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Up

The Accusations Against Bulgaria

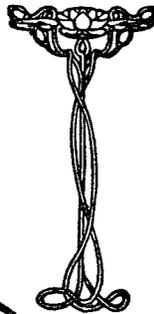
OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

Presented to

The Peace Conference

By

THE BULGARIAN DELEGATION



I.

EDITOR'S FOREWORD.

During the world-war Bulgaria, owing to the Allied censorship and blockade, was isolated from the outside world. This isolation gave a good opportunity to the Serbian and Greek propagandists of spreading various reports of Bulgarian "atrocities" and outrages which, they knew very well, the Bulgarian government was not in a position to disprove. But since Bulgaria went out of the war, the Bulgarian Government has taken cognizance of the various charges, and in the beginning of the year it published in French under the title: *The Truth About the Accusations Against Bulgaria*, a long memorandum of about 600 pages, with documents and facsimiles attached, in which most of the accusations are shown to be either baseless or grossly exaggerated. Last August the Bulgarian Delegation to the Peace Conference presented in a shorter form the defence of Bulgaria against the accusations of the Serbians and Greeks in the present memorandum.

How unscrupulous and unabashed both Greeks and Serbians have been in launching accusations against the Bulgarians will be made evident by the following facts:

1. It has been repeatedly asserted by the Serbians that from 30,000 to 40,000 Serbians had been deported by the Bulgarians to Asia Minor to perish there from starvation. It was also reported that from 6,000 to 16,000 Serbian girls of the age of 14 and above had been carried off by the Bulgarians to Constantinople and there distributed or sold into the Turkish harems. Both statements are downright falsehoods, as is proven by the fact that although the Allies have been in control since a year in Turkey, no effort has been made by the Serbian Government to discover and recover the Serbians from the deserts of Asia Minor or the Serbian maidens from the harems.

2. In 1917 the English translation of a blood-curdling and highly brutal poem, entitled "Hymn of Hate," was published in the American press by the Serbian Information Bureau of Washington, D. C. The original of the poem was attributed to a certain Ivan Arnaoudoff, said to be the Pindar and court-poet of Bulgaria. The whole thing was a Serbian fake, and when its authors were challenged to produce the Bulgarian original or to point out where it was published, no reply was given. A specimen of this poem is found on p. 22 of Professor William M. Sloane's "The Balkans, a Laboratory of History," published in 1914; that is, three years before the Serbians reproduced it. Prof. Sloane says that the Bulgarian author

is Ivan Arkudoff, "who * * * is a person favorably received in the highest Bulgarian circles," and that the translation in Greek was made "by the Greek poet Paul Nirvana." The very names of *Arkudoff* (son of a bear, from the Greek *arkuda*—a bear, often applied to a Bulgarian as an opprobrious epithet) and *Nirvana* (*nothingness*) are evidence enough of the spurious source of the poem. There is no Bulgarian writer or poet by the name of Ivan Arkudoff.

3. Another Serbian assertion which is proven to have been a falsehood is that there were 100,000 Serbians interned in Bulgaria, one-half of whom perished from privations and ill-treatment. According to the official registers the number of interned Serbians in Bulgaria never exceeded 34,973, of whom 5,449 died of various diseases.

4. Equally false was the assertion that the Bulgarians were forcing upon the Serbians their heretical religion. There is not an iota or a tittle of difference between the religion of the two peoples, and the accusation is just as silly and baseless as it would be to say that the Italians were forcing upon the Spaniards their heretical religion.

The Greeks were not remiss in emulating the Serbians in false charges against the Bulgarians. To what trickeries they had recourse the following instances will show:

1. When at the beginning of this year, Mr. Dominic I. Murphy, former American Consul-General in Bulgaria, arrived in Salonika on his way to America, he was taken seriously ill with pneumonia, and at one time his life was despaired of. In the hope that he would die or would not see the news in time to disprove it, the Greeks launched a telegram from Salonika saying that Mr. Murphy had declared the Bulgarians to be a savage and cruel race. This was an impudent lie, for Mr. Murphy had said no such thing to anyone, and his opinion of the Bulgarians was just the reverse of what it had been reported to be.

2. Mr. James D. Bouchier is a well-known journalist, who for thirty years has lived in the Balkan Peninsula as correspondent of *The Times* (London), and is thoroughly acquainted with Balkan politics and peoples. He is certainly one of the best authorities on the Near East, and a staunch defender of the cause of Bulgaria against the encroachments and ambitions of Serbia, Greece and Roumania. There is also a well known English actor by the name of Arthur Bouchier. In order to mystify and mislead public opinion in England and elsewhere, the Greeks approached the actor Bouchier with the tempting proposition to pay him every month a handsome pecuniary remuneration, if he would consent to put his signature to any Greek propaganda publications on the Balkan question. The proposition was, of course, scornfully and indignantly rejected.

3. It has been asserted that the Turkish deputies in the Bulgarian Parliament had sent an address to Venizelos to lay it before the Peace Conference, in which they expressed their abhorrence of

Bulgarian rule in Thrace and their great desire to have Thrace put under Greek rule. By a solemn declaration these deputies have pronounced the whole thing a fake, their signatures and the address, a forgery.

These few instances of Serbian and Greek propaganda are enough to show what means have been used in trying to blacken Bulgaria in the eyes of the world. Both the Serbian and the Greek Governments have made use of so-called "interallied" commissions composed mostly of their own nominees, to investigate and report upon Bulgarian outrages; but they have persistently refused to entertain the idea of a truly international Commission on which neutrals and Bulgaria should also be represented. This is what the Bulgarian Government has demanded with insistence, for such a commission only can with impartiality and fairness investigate matters and establish the guilt of all concerned. It is not difficult to surmise why Serbians and Greeks do not wish to face such an international Commission, for they know that their misdeeds and crimes against the Bulgarians are much greater than those of the Bulgarians against them.

THE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST BULGARIA.

(Official Documents Submitted to the Peace Conference by the Bulgarian Delegation.)

Our Serbian and Greek neighbors had no sooner returned to the territories formerly occupied by the Bulgarian armies than they opened against them a campaign of denunciations, charging them with massacres and destruction, and appealing to the civilized world to brand "the criminal conduct of the Bulgarians." By this means they succeeded in bringing on two enquiries in Serbia and Eastern Macedonia which, carried out in a perfunctory fashion and without sufficient precautions being taken against possible errors have, as might have been anticipated, resulted in a series of grave accusations against Bulgaria and the Bulgarian nation.

These accusations, of which only a faint echo reached us in our isolation after hostilities had ceased, making all defence well-nigh impossible, did not come to our full knowledge until after the arrival of the Bulgarian Delegation in Paris.

Without denying that reprehensible acts have been committed in the territories under Bulgarian occupation, the Bulgarian Delegation ventures to remind the Peace Conference that similar methods of accusation, employed by the Serbians and the Greeks in 1913, were soon after unmasked by the impartial and neutral Carnegie Enquiry. In the report of the said commission one finds the following passage which might almost literally be applied to a good many of the charges now current against Bulgaria :

"The charges brought by the Greeks against the Bulgarians are already painfully familiar to every newspaper reader. That some of these accusations were grossly exaggerated is now apparent. Thus, *le Temps* reported the murder of the Greek bishop of Doiran. We saw him vigorous and apparently alive some two months afterwards. A *Requiem* mass was sung for the bishop of Cavalla; his flock welcomed him back to them while we were in Salonica. The correspondent of the same newspaper stated that he personally assisted at the burial of the archbishop of Serres, who was savagely mutilated before he was killed (letter dated Livonovo, 23rd of July). This distressing experience in no way caused the said prelate to interrupt his duties, which he still performs."¹

Today we are faced by the same exaggerations and prejudices which create convictions by distorting the reality. To our accusers truth is a matter of secondary importance; what they want is to fix

¹Report of the Carnegie Commission of Enquiry in the Balkans, p. 78.

on us the reputation of a barbarous people, animated by low instincts, incapable of controlling and governing themselves, and for whom there is no place in the Society of Nations.

Being tardily apprized of these accusations and finding it impossible to undertake at the present moment fresh investigations, the Bulgarian Delegation, while referring the Peace Conference to the official Memorandum of the Bulgarian Government, entitled *La Vérité sur les accusations contre la Bulgarie* (pp. 43 and 80), which it had the honor to transmit by its letter No. 34 of the first instant, esteems it a duty to offer some further explanations to which it ventures to draw the benevolent attention of the Conference.

