Preveza. Consequently, at the Convention of Berlin that followed (July 1878), the delegates of the League appeared for the first time as observers. Within the framework of this policy, the Prizren League requested from the Ottoman Empire the unification of all the “Albanian territories” which were divided until that time between the “Vilaetia” (prefectures, counties) of Skodra, Kosovo, Monastiri and Ioannina in one “autonomous” Vilaeti, under the supervision of the Ottoman Empire.

It was at this point that the “Albanian nationalism” becomes

¹² *History of Labor Party of Albania*, Athens, Publ. by Historic Publishing, 1976, p. 123.

a substantial factor, and the first claims for the establishment of an Albanian state are raised.

The defeat of the Ottoman Empire by the Balkan Allies in 1912 liberated Northern Epirus (December 1912 - March 1913). The memo by the State Dept of Greece dated June 13th, 1912, considers that the whole districts of Preveza, Igoumenitsa, Ioannina, the biggest part of the district of Argyrokastrò and half of the district of Avlona, from Kourvelesi down to Aoos river, belong to Epirus, and –consequently– to Greece. According to the same document, the district of Skodra in whole and the area of Verati belong to Albania.

However, the Greek plans faced strong opposition from Italy and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, two powers with claims on the Adriatic Sea, who didn't want to see the formation of any big and strong countries in the area, who might present obstacles to their plans¹³. Therefore, through the support of Austria and Italy, the “National Parliament” comes to effect in Avlona, in December 1912, under the leadership of the member of the Ottoman Parliament Ismael Kemal¹⁴, and in 1913 (May 17-30) the Albanian State is recognized by the Great Powers. The Great Powers signed a decree in London, establishing an independent Albanian State¹⁵, and placing it

13 Laskaris S., *Diplomatic History of Europe, 1814-1914*, Athens, 1936, p. 335, and Pipinelis P., *History of the Foreign Policy of Greece, 1923-1941*, Athens, 1948, Saliveros Publications, p. 57-74. Also by the same author, his book over Albania, Pipinelis P., *Europe and the Albanian question*, Chicago, Argonautic Inc, 1963.

14 Castellan G., *Historie des Balkans*, Paris, Librairie Artheme Fayard, 1991, p. 425.

15 E., *The land borders of Greece*, Thessaloniki, Foundation of Studies of the Aimos Peninsula, 1991, p. 63. Over the foundation of the Albanian state and the Northern Epirus issue, see also Pitoulis - Kitsos Ch., *The Greek Albanian Relationships during the period 1907-1914*, Athens, Olkos Publications, 1997.

under their protection and close supervision¹⁶. During the preliminary meetings (Ambassadors Conference), the delegates of the temporary Albanian government raised claims that included the whole region of Kosovo, and the areas of Skopje and Monastirion, which belonged to Serbia, and in the south the area northwest of Kastoria, east of Metsovo all the way to Amvrakikos Bay, namely the area that composed the “Vilaeti” of Ioannina. These were the same claims that had been previously raised by the Prizren League in 1878¹⁷.

The borders of the new state were finalized through the Protocol of Florence (December 17, 1913)¹⁸, and Northern Epirus was incorporated into Albania. Ever since that time, the term Northern Epirus includes the area from Genousos River to the Greek Albanian borders, from north to south.

This was an utterly unreasonable decision, in the sense that an area (Northern Epirus) was given to Albania, in total violation of the demographics of the area. When Northern Epirus was given to Albania, the majority of the population was Greek, and actually native Greek, over the millennia.

The numbers are extremely interesting in this case. Having been through half a millennium of Turkish Albanian occupation, Epirus –northern and southern– was still Greek, at the beginning

¹⁶ Korantis A., *Diplomatic History of Europe*, Thessaloniki, 1968, p. 97-206.

¹⁷ Puto A., *L'Independence Albanaise et la diplomatie des grandes puissances*, Tirana 1982, p. 268.

¹⁸ Pollo S., - Puto A., *History of Albania* (transl. A. Aktsoglou), Thessaloniki, “Ekdotiki Omada” Publishers, p. 210, Tountas - Fergadis A., *Issues of Diplomatic History (1912-1934)*, Thessaloniki 1989, p. 53-54, Kontis V., “The Epirus Issue and the Borderline Settlement”, in Minutes of Conference: *The treaty of Bucharest and Greece*, Thessaloniki, Foundation of Studies for the Aimos Peninsula, 1990, p. 64.

of the 20th century. During a census by Turkey in 1908, 380,000 out of 500,000 residents of the area stated they were Greek Christian. Another statistic reveals that in 107 there were 452,000 inhabitants in the whole Epirus region, out of which 297,000 were Christian, and 155,000 were Moslems¹⁹.

A few years later, the International Committee of Ethnological Control also published information that proved the numerical majority –astonishing, actually– of the Greek population in Northern Epirus. We simply list four districts that the Committee checked, and the numbers of registered Greeks and Albanians respectively: Koritsa 12,500 / 3,000, Chimara 1,000 / 0, Delvino 1,700 / 600, Moschopolis 1,500 / 0. Even in the few areas where the Albanian population had the majority (Tepeleni, Achrida, Elvasan), the Greeks represented a good 35% of the total population.

Nonetheless, the Protocol of Florence was implemented. The Greek Army was forced to withdraw from Northern Epirus and make a commitment that it would leave no armaments to the Northern Epirotes, nor would it initiate any revolutionary movements²⁰. Based on that protocol, Greece was forced to withdraw its troops (early 1914) from Northern Epirus within a specific timeframe. The Prime Minister of Greece, Eleftherios Venizelos, had no other choice but to accept the decisions of the Great Powers, since with the peace treaty Greece settled not only the issue of the borderline in Epirus, but also the issue of the Aegean Islands, which were all given to Greece, except Imvros and Tenedos. However, Greece would only take real

¹⁹ *Geografico de Agostini*, Roma 1907.

²⁰ Kontis V., *The Hellenism of Northern Epirus and the Greek Albanian Relations*: Vol. 1 (1897-1918), Vol. 2 (1919-1921), Athens, Estia Publications, 1995.

possession on those islands once the Greek Army withdrew from Northern Epirus. The opposition of the Greeks towards the new Albanian state and its creators started from the fact that the Great Powers included Northern Epirus in it. Having to face that harsh reality, the Greeks made every possible effort to make sure that the new state would include as few Greeks as possible, and also that certain guarantees be given, regarding the status and the privileges of the Greeks in its territories. It must be noted that the two most critical factors in the formation of the borderline were: a) the refusal of Austria to allow Serbia access to the Adriatic Sea, and b) The Russian persistence that in return Kosovo be given to Serbia. Therefore, once Kosovo was given to Serbia, it was impossible for Greece to get Northern Epirus, because the Great Powers believed that without Northern Epirus it was very doubtful if Albania would ever become a viable state.

However, before the Greek Army withdrew from the districts of Akrokeravnia Mountains, Avlona, Argyrokastró and Korítsa (February 13, 1914), the PanEpirotic Conference in Argyrokastró formed a temporary government, with the former Secretary of State of Greece Georgios Ch. Zografos as a Prime Minister, and decided to demand a local autonomy from the Great Powers and the Albanians. As a result, the independent state of Autonomous Epirus was created (February 17, 1914)²¹. This independent state was recognized through the Protocol of Corfu (May 17, 1914), which offered a state of full autonomy

²¹ Papatheodorou A., *The Struggle of Northern Epirus for Autonomy 1914*, Athens, Tinos Publications, 2004, Skenderis K., *The Northern Epirotic Fight (1914)*, Athens 1929, Dellias P., *Northern Epirotic Fight 1914-1915*, Athens 1933, Drinos G., *Chronicles of the Northern Epirotic Fight 1914*, Athens 1966.

to the regions of Argyrokastro and Koritsa (religious, educational, administrative), recognized the Greek character of Northern Epirus, it provided that its residents be called Epirotes, and not Albanians, and was signed by Albania and the six Great Powers (USA, France, England, Austria & Hungary, Germany and Russia)²².

Meanwhile, King Wilhem von Ved, who was selected by the Great Powers for Albania, left the country, and the result was a state of anarchy²³. At that time, upon Eleftherios Venizelos' petition to the Great Powers, the Greek Army occupied Northern Epirus again, in October 1914. In the middle of October 1914 the Greek Army entered Premeti, Argyrokastro and Koritsa. On October 24, 1914, the hand over of Northern Epirus to the Greek Army was completed, and the government of Georgios Zografos resigned.

When the Treaty of London was signed (April 1915), the leaders of Albania expressed their political targets: To secure the independence of Albania, as it was declared in November of 1912, to protect the territorial integrity of the Albanian state, as it had been determined by the Ambassadors' Conference of London, and include within its borderlines all the Albanian regions that had been left out, as a result of the decisions of the Great Powers.

Once Athens restored law and order and secured the

²² Papadakis B., *Historie Diplomatique de la Question Nord-Epirote, 1912-1957*, Thessaloniki 1958, p. 37.

²³ The constitutional and economic organization of the newly founded country was organized by a committee of the Great Powers and one Albanian representative. The army was organized by Dutch officers, and German Prince Wilhem de Wied was appointed as King, but resigned very quickly. Nistazopoulou - Pelekidou M., *The Balkan Countries*, Thessaloniki, Vantias Publications, p. 294.

cooperation of the local population in Northern Epirus, it allowed to the Greeks of Northern Epirus to send their representatives to the Greek Parliament, on January 11, 1916. However, when Greece proclaimed, through a Regal Proclamation of March 1916, the annexation of Northern Epirus into the Kingdom of Greece, Rome reacted very violently, to the extent that it forced the Great Powers to force Greece to suspend the participation of the Northern Epirotes in the Greek Parliament. In the continuous negotiations that followed between the victorious allied powers over the distribution of territories after WWI, Venizelos was able to overcome the Italian objections over the Greek claims on Northern Epirus, and on 7.29.1919 the Venizelos - Titoni agreement was signed, which provided that Koritsa and Argyrokastro were given to Greece²⁴, a development which was also ratified by the U.S. Senate, through a resolution dated 5.17.1920, introduced by Senator Andrew Loge. Unfortunately, though, the contents of that agreement were voided very soon. On 5.28.1920 the Protocol of Kapestica was signed, through which Greece and Albania agreed on an immediate and final settlement on the borderline, while, at the same time, Albania undertook the obligation and responsibility to respect the religious and educational rights of the Greek minority²⁵.

The Convention of Lousna in 1920 declared the final independence of Albania, with Tirana as its capital. In December 1920 Albania joined the League of Nations, and its acceptance was under the condition of its unilateral commitment to protect

²⁴ Roukounas E., *Foreign Policy, 1914-1923*, Athens 1983, p. 303.

²⁵ Kontis V., "The Albanian question at the beginning of the 1920s and the Greek Protocol of Kapestica", *Balkan Studies*, 20, (1979), p. 393-416.

the minorities in its territories, within the framework of the broader protection of minorities that was adopted by the League of Nations. The Albanian delegate Fan Noli (Theofanis Mavromatis) presented the Unilateral Proclamation of 20.2.1921, through which Albania committed to respecting the minorities in its territories, and which was ratified by the Albanian Parliament on February 17, 1922. **This unilateral proclamation of 1921 is the cornerstone of the legal recognition of the Greek minority and its rights**²⁶. Greece, on the other hand, once the borderline dispute was settled, spared no efforts to establish a good cooperation between the two countries²⁷. In 1926 a trade agreement was signed, as well as others regarding citizenship and extradition of fugitives. The Albanian governments formed in the following years were not stable and viable, and, consequently, they avoided any attempts for reforms, until Ahmed Beis Zoggoli (Zogou) appeared on the political stage, and, with the help and support of Serbian and Byelorussian troops, he overthrew the government of Fan Noli, declared himself the President of the Albanian Republic in 1925, and in 1928 declared himself a king, under the name King Zog A' ²⁸. In the years of Ahmed Zogou Albania developed close relationships with the fascist regime of Mussolini in Italy²⁹.

²⁶ Tsitselikis K., Christopoulos D., *The Greek Minority in Albania*, Athens 2003, Kritiki Publications, p. 25.

²⁷ At the Ambassadors Conference in November 1921, when the Greek-Albanian borders were settled, the Albanian delegate declared that his country would respect the rights of the Greek population, as mandated by the Florence Protocol (1913).

²⁸ Fischer B., *King Zog and the Struggle for Stability in Albania*, New York 1984.

²⁹ Mantas E., "Reciprocal Relationship between Politics and Economics: The Renewal of the 1926 Treaty of Tirana", *Balkan Studies*, 37, 1996, p. 309-330. Mantas E., "The Economic Recession in Albania and the

With regards to its relationship with Greece, in spite of its international obligations and commitments, Albania immediately started a systematic program of persecutions and alteration of the Greek identity. As a result of this policy, immigration intensified during the period 1920-1938, with USA as the main destination.

The Albanian government allowed the operation of Greek schools only in the areas where the existence of Greek populations was officially recognized, and prohibited the teaching of the Greek language in all other Albanian speaking regions. Until those days, education was not for granted, and it had received influence from the Greek, Italian and Ottoman educational systems³⁰. The government was clearly trying to put an end to private education, in favor of an absolute government monopoly in education, which would be an obvious violation of its international obligations.

Contrary to the number of Greek schools that were in operation in orthodox communities of nowadays Southern Albania, the first Albanian school in the south was established in Koritsa in 1887. When Albania was declared an independent state in 1913, the Greek orthodox schools remained in operation. However, and in spite of all the efforts by the Greek government, the Albanian government took a series of restrictive measures against the operation of the Greek schools³¹. A letter by the

Italian Infiltration: The Loan of 1931", *Balkan Studies*, 36 (1995), p. 265- 296, Milo P., "The Balkan Entente", *Balkan Studies*, 39, (1998), p. 91-122.

³⁰ It is worth noting that Albania had no alphabet of their own until 1908, and the Albanian language made use of both the Greek and the Latin characters. N. Fraseri, the national poet of Albania, used to write in Greek, and his writings were only translated into Albanian in 1926.

³¹ Lekkas A., *Summary History of Northern Epirus*, 2nd edition, Athens, PASYBA, 1991, and Gizelis G., *The Issue of Northern Epirus. Analysis*

Albanian Secretary of State to the League of Nations (August 22, 1922) stipulates that the obligations of his country include not only the religious minorities but also the Greek speaking orthodox minority. Back in those days, the Albanian state maintained, through the government budget, 36 Greek speaking minority schools, where 2,614 students attended class. However, the majority of the Greek schools were maintained by the Greek communities, which were also supported by the Greek government. In the years to follow, the Albanian government fired all the Greek teachers who didn't speak the Albanian language, and replaced them with Albanian teachers, appointed by the state, and also limited drastically the time allotted to teaching the Greek language. Furthermore, all the buildings housing Greek schools in regions that were not recognized as "minority areas" were requisitioned by the state, and the schools were converted to Albanian public schools. The Constitution of 1928 provided for a mandatory elementary school education, which would be provided by the state schools only, while the various religious communities could only operate a school upon a special permission, issued by the Secretary of Education. As of 1930, the Greek schools start facing serious problems, as the Albanian state prohibits the religious communities from receiving any financial aid from foreign countries³². In 1914 there were 160 schools, in 1927 only 70 were in operation, in 1931 just 40, in 1933 only 10, and eventually in 1934 all of them were outlawed³³.

and Criticism of the Historical Events and the Greek Foreign Policy, Athens, KEBA Publications 1992.

³² Giortzis V., "Greece Ought to Protect the Northern Epirotes from the Albanian Nationalism", *Epirus*, 11/1/1927.

³³ Michalopoulos D., *Tsamides*, Athens, Arsenidis Publications, 1922, p. 125.

In April 1933, the Albanian Department of Education decided to declare grammar school as compulsory education, provided free of charge by the state for all its citizens. At the same time, it decided to close all the private / community schools (Greek Orthodox, Catholic, Sunni and also private Albanian schools; 67 schools in total, of which 10 were Greek), in accordance to some articles of the 1928 Constitution. These measures caused the reaction of Greece, which appealed to the League of Nations. The League of Nations referred this matter to the Permanent Court of International Justice, requesting its expert opinion. The Court examined the contents of “the treatment and the guarantees, legally and realistically” that Albania ought to provide to the members of its minorities, and ruled that any different treatment should only offered as an alternative, and not be enforced on the minorities, which should always have the choice between different options³⁴. During its deliberations, the International Court ruled that Albania violated its obligations that sourced from the Unilateral Proclamation, and ruled that the Greek minority had the right to establish its schools freely, maintain them, and wherever there were no resources, the Albanian state had the obligation to provide for them³⁵. On the other hand, Albania tried to justify the measures it had taken, by presenting several excuses³⁶. The Prime Minister of Albania at the time³⁷ stated to the

³⁴ Permanent Court of International Justice, *Minority Schools in Albania, Advisory Opinion of 6 April 1935*, Series A/B, No. 64, p. 20.

³⁵ In 1939 there were 74 Greek schools in operation, with 5,254 students and 141 teachers.

³⁶ The complete text in Papadopoulos G., *The Ethnic Greek Minority in Albania and the Problem with its Schools*, Ioannina 1981, p. 89-96.

³⁷ Permanent Court of International Justice, *Minority Schools in Albania, Advisory Opinion of 6 April 1935*, Series A/B, No. 64, p. 20.

League of Nations on August 23, 1935 that he accepts the ruling and he accepts the responsibility to comply with it. Since then Greek schools in Northern Epirus opened up again, particularly in the regions of Argyrokastro and Chimara, but at a very limited scale.

At the end of that period, Italy will also get involved militarily in Albania, as on April 1939 Italian armed forces landed in Albania and occupied the country. Ahmed Zogou fled to Greece. A year and a half later the Greek-Italian war (1940-1941) lead the Greek forces once again into Northern Epirus, from which they withdrew in April 1941, after the German attack against Greece³⁸.

³⁸ In 1939 there were 74 Greek schools in operation, with 5,254 students and 141 teachers.

4. The Albanian Policy and the Greek Minority During WWII

With King Zogou out of the picture and the occupation of the country by the Italian and German forces, new dynamics develop in Albania. A good percentage of the Albanian population expects that their dreams for a Great Albania will come true, and they cooperate with the forces of Axis in the occupation of Kosovo, FYROM and Greece, while others try to form resistance groups. The former unite around the National Union (Balli Kombetar), while the later around various teams, mostly of communist orientation³⁹. In that framework, one can also identify the differences between the main two tribes in Albania, with the resistance against the Axis forces taking a tribe character, and not an ideological one. For example, the absolute majority of the membership of the Albanian Communist Party came from the south, and belonged to the Toskides tribe, while the majority of the Gegides tribe, which formed the anti-communist organization Balli Kombetar, supported the Germans and the Italians, and later on tried to break the monopoly of the communists, by organizing their own resistance groups⁴⁰.

³⁹ Vickers M., *The Albanians*, Athens, Odysseas Publications, 1997, p. 45, and Zogou V., *The Albanian Position in the Present War*, Athens 1945, p. 18-25.

⁴⁰ With regards to the Albanian Communist Party, see Lendvai P., *Eagles in Cobwebs, Nationalism and Communism in the Balkans*, London 1969, p. 180-190. Regarding the position of the Gegides, it must be noted that their opposition to the communist party did not have any anti-Marxist

Through the support of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, the communist groups of Albania - the groups of Skodra, under the leadership of Ali Kelmenti and that of Koritsa, under Emver Hoxha⁴¹, unite into one, organization, under the title of Communist Party of Albania (Partia Kommuniste Shqiptare - PKS), which was founded on November 8, 1941, for the purpose of “liberating the Albanian people from the fascism and fighting for an independent Albania and a people’s republic”⁴². Hoxha is elected Secretary of the temporary seven-member committee, and on September 1942 (Peza Conference), PKS organizes the Antifascist National Liberation Front (Fronti Antifascist National Clirimtare - FANC). Until the end of 1944, FANC and Albanian Liberation Army (ALA - Ushtria Nacionalclirimtare Shqiptare)⁴³ have prevailed, and cooperate with other Balkan movements of communist nature⁴⁴. At the Conference of Premeti, FANC selected the anti-fascist Council of National Liberation (Keshilli Antifascist Nacional Clirimtar) to act as the governing body of the country, and Hoxha becomes the President of the Executive Committee of the Council and the Supreme Commander of the National Liberation Army.

roots, but only national differences, and it can be viewed in the framework of the rivalry between North and South. Hasluk M., “The Muslims of Albania”, *Contemporary Review*, cxxvii, (1925), p. 54-65.

⁴¹ Doules E., *Demolishing the Tyranny, A 'B'*, Athens, Euclides Publications, 1994, p. 78.

⁴² *History of the Labor Party of Albania*, as above, p. 72. It must be noted that part of the Albanian population approved of and participated in the occupation of Kosovo, part of FYROM, Montenegro and Greece, as part of materializing the dream of a Great Albania. In Kosovo, actually, the Skenterbeis brigade was formed, which operated in that Yugoslavian province.

⁴³ Hoxha E., *Apanta*, vol. 2, Tirana, 1973, p. 416.

⁴⁴ Hoxha E., *Two friendly Countries*, p. 316.

On October 23, 1944, the Council is renamed to temporary government of Albania, and Hoxha becomes Prime Minister. On November 17, 1944, Tirana are liberated, and eleven days later, in a speech to the population of the capital, Hoxha mentions the necessity for an agricultural reform⁴⁵ and the nationalization of all resources and infrastructure, and notes that “*the democratic government will guarantee the Greek minority all the freedom and the civil and ethnic rights, for which the youth of the minority fought so heroically in the ranks of the liberation brigades*”⁴⁶. Nonetheless, all these commitments never materialized.

⁴⁵ The agricultural reform was based on the Law of August 29, 1945, which allowed former land owners to collect taxes on the loan. After the reform of May 1946 all land came by law in the hands of the government, and each family was given 50 stremmata. It is important to note that the second agricultural cooperative formed in Albania was founded in the Greek village of Zervati in 1946.

⁴⁶ Hoxha E., *Apanta*, vol. 2, Tirana, 1973, p. 612.

5. The Establishment of the Communist Regime, the Cold War, and the Greek Minority

In December 1944 parliamentary elections take place (Kuvendi Popullor), in which, however, only members of the National Liberation Front, now renamed to Democratic Front, could participate. At the same time, the communists act fast in order to consolidate their power. Thousands of their enemies are labeled as enemies of the people and face the execution squad; among them also Hoxha's son in law, Bahri Omari. As a matter of fact, in just the first two weeks of the new government in office, more than 600 people were executed as anti-communists, while until August 1945 1,600 were jailed as enemies of the regime, 115 sentenced to death and another 125 to long terms in jail. Many are sentenced in forced labor camps at the interior of the country, and many members of the Greek minority were among them. All property assets of political opponents and foreign citizens is confiscated. In February 1946 the leadership of the anti-Hoxha organization Bashqimi Shqiptar, which had been established a year earlier and was fighting for the unification of Kosovo with Albania, were sentenced to death. The lead role in those persecutions belongs to the secret police, Sigurimi, and all political parties except the Communist Party are outlawed. The communists monopolize power. In the elections of December 2, 1945, the Democratic Front, which was affiliated with the Communist Party, received 93% of the votes. These results gave Hoxha a feeling of invincibility, according to all Greek estimates. On January 11, 1946 the Monarchy is abolished,

and the People's Republic of Albania is proclaimed (Republika Popullore e Shqiperise), while a new constitution is drafted, which is an exact copy of the Yugoslavian one⁴⁷. All these actions are part of Hoxha's need to consolidate power and fight enemies visible and invisible, and all plans for his expulsion. These measures also include breaking diplomatic relations with USA and Great Britain⁴⁸.

Hoxha take the positions of Prime Minister, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Supreme Commander of the armed forces and First Secretary of the communist party, and states that the establishment of true socialism is the prime objective⁴⁹. Hoxha is worshipped, and his statues are erected throughout the country⁵⁰. Albania turned to Yugoslavia for

⁴⁷ University of Tirana, *Albania, Thirty Years of People's Republic. Social and Economic Development*, Thessaloniki, Erevna Publications, 1977, p. 13.

⁴⁸ Balli Kombetar was been renamed to National Democratic Albanian Committee (Komiteti Nacional Demokratik Shqiptar), for the purpose of overthrowing Hoxha, while the British intelligence had been trying to overthrow Hoxha and reinstate King Zogou. See Gardiner L., *The Eagle Spreads his Claws. A History of the Corfu Channel Dispute and of Albania's Relations with the West, 1945-1965*, London 1966, and Dagios S., *The International Ramifications of the E. Hoxha - J.B. Tito Dispute and the End of the Greek Civil War*, Thessaloniki, Paratiritis Publications, 2003, p. 56. The issue between Albania and Great Britain was the incident at the Corfu Channel at the end of 1945, when two British vessels hit mines and went down. The issue was taken to the U.N., and Albania was condemned by the International Court to pay compensation, while the gold deposits of the country that were stolen by the Axis forces and were retrieved by the Allies were never returned.

⁴⁹ Sherman A., *The Broken Eagle of the Balkans*, Athens, Indiktos Publications, 2000, p. 70.

⁵⁰ The main slogans in the country at that time were Rrofte skuku Enre Hoxha (Long live comrade Enre Hoxha) and Partia mbi te gjitha (The Party is above everybody).

assistance and advise on the reforms, but the situation changed on June 28th, when Yugoslavia was expelled from COM Inform⁵¹.

Albania turns to the Soviet Union, which agrees to help Albania. At the same time, feeling stronger than ever, Hoxha starts weeding out his closest comrades; 14 out of 31 members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and 32 out of the 109 members of the Parliament are executed, having been labeled as supporters of Tito and the pro-Yugoslavian fraction. Another 25% approximately of the members of the communist party is arrested and exiled⁵².

In 1949 the government issued a decree governing “religious communities”, demanding that they comply with the (new) laws of the country. Any religious organizations headquartered out of the country are ordered to cease any and all activities in Albania, religious organizations are prohibited from participating in education, health and social welfare, and religious organizations lose all their property assets. All these in the name of “building a new Albania”⁵³. The Greek minority

51 Cominform was the press office of the international communist movement. Regarding the relationship between Yugoslavia and Cominform, see Stathis S., *Yugoslavia and Tito 1919-1953*, Athens, Estia Publications, 1983. Over the disputed between Albania and Yugoslavia, see Hoxha E., *Marxism and Leninism, Theory and Applications*, Athens, Serve The People Publications, 1975, p. 6, *Titoism*, Athens, Poreia Publications, 1983, and *Imperialism and Revolution*, Athens, Poreia Publications, 1979, p. 40-50.

52 At that time several very close partners of Hoxha are executed, such as the Organizational Secretary of the Central Committee of the party, Koci Tzoxhe, who was of Serbian descent, and was his representative in the talks with the communist parties of Greece and Yugoslavia. Tzoxhe was accused for working with Tito and being an “agent of imperialism”, and was executed in 1948.

53 Hoxha E., *When the Foundations of the New Albania Were Set*, Athens, Planet Publications, 1984, p. 23-24. According to the National Committee

and the Orthodox church are the recipients of the harshest attacks.

In September of 1952 a law is passed, which calls for the death penalty for anybody found guilty of conspiracy against the state, destruction of public property or sabotage.

In May 1955 Albania becomes one of the founding members of the Warsaw Pact. However, Stalin's death in 1954 and Nikita Khrushchev's revelations at the 20th conference of the Soviet Union Communist Party, form new relations for the Soviet - Albanian relations. The persecution mania that had taken control over Hoxha intensifies, and so do his suspicions that the Soviets and the Yugoslavs are conspiring to overthrow him. Therefore, it came as no surprise to anybody that the economic relationships between Albania and the Soviet Union ceased in 1959, when Khrushchev visited Albania and advised the government to normalize their relationship with Yugoslavia, and when the same year Soviet consultants advised Albania to give emphasis to the agricultural over the industrial sector of the economy; advises which were rejected by the Albanian government⁵⁴. Hoxha stated that *"the Albanian people and the Labor Party will survive eating vegetables only, if need be, but will never betray their soul for 30 rubles, because they would rather die with their face clean, than live in shame, on their knees"*⁵⁵.

for a Free Albania, out of the 93 catholic priests in the country in 1993, only 10 were still free; 24 were murdered, 35 imprisoned, 10 died or were missing, 11 were expelled from their positions and 3 fled overseas. See also Skendi S., *Albania*, New York, Praeger, 1958, p. 299.

⁵⁴ Halliday J., *The Artful Albanian, The Memoirs of Emver Hoxha*, London 1986, p. 219.

⁵⁵ Hoxha E., Address of Nov 7th, 1961, *Apanta*, vol. 22, Tirana 1978, p. 127. Nonetheless, as Mury G. states, Hoxha continued calling upon the

Out of necessity, therefore, Albania turned completely towards China for financial and political support. At the same time that Mao Zedong started his big “proletarian cultural revolution” among the Chinese population, Hoxha initiated his own “cultural and ideological revolution”, to form the “new man”⁵⁶. Worship of the leader intensifies at schools, collective cultivations expand, traveling outside the country is prohibited, and an extensive program of over 400,000 defense bunkers along the borders starts, in order to protect the country from the invaders⁵⁷. In 1967, as part of his cultural and ideological revolution, Hoxha calls his citizens to join forces against the “religious superstition”⁵⁸. He declares that “the religion in Albania is Albanism”, and by May of that year over two thousand churches, mosques, monasteries and other religious institutions have been closed, or the buildings have been converted for other uses. The clergy is imprisoned or forced to work as industry workers, the Museum of Atheism is founded in Skodra, and Albania becomes the first atheist state, according to the 1967 Constitution.

Furthermore, Hoxha promoted the development of a common Albanian national identity, the merging of the Toskides

Soviets to comply by the bilateral agreements between the two countries, as the difficulties for Albania were mounting, after they broke ties with the USSR.

⁵⁶ Svolopoulos K., *The Greek Foreign Policy, 1945-1981*, vol. A, Athens, Estia Publications, 2003, p. 74. Also see Mury G., p. 135.

⁵⁷ Hoxha at that time frequently spoke about “*claims by the Greek monarchists and fascists over Northern Epirus, which they will only take away from Albania when no Albanian stands alive*”. Hoxha E., *When the...*, p. 178.

⁵⁸ Veremis Th., Kouloumbis Th., Nicolakopoulos E., *The Hellenism of Albania*, Athens, University of Athens, Greek Foundation for European and Foreign Policy, 1995, p. 23.

and Gegides tribes, and the protection of his model of political, economical and social structure. Moreover, he started, once again, persecutions against the Greek minority.

In 1976, Mao Zedong dies, and Hoxha becomes increasingly critical of the new regime in China, over their developing approach to the West⁵⁹. The Chinese respond by getting closer to Yugoslavia and inviting Tito to China for a state visit, and in July 1978 they suspend the financial aid to Albania, as well as any economical or military relationships between the two countries. Since that moment, Albania continues solely on their own limited resources, and keeps struggling. Hoxha notes the need for the country to become more self sufficient⁶⁰. In December 1976 the country becomes a socialist republic, and Hoxha names Marxism - Leninism as the official ideology of the country⁶¹.

In 1981 Prime Minister Mehmet Shehu dies. According to the official version, Shehu, who had been the Prime Minister for over three decades, committed suicide⁶²; nonetheless, he was murdered by the regime. His death is followed by a clean up in the army and the secret services. However, Hoxha had

⁵⁹ Hoxha E., *Notes About China, 1962-1972. Political Diary*. Athens, Poreia Publications, 1979, and Biberaj E., *Albania and China, A Study of Unequal Alliance*, Boulder / San Francisco / Oxford, 1986.

⁶⁰ The economical developments of the period 1951-1980 can be summarized as follows: Albania became industrialized relatively fast, the added value increased from 19% in 1951 to 40% in 1980. The agricultural production roughly doubled in volume during that period; however, it's contribution to the G.N.P. dropped from 80% to 36%, while the construction, transportation and telecommunications sectors remained at approximately 10% of the G.N.P.

⁶¹ Hoxha E., *When the...*, p. 378-379.

⁶² Shehu served as Interior Minister from 1948 to 1953, and then as Prime Minister from 1953 to 1981.

started facing health problems as of 1973, which intensify in 1983, and eventually he dies in 1985. He was replaced as a leader of the party and the country by Ramiz Alia⁶³, who tries desperately to make sure the regime survives, and he opens some windows to the West⁶⁴, but at an extremely slow pace. Nonetheless, facing the mounting needs of the Albanian economy, he started relations with (then) West Germany, France and Italy, which played the lead role in the reforms that took place in the country at that time. In 1990, after massive strikes and the exodus of a wave of thousands of refugees to Greece and Italy, Alia introduces democratic reforms, including a multi party political system, and in March of 1991 the first multi party elections since the decade of 1920 take place in Albania. The Communist Party wins, but in just one, short year, it will collapse, under the weight of the problems, and hand over power to the Democratic Party.

⁶³ Biberaj E., *Albania. A Socialist Maverick*. Boulder / San Francisco / Oxford, 1990, p. 36.

⁶⁴ Alia was born in Skodra in 1921. He joined the Youth Organization of the communist party in 1941, and he became a party member in 1943. In 1948 he became a member of the Central Committee, and in 1949 President of the Youth Organization. He studied in the USSR, and in 1956 he was elected a substitute member of the Politburo, and in 1961 a full fledged member. His ascend at the party was due to his good relations with Hoxha and his wife Nezmiye. Pano N., "The Process of democratization in Albania", Dawisha K., - Parrot B., *Politics, Power and the Struggle for Democracy in South East Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 285-352.

6. The Greek Albanian Relations During the Period 1944-1974 and the Greek Minority

At the time Italy declared war on Greece, Albania was part of the Kingdom of Italy.

Greece found itself in a state of war against Albania⁶⁵, as it named as enemy states Italy along with all its colonies and possessions, including Albania, where the Italian invasion into Greece started from⁶⁶. That legal term of “state of war” was destined to play a crucial role in the development of the Greek - Albanian relations. More specifically, until 1971, when finally the two countries re-established diplomatic relations and exchanged ambassadors⁶⁷, the state of war from the Greek side was still typically in effect, and it was not until much later on, in 1987, when Greece finally decided to lift the state of war. The post-war Greece, having concentrated all its efforts towards satisfying its goals in Northern Epirus⁶⁸ and guaranteeing the rights of the Greek minority in Albania, did not sign a

⁶⁵ Valden S., Greece - Yugoslavia. *The birth and development of a crisis, and the reshuffling of cards in the Balkans, 1961-1962*, Athens, Themelio Publications, 1994.

⁶⁶ Law 2636/10/10.11.1940 “*With regards to rights of enemies and guarantees on enemy properties*”. Based on that law, a decree was issued “*With regards to declaring Italy and Albania as enemy states, and applying the provisions of Law 2636/1940 to the above states*”.

⁶⁷ Valinakis I., *Introduction into Greek Foreign Policy, 1949-1988*, Thessaloniki, Paratiritis Publications, 1989, p. 116-117.

⁶⁸ Kyrou A., *Our Balkan Neighbors*, Athens 1962.

peace treaty with Albania after WWII, which would formally end the war between the two countries.

In both the internal as well as the international arenas, Greece tried through continuous memoranda and papers, to satisfy its goals for the Greek minority. In October 18, 1944, at the address to the nation by the Prime Minister of the Ecumenical Government in Greece, it was stated that “Northern Epirus composes an inseparable part of Greece, which has very recently been sanctified again by the grave sites of our heroes”; a statement that caused the reaction of the Albanian side⁶⁹. After the end of WWII, the Greek side paid particular attention to the issue of Northern Epirus, where the Greek minority was facing extinction. In August 1945, the Deputy Secretary of State F. Dragoumis repeated that Greece claimed Northern Epirus⁷⁰, while in November 1945 the Greek government sent a letter to the U.S. State Dept, reminding that the Greek rights in Northern Epirus remain non-negotiable⁷¹. The Greek Secretary of State K. Rentis, addressing the U.N. Security Council, labeled Albania as an enemy country, rejecting Albania’s application for admission in the U.N., which had been submitted on Feb 12⁷², while the Greek Prime Minister repeated that Greece has claims over Northern Epirus⁷³.

At the Peace Conference in Paris, which convened in 1946, the Greek government, through the Secretary of State K. Rentis, through a memo dated Feb 15, 1946, had requested

⁶⁹ Dagios, as above, p. 84.

⁷⁰ Xydis, as above, p. 123-125.

⁷¹ Archives of the State Dept of Greece, Embassy of Greece in Washington, D.C., Memo of 11.1.1945

⁷² Dagios, as above, p. 129, and Hoxha, *Two friendly countries*, p. 20-12.

⁷³ Xydis, p. 196-197.

that a peace plan with Albania be drafted and submitted during the conference. Rentis pointed out that Albania had declared war against Greece, and had no right to participate at the conference, as it “*had committed acts of aggression against Greece, and had become a willful partner and ally of Hitler and Mussolini*”.

At the end of that paper, it was noted that the Greek claims on Northern Epirus “*were founded on historical, demographic and legal reasons*”. On March 25th, a new memo was submitted to the Council of Secretaries of State, which requested that a peace treaty plan with Albania be drafted⁷⁴. The following day, the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, with a unanimous resolution # 82 / 3.26.1946, stated the following: “*Therefore, the Senate determines that Northern Epirus, including Koritsa, the Twelve Islands in the Aegean Sea known as the Dodecanese, where the predominant population is Greek, should be given through the Peace Treaty to Greece, and become parts of the Greek sovereignty*”. On April 11, 1946, the Greek government filed a new petition, asking that the Council examine the claim over Northern Epirus “*separately and in its entirety*” without, however, mentioning anything about a peace treaty with Albania this time⁷⁵. At the meeting

⁷⁴ Xydis S., *Greece and the Great Powers, 1944-1947*, Thessaloniki, 1963.

