

## Nomad jürüks in Yugoslavia-Macedonia

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Not even stringent government intervention along with extensive planned economic measures have been able to prevent a socio-economic form of nomadism which, even today, exists in Yugoslavia. Prejudice against nomads, who, for example in lower Mediterranean regions are allegedly responsible for the destruction of entire forests and thus depriving the resident inhabitants of economic stability, has led to successive repression of the nomadic culture itself. Even though in the mean time this false and negative image has been revised(1), the nomadic culture nevertheless faces extinction. This is particularly regrettable in areas where nomadism, as a supplementary economic factor, has successfully utilized available natural resources to the fullest - for example in climatic unproductive zones where intensive cultivation is almost impossible. But nomadic integration is also possible in areas with high productivity. If the name nomadism were to be altered to «pasturekeeping», one notices how widely spread this form of economic pastoralism (in Europe) actually is.

Certain regions of Macedonia that presently harbour the receding nomadic Jürüks are agricultural wastelands. These Jürüks, who originally migrated out of Asia, speak an ancient asian language and, in fact, have cultural bonds with the Turks. They have also over the years, in hideaway regions in the Balkan area, managed to retain their nomadic character. Even the socialist Yugoslav government could'nt persuade them to remain stationary.

By itself, the name «Jürüke», which in all probability originated from the turkish verb «yürüme» (to wander, roam) shows how deeply this nomadic element is rooted in their tradition.

The Jürüks live, among other places, on the Platschkowitza - east of

Stip. Because available ethnic maps and charts hardly depict the areas populated by nomadic tribes, the «Yürüklük Mountains», referring directly to the nomads, can serve as an especially vivid natural roadmarker.

de Planhol proved that **because** of nomadism, forests have been preserved. Their almost total isolation, to which nearly impassible mountain roads and extremely rough terrain certainly contribute, make it tryingly difficult to reach them. Only in neighboring settlements can one obtain reliable clues as to where they might be. Searching for the Jürüks is most definitely a tedious endeavour, but even a short visit with them makes it all worth while.

The hospitable and trusting Jürüks were more than willing to subject themselves to scientific research. The author, for example, found no difficulty in recording language samples, studying certain habits, as well as probing their geographic, social, and economic situation. Above all, their language is worth special attention. The Macedonian tribes speak with a turkish dialect that, especially for the Jürüks in the south-west of Turkey, is closer related to certain anatolian dialects as the west-rumelian dialect of other Balkan Turks. Because of the fact that other subtle language differences would have become indistinguishable, there was probably no connection between Jürüks and other turkish tribes in the past.

While the Jürüks of predominately lower Asia still maintain their nomadic life-style, those of Macedonia are already showing signs of migratory limitation. Their cultural living-space was confined to such a small area that typical nomadic tendencies, such as migrating into different climate zones, gradually disappeared. Geographic «vertical» migration gaveway to a «horizontal» movement that actually failed its purpose entirely. The transition from traditional nomadism to a partial, restricted nomadic way of life advanced to such a degree that transient livingquarters are only required a few times each year. This lead directly to the establishment of large, permanent settlements that, after daytime excursions, offer refuge at night. But in traveling farther outward to more distant lying pastures, dark-colored tents and thatched huts serve as shelter. Livestock, on the other hand, are fancied in a makeshift corral known as an «agil» by the Jürüks.

Here, one can still experience the remainder of true nomadism - where shepherds purses are braided and, from time to time, one encounters a shepherd with a hand-carved flute, playing old, tradi-

tional melodies. The absence of tea-houses, trade-shops, and craftsmen within these communities signal the nomadic characteristics of its inhabitants who buy their goods in either distant townships or neighboring settlements.

And still there is nothing arid or barren in a Jürüke community. Their unbelievably friendly attitude, along with the carefree rambling of children near their dwellings, suggest a lively and bustling atmosphere.

On the other hand, the shabby condition of their housing offers a vivid contrast to the former. Considering the strong religious ties of the Mussulman Jürüks, especially their marked Islamic fanaticism in the Dispora region, the fact that even their mosque is deteriorating shows how poverty-stricken they really are. This is proof of the economic instability of this restrained and altered form of nomadism. Even though in the mean time remedial, small-scale agriculture programs have been introduced, good intentions seem to far outweigh their business success. Because nomadism has been deprived, falsified, and suppressed, one cannot, in its last refuges, expect economic miracles. On behalf of the Yugoslav government a trial program was started to convert the Jürüks to a new life-style. For the time being, this first step will be the last. Smirkingly the Jürüks informed us that they were awaiting a teacher - the fact that he won't arrive is not taken too seriously.

Unless their contact with neighboring townships and villages induce a need for technical and social interdependence, it is not to be expected that the Jürüks will change their traditional living habits. The present situation will presumably remain the same since integrating the nomadic Jürüks in the social and economic structure of other ethnic communities is just as hopeless as trying to convert them as an entity. In fact, either the continuation of nomadism (or a derivative of some sort), or possibly even the extinction of the Jürüks in Macedonia are more likely than their integration into socialist Macedonia's socio-economic structure.

An accurate census of the Jürüke population is not available, and deciphered statistics are very discouraging. The Jürüks are most likely to be found as part of the Turk or Mussulman communities. In his article «The Turkish Organized Corporate Racial Minority in Yugoslavia» (1974), R. Grulich expresses the difficulty in census-taking of Macedonian minorities. Probably due to their isolation from surrounding cultural centers, the Jürüks, belonging to the Yugoslav-

Turkish minorities, are least affected by the migration trends into Turkey. Though, from a social-economic viewpoint, the Jürüks would be most suitable for relocation there.

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