

Ascendant industrialists, emerging working class, turbulent communities

The advance of industrialization brought profound changes to the class structure of Macedonia, most notably in Thessaloniki and the region of Mount Vermion. By the 1900s a class with a distinctly capitalist character had emerged in both places, though its outlook differed between the two, not least due to the cultural and political traditions of their respective communities. Similarly, a working class began to emerge with increasing coherence and ability to project its own views on political and social life. The outlook of the components of the working class also varied according to their respective communities.

Industrial capitalism in Ottoman Macedonia was led by the Jewish community in Thessaloniki and the Christian community in Mount Vermion which also became gradually established in Thessaloniki. Industrialization drew strength from communal practices and institutions, always within the constraints of Ottoman society and under the watchful eye of the Ottoman state. To deal with the problems of emerging capitalism, including class conflict, both communities relied on their own internal mechanisms of power and control that were typically attached to religious structures. They also interacted continually with the Ottoman state and the still dominant mechanisms of the Muslim community.

In Thessaloniki industrialization rested on the bedrock of a thoroughly urban Jewish community led by merchants who had an international outlook and often held foreign citizenship. In Mount Vermion, industrialization was based on a heavily agrarian Christian community and was spearheaded by merchants who had only recently sprung out of the same soil. From the very beginning the Christians tended to compete against Jewish economic

power emanating from Thessaloniki and indeed the contest between the two communities went a long way into the historical past.

It was shown in previous chapters that the Jews of Thessaloniki were in a more advantageous position at the initial stages of industrialization due to their favourable relations with the Ottoman state and the superior economic and financial institutions of the port city. The Greek community of Thessaloniki responded partly by mobilizing the support of the Greek Kingdom. The growing power of the Greeks was manifest in the range of financial institutions that appeared at the very end of the nineteenth century, including the Banque de Mytilene, the Bank of Athens and the Banque d'Orient. Furthermore, as Ilicak noted, the Greek 'merchants of the interior' typically sent their sons to Thessaloniki to be installed as commercial agents: 'Greek banks extended credit to these young people and tried to establish contact with Greek clients from their hometown and region.'¹ The rivalry between the two communities intensified after the Young Turk revolution of 1908. There were anti-Jewish campaigns and boycotts by the Greek community, with the Greek press of the city calling on Greek nationals to desist from business transactions with the Jews.

The opposition between the two communities casts light on the social and political development of Ottoman Macedonia as industrial capitalism took root. The dominant form of conflict and struggle during the period of industrialization was between communities and the state as well as among communities. The tensions generated as commercial and industrial capitalism impacted on the social structures of Ottoman Macedonia were a major contributory factor to the nationalist confrontations among Muslims, Jews and Christians. Intense nationalist conflict occurred across Macedonia after 1870, assuming increasingly violent forms towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. The Christian community largely favoured independence from the Empire but was rent asunder by the rivalry between Greek and Bulgarian nationalisms. Thessaloniki and the area of Mount Vermion, but also the area around Giannitsa and the *çiftlik* villages on the plain, witnessed vicious armed struggle in the 1900s, also involving the

¹ Ilicak (2002, p. 137). This practice underpinned the expansion of Naoussa capitalists in Thessaloniki in the face of the the city's unfavourable labour and energy costs.

Ottoman state. In contrast, nationalism and secession played a minor role in the life of the Jewish community, which had reached an implicit accommodation with the Ottoman state. Finally, the Muslim community was the last to be drawn to nationalism and tended generally to support the Ottoman Empire and its security forces.

The ethnic tensions in Macedonia and the trajectory of the notorious ‘Macedonian Question’ – essentially the issue of state control over the European part of the Ottoman Empire – are best considered against the background of rising industrial capitalism in the region. The social transformation wrought by advancing capitalism certainly led to conflict between capital and labour, especially in Thessaloniki, but also fuelled the nationalist struggle in Macedonia.

8.1 Social and communal parameters of capitalist transformation

The clear winners of the profound changes that took place across Ottoman Macedonia during the nineteenth century were the merchants, out of whom emerged the industrialists. It has been estimated that a foreign merchant resident in Thessaloniki could anticipate annual net profits of 200 per cent on investment, while indigenous merchants – provided they were sufficiently cautious – had even greater opportunities for profit making.² Jewish merchants became fabulously wealthy and came to control industry in Thessaloniki. Greek merchants from Mount Vermion became very rich, controlled industry in their region and acquired a significant economic presence in Thessaloniki.

Macedonian merchants initiated industrialization in the second half of the nineteenth century in textiles as well as other fields. More broadly, a variety of industrial enterprises emerged across Macedonia: distilleries, brick and tile plants, flour mills, soap factories, in addition to textile mills, and all served domestic markets. At first sight it appears that Sweezy’s – and Pirenne’s – approach to the emergence of capitalism fits the Ottoman case better than Dobb’s, at least in Macedonia, the epicentre of Ottoman industrialization. To an extent this is obviously true, but appearances can be deceptive.

² See Svoronos (1956, p. 114).

The Jewish merchants of Thessaloniki broadly confirm Sweezy's view since they traded over long-distances and were well-connected internationally as well as being polyglot and often holding foreign passports. To be sure there were substantial numbers of Jewish merchants who did not conform to this type, but the leading ones certainly did. However, the Greek merchants of Mount Vermion were very different from the Jewish merchants of Thessaloniki. They also belonged to a trading tradition with a long international pedigree but were still rooted in the agrarian society of their region. They were from the beginning implicated in the domestic production of woollen cloth, probably reflecting the traditional skills of their birthplaces. These were merchants who had recently sprung out of the ranks of artisanal production and would pose few problems for Dobb's approach.

Furthermore, the wage workers employed by the Jewish merchants – who were often young women – came from the Jewish community and had a thoroughly urban background. In contrast, the wage workers of Mount Vermion – also often young women – came from the surrounding villages and typically worked in the mills for a short period of time. Without question the working class of Ottoman Thessaloniki did not spring out of an agrarian transformation. Equally, there was no wholesale dispossession of the peasantry in the second half of the nineteenth century in provincial Macedonia leading to emergence of wage labour. Capitalist agriculture failed to emerge altogether in Ottoman Macedonia despite industrial capitalism appearing in Thessaloniki and Mount Vermion.

Thus, the classic debates on the transition to capitalism have limited applicability to Ottoman Macedonia. This is further evidence that the specificity and peculiarities of each historical society preclude generalizations regarding the transition to capitalism. Theoretical debates, useful as they are to fix ideas and formulate appropriate questions, offer little more than guideposts to the actual historical emergence of capitalism.

The rise of the merchants and the eventual transformation of some among them into industrial capitalists in provincial Macedonia reflected the upheaval in the social structure of the Ottoman Empire after the second half of the eighteenth century. As *çiftlik* were formed in the agrarian sector, the provincial Muslim elite – the *ayan* – who frequently had military power, accumulated economic and political power in local areas. They obtained tax-farming rights,

applied pressure on the peasants directly or through money-lending, and systematically enlarged their land-holdings. The *ayan* acquired vast power over their regions, particularly as central control weakened in the second half of the eighteenth century. That was indeed a time of dispossession of the peasantry in the Balkans, when a hereditary Muslim landlord class began to emerge in the Ottoman Empire.

It is arguable that conditions at the end of the eighteenth or the beginning of the nineteenth century were amenable to the emergence of agrarian capitalism in the Ottoman Empire. Agricultural production increased and became more intensive; control by rich individuals over agriculture (and to an extent over manufacturing) became easier through the *malikane* tax-farming system; layers of the peasantry were dispossessed due to heavy tax exactions and landlord pressure; and trade opportunities kept expanding. And yet, a fully-fledged capitalist transformation of agriculture never occurred in the Ottoman Balkans.

Ottoman agriculture was generally characterized by abundance of land and scarcity of labour. Peasant smallholdings were sizeable and opportunities to sell the crop were readily available. Similarly, the landlords were able to sell the surpluses produced by sharecroppers at a substantial profit. There were few incentives across the sector to transform agriculture on a capitalist basis by unifying strips of land, upgrading agricultural technique, using advanced technology and hiring wage labour. Moreover, the social and political orientation of the Muslim *ayan* was not conducive to agrarian capitalism. Their privileged status was tightly bound with their political position. The *ayan* deployed their wealth with a view to sustaining their political standing and relations, rather than systematically investing profits to raise the productivity of their lands.³ They sought monetary profit aggressively and engaged in money lending, but their economic activities were heavily conditioned by non-economic power.

Critical to the evolution of the *ayan* was the absence of an ideology that would have allowed them to become a coherent agrarian class. There can be no capitalism without an ideological web uniting the nascent capitalist class around the calculus of monetary gain and loss. As the nineteenth century

³ See Reyhan (2008, p. 138).

progressed, the *ayan* gradually lost social power and were integrated into the bureaucratic structures of the revived central Ottoman state. The landlords remained locally rich and powerful but had missed the historical boat to become capitalist farmers.

The rise of Muslim landlords encouraged further divisions along religious and communal lines in the Balkans. Muslim landlords certainly possessed Christian villages as part of their *çiftlik* and exercised political and social command over the villagers. However, if a non-Muslim *çiftlik* holder attempted to exercise similar command over Muslim peasants, intolerable religious and social tensions would be likely to break out. Furthermore, there is little or no evidence that powerful and prominent Christians – sometimes known as *kocabaşı* in southern Greece – tended systematically to become large landowners similar to the *ayan*. Note that the term *kocabaşı*, and its Macedonian equivalent, *çorbacı*, remained vague, as indeed was the term *ayan*. These were not official Ottoman titles but designations deployed among the communities to denote social standing.

That is not to deny that rich and powerful Christians were able to acquire large estates and became involved in tax farming even in the late eighteenth century in the Balkans and elsewhere.⁴ But the power of the Christian notables derived primarily from the web of credit and money lending they were able to weave around the payment of taxes by their community to the state. The system of ‘reallocation, or reapportioning’ (*tevzi*) of local taxes, which emerged at the end of the eighteenth century as the power of the Porte declined, essentially allowed for local taxes to be paid by the community after deciding the incidence among its members.⁵ The *ayan* used their political, military and financial power to mould the *tevzi* system in their own interests. In similar fashion, Christian communal notables had the financial means to provide the liquidity necessary to pay the taxes, subsequently binding the community to their interests through a structure of debts.⁶ Their activities were closely related to the Orthodox Church, which had major tax-collecting functions. In this respect the Christian notables were similar to the *ayan*, but

⁴ See Sadat (1972, p. 350). The case of Zafirakis in Naoussa was also noted in Chapter 4.

⁵ See McGowan (1981, p. 159); see also Yaycioglu (2016, pp. 151–6).

⁶ This argument has been thoroughly established for southern Greece by Petmezas (2003).

they were not a major landed class and usually possessed estates of smaller size.⁷ There was no real comparison with the land-owning outlook of the Muslim *ayan*.

It was shown in Chapter 4 that in the area of Mount Vermion at the end of the nineteenth century there were several large landlords among the Christian notables. Yet, none of them hailed from an established landlord class. They had acquired vast estates in the second half of the century, but via a very different process to the *ayan*. Christian landlords had become wealthy through commerce and industry at a time when the Ottoman state had promulgated legislation that secured private property in land. They were capitalists investing in land, not landlords in the mould of the *ayan*. Remarkably, they did not transform their *çiftlik* into capitalist estates, for the straightjacket of *çiftlik* relations proved too rigid.

The privileged access to land that Muslims enjoyed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century pushed sizeable layers of the non-Muslim communities towards artisanal production and in commercial activity. Excluded from the land grab by the *ayan*, the richer and more energetic members of the Christian and Jewish communities 'increasingly entered trade, which reinforced their extraterritorial affiliations'.⁸ The Jews had never, in any case, formed a landed community in Macedonia and were mainly manufacturers, traders, small shop-owners, and labourers. Christian peasants, on the other hand, were pushed to the uplands and turned to proto-industrial manufacturing typically organized by Christian merchants, who also engaged in money lending and tax farming. There were even upland Christian settlements that systematically cultivated cash crops under the leadership of communal notables.⁹ The provincial Christian elite controlled agricultural production and domestic manufacturing through a complex web of cash advances and money lending that organized the financial affairs of the community. Relations between the Muslim landlord class and the Christian merchant and money-lending class often became cooperative. The *ayan* provided security while the merchants traded agricultural produce from the *çiftlik* of the *ayan*, as well as their own

⁷ See Petmezas (1990, pp. 583–4).

⁸ See Sadat (1972, p. 356).