⁷⁵ Kondis B., Manda E., *The Greek Minority in Albania*, Thessaloniki, Institute of Balkan Studies, 1994. A few days later (April 17th), a memo by the Greek Embassy in Washington was submitted to the U.S. State Dept, where, along with the national claims, the issue of the continuous border violations was mentioned, along the Greek - Albanian and the Greek - Bulgarian borderline, due to the Greek civil war, and the necessity to put an end to those violations was brought up. Kondis B., “The Greek Minority in Albania”, *Balkan Studies*, 36, 1995, 85 - 102 and Kondis B., “*The Angloamerican Policy and the Greek Problem*”, 1945-1949, Thessaloniki, p. 157-199.

of the Council of the Secretaries of State of May 15, 1946, the Secretary of State of Great Britain Ernest Bevin mentioned that the Greek government had submitted their claims over Northern Epirus, and that the Council should examine them⁷⁶.

The Peace Conference, consisting of 21 states, the winners of WWII, accepts on June 29th 1946 the Greek petition that the Northern Epirus issue be placed on the agenda.

On August 30th, upon the request of F. Dragoumis, the Greek petition over Northern Epirus is entered on the agenda, and it passes with a 12 - 7 vote, with 2 countries abstaining (Belgium and Norway), but the discussion is postponed for the next session. The Greek plans will face a very strong opposition from the Albanian, Yugoslavian and Soviet delegations, which all suggested that it should be referred to the Council of the Secretaries of State of the four Great Powers (USA, USSR, Great Britain, France).

In November 1946, Greece submitted once again its petition to the Council of the Secretaries of State, with no decisions made, as the “*issue of the settlement of the Greek - Albanian borders*” was referred to the Council of the four Guarantor Powers, to be discussed and resolved whenever the peace treaty with Austria is signed. The peace treaty with Austria was signed on May 15, 1955; however, the issue of the Greek - Albanian borders is still pending!

While ratifying the Peace Treaty of Paris of Feb 10, 1947, Greece expressed the following reservations, which, however, were not included on the final ratifying document⁷⁷:

1. Based on the discussions and votes during the peace

⁷⁶ Kontis B., *Delicate Balances. Greece and Albania in the 20th Century*, Thessaloniki 1994.

⁷⁷ Papadakis B., as above, p. 176.

conference, article 27 does not preclude the settlement of the Albanian borders that was set forth by the Greek delegation.

2. The Greek delegation accepted the referral of this issue to the council of the four powers for the sole purpose of not delaying the progress of the conference.

3. Greece is looking forward with confidence to the issue of Northern Epirus being resolved by the council of the four powers; an issue that had remained open when the peace treaty with Italy was signed.

4. Article 88 does not contradict at all with that fair resolution.

The Greek politicians always made sure they kept the Northern Epirus issue and the Northern Epirotes on the forefront. To that effect, there is a multitude of actions and statements. For example, the Vice President of the Greek government and head of the Greek delegation to the U.N. at the General Assembly of 1948, mentioned to the Assembly that *“in order to avoid any possibility of confusion or misunderstanding, the Greek delegation declares that the Greek government, while signing for the independence and sovereignty of Albania, will not give up, under any circumstances, its undisputable rights over a Greek territory, rights that trace their roots to the very early days of history, on territories that have been united with the mother land through the blood of its soldiers, and maintains its claims to the fullest, until such time that the Northern Epirus issue is settled permanently and fairly”*⁷⁸.

During the period 1950-1961, when the Soviet Union still played the lead role in Albanian politics, an intense climate

⁷⁸ Antonopoulos N., *“The State of War between Greece and Albania”*, Minutes of Meeting of the A’ Scientific Conference on Northern Epirus - Saint Kosmas the Aetolian, p. 706-738, and Hoxha E., *Report to the First Conference of the C.P.A.*, Tirana 1948, p. 35.

of suspicion prevailed over the Greek - Albanian relations⁷⁹. Even though some minor issues were settled, such as the return of Greek hostages in 1953, and small children that were left there during the years of the Greek civil war, and the opening of the Corfu channel to free navigation in 1958, the bilateral relations remained very intense. There was an Albanian initiative in the UN in 1955, aiming at establishing diplomatic relations, which was repeated in 1956⁸⁰ and again in 1957⁸¹ - while the Greek governments kept raising the Northern Epirus issue⁸². In 1960, S. Venizelos brought up the Northern Epirus issue to the Soviet leader N. Khrushchev, and he mentioned that only once this issue is dealt with, discussed and resolved through an autonomy status for the Greek minority, will the problems with Albania be resolved. More specifically, he said: *“I mentioned the conditions under which the Greek minority in Northern Epirus lives under, and, without raising under any circumstances an issue of borderline settlement, I brought up the need that an Autonomy be given by the Albanian government to the Greek minority within the sovereignty of the Albanian state, in the form of an autonomous region, until such time that the*

⁷⁹ Kondis B., “The Greek Minority in Albania”, *Balkan Studies*, 36, 1995, 85-102. For the Albanian point of view over the relations with the US and Great Britain, see Hoxha E., *The Angloamerican Danger for Albania*, Athens, Allagi Publications, 1982.

⁸⁰ Hoxha E., *Report to the Third Conference of the C.P.A.*, p. 25.

⁸¹ Hoxha’s interview to M. Glezos, newspaper *Avgi*, 11/22/1957. The Albanian leader gave more emphasis to the development of trade between the two countries, and he believed that this would lead, if the “artificial and non-existent obstacles” were also removed, to smoother relations between the two countries.

⁸² In 1953 one more attempt to establish border “pyramids” failed; an attempt that Hoxha presented as a failure to re-establish diplomatic relations. Kyrou A., *Greek Foreign Policy*, Athens 1955, p. 200.

issue be permanently resolved by the Council of the Secretaries of State of the four Great Powers, before which the issue is still pending, as we all know"⁸³. Khrushchev responded that in Koritsa he saw Greeks and Albanians working side by side like brothers, and issues like this should be resolved peacefully, and he promised to relay the message to the Albanians⁸⁴. At any rate, the relations between the Soviet Union and Albania will be terminated a short time later, and there will be no resolution to this issue. Continuing with statements and declarations by Greek politicians on Northern Epirus, the Greek Albanian relations and the minority issue, Georgios Papandreou, while addressing the Greek Parliament on May 31st, 1960, stated that: "What every Greek government should always keep in mind, is that the issue of Northern Epirus is still very much alive. And what is prohibited into the ages of ages is giving up our rights to this sanctified land. What should never be repeated with Northern Epirus, is what happened with Cyprus, where, unfortunately, we gave up the right to incorporate the island in Greece. As far as Northern Epirus is concerned, the issue is there, undeniably. How to manage the issue, the time, manner and circumstances, is in the hands of every government. Its also a matter of international

⁸³ Newspaper *To Vima*, 6/28/1960.

⁸⁴ Antonopoulos E., *Albania and the Greek - Albanian Relations, 1912-1994*, Athens, Oceanida Publications 1999. Khrushchev mentioned to Sophocles Venizelos that "he understood the Greek claims in Northern Epirus, because he had personally seen Greeks in Koritsa". However, there had been a prior statement by the Soviet ambassador in Athens, S. Ivanov, who encouraged Albania to take up the issue of the state of war and the Greek claims over Albanian territories to the UN and to the International Court of Hague, in order to normalize its relations with the neighboring country, a statement that caused an angry reaction by the Albanian side.

circumstances. It's a matter of history. I believe the international circumstances are now ripe, as last year the issue of the two Germanies was finally settled, which allows us to bring up our issue again, and demand that Northern Epirus be incorporated into Greece, as the Great Powers had determined back in 1946⁸⁵". In 1961, in a conference over "Balkan Approach" that took place in Athens, with the participation of Greece, Bulgaria, Rumania and Yugoslavia, Albania did not participate, under the convenient excuse that the host country refused to issue visas to its delegates.

In 1962, even though the attempts to establish diplomatic relationships that had started under Secretary of State E. Averof failed⁸⁶, it was allowed to some Greeks that wished to repatriate to do so –123 in total– in return for a statement of "*good will and good neighbor ship by the Greek government*", the Corfu channel was cleared of mines, and there were some attempts and proposals to settle border disputes and start trade⁸⁷. It must be noted that in May 1962, the member of

⁸⁵ Minutes of meeting. *Hellenism in Northern Epirus. Ethnological, Historical, Legal and Diplomatic Approach of the Northern Epirus issue*. Athens, SFEVA - PASYVA Publications, 2002, p. 100-106.

⁸⁶ Evangelos Averof stated that "*I won't hide the fact that during my seven years in office there were several indirect approaches towards normalizing our relations with Albania, which always hit the unsurpassable obstacle that Albania starts with the pre-condition that once relations are established, the issue will still be where it has always been*". *Apogevmatini* newspaper, 11/4/1964. Hoxha also mentions that in 1962, with the opportunity of the repatriation of those Greeks who wanted to go home, the Greek delegation requested that the issue of establishing diplomatic relations be discussed. Hoxha E., *Two friendly nations*, p. 69.

⁸⁷ These were deserters of the Greek army that fled to Albania during the Greek civil war (over 400 persons). Since Albania considered them as foreign agents, they were placed under guard in the village of Valias, near Tirana. See Hoxha, *Two friendly nations...*, p. 112, and same author, *Report*

Parliament (EDA) St. Merkouris visited Tirana, as president of the Greek Movement for the Balkan Approach and Reconciliation⁸⁸. Merkouris inquired with the Albanian government as to their intentions on re-establishing diplomatic relations with Greece, and when he returned to Athens, he claimed that Albania was positive towards that development. However, these efforts did not come to fruition, as Greece did not intend to give up the Northern Epirus issue. On Sep 11, 1963, the Prime Minister and Secretary of State P. Pipinelis, stated that “the current improvements of the international climate through the gradual handling and resolution of long standing disputes, inevitably will bring on the table also the issue of Northern Epirus... An issue like that cannot be forgotten over time... This issue has diplomatic, military, national, historical and financial aspects, and the proper resolution is anticipated⁸⁹”.

On Dec 7, 1963, Sophocles Venizelos, as Vice President and Secretary of State, stated that Greece “is deeply worried over the status of the Northern Epirotes”, and that “on our side, it would be very easy to reconcile with Albania, once this country agreed to offer autonomy to the Greek minority”⁹⁰. In spite of the various attempts in the UN (1961-1966) by the

to the 4th Conference of the C.P.A., Tirana 1961, p. 23. S. Agapitidis mentions that after WWII 6,500 Albanian citizens crossed over to Greece. Agapitidis S., “Deplacements recents de population en Grece”, *Balkan Studies*, vol. 18, 2, 1977, p. 273-283.

⁸⁸ Christidis G., *The Communist Balkans*, Vanias Publications, 2003, p. 55.

⁸⁹ Lambrinidis M., *Albania Today*, Athens 1987, p. 36.

⁹⁰ Zanga L., “Albanian Foreign Policy in the Wake of 7th Party Congress,” R. King / J. Braun, “Eastern Europe’s Uncertain Future”, New York 1977, p. 88-89. The claims of the Greek side were filed at the UN on Mar 27, while previously there had been a motion on Mar 25th through the Greek ambassador in Rumania.

delegates of the two sides, the relations between Greece and Albania remained intense, as the Greek proposal that relations be re-established and then the various pending issues be resolved was not received favorably by the Albanian side⁹¹. As a result of the above, the first successful attempts towards improving the climate were undertaken by the military dictatorship of 1967, which established diplomatic relations. In October 1969, the Greek ambassador at the UN suggested to his Albanian counterpart Halim Bunto that trading start, and he received the answer that before diplomatic relations be established, the state of war must be lifted. In January 1970 trade delegations of the two countries met in Paris, while on Feb 10 the trade agreement was signed⁹².

On Dec 14, 1970, the Greek delegate at the UN Dimitrios Bitsios, while talking to his Albanian counterpart Sami Baholli, stated that the Greek government will take further steps to improve the relations, up to the point of establishing diplomatic relations⁹³.

On March 1971 the proposal of the Greek government for

⁹¹ Newspaper *To Vima*, 12/17/1963.

⁹² The newspaper *Eleftheros Cosmos*, which was completely controlled by the military dictatorship, wrote on 2/11/1970 that “*There is a necessity that Albania should be viewed as it is. Albania is not under the influence of any Balkan or other European country, that may be used against us. Greece does not raise now the issue of territorial claims; however, it has not neglected it, and reserves the right to request from Tirana that effective measures be taken for the Greeks who live there*”. This article reflects the policy of the dictatorship at that time for friendly articles towards Albania, as Hoxha also mentions. The response to that friendly article came from Zeri I Populit, the newspaper of the CPA, which insinuated that the initiative for further developments lays in the hands of the Greek side.

⁹³ Hoxha E., *Two Friendly Nations*, p. 115.

establishing diplomatic relations with Albania was submitted, and the Albanian side responded on April 28⁹⁴.

The Greek government at that time, on their response, noted the following: “The Albanian government was correct in noting the persistence of the Greek government in getting guarantees, with regards to the Greek minority in Albania. It shares the opinion of the Albanian government that this persistence cannot pre-determine the outcome of that issue. The Greek government pays a lot of attention to the position of the Albanian government towards the Greek minority”. It also notes with satisfaction the statement by the Albanian government, that “the Labor Party of Albania and the government of the People’s Republic of Albania never allowed the rights of the minority to be ignored. The same will also apply in the future”⁹⁵.

Following those initiatives, which took place mainly in the UN, between the ambassadors of the two countries –as already mentioned, there had been a trade agreement signed, on a non government level, between the Chambers of Commerce of Greece and Albania– on May 6, 1971, a press release was issued in Athens and Tirana, according to which the governments of the two countries had agreed to re-establish diplomatic relations and exchange ambassadors, without having resolved any of the pending issues, on which both countries maintain their positions⁹⁶.

⁹⁴ Greek Foreign Ministry, 1112/c.57.4.26.1984, p. 4, and the accompanying report of 4.26.1984, p. 2.

⁹⁵ Greek Foreign Ministry, 1112/c.57.4.26.1984, p. 4-5.

⁹⁶ Greek Foreign Ministry, report of 4.26.1984, Law 947 / 7.26.1971 “Opening an Embassy in Tirana, and Drafting its Organization Chart”. The first Greek ambassador (after 1939) presented his credentials in Tirana on Oct 25, 1971, and the Albanian ambassador in Athens on Nov 16, 1971.

Following these developments, the first trade agreement was signed, and visits by the Greek ambassador to the recognized minority areas took place. In October 1972⁹⁷ a joint border committee was established, which could not reach any results, because, as it was proven very early in the process, the Albanian side was looking at resolving political issues, while the Greek side strictly border disputes. Therefore, until the collapse of the dictatorship in Athens, on July 24, 1974, the trade agreements were the only area of progress in the relations between the two countries.

⁹⁷ Unfortunately, there was no progress on border disputes. The Greek side suggested a settlement along the lines of the Greek - Yugoslavian method, which recognized the existing border line, and avoided mentioning prior agreements. The Albanian side counter suggested that the Florence Protocol be taken as a guideline, thus insinuating that they wanted a new border line to be established. Thus, no agreement was reached between the two sides.

7. The Greek Albanian Relations After Democracy was Restored in Greece

After the restoration of democracy in Greece, the relations with Albania remained stable, and were developed based on the policy of the Greek government (ND, New Democracy), of “equal distances in the Balkans”⁹⁸, in spite of the fact that the Albanian government, on Sep 23, 1975, forced all members of the Greek minority to change their Greek and Christian names into Albanian ones, and do the same with the names of their towns or villages. In May 1976 a second, five-year trade agreement will be signed, while on July 16, 1977, the two countries agree on an airline connection between Tirana and Athens. In 1978, Hoxha attempted an opening towards Greece, by visiting the minority villages, where he spoke with warm words regarding the relations between the Greek and the Albanian people, and the importance of minority languages,

⁹⁸ The Prime Minister at the time, Constantinos Karamanlis, described the basic parameters of his policy in the area as follows: “The policy of my country is based on equal distances with all countries, and particularly with our neighbors. On a Balkan level, this policy aims at a multidimensional development of our relations, both on a bilateral and also on multilateral level. We are convinced that the idea of a Balkan cooperation has to be developed, so that this area, that used to be called the ‘ammunition depot’ of Europe, can be transformed into an example of peaceful cooperation between countries with different social and political systems”. Albania, however, turned down the invitation by the Greek government for the Balkan Cooperation conference (1975-1976), while it did not participate at the Conference for Safety and Cooperation in Europe, either (Helsinki 1975). Svolopoulos K., as above, vol B’, p. 227.

which have to be preserved through education. Nonetheless, all these good words were not followed by any acts of good will.

The government that was elected in Athens in 1981, initially was looking sympathetically towards the Albanian regime; however, the refusal of Albania to participate at the convention of Athens for nuclear free zone in the Balkans in 1983, infuriated the Greek Prime Minister, who, during a public speech in Ioannina in February of 1984, made references to the deplorable conditions that the Greek minority in Albania lived in⁹⁹. At the same time period, several reports by the Human Rights Committee of the UN fell very hard on Albania over the violation of the human rights of the Greek minority, and placed Albania unanimously on the “black list” of the UN members¹⁰⁰. Among others, the report mentions that *“the Committee, having been overly alarmed by the constitutional and other legal measures that have been adopted by the government of People’s Socialist Republic of Albania, which prohibit the right to exercise religion and education freely, believing that the above measures constitute a threat against human dignity, and a blatant and systematic violation of human rights, and an insult to the principles of the Chart of the UN and an obstacle towards the friendly and peaceful relations between Nations... requests that the Committee urge the government of the People’s Socialist Republic of Albania to adopt sufficient constitutional and legal measures, compatible with the provisions of the International Proclamation of Human Rights and the Proclamation Against All Non Tolerance or Religious*

⁹⁹ Newspaper *Kathimerini*, 2/22/1984.

¹⁰⁰ Mylonas Th., *The Issue of Northern Epirus at the Brinks of a National Treason*, Athens, Sideris Publications, 1987, p. 132.

Discrimination, for the purpose of ensuring the freedom of religion and making sure that any such discrimination would be considered illegal...". First such step was Resolution 1503 of 1983 of the Economic & Social Council of Europe, which was, incidentally, also voted by the delegations of the USSR, China and Bulgaria. Very similar in spirit were the reports of the U.S. State Dept, the European Parliament (resolutions of 4/9/1983 and 10/9/1985), and of Amnesty International (report of 12/12/1984)¹⁰¹.

¹⁰¹ The report made references to the secrecy surrounding the political prisoners in Albania, the restrictions in the freedom of speech, religion and travel, the horrendous conditions for the prisoners and the systematic use of tortures, and the conditions in three concentration camps (those of Spac, Ballsh and Burrel), and ended with testimonies by fugitives from the Greek minority. Mylonas Th., p. 190-206.

8. The lifting of the State of War

The lifting of the State of War by the Cabinet on Aug 28, 1987, was mentioned as the cornerstone of the Greek policy towards Albania; however, it brought on results for the Greek minority. The lifting was essentially limited to only the political aspect of the situation, while the issue of the properties of the minority, which were in a state of sequestration remains unresolved until today, and so remains the issue of the continental shelf between Greece and Albania.

9. The Greek Ethnic Minority and the Greek Albanian Relations from the Foundation of the Albanian State until the End of WWII

The Greek minority constitutes the biggest ethnic minority in Albania. They are a native minority¹⁰², and it is connected to a series of attempts to either unify with Greece, or obtain autonomy within the Albanian state –very important period was that of WWII– but is primarily connected to the struggle for defending their human, social and minority rights from the early days of the 20th century, when the Albanian state came to existence.

The unilateral declaration of 1921 constitutes the cornerstone

¹⁰² *Epirus, 4000 Years of Greek Presence and Civilization*, Ekdotiki Athinon Publications, 1977, p. 212.

of the legal recognition of the Greek minority and the rights it is entitled to, and mentions the commitments Albania has made towards all its citizens that belong to various ethnic, religious or language minorities. The protection framework refers to the freedom of religion, language and education, and it guarantees non discrimination and equality against the law. The Declaration was accepted by the League of Nations the same day it was submitted, and it was placed under the guarantee of the respective governing bodies of the organization. During Hoxha's days in office, the rights of the Greek minority were only formally respected, as the 1946 constitution mentioned that the ethnic minorities enjoy all the rights with regards to the protection of their cultural development and the free use of their language (article 39), while the constitution of 1977 gave guarantees to ethnic minorities over the protection and development of their civilization and their traditions, the use of their mother tongue and the right to teach it at school, and the equality in all aspects of social life (art. 42). However, even though the two constitutions referred to the equality of all citizens regardless of nationality, race or religion and to the rights of minorities, they did not name specific minorities¹⁰³, while the Constitution of 1946 transferred the management of all schools to the state, taking away a right that before WWII was in the hands of the Greek communities. It is common place that the Hoxha's regime gave a blow to the education of the Greek minority, to the extend that it degraded the

¹⁰³ In the school book by N. Salakos, *Geography of Albania for 4th graders*, School Books Publications, Tirana 1980, p. 62, it was mentioned that "in Albania, in addition to the Albanians, lives a very small minority of Greek and Macedonian identity. In the People's Republic of Albania, ethnic minorities have the same rights with the Albanian people".

standards of living of the Greek minority and it restricted each and every one of their rights. The members of the Greek minority faced additional problems. On paper, the minority education was maintained; in essence, though, it literally went down the drain, as it went to the hands of the central government, and it lost all its resources, human and financial. In the region of Chimara, the government closed down the Greek school, as reprisals for the negative stand the minority displayed at the 1946 elections. The Hoxha administration created the so-called “minority zones”, which included 99 villages and townships where Greek was the native language, which, however, excluded the Greek speaking villages of Chimara –and in 1959 they also revoked the Greek nationality from their residents– Arta of Avlona, and some areas with solid Greek populations (Argyrokastro, Premeti etc).

Two issues are of predominant importance for the Greek minority at that time. The first issue relates to its numbers. The 1930 census shows 37,000 Greeks in Albania, and the Albanian population between 1930 and 1980 quadruples. This would have brought the Greek speaking population up to approximately 150,000. On the contrary, the 1961 census indicated 40,000 Greeks, and that of 1989 58,758 individuals¹⁰⁴, excluding those of the Chimara region. Obviously, these must have been the ones registered under “nationality: Greek”. The Albanian census showed 56,500 Greeks for the regions of Agioi Saranta, Delvino and Argyrokastro, and 59,700 in 1992. The sum of the residents of the rural settlements, along with the Greeks of the three cities in the area, exceeded 60,000 - 61,000

¹⁰⁴ Zanga L., “Albania. Minorities; An Overview”, *Report on Eastern Europe*, vol. 2, Bo. 50, 1991, p. 3.

Greeks in the area of the “minority zone”¹⁰⁵. The variation from the Albanian census of 1989 pertains to approximately 4,000 to 5,000 Greeks within the so-called “minority zones”¹⁰⁶. Outside the limits of the “minority zones”, the calculations for the Greek minority are considerably more challenging. In addition to the deprivation of their minority rights and forced relocation, there are other objective difficulties, pertaining to the determination of the real identity of those people, as well as their language¹⁰⁷. The problem can be focused in the big

¹⁰⁵ The Greek ethnic minority at the various census takings between 1945 and 1989, shows the following numbers:

Date	Total Population	Greek Minority
9.30.1945	1,122,044	26,535 (2,4%)
9.3.1950	1,128,943	28,993 (2,4%)
10.2.1955	1,391,499	35,345 (2,5%)
10.2.1960	1,626,318	40,000 (2,4%)
4.15.1969	2,068,155	Data N/A
1.16.1979	2,590,600	49,307 (1,9%)
4.8.1989	3,182,417	48,758 (2,4%)

Source: Schmidt-Neke M., Sjoeborg O., “*Bevoelkerungsstruktur*”, K-D. Grothusen, Albanien, Gottingen 1993, p. 465 (Schukalla K.J., “*Nationale Minderheiten in Albanien und Albaner im Ausland*”, Grothusen K.D., as above, p. 506.

¹⁰⁶ If we started with 26,500 Greeks, based on the 1945 census, and we followed the average population growth of 16,05 per thousand people for the post-WWII period, the number should be over 74,000 in 1989. Berholli A., “The Greek minority in the Albanian Republic. A demographic Study”. *Albanian Catholic Bulletin*, vol. XV, San Francisco, 1994, p. 87-93, and also Kallivretakis L., “The Greek community in Albania from the perspective of historical geography and demographics”, in Veremis Th., *The Hellenism in Albania*, as above, p. 25-58.

¹⁰⁷ In certain isolated and inhospitable areas of the Albanian north, such as Kouxi and Hashi, inhospitable for Greeks as well as Albanians from the south, the number of Greeks that the 1989 census gives should not consider unrealistic, while the same census gives a number of 442 Greeks for Premeti.

cities of Tirana, as well as in Avlona and Dyrrachio, and the number of Greeks is many times higher than the Albanian census claims, as a result of forced relocation and the exodus of the Greek population from the agricultural areas of the south to the big cities.

The gradual assimilation of the Greeks living outside the minority zones and the escape of several members of the minority to Greece during WWII, are important factors that point to an important reduction of the initial estimates of 150,000, and certainly reduce the number of Greeks below 100,000. On the other hand, the Greek policy always maintained that the Greek minority numbered 400,000, while a research by the U.S. State Dept referred to 266,800 Greeks¹⁰⁸.

The second issue is to determine who classifies as a “Greek” in Albania. The difficult task of identifying the Greek minority outside the minority areas¹⁰⁹ becomes even more challenging because of their high degree of assimilation in the Albanian society, while the Greek Vlachs were considered right away as Albanians.

In the early 1960s, the Hoxha administration forcefully moved some 5,000 Greek Vlachs to the area along the coastline from Examilia to Vryna. This population used to be nomads, roaming on the coastline around Agioi Saranta. When the borders were closed, they were trapped inside Albania. They

¹⁰⁸ Sherman A., as above, p. 120.

¹⁰⁹ Winnifrith T., *Vlachs of Albania*, London 1995, p. 58-59. See also Kahl Th., *Ethnizität und räumliche Verteilung der Aromunen in Südosteuropa*; Muenster 1999. Schwandner-Sievers St, *The Albanian Aromanians, Awakening: Identity Politics and Conflicts in Post - Communist Albania*. For more about the Vlachs in Albania on the 19th and 20th centuries, see Kakoudis A., *The Metropolis and the Diaspora of the Vlachs*, Thessaloniki, Institute of Defense Studies, Zitros 2000.

were never registered in any city registries, and they spoke no Albanian at all. At one census for the area of Colonia in 1945, their mother language was noted as “Vlachian”, Greek as a second language, and there was no mention at all of the Albanian language¹¹⁰.

The displaced Greek Vlachs were placed in the villages of Liountzeria, Zagoria and Pogoni, areas where a significant amount of Greek population had been forcefully evacuated from, as mentioned above, including the whole leadership of the Greek minority in the area. Actually, the Vlachs also founded some villages of their own, such as Anton Potsi. However, they were enrolled in Albanian schools, and their nationality was arbitrarily changed to Albanian. The administration opened up Albanian schools for them, and prohibited them from attending the existing Greek schools.

Later on, some massive persecutions of the Vlachs followed. Vlachs were arrested in huge numbers, with the charge of being “accomplices of the Greek monarcho-fascists”. Of them, 65 were executed, and several more were sentenced to a total of 1,850 years in prison. After a few decades, the Greek language faded away, and remained only the language of the elderly, which gradually passed away. Indeed, in most villages even the dialect of the Vlachs disappeared, as the villages had a mixed population, with the Albanian ever increasing, and the Vlachs constantly decreasing in numbers, thus allowing the Albanian language to become the predominant one in those areas.

In our days, the Vlachs are concentrated in two main geographical areas. The first one is in the areas of Pogradec, Koritsa and Erseka, Premeti, and to a lesser extend in Argyrokastro

¹¹⁰ Potsis S., *Scientific Studies 5*, University of Argyrokastro 2001, p. 139.

and Agioi Saranta. The second significant concentration is located north of the Avlona - Verati line, up to Kavagia. After 1991, the Party of the Union for Human Rights estimated a total of 150,000 Vlachs with Greek roots and culture.

The gradual social incorporation and climb of the Greeks in Albania was welcome by the Hoxha administration, as long as it was accompanied by the denial of their Greek heritage and culture¹¹¹ and their support to the C.P.A., a practice that was common place in the Leninist approach of the minorities¹¹², and it was a prerequisite for their incorporation in the Albanian national and social structure. The Hoxha regime followed a systematic and continuous forceful relocation of the Greek Diaspora in other areas of the country, while, at the same time, prominent members of the Greek minority took high positions in the administration. High standing officials¹¹³, members of the Greek minority, were placed in areas way outside of the minority regions¹¹⁴, Greeks that were deemed as opposing the regime were exiled and imprisoned¹¹⁵, and an ever increasing

¹¹¹ Potsis S., *Scientific Studies 5*, University of Argyrokastro 2001, p. 139-140.

¹¹² It is worth noting that the Encyclopedia of the Albanian Academy of Science did not recognize that the Greek minority had been living in the area from the early days of history, and mentioned that “*the residents of Dropoli arrived there in the 18th century, working as farm hands for the albanian land owners*” Chimara was referred to as a city of the ancient Illyria, and the areas of Agioi Saranta and Delvino were not even mentioned as areas with any Greek populations at all. See Akademia e Shkencave e Republik Popullare Socialist te Shqiperise, Fjalor eicicopedik, Tirane 1985, p. 270, 345-346.

¹¹³ Kofos E., *Balkan Minorities in the Communist Regimes*, Thessaloniki 1960, p. 27.

¹¹⁴ Petifer T., Vickers M., p. 331.

¹¹⁵ During the 1980s alone, over 300 government employees from the Greek minority were placed in the Albanian North.

number of Albanian settlers were moved into the Greek minority regions¹¹⁶, for the purpose of altering the demographics of the area, and isolating the remaining Greeks from their heritage, culture and traditions¹¹⁷.

The exile usually meant exile for the whole family, while often the family was “marginalized” at their place of residence. The exile for the Greeks usually started with imprisonment at the castle of Argyrokastro, and then continued at the concentration camps of Spac, Bourell or Vlostic, as well as several small, isolated villages, where the prisoners were systematically tortured and received no medical attention at all. According to some very conservative estimates, at least a 10-12% of all greeks in the minority zones was exiled or imprisoned.

Direct result of these oppressive methods against the Greek minority was a significant increase in the number of mixed weddings¹¹⁸. The children that were born to those marriages

¹¹⁶ Tsakas A., “The Chronicle of the Long Standing Tragedy of the Tragedy of Northern Epirus. Martyrs List of Northern Epirotes”. Ioannina, Foundation for Northern Epirotic Studies, 1999.

¹¹⁷ Union of Retired Teachers of the Greek Minority in Northern Epirus, Idioms of the Greek Minority, Argyrokastro 2004. Katsalidas G., “The Identity of the Northern Epirotic Hellenism”, Ioannina, Foundation for Northern Epirotic Studies, 2004.

¹¹⁸ By offering the members of the Greek minority humiliatingly low wages, the regime forced them into mixed marriages, mostly in the big cities. At this point, it should be mentioned that there was a big confusion among the leading class of educated greeks; some tried to be friendly with the regime, and some had isolated themselves from the harsh reality and had no contact with the economic and social conditions in the minority zones. In the cities of Argyrokastro, Agioi Saranta and Delvino, 50% of the minority members were forced into mixed marriages. In 1990, the population of Chimara numbered 8.5 thousand. The number of political prisoners during the days of communism was at least 2,700 people with prison terms varying between

lived in big cities, attended Albanian schools, had very little or no knowledge of the Greek language, and were, in general, fully assimilated into the Albanian national identity.

Another commonly used method that caused significant erosion to the Greek minority was that the regime forced greeks to adopt names that were either Albanian, or Illyrian or artificially made names –ie Marenglen, composed from the first syllables of the names Marx, Engels and Lenin– and name changes of Greek villages and towns (ie Theologos Agion Saranta to Partizani, Agios Nikolaos to Drita, Mavropoulon

12-25 years, 5 were executed, 3 received sentences of 101 years, and 100 families were displaced. At the same time, based on the records by the Association of Chimarians in Tirana, the number of Chimarians in Tirana, Dyracchio, Avlona, Fieri and Liousnia is estimated at 10,000. On the other hand, the number of Chimarians graduating college was limited to 380 only.

In Droviani, during the days of Hoxha in office, 29 persons were imprisoned and 8 were executed. From the 18 teachers that were educated in Greece, 7 were imprisoned and 9 fled to Greece, in order to save their lives. Another good example: 122 residents of Droviani graduated college. Of those, only 14 were placed in the area, and the rest were scattered all over Albania. As a result of the persecutions and the extremely difficult conditions, the Greek population of the town shrank from 1,630 residents in 1913 to just 780 in 1990.

In 1913 Politsiani numbered 1,650 residents. In 1985 there were only 585 people living in the village; 136 Greek families, and 23 families of Albanian officials. The village had 19 prisoners for a total term of 680 years, and 95 persecuted families. 250 Greek families were forcefully relocated away from the village, and in Avlona alone there are 156 families from Politsiani. In Divri, the population in 1899 was 1,100 people. In 1990 it was only 700 people. Until 1967 35 Greek minority members from Divri were sent to jail, for a total term of 268 years, including 5 women. Four were sentenced to death and executed, and two more died in jail. During that same period, 25 people fled to Greece. As reprisals for those escapes, 17 other families were exiled.

to Bouronia)¹¹⁹. This was also combined with the creation of new settlements with exclusively Albanian, moslem population, within the Greek minority zones. For example, starting in the 1950s, several new villages, the so called “socialist villages” were built in the Greek zones of Argyrokastro (Valere, Vrisera, Asim Zeneli, Anton Potsi, Boulio etc) and of Agioi Saranta (Fitoria, Davera, Giasta etc)¹²⁰. Further more, the minority zones were declared “zones under observation”, traffic was prohibited, and several brutal police measures were adopted, such as the installation of an electric fence along the border with Greece, in spite of the declared position of Greece that the Greek minority be used as a factor of friendship, and as a bridge between the two nations¹²¹.

After 1991, however, and the change of the regime in Albania, the number of the members of the Greek minority went down even further, as a large number of greeks crossed the border and migrated into Greece¹²². Furthermore, the census of 2001 did not even include “Greek” as an option for nationality, and as a result of that, the members of the Greek minority abstained. It is estimated that the Greek minority today consists of 400,000 members¹²³. Today the minority is considered as “forever recognized as an ethnic

¹¹⁹ Resolution 225/23.9.1975 by the Presidency of the Parliament of Albania.

¹²⁰ Papadopoulos G.Ch., as above, p. 190.

¹²¹ Greek Foreign Minister K. Papoulias, after his visit in Albania, November 1987. Antonopoulos E., p. 42.

¹²² Fekrat B., *Ethnic Greeks in Albania*, Update Jonathan Fox (1995), Lyubov Mincheva (1999), p. 8.

¹²³ At an interview to the German magazine *Der Spiegel* on Mar 30, 1992, the leader of the Democratic Party Sali Berisha stated that the Greek minority in Albania does not exceed 45,000 people.

minority”¹²⁴, a recognition that proves the significant gravity of the existence of a Greek minority in the relations between Greece and Albania, while also recognized are the “Macedonian”¹²⁵, “Montenegrin”, “Vlachian”, “Roma”, “Egyptian” and other minorities.

¹²⁴ It is very indicative that the *First Report on the Implementation of the Framework Agreement for the Protection of Ethnic Minorities in Albania* places the Greek minority on top of the list, as the most significant ethnic minority in the country.

¹²⁵ During Hoxha’s days in office, a “Macedonian” minority had been recognized with 4,697 members, according to the 1989 census. Poulton H., *The Balkans. Minorities and States in Conflict*, London 1993, p. 195, p. 201-202.

10. The issue of Education of the Greek Minority

During the years of the Cold War, the education of the Greek minority always was at the top of the list of problems for the Greek Albanian relations. Once Hoxha solidified his position in office, education in Albania geared towards building up a socialist society.

More specifically, Hoxha's administration since 1946 referred to 79 Greek elementary and one high school¹²⁶, and is characterized by an arbitrary determination of the "minority zones" and the right of the villages in those zones to have Greek schools, excluding the region of Chimara. In the existing elementary schools, Greek language is taught up to the fourth grade¹²⁷. In the main villages and towns of the South, where the biggest number of Greeks lived, such as Argyrokastrò, Agioi Saranta, Premeti, Koritsa, Avlona, Chimara, as well as Fieri and Tirana, where the number of Greeks was also significant, Greek schools were not allowed, as they were not included in the minority zones¹²⁸.

The "targets" were set by the party in its various Congresses¹²⁹,

¹²⁶ Hoxha E., *Two friendly nations*, p. 39.

¹²⁷ Waehling S., "Die Griechen in Albanien", *Das Parlament*, 8.11.1991.

¹²⁸ Minutes of 2nd Pan-Hellenic Scientific Conference, *The Northern Epirus Issue (Past, Present, Future)*, Athens, Metropolis of Driinoupolis, Pogoniani and Konitsa Publications, PASYVA, 1991.