THE GREEK ACCUSATIONS.

The Greek accusations against Bulgaria are contained in the Report of the Commission appointed to enquire into the breaches of International Law in Eastern Macedonia. This document, which was recently submitted to the Peace Conference, is signed by French, English, Belgian and Serbian delegates.¹

We beg leave to examine briefly the conclusions at which the Commission of Enquiry has arrived.

1.

The Report of the Enquiry Commission says that from August, 1916, when the Bulgarian army occupied Eastern Macedonia with the formal consent of the Government of Athens, to July, 1917, Bulgaria was not at war with Greece. "But," the Report adds, "it would be a great error, betraying total ignorance of Bulgarian dissimulation, if one were to suppose that the violations of International Law which are imputed to the Bulgarian army only took place after the month of June, 1917."

To give an idea of this pretended regime of dissimulation we shall mention the following facts:

a. The Bulgarian troops entered Greek territory in virtue of a previous agreement between the Cabinet of Athens and the German Government; the country was only militarily occupied, without injury to the Greek administration, whose autonomy was scrupulously respected and whose attributes and obligations toward the Greek population remained untouched by the Bulgarian authorities.

b. The Bulgarian military courts in that region had authority to deal only with the crimes expressly reserved by the Provisional Regulations concerning the military administration and inspection, all other crimes and misdemeanors being left to the Greek law courts which, as we shall shortly see, assured impunity to several Greek functionaries who were being prosecuted.

c. General Taneff, head of the Military Inspection at Drama,

¹M. Aimé Cuypers, Consul, Delegate of the Belgian Government.

M. Georges Dutilh, Lawyer, Delegate of the French-Government, Reporter.

Captain Reginald Strologo, Delegate of the British Government.

Cavalry Colonel Givoine-J. Babitch, Delegate of the Serbian Government.

having been asked by the Bulgarian Metropolitan Makarius for permission to appoint a Bulgarian suffragan at Drama, replied in a letter (No. 1040) of 31st December, 1916: "Under these circumstances and bearing in mind that the Greek Government expelled from here our ecclesiastical authorities, the return of these latter, as suggested, would be in manifest contradiction with our policy and would expose us to unfriendly comment and criticisms. Besides, the need of such an office at the present moment is not imperative, and neither our Holy Church nor our country will lose much by not creating one."

2. Arrest, Tortures, Terrorism.

The Report mentions twelve cases of people murdered or who died from torture, but gives the names of only four of them. Nevertheless, the Commission says that "several hundred people perished from violent death * * *" This statement is the more surprising as the Commission conducted its enquiry on the spot and could, one would have thought, very easily prepare a full and detailed list of the names of the victims, who are said to have been local inhabitants.

3. Compulsory Labor.

Since the Report of the Commission deals with breaches of International Law, one experiences some difficulty in explaining how it could assert that "the population of an occupied territory must not be made to do work without remuneration, and *a fortiori* be employed on works of strategic character." Art. 52 of the Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of war on land explicitly says that requisitions in kind and of labor may be levied on the communes or the inhabitants for the needs of the army of occupation. As regards the gratuity of the labor furnished, it must be said that the inhabitants whose labor was requisitioned were paid in food. This arrangement was entirely satisfactory to them, given the food difficulties and the high prices (see Sec. VIII).

4. Spoliations, Extortions of Money, Thefts and Pillages.

According to the Commission of Enquiry, the Bulgarian High Command and all the Bulgarian officers and soldiers are equally responsible for these crimes. Such a statement cannot be taken seriously. Isolated crimes may have occurred, but the guilt of individuals cannot be imputed to a whole nation. What one has a right to expect of a modern State is that its authorities should punish and not protect the guilty parties. As a matter of fact, all those who are accused of extortions, violence and abuse of authority have been arraigned before the law courts, including Angelhoff and Panitza, whose names figure in the pages of the Report. (Dossiers d'Instruction judiciaire, Nos. 104/1918 and 184/1918. See also *La Vérité sur les accusations contre la Bulgarie*, p. 79.)

5. Cases of Rape.

The Commission admits that there is a discrepancy between the number of actual violations and that given by the witnesses whom it examined. Nevertheless, the Commission accepts everything as probable on the ground that "one hardly imagines the Bulgarian soldier showing more respect for the honor of women than he showed for the liberty, property and life of the citizens." How gratuitous such a conclusion is may be gathered from the fact that in the statistics for crimes against morality Bulgaria occupies one of the most enviable places. On the other hand, the Report of the Carnegie Commission abounds in proofs of violations committed by Greek soldiers in 1913: "One of the witnesses testified that such violations took place openly, in the fields and along the roads. He had seen several such cases himself." "A Greek soldier tried to violate a nun and stole 300 Turkish pounds." "We violated all the young women whom we met." (See "Enquiry in the Balkans," pp. 102, 103, 105, and the facsimile of the letter.)

6. Internments, Abduction of Children.

Among the grossly exaggerated charges is that regarding the number of persons interned or "abducted" and the rate of mortality among them. These cases must be divided into two categories:

a. About 8,000 persons remained without work and means of subsistence, or came from villages situated in the zone of military operations. These people voluntarily emigrated to Bulgaria to earn their livelihood, being supplied at their own request with the necessary passes. Among them were boys and girls, most of them orphans, which fact has given rise to the legend, sedulously spread by the Greeks, that thousands of children have been abducted to Bulgaria in order to be "bulgarized." Their entire number throughout Bulgaria did not exceed 120. In Sofia, out of 36 girls whose restitution the Greek Government demanded, only 13 were found to exist. It should also be added that a good number of these children were not of Greek origin, and that many who were well looked after and even had been adopted did not wish to leave their benefactors.

b. Some 12,962 were interned in Bulgaria for military reasons or on account of the food question. Up to the 3rd of January, 1919, the Office for the prisoners of war had registered 1,775 cases of death for the two categories, this high rate of mortality being due mainly to Spanish influenza, which in 1918 raged all over the country, causing great ravages. Thus, in Sofia the number of deaths during 1914 was 1,969, as against 1,933 deaths for the month of October, 1918, alone. At Philippopolis, out of a population of 54,212, some 1,404 died during the first six months of the same year.

7. Famine.

The Commission expresses the opinion that "the Bulgarian Government deliberately left the famine to accomplish its destructive

work," and that "this destructive famine was desired, organized, encouraged and exploited by the Bulgarian High Command." To appraise this arbitrary conclusion at its true value, one must take into consideration the great sacrifices made by the Bulgarian State and the Bulgarian Red Society in succoring the destitute populations of Eastern Macedonia at a time when Bulgaria herself was suffering from scarcity of food.

In February, 1917, before the rupture of diplomatic relations between Bulgaria and Greece, M. Naoum, the Greek Minister in Sofia, had asked the Greek Government to come to the assistance of the inhabitants of Drama; but the Cabinet of Athens declined to intervene, for the very good reason that the economic situation of Greece made this impossible. On the message which M. Naoum had sent to the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the 15/28 February, 1917, one finds the following annotation: "When the economic situation allows it. For the time being, file it" (see the Greek White Book, published by the Librairie Militaire Berger-Levrault, Paris-Nancy; No. 74, pp. 124-125). Such were the conditions under which the Bulgarian Government took in hand the relief work in Eastern Macedonia. Between September, 1916, and July, 1918, the Special Commission sent from Bulgaria more than 20 million kilos of cereals and other foodstuffs to the six Committees, composed of representatives of the various nationalities at Drama, Cavalla, Serres, Pravishta, Sari-Shaban and Ziliahovo. These consignments were discontinued in 1918 owing to the good crops of that year. The foodstuffs were distributed at the price of 50 centimes to one lev per kilo, with the exception of some 4,000 kilos which were exchanged against raw materials needed by the army, the exchange being effected by the intermediary of the German Office. Independently of these consignments, the Commissariats of the 7th, 8th and 10th Bulgarian Divisions, acting on orders from the Bulgarian Government, fed the poor population of Drama free of all charges. According to the lists prepared by the Municipal authorities, the number of persons so fed at the end of 1917 exceeded 60,000. Finally, a considerable number of men and women earned their living in the various military establishments, such as stores, bakeries, market gardens, etc. Thus, the Commissariat of the 8th Division at Serres employed 2,000 on the roads to give them a chance to earn their bread.