⁹ See Petmezas (1990, p. 584).

manufactured goods. The two groups had a common interest in the expansion of trade.¹⁰

Under these conditions Jews and Christians in Macedonia engaged in primitive accumulation of capital throughout the first half of the nineteenth century and were in pivot position to make the move to industrial capitalism when the opportunity arose. It is a misconception that indigenous entrepreneurial groups with capital to invest did not exist in the Ottoman Empire. It is a further misconception that the successful capitalists were the beneficiaries of privileged relations with foreign interests in the Empire. The leading Jewish capitalists in Thessaloniki had indeed kept a foot permanently in Western Europe, but the Christian Greek capitalists of Macedonia were not availed of special contacts with Western European interests. Both groups were engaged in a sustained commercial battle against foreign imports. Ottoman capitalists were products of the endogenous development of Ottoman society reflecting its unique historical peculiarities.

The exceptional weight of religious affiliation in determining juridical, political, property and communal rights was a notable feature of Ottoman society. The merchants of the Balkans – Christians, Jews and Muslims – came from communities that were permeated by religious institutions, functioning in a society and a state that had for centuries accorded to Islam a dominant position. Moreover, the core religious structures of the Christian and the Jewish communities were deeply conservative, and indeed functioned as integral parts of the Ottoman state machine.¹¹ The paradox was that the relatively marginal place of Christianity and Judaism in the Ottoman Empire offered to their respective communities a privileged window to the earth-shattering developments occurring in Western Europe.

Particularly important in this respect was the expansion of communal education which spread literacy but also familiarity with the new ideas that

¹⁰ See Sadat (1972, p. 335).

¹¹ The religious organization of the Jewish community was vastly different to that of Orthodox Christians. Jewish religious institutions were far more horizontal across the community, lacking the hierarchical structure of the Orthodox Church. The Chief Rabbi, or *haham başı*, did not have remotely the same power over the community as the Orthodox Patriarch, and indeed his initial appointment occurred only in 1835 at the express insistence of the Ottoman state which sought a formal head for the Jewish *millet* (see, Levy, 1994b). The Jewish religious structures were generally a conservative force in Ottoman society.

accompanied the growth of capitalism in the West. Thus, barely two decades after the repopulation of the Naoussa in the 1830s, the provision of education preoccupied the leadership of the community and the Church, and a school was built in 1853. The tide truly turned in 1864, with the construction of the 'Naoussa Greek School', whose student numbers increased steadily, reaching almost five hundred in 1896–7.¹² Given that a decade and a half later the population of the town was perhaps ten thousand, the schooling of children had obviously become a widespread and regular practice among the Christians. Industrial capitalism would not be hampered by a lack of literate workers.

This development owed nothing to a presumed inherently 'progressive' character of Christianity or Judaism in contrast to Islam. Indeed there was nothing remotely Weberian to the religious aspect of Ottoman capitalism, whether Jewish or Christian.¹³ Rather, the religious dimension was a result of the institutional and cultural evolution of Ottoman society. Dominant Ottoman Islam had an unshakeable belief in its superiority relative to Christianity and Judaism, and paid a bitter price for the conservatism engendered by its ascendancy. The modernizing Ottoman state of the nineteenth century took steps to promote education but ultimately failed to create effective structures across society that could homogenize the cultural outlook of the population. In provincial Macedonia the result was a system of education supported by communal mechanisms which fostered a Christian religious and cultural identity that became synonymous with social progress.

Religion was also important for the stratification of the *reaya*, the main tax paying class in the Ottoman Empire, who were mostly peasants but also artisans and traders. The impositions of the *ayan* and the tax pressures by the state were felt across the body of the *reaya* irrespective of religious affiliation. However, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Muslims were able to escape from taxation in ways that were not available to non-Muslims. They had exclusive access to the Janissary Corps until its disbandment;

¹² See Biliouris (2014, p. 14).

¹³ In the sense of broadly confirming Weber's substantive approach in his classic work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

they enjoyed privileged access to the urban guilds; they were favoured by religious establishments that played a strong economic role, above all, the *vakıf*. In contrast, non-Muslims typically paid additional taxes, including a poll tax, though they were much less likely to be conscripted in the armed forces. Furthermore, as was mentioned earlier, the taxes of Christian peasant communities were determined according to population and were reapportioned internally. Community notables and Church representatives would often collect and pay taxes on behalf of the community, making up shortfalls on behalf of those who could not meet their obligations.¹⁴ The ties of money lending and the obligations of tax paying were inextricably linked, holding Christian communities together, while also creating internal power structures.

As industrial capitalism advanced and the Ottoman state was itself transformed in the second half of the nineteenth century, relations among the communities inevitably changed. Jewish and Christian merchants and industrialists became familiar with the mechanisms and institutions of Ottoman power, as was shown in Chapter 7. However, Muslim merchants and capitalists were also active, at the very least because tax farming and effective money lending had always been a regular practice of Muslim landlords and others. A working class began to emerge, especially in Thessaloniki, that was able to overcome communal barriers, even if it was mostly Jewish and Christian. The capitalist spirit was abroad and the ideological role of religion lost some of its weight. At the same time the rising nationalism of Western and Central Europe entered the Ottoman realm, often through the channels of education, the very conduit of modernity.

The merchants and industrialists of provincial Macedonia gained coherence as a group by being Christian, a cultural identity that also strongly predisposed them to being ethnically Greek. They were certainly not rebels, but they were also not ideal material for an Ottoman capitalist class. The absence of a unifying and homogenizing ideological framework warped the development of capitalism in the Ottoman context.

¹⁴ See Petmezas (1990, p. 584).

8.2 A nascent capitalist class in Mount Vermion: Controlling the community and dealing with the state

The Christian Greek upper social layer of Mount Vermion was dominated by landowners, real estate owners, merchants, moneylenders and industrialists, who can be described loosely as the *çorbacı*. The term did not denote an official Ottoman title and nor was it recognized by the state, but it was widely deployed at the time. Gradually it came to acquire negative and even pejorative implications as class, communal and ethnic tensions were exacerbated in the course of capitalist development.

Many of the Naoussa *çorbacı* had moved into the town from the surrounding villages and nearby areas of Mount Vermion when Naoussa was repopulated in the 1830s. Ties among them were cemented through intermarriage, gradually creating a closed and exclusive social layer. It is common for familial links to support the emergence of commercial and industrial capitalism since they provide necessary – and unspoken – mechanisms of trust and monitoring of economic activities. The family and community networks of the *çorbacı*, establishing access and control over capital, land, commercial networks and market information, were vital to the industrial transformation of the area of Mount Vermion. The families of the *çorbacı* were able to secure privileged access to land that was close to fast-flowing water. They were also heavily involved in the management of communal funds as well as being implicated in the collection and payment of local and national taxes.¹⁵

A flavour of the social outlook of the *çorbacı* of Naoussa can be gained from the photograph of members of the Longos family in Figure 8.1. Surrounded by women of the Longos family, who were relations of the great *çorbacı* ‘Galakis’ Longos, stands Heracles Hadjidimoulas, erect and confident. The industrialist, who had interests in Edhessa, is formally attired, as is his wife to his left. All the younger women are dressed and coiffed in the ‘European’ style, as are also the children. The older women, including the mother of Hadjidimoulas and sister of ‘Galakis’ Longos, are dressed in traditional, if wealthy, Naoussa style.

¹⁵ See Lapavitsas (2006, p. 672).



Figure 8.1 Members of the Longos family, early twentieth century

Source: Private collection, made available by Lazaros Biliouris.

The social and cultural leap that had taken place within a single generation is manifest.

A similar image is projected by the Bilis and Tsitsis families, standing to be photographed in the yard of their plant in Figure 8.2. The families, whose members held variable shares of equity, are evidently making a show of their alliance. The men, even the older ones, are dressed in the ‘European’ style, as are the younger women and the children. One older woman is wearing traditional dress. The scene has a relaxed air, which makes even more apparent the presence of modernity as well as a bourgeois outlook and abundant social power.

However, nothing conveys more clearly the social transformation that had taken place in the preceding decades than the picture in Figure 8.3. The photograph was taken in the yard of the Tsitsis plant in Naoussa, that of the complicated Lapavitsas–Kokkinos provenance. The Victorian design of the plant is clear, but even more vivid is the confident outlook of the Tsitsis, Longos and Kokkinos families posing in their finery, with some of the older women dressed traditionally and at considerable expense. The gathering took



Figure 8.2 Bilis-Tsitsis families, early twentieth century

Source: Private collection of Takis Baitsis.



Figure 8.3 Tsitsis, Kokkinos and Longos families in the 1920s

Source: Private collection of Takis Baitsis.

place under Greek rule well after the end of Ottoman power in Macedonia, but the people in the factory yard had acquired their wealth and high social standing under Ottoman conditions. It is immediately apparent to the trained eye that they were provincials. This is a fleeting – almost ghostly – image of the bourgeoisie that the Ottoman Empire never fully succeeded in forming in provincial Macedonia. At the back and near the middle, surveying all, stands the patriarchal figure of Aristides Kokkinos.

It should further be said that, despite the dramatic social changes wrought by advancing industrial capitalism, the Christian community of Mount Vermion also exhibited great social conservatism. A remarkable picture of a group of young women of Naoussa in the 1920s serves as witness in Figure 8.4. The photograph was taken during Carnival – a major religious and social occasion in the region – and the women posed in what were clearly their best clothes in the traditional style. Modernity had made great strides and was on occasion flaunted in Naoussa, but the traditional background from which the new world had emerged had far from disappeared. Attachment to it was on occasion strongly asserted.

In this rapidly changing world much of the power of the *çorbacı* derived from control over the community, which meant in the first instance control over local administration, the main field of political struggle in Naoussa. The mechanisms of local administration were completely reformed after the Tanzimat as central authority was reasserted. In the 1850s Naoussa had a resident civilian officer, a *müdür*, and a judge, a *kadi*, both of whom were in charge of implementing Tanzimat reforms.¹⁶ The *müdür* guided local administration until the end of Ottoman rule, supported by resident lower-ranking officers for forestry, post and telegraph services, the tobacco monopoly and the police.

The Ottoman administration was further revamped after the *Vilayet Law* (*Teşkil-i Vilayet Nizamnamesi*) of 1867, which allowed Christians to assume official positions in local areas, a natural byproduct of the Rescript of Reform (*Islahat Hatt-ı Hümayunu*) of 1856. The office of mayor was integral to the modernized Ottoman local administration of the Tanzimat since the mayor had formal power over the town's affairs and was entitled to an armed guard.

¹⁶ See Nicolaidy (1859, [vol. 2] p. 281).



Figure 8.4 Young women of Naoussa, early twentieth century

Source: Private collection.

But the law was far from easy to implement in view of the age-old traditions of discrimination in the Ottoman Empire and the likely reactions of the Muslim community. Still, the *çorbacı* coveted the post of mayor for the formal role it afforded in the state machine. It thus became an object of political struggle with the workers and the poor of Naoussa.

The reaction of the Muslim community of Naoussa to the administrative reforms was anything but tolerant, even taking violent forms in the 1860s. The first mayor of Naoussa, appointed in 1868, was actually a local Muslim with little social power, a barber. Within a year the *çorbacı* had taken over the position and Constantinos Lapavitsas was appointed as the first Christian mayor of Naoussa, a post he kept for many years. He was followed by Constantinos Antonakis (Perdikaris), another *çorbacı* elected through limited suffrage, and then by *Mici Longo Ağa* (Dimitrios Longos), who was the first mayor to be mentioned in Ottoman documents in 1886.¹⁷ The first mayor to be elected with full male suffrage was Constantinos Hadjimalousis, also a *çorbacı*, whose election in the 1900s signalled the sharpening of social tensions in the area and the growing confidence of workers and the poorer social strata of Naoussa.

While embedding themselves in the local Ottoman structures, the *çorbacı* cultivated the formal communal governance mechanisms fostered by the Tanzimat. The Christian community of Naoussa had a long tradition of self-government, evidence of which is available from travellers for the period before 1822, who also confirmed the existence of Christian armed forces at the disposal of the leader of the community, the *archon*.¹⁸ The revolt of 1822 obviously delivered a body blow to these structures. Yet, by the 1850s the mechanisms of self-government for the Christian community of Naoussa had been re-established, led by ten notables, the Elders (Demogerontes).¹⁹ They operated in conjunction with the mechanisms of the Orthodox Church, the head of which for Naoussa was the Bishop of Veroia.

The structures of self-government in the 1890s and the 1900s, the period of the fastest growth of industrial capitalism, were determined by adult male

¹⁷ See SVS IX, 1303 [1886]. For the first mayors see Goutas (1999, p. 133).

¹⁸ See Cousinery (1831, pp. 72–3) and Pouqueville (1826, vol. II, p. 94).

