

ΟΡΑΚΗ.

DR. EVRIPIDIS ST. STYLIANIDIS

THRACIAE VETERIS TYPVS.

Ex conatibus Geographicis Abrah. Ortelij.

ris pars.

Moefiae Inferio

ARDICA

Serdica.

DANTHEL

Dense

popu

Tila

belus

one

PARVUS

MEMIA.

PA

Phrag

KONLS

epipolia

de Byzonia

Archus

DISALITA.

Arach

Syleus campu

Sugra.

EDONIAE

Caprall

ORONAICVS.

Sinus

Phloga

ALLE

NA.

SAM AICA.

Albena, quae est Acha,

Thracica, et Dorylae.

et in populi.

Albena, quae est Rhombus.

DOLONC I.

AGR IANES.

TRAVSI.

AGATHYR.

Milobus.

DOBE R.

DI.

CYCLO.

BRIANTICA, quae

est OLIM GALATICA.

BRANTICA, quae

est OLIM GALATICA.

BRANTICA, quae

est OLIM GALATICA.

BRANTICA, quae

est OLIM GALATICA.

BRANTICA, quae

est OLIM GALATICA.

BRANTICA, quae

est OLIM GALATICA.

BRANTICA, quae

est OLIM GALATICA.

BRANTICA, quae

est OLIM GALATICA.

BRANTICA, quae

est OLIM GALATICA.

BRANTICA, quae

est OLIM GALATICA.

Thrace: The Greek Model of an Open Democratic Society

"I am the deep pull of your place.
At bottom I may be no one in
particular, but I can become
whatever you make of me."

G. Seferis

LEMNOS, quae
et Dipolis.



MINOAS
EDITIONS

Wille passus

Petrus Xerius Calcut

MERT 54 DIES.

THRACE:

The Greek Model of an Open Democratic Society

1. Prologue

After 20 years of persistent efforts and political and national struggles for my homeland—Rhodope and Thrace—I deem it my moral, political, and national duty to write this study for my native land.

I felt it was my duty towards my fellow citizens as well as towards our parents and refugee grandparents who went through so much, and a legacy for the unborn Thracians and young Greeks. I felt the need to create a thorough manual that could be used as a valuable briefing tool by both the Greek State and any scholar, diplomat, investor, politician, or journalist—Greek or foreign—who has an interest in my home region.

My book *Thrace: The Greek Model of an Open Democratic Society* is a statement:

A statement of experience and knowledge.

A statement of my belief in the potential of Thrace and its people.

A statement of the truth that breaks the silence of expediency, covert interests, indifference, equilibriums, and fears...

A statement from my heart and soul!

Unfortunately, the analyses, fears, and predictions outlined in this book

had already begun coming true even before the manuscript went to the printers.

The September 2015 elections left Rhodope without a Christian MP, completely ruining the just and balanced representation of the coexisting populations, Christian and Muslim, and shaking to its foundations the Model Open Democratic Society that we had built together with so much effort over the last decades.

After such a development, the National Center no longer has the right to remain silent and indifferent.

For once, the Greek State must overtake events instead of being overtaken by them. It is a national duty for political parties to come to an agreement once and for all on a national and development policy for Thrace. The Church, and more generally the intellectual leaders, must speak loudly and openly, expressing in public what politics does not dare say.

Leaders in the economic sphere must act immediately and effectively.

The diaspora must be informed and mobilized.

Thracian society must awaken and take its fate into its own hands.

Only with national confidence and belief in the potential of our land can we, both in Thrace and in Greece, make true what the poet G. Seferis aptly pointed out:

*I am your land. I may be nobody,
but I can become what you want...*

Dr. Evripidis St. Stylianidis

2. Introduction

In my family, as in all refugee families from Ionia, Pontus, Cappadocia, Thrace, or Constantinople, the idea of “our homeland” carries a different content and weight than it has in the political and administrative center of the country. It is a keyword that unlocks the heart and mind of three different generations, producing different emotions in each.

For the **generation of my grandparents**, it evoked sorrow and nostalgia for the land they had left behind at Saranta Ekklesies in Eastern Thrace in 1922 after the population exchange. Pain for the lives lost before or during the uprooting and anger for the small-mindedness and the mistakes, the failures and inability of the National Center to protect effectively the most lively and vigorous part of the Greek people.