¹²⁹ Siechou M., *Report on the 5-year Plan, 1976-1980*, Tirana 1976.

as well as by the Constitutions of 1946 and 1976¹³⁰ and their amendments (1955, 1967), and the law governing the educational system¹³¹. At the introductory report for Law 4263, the law - framework on the educational system, it was mentioned that: *“The educational system is based on democratic, socialistic principles, and it is inspired entirely by the ideological Marxist - Leninist theories... The elementary, eight year education has as its main target to prepare the students, according to their age, to participate in social life and socialist production... The middle school must give its students a healthy Marxist, Leninist, scientific and applied education... The higher education gives an outlet to those duties by strengthening the Marxist - Leninist principles and the teachings of specific classes, connected with the production, along with physical and military education”*¹³².

The purpose of the educational system was to form a new type of citizen, along the Marxist - Leninist lines, faithful to Hoxha and the Albanian state, without any affiliations to any religious dogma or ethnic minorities¹³³.

¹³⁰ *Constitution of the People’s Republic of Albania*, Athens, Poreia Publications, 1977.

¹³¹ Newspaper *Laiko Vima*, Argyrokastro 10/28/1969.

¹³² Papadopoulos, p. 108.

¹³³ Newspaper *“I Foni tis Omonoias”*, 9.24.1993, Papadopoulos G., *The Ethnic Greek Minority in Albania, and its educational Problems*, Ioannina 1981, p. 127-170.

11. The Religious Freedom of the Greek Minority And the Greek Albanian Relations

The religious freedom of the Greek minority was always a major chapter of the Greek Albanian relations during the Cold War, while the Orthodox Church of Albania was always a very significant factor in the development of the Greek Albanian relations¹³⁴. The whole history of the Orthodox Church of Albania is irrevocably linked to the degree of influence from Greece, and its efforts to gain independence from the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople. From the very first day the Albanian state was established, the Albanian cultivated the idea of creating an autocephalous church, as the most effective way of distancing the influence of Greece and the Ecumenical Patriarchate on the church and on the Greek orthodox minority in Northern Epirus. The main force behind this idea was Van Noli. On September 10, 1922, a clergy-laity conference was held in Berat (ancient Antipatria), which declared the Orthodox Church of Albania autocephalous, and appointed an eight-member Supreme Church Council¹³⁵. Since, however, the

¹³⁴ Glavinias A., *The Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania*, Thessaloniki 1989, Angelopoulos A., *The World of Orthodoxy in the Balkans Today*, Thessaloniki 1992, p. 19-114, and Glavinias A., *The Autocephalous Orthodox Church in Albania based on unpublished documents*, Ioannina, Society of Epirotic Studies - Foundation for Studies of the Ionian and Adriatic Seas Area, 1978.

¹³⁵ Metallinos G., "The ecclesiastical situation in Northern Epirus and

Ecumenical Patriarchate refused to recognize this act, the Albanian government, in early 1929, decided to put an end to this problem, even without the consent of the Patriarchate. Consequently, on February 11, 1929, King Zogou once again declared the Orthodox Church of Albania as autocephalous, and appointed a Holy Synod. This led to a tremendous opposition and upheaval among all the orthodox population, and this forced King Zogou to request from the Ecumenical Patriarchate to recognize the autocephalous church (Kisha Orthodokse Autoqefale te Shqiperise), something that finally the Ecumenical Patriarchate consented to on April 12, 1937, after several years of disputes and negotiations.

Once Hoxha came in office, an extremely negative atmosphere¹³⁶ was created right away for the Orthodox Church (as well as all other churches¹³⁷), which included persecutions, deportations of religious leaders, confiscation of church properties, closing down churches and monasteries, which were converted to residences, warehouses or cultural centers etc. The last Archbishop was Christopher (Kissis) who passed away in 1958,

Albania before the church was declared autocephalous". Minutes of the 2nd Pan-Hellenic Scientific Conference, Konitsa 1990, p. 305-339. It is worth noting that Van Noli, who served as prime minister in 1924 and was the main representative of the Albanian nationalism, after he left the country he moved to the U.S. where he founded the "Vatra" organization, and he also worked on establishing the Albanian Orthodox Church of America, which remains in existence until today. He also appointed himself "Bishop of Boston", and later on "Archbishop".

¹³⁶ In 1945 out of a total population of 1,180,500 people, it was estimated that 860,000 were Moslems –600,000 Sunnis and the rest of them Bektasides– as well as 212,500 Christian orthodox and 142,000 Catholics. Sherman A., as above, p. 94.

¹³⁷ Akrokeravnios, "The Twilight of Gods in Albania", Chicago, PanEpirotan Struggle Publications, 1976.

thus creating unsurpassable obstacles to its course and its development, as well as its contact with the Albanian society.

In 1949, with the framework law 743/26.11.1949 on “religious communities”, the property of the church –real estate or in any other form– was confiscated, and the control of the state over the church intensified. The consequences of that law were detrimental for the Greek minority, because during the four centuries of the Ottoman rule, the Greeks used to donate property to the church, which was an entity that was recognized by the state, in order to avoid taxation and confiscation of their property by other civil authorities. As a result, the church had accumulated enormous property, particularly real estate. Once the church became autocephalous, and even worse later on, with the law of 1949, all this enormous property passed, first indirectly and then directly, in the hands of the Albanian state, and was lost forever by the Greek minority.

Following the implementation of the law about “religious communities”, a new charter was passed by the 3rd Clergy - Laity Congress of Tirana (1950), which provided, on art. 4, that “*the orthodox autocephalous church of Albania has the duty and obligation to cultivate to its faithful a feeling of faith towards the power of the people and the People’s republic of Albania, as well as supporting and promoting the faith to the mother country and to national unity*”¹³⁸. Following those measures, the war against the orthodox church intensified. In 1963, Hoxha stated that “*the fight against religious anachronisms is a long term, complicated and difficult fight*”¹³⁹, and added that “*the main danger, which we have to avoid and fight at all cost, is the continuation of the operation of the Christian*

¹³⁸ Tzortzatos V., *The autocephalous orthodox church of Albania and its main principles of administration*, Athens 1975, p. 45.

¹³⁹ Hoxha E., *Reports & Speeches 1967-1968*, Tirana 1969, p. 207.

*orthodox church. We must never stop trying to make people sick and tired of it, so they wouldn't go to it at all, when the church bell tolls. Whenever the chance arises, churches must be demolished; not as a war campaign, of course, but taking advantage of situations. Furthermore, it is right and necessary, from an administrative point of view, not to offer any financial or other support, of any kind, whatsoever, to the orthodox church, to further expand its ideology. Using every means possible, to prohibit the church bells from tolling, to prohibit church schools entirely etc. This way, a day will come that the church will become completely extinct. We have to always keep in mind that people attending church are the people's enemies. This way it becomes clear to us who the enemies are, how strong they are, and how we can face them"*¹⁴⁰. Furthermore, he claimed that the fulfillment of the fight against religions "would free the people from the binds of a repressive, negative culture, from the binds of the patriarchic types, the religious believes and anachronisms, and all the rotten culture of the past"¹⁴¹.

In 1967, based on Law 4337 / 13.11.1967, which was later incorporated also in the 1977 Constitution, atheism was adopted in Albania, which becomes the first atheist country on the planet, and this signifies the countdown for the complete extinction of the orthodox church (and all other dogmas and religions). In 1967 the head of the Orthodox Church, Damianos Kokonessis, is sent to prison, where he will die in 1973¹⁴², and some 630 churches will be closed down.

¹⁴⁰ Hoxha E., *Apanta*, vol. 26, Tirana 1964, p. 88-89.

¹⁴¹ Hoxha E., *Symbol of Fight for Freedom and Socialism*, Tirana 1985, p. 107.

¹⁴² Metropolitan Sevastianos of Driinoupolis, *The Crucifixion of Northern Epirus*, Konitsa 1984, p. 44.

It is an undeniable fact that religion is closely connected to the culture and the traditions of the ethnic Greek minority. (Birth, baptism, wedding, and even more so death, the everyday work, Christmas, Easter, the Dormition of Virgin Mary). Actually, under the conditions of isolation from the mother country, this institution became even more decisive in maintaining the national identity. Hoxha was not satisfied with all the restrictions, but he even invented the substitution of those holidays with ideological, politically motivated celebrations, which were invented for the Greek minority only. For example, in Vrysera, Pano Dropolis, along with the holiday of Aug 15th (the Dormition of Virgin Mary), Hoxha invented the celebration for a partisan, communist team, and allowed thousands of Greeks to move freely for that celebration, in an area where everyday traffic was prohibited, due to its proximity with the Greek border. Thus, he attempted to promote this celebration, and make it equally important with the religious celebration of Aug 15th. The same happened with the other major religious holiday in that same area, that of the Holy Spirit, which was celebrated at the monastery of Pepeli. This was a monastery with a prominent position in the area, very well known and respected in Albania and Greece, not only by Christians, but by Moslems as well. In 1959, on the day of the celebration for the Holy Spirit, Hoxha visited a village neighboring Pepeli, and since that time, his visit to that village became a “new socialist holiday”, not only for that village, but for the whole area.

Along those lines, one should not forget that the Hoxha administration converted 22 monasteries or churches in the major Argyrokastro area into army barracks, while the rest were demolished, converted to civil centers for the entertainment and the indoctrination of the youth, warehouses or even stables! Only very few, about 10 out of over 400 places of worship in

the metropolis of Argyrokastro were preserved as museums, so that Hoxha could present them to the westerners, as remnants of the Christian roots of his country. (Hoxha had never presented to the West any propaganda materials with Moslem mosques).

Among several measures against the orthodox church, which were in essence taken against the Greek minority, were the prohibition of religious celebrations, which were substituted by labor and industry celebrations, such as the Day of the Construction Workers, the Day of the Coal Miners, the Day of the Printshop Workers etc¹⁴³, the prohibition of religious symbols, religious ceremonies, and all those prohibitions under severe penalties, including imprisonment and exile, while Law 5339/23.9.1975 imposed the change of all Greek and Christian names with other ones, from a list approved by the C.P.A., in compliance with the political, ideological and moral guidelines of the state. The Greeks received the strictest orders to change their names and surnames immediately, and at the same time, as already mentioned, more than 90 villages and town with Greek minority population were also forced to change their names. However, the name change was not enforced on the whole population, as the ones with Moslem names, such as Hoxha himself, were excluded¹⁴⁴. The 1976 Constitution codified the measures against religion, as each act that was labeled as fascist, religious, warlike or antisocialist was considered illegal, and possession or distribution or reproduction of religious literature was punishable with prison terms varying from three to ten years. Unfortunately, it must be noted that in the war against the Orthodox Church, some Greeks also

¹⁴³ Prifti P., *Socialist Albania since 1944. Domestic and foreign developments*, Massachusetts, The MIT Press, 1978, p. 162.

¹⁴⁴ Poulton H., as above, p. 199.

participated, members of the Communist Party or not, and some of them displayed an extremely active attitude against the church and the members of the minority in the campaign for atheism. As of 1967, every religious activity was prohibited, and this was a tremendous blow on the Orthodox Church, as it diminished the religious distinctions as a connective link between the orthodox Albanians, Greeks and Vlachs.

The restoration of the Orthodox Church started gradually in 1991, when the Ecumenical Patriarchate appointed, upon request by the Albanian government, Bishop Anastasios Giannoulatos of Androusa as the Metropolitan of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania. Nonetheless, the Albanian government continues presenting obstacles to the Orthodox Church all the time.

12. The Greek Minority after the Change of the Regime in Albania

The Albanian regime, even though it was among the cruelest in the socialist world, and its people had no communication and received no news from the outside world, with the exception of a few people in the north, who received signal from Italian TV stations, and some in the south, who could view Greek stations, showed clear signs that it would not be able to resist the changes that were taking place in the countries of Eastern Europe. Hoxha's death in 1985 shook up the regime, but it was actually the fall of the Berlin Wall that sparked massive developments in certain areas, mainly among the students and people in the cultural circles, with the democratization of the country as the common denominator. At that time, the well known writer Ismail Kadare chose to leave the country and seek political asylum in France, criticizing the regime very harshly. In March 1990 political prisoners are freed, as a first sign by the leadership of the communist party towards democratization, and in the fall of the same year we have the first discussions for the organization of the Greek minority "OMONOIA", in spite of the strong blow it had suffered with the imprisonment of prominent members of the minority, who had attempted to send a letter to the Prime Minister of Greece, over the violation of their rights (S. & F. Kyriazatis, V. Krommydas, Th. Gerontatis, V. Karathanos, G. Kirousis and Ch. Zotos).

Albania goes through some very difficult times, and the threat of a total economic collapse is imminent. The majority of the Albanian people face real hunger, as the shelves in the

stores are empty. Once the regime opened the borders and allowed travels overseas, it became very obvious that not even the law enforcement agencies could function any more, and this image of total collapse became even worse in the areas bordering Greece, where both Albanians and Greeks gathered by the thousands¹⁴⁵. Convoys of desperate Albanians crossed the borders and fled into Greece seeking help; the situation was so dramatic, that children mortality rate climbed up to 8%¹⁴⁶. The migration of such a big number of refugees from Albania in 1991 signified a new start for them, both in Greece and for those who stayed back. However, with the migration of all the young people and children, a big gap was created in the minority areas in Albania, a gap that grew even bigger after the second big migration wave of 1997.

After the collapse of the C.P.A., the Democratic Union of the Greek Ethnic Minority in Albania, “OMONOIA”, though a memo submitted to the Conference for the Security and Cooperation in Europe (Moscow 1991), claimed that the Greek minority numbers almost 300,000 people, and condemned the “*arbitrary geographical separation of the minority and the statistical genocide*”. An official from the International Society for Human Rights, during a research he did in Albania in 1991, concluded that the real number of Greeks is approximately 300,000, scattered through out the country, and he stated that in Tirana alone there are 15,000 Greeks¹⁴⁷. From 1991 forward,

¹⁴⁵ Dodos D., *Geography of the minorities. Minority parties in the South Balkans, Greece, Bulgaria, Albania*. Athens, Exantas Publications, 1944, p. 126.

¹⁴⁶ National Foundation for the Receipt and Incorporation of Returning Greeks from Overseas. *Report on Years 1991-1995*. Athens, 1996, p. 23.

¹⁴⁷ Sylvia Weahling, Newspaper *The Voice of Omonoia*, 12/3/1991.

“OMONOIA” steadily reports on every memo to every international organization (UN, EU etc) the arbitrary geographical restrictions on the minority, the statistical genocide, the violent alteration of the Greek character of the minority villages, the forceful removal of the Greek population from the so-called “minority areas”, the cultural violence, the persecutions, the prohibition of Greek names in baptisms, the restrictions on religious ceremonies, and in general, all the negative aspects that are so significant for the existence and the survival of the Greek minority in the future decades¹⁴⁸.

On the other hand, in July 1991, the Albanian Parliament passed a law which prohibited the formation of parties that were based on “ethnic, religious or local” basis; an act that was clearly directed against the Greeks in Albania. Finally, in February 1992, when the law regulating the elections of March 22, 1992 was passed, an article was included, which prohibited “Omonoia” from taking part in the elections, and this resulted in the five members of parliament of the “Omonoia” party walking out of the Parliament in protest.

As an alternative, which would allow the participation of the Greeks in the elections, the nationwide party of the “Union for the Human Rights” was established (KEAD), which included mainly the Greeks, but also some other minorities (Serbs and Montenegrins), through which it became possible for “Omonoia” to have some form of political participation, even in an indirect way. In the 1992, KEAD elected two representatives.

On July 27, 1992, elections took place for local archons, namely mayors and prefecture managers (county managers). Before the elections, the prefecture of Agioi Saranta was split in two, and the prefecture of Delvino was created. This was

¹⁴⁸ Kontis B., Manda E., 1994, as above.

yet another attempt from the Albanian side to split the Greek minority and minimize its representation; however, it brought exactly the opposite results, as several Greeks were elected as Mayors and Prefecture Managers.

In May 1993, "Omonoia" presents its manifest, through its "Declaration for the Rights of the Ethnic Greek Community in Albania", which was sent to President Sali Berisha, the Speaker of the Parliament Pietr Arbnori and the Prime Minister Alexander Mexi. The declaration included the fundamental rights which the organization demanded, on behalf of the whole Greek minority. More specifically, "Omonoia" mentioned the following points:

A. The right of education in the Greek language in all levels of schooling, in all areas where the members of the Greek minority are the majority or a good percentage of the total population.

B. The right to learn the mother language, to preserve the cultural heritage and to exercise their religious rights.

C. The freedom to establish and participate in any kind of political organization, the right of the Greek minority to take part in all levels of public life, the right to emigrate, and the right of free return. Finally,

D. The national identity of each citizen must be determined based on each citizens free declaration, at the time of the census¹⁴⁹.

The years 1993 and 1994 were a critical period in the Greek - Albanian relationships. Archimandrite Chrysostomos Meidonis of Argyrokastro was deported, charged with anti-Albanian acts, and this sparked violent incidents between the members of the Greek minority and the Albanian authorities.

¹⁴⁹ Declaration for the Rights of the Ethnic Greek Community in Albania, Agioi Saranta, May 1993.

In June 1994 several members of Omonoia's leadership are imprisoned: Theodoros Vezianis, Vangelis Papachristou, Iraklis Sirmos, Constantinos Kyriakou and Panagiotis Martos. They are held in isolation, without access to an attorney of their choice. The Attorney General of Albania will charge them with spying and treason, and, as the Greek Prime Minister pointed out in a letter to his counterparts and other foreign leaders, "*the charges constitute a vague political manifest... the position and attitude of the Albanian authorities has already forced a huge number of Greeks from Albania to seek refuge in Greece, as their political rights, educational and religious freedom are constantly and systematically violated. The authorities continuously cultivate a climate of persecutions against the Greek minority, which aims at discouraging the minority from staying, and encouraging them to leave Albania*"¹⁵⁰.

The conditions under which the trial took place were considered unacceptable by the whole civilized world, and caused international upheaval and condemnation of the Albanian justice system. During the trial there were several incidents that took place against Greek and foreign reporters, attorneys and international observers that were attending the trial, while there were some very peculiar reactions from the Greek side, the most noteworthy being the flight by a Greek air forces officer over Avlona and Agioi Saranta, who dropped leaflets with anti-Albanian slogans.

In September of that same year, "the five leaders of the Greek minority are convicted, and receive very heavy sentences, after a parody of an investigation and a trial, as many independent,

¹⁵⁰ Papandreou A., statement of 8/8/1994, Greek Foundation of Foreign and Defense Policies, Minutes of Defense and Foreign Policy, Athens 1995, p. 299.

foreign observes verified”, and the wave of persecutions against the Greeks of Albania continues, “so that its members are forced to abandon their age long home territories”¹⁵¹.

In view of those developments, the Greek side took a hard stand, too, by immediately suspending all contacts with Albania, from the moment the “five leaders” were arrested, and setting the condition that the “five” be set free, before any contacts resume. At the same time, Greece kept this issue on the front burner on an international level, causing continuous condemnations of the Albanian acts on every international organization, and blocking a financial aid, in the amount of 35 mil. ECU, that had been approved by the EU for Albania.

On November 6, 1994, the Albanian government suffered a big defeat, when the proposed draft of the new Constitution was rejected by the people at a referendum. This draft had been widely criticized by lots of different groups for not guarantying the respect of human rights, and not complying with European and international standards. More specifically, this draft included a provision about the Orthodox Church of Albania, which required that the head of the church be an Albanian citizen; this was a requirement that was directed directly against the Archbishop Anastasios. Article 7, par. 4, stipulated that “*the heads of major religious communities must be Albanian citizens, born in Albania, and residing permanently in Albania for the last 20 years*”. This provision was impossible to implement, given that religion was outlawed in Albania during the days of the Hoxha regime. This provision was aiming at removing Archbishop Anastasios from his office; a development that was eventually prevented, as the draft was rejected by the people at the referendum.

¹⁵¹ Papoulias K., address to the 49th Annual General Assembly of the U.N., New York, October 28, 1994, Greek Foundation..., as above, p. 310.

After a lot of interventions and pressure from the international community, the “five” were finally set free –one of them was released earlier, for health reasons– and that opened the way for the two countries resuming talks again. This new start was eventually sealed with the visit of the Greek Foreign Minister to Tirana, on March 13, 1995. This visit solidified the new start on the dialog between the two countries, and was followed by several visits of delegations of the two countries, working on resolving various separate issues. In that framework, the decision was taken to establish task forces that would work on issues of higher priority and importance, such as the education of the Greek minority, the economic cooperation, the borderline disputes and the defensive cooperation, the law and order in Albania, the consular offices etc. On the Greek side, what was of paramount importance was the issue of the rights of the minority being respected and the “minority zones” being abolished, while the Albanian side prioritized the issue of illegal migration. This gave an initial impression that the relations between the two countries had taken a new course, and the problems would be examined on a new basis and no longer be the source of friction.

The first post-communist era Constitution, art. 20, stipulates that: “*Persons belonging to ethnic minorities exercise their rights in full equity against the law. They have the right to express their national, cultural, religious and language heritage completely freely, without any obstacles. They have the right to protect, develop and spread this heritage, be taught in their mother language, and establish their own unions and organizations, for the development of their heritage and identity*”. Nonetheless, all these remained empty words, and Albania never fulfilled its constitutional obligations, with regards to the rights of the Greek minority.

Greece, on the other hand, has been supporting Albania

from every possible aspect. The Greek policy ever since the change of regime in 1991 aims at ensuring the stabilization, development and prosperity of Albania, and its successful course towards becoming a member of NATO and the EU, under the condition, of course, that Albania respects the terms and criteria adopted by the EU. A significant step, which triggered the development of the bilateral relations between the two countries, was the Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation, Good Neighborship and Security that was signed in Tirana on March 21, 1996, by the Foreign Ministers of the two countries, after a long period of persecutions for the Greek minority, for both political (the trial of the “five”) and religious reasons (Archbishop Anastasios). This 1996 agreement makes a special mention to the Greek Minority, as follows: “*The Greek Ethnic Minority in Albania has contributed and continues to contribute significantly to the life of the Albanian society, and acts as a factor for the development of the friendship between the two countries*”.

13. The Insecurity of Albania and the Atmosphere of Terror

An issue that causes concern is that of security and the level of living. Already from the first years after the change of the regime, a continuously increasing wave of robberies, assaults and wounding of members of the Greek Community has been observed and this peaked with the acts of violence against the escort of the president of a branch of OMONOIA of Argyrokastro and of the Delvino Prefect (28/07/1993). The Greek minority members consider that these acts turn directly against the economic survival and the existence itself of their community¹⁵². The increase in the incidence of violent acts and the subsequent concern of the Greek Community has been noted in the report of Supreme Commissioner of the Convention for the Security and Co-operation in Europe Max Van der Stoole along with the wish - urging for a more efficient protection of the population¹⁵³.

The issues of security of the Greek minority have also occupied international organizations and their representatives in Albania since the *“insecurity and the lack of order inhibits every effort of economic livelihood in the sector of the Greek Minority, the incidence being much higher than in any other*

¹⁵² Democratic Union of the National Greek Minority “OMONOIA”, *“The National Greek Minority in Albania in an atmosphere of Insecurity and Terror”*, Argyrokastro, August 1993.

¹⁵³ Letter from the C.S.C.E. High Commissioner on National Minorities, to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania, 19/9/1993.

region. The Greek Minority not only is not defended –especially as such– against the aforementioned by the State but it is also harmed often by actions of representatives of the law and the state. It was also noted that all these years the National Greek Minority (henceforward EEM) had been a target of destabilization of the balance between the two basic communities of the South, something that was not however achieved. The efforts had a religious, political, financial, etc character. But, what was observed was that, from these continuing frictions, the EEM members opted to flee which means indirectly that they were chased out of their territories”.

From its side, Greece has underlined the atmosphere of terror that prevails in the minority villages, with unceasing occurrences of abductions and extortions that reinforce the feeling of insecurity of the Greeks of the area. Greece has interceded towards the countries-members of the E.U. asking for the increase of the E.U. help to Albania, aiming at the improvement of the infrastructure and the development of the areas where the EEM lives. Indeed, at times, in an effort to protect the individuals of the minority, Greece, the E.U. and international organizations have sent representatives in the minority's areas in order to strengthen security.

14. The Education of the Greek Minority and the Problems

After the Cold War, the education of the Greeks continues to face problems as the Albanian side continues to put obstacles to prevent the Greek education, with the result that for the remaining Greeks the education of their maternal language was getting all the more difficult.

By the recognition of the minority area status for the 99 villages of the Argyrokastro and Agioi Saranta prefectures by K.E.A. and the continuation of the same regime in the education of the community by the “post-communist” Albanian State, the Greeks were subsequently deprived of the Greek education and those who were studying in areas where Greek schools were operating to face the great difficulties of modern Albania.

In September 1991, upon the commencement of the school year 1991-1992, the Greeks of Albania, parents, teachers and students went on a fifteen-day-long general strike from the lessons with four basic requests. Among them, we mention: education in the maternal language, education in the maternal language beyond the arbitrarily defined “minority areas” (wherever there is a significant number of Greeks), teaching of the history and culture of the nation, furthering the teaching of the maternal language into the High Schools. These objectives were partially attained. So, it was decided that all the lessons in the compulsory elementary education be taught in the maternal Greek language. The next two years with separate acts there were specific percentages defined for lessons taught in Greek and those taught in Albanian under the pretext of the incorporation in the Albanian society.

Schools teaching in the maternal language opened their

doors in 7 mixed-population villages that had been set up by the communist regime inside regions with purely Greek population. One year later, schools teaching in the maternal language were permitted in the cities of Agioi Saranta and Delvino. These were not allowed in Argyrokastro and in the next year, 1993-94, the schools of Agioi Saranta and Delvino were stopped, too. They would reopen in all three cities in 1996, as minority classes dependent on directions of Albanian schools. So they have remained until today, despite the fact that they have completed the block of the 9 years of elementary education and the fact that they constitute the minority schools with the greatest number of students.

We also add that in these aforementioned schools students, whose parents had not secured the Greek minority nationality according to the laws of the former communist regime, were not allowed in.

Also, the road for the teaching of the history of the Greek nation opened up *de jure*, however, this was never implemented since the first attempt that took place in 1998-99 came up against the resistance of the Greek teachers and parents; the curriculum of the lesson of Greek history had been compiled by the Albanian authorities and certain sensitive issue were dealt with from the Albanian nationalist positions.

Furthermore, the school texts, both in the Greek and in the Albanian language, in a total of 17 school books of the elementary and middle education were not rid of the Albanian national feeling against Greece, thus making their teaching impossible if one takes into account the psychological trauma that this nationalism causes to the students. In addition, the pressure exacted on and the extortion suffered by the teachers implying the loss of their employment has filled them with the mentality of the communist regime: adaptation and compliance to the interests of the Albanian state, setting

aside any effort to transmit the Greek culture and education.

An important argument in the tendency of degrading-dissolving the schools teaching in the maternal language is the fact that, during the whole transition period, the Albanian governments came up with excuses for delayed provision of the school-books in the maternal language. As a result, since the school year 2005-06 the Greek students of the compulsory Elementary education have not had even one book in the maternal language and have been, thus, forced to attend the lessons solely with note-taking and aided by the translating abilities from Albanian to Greek of each teacher, as was done in the beginning of the previous century. The formal State Authorities initially claimed that the cost of printing the books would be relatively high, due to the small number of copies. This argument is used at a period when 75% of the income of the Albanian State in the prefectures where the Greek population mainly resides comes from the taxation of this minority.

In 1993-94, a Department of Greek Language opened its doors in the Argyrokastró University with the aim to educate the teachers of Greek in the minority schools. However, this quickly gained the character of a formality since it could not prepare the teachers for all the courses in the Greece language - except for language and literature. It could not also prepare executives for the Higher Education for the other infrastructure needs of the Greek minority of Albania.

Moreover, the demand of the Greek minority that a school teaching students in the maternal language be opened wherever there is the required number of students was not realised. The most pressing case is the opening of a maternal language school in Chimara.

The most important of the problems faced by the Greek education in Albania is the complete absence of any legal framework which strictly defines the conditions and the terms

of its operations. The collapse of the previous regime led to an effort to get rid of the commitments of the past and, in this mind, several bills of law were proposed without –however– any of them to become a law of the State. The result has been that the institution gap has remained, and this is provisionally covered by governmental decisions and edicts, giving the Government the opportunity to rule by political and not strictly educational criteria.

The first edict, which constituted at the same time the first attempt to regulate the regime of operation of the minority education, was issued already in September 1991. This edict foresaw that the courses in the eight years of the compulsory education in the schools of the Greek minority would be taught in Greek, according to the curriculum that would be compiled by the Ministry of Education, whereas Albanian would be taught as a foreign language. Despite the fact that there was no mention of instruction in Greek in the High Schools and the Higher Education, with the exception of the Pedagogical Academy of Argyrokastro, this edict inspired a feeling of optimism in the Greek minority in what concerned the educational issues; it constituted a clear first step towards the improvement of the situation as compared to the past.

However, in the next years there was an abundance of problems and obstacles which continuously impeded the function of the Greek schools. Beyond the financial difficulties and the infrastructure problems that had to be tackled, the refusal of the Albanian Government to abolish the regime of the minority regions, only in which is the instruction of the maternal language allowed and the prohibition of the teaching the Greek history and culture at school came to be added.

The continuous adversities led “Omonoia” on May 7 1993 to submit a plebiscite to the Albanian Government stating their main demands relating to education. These demands

focused mainly on the maternal language in all levels and grades of the education, wherever the members of the minority constituted the majority or a significant percentage of the population - even outside the minority regions, as well as the right to establish private schools and schools of supplementary education (*frontisteria*) in the Greek language. There was also much talk about the use of Greek books –those of the National Center– and the teaching of the Greek history and culture, as well as about the right to preserve and further develop the specific cultural heritage of the minority group.

To these demands, the Albanian Government responded with edict 19 on September 13 1993, bringing back the minority education to the regime of K.E.A. According to these regulations, the material to be taught was to be in Greek or the first four classes only of the eight of the compulsory elementary education, whereas in the rest four the courses would be taught in Albanian and Greek would be taught as a foreign language. No mention was made of the “*Omonoia*”: demands, neither had they been taken into account. A further year later, by the edict 396 of August 22 1994, the Albanian Ministerial Cabinet imposed even stricter limitations to the operation of the eight-year minority education, as article 6 set as a prerequisite the existence of a sufficient number of students (30 to be more exact) for the right to be granted for new schools to open up. In parallel, it instituted the submission of the related parental requested as a necessary step to be taken 6 months before the commencement of the school years. This was clearly a decision of the Albanian Authorities aiming to close down arbitrarily several Greek schools in Argyrokastro, Agioi Saranta, etc., that had already started since 1993 under the pretext of the shortage of students¹⁵⁴.

¹⁵⁴ Contis, V. & Manta, E., “Greece and Albania”, Thessaloniki, publ. by the Council of Greeks of the Diaspora, 1998.

The great issue of the education constituted almost every time the object Greek-Albanian talks, whenever such negotiations were taking place and it was once put on the table during the visit of the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs in Tirana in November 1993. The most important element which was accomplished was the aforementioned establishment and operation of the Department of Greek Language and Literature at the Argyrokastro University aiming to train the teachers who would teach in the Greek minority schools from fifth grade and onwards; this however has been facing acute functional problems.

The results of the visit of the Greek Minister in Tirana in March 1995 (after the release of the five imprisoned minority leaders and the resuming of the Greek-Albanian talks) were more fruitful. It was then decided, among others, to establish a special Greek-Albanian committee that would undertake the resolution of the problems of Greek education in Albania. The effort of the Greek side focused on the dissolution of the minority regions and the opening up of new schools for the free teaching the Greek language wherever there is the Greek element.

The education of the Greek minority was tested by inherent problems such as fears, reservations and the suspiciousness of the Greek State towards the Education in Greek. There can be a change of conditions as long as the Albanian State manages to convince by its actions the Greek minority that there is no danger of their assimilation by the majority group and, thus, no danger of losing their cultural identity. So, it will help with a specific policy the minority to sense the need to share with the dominating and broader majority some specific values and the two of them to fight together for the resolution of the problems of their common everyday life, problems that are intense and deteriorating by time.

The main reason for the failure of the educational system

of Albania to reach one of its basic international targets –as concerns the Greek minority– is the insufficient educational policy in matters that concern to the education of linguistic, social and cultural minorities. The social and cultural –and, even more, the economic and developmental– reality of the area and the diversity that characterizes the education –due to international commitments– create on the one hand the requirements for a different and comprehensive approach and on the other hand demand radically different curriculum. Minority education needs opportunities for co-operation between educationalists and it also needs common programs. The respect to diversity does not exclude the strengthening of the shared characteristics. The attainment of this objective requires an education that will take into account the social and cultural particularities of the minority and will combine the cultivation of elements that promote diversity with those that promote integration. The pedagogical theory and the educational experience provide us with the guarantee for a successful intervention in an area that today our educational system is facing a continuous crisis.

In conclusion, it could be said that the education of the Greek minority, a field that had known periods of great flourishing in the past, has been led to shrinking by the systematic efforts to curtail the number of the Greek schools and of the teaching hours of the Greek language – these were started in the intra-bellum period and were continue by the post-bellum Albanian regime even until today. The dominant objectives of the new educational system were the eradication of the national differences, the shaping of a new type of citizen aligned to the Marxist - Leninist principles, devoted to Hoxha and the Albanian State without any religious or national origins¹⁵⁵,

¹⁵⁵ Newspaper *Omonoia*'s Voice, 24.9.1993, Papadopoulos, G., *The Natio-*

more generally, the cultivation of the socialist conscience to the youth and the complete incorporation of the Greeks in the newly-shaped form. There may have indeed been eight-year schools in the arbitrarily defined minority regions that taught in Greek in the first for years (Albanian being taught as a foreign language) but the proportion was reversed in the next four years. The books employed were mere translations of the corresponding Albanian ones, there was a complete prohibition on the mentioning of the Greek origin of the students and the Greek history and culture were absent. There were no Greek High Schools and the only Greek Higher School operating was the Pedagogical Academy of Argyrokastro, where the teachers meant for the Greek minority schools graduated from. This situation continues until today, despite the meaningless rhetoric of Albania to the opposite.

nal Greek Minority in Albania and its Educational Issue, Ioannina 1981, pp. 127-170 (according to an analytical report of the Albanian Superintendent Kol Kotsi) and *Wissenschaftlicher Dienst*, 1953, pp. 16, 24, Kapsalis, G., *The Education of the Geek Minority of Albania, School Manuals, Linguistic Education, Perspectives*, Athens, publ. by Gutenberg, 1996 and Paschalis, A. *The Post-War Reading Books of the Greek Minority in Albania. Linguistic and Ideological Approach*, Athens, publ. by Gutenberg, 1998.

15. Religious Freedom

As it has been mentioned before, along with the change of the regime, the need for the election of an Archbishop arose and it was concluded despite the great reactions of the Albanian Parliament and of politicians that were affiliated to other dogmas. By a unanimous decision of the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate on June 24 1992, the Patriarchal Exarch Bishop of Androusis Anastasios Giannoulatos was elected Archbishop and was enthroned on August 2 of the same year.

There was tension in the Greek-Albanian relations after the deportation of the Archimandrite Chrysostomos Maydonis on June 25 1993 from Argyrokastro and the tension extended to the Orthodox Church of Albania. The deportation of the Archimandrite was caused, according to some, by the rising incidence of the conversion of Muslims to orthodoxy, especially in the North Epirotan area or, according to others, by the fear of the Albania State for the creation of a Greek conscience among the orthodox population. Then (29/06/1993), the President of Albania Sali Berisha would send a letter to the U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros Gali where he would refer to the activities of the Archimandrite “*who went beyond his religious duties*” and to the countermeasures that Greece implemented with the deportation of about 20,000 Albanian illegal immigrants¹⁵⁶.

These had as a result, the organizing of mass protests in

¹⁵⁶ Newspaper *Pontiki*, July 1 1993.

Argyrokastrò, Delvino and Dervitsani, that were dispersed by the violent interventions of the Albanian police. The warlike atmosphere and the persecution in various ways of the Greeks in Albania were further reinforced by the deportation of Albanians from Greece and, significantly, by the six terms that the Greek Government set. The atmosphere affected the Orthodox Church of Albania and the position of Archbishop Anastasios whom President Sali Berisha characterised as “*provisional*”.

The six terms that the Greek Government set were:

- i) The return of the Archimandrite to his religious duties,
- ii) the return of the property that had been confiscated by the previous regime and the current Albanian Government is unduly delaying to return,
- iii) the establishment of minority schools in all the grades of education and not exclusively in the arbitrarily defined minority regions,
- iv) the free function of political and other unions,
- v) the free and unimpeded pursuit of everyone’s religious belief and duties and the return of those who had been displaced by force and
- iv) the citizens to designate their national identity.

Eventually, the further intensification of the crisis that was fuelled by other actions, too, was avoided by personal actions of Archbishop Anastasios who visited both the President of Albania and the Prime Minister of Greece.

16. The Church of Albania

The Church of Albania has been facing many problems and obstacles since its re-establishment¹⁵⁷, that are influenced by the climate of the Greek-Albanian relations. Today, one may observe a lack of will for progress as far as the return of the church and the monastic properties are concerned. There is a great number of major cases and unanswered applications in many prefectures and offices for the recognition and return of properties. Although there were signs for a better, quicker and more well-intentioned response to this significant matter –not only for the orthodox, either– the real progress observed was small. Indeed, there was originally optimism for the compilation of a special law that would separate the procedures and make them briefer than the corresponding cases of the citizens-former proprietors, then unwillingness set in¹⁵⁸. Characteristic examples of this case are those of the Holy Church of the Passing Away of the Virgin Mary in Premeti - where the priest was beaten by “persons unknown”, the chapel of the Virgin Mary in Dragoti, the Holy Church of the Annunciation in Libochovo, the Holy Church of St. George in Tsouka, the Monastery of Prophet Elias in Tzarra - which is used for the “*colonization of northern-origin families and the founding of a village in its fields*”, the threats for the moving-

¹⁵⁷ Church of Greece, (1999), *Pamphlets of the Church of Greece*, publ. by the Apostolic Deaconry of the Church of Greece, Athens, p. 1210.