¹⁹ See Nicolaidy (1859, [vol. 2] p. 282).

suffrage in the four main parishes of the town, electing twenty representatives who met with the Bishop of Veroia in the chair. The representatives were in charge of monitoring the economic affairs of a host of committees dealing with town affairs, but mostly religious and education issues.²⁰ The representatives also elected the Council of Elders (Demogerontia), a formal body that operated as a Court of Law based on the Byzantine and Orthodox legal corpus that was made available by the Patriarchate of Constantinople, in addition to deploying customary law. The suits brought to the Council were typically civil cases referring to marriage, inheritance, communal property, debts and employment contracts, and a host of other minor issues. The Council also dealt with cases relating to the payment of the Church Contribution, a widely disliked imposition on the community.

Much of the power of the *çorbacı* of Naoussa derived from controlling the finances of the parishes, thus availing themselves of access to liquid funds. Power also derived from engaging in the provision of communal education, which relied on the mechanisms of the Church. It was a common practice for powerful and wealthy families to make donations and become involved in the management of the schools and churches that emerged in Naoussa towards the end of Ottoman rule. Control over church and education affairs had profound economic, social, but also ethnic implications. Naturally, it became a hotly contested field between the *çorbacı* and the emerging working class as well as among the rival nationalist movements of the area.

The published Minutes of the Council of Elders for the 1890s and 1900s contain mostly trivial disputes typical of the life of any community. However, they also refer to major cases that involved the *çorbacı* of Naoussa. One of these was the suit brought by Lapavitsas against Kokkinos, discussed in Chapter 7. There were several others that cast an equally revealing light on the life of the community. Thus, in April 1911, the Council heard a case against Dimitrios Tsitsis who had used church funds to acquire property in Thessaloniki, and subsequently refused to return it to the community, or even pay the appropriate rents. In January 1912 another case was brought by several *çorbacı* against Spyridon Lanaras, who was chair of the leading *çorbacı* political society of the town and had kept possession of substantial funds of the society instead of

²⁰ See Valsamidis and Intzesiloglou (2016, pp. 289–96).

making them available to schools. The Council found against the accused in both cases.²¹

Two points from this evidence are important for our purposes. The first is that control over communal mechanisms was of vital importance to the *çorbacı*, and they were keen to acquire it. Their dominant position was continually challenged by communal bodies that had attained considerable independence towards the end of the period. Rising capitalism had led to burgeoning popular discontent that eventually found a political voice. The second is that the *çorbacı* were prepared to seek recourse to the justice mechanisms of the community for significant affairs, while continuing to avail themselves of the judicial procedures of the Ottoman state.

The peculiar duality of Ottoman society is thus made manifest: an authoritarian and prying state coexisted with communal mechanisms that enjoyed remarkable independence and towards which the state often showed little interest. The *çorbacı* negotiated their relations with the Ottoman state in the decades after 1870 and took advantage of its mechanisms, even though these were not entirely free from the prejudices and habits of the past. Furthermore, the *çorbacı* were riven by divisions among themselves arising from the tensions of industrialization and capitalist accumulation. They naturally sought recourse to official justice, and the attitude of the Ottoman state towards their internecine conflicts was indicative of the state's own transformed outlook.

Consider, for instance, the dispute between Longos–Kyrtsis–Tourpalis and Lamnides regarding their respective applications for woollen mills in 1907, already mentioned in Chapter 7. The two sides came into conflict regarding access to the waters of Arapitsa and the issue went well beyond the remit of local administration, the case being eventually taken to the courts. Lamnides succeeded in obtaining permission to build; the application of Longos–Kyrtsis–Tourpalis was rejected on the grounds that the flow of water was insufficient in the summer. The disgruntled applicants sent grievance letters to the Provincial Government of Thessaloniki on 17 July 1907 and to the General Inspectorate of the *Vilayet of Rumeli* on 28 July 1907 claiming that the decision was based solely on the misleading testimony of Lamnides.²² They also filed a case in

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 176–81 and pp. 223–5.

²² BOA. TFR.I.SL.161/16085.

the Court of the First Instance in Veroia asserting that the use of water by Lamnides would harm those who held land on the opposite bank of the river, such as themselves.

The dispute had actually begun earlier in 1907. Documents indicate that Lamnides had requested an official investigation of a damaged water wheel on suspicion that malefactors were involved. The Municipality of Veroia instructed the builder of the wheel to investigate the incident and he concluded that the causes were natural.²³ The Court of the First Instance, nonetheless, decided that Lamnides should suspend construction of his mill as long as there were complaints about water use. On this basis Longos–Kyrtsis–Tourpali quickly resubmitted their application, which was however rejected on the grounds that the dispute was still not settled since Lamnides had taken his case to the Court of Appeal.²⁴ No further evidence is available in the archives but since Lamnides's permit was actually used to build the Hadzilazaros–Angelakis plant, it is probable that Longos–Kyrtsis–Tourpali let their application lapse. What is important for our purposes is that, much as they tried, none of the warring sides had sufficient strength to swing the authorities in its favour. The Ottoman state acted as an impartial observer and judge, retaining some of the concern for the social implications of the industrial use of water that it had also demonstrated in 1874–5.

The attitude of the state was broadly similar in a further case, namely a complaint by Longos–Kyrtsis–Tourpali regarding the presumed overvaluation of their industrial operations for tax purposes, submitted to the General Inspectorate of the *Vilayet of Rumeli* in 1905.²⁵ The industrialists argued that valuing the plant and the machinery separately from each other had resulted in overvaluation, and hence their tax obligations had been overestimated. The Ministry of Finance (*Maliye Nezareti*) concurred with the industrialists on the grounds that the relevant laws prohibited the taxation of machinery, even though the Regional Revenue Officer (*Mal Müdürü*) had insisted that the valuation method was appropriate.²⁶ But there was a caveat: the additional value

²³ BOA. TFR.I.SL.140/13923.

²⁴ BOA. TFR.I.SL.161/16085.

²⁵ BOA. TFR.I.ŞKT.70/6999.

²⁶ Specifically, the Public Mandate of *Hazine-i Celile* (Treasury), issued on 17.06.1893, and the *Vergi Emaneti* (Tax Security Department) issued on 20.04.1885.

created by means of the machinery would have to be taken into consideration in ascertaining the amount of tax. This was certainly bad economics, if the point of the tax was to impose a charge on wealth. Yet, once again the state appeared impartial by maintaining a careful distance from the complainants.

For provincial industrialists the task of establishing a close relationship with the state was far from easy. Distance – physical and social – must have been an important factor, and the contrast with the Jewish industrialists was striking. In the voluminous documentation in the archives that refer to the Allatini industrial enterprises there are no demands for testimonials to the family's character or uprightness, despite the fact that they were Italian subjects.²⁷ The Allatini had at their disposal an entirely different order of contacts and influence in Ottoman society.

Perhaps, however, things had begun to change towards the very end of the period, particularly as some of the provincial industrialists had moved to Thessaloniki and their operations matured, even taking the joint-stock form. This seems to be the evidence from correspondence by Hadjilazaros and Angelakis, who had built the closest relationship with the Ottoman state, mostly by supplying cloth to the gendarmerie. The letter by Athanassios Makris, mentioned in Chapter 6, which had been sent to the Council of State in 1912, stated boldly that the company requested the same favourable treatment given to the Thessaloniki Fez and Textiles Mill Inc. Co., owned by the Allatini. The concessions included a ten-year exemption from property tax, land tax, dividend tax, patent tax and customs tax for all the machinery and raw materials required by the plant. Remarkably, Makris also stated that:²⁸

In fact, the necessity of the requested concessions, in view of competition with foreign products and the resulting economic benefits, has already been acknowledged by the state, which is believed to have included them in the Industrial Encouragement Law (*Teşvik-i Sanayi Kanunu*) that is now being prepared by the Council of Ministers (*Meclis-i Mebusan*).

The letter by Makris was addressed to the government that was formed after the establishment of the Young Turk regime in 1909. Quite apart from its confident tone, it is striking that Makris had already been apprised of

²⁷ And some Austrian, or French; see BOA. MKT.NZD.423/77.

²⁸ BOA. ŞD.1240/35, 23 Receb 1330/ 25 Haziran 1328 (08.07.1912).

the content of forthcoming legislation. Things had come a long way for the provincials. Nevertheless, when Hadzilazaros applied to build a new road leading to his plant in 1911, the application was initially turned down on the grounds that it would affect public recreation areas. It was eventually approved but on condition that it would neither impinge on the land of other people, nor damage the existing road.²⁹

8.3 The emergence of a working class

The counterpart to a rising capitalist class was, of course, an emerging working class. From the 1870s onwards substantial concentrations of industrial workers appeared in the Ottoman Empire, particularly in Macedonia. Information about employment conditions, but also about living and other conditions, is relatively scarce. For Macedonia the most reliable evidence is about Thessaloniki and there is very little on the provincial mills. Information on capital–labour relations in the provinces can only be gleaned from scattered comments as well as from a few references in the archives. The history of the formation of the provincial working class in Macedonia, unlike that of the capitalist layer, is practically impossible to write. It is instructive to remember, furthermore, that Ottoman workers laboured under probably the worst conditions in Europe. There was neither an officially recognized scale of wages nor a single Factory Act issued by the Ottoman state throughout its existence.³⁰

The officially recorded number of workers in Thessaloniki varied greatly, but it is certain that a large and active working class was present in the city by the early 1900s.³¹ Statistical figures for 1910 together with the estimates by the workers' federations put the number of wage workers in the city, employed in eleven industrial sectors, at around ten thousand; most of the enterprises employed less than ten workers each.³² The bulk of the labour force comprised Jewish labourers, especially women and children. Ilicak has estimated that, in

²⁹ BOA. ŞD.2075/8; BOA. DH-H.33-1/53.

³⁰ See Dumont and Haupt (1978, p. 69).

³¹ There is a significant literature on the labour movement in Thessaloniki and the Ottoman Empire see Sencer (Baydar) (1969, 1982); Ilicak (2002); Karakışla (1998); Mentzel (1994); Dumont and Haupt (1978); Quataert and Zürcher (1995).

³² See Ilicak (2002, p. 120).

1893, a total of 640 workers were employed in the cotton mills alone, 480 of whom were women or girls, and all of whom were Jews.³³

The cotton mills of Thessaloniki operated from sunrise to sunset, and workers only had a thirty-five-minute break for lunch. Wages were low. Hekimoglou considered the annual earnings of a skilled worker in Thessaloniki to be at most 50 Ottoman *lira*, while a skilled accountant would make 150, a high bank executive 200, and a bank manager 300–1,000 Ottoman *lira*, depending on the bank.³⁴ More reliable seems to be Quataert's estimate of around 5–8 *guruş* daily for unskilled men and 3–8 *guruş* for women and children, which amounted to roughly 20 Ottoman *lira* per annum for men and perhaps 10–15 for women.³⁵ Men were paid two to three times more than boys and starting wages for girls were 50 per cent lower than for boys.³⁶ Poverty was the hallmark of workers and the lower social strata in Thessaloniki, and poverty marked the bulk of the Jewish community.

The workers federations in Thessaloniki repeatedly stated that the Ottoman labourers worked under the worst conditions in Europe.³⁷ Remarkably, employment conditions in the provincial mills were much worse than in Thessaloniki. A large proportion of workers in the Naoussa mills came from the surrounding villages, as was also probably the case in Veroia and Edhessa.³⁸ There is little doubt that the majority of the workers were young women and girls.³⁹ Their wages were substantially lower than in Thessaloniki, perhaps only a third, as was already mentioned in Chapter 6. After all, towards the end of 1912 the daily wage for women and children in Thessaloniki had reached 7 *guruş*. Provincial workers were plainly paid a pittance.

Working hours in the provincial mills, as in Thessaloniki, were very long: from 'sunrise to sunset' or 'dawn to dusk'.⁴⁰ This meant a fifteen-hour day in summer and a ten-hour day in winter. Things could get much

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 121–2.

³⁴ See Hekimoglou (1997, p. 177). The estimate by Hekimoglou was taken from Kofinas (1914) and should be treated with the utmost caution. Presumably Kofinas meant indigenous skilled labour, not workers invited from abroad, who typically earned a lot more.

³⁵ See Quataert (2014).

³⁶ See Quataert (1993a, p. 47).

³⁷ See Ilicak (2002, p. 121).

³⁸ See Lapavitsas (2006, p. 679).

³⁹ See, for instance, Upward (1908, p. 188) and Quataert (1993a, p. 47).

⁴⁰ A point that is generally agreed; see Lapavitsas (2006, pp. 679–80); Quataert (1993a, p. 47); Upward (1908, p. 188).