For the **generation of my parents**, the idea of “our homeland” produced faith and tenacity, love and pride, determination and assertiveness. Belief in the potential of the new land, Southwestern Thrace, that remained free. Tenacity for the reconstruction of a New Greece. Love and pride for the lands in which they put down roots as refugees, transferring here whatever they had managed to rescue from a great culture, reusing the names of villages and cities they had lost. Building churches to house the icons of the saints they had salvaged and schools in order to teach their history and language that should not be interrupted or lost, transferring their knowledge through literature, the arts, the cultivation of the land, commerce, culture.

The generation of my parents was a generation of frontiersmen determined to give their all in order to not lose their homeland again. They struggled against poverty, contempt, snobbery, and the indifference of the National Center and they tried to build a new homeland, better than the

one they had lost. They did not take revenge on the Muslim minority for what they had experienced—on the contrary they embraced it. They had no hatred for what was different, only respect. They were often hurt by the lack of meritocracy, by clientelism, and the disparaging treatment of some sharp operators of the Center who considered them “pariahs”, “extra burdens” to the national budget, foreign bodies, “Turkseeds”, as they were called by some, even though they were Greeks of the frontline and had carried Greece on their backs from 1922 until now, in the second world war, in the German Occupation, the Civil War, Cyprus. Yet, the generation of our parents in Thrace did not instil in us any complexes or hate against the National Center, but devotion to national unity, self-confidence, and assertiveness.

“Homeland” **for my generation** signifies the duty to right the injustices suffered by Greek refugees. It signifies the effort to secure an equal participation of new countries in the decision-making process. And finally, it signifies a constant assertive struggle in order to secure for the Greek periphery, for the frontier Greeks of Thrace, as well as the other frontier regions of Greece, what they deserve and are entitled to due to their history; building an Open Society that vindicates the values of our Civilization, and becomes a mirror of modern Democracy and a model of peaceful and creative coexistence of Christians and Muslims for the wider region of Southeastern Europe.

Having served for 15 years as an elected representative of Rhodope and Thrace in the National Parliament, as well as a Minister in four important Ministries, thus breaking a tradition that for half a century had kept the Rhodope prefecture out of the decision-making centers, I felt a duty towards my fellow citizens, towards the generations of the past, but mainly towards the Thracian generations of the future, to write this short study entitled: *Thrace: The Greek Model of an Open Democratic Society*.

The aim of the study is to become a simplified informative textbook for new diplomats, military officers and politicians, students, researchers and scientists, journalists, would-be Greek and foreign investors, as well as any Greek or foreigner who seeks information on the local society’s characteristics, the minority policy of Greece in Thrace, and the potential of this frontier region as an attractive international investment destination.

The study is structured along twelve chapters, and an appendix rich with important formative texts. It analyzes the legal basis of the minority of Thrace. It describes basic historical milestones for the evolution of minority policy during the post-junta years, 1974-2009.

It presents more thoroughly the period of government of Kostas Karamanlis (2004-2009) regarding quality of life, education and religious freedom, as well as explaining the policy of “positive discrimination”.

It describes the consequences of the recession after 2009 and the reappearance of dividing lines. It exposes Turkey’s interventionist strategy for the region, underscoring the “trust” between the coexisting populations as well as between the two countries, Greece and Turkey, as a catalyst of positive or negative developments.

Finally, it highlights the comparative advantages of the area, both natural and man-made, as a unique international investor destination, pointing out that the demographic strengthening of Thrace must be a national priority.

The work ends with a comprehensive proposal for the future of Thrace and Greece: the immediate formation of a **Cross-Party Parliamentary Committee to plan a Unified National Policy for Thrace’s development and promotion.**

The book is not the product of my work exclusively. I had the help of assistants who have stood by my side all these years, both in politics and in my scientific endeavors. First, the head of my office in Komotini, Panagiotis Halvatzis, with whose help I have successfully handled sensitive national and local issues in Rhodope and Thrace, along with jurists Georgia Philippou and Demetra Tsimpiridou.

Also, the head of my office in Athens, philologist Giorgos Andreadis, who contributed in advancing various issues both at the Ministries we served at and in the national Parliament. And, economist and scientific associate Katerina Karouta, who contributed to the technical processing of the data we collected.

My scientific assistant, philologist and historian Vicky Lykoura, contributed valuable work to the collection and processing of the scientific material used, as well as to the final editing of the book.