¹⁵⁸ Newspaper *Omonoia's News*, Argrokastro, February 27-28 1999.

in the fields of the Monaria Monastery in Lovina of two thousand refugees from Kosovo - today it is leased to farmers and, finally, the field of the Monastery of Prophet Elias in Georgoutsates, that had been transformed to barracks, is now being trespassed against.

17. The Albanian State and the Protection of the Rights of the Greek Minority

Fifteen years after the collapse of “existing socialism” and the opening up of borders, North Epirus is still experiencing a difficult reality. The inhabitant of that area waited and suffered everything for decades until the situation would change in order to communicate freely with the other side. Now, they are fighting an uphill battle to retain their homes as the Albanians have started a steady fight to accomplish an ethnic purging at the expense of the national Greek minority.

The ratification by the Albanian Parliament of the Framework of Principles of the Council of Europe for the Protection of National Minorities was not followed by legislative acts that would guarantee its implementation. The initiatives of the local authorities for the promotion of the Framework were not accepted by the central Government. The Stabilization and Joining Agreement with the European Union is applied by the Albanian state only on the one part - that of the “economic restructuring, the co-operation and the development” - but the other one - that foresees the “democratization and the Human rights” is being totally ignored.

As far as security in the areas of the Greek minority is concerned, the fluidity from the time of the armed revolts of 1997 remains, being fed by the indifference and the support of the Albanian Government, as it helps in the demographic alteration of the areas. Already, in Agioi Saranta, Argyrokastro and Chimarra, the demographic proportions have shifted against the Greek minority.

Other ways for the alteration of the demographic strength of the Greek minority and the albanization of areas with completely Greek population are: the moving-in of Albanians in order for them to buy land in strategic points of those areas, such as the highway Argyrokastro - Kakavia, the urging of Albanians to settle in the urban centres of the national Greek minority, such as Georgoutsati, Vrysera, (of the Argyrokastro prefecture), Livadia and Finiki of Agioi Saranta.

The practice of the current Albanian Government continues the practice of the KEA regime which allowed the teaching in school in Greek only within the arbitrarily defined minority regions, whereas regions with purely Greek population were excluded.

The distribution of financial assistance from abroad –that from Greece included– and the public expenditure is used in a way that constitutes discrimination against the minority. Whereas the areas where historically the Greeks have lived in large numbers contribute more than any other region –except for that of Tirana, the capital– to the financial well-being of the country, yet they receive the smallest portion of the financial assistance from abroad, as concerns of the allotment of funds to the public works.

The situation is also tragic in the issue of property. A strong campaign has been under progress all these years, and it has intensified lately, with the aim to change the property balance in the areas where historically the Greeks have inhabited. In Dropolis and Vourko large areas have been seized as well as properties in Agioi Saranta and Delvino.

Vast areas owned by Greeks was given over to Albanians originating from the north of the country or from other mountainous areas - to reconstruct settlements; such was the case of Ai Lias in the Tzarra district, the whole Finiki area, the area from Vryoni to Metochi, near Agioi Saranta, 3 thousand

most fertile acres between the Greek villages Tsiaousi and Alikos and Giasta which is inhabited mostly by Tsamides and is thus suited for settlement by Albanians coming from Tsami-villages by the Greek-Albanian villages.

At the same time, the Greeks constitute the weak element in the cities, especially in Aghii Saranta. Many of their properties pass over to Albanians by use of force and the tolerance of the state; such was the case of the 300 lots owned by Greeks in Agioi Saranta (in the period after 1996) and the tens of decisions of Albanian courts against the properties of Greeks.

In this unjust and manufactured way, the Albanian Government tries to seize thousand of acres of land, forest or prairie, that belongs to villages, monasteries while at the same time land is “returned” to individuals who are not the true owners and who, in most of the cases, have never been inhabitants of those areas.

The Albanian Government with its various Administrative Reformations redefines the administrative limits at the southern part of the country, in such a way as to reduce the voting power and representation of Greeks (and Vlach-speaking Greeks) in the local and national levels. So, the Greek minority areas at the Agioi Saranta and Delvino prefectures passed to the Avlona region and the areas of the Argyrokastro prefecture to the Argyrokastro region. In this way, the electoral and, consequently, the political power of the national Greek minority was reduced because, for instance, for the election of parliament members in the one-seat regions of the afore-mentioned prefectures it is the Albanian majority that decides; the administrative division does not allow the proportional composition of the voters.

Despite the repeated promises, the Albanian authorities have not returned all the churches, the monasteries, the monastic lands, the holy icons, the holy utensils, the church records and

the works of art that the previous regime had seized from the Orthodox Church.

Successive Albanian Governments in the last decade have systematically kept all the Greeks away from positions of power in all the aspects of public life, something that not even the atheist governments had attempted in the long stay in power.

The greatest crime however was committed on the right of the identification on the national and religious identity. For about one century, those of Greek origin suffered violent governmental efforts to take away this very identity with methods such as the forced banishment, the refusal to educate the children in their maternal language and the Albanization of their names. The census, offers a chance for the Albanian side to rectify some of the evils that its policies incurred, keeping the international standards in the procedure¹⁵⁹.

¹⁵⁹ A picture of the painful reality is taken by the recording of the recent events:

- i) Blowing up of a steeple with Cross in Tzarra,
- ii) Destruction of an Orthodox Youth Camp next to the Holy Church of St. George in Agioi Saranta,
- iii) Eviction of the Orthodox community from an old temple in Premeti (charges brought by the Council of European Churches, 03/10/04 in Prague),
- iv) Demolition of 220 houses of North Epirotan from Chimarra to Agioi Saranta as supposedly built without a license (Newspaper *Laiko Vima* of Argyrokastro, 14/11/2004),
- v) Forcing the door and theft of the money of the Holy church of Aghios Charalampos. in Aghii Saranta on 26/10/04 and vandalization and theft the same night at the church of Delvino (Newspaper *Laiko Vima* of Argyrokastro, 4/11/2004),
- vi) Intrusion and damages in a Greek Kindergarten in Chimarra twice,
- vii) Conviction of 5 North Epirotans to two years imprisonment for their activities in favor of the Mayor of Chimarra V. Bolanos in the 2004 elections.

The actions of the Albanian side against the Greek minority focused on the geographical and territorial, demographic and registrational, name-giving (both for people and for places), linguistic and educational, historical and cultural, religious, political and ideological De-Hellenization.

The first action of this broader policy of the Albanian State relates to the insecurity that is cultivated against the national Greek minority and this leads to:

1. - The demographic thinning of the population and the promotion of internal immigration from the North to the South.

2. - The insecurity that constitutes for the Greeks the main reason for their moving to Greece.

3. - The shrinking of the economic activity. The seizing and the stealth of animals, the robberies for equipment, the abductions against the Greek entrepreneurs do not allow the economic flourishing of the area¹⁶⁰.

4. Paralysis of the activities of the institutions of the minority,

¹⁶⁰ It is by now certified that the Greeks in their financial private activity are obliged to operate under unequal terms and condemned to paying dearly and in various ways their national origin. Specifically, due to their national origin and education, they are forced to pay always in time their tax obligations to the state and to compete with other ethnic groups that not only do they not pay but they also have the support of the state. During 2005-06, the Argyrokastro population paid 115% for the electrical power they consumed whereas other areas paid 0% - 60%. The Greek areas however, suffered longer blackouts due to the energy crisis. At the same time, they were the only ones to pay fines supposedly for avoiding to pay their dues. In 2005, the Prime Minister of Albania Sali Berisha started his campaign against tax evasion from the areas of the Greek minority when the related authorities praised the Greek businessmen and citizens that they were the most punctual ones.

exclusion from the participation in the State mechanism. In 1994-95, under the pretext of the creation of national structures in the army, police and secret services, the Government of the Democratic Party fired from these structures 300 individuals who either had Greek origin or were related to it. The Greeks were removed to a great extent from many of the other civil services. Indeed, the keeping of the demographic proportions was abandoned and the corresponding stuffing of the state mechanism during the communist years even in areas of purely Greek population, such as Argyrokastro, Delvino and Agioi Saranta. So, the relations of the members of the Greek minority with the state, the courts, the police, the diplomatic corps and other state structure remain still very difficult when they are totally rid of Greeks.

The violation of special rights that relate to the exhibition and development of the national identity, such as the instruction in the maternal language, the self-determination as far as the ethnicity is concerned, the regime of inhibition of the Greek ethnicity, etc, which relates to the attempt of ethnological alteration of the Greek minority, pursuing thus, in the interim period the typical levels of respect or rights of the Greek Minority during the communist period. The effort of the inhabitants of the Greek minority villages to up bilingual signs with their names is well-known, as it is stipulated in the framework of the Council of Europe for the Protection of Minorities. In the 7 years since 2000, neither the Albanian State nor the Albanian public opinion have managed to accept the practical application of this fundamental right. The intervention of the international community was required for the erection of these signs, yet, no one complained when “persons unknown” effaced them during the night.

Also, the restitution of the ethnicity was not assigned to a personal declaration by the individual but this right was allotted

with great difficulty to the courts while recently the courts ruled that they were incapable of changing the ethnicity of a child without a written statement by both parents. However, Greek is not recognized as a formal language, not even in areas that have a purely Greek population composition and no document written in Greek has any legal standing.

Albania, neither at the times of the communist regime not today, had it recognized the natural residency of the Greek population; instead by falsifying history they claim that the historical extent of Albania spreads from Preveza and Arta in the south and that the whole territory of Epirus and the related culture, especially in the northern part belongs to Albania¹⁶¹. By the same mentality of claiming those of others, Albania deals with North and South Epirus historically, geographically and demographically in all the historical and geographical school books from the fourth grade up to the University¹⁶².

Albania, both before and after 1990, keeps the same attitude as concerns the origin of the Greek minority, claiming that they settled these lands in the 18th century. These are mentioned in the encyclopedic dictionary of the Academy of Sciences of Tirana at the entry “Dropolis”¹⁶³: “proving that the inhabitants of Dropolis, of Greek origin, arrived here in the XVIII century as laborers in the estates of the Albanian landlords”, whereas

¹⁶¹ Albanian Academy of Sciences, “The History of the Albanian People”, Tirana, 2003.

¹⁶² Indicatively, we mention the book “*Let us Learn the History of our People*” by Kouri, Gini, Bisqemi and Papayiannis, Tirana, 2003, where the issue of the origin of the Epirotans from an Illyric tribe, (pp 7-8), of the “albanization” of King Pyrrus (p. 12), of the analysis of the Second World War (p. 90) and of the bringing-up of the Tsamouria issue. (p. 112).

¹⁶³ Albanian Academy of Sciences, *Encyclopedic Dictionary*, Tirana, 2001.

Chimarra is mentioned as “the Illyrian city of Chaonia from the V century A.D.”. The other areas with purely Greek population, such as Vourkos, Finiki, Theologos, Grava, Mesopotamos and Livadia and Mavri Riza of the Argyrokaastro prefecture, are simply mentioned as administrative units of the Albanian territory, without any reference to the Greek population.

On the other hand, ever since the establishment of the Albanian nation, there has never taken place a census, realistically and honestly, without geographical restrictions and with the right of the self identification of ethnicity.

Despite the fact that in the Albanian legislation (starting with the constitution, there is the solid guarantee of rights on the basis of ethnic origin and nationality, it has been noted that the Albanian legislation, though based on European frames as to what concerns the human and national rights, does not enforce what it foresees; when the Albanian authorities are so eager to apply the European principles on the issue of the human and national rights, then we think that the demands of the minority for the notation of the ethnicity on every formal document are fully justified.

The insistence of the Greeks that live in Albania and of the representatives in all the levels on issues that concern ethnicity, such as the incorporation of the ethnicity entry in the national census, the registering of the ethnicity as a personal item in the Registries and the police I.D. cards creates the impression that the National Greek Minority expresses positions that are not compatible with the European principles.

In essence, the Greek minority, while it believes that the induction of Albania in the European Union constitutes the best solution for it too as far as the respect of the human and national rights are concerned, expresses some reservations at the same time on the true intentions of the Albanian authorities

towards this direction. When they argue based on legal regulation of European principles they prepare the ground for the continuation of the same policy towards the national, demographical shrinking of the Greek community, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

18. The Securing of the Rights of the Greek Minority

The rights of the Greek minority on the level of the Protocols with Albania and the Great Powers are raised from international documents (see Addendum) as well as through the accepted documents for the protection. These could be divided in two parts, the general and the specific¹⁶⁴. In the general part we include the rights that apply to all the members of all the minorities. That is, due to the nature of being a minority member, there are some rights that can find application in every minority group. These rights are that of the self-determination¹⁶⁵, of the selection of treatment¹⁶⁶, of the free cross-boundary communication¹⁶⁷, of the personal and common practice of special rights¹⁶⁸, of the establishment of associations¹⁶⁹, of the participation in the life of the country¹⁷⁰, of the participation in decision-making that concerns the minorities¹⁷¹, of the

¹⁶⁴ Diakofotakis, G. "On Minorities in the International Law", Pantion University, Doctoral Thesis Athens 1999.

¹⁶⁵ Convention on the Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), Copenhagen, par. 32, art. 2 and Framework Convention, art. 3.1.

¹⁶⁶ U.N. Declaration (1992), art. 3.2.

¹⁶⁷ CSCE, Vienna, par. 31 and U.N. Declaration, art. 2.5.

¹⁶⁸ U.N. Declaration, art. 3.1, K.E.P. Instrument, art. 3, Framework Convention art. 3.2.

¹⁶⁹ U.N. Declaration, art. 2.4, CSCE, Copenhagen, par. 32.6 and Framework Convention, art. 7, 17.

¹⁷⁰ U.N. Declaration, art. 2.2, 4.5 and K.E.P., art. 20.

¹⁷¹ CSCE, Copenhagen, art. 35, U.N. Declaration, art. 2.3, K.E.P., art. 22 and Framework Convention, art 15.

respect of the demographic proportion and of the boundaries of the minority regions¹⁷², of the establishment of parties¹⁷³ and of the autonomy of minorities¹⁷⁴.

The specific part of the minority protection includes the rights that apply to the members of some minorities with specific characteristics. These are not general rights for every minority but select for some. These could be the rights of ethnicity and culture¹⁷⁵, religious rights¹⁷⁶, language rights¹⁷⁷ and educational rights¹⁷⁸. However, all the above have different or no legal value and are characterized by a dissimilar vocabulary. Most remain on the level of principles, directions, political commitments, urgings and recommendations. Even in those few cases where there could be a case of legal commitments, the vagueness of the texts complicates their interpretation. The disagreements between the legal international experts are many and continuous. The generalities, the vagueness, the complexity, the contradictory nature of the texts, and the selective interpretation of the legal texts will emerge to an even greater degree in the next unit that examines the right of self-government.

¹⁷² CSCE, Helsinki, art., 1992, decisions of city, title VI, par. 27 and K.E.P., art. 9.

¹⁷³ K.E.P., art. 21.

¹⁷⁴ CSCE, Copenhagen, art. 35 and K.E.P. art. 22.

¹⁷⁵ CSCE, Vienna, art. 59 and CSCE, Copenhagen, art. 32.

¹⁷⁶ CSCE, Vienna, art. 16 and CSCE, Copenhagen, art. 32.3.

¹⁷⁷ CSCE, Copenhagen, art. 32, 34, U.N. Declaration, art. 2.1, K.E.P., art. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18 and 19 and the European Map of Regional or Minority Languages.

¹⁷⁸ UNESCO Convention, art 5, CSCE, Copenhagen, art. 32.3, 34, U.N. Declaration, art. 4.4, K.E.P., art. 17, 18.

18.1 International Protection

The protection of the minorities as the result of conventional regulations emerged right after WWI, but not with texts of an ecumenical character but with ad hoc conventions for the protection of specific minorities that came up by the creation of new nations and the shifting of the borders after the end of the war. After WW II, the stance of the international community was especially negative as to the recognition of minority rights, as the Nazis had used the numerous German-speaking minorities that lived in various European countries (Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Baltic Republics) to promote their imperialistic ambitions. The expulsion even of 12 - 14 million of German speaking people by the Allies from territories that they liberated¹⁷⁹ did not leave much room for dealing with such issues.

As concerns the legal protection of minorities, it must be stressed that the positive international law does not recognize minority rights.

In the first ecumenical texts of the protection of the human rights again there was no reference to minorities¹⁸⁰. There were individual rights foreseen for individuals belonging to minorities as part of the international protection of the human. Therefore, there was the recognition of individual

¹⁷⁹ De Zayas A.: *International Law and Mass Population Transfers*, 16 Harvard ILJ 207 (1975), pp. 227-242.

¹⁸⁰ The Universal Convention for the Declaration of the Human Rights (UNGA Res. 217A (III) of December 10 1948) does not mention specifically minorities, though the Sub-Committee on Minorities of the Human Rights Committee of the U.N. had prepared a bill referring to the protection of minorities (UN Doc. E/CN.4/52 December 5 1947).

rights but not group rights or collective rights¹⁸¹. However, the practice in mass of these rights was allowed.

In the U.N., we have indirect references in the Community Charter (1945), in the Ecumenical Declaration of the Human Rights (1948) as well as in the 2 International Conventions of 1966, in the International Agreement for the Individual and the Political Rights in power since 1976 and the International Agreement on the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In 1947 the Sub-Committee for the Prevention and Protection of Minorities was created and it operates until today within the frame of the Committee of Human Rights of the U.N. The most significant texts of the Organization that refer in one way or another are the Convention for the Protection and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948), the Declaration for the Eradication of all the Forms of Racial Discrimination (1963), the International Convention for the Rights of Individuals belonging to National, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992).

In the International Convention for the Individual and Political Rights in 1966¹⁸² in art. 27, the following were stated: “In those nations where there are national, religious or linguistic minorities, the individuals belonging to these will have the right to enjoy their culture, to practice their religious rights or to use their language together with other members of the community”. This specific syntax does not in reality refer to minorities as collective entities but as the grouping of individuals

¹⁸¹ The only collective right that can be recognized to a people under certain conditions is that of self-government, which will be analyzed in the next unit.

¹⁸² International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 999 UNTS 171, 6 ILM 368 (1967).

that belong to them excluding them from any type of collective action that would not constitute the addition of “acceptable” individual actions¹⁸³. In the weaknesses of this specific phrasing, one could put that from this the national are left to define if there are minorities in their own territories or not whereas the non-existence of an acceptable definition of minorities constitutes an obstacle, not only to the specific but any agreement for their protection.

One should also mention the *U.N. Convention for the Eradication of Racial Discrimination*,¹⁸⁴ with Art. 5 of which the member-states undertake the obligation to forbid and eradicate racial discrimination and “... to guarantee the right of any person, disregarding the race, skin color or national origin for equality towards the law”, specifying the above in the right of equal treatment in the court and the administration, the protection from state violence and the civil rights. In the universal texts for the protection of minorities, one should also include the *Declaration for Personas that Belong to National, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*,¹⁸⁵ which, however, does not recognize the minorities as agents but records the rights of their members; in addition, by its having only been adopted through voting in the General Assembly of the U.N.

¹⁸³ Millennium Summit Multilateral Treaty Framework: An Invitation to Universal Participation, United Nations, 2000, pp. 15-18. Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 23 (50) on Article 27, 15 HRLJ 233 1994. Nowak M.: The Activities of the UN Human Rights Committee: Developments from August 1, 1992 to July 31, 1995, 16 HRLJ 377 (1995), p. 379.

¹⁸⁴ International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (1966), 660 UNTS 195.

¹⁸⁵ Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, UNGA Res. 47/135 December 18 1992, 32 ILM 911 (1993).

they do not have the necessary legal commitment¹⁸⁶ so as to constitute a reference text for the universal protection of minorities.

18.2 The Legal Framework in Europe

The lack of protective rules in a universal level was partly covered by conventional texts in regional levels. The European continent has been since the early years in the forefront of protecting the human rights.

A. The Council of Europe

Special attention should be paid to the Council of Europe as concerns the minority rights and to the European Convention on Human Rights, constituting a prototype of international protection for the human rights in regional and international level. Specifically, it foresees the enumeration of the rights as well as the right to appeal to the European Court of Human Rights in case these rights are deemed to have been violated. We should also mention the European Chart of Regional or Minority Languages (1992) and the most significant Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995).

The adoption of the *European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR)*,¹⁸⁷ which continuously expands through the creation of different Protocols offers to all the European citizens an efficient frame for the preservation and the defense of all the

¹⁸⁶ According to art. 10 of the U.N. Chart, the votings of the General Assembly are not bounding against the other members or organs of the U.N. but are simple recommendations and Brownlie I.: Principles of Public International Law, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1990, p. 14.

¹⁸⁷ ETS No 5, Strasbourg, 1948.

fundamental rights and freedoms¹⁸⁸. Even though the Convention does not refer distinctly to minorities, Art. 14 foresees that “*the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms recorded in this Convention will be secure without discrimination for any reason, such as race, skin color, language, religion, political or other beliefs, ethnic or social origin, relation to a national minority...*”, ensuring thus that all the minority groups will not be treated in a discriminatory manner as concerns their rights. A most recent development was the 12th Protocol of the ECHR which extends the prohibition of discriminations (or Art. 14) to every right and not only those that are secured by ECHR, but it has not come into power yet.

The most analytical text that has come out yet universally has been the Convention Framework for the Protection of National Minorities¹⁸⁹ adopted in 1995. This Convention is the first legally bounding text of European origin referring to the protection of the national minorities. It includes an extensive recording and analysis of minority rights and freedoms that are offered, through careful phrasing to the individuals and not to the minority groups. In essence, this text analyses the rights of ECHR under the prism of national minorities, completing them with some new ones that deal with specific violation practices of the rights on minority individuals. (such as: the right to use the family name in the minority language and its official recognition foreseen by Art. 11 § 1). Even though the Convention does not proceed to the recognition of minorities as collective agents and to the ceding of collective rights to

¹⁸⁸ Perrakis, S., *Dimensions of the International Protection of Human Rights*, vol. 1, U.N., and *European Convention for Human Rights*, Sakkoulas Publications, Athens-Comotini, 1998, pp. 88 - .

¹⁸⁹ Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, ETS No. 157, Strasbourg, 1-2-1995.

them, it should not be overlooked that most of these are practiced collectively. Besides, in Art. 1 of the Convention it is stressed that the protection of national minorities constitutes an integral part of the international protection of the human rights and in the introduction it is stated that the principles are protected and the obligations stemming from these aim to secure the more efficient protection of the national minorities (item 12). From the above, one concludes that even though there was no mention to the minorities as such, the personal rights offered are meant also for the protection of the minorities as collective agents.

Another significant document for the protection of the minorities, which was adopted within the framework of the Council of Europe, is the *European Charter of Local or Minority Languages*,¹⁹⁰ which, however, does not bind the Black sea countries as only Armenia has signed it. Today the minority is considered as “*since always recognized as national*”¹⁹¹ by the Council of Europe, something which demonstrates the particular ideological weight for the existence of a Greek minority in the relations of Greece and Albania.

B. The Organization for the Security and the Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

OSCE has been especially active in protecting the minorities. It started as Convention but transformed into an organization. Even though the legal nature of its texts is rather loose, and the commitments the nations undertake are of political and

¹⁹⁰ European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, ETS No. 148, Strasbourg, 5 November 1992.

¹⁹¹ It is indicative that the First Report of application of the convention - framework on the protection of national minority rights in Albania places it as the most import minority.

not legal character¹⁹², yet in the framework of OECD significant texts have been adopted, comprising the flagship of the protection of the human rights, inside and outside the Organization. So we have the Final Helsinki Act (1975), the final Text of Vienna (1989), the Copenhagen Text on the Human Dimension (1990), the hart of Paris On a New Europe) and the Helsinki Text (1992). In the OECD texts relating to minorities we should mention specifically the conclusions of sub-committees that dealt with minority issues and are divided into two categories. Those that refer to general minority rights and the banning of discrimination and those that deal specifically with minorities. From the first category, the Final Helsinki Act¹⁹³ is of special interest preaching the respect of the human rights and especially of individuals belonging to minorities. Also the Concluding Text of Vienna¹⁹⁴, where a large passage is devoted to recording the basic parameters of religious freedom and of the related obligations that stem from it for the nations as concerns their attitude towards religious freedom and the faithful.

In the second category, we find specialized texts that concern more directly the protection of minority rights. So in the *Copenhagen Text* of the Committee of Specialists for the Human Dimension of CSCE¹⁹⁵, there are extensive regulations for the rights of the individuals that belong to national minorities with a much more advanced character in relation to the general

¹⁹² On the lack of legal pinging, see Buergenthal T.: The CSCE Rights System, 25 Geo. Wash. JIL & Econ. 333 (1991), pp. 375-378.

¹⁹³ Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, Helsinki 1-8-1975, Principle No. VII.

¹⁹⁴ Vienna Concluding Document of 15 January 1989, 10 HRLJ 270 (1989), Principles 16-21.

¹⁹⁵ Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE, 29 June 1990, 11 HRLJ 232 (1990).

texts of the protection of human rights. Characteristically, the later *Convention Framework for the Protection of National Minorities* mentions the above text in its preamble and its regulations are clearly influenced by it. The most important innovation of the text is that it recognizes –indirectly– the minorities as collective agents, urging the states to protect and to prepare the necessary conditions for the promotion of the identity of the national minorities, “intern alia” through discussions with the collective agents of expression of the minorities (Part IV, par. 33). Most significant is the *Report of the CSCE Meeting of Experts on National Minorities*¹⁹⁶ of Geneva which essentially repeats the phrasing of the Copenhagen Text referring however exclusively to individuals belonging to minorities, continuing thus to consider the minority rights as personal and not collective. An especially significant part of the text is that it considers the issues that concern the national minorities as issues of international legal interest and not simply as part of the domestic jurisdiction of each nation (II, par.).

Even though all the Black Sea countries all belong to the OECD, as it has been mentioned above, the phrasing of these texts are of a political and not a legal character, not having been incorporated in a legally binding text and, as a result, the states have no legal obligations on the protection of minorities.

C. The European Union

At a first glance, the European Union (EU) does not seem to play any important role in the formation of an institutional framework over the protection of the minorities in the Black

¹⁹⁶ Report of the CSCE Meeting of Experts on National Minorities, Geneva, 19 July 1991, 12 HRLJ 332 (1991).

Sea countries, however, its position is most important in the essential level. The political criteria that the EU sets for the candidate countries (Albania signed the Stabilization and Connection Agreement in June 2000)¹⁹⁷ include the issues of treatment of minorities, the eradication of discrimination against them and for a candidate country to enter the EU it has to fulfill all the prerequisites set. Thus, all the countries that had minority problems were forced to adjust their legislation and their administrative and other practices to the Community standards. In a practical level, the EU has compiled many projects with the minorities as their beneficiaries and it promoted to a large extent the linguistic and cultural identity of these groups.

The EU sets strict criteria to the candidate countries, which include the issues of treatment of minorities, the eradication of discrimination against them and for a candidate country to enter the EU it has to fulfill all the prerequisites set. The EU signed with Albania on June 12 the Stabilization and Connection Agreement (CSA), as a first stage for its acceptance. The CSA, a policy instrument of the EU, is applied in the area of the Western Balkans with the central aim of incorporating these nations in the European central structures. The basic axes of action of the CSA are two: a) helping the countries approach

¹⁹⁷ During the meeting of the EU Ministerial Troika with Albania (Tirana, January 13, 2003) the commitment of the EU for the European perspective of Albania was confirmed, and the former was simultaneously called to undertake with seriousness the fulfillment of all the terms of conditionality of the Stabilization and Connection Procedure, among which was the full respect and protection of the rights of the Greek National Minority. The same was confirmed also in *The Thessaloniki Agenda for the Western Balkans: Moving towards European Integration* which was adopted during the summit convention in Thessaloniki, June 18-20, 2003.

the EU and b) that this approach is effected under terms (conditionality), such as the respect to international right, democratic principles, human rights and the **Rights of the Minorities**. Albania on the one side will gain a great economic assistance and on the other hand it is committed to changes **for the human and minority rights**. Regardless, the EU had called Albania since 2003 to undertake with responsibility all the conditionality terms of the CSA, among which the full respect and protection of the rights of the Greek National Minority is included stressing that the progress in the negotiations and the approaching of Albania to the EU will depend exclusively on its ability to face to the commitments it has undertaken.

The minorities are included in the broader human rights of the EU that are protected by the institutional organs whereas in Community texts there is ample of reference to other organizations such as the U.N. and the Council of Europe. In the Agenda 2000 of the European Commission, there is mention to the respect of the minorities, whereas the Stabilization Pact for South East Europe is dealt by many as the only Community action focusing strongly on the minorities¹⁹⁸.

Finally, the minority issues occupied to a large extent the Central European Initiative within the frame of which a work group was created exclusively for the protection of national minorities (Working Group on Minorities). This group prepared a plan of agreement aiming the protection of the national minorities; This was adopted by the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Initiative (Turin 1994), taking the title “Organ for the Protection of Minority Rights”.

¹⁹⁸ Malkidis, Th., *European Union and the Black Sea Area*, Athens, Gordios, 2004.

19. Conclusions

The problems of the minorities are undoubtedly real. Most countries, especially in the last years that an intense activity has been noted in favor of the minority issues with intra-scientific and political approaches, reconstitute the minority concern as a central point of reference of the social, political and cultural history; however, they do not proceed to an essential resolution of its problems. One such case is Albania, which treats the Greek National Minority in an undemocratic way.

From the establishment of the Albanian nation and especially during the communist period, the Albanian State knew that the Greek Minority would resist valiantly to its homogenizing mechanisms to preserve its cultural identity and avoid a cultural elimination. Albania, even though it recognized formally the existence and the rights of the Greek Minority, planned out a systematic violation of all the internationally recognized and accepted human and minority rights, cultivating a unique independent system of minority conscience in an effort to replace the Greek National conscience.

It undermined the conscience and the inseparable of its cultural heritage and the psychological unity of the population of the Greek Minority from the common traditional heritage of the Greek nation, channeling at the same time a culture and mentality that spoiled the genuineness of its identity and distanced it from its traditions.

The measures taken by the Albanian state in the expense of the Greek Minority was its exclusion from every communication with Greece, the forging of history, the arbitrary redesigning of the “minority area”, the persecution of the church, the

cultivation of the mentality that led to the denationalization of the people, the restructuring of the social fiber aiming towards assimilation or spoiling, the terrorization of the population, the mass movements of population, the executions, the imprisonments, the exiles, the deaths.

After 1991 and the regime change in Albania, the number of the members of the minority was radically reduced as a large part of the Greeks immigrated or was forced to immigrate to Greece.

This new situation that is developing in Albania in the post-communist period constitutes in essence a confirmation of the effectiveness of the spoiling of their identity by the communist regime.

Great problems, such as the education of the members of the Greek Minority, its religious freedom, the giving back of the private, community and church property, the non-implementation of the commitments (of the Albanian side) for the human and minority rights, the terrorizing remain and intensify. In the nationalistic spirit which is developing in Albanian a series of actions by the Albanian government turned against the Greek minority aiming to force them to immigrate as a whole. The issue of the Greek Minority must constitute a focal subject in the Greek-Albanian relations. In the negotiations of Albania to enter the European Union, as a development issue (or not) of the relation of the two sides and of its progress with other European and International organizations (U.N., NATO, OECD).

Therefore, the main target must be the respect and the full practice of the rights of the Greek community. The national minorities are not marginal elements of the Balkan states and of Albania, but creative parts of it. Under this perspective, it is necessary to respect the human rights as guaranteed by the international organizations, the international conventions and

the Albanian legislation; on the other hand, the international community must comprehend the issue of the Greek National Minority that lives in Albania and constitutes an issue of democracy, dignity and freedom.

APPENDIX

The London Convention of 1913 and the Protocol of Florence of 1913

TREATY OF PEACE BETWEEN GREECE, BULGARIA,
MONTENEGRO, SERBIA ON THE ONE PART AND
TURKEY ON THE OTHER PART
(London) May 17, 1913

Article I

There will be from the date of the exchange of the ratifications of the present treaty, peace and friendship between His Majesty the Emperor of the Ottomans on the one part, and their Majesties the Allied Sovereigns on the other part, as well as between their heirs and successors, their States and respective subjects in perpetuity.

Article II

His Majesty the Emperor of the Ottomans cedes to their Majesties the Allied Sovereigns all the territories of his Empire on the continent of Europe to the west of a line drawn from Enos on the Aegean Sea to Midia on the Black Sea with the exception of Albania. The exact line of the frontier from Enos to Midia will be determined by an international commission.

Article III

His Majesty the Emperor of the Ottomans and their Majesties the Allied Sovereigns declare that they remit to His Majesty the Emperor of Germany, His Majesty the Emperor of Austria, King of Bohemia, etc. and Apostolic King of Hungary, the President of the French Republic, His Majesty the King of Great Britain and Ireland and Emperor of all the Overseas British Territories and India,, and His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias the care of settling the delimitation of the frontiers of Albania and all other questions concerning Albania.

Article IV

His Majesty the Emperor of the Ottomans declares that he cedes to their Majesties the Allied Sovereigns the Isle of Crete, and that he renounces in their favour all the rights of sovereignty and other rights which he possessed on that Isle.

Article V

His Majesty the Emperor of the Ottomans and their Majesties the Allied Sovereigns declare that they confide to His Majesty the Emperor of Germany, His Majesty the Emperor of Austria, King of Bohemia, etc. and Apostolic King of Hungary, the President of the French Republic, His Majesty the King of Great Britain and Ireland and Emperor of all the Overseas British Territories and India, His Majesty the King of Italy, and His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias the task of deciding the destiny of all the Ottoman isles of the Aegean Sea excepting Crete, and of the Peninsula of Mount Athos.

Article VI

His Majesty the Emperor of the Ottomans and their Majesties the Allied Sovereigns declare that they remit the task of regulating questions of a financial kind resulting from the state of war just finished and from the territorial cession above mentioned, to the International Commission convened at Paris, to which they have deputed their representatives.

Article IV

The matters relating to the prisoners, judicial jurisdiction, nationality and commerce will be regulated by special agreements.

Concluding Article

This present convention will be ratified and the ratifications will be exchanged in London the soonest possible.

In proof of this, the Representatives of the Majesties of the two parties signed this present Convention and sealed it accordingly.

London, May 17, 1913

FLORENCE PROTOCOL

December 17, 1913

Description of the frontier lands. The frontier line starts from point S (altitude 1,738 n the Austrian map, on the northeast of Mandras Nikoltsas) where the southern border of (Kazas) of Korytsa meets the ridge of Grammos mountains. It then turns to the south, following the Grammos ridge up to Mavri Petra, then passes the altitudes 2,536 and 2,016 and meets Golo. From there, having follows the splitting of the river to the altitude 1,740, it passes between the villages Radati and Koursitsa and it turns towards the hill located to the northeast of Koursitsa from where it turns to meet the Sarantaporos river. It follows this course up to the point where it meets the river Voyiousa and from there the peak Toumpa mountain, passing between the villages Zipoulitsa and Mesaria and the altitude points 956 and 2,000. From the peak of the Toumpa, the frontier line moves to the west at an altitude of 1,621 m. passing north of Drymades. It follows the course of the river up to the hill to the northeast of Episkopi village. From there, it goes southwards, following the line between Radati that remains in Albania and Gaidurohori that remains in Greece, it descends to the valley of Drinos and, crossing the river it ascends on the Kakavia hill, the homonymous village remaining in Albania. It follows again the course of the river leaving Valtista and Kastaniani in Greece and Kosovitsa in Albania and meets Mourgana, alt. 2,124. From there, it meets Stougar and, through Vertop and the altitude point 750 and leaving Giannari and Verva in Albania, it passes through the altitude points 1014, 675, 839, and moves northeast. it leaves Konispolis in Albania and follows the ridge of the hills of Stylos and, before reaching altitude 254, it runs to the south and meets the bay of Ftelia.

THE PROTOCOL OF CORFU (KERKYRA)

Kerkyra, May 17, 1914

The International Commission of Control so as to avoid the repetition of the enemy acts, considered it its duty to research, as much as that was feasible, the opinion of the peoples of Epirus on the special regulations that they were demanding and on the intentions of the Albanian Government.

Under these ideas and perceptions, the Commission deigned to submit to the Powers, which it represents, as well as to the Albanian Government, the enclosed finding report on the discussions the members of this Commission had with the representatives of Epirus.

Kerkyra, May 17, 1914

The International Control Commission

Lamb (English Attache), Wigel (General Consul of Gemany), Kral (General Consul of Austria), Krazefski (General Consul of France), Schachtein (Vice-consul of Austria), Petrov (General Consul of Russia), Lauro (General Consul of Italy), Mehdi (special representative of Albania).

With the reservations as to the approval of our electorate.

Georgios Chr. Zografos, Alex. Karapanos

REGULATIONS OF THE PROTOCOL OF CORFU

1. Organization: the execution and the observing of the present regulations for the organization of the two southern prefectures are assigned for the present to the International Commission of Control, (I.C.C.) which will organize the Administration, the Justice and the Finances.