Given the difficulties of transport and the impossibility of increasing the consignments from Bulgaria, the Special Commission entrusted with the distribution of the foodstuffs did its best to increase the area of the cultivated land in those regions. The organization of the sowing was undertaken by military experts. Carrying out the same policy, the army units in that sector were ordered to lend the farmers cattle for their field labors. In the fall of 1917 and the spring of 1918 the Commission distributed among the farmers the following quantities of seed: 1^o wheat, 89,809 kilos; 2^o rye, 124,451 kilos; 3^o vetch, 12,549 kilos; 4^o maize, 238,770 kilos; 5^o beans, 44,400 kilos; 6^o millet and sesame, 27,135 kilos; 7^o potatoes, 5,700

kilos; 8^o onions, 3,370 kilos; 9^o rice, 6,700 kilos, etc. The autumn seed yielded an excellent crop. There was a good crop of maize and millet.

The Bulgarian Red Cross also came to the rescue by distributing 100,067 kilos of maize in the towns and villages of Eastern Macedonia, a good share of which (27,892 kilos) was assigned to the town of Cavalla, where the lack of foodstuffs made itself felt most keenly. The grain was distributed without regard to the nationality or religion of the sufferers, and the Red Cross, in addition to possessing receipts for the grain made out in the proper form, has received many letters of thanks for this relief. The Bulgarian Delegation has the honor to append to the present note photographs of several of those letters addressed by the Greek communities.

But while the authorities and the Bulgarian Red Cross did their utmost, the Greek local officials, instead of aiding the Food Administration, hampered its work and gave themselves up to speculation. A large part of the food supplies was squandered or else distributed to persons who stood close to the organs of the Greek administration, instead of being used to meet the needs of the population. What is worse, the Greek authorities misappropriated the food supplies which were entrusted to them for distribution to the population and sold them, reaping huge profits. Owing to conduct like this, the inhabitants of Drama were obliged to eat bread made without salt, though salt was being sold clandestinely in the town at very high prices. The wheat issued to the Greeks for the sowing of their fields was sold by them at high prices, instead of going to its destination. The population repeatedly protested and Annexes No. 9 and 10 of the present note reproduce two of these protests lodged by the Musulman inhabitants of Drama. Unfortunately, the prosecutions instituted against Greek officials for abuses in the distribution of the food supplies had to be suspended because the Bulgarian military courts had no jurisdiction over them, in consequence of the above mentioned regulations.

The Bulgarian Delegation must also lay stress on the fact that in all the territory occupied by the Bulgarian army, the Army Command not only cared for the feeding and the health of the population, but also undertook everywhere useful public works. The Bulgarian Department of Public Works estimates that in the Serres-Drama sector roads, buildings, fountains and bridges were constructed at a cost of 84,951,875 leva in gold.

8. Destruction of Property.

The Bulgarian army is accused of having destroyed in Eastern Macedonia 94 villages, among them the town of Kato-Tzumaya. That estimate corresponds to the number of totally or partially destroyed villages in that region, but their destruction is in no way the work of Bulgarians acting in a spirit of revenge.

We must point out that during its investigations the Commis-

sion of Enquiry was led into gross error by the interested party. The destruction of a large number of localities which dates back to the war of 1912-1913 and is attributable to the Turks and Greeks, is imputed to the Bulgarian troops. This is the case with the following villages: Banitsa, Pulevo, Gherman, Eskidji, Livaditsa, Orehovitsa, Dutli, Siros-makhale, Gorno-Nouska, Drenovo, Kalopote, Skrizhevo, Tolos, Turadjik, Tehelebilir, Kurfali, Tehista, Fteri, Gorno and Dolno Brody, Lekhovo, Gorno and Dolno Frashtani, Alistrat, Meleghisti, Ramna, Keshishlik, Hadji Beylik, Rupel, Gorni and Dolni Poroy, Lakish, Vishani, Mertatovo, Kulatchifik and others which were destroyed in part or in whole during the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913. It is evident, therefore, that we cannot assume responsibility for acts of destruction of which others have been the authors. The same holds true of the town of Serres where the eight hundred houses burnt in 1913 reappear on page 434 of the Report of the Commission.

All the other villages which were destroyed or suffered damage during the present war stood in the firing zone or between the lines. Their destruction was the inevitable consequence of the military operations and can in no wise be described as a deliberate act of vandalism. This is clearly established by the fact that of the 56 stricken villages, after subtracting from the total those destroyed in 1913, 37 were exclusively by Bulgarians, 6 by Turks, 8 had a mixed population of Turks and Bulgarians, while only 5 were inhabited by Greeks. The town of Kato-Tzoumaya of which the Commission of Enquiry speaks in its Report is Bulgarian, with a slight admixture of Turks and Koutzo-Vlaxhs.

9. Taxes, Arbitrary Requisitions.

Raising of taxes, collection of duties and tolls, contributions and requisitions in kind and labor for the requirements of the army and the administration of occupied territories are sanctioned by Arts. 48, 49 and 52 of the Regulations concerning the laws and customs of war on land.

It is notorious that the occupation of Eastern Macedonia took place in virtue of an agreement between the German, Bulgarian and Greek Governments. All purchases of foodstuffs and cattle by the Bulgarian Commissariat were made with the consent of the sellers, who were paid in ready money. The more important sales were attended by representatives of the Greek authorities. This practice continued even after Greece had broken diplomatic relations with Bulgaria.

The care of the abandoned property was confided to the Greek authorities so long as they remained in the country. After their departure in June, 1917, the property passed into the custody of the Bulgarian authorities, which saw to its safety.

With respect to the cattle which is supposed to have been requi-

sitioned and removed to Bulgaria during the retreat of our troops, a commission appointed by the General Staff of the Allied armies in Bulgaria and consisting of representatives of France, Great Britain, Italy, Greece and Bulgaria, has fully gone into the matter and established the baselessness of the Greek charges. The commission has not been able to complete its task owing to the refusal of the Greek authorities to allow its members to verify on the spot the evidence given by the inhabitants.

We have official data about the number of cattle which our troops found in the country east of the Strouma. The stock consisted of the following items: 2,907 horses, 3,767 mules, 19,187 donkeys, 40,340 heads of horned cattle, and 157,134 sheep, goats, etc. We also know the number of cattle owned by the various Bulgarian Divisions at different periods. These figures establish that during the retreat the Bulgarian troops did not carry off any cattle whatever. Besides, such a thing would have been quite impossible, as the Greek army followed within close range and on occasions got ahead of them to reoccupy the territory which the 2nd and the 4th Bulgarian armies were evacuating in virtue of the Armistice signed in Salonika.

According to the Greeks, the cattle carried off by the Bulgarians amounts to 62,097 horses and mules and some 506,981 sheep, goats, etc. These figures do not in the least tally with the total quantity of cattle in Eastern Macedonia at the arrival of the Bulgarian troops. Under these circumstances, one easily understands why the Greek authorities decline to allow the commission appointed by the General Staff of the Allied troops in Bulgaria to make an enquiry on the spot. Such an enquiry, conducted with full freedom, will not fail to throw light on this matter and help to establish the truth.

THE SERBIAN CHARGES.

The Serbian charges are recorded in the report of a commission composed of three Serbs (L. Stoyanovitch, P. Pavlovitch and Slobodan Yovanovitch), one Frenchman (M. Bonnassieux), and one Englishman (Lieut.-Col. H. B. Mayne). This report appeared under the title *Documents relatifs aux violations des Conventions de La Haye et du Droit International en général, commises de 1915 a 1918 par les Bulgares en Serbie occupée.*

The Report of the Commission is divided into a series of paragraphs, which we shall examine in their order.

1. Massacres of the Civilian Population.

There is no doubt that certain offences against the Laws of Nations were committed in the Morava region during the war. But it is no less certain that the individuals guilty of violations of the laws of war have not escaped the sternness of Bulgarian justice; some of them were punished by the military courts during the occupation itself, while over the others legal proceedings are now pending.

Whoever desires to ascertain the real sentiments of the Bulgarian people toward the inhabitants of the occupied country can turn to the testimony of MM. Katslerovitch and Popovitch, well known leaders of the Serbian Socialist party. Speaking in their memorandum to the International Socialist Conference at Stockholm of the conduct of the Bulgarian soldiers in the Morava region, they say: "One of the two signers of this memorandum had during the first months of the war the opportunity of gaining a personal knowledge of the two administrations, that of the Bulgars and that of the Austro-Hungarians. He was able to observe them at close range, and to compare them. The Bulgarian soldier, that is to say, the Bulgarian serving under the colors, made a good impression upon the entire Serbian population wherever he came in contact with it. During the first days of the invasion, when every soldier had, so to say, the right of life and death over the subjugated population, when his discretionary power was unlimited and his responsibility was almost null, when there was no legal order in existence, the situation in the territory conquered by the Bulgarian army was easily better. There was more order and liberty then than later, when the occupation authorities had come and introduced official "order." During that first period, assassinations, cases of rape and pillage were unknown, and no one amused himself by maltreating the population.