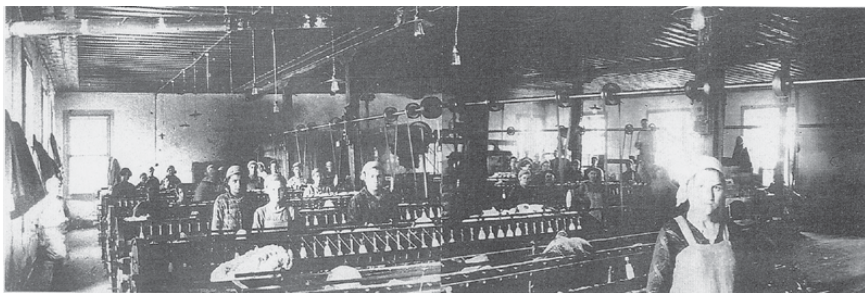


Figure 8.5 Working conditions in the factories

Source: Private collection of Takis Baitsis.

harder, however, when the pressure of market demand was great. Thus, in correspondence with the Ottoman authorities in 1903, *Liğor Çiçi* (Grigorios Tsitsis) of Edhessa stated that, although his mill usually operated from sunrise to sunset, there were times in winter when it had to continue until midnight.⁴¹ This made the working day seventeen- or eighteen-hours long, and it most probably was a single shift.

The harsh conditions that workers faced during these shifts can be glimpsed from photographs that date from the period after the end of Ottoman rule but still give a taste of the interior of the textile plants during the Ottoman period. Thus, Figure 8.5 shows that textile capitalism in Naoussa, as elsewhere in the world, relied on the nimble fingers of young girls and children. They worked in a gloomy and bare environment that became harsh in winter. The prevalence of child and female labour is even more apparent in the striking image of Figure 8.6. It is probable that a gender-based division of labour existed in the plants, perhaps reflected in the male presence in Figure 8.7. Note that the photograph also shows the central axle providing the fundamental motion of the machinery.

In the same note, Tsitsis requested permission to electrify his plant. The introduction of the note summed up the ‘mission statement’ of his company as follows:⁴²

Our company, founded seven years ago and comprising solely of Ottoman subjects, has succeeded in establishing a sizeable water-powered yarn and

⁴¹ BOA. TFR.I. ŞKT.15/1465.

⁴² BOA. TFR.I.ŞKT.15/1465.

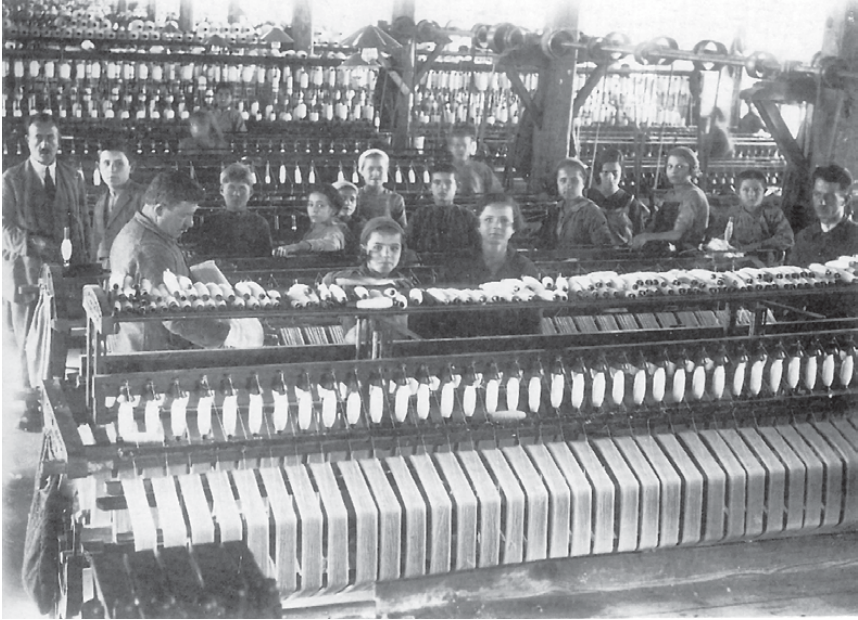


Figure 8.6 Child and female labour in the mills

Source: Private collection of Takis Baitsis.

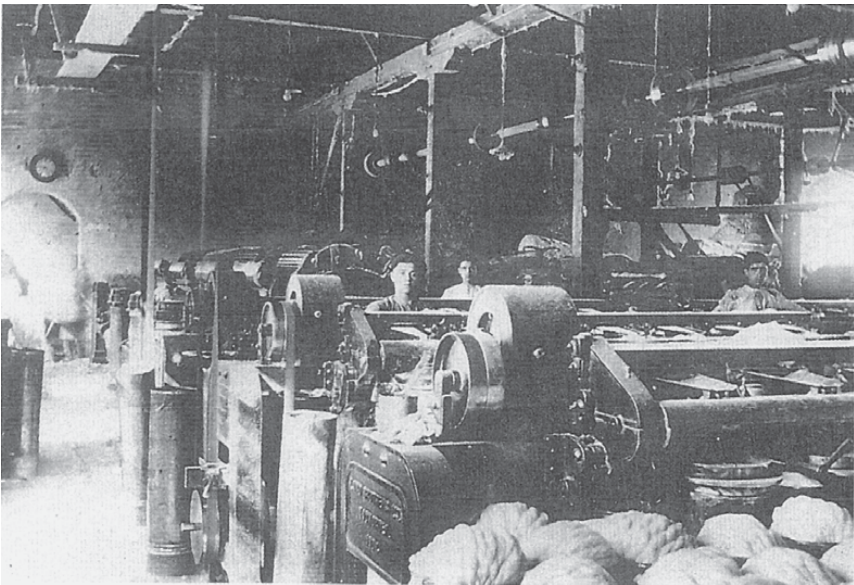


Figure 8.7 Men working in the mills

Source: Private collection of Takis Baitsis.

fabric factory in Edhessa, thanks to His Majesty's permission. Since then it has spared no sacrifice to compete with European products.

With this lofty ambition Tsitsis kept the plant going until late at night in winter. The problem was that it was impossible to use gas lamps to provide light since there was a great danger of setting the cotton dust on fire. Candles were used, which unfortunately did not illuminate the workplace sufficiently to ensure its efficient operation. Tsitsis must have been aware of the gains made by the Allatini flour mill in Thessaloniki, which was electrified and able to work during the night from as early as 1890.⁴³ He appeared much less interested in the welfare of his workers – scutching, carding, drawing and spinning cotton for interminable hours, by candlelight and without heating in the freezing winter nights of Edhessa. Dark, satanic mills, indeed.

The response of the authorities to Tsitsis is not known, but there is a further letter in the archives dating from 1907, which again requested permission to electrify the mill. The request was supported by a letter from the Austrian Embassy to the Grand Vizier (*Sadrizam*) which also asked for customs clearance for the electrical equipment. The supplier was the huge concern of Ganz and Co. in Budapest.⁴⁴ Efficiency would be served at last.

Workplace accidents that resulted in major injuries attracted the interest of the Municipal authorities and even of the General Inspectorate of *Rumeli*. The Inspectorate was founded towards the end of 1902, mainly to deal with unrest in Macedonia and *Rumeli*, and operated until the Young Turk Revolution in 1908 under the Inspector Hüseyin Hilmi *Paşa* who was responsible for the reorganization of the disturbed provinces.⁴⁵ There are at least three files in the archives on factories in Naoussa, Edhessa and Veroia in 1903–4 relating to serious injuries incurred either in the construction or in the operation of the factories.⁴⁶ The Ottoman state could be very meticulous on some of these occasions. Thus, the Local Administration of Naoussa was ordered to investigate an incident in which the worker *Marika*, daughter of *Dimitri*, was seriously injured in the Longos–Kyrtsis–Tourpali plant in

⁴³ SVS X, 1307 [1890].

⁴⁴ BOA. BEO.3021/226569; BOA. İ.RSM.28/21; BOA. BEO.3084/231233.

⁴⁵ See Adanır (1996).

⁴⁶ BOA. TFR.I.SL.19/1804; BOA. TFR.I.SL.22/2133; BOA. TFR.I.SL.44/4382

1904 because her hair was caught in the straps of a machine.⁴⁷ It is hardly credible that over four decades there were a mere three accidents, however, especially in view of the harsh labour conditions. It is more likely that the state intervened only when accidents were too serious to be handled tacitly at the plant.

One reason for worse wages and conditions in the provincial mills was the relative abundance of labour power in the provinces. Quataert asserts that:⁴⁸

Generally, however, there were few other wage-earning jobs near the mills of interior Macedonia and so the operators could rely on cultivators who were available seasonally. During the summer harvest, the number of workers did fall sharply. But, since they had few other opportunities to earn cash wages, their labour remained cheap and available for the yarn factories of the Macedonian interior.

Labour supply became more problematic in the 1900s as migration to the United States of America and elsewhere assumed significant dimensions in rural Macedonia.⁴⁹ There were also employment opportunities in agriculture, especially in the booming tobacco industry. Provincial employers were obliged to improve conditions somewhat, but the gap with Thessaloniki remained.⁵⁰

A further reason for better conditions in Thessaloniki was that its workers constituted the most conscious and best organized section of the working class in the Empire.⁵¹ The labour movement of Thessaloniki proved capable of putting upward pressure on wages, especially in the 1900s. Tobacco and textile workers had begun to engage in strike action already in the early 1900s, but the decisive moment came in 1908 immediately after the Young Turk Revolution, when a great strike wave engulfed the city and the Empire. On one count there were 60 strikes in the three months immediately after the Revolution, in which more than 100,000 workers took part;⁵² according to Güzel, there were altogether 111 strikes in 1908.⁵³ The frustrations of the emerging working class

⁴⁷ BOA. TFR.I.SL.44/4382.

⁴⁸ See Quataert (1993a, p. 46).

⁴⁹ See Quataert (2014, p. 245).

⁵⁰ See Quataert (1993a, p. 48).

⁵¹ See Quataert (2014, p. 245).

⁵² See Sencer (Baydar) (1982).

⁵³ See Güzel (1996, pp. 35–47).

that had accumulated over many years, exploded after the rise of the Young Turks.⁵⁴

A direct result of the strikes in Thessaloniki was the emergence in 1909 of the Socialist Workers' Federation, led by Avraam Benaroya, a Bulgarian Jew. The Federation, as its name signified, hoped for a common front and joint organization of all workers in Thessaloniki and indeed across the Empire. It was broadly supportive of the Empire as a state entity but naturally not as a social or political formation. Among its founding members were Bulgarian socialists and even the socially radical elements among Bulgarian nationalists. The bulk of Federation support came from Jewish and Bulgarian workers, while Greek workers generally kept their distance. In one of those curious twists of history, however, the Federation was instrumental to the eventual creation of the Greek Communist Party in the 1920s, and had an input in the making of the Turkish Communist Party.

The Ottoman state showed no interest in improving employment conditions, despite strict control over the establishment and operation of the factories. The state would become involved only when there was a major incident, such as a dispute over pay. It certainly disapproved of labour movements and attempted to avoid capital–labour confrontations, especially when the state itself was the employer. When the Police Department was established in 1845, several punitive measures were legally promulgated to support its actions in dealing with employee mobilizations.⁵⁵ After the 1890s the state became increasingly uneasy about proletarianization in the cities and elsewhere, and was so concerned about new forms of labour organization that it intervened to restrict them.⁵⁶

Equally revealing was the response of the Young Turks to the strike wave of 1908. The government passed the Provisional Strike Law (*Tatil-i Eşgal Cemiyetleri Hakkında Kanun-ı Muvakkat*) in 1909, marking a deliberate change of attitude by the state towards workers.⁵⁷ The various prohibitions imposed during the previous era indicated that the Ottoman state understood

⁵⁴ See Özkok-Gündoğan (2012, p. 183).

⁵⁵ See Sencer (Baydar) (1969, pp. 97–8).

⁵⁶ See Quataert (1993b).

⁵⁷ See Ökçün (1982).

little of the generic opposition between capital and labour, and dealt with such conflicts as a matter of public order. In contrast, the new Law was fully aware of the nature of social conflict and attempted to resolve it, but in favour of capital.⁵⁸ There would be no social revolution delivered by the Young Turks, certainly none that they had intended.

The organization of labour in the interior of Macedonia was much inferior to Thessaloniki. Important in this regard was that wage labourers in the provinces were often engaged in cultivating their own smallholdings.⁵⁹ There is also little doubt that employer pressure on workers was of a different order of magnitude compared to Thessaloniki. Measures were systematically taken to assert employer power, and even 'armed goons were employed by mill-owners to police clocking-in times and intimidate workers.'⁶⁰ The fact that the factories of the interior Macedonia had armed guards is also confirmed by the Ottoman archives. In one well-documented case the Tsitsis brothers requested permission to hire four or five armed guards in their factory in Naoussa to protect it from possible Bulgarian attacks, and their application was approved by the authorities.⁶¹

There were no worker strikes recorded in Naoussa, or elsewhere in the provincial mills, during the Ottoman period. Even so, in Naoussa a grassroots movement emerged in the 1890s, the *Poupoulo*, which had populist and socialist sympathies, as well as a constitution that demanded better conditions for workers.⁶² The inevitable conflict between the *Poupoulo* and the *çorbacı* of Naoussa took directly political rather than industrial forms. There was intense rivalry, particularly over controlling the administrative structures of the town, above all the office of the mayor. After protracted political struggles in the 1900s, the *Poupoulo* prevailed and its leader, Constantinos Hadjimalousis, was the first mayor of Naoussa elected with full male suffrage. Unfortunately, there is no information about these events in the archives, which is not surprising as they were generally settled within the Christian community. The absence of involvement by the Ottoman state is itself indicative of the direction of development of Ottoman capitalism.