2. The Albanian Government jointly with the ICC will appoint and dismiss the Commanders and the higher civil

servants taking into consideration the population proportion of each religious group.

3. Local Councils: The number of the members elected to the Local Councils will be triple the number of the entitled members.

4. Determination and administrative subdivisions: The ICC will also supervise the determination and the administrative subdivision of these two Prefectures once and forever and no change to this will be possible without the consent of the Powers.

5. The Lands: All the mentioned regulations are applied to the populations of the formerly conquered by Greece lands and later annexed by Albania.

6. Police Force: So as to preserve the order in the Southern provinces, a local police force will be formed by officers and policemen, representing all the religious groups in proportion to the numbers of their populations in these Prefectures. The Police Force will not be allowed to operate outside the limits of these Prefectures, except for a limited period and this only because of a superior need recognized by the ICC. This restriction will be applied only to the Police Force of these southern Prefectures, consisting of inhabitants of these Prefectures.

7. The officers of this Police Force are advised to use in the various areas only policemen from the same religious group as that of the inhabitants of the area.

8. In case of the local inhabitants not sufficing for the proportional composition of the Police Force, this will resort to recruiting inhabitants of other Prefectures of Albania.

9. In accordance to these stated principles, the Dutch offices should commence the recruitment procedures.

10. It is meant that all the afore-mentioned regulations will not hurt the integrity of the Albanian Police Force, as this was agreed in the London Convention.

11. Armed Forces: Except in the case of war or revolution in the Southern Provinces, it will not be allowed to move in or use military units of non-locals in these Prefectures.

12. Orthodox Communities: The Christian Orthodox Communities are recognized Legal Entities, same as all the others.

13. Retaining of the property and free use of it. The relations with the spiritual leaders of the Orthodox communities will remain the same as in the past. Under no condition should the inherited rights and the rank and organization of these communities be hurt, excepted if there is an agreement between the Government of Albania and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

14. Schools: The education is free. In the schools of the orthodox communities the instruction is in Greek. In the three grades of Primary School, along with the Greek language, the Albanian one will also be taught. But the teaching of religion will be done exclusively in Greek.

15. Free use of language: In accordance to the declaration set forth by the Powers to Greece dated April 11/24 1914 the use of the Albanian and of the Greek language should be secured to all the inhabitants of the Southern Provinces including the Courts and the elected councils.

16. Occupation: In the name of the Albanian Government, the ICC will occupy these lands, moving in place.

17. The officers of the Dutch mission should proceed to the formation of the local Police Force. Temporarily and until this formation, the Dutch officers will undertake the guarding of the public security assisted by local elements.

18. The ICC will proceed to the formation of mixed committees, both from Muslims and Christians in proportion to the population of each religious group. Temporarily and until the formation of the local authorities, these committees

will exercise the administrative duties supervised by ICC, which will determine the extent of these authorities. Before the arrival of the Dutch officers, the Provisional Government of Argyrokastró should take all the necessary measures to repel every foreign armed element.

19. These regulations will be applied also in the Korytsa Prefecture, which is currently being occupied by the Albanian Government, as the other Southern Provinces, too.

20. Assistance: The Government of Albania, will take the necessary measures jointly with the ICC to assist the populations who were plagued by the various armed units.

21. Immunity: Full immunity is granted to all Epirotes for all their actions prior to the occupation of these prefectures by the representatives of the Albanian Government. All the individuals not of Epirotic origin will be prosecuted only for crimes of the common penal code, during the afore-mentioned period.

22. Guaranties: The Powers that guaranteed the integrity of Albania through the Convention in London and set in place the ICC guarantee the execution and the observing of all the afore-mentioned regulations.

23. Regulations concerning the Chimarra are. Having listened to the leader of Chimarra along with the representatives of Epirus and having taken into account the stated demands relating to the preservation of time-honored privileges along with the new proposals set forth for the interest of Chimarra, the ICC will submit these long with all the others relating to Epirus to the Great Powers and to the Government of Albania for approval.

Administratively, the area of Chimarra will be annexed by the province of Argyrokastró. It is also demanded that Chimarra by the seat of a Court and that the magistrates, who should be elected among the Christian Orthodox Epirotes, should

have extended jurisdiction, especially as concerns the penal judicial authority so that - through the strict application of the law in place if necessary they be able to defeat some untoward habits and to avoid also, in this way, to have to move around these people, who are so fiercely proud of their glorious, past to distant places (something which is very difficult in the condition that transportation is) in case they get accused of serious offences or misdemeanours.

DECLARATION OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF EPIRUS

The Epirotic representatives state that they will continue to demand that:

1. The local Police Force should not be allowed to operate in any case, even that of superior force, outside the limits of the two southern provinces.
2. For a decade, the commanders be foreign nationals of a neutral country, descending from it or being at least Orthodox Christians

Georgios Chr. Zografos, Al. Karapanos

ALBANIA RECOGNIZES UNCONDITIONALLY THE PROTOCOL OF CORFU

June 12, 1914

– The following telegram was sent to Mr. Zografos by the ICC of Albania:

H.R.H. the Monarch of Albania and his Government accepted unconditionally and in total the agreement of Corfu and gave total freedom of movements to the International Commission of Control to settle after in place investigation the Chimarra question as also the issue of the administrative subdivision. As to your other written statements that were

attached to the text of the agreement, they were taken into account and they were settled by articles 1 and 5 of that agreement.

In this way, the final determination of the issue came to the exclusive authority of the Gr. Powers, represented by the International Commission of Control.

After we receive from you your final answer, we will notify you formally of the decision of the Gr. Powers and of the date of our arrival to Aghii Saranta.

August Kral
ICC of Albania

**THE GR. POWERS ANNOUNCE THE FOLLOWING
IN CORFU**

July 19, 1914

**ANNOUNCEMENT TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE MINISTER
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF GREECE**

The signees have the honor to announce to his Excellency to the Minister of Foreign Affairs that the Governments of Germany, AustroHungaria, France, Great Britain, Italy and Russia ratified Corfu agreement between the International Commission of Control and the Representatives of the Epirotes as concerns the future state of Epirus.

Quiet, Schilassi, Dauville, Erakins,
Bosdari, Prince Courousof

THE PROTOCOL OF CAPESTITSA

The signers,

On the one side, the General Commander of Eastern Macedonia M. Iliaskos and General N. Tricoupis, representing the Greek Government,

On the other hand, Esref, General Director of the Public Works of the Tirana Government, G. Ratzi, President of the Council of Elders, P. Tsali, former minister of Albania, I. Nisnika, Member of the Council, N. Zoi, Director of Economics and Captain Sel. Dosme, representative of the Albanian government.

Convening today on May 15, 1920 in Kapestitsa, they agreed on the following:

In order for the Greek Army to move in to occupy Corytsa replacing the French Army that is leaving, after the request of the second part, the first part undertakes the responsibility to stop an intervening so that the communication between the Governments of Greece and Albania be facilitated, the good relations of neighbourhood be preserved between the two brethren people and any bloodshed be avoided.

After this and until the issue is settled either by the Peace Convention or by direct agreement between the two Governments, the second part undertakes the following responsibilities:

I: None of the Greeks residing on land not to be occupied by the Greek army is to suffer in the least due to his feelings.

II: The Greek School and the churches will operate freely.

III: No advancement of positions will be made beyond the line occupied by the Greek army before the last war and this line starts from Slimerika village on Grammos mountain, follows the splitting of the rivers Devoli (Upper) and Aliakmon (Vistitsa) - Upper and passes passing to the west of the Kapestitsa village goes to the north passing west of the Vernik village.

From this point, it moves to the West, passes through peaks 858, 1309 and 1090 and from there it moves to the right and goes in Prespa lake. The advanced positions are not allowed to camp on the afore-mentioned line.

The Albanian policemen who happen to be on the Greek side of the line have a three-day deadline within which they must withdraw.

The two contracted parties promise similarly to conform with the decision of the Convention which will settle permanently the frontier line.

This document is signed in duplicate by both the contracted parties and by the participants during this agreement under the guidance of his Holiness the Bishop of Dyrrachion

The contracted parties

Iliaskos, Trikoupis

The Albanians Esres, Frasari, G. Ratz, P. Tsalis

The Participants

(Bishop) of Dyrrachio Iakovos Riza Hoursit

PROTOCOL OF DRAWING THE GREEK-ALBANIAN FRONTIER LINE

Florence, January 27, 1925

FINAL PROTOCOL

Article 1

Composition of the Committee:

According to the decisions of February 1 and November 10 1922 of the Ambassadors' Convention in Paris, the undersigned, duly authorized by their respective Governments as members of the International Committee on the definition of the borders of Albania - foreseen by the related decision taken on November 9, 1921 by the Governments of the British Empire, of France, of Italy and of Japan - were assigned the duty to delineate the frontiers between Albania and Greece.

Article 2

Documents Defining the Borders

The separating line between Albania and Greece was composed by the London Convention of 1913, the definition of the northern part from the tri-national point of Albania, Yugoslavia and Greece until Bandaros was determined precisely by the convention of the Ambassadors on July 27, 1923. The definition of the rest of the section from Bandaros until the bay of Ftelia, was precisely delineated by the Protocol of Florence on December 17, 1913 of the International committee for the determination of the South borders of Albania in the Minutes of its 15th meeting.

Article 3

Subdivision of the frontier area

For the in-place subdivision, the Greek-Albanian frontier line was drawn by the International Commission of determination of the Albanian borders in 1923-24 in three sectors.

The first sector passes from the tri-national point (in the Prespa lake). It was located on the spot by 69 regular geographical indices numbered from 1.1 to 1.69.

The second sector goes to the top of the altitude pointer 2,036 of Bandaros to the connection of Sarantaporos and Voyiousa rivers. This was located by 29 regular geographical indices, numbered from II.1 to II.29.

The third sector passes from the connection of Sarantaporos and Voyiousa rivers to the Ftelia Bay, This was located by 79 regular geographical indices, numbered from III.1 to III.79.

In order for the demarcating line to be made clear between two successive geographical indices, small unnumbered pyramids were manufactured and paced at some spots.

The details referring to the construction of the geographical indices are summarized in Appendix I.

Article 4

Documents Determining the Exact Line of the Borders

The exact line of the borders is determined by:

1) Each of the 177 maps bearing the border line and the surrounding area in detail covering the area from the one index to the other (Appendix II).

2) By the general description of the border area (Appendix III).

3) By seven charts of a map of the border area (scale 13:50,000), compiled in the care of the International Commission to determine the borders of Albania, 1923-24 (Appendix IV).

The descriptions given in the documents listed above, refer exclusively to this latter map, which replaces either the concise maps 1:100,000 drawn in 1913 by Captains King and Grabeau and attached to the Protocol of Florence (December 17, 1913) and which the Commission declared as inaccurate, or the sketching in scale 1:50,000 adopted temporarily by the Commission and on which the Convention of the Ambassadors had issued

their decision for the first sector. In case of disagreement between map and text, it is understood clearly that the analytical description which is given on the pages of par. 1 will be taken as a rule.

Article 5

River courses followed by the border line.

Each time that the border line follows the draining course of a water flow it is customary that if this water flow is altered, due to the natural and successive erosion of the water, the border line is altered accordingly to follow the water course.

If, however, the alterations are due to technical reasons or to a sudden natural cause, then there will be no alteration of the borderline. This will remain steady and unchanged.

Article 6

Paths and narrow crossings following the border line

If, in an exceptional case, the border line is followed by a path or narrow crossing, the inhabitants of both border villages will have the right of free passage on that path or narrow crossing.

Article 7

Military projects near the border line

No military project can exist anymore, nor can one be constructed in the future on a land strip of 20 meters width on each side of the border line.

Article 8

Maintenance of the border line

a) the maintenance of the indices, the small pyramids and of the deforestation of a strip of 3 meters width on each side of the border line will constitute the object of a special agreement to be compiled by the two interested Governments.

b) Until the signing of this future agreement, the maintenance of the borderline is allotted as follows: From lake Prespa to the connection of the rivers Sarantaporos - Voyiousa (included)

to Albania and from the connection of the rivers Sarantaporos - Voyiousa (excluded) to the Ftelia Bay to Greece.

Additionally, a Commission, consisting of one officer of each country is ordered to walk once the whole length of the border line and to compile a report on its condition. This ought to be done every year on July 1 in Kapestitsa.

Article 9

Maintenance of the Perati bridge

The maintenance of this concrete bridge, which now exists over Sarantaporos river at Perati will constitute the object of a special convention between the two neighboring countries.

Article 10

Various Issues

The various issues that will arise by the establishment of this border line, which are not foreseen by this Protocol, will constitute the objective of direct negotiations between the two interested countries.

Article 11

Statements of the Commission about the border line.

The Commission on determining the border line after it certified that:

a) the on-place diagram is accurate according to the principles set in Article 2,

b) the three compiled documents are compatible to the ground morphology,

c) that the three attached copies of the documents, to be used respectively in the convention of the Ambassadors by Albania and Greece are identical,

and after the handing over of the border line to the two interested Governments was conducted and after taking into consideration the statements of the representatives of the two interested nations, that are included in Appendix V,

Declares unanimously that the border area between Albania

and Greece from the tri-national point of Albania, Greece and Yugoslavia until the Ftelia Bay is truly and validly marked (articles III and IV of the present Protocol).

Article 12

Termination of the project

By signing this Protocol, the works of the International Commission to determine the border line of Albania on the Greek-Albanian border area are terminated.

Compiled in Florence in Three Original copies to be given to:

The Convention of the Ambassadors

The Government of Albania

The Government of Greece

APPENDIX V

Comments of the representatives of Albania and Greece to the International Commission to determine the border line of Albania

The undersigned Representatives of the Government of Albania and Greece, properly authorized to the International Commission, present the following statements on behalf of their respective Governments.

1) The Albanian Representative has no remark of technical nature to make as relates to the border line as it was marked from the tri-national point of Albania, Greece and Yugoslavia to the Ftelia Bay.

The Greek Representative considers the statement on this issue redundant as given than the Greek Government made known at a proper time its objections to the Convention of the Ambassadors and then subjected to the decisions of this Convention.

2) The two Representatives have no statement to make of

technical nature as to the compiled (by the International Commission on determining the border line) maps, that is the 177 pages with the indices and the 7 numbered 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 & 17 pages of the map of the border area in scale 1:50,000.

3) The two Representatives are in agreement that the maintenance of the indices, the small pyramids and of the deforested strip of 3 meters width on each side of the border line should constitute the object of a special convention to be held between the two Governments.

As for the plan of the Commission that up until the signing of such a treaty, the maintenance of the borderline is allotted as follows: From lake Prespa to the connection of the rivers Sarantaporos Voyiousa (included) to Albania and from the connection of the rivers Sarantaporos - Voyiousa (excluded) to the Ftelia Bay to Greece.

And that, in addition, a Commission, consisting of one officer of each country, will form every year on July 1 in Kapestitsa and walk once the whole length of the border line and to compile a report on its condition.

The Albanian Representative is aligned to the proposal of the Commission.

The Greek Representative states that everything related to the maintenance mentioned above should be arranged by the afore-mentioned convention between the two Governments.

Florence, January 27, 1925.

The Albanian Representative	The Greek Representative
MEDHI FRACHERI	Lt. Colonel. CHR. AVRAMIDIS

U.S. SENATE RESOLUTION 82

Washington, March 27, 1946

The Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Senate of the United States of America. Resolution 82, 1946.

RESOLVED that it is the sense of the Senate that Northern Epirus (including Koritsa) and the twelve islands of the Aegean Sea, known as the Dodecanese Islands where a strong Greek Population predominates, should be awarded by the peace Conference to Greece and become incorporated in the territory of Greece.

PEACE CONVENTION

Paris, 1946

The Peace Convention with the participation of 21 nations - winners of the Second World War accepts on June 29, 1946 the proposal of the Greek Government to the assembly, requesting the entering of the North Epirus issue in the agenda.

In November 1946, the Council of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, without reaching any decision, relegated the subject of the “*determination of the Greek-Albanian borderline*” for discussion and resolution by the Council of the four Great Powers after the peace treaty with Austria is signed –it was signed on May 15, 1955 – and it has remained there pending until today.

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Paris December 10 1948 (United Nations)

Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion,

national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 9

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 13

Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 17

No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

**UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE ELIMINATION
OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (Extract)**

Article 1

Discrimination between human beings on the ground of race, colour or ethnic origin is an offence to human dignity and shall be condemned as a denial of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as a violation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as an obstacle to friendly and peaceful relations among nations and as a fact capable of disturbing peace and security among peoples.

Article 2

1. No State, institution, group or individual shall make any

discrimination whatsoever in matters of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the treatment of persons, groups of persons or institutions on the ground of race, colour or ethnic origin.

2. No State shall encourage, advocate or lend its support, through police action or otherwise, to any discrimination based on race, colour or ethnic origin by any group, institution or individual.

3. Special concrete measures shall be taken in appropriate circumstances in order to secure adequate development or protection of individuals belonging to certain racial groups with the object of ensuring the full enjoyment by such individuals of human rights and fundamental freedoms. These measures shall in no circumstances have as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate rights for different racial groups.

Article 3

1. Particular efforts shall be made to prevent discrimination based on race, colour or ethnic origin, especially in the fields of civil rights, access to citizenship, education, religion, employment, occupation and housing.

2. Everyone shall have equal access to any place or facility intended for use by the general public, without distinction as to race, colour or ethnic origin.

CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Rome, November 14, 1950, as modified from the Protocol No. 11 (Council of Europe)

Article 14 - Prohibition of discrimination

The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any

ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.

CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Article 55

With a view to the creation of conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, the United Nations shall promote:

- a. higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development;
- b. solutions of international economic, social, health, and related problems; and international cultural and educational cooperation; and
- c. universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.

Article 56

All Members pledge themselves to take joint and separate action in co-operation with the Organization for the achievement of the purposes set forth in Article 55.

CONVENTION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION

Paris, December 14, 1960 (UNESCO - United Nations)

The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, meeting in Paris from

14 November to 15 December 1960, at its eleventh session,
Recalling that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts the principle of non-discrimination and proclaims that every person has the right to education,

Considering that discrimination in education is a violation of rights enunciated in that Declaration,

Considering that, under the terms of its Constitution, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has the purpose of instituting collaboration among the nations with a view to furthering for all universal respect for human rights and equality of educational opportunity,

Recognizing that, consequently, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, while respecting the diversity of national educational systems, has the duty not only to proscribe any form of discrimination in education but also to promote equality of opportunity and treatment for all in education,

Having before it proposals concerning the different aspects of discrimination in education, constituting item 17.1.4 of the agenda of the session,

Having decided at its tenth session that this question should be made the subject of an international convention as well as of recommendations to Member States,

Adopts this Convention on the fourteenth day of December 1960.

Article 1

1. For the purpose of this Convention, the term “discrimination” includes any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education and in particular:

(a) Of depriving any person or group of persons of access

to education of any type or at any level;

(b) Of limiting any person or group of persons to education of an inferior standard;

(c) Subject to the provisions of article 2 of this Convention, of establishing or maintaining separate educational systems or institutions for persons or groups of persons; or

(d) Of inflicting on any person or group of persons conditions which are incompatible with the dignity of man.

2. For the purposes of this Convention, the term “education” refers to all types and levels of education, and includes access to education, the standard and quality of education, and the conditions under which it is given.

Article 2

When permitted in a State, the following situations shall not be deemed to constitute discrimination, within the meaning of article 1 of this Convention:

(a) The establishment or maintenance of separate educational systems or institutions for pupils of the two sexes, if these systems or institutions offer equivalent access to education, provide a teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard as well as school premises and equipment of the same quality, and afford the opportunity to take the same or equivalent courses of study;

(b) The establishment or maintenance, for religious or linguistic reasons, of separate educational systems or institutions offering an education which is in keeping with the wishes of the pupil’s parents or legal guardians, if participation in such systems or attendance at such institutions is optional and if the education provided conforms to such standards as may be laid down or approved by the competent authorities, in particular for education of the same level;

(c) The establishment or maintenance of private educational institutions, if the object of the institutions is not to secure the

exclusion of any group but to provide educational facilities in addition to those provided by the public authorities, if the institutions are conducted in accordance with that object, and if the education provided conforms with such standards as may be laid down or approved by the competent authorities, in particular for education of the same level.

Article 5

1. The States Parties to this Convention agree that:

(a) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; it shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace;

(b) It is essential to respect the liberty of parents and, where applicable, of legal guardians, firstly to choose for their children institutions other than those maintained by the public authorities but conforming to such minimum educational standards as may be laid down or approved by the competent authorities and, secondly, to ensure in a manner consistent with the procedures followed in the State for the application of its legislation, the religious and moral education of the children in conformity with their own convictions; and no person or group of persons should be compelled to receive religious instruction inconsistent with his or their conviction;

(c) It is essential to recognize the right of members of national minorities to carry on their own educational activities, including the maintenance of schools and, depending on the educational policy of each State, the use or the teaching of their own language, provided however:

(i) That this right is not exercised in a manner which prevents the members of these minorities from understanding the culture and language of the community as a whole and from participating

in its - activities, or which prejudices national sovereignty;

(ii) That the standard of education is not lower than the general standard laid down or approved by the competent authorities; and

(iii) That attendance at such schools is optional.

INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL & POLITICAL RIGHTS

New York, December 16 1966 (United Nations)

Article 2

1. Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to respect and to ensure to all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognized in the present Covenant, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

2. Where not already provided for by existing legislative or other measures, each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to take the necessary steps, in accordance with its constitutional processes and with the provisions of the present Covenant, to adopt such laws or other measures as may be necessary to give effect to the rights recognized in the present Covenant.

3. Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes:

(a) To ensure that any person whose rights or freedoms as herein recognized are violated shall have an effective remedy, notwithstanding that the violation has been committed by persons acting in an official capacity;

(b) To ensure that any person claiming such a remedy shall have his right thereto determined by competent judicial, administrative or legislative authorities, or by any other competent authority provided for by the legal system of the

State, and to develop the possibilities of judicial remedy;

(c) To ensure that the competent authorities shall enforce such remedies when granted.

Article 27

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language.

INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL & CULTURAL RIGHTS

New York, December 1966 (United Nations)

Article 2. - 2. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to guarantee that the rights enunciated in the present Covenant will be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Article 13. - 1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

2. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize that, with a view to achieving the full realization of this right:

(a) Primary education shall be compulsory and available free to all;

(b) Secondary education in its different forms, including technical and vocational secondary education, shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education;

(c) Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education;

(d) Fundamental education shall be encouraged or intensified as far as possible for those persons who have not received or completed the whole period of their primary education;

(e) The development of a system of schools at all levels shall be actively pursued, an adequate fellowship system shall be established, and the material conditions of teaching staff shall be continuously improved.

3. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to choose for their children schools, other than those established by the public authorities, which conform to such minimum educational standards as may be laid down or approved by the State and to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

4. No part of this article shall be construed so as to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, subject always to the observance of the principles set forth in paragraph I of this article and to the requirement that the education given in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the State.

**INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION
OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION**

New York, March 7 1966 (United Nations)

The States Parties to this Convention,

CONSIDERING that the United Nations has condemned colonialism and all practices of segregation and discrimination associated therewith, in whatever form and wherever they exist, and that the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples of 14 December 1960 (General Assembly resolution 1514 {XV}) has affirmed and solemnly proclaimed the necessity of bringing them to a speedy and unconditional end,

CONSIDERING that the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 20 November 1963 (General Assembly resolution 1904 {XVIII}) solemnly affirms the necessity of speedily eliminating racial discrimination throughout the world in all its forms and manifestations and of securing understanding of and respect for the dignity of the human person,

CONVINCED that any doctrine of superiority based on racial differentiation is scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous, and that there is no justification for racial discrimination, in theory or in practice, anywhere,

REAFFIRMING that discrimination between human beings on the grounds of race, colour or ethnic origin is an obstacle to friendly and peaceful relations among nations and is capable of disturbing peace and security among peoples and the harmony of persons living side by side even within one and the same State,

CONVINCED that the existence of racial barriers is repugnant to the ideals of any human society,

ALARMED by manifestations of racial discrimination still

in evidence in some areas of the world and by governmental policies based on racial superiority or hatred, such as policies of *apartheid*, segregation or separation,

RESOLVED to adopt all necessary measures for speedily eliminating racial discrimination in all its forms and manifestations, and to prevent and combat racist doctrines and practices in order to promote understanding between races and to build an international community free from all forms of racial segregation and racial discrimination,

BEARING IN MIND the Convention concerning Discrimination in respect of Employment and Occupation adopted by the International Labour Organisation in 1958, and the Convention against Discrimination in Education adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 1960,

DESIRING to implement the principles embodied in the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and to secure the earliest adoption of practical measures to that end,

HAVE AGREED as follows:

Part I

Article 1. - 1. In this Convention, the term “racial discrimination” shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.

2. This Convention shall not apply to distinctions, exclusions, restrictions or preferences made by a State Party to this Convention between citizens and non-citizens.

3. Nothing in this Convention may be interpreted as affecting

in any way the legal provisions of States Parties concerning nationality, citizenship or naturalization, provided that such provisions do not discriminate against any particular nationality.

4. Special measures taken for the sole purpose of securing adequate advancement of certain racial or ethnic groups or individuals requiring such protection as may be necessary in order to ensure such groups or individuals equal enjoyment or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms shall not be deemed racial discrimination, provided, however, that such measures do not, as a consequence, lead to the maintenance of separate rights for different racial groups and that they shall not be continued after the objectives for which they were taken have been achieved.

Article 2. - 1. States Parties condemn racial discrimination and undertake to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating racial discrimination in all its forms and promoting understanding among all races, and, to this end:

(a) Each State Party undertakes to engage in no act or practice of racial discrimination against persons, groups of persons or institutions and to ensure that all public authorities and public institutions, national and local, shall act in conformity with this obligation;

(b) Each State Party undertakes not to sponsor, defend or support racial discrimination by any persons or organizations;

(c) Each State Party shall take effective measures to review governmental, national and local policies, and to amend, rescind or nullify any laws and regulations which have the effect of creating or perpetuating racial discrimination wherever it exists;

(d) Each State Party shall prohibit and bring to an end, by all appropriate means, including legislation as required by circumstances, racial discrimination by any persons, group or organization;

(e) Each State Party undertakes to encourage, where appropriate, integrationist multi-racial organizations and movements and other means of eliminating barriers between races, and to discourage anything which tends to strengthen racial division.

2. States Parties shall, when the circumstances so warrant, take, in the social, economic, cultural and other fields, special and concrete measures to ensure the adequate development and protection of certain racial groups or individuals belonging to them, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the full and equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. These measures shall in no case entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate rights for different racial groups after the objectives for which they were taken have been achieved.

Article 3. - States Parties particularly condemn racial segregation and *apartheid* and undertake to prevent, prohibit and eradicate all practices of this nature in territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 4. - States Parties condemn all propaganda and all organizations which are based on ideas or theories of superiority of one race or group of persons of one colour or ethnic origin, or which attempt to justify or promote racial hatred and discrimination in any form, and undertake to adopt immediate and positive measures designed to eradicate all incitement to, or acts of, such discrimination and, to this end, with due regard to the principles embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the rights expressly set forth in Article 5 of this Convention, *inter alia*:

(a) Shall declare an offence punishable by law all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, incitement to racial discrimination, as well as all acts of violence or incitement to such acts against any race or group of persons of another

colour or ethnic origin, and also the provision of any assistance to racist activities, including the financing thereof;

(b) Shall declare illegal and prohibit organizations, and also organized and all other propaganda activities, which promote and incite racial discrimination, and shall recognize participation in such organizations or activities as an offence punishable by law;

(c) Shall not permit public authorities or public institutions, national or local, to promote or incite racial discrimination.

Article 5. - In compliance with the fundamental obligations laid down in Article 2 of this Convention, States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of the following rights:

(a) The right to equal treatment before the tribunals and all other organs administering justice;

(b) The right to security of person and protection by the State against violence or bodily harm, whether inflicted by government officials or by any individual, group or institution;

(c) Political rights, in particular the rights to participate in elections – to vote and to stand for election – on the basis of universal and equal suffrage, to take part in the Government as well as in the conduct of public affairs at any level and to have equal access to public service;

(d) Other civil rights, in particular:

(i) The right to freedom of movement and residence within the border of the State;

(ii) The right to leave any country, including one's own, and to return to one's country;

(iii) The right to nationality;

(iv) The right to marriage and choice of spouse;

- (v) The right to own property alone as well as in association with others;
- (vi) The right to inherit;
- (vii) The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion;
- (viii) The right to freedom of opinion and expression;
- (ix) The right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association;
- (e) Economic, social and cultural rights, in particular:
 - (i) The rights to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work, to protection against unemployment, to equal pay for equal work, to just and favourable remuneration;
 - (ii) The right to form and join trade unions;
 - (iii) The right to housing;
 - (iv) The right to public health, medical care, social security and social services;
 - (v) The right to education and training;
 - (vi) The right to equal participation in cultural activities;
- (f) The right of access to any place or service intended for use by the general public, such as transport, hotels, restaurants, cafes, theatres and parks.

Article 6. - States Parties shall assure to everyone within their jurisdiction effective protection and remedies, through the competent national tribunals and other State institutions, against any acts of racial discrimination which violate his human rights and fundamental freedoms contrary to this Convention, as well as the right to seek from such tribunals just and adequate reparation or satisfaction for any damage suffered as a result of such discrimination.

Article 7. - States Parties undertake to adopt immediate and effective measures, particularly in the fields of teaching, education, culture and information, with a view to combating prejudices which lead to racial discrimination and to promoting

understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations and racial or ethnical groups, as well as to propagating the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Declaration of the Elimination of All Forms Racial Discrimination, and this Convention.

FINAL ACT OF HELSINKI 1975 (Extract)

VII. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief

The participating States will respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

They will promote and encourage the effective exercise of civil, political, economic, social, cultural and other rights and freedoms all of which derive from the inherent dignity of the human person and are essential for his free and full development.

Within this framework the participating States will recognize and respect the freedom of the individual to profess and practice, alone or in community with others, religion or belief acting in accordance with the dictates of his own conscience.

The participating States on whose territory national minorities exist will respect the right of persons belonging to such minorities to equality before the law, will afford them the full opportunity for the actual enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms and will, in this manner, protect their legitimate interests in this sphere.

The participating States recognize the universal significance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for which is an essential factor for the peace, justice and wellbeing

necessary to ensure the development of friendly relations and co-operation among themselves as among all States.

They will constantly respect these rights and freedoms in their mutual relations and will endeavour jointly and separately, including in co-operation with the United Nations, to promote universal and effective respect for them.

They confirm the right of the individual to know and act upon his rights and duties in this field.

In the field of human rights and fundamental freedoms, the participating States will act in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They will also fulfil their obligations as set forth in the international declarations and agreements in this field, including inter alia the International Covenants on Human Rights, by which they may be bound.

VIII. Equal rights and self-determination of peoples

The participating States will respect the equal rights of peoples and their right to self-determination, acting at all times in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and with the relevant norms of international law, including those relating to territorial integrity of States.

By virtue of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, all peoples always have the right, in full freedom, to determine, when and as they wish, their internal and external political status, without external interference, and to pursue as they wish their political, economic, social and cultural development.

The participating States reaffirm the universal significance of respect for and effective exercise of equal rights and self-determination of peoples for the development of friendly relations among themselves as among all States; they also recall the importance of the elimination of any form of violation of this principle.

**CONFERENCE ON THE HUMAN DIMENSION
OF THE CSCE (Extract)**

Copenhagen July 28, 1990

(30) The participating States recognize that the questions relating to national minorities can only be satisfactorily resolved in a democratic political framework based on the rule of law, with a functioning independent judiciary. This framework guarantees full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, equal rights and status for all citizens, the free expression of all their legitimate interests and aspirations, political pluralism, social tolerance and the implementation of legal rules that place effective restraints on the abuse of governmental power.

They also recognize the important role of non-governmental organizations, including political parties, trade unions, human rights organizations and religious groups, in the promotion of tolerance, cultural diversity and the resolution of questions relating to national minorities.

They further reaffirm that respect for the rights of persons belonging to national minorities as part of universally recognized human rights is an essential factor for peace, justice, stability and democracy in the participating States.

(31) Persons belonging to national minorities have the right to exercise fully and effectively their human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and in full equality before the law.

The participating States will adopt, where necessary, special measures for the purpose of ensuring to persons belonging to national minorities full equality with the other citizens in the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

(32) To belong to a national minority is a matter of a persons individual choice and no disadvantage may arise from the exercise of such choice.

Persons belonging to national minorities have the right freely to express, preserve and develop their ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity and to maintain and develop their culture in all its aspects, free of any attempts at assimilation against their will. In particular, they have the right.

(32.1) - to use freely their mother tongue in private as well as in public;

(32.2) - to establish and maintain their own educational, cultural and religious institutions, organizations or associations, which can seek voluntary financial and other contributions as well as public assistance, in conformity with national legislation;

(32.3) - to profess and practise their religion, including the acquisition, possession and use of religious materials, and to conduct religious educational activities in their mother tongue;

(32.4) - to establish and maintain unimpeded contacts among themselves within their country as well as contacts across frontiers with citizens of other States with whom they share a common ethnic or national origin, cultural heritage or religious beliefs;

(32.5) - to disseminate, have access to and exchange information in their mother tongue;

(32.6) - to establish and maintain organizations or associations within their country and to participate in international non-governmental organizations.

Persons belonging to national minorities can exercise and enjoy their rights individually as well as in community with other members of their group. No disadvantage may arise for a person belonging to a national minority on account of the exercise or non-exercise of any such rights.

(33) The participating States will protect the ethnic, cultural,

linguistic and religious identity of national minorities on their territory and create conditions for the promotion of that identity. They will take the necessary measures to that effect after due consultations, including contacts with organizations or associations of such minorities, in accordance with the decision-making procedures of each State.

Any such measures will be in conformity with the principles of equality and non-discrimination with respect to the other citizens of the participating State concerned.

(34) The participating States will endeavour to ensure that persons belonging to national minorities, notwithstanding the need to learn the official language or languages of the State concerned, have adequate opportunities for instruction of their mother tongue or in their mother tongue, as well as, wherever possible and necessary, for its use before public authorities, in conformity with applicable national legislation.

In the context of the teaching of history and culture in educational establishments, they will also take account of the history and culture of national minorities.

(35) The participating States will respect the right of persons belonging to national minorities to effective participation in public affairs, including participation in the affairs relating to the protection and promotion of the identity of such minorities.

The participating States note the efforts undertaken to protect and create conditions for the promotion of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of certain national minorities by establishing, as one of the possible means to achieve these aims, appropriate local or autonomous administrations corresponding to the specific historical and territorial circumstances of such minorities and in accordance with the policies of the State concerned.

(36) The participating States recognize the particular importance of increasing constructive co-operation among

themselves on questions relating to national minorities. Such co-operation seeks to promote mutual understanding and confidence, friendly and good-neighbourly relations, international peace, security and justice.

Every participating State will promote a climate of mutual respect, understanding, co-operation and solidarity among all persons living on its territory, without distinction as to ethnic or national origin or religion, and will encourage the solution of problems through dialogue based on the principles of the rule of law.

(37) None of these commitments may be interpreted as implying any right to engage in any activity or perform any action in contravention of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, other obligations under international law or the provisions of the Final Act, including the principle of territorial integrity of States.

(38) The participating States, in their efforts to protect and promote the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, will fully respect their undertakings under existing human rights conventions and other relevant international instruments and consider adhering to the relevant conventions, if they have not yet done so, including those providing for a right of complaint by individuals.

(39) The participating States will co-operate closely in the competent international organizations to which they belong, including the United Nations and, as appropriate, the Council of Europe, bearing in mind their on-going work with respect to questions relating to national minorities.

They will consider convening a meeting of experts for a thorough discussion of the issue of national minorities.

(40) The participating States clearly and unequivocally condemn totalitarianism, racial and ethnic hatred, anti-semitism, xenophobia and discrimination against anyone as well as

persecution on religious and ideological grounds. In this context, they also recognize the particular problems of Roma (gypsies).

They declare their firm intention to intensify the efforts to combat these phenomena in all their forms and therefore will

(40.1) - take effective measures, including the adoption, in conformity with their constitutional systems and their international obligations, of such laws as may be necessary, to provide protection against any acts that constitute incitement to violence against persons or groups based on national, racial, ethnic or religious discrimination, hostility or hatred, including anti-semitism;

(40.2) - commit themselves to take appropriate and proportionate measures to protect persons or groups who may be subject to threats or acts of discrimination, hostility or violence as a result of their racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, and to protect their property;

(40.3) - take effective measures, in conformity with their constitutional systems, at the national, regional and local levels to promote understanding and tolerance, particularly in the fields of education, culture and information;

(40.4) - endeavour to ensure that the objectives of education include special attention to the problem of racial prejudice and hatred and to the development of respect for different civilizations and cultures;

(40.5) - recognize the right of the individual to effective remedies and endeavour to recognize, in conformity with national legislation, the right of interested persons and groups to initiate and support complaints against acts of discrimination, including racist and xenophobic acts;

(40.6) - consider adhering, if they have not yet done so, to the international instruments which address the problem of discrimination and ensure full compliance with the obligations therein, including those relating to the submission of periodic reports;

(40.7) - consider, also, accepting those international mechanisms which allow States and individuals to bring communications relating to discrimination before international bodies.

**CONFERENCE ON THE HUMAN DIMENSION
OF THE CSCE (Extract)**

Moscow, October 4, 1991

(38) The participating States recognize the need to ensure that the rights of migrant workers and their families lawfully residing in the participating States are respected and underline their right to express freely their ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic characteristics. The exercise of such rights may be subject to such restrictions as are prescribed by law and are consistent with international standards.