The situation in the East of Serbia, occupied by the Bulgars, was at that time better, less intolerable, than that of the West, occupied by the Germans and Austrians. The common Bulgarian soldier had sympathy for the Serbian people, feeling drawn to them by the racial relationship which unites the two peoples, and well understanding the horrible tragedy of our situation. Very often it came to pass that these sons of the Bulgarian people wept in our presence over the ruin of Serbia, and were profoundly disconsolate at seeing Bulgaria and Serbia once again—for the third time—involved into a fratricidal war.” (See *La Vérité sur les accusations contre la Bulgarie*, page 26, and the book *Stockholm*, Tidens-Verlag, Stockholm, 1918, page 249.)

The Bulgarian government has never shielded those who have been guilty of crime in the Morava region. When such cases came to its knowledge, it insisted on the exemplary punishment of their authors, irrespective of the position which they occupied. In perfect accord with the aroused conscience of the nation, the Bulgarian government appointed on 18 December, 1918, a Commission at the Ministry of War to investigate all offences committed in the occupied territories during the war and to arraign the culprits. (See *La Vérité sur les accusations*, page 30.) The principal offenders, such as Major Ilkoff, Colonel Kalkandjieff (1), who are mentioned by the Commission of Enquiry, Colonel Airanoff, Colonel Popoff and others responsible for the crimes perpetrated at Surdulitsa, are already in the hands of justice, which will soon pronounce on the misdeeds which are imputed to them. Major Kultchin, town commandant at Kyupriya during the war, whose prosecution was begun early in 1918, has been sentenced to death and executed in Sofia. Bulgarian justice was proceeding with rigor against offenders long before the conclusion of the armistice. The many sentences pronounced on military and civil offenders furnish sufficient evidence of this. A complete list of these sentences is given on page 269 of *La Vérité*, Annex No. 135. Since December, 1918, when this list was prepared, further names have been added to it.¹

During the Morava insurrectionary movement in February, 1917, which, as we shall see farther on (page 17), was instigated and directed by the Serbian Head Quarters, and seriously threatened the

¹This officer, under the weight of his crimes, did not await for his verdict, but committed suicide at the moment he was arraigned.

Prosecutions are also pending since December, 1918, against Lieutenants Yourukoff, Radcoff and Simeonoff, of the 42nd Regiment of Infantry, whose crimes are described in the Report of the Serbian Enquiry Commission. Lieutenant Yourukoff having been killed on 16th October, 1916, in Dobroudja, the legal proceedings against him had to be abandoned.

Major Shopoff and Second Lieutenant Vassilieff, of the 17th auxiliary battalion (*Documents* vol. I. pages 101-106), Lieutenant Boyadjieff, of the 57th Regiment, town commandant at Petrovatz (*ibid.*, p. 10), against all of whom capital punishment is demanded; together with Lieutenants Orozoff and Kraeff, of the 16th auxiliary battalion at Lehave, are also being prosecuted on criminal charges. Proceedings in these latter cases date from the time of the Bulgarian occupation in the Morava region. The voyvode Gave

sole line of communication between the rear and the front of the Bulgarian army, the Bulgarian authorities prosecuted and punished none but rebels and *comitadjis*, some of whom even crossed over into Bulgaria and gave themselves up to murdering and looting the population of Belogradtchik and Bossilegrad. (See *La Vérité*, pages 405-413.) One finds a confirmation of this in the proclamation which General Protogueroff, then chief of the Morava Military Inspection Area, posted on 10 March, 1917, and which is reproduced on page 269 of Vol. I of the *Documents*. It is explicitly said in paragraph 4 of this proclamation that "The peaceable population which obeys the law and the orders of the authorities will enjoy full liberty and the protection of the authorities." (See *La Vérité*, page 421.) The Colonel in command of the 39th Infantry regiment which was sent to suppress the insurrectionary movement, expresses himself as follows in an order of the day addressed to his troops on 20, March, 1917:

.....
"2. You are to be stern and pitiless towards the offenders.
.....

"4. You are not to lay hand on the person and property of the peaceable or repentant inhabitants, whatever be their sex or age.

"5. You are to avoid excesses and acts of vengeance."

And farther on, "In this manner we shall prove that the Bulgarian army, which is fighting for liberty and against oppression, though strong and invincible, is just and magnanimous."

The Bulgarian army was indeed magnanimous towards the rebels. As evidence of this we may mention the example given on page 41 of *La Vérité*. The revolutionary band of the Plavtchitch Brothers, who, on 27 January, 1918, had waylaid and assassinated seven Bulgarian soldiers, including a corporal, and seriously wounded two others, were merely interned in Bulgaria, upon consenting to surrender voluntarily to the Bulgarian authorities. Today all those *comitadjis* are back in their homes and one of them, Ivan Plavtchitch, is mayor of the village of Borovtsi, district of Lebane.

While the Bulgarian authorities did their utmost to protect the

Stoilcoff (*ibid.*, pages 118 and fol.) was under prosecution, but succeeded in escaping from prison and was eventually killed.

The prefect of Pojarevatz (*ibid.*, p. 14), is also being prosecuted, the indictment dating from 30th April, 1918.

The present list might be further extended, but we must stop owing to limitation of space. What has already been said is enough to show that the culprits of whom the Report of the Serbian Enquiry Commission speaks, have not escaped the eye of Bulgarian justice even before the publication of the Report, while in the majority of cases the criminal prosecution was begun during the Bulgarian occupation of the Morava region.

¹The court martial of the Morava region pronounced from November, 1915 to September 1918, some 238 condemnatory verdicts against administrative officials accused of committing crimes against the local population. The same court martial sentenced for similar reasons eight officers, of whom one to capital punishment, five to hard labor from two and a half years to six years, and one to solitary confinement.

inhabitants from the activities of the revolutionary ring-leaders, and even endeavored to win over the rebels by kindness and persuasion, publishing to that effect a series of amnesties (See *La Vérité*, pages 421, 422 and 424), the Serbian secret organization used against them every weapon of terrorism. Thus, according to the statement of the Serbian voivode Dimitry Dimitrievitch, Costa Petchanatz killed 500-600 peaceable inhabitants during the insurrection of 1917. The names of some of them are given in Annex No. 309 of *La Vérité*. A number of terroristic acts committed by other Serbian *comitadjis* against the inhabitants of the Morava region are mentioned in the following annexes of *La Vérité*: Nos. 143, 144, 152, 153, 156, 160, 161, 166, 168, 170, 175, 178, 183, 196, 197, 200, 205, 209, 212, 215, 234, 240, 242, 244, 267, 284, 289, 292, 352, 372, etc. Not the least doubt can be entertained regarding the authenticity of these testimonies emanating from Serbs, signed by them, and many of them reproduced in facsimile in *La Vérité*, Vol. II, pages 6, 7, 8, 9, 20, 31, 37, 43, 48, 56. It is very characteristic of Serbian conduct and methods that the Serb *comitadjis* have always tried to charge the Bulgarian authorities with the crimes which they themselves committed. A *comitadjî* writes the following in one of the letters: "Sinadine Yankovitch (one of the prominent *comitadjis* in the district of Lebane) assassinated Sava Dragovitch in the fields, in broad daylight, and attributed this crime to the Bulgarian authorities." (See *La Vérité*, Vol. II, facsimile No. 206.) It is difficult to imagine how many of these crimes are today ascribed to Bulgarians. Certain it is that the figures given by the Serbs in their report also include the victims of their own *comitadjis* in the Morava region.

2. Tortures.

As much can be said of the Serbian charges in the matter of alleged tortures committed by the Bulgarian authorities upon the inhabitants of the province.