⁵⁸ See Boratav (2007, pp. 19–39). For the national(ist) economy policy of the Young Turks, see Toprak (2012).

⁵⁹ See Lapavitsas (2006, p. 678).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 680.

⁶¹ BOA. TFR.I.SL. 154/15376; BOA. TFR.I.SL. 155/15450; BOA. TFR.I.SL. 155/15459.

⁶² See Lapavitsas (2006, p. 680).

The Ottoman state, ever vigilant and controlling, kept itself rather aloof from the internal political life of the Christian community, also reflecting its distance from the *çorbacı*. The struggle between the *çorbacı* and the *Poupoulo* in Naoussa was largely handled by the Christian community relying on its own resources, but also by turning to the Kingdom of Greece, including the Athens newspapers and the Greek consul in Thessaloniki. Similarly, the community mobilized the mechanisms of the Church rather than the Ottoman state to tackle sharp disputes about education and schools.⁶³ The Ottoman state never possessed the ideological means that were necessary fully to integrate the Christian community. The Christians belonged to Ottoman society, but they were still an 'other'. These were the grounds on which nationalism took root in the community.

To sum up, the conditions of the emerging working class in provincial Macedonia were extremely poor. The British traveller Upward was dismayed by the social and working conditions that he saw in Naoussa in 1907–8 and commented in a memorable turn of phrase: 'It is progress, it is civilisation, but even when the Turk has gone there will still be something left for the Labour Party to do in Niausta.'⁶⁴ He was certainly right, although there would be no Labour Party in Macedonia after the arrival of the Greek army in 1912. Social, political and economic conditions changed substantially under Greek rule, but industrial and social tensions continued to pile up. When the Democratic Army of Greece, the Communist insurgent army of the Greek Civil War, occupied Naoussa in January 1949, some of the heaviest fighting took place in the fortified mills. Decades of class tension peaked violently when the rebels burnt the factories and mansions of the elite of Naoussa.

8.4 The clash of nationalisms

Nationalism in the Balkans was imported from Western Europe towards the end of the eighteenth century, as the ideas of the Enlightenment and the

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ See Upward (1908, p. 188). Upward was also amazed to discover that 'English football' was keenly practiced in the little Macedonian town. This unmistakable sign of the working class was probably the gift of English engineers brought in to operate the machinery of the factories.

French Revolution began to spread. It was initially most prominent among the Greeks, whose revolt in 1821 had much of the character of a people's rising. Among the Slavic peoples of the peninsula it arrived later, by which time it had acquired a strongly romantic admixture. To be sure the Serbs had revolted against Ottoman power already in 1804 but, unlike the Greeks, their revolt was not initially characterized by a coherent nationalist ideology.

Balkan nationalism developed along two main cultural axes both of which reflected the medieval history of the area, namely religion and language. Of the two, religion proved the main instrument of national differentiation in the Ottoman Empire, though it did not make for a prevalent national outlook among Ottoman Jews.

Religion was the dominant ideology of Ottoman society from the beginning, providing the ethical principle of state organization and the moral means of integrating the many components of the Empire's population. The Ottoman Empire was fundamentally a Turco-Islamic state that never entirely abandoned the ideology of *gaza*, that is, punitive campaigns to spread Islam among the non-believers.⁶⁵ It tolerated communities of Christians and Jews within its borders since they were 'the people of the book/scripture', even after the Ottomans had formed a heavily centralized imperial state in the sixteenth century with an increasingly conservative Sunni outlook. However, the other believers had an inherently inferior position marked by a legion of rules and other forms of discrimination.⁶⁶

The Balkans had remained mostly Christian following the Ottoman conquest in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, in sharp contrast to Anatolia. Moreover, the Balkan Christians were frequently armed and had for centuries supplied units to the Ottoman security forces.⁶⁷ Christianity

⁶⁵ See İnalçık (1973) for an authoritative exposition. Wittek's (1938) '*gaza* thesis' postulated that the establishment of the Ottoman state was the result of a committed religious struggle against the 'infidels'. This thesis has been challenged by historians and the on-going debate is not directly relevant to our purposes. However, even if it were accepted that the rise of the Ottomans was mostly a sustained campaign of plunder and enslavement, and while acknowledging that Christian warlords went into partnership with Muslim raiders at the time of the initial Ottoman expansion, it would still seem likely that the *gaza* played a crucial ideological role in the fluid frontier zone of Northeastern Anatolia, where the Ottoman statelet emerged at the end of the thirteenth century; see Kafadar (1995).

⁶⁶ See Lewis (1984).

⁶⁷ The Islamization and Turkification of Anatolia after the Battle of Manzikert in 1071 is a process that is still shrouded in darkness due in part to the scarcity of original sources. Vryonis (1971) has

sustained the separate character of its adherents as well as providing a degree of cultural affinity with Western Europe, notwithstanding the vicious conflicts and the frequently undisguised hatred between Orthodox and Catholic Christians. Substantial numbers of Balkan people, mostly of Slavic ethnic origin, lived in the northern and western parts of the Balkan Peninsula under the jurisdiction of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The political role of Christianity in the Balkans crucially affected political, social and economic developments in the nineteenth century. Persistent antagonisms between the Ottoman, the Habsburg and the Romanov Empires in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, together with the equally persistent meddling of Britain and France in Ottoman affairs, placed their stamp on Balkan nationalisms. National divisions were sharply exacerbated by Great Power politics, especially as the small Balkan states that emerged in the nineteenth century operated under the tutelage of the Great Powers.⁶⁸

The Greek Christian, or rather, the ‘Rum’, part of the Ottoman population had developed its own aristocracy already by the end of the seventeenth century. Pivotal to it was the Patriarchate of Constantinople, an ancient institution with a complex administrative and economic structure. In the eighteenth century the Great Church could justifiably be called an integral part of the Ottoman state machine. Recent historical research has shown that it was effectively a tax collector, and the position of the Patriarch was in practice an Ottoman state post.⁶⁹ Closely connected to the Church was the secular aristocracy of the Phanariot Greeks of İstanbul. They supplied professional services to the ruling Muslim stratum of the Empire ranging from functioning as the Dragomans of the Porte and the Fleet – in practice officers for foreign affairs – to providing advanced medical expertise. In the eighteenth century the Phanariots reached the pinnacle of their power, above all, by securing monopoly control over the rulership of the Danubian principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, under the suzerainty of the Sultan.

produced a classic piece of scholarship stressing the violent and destructive nature of the Turkic invasions. However, the process appears to have been more complex, variable and negotiated, with a common cultural and religious substratum emerging between Christianity and Islam; see Hasluck (1929) and Peacock, De Nicola and Yıldız (eds) (2015).

⁶⁸ See Jelavich (1983, ch. 5).

⁶⁹ See Papademetriou (2015, chs. 3 and 4).

Western ideas flowed into this realm, even as a trickle, particularly as the Phanariot aristocracy regularly sent its offspring to study in the West. Such was the background of the so-called 'Modern Greek Enlightenment', an explosion of intellectual activity that followed Western European trends in the second half of the eighteenth century.⁷⁰ The 'Enlightenment' provided the intellectual backing for the rise of nationalism among the Orthodox Christians of the Empire. Moreover, the Christians had never entirely forgotten their medieval past, whether that was the Byzantine Empire or the independent kingdoms of the Serbs, Bulgarians, and others. They had retained a memory of it in folk songs and customs as well as through Church mechanisms and rituals.⁷¹

By the late eighteenth century broad layers of Orthodox Christians increasingly perceived themselves as the nation of Greeks, a development fully facilitated by their pre-eminence in trade. The implications were profound, since nationalism relates first and foremost to identity and community, even if these are largely fictitious.⁷² The appearance of national identities in the Balkans occurred at a time when the central state was weak, there was widespread landlordism by the *ayan*, and the *kırcalı* roamed the lowlands. Meanwhile, trade, including with Western Europe, was expanding.

Lest it be misunderstood, it was far from inevitable that the constructed national identities of the Balkans would tend to acquire a sharp religious outlook.⁷³ There is a common cultural bedrock and an affinity of aspirations among the Balkan and the Anatolian peoples, which have been a constant refrain in the history of the area since the tales of *Şeyh Bedreddin* in the fourteenth century. However, Ottoman society was based on undisputed Muslim ascendancy that was institutionally buttressed by a conservative Sunni state. Muslims had a deeply rooted conviction in their own superiority toward Ottoman Christians, who were tolerated as long as they kept their place. Christians reciprocated with disdain mixed with fear. Wealth acquired by Christians would naturally alter the perceptions of relative superiority, but

⁷⁰ The term 'Modern Greek Enlightenment' was coined by Dimaras (1977). For in depth discussions of its emergence see Kitromilides (1996) and Kondylis (1988).

⁷¹ See Jelavich (1983, pp. 171–8).

⁷² Anderson's (1983) analysis of 'imagined communities' certainly fits the extraordinary emphasis on a mythical historical past that is characteristic of Balkan nationalisms.

⁷³ Todorova (2009, p. 165) has stressed the organic, unifying tradition of popular culture among Christians and Muslims in the region.

divisions still run very deep.⁷⁴ Religious divisions were also prominent among the Balkan Christians, particularly between Orthodox and Catholic.

Language was a secondary principle of national differentiation in the Balkans, constantly leading to fissures in Christian nationalism in the nineteenth century. The Orthodox Church, unlike the Catholic, had allowed mass to be preached in languages other than Greek since the deepest Middle Ages. For the Slavic peoples of the Balkans and Eastern Europe, Orthodox Christianity was the means of acquiring written command over their own languages.⁷⁵ However, the Patriarchate of Constantinople spoke, wrote and delivered the liturgy in Greek, the holy language of the East. Its administrative structures were culturally Greek, regardless of the ethnic origin of those who filled the posts.

The Ottoman state took systematic advantage of the administrative and ideological mechanisms of the Christians in the Balkans to cement its rule. Mehmed II, the first truly powerful Ottoman Sultan, officially reconstituted the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 1454 by personally appointing as Patriarch the monk Gennadios, a sworn enemy of Orthodox union with the Catholic Church.⁷⁶ It is worth stressing that the leading position of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the late Ottoman Empire was very much a product of Ottoman rule. A decisive step in its ascendancy occurred in 1766-7, when the Ottoman authorities allowed the Patriarchate to absorb the autonomous Slavic churches of Peć and Ohrid in the Balkans. With its influence enhanced and as the authority of the Porte declined amidst the administrative chaos of the eighteenth century, the Church emerged as a reliable tax-collecting mechanism that operated in part by auctioning powerful positions within its institutional structures.

⁷⁴ Krstić (2011) has carefully traced the sharp religious borders between Ottoman Christians and Muslims despite their coexistence and cultural syncretism. The army of Christian 'neomartyrs' during the Ottoman period has, for instance, served to mark Christian oppression and the unbridgeable gap with Muslims.

⁷⁵ A point that was elegantly demonstrated by Obolensky (1982). The first Glagolitic alphabet of the Slavs, devised in the ninth century by Cyril and propagated with the help of his brother Methodius from Thessaloniki, was probably based on the Slavic dialects of Macedonia, the lineal descendants of which can still be heard in Northern Greece.

⁷⁶ This is an event shrouded in myth and symbolism reflecting perceptions of 'Turkish tyranny', which has been used to legitimize the ascendancy of the Church among the Orthodox Christians at the expense of the secular Byzantine aristocracy; see Papademetriou (2015, pp. 21-41).

Vital to the rising nationalisms in the Ottoman Balkans was also the concept of the *millet*, which has deep Islamic roots that predate the Ottoman Empire and indicates a religious community.⁷⁷ The meaning of the *millet*, despite its undeniable religious associations, has varied over the centuries of Ottoman rule and it would be deeply misleading to confuse it with the modern nation. For our purposes, toward the end of the eighteenth century the *millet* began increasingly to signify a religious group integral to the Empire and possessing its own internal structure, including mechanisms of taxation, as well as having its own leader. The Patriarch of Constantinople became the formal head of the *Millet-i Rum*, which came to include practically all the Orthodox Christians of the Empire – Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, Vlachs, Moldavians, Arabs and others – thus enormously augmenting the Patriarch's secular power.