I want to thank everyone for their contribution and the consistent man-

ner in which they have stood by me all these years, both in my political struggles as well as in the scientific projects I have undertaken.

Special thanks to Professor Aggelos Syrigos for the scientific editing of my book, and his cooperation from different posts (as advisor, and as Special and General Secretary), in the Ministries where we have served together.

I want to thank my good friend and former General Secretary of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Transport, Ambassador Demetris Platis, for his discerning remarks.

I thank Ambassador Alexis Alexandris, who hails from Constantinople and experienced first-hand the implementation of the Treaty of Lausanne by the Turkish side, for his apt observations.

My thanks to my good friends and publishers Ioannis and Zoe Konstantaropoulou for the excellent work of Minoas Publications in both the publication and in the promotion of my book.

A big thanks to the Thracian companies for their contributions. The presentation of the successful investments they have made in Thrace confirms my arguments for its promotion as an excellent investment destination. I want to thank the local newspapers *Chronos Komotinis* and *Paratiritis tis Thrakis*, the National Research Foundation Eleftherios K. Venizelos, as well as the other photographers for the material they contributed from their archives.

I thank my parents and teachers, my late father Stylianos Stylianidis and my mother Georgia Petra-Stylianidi; I thank them as my parents because they taught me to love my homeland, Thrace, and as teachers because through their work and discourse they showed me why I should be proud and fight for it.

Finally, I want to express a big thank you to my family. My wife Giouli Papachristou, for her love and support in my struggles all these years, as well as for our three children, Stylianos, Elena and Georgia, for whom I want to express the wish that they love their homeland as much as I do. Let God keep them healthy and happy so that they will see their dreams come true. However, no matter how high their achievements, let them not forget when and where they started from. Let them not forget our roots; let us not forget our Thrace.

3. Historical Approach. The legal basis for the recognition of the Thrace minority

Greek policy toward the Thrace minorities, despite any problems or weaknesses of the human factor and of the Public Administration, constitutes a modern achievement of Greek democracy and a heretofore unexploited **argument** that can make the international community realize our civilized approach. It is an argument that undoubtedly could prove in practice the sensitivity of our society on matters of human and minority rights, our respect toward diversity, and the reverence with which the modern Greek State approaches principles and values such as those of equality, egalitarianism, equal opportunities, decency, and solidarity.



*The Greek delegation at the negotiations of Lausanne, 1923,
led by Eleftherios Venizelos. From the photographic archive
of the National Research Foundation Eleftherios K. Venizelos – Chania*



Eleftherios Venizelos right after the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne, June 24, 1923. From the photographic archive of the National Research Foundation Eleftherios K. Venizelos – Chania

The minority in Thrace is considered **religious** and defined as **Muslim** by the Treaty of Lausanne,¹ exactly as stipulated by international law. In 1991, Greece recognized the **right to individual self-determination**.² This gives **every Greek citizen member of the minority the right to determine themselves as they want, but it definitely does not change the character and definition of the minority as a religious Muslim minority.**

This clarification is advisable for reasons of political, historical, and sci-

1. Οι παραβιάσεις της Συνθήκης της Λωζάννης, Komotini, Oct. 1993 – Έκδοση Συλλόγου Ιμβρίων-Κωνσταντινουπολιτών-Τενεδίων και Ανατολικοθρακών Θράκης, 2nd edition.

2. Εμμανουήλ Ρούκουνας, Διεθνής προστασία των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων, Βιβλιοπωλείον της Εστίας, 1995, Κων/νος Τσιτσελίκης-Δημ. Χριστόπουλος, Το μειονοτικό φαινόμενο στην Ελλάδα – Μία συμβολή των κοινωνικών επιστημών, Κριτική, 1997, Α. Μπρεδήμας-Α. Α. Σισιλιάνος, Η προστασία των μειονοτήτων – Η σύμβαση-πλαίσιο του Συμβουλίου της Ευρώπης, Ίδρυμα Μαραγκοπούλου για τα δικαιώματα του ανθρώπου, Σάκκουλας, 1997.

entific³ accuracy because there have been frequent efforts to change the name of the minority to “national Turkish minority” by circles or individuals who base their financial or political survival on populism and nationalism. These circles, which are usually aligned with corresponding nationalistic and imperialistic circles of Turkish politics, base their existence on hate and fanaticism and have often attempted, sometimes successfully and sometimes not, to trap the minority in this deadend policy that is utterly destructive both for the relations between the coexisting populations and for the promotion of a new mindset in the Balkan area.⁴

The adoption of this policy is contrary to the Treaty of Lausanne and more generally to the international law that protects human and minority rights. The Treaty of Lausanne,⁵ which was signed by Eleftherios Venizelos and Ismet pasha (Inonu) and accepted by Kemal Ataturk, had two characteristics that silence contemporary provocateurs. Specifically:

1. It is based on **reciprocity** since it refers to the Muslims of Thrace as well as the Greeks of Constantinople, Imbros, and Tenedos.