Here, in fact, is what the famous rebel chief Costa Petchanatz wrote himself in June, 1917, to his colleague, Dimitry Dimitrievitch: "You and your infamous bandits have burnt children, old men and old women in order to extort money from them." (*La Vérité*, Annex No. 372.) Another Serb voivode, Toshov Vlahovitch, wrote about the same time: "We at once broached the topic which was the object of our meeting. I asked Costa Petchanatz why he had permitted the *comitadjis* to pillage and carry on in this wicked manner. He explained to me that it was impossible to stop this nuisance because the men were bad characters. * * * Later I talked to him of the pillaging in the villages of Lapotintsi and Stuble and pointed out to him the *comitadjis* who had done it. He thereupon said that it was a trifling matter in comparison with what other *comitadjis* were doing, and cited as an example that three children had been roasted alive because their parents had not given money." (*La Vérité*, Annex No. 240.)

The Bulgarians are accused of having thrown living men into wells. This charge is surely of the same origin. Indeed, the above mentioned *comitadji* notes down in his diary, which fell into the hands of the Bulgarian troops, the following: "This evening Costa Petchanatz detailed several *comitadjis* to arrest Anitsa Yov. Rilaka and her mother, of Souvaya, and to kill them. In a little while they came back and said that they had thrown the two women down into a well twelve fathoms deep. We were about to have dinner when whispering was heard from the people standing near the door. We were informed that the younger woman who had been thrown into the well had got out and was on her way to the communal office, all wet and bleeding. The *comitadjis* who had been detailed to arrest her went out again to look for her, found her in the presence of the mayor, and after killing her, threw her body down the well once more. The devil alone knows how she succeeded in coming out of so deep a well." (*La Vérité*, Annex No. 215.)

3. Internments.

Internments are not sanctioned either by International Law nor by the Hague Conventions; nevertheless they have been practiced by all the belligerents. We therefore believe that it would be unjust to hold none but the Bulgarians strictly answerable for them.

It is not true that the interned were not told the reasons for the measure taken with regard to them. Order No. 48 of 10 July, 1917, issued by the General Officer in command of the Morava Military Inspection Area, is categorical in this respect. He directs that the person whom it is proposed to intern should be acquainted with the motives of his internment, and that his objections and the opinion of the local notables should be considered, before carrying out the measure.

The remaining Serbian charges on this count are no better founded:

1. It is false to pretend that the Bulgarian authorities left the interned no time to prepare for the journey. The orders of the Military Inspection tended all the other way and were always carried out. To enable the interned to set their private affairs in order and to get what they required after their internment, leaves from 15-20 days were granted from time to time. More than that, with the object of hastening the arrival of the clothing which the families of the interned forwarded, a special courier visited the villages of the interned to receive the parcels and bring them to the internment camps. As for the complaint that the interned were conveyed in cattle trucks, it should be remembered that the Bulgarian soldiers and even the officers fared no better in that respect.

2. The real conditions in the internment camps were quite different from the picture given in the report of the Serbian Enquiry Commission. In the camps, the interned were lodged in barracks

with double walls, filled with sawdust. They slept on iron and wooden beds, or on mattresses spread over the floor. (See Internment camp at Sliven, *La Vérité*, page 171.) Both for the interned civilians and for the war prisoners the food was the same as that served to the Bulgarian soldiers. The bread ration at the beginning was 1 kilo per day. As the war advanced, the feeding of the army became more and more difficult, and there came a time when the rations both of the interned and the soldiers were reduced to 500 grams of bread per day, but they never fell below that quantity. Although at certain stages of the war the Bulgarian soldier remained without underclothing, and had to wear wooden shoes while defending for three uninterrupted years the frontiers of their fatherland, the Bulgarian Government found means to protect the interned civilians against the rigors of the winter. (See *La Vérité*, pages 81-86.) Besides, a good number of the interned were allowed to live freely in Bulgaria and to exercise their professions. The medical assistance given to the interned was the same as that received by the Bulgarian soldiers. (*La Vérité*, page 594, Annex No. 522.) Contrary to what the Serbians say, the interned were allowed to correspond with their families. The Serbian bishop Dossitey, in the letter reproduced on page 586 of *La Vérité*, Annex No. 502, tells his Bulgarian friend that he has received news from his people and that the latter had had word from him. This testimony of the Serbian prelate is a sufficient reply to the groundless assertions of his flock. The conditions in which the interned Serbians lived did not, therefore, tend to "their destruction," as is pretended in the Report of the Serbian Enquiry.

3. The figure given by the members of the Serbian Enquiry Commission as regards the number of persons interned in Bulgaria, viz., some 100,000, is entirely false. At the beginning of the war, the internment order only affected a very small circle of suspected people, all of them men. But after the Serbian insurrection in February, 1917, and until the end of the war, a greater number of people of both sexes had to be interned for complicity in the revolt. Even then, however, the total number of interned civilians never exceeded 34,973, of whom some 5,449 died from various illnesses. This figure is extracted from the official registers and is wholly at variance with the Serbian assertion that 50,000 interned civilians perished in Bulgaria.

It is also worth remarking that almost all the interned Serbs left Bulgaria with feelings totally different from those mirrored in the Report of the Serbian Enquiry. Such were, for example, the sentiments of the 163 Serbian priests interned in Eski Djumaya and housed there, according to the expression of one of them, the Arch-priest Stephen Dimitrevitch, "in one of the finest school buildings" of the place. (See the priest's letter on page 584 of *La Vérité*.) Moreover, all the interned Serbs met with a fraternal reception in Bulgaria. The letters of Mgr. Dossitey, Metropolitan bishop of Nish, whose murder by the Bulgarians was reported abroad by the Serbian Telegraphic Agency, reproduced in Annexes 500-509, bear sufficient witness of that. The abbot of the Batchkovo monastery, Archi-

mandrite Evthyme, a Bulgarian, did his best to lighten in every way the lot of the Serb prelate, by supplying him with books, money, etc. And Mgr. Dossitey, before leaving Bulgaria, informed his Bulgar friend of his impending departure, expressing the hope that it would be possible for him to see his friend and embrace him fraternally before starting on his journey back to Serbia. (*Ibid.* 506-507.) Mgr. Dossitey was constantly the object of particular attention during his stay in Bulgaria. Thus, in a letter (*Ibid.* 508) he praises the marks of attention and the willingness to oblige shown him by his brother bishop of Tirnovo. The Serbian prelate was even honored by a visit from the late Queen of Bulgaria, who promised to do her best to improve his lot, and authorized him to write to her directly. (*Ibid.*, Annex 509.)

In the presence of these testimonies from exclusively Serb sources, one has good ground for being skeptical about the allegations of pretended bad treatment of the civilians interned in Bulgaria.

4. The Great Insurrection of 1917 in the Moravia Region.

On page 33 of Vol. I of *Documents relatifs*, etc., the Commission of Enquiry asserts that the insurrection in the Morava region in February, 1917, was not instigated from abroad, but was the work of the population itself and provoked by the "Draconian" measures of the Bulgarian Government, which wished to recruit soldiers in this province, "forcing thus Serbian subjects to fight against their king and their brothers." Before proceeding any further, we must remark that not a single inhabitant of the Morava was drafted into the Bulgarian army, much less sent to the firing line. The men in that province who, after a regular examination by special commissions, were found able-bodied were only employed in the rear of the army as common laborers.

Besides, we are in possession of documents from exclusively Serbian sources which prove in an irrefutable manner that the insurrection in the Morava region was the work of the Serbian Head Quarters, which thereby pursued a double object.

In the first place, they aimed at a direct and purely military object: to organize an uprising, coinciding with the offensive projected in Macedonia that spring, which would prevent, or at least hamper, the supply of the Bulgarian army with food and munitions. The insurrectionary movement was to lead off in the rear with attempts upon railways, roads, tunnels, bridges, etc. And this actually took place as regards the bridge at Ristovats, which was blown up by Costa Petchanatz on 13th May, 1917. The detachment stationed as guard to the bridge and consisting of one officer and a score of soldiers were massacred. Petchanatz succeeded farther in holding up three trains and killing all their passengers, who were for the most part wounded soldiers and refugees from Macedonia. We refer to the Serb testimony of the *comitadji* Tosho Vlahovitch, who describes in stirring language the exploit of his chief. (See *La Vérité*, Annex

No. 389.) The appearance of bands of insurgents in the valleys of the Morava and the Vardar was also to shake the *morale* of the Bulgarian troops, which was a matter of great importance to the Serbian army.

Secondly, they aimed at an object of a political nature: the insurrectionary movement was to prove to the world that the *regime* instituted by the Bulgarian authorities in the Morava region was unbearable, that the population was very discontented with the Bulgarian administration and longed for the return of the Serb officials and administration.