(38.1) They condemn all acts of discrimination on the ground of race, colour and ethnic origin, intolerance and xenophobia against migrant workers. They will, in conformity with domestic law and international obligations, take effective measures to promote tolerance, understanding, equality of opportunity and respect for the fundamental human rights of migrant workers and adopt, if they have not already done so, measures that would prohibit acts that constitute incitement to violence based on national, racial, ethnic or religious discrimination, hostility or hatred.

DECLARATION ON RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA

Maastricht, December 1991 (European Council)

The European Council notes with concern that manifestations of racism and xenophobia are steadily growing in Europe, both in the Member States of the Community and elsewhere.

The European Council stresses the undiminished validity of international obligations with regard to combating discrimination and racism to which the Member States have committed themselves within the framework of the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the CSCE.

The European Council recalls the Declaration against racism and xenophobia issued by the European Parliament, Council and Commission on 11 June 1986 and, reaffirming its Declaration issued in Dublin on 26 June 1990, expresses its revulsion against racist sentiments and manifestations. These manifestations, including expressions of prejudice and violence against foreign immigrants and exploitation of them, are unacceptable.

The European Council expresses its conviction that respect for human dignity is essential to the Europe of the Community and that combating discrimination in all its forms is therefore vital to the European Community, as a community of States governed by the rule of law. The European Council therefore considers it necessary that the governments and parliaments of the Member States should act clearly and unambiguously to counter the growth of sentiments and manifestations of racism and xenophobia.

The European Council asks Ministers and the Commission to increase their efforts to combat discrimination and xenophobia, and to strengthen the legal protection for third-country nationals in the territories of the Member States.

Lastly, the European Council notes that, in connection with the upheavals in Eastern Europe, similar sentiments' of intolerance and xenophobia are manifesting themselves in extreme forms of nationalism and ethnocentrism. The policies of the Community and its Member States towards the countries concerned will aim to discourage strongly such manifestations.

EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

Strasbourg, November 1992 (Council of Europe)

Preamble

The member States of the Council of Europe signatory hereto,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members, particularly for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage;

Considering that the protection of the historical regional or minority languages of Europe, some of which are in danger of eventual extinction, contributes to the maintenance and development of Europe's cultural wealth and traditions;

Considering that the right to use a regional or minority language in private and public life is an inalienable right conforming to the principles embodied in the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and according to the spirit of the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms;

Having regard to the work carried out within the CSCE and in particular to the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 and the document of the Copenhagen Meeting of 1990;

Stressing the value of interculturalism and multilingualism and considering that the protection and encouragement of regional or minority languages should not be to the detriment of the official languages and the need to learn them;

Realising that the protection and promotion of regional or minority languages in the different countries and regions of Europe represent an important contribution to the building of a Europe based on the principles of democracy and cultural diversity within the framework of national sovereignty and territorial integrity;

Taking into consideration the specific conditions and historical traditions in the different regions of the European States,

Have agreed as follows:

Part I – General provisions

Article 1 - Definitions

For the purposes of this Charter:

- a “regional or minority languages” means languages that are:
 - i traditionally used within a given territory of a State by nationals of that State who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the State’s population; and
 - ii different from the official language(s) of that State; it does not include either dialects of the official language(s) of the State or the languages of migrants;
- b “territory in which the regional or minority language is used” means the geographical area in which the said language is the mode of expression of a number of people justifying the adoption of the various protective and promotional measures provided for in this Charter;
- c “non-territorial languages” means languages used by nationals of the State which differ from the language or languages used by the rest of the State’s population but which, although traditionally used within the territory of the State, cannot be identified with a particular area thereof.

Article 2 - Undertakings

1. Each Party undertakes to apply the provisions of Part II to all the regional or minority languages spoken within its territory and which comply with the definition in Article 1.

2. In respect of each language specified at the time of ratification, acceptance or approval, in accordance with Article 3, each Party undertakes to apply a minimum of thirty-five

paragraphs or sub-paragraphs chosen from among the provisions of Part III of the Charter, including at least three chosen from each of the Articles 8 and 12 and one from each of the Articles 9, 10, 11 and 13.

Article 3 - Practical arrangements

1. Each Contracting State shall specify in its instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval, each regional or minority language, or official language which is less widely used on the whole or part of its territory, to which the paragraphs chosen in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 2, shall apply.

2. Any Party may, at any subsequent time, notify the Secretary General that it accepts the obligations arising out of the provisions of any other paragraph of the Charter not already specified in its instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval, or that it will apply paragraph 1 of the present article to other regional or minority languages, or to other official languages which are less widely used on the whole or part of its territory.

3. The undertakings referred to in the foregoing paragraph shall be deemed to form an integral part of the ratification, acceptance or approval and will have the same effect as from their date of notification.

Article 4 - Existing regimes of protection

1. Nothing in this Charter shall be construed as limiting or derogating from any of the rights guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights.

2. The provisions of this Charter shall not affect any more favourable provisions concerning the status of regional or minority languages, or the legal regime of persons belonging to minorities which may exist in a Party or are provided for by relevant bilateral or multilateral international agreements.

Article 5 - Existing obligations

Nothing in this Charter may be interpreted as implying any right to engage in any activity or perform any action in

contravention of the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations or other obligations under international law, including the principle of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.

Article 6 - Information

The Parties undertake to see to it that the authorities, organisations and persons concerned are informed of the rights and duties established by this Charter.

Part II – Objectives and principles pursued in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 1

Article 7 - Objectives and principles

1. In respect of regional or minority languages, within the territories in which such languages are used and according to the situation of each language, the Parties shall base their policies, legislation and practice on the following objectives and principles:

- a the recognition of the regional or minority languages as an expression of cultural wealth;
- b the respect of the geographical area of each regional or minority language in order to ensure that existing or new administrative divisions do not constitute an obstacle to the promotion of the regional or minority language in question;
- c the need for resolute action to promote regional or minority languages in order to safeguard them;
- d the facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of regional or minority languages, in speech and writing, in public and private life;
- e the maintenance and development of links, in the fields covered by this Charter, between groups using a regional or minority language and other groups in the State employing a language used in identical or similar form, as well as the establishment of cultural relations with

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- f other groups in the State using different languages; the provision of appropriate forms and means for the teaching and study of regional or minority languages at all appropriate stages;
 - g the provision of facilities enabling non-speakers of a regional or minority language living in the area where it is used to learn it if they so desire;
 - h the promotion of study and research on regional or minority languages at universities or equivalent institutions;
 - i the promotion of appropriate types of trans-national exchanges, in the fields covered by this Charter, for regional or minority languages used in identical or similar form in two or more States.

2. The Parties undertake to eliminate, if they have not yet done so, any unjustified distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the use of a regional or minority language and intended to discourage or endanger the maintenance or development of it. The adoption of special measures in favour of regional or minority languages aimed at promoting equality between the users of these languages and the rest of the population or which take due account of their specific conditions is not considered to be an act of discrimination against the users of more widely-used languages.

3. The Parties undertake to promote, by appropriate measures, mutual understanding between all the linguistic groups of the country and in particular the inclusion of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to regional or minority languages among the objectives of education and training provided within their countries and encouragement of the mass media to pursue the same objective.

4. In determining their policy with regard to regional or minority languages, the Parties shall take into consideration

the needs and wishes expressed by the groups which use such languages. They are encouraged to establish bodies, if necessary, for the purpose of advising the authorities on all matters pertaining to regional or minority languages.

5. The Parties undertake to apply, *mutatis mutandis*, the principles listed in paragraphs 1 to 4 above to non-territorial languages. However, as far as these languages are concerned, the nature and scope of the measures to be taken to give effect to this Charter shall be determined in a flexible manner, bearing in mind the needs and wishes, and respecting the traditions and characteristics, of the groups which use the languages concerned.

Part III – Measures to promote the use of regional or minority languages in public life in accordance with the undertakings entered into under Article 2, paragraph 2.

Article 8 - Education

1. With regard to education, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used, according to the situation of each of these languages, and without prejudice to the teaching of the official language(s) of the State:

- a i to make available pre-school education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or
- ii to make available a substantial part of pre-school education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or
- iii to apply one of the measures provided for under i and ii above at least to those pupils whose families so request and whose number is considered sufficient; or
- iv if the public authorities have no direct competence in the field of pre-school education, to favour and/or encourage the application of the measures referred to under i to iii above;
- b i to make available primary education in the

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- relevant regional or minority languages; or
 - ii to make available a substantial part of primary education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or
 - iii to provide, within primary education, for the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum; or
 - iv to apply one of the measures provided for under i to iii above at least to those pupils whose families so request and whose number is considered sufficient;
 - c
 - i to make available secondary education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or
 - ii to make available a substantial part of secondary education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or
 - iii to provide, within secondary education, for the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum; or
 - iv to apply one of the measures provided for under i to iii above at least to those pupils who, or where appropriate whose families, so wish in a number considered sufficient;
 - d
 - i to make available technical and vocational education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or
 - ii to make available a substantial part of technical and vocational education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or
 - iii to provide, within technical and vocational education, for the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum; or
 - iv to apply one of the measures provided for under i to iii above at least to those pupils who, or where appropriate whose families, so wish in a number considered sufficient;
 - e
 - i to make available university and other higher

- education in regional or minority languages; or
- ii to provide facilities for the study of these languages as university and higher education subjects; or
- iii if, by reason of the role of the State in relation to higher education institutions, sub-paragraphs i and ii cannot be applied, to encourage and/or allow the provision of university or other forms of higher education in regional or minority languages or of facilities for the study of these languages as university or higher education subjects;
- f
 - i to arrange for the provision of adult and continuing education courses which are taught mainly or wholly in the regional or minority languages; or
 - ii to offer such languages as subjects of adult and continuing education; or
 - iii if the public authorities have no direct competence in the field of adult education, to favour and/or encourage the offering of such languages as subjects of adult and continuing education;
- g to make arrangements to ensure the teaching of the history and the culture which is reflected by the regional or minority language;
- h to provide the basic and further training of the teachers required to implement those of paragraphs a to g accepted by the Party;
- i to set up a supervisory body or bodies responsible for monitoring the measures taken and progress achieved in establishing or developing the teaching of regional or minority languages and for drawing up periodic reports of their findings, which will be made public.

2. With regard to education and in respect of territories other than those in which the regional or minority languages are traditionally used, the Parties undertake, if the number of

users of a regional or minority language justifies it, to allow, encourage or provide teaching in or of the regional or minority language at all the appropriate stages of education.

**DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS
BELONGING TO NATIONAL OR ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS
AND LINGUISTIC MINORITIES**

New York, December 18, 1992 (United Nations)

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming that one of the basic aims of the United Nations, as proclaimed in the Charter, is to promote and encourage respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,

Reaffirming faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small,

Desiring to promote the realization of the principles contained in the Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as other relevant international instruments that have been adopted at the universal or regional level and those concluded between individual States Members of the United Nations,

Inspired by the provisions of article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights concerning the rights

of persons belonging to ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities,

Considering that the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities contribute to the political and social stability of States in which they live,

Emphasizing that the constant promotion and realization of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, as an integral part of the development of society as a whole and within a democratic framework based on the rule of law, would contribute to the strengthening of friendship and cooperation among peoples and States,

Considering that the United Nations has an important role to play regarding the protection of minorities,

Bearing in mind the work done so far within the United Nations system, in particular by the Commission on Human Rights, the Sub-commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the bodies established pursuant to the International Covenants on Human Rights and other relevant international human rights instruments in promoting and protecting the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities,

Taking into account the important work which is done by intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in protecting minorities and in promoting and protecting the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities,

Recognizing the need to ensure even more effective implementation of international human rights instruments with regard to the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities,

Proclaims this Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities:

Article 1. - 1. States shall protect the existence and the

national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories and shall encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity.

2. States shall adopt appropriate legislative and other measures to achieve those ends.

Article 2. - 1. Persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (hereinafter referred to as persons belonging to minorities) have the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, and to use their own language, in private and in public, freely and without interference or any form of discrimination.

2. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to participate effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life.

3. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to participate effectively in decisions on the national and, where appropriate, regional level concerning the minority to which they belong or the regions in which they live, in a manner not incompatible with national legislation.

4. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to establish and maintain their own associations.

5. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to establish and maintain, without any discrimination, free and peaceful contacts with other members of their group and with persons belonging to other minorities, as well as contacts across frontiers with citizens of other States to whom they are related by national or ethnic, religious or linguistic ties.

Article 3. - 1. Persons belonging to minorities may exercise their rights, including those set forth in the present Declaration, individually as well as in community with other members of their group, without any discrimination.

2. No disadvantage shall result for any person belonging to a minority as the consequence of the exercise or non-exercise

of the rights set forth in the present Declaration.

Article 4. - 1. States shall take measures where required to ensure that persons belonging to minorities may exercise fully and effectively all their human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and in full equality before the law.

2. States shall take measures to create favourable conditions to enable persons belonging to minorities to express their characteristics and to develop their culture, language, religion, traditions and customs, except where specific practices are in violation of national law and contrary to international standards.

3. States should take appropriate measures so that, wherever possible, persons belonging to minorities may have adequate opportunities to learn their mother tongue or to have instruction in their mother tongue.

4. States should, where appropriate, take measures in the field of education, in order to encourage knowledge of the history, traditions, language and culture of the minorities existing within their territory. Persons belonging to minorities should have adequate opportunities to gain knowledge of the society as a whole.

5. States should consider appropriate measures so that persons belonging to minorities may participate fully in the economic progress and development in their country.

Article 5. - 1. National policies and programmes shall be planned and implemented with due regard for the legitimate interests of persons belonging to minorities.

2. Programmes of cooperation and assistance among States should be planned and implemented with due regard for the legitimate interests of persons belonging to minorities.

Article 6. - States should cooperate on questions relating to persons belonging to minorities, inter alia, exchanging information and experiences, in order to promote mutual understanding and confidence.

Article 7. - States should cooperate in order to promote respect for the rights set forth in the present Declaration.

Article 8. - 1. Nothing in the present Declaration shall prevent the fulfilment of international obligations of States in relation to persons belonging to minorities. In particular, States shall fulfil in good faith the obligations and commitments they have assumed under international treaties and agreements to which they are parties.

2. The exercise of the rights set forth in the present Declaration shall not prejudice the enjoyment by all persons of universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms.

3. Measures taken by States to ensure the effective enjoyment of the rights set forth in the present Declaration shall not *prima facie* be considered contrary to the principle of equality contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

4. Nothing in the present Declaration may be construed as permitting any activity contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, including sovereign equality, territorial integrity and political independence of States.

Article 9. - The specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system shall contribute to the full realization of the rights and principles set forth in the present Declaration, within their respective fields of competence.

VIENNA DECLARATION OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Vienna, October 9, 1993 (Council of Europe)

APPENDIX II

National Minorities

We, Heads of State and Government of the member States of the Council of Europe, have agreed as follows, concerning the protection of national minorities:

The national minorities which the upheavals of history have established in Europe should be protected and respected so that they can contribute to stability and peace.

In this Europe which we wish to build, we must respond to this challenge: assuring the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities within the rule of law, respecting the territorial integrity and the national sovereignty of States. On these conditions, these minorities will make a valuable contribution to the life of our societies.

The creation of a climate of tolerance and dialogue is necessary for the participation of all in political life. In this regard an important contribution should be made by regional and local authorities.

In their actions, States should ensure the respect of the principles which are fundamental to our common European tradition: equality before the law, non-discrimination, equal opportunity, freedom of association and assembly as well as to participate actively in public life.

States should create the conditions necessary for persons belonging to national minorities to develop their culture, while preserving their religion, traditions and customs. These persons must be able to use their language both in private and in public

and should be able to use it, under certain conditions, in their relations with the public authorities.

We stress the importance which bilateral agreements between States, aimed at assuring the protection of the national minorities concerned, can have for stability and peace in Europe.

We confirm our determination to implement fully the commitments concerning the protection of national minorities contained in the Copenhagen and other documents of the CSCE.

We consider that the Council of Europe should apply itself to transforming, to the greatest possible extent, these political commitments into legal obligations.

Having regard to its fundamental vocation, the Council of Europe is particularly well placed to contribute to the settlement of problems of national minorities. In this connection, we intend to pursue the close co-operation engaged between the Council of Europe and the CSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities.

In consequence, we decide to instruct the Committee of Ministers:

- to draw up confidence-building measures aimed at increasing tolerance and understanding among peoples;

- to respond to requests for assistance for the negotiation and implementation of treaties on questions concerning national minorities as well as agreements on trans frontier co-operation;

- to draft with minimum delay a framework convention specifying the principles which contracting States commit themselves to respect, in order to assure the protection of national minorities. This instrument would also be open for signature by non-member States;

- to begin work on drafting a protocol complementing the European Convention on Human Rights in the cultural field by provisions guaranteeing individual rights, in particular for persons belonging to national minorities.

APPENDIX III

Declaration and Plan of Action on combating racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance

We, Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe member States,

Convinced that the diversity of traditions and cultures has for centuries been one of Europe's riches and that the principle of tolerance is the guarantee of the maintenance in Europe of an open society respecting the cultural diversity to which we are attached;

Convinced that to bring about a democratic and pluralist society respecting the equal dignity of all human beings remains one of the prime objectives of European construction;

Alarmed by the present resurgence of racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism, the development of a climate of intolerance, the increase in acts of violence, notably against migrants and people of immigrant origin, and the degrading treatment and discriminatory practices accompanying them;

Equally alarmed also by the development of aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism which constitute new expressions of xenophobia;

Concerned at the deterioration of the economic situation, which threatens the cohesion of European societies by generating forms of exclusion likely to foster social tensions and manifestations of xenophobia;

Convinced that these manifestations of intolerance threaten democratic societies and their fundamental values and undermine the foundations of European construction;

Confirming the Declaration of 14 May 1981 of the Committee of Ministers in which the latter already solemnly condemned all forms of intolerance and the acts of violence that they engender;

Reaffirming the values of solidarity which must inspire all members of society in order to reduce marginalisation and social exclusion;

Convinced furthermore that Europe's future demands from individuals and from groups not only tolerance but also the will to act together, combining their diverse contributions,

Condemn in the strongest possible terms racism in all its forms, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance and all forms of religious discrimination;

Encourage member States to continue efforts already undertaken to eliminate these phenomena, and commit ourselves to strengthening national laws and international instruments and taking appropriate measures at national and European level;

Undertake to combat all ideologies, policies and practices constituting an incitement to racial hatred, violence and discrimination, as well as any action or language likely to strengthen fears and tensions between groups from different racial, ethnic, national, religious or social backgrounds;

CONVENTION FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES

Strasburg, November 4, 1993 (Council of Europe)

CHART OF THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Article 21

Non-discrimination

1. Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited.

2. Within the scope of application of the Treaty establishing the European Community and of the Treaty on European Union, and without prejudice to the special provisions of those Treaties, any discrimination on grounds of nationality shall be prohibited.

Article 22

Cultural, religious and linguistic diversity

The Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.

**PACT OF FRIENDSHIP, CO-OPERATION, GOOD
NEIGHBORLY RELATIONS AND SECURITY BETWEEN
GREECE AND ALBANIA**

March 21, 1996 (ratified by Law N.2568 in HGJ A' 8/13-1-1998)

“The Greek National minority in Albania contributed and continues to contribute significantly in the social life of Albania and it constitutes a factor for the development of friendship between the two countries”

**EUROPEAN UNION – STABILIZATION AND CONNECTION
AGREEMENT WITH ALBANIA**

June 2006

Albania, by signing this agreement on the one side will gain a great economic assistance and on the other hand it is committed to changes for the human and minority rights. The EU calls Albania to undertake with responsibility all the conditionality terms of the CSA, among which the full respect and protection of the rights of the Greek National Minority is included stressing that the progress in the negotiations and the approaching of Albania to the EU will depend exclusively on its ability to face to the commitments it has undertaken.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES

The member States of the Council of Europe and the other States, signatories to the present framework Convention,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage;

Considering that one of the methods by which that aim is to be pursued is the maintenance and further realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

Wishing to follow-up the Declaration of the Heads of State and Government of the member States of the Council of Europe adopted in Vienna on 9 October 1993;

Being resolved to protect within their respective territories the existence of national minorities;

Considering that the upheavals of European history have shown that the protection of national minorities is essential to stability, democratic security and peace in this continent;

Considering that a pluralist and genuinely democratic society should not only respect the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of each person belonging to a national minority, but also create appropriate conditions enabling them to express, preserve and develop this identity;

Considering that the creation of a climate of tolerance and dialogue is necessary to enable cultural diversity to be a source and a factor, not of division, but of enrichment for each society;

Considering that the realisation of a tolerant and prosperous Europe does not depend solely on co-operation between States but also requires trans-national co-operation between local

and regional authorities without prejudice to the constitution and territorial integrity of each State;

Having regard to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the Protocols thereto;

Having regard to the commitments concerning the protection of national minorities in United Nations conventions and declarations and in the documents of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, particularly the Copenhagen Document of 29 June 1990;

Being resolved to define the principles to be respected and the obligations which flow from them, in order to ensure, in the member States and such other States as may become Parties to the present instrument, the effective protection of national minorities and of the rights and freedoms of persons belonging to those minorities, within the rule of law, respecting the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of states;

Being determined to implement the principles set out in this framework Convention through national legislation and appropriate governmental policies,

Have agreed as follows:

Section I

Article 1

The protection of national minorities and of the rights and freedoms of persons belonging to those minorities forms an integral part of the international protection of human rights, and as such falls within the scope of international co-operation.

Article 2

The provisions of this framework Convention shall be applied in good faith, in a spirit of understanding and tolerance and in conformity with the principles of good neighbourliness, friendly relations and co-operation between States.

Article 3

1. Every person belonging to a national minority shall have the right freely to choose to be treated or not to be treated as such and no disadvantage shall result from this choice or from the exercise of the rights which are connected to that choice.

2. Persons belonging to national minorities may exercise the rights and enjoy the freedoms flowing from the principles enshrined in the present framework Convention individually as well as in community with others.

Section II*Article 4*

1. The Parties undertake to guarantee to persons belonging to national minorities the right of equality before the law and of equal protection of the law. In this respect, any discrimination based on belonging to a national minority shall be prohibited.

2. The Parties undertake to adopt, where necessary, adequate measures in order to promote, in all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life, full and effective equality between persons belonging to a national minority and those belonging to the majority. In this respect, they shall take due account of the specific conditions of the persons belonging to national minorities.

3. The measures adopted in accordance with paragraph 2 shall not be considered to be an act of discrimination.

Article 5

1. The Parties undertake to promote the conditions necessary for persons belonging to national minorities to maintain and develop their culture, and to preserve the essential elements of their identity, namely their religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage.

2. Without prejudice to measures taken in pursuance of their general integration policy, the Parties shall refrain from

policies or practices aimed at assimilation of persons belonging to national minorities against their will and shall protect these persons from any action aimed at such assimilation.

Article 6

1. The Parties shall encourage a spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue and take effective measures to promote mutual respect and understanding and co-operation among all persons living on their territory, irrespective of those persons' ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, in particular in the fields of education, culture and the media.

2. The Parties undertake to take appropriate measures to protect persons who may be subject to threats or acts of discrimination, hostility or violence as a result of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity.

Article 7

The Parties shall ensure respect for the right of every person belonging to a national minority to freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of association, freedom of expression, and freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Article 8

The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to manifest his or her religion or belief and to establish religious institutions, organisations and associations.

Article 9

1. The Parties undertake to recognise that the right to freedom of expression of every person belonging to a national minority includes freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas in the minority language, without interference by public authorities and regardless of frontiers. The Parties shall ensure, within the framework of their legal systems, that persons belonging to a national minority are not discriminated against in their access to the media.

2. Paragraph 1 shall not prevent Parties from requiring the licensing, without discrimination and based on objective criteria, of sound radio and television broadcasting, or cinema enterprises.

3. The Parties shall not hinder the creation and the use of printed media by persons belonging to national minorities. In the legal framework of sound radio and television broadcasting, they shall ensure, as far as possible, and taking into account the provisions of paragraph 1, that persons belonging to national minorities are granted the possibility of creating and using their own media.

4. In the framework of their legal systems, the Parties shall adopt adequate measures in order to facilitate access to the media for persons belonging to national minorities and in order to promote tolerance and permit cultural pluralism.

Article 10

1. The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to use freely and without interference his or her minority language, in private and in public, orally and in writing.

2. In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if those persons so request and where such a request corresponds to a real need, the Parties shall endeavour to ensure, as far as possible, the conditions which would make it possible to use the minority language in relations between those persons and the administrative authorities.

3. The Parties undertake to guarantee the right of every person belonging to a national minority to be informed promptly, in a language which he or she understands, of the reasons for his or her arrest, and of the nature and cause of any accusation against him or her, and to defend himself or herself in this language, if necessary with the free assistance of an interpreter.

Article 11

1. The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to use his or her surname (patronym) and first names in the minority language and the right to official recognition of them, according to modalities provided for in their legal system.

2. The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to display in his or her minority language signs, inscriptions and other information of a private nature visible to the public.

3. In areas traditionally inhabited by substantial numbers of persons belonging to a national minority, the Parties shall endeavour, in the framework of their legal system, including, where appropriate, agreements with other States, and taking into account their specific conditions, to display traditional local names, street names and other topographical indications intended for the public also in the minority language when there is a sufficient demand for such indications.

Article 12

1. The Parties shall, where appropriate, take measures in the fields of education and research to foster knowledge of the culture, history, language and religion of their national minorities and of the majority.

2. In this context the Parties shall inter alia provide adequate opportunities for teacher training and access to textbooks, and facilitate contacts among students and teachers of different communities.

3. The Parties undertake to promote equal opportunities for access to education at all levels for persons belonging to national minorities.

Article 13

1. Within the framework of their education systems, the Parties shall recognise that persons belonging to a national

minority have the right to set up and to manage their own private educational and training establishments.

2. The exercise of this right shall not entail any financial obligation for the Parties.

Article 14

1. The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to learn his or her minority language.

2. In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if there is sufficient demand, the Parties shall endeavour to ensure, as far as possible and within the framework of their education systems, that persons belonging to those minorities have adequate opportunities for being taught the minority language or for receiving instruction in this language.

3. Paragraph 2 of this article shall be implemented without prejudice to the learning of the official language or the teaching in this language.

Article 15

The Parties shall create the conditions necessary for the effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in cultural, social and economic life and in public affairs, in particular those affecting them.

Article 16

The Parties shall refrain from measures which alter the proportions of the population in areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities and are aimed at restricting the rights and freedoms flowing from the principles enshrined in the present framework Convention.

Article 17

1. The Parties undertake not to interfere with the right of persons belonging to national minorities to establish and maintain free and peaceful contacts across frontiers with

persons lawfully staying in other States, in particular those with whom they share an ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, or a common cultural heritage.

2. The Parties undertake not to interfere with the right of persons belonging to national minorities to participate in the activities of non-governmental organisations, both at the national and international levels.

Article 18

1. The Parties shall endeavour to conclude, where necessary, bilateral and multilateral agreements with other States, in particular neighbouring States, in order to ensure the protection of persons belonging to the national minorities concerned.

2. Where relevant, the Parties shall take measures to encourage trans frontier co-operation.

Article 19

The Parties undertake to respect and implement the principles enshrined in the present framework Convention making, where necessary, only those limitations, restrictions or derogations which are provided for in international legal instruments, in particular the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, in so far as they are relevant to the rights and freedoms flowing from the said principles.

Section III

Article 20

In the exercise of the rights and freedoms flowing from the principles enshrined in the present framework Convention, any person belonging to a national minority shall respect the national legislation and the rights of others, in particular those of persons belonging to the majority or to other national minorities.

Article 21

Nothing in the present framework Convention shall be

interpreted as implying any right to engage in any activity or perform any act contrary to the fundamental principles of international law and in particular of the sovereign equality, territorial integrity and political independence of States.

Article 22

Nothing in the present framework Convention shall be construed as limiting or derogating from any of the human rights and fundamental freedoms which may be ensured under the laws of any Contracting Party or under any other agreement to which it is a Party.

Article 23

The rights and freedoms flowing from the principles enshrined in the present framework Convention, in so far as they are the subject of a corresponding provision in the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms or in the Protocols thereto, shall be understood so as to conform to the latter provisions.

Section IV

Article 24

1. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe shall monitor the implementation of this framework Convention by the Contracting Parties.

2. The Parties which are not members of the Council of Europe shall participate in the implementation mechanism, according to modalities to be determined.

Article 25

1. Within a period of one year following the entry into force of this framework Convention in respect of a Contracting Party, the latter shall transmit to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe full information on the legislative and other measures taken to give effect to the principles set out in this framework Convention.

2. Thereafter, each Party shall transmit to the Secretary General on a periodical basis and whenever the Committee of Ministers so requests any further information of relevance to the implementation of this framework Convention.

3. The Secretary General shall forward to the Committee of Ministers the information transmitted under the terms of this Article.

Article 26

1. In evaluating the adequacy of the measures taken by the Parties to give effect to the principles set out in this framework Convention the Committee of Ministers shall be assisted by an advisory committee, the members of which shall have recognised expertise in the field of the protection of national minorities.

2. The composition of this advisory committee and its procedure shall be determined by the Committee of Ministers within a period of one year following the entry into force of this framework Convention.

Section V

Article 27

This framework Convention shall be open for signature by the member States of the Council of Europe. Up until the date when the Convention enters into force, it shall also be open for signature by any other State so invited by the Committee of Ministers. It is subject to ratification, acceptance or approval. Instruments of ratification, acceptance or approval shall be deposited with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

Article 28

1. This framework Convention shall enter into force on the first day of the month following the expiration of a period of three months after the date on which twelve member States of the Council of Europe have expressed their consent to be

bound by the Convention in accordance with the provisions of Article 27.

2. In respect of any member State which subsequently expresses its consent to be bound by it, the framework Convention shall enter into force on the first day of the month following the expiration of a period of three months after the date of the deposit of the instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval.

Article 29

1. After the entry into force of this framework Convention and after consulting the Contracting States, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe may invite to accede to the Convention, by a decision taken by the majority provided for in Article 20.d of the Statute of the Council of Europe, any non-member State of the Council of Europe which, invited to sign in accordance with the provisions of Article 27, has not yet done so, and any other non-member State.

2. In respect of any acceding State, the framework Convention shall enter into force on the first day of the month following the expiration of a period of three months after the date of the deposit of the instrument of accession with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

Article 30

1. Any State may at the time of signature or when depositing its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, specify the territory or territories for whose international relations it is responsible to which this framework Convention shall apply.

2. Any State may at any later date, by a declaration addressed to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, extend the application of this framework Convention to any other territory specified in the declaration. In respect of such territory the framework Convention shall enter into force on the first day

of the month following the expiration of a period of three months after the date of receipt of such declaration by the Secretary General.

3. Any declaration made under the two preceding paragraphs may, in respect of any territory specified in such declaration, be withdrawn by a notification addressed to the Secretary General. The withdrawal shall become effective on the first day of the month following the expiration of a period of three months after the date of receipt of such notification by the Secretary General.

Article 31

1. Any Party may at any time denounce this framework Convention by means of a notification addressed to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

2. Such denunciation shall become effective on the first day of the month following the expiration of a period of six months after the date of receipt of the notification by the Secretary General.

Article 32

The Secretary General of the Council of Europe shall notify the member States of the Council, other signatory States and any State which has acceded to this framework Convention, of:

- a. any signature;
- b. the deposit of any instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession;
- c. any date of entry into force of this framework Convention in accordance with Articles 28, 29 and 30;
- d. any other act, notification or communication relating to this framework Convention.

In witness whereof the undersigned, being duly authorised thereto, have signed this framework Convention.

Done at Strasbourg, this 1st day of February 1995, in English

and French, both texts being equally authentic, in a single copy which shall be deposited in the archives of the Council of Europe. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe shall transmit certified copies to each member State of the Council of Europe and to any State invited to sign or accede to this framework Convention.

THE HISTORY OF THE PANEPIROTIC FEDERATION OF AMERICA

By Elias Betzios

It is with great pleasure that I respond to the request of the Epirotic Association “Enosis” in Worcester to write the history of our Federation on the occasion of the 35th Panepirotic Convention which meets this year in their city. I have extracted some information from the book of the late Vasilios Pliatsikas “Epirotic Recollections” as well as the book of Nikos Liolis “Epirotes in America” on the issue of the establishment and the activities of the Panepirotic Federation until 1955, the year that is that I arrived in America and got actively involved in the organization. This gives me the opportunity to complete the history of the Panepirotic Federation until today with the data that I keep in my archive.

I begin with V. Pliatsikas’ report relating to the establishment of the Panepirotic Federation of America, which was renamed with the passing of time to “of America and Canada” and later to “of America, Canada and Australia”.

* * *

“After the initiative of the Epirotic organizations of New York, Philadelphia and Worcester and after many conventions, the first meeting of a Panepirotic Convention in a small mansion in Northboro, a small town near Worcester. The Convention was set for July 19-21 1942.

This Panepirotic Convention will remain indelible in the

history of the Epirotes of America. The innumerable participation of Epirotes from every corner of America, the enthusiasm, the love, the glee and all the activities of those three days will remain unforgettable to all those who had the rare occasion to participate in this Epirotic ritual. Both the Greek newspapers of New York, as well as others, sent correspondents and devoted whole columns to this historic event. The spirit behind the whole project was the Great Athinagoras, who gave splendor and majesty to the unprecedented three-day-long Epirotic fraternization. The Archbishop proposes that this mansion of great value at this picturesque location be purchased to be used as the Epirote Home with the name 'Panepirotic Roof', as a cultural and training center and in order to accommodate the Epirotic magnanimosity and history. This purchase was realized with the first donation of a thousand dollars being that of the brothers Christos and Ioannis Tsouros. Unfortunately, the estate was later resold as its maintenance was deemed very expensive, negating in that way the dream of the Great Athinagoras".

From the book of Nikos Lolis, I draw summarily the following:

"The main items of the national action of the Panepirotic Federation of America from its establishment in July 1942 up to 1946 – that critical four-year period for the nation – under the leadership of its first President Dr. Fotios Kyritsis, can be summarized as follows:

Its first act was the strong protest over the printing of commemorative Albanian stamps, besides those that were printed by the U.S. Government in the honor of Greece and the other allied countries, which resisted and fought the Axis.

Also, the sending of a delegation in San Francisco, during the founding Convention of the United Nations, to eliminate Albanian propaganda.

The regular issuing of a Bulletin in English to cultivate the

public opinion of America and other countries in favor of the North Epirotic Issue. Informative studies and protests to the Ministerial Cabinets of America, Great Britain, France and Russia. Informative reports and protests to the Peace Convention with the aim that Albania would not be considered a “combatant”, but an enemy nation, an Axis ally. Similar protests to the Security Council so that Albania would not be approved as a member of the Coalition of Peaceful Nations. Informative announcements and interviews to the American Press, radio speeches and lectures on the North Epirotic Issue and discussions with Senators and other political personas of America. The issuing of informative leaflets for the various phases of the North Epirotic Issue by Mr. F. Kyritsis and N. Kassavetis. Coordinated efforts and co-operations towards the adoption by the U.S. Senate of a proposal in favor of North Epirus, known as “Resolution S. 82”, by the Florida Senator S. Pepper.

This Bill (Resolution S. 82) of the U.S. Senate has as follows: “IT CONCLUDES that the U.S. Senate comprehends that North Epirus (the city of Corytsa included) and the twelve islands of the Aegean Sea, known as Dodecanese, where the Greek population prevails vastly, be given over by the Peace Convention to Greece and be incorporated in its territories”.

Later on, during this period, the Panepirotic Federation of America co-operated with the North Epirotic Delegation, which came to America under the leadership of the late Argyrokastro Bishop Panteleimon. It supported financially the refugees and the orphans of North Epirus, who had taken refuge in Greece. It instituted a Committee to go Paris for the Peace Convention. It organized successfully interviews and meetings of the leaders and other officials of the Federation with significant political personalities of America, Senators and other figures of Pan-American reputation and significance and many others”.

Nikos Lolis writes next that he emphasizes exclusively on the first years of action of the Panepirotic Federation of America for two reasons. “First, because since then, this *modus operandi* repeats more or less in the same form but in different tone and intensity. And, secondly, because in its greatest part this action deals with the National Issue and cannot be thus publicized in all detail. But also because we were unable to compile the necessary documents, which we assign to the future historian”.

* * *

Without, of course, claiming to be the “future historian” to whom Nikos Lolis refers at the end of his writings, I continue from 1955 until today the history of the activities of the Panepirotic Federation, as I experienced it and served it for fifty whole years, begging in advance forgiveness for any erroneous omission or overseeing of any significant part of my archives.

* * *

It was May of 1955 when I arrived as an immigrant in New York. I had had no time to get to know the leaders of the Epirotic organizations of that time, but I found out that there was a Federation of Epirotes in America and that in July 14 - 18 (two months later) it was preparing the 9th Convention in Detroit. It was the only convention of the Panepirotic Federation that I did not attend because, being a new immigrant then, I did not have either the money or the acquaintances necessary.

Constantinos Dimas From Chimara was the President then and he had been elected in New York in 1953 for the first time. Immediately after his election, he managed to rent a very plush office in the heart of New York, 42nd Street and Broadway.

He hired the late Costas Tzovas – a student at Columbia University at the time – as a secretary and his penmanship proved a lucky star for the activity and the operation of the office of the organization.