2. In its Greek text, it refers to **“Muslim minorities” and not to a “Muslim minority” of Thrace. Kemal Ataturk accepts, even if indirectly, the existence of different ethnic groups, which today are harmed by any attempt at their Turkification.**

3. Η ενσωμάτωση της Θράκης, Ιστορικά – Ελευθεροτυπία, May 11, 2000, **Μιράντα Παξιμαδοπούλου-Σταυρινού**, Η δυτική Θράκη στην εξωτερική πολιτική της Βουλγαρίας. Το ζήτημα της βουλγαρικής οικονομικής διεξόδου στο Αιγαίο (1919-1923), Gutenberg, 1997, Η ιστορική, αρχαιολογική και λαογραφική έρευνα για τη Θράκη, Ινστιτούτο Βαλκανικών Σπουδών, Συμπόσιο Θεσ/νίκης, 1988, Η Κομοτηνή και ο ευρύτερος χώρος. Παρελθόν – Παρόν – Μέλλον, Scientific Conference, Εταιρεία Παιδαγωγικών Επιστημών Κομοτηνής, Komotini, 2006.

4. **Γεώργιος Στυλιανός-Ν. Πρεβελάκης**, Τα Βαλκάνια – Πολιτισμοί και Γεωπολιτική, Libro, 2001.

5. 1923-1993: 70 χρόνια τουρκικές προκλήσεις και παραβιάσεις της Συνθήκης της Λωζάννης. Χρονικό παραβιάσεων ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων. Αγώνας για δικαίωση, Komotini, Aug. 1997 – Έκδοση Συλλόγου Ιμβρίων-Κωνσταντινουπολιτών-Τενεδίων και Ανατολικοθρακών Θράκης, 90 χρόνια από τη Συνθήκη της Λωζάννης. Η λειτουργία της συνθήκης υπό το φως των εξελίξεων μετά το 1923, eds Φωτεινή Παζαρτζή-Κωνσταντίνος Αντωνόπουλος, Νομική Βιβλιοθήκη, 2014.

These are:

- A) Turkish-speaking Muslims (religion: Islam; descent: Ottoman-Turkish; language: Turkish);⁶
- B) Pomaks (religion: Islam; descent: ancient Thracian; language: Pomak);⁷
- C) Gypsies - Roma (religion: Islam or Orthodox Christians; descent: Rom; language: Romani).

We will not expand upon the violation of the **Treaty of Lausanne by Turkey in 1955**⁸ because Greece, as a democratic European country, made

6. Μανώλης Κοττάκης, *Θράκη: Η μειονότητα σήμερα*, Λιβάνης, 2000.

7. Πόλυς Α. Μυλωνάς, *Οι Πομάκοι της Θράκης*, Λιβάνης, 1990, Paul Hidirolou, *The Greek Pomaks and their relation with Turkey*, Athens Academy Prize, Προσκήνιο, 1991, Αντώνης Κ. Λιάπης, *Η υποθηκευμένη γλωσσική ιδιαιτερότητα των Πομάκων*, Θρακική Εταιρεία, Komotini, 1995, Αχιλλέας Στ. Ανθεμίδης, *Τουρκία: Η χώρα των θρησκευτικών και εθνικών μειονοτήτων*, Κυριακίδης, 1999.