The Serbian Head Quarters had entrusted the organization of this movement to Costa Petchanatz, an employee in its Intelligence service, who, as former *comitadji* in Macedonia, was an expert in the art of organizing insurrectionary bands. Here are the proofs:

1. Costa Petchanatz flew from the Serbian front on the 14th September, 1916, the aeroplane landing near the village of Mehane, in the district of Lebane. On his arrival he was met by an inhabitant of the same village called Ivan Elitch. Petchanatz was armed with a new rifle and wore a new French uniform, which he could not have procured either in Serbia or in Albania.

He carried a quantity of proclamations in Turkish, intended for the Albanian people and bearing the signature of Essad Pacha, which at that time could have been printed only in Salonika. (See *La Vérité*, Annex No. 136.) A copy of these proclamations fell into the hands of the Bulgarian authorities and is reproduced in facsimile in the same Memorandum, Vol. II, page 5.

2. It is in the name of King Peter that the proclamation spread by Petchanatz summoned the Serbian people to take up arms. These are the very words: "Heroes of Serbia! In the name of H. M. the King of Serbia, and of the Serbian fatherland, I invite you to rise against our hereditary enemy. * * *"

3. All the other voivodes and the Serbian comitadjis recognized in Petchanatz the emissary of the Serbian Head Quarters, and in their letters give him the title of "Delegate of the Royal Government of Serbia and of the Serbian High Command."

4. In the name of the High Command Kosta Petchanatz promoted privates to the rank of second lieutenants, as in the case of the comitadjis Atza Piper, Boulaitch, Elitch; he distributed rewards, salaries, etc. (evidence given by the Serbian voivode Dimitri Dimitrievitch).

5. He recalled the deserters of the Serbian army, promising them free pardon on behalf of the High Command.

6. He pronounced death sentences, also in the name of the Serbian Government. (*La Vérité*, Vol. II, page 6.)

7. He ordered the voivodes to keep a diary of military opera-

tions, which was to be sent to Head Quarters. "Note down the daily events in your diary," writes Petchanatz, in his letter of 14th April, 1917, to the voivode Dimitri Begovitch, "for it will help me to show the High Command what each band has accomplished."

8. Having organized the insurrection, Petchanatz dispatched to Salonika Anton Stankovitch, of Prizren, to inform the Serbian High Command of the measures taken in view of this insurrection. The emissary was taken prisoner near Djoura, by the Austrian gendarmerie.

9. The Serbian High Command, represented by Major Svetozar Bogdanovitch, of the 3rd Infantry Regiment, on the 9th April, 1917, ordered Petar Stankovitch of Dolna-Yanya, Mihal Kotzitch of Vlasse, Ilija Petrovitch of Balitchko, Dragotine Stankovitch of Preva-Koutina and Arif Mousli, all privates, to go with four other Albanians to the Morava district and get in touch with Kosta Petchanatz. The first of these messengers was arrested in the neighborhood of Preshovo; he confessed that the major had given Mihal Kotzitch 200 Napoleons and a note-book. Their mission was to reach Mitrovitza and, thence, the mountain of Yastrebatz, in order to join Kosta Petchanatz, who was to write his answer in the note-book, giving full particulars of the progress of the insurrection.

10. On the 29th October, 1917, a Serbian aeroplane, piloted by Sanisha Stepanovitch of Belgrad and carrying Captain Ivan Elitch of Prokouplia, landed near Pousto Shilovo, district of Lebane. The Bulgarian authorities having noticed its approach, the pilot and the officer were pursued and captured shortly after. During the examination Captain Elitch acknowledged that he had been entrusted by Colonel Kalafatovitch, of the Serbian Head Quarters at Salonika, with the mission of settling the disputes among the chiefs of the insurrectionary bands and of assuring them that at the proper time officers, leaders, machine guns and other technical appliances would be sent to the rebels by aeroplane.

The arrival of the aeroplane carrying Captain Elitch can only be explained as the result of a letter of 23rd July, 1917, which the voivode voinovitch had confided to Sergeant Radko Stefanovitch, Lieutenant Proka Planitch, voivode Dimitri Dimitrievitch and Atza Piper for transmission to the Serbian High Command. Dimitrievitch and Atza Piper were captured on the 29th August, 1917, by the Bulgarian sentries near Bitolia, while Proka Planitch, the bearer of the letter, succeeded in passing through the lines and reaching the Serbian camp. A copy of this letter was found in Costa Voinovitch's diary, which fell into the hands of the Bulgarian authorities. In it Voinovitch gave a detailed account of the results of the insurrection and described the condition of the population and the state of the revolutionary organization. In concluding, Voinovitch asked the Serbian Command to dispatch by aeroplane an officer who was to raise the *morale* of the rebels and bring instructions as to their future conduct.

5. Cases of Rape.

In Vol. I of the *Documents*, on page 15, the agents of the Bulgarian administrative and military authorities are accused of having practiced rape in the Morava district. The great number of women suffering from venereal disease and the equally high number of illegitimate children born during the husbands' absence are in this instance invoked as evidence. These two facts by themselves do not constitute sufficient and convincing proof that such violations were committed. The statistics show that in Serbia there has always been a considerable prevalence of venereal diseases. The Serbian physician Dr. Miloutine Perichitch, in his book on *Syphilis in Serbia* (Nancy, Imp. A. Crepin-Leblond, 1901) gives the following data about their progress in Serbia during a period prior to the last war: "Cases of syphilis have been observed all over Serbia. Of the 1,308 Serbian communes, 730 are contaminated with syphilis. The highest number of persons contaminated reached 14,770, of whom 8,434 are to be found in the seven Eastern districts, where the proportion is 38 per thousand inhabitants. It is proved that from 1895 to 1899, out of each 1,000 patients nursed in the hospitals, 249 were suffering from venereal diseases. Of the 61,272 men admitted to the hospitals during the same period 11,628 were afflicted with them. Of the 33,552 women received in the same hospitals, 11,966 had the same illness, which represents a proportion of 356 per 1,000 patients."

This proves that venereal diseases were extant in Serbia long before the war. The Bulgarian Command was well aware of this state of things and took preventive measures for safeguarding the health of the troops during their passage through Serbia. In an order of the day (Nov. 7, 1915) the general commanding the Bulgarian Army in Serbia warned his officers and soldiers that they are liable to be brought before the court martials and will be treated as men with self-inflicted wounds, if they are found to be suffering from venereal diseases contracted in Serbia. The penalty for self-inflicted wounds, as seen in Art. 257 of the Military Penal Code, was capital punishment or 15 years of hard labor. From this it will be seen that the Bulgarian High Command, far from encouraging the soldiers to commit rape, on the contrary used its influence to prevent them from having all sexual relations with Serbian women.

As regards "the great number of illegitimate children," statistics again show that in this respect also Serbia occupies a lower place than Bulgaria. In 1910 out of every 10,000 children born alive, in Bulgaria, there were only 64 illegitimate children, whereas in Serbia the number of illegitimate children per 10,000 born alive was 141. (*Annuaire International de Statistique*, II: Movement de la population, La Haye, 1917.)

When speaking of cases of rape in the Morava district, one must not forget that women and girls under age were violated by the Serbian *comitadjis*, as is recorded in their own papers, in the passages published under Nos. 167, 168, 171, 194, 202, 212, 234, 298,

302, 372, etc., of the Annexes in the Memorandum (*La Vérité*, etc.). The notes written by the insurgent Tocho Vlahovitch, which have also fallen into the hands of the Bulgarian authorities, are particularly edifying in that respect. One reads there the following passage: "Here is another case which depicts the character of our *comitadjis*. The men of the band of Tosho Slichanski, in arriving at this village (Boubintzi) have violated an honest Serbian woman. These shameless fellows are still alive and bear the name of Serbian *comitadjis*." (*La Vérité*, Annex No. 255.) The same writes again: "The rebels have fallen so low that they even went to the extent of violating women, a thing which our enemies, the Bulgarians, have not done."

Where there have been cases of rape attributed to the Bulgarians, it is only fair to say that the Bulgarian law courts have inflicted severe punishment upon their authors.¹

The statement that "the Bulgarian Bishop Miletî preached in church that women must not shun Bulgarian soldiers, and that even if they became pregnant, there would be no harm in that," is an abominable calumny against a venerable old man who could not have delivered such a sermon for the simple reason that there is not a single Serbian family as Veles, his episcopal see, where he only stayed a short time at the beginning of the occupation; his residence for the last few years has been Constantinople. As regards the case of Murat Ferdinand, we must protest against the monstrous charge leveled at him. This officer, whose mother is English, and who has been brought up in France, has petitioned General Chrétien, commanding the Allied troops in Bulgaria to allow him to go on the spot for a confrontation with his accusers and for an enquiry into the infamous action with which he has been charged.