Costas Dimas activated the Panepirotic Federation by organizing Epirotic associations in cities where these did not exist – naturally – until then, but also by enlightening both the Epirotans and the rest of Diaspora on the National North Epirotic Issue. That summer, he was re-elected for two more years in the Detroit convention.

In the last two years of Dimas, both I and other youths of my age – especially in New York – had the opportunity to get acquainted with the leaders of the time and to help them in their task; and, consequently, to acquire slowly some experience for ourselves as we would unavoidably replace them some day.

Pandelis Sepis from Corytsa replaced Costas Dimas in The Chicago convention in 1957. A permanent resident of Chicago, he served the Panepirotic Federation and kept it for four years united and free of the usual internal strife that torment most of the Diaspora organizations. A serious businessman and an active leader, he gained everyone's respect. The doctor Vasilios Fotos from Politsani of North Epirus was then Secretary of the Panepirotic Federation, also a Chicago resident, who was elected for the first time – after the two two-year terms of P. Sepis – Supreme President of the Organization in July 1961.

The doctor V. Fotos remains a shining example in the activities and the struggles of the Panepirotic Federation. The fact alone that he served the organization for seven (7) two-year terms places him on an undisputed pedestal among all of us that succeeded him in the leadership of the Epirotes of America.

His activity centered mostly on the contacts he had with the governmental representatives of the time in Greece n

repeated trips, spending personally thousands of dollars in public relations with governmental personalities, insisting that the North Epirus Issue be kept alive and be placed as a National Claim of Greece.

In Chicago, where he practiced medicine, he helped many poor people by examining them for free. He brought to America, by his own affidavit, thousands of immigrants from North Epirus and he took care to find them employment to earn a living. He was the man who started the Greek Parade in his city, something that has since become an institution and is celebrated every year.

One could write many things on the activities of doctor V. Fotos, but I do not have the space for more details.

POA is renamed to POAC

In the 16th convention of the Panepirotic Federation, which took place in New York between July 9 and 14 1969, because of the participation of many representatives from Epirotic associations from Canada who expressed their desire to become members of the Federation, the charter committee proposed the change of the name of the Panepirotic Federation of America (POA) to Panepirotic Federation of America and Canada, that is POAC. The proposal was unanimously accepted.

In this Convention, the doctor V. Fotos finished his fourth two-year term as President of the Panepirotic Federation and the 16th Convention (July 9 - 14 1969) elected Constantinos Filidis from Concord, N.H., as President. At the 17th convention in Ioannina in July 1971, he was re-elected for a second term, to be succeeded due to his death by doctor Michalis Tsokas (vice-president) from Philadelphia.

After two successive terms of doctor V. Fotos again, 1973 - 1975 and 1975 - 1976, the Panepirotic Federation passed to the hands of the younger generation, as it is mentioned below, that is of Menelaos Tzelios, Elias Betzios, Vass. Mikelis and Dim. Tsoumbanos; the beginning being made at the 20th Convention of the Panepirotic Federation in Detroit between July 13 and 18, 1977 where M. Tzelios succeeded V. Fotos.

In his first term (of three years) he dealt with the various branches of the Federation with personal visits to their HQs. I recite extracts from his accounts in the two Panepirotic Conventions of 1980 in Washington and of 1982 in Philadelphia.

“We had to bring the North Epirotic Issue to a broader circle. After many contacts and meetings, by the help of the distinguished compatriot and highly-placed U.S. State Department employee Mr. Sakellaridis, we sent a telegram to the American delegation in the Committee of Human Rights of the UN that was then convening in Geneva. Through this telegram, we were asking from the American delegation to denounce the violations of the human rights of the Greeks of North Epirus by the Albanian Communist Party. The U.S. delegate brought up this matter in the assembly of the United Nations in Geneva and, for the first time, this Organization dealt with the issue of the violation of human rights in Albania. After that, the Amnesty International got also interested in this”.

“Around the end of 1979, a bill of law was submitted to the Hellenic Parliament bearing two articles. The first article referred to the smoothing over of the relations of Greece and Albania and the interruption of the wartime status. The second article referred to the arrangement of the properties of the North Epirotes who resided while the beneficiaries were blocked inside Albania. We resisted this bill of law and with telegrams to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece we asked that every discussion be postponed until the interested parties got

informed and they expressed their opinions. We stressed in the telegram that rushed decisions without the opinion and contribution of those immediately interested had always proved to be harmful to the National North Epirotic Issue”.

“At the end of February of 1980, I went to Greece and had meetings with (in chronological order) the following: the Archbishop of Greece Seraphim, the President of KEVA (Central Committee of North Epirotic Struggle), with whom I discussed the need that our fight in Greece should be further intensified. I also informed him on the action of our Federation”.

“On February 28, I was received by the President of the Republic Mr. C. Tsatsos, who was most interested in the action of our Federation in America. Moreover, he was most well-informed about the North Epirotic Issue. I reported to him about the bill of law and explained our reasons for objecting to it. In this meeting the Secretary of KEVA Mr. Tsamberis was present. After Mr. Tsatsos listened carefully to us, he asked for a memorandum and he emphatically stated that as President of the Republic he was not going to sign any such bill”.

“On Saturday, March 1st, I met with the National Defense Minister Mr. Ev. Averof. Mr. Tsamberis and Mr. Socratidis, president of the Selasforos association and a KEVA member, were with me. The meeting lasted an hour and a half and we had the opportunity to discuss the North Epirotic Issue thoroughly, as well as other issues that related to the Panepirotic Federation’s activities in America and Canada. On the issue of the bill of law, he also stated categorically that he would fight it and that he would request a meeting with Karamanlis and Rallis to express them his views, something which he truly did”.

“On Wednesday, March 5th, I met with Mr. Molyviatis, who was then Advisor of Mr. Karamanlis of Foreign Affairs. I had an interesting discussion with him. As for the bill of law,

upon my leaving, he told me (knowing that I would next go meet with Mr. Rallis, who was then Minister of Foreign Affairs): 'Now that you will go to Mr. Rallis, he has good news for you. I believe that you will be satisfied'."

"Mr. Tsamberis and Mr. Socratidis were again present in my meeting with Mr. Rallis. After I relayed to Mr. Rallis the impact that the passing of the law would have on the morale of our brothers in North Epirus, he replied to us that he considers it irrational and unprecedented in the annals of diplomacy to have diplomatic relations with a country with which we are at war".

"Finally, he stated to us that since we had strong reservations, he had no intention of creating strife with us and that he would retract the bill of law. That same evening, Mr. Averof called me at the hotel and he asked me if I was satisfied by the result. I told him 'yes' and thanked him."

"On Tuesday, March 11, I held a press conference in the 'Grande Bretagne' hotel where almost all the newspapers of Athens and a TV crew were present. At the press conference, I referred to the activities of our Federation and our contribution to the problems of the Greeks in America, as well as our active support and help in all the national issues of Greece".

"After about a month, I traveled again to Athens, more specifically on the 19th of May. I met again with Mr. Averof and on those days, as you know, there had been a government change and Mr. Rallis had become the Prime Minister. In our meeting with Mr. Averof on Tuesday, during which the professor Mr. Stavrou was present, we discussed again the North Epirotic Issue and he mentioned to us that in the government's inaugural statement, which would take place that Thursday they had a paragraph mentioning that we had good relations with Albania. Mr. Averof objected to that paragraph and they agreed to state that we had interest in the Greek minority. However, they

finally took it out completely and they did not say anything about Albania or the Greco-Albanian relations. Indeed, they did not mention anything about the other Balkan states”.

When I met with Mr. Mitsotakis (who had been assigned the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) a few days later, he confirmed too what Mr. Averof has told me, that he had asked for the paragraph about Albania to change, but that he had decided not to say anything as he was new in the Foreign Affairs Ministry. “I have not studied your Issue yet and so as not to walk into a pitfall and confront a problem later,” he said “I deemed it preferable not to mention anything on the relations of Greece with Albania.”

Continuing on his activities, Mr. Tzelios referred to a topic on which many Panepirotic Federation members had expressed disagreements.

“We promoted the issue of the nationality for the North Epirotes residing in Greece. Through our reports to the Ministers of the Interior Mr. Stratos, Mr. Averof and the Prime Minister of the time Mr. Rallis, we requested that the right to the Greek nationality be given to the North Epirotes residing in Greece and bearing the Albanian nationality up to that point”.

* * *

In the summer of 1983, the Panepirotic Federation – under the presidency of Elias Betzios– decided with the co-operation of the North Epirotic associations of Greece to bring the North Epirotic Issue (and, especially, the violation of the human rights) in the U.N. in Geneva.

In the front line of our struggle stood that distinguished Greek lady, world famous for her struggles, her knowledge and her interest in the human rights of the oppressed peoples of the world, Dr. Erica Dai (International Lawyer, U.N. Expert

in Human Rights and Protection of the Minorities).

These posts in the Human Rights Commission in the U.N. are very few and they are assigned to individuals possessing very strict qualifications, the election of whom is conducted after the countries-members of the committee vote.

Thanks to the initiative of the late Stef. Kallos, of North Epirus origins, a tight group of specialists was assembled in Geneva, along with whom we prepared our appeal to the U.N. Human Rights Committee. During this time, it was considered necessary that a meeting be held among our associates in Geneva, the KEVA of Athens and the POAC. Indeed, this meeting took place in Switzerland and, there, we draw in common the guidelines of the new action plan for the success of our cause, that is, the acceptance and voting of our appeal in the U.N. Human Rights Committee.

However, the Panepirotic Federation had not been recognized as a Non-Governmental Organization (N.G.O.) and thus had no right to be present in the conventions of the U.N. Human Rights Committee.

Fortunately, through the intervention of POAC president El. Betzios, who was a member of the Archbishopic Council, the late Archbishop of America Iacovos authorized him to represent the Archbishopic of America (which was a recognized N.G.O.) to the U.N..

In the beginning of August 1983, our denunciation was discussed in the work group where it passed and it was proposed as a topic of the agenda and, subsequently, it came to the sub-committee consisting of 17 nations. It was approved by the sub-committee and it was forwarded to the great Committee of the 43 countries in February of 1984.

The protests of the Panepirotic Federation continue in every directions.

On January 25, 1984, the Panepirotic Federation, with the

help of the U.S. Congressmen BENJAMIN ROSENTHAL, GUS YATRON and PAUL SARBANES managed to bring this issue to the human rights committee of the U.S. Congress, in the presence of the late Bishop of Driinoupolis, Pogoniani and Konitsa Sevastianos.

These same contacts continued simultaneously in the Congress with the help of the personal friend of the Panepirotic Federation president, the friend-of-Greece Senator THOMAS EAGLETON.

At the same time, always with Dr. Dai's help, POACAT founded on May 11 1984, the "International Federation for the Protection of the Rights of Ethnic, Religious, Linguistic and other Minorities", one more N.G.O. formally recognized by the U.N.. So, with these two organizations. the Panepirotic Federation, along with its former presidents M. Tzelios, El. Betzios, Vass. Mikelis and Dim. Tsoumbanos, repeatedly denounced Albania in the Sub-Committee for the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities in the U.N.. In one trip to Geneva, indeed, Dim. Papas, a member of the Directors' Board of "International Federation" came along.

It would not be an exaggeration to state that the Panepirotic Federation was the first organization to bring a matter of human rights to the U.N.' attention. Always with the assistance of Dr. Dai, it submitted the most well-known denouncements of Albania for the blatant and systematic violation of the human rights of the Greek minority. So, Albania was blacklisted along with countries that systematically violate the human rights of minorities.

POAC renamed to POACA

In the 23rd Panepirotic Convention in New York (June 27 - 30 1984) the president of the Panepirotic Federation of Australia Petros Petranis attended and he expressed to the

members the wish of the Epirotes of Australia to become POAC members. The President of POAC then stated that there had been the thought of a merging of POAC and the Panepirotic Federation of Australia. The Epirotes of Australia adopted the idea and the proposal was to be announced personally by Mr. Petranis who attended that convention.

Mr. Petranis read the minutes of the decision by the full convention of the Panepirotic Federation of Australia and an ovation followed from the convention members.

There was the proposal that POAC be extended to Australia. The proposal was seconded and it was approved unanimously. Thus, POAC was renamed to POACA (Panepirotic Federation of America, Canada and Australia).

At that same convention, the president of POACA proposed the ceasing of the obsolete by-then term "Supreme" which was awarded to officials and members of the boards of directors, a proposal that was unanimously approved by the assembly.

Ceasing of War Status

In the same period, in June 1984, the negotiations between Greece and Albania commenced towards the termination of the War status between the two countries. The issue was discussed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs (currently President of the Hellenic Republic) Carolos Papoulias and the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania M. Kaplani.

During a personal phonecall of the POACA president to our compatriot Minister, to inquire on the terms for the ceasing of the wartime status, the answer was that even though the terms had not been discussed with Mr. Kaplani, the interests of Greece would not be hurt. "If you want to learn more, come to Athens and we will discuss them".

The Panepirotic Federation deemed that it could not retain the privilege of information on the national issue and that it

should simultaneously inform the organizations of Greece and, especially, KEVA. With the approval of Mr. Papoulias for a friendly meeting in the Foreign Affairs Ministry, the President of POAC called the late Archbishop of Athens and the whole of Greece Seraphim, president of KEVA, to lead the Epirotic delegation in the meeting with the Minister Carolos Papoulias.

Indeed, on August 30 1984, this meeting took place in the Foreign Affairs Ministry with the participation of members of the Panepirotic Federation (Betzios, Tzelios, Stavrou and Kyranis), of KEVA (with the personal presence of its president Archbishop Seraphim), the general secretary Yiannis Tsiamberis, the president of the North Epirotic Association Costas Giigas and the representative of the North Epirotic Associations of Greece Stef. Kallos from Geneva.

In that meeting, it was clearly stated to our compatriot minister that the Epirotic associations of Greece and America were opposed to the termination of the wartime status between the two countries. Even though Mr. Papoulias was most clear that in essence there was no “wartime status” with Albania, the irreversible position of the Epirotans forced the government (in our own evaluation) to postpone the issue for a year.

A year later, in the summer of 1985, the issue resurfaced, so the president and the general secretary of the Panepirotic Federation, El. Betzios and Vas. Mikelis, were forced to travel again to Athens where they met with the President of the Republic Mr. Christos Sartzetakis and the late Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou at whose house they developed the argument that the termination of the wartime status would be the ruination of North Epirus. The Prime Minister’s statement to the Panepirotic Federation was that “the Prime Minister of Greece was not ready for any final act and that before any decision, the immediately concerned Epirotes will be notified”.

In the evening of the same day, the PanEpirotic representation had a meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Papoulias who again stated to them that the decision of Greece was irreversible and that the ceasing of the wartime status would take place. Then, the PanEpirotic representation decided to tell him the “secret” that in the meeting with the Prime Minister that very same day, they had got the reassurance that “the government is not ready for any final act” and, so, Mr. Papoulias stated that he ceded in difference to the leader. Thus, the termination of the wartime status was postponed for one more year.

In April of 1986 the Prime Minister and the Foreign Affairs Minister jointly stated that the decision to end the wartime status in the next month (May) had been taken.

Again there was an uprising and a quick trip (May 2 1986) for the president and the treasurer of the Panepirotic Federation, El. Betzios and Vas. Mikelis, to Athens. This time, Mr. Papoulias, although he showed a warmer and friendlier attitude towards the PanEpirotes leaders, gave a negative and disappointing answer and left no opening for a change or even a postponement of the government’s decision. The meeting ended with the following declaration of the Minister: “One day you will apologize to me for your objections and for all those that you accuse me of”.

In their very brief visit to the Prime Minister Andrea Papandreou’s house in Kastri that evening, the president and the treasurer of the Panepirotic Federation were not satisfied by his statement that “the government will do whatever it can for the prosperity of the Greek minority in Albania”. Whereas in their last meeting, the Prime Minister had promised that the government would not proceed to any action relating to the wartime status if those immediately concerned were not notified first ...

The objection of the Panepirotic Federation and of the North Epirotic associations of Greece towards the termination of the wartime status with Albania seemed illogical to those who did not know the matter well, however, our organizations were in essence opposed only to the unconditional termination of the wartime status. What we were asking for was the signing of a peace treaty between the two countries and, above all, the full restitution of human rights for the North Epirotes people in Albania.

Some days later, on May 15 1986, a great convention took place at the “Caravel” Hotel with the participation of all the Epirotic associations of Greece and of POACA where a plebiscite was issued and sent to the Government.

The late Archbishop of America Iacovos supported our cause actively with the following telegram to Mr. Papoulias:

“The Epirotes People of America and Canada and the whole Diaspora of America consider the unconditional termination of the wartime status (as this appears to be) between Greece and Albania as the ceding of national rights. It is the wish of everyone that a peace treaty is reached with terms that protect the human rights of the Greek North Epirotes, which had been established by older treaties. In case, the rights of the North Epirotes are not respected, they say, let the wartime status remain until the resolution of their just demands”.

* * *

On February 1987 and on the occasion of the celebration of the autonomy of North Epirus and the liberation of Ioannina, during a private trip to Australia of the president of POACA Vas. Mikelis, the former president El. Betzios and vice-president Dim. Tsoumbanou (candidate for the presidency) along with their wives, they visited the Epirotic associations and Panepirotic

Federation of Australia which had already become a member of POACA. The visit began in Sidney where the whole board of directors of the Epirotic association with its president Costas Yiotakis received them at the airport. There followed a reception and dinner the same evening in their honor with the participation of many Epirotes of that city. The next day, a general convention of the association's members took place where the president of POACA and his group hailed the convention and spoke on the activities of POACA on the North Epirotic Issue.

Continuing their trip, they visited the Epirotic sections and the Federation of Melbourne where again they were received warmly by their compatriots of that city under the leadership of Sotiris Papazisis and Petros Petranis, president and general secretary of the Panepirotic Federation.

The representatives of POACA, on the occasion of the two historic anniversaries, the 17th and the 21st of February, attended the instituted commemorative liturgy, at the end of which a lecture by former president El. Betzios ensued on the topic "Termination of the wartime status and relations with Albania". The commemorative liturgy was attended by the Ambassador of Greece Mr. Tzaferis and the Gen. Consul Mr. Manolopoulos. That same evening, the PanEpirotic Union of Melbourne offered dinner in their honor at the private club of the organization.

* * *

On August 28 1987, upon the Government's announcement (again) that the termination of the wartime status would be conducted, the Epirotic organizations set up a huge Pan-Hellenic demonstration at the foreground of the University of Athens with thousands of participants under the guidance of Bishop of Konitsa Sevastianos. POACA was represented by president Vas. Mikelis, secretary Fotis Galitsis, El. Betzios,

Dim. Tsoumbanos, Men. Tselios, Thomas Karathanos, Nikolaos Katsis and Costas Vetsas.

Vass, Mikelis' speech to thousands of people was given loud applause, especially at the point where the Bishop of Driinoupolis joked by saying: "You have overshadowed me, Mr. Mikelis". At the press conference that followed that same evening for the journalists and correspondents of the newspapers of Greece, the president of the Panepirotic Federation stated that "since today our organization is a wartime with the Greek Government."

At the end of 1987 the "International Federation" left the Panepirotic Federation and was autonomized, and the latter was forced to resort to "MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP" in London so as to continue its activities in the UN, always in combination with the Archbishopric of America.

I borrow from the minutes of the 25th Panepirotic Convention, where the president at the time Vas. Mikelis recounts what had been done during his term.:

"In January 1988 we began negotiations with the internationally known and appreciated MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP, which is based in London. The request which submitted to that organization was to be authorized to represent it in the U.N. Human Rights Committee, so as to make our voice heard again. After the initial negotiations with the above organization, to whose direction the North Epirotic Issue was already known and was so dealt with in a positive spirit due to the continuous efforts of our great friend and mother to North Epirus - Dr. Erica Dai, we managed with our visit to London to secure the authorization from MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP to represent it on the 44th Convention of the U.N. Human Rights Committee in Geneva.

At this point, I feel obliged to praise to the utmost possible the great social work in the U.N. Human Rights Committee

of this great friend of ours, a work aimed at mollifying the pin of all oppressed peoples of the world, the North Epirotes included. Worthy Greek woman proving in action that the Greek culture and the Greek identity are interwoven with the humanistic spirit. She belongs to that category of anonymous pioneers of the international scene, because the respect of human rights is the basic prerequisite for the preservation of World Peace, according to the Final Act of Helsinki.

The important issue that occupied us next was what kind of a petition we would submit to the Human Rights Committee. Therefore, we decided to ask what we had been granted and then deprived of, THE RESTITUTION OF THE AUTONOMY IN NORTH EPIRUS”.

That same week, the Archbishop of the Orthodox Church of England Methodios of Thyatira had convened in London a world convention of the Greek Women Living Abroad, where the Panepirotic Federation had been invited. The Epirotes of America were represented – wholly on personal expenses – by Vas. Mikelis and El. Betzios. And Mikelis continued his recounting:

“The Convention of the Greek Women Living Abroad was honored by the presence of representations of organization from all over the world, of politicians and religious leaders, of governmental representatives, of journalists and many people, among whom many Greek ship-owners.

More than 1.000 Greek women had gathered from every corner of the world; the only absent one was the enslaved North Epirotan woman. On her behalf, Mrs. Ioulia Betziou hailed the Greek ladies of the Diaspora, causing a great emotion to overcome her audience when she referred to the great absentee, the North Epirotan mother”.

When she finished her speech, she was given a long standing ovation by all the dignitaries, the members and the journalists.

The Athenian newspapers wrote most praising comments for the absent North Epirotan mother. They indeed reproached the representative of the Greek Government at the convention as being the only one who did not applaud.

The next day, an official dinner was given, where the president Vas. Mikelis was invited and, sitting at the table of the dignitaries, he was offered the microphone to address the participants. When he concluded his speech, it was such the enthusiasm of those present, that they were applauding incessantly for the struggle that the Epirotes of America conduct.

* * *

Reverting to the Autonomy Issue, Vas. Mikelis continued his report by saying:

“Indeed, after a waiting period of three months and with the always invaluable assistance of Dr. Erica Dai, who managed to secure for us the necessary priority, I was included in the list of speakers for March 4th 1988. In front of the international committee in Geneva and, after I once more denounced the systematic and blatant violation of the human rights of our Greek brethren in North Epirus as well as the methodical eradication of the Greek-Christian element, by the regime which shames the international community, we submitted our demand:

**“RESTITUTION OF THE AUTONOMY IN NORTH
EPIRUS”**

“A demand powerful as a thunder (that was how the foreign journalists described it - because it differed radically from our demands of the past, and also from the demands and the petitions of tens of speakers in that assembly. The novelty of the demand caused the vivid interest of the representatives of the nations, who – after the end of my speech – wanted to

learn more details on our National Issue. Many speakers among them asked me to include their request too in my speech. I was wondering then why during all those past years we had been unable to become active in that direction...

My dear compatriots, I proudly tell you that March 4 1988 constitutes a spring vault for the course of the Panepirotic Federation, despite the disappointing result that followed this initial success.

The fact that disappointed us and filled us with sadness and anger was the following: the U.N. Human Rights Committee is obliged to forward its decision to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the U.N.. On May 27 1988, the decision of the Human Rights committee came to the floor in the assembly of ECOSOC and, while in the first stage it was voted in favor with 13 to 10, during the discussion in ECOSOC, when the nations were called to vote on it overtly, it got only 11 votes in favor, 13 against and 29 abstentions. Among the nations that abstained from the voting procedure was Greece, too”.

* * *

In the 25th Convention of POACA, June 22 - 25 1988, Dim. Tsoumbanos was elected president.

At that stage, the co-operation of POACA with the Greek Government had been interrupted after the announcement of the Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou that he would proceed in the “*termination of the wartime status*” with Albania. As president Dim. Tsoumbanos recounted “*the management of the National Issue fell victim to political ambitions, to the already taken decisions of a government whose grasp of power was questionable due to the forthcoming elections*” and, he continued: “*With the given situation, I considered that the U.N. was the only battlefield that POACA should never abandon*

in any way, because its future decisions could be determinant in the development of the North Epirotic Issue”.

On August 1988, the representation of POACA (Tsoumbanos - Betzios - Mikelis) re-demanded the AUTONOMY with a new intervention in the U.N., denouncing Albania at the same time for its continuous violations of the human rights of the North Epirotes. On August 18, Mrs. Erica Dai, as a member of the Specialists’ Sub-Committee, analyzed the Autonomy issue and its restitution.

So, on September 1, the U.N. Sub-Committee for the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities, through its 15/1988 decision, recognized the brutal and systematic violation and suppression of human right by the government of Albania.

On February 1990, in one more intervention of POACA to the Human Rights Committee, we appealed to the U.N. Secretary General not to respond to the invitation by the Albanian Government and to postpone his visit to Albania until the human rights were fully restored and the basic freedoms were secured in that country.

Despite our efforts, the Human Rights Committee agreed to the Secretary General’s visit but advised that during his stay in Albania he demanded a specific schedule on the issue of the human rights reform from the Albanians. In a phone call of mine with Mr. De Gueillar’s office, we were reassured that the Secretary General was well informed of the status quo in Albania.

On December 1989, the statements of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the time, Mr. Antonis Samaras brought a storm in the stagnant waters of the Greek political life; he wished that our North Epirotic brethren be free to celebrate Christmas unimpeded, same as the Romanian people. That statement of his led the Greek political parties in endless

confrontations. Yet, from the whole proceedings something beneficial to our Issue came out, too: the North Epirotic cause became the centre of the Greek political stage”.

Given this opportunity, the governing board of POACA decided to send a delegation to Athens with the purpose of meeting Mr. Samaras and the leader and – later – Prime Minister of Nea Demokratia Mr. Mitsotakis. President Dim. Tsoumbanos was escorted to Athens by former presidents El. Betzios and Vas. Mikelis.

On Thursday, January 4 1990, the predetermined meeting took place between the POACA delegation and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Samaras. During this meeting, a complete agreement of opinions was found as to the future promotion of the North Epirotic Issue and we were given promises of co-operation.

In Athens, there had already arrived a group of North Epirotes under the name “NORTH EPIROTAN ACTION”, who tried to have meetings with Greek political leaders, moving totally independently from POACA. They were the members of “International Federation”, who had seceded from POACA.

On Tuesday, January 9 1990, in the morning, a lengthy discussion took place in the offices of SFEVA, under the aegis of the Bishop of Dryinoupolis, Pogoniani and Conitsa Sevastianos. Eventually, after a tempestuous discussion in an extremely disturbed atmosphere, it was agreed that the meeting with Mr. Mitsotakis to be made with the participation of all the representatives of Epirotes of America and Greece, led by Bishop Sevastianos.

Mr. Mitsotakis was addressed by Bishop Sevastianos, the POACA president Mr. Tsoumbanos and the “North Epirotes Action” president Mr. Dim. Papas. After the end of the discussion, Mr. Mitsotakis called the reporters and the TV crews in the conference room and stated that his party formally

made an issue of the human rights of the North Epirotes and called the Government to demand their immediate restitution by Albania.

After our meeting with Mr. Mitsotakis, only the representation of POACA (Tsoumbanos, Betzios, Mikelis and Kolios) was received by the President of the Republic Mr. Christos Sartzetakis. In his speech that lasted for one hour and twenty minutes, Mr. Sartzetakis repeated once more that the issue of North Epirus and of the enslaved Greeks was something that would occupy him forever, until its final fruitful resolution.

On Wednesday, January 10 1990, our representation gave a press conference at the Hilton Hotel. The press conference was broadcast the same day by the news bulletins of ERT and all the other public and private TV stations, as well as all the printed Press of the following day.

On Thursday, January 11 1990, the Holy Synod had organized a demonstration, under the auspices of Archbishop Seraphim, a rally in the foreground of the University of Athens and a march to the Parliament and Embassy of Albania.

The demonstration was a huge success and in it POACA President Dim. Tsoumbanos, “North Epirotan Action” president Dim. Papas, the SFEVA president and the Selasforos association president spoke in turn and Bishop Sevastianos delivered a fiery speech at the end that spoke directly to the hearts of all the participants. Then came the march to the parliament and to the Albanian Embassy where a plebiscite was glued on the door.

In the same evening, POACA president Dim. Tsoumbanos and El. Betzios met with the PASOC president Andreas Papandreou (he was not Prime Minister at the time) to whom they expressed the complaints of the Epirotes of the Diaspora for his management of the National North Epirotic Issue, through his various governments, and especially over the

unilateral termination of the wartime status, with an illegal and anti-constitutional Ministerial Act.

Mr. Papandreou, in turn, repeated his usual promises that he would do whatever he could to defend the human rights of the Greeks in North Epirus.

* * *

In June 28 - 30 1990, the 26th Panepirotic Convention met in New York where Simos Dimas was elected president. One year later, he resigned and on that occasion, the 27th Convention was assembled in Chicago (June 29 - July 2 1991) where the doctor V. Fotos was re-elected for the last time to serve for two more years.

Continuing its pro-POACA activities in the U.S. Congress, the U.S. Senate and the U.N. in Geneva, the Archbishopric of America was represented in September of 1991 by El. Betzios, a member of the Archbishopric Council, to the *International Security and Co-operation in Europe* which for the first time after the collapse of the communist regime met in Moscow.

All the Greek U.N. delegation, Dr. Erica Dai and the former POACA president formed one team whose activities were coordinated by the permanent representative of Greece in Geneva Mr. Yiannis Bakaouris.

In their every appearance to the U.N. Human Rights Committee, the POACA representatives with the guidance of Dr. Dai, did not cease to bring to the attention of the other nations the Issue of Cyprus, that is the suppression of the human rights of its people by the "Attila".

However, I would not wish to end the "Fotos" chapter without mentioning that it took many years for all the Epirotes of America to recognize that the doctor V. Fotos had shaped an era because he was the exception in the activities and the

national Cause of the Panepirotic Federation. As a sign of respect and recognition of his contributions of many years, the 33rd Convention in Florida in 2003 proclaimed him Emeritus President of the organization.

In the same convention, also in recognition of her contributions to the POACA and its cause, Dr. Erica Dai was proclaimed an Emeritus member of the Board of Directors.

* * *

In June 1993 in Toronto, Canada, Nick Gage from Worcester, MA, was elected president.

In North Epirus at the same time, despite the fact that Albania had gotten rid of Emver Hoxha and Ramiz Alia, the Greeks were still being oppressed by the governmental security forces and they were getting ousted from their public positions in the armed forces, justice and public administration. As a result of this persecution and the discriminations, they were forced to abandon their homes seeking asylum in Greece. In the spring of 1992, for the first time in Albania there was a democratic government elected under Sali Berisha's presidency. Though it was democratic, it did not terminate the oppression of the Greek minority that remained in Albania. Sali Berisha turned his attention towards America trying to gain the State Department's support for his country.

Indeed, in one of his trips to America in June 1992, the organization "Appeal of Conscience Foundation" organized a dinner in his honor and invited almost all the religious leaderships, among whom the Archbishopric of America. The Archbishop of the time Iacovos assigned the representation of the Archbishopric to the Rev. Milton Efthymiou and the former POACA president El. Betzios (under his membership to the Archbishopric council). In his speech after the meal,

Berisha raised the issue of the autonomy of Kosovo, something that gave the opportunity to El. Betzios to remind him the right of the North Epirotes to autonomy of their country. Berisha's answer was that in Albania there were only 50,000 Greeks and therefore no autonomy issue could be raised. There was a long argumentative discussion after that and Berisha stated formally that he would perform a population "census" so as to determine the exact number of the Greek minority. Next on his trip in America, Berisha had been scheduled to go to Boston, as an invitee of the Law School of Boston University, where he would receive the Doctorate title; yet, the Epirotic associations of Boston with Mr. Gage in the head managed to cancel the whole ceremony by accusing him that he suppresses the human rights of the Greek minority in his country.

The worst part of Sali Berisha's activity against the Greek minority was in 1994 when the secret police invaded and investigated the houses of 700 North Epirotes, destroyed the offices of the political organization "Omonoia" and imprisoned five of its leading members with the charges of treason.

The POACA president of the time Nick Gage, in order to liberate the five prisoners from "Omonoia", undertook a campaign to enlighten the international public opinion, with articles in the American and European press, pressing his critique on the Berisha government so as to raise the awareness of many humanitarian organizations and so that these would send monitors to the trial of the five "Omonoia" leaders. At the trial (August 15 1994) a great interest was also shown from many members of North Epirotic associations of Greece. The defense of the five defendants was voluntarily undertaken by the Boston-based attorney Dimitris Kafkas who, although he was very young, did a wonderful job. Eventually, the five North Epirotes were released after a total of nine months of imprisonment.

The foreign monitors to the trial of the five “Omonoia” members created, through their reports to the international press, a negative climate in the U.S. Government towards the Albanian government of Berisha and the Albanian leader himself. Through the meetings of the POACA president in the White House the financial support of America was interrupted and Berisha was forced to conduct elections in Albania, which he lost. In his address to the Albanian people, Berisha stated that his failure to get re-elected was due to the intervention of the Panepirotic Federation of America and, especially, its president Nick Gage. The new Albanian Government decided to change course and attitude towards the Greek minority, appointing many Greeks to various governmental positions.

In the meantime, the Panepirotic Federation, through its Scholarship Fund and the fund of the National Issue, offered during the Gage presidency US\$ 575,000 in scholarships, church repairs, street construction and aid to poor families. Finally, Berisha himself, in the Opposition, changed attitude towards the Greek minority and, when he regained power, he appointed many North Epirotic Ministers in his government. Yet, this assistance of the Panepirotic Federation was not appreciated by the minority leaders and, as a result, they keep a distance from the Epirotic associations of Greece and, especially, of America.

In the 30th PanEpirotic Council (February 19 - 23 1997) in Florida, Christos Kyrkos was elected as POACA president and he served for two terms until July 7 2001. Christos Kyrkos endeavored to raise money from Mrs. Sophia Kallou, the Panepirotic Federation, the fund of the National Issue and some significant personal funds of his which he offered to construct highways in North Epirus to connect eight villages of the Ano Pogoni district in North Epirus. Also, he escorted in North Epirus Andrew Athens, General President of the

Convention of Greeks of the Diaspora (SAE), who gave significant amounts of money for the creation of a clinic at the Georgoutsates village.

In July 2001 in new York, El. Betzios was re-elected president and during his term POACA reverts to its first name POA, in order for the Federations of Australia and Canada to be incorporated in the new World Organization of the Epirotes of abroad, the “World Council of Epirotes Abroad”, in the establishment of which the POA played, naturally, a leading role.

In February 2003, Panayiotis Silis got elected in Florida and, along with other POA members, they organized a large convention in Ioannina with the presence of the local administration; the topic was the development of Epirus and the issue of the dual nationality of the North Epirotes was brought up once more.

* * *

In March 2005, after three successful conventions in Florida under the leadership of Michalis Servos, the Epirotes elected him POA president. New members were on his side and new activities - especially for the history and the promotion of free Epirus. Through the donations of Epirotes and friends from America, he erected in the central square of Ioannina the statue of Olympias - mother of Alexander the Great, and at the same time that square was renamed to “Olympiados Square”.

After a request of POA to the Ministry concerned, the Ioannina airport was given the name “Vasilefs Pyrrhus” (King Pyrrhus) and the statue of that King was erected there, a donation by Michalis Servos. Also, King Pyrrhus’ statue was erected again by his donation in the central square of Ioannina.

One more statue, that of “Pogonisia Mana” (Mother of Pogoniani), was erected in Pogoniani, a donation by the late Christos Pliatsikas. Michalis Servos was not limited to monuments and statues. In his effort to leave something to remember in his own village, he erected in the honor of the barrel-makers of Sopiki in North Epirus a huge bronze barrel, a donation by Anastassia Ginopoulou.

During his presidency at POA, he contributed actively to the establishment of the World Council of Epirotes of Abroad and, finally, he promoted the publication off the book “A Retrospect on the History of North Epirus and the Greek Minority” by professor Theophanis Malkidis of the Democritean University of Thrace.

It would be a great omission on my part, to end this historical summary of the activities of the Panepirotic Federation of America, without referring to the valuable patriotic contribution of many other distinguished members who served in different posts of the various councils or assisted the organization financially.

I commence with the late Epirotes benefactors Fotios Kyritsis, Vaggelis Kotsidas, Spyros Tsigos and, naturally, Michalis Anagnostopoulos from Konitsa, from whose property, the Panepirotic Federation draws each year significant funds for our scholarship program. The deceased presidents of the POA are listed in the attached table. Other deceased members are Andreas Mellios, Nick Kassavetis, Christos Batsios, Christos Mastoras, Michalis Manos, doctor Mattheos Papageorgiou, Christos Mikelis, Andreas Kolios, Vasilios Loukas, Andreas Godimis, Theodoros Singas and Vasilis Ikonomidou (from Worcester), Michalis Ninas (from Boston), Christoforos Kyrkos and Costas Stripelis (from Canada), Georgios Koumbis and Alexandros Lazakis (from Chicago), Elias Tsiopos (from St. Louis) and Dimitrios Zois (from Washington, D.C.).