After the Tanzimat the Ottoman state used the *millet* system as a means of confronting the age-old practices of Muslim ascendancy. Seeking modernity was far from the exclusive concern of the Christians. The Muslim community keenly absorbed the ideas of Western Europe already from the eighteenth century. However, among the Muslims the drive toward modernity took peculiarly official forms driven by the desperate need of the state to confront Western military superiority. While the educational mechanisms of the Orthodox Christians were shaped by the Church, the first high educational institutions of the Muslims were military schools established by the reforming sultans. As the Porte reasserted its power in the nineteenth century, the ideology of 'Ottomanism' was promulgated, amounting largely to equality among the *millet*, coupled with individual equality in juridical and electoral rights. Secularism was supposed to replace the religious basis of the *millet* system, and the person of the Sultan was expected to act as the focal point of 'Ottomanism'.

In practice the Ottoman state failed to secure equitable participation of the various *millet* in the 'reformed' structures of the army, the administration, and education.⁷⁸ It is important to note that the Orthodox Church was ambivalent about the Tanzimat reforms since they potentially threatened its traditional

⁷⁷ The debate on the meaning and the role of the *millet* is extensive and not directly relevant to our purposes. Braude (1982) has argued that the term *millet* became widely used only in the late Ottoman period, particularly the term *Millet-i Rum* to denote the Greek Orthodox. Konortas (1999) has further argued that the Patriarch assumed the role of 'leader' of the Christians only after the decline of power of the Porte in the eighteenth century.

⁷⁸ See Findley (1982).

hold over the secular affairs of Orthodox Christians. Individual rights for Christians that were presumably ensured through secular Ottoman courts were not easily compatible with traditional group rights defended in ecclesiastical courts.⁷⁹ Partly through its own failings and partly through the resistance of the established mechanisms of the *millet*, the Ottoman state proved incapable of sustaining a new homogenizing national identity similar to those of Western Europe, or even to those of the Balkan states of Greece and Serbia. The half-baked concoction of ‘Ottomanism’ had no chance against the rising nationalisms of the ethnic and religious groups of the Empire in the Balkans⁸⁰ ‘Ottomanism’ was briefly revived by the Young Turks after 1909 in an attempt to create an ‘Ottoman nation’, minus the pivotal role of the Sultan. The Balkan Wars of 1912–13 put a decisive end to that notion. As ‘Ottomanism’ failed, the Young Turks became open and ardent Turkish nationalists.

Nationalism was imported from Western Europe but the ideological vehicles for it were created by the internal practices of the Ottoman Empire. The conceptual apparatus of the *millet* – inherently based on discrimination – was incapable of dealing with the ideas of equality and liberty emanating from Western Europe, irrespective of the wishes of the Ottoman ruling elite.⁸¹ The ideal notion of the nation triumphed over the religious identity of the *millet*. Armed clashes and the shedding of blood in the nineteenth century firmly fixed divisions between Christians and Muslims but also among Christians. Not least in importance was the role of the small states of Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria acting as powerful poles of irredentist, state-backed nationalism, each with its own historical-religious myth, throughout most of the nineteenth century.

It is important to note in this connection that the Jews of Thessaloniki did not seek to differentiate themselves nationally from the Ottoman Empire, even though their most powerful families carried Italian and French passports. The competing nationalisms of the Balkans offered no advantages to Jews compared to the reforming Ottoman Empire, indeed they represented a palpable threat from undercurrents of intolerant Christianity. Moreover, Zionism was an ideology developed by Ashkenazy Western European Jews

⁷⁹ See Stamatopoulos (2018). For an older discussion of the impact of the Tanzimat on the Patriarchate of Constantinople, see Augustinos (1992).

⁸⁰ See Lewis (1979 [1961], chs. 6, 7).

⁸¹ See Karpat (1982).

that was largely brought over to indigenous Sephardic Ottoman Jews as part of a far broader wave of cultural modernization of Ottoman Jewry in the second half of the nineteenth century. Modernization was led by Western European Jews keen to help their brethren in the Ottoman Empire. Its main domestic agents in İstanbul, Thessaloniki and elsewhere were the powerful Francos of the Ottoman Jewry.⁸² The modernizers tended to be assimilationists and keen to promote the learning of Turkish by Jews.

The Zionists assumed a rejectionist outlook toward the modernizing upper layers of the Jewish community, thus promoting the learning of Hebrew and appealing to the youth and the poor.⁸³ But they made limited headway in a community that had rarely felt threatened where it lived and for which 'the return to Zion' typically meant going to the Holy Land to die, not least as Zion was part of the Empire. In Thessaloniki, in particular, the Zionist message had very little appeal for a majority community that dominated the city's economic and social life. Furthermore, the Jewish youth and poor of Thessaloniki were strongly attracted to the ideas of the Socialist Workers' Federation of Avraam Benaroya. The ground was barren for the Zionists even in the political turmoil that followed the Young Turk revolt.⁸⁴

The Jews of the Empire were the only religious community to embrace the ideology of 'Ottomanism' with any vigour.⁸⁵ Education played an important role in this respect since among the Jews it generally lacked the sectarian character that it had for Christians. The main lever for the educational advancement of Ottoman Jews was the Alliance Israélite Universelle, an international educational association established as part of the modernizing efforts of Western European Jews and embraced by the Francos. The Alliance had an assimilationist outlook and generally supported the efforts of the Tanzimat. In Thessaloniki the educational lead of the Alliance was buttressed by the Allatini, thus fostering an educational boom during the final decades of Ottoman rule. In a short period of time and exactly as industrial capitalism

⁸² See Rodrigue (1994).

⁸³ See Benbassa (1994).

⁸⁴ See Mazower (2004, pp. 405–6) for an account of two separate visits by Vladimir Jabotinsky, the apostle of Zionism, to Thessaloniki. In 1908 Jabotinsky's efforts to instill Jewish nationalism left the community largely indifferent. In 1926 he had more success, but by then Thessaloniki was part of the Greek nation state and conditions were quite different for the Jewish community.

⁸⁵ See Cohen (2014).

emerged, the Jewry of Thessaloniki was transformed from a community of low literacy and poor intellectual accomplishment into a paragon of intellectual progress.⁸⁶

Macedonia was also relatively remote from the main centres of Greek nationalism in the south as well as from the centres of the Modern Greek Enlightenment in İstanbul, Bucharest, Trieste and elsewhere. The oldest form of national identity in Macedonia was nonetheless Greek, reflecting the dominance of Greek public culture among the Christians. Independence for Greece in the 1830s lent extra kudos to Greek nationalism. Its most powerful rival was Bulgarian nationalism which arose later but was visibly present by the 1850s.⁸⁷ Bulgarian nationalism was a relative latecomer to the Balkans, partly because of the proximity of Bulgarian lands to İstanbul, and partly because of the domination exercised by Greeks over Bulgarian intellectual and religious life. Consequently, two interrelated issues provided the organizing focus of Bulgarian nationalism in addition to confronting the Ottoman state: first, independence from the Greek-dominated structures of the Church and, second, command over education, which meant using the Bulgarian language and altering school curricula accordingly. Greek and Bulgarian nationalisms clashed primarily over these two issues in Macedonia in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Few texts sum up the early outlook of Bulgarian nationalism in Macedonia more succinctly than a letter by Kiryak Durzhilovich to Georgi Rakovski, sent on 25 October 1860, and shown in Figures 8.8a and b. Durzhilovich was born in 1817 in the village of Drazilovo or Derzilovo (in Bulgarian, Държилово – Durzhilovo) on Mount Vermion, the broader area from which several of the *çorbacı* of Naoussa originated.⁸⁸ His family name was Dinka or Dinkov (in Greek, Dingas) but he typically signed his name in Greek as Kiriakos Darzilovitis (or Derzilovitz). Kiryak Durzhilovich and his younger brother, Konstantin (Constantinos), were significant figures in the history of Bulgarian nationalism in Macedonia. Their father was a merchant who moved the family to nearby Edhessa (*Vodina*) sometime in the 1820s. In the 1840s Kiryak entered

⁸⁶ See Hekimoglou (2012).

⁸⁷ The bibliography on this issue is enormous. For a useful summary see Gounaris and Mihailidis (2000).

⁸⁸ The village of Metamorfofi on Mount Vermion currently stands on the site of Drazilovo. The contemporary village is a little hamlet, but the original name is still widely used in the area.

305

От Киряк Държилович¹ — Солун

25 октомври 1860 г.

Отговаря на писмо от Раковски относно получаването на „Дунавски лебед“ в Солун. Дава сведения за себе си. Настанен в Солун отдавна като гръцки печатар и книжар. По интриги на гръцки шовинисти и владници печатницата му закрыта. Пристигането от Москва на племенника му Георги Динков. Безпомощното положение на християните от Южна Македония

Θεσσαλονίκη, 25 Ὀκτωβρίου 1860.

Ἀξιότιμε κύριε,

Πρὸ τῶν ἑβδομάδων ἔλαβον δύο φύλλα τῆς ἡμετέρας ἐφημερίδος τοῦ πρώτου αὐτῆς ἀρ[ι]θμ[οῦ], πρὸ πέντε δὲ ἡμερῶν ἕτερα μέχρι τοῦ ἀρ[ι]θμ[οῦ] 5. Ἐνεκα ἀπασχολήσεως δὲν Σᾶς ἔγραψα ἐγκαίρως. Ἦδη εὐχαρίστως ἀπατώ.

Λυποῦμαι οὐκ ὀλίγον μὴ δυνάμενος νὰ εὐχαριστήσω ὑμᾶς δι' ἐγγραφῆς συνδρομητῶν, ἐλπίζω ὅμως τὸν ἅγιον Πολυάγαθον νὰ ἐγγράψω συνδρομητήν. Σήμερον πέμπω εἰς Κορυκοῦσιον τὰ φύλλα, ἴσως ἀκολούθως ἐγγράψω καὶ ἄλλον τινά.

Μεγαλύτεραν λύπην αἰσθάνομαι μὴ γνωρίζον τὴν βουλγαρικὴν γλῶσσαν, καίτοι Βούλγαρος. Πρὸ δέκα περίπου ἐτῶν εἶμαι ἀποκαταστημένος ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ, ἔχω τυπογραφεῖον, εἰς ὃ τυπῶν ὅλα τὰ ἐν χρῆσει τοῖς σχολείοις ἐλλ[η]νικὰ βιβλία. Ἐπειδὴ ὅμως, ὡς ἦτο δίκαιον, συνήρρησα εἰς τὸ νὰ ζητήσωσι οἱ Βούλγαροι Κορυκοῦσιον ἐπίσκοπον Βούλγαρον τὸν Παρθένιον, οἱ Γραικοὶ, υἱόστα οἱ ἐν τοῖς πράγμασιν, σὺν τῷ μητροπολίτῃ Θεσσαλονίκης καὶ τῷ μητροπολίτῃ Βοδενῶν, συνήρρησαν διὰ τοῦ πασᾶ καὶ πρὸ ἕξ μηνῶν μοῦ ἐκλείσαν τὸ τυπογραφεῖόν μου. Ἦδη δὲ μένω μὲ μόνον τὸ βιβλιοπολεῖόν μου. Ἡ ὑπόθεσις μετέβη εἰς Κωνσταντινούπολιν εἰς τὸ ὑπουργεῖον. Ἐκεῖ ἔχω φίλους, πλὴν ἔχω καὶ τοὺς ἀντιεργουήτας. Τὸ ἀποτέλεσμα μοὶ εἶναι ἄηλον. Οἱ Γραικοὶ, βεβαίως βοηθούμενοι ὑπὸ τοῦ κλήρου καὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας, σφοδρῶς καταφέρονται κατὰ τῶν Βουλγάρων, ἐνῶ οὗτοι πράττουσι ἐντὸς τῶν δικαιωμάτων των, ζητοῦντες ἀνάπτυξιν καὶ πρόοδον τῆς μητρικῆς των γλώσσης. Ἐγὼ καίτοι ἀγνοῶ τὴν γλῶσσαν ταύτην, ἀνέκαθεν ὀμίλησα ὑπὲρ τῆς διαδόσεως αὐτῆς μεταξὺ τῶν Βουλγάρων. Ἡ σπουδὴ αὐτῆς διευκολύνει κατὰ μέγα μέρος καὶ τὴν σπουδὴν τῆς ἐλληνικῆς. Καὶ γνήσιος Γραικὸς ἂν ἤμην, τὸ αὐτὸ ἤθελον ὀμίλησθαι. Φαίνεται ὅμως, ὅτι οἱ ἀπαθῶς κρίνοντες εἰσὶν ὀλίγοι, ἐπομένως θεωροῦνται καὶ παιᾶται.