8. Αιμιλία Λαδοπούλου, *Η Θράκη του χθες και του σήμερα*, Θρακικά, vol. 7, 1991-1992, Hayk Ghazarian, *The genocide of the Armenian People in the Ottoman Empire*, Yerevan 2005, Αναστάσιος Λαυρέντζος, *Η Θράκη στο μεταίχμιο*, Dissertation, 2013, note no. 8, pp. 37-38: "As the tripartite conference (Greece-England-Turkey) on the Cyprus problem in London was heading for a breakdown, on September 6, 1955, 'spontaneous' demonstrations were organized in Constantinople and Smyrna in favor of the Turkish positions. At the same time, there was an 'unexpected' explosion of two powerful bombs at the house of Kemal Ataturk and at the Turkish Consulate in Thessaloniki, news that was published on the same day in *İstanbul Eksam*. The result was that the demonstrations turned into a wave of blind violence against Greeks in the two cities. According to official records, during the night of September 6-7, 1955, 16 Greeks were killed, 32 were gravely injured, and 200 Greek women were raped. As far as material damages are concerned, 1,004 houses, 4,348 shops, 27 pharmacies, 21 factories, 110 hotels and restaurants, were looted or destroyed. Also 73 Orthodox churches, 2 monasteries, 26 Greek schools and 5 athletic clubs suffered serious damages. The 'incensed demonstrators' did not hesitate even to desecrate graves, among them those of the Ecumenical Patriarchs on the grounds of the Valoukli Monastery. (See Αλ. Αλεξανδρή, *Οι ελληνοτουρκικές σχέσεις 1923-1987*, pp. 497-504 and note no. 10, p. 543), Γνώση, 1991. The General Consul of Great Britain to Constantinople writes in a telegraph sent on September 7, 1955: "The situation at Valoukli defies description. The graves of the patriarchs were opened and their bones scattered, the church and the monastery were burned to ashes. It was here that an old monk died in the fire" (FO R 10110/1). [From the article series "Τα αρχαία του Φόρειν Όφης, 1955" published in *Ελευθεροτυπία* (January 8, 1986).]



Destruction of Greek shops, churches, and cemeteries and persecution of Greeks in Smyrna and Constantinople on September 6-7, 1955.

the conscious choice of not following Turkey in this brute policy of violation of the human and minority rights of Constantinople Greeks. However, it is necessary for the international community to know that despite the great cost and heavy toll it paid with the extermination or persecution of 250,000 Greeks, Greece remained firmly committed to the ideals and values of anthropocentric civilization and democracy.⁹

9. Η Μουσουλμανική Μειονότητα στην Ελλάδα, εκδ. ΕΛΙΑΜΕΠ, Αθήνα 1990, Η συμβολή της τοπικής εκκλησίας εις την αντιμετώπιση των Εθνικών προβλημάτων της Θράκης, Ι.Μ. Μαρώνεια και Κομοτηνή, 1989, Δημήτρης Μαυρίδης, Από την ιστορία της Θράκης 1875-1925, Ι.Μ. Ξάνθης και Περιθεωρίου, 2006, Θράκη

Thrace: The Greek Model of an Open Democratic Society

Thrace, due to its geopolitical importance and the composition of its population, will either bear the brunt of the recovery of the Greek economy and the return of Greece to the role of a regional leading power, or, because of the indifference and mistakes of the Athenian center, will become the most serious national issue of the country in the coming years. In this study, we present:

- The truth about the legal and real status of the Muslim minority.
- The errors, as well as the achievements of Greek politics, from the “Principle of Reciprocity in the Lausanne Treaty” to the “Politics of Positive Discrimination”.
- What had T. Erdogan pleasantly surprised when he visited the area as prime minister.
- The role of the Turkish General Consulate in Komotini, and “trust” as a catalyst for the establishment of “Open Society” and the improvement of Greek-Turkish bilateral relations.
- The repercussions of the financial crisis on the development of the area, the demographic and political balance between Christians and Muslims, and the reappearance of interventionist policies on the part of Turkey, aiming at a “Co-administration of Thrace”.
- A proposition for turning Thrace to an ideal investment destination, through upgrading its geostrategic role, making the best of its comparative advantages, establishing its Open Society, and strengthening the extroversion of the Greek National Economy towards its neighboring markets.

Thrace, despite the continuous sacrifices of its inhabitants, always changed hands not through wars but through treaties... A smart National Developmental and Demographic Policy can transform it from a “shield” to a “spear” of financial diplomacy, and from a “gate” to a “bridge” of Greece and Europe towards the East. If we have a Plan, as well as Political Will and Daring, this frontier land will return manifold benefits to Greece, on the economy front as well as in national politics and the political safety of the country.

Visit the author's page
on Facebook



Visit the author's
official website



  
www.minoas.gr