From those that served and some are still serving today in crucial posts in Boards of Directors or Committees: Yiannis Tsiamberis – retiree in Athens, Fotis Galitsis – repeatedly secretary until today, Antonis Karassis - repeatedly treasurer, Spyros Derdemezis, Christs Tzelios, Yiannis Kambesis, Christos Kossovitsas, Athina Xynogalou, Eva Kantli, Irimi Tsouka, Christos Carassas, Dimitrios Vassos, Dimitris Dralios and Manolis Litsis, Kikis brothers & Yfantis brothers (from New York), Nikos Tsoumbas, Aris Felis, Ekaterini Singas and Fotis Gantias (from Worcester), the Rev. Alkiviadis Kalyvas, Vasilis Kyranis, Yiannis Rammos, Elias Potsis, and Yiorgos Bratsis (from Boston), Nikos Vainikos, Christos Panos, Evdoxia Koumbi, Milton Vainikos, Dim. Vainikos, Yiannis Antoniou and Nikolaos Aidonis (from Chicago), Thomas Karathanos, Dimitrios Papas and Nikos Katsis - repeatedly treasurer (from Detroit), Telis Moumas. Pavlos Kotrotsios and Costas Zidros (from Philadelphia), the doctor Spyros Kyrkos (from Cleveland), Vass. Tsiopos (from St. Louis), Apostolos Kefalas and Rita Apostolidou (from Canada).

I would like to mention many more noteworthy compatriots of ours that served our organization but I do not have infinite space in my disposal. But I will end with names of the last Board of Directors that still serves under the presidency of Michalis Servos and have not been mentioned in this historical note of mine: Irimi Fotou, Mattheos Panayiotou, Eleonora Michopoulou, Alex Pallas, Takis Fotos and Costas Gantias.

Concluding, I wish that the Panepirotic Federation of America to continue its patriotic work for many years and, with the participation of the new generation, to write more pages of history.

**CONVENTIONS & PRESIDENTS
OF THE PANEPIROTCIC FEDERATION OF AMERICA
SINCE ITS ESTABLISHMENT**

1st July 19-21	1942	NORTHBORO, MA	FOTIOS KYRITSIS
2nd September 5-7	1943	NEW YORK	CHRISTOS TSOUROS
3rd September 3-6	1944	DETROIT	CHRISTOS TSOUROS
4th September 28-30	1945	NEW YORK	FOTIOS KYRITSIS
5th July 7-9	1947	WASHINGTON	ATHANASSIOS KOTSIS
6th July 27-29	1949	PHILADELPHIA	ATHANASSIOS KOTSIS
7th July 15-18	1951	CONCORD, NH	ARCH. VASS. LOKIS - EVAGG. KOTSIDAS
8th Nov. 29 - Dec. 2	1953	NEW YORK	CONSTANTINOS DIMAS
9th July 14 - 18	1955	DETROIT	CONSTANTINOS DIMAS
10th July 18 - 22	1957	CHICAGO	PANTELIS SIEPIS
11th July 23 - 27	1959	CLEAVELAND	PANTELIS SIEPIS
12th July 5 - 11	1961	BOSTON	VASSILIOS FOTOS
13th July 2 - 7	1963	NEW YORK	VASSILIOS FOTOS
14th June 30-July 4	1965	DETROIT	VASSILIOS FOTOS
15th August 6-10	1967	IOANNINA	VASSILIOS FOTOS
16th July 9 - 14	1969	NEW YORK	CONSTANTINOS FILIDIS
17th July 18 - 25	1971	IOANNINA	CONST. FILIDIS - MICHALIS TSOKAS
18th July 22 - 27	1973	MONTREAL	VASSILIOS FOTOS
19th July 23 - 28	1975	CHICAGO	VASSILIOS FOTOS
20th July 13 - 18	1977	DETROIT (3 Years)	MENELAOS TZELIOS
21st June 19 - 22	1980	WASHINGTON (2 Years)	MENELAOS TZELIOS
22nd June 26 - 29	1982	PHILADELPHIA	ELIAS BETZIOS
23rd June 27 - 30	1984	NEW YORK	ELIAS BETZIOS
24th June 25 - 29	1986	BOSTON	VASSILIOS MIKELIS

25th	June 22 - 25	1988	ATLANTIC CITY	DIM. TSOUMBANOS
26th	June 28 - 30	1990	NEW YORK	SIMOS DIMAS
27th	June 29 - July 2	1991	CHICAGO	VASSILIOS FOTOS
28th	June 24 - 27	1993	TORONO	NICK GAGE
29th	June 14 - 18	1995	WASHINGTON	NICK GAGE
30th	February 19-22	1997	FLORIDA	CHRISTOS KIRKOS
31st	June 30 - July 3	1999	SAN FRANCISCO	CHRISTOS KIRKOS
32nd	July 5 - 8	2001	NEW YORK	ELIAS BETZIOS
33rd	February 19-23	2003	FLORIDA	PANAYIOTIS SILIS
34th	March 2 - 6	2005	FLORIDA	MICHALIS SERVOS

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
PANEPIROTIC FEDERATION OF AMERICA**

**MICHALIS SERVOS
PRESIDENT**

**CHRISTOS CARASSAS
VICE PRESIDENT**

**FOTIOS GALITSIS
SECRETARY GENERAL**

**DIMITRIOS DRALLIOS
TREASURER**

**IRINI FOTOS
ASSISTANT SECRETARY**

MEMBERS

**TAKIS FOTOS
ANTONIOS KARASIS
Dr. SPIROS KYRKOS
ELEONORA MICHPOULOS
ALEXANDROS PALLAS
MATHEOS PANAGIOTOU**

DEPUTY MEMBERS

**ANASTASIA DRALLIOS
COSTAS GANIAS**

GOVERNORS

**GEORGIA MITSIS
CHRISTOS PANOS
ELIAS POTSIS
IRINI TSOUKAS
COSTAS ZIDROS**

FORMER PRESIDENTS

**Dr. VASILIOS FOTOS (HONORARY)
Dr. MICHALIS TSOKAS
MENELAOS TZELIOS
ELIAS BETZIOS
VASILIOS MIKELIS
DIMITRIOS TSOUMBANOS
SIMOS DIMAS
NICKOLAS GAGE
CHRISTOS KYRKOS
PANAGIOTIS SILIS**

OMONOIA: Political, Social and Cultural Association of the Greek Minority in Albania

Moscow, 10 September - 4 October 1991

MEMORANDUM TO THE CSCE HUMAN DIMENSION CONFERENCE INTRODUCTION

A forgotten minority in the middle of Europe, whose voice was silenced for almost half a century has found the opportunity, for the first time, to present itself before an international forum. We speak for the Greek national minority of Albania of nearly 300,000 Albanian citizens.

Our aim is to make known to the participants of the CSCE, Moscow Conference on the Human Dimension, the untold story of 50 years of suffering, forced assimilation and cultural genocide. To analyze the current climate of new opportunities but also of few difficulties, and to submit concrete proposals for immediate action by the CSCE states and the NGO's participating in the Parallel Activities.

We are able to do this, for the first time, because of the introduction of democratic processes in Albania, coupled and the opportunities offered by CSCE mechanisms and NGO's procedures.

The dearth of information concerning the Greek national minority of Albania necessitates a short historical synopsis and a brief itemization of the denationalization practices of the former totalitarian regime. To record those practices today will make the international public opinion aware of the plight of the minority for five decades and will, hopefully, prevent a repetition.

THE PRE-WORLD WAR II YEARS

The Greek ethnic minority in Albania emerged as consequence

of the establishment of the independent Albanian state in 1912, and the territorial arrangements decided by the great powers. As a result, large districts in the southern part of the newly-formed Albanian state, known as “Northern Epirus” were inhabited by sizeable autochthonous Greek populations, tracing their origins to classical antiquity. Albania by signing a series of international agreements and by its adherence to the minority clauses of the League of Nations undertook concrete obligations toward the minority.

Unfortunately, the violations of the rights of the Greek minority during the inter-war period, compelled the international community to intervene with the then Albanian governments in support of the minority. Indeed, the Permanent Court of International Justice at the Hague, by a decision in 1935, compelled the Albanian Government to abide by its obligations regarding the educational rights of the Greek ethnic minority. During the Second World War, the Greek minority welcomed and endorsed the principles of the Atlantic Charter, joining en masse the Resistance movement against the fascist and nazi occupation, alongside the Albanian people. Nevertheless, despite their struggles and sacrifices, the members of the Greek minority soon realized that they had no say in determining their future. Instead, they found themselves under the jurisdiction of the new oppressive regime of the “People’s Republic of Albania”.

THE MINORITY UNDER TOTALIARIANISM: 1945-1990

For the Greek national minority the long road to its own “gulag” started in 1945. It continued uninterrupted until Enver Hoxha’s death, and the termination of the Communist Party’s dictatorial rule in late 1990.

During this period, the systematic policy of forced assimilation and dehellenization, compounded by the general misery of

Albanian society as a whole, embraced all spheres of human activity. More precisely:

1. Arbitrary territorial delimitation of the minority

The area where the Greek minority lives was artificially limited to the two southern provinces of Girokaster (Argyrokaastro) and Sarante (Agiol Saranta), comprising of 100 Greek villages. Members of this minority within this “minority territory” were allowed certain rudimentary rights, such as a four-year Greek language education and the publication of a newspaper, conveying in Greek the line of the Albanian Communist Party as propaganda to the members of the minority. Outside this territory, no individual was recognized as an ethnic Greek. The populations of entire ethnic Greek villages were registered as ethnic Albanians, thus losing the right to speak their mother tongue and to engage in cultural activities related to their ethnicity.

2. Statistical genocide

The manipulation of statistical data –a classical method of squeezing the size of a minority– was applied in the case of the Greek national minority to the point of excluding at least 3/4 of its numerical strength. Initially, all ethnic Greeks, numbering in tens of thousands, living outside the “minority territory” were ignored. Moreover, figures of the registered members of the minority within the territory, were sharply and arbitrarily reduced. Thus, out of a minority nearing 300,000 members, the official Albanian census of 1988 recorded only 58,000 (sic).

3. Forced ethnological alteration of Greek villages

A concerted effort to alter the ethnic Greek character of even the recognized “minority territory” was pursued by the regime for over four decades. This involved the transfer and settlement of ethnic Albanians in Greek villages.

Moreover, in certain cases, entirely new Albanian settlements were interposed among clusters of Greek villages. Consequently, in the villages, converted into mixed habitations of Greeks and Albanians, the ethnic Greeks lost even the rudimentary right to have a few years of Greek-language elementary education.

4. Expulsion of ethnic Greeks from their “territory”

A policy of systematic reduction of the Greek national minority living in the “minority territory” was put into effect. Mass transfers of Greeks to Albanian towns and villages, dispersed throughout the country were recorded.

Dissidents or alleged opponents of the “socialist fatherland” were exiled to labour camps in the north; and, finally, better educated members of the minority were attracted to Tirana, for lack of employment in the minority territory.

Automatically, all those leaving the territory were divested of their ethnic Greek identity and their ethnic rights.

5. Cultural de-Hellenization of the “minority territory”

At the same time, the “minority territory” was subjected to a forced albanization process. The Greek names of villages and geographical areas were substituted by Albanian names. Greek antiquities and archaeological sites in the region, dating back to classical and Hellenistic times, were baptised “Illyrian”. Greek Byzantine monuments, mainly churches, were closed or converted to barns and storehouses, in the context of the state-decreed atheist campaign.

Thus, the ties of the Greek minority territory with its classical, medieval and pre - 1944 periods were conveniently broken and erased.

6. Oppression, assimilation and denationalization

More than the region, the members of the Greek national minority felt the consequences of the systematic policy of oppression, assimilation and denationalization. Their

communication with their fellow ethnic Greeks in Greece was severed; electrified barbed wire fences were erected along the border and anyone attempting to cross into Greece was executed on the spot, tortured or sentenced to many years of solitary confinement and hard labour. A less known Berlin Wall” was erected along the Albanian-Greek border. It survived for almost half a century. But, unlike the unfortunate victims of Berlin, who attracted world-wide publicity by shaking the consciousness of the democratic peoples of Europe and America, the unaccounted hundreds of executed, tortured or imprisoned ethnic Greeks of Albania were left unrecorded. They remain the unburied human monuments of an inhuman regime.

Intellectually, persons belonging to the Greek national minority were subjected to a continuous brain-washing of negative propaganda against the Greek state. For years, the media, the schools, the public indoctrination sessions in factories and agricultural cooperatives were used to display the Hellenic nation as an enemy not only of Albania but of the Greek minority as well. Monuments and statues were erected in various Greek minority villages to underline this anti-Greek campaign. They remain intact, a living testimony, to the schizophrenic antics of a tyrannical regime.

7. The elimination and falsification of Greek history and culture

Of more lasting consequence for the national and cultural identity of the minority was the policy of eradicating and falsifying the historical and cultural links of the minority with the rest of Hellenism. Particularly during the last two decades, Greek history and cultural heritage had been removed from school textbooks. It is not an exaggeration to say that an ethnic Greek child acquired more knowledge about events and the history of far away Mongolia, than about next- door Greece.

8. The denial of Greek names to new-borns

In the mid-1970's as the regime increased its assimilative practices, a Government decree prevented ethnic Greeks from giving Greek names to their children. Despite Greek Government demands at the time and an Albanian promise to annul the measure, strong pressure on families continued to be exercised by local authorities against Greek name giving.

9. Abolition of religion and religious-oriented cultural activities

By far, however, the abolition of religion in Albania in 1967, dealt the most severe blow to the identity of the Greek national minority.

True, the measure was general and affected all religious and Christian denominations in Albania. The Greek Orthodox religion, however, had been associated with the Greek nation since the Byzantine times. It had been the spiritual heart and guarantor of the Greek Orthodox churches. By defrocking the priests and by prohibiting religious-oriented cultural activities –such as saints' festivals and religious anniversaries– the regime cut off the cultural links of the Greek minority, not only with the Greeks across the border, but with Greeks all over the world.

DEMOCRATIZATION IN ALBANIA AND THE STATUS OF THE MINORITY

1. As a result of the termination of the totalitarian regime, late in 1990, the Greek national minority along with the rest of the Albanian population began to reap the fruits of democratization. Thus:

a. On 22 February 1991, the Political, Social and Cultural Association "Omonoia" was registered as the organization of the Greek minority in Albania.

As such "Omonoia" participated in the first multi-party

elections held in Albania on 31 March 1991, and had five deputies elected. In its statutory by-laws, “Omonoia” declared its determination to promote good relations between the Albanian people and the Greek minority, and to become a bridge of Friendship between Albania and Greece.

b. The fences on the Albanian-Greek border were torn down by the people themselves, on the eve of New Year’s Day (1991), and ever since, communication across the border is unrestricted similarly, restrictions to travel abroad were removed for all Albanian citizens, including members belonging to the Greek national minority.

c. All measures leading to the democratization of social and public life, and for the privatization of the economy, including the property of agricultural cooperatives, were applied to regions inhabited by ethnic Greeks.

d. Restriction on the exercise of religious practices were removed and this allowed the Greek orthodox communities to repossess their churches and other religious establishments, although the lack of priests constitutes a serious obstacle to the conduct of religious services. The Albanian Government accepted the Exarch Metropolitan Anastasios appointed by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, to assist in the revival of the Albanian Orthodox Church.

e. Political prisoners, members of the Greek minority, were released from prisons and labor camps.

2. On the other hand, certain new negative phenomena in the fields of political and educational rights raise serious questions about the future of the Greek national minority in Albania. More precisely:

a. In the field of political rights, a systematic attempt was made on the eve of the March elections to limit “Omonoia” representation in Parliament. Thus “Omonoia” was not allowed to register candidates in the electoral districts of towns of

Girokaster, Sarante and Delvino, all with considerable percentages of ethnic Greeks within the “minority territory”. Similarly, no “Omonoia” candidates were allowed to run for election in other electoral districts which also contain sizeable Greek minorities, for the mere reason that these districts were not within the absurd confines of the “minority territory”, arbitrarily carved out by the former totalitarian regime. Furthermore, when an all-party coalition government was formed in May of this year, “Omonoia” was denied the right to have some of its own members in the Cabinet. On the other hand, other parties with no parliamentary representation, were given a number of portfolios. Even worse, a new law was passed in July, making it illegal to form political parties or organizations based on ethnic or religious criteria. Such organizations will not be permitted to participate in the next elections scheduled for 1992, thus depriving the Greek national minority of its voice in the Parliament and in the emerging new Albanian society. The escalation of such measures raises doubts about the willingness of the new Albanian leadership to proceed with the granting and safeguarding of equal rights and representation of the Greek minority in Albanian political life and institutions.

b. In the field of *educational rights*, nothing whatsoever has been done to improve the sad state of Greek education. “Omonoia” has repeatedly submitted concrete proposals to extend the teaching of the Greek language to all ethnic Greek villages and districts; to make the Greek language curriculum available the eight-grade school of compulsory education and not to limit it to the first four grades, as is the case today; to introduce courses in Greek history and culture; and to prepare appropriate textbooks to this end.

The State’s lack of response to these basic requests is all the more regrettable, as these requests are well below the standards set forth by the CSCE documents.

Therefore, we the undersigned authorized representatives of the “Omonoia” Political, Social and Cultural Association of the Greek National Minority of Albania.

APPEAL

- To the 38 CSCE participating states assembled in Moscow,
- To the Non-Governmental Organizations taking part in the Parallel Activities, to take notice of our legitimate requests and to initiate the necessary measures, namely:
 - to instruct the fact-finding mission sent recently to Albania, and which visited all the regions inhabited by the ethnic Greek minority, to analyse the prevailing situation and to make the necessary recommendations for the protection and promotion of the rights and the identity of the minority,
 - to request the Albanian government to annul the provisions of the recent law which prevents the formation of political parties and organizations based on ethnic and religious criteria,
 - to recommend to the Albanian authorities the extension of Greek language education in all ethnic Greek communities and in all appropriate levels of education,
 - to provide financial assistance to the Albanian authorities in order to save important cultural monuments from inevitable destruction in the minority regions which belong to the cultural heritage of the minority and humanity at large,
 - to keep on their agenda and maintain alive their interest in the fate of the Greek national minority of Albania which is the best guarantee for the physical and cultural survival of the minority in its ancestral soil.

On behalf of the “Omonoia”

THOMA MICO
Deputy
Albanian Parliament

THOMA SHARRA
Tirana University
Teacher of English (ret.)

**The Democratic Union of the Greek Ethnic Minority
People in Albania “OMONOIA” to S. Berisha, President
of the Republic**

Tirana, May 7th, 1993

**REQUEST ON THE RIGHTS OF THE GREEK ETHNIC
MINORITY PEOPLE IN ALBANIA**

The Democratic Union of the Greek Ethnic Minority people, known otherwise as “OMONOIA”, being the legitimate representative of this minority, which expresses their interests and defends their political, social, cultural and religious rights, presents the following document to the President of the Republic, the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the People’s Assembly and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania.

Living on their native territory in Albania are a Greek ethnic minority people who have through the ages retained their national identity and preserved their traditions, language, culture and habits. Throughout history the Greek ethnic minority people and the Albanians have coexisted in good understanding, friendship and peace. The Greek minority people have never come out against the interests of Albania and the Albanians. They have never backed up and supported foreigners to the detriment of Albanians and Albania; on the contrary, they have always shared each other’s fates. In the course of the communist regime the Greek minority people were made the target of a double social and ethnic oppression. They were made to submit to a programmed denationalization plan aiming at promoting in the Greek minority people “A minority awareness “sui generis instead of a national Greek awareness. They were deprived of their religion, faith, religious worshipping and cultural activities. Good knowledge of this

denationalization policy of the past and opposition to certain new manifestations of it would make it possible for you to understand the difficult life of the Greek ethnic minority people in the past 50 years and would bar the path to whatever eventual repetition of similar phenomena, which might jeopardize the delicate passing circumstances we are living through.

Impelled by these reasons precisely, we decided to address to you, who are the top-level leadership of the country, in order to set forth to you this document which we are sure will help regulate the whole socio-political life of the Greek ethnic minority people living in Albania.

The rights contained in this document have been drafted on the basis of and in compliance with the Albanian legislation, the international human rights conventions in general, and minorities' human rights in particular, the UNO and the CSCE documents, the human rights final acts of the conferences held at Helsinki, Madrid, Stockholm, Vienna, Copenhagen, Paris, Geneva and Moscow, the statements made by President Berisha and the constitutional laws on the fundamental human rights and freedoms endorsed recently by the Albanian Parliament.

The following text comprises the fundamental rights that the “OMONOIA” organization demands in the name of the Greek ethnic minority people.

1. a) The right of schooling and cultural formation in the mother tongue, at all the levels of the educational system, wherever the Greek ethnic minority people make up the majority or a considerable section of the population.

b) The right to learn their mother tongue at school in the course of the obligatory education in other regions of the country where Greek ethnic minority people live.

c) The right to have private schools and language courses teaching in Greek. These rights must be included in the law on education and the regulations of the Ministry of Education,

which define the conditions for the setting up and normal functioning of the school.

2. The right to preserve and further develop their cultural heritage.

a) The right to take all-sided measures to establish and promote relations with the mother nation and other communities and citizens of other countries with whom they share common ethnic descent and cultural heritage. The state should encourage and support these efforts, assessing these links with Hellenism as a guarantee for the survival and preservation of their native identity and culture.

b) The right to learn their mother tongue at all the level of the educational system by using the same linguistic textbooks as in their mother nation.

c) The right to have the history of the Greek nation and civilization included on the school s curricula and programmes and in textbooks meant for the Greek ethnic minority people.

d) The right to have the state guaranteeing the Greek ethnic minority people preservation and development of their civilization in all its aspects and preservation and protection of cultural and historical monuments and objects.

3. The Greek ethnic minority people's right to practise their religion and worship in their mother tongue. In this context the state has:

a) To promote a climate of mutual consensus and respect among believers of different religious communities and between believers and non-believers.

b) To respect the Greek ethnic minority people's right to freely define and protect their places of worship or congregation.

c) To recognize their right to be organized also on the basis of the religious hierarchical structure.

d) To recognize their right to be elected and represented in the hierarchy of the Albanian Autocephalous Orthodox

Church and religious communities.

e) To recognize them the right to elect, appoint and replace performers in their religious communities according to their needs and on the basis of the regulations and the agreements concluded between them and the state.

f) To let them free to seek and receive economic contributions or any other contribution which is not of a purely economic character.

g) To allow the schooling and training of religious performers in suitable institutions within and outside the country.

h) To respect the right of certain worshippers and the religious communities of the Greek ethnic minority people to obtain, take possession of and use holy books and religious publications in their mother tongue, as well as other objects relative to their faith or convictions.

i) To take back to the churches of the Greek ethnic minority people all their former property as well as church objects (icons, iconostases, etc.), that have been plundered by the totalitarian state or taken away by the institutions.

4. a) To guarantee them the right to set up political parties on the basis of their ethnic composition, political organizations, trade - unions, associations with different character, religious unions, etc., whose aim is to promote the spirit of consensus and political pluralism.

b) To recognize the Greek ethnic minority people the right of democratic participation in decision-taking committees and commissions, in law - drafting commissions and in consultative commissions and committees.

5. The Greek ethnic minority people must be guaranteed the right to freely use their mother tongue in private and in public all over the territory of the Republic of Albania, as well as the right to have Greek being used in parallel with the Albanian language in the areas inhabited by them: in administrative

and judicial institutions, on boards hanging over entrances to institutions and shops, road signs, etc.

In this context they must be guaranteed the right to broadcast and Exchange information, as well as publish, distribute and use newspapers and periodicals in the mother tongue. They must be entitled to receive textbooks and scientific and literary books from other cultural and scientific centres, institutions, book-shops and libraries on the basis of the rules, regulations and circulars of the respective ministries. Regular radio and television broadcasting in the mother tongue, taking account of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of the Greek ethnic minority people, is a component part of this right.

6. The Greek ethnic minority people must be guaranteed the right of participation in all sectors and at all levels of public administration and the legislative, executive and judicial state power.

In the same context, we demand that the Greek ethnic minority people are guaranteed the right to take part in all the sectors of local administration in the areas in which they live, including also the armed forces and the forces of public order.

7. The Greek ethnic minority people must be guaranteed the right to emigrate and come back to their own territories if they wish to do so.

In this context, in order to guarantee this right we demand that measures are taken to reduce to the maximum the formal limitations regulating the crossing of the Albanian-Greek border and vice versa and recognize the Greek ethnic minority people the right to a permanent entry visa that does not constitute a privilege but only a right which has been denied to them so far.

8. We demand that the state takes strict measures, including

also endorsement of special laws or regulations, to prohibit action that encourage ethnic, national or religious confrontations and stir up hostility or hatred, so as to protect and guarantee the inviolability of the individual, the dwelling place and property, as well as schools, churches, cultural centres or monuments that belong to the Greek ethnic minority people and their associations organizations and communities.

9. They must be recognized the right to use the Greek flag, and have the Greek national anthem and symbols along with the Albanian flag and Albanian national hymn and symbols on occasions of official celebrations or festivities.

10. We believe that consolidation of local self-governing, in the framework of the economic, administrative decentralization, will contribute to create the necessary conditions to develop social, cultural and economic life and strengthen the democratic institutions of the country.

In this context, the Greek ethnic minority people whose contribution is already known in the country's history, will continue to play an important role in the all-round development of Albania.

11. a) We demand that the next census takes account of the citizens' national identity declared of their free will at the moment when the census is performed; the latter must include also the political and economic refugees of old and recent times and the emigrants of the past.

b) Those individuals, groups and regions whom the old communist regime has unjustly deprived of their nationality must have the right to demand that their nationality be recognized to them.

c) For each census accurate information must be published on the number of the Greek ethnic minority people locally and on a Republic scale.

12. The guarantee and performance of these rights must

be institutionalized by special laws, decrees, decisions and circulars. Our confidence in the Albanian democratic state and the democratic order that is being established in the country, for whose success the Greek ethnic minority people have fought and are fighting on the front-line, gives us hope that our legitimate demands will be fulfilled.

It is greatly to the credit of our peoples that, at a time when fierce ethnic conflicts have burst out in Europe and the Balkans in particular, fraught with far-reaching consequences for their peoples and dangerous for the fates of peace in the Balkans and Europe, they have displayed their culture and maturity and have known to deal with the problems facing them in the democratic and good understanding spirit and by way of dialogue and tolerance.

Approval of this document will surely strengthen even more this spirit of good understanding, peace and democracy in our country and will be another step ahead on the road to the integration of our country into the family of European states.

FEBRUARY 9, 2001

Prepared by **American Hellenic Institute**

Approved by Order of **AHEPA**

Hellenic American National Council

Hellenic American Women's Council

Cyprus Federation of America

Panepirotic Federation of America

Pan-Macedonian Association of America

Pan-Cretan Association of America

The American Hellenic Institute (AHI)

Albania

We continue to be concerned about the threat to the Greek Orthodox community in Southern Albania (also known as Northern Epirus) by denying and restricting the full legal, educational (including Greek language instruction), religious, voting and employment rights guaranteed to the minority by international agreements signed by Albania. We continue to be concerned about the personal security of the Greek minority population which is regularly victimized through kidnapping and ransom demands.

The Greek minority in Albania, which was brutally persecuted by the communist dictatorship that ruled the country for almost half a century, thought their ordeal would end once communism collapsed. But the succeeding governments have continued the oppressive policies of the past and have pursued them so relentlessly that they threaten the very existence of the Greek minority in the country. Over the past decade all ethnic Greeks have been removed from positions of power in the armed forces, the police, the judiciary, and public administration - something not even the communists tried to do. In addition, Tirana has redistricted administrative and voting regions to

prevent ethnic Greeks from exerting any form of political power where they dominate. When an ethnic Greek appeared likely to be elected mayor in the town of Chimara last October, for example, the ruling Socialist government resorted to acts of outright fraud, as documented by international observers, to insure his defeat.

These acts of discrimination and persecution constitute subtle ethnic cleansing and are aimed at making ethnic Greeks in the country feel isolated, powerless and vulnerable so that they will abandon their homes and move south to Greece.

This spring Tirana plans to launch a campaign to disenfranchise all ethnic and religious minorities in the country by pretending they no longer exist. In the first national census to be held in the country in 60 years, the government has decided to issue questionnaires that do not measure religious or ethnic affiliation in clear contrast to what Tirana demanded and received from Albanian minorities in neighbouring countries. For example, in the census taken in FYROM in 1994 Albania insisted that questions regarding ethnic identity and religious affiliation be included and they were as a result of strong support from the international community. Now Albania wants to deny its minorities the same opportunity to be counted offered to Albanians in FYROM.

“For us ethnic Greeks, who have lived in the area since Homer’s time, the failure to be counted will mean the end of our existence as a community”, Vangelis Doules, the president of OMONOIA, the civil rights group that represents ethnic Greeks in Albania, recently wrote the State Department. “For we know very well that the reason Albanian leaders do not want any measure of our number to be taken is so that they... can claim that most ethnic Greeks have left the country, something they have started to say already and don’t want an actual count to refute”.

We call on the U.S. government, in its own interest and the interest of maintaining peace and stability in the southern Balkans, to undertake an intense diplomatic dialogue with the government of Albania to ensure that the issues of the rule of law and minority and human rights cited above are resolved. It is extremely urgent for the U.S. to make it clear to Tirana that it must treat its own minorities fairly and it must begin that effort by giving them the right to declare their ethnic and religious affiliation in the upcoming census.

Table 1.

Greek Student Population in the Prefecture of Argyrokaastro Elementary (8 Grade) Schools

	1992-1993	1995-1996	1999-2000	2001-2002	2003-2004
Dervitsani	208	173	167	102	75
Gorantzi	106	99	79	76	54
Chaskovo	25	1	Closed	Closed	Closed
Vanitsa	13	13	Closed	Closed	Closed
Sofratika	74	67	61	41	31
Douviani	11	4	Closed	Closed	Closed
Tieriachati	41	29	Closed	12	15
Frastani	87	61	80	71	45
Liougari	11	3	Closed	Closed	Closed
Goritsa	6	4	Closed	Closed	Closed
Grapsi	39	36	16	16	9
Georgoutsati	92	47	16	19	21
Zervati	38	27	9	9	Closed
Vouliarates	52	42	38	9	27
Vodistra	100	61	31	27	13
Kra	31	16	Closed	Closed	Closed
Vrisera	79	69	64	43	37
Vodino	7	4	Closed	Closed	Closed
Kakavia	35	24	Closed	Closed	Closed
Agios Nikolaos	6	5	3	2	Closed
Kleisari	41	31	3	2	Closed
Pepeli	23	31	3	2	Closed
Selio	10	2	Closed	Closed	Closed
Likomili	6	Closed	Closed	9	Closed
Longos	47	16	3	Closed	Closed
Ano Lovina	17	8	Closed	2	Closed
Kato Lovina	5	9	Closed	3	Closed
Sotira	35	12	4	Closed	Closed
Krioneri	13	2	Closed	4	Closed

Kosovitsa	33	19	19	19	Closed
Kato Episkopi	48	26	16	Closed	3
Ano Episkopi	15	8	Closed	Closed	Closed
Rantati	4	1	Closed	Closed	Closed
Glina	49	38	34	28	Closed
Vrahorantzi	14	6	Closed	Closed	Closed
Politsiani	74	52	34	18	12
Schoriades	37	7	34	Closed	Closed
Sopiki	28	25	23	12	7
Chlomo	32	4	Closed	Closed	Closed
Tsiatista	64	22	8	5	6
Argirokastro					148
TOTAL	1658	1097	652	521	493

Table 2.

Greek Student Population in the Prefecture of Argyrocastro High Schools (4 Grades)

School Year 2003-2004

Vouliarates	73
Dervitsani	68
Pedagogical	67
Eccesiastical Holy Cross	85
TOTAL	293

Table 3.

Greek Student Population in the Prefectures of Agioi Saranta, Argyrocastro and Delvino

	Argirokastro	Delvino	Agioi Saranta	TOTAL
1991-1992	2.137	2.108	2.189	6.437
1999-2000	959	195	616	1.770
2000-2001	861	285	538	1.564

Table 4.

Greek Student Population in the Prefecture of Agioi Saranta
Elementary (8 Grade) Schools

School Year 2003-2004

Agioi Saranta	201	(incl. 13 in kindergarten)
Livadia	80	plus 35 in a 4-grade school
Koulouritsa	6	
Kaisarati	8	
Sminetsi	7	
Karoki	3	
Dermisi	26	
Divri	17	plus 21 in kindergarten
Tserkovitsa	6	
Ano Lesinitza	3	
Aliko	24	
Plaka	8	
Tsouka	19	
TOTAL	408	

Table 5.

Greek Student Population in the Prefecture of Delvino Elementary
(8 Grade) Schools

School Year 2003-2004

Delvino	45
Bristritsa	11
Droviani	2
Mesopotamos	56
Krania	3
Finiki	22
Karahatzi	4
Livena	15
Vrioni	4
Eleftherohori	2
TOTAL:	164

PANEPIROTIC FEDERATION OF AMERICA

Resolution Draft presented to the General Assembly of the Greek Diaspora

Thessaloniki, December 2006

As it is well known to you, the Panepirotic Federation of America is the third level of organization of the Epirotes in Diaspora, and it is an organization that is a jewel for the Greek Diaspora in North America. A good part of our membership consists of Northern Epirotes. Therefore, we are extremely sensitive to the issue of the rights of the Greek minority in Albania, as we believe every Greek should be.

The recent developments in the Greek Albanian relations bring to the surface the condition of the Greek Northern Epirotes that are still in the neighbouring country, and a whole series of issues, the most important of which, to our opinion, are the following:

1. After the change of regime in Albania in 1991, a big number of Greeks migrated, or was forced to migrate to Greece. This issue is of paramount importance, and this tendency as to be reversed. Furthermore, we have to handle with top urgency and attention certain issues that pertain to them (ie, double nationality, pension plans etc).

2. The education of the members of the Greek minority is a major issue, because the Albanian government continues to deny Greek education outside the arbitrarily determined minority zones, and also because Albanian school books contain derogatory remarks for greeks. More specifically, in the bilateral agreements on education between the two countries, there are terms supporting the Greek language as a secondary language in schools where the conditions exist, and those conditions are the same as the ones mentioned on Art. 14 of the Framework Agreement for the Protection of Ethnic

Minorities of the Council of Europe. This same article stipulates that “in areas where the residents belong to minority groups, traditionally, and in adequate numbers, all efforts must be made so that the minority members are afforded the suitable conditions for learning their mother tongue”. It is a sad fact that both before and after this Agreement was ratified, members of the Greek minority had submitted applications, but those applications were denied (Premeti, Chimara etc).

3. Freedom of religion is not exercised freely, or is subject to restrictions according to the decisions of local administrators.

4. The return of private, community or church properties to its rightful owners is delayed, and in many instances it has not taken place, in spite of the relevant court orders.

5. It is a well known fact that the economic life of the Greek minority is based on agriculture, livestock and trade. The constant thefts of livestock and equipment and the threats against Greek businessmen do not allow the economy to flourish, in spite of the assistance of the Greek state towards Albania (i.e. Greek Plan for the Economic Reconstruction of the Balkans etc).

6. Albania continues to falsify history, geography (Albanian names given to Greek villages have not been reversed to Greek yet), Greek culture and tradition, everyday real life through restrictions, falsification of data etc, in spite of the commitments the neighbouring country has taken through international conventions (ie, Framework Agreement for the Protection of Ethnic Minorities of the Council of Europe). What is of paramount importance is the falsification of the ethnic identity during census taking, as Albania still does not specify the ethnic identity, thus falsifying data for the minority. Actually, during the census of 2001, which was financed by international organizations, Albania did not include on the appropriate form a space for ethnic identity or religion, for reasons that it did

not explain to anybody, including the organizations that financed the census, thus forcing the Greek minority to abstain from the census.

7. The geographical area of Northern Epirus is a sacred place for our forefathers, and all Greeks in general, as it is a place of sacrifice of all those who fought and fell in the war against the Italian fascist invasion of our country. Internal problems and the Cold War did not allow the Greek state to collect the remains of the fallen Greek soldiers, and this results in a serious human and political problem, which has come to the surface once again, after the Albanian provocations. A resolution has to be found for this very serious problem, which has been bothering the families of the fallen soldiers for over six decades, and the Albanian side has to realize that collecting the remains of the fallen is not a financial dealing, but a human and political issue, and a minimum gesture of good will towards the Greek side, which has been supporting Albania in a multitude of ways for the last two decades. Actually, as a result of the recent episode in Albania, and the provocations by local police forces during a legal, court approved collection of remains of Greek soldiers, we suggest that a strict warning be issued to Albania, so that they realize that its cooperation is a matter of compliance with its INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS, and not a matter open to negotiations. The collection of remains of fallen Greek soldiers is a long overdue issue, leftover from the cold war era, an in today's environment of cooperation between nations, this should be resolved immediately.

8. The non implementation by the Albanian side of their obligations towards the human rights of the Greek minority and the continued atmosphere of terror against the minority, are problems that continue to remain unresolved. As part of nationalistic atmosphere that is developing in Albania, a series of actions of the Albanian government turned against the

Greek minority. These actions aim at the final expulsion and uprooting of the Greek minority from Albania, along with the Albanian demands for equal rights to the Albanian immigrants in Greece, and the issue of Tsamides, which is once again resurrected by various nationalistic organizations in Albania.

9. Greece has, once again, indicated its good intentions towards Albania by signing the Agreement for Stabilization and Connection between Albania and the European Union (Luxembourg, June 12th), which –under conditions– opens up the door to an eventual entry of Albania into the European Union. On that perspective, as well as the perspective of Albania’s admission into NATO, we strongly believe that Albania’s admission in the western world and the successful end of the negotiations should not be taken for granted. Greece should call upon Albania to comply with all of its obligations, among which is the full respect and protection of the rights of the ethnic Greek minority, and make it very clear that the progress in the negotiations and Albania’s eventual admission in the European Union (and NATO) is subject to its ability to fulfil its obligations.