As to the indictment that Second Lieutenant Tchavdaroff ordered contaminated soldiers to sleep with young girls, the enquiry which was immediately opened has established that the said Tchavdaroff has always been distinguished for his exemplary behavior during his brief stay in Serbia.

6. Destructions and Incendiarism.

One may say that the Bulgarian authorities in the Morava region committed no acts of destruction, not even such as are warranted by military operations. On the other hand, the Serbian troops during their retreat in 1915 destroyed everything along their route, bridges, railways, etc.

The evacuation of the Morava region by the Bulgarian army took place in perfect order and without fighting, the German troops remaining behind to continue the operations against the Allied

¹On that count the Morava court martial pronounced 14 verdicts of condemnation varying from two to nine years of hard labor.

armies. The devastations which the Enquiry Commission records are the work of the German troops which, while retreating, destroyed all that lay in their way.

7. Taxes, Requisitions, Contributions, Compulsory Labor, Pillaging.

As regards the taxes, the requisitions and contributions which the Bulgarian authorities imposed on the occupied territories, it must be remembered that in virtue of Arts. 48 and 52 of The Hague convention the Bulgarian Government cannot be held answerable for such acts.

With respect to compulsory labor, the question is again one of requisition, only of a particular kind: the requisition of the labor of the inhabitants. The assertion of the Serbians that the local population was employed on military works is entirely baseless. The inhabitants were utilized for the repairing of railways, roads and bridges, for transport, etc., in the distant rear of the armies. Equally baseless is the contention that the rate of mortality among the people so employed was 20-30 per day. (Documents, Vol. 1, p. 27.) In the matter of food they were treated on a footing of equality with the Bulgarian soldiers. Besides, as they worked in close proximity of their villages, they slept at night in their own houses. Children were never employed on this work. Sometimes women were utilized, principally for the service of transports, where they looked after the animals. With the object of avoiding abuses in the requisition of labor, the chief of the Military Inspection in the region of Morava issued the order No. 222, dated 29th August, 1918, in which special conditions were laid down and penalties enacted against all those who should fail to conform with those conditions.

Pillaging was sternly and pitilessly punished by the authorities. It must, however, be added that the local population suffered systematic depredation at the hands of the Serbian *comitadjis*, as is established by the autograph letters and diaries of the chiefs of the Serbian bands. (*La Vérité*, Annexes Nos. 267, 372.)

Neither must it be forgotten that during this retreat the Serbian regulars also gave themselves up to the pillaging of the local population. Such, for instance, was the case with Nish which, before the entry of our troops, was ransacked by the 20th Serbian territorial regiment. These pillages are confirmed by the autograph signatures of the victimized Serbians in an act reproduced in facsimile in *La Vérité*, etc., Annex No. 407, Vol. II. Notwithstanding these facts, the Serbians pretend in their *Deuxième Livre Bleu*, 1916, Annexe 71, that the Bulgarian troops pillaged all the shops of Nish, sparing only two.

In this respect the local population suffered no less at the hands of the Albanians and the Germans (*La Vérité*, Annexes Nos. 352, 353, 133.) The Bulgarian authorities did their best to protect the inhabitants against depredations from those two quarters.

8. Breaches of the Regulations of the Fourth Convention of the Hague Concerning the Treatment of Belligerents.

1. *Compulsory Labor Imposed on Officers Taken Prisoners of War.*—This charge is devoid of all foundation. Art. 34 of the Regulation regarding the prisoners of war and the interned civilians, approved by an ordinance of the Ministry of War, No. 135, dated 27th March, 1918, says: "Officers or those who have equivalent rank and officials taken prisoners of war may not be obliged to do work. Doctors and persons belonging to the sanitary service who are taken prisoners of war may, in case of need, be employed to assist the patients in civil or military hospitals, and to attend professionally the prisoners of war in the depots." This ordinance bears the signature of General Naidenoff, War Minister at that time, and one fails to understand how this same general would issue an order to the contrary effect, as the Serbian indictment pretends to have been the case. The Enquiry Commission, it must be noted, gives neither the number of this order, nor the name of the person who signed it. In the absence of these particulars the charge becomes worthless.

2. *Employment of Prisoners of War on Military Works and Their Dispatch to the Firing Line.*—This accusation is equally baseless. Paragraph 35 of the above mentioned ordinance forbids similar acts: "All soldiers and non-commissioned officers who are prisoners of war may be employed on works *which are not connected with military operations*. The work which is given to them must correspond to the physical and professional qualifications of the prisoners of war."

As regards the charge that prisoners of war have been sent to the firing line, the Serbians commit a gross error. It is a well-known fact that the Serbians had recruited in Macedonia soldiers by force. When the war broke out between Serbia and Bulgaria, the Macedonians so drafted in the Serbian army began to desert in masses and to surrender to the Bulgarian troops. In the same way and as a result of a convention between Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary, this latter set free and handed over to Bulgaria all the Macedonians who had been taken prisoners of war by the Austro-Hungarian army in the course of the military operations. All these Macedonians who had been incorporated by force into the Serbian army expressed freely the wish to enter the ranks of the Bulgarian army and to be sent to the front in order to fight alongside their brothers for the liberation of enslaved and martyred Macedonia. The Bulgarian army comprised a whole division formed entirely of Macedonian volunteers and the liberated prisoners of war were drafted into this division. Such is the truth of the matter, and it furnishes a fresh proof of the real ethnographic character of Macedonia.

3. *Massacres and Ill-treatment of Serbian Prisoners of War and Wounded. Spoliations.*—The gravest of these charges has been uttered by one Alexander Pope Krosnovitch, young man of 21 years, who says that the soldiers of the 5th Bulgarian division "massacred

at Prilep 18,000 Serbian prisoners of war, who were sabred by the cavalry."¹ As this figure excited the suspicion of the Enquiry Commission, this latter remarks that "even if the number 18,000 is exaggerated, it is certain that at Prilep the Bulgarians massacred thousands of Serbian prisoners."

This is a monstrous calumny as will be seen from the following facts:

1. The town of Prilep was captured on 2nd November, 1915, without fighting by the Bulgarian Cavalry Division, which took no prisoners. On 10th November, 1915, began the operations which led to the capture of Bitolia. During these operations the Bulgarian troops took only small and isolated groups of Serbian soldiers who had been cut from their units, the unimportant Serbian force having withdrawn in time.

2. The Cavalry Division remained in Prilep from 2nd to 10th November, 1915, during which period no Serbian prisoners of war were taken.

3. There were no war prisoners taken either at Prilep or in the vicinity, the same being also true of Bitolia, Ressen, Ochrida and Strouga. The Serbian administrative authorities had left these places before they fell and had retired on Greek territory.

4. The total number of Serbian troops which operated in the region of Prilep-Bitolia-Ochrida-Ressen, under the command of Colonel Vassitch, never exceeded 4,000-5,000 men, and these withdrew in the direction of Strouga-Elbassan.

All the prisoners captured on this front were dispatched to the rear without ever being massed at Prilep, and their total number in that zone did not exceed one hundred men.

5. The 5th Bulgarian Infantry Division never took part in any operations in the region of Prilep. At the commencement of the war with Serbia this Division was stationed on the Roumanian frontier and reached the valley of Vardar in November, 1915.

6. If the facts revealed by Krosnovitch were really true, they would have been confirmed by other and more convincing evidence than the words of a young man who manifestly has in view some other object than the truth.

It would be rash to affirm that there were no cases of ill-treatment of the prisoners of war. Enquiries have been ordered into all such cases specifically mentioned in the Serbian accusation, and the guilty parties have been arraigned before the law courts. Persons like Captain Semerdjieff and Lieutenant Altabanoff were prosecuted, the first being sentenced to 15 years of hard labor, while the action against Lieutenant Altabanoff is still pending. But their misdeeds must not be attributed to some system instituted by the Bulgarian authorities which, in Art. 12 of the Regulation concerning the

¹See *Journal des Débats*, August 10th, No. 221.

prisoners of war and the interned, had, on the contrary, laid down that "the prisoners of war must be treated humanely."