Ὁ Γεώργιος Διγκῶφ κατὰ μῆνα Αὐγουστον ἐρχόμενος ἐκ Μόσχας ἐπέρασαν ἀπὸ τὴν πόλιν σας. Ἴσως ἐγένετο πρὸς ὑμᾶς γνωστός. Οὗτος εἶναι ἀνεμιός μου, δηλ. υἱὸς τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ μου Κ[ωνσταντίνου] Δίγκα. Λιά συνεργείας μου πρὸ δύο ἐτῶν ἐστάλη εἰς τὴν Ῥωσίαν. Κατετάχθη μαθητὴς εἰς τὸ σχολεῖον τῆς Σμολένσκης, ὅπου σπουδάζει δι' ἐξόδων τῆς κυβερνήσεως ὡς ὑπότροφος.

Ἐπεὶθεν οὐδὲν νεώτερον δύναμαι νὰ σᾶς μεταδώσω, ἐκτὸς τῆς καταπιέσεως καὶ ταλαιπωρίας τῶν χριστιανῶν. Πολιτικὸν καὶ ἐκκλησιαστικὸν ἄρχοντες,

Figure 8.8a Letter by Kiryak Durzhlilovich to Georgi Rakovski, 1860

Source: Traikov (1957).

622

Писма до Г. С. Раковски 1860 г.

ἐξαίρεσει ὀλίγων, πάντες εἰς οὐδὲν ἕτερον καταγίνονται, εἰμὴ εἰς ἀρπάξει καὶ
 ξοσχίσει. Οὐδεμίαν πρόνοιαν περὶ τῆς βελτιώσεως τῶν χριστιανῶν. Μάτην φρονίζον
 οἱ εὐρωπαϊοὶ, μάτην γράφουν οἱ ἐπουργοί, μάτην δημοσιεύουν κλολάς καὶ
 σφαγὰς οἱ δημοσιογράφοι, — οἱ Τούρκοι μένουσιν ἀνάληθοι. Καίριον δὲν ἔχω
 γὰ γράψω ὑμῖν καθέκαστα.

¹ Ἐν τούτοις μένω

ὁ ὑμέτερος

Κ[υριάκος] Δερζήλοβιτζ.

ДБК. Ф. Раковски, ІВ 1166/52
 (стар инв. № 8184)

Превод

Солун, 25 октомври 1860 г.

Почитаеми господине!

Преди няколко седмици получих два екземпляра от първия брой на вашия вестник, а преди пет дена получих други екземпляри до брой пети.

Поради заетост не ви писах навреме. Сега с удоволствие ви отговарям.²

Съжалявам немалко, задето не мога да ви зарадвам със записване на абонати, но се надявам да запиша св. поленинския [епископ] като абонат. Днес изпращам броевете в Кукуш. Може би по-нататък да запиша и някой друг.

Много голяма скръб изпитвам, че макар и да съм българин, не знам [да пиша на] български език. От около десет години аз съм настанен в този град [Солун] и имам печатница, в която печатам всички въведени в училищата гръцки книги³, но понеже, както и беше право, съдействувах на кукушките българи да искат епископ българин — Партений, гърците, особено първенците, заедно със солунския и воденския митрополит, направиха постъпки пред пащата (окръжния управител) и преди шест месеца ми закриха печатницата. Сега оставам само с книжарницата си. Въпросът бе отнесен в министерството в Цариград. Там имам приятели⁴, но има и такива, които действуват против мене. Резултатът не ми е известен. Гърците, разбира се, подпомогнати от духовенството и властите, силно се нахвърлят срещу българите, макар последните да действуват в рамките на своите права, като искат да се развиват и напредват на майчиния си език. Ако и да не владея [писмено] този език, аз винаги съм говорил в полза на неговото разпространение между българите. Преподаването му улеснява до голяма степен и изучаването на гръцкия език. И истински грък да бях, пак същото щях да поддържам. Изглежда обаче малцина са тия, които оценяват безстрастно и поради това се смята, че сме виновни ние.

Георги Динков, връщайки се през месец август от Москва, мина през вашия град. Може би се е запознал с вас. Той е мой племеник, сиреч син на моя брат К[онстантин] Динката. С мое съдействие преди две години той беше изпратен в Русия. Постъпи ученик в училището [семинарията] в Смоленск, където следва на държавни разноски като стипендиант.⁵

Figure 8.8b Letter by Kiryak Durzhilovich to Georgi Rakovski, 1860

the University of Athens and lived in the Kingdom of Greece probably until 1850. In the 1850s and 1860s Kiriakos Darzilovitis, supported by his brother Constantinos, acted as publisher and bookseller in Thessaloniki promoting the literary use of Bulgarian and the cause of Bulgarian nationalism.

The letter by Durzhilovich was sent to Rakovski, a prominent intellectual and activist in the Bulgarian Renaissance and one of the historic fathers of Bulgarian nationalism. At the time Rakovski lived in exile in Belgrade, hounded by the security forces of the Ottoman state. During 1860–1 he published the newspaper *Dunavski Lebed* (The Danube Swan), an outlet for rebellious Bulgarian nationalism. Durzhilovich kept a correspondence with Rakovski.⁸⁹ The letter in Figures 8.8a and b was edited by Rakovski and published in his newspaper with the evident aim of bolstering Bulgarian nationalism in Macedonia. It is instructive to translate it in full (with contemporary place names in brackets):⁹⁰

Dear Sir,

A few weeks ago, I received two copies of the first issue of your newspaper, and five days ago several more up to issue number 5.

Due to various obligations I did not write to you promptly. I am now responding with pleasure.

I feel not a little sorrow that I am unable to please you by registering subscribers, but I hope to obtain the subscription of the Bishop of Polyani.⁹¹ Today I will send the copies to Koukoush (Kilkis), and perhaps I might be able to find another subscriber soon.

I feel even greater sorrow that, although I am a Bulgarian, I do not know the Bulgarian language. I have been living in this city (Thessaloniki) for ten years now, and I have a print shop where I publish all the Greek books that are used in schools. However, because I helped, as was only proper, the Bulgarians of Koukoush to request a Bulgarian bishop – Parthenios – the Greeks,⁹² especially the notables, together with the

⁸⁹ There are altogether eight letters by Durzhilovich to Rakovski in the Bulgarian historical archive at the National Library of Bulgaria in Sofia.

⁹⁰ See Traikov (1957 [vol. 2], pp. 621–5), which also includes facsimiles of the handwritten letter by Durzhilovich. A partial translation of the letter in English is available at <http://www.promacedonia.org/en/vt/index.htm> (accessed 31 January 2018). The translation has been completed and slightly amended in the text below.

⁹¹ The Bishopric of Polyani is a historic seat in central Macedonia that includes the town of Kilkis (in Bulgarian, Koukoush), that is, the settlement of *Avrethisar* in the *vakıf* of *Gazi Evrenos Bey*.

⁹² In the text, Γραικοί, that is, specifically Greek-speaking Ottoman Orthodox Christians.

Bishop of Thessaloniki and the Bishop of Vodina, made representations to the *paşa* and six months ago closed down my printshop. And now I have only my bookshop. The issue was passed on to Constantinople, to the Ministry. I have friends there, but there are also people who are against me. The result is not yet known to me. The Greeks, naturally backed by the clergy and the authorities, are strongly attacking the Bulgarians, though the latter are acting within their rights, demanding development and progress of their mother tongue. For my part, though I am ignorant of this language, I have always spoken in favour of its dissemination among the Bulgarians. The study of this language greatly helps the study of Greek. Even if I were a pure Greek, I would have maintained the same. But it appears that those who form opinions without bias are few, and that is why they are considered at fault.

In the month of August, Georgios Dinkov passed from your city (Belgrade) on his way from Moscow. Perhaps he was introduced to you. He is my nephew, that is, the son of my brother Constantinos Dingas. Partly due to my efforts he was sent to Russia two years ago. He entered school at Smolensk, where he is studying with a government scholarship.

There is no further news to report to you from here, other than the oppression and troubles of the Christians. Political and Church leaders, with few exceptions, are only concerned with one thing, how to grab and tear things apart. No thought is given to improving the condition of the Christians. The Europeans complain in vain, the Ministers write in vain, the journalists report thefts and massacres in vain. The Turks are callous. I have no time to relate to you these events.

I remain

Yours

K. Derzilovitz

This is a remarkable letter, written in natural Greek by a man who had clearly had university training, an extremely rare event at the time. Durzhilovich not only hailed from the same area as several of the merchants and industrialists of Naoussa but also belonged to the same agrarian and trading social layer. Even though he had lived and studied in Athens, he was an ardent Bulgarian patriot in conflict with the Ottoman authorities as well as the Greek notables and clergy. Indeed the problems he confronted in 1860 were not new. In 1851 he had faced charges in the Ottoman courts of Thessaloniki for publishing

'seditious' books.⁹³ As a Bulgarian nationalist he was concerned to promote education in Bulgarian and independence from the structures of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. He was equally concerned to confront the poor social conditions of the Christians. His nationalism was marked by social radicalism similar to that of Rakovski.

The most striking aspect of the letter, however, is that Durzhilovich openly admitted to having no knowledge of Bulgarian in the course of communicating with one of the fathers of Bulgarian nationalism.⁹⁴ He sought to spread the message of Rakovski's nationalist newspaper in Macedonia, even securing a subscription by the new Bulgarian bishop of Kilkis and considered himself a Bulgarian patriot, but could only communicate in Greek. He was also a highly educated man, who run a vital publishing house in Thessaloniki that produced textbooks for Greek schools and could have presumably easily learnt to write in Bulgarian, but apparently failed to do so. From the standpoint of his Greek opponents in Thessaloniki, Kiriakos Darzilovitis would appear to be a Greek (Γραικός) who had become very confused and dangerous.

The ethnic outlook of Durzhilovich was characteristic of the early period of conflict in Macedonia, a time of fluid identities and comparative innocence. The fluidity between Greek and Bulgarian national identities persevered throughout the decades that followed, and further striking confirmation of it is afforded by Durzhilovich's own family. Take, for instance, Kiryak's nephew, Georgi (Georgios) Dinkov, the son of Konstantin Durzhilovich, who is mentioned in the text of the letter. Georgi, also known by the surname Dinkata, was a well-known advocate of Bulgarian education and nationalism, who recorded the folk traditions and geography of Macedonia and was attracted

⁹³ See Vakali (2015), who discusses the trial of 1851 and gives further information on Durzhilovich/Darzilovitis.

⁹⁴ The edited Bulgarian text by Rakovski makes two crucial interpolations, namely [ДА ПИША НА] and [ПИСМЕНО], suggesting that Durzhilovich merely lacked command of written Bulgarian, and this was presumably the reason why he wrote in Greek. However, in the letter Durzhilovich stated twice and clearly that he was 'ignorant' of Bulgarian altogether ('μη γνωρίζων την βουλγαρικήν γλώσσαν' and 'άγνοών την γλώσσαν ταύτην'). It is indeed hard to believe that someone like Durzhilovich had no knowledge of Bulgarian, and it would seem plausible that he simply did not know how to write in it. Yet, how plausible could it be that such a committed nationalist, with exceptional academic abilities and keen to promote the use of Bulgarian, failed to acquire written command of the language, if indeed Bulgarian was his mother tongue?

to socialism.⁹⁵ Moreover, his sister, Slavka Dinkova, was prominent in the promotion of Bulgarian education, especially for women, in Thessaloniki. The activities of both Georgi and Slavka were of a piece with those of their father Konstantin and uncle Kiryak both of whom had become leading figures in the sizeable Bulgarian community of Thessaloniki in the late 1860s.

However, in the 1870s, following the end of his Bulgarian nationalist exploits in Macedonia, Georgi Dinkov went to live in Athens, where he earned a living as a pettifogger, and in 1876, shortly before his death, had a son. Dimitrios Dingas, son of Georgi Dinkov, grandson of Konstantin Durzhevich, and nephew of Slavka Dinkova, became a devoted Greek patriot and paragon of the Greek community of Macedonia. He was a Member of the Ottoman Parliament after the Young Turk Revolution, a Member of the Greek Parliament after the incorporation of a large part of Macedonia in the Kingdom of Greece, and a high-ranking Minister in several Greek governments for decades. The great-nephew of Kiryak Durzhevich, inveterate promoter of Bulgarian education in Macedonia, even served as Greek Minister of Education in the 1920s. Such astonishing fluidity of names and roles was a characteristic feature of national identity in Macedonia.

Fluidity aside, the spirit of comparative innocence marking Durzhevich's letter would soon come to an end. The conflict between the two nationalisms became venomous once the Ottoman state had acknowledged a separate Bulgarian Church in 1870 (Bulgarian Exarchate). In practice, if not formally, the Porte had recognized the existence of a separate Bulgarian *millet*. Bulgarian nationalism gained further momentum after the Congress of Berlin in 1878 which, at the instigation of Russia, accorded to Bulgaria effective independence and even assigned to it greatly expanded borders that included Macedonia. The Russian plan never came to fruition mostly due to German intervention, but it was clear that Bulgaria was on the ascendant in the Balkans. The struggle between Bulgarian nationalism and the Ottoman state as well as between Bulgarian and Greek nationalisms in Macedonia became armed and murderous in the 1890s and 1900s.

Nationalism in Macedonia certainly had a religious and linguistic pedigree but it would be hopelessly one-sided to analyse it at the level of ideology alone.

⁹⁵ See Traikov (1957 [vol. 2], p. 626).

As Gounaris has claimed, the adoption of nationalism, the rediscovery by Christian communities of the deep historical past and its re-description in national terms, 'were mostly determined by cleavages which reflected real and vital interests, basically the allocation of material resources'.⁹⁶ These cleavages resulted in good part from the socio-economic transformation of Macedonia since the late eighteenth century leading to the emergence of commercial and industrial capitalism. The analysis of the transformation of the region of Mount Vermion in the preceding chapters of this book can cast a fresh light on the social and economic forces engaged in the nationalist struggle.

The frictions attendant to the rise of capitalism inevitably generated class antagonisms. Among the Christians class antagonisms became intertwined with communal conflicts which were marked by nationalist ideologies. Even the Greek Consul General in Thessaloniki was fully aware of this aspect of the nationalist struggle in Macedonia, and explicitly stated that: '... in the villages of Macedonia antagonism of interests takes precedence but later on it is necessarily transformed into a national confrontation'.⁹⁷ The social tensions created by commercial and industrial capitalism in Mount Vermion made the region a flashpoint between Greek, Bulgarian, and – much less – Romanian nationalism. Turkish nationalism, which emerged later among the Muslims, was bound up with controlling the Ottoman state and defending the Empire.

The leading bearers of Hellenism in the area of Mount Vermion were by and large the *çorbacı*, irrespective of their ethnic background. Adopting the Greek identity with its close attachment to the Patriarchate of Constantinople was a natural option for the wealthy merchants, landowners and manufacturers of the region already from the early decades of the nineteenth century and long before Bulgarian nationalism had raised its head. This phenomenon was common in the southern Balkans as the Greek identity – mostly in language and education – was adopted by the urban elite, even when its mother tongue was Bulgarian, Vlach, or other. In Plovdiv – Philippoupolis for the Greeks, or *Filibe* for the Turks – an important city in modern day Bulgaria, for instance,

⁹⁶ See Gounaris (1995, p. 415). Gounaris (2010) has also written a comprehensive bibliographical account of the enormous literature on the 'Macedonian Question'.

⁹⁷ See Gounaris (1995, p. 417).

the established section of the merchant elite was strongly Greek, but was challenged by a zealous Bulgarian faction, leading to one of the earliest clashes among the two nationalisms in the 1850s.⁹⁸ Similarly, much of the elite of Bitola (*Manastir*) in Macedonia had a prominent Greek character, even though its mother tongue was often Vlach.⁹⁹

Adoption of the Greek identity by the *çorbacı* in the region of Mount Vermion lent to Greek nationalism a whiff of privilege. Bulgarian nationalism appealed to small shopkeepers, petty traders, artisans and other middling layers striving for social ascendancy in a rapidly changing world, and finding themselves under pressure from large merchants and industrialists. They had a visceral dislike of the *çorbacı*, who repaid them with social contempt. It was not surprising, therefore, that some sections of Bulgarian nationalism continually interacted with socialist currents of thought. Greek nationalism was very different in this regard, trapped in a rigid narrative of the glories of ancient Greece and deeply suspicious of socialist ideas.

Amidst the sea of the peasantry that was heavily Slavophone things were less clear. The peasants were naturally opposed to landlords, who were mostly Muslim but could also be Christian, which typically meant Greek. They were sympathetic to agrarian reform and shared the hostility of Bulgarian nationalists towards the *çorbacı*. The peasants were also deeply suspicious of the Greek clergy and infuriated by the exactions and corruption of the Church. Any preference for Bulgarian nationalism was, however, tempered by natural peasant conservatism on matters of religion. The *çiftlik* villages in the region of Mount Vermion were torn between Patriarchism and Exarchism during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. At the end of the Ottoman period, however, Exarchism had gained the upper hand. The Vlachs of the uplands of Mount Vermion and to some extent in Veroia showed some sympathy towards Romanian nationalism.

The nationalist struggle in Macedonia reached its peak in the 1900s, the time of the fastest development of industrial capitalism in the region. The leading role was played by Bulgarian nationalism under the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) which was established in

⁹⁸ Described in full by Lyberatos (2009; see also Lyberatos (2010).

⁹⁹ Discussed by Gounaris (2000).

1893 in Thessaloniki. The IMRO was an organization led by schoolteachers and officers of the Bulgarian army that attracted wide support among the urban layers but also the peasants of Macedonia. Its ideological and organizational development followed a violent and tortuous path, and it contained currents that sought independence for Macedonia, with a strong admixture of socialism.¹⁰⁰ In the late 1890s the IMRO began to prepare for armed revolt against the Ottoman state, especially after the Greek army had been thoroughly beaten by the Ottomans in 1897.

In April 1903 there was a campaign of bombing in Thessaloniki undertaken by anarchist Bulgarian students associated with IMRO. The bombing was followed by a generalized peasant uprising among the Christians of Macedonia, which broke out on 20 July 1903, *Ilinden*, and was at its most intense in the *vilayet* of Bitola (*Manastır*). The revolt failed as the Ottoman state, supported by the Muslim community, suppressed it ruthlessly. Despite its failure, the initiative of IMRO spurred Greek nationalists to intervene more actively in Macedonia. Bands of armed irredentist Greeks, led by Greek army personnel, began to appear in the Macedonian countryside after 1904, engaging in clashes with IMRO bands. The marshy plain of Mount Vermion was a leading area of conflict, one of the most forceful agents of which was Constantinos Mazarakis-Ainian, an officer of the Greek army who led a Greek band and left a book recounting his experiences.¹⁰¹ For our purposes, the following two points stand out in the officer's memoirs.

First, Mazarakis had little comprehension of the economic and social upheaval occurring in the area. He appeared perfectly content with the stereotypes of his time concerning national character, blending a strong dose of arrogance towards the local people with a virulent anti-Bulgarianism. Second, Mazarakis was dismissive of the *çorbacı* of Naoussa, from whom he had expected much more than he had received. Thus, in May 1905 he met

¹⁰⁰ The literature on IMRO is quite extensive and not directly relevant to our purposes. A detailed (if poorly translated) account of its evolution based on Western European sources can be found in Lange-Akhund (1998). Perhaps the most succinct summary of its ideological trajectory in the twentieth century, and still useful, was given by Barker (1950).

¹⁰¹ See Mazarakis (1963). The memoirs of Mazarakis first appeared in the 1930s and were subsequently subjected to heavy doctoring by the institutions of the Greek state to make them more compatible with the – ever-changing – official view of Macedonia and the national character of its people; see Karavas (1999). They still remain an invaluable testimony to the reality of the struggle for Macedonia in the 1900s.

Longos and Tourpalis, who apparently promised a lot but delivered very little.¹⁰² Indeed, Mazarakis seemed altogether disappointed with the people of Naoussa because they had failed to provide reliable recruits and were more interested in the good life than in the nationalist struggle. Local attitudes to the Macedonian Question did not match the high standards of a low-ranking officer of the Greek army.

The outlook of Mazarakis was perhaps typical of nationalists from the Kingdom of Greece at the time.¹⁰³ In contrast, the *çorbacı* of Naoussa were far more aware of the realities of Mount Vermion and Macedonia, which tempered their nationalism. They certainly understood the social and political dangers posed by Bulgarian nationalists in the 1900s and were keen to confront them. To this purpose they requested express permission from the Ottoman state to hire armed guards. In 1907 both Longos–Kyrtsis–Tourpalis in Naoussa and Tsitsis in Edhessa submitted petitions to the local administration and to the General Inspectorate of the *Vilayet of Rumeli* asking for permission to deploy armed guards on the grounds that their mills, depots and commercial activities were under threat from Bulgarian irredentists. Longos–Kyrtsis–Tourpalis wanted to hire twelve armed men but the Inspectorate allowed only four and demanded that their names be registered.¹⁰⁴

The threat was real. In 1907 there was an assault by a Bulgarian band on the Tsitsis mill in Edhessa as a result of which the plant was placed under permanent military protection by the state, and eventually some of its workers were given arms. In spite of rising nationalism, there were no walls separating the industrialists from the Ottoman state. The guards requested by the industrialists soon found further uses in an environment riven by class and national conflicts. In a letter by the Municipality of Karaferye to the General Inspectorate of Thessaloniki it was noted that the armed guards of

¹⁰² See Mazarakis (1963, pp. 61–2).

¹⁰³ At least Mazarakis had experienced the realities of Ottoman Macedonia at first hand. This is much more than could be said for Penelope Delta, a nationalist from the upper circles of Athenian society who wrote *In the Secrets of the Marsh*, a historical novel about the Greek nationalist effort in Macedonia in the 1900s that has had a tremendous ideological impact in Greece over the decades. The ‘Marsh’ was, of course, the marshy lake of Giannitsa surrounded by *çifilik* villages. Written in 1937, the novel was little more than a noxious anti-Bulgarian tale utterly ignorant of the economic and social realities of the area; see Karavas (2014).

¹⁰⁴ BOA. TFR.I.ŞKT.125/12436; BOA. TFR.I.SL.154/15376; BOA. TFR.I.SL.155/15450; BOA. TFR.I.SL.155/15459.

the Longos–Kyrtis–Tourpalis plant had been used to protect a priest from Naoussa and his entourage during a trip undertaken to the north of Macedonia. The Municipality of Karaferye duly ordered an investigation.¹⁰⁵

The armed nationalist struggle in the region of Mount Vermion remained in full swing until 1908, when the Young Turk revolt took place. Greek nationalists, including the powerful business community of Thessaloniki, initially assumed an ambivalent stance towards the Young Turks, partly at the instigation of the Greek Kingdom.¹⁰⁶ Both the Greek state and the leaders of the Greek community in Thessaloniki perceived Bulgarian nationalism as their main enemy and were generally accommodating towards the Ottoman state. The Greek industrialists and bankers of Thessaloniki were not prepared to risk upsetting the Sultan's government in İstanbul for the sake of what appeared to be a movement led by mere mid-ranking Ottoman officers and bureaucrats. In contrast to the Greeks, the Jewish community played a significant role in the Young Turk movement.

To general surprise the Young Turks were enormously successful and received support from the Socialist Workers' Federation and the socialist wing of IMRO in Thessaloniki. But the expectation of democratic gains and rapid improvement in communal relations following the overthrow of Abdülhamid proved largely unfounded. It gradually became clear that the Young Turks would in practice give to the Empire a stronger Turkish outlook. Still, the change of regime kept a lid on Christian nationalist unrest in Macedonia for a period as the Bulgarian bands went quiet and the Greek bands largely withdrew. A tense normality returned to the countryside while the Young Turks made sustained efforts to boost 'Ottomanism'.

Thus, in 1911 Sultan Mehmed Reşad, a weak and ceremonial figure who had succeeded Abdülhamid and was entirely beholden to the Young Turk administration, went on an official trip in the Balkans. The aim obviously was to boost the legitimacy of Ottoman rule as the clouds were gathering beyond the imperial borders. Figure 8.9 shows the welcoming of the Sultan at the train station in Naoussa. The town had clearly put on its best clothes for the occasion and there was a palpably festive air.

¹⁰⁵ BOA. TFR.I.SL.144/14397.

¹⁰⁶ See Hekimoglou (2015).



Figure 8.9 Waiting for Sultan Mehmed Reşad in 1911

Source: Megas (2011).

The tensions created by industrial capitalism and nationalism were certainly enormous, but the end of the Ottoman Empire in Europe would not come from a nationalist revolt. The lethal blow would fall from the outside. Against all expectations the small Christian states of Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece and Montenegro succeeded in forming an anti-Ottoman alliance in 1912. The First Balkan War broke out in October of the same year. The Ottoman army was rapidly and decisively defeated, and the armies of Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria took over Macedonia, while the Bulgarians even threatened to take İstanbul. The Ottoman era came to a sudden end in the Balkans and the Macedonian Question was settled through the barrel of a gun, as is the historical norm. In the following decades, the economic and social development of the region of Mount Vermion and the whole of Macedonia would be determined by entirely different factors. It is beyond doubt, however, that the roots of industrial capitalism and modernity in Macedonia are to be found in the late Ottoman period.