The same may be also said of the charge that the prisoners of war were robbed of their money and other belongings. Paragraph second of the "Instructions about the carrying out of the Regulation concerning the prisoners of war" says: "The enemy soldiers when taken prisoners, must be searched and all objects found on them, such as firearms, munitions and other weapons, must be confiscated. *As regards the other objects and belongings found on them, they must, according to circumstances, either be taken away and preserved, or be left with the prisoners for their private use.*"

Given these enactments, any officers commanding the depots or the convoys, and all persons who allowed themselves to rob the prisoners of war were committing acts which far from being approved by the official authorities were, on the contrary, strictly forbidden by them. It follows that all such acts of robbery should be imputed to their authors, and not laid at the door of the Bulgarian authorities. The fact that these latter have always and without loss of time arraigned before the courts martial the authors of similar misdemeanors is a sufficient proof that they meant their orders to be obeyed.

4. *Attempts at Flight Punished by Death.*—It is necessary to reproduce here the text of paragraphs 16 and 17 of the "Regulation concerning the prisoners of war and the interned civilians" which deal with the matter in question in order to see that such punishments were quite impossible:

Paragraph 16 says: "The prisoners of war who have escaped and are recaptured before joining their troops or before leaving the territory occupied by the Bulgarian army are liable to disciplinary punishment. * * *"

Paragraph 17.—"In cases of attempt at flight, the men in charge of the prisoners may use their firearms and are bound to fire at the prisoners trying to escape, *if there be no other means of stopping the fugitive, or if he refuses to stop or to obey the call of the sentry.*"

5. *Corporal Punishment of the Prisoners of War.*—In conformity with telegram No. 1164, issued by the General Staff of the Army in the field on 26th September, 1915, and Order No. 17 issued by the same on 1st October, 1915, corporal punishment (bastinado consisting of 25 strokes) was introduced in the Bulgarian army as a disciplinary punishment, but only for the lower ranks. This innovation was authorized by Art. 270 of the Military Penal Code, published in the *Official Paper* No. 220 of 1915, which gave the Commander in Chief the right to enact *special* disciplinary punishment for the maintenance of order and discipline.

In virtue of paragraph 15 of the "Regulations concerning the Prisoners of War and the interned civilians," this measure was also

applied to the prisoners of war belonging to lower ranks, but in no case to the officers, and any assertion by the Serbs to the contrary is devoid of foundation. This explains why the Commission has not been able to find a single instance of corporal punishment applied to Serbian officers, but prefers to formulate its accusation in vague terms.

That the orders and regulations in vigor were strictly carried out by the inferior agents—except in a few cases where the refractory persons were severely punished—is attested by the prisoners of war in their correspondence, extracts from which are to be found in Annexes Nos. 457-488 and 523-526 of *La Vérité*, etc., and more especially in the volume of "*Letters from Prisoners of War in Bulgaria*," which we submit to the attention of the Conference. They contain testimonies entirely at variance with the Serbian accusations which describe the prisoners' camps in Bulgaria as "places worse than hell." We give several specimens: "The Bulgarians respect us and treat us well." (*La Vérité*, Annex No. 469.) "The food is good, the same as given to Bulgarian soldiers." (Annex No. 471.) "We are very well treated and the Bulgarians are very kind. The wounded are cared for with the utmost consideration in the hospitals." (*Ibid.*, Annex No. 477.) "Am very well looked after, receive exactly the same attention as the Bulgarian officers; we need nothing. Plenty of tea, cakes and cigarettes. Nothing missing." (*Ibid.*, Annex No. 460.) Doctor *Constantinovitsh*, in his letter to the Bulgarian physician *Sarajoff*, writes in the following moving terms which we reproduce without alterations: "I also do not forget your kindness in lending me money and in putting your rich collection of medical books at my disposal. For all this and for all the the rest which I do not mention, I thank you, dear Colonel, from all my heart. I count myself your deeply obliged for ever." (*Ibid.*, Annex No. 523.) Another Serbian—*Voucomanovitsh*—writes to the same physician: "I am lodged and fed at the hospital, installed in the building which was formerly a college for young girls, and of which Dr. *Karaeneff* is the Senior Physician. I am very grateful for the kindness shown to me by all and can say with perfect truth that I am very happy here." (*Ibid.*, Annex No. 524.) We could give further quotations, but do not wish to unduly lengthen our account.

In concluding, we wish to observe that one must be on his guard when dealing with ex-post facto evidence given by Serbians who were formerly prisoners of war in Bulgaria and are now repatriated. This is proved by the case of the prisoners *Alkalay*, *Militsh*, *Tziritch* and *Ivan Kostitch*, who, on their return home, uttered the gravest accusations concerning bastinadoes, murders and other misdeeds perpetrated at the prisoners' camp in Sophia. The enquiry which took place shortly after established that these very prisoners of war had been amongst the most favored in the camp, and that the head officer Captain *Baltoff*, had treated all the prisoners under his orders like a father, as is admitted by one of the accusers himself. (*La Vérité*, Vol. I, pages 94-95.)

9. The Attitude of the Bulgarian Authorities in Macedonia.

We now come to the most astounding of all the accusations, that concerning the conduct of the Bulgarian authorities in Macedonia.

The Serbians have the audacity to speak of "general massacres" perpetrated upon "compact Serbian populations" constituting the "center of the opposition to the Bulgarian propaganda" in Macedonia, and to assert that the Bulgarians, in their wish "to annihilate all the more compact Serbian populations," interned the male population in such large numbers "that the traffic on the roads leading to Bulgaria was congested, and the Germans, unable to freely proceed with the dislocation of their troops, had to ask on military grounds for a temporary suspension of the internments." The least one can say of such accusations on the part of the Serbs is that they are out of place. There certainly was a time when the roads in Macedonia were encumbered, but that was during the mournful days of the exodus of Macedonians who, in 1913 and 1914, fled in thousands to Bulgaria to escape from the "favors" with which their "deliverers" the Serbians wished to overwhelm them. There have also been murders and revolting massacres; but that was during the sad period of Serbian occupation, when entire populations were moved away because they would remain Bulgarian, and when all those who dared show their affection for Bulgaria, the mother country, which had just sacrificed the best of its children for their liberation, were persecuted and pitilessly exterminated.

We have no wish to dwell on these facts; the honorable Conference will find a full account of them in the "Enquiry in the Balkans" of the Carnegie Commission, as well as in the memorandum entitled "The Bulgarian Question and the Balkan States." Our only purpose here is to show the absurdity of an accusation which might with better cause be addressed to those who have formulated it.

CONCLUSION.

One may gather from the very conclusions of the two Enquiry Commissions that they have not always been in a position to test the value of the evidence submitted to them, or to control the reliability of the collected data. The fact is that their enquiries were viciated in their very principle by the accused party being entirely excluded, which rendered it impossible for truth to make its way.

Sincerely desirous that full light should be thrown on the responsibilities incurred in this matter, and basing itself on what precedes, as well as on its Memorandum, "*La Vérité sur les accusations contre la Bulgarie*," the Bulgarian Delegation ventures to approach the Peace Conference with the request that an international and truly impartial enquiry be opened at which all the interested parties shall be represented, and which shall examine all the reprehensible acts committed by the belligerents in the Balkans during the war of 1915-1918, as well as and during the subsequent armistice. Such an enquiry seems to it the only means of establishing the truth and silencing calumnies. The findings of the enquiry may perhaps not be very favorable to the Bulgarians, but they will certainly be even less so to their accusers.

THE BULGARIAN DELEGATION.

August, 1919.

(Here follows ten Annexes with the originals photographed:—)

Annex 1-6 are letters written by the Greek Mayors of Drama, Pravishta, Serres and Cavalla, expressing their gratitude for the Indian corn supplied to the population by the Bulgarian Red Cross.

Annex 7 is a letter of thanks written by the Abbott and the Administrative Council of the Greek Monastery of Icosiphynissa for Indian corn supplied to the monastery.

Annex 8 is a translation of a letter addressed by Philaret, Greek archbishop of Dimotika, to the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople, in which he speaks highly and gratefully of the conduct of the Bulgarian authorities towards him and his flock.

Annexes 9-10 are two petitions signed by sixteen Turkish *imams* (priests) and mayors of the Drama district, complaining of the unfair distribution by the Greek officials of the foodstuffs supplied by the Bulgarian Government, and asking for the apportionment of a special commission to take charge of the distribution.

(THE EDITOR.